/The Mongo file consists of nine sources, three of which are translations from the French, and four translations from the Flemish and one from the German. The main sources in this file are 1:Maes and 2:Hulstaert. 1:Maes is a general survey of the peoples in the southern part of the Mongo territory - particularly the Ekonda. 2:Hulstaert is a long, thorough study of the ramifications of the Nkundu Mongo marriage pattern. 3:Boelaert and 4:Gutersohn are short articles on Mongo society and economics. 5:Brepoels and 6:Kaptein are brief articles on family life and customs. 7:Brown examines the functions of a local official among the Ntomba Mongo. 8:Muller and 9:Boelart deal with kin and social organization.

An Outline of World Cultures change has been made so that FO37 Ntomba and FO48 Yaelima have been subsumed under the general heading FO32 Mongo, and the special OWC numbers for these groups have been dropped. There were no other special marking decisions made.

This file is strong on materials pertaining to marriage, the life cycle in general terms, and political organization. It is deficient on materials relating to human biology, psychology, the ethnosciences and demography. --Analyst/

Processed in 1960

302 532 fashioning most of the statuettes, figurines and bowls that we possess from this region, which are so remarkably decorated. Moreover, we find these same forms among the Babuba and Bashilele, up to the region of the Bankutshu of Bena Dibele-Kole. These various tribes have also reproduced in their sculpture the designs of the shaved parts of the head, which are so uniform and so characteristic. In this respect these various tribes are related, and their ethnic affinity seems very clear. Despite their present remoteness from each other and the absence of all tribal intercourse, their ethnic kinship is clearly shown in the mementos they have preserved of the ancestral culture.

[142 304]

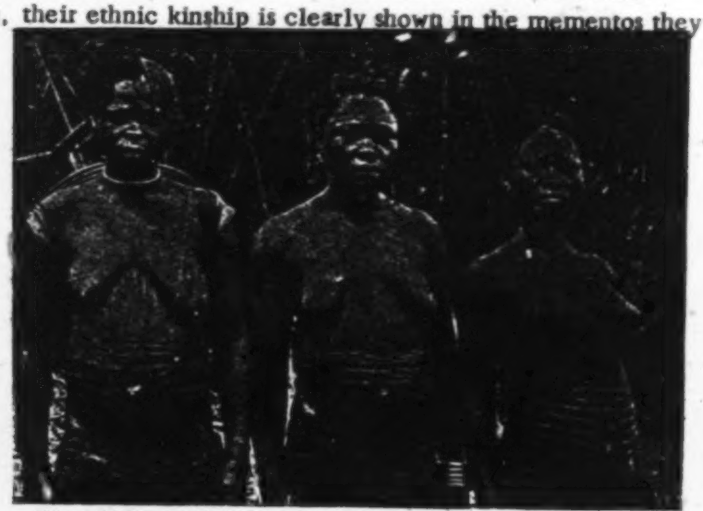


Fig. 100. Hairdos and Tattoos of Lake Leopold II.

302 161 ● These various observations permit us to divide the peoples into three very distinct groups.

1) The Bateke-Banfumu group, with its chignon hairdo over the nape of the neck and the rest of the head shaved or with the hair cut short.

2) The group including the Ipanga and the eastern peoples, with their hairdo of two braids passing behind the ears and under the chin and the upright roll on top of the head. [179]

3) The group including the tribes of Lake Leopold II and the lower Lukenie up to the Ipanga region, where having the hair arranged in tiny braids predominates.

301 The love of finery is more or less developed among all the peoples of the Kasai-Lake Leopold II-Lukenie region. Ornaments

Teke F133
Sakata FO43

M
137
361

The few groups of natives who inhabit this region have built their villages along the river on raised ground, safe from the periodic floods.

In the forest region the villages seem to be scattered purely at random.

The huts are built in the center of a large clearing, surrounded by manioc plots and banana groves which are encircled in the distance by uncleared forest.

Such is the region that we crossed from Stanley Pool to Kassai-Kwango, from the Fimi to Lake Leopold II, and over the entire basin of the Lukenie.

S
M
101
131

The first peoples we encountered there belong to the Bateke [Teke] group. Their territory lies around Stanley Pool and extends to the north as far as the Lufimi. Beyond that live the Banfumungu [Fumu], also called Banfugumu, Banfumuka, Baumbu, or simply Bamfumu.

North of the Kasai and along the banks of the Congo live the Bayanzi [Yanzi] or Babangi. Their neighbors to the east, the Baboma [Boma] or Babuma, occupy the whole of the confluence of the Fimi and the Kasai, up to the left bank of the lower Kwango.

Fig. 3
Bateke Woman and Child.

T
[854
291]

The Wadia [Dia] live to the north of the Baboma between Nioki and Kutu and extend along the Boriempa and the western shore of Lake Leopold II up to the territory of the Mosengere [Sengele].

The region occupied by the Basakata [Sakata] stretches along the left bank of the Lukenie-Fimi between Bokoro and Moleke.

The Mosengere or Monsengere are settled along the Olonga-Uele in the region of Bongo. Northwest of this group we encountered the Bakutu [Kutu], whose territory extends beyond the boundaries of the Lake Leopold II district. [8]

The Bolia occupy the country northeast of Bongo as far as the Bolia-Kiri region.

The Tumba [Ntomba] are settled all along the eastern shore

Sakata FO43
Yaelima

5 M of Lake Leopold II.

101 The Bobaie [Baye] are the northern neighbors of the Basakata
131 in the Isoko-Tolo region.

The Balesa [Lesa] -- Batete -- occupy the left bank of the Lukenie between Bokoro and Pobombo.

The Ipanga and the Batitu or Atshitu, inhabit the Oshwe sector both north and south of the Lukenie. The region occupied by the Bokala lies farther east, between the Lodima and Bumbuli.

The Yaelima are found from east of Bumbuli to the Dekese sector and up to Dengese country.

A few Bashilele [Lele] groups are settled at the confluence of the Kasai and Sankuru. Their territory extends far to the south between the Kasai and the Loanga.

The Bankutshu [Wankutshu], also called Basongo-Meno [Songomeno], live on the left bank of the Sankuru up to the sector of Bena-Dibele and Kole. [Ed. the text from here to mid-page 14 is not translated.]

M [142] [291] 5 764 152

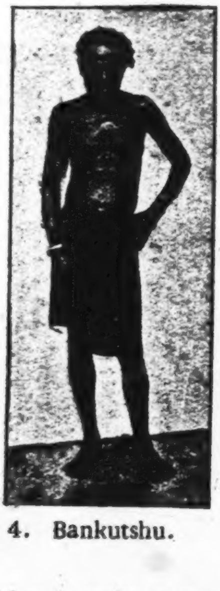


Fig. 4. Bankutshu.

[14] During our stay in the village of Chief Pokei, Baboma tribe, one of the dignitaries died. This death gave rise to an important mourning ceremony, as required by custom. The whole gunpowder supply of the deceased had been used to announce his death to the neighboring villages. Sorrow was expressed in the noisiest and most unexpected ways. The sobs of the women, the cries of despair of the relatives, and the plaintive chanting of the official female mourners mingled with the roll of the drums and the guttural and incoherent cries of the men, who kept drinking in order to express their sorrow more convincingly. All this display is an act. The screams and cries of grief are duties and are all feigned. [15] The Banfumungu cry over the death of a neighbor in the same way as they go hunting; the women mourn and cry just as they prepare food. All this is done as another job, because it is customary, because it is obligatory.

Introduction

● 101 This study deals with the marriage laws and customs of a large group of the Nkundó [Nkundu] people. Therefore, it would be useful at the beginning to give some general information about this people, who are very interesting from the ethnological standpoint. Then we can define the specific purpose of our investigation.

101 131 The Nkundó or Mongo occupy almost the entire length of the central basin of the Belgian Congo, from the Lulonga-Lopori [rivers] in the north all the way to Lake Leopold II, and beyond the Lukenie [River] as far as the Kasai [River]. In the west they touch the Congo River only south of the "Ruki" (1); the western part of the old Lulonga District is occupied by the Ngombe, whose territory extends as far as the Maringa [River] (known to the natives as Lǔwo) upstream from Basankusu (Basǎnkoso according to the natives). (2) In the east they may be found as far as, and even beyond, the Lomami. In the southeast they have penetrated into the northwestern part of Sankuru District. At the present time it is still impossible to delineate precisely their eastern and southeastern boundaries; the Bambólé, the Bahamba, the Mïtuku, the Bangelengele, [4] the Balengola, the Basongola, and even the Batetela and the "Bakusu," are either Móngo or very closely related. (1)

---

1. Ruki is probably a corruption of Bolóki, a tribe of fishermen living downstream on the banks of this river, which the natives prefer to call Loilaka.

2. According to Bittremieux and Lestaeghe, a few Nkundó remain on Nsumba Island near Nouvelle-Anvers (*Congo*, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 194).

101 1. See Donckerwolcke, in Kongo-Overzee, Vol. 1, p. 235, and my article in *Congo*, Vol. 1, p. 13. The fact that Donckerwolcke

161 It is impossible to give an exact figure for the size of the population we have just defined. In any case one can estimate that it is more than a million.

184 Throughout the huge territory occupied by this people, only insignificant differences in institutions or language can be observed. Greater divergences appear in the material manifestations of culture.

101 563 In my opinion it is likely that certain groups which belong among the Nkundo-Móngo as far as culture and speech are concerned, may be distinguished from them in genealogy and history. Among these are the true Elína or riverain people (the Bolóki, the Eleku, the Elíngá of the upper Lomela and the upper Tshuapa), (2) the Ngombe tribes of the Lomela, the Mbólé, the Bakutu of the Lomela-Tshuapa (with whom one should probably include the Ntómbá and the Nkóle), (3) and perhaps also the Mpámá and the Losakanyi. (4). This likelihood

---

● 101 classifies the Bakela (or Boyéla), who are unquestionably pure Móngo, among the Wakutshu [Wakusu] or Batetela is highly significant.

2. We exclude a few Libinja and Basokó clans living near Coquilhatville, since they are clearly of alien origin. The native name for the Tshuapa [River] is Jwafa or Jafa and, higher up, Lwafa. Among the Bongandó and the Bahamba it is called the Laha.

3. See my article in Congo, 1931, Vol.1, pp. 21 ff.

4. The latter are erroneously called Losakanja by Father Schebesta in Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge, p. 199. They seem to have lived formerly on the lower Momboyo River (Luilaka); the land on which Flandria Mission has been established still bears their name.

Pygmies FO4
Batswa

M 101 563 does not exclude the possibility of a distant kinship, but the present state of our knowledge makes the solution to this question impossible; for very close resemblances may be explained by a common origin as well as by a period of living in close contact, and differences may be due to diverse origins [5] or to a temporary separation at a certain point in history.

P M 101 563 144 A considerable number of Pygmoids or Pygmiforms (1) (Batswá, Jǒfe, Balúmbe, Bilángi, Boné) are to be found scattered among the Nkundó. They share a community of social and economic interests with their "masters." The Botswá belongs to his master and depends on him, but he is not, strictly speaking, his slave. His master not only has rights over him; he also has obligations to fulfill. Most of the Pygmoids are to be found in the western part of Nkundó territory; in the east they are very rare.

M 101 173 The Nkundó-Móngo came from the north or northeast, while the Mbólé claim to have come from the northwest, and the Bakutu from the west. (2)

M 101 A word should be said about the name of these people. Ordinarily, we call them the Nkundó-Móngo. The first of these names is used in the west and in the south, the second especially in the north and in the east. The Elángá of the Losanganya region are called the Mongo êa Lolo, or the Upstream Móngo, by the peoples to the west of them. Foreigners call all these peoples, including the Nkundó, the Mbólé, the Bakutu, etc., by the name of Móngo. In literature one sometimes encounters the name of Lolo or Balolo. (3) But, as we have seen, *lolo* is not a proper noun but simply the word meaning "upstream"

---

1. This name was proposed by Father Schebesta, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

2. See my study, previously cited, *passim*.

3. For example, the name of the Protestant mission of the Lulonga is "Congo Balolo Mission."

● 101 (in other dialects translated as nkoto).

The people are called Nkundó or Mó̲ngo̲, never Bankundó or 101 Bamó̲ngo̲. The prefix ba is often heard, as it may be used in front 193 of all proper nouns, similarly to the French usage in les Molière, les Rubens, etc. [or the English usage: the Browns, the French, the Nkundó]. The singular prefix bo is also used, but only rarely. [6] I have heard it only in the expression: ale ó bonkundó mongo, "He is a real Nkundo." This statement was made only in speaking of a foreigner who had successfully assimilated the Nkundó language and culture. It is possible, however, that it has a broader meaning.

Is it possible to discover an etymology for these names? 101 Mó̲ngo̲ is a common noun signifying something excellent, expecially a person. People say mó̲ng'ěy'ǒ̲na, "a fine child," mó̲ng'ěy'ǒmoto, a superb woman." (The name should be compared also with the term imó̲ngo̲, which denotes the state of being of a person who is well thought of, prosperous, rich, etc.) The form of the word does not change in the plural. The name Nkundó is more difficult to explain, if an explanation is at all possible. (1) If the name is to be related to some other word, the only possibility is the verb kundola, "to unearth what has been buried." But to unearth what? The corpses of one's enemies, in order to prove one's daring by eating them? Or copper rings, which would mean their wealth? The possibility is there, but we have no direct evidence. According to Fathers Bittremieux and Lestaeghe (on p. 195 of the article mentioned), some maintain that Nkundó means nkóló, "master." But what is the basis for this explanation? (2)

1. The word is Nkundó not Nkundu or Kundu. The assertion that the initial n is not part of the word, but is simply a nasal sound which must precede a consonant in the native sound system, shows a real lack of linguistic knowledge.

2. In contrast to the Batswá, the Nkundó and other groups are Baotó (sing. Bootó), meaning non-Batswá.

101 The explanation that I judge to be the most plausible is that Nkundɔ́ means "people of the interior." As a matter of fact, the name is almost always used in contrast to Elínga, "riverain people," and sometimes in contrast to other groups. But the original meaning of the term was probably broadened through contact with other Negro groups and with Europeans; it may thus have become the more or less specific name of the group. Still it should be noted that if you ask a Ngombe whether his tribe is Elínga, "riverain-fishermen," [7] he may answer you, "Among us there are Elíngá and there are Nkundɔ́." His reply would confirm our supposition. The word is thus a synonym of Nkondaka, which is found in several dialects at the equator. (1)

> 1. See my cited article, p. 19. I have also heard this term among the Lifumba. Nkondaka should be compared with the name Ekonda, and with *bokonda*, "forest on dry land," and with the verb *konda*, "to silt up, to be filled with alluvium, to become dry ground."

One often hears the Bombwanja contrasted with the Bokɔ́tɛ́. In many cases Bokotɛ́ is a synonym for Nkundɔ́, in the present-day meaning of the word. In his study of the Wǎngatá (*Revue Congolaise*, Vol. 1, 1910), Engels, who knew these peoples well since he was among other things administrator of the territory of Bokatola, already contrasted the Bombwanja and the Bokɔ́tɛ́. It seems to me that this name is the true name of the people in question, or at least for a great portion of them. It has no other meaning in the language of the present day. Etymologically, however, it may be related to the verb *kɔ́ta*, "to grow old," or to another *kɔ́ta*, as in *kɔ́ta likambo* (elsewhere bɔ́tola), "to end a dispute by pronouncing a final judgment," *kɔ́ta lisolɔ́*, "to have the last word in a discussion," *kɔ́ta esɛ́*, "to ensure peace and order in the village," and in the verb derived from it, *kɔ́tela*, "to be competent, skillful."

Leaving aside the Mbɔ́lɛ́, etc., as well as the tribes of the Lukenie [River], we can distinguish a number of different groups within the Nkundo-Mɔ́ngo: the Nsongɔ́ (Mbonje), Elangá, Bosaka, Bongandɔ́, Boyɛ́la, Ekonda, etc. Each of these contains a number of subdivisions or tribes.

101 We have excluded the majority of these groups from the scope of our study and have confined ourselves to a territory limited as follows: it is bound in the north by the Ruki-Tshuapa; in the east by the Salonga as far as the Mbólé boundary; in the south by a line running from the junction of the Luilaka and the Lwíle to the northern boundary of the Bombwanja of the Lokoló and then to the boundary of the Ekonda; in the west by the Bolóko, a tributary of the Ruki. In other words, we are considering only a very small part of the territory of the Nkundó tribes. But [8] it is the only part we have been able to investigate thoroughly. We are including the Bombwanja and the Elíngá who have settled in the area thus outlined.

101 563 The Elíngá live only along the big rivers. In our area they include in addition to the true Elíngá (of whom there are only about ten clans belonging to the Bolóki group, who have settled between Ikéngé and Bokéle and Mpakú, and the four or five Eleku villages on the Salonga), the Nkóle and Ekonda (1) villages who have adopted the way of life and customs of the Elíngá. (2)

As to the Bombwanja, their clans may be found scattered throughout the area. They are more or less dependent on clans of other peoples with whom they live and form hamlets of a sort in a great many villages. A solid bloc of them is to be found in the vicinity of Bokátola. It is constituted as an independent district [chefferie] even though, according to "custom," it "belongs" as a *julé* (pl. *baulé*), "subject," or "subjugated clan" (the verb is *uja*) to certain Bokóté villages or groups. (3) It is quite possible that these

---

1. Related respectively to the Nkóle of the Lokoló and the Ekonda of Lake Leopold II.

2. See the data on the history and life of the Elíngá published by Father Boelaert, M.S.C., in *Congo*, 1935, Vol. 2, p. 705.

3. The same is true of the Bombwanja group of the Lokoló. Other clans are scattered

Bombwanja were originally Mbólé, for certain words and idioms in their dialect are reminiscent of the Lombólé.

Let us briefly enumerate the other tribes -- "pure" Nkundó -- who form the subject of this study: 101 619

1. The Injóló, "sister's son" (bonankáná) of the Ntómbá and the Bolénge who live beyond the Boloko. They are divided into three groups [9] -- Engónjó, Wesé, and Ngombe, (1) each of which comprises a subdistrict [sous-chefferie] for administrative purposes. A small segment is to be found outside the area under discussion, between the Boloko and Coq. (2)

2. The Boángí (and their subgroup, the Besombó), related to the Bokála of the Losanganya region. (3)

---

101 563 among the Elángá beyond the Tshuapa. All of them are beyond the scope of this study. The Bombwanja are divided into Basuné and Bonkoso, and the Boendé are considered their bónankáná (sister's son).

1. West of their territory are to be found the remains of a group of former inhabitants of the area, whom the present inhabitants call Tompoko (or Baséká Bofáka l'Eléké) but who are completely unknown to me.

2. The southern Injóló are often called Imoma.

[114] 3. On the ethnographic map of the Belgian Congo prepared and published by Dr. J. Maes, the territory of the Boangi is marked with the name "Bokuala." There is no tribe or village by that name. Unless an insulting and humiliating nickname (bokwala, "slave") is involved, the name may result from an erroneous use of the name of the present chief of the Boangi, Bokwála.

101
619

3. The Ionda, related to the Bonyanga living north of the Tshuapa.

4. The Wǎngatá-Ntómbá, of whom one group is settled near Igende at the junction of the Tshuapa and the Momboyo, and another on the Jwalé. Other parts of this tribe may be found near Coquilhatville (district [chefferie] of the "Tumba"), near Bokote (Ikengo district), and at the middle section of the Luilaka, between Waka and Bonkoto (Nkundêngolo, or Wafanya and "Tumba"). (4)

4. At the present time it is impossible to determine the exact relationship between the Ntómbá and the Wǎngatá. In general the latter are treated as a subdivision of the Ntómbá, together with the Inganda and the Ikengo. Moreover, we do not know yet whether these Ntómbá are related to other tribes bearing the same name which are frequently encountered (on the Lopori, in the vicinity of Lake Tumba, and Lake Leopold II, among the Bakutu, etc.), or whether these are no more than groups bearing the same name. It should be noted that on the map previously mentioned, the Wǎngatá are placed much too far north; actually they are all to be found south of the Ruki.

5. The Bakáala, who seem to be more or less related to the Wǎngatá.

6. The Bonkoso.

7. The three sister tribes of the Bongíli, the Bombomba, and the Lifumba (the Beloko are a subtribe of the latter). [10]

8. The village of Bomángola, wedged in among the Lifumda. This village contains no more than thirty taxpayers but since it belongs to the Nsongó, the oldest of all Nkundó-Móngo groups, it is considered as a separate district. (1)

1. Their primacy has always been recognized and respected by the Lifumba.

101
619 9. The Bongale. Three large villages belonging to this group are to be found in the territory under discussion. In order of their size they are: Bongale wǎ Botóló (among the Lifumba, between the Bonsómbé, Lolíma and Saási rivers), Bongale wǎ Ilinga (among the Bakáalá, near Ikéngé), and Bongale wǎ Bo̱so̱ngú (among the Bonkoso, near Bempumba). [563] The difference between their rules of exogamy and those of the other tribes confirms the view that the Bongale are not true Nkundó. (2)

2. See Chapter V, Article III. There are several other small Bongale groups, but I do not know whether they are related to those mentioned above. Among them are those living near Bo̱nye̱ka (Busira) among the Boángi (Bokála, Boénjola). They may be descended from different ancestors who all bore the name Ngale. The same name may indicate an identical origin, but it may also be derived from different individuals whose names were the same. This statement is generally applicable.

The tribes living between the Jwalé and the Boloko, with whom the Bolénge and the Ntómbá between the Congo and the Boloko are sometimes classified, are grouped under the general name of Ilángá by the Boángí, Injó̱ló̱, and Elángá. (3)

[114] 3. The Bokele tribe listed on the above-mentioned map does not exist. Could this error be due to an incorrect extension of the name of a Boloki village near Bokúma which is called Bokélé?

The Nkundó-Mó̱ngo̱ came from the north or the northeast. (4)

[825] 4. The following note may be of interest: The stories and songs of the Nkundó indicate a

101
619
[825]

> recollection of an animal of the leopard family which they call *bokonga*. Their description of it corresponds to the lion. Some soldiers and other expatriates, who were also young people, shown representations of a lion immediately identified it with their *bokonga*.

The groups under discussion here lived for a time on the banks of the Luwo (Maringa) and the [11] upper Ikelemba, (1) then under

[173]

> 1. It appears that between the Ikelemba and its tributary the Losálifa, there is still a *bonkom* tree called w'ãmenga (of bald heads) under which, according to tradition, the ancestors held their councils. Nearby there is a *bosáá* whose fruits never ripen.

pressure from other Móngo tribes, they crossed the Tshuapa-Ruki. They evicted the Ekonda and settled in their present location. This exodus must have taken place a fairly long time ago; it is impossible to determine the date and difficult to make any estimates. In any case it must have occurred 150 to 200 years ago.

244 These peoples are primarily farmers; they grow chiefly bananas, manioc, yams, *colocasia* [taro], sweet potatoes, sugar cane, and various vegetables and condiments. The food crops they grow, together with what they gather and the Elaeis palm trees provide them with a continuous and abundant food supply, as long as elephants do [231] not interfere. Their domestic animals include chickens, goats, and 224 dogs. (2) Hunting is a pleasant change of activity rather than an

[177]

> 2. Ducks have been introduced fairly recently, but they were known long before colonial times. They came from the south. Sheep have been introduced only in the last few decades, and they are found only in a few villages on the river banks in the lowlands.

2: Hulstaert
101, 131, 563, 619

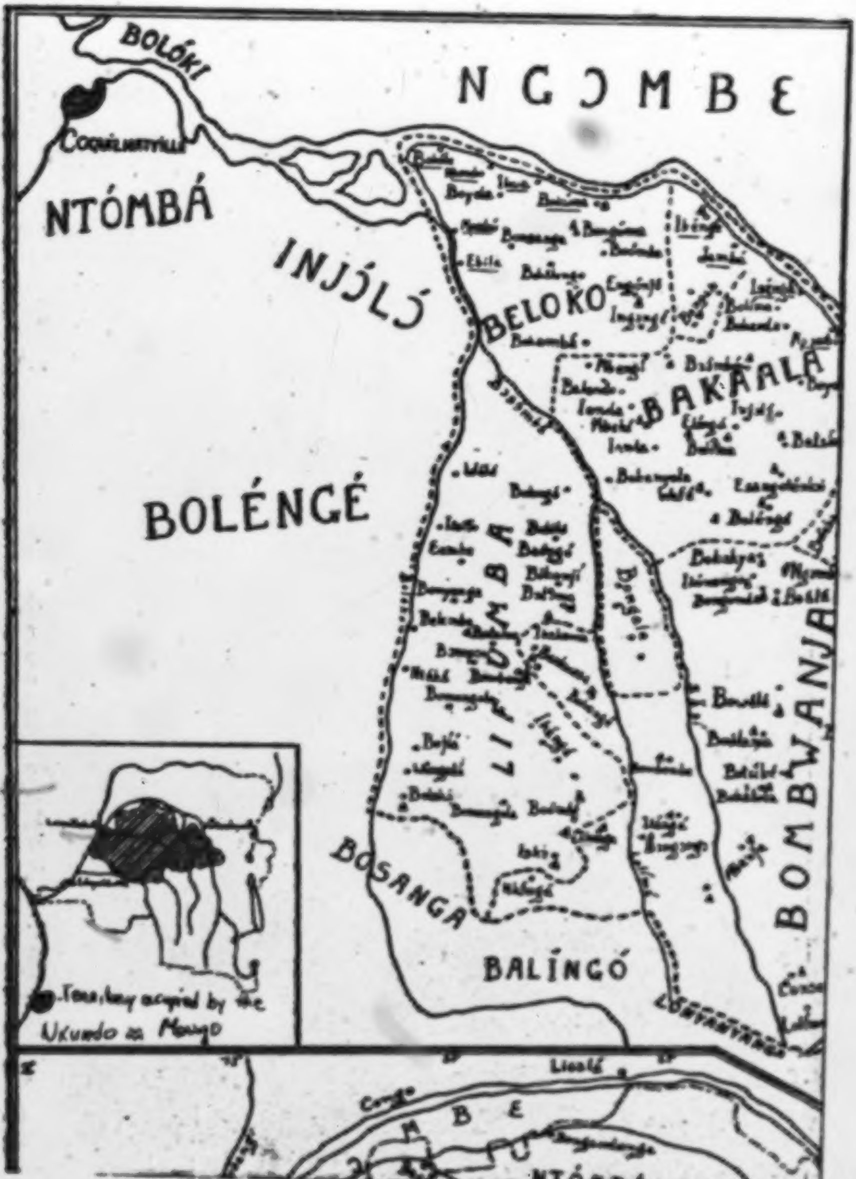
Mongo FO32

/The division of sections in the end map is as follows:/

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H

2:Huistaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

●101
131
563
619

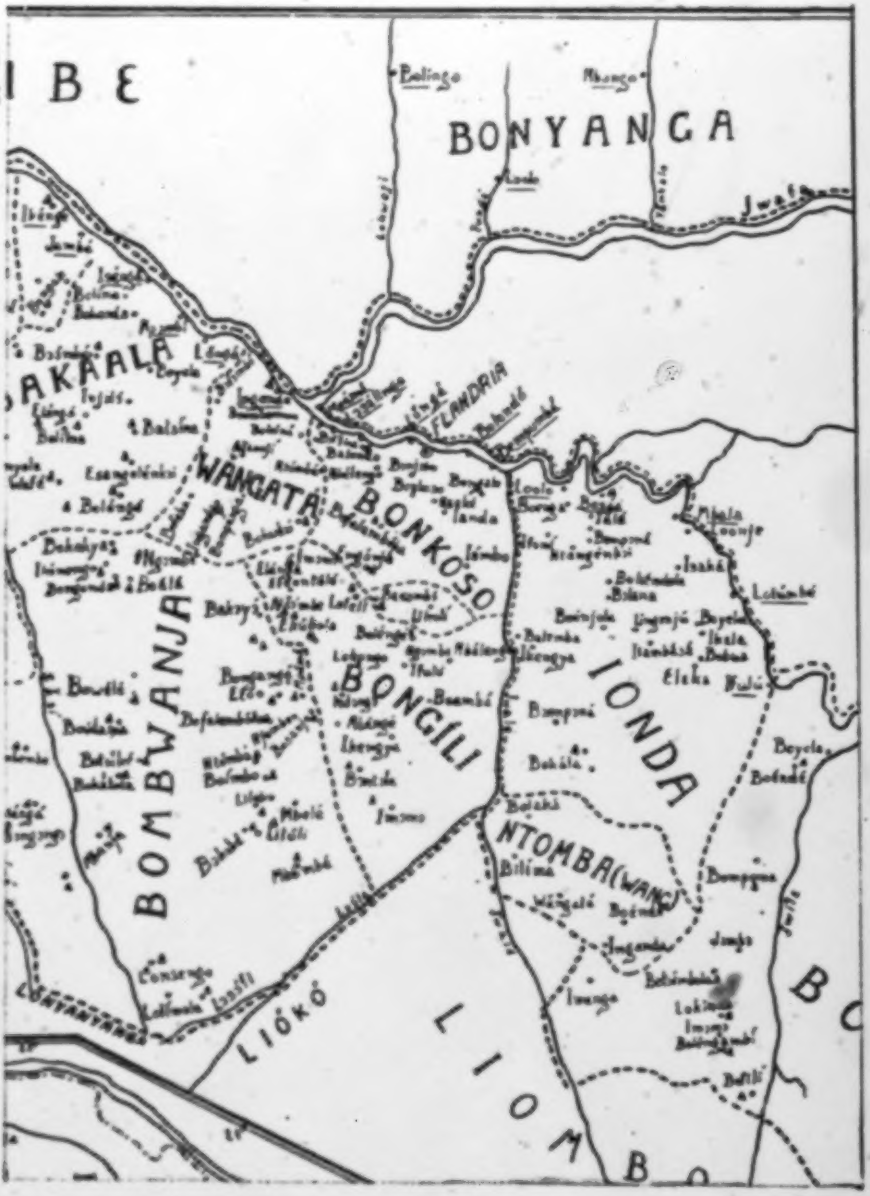

BOLÓKI
COQUILHATVILLE
NGƆMBƐ
NTÓMBÁ
INJƆ́LƆ́
BELOKO
BAKAALA
BOLÉNGÉ
LIOMBA
BOMBWANJA
BOSANGA
BALÍNGÓ
Terre occupied by the Nkundo or Mongo
Congo
ABE
Lioolé
NTÓMBA

[End Map (A)]

2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32

Ñkundu

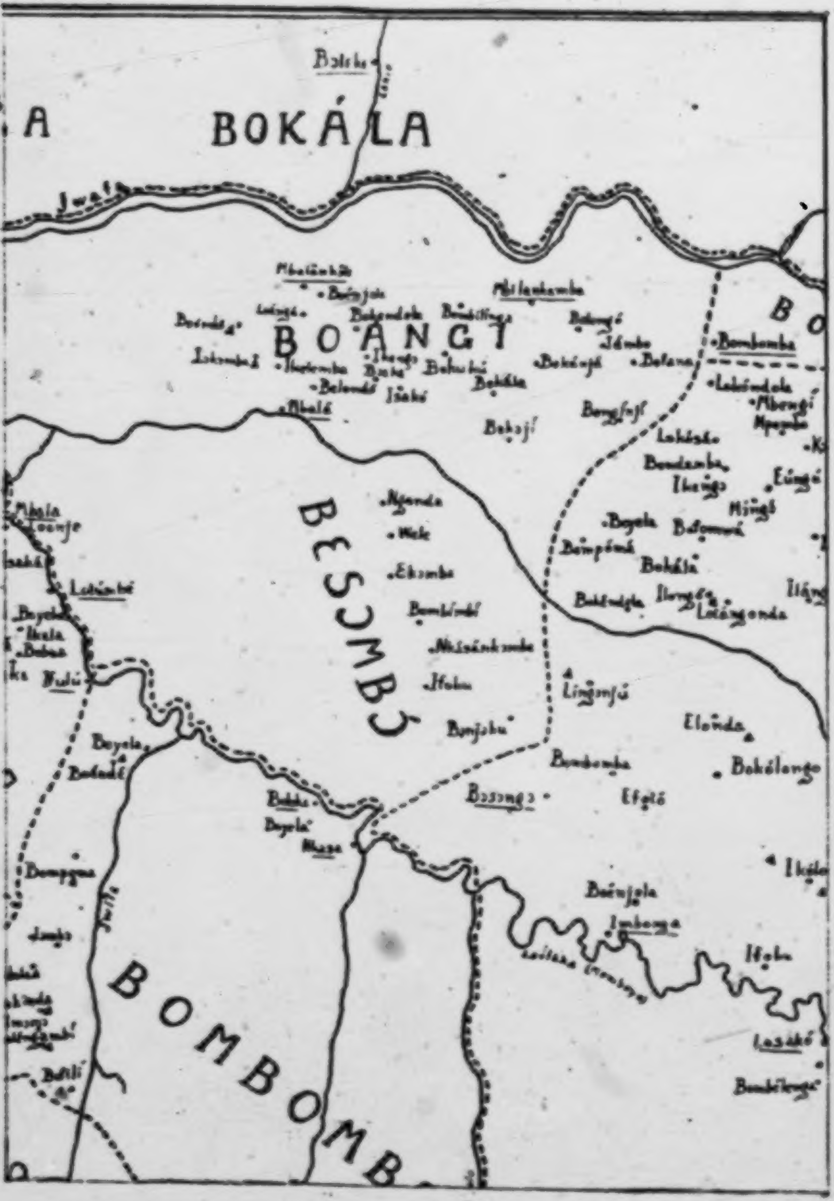
● 101
131
563
619


IBE
BONYANGA
Bolingo
Lolo
Jwafa
BAKAALA
WANGATA
BONKOSO
FLANDRIA
Bokotë
Bombwanja
BONGILI
IONDA
NTOMBA(WANGA)
Boyela
Bokondë
Bompoma
Bokala
Imbonga
Consenga
LUKANYANYA
LIOKO
LIOMBO
BO

[End Map (B)]

2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

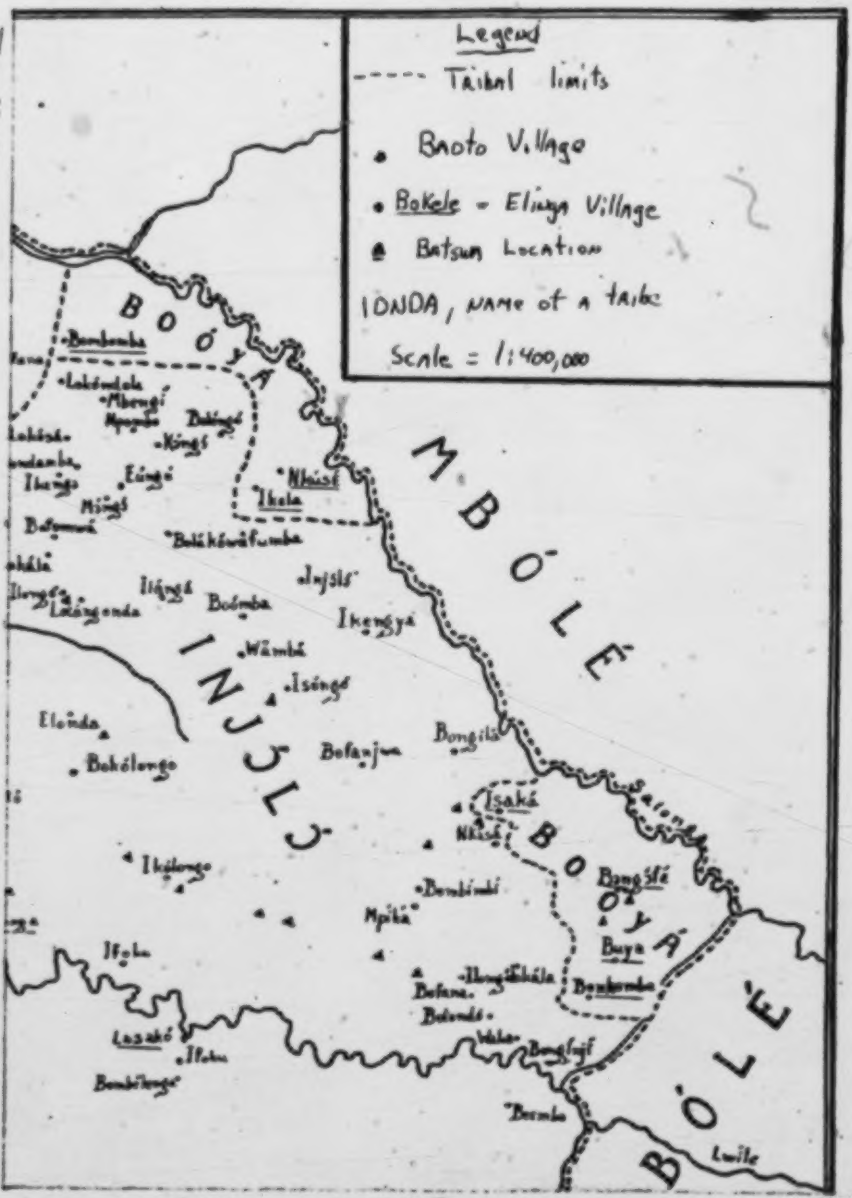
● 101
131
563
619


A
BOKÁLA
Bolsiko
Jwafa
BOANGI
Mbalambala
Boinjolo
Loinga
Bosolo
Bokondoko
Bombolinga
Mbilankamba
Bolingi
Jamba
Lokombe
Iketemba
Ikanga
Bote
Bokutu
Bokala
Belondo
Isako
Mbala
Bokonji
Belana
Bokoji
Bongfuji
BO
Bombomba
Lokondola
Mbengi
Mpaya
Lokolo
Bondamba
Ikenga
Einga
Minga
Boyela
Bofomwa
Boimpona
Bokala
Bokendela
Ilongola
Lolangonda
Ilanga
BESOMBO
Ngonda
Wele
Ekomba
Bombindo
Nkusankomba
Ifoku
Bonjoku
Lingonju
Elonda
Bombomba
Bokolongo
Bosongo
Efolo
Mbala
Loonje
Lotumbe
Boyela
Ikala
Bobaa
Nulu
Boyela
Bokodo
Bokoko
Boyela
Mbaya
Bompona
Ikela
Boinjola
Imbonga
Ifoku
Lasako
Bombilongo
Boili
BOMBOMB

[End Map (c)]

2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

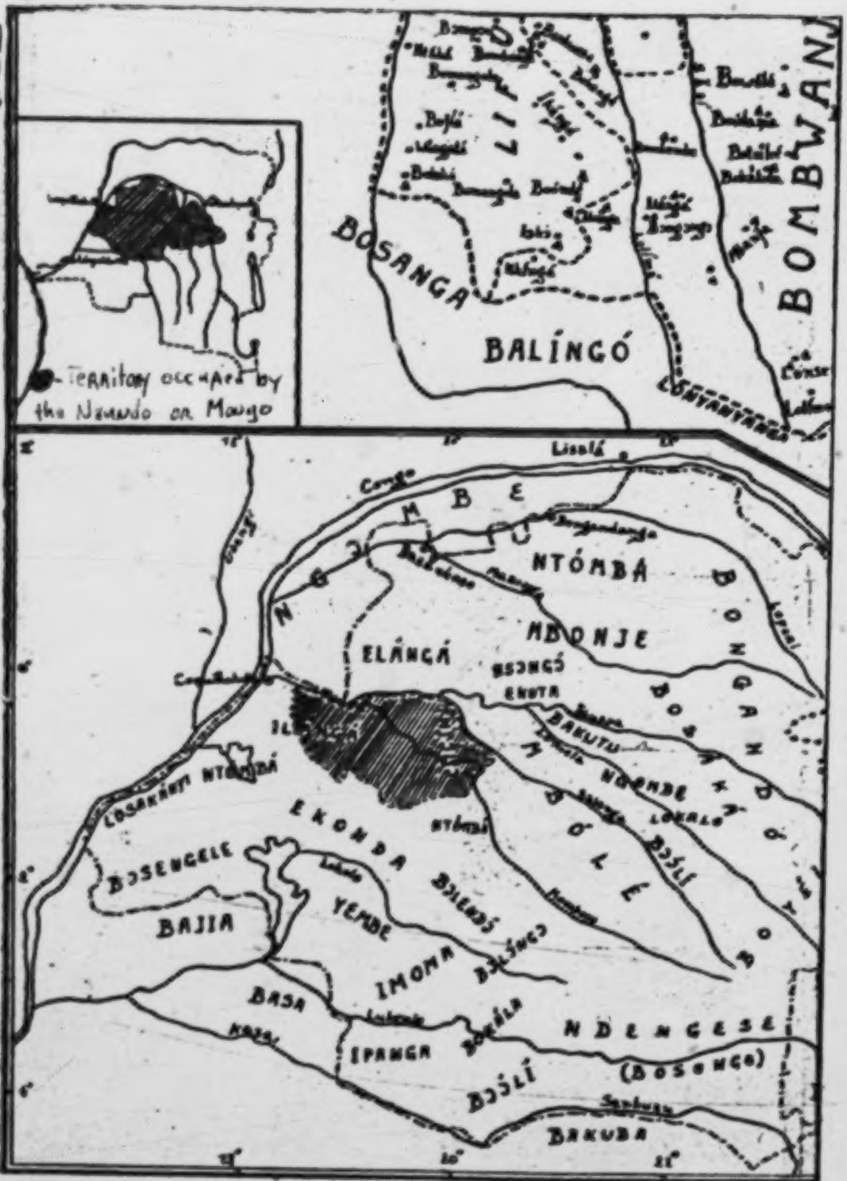
101
131
563
619


Legend
----- Tribal limits
• Baoto Village
• Bokele = Elinga Village
▲ Batsua Location
IONDA, name of a tribe
Scale = 1:400,000
BOÓYA
MBÖLÉ
INJOLO
BOÓYA
BÖLÉ
Bombomba
Lokóndola
Mbongé
Bokéngé
Kóngé
Ilonga
Ikengo
Mónge
Nkisó
Ikela
Bolákówáfumba
Injólo
Boómba
Ikengyá
Lokongonda
Wámbá
Isónge
Elonda
Bokólongo
Bofanjua
Bongilá
Isaká
Nkisó
Bongólé
Boya
Bombomba
Bombimbi
Ikolongo
Mpiká
Ifola
Ilongolabála
Bofana
Bolondó
Lasakó
Ifola
Bombilongo
Bongólo
Bomba
Salonga
Lwile

[End Map(D)]

2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

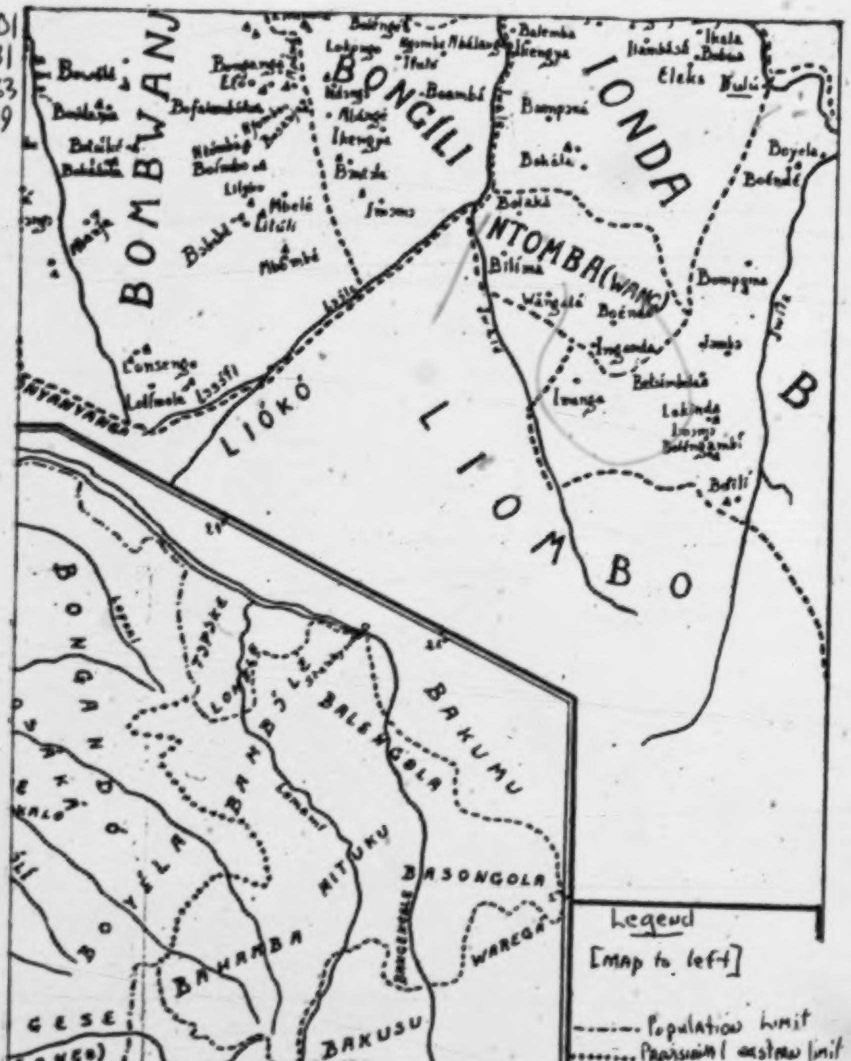
● 101
131
563
619


BOSANGA
BALÍNGÓ
LI
BOMBWANJ
Territory occupied by the Nkundo or Mongo
Congo
Lisala
N G O M B E
NTÓMBA
MBONJE
ELÁNGÁ
BOSONGÓ
EKOTA
BAKUTU
NGOMBE
LOKALO
BOSLI
M B O L E
B O N G A N D O
EKONDA
BOSENGELE
BAJIA
YEMBE
BOLENDO
IMOMA
BOSONGO
BASA
IPANGA
BOSILI
NDENGESE
(BOSONGO)
BAKUBA
Sankuru
Kasai

[End Map (E)]

2: Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

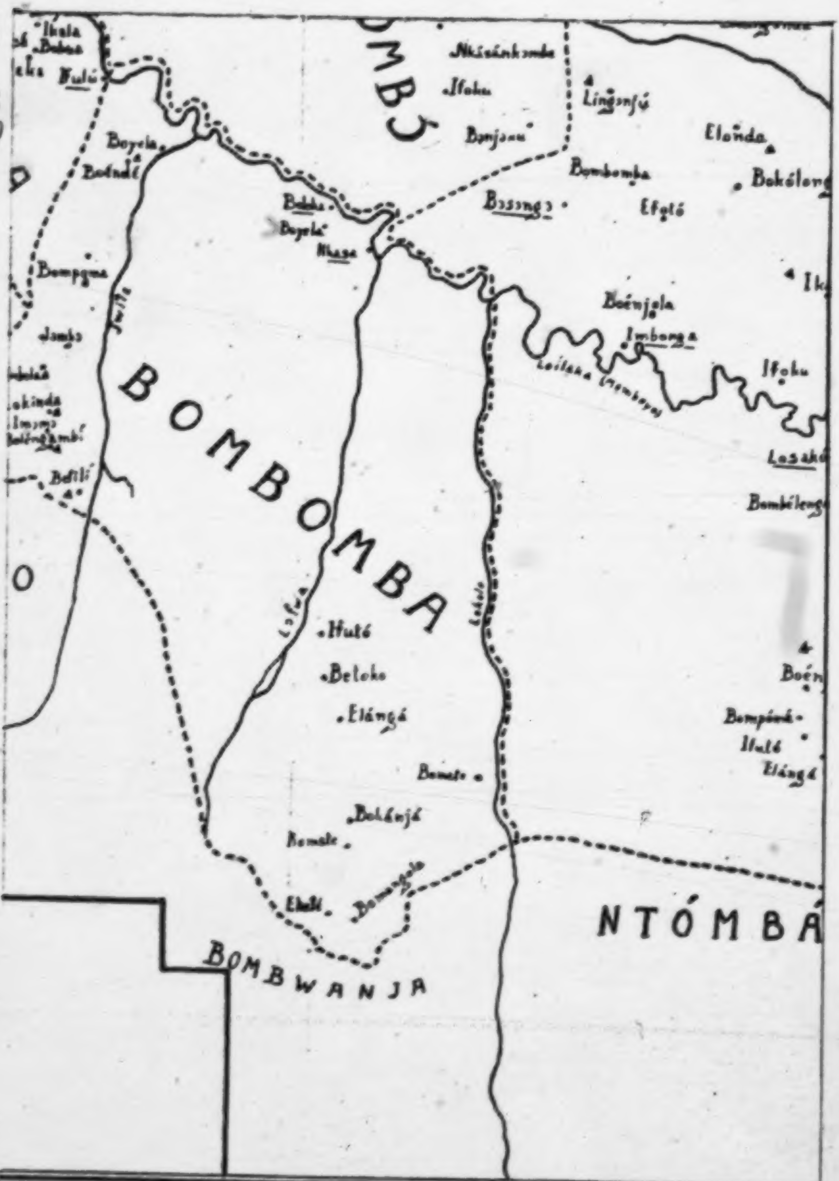
101
131
563
619


BOMBWANJ
BONGILI
IONDA
NTOMBA(WANJ)
LIOKO
LIOMBO
B
BONGANDO
BOYELA
BAMBOLE
BALENGOLA
BAKUMU
KITUKU
BASONGOLA
BAKUSU
WAREGA
BAHAMBA
BATETELA
GESE
SONGO
Bombwanja
Lokolo
Bolongo
Ikelemba
Busira
Lopori
Lomami
Lomela
Tshuapa
Lokenye
Lualaba
25°
26°
Bolemba
Ikengya
Bompona
Bokala
Bolaka
Bilima
Wangata
Boende
Inganda
Iwanga
Bokatola
Boyela
Bolende
Bompgima
Jombo
Lokinda
Befili
Eleko
Ikela
Bokuma
Ilombe
Mbelé
Boende
Bokanga
Lingomo
Coquilhatville
Legend
[map to left]
Population limit
Provisional eastern limit
probable eastern limit
tribes studied
EKONDA names of the principal tribes
Scale 1:5 000 000

[End Map (F)]

2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

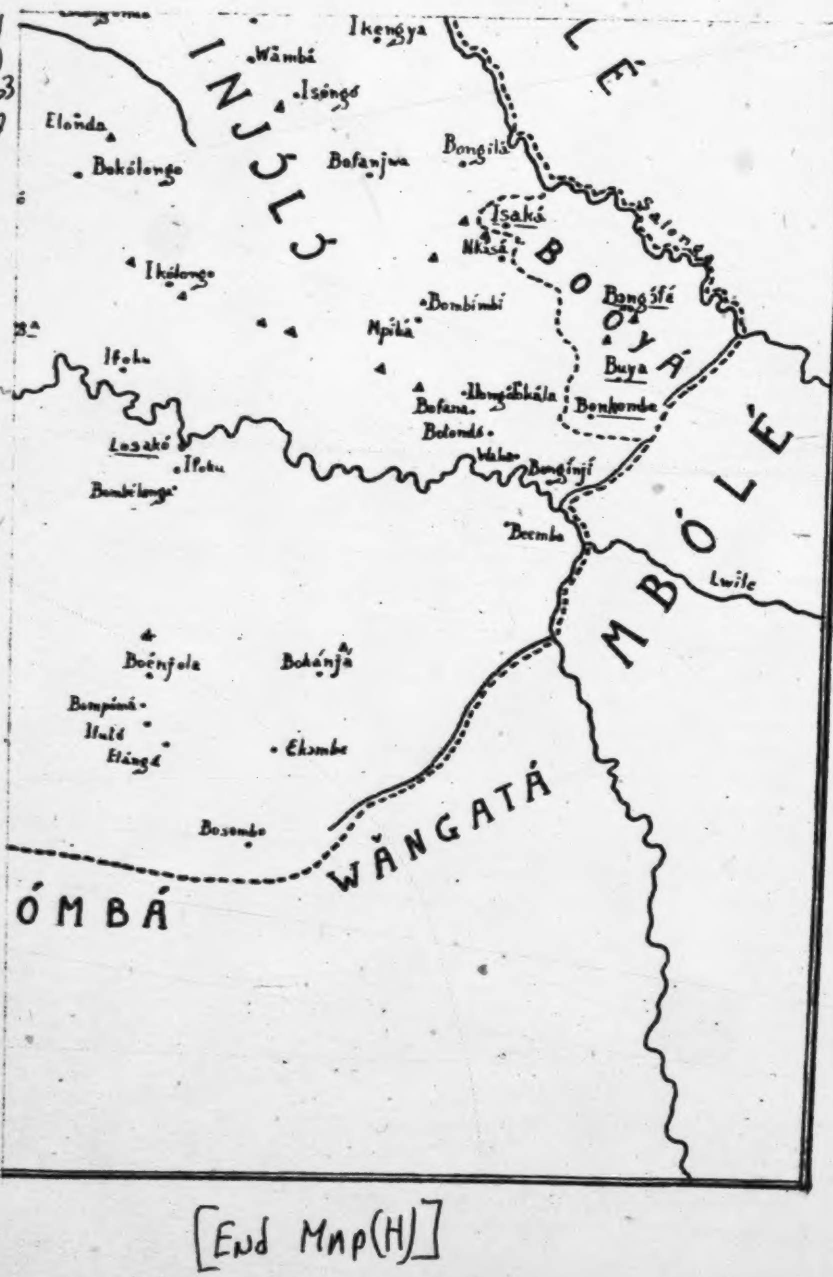
101
131
563
619


Ikala
Bokoa
Kulú
Boyela
Bofandé
Bompɔna
Jɔmbɔ
Lokinda
Imɔmɔ
Bolɛ́ngɔmbí
Bafílí
O
MBƆ
Nkúsánkɔmbɔ
Ifoku
Bɔnjɔɔu
Lingɔnjú
Elɔnda
Bombomba
Bakólong
Bɔsɔngɔ
Efɛtó
Bokaka
Boyela
Nkaza
Ik
Boénjola
Imbonga
Loilaka (Lomboyo)
Ifoku
Losakó
Bombélong
BOMBOMBA
Jwafa
Lofoma
Ifutó
Beloko
Elángá
Bonato
Bokánjá
Bomata
Ekafí
Bomangala
Boén
Bompáná
Ifutó
Elángá
NTÓMBA
BOMBWANJA

[End Map (G)]

2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

101
131
563
619



Ikengya
Wãmbá
Isongó
INJƆLƆ
LÉ
Elonda
Bokólongo
Bofanjwa
Bongilá
Isaká
Nkisá
Salonga
BOOYÁ
Ikólongo
Bombimbi
Mpiká
Bongɔ́fé
Buya
Ifoku
Ilongáókála
Bofana
Bonkombe
Bolondó
Losakó
Ifoku
Wala
Bongínjí
Bombilongo
Boemba
MBÓLÉ
Lwile
Boénjola
Bokánjá
Bompímá
Ilulé
Elángá
Ekombe
WĂNGATÁ
Bosombo
ÓMBÁ

[End Map(H)]

THE *NKUMU* OF THE TUMBA

RITUAL CHIEFTAINSHIP ON THE MIDDLE CONGO

H. D. BROWN

● 101 THE tribes living round Lake Tumba, a lake some thirty-five miles long by twelve wide lying north of Lake Leopold II (approximately 0° 30′ south latitude,
[133] and 18° east longitude) and draining into the Congo River at the confluence of the Ubangi, lack cohesion and show a considerable variety of custom and language. But they are known collectively as Tumba, the Government adaptation of the Native term *Ntomba*. Most of them are found to the east of the lake, the whole group numbering perhaps little more than forty to fifty thousand at the present time, though
[797] there is evidence that the last twenty years have seen a great decrease in population. European occupation of this area goes back barely fifty years, Protestant missions having been established for about the same length of time. The first mission post
[177] was established at Ikoko on the north-east shore of the lake, one of the villages of a group known as Bonginda. In pursuing this investigation particular attention has been given to the practices of this group, but mention is occasionally made where considerable differences have been found elsewhere.

105 The Tumba are agricultural, hunting, and fishing people. Their country is flat
13 and swampy with dense forests, and there are many watercourses flowing into Lake Tumba. There are occasional small, less swampy plains, and one such area, more open, with quite wide stretches of prairie, is a haunt of buffalo. The forests are fairly well supplied with game, and the swamps, streams, and lakes with fish. A heavy rainfall and no distinct dry season make agriculture reasonably easy and famine unknown. Every family has its plantation of manioc, the staple diet, which is supplemented by plantains and bananas. The people make their own tools, formerly smelting their own iron for this purpose, are fairly skilful at making dug-out canoes, engage in weaving raffia and making mats out of split cane, and are efficient at pottery production.

624 The role of the *nkumu* in the socio-religious activities of the community is one of the most interesting features of Tumba life. As a result of European contact the
101 ceremonies connected with the *nkumu* are rapidly disappearing, but it has been
178 possible to collect considerable information from the older men and women among whom the details are still vividly remembered.[1] The following report refers to the period previous to European occupation and control, a time within the memory of a large number of people, but already sufficiently remote to become a matter of hearsay before the lapse of many more years.

596 An understanding of the place of the *nkumu* among the Tumba requires a glance
[173] at the tribal organization. According to the people themselves, they migrated westward, and coming into these parts chose land for themselves. Among the several

---

[1] In *My Children of the Forest*, New York, 1924, pp. 48–51, Andrew F. Hensey has briefly outlined some of the items of interest observed among the *nkumu* of the district adjacent to that of the present study. These more detailed notes are, however, timely if a record is to be preserved that approximates to accuracy.

6. Primitive Society.

[12] and Lévi-Strauss (7) were consulted (8).

7. Structures élémentaires.

8. I am particularly indebted to Prof. Mühlmann for his advice and references to source material.

By their very nature, all attempts to recognize ethnosociological ideal types must remain incomplete and are in constant need of revision on the basis of ethnographic reality (9).

9. Mühlmann, Methodik, p. 120.

Such revision can only be carried out if each field worker, while studying his material, compares the existing terminology with "his" realities and if he then submits the result of this comparison to the scrutiny of others. Unfortunately the use of ethnosociological terms is often dictated primarily by the convictions and preferences of the individual author who may neither refer to the existing terminology nor otherwise inform the reader of what he means exactly by the various terms. Many authors in this respect follow such unreliable standards as their "feeling for the language" or they act under the delusion that their private terminology corresponds to what is generally accepted. Too often, however, the actual usage differs considerably from what has been suggested in terminological studies. As a result terms like "clan," "kinship group [Sippe]," and "large family [Grossfamilie]" create different impressions among different readers.

In the present study the terminology of the authors mentioned above will be discussed in relation to the kinship and local groups of the Ekonda. [101] We are concerned here with the northwestern subdivision of the Ekonda who live in the Bikoro territory. The Ekonda belong to the large group, the Móngo.

61
602 another group. According to their relationship to others, groups may be designated as:

brother, younger or older;
brother or half brother (descended from various wives of the polygynous ancestor);
[848] Illegitimate child of the sister which, legally, as the child of the oldest brother or of the father of his mother, belongs to the group of the mother's relatives;
child of a boy who together with his sister has moved to the unit of his brothers-in-law and has settled there permanently;
son of a sister, who for some reason has separated from his paternal relatives and has moved in with the group of his mother or of one of his grandmothers.

601 Present-day social relationships are influenced by this variety of kinship relations. The kinship terms which refer to the relationships of the genuine or assumed ancestors to each other are occasionally transferred to the groups.

614
602
621 In this paper we shall describe the Isangi group (12) as an

12. Müller, Fürstentum [Kingdom], pp. 68 ff., 125, 128 ff.

●[101] example of hierarchical kinship structure. Isangi is a local group of the type described above (p. 1). Following the custom of the region, I shall refer to it as a "village." Until we have decided which terms are applicable to the various groups, I shall use the letters A to E for the individual ranks of the hierarchical structure. Within this system A shall stand for the smallest and E for the largest units (see Diagram 2).[1]

In addition to the three ranks of Group D in Isangi, there are others in the daughter villages (see Diagram 1). These may also include foreign groups, as, for example, the "Nkundó" group, Liimbu, in Wengá.

[1] [See page 6, category 116.—Analyst]

101 114 [218] The Nkundo [Nkundu], or Mongo, are an important ethnic group of the central basin of the Belgian Congo. They are patriarchal (1). I lived among their west-central tribes for 20 years.

614 We call a clan, in the ethnic sense, the group of paternal blood relatives who have an autonomous territory in common. This resembles closely what Anglo-Saxon researchers like to call a "lineage" (2).

I. *Wise*

601 614 A Nkundo calls his own clan his *wise*, from the word *ise* which means "father." My *wise* thus includes:

1. My paternal grandfather and his brothers and sisters who are called *nkoko* (pl., *bankoko*), "grandfather, grandmother."

2. The sons of my male *bankoko*, including my own father, all of whom are my "fathers" (*ise*; pl., *baise*).

The sisters of my "fathers" are my "female fathers" (*isomoto*, composed of *isé* and *bomoto*, "woman").

3. The sons of my "fathers" are my older brothers (*botomolo*; pl., *batomolo*) and younger brothers (*bokune*; pl., *bakune*). The daughters of my "fathers" are my sisters (*nkâna*; pl., *bankâna*).

---

1. The rules and many details of the classificatory system of the Nkundo have already been set forth in *Le Mariage des Nkundo* by Father G. Hulstaert (Belgian Royal Colonial Institute, 1938).

2. The quotations in this article are from *The Pattern of Hera Kinship*, by J. F. Holleman (Capetown University Press, for Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1949).

105

Identification

The Ekonda are a Bantu nation of the Southern branch of the Mongo "in a restricted sense." They number 160,000 to 200,000, in addition to 25,000 to 30,000 Ekondized Pygmies. In addition to the Mbo, Wati, and Isoko, acculturated to the Ipanga and Yembe, and probably also the Lusakani and Mpama-Bakutu, Van der Kerken includes the following tribes and sub-tribes:

a. Baseka Buliasa: Bohanga, Lonianianga, Biole, Besongo, Loondu.
b. Baseka Liombo: Baseka Ntomba Ileli, Djombo.
c. Baseka Ileli: Ntomba Ndongo, Bolia, Basengere (Basengele, Monsengere, Sengere).
d. Baseka Etuka: Waya, Weli, Ilanga, Bolongo, Bakonda, Tembe, Mbelo, Bokongo, Ipanga, Boleandamba.

Basic Economy

Primarily agricultural, with a very strong secondary reliance on fishing, especially around Lake Ntumba. The staple crop is manioc, followed by bananas. Lesser crops include peanuts, maize, sweet potatoes, yams, and legumes. There are no cattle, but goats, dogs, and a few chickens (eggs not eaten) are kept. Hunting is unimportant. Fishing is done with traps, spears, nets, hook and line, weirs, and the bow and arrow. Fish and salt (an important local manufacture) are traded to other tribes. Markets.

Sex Division of Labor

Men hunt, do most of the fishing, and clear land, but women do the balance of the agricultural work as well as market trading.

Property

Brass rods constitute an important form of wealth. Property in land is acquired by bringing it under cultivation. In general, land is owned by minimal patri-lineages and administered by the heads thereof, but any member of the minor lineage has the right to hunt and gather on the territories of the component minimal lineages.

Inheritance is patrilineal--by the eldest surviving brother, by a son only in default of a brother, by a DaSo in default of a patrilineal heir.

Social Stratification

Groups of Pygmies are attached as hereditary serfs to particular extended families or minimal patri-lineages. There are non-hereditary slaves, whose children become members of the owner's family.

Marriage

Infant betrothal is common, and sex relations are permitted after betrothal--during a period of trial marriage. The normal mode of marriage is by payment of a substantial bride-price in brass rods or copper bracelets. It is supplied by the head of the groom's extended family, and the WiMo receives a quarter to a third. Marriage also occurs through the capture or abduction of an alien woman in war. An earlier mode of marriage, now largely replaced by the bride-price, consisted in giving merely a token payment.

Polygyny prevails, but a man rarely has more than 2-4 wives. Each has her own dwelling, and the first wife is chief wife. The sororate and sororal polygyny are forbidden, but there is preferential junior levirate [marriage is forbidden with YoBrWi].

Family

The residential unit is a patrilocal extended family, occupying a compound. It consists of the families of a man and his married sons, together with clients and slaves. A larger extended family (ikundi), averaging about 40 members, consists of a localized minor lineage. It has a patriarchal head with nearly absolute authority over other members. He administers the real and movable property of the lineage, and is succeeded by its eldest surviving male member, commonly a YoBr. These larger extended families reveal a fissive tendence; branches can break off with the consent of the head to form new families.

Residence

Residence is normally patrilocal--in a new house in the compound of HuFa until his death, but avunculocal residence is a fairly common alternative. For example, in the case of an extended family with no male heir, the headship and property descend to a DaSo, who leaves his father and moves to his mother's family of orientation in avunculocal residence.

Kin Groups and Exogamy

Local agamy prevails. A man may marry into another village or into another quarter or hamlet of his own village.

Incest taboos and marriage prohibitions are extended bilaterally to fourth cousins.

Descent is patrilineal. Minimal lineages, localized as extended families, are aggregated into minor patri-lineages, each with a sib priest, who comes from a particular minor lineage, and also a head, who is the head of the senior component minimal lineage and who is merely primus inter pares. Minor lineages, which are exogamous with respect to both sex and marriage, are aggregated into sub-sibs, which are agamous for marriage, but not for sex relations. These are aggregated into sibs, which are also exogamous but with exceptions, and these into phratries of traditional common descent, which are really political groups and usually occupy more than one village. Philippe mentions "material clans" (elombe) with chiefs among the Ntomba Njale, states that this group was formerly matrilineal, and concludes that, lying as it does between the patrilineal Ekonda and the matrilineal Badia and Batou, they "present a mixture of these two systems of social organization."

Settlement Pattern

The local community consists of a cluster of hamlets (or "quarters"), separated from each other by bush. Each consists of a group of dwellings arranged on either side of a single street, and each has a men's clubhouse.

Community Organization

A hamlet is a patrilocal clan-barrio, normally occupied by the members of one sub-sib but sometimes by several or by part of one. The community is likewise a patri-clan, but not necessarily a localized sib or segment thereof, for Müller found three sibs of the same phratry represented in the village he studied. Circumcision is obligatory for boys, but clitoridectomy is not practiced.

Local Government

Each clan-barrio has a head, and each community has a council composed of the heads of its component extended families (minimal lineages).

State

The Baseka Muliasa tribe is politically organized under a tribal chief--rare among the Mongo peoples. Elsewhere there are only ritual chiefs (nkumu) over districts or localized phratries, but no higher political integration. The district has a common assembly place where courts are held. Ritual chiefs are chosen from among rich men; their persons are sacred; they are surrounded by numerous taboos; there are human sacrifices at their death; they are succeeded by the eldest male in their extended family. Van der Kerken reports such ritual chiefs as widespread among the Mongo tribes.

Warfare

Warfare is common, even between districts of the same tribe.

Bibliography

Brown, H. D. The Nkumu of the Tumba. Africa, XIV, 431-447. 1944. Bk2. 10. v. 14. [Good on ritual chiefs].

De Boeck, J. Eenige nota's over het inlandsch huwelijk bei de Ekonda. Congo, XIV, i, 547-554. 1933. Bk18. 6. v. 14(1. [A few items].

Gilliard, L. Etude de la société indigène. Congo, VI, i, 39-76. 1925. Bk18. 6. v. 6(1. [Considerable information on the Bolia, Sengele, and Ntomba.]

_______. Au Lac Leopold II: Les Bolia. Congo, VI, ii, 223-238. 1925. [Very little material.]

Müller, E. W. Soziologische Terminologie und soziale Organisation der Ekonda. Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, LXXXI, 188-202. 1956. [Excellent on social organization.]

105

Philippe, R. Le mariage chez les Ntomb'e Njale du Lac Léopold II. Aequatoria, XVII, 87-106, 129-153. Coquilhatville, 1954. Harvard Peabody Museum Library. [Contains a modest amount of information on the Ntomba.]

Van der Kerken, G. L'ethnie Mongo. Mémoires de l'Institut Royal Colonial Belge, XIII, 1-1143. 1944. Bk18. 6d. v. 13. [Mainly map, tribal classification, and history.]

105

Identification

The Mongo (Balolo, Bamongo, Bomongo, Mbongo, Lolo) constitute the northern division of the Mongo nation proper [the Bosaka, Mbole, and Nkundu form the central division, the Ekonda and Kutshu the southern division]. With the Mongo, who number over 200,000, live numerous Pygmies or Twa, dependent and Mongoized, who provide game, and various riverine tribes [locally called Baringa, Baenga, Boluki, Nkole, etc.], who live almost exclusively by fishing and trade. Van der Kerken divides the Mongo in the limited sense into three groups: Mongo, Ntomba, and Yamongo.

Basic Economy

Primarily agricultural, with some hunting, fishing, and gathering and a little animal husbandry. The staple crops are bananas, manioc, and yams. Goats and chickens are kept, but no cattle.

Sex Division of Labor

Men hunt and clear land, but women do the tillage.

Property

Land is inferentially owned collectively by patri-clans.

Inheritance is apparently patrilineal except probably for a SiSo choosing to reside with his MoBr.

Social Stratification

Slavery prevails, but there is a relatively egalitarian or democratic status structure for freemen.

Marriage

A substantial bride-price is customary.

Van der Kerken reports limited polygyny, but all other sources specify common and preferential polygyny. Each co-wife inferentially has her own hut.

1: Murdock--7 E-4 (No date) 1958 F1 Africa
Mongo FO32
Mongo

105

Family

The patrilocal extended family is the norm, with nuclear family households.

Residence

Patrilocality is the norm, but avunculocal residence is an important alternative; a SiSo has the right to reside with a succeed a MoBr who obtained a wife with the bride-price received for the nephew's mother.

Kin Groups and Exogamy

Local exogamy is the norm.

There are patri-sibs localized in communities and patri-lineages localized in hamlets. Matrilineal descent, however, is reported for the Ntomba tribe.

The nkita system, presumably similar to that among the Nkundu, strongly suggests former matrilineal descent and avunculocal residence.

Kinship Terminology

Fa--ise. Mo--nyango. Ch--bona. ElBr--botomolo. YoBr--bokune. Sibling of opposite sex--nkana. Hu--bome, bosaka. Wi--waji, wali.

Bifurcate merging terminology except for BrCh(w.s.), where generation terms prevail.

Cousin terms are of Crow type. The social system as a whole is thus Patri-Fox.

Settlement Pattern

Inferentially there are settled communities composed of hamlets separated by plantations.

Community Organizations

Patrilocal clan-communities and clan-barrios are probable.

Local Government

Inferentially there are local headmen (clan chiefs) with councils of elders.

State

Inferentially there are politically organized sub-tribes with hereditary paramount chiefs. Succession is everywhere patrilineal, brothers taking precedence over chiefs. Succession is everywhere patrilineal, brothers taking precedence over sons.

Bibliography

Gutersohn, T. Het economisch leven van den Mongo-neger. Congo, I, I, 92-105. 1920. Bk18. 6. v. 1(1. (A few items).

Ruskin, E. A. and L. Dictionary of the Lomongo Language. London, 1928. Fys. L195. R89. (Full kinship terms and incidental suggestions as to cultural data).

Van der Kerken, G. L'ethnie Mongo. Mémoires de l'Institut Royal Colonial Belge, XIII, 1-1143. 1944. Bk18. 6d. v. 13(1-2. (Good maps, tribal classification, and history, with some incidental ethnography.)

Identification

The nation under consideration includes the following tribes and sub-groups:

1. Ngombe (Bongombe, Bongongombe, Bangombe, Ngombeh), who are not to be confused with a Nkundu sub-group called Ngombe nor with the great "Ngombe ethnic stock" of the north (see under Budja, Ndoko). The Ngombe treated herewith are mainly of Mbole origin but are strongly acculturated to the Bakutu-Ntomba of the Lomela. Van der Kerken lists the following sub-groups: Ikongo, Lotoko, Mpoko, Ngombe (including the Booli, Boyea, Ebengee or Nkoto, and Itsika).

2. Kutu-Ntomba (Bakutu and Ntomba of the Lomela). Though they are Mongo in an extended sense, they differ appreciably from other Mongo in language and culture. The other groups are acculturated to the Kutu-Ntomba. These Kutu must not be confused with the Kutshu or with the Wankutshu division of the Tetela, and these Ntomba must not be confused with the Ntomba tribe of the Mongo proper, the Ntomba subtribe of the Nkundu, five Ekonda divisions known as Ntomba, or a Mbole group called Ntomba. Van der Kerken notes the following sub-groups: Bakutu (Bovame, Nsamba) including the Botsini and Ekea; Bosengea; Nkoe (Kwe, Nkole, Nkwe); Mpombi (Pombi); Watsi, comprising the Besongote and Ngommesa; Yenge.

3. Linga (Balinga, Baringa, Elinga, Waringa)--a generalized name for various riverine tribes who live by fishing and practice little agriculture. Mongoized.

4. Twa or pygmies. Mongoized pygmies are reported for most of the Mongo area though not specifically for the Ngombe territory.

Basic Economy

Primarily agricultural, except for the Linga and other riverine tribes, who subsist largely by fishing and trading (dried fish and pottery for manioc, bananas, meat, and weapons). The principal crops are inferentially manioc and bananas. Van der Kerken for the Mongo tribes in general reports: cultivation of manioc, bananas, yams, maize, and sweet potatoes; chickens, goats, and

105

perhaps ducks; subsidiary hunting, fishing, and gathering.

Sex Division of Labor

Among the Linga both sexes fish, and the women make pottery.

Settlement Pattern

Settled communities except among the Linga, who live much of the time in boats and have only temporary villages. Kutu-Ntomba houses are rectangular and clustered close together; neighborhoods of hamlets and distinct extended-family "quarters."

Bibliography

Hulstaert, E.P. Over de volkstammen der Lomela. Congo, XII, i, 13-52. 1931. Bk18.6.v.12(1. (Only scraps of information.)

Maes, J., and O. Boone. Les peuplades du Congo Belge. Bruxelles, 1935. Nkd82.+T27e.v.1. (Synonymy and tribal maps only.)

Van der Kerken, G. L'ethnie Mongo. Mémoires de l'Institut Royal Colonial Belge, XIII, 1-1143. 1944. Bk18.6d.v.13(1-2. (Good map, tribal classification, and history, with incidental ethnography, mostly general Mongo).

1: Murdock --11   E-4   (No date) 1958   F1 Africa
Mongo FO32
Nkundu

105

Identification

The Nkundu (Bankundu, Baseka Mondji, Elanga, Gundo, Iukundo, Kundu, Nkundo) are a tribe of the Central division of the Mongo nation in the strict sense, and are consequently closely related to the Mongo proper (forming the Northern division), the Mbole and Bosaka (with Ekota) of the Central division, and Ekonda and Kutshu (with Boshongo) of the Southern division. With them live a very large number of dependent Nkunduized Twa or pygmies--about 45,000 locally called Balumbe, Batswa, Bilangi, Bone, and Jofe. There are also Elinga and other Nkunduized fishing people of alien origin, and the alien Bombwanja. Hulstaert lists the Nkundu component tribes as: Injulo (Ilanga Mongo of Hulstaert, with Engonjo, Wese, and Ngombe sub-tribes), Boangi (with Besombo), Ionda (Yonda of H), Wangata and Ntomba (with Bakaala), Bonkoso), Bongili-Bombomba-Lifumba sister tribes, Bomangola (a single village regarded as oldest Nkundu group), Bongale. Van der Kerken gives a very different list: Bolembelongi-Bokeniuma (with Bokala, Bunianga, Buya, Nsongo, Waola, Lingoi, Ntomba, and Bolenge sub-tribes), Botabongo (with Isaka, Ilongo, Elinga), Okweokai (with Lifino Lileko, Bekili, Esese, Bosombe), Bolemba (Bokote, Lifumba, Hulstaert's Elonga, with sub-tribes Bomangola, Bongali, Lifumba, Wangata), Yonda (Ionda), Lokwa Onene (Bombwandja), Ilanga Mongo (Indjolo of Hulstaert, with sub-tribes Boangi, Yonda, Indjolo, Bombomba), Mputela (with Ekota, Ekonda). Van der Kerken estimates the total Nkundu population at between 150,000 and 200,000 (including apparently, the pygmies).

Basic Economy

Primarily agricultural, with brand-tillage. The staple crops are bananas and manioc (both sweet and bitter); also grown are maize, sweet potatoes, yams, taro, and groundnuts. Animal husbandry is unimportant; there are a few goats (not milked), no cattle or sheep, numerous chickens and ducks (the latter relatively recent), and dogs. Fishing is next in importance to agriculture, and some subjected groups (Boluki, Elinga, Nkole) live primarily by fishing. Hunting is of less importance, and is done mainly for sport, most serious hunting being done by dependent Twa(pygmies). Collecting is mentioned.

105

Sex Division of Labor

The men clear the land and plant bananas, but women plant other crops, hoe, harvest, and do practically all other agricultural work. The men hunt and fish; the women do the gathering and a little fishing.

Property

Important objects of property are slaves, iron knives, copper rings, goats, and formerly pearls and shell ornaments. Property in land is held only by men, who acquire usufruct in plots brought under cultivation. Land is essentially the common property of clans (see Community Organization).

Inheritance is primarily by classificatory "brothers" (including ortho-cousins), passing by seniority through one generation in the extended family before passing to a member of the next generation. After "brothers" are exhausted, the rule of predominantly patrilineal (Engels, Schebesta, and Van der Kerken speak only of patrilineal inheritance), the ElSo taking priority. However, there is a matrilineal alternative of some consequence (described by Boelaert and Hulstaert and treated as the exclusive rule by Brepoels). By virtue of the nkita institution, a SiSo acquires certain rights against his MoBr in consequence of the fact tnat the latter normally obtained a wife with the bride-price secured by the marriage of his Si, the nephew's Mo. Brepoels says matrilineal inheritance is a compensation for money brought into the family by the sister's bride-price, but Boelaert and Hulstaert explain in greater detail what the nephew's rights are: he participates in the family council allocating the inheritance (perhaps receiving a portion himself), he has a right to the bride-price (or an equivalent) received for a daughter of the MoBrWi married through the bride-price received for his Mo, and he can become full heir and successor to his MoBr (taking priority over the latter's sons but not brothers) if he has elected to take up residence with his MoBr. Clearly, then, the inheritance rule, though primarily patrilineal, reveals strong survivals of matrilineal inheritance.

105

Social Stratification

Slaves are acquired only for debt, by capture in war, or by purchase. The status is not hereditary; females become free by marriage, and males become free when they marry a free woman or produce an heir for their master by a slave wife. Descent for slaves is strictly patrilineal, and the children of slaves suffer some stigma since they cannot trade matrilineal ancestry. Except for this stigma on the children of slaves, there are no significant class distinctions among freemen, though age status and political status are important. The dependent Twa (pygmies) form a sort of lower caste; marriage with them is forbidden.

Marriage

There are several modes of marriage, as follows:

a. Preferential levirate and sororate, extended from HuBr and WiSi to other relatives--for secondary unions only.

b. Exchange of sisters by two men, in lieu of a bride-price.

c. Free gift of a woman in marriage, without a bride-price. A probable example is Engel's report that a wealthy family without sons allow a daughter to live with one or more men, the first child belonging to the girl's Fa in lieu of a bride-price.

d. True purchase of a wife, as distinguished from marriage with a bride-price. Though not practiced by the Nkundu, this mode occurs among the Elinga.

e. By negotiation through a formal intermediary with betrothal period and payment of a substantial bride-price in installments (ndanga, walo, etc.). The bride-price is normally raised by the relatives of the groom--not only his paternal kinsmen but his maternal, including always his MoBr. It consists of skins, iron knives and/or copper rings, and a male slave. Prestige accrues to a groom who pays a larger bride-price than contracted for. The bride-price goes to the girl's father, and is always used to obtain a wife for some male member of her extended family, most commonly a brother. This gives rise to the nkita institution (see below).

105

Nkita institution. A wife obtained with the bride-price received for a sister (or other female relative) is called the nkita of that sister, who is the nkolo. Brepoels says the nkita is technically regarded as belonging to the nkolo, though it is not the latter but her children who profit, that the nkita's children are ideologically those of the nkolo (so that patrilineal descent is justified as technically matrilineal), and that matrilineal inheritance by the nkolo's children is interpreted as a compensation for the fact that her bride-price was used to marry the nkita. The accounts by Boelaert and Hulstaert are probably more accurate. They specify that the use of the nkolo's bride-price to obtain the nkita in marriage gives the nkolo's sons special rights against their MoBr and his children by the nkita. These include: (a) a right to the bride-price received for a daughter of the nkita; (2) a right against the MoBr, exercised if the nephew's father dies or his paternal relatives cannot or will not provide him with a bride-price, to go to live with the MoBr, cultivate land of the latter's clan, be provided with a wife by the MoBr (sometimes a secondary wife of the latter, occasionally even the nkita herself, and at least the wherewithal for a bride-price, even if only that received for a daughter of the nkita), and to be the heir and successor of the MoBr in preference to the sons of the latter (but not his brothers). The prevailing Crow kinship terminology, by which the nephew is called "father" by the children of his maternal uncle, justifies his priority in inheritance and succession. In this extremely interesting way, surviving matrilineal usages have been integrated with the prevailing patrilineal ones.

Polygyny is general and preferred (all other sources contradict Van der Kerken's assertion that limited polygyny prevails among the Mongo tribes). The first wife enjoys a special status. Each wife has her separate hut (Engels says a separate apartment in the case of the Ngata). The implication of most sources is that polygyny is normally non-sororal, though Engels says it is often sororal (he may be confusing preferential sororate).

105

Family

The patrilocal extended family is the norm (with an avunculocal admixture--see Residence). According to Van der Kerken, it typically occupies a special "quarter" within a hamlet of the village. It is called likudu, and is headed by its senior male member as patriarch. Succession is normally patrilineal by seniority. The patriarch is succeeded in order by his younger brothers (including classificatory "brothers" like FaBrSo), then by a SiSo (but only if he has exercised his right of avunculocal residence under the nkita institution--see Marriage above), then (and normally) by ElSo.

Residence

Residence is normally patrilocal--occasionally at first in house of groom's parents, but usually in a new dwelling. Engels reports occasional matri-patrilocal residence in special cases. Avunculocal residence is a regular alternative whenever a nephew exercises his nkita right against his MoBr. Sons usually remain with or return to paternal relatives, even after death of Fa or divorce of Mo, but may exercise avunculocal right.

Kin Groups and Exogamy

Local exogamy is the rule. A woman leaves her own village to join her Hu, regardless of whether he resides in patrilocal or avunculocal residence.

Kindreds are unreported and almost certainly absent. Marriage is forbidden with any first cousin, and technically also with any known relative in any line, but this applies in practice only for members of the same community and for others with whom a direct patrilineal or matrilineal connection can be traced.

Descent is patrilineal, with matrilineal survivals. There are exogamous patri-lineages (ilongo), usually localized in a hamlet of a village, and exogamous patri-sibs, usually localized as clan-communities. Schebesta reports totemic food taboos associated with patri-sibs. Patrilineal exogamy is carried further for marriage than for premarital or extramarital sex relations, being extended to sibs traditionally descended from the same common ancestor of Ego's sib. Traces of matrilineal descent are unmistakable; the child of an unmarried woman belongs to its mother's patri-sib, which is called bonyango; a nephew exercising his nkita privilege is affiliated with his mother's (MoBr's) patri-sib. Moreover, the ability to trace descent in the female line is popularly regarded as more important than the ability to trace it in the male line; no two people who are matri-lineally descended from a known common ancestress may marry; this idea accounts for the stigma on the children of slaves, who have no matrilineal ancestry, being affiliated with the sib of the Fa or owner. Hulstaert says specifically: "Descent from a common mother is a more important factor than paternal descent." Though matrilineal exogamy is observed, no authorities report any corporate matrilineal kin-groups. For this reason, the rule of descent is classed as patrilineal with matrilineal survivals, rather than as double descent. The prevailing Crow kinship terminology is another clear indication of former matrilineal descent.

Kinship Terminology

Fa--ise. Mo--nyango. Ch--bona, Hu--bome. Wi--wali. ElBr(ms), ElSi(ws)--botomolo. YoBr(ms), rosi(ws)--bokune. Br(ws), Si(ms)--nkana.

Avuncular and nepotic terminology are of bifurcate merging type.

Cousin terminology is of Crow type. The social system as a whole is thus to be classed as Patri-Fox (or Duo-Crow if descent is regarded as double).

Settlement Pattern

Settled communities consisting of from 1 to 6 hamlets separated by plantations. Each hamlet is composed of a double row of dwellings arranged close together on either side of a single street. Near many communities there is a settlement of dependent Twa (pygmies). There are bachelors' houses in at least some communities.

105

Community Organization

Patri-lineages (ilongo), composed of patrilineally related extended families, normally occupy the hamlets of a village, forming clan-barrios. The lineages of a patri-sib normally occupy a settlement, which is thus a patrilocal clan-community, called ese (Van der Kerken), wise from ise, "father" (Boelaert). The agricultural land and hunting territories of a settlement are the communal property of its resident clan.

Local Government

Each settlement or clan has its hereditary headmen and a council of elders, who are presumably the heads of the component lineages or clan-barriors. The rule of succession is patrilineal, subject to the qualifications for inheritance.

State

Clans are aggregated into etuka (perhaps phratries or districts), these into sub-tribes (liotsi), and these into tribes (bonanga); the sub-tribe is normally the largest political aggregate, having a patriarchal head (Van der Kerken). Engels uses etuka for clan-barrio, reporting it as the strongest functioning unit and the largest political unit today, when larger units have gone.

Warfare

Both intertribal and intra-tribal warfare is common. The causes, according to Engels, are usually to avenge an uncompensated murder or settle an unresolved dispute. Probably the capture of slaves is another reason. Schebesta reports extensive cannibalism (not mentioned by other sources, which deal mainly with marriage and the family).

Bibliography

Boelaert, E. De Nkundo-maatschappij. Kongo-Overzee, VI, 148-161. Antwerpen, 1940. Bk18. 7d. v. 6. (Good on social organization).

________. Terminologie classificatoire des Nkundo. Africa, XXI, 218-223. 1951. (Analysis of kin terms, adding a very few items to Hulstaert's monograph).

105

Brepoels, H. Het familienhoofd bij de Nkundo negers. Congo, XI, ii, 332-340. 1930. Bk18.6.v.11(2. (Good on family organization).

Engels, A. Les Wangata. Revue Congolaise, II, 26-54, 107-124, 203-217. 1911. Bk18.7.v.2. (A fairly good general ethnography on the Ngata sub-tribe).

_______. Les Wangata. Bruxelles, 1912. Nkd83.W18.912e. (The same in book form).

Hulstaert, G. Le divorce chez les Nkundo. Congo, XV, ii, 657-673; XVI, i, 38-56. 1934-35. Bk18.6.v.15(2,16(1. (A few items; superseded by the following).

_______. Le mariage des Nkundő. Mémoires de l'Institut Royal Colonial Belge, VIII, 1-519. 1938. Bk18.6d.v.8. (An excellent monograph, covering marriage, sex, and the family).

Kaptein, G. Familieleven en zeden bij de imboorlingen van den Evenaar. Congo, III, i, 531-549. 1922. Bk18.6.v.3(1. Covers the Mbole as well as the Nkundu).

Ruskin, E.A. and L. Dictionary of the Lomongo Language. London, 1928. Fys.L195.R89. (Contains full kinship terms on the neighboring and related Mongo, corroborating those given by Hulstaert).

Schebesta, P. Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge. Leipzig, 1934. Nkd82.934s. (Has one chapter on the Nkundu with considerable information; approved by Hulstaert).

_______. My Pygmy and Negro Hosts. London, 1936. Nkd82.934sg. (Translation of above).

Van der Kerken, G. L'ethnie Mongo. Mémoires de l'Institut Royal Colonial Belge, III, 1-1143. 1944. Bk18.6d.v.13(1-2. (Good map, tribal classification, and history, with some incidental ethnography).

Hulstaert, G. Des differentes formes de mariage et unions pseudo-matrimoniales chez les Nkundo. Bulletin des Jurisdictions Indigenes et du Droit Coutumier Congolais, X, 229-247. 1936. (Not in Yale).

THE *NKUMU* OF THE TUMBA

RITUAL CHIEFTAINSHIP ON THE MIDDLE CONGO

H. D. BROWN

101 THE tribes living round Lake Tumba, a lake some thirty-five miles long by twelve wide lying north of Lake Leopold II (approximately 0° 30′ south latitude, [133] and 18° east longitude) and draining into the Congo River at the confluence of the Ubangi, lack cohesion and show a considerable variety of custom and language. But they are known collectively as Tumba, the Government adaptation of the Native term *Ntomba*. Most of them are found to the east of the lake, the whole group numbering perhaps little more than forty to fifty thousand at the present time, though [797] there is evidence that the last twenty years have seen a great decrease in population. European occupation of this area goes back barely fifty years, Protestant missions having been established for about the same length of time. The first mission post [177] was established at Ikoko on the north-east shore of the lake, one of the villages of a group known as Bonginda. In pursuing this investigation particular attention has been given to the practices of this group, but mention is occasionally made where considerable differences have been found elsewhere.

●105 The Tumba are agricultural, hunting, and fishing people. Their country is flat 13 and swampy with dense forests, and there are many watercourses flowing into Lake Tumba. There are occasional small, less swampy plains, and one such area, more open, with quite wide stretches of prairie, is a haunt of buffalo. The forests are fairly well supplied with game, and the swamps, streams, and lakes with fish. A heavy rainfall and no distinct dry season make agriculture reasonably easy and famine unknown. Every family has its plantation of manioc, the staple diet, which is supplemented by plantains and bananas. The people make their own tools, formerly smelting their own iron for this purpose, are fairly skilful at making dug-out canoes, engage in weaving raffia and making mats out of split cane, and are efficient at pottery production.

624 The role of the *nkumu* in the socio-religious activities of the community is one of the most interesting features of Tumba life. As a result of European contact the 101 ceremonies connected with the *nkumu* are rapidly disappearing, but it has been 178 possible to collect considerable information from the older men and women among whom the details are still vividly remembered.[1] The following report refers to the period previous to European occupation and control, a time within the memory of a large number of people, but already sufficiently remote to become a matter of hearsay before the lapse of many more years.

596 An understanding of the place of the *nkumu* among the Tumba requires a glance [173] at the tribal organization. According to the people themselves, they migrated westward, and coming into these parts chose land for themselves. Among the several

---

[1] In *My Children of the Forest*, New York, 1924, pp. 48–51, Andrew F. Hensey has briefly outlined some of the items of interest observed among the *nkumu* of the district adjacent to that of the present study. These more detailed notes are, however, timely if a record is to be preserved that approximates to accuracy.

111 FO32 Mongo 1 - 2

1: Maes, J. Notes sur les Populations des Bassins du Kasai, de la Lukenie, et du Lac Leopold II /Notes on the Populations of the Kasai, Lukenie, and Lake Leopold II Basins/. Annales du Musee du Congo Belge, Nouvelle Serie, Miscellanées, Vol. I, Fascicule 1. Brussels (Tervueren), 1924.

Pp. 212; 126 illustrations /HRAF manuscript, pp. vii, 161/

/Omitted: Numerous non-descriptive passages./

Yale: Nkd82 + T27M

/This volume is a general sketch of the culture of the Mongo and related peoples by the head of the Belgian ethnographic mission to the Central Congo in 1913-1914. The volume is divided into five main sections concerning the land and its inhabitants, dwellings, subsistence, food, and care of the body. In addition to data on the Mongo, there is much information on other groups, particularly on the Sakata and the Teke. The volume contains a good deal of discussion of distributional data

1: Maes, J.

with the idea of dividing the area of the central Congo into ethnographic provinces. The source is especially strong on materials pertaining to architecture, tattooing, fishing, and food in general. The FO37 Ntomba and FO48 Yaelima, listed in the Outline of World Cultures as separate files, are now subsumed under FO32 Mongo as as sub-groups. --Analyst/

Field date: 1913-1914
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Ethnologist - 5
Processed in 1960

111 FO32 Mongo-1-2

2: Hulstaert, Gustave-E. Le Mariage des Nkundó /Marriage among the Nkundu/. Institut Royal Colonial Belge, Section des Sciences Morales et Politiques, Mémoires In-8^{o}, Vol. 8. Bruxelles: Librairie Falk fils, Georges Van Campenhout, Successeur, 1938.

Pp. iv, 520; end map (HRAF ms. pp. ii, 487)

Yale: Bk18 6d 7-8

/Translated from the French for the Human Relations Area Files by Monika B. Vizedom./

/This source, by a Belgian Roman Catholic missionary, is an exhaustive study of the ramifications of marriage and the family in the life of the Nkundu Mongo, with emphasis on the aboriginal culture. Topics treated include a preliminary description of Nkundu history and culture, the marriage agreement, the various forms of marriage and pseudo-marriage, the age of the bride and groom, obstacles to marriage, married life, polygamy, divorce, death, and children. There is a brief section on kinship terminology. Information on the ndonga, the official witness to the marriage, usually related

2: Hulstaert, Gustave-E.

to both parties, has been placed in Category 584. Material on the *bọọ́ndọ*, a payment in apology or retraction, has been placed in Category 576. --Analyst/

Field date: ca. 1930
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Missionary-5
Processed in 1959

111

FO32 Mongo
Nkundo

3: Boelaert, E. De Nkundo-Maatschappij /Nkundo Society /. Kongo-Overzee, Vol. 6, pp. 148-161. Antwerp: De Sikkel, 1940.

Yale: Bk18 &d 6-8 /HRAF MS. pp. 1-12/

/Translated from the Flemish for the Human Relations Area Files by Helen N. Sprey./

/This article is a brief synthesis of Nkundu social organization. Phases of the culture touched upon include the patriarchal "clan," kinship terminology, and relationships, the property system, exogamy, and kin relationships with the maternal clan and other clans. Material on what Boelaert calls "clans" has been placed in category 613 Lineages. Boelaert is a Belgian ethnologist who has worked in the Congo for many years.--Analyst/

Field date: no date
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1959

111 FO32 Mongo

4: Gutersohn, Th. Het Economisch Leven van den Mongo-neger. /The Economic Life of the Mongo Negro/ Congo, Vol. I, pp. 92-105. Brussels: Goemaere, Imprimeur du Roi, 1920.

Yale: Bk18.6 1[1] /HRAF manuscript pp. i, 1-14/

/Translated from the Flemish for the Human Relations Area Files by Richard Neuse./

/This is a brief sketch of a portion of the economic life of the Mongo by a resident missionary. After a very unflattering analysis of the Mongo attitude toward work, Gutersohn goes on to describe Mongo smithing, carpentry, canoe-making, the "bush-telegraph" system, and weaving and basket-making. --Analyst/

Field date: no date
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Missionary-5
Processed in 1959

111 FO32 Mongo
Nkundo

5: Brepoels, H. Het Familiehoofd bij de Nkundo Negers /The Family Head among the Nkundo Negroes/. Congo, Vol. 2, pp. 332-340. Brussels: Goemaere, Imprimeur du Roi, 1930.

Yale: Bk18 6 11^2 /HRAF MS., pp. 1-8/

/Translated from the Flemish for the Human Relations Area Files by Helen N. Sprey./

/This brief article describes the composition of the extended family among the Nkundu, the family headship and its method of inheritance, the nkita-relationship which is a function of bride-price among the Nkundu, and concludes with some speculation as to the origins of the nkita. Brepoels was a missionary with many years experience in the Mongo country.--Analyst/

Field date: no date
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Missionary-5
Processed in 1959

6: Kaptein, Gregorius. Familieleven en zeden bij de inboorlingen van den Evenaar. /Family Life and Customs among the Natives of Equatorial Africa/ Congo, Vol. 3, part 1, pp. 531-549. Brussels: Goemaere, Imprimeur du Roi, 1922.

Yale: Bk18.6 3^1 /HRAF MS., pp. 1-19/

/Translated from the Flemish for the Human Relations Area Files by Helen N. Sprey./

/This article discusses contemporary and past customs of marriage and inheritance of the Mongo of Evenaar. Particular attention is paid to the bride price and the nkita relationship, and to polygamy, especially as they relate to modern conditions in which a few men are able to monopolize the available women. Father Kaptein was a missionary in the area.--Analyst/

Field date: no date
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Missionary-5
Processed in 1959

111

FO32 Mongo
Ntomba

7: Brown, H.D. The Nkumu of the Tumba: Ritual Chieftainship on the Middle Congo. Africa, Vol. 14, Pp. 431-446. London: Oxford University Press for the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures. 1944

Yale: Bk2 10 14

/The nkumu is a local official chosen by the members of a tribe. He must be from a different village or settlement from the people who select him, though a member of the same tribe. His office is partly judicial, partly honorary leader, though deference is always accorded him. This article discusses the nkumu's selection, inauguration, funeral and incidental related customs. Material related to the nkumu but not specifically related to functional categories, such as the nkumu's attendants and ceremonies surrounding his inauguration, has been marked for category 624 (Local Officials). The author was a protestant missionary in the region. --Analyst/

Field date: ca. 1941
Analyst: George R. Bedell

Evaluation: Missionary-5
Processed in 1960

8: Müller, Ernst W. Soziologische Terminologie und soziale Organisation der Ekonda [Sociological Terminology and Social Organization of the Ekonda/. Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, Vol. 81, pp. 188-202. Braunschweig (Brunswick), 1956.

Yale: Nk10 Z37 81-82

[HRAF ms., pp. 28]

[Translated from the German for the Human Relations Area Files by Helmut Handzik.]

/This source is a study of the village of Ipangi and of the kin groups and hamlets which are at its base. The Ekonda have a system of segmentary kin groups which are related to one another according to real or assumed kinship. The system has many levels, with larger groups comprising from one to four groups of the next order. The relationship between the groups corresponds to the relationship

111

FO32 Mongo -- 2
Ekonda

8: Müller, Ernst W.

between their founders. Müller analyzes in some detail the various theories concerning the family, especially those of Thurnwald. He notes briefly the institutions of chieftainship and of messengers.--Analyst/

Field date: 1951-1954
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Ethnologist - 5
Processed in 1960

FO32 Mongo
Nkundu

9: Boelaert, Edmond. Terminologie Classificatoire des Nkundo [Classificatory Terminology of the Nkundu]. Africa, Vol. 21, pp. 218-222. London: International African Institute, 1951.

Yale: Bk2 10 21

[HRAF ms. pp. 7]

[Translated from the French for the Human Relations Area Files by Anne R. Coleman.]

[In this source Boelaert, a missionary with long experience in the area, discusses the classificatory kinship terms applied to the members of a five-generation patrilineage. The four principles governing the classificatory kinship terminology as enumerated by Holleman are examined and the extent to which they apply to Nkundu kinship is defined. --Analyst]

Field date: ca. 1943
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Missionary, Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1960

FO32 Mongo

Hulstaert, G. Les Idées Religieuses des Nkundo. Congo, Vol. 17, Part 2, pp. 668-676. Brussels: Gomaere, 1936.

Yale: Bk18 ;6 17^{L2}

/In this article, Hulstaert, a missionary, deals with the religious ideas of a group of Mongo living to the west of Salonga. The subjects he discusses include the supreme being, spirits, and souls. Since much the same material is contained in other sources, this article has not been processed for the Mongo file. --Analyst/

112 FO32 Mongo

Ruskin, E.A. and L. Dictionary of the Lomongo Language. London: Christian Literature Society, 1928.

Pp. viii, 651

Yale: Fys L835 R89

/This Mongo-English-French dictionary was compiled by two missionaries long resident in the Mongo country. Since it contains no cultural data other than the vocabulary, it has not been processed for the FO32 Mongo file.--Analyst/

112

FO32 Mongo

Van der Kerken, G. L'Ethnie Mongo. Memoires de l'Institut Royal Colonial Belge, Vol. 13, pp. 1-1143. Bruxelles, 1944.

/This general work on the Mongo draws heavily upon other published sources. It contains many maps locating the various Mongo groups, and the degree of relationship of the various groups is explained. --Analyst/

303 blocks is placed on the ground. The woman sits during the work. The second block is placed flat on the top surface of the first, which is moistened and sprinkled with sand. The woman holds the top block in both hands and rubs it back and forth with a rotary motion, taking care to keep the two grinding surfaces wet. The rubbing and the action of the grains of sand as fine graters produce a fine, red, almost impalpable powder mixed with water. The skill in this process consists of proceeding in such a way that the gritty sand is mixed as little as possible with the wood dust. The skill of some persons is so [168] great that one can find hardly any traces of sand in their *ngula* (1).

[113] 1. On this subject see the monograph on *ngula* and its manufacture in the Belgian Congo by Dr. J. Maes in the periodical, *Congo*, 1920 volume.

In the region of the Mosengere, the apparatus for making *ngula* is usually more elaborate. A thick piece of tree bark is used as a basin. Four or six rather strong sticks are fastened to this basin, and to these the native attaches one of the *takula* blocks. A special device permits this apparatus to be fastened in place. Some natives even have an improved apparatus set up under a crude shelter in front of their hut, which permits them to make *ngula* while standing up. Four heavy stakes driven perpendicularly into the ground support a large basin of tree bark 15 centimeters above the ground. [169] One meter from the ground, horizontal crossbars are attached to the forked ends of the stakes, and one of the blocks of *takula* is fastened to these crossbars. An earthenware receptacle, held in the three forks of a stake driven into the ground beside the apparatus, contains a mixture of water and a small portion of oil. A brush made of a piece of soft wood is immersed in the mixture and permits the craftsman to wet the *takula* block at will. A small piece of a calabash holds the sand which is rubbed on the wood to grate it to dust. Despite all the skill of the worker, this sand gets mixed into the dust and must be replaced from time to time. The person making

121 to present anything we have not thoroughly investigated. We have not stepped outside the geographic limits set forth except for a few incidental remarks. Although the cultural uniformity of the Nkundó-Móngo is remarkable it is not, of course, absolute. And if we have used the title Mariage des Nkundó (Marriage among the Nkundu), we have done so because it was difficult to find one which would be more appropriate for the geographic and ethnic limits of [14] this study. It is very likely that in most cases our data are valid beyond the limits we have laid out, but to generalize upon it before making a thorough study of each group would be contrary to all scientific method. The reader is therefore earnestly requested to take these remarks into account and to abstain from giving our conclusions too broad a scope.

Familial institutions in themselves and in their totality are outside the scope of this book. But since they are based on marriage, they have an important place within our framework. We must necessarily touch upon them, but we will limit our excursions into that realm to what is required to make the general description intelligible. On the other hand, the study of marriage throws a good deal of light on familial institutions.

The words "family," "clan," "group," etc. recur frequently.
128 The family is an entity smaller than the clan, and the latter is sub-
596 ordinate to the group. Since it is very difficult to give a precise
614 definition, however, we have taken the trouble to make a clear distinction only when necessary. (1) [Editor's Note: Elsewhere we use them more as generic terms or even as synonyms. In order to make family relationships and the expressions used by the Nkundó to designate them more comprehensible, we are attaching an example of a genealogical table.]

113 I know of the following previous studies on the same subject:

Engels, "Les Wangata," Revue Congolaise, 1910, which also deals with marriage.

G. Kaptein, "Familieleven en -zeden bij de Inboorlingen van den Evenaar," Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 531. [15] This study covers

---

1. See Chapter V, Article III.

113 more ground than ours, since it even includes a discussion of the Mbole.

H. Brepoels, "Het Familiehoofd bij de Nkundô-Negers," Congo, 1930, Vol. 2, p. 332.

124 We have tried to make our data as complete as possible. We have given here not only the major trends and basic principles, but also the particulars, even those that seem most insignificant. They are always interesting, and sometimes more so than one may have suspected at first. All the material has been discussed over and over again, in private and in public, with very varied people at different times and places, and the points that presented the greatest difficulty were gone over countless times.

121 In general we have preferred to use the descriptive and analytic method. We have drawn conclusions and principles from the data. Although case histories naturally lengthened the text of this work, we have not hesitated to insert them at various points. They are the best means of bringing out certain rules or customs and bringing to life the psychology of our people.

121
69 In this respect a remark should be made whose importance deserves our attention for a moment. The examination of judicial cases of which we have been direct or indirect witnesses does not provide a scientific certainty about the laws -- or "the customs," to use the term so frequently applied (1). For not all [16] that is done

1. It is unfortunate that this term has become so fashionable, for it lacks precision. Indeed, it may mean simply "practice, usage," or it may be used in the legal sense of "a practice having the force of a law." Often a confusion between the two meanings is created, and all customs are considered to be legally obligatory, when actually, some practices are outside common law, and others are in opposition to it. For the sake of precision in ethnographic and ethnological works, it would be well to use this ambiguous term as little as possible and to distinguish clearly among legal procedures, the laws and custom or usage.

837 their sense of the personal injustice involved. But they do not reason 577 out these feelings; they follow them spontaneously, blindly.

There is a greater awareness of the social evil in adultery. But it is based not on the philosophical considerations of this harm in itself, but on the consequences of individual cases for the proper functioning of society -- palavers, financial difficulties, enmities, quarrels, wars.

This it seems to me is the present state of their ideas. It does not preclude the possibility that the law and sanctions against adultery may rest on an ultimate basis of moral ideas. And more particularly it is quite possible that the moral idea [331] operates only in the form of a feeling of the great principles of fundamental natural law which is innate to all human reason.

837 5) No one will be astonished if we say that colonization, far 177 from reducing the frequency of adultery, actually contributed to its considerable increase. The abolition of native penalties and punishments together with a great freedom of movement could not help but lead, naturally, to this state of affairs. Every informed colonial who is in close contact with the natives is aware of the situation. "The prohibition of corporal punishments which, according to custom, were the sanctions imposed against a woman's adultery have brought about a license whose extent can be measured by the degree to which a group is subject to our occupation. The forgetfulness if not the contempt for the promises of marriage is nowhere carried so far as in places where the customary disciplines have been completely re- ● [113] moved." (Maj. Engels, Bulletin Soc. Belge. Et. Col., cited in Congo, 3rd year, Vol. 1, p. 77, April, 1922). That is why various persons have repeatedly called for sanctions against adultery to replace the ancestral means of repression that have been abolished.

But the decrees hoped for have never passed beyond the stage 692 of mere projects. Fortunately, another step, and a fundamental one, 177 has been taken in the meantime through the establishment of native 837 jurisdiction (1926). Under the guidance and control of European authorities, native courts will turn the helm halfway back to the ancient sanctions, adapting these all the while to the new conditions created by colonization and by the introduction of more humanitarian

Bibliography

● 113 **Boelaert**, Edmond: Les Bongili, Aequatoria 10, S 17—34. Coquilhatville 1947.
— Le Clan équivoque, Aequatoria 11, S. 13—19. Coquilhatville 1948.
Fortes, Meyer: The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi. London 1945.
Hulstaert, Gustav: Le mariage des Nkundó, Mémoires des IRCB, Sect. des Sciences Morales et Politiques, 8 (8°) 1938. Bruxelles 1938.
Lévi-Strauss, Claude: Les structures élémentaires de la parenté. Paris 1949.
Kirchhoff, Paul: Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen und Verwandtenheirat, Zeitschrift für Ethnologie 64, S. 41—47. Berlin 1932.
— Die Verwandtschaftsorganisation der Urwaldstämme Südamerikas, Zeitschrift für Ethnologie 63, S. 85—193. Berlin 1931.
Lowie, Robert Heinrich: Primitive Society. New York 1949^4.
Mühlmann, Wilhelm Emil: Methodik der Völkerkunde. Stuttgart 1938.
Müller, Ernst Wilhelm: Das Fürstentum bei den Südwestmongo. Philosophische Dissertation. Mainz 1955.
Murdock, Georg Peter: Changing Emphasis in Social Structure, Southwestern Journ. of Anthropology 11, S. 361—370. Albuquerque 1955.
— Social structure. New York 1949.
Preuss, Konrad Theodor (Herausgeber): Lehrbuch der Völkerkunde in 2., teilweise veränderter Auflage, herausgegeben von Richard Thurnwald. Stuttgart 1939.
Radcliffe-Brown: The study of Kinship systems, Journal of the Royal Anthr. Institute 71, S. 1—18. London 1941.
Thurnwald, Richard: Die menschliche Gesellschaft in ihren ethno-soziologischen Grundlagen, 5 Bände. Berlin 1932—35.
Wörterbuch der Soziologie, herausgegeben von W. Bernsdorf und Fr. Bülow, Stuttgart 1955.

101
563 among the Elángá beyond the Tshuapa. All of them are beyond the scope of this study. The Bombwanja are divided into Basunɛ́ and Bonkoso, and the Boeńdɛ́ are considered their bónankáná (sister's son).

Bombwanja were originally Mbólɛ́, for certain words and idioms in their dialect are reminiscent of the Lombólɛ́.

Let us briefly enumerate the other tribes -- "pure" Nkundó -- who form the subject of this study:

101
619 1. The Injóló, "sister's son" (bonankáná) of the Ntómbá and the Bolɛ́ngɛ́ who live beyond the Boloko. They are divided into three groups [9] -- Engónjó, Wesɛ́, and Ngombe, (1) each of which comprises

1. West of their territory are to be found the remains of a group of former inhabitants of the area, whom the present inhabitants call Tompoko (or Basɛ́ká Bofáka l Elɛ́kɛ́) but who are completely unknown to me.

a subdistrict [sous-chefferie] for administrative purposes. A small segment is to be found outside the area under discussion, between the Boloko and Coq. (2)

2. The southern Injóló are often called Imoma.

2. The Boángɪ́ (and their subgroup, the Besombó), related to the Bokála of the Losanganya region. (3)

●[114] 3. On the ethnographic map of the Belgian Congo prepared and published by Dr. J. Maes, the territory of the Boangi is marked with the name "Bokuala." There is no tribe or village by that name. Unless an insulting and humiliating nickname (bokwala, "slave") is involved, the name may result from an erroneous use of the name of the present chief of the Boangi, Bokwála.

101
619 9. The Bongale. Three large villages belonging to this group are to be found in the territory under discussion. In order of their size they are: Bongale wǎ Botóló (among the Lifumba, between the Bonsómbé, Lolíma and Saási rivers), Bongale wǎ Ilinga (among the Bakáala, near Ikéngé), and Bongale wá Bosongó (among the Bonkoso, [569] near Bempumba). The difference between their rules of exogamy and those of the other tribes confirms the view that the Bongale are not true Nkundó. (2)

2. See Chapter V, Article III. There are several other small Bongale groups, but I do not know whether they are related to those mentioned above. Among them are those living near Bonyeka (Busira) among the Boángi (Bokála, Boénjola). They may be descended from different ancestors who all bore the name Ngale. The same name may indicate an identical origin, but it may also be derived from different individuals whose names were the same. This statement is generally applicable.

The tribes living between the Jwalé and the Boloko, with whom the Boléngé and the Ntómbá between the Congo and the Boloko are sometimes classified, are grouped under the general name of Ilángá by the Boángí, Injóló, and Elángá. (3)

● [114] 3. The Bokele tribe listed on the above-mentioned map does not exist. Could this error be due to an incorrect extension of the name of a Boloki village near Bokúma which is called Bokélé?

The Nkundó-Móngo came from the north or the northeast. (4)

[825] 4. The following note may be of interest: The stories and songs of the Nkundó indicate a

771 In matters of religion the Nkundó recognize the existence of a Supreme Being: Njakomba or Mbombiɛ́ndɛ́, creator and ruler of all that exists. They do not worship him in any way, however; all their religious practices are addressed to guardian and ancestral spirits. (2)

> 2. On the subject of the religious conceptions of the Nkundó, see a detailed study by Father Boelaert, M.S.C., in Hooger Leven, 1934, pp. 1612 and 1636, and 1935, pp. 12 and 60.

197 The language of the Nkundó is beautiful, harmonious, flexible, and rich. It has all the qualities needed to become a literary language and is admirably suited to the requirements of teaching. Furthermore, its various dialects are spoken over a considerably large territory, in fact over one of the largest language areas [13] of the Congo. 797 214 In addition to the religious and devotional books of the Catholic missions, a fairly large collection of various academic textbooks is available in this language, thanks primarily to the zeal of the Protestant missionaries. The latter have also published a complete translation of the Bible. Several vocabularies and small grammars have been compiled, and in recent years a large dictionary and an expanded grammar have been added to these, both compiled by A. and L. Ruskin of the Bongandanga Mission. For several years the Protestant mission at Bolenge has been publishing a native magazine, and the Catholic mission is pushing ahead with preparations to publish one also.

114 Father Shebesta's book, Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge, includes a chapter on the Nkundó in which the author gives a good general description of this people. Nevertheless, some of the details given must be accepted with reservations.

121 The general information given above is enough to give the reader a superficial knowledge of the Nkundó.

The purpose of this work is to give a more extensive account of their institutions pertaining to marriage.

As we have previously stated, we are considering only a portion of this people. All our statements cover only the fraction we have delimited. The family institutions of other Nkundó groups are not accounted for, as they are less known to us and we do not want

121 69 is in accordance with justice. The observation that the natives behave in one fashion or another, and that this or that palaver is often settled in a particular way, is not a sufficient basis for concluding that such is the law.

Infractions of the rules of social justice are more frequent than one would suspect. The principles are good, but often passions prevent their application, and frequently there are neither sanctions to support a weakness of will nor rewards to stimulate loyal adherence.

121 114 69 Furthermore, one should not invoke the variability and continuous transformation of native law (as does Dr. T. Seitz, for example, in Africa, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 89) without first establishing whether the judgments rendered have been in conformity with the law. The remark made by this eminent author further on in his article, "Welche Rolle dabei das Machtmoment," etc. . . . weakens his first statement and shows precisely that an accurate knowledge of legal prescriptions cannot be attained solely on the basis of the verdicts of tribunals, and that partiality often plays a considerable part. The observation made by the former governor of the Cameroons may be applied to the Belgian Congo and often to "civilized" countries as well -- partially and the abuse of power are nowhere unknown.

121 69 We must also take into account the possibility of the judges' ignorance, as well as our own difficulty in understanding their sentences, since important points of fact and law are sometimes left unmentioned, and yet are implied.

It is not surprising that there are complicated cases where it is very difficult for the natives, however intelligent and impartial, to settle the dispute and provide a fair and legitimate solution. The law cannot foresee for every case the infinite variety of personal, local, and modal circumstances that may occur.

Only the analysis and comparison of diverse cases, [17] their solutions, sanctions, and consequences, together with discussions with discreet and impartial natives who are knowing and skillful and who have learned to know us and to understand what we want to learn from them, and who are sincerely disposed to help us at the same time, can produce a rational and reasoned certainty which conforms to reality. These conditions are numerous, and it is difficult to find them

121 conformity or in opposition to this or that ethnological theory. We are presenting the facts in their entirety, the material portion of the culture as well as its intellectual, psychological, and moral basis. Theory should be based on these facts, not the facts adapted to suit the theories.

In the text of this work the reader will find repetitions, foot-
121 notes, and references. We would have preferred to omit these,
114 since they are always tedious, but their presence was dictated by the nature of the material and by the strictly scientific nature of this work, which we wanted to retain at all costs. We hope in fact that those who wish to study it thoroughly will find these repetitions not an obstacle, but a valuable aid which will help them to obtain a total and precise picture of the material.

Although I have taken the greatest care and all possible precautions to present to the reader only facts and evidence which correspond to reality, and to document [20] everything as completely as possible, this work will inevitably contain gaps, imperfections, even one mistake or another. (1)

---

1. This is especially true with regard to the legal significance of certain practices, a most delicate point of inquiry, which has yet to be thoroughly investigated -- particularly, certain questions concerning the origin of marriage in its various forms.

This material is not exempt from such faults, and it would be pure presumption to pretend otherwise. But science could not advance, nor could the practical purpose of our knowledge ever be accomplished, should we try to achieve the perfection that can be the result only of successive studies by different people, before presenting the results of our research to the public. I would be gratified if others would check my data, criticize it, and supplement and correct it wherever necessary. I hope that this work will also stimulate them to make a similar study of the other segments of the Nkundó-Mongo so that at last we may have a total picture of the matrimonial institutions of this very important people.

114 I should like to express one more wish relevant to this subject. A number of studies by civil servants and government agents, containing a good deal of ethnographic data on various subjects, lie in bales in the bureaus of the Congo, waiting for the day when they will serve as fodder for ever-hungry termites. Would it not be possible to make these documents -- at least the better ones -- available to the public? Even if they contain gaps and errors, they will be gratefully received. They will lead other researchers to explore these questions thoroughly, and through emulation, criticism, and discussion, we will develop an increasing and more accurate knowledge of the natives, [21] their history, their way of life, their laws, their customs, and their mentality, which will be of great benefit for all colonial work.

Some of the terms used in one or another part of this study may appear too coarse. I would rather have avoided them, but I would have had to use veiled expressions and circumlocutions which would have adversely affected the clarity of this work and therefore its value, for it is intended for a purely scientific purpose. I trust the indulgent reader will therefore excuse their presence.

124 Here and there case histories are given in full. I believe that the details are not without interest, since they give a living picture of the mentality of our people. Most of the incidents were [114] collected in the vicinity of Flandria, the area with which I am most familiar. Here and there I have taken the liberty of passing judgment and of recommending solutions to certain problems. I should like to say that in these cases I am expressing opinions which are purely personal.

000 The map appended to this work makes it possible for the reader to find a tribe or village which is under discussion and shows its geographic position amidst the groups that comprise the Móngo-Nkundó people.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all those who have in some way contributed to this work: His Excellency Monsignor Ed. Van Goethem, our venerable vicar apostolic, who gave me permission to carry it out and always encouraged me in my research, understanding fully its practical value for a sensible adaptation which will enable us to establish the Church on a firm foundation; my colleagues, Father Trigalet and Father Wauters, as well as Brother Brants, who took upon

369
548 2) There is a considerable excess of bachelors over eligible women.

[694] 3) The freedom to commit adultery: no sanctions were provided.[1]

[586] 4) The difficulty of finding a suitable husband experienced by many girls born in the centers. Marriages between individuals belonging to different groups (especially certain ones) seldom last. And since inhabitants of the centers have no fixed or stable residence, they intend sooner or later to go back to their tribe of origin. Serious-minded parents therefore discourage and thwart these "mixed" marriages. (1)

1. On this subject, read Jadot's fine page in Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 132, beginning: "La prostitution devait inevitablement . . . (Prostitution was inevitably . . .).

[361] In the region under discussion there are only a few lightly populated centers: plantations, government or business stations, and small commercial centers. From time to time the bachelors there satisfy their desires with the wives of their fellow workers, and especially with women who come from the interior to sell their products at market. But they do not avoid one of the consequences of prostitution, namely the spreading of venereal diseases.

It is possible to conclude that in the past prostitution existed only in a very broad sense [75] and there was very little of it. In

[114] Engel's article, "Les Wangata" op. cit., he writes that among the Wangata "prostitution no longer exists." If the eminent author is using the term according to the meaning in the dictionary, we may ask on what basis he is implicitly stating that this institution existed in the past. If prostitution is broadly defined, then the facts contradict his remark, for actually it has not ceased to develop among the tribes he discussed,, who are located very close to the city of Coquilhatville and its various suburbs.

[1] [i.e., in the centers.- Analyst]

2. The nature of walo valuables

583x [301] [326] [435] The walo primarily consists of copper and brass rings. Wrought metal objects (bifeko), such as spears, knives, or axes are also added. Nowadays a part may be made up of simple brass or iron (steel) bars. Goats may be given in addition; a she-goat is worth 5 to 6 rings (nowadays 10), and a he-goat, 3 to 4 bakonga (nowadays 6 to 7). One or more elɔ́njɛ bells are greatly prized as gifts.

583x 435 Payment in iron or copper chains (bengɛ́-nyola), in various kinds of bead necklaces, and in leopard's teeth has almost entirely disappeared. Formerly, certain kinds of beads had great value; the big, round bluish-white ones (lonyɔ́ngu, pl. nnyɔ́ngu) were worth 1 konga each, the big, oblong blackish ones, cylindrical or rectangular in shape, 2 to 3 centimeters in diameter and 5 to 10 centimeters long (called nkángɛ́) were worth one slave or, nowadays, 20 to 25 bakonga each.

583x Copper (konga) and brass (kɔ́ngo) are the most important of all. Thus paying the bride price is often referred to as ɛ́nga la kɔ́ngo la konga.

● [14] The statement by R.P. Kaptein (in Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, pp. 452-543) that original valuables were the benkata, the bingetele, and the mitako is based on an error. [132] The first two types of valuables, also called bendɔ́ngu by some tribes, were used exclusively by the Ntɔ́mbɛ of Lake Tumba and the adjacent Ekonda (Bosanga, Balíngɔ́, Lonyanyanga, etc.). The mitako, known in Lonkundo as nngelo, [436] singular longelo, are not native; this monetary unit was introduced by the Independent State.

[177] The practice of making the payment at least partially in money or in objects of European origin (such as fabrics, blankets, sewing machines, trunks, household utensils, etc.) is gradually being introduced. Before the crisis it was already very popular among "white people."

3. The source of the valuables

A young man obtains the valuables for the bride price in various ways. The most usual way and the one which also conforms best to the Nkundɔ́'s familial and social regulations is the use of valuables

583^ a share of his father's goods without the consent of his *nkóló*) or the
602 use of the bride prices received for the daughters.
607 3) If he cannot obtain a wife through his own clan, he is entitled to the bride price of one of his *bekwá* if it is not first needed by one of her own uncles or brothers. The rights of the latter have priority over that of the *nkóló*, unless he settles in his mother's clan. For in that case his rights have precedence over those of the brothers (though never those of an uncle), and he is next in line, after his uncles, to become head of the family. Since he is sister's son, the uncle's children call him "father" just as they call his mother, their paternal aunt, by the name of *isómoto* ("female father"). He himself calls his first cousins *bǎna*, "children," and thus has precedence over them. [168]

Thus the rights to authority over the daughters of the *nkita* on the part of the *nkóló*'s son are limited by the rights of the uncles and, to a certain degree, of the brothers. (1) But in the inheritance of widows the rights of the *nkóló*'s son operate fully, and he may claim the one acquired by means of his *bokwá*'s bride price, who in a way is his *nkita* (when she is assigned to him they say *balá ěkě nkita*, "here is your *nkita*").

These rules can result in multiple transactions and in a repeated tr[illegible]ferring of rights from one of the two clans to the other as well as within the same clan.

The *nkóló*'s grandsons call the *nkita*'s grandsons *nkwá y'áámbá*, "the excrements of valuables" (an expression which is not at all disrespectful or shocking) because the rights derived from the relationship of *nkóló* and *nkita* are almost without force. In favorable circumstances they are limited to a little respect and assistance. And if the *nkóló*'s grandsons have no other kinship tie with the paternal clan of their second cousins, they cannot even call them by that name.

● [114] 1. In his study "Het Familiehoofd bij de Nkundo-Negers" [The Family Head among the Nkundó Negroes], *Congo*, 1930, Vol. 2, p. 332, Father Brepoels somewhat exaggerates the rights of the *nkóló*'s son.

583x
607
The mutuality of the rights of nkóló and nkita is well expressed in the saying, ómbáté ñkoáté wě, "possess me so that I may possess you." It is like do ut des.

583x
607
182
[611]
It is possible to judge from the preceding descriptions that the bride price has a considerable influence on family relations. Although the Nkundó system is clearly and manifestly patriarchal, the custom of the bride price and its logical consequences give it certain features which make one think of a matriarchy. This situation comes about quite naturally. Since the bride price is wealth it represents power in society. Through marriage this power is transferred from the husband's clan to the wife's, which is enriched in goods and persons by the bride price that has been received. In a sense, the husband is the provider of his wife's clan. And the child can truthfully maintain that his clan was enriched thanks to his father. As a matter of fact, for the Nkundó, this consideration above all others is the basis for their demands of whatever rights they possess in the mother's clan. [170] The relationship between a woman and her nkita and between their respective children is founded solely on the bride-price system of marriage and has nothing to do with matriarchy. (1)

1. But the above considerations may furnish one source of explanation for the origin of that family system.

Consequently, it is unnecessary to erect complicated theories or engage in tortuous speculations in order to explain the creation of this system or to justify it. It is quite simply the outcome of the payment of a bride price in valuables that are of no use except in connection with a similar purpose.

Nevertheless, although the system of the nkita is a natural and logical consequence of marriage by means of a bride price, it is not a necessary consequence. The bride price exists in all the tribes of the Congo, but it does not seem to have resulted everywhere in the institution of the nkita.

583x
174
•114
607
What has given rise to this institution among the Nkundó? Father Brepoels (loc. cit., p. 339) gives the following explanation:

174 "The sale (sic) of the woman and her loss of liberty must naturally
583x have aroused her indignation. The man probably had a great deal
●114 of difficulty in persuading her to resign herself to it. It was neces-
607 sary to arrange for some compensation and that is how the system
of the *nkita* originated. That is how the woman acquired rights over her *nkita* and how nonexistent prerogatives were attributed to her children: they became the superiors, the "fathers" of the mothers' family . . . . The elders, the wealthy, profited from this system, which released them from any concern for their daughters: the girls could be sold while they were still very young and then if, later, they complained of the injustice that had been done them, the elders consoled them by reminding them of their rights and those of their sons over the *nkita* and her offspring . . . moreover, this system released the elders from their duty of obtaining wives for their sons and removed any reason for the latter to claim their father's wives.""

This explanation for the origin of the *nkita* system is unthinkable, for it is entirely contrary to everything [171] we know about the nature of Nkundó marriage. But it seems plausible that the fact that the old father benefited from this institution helped it to flower and spread. Native greed also may have played a role.

583x Nevertheless, we must seek beyond the operation of causes
174 which have contributed to the spread and retention of the system in
607 Nkundó society for those that led to its origin.

Need we invent complicated hypotheses for this purpose? It seems to me that we need not; we can be satisfied with the native explanation: the *nkɔ́lɔ́*'s rights over the *nkita* spring naturally from her dominance over the latter, for the *nkita's* marriage was made possible by the valuables paid for the *nkɔ́lɔ́*; whereas the rights of the *nkɔ́lɔ́'s* sons over the *nkita*'s children are derived from the fact that in the Nkundó hierarchy the relationship of the latter to the former is that of "son" to "father."

The secondary causes mentioned above, together with the necessity of reconciling the interests of the various members of the family, subsequently amplified the system.

583x Exceptionally it may happen that a mother becomes her
607 daughter's *nkita*. Such was the historic case of Bekombe of Belondó
(Bonjoku) and her daughter, Mbɛ́lɛ́. The daughter's bride price was

583^x^ 581 men although their first marriage has not been broken and no new marriage agreement has been concluded.

184 [114] The data given above provides no confirmation in the Nkundô tribes under study of the statement made by Engels "Les Wangata [The Wangata]," Revue congolaise, 1910, p. 35) that among the Wangata "her husband can exchange her . . . she can make no protest." (1)

1. The Ekonda apply the term lienjɛ only to an exchange of daughters or sisters. They have a specific term: mpɛ́ngô. Note, by the way, that certain Mbôlɛ tribes who practice a true wife exchange designate it by the same name: impɛ́ngô.

Article VII. Purchase

492 562 587 The purchase of women is not practiced by the Nkundô tribes under discussion here nor even by the Bombwanja. The practice is to be found only among the Elingɛ. What is involved is not a marriage by means of a bride price but a real purchase; that is, a man buys a woman from her husband for a certain sum. He does not go through the woman's parents, as in an ordinary marriage by bride-price payment, but addresses himself directly to the husband.

[721] In general it is the woman who makes the proposal that a man buy her in this manner. Sometimes a man wants to take a woman and first comes to an agreement with her. Before the Europeans arrived such a situation generally led to a war between clans or villages. After an armistice the palaver was settled, and the [219] purchaser paid the husband. [177] Nowadays, since the Nkundô no longer dare to fight because of the legal sanctions that inevitably follow, when a woman abandons her husband for another man who wants to buy her, the parties involved bring the palaver before the judges. As the woman wants only her new husband, and as, on the other hand, war and the punishment of women have been abolished, the first husband has no

776
842
[791] women receive other signs: an unexpected obstacle in the form of a stone, a stump, a root, the capture of a tree frog which comes and jumps onto the shoulder, etc

A spirit loves and protects only a child he himself has given. He abhors and hates to the death the living gifts of his fellow spirits. If there are several *bilímá* in the vicinity of a single village, however, the Nkundó explain the absence of the usual rivalries by considering them as related; one is the husband, another the wife, others the children; that is why they do not oppose each other.

776
843 Thus an *elímá* is hostile to any fetus not of his creation. Nevertheless, his spiteful action only begins at the end of several weeks, and even then the pregnancy must have gone far enough to be visible (*ɛ́mi jɔ̂kela isómbá*) Does it take time for him to obtain evidence that the fruit in question is undoubtedly his own gift?

In any case the consequence of this belief is that a woman who has been pregnant for several months cannot long [472] reside in foreign parts, and one who, after conception, has accompanied a husband who has gone to work elsewhere, returns to her village to complete the last period of pregnancy and to deliver.

However, there is an antidote (*nsengó*) against this murder-
[751] ous action of the spirits. It may be obtained from a person who knows the recipe (this person is not the *nkanga* or "doctor"). The protective compound is wrapped in a bit of cloth and, by means of a thread of fibers from the *lokósá* creeper, is tied in the middle of a rope braided with the fibers of the *ikuluyaóndó* bush, which the threatened woman ties around her hips. (1)

---

[114]
[115] 1. These data on the subject of the *elímá* is diametrically opposed to the ideas of Father Schebesta (*Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge*, p. 241, and W. Schmidt, *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee*, Vol. 4, p. 322), based on the word of his interpreter, Bern. Bongonga of Bodlama (Bombwanja) (now deceased), who was

843
776
● 114
115

obliged in my presence to retract his statements under the pressure of crushing objections on the part of a considerable number of other natives See also Father Boelaert, Hooger Leven, 1935, p. 60, and Congo, 1936, Vol. 1, p. 42, as well as Hulstaert, Congo, 1936, Vol. 2, p. 670.

843
777

2. The beginnings of pregnancy

The first months following the cessation of menstruation are called bɔfɔswa. The oral expression is -fɔswa jɛ́mi (jɛ́mi meaning "fetus")

A woman who has just conceived no longer has any success in looking for caterpillars or in fishing (by scooping, whether with balɛ́ngɛ́ hooks or drugs, called lisola). She is unable to catch anything while the efforts of her companions are fruitful. That is because the bɔfɔswa is wɛ̌ká, that is, a cause for a lack of success (bɔ̌moto ɔa wɛ̌ká ɛ́fɔ́áte) Note that this word may be derived from the verb ɛ́ka, "to place an obstacle."

The husband of a woman in this condition is no better off. His wife's wɛ̌ká is communicated to him as well as to all those of his relatives who [473] live in the same village or, as the natives say, ɔ́jɛ́ mpokɛ́ ɛmɔ̂nkɔlɔ́, "one who eats from the same pot," and okisɛ́ ilɔmbɛ ɛ́mɔnkɔlɔ́, "one who lives in the same house." Friends are not harmed, even if they live in the same settlement as the pregnant woman, nor are relatives living elsewhere.

The wɛ̌ká brings misfortune to anyone tainted with it. Thus if he goes hunting, he will return empty handed; if he participates in a war he will be wounded. Furthermore, if there is a leopard in the vicinity he will choose to kill that man. An elephant will detect his presence and try to kill him. A snake will bite him more readily than another. At market he will be charged more for everything.

This burdensome situation continues during the entire period of pregnancy, hence until the birth of the child.

[188]

Introduction

● 114 This study is based on the preliminary work connected with the publication of the results of the "Mainz Congo Expedition 1951-54" in which I participated as an assistant to Dr. Sulzmann.

121 In order to describe and characterize the kinship and local groups of the Ekonda, they should first be regarded as ethno-sociological ideal types (1). For this purpose it was necessary to obtain a clear understanding of the meaning of the terms used to describe the types. Studies by Thurnwald (2), Kirchhoff (3), Murdock (4) (4a), Radcliffe-Brown (5), Lowie (6),

1. For the concept of type, see Thurnwald, *Menschliche Gesellschaft* [Human Society], Vol. 1, p. 7 ff.; Mühlmann, *Methodik* [Methodology], p. 114 ff.; and *Wörterbuch der Soziologie* [Dictionary of Sociology], p. 224 f.

2. *Menschliche Gesellschaft* [Human Society], Vols. 2, 4.

3. "*Verwandtschaftsorganisation* [Kinship Organization], *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Vol. 63, pp. 85-193; "Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen [Kinship Terminology], "*Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Vol. 64, pp. 41-71.

4. *Social Structure*.

4a. "Changing Emphasis."

5. "Study of Kinship Systems."

121 definitions to present a theory of development, the differentia-
114 tion between the two terms appears to me to be very useful, and
this seems particularly true if we accept the first definition of
clan given by Thurnwald and regard the second as completely
irrelevant for our present purposes.

It is true that our A-group lives in a certain district
614 which it claims for itself as its own "province," but it is never-
621 theless difficult to describe this district as a politically sovereign
community. A political nature could rather be attributed to those
groups which, up to now, we have not described at all, i.e.,
the settlement communities. Proceeding further, the A-group is
integrated into the B-group, the B-group into the C-group, thus
forming an endless chain; among those tribes who have a greater
degree of genealogical consciousness than the Ekonda -- for example, the neighboring Bongili (25) -- the hierarchy of groups

25. Boelaert, "Les Bongili."

ends with mankind, the hierarchy of ancestors with God.

Thurnwald emphasizes this ranked structure, especially
121 in discussing the kinship group. Kirchhoff, however, fails to
614 deal with the problem of the kinship group in a manner which
would be of value to us in differentiating between kinship group
and clan. Dealing with the organizational structure of the peoples he discussed, he naturally was more interested in defining
the border between large family and kinship group. Lowie (26)

26. Primitive Society.

only discusses the kinship group, "sib," calling it the "'clan' of British anthropologists", (p. 105) or "clans," if patrilineal, and "gentes," if matrilineal, "of most American anthropologists." The "ad infinitum" (p. 106) is also stressed by him in relation to the kinship group. Lowie also admits the possibility of subdivision with respect to his "sib," and consequently he even includes in the kinship group such forms as the "moieties," which according to Thurnwald's definition are still part of it, but which in his view

101
114 [218] The Nkundo [Nkundu], or Mongo, are an important ethnic group of the central basin of the Belgian Congo. They are patriarchal (1). I lived among their west-central tribes for

1. The rules and many details of the classificatory system of the Nkundo have already been set forth in *Le Mariage des Nkundo* by Father G. Hulstaert (Belgian Royal Colonial Institute, 1938).

20 years.

614 We call a clan, in the ethnic sense, the group of paternal blood relatives who have an autonomous territory in common. This resembles closely what Anglo-Saxon researchers like to call a "lineage" (2).

2. The quotations in this article are from *The Pattern of Hera Kinship*, by J. F. Holleman (Capetown University Press, for Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1949).

I. *Wise*

601
614 A Nkundo calls his own clan his *wise*, from the word *ise* which means "father." My *wise* thus includes:

1. My paternal grandfather and his brothers and sisters who are called *nkoko* (pl., *bankoko*), "grandfather, grandmother."

2. The sons of my male *bankoko*, including my own father, all of whom are my "fathers" (*ise*; pl., *baise*).

The sisters of my "fathers" are my "female fathers" (*isomoto*, composed of *isé* and *bomoto*, "woman").

3. The sons of my "fathers" are my older brothers (*botomolo*; pl., *batomolo*) and younger brothers (*bokune*; pl., *bakune*). The daughters of my "fathers" are my sisters (*nkâna*; pl., *bankâna*).

776 842 [791] women receive other signs: an unexpected obstacle in the form of a stone, a stump, a root, the capture of a tree frog which comes and jumps onto the shoulder, etc

A spirit loves and protects only a child he himself has given. He abhors and hates to the death the living gifts of his fellow spirits. If there are several *bilímɔ́* in the vicinity of a single village, however, the Nkúndó explain the absence of the usual rivalries by considering them as related; one is the husband, another the wife, others the children; that is why they do not oppose each other.

776 843 Thus an *elímɔ́* is hostile to any fetus not of his creation. Nevertheless, his spiteful action only begins at the end of several weeks, and even then the pregnancy must have gone far enough to be visible (*émi jótela isómbá*) Does it take time for him to obtain evidence that the fruit in question is undoubtedly his own gift?

In any case the consequence of this belief is that a woman who has been pregnant for several months cannot long [472] reside in foreign parts, and one who, after conception, has accompanied a husband who has gone to work elsewhere, returns to her village to complete the last period of pregnancy and to deliver.

[751] However, there is an antidote (*nsengó*) against this murderous action of the spirits. It may be obtained from a person who knows the recipe (this person is not the *nkanga* or "doctor"). The protective compound is wrapped in a bit of cloth and, by means of a thread of fibers from the *lokólá* creeper, is tied in the middle of a rope braided with the fibers of the *ikulayafodé* bush, which the threatened woman ties around her hips. (1)

[114]
[115]

1. These data on the subject of the *elímɔ́* is diametrically opposed to the ideas of Father Schebesta (*Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge*, p. 241, and W. Schmidt, *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee*, Vol. 4, p. 222), based on the word of his interpreter, Bern.. Bongonga of Bolilama (Bombwanja) (now deceased), who was

843
776
114
115

obliged in my presence to retract his statements under the pressure of crushing objections on the part of a considerable number of other natives See also Father Boelaert, Hooger Leven, 1935, p. 60, and Congo, 1936, Vol. 1, p. 42, as well as Hulstaert, Congo, 1936, Vol. 2, p. 670.

843
777

2. The beginnings of pregnancy

The first months following the cessation of menstruation are called bɔfɔswa. The oral expression is -fɔswa jɛ́mi (jɛ́mi meaning "fetus")

A woman who has just conceived no longer has any success in looking for caterpillars or in fishing (by scooping, whether with balɛ́ngɛ́ hooks or drugs, called lisola). She is unable to catch anything while the efforts of her companions are fruitful. That is because the bɔfɔswa is wɛ̌ká, that is, a cause for a lack of success (bɔ́moto ɓa wɛ̌ká áfɔ́áte) Note that this word may be derived from the verb ɛ́ka, "to place an obstacle."

The husband of a woman in this condition is no better off. His wife's wɛ̌ká is communicated to him as well as to all those of his relatives who [473] live in the same village or, as the natives say, ɔ́jɛ́ mpokɛ́ ɛmɔ̂nkɔlɔ́, "one who eats from the same pot," and okisɛ́ ilɔmbɛ ɛ́mɔnkɔlɔ́, "one who lives in the same house." Friends are not harmed, even if they live in the same settlement as the pregnant woman, nor are relatives living elsewhere.

The wɛ̌ká brings misfortune to anyone tainted with it. Thus if he goes hunting, he will return empty handed; if he participates in a war he will be wounded. Furthermore, if there is a leopard in the vicinity he will choose to kill that man. An elephant will detect his presence and try to kill him. A snake will bite him more readily than another. At market he will be charged more for everything.

This burdensome situation continues during the entire period of pregnancy, hence until the birth of the child.

000

Notes on the Populations of the Kasai, Lukenie, and Lake Leopold II Basins [Notes sur les populations des bassins du Kasai, de la Lukenie et du Lac Léopold II]

by J. Maes

Annales du Musée du Congo Belge
New Series, Miscellanea
Vol. 1, Part 1
Brussels, 1924

Translated from the French by Thomas Turner

Human Relations Area Files

1960

[Title Page]

Table of Contents

Chapter Page

1. The Land and Its Inhabitants 1

2. Dwellings 18

3. The Native's Means of Subsistence 36

4. Food 73

5. Care of the Body 123

List of Illustrations

Fig. Page
1. En Route in the Bush and Savanna of the Lukenie 2
2. In the Equatorial Forest 2
3. Bateke Woman and Child. 3
4. Bankutshu 4
[Figs. 5-9 appear in omitted portions of the text]
10. Mourning Dance in the Village of Chief Pokéli, Baboma. 5
11. Native Woman in Mourning (front and back) at the Native Market, Lusambo. . . . 6
12. Mother and Child, Bankutshu Tribe 7
[Fig. 13 is in an omitted portion of the text.]
14. Natural Deformations among the Natives . . . 8
15. Implements of Diapolo, Basakata Fetisher of the Bokoro Region 10
16. Ebandia, Chief of the Mosengere, Two Favorite Wives, and Principal Dignitaries 12
[Fig. 17 is in an omitted portion of the text.]
18. Batitu Woman, the Special Favorite of Imenu, Young Batitu Chief. 13
19. Sitting up with the Dead among the Bateke 14
20. The Great Chief Bembe, Mfumu na Twe of the Wadia 16
21. Native Medicine: Cupping among the Basakata 17
22. Corner of a Batitu Village Barely Outlined 20
23. Longinipila, a Batitu Village Newly Erected in the midst of the Equatorial Forest 21
24. Baboma Hut of the Old Type under Construction. 22
25. (1) Baboma Hut under Construction
(2) Banfumu Hut under Construction 24
26. Baboma Hut for the Nkisi of the Hunt 25

List of Illustrations (cont'd)

Fig. Page
27. Hut of the Wadia and Mosengere 26
28. Tumba Hut with Rectangular Base and Slightly Arched Roof 28
29. Basakata Huts Connected by a Common Court 29
30. View of the Interior of a Ypanga Hut 30
31. Batitu Huts with Arched Roof, under Construction 31
32. Another Form of Batitu Hut, under Construction in the Village of Longinpila 32
33. Temporary Hut of the Bokala-Yaelima 33
34. (1) Bankutu-Bakuba Hut under Construction
(2) Completed Bankutu-Bankuba Hut 34
35. Interior of a Lupango and Drying Peanuts, Bena Dibele-Kole Region 35
[Fig. 36 is in an omitted portion of the text.]
37. Ax and Hoe from Lake Leopold II-Lukenie 37
38. Initial Establishment of the Village of Longinpila in a New Clearing, Batitu Tribe 38
39. Hut for the Nkisi of the Hunt and a Banana Tree with Flower and Fruit, Village of Madjuku, Bobaie Tribe 39
40. Hunting Spears and Trap for Large Game, Lake Leopold II 44
41. Bow Strung with Cord and Arrow with Barbed Iron Head 46
42. Bow Strung with Rattan and Wooden Arrow 46
43. Basakata Armed with Spears, and Bow and Arrows 47
44. Great Yaelima Hunter Showing his Harpoon Arrow 49
45. Leaving for the Hunt in Yaelima Territory with Spears, Bows, Arrows, and Nets 50
46. Putting the Hunting Nets in Place 52

List of Illustrations (cont'd)

000

Fig. Page

47. Baboma Hut for Nkisi of the Hunt 54
48. (1) Baboma Hunting Fetish
(2) Banfumu Hunting Fetish 56
49. Hut of Nkisi of the Hunt and a Banana Tree with Flower and Fruit, Village of Madjuku, Bobaie Tribe 57
50. Bobaie Hunting Fetish, Village of Madjuku . . . 58
51. Yaelima Fetish, Nkisi of the Hunt 60
52. Making a Fish Trap among the Wadia and Tumba 61
53. Fish Traps used by the Peoples of Lake Leopold II 62
54. Fish Traps and Lines, Lake Leopold II 65
55. Making a Fish Trap among the Bobaie 67
56. Fish Trap. Fish Net with Floats. Fishing Harpoons from Lake Leopold II 68
57. Baskets for Fishing, Lake Leopold II 71
58. Weir Fishing at a Dam among the Mosengere. Closing the Screens and Capturing Trapped Fish 72
59. Making Fire by Friction 74
60. Making Fire by Rotation 74
61. Rod and Small Board with Notches 76
62. Two Rods, One with Notches 76
63. Stacks of Salt Grass, among the Bobaie 79
64. Evaporation of Water Saturated with Salt, among the Basakata 82
[Fig. 65 is in an omitted portion of the text.]
66. Calabashes for Salt, Lake Leopold II 83
67. Preparation of Manioc Flour among the Bobaie. Special Form of Knife to Chop Manioc 85
68. Baboma Chopping Manioc 86
69. Mortar with Clay Pestle (etuti) for Manioc, Banfumu Tribe 87
70. Yaelima Women Preparing Manioc 88

List of Illustrations (cont'd)

Fig. Page
71. Mortar, Pestle, and Sifter for Manioc Flour among the Bankutu 89
72. Chikwangue Brought to the Post 90
73. Bateke Pulverizing Manioc 91
74. Batitu Women Shelling Maize and Preparing Vegetables 92
75. Communal Smoking Apparatus 96
76. Rattan Belt. 97
77. Two Ways of Climbing Trees 98
78. Mortar and Pestle for Preparing Vegetables and Palm Oil 99
79. Installation for Making Palm Oil 100
80. Calabashes used as Receptacles for Water, Wine, Beer, and Oil 102
81. Carrying Firewood 104
82. Native Outdoor Kitchen, Ipanga-Batitu Tribe 105
83. Water Carrier 106
84. Calabash for Palm Oil also for Water 108
85. Masanga Brewery, Basakata 109
86. Bobaie Children. One of them shows signs of geophagy 112
87. Pipe for Smoking Hemp, Adorned with Nkisi 114
88. Pipe for Smoking Hemp 116
89. Monsengere Smoking Tobacco 121
90. Wadia Smoking Hemp 122
91. A Scene from Native Life among the Riparian People of the Lower Lukenie 124
92. A Batua Chief, Inongo, with a Rope Headdress. 130
93. Batete Type with Long Beard, Plucked Eyelashes and Eyebrows 130
94. A Balesa with a Small Goatee and with Eyelashes and Eyebrows Carefully Plucked . . 131

List of Illustrations (cont'd)

Fig. Page

95. Deformation of the Teeth, Lake Leopold II 132
96. Deformation of the Teeth and Headdress among the Bateke 132
97. Bankutshu Chief's Coiffure Enhanced with Ngula 133
98. Mosengere with his Hair in an Adjustable Aureole 134
99. Batitu Woman, Favorite Wife of Chief Inunu 134
100. Hairdos and Tattoos of Lake Leopold II . . . 135
101. Group of Batitu Women. Hairdos and Ornaments 136
102. A Batitu Mother and her Children, Adorned with Cowry Beads and Brass Rings 137
103. An Old Native Chief of Lake Leopold II Adorned with his Insignia and Accompanied by his Two Favorite Wives and his Lukumbe Player 138
104. Native Chief of Lake Leopold II and his Counselor, Highest Dignitary of the Tribe, Both in Dress Costume 139
105. Two Wadia Women and a Child, Wearing Solid Brass Necklaces 140
106. Natali, Banfunu Chief of Kapanda 141
107. A Group of Batitu Children 142
108. Etoti, Unsociable Old Chief of the Wadia, in Full Regalia 143
109. Dancing Costume of the Yaelima-Bokala of the Wumbali Region. Tattooing on the Back 144
110. Tribal Tattooing Executed by a Man, Wadia Tribe 145

List of Illustrations (cont'd)

888

Fig. Page
111. Ornamental Tattooing Executed by a Woman, Wadia Tribe 145
112. Bateke-Banfumungu Tattooing 146
113. Tattooing of Bateke-Bamfumu Women . . . 146
114. Tattooing of Wadia-Balesa Women 146
115. Elegant Lady of the Bokala-Yaelima Region. Tattoos, Bracelets, and Necklaces 147
116. Tattooing among the Women of Lake Leopold II and the Lower Lukenie 149
117. Batitu-Ipanga Tattoos 150
118. Inamu, the Young and Excellently Endowed Batitu Chief of the Oshwe Region 151
119. Tattoos of the Lake Leopold II Tribes 152
120. Bokala-Yaelima Tattoos 153
121. Ipanga-Batitu Tattoos 154
122. Bokala-Yaelima Tattoos 154
123. Tattoos of the Bokala-Yaelima Woman, Front and Back 155
124. Yaelima Headdress and Tattooing. Typical Longomo or Dignitary 157
125. Yaelima Tattooing and Headdress Adorned with Peanuts Smeared with Ngula 158
126. Return from the Fields 160

[5]

Chapter 1

The Land and Its Inhabitants

The appearance of the land. -- Location of the tribes. -- General characteristics of the natives. -- Maternal feelings. -- The fetisher. -- Religious beliefs. -- Cult of the dead. -- The Mfumu. -- Medicine.

[137] The area between the Congo, the Kasai, and the Kwango is covered with tall grass interspersed with stunted trees and a few small forests whose verdant canopy rises majestically over a boundless plain. A curtain of trees stretches along the rivers and gradually thins out as one penetrates into the interior. The path [491] beaten by the regular passage of endless columns of natives, walking Indian file, winds sadly and monotonously across these lightly rolling plains. During the rainy season the grass, whose stems grow as high as two or two and a half meters, obstructs the view. During the dry season, destroyed by brush fires, it has given way to a blackish-yellow plain from which all life seems to have been [361] banished. From time to [6] time, at distances of 30 and sometimes 40 kilometers apart, we find groupings of huts, surrounded by a few manioc fields, [Fig. 1 appears here] banana groves, and sometimes small plots of maize and peanuts. Upon our arrival, [60] the men look at us without concern, the mistrustful women hide [Fig. 2 appears here] in their huts or take refuge in the forest and fields, and the less timid children stare at us with the insouciance characteristic of their age. [7]

Beyond the Kasai, in the region of the Fimi, around Lake Leopold II, and along the Lukenie, the bush gives way to the forest, damp, swampy, dark, and mysterious.

[137] [136] At the confluence of the Fimi and the Kasai, a vast swampy area stretches as far as the eye can see, bare of all arborescent vegetation, crossed by innumerable channels which are narrow and shallow during the dry season and wide to the point of covering practically the whole region during the rainy season.

[text continues on p. 3]

482

Fig. 1. En Route in the Bush and Savanna of the Lukenie.

000

Fig. 2. In the Equatorial Forest.

Teke FI33
Sakata FO45

M
137
361

The few groups of natives who inhabit this region have built their villages along the river on raised ground, safe from the periodic floods.

In the forest region the villages seem to be scattered purely at random.

The huts are built in the center of a large clearing, surrounded by manioc plots and banana groves which are encircled in the distance by uncleared forest.

Such is the region that we crossed from Stanley Pool to Kasai-Kwango, from the Fimi to Lake Leopold II, and over the entire basin of the Lukenie.

S
A
101
131

The first peoples we encountered there belong to the Bateke [Teke] group. Their territory lies around Stanley Pool and extends to the north as far as the Lufimi. Beyond that live the Banfumungu [Fumu], also called Banfugumu, Banfumuka, Baumbu, or simply Bamfumu.

North of the Kasai and along the banks of the Congo live the Bayanzi [Yanzi] or Babangi. Their neighbors to the east, the Baboma [Boma] or Babuma, occupy the whole of the confluence of the Fimi and the Kasai, up to the left bank of the lower Kwango.

Fig. 2
Bateke Woman and Child

T
351
391

The Wadia [Dia] live to the north of the Baboma between Nioki and Kutu and extend along the Boriemps and the western shore of Lake Leopold II up to the territory of the Mosengere [Sengele].[8]

The region occupied by the Basakata [Sakata] stretches along the left bank of the Lukenie-Fimi between Bokoro and [illegible].

The Mosengere or Mousengere are settled along the Olonga-Uele in the region of Bongo. Northwest of this group we encountered the Bakutu [Kutu], whose territory extends beyond the boundaries of the Lake Leopold II district. [8]

The Bolia occupy the country northeast of Bongo as far as the Bolia-Kiri region.

The Tumba [Ntomba] are settled all along the eastern shore

Sakata FO43
Yaelima

S
M
101
131

of Lake Leopold II.

The Bobaie [Baye] are the northern neighbors of the Basakata in the Isoko-Tolo region.

The Balesa [Lesa] -- Batete -- occupy the left bank of the Lukenie between Bokoro and Pobombo.

The Ipanga and the Batitu or Atshitu, inhabit the Oshwe sector both north and south of the Lukenie. The region occupied by the Bokala lies farther east, between the Lodima and Bumbuli.

The Yaelima are found from east of Bumbuli to the Dekese sector and up to Dengese country.

A few Bashilele [Lele] groups are settled at the confluence of the Kasai and Sankuru. Their territory extends far to the south between the Kasai and the Loanga.

The Bankutshu [Wankutshu], also called Basongo-Meno [Songomeno], live on the left bank of the Sankuru up to the sector of Bena-Dibele and Kole. [Ed. the text from here to mid-page 14 is not translated.]

M
[142]
[591]
S
764
152

Fig. 4. Bankutshu.

[14] During our stay in the village of Chief Pokei, Baboma tribe, one of the dignitaries died. This death gave rise to an important mourning ceremony, as required by custom. The whole gunpowder supply of the deceased had been used to announce his death to the neighboring villages. Sorrow was expressed in the noisiest and most unexpected ways. The sobs of the women, the cries of despair of the relatives, and the plaintive chanting of the official female mourners mingled with the roll of the drums and the guttural and incoherent cries of the men, who kept drinking in order to express their sorrow more convincingly. All this display is an act. The screams and cries of grief are duties and are all feigned. [15] The Banfumungu cry over the death of a neighbor in the same way as they go hunting; the women mourn and cry just as they prepare food. All this is done as another job, because it is customary, because it is obligatory.

764 273 After the initial manifestations of grief came the burial. The deceased was interred quite far from the village. On the grave, the natives laid out a considerable part of his property, cooking pots, trunks, boxes, pottery, an umbrella, etc., all of which had previously been made useless. The whole ceremony was preceded by copious libations of palm wine and sugar-cane beer. All the guests made it a duty to pay the highest honors to them, and the funeral soon evolved into a scene of general drunkenness.

[362] The women of the village were excluded from the drinking. They would go once in a while to the hut of the deceased, enter it, stay there for 15 or 20 minutes, loudly weeping and wailing, and then calmly go back to their work. There was no trace of [152] true sorrow, of real grief! Only appearances are important to the Banfumongo in these circumstances. [16]

764 291

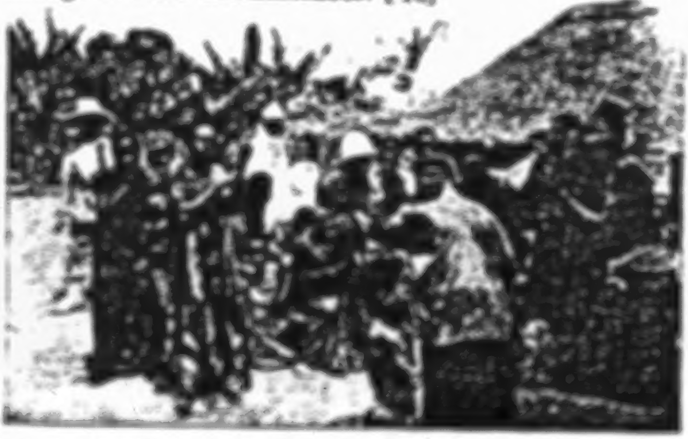


Fig. 10. Mourning Dance in the Village of Chief Pokdi, Belemo.

764 152 A native, nevertheless, is truly affected by the death of a member of his family. The mother in particular suffers at the death of her child, especially if she has raised it through the first stage of infancy. The father is more affected by the loss of a daughter, because she constitutes part of his fortune. Upon the death of her child, husband, or a brother born of the same mother, the woman covers her body with a whitish clay. It is not the white earth called mpembe, but a viscous mud which lends the woman a

rather unpleasant, not to say repulsive, appearance. Usually, the 764
traditional loincloth is replaced by crude rags, dipped in the same 152
mud, and leafy branches attached to the waist.

In general a child mourns the loss of his parents very little If they 152
die when he is young, the brothers and sisters of his mother or father 768
take care of him, and he will have the same rights among them as he 764
would have had under the maternal roof. If his parents are old when
they die, he is little affected by his loss, and, except for the heavy
white lines which the women draw on his forehead, arms, and chest
after the great mourning period, he will have little recollection of
them.

When we arrived at the village of Penge, a young girl had just died. 764
Throughout the night and the following day, there were incessant 152
cries and laments. The village women would go in turns into the
mortuary hut [17], gather around the body, and take up their mourning chant, melancholy, gloomy, and monotonous. At the end of 10 or 20 minutes, they would come out with an unconcerned, casual, and indifferent air while other mourners took their place. The mother

[291
302]

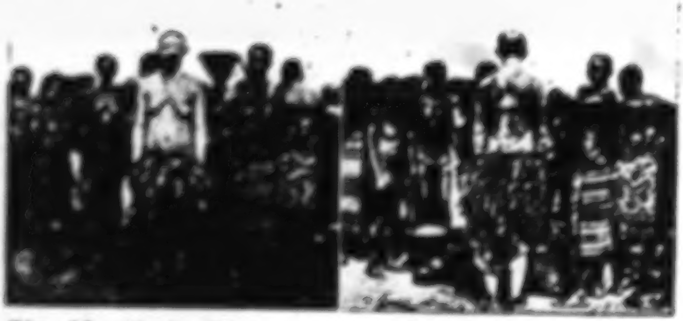


Fig. 11. Native Woman in Mourning (front and back) at the Native Market, Lusambo.

alone wept for her child, and her sorrow, less noisy and showy, was sincere, real, and profound.

764 At the village of Tik-ke-Tik in Yaelima territory, we witnessed a similar scene following the death of a young man.

At nightfall his body was wrapped in mats or rattan splints, solidly plaited, tied up, and completely sealed. At dawn the [342] mortuary bundle, attached to a strong branch, was lifted by two men. Instead of taking the village lane, they carried the corpse behind the hut and then through the bush. A few men walking Indian file made up the procession, at the end of which was the

[342
291
301
516]

Fig. 12. Mother and Child, Bankutshu Tribe.

mother of the deceased in mourning costume. The path they followed was quite irregular. Largely avoiding the trodden paths, the bearers often retraced their steps and took almost two hours to reach the cemetery, four kilometers from the village.

764
761 On the way back, the natives explained to me that the numerous turns and the walk through untrodden bush were meant to lead astray the evil spirit who had entered the village and killed the

Take F/33

young man! [Ed., the text is not translated from mid-page 17 to the second paragraph, page 19.] M 714 761

[19] Since the chief goal of our expedition was to study the practices and customs connected with the material and everyday life of the native, as well as to gather objects for our collection, our stay among the various tribes was too M 121

M [732]

Fig. 14. Natural Deformations among the Natives.
(1) Bankutu women; (2) Barakata woman; (3) Bankutu child.

short to permit a thorough study of their religious life and its attendant customs.

We ascertained that the native, as a rule, acknowledges the existence of a higher spirit. During my stay in the village of Kapanda, Basfumungo tribe, I had the opportunity to question a chief on the subject. M I 716

"Who causes the sun and the moon to rise? Who gave you the fish of the river and the animals of the plain, Matali?"

The chief looked at me for an instant, dumbfounded, and then replied, "*Nzambi ve Mundele*?" "Was it not Nzambi, White man?"

"Why, then, do you not call upon Nzambi to protect your crops, favor your fishing, and grant you success in hunting, Matali?" [20]

Text F133

M 776 "Would he want to help us, Mundele?"

"Why not?"

"Is he not exclusively good?" Matali continued.

"If he is so good, should he not listen to you, Matali?"

"Are not misfortunes caused by the *ndoki* (spirits), Mundele?"

"But is not Nzambi sufficiently powerful to ward off these *ndoki*, Matali?"

"Are not the *ndoki* sent against those who have done evil to others? Would Nzambi still be good if he were to ward off the *ndoki*, who punish the evil-doers? *Ve Mundele, ve*! Nzambi is good, he does only good; why call upon him?"

This bit of conversation sums up the native's conception of the supreme being. One calls upon him to explain what one cannot understand, but there is no cult devoted to him. Everything that is good for the society and whose source or origin is not known comes from him.

M 776 778 Aside from this spirit, the various tribes believe that there is a multitude of other spirits, some stronger than others, who are all very much concerned with the natives. They are all good in the sense that what is obtained from them is always beneficial to someone, although sometimes it is quite harmful to someone else. For this reason the native has created *nkisi* [Ed., fetish] and *ndoki*.

M 776 791 The fetisher is supposed to be able to communicate with these spirits. He keeps from them, according to native belief, the secrets of which plants help in healing and who has killed someone. He can obtain from them the punishment of a thief, because such punishment is beneficial to the one robbed. Through their intervention he can assure good fishing, guarantee rich hunting, facilitate childbirth, heal the sick, etc., or, on the other hand, make any enterprise fail.

M 776 791 778 The native believes that success of any kind is granted by these spirits. He attempts, therefore, to secure their good graces as much as possible. Before hunting, fishing, childbirth, etc., he goes to the fetisher. For a fairly high fee, the latter calls upon the spirits and hands over the appropriate *nkisi*. If the results do not conform to his expectations, the native blames [21] neither the fetisher nor the *nkisi*, but a *ndoki* more powerful than the *nkisi* involved. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

M
776
791
778

The intervention of the nkisi or ndoki is only a temporary one. Once an undertaking has been successfully carried out, the native has no further use for the object given to him by the fetisher to insure success. On the next occasion he will go back to the fetisher and ask for a new nkisi, which he would always like to be more powerful than the ndoki. Unfortunately the fetisher cannot find such an all-powerful nkisi. A spirit that he has invoked with success for years, whose power seems inexhaustible,

S
[778]

Fig. 15. Implements of Diapolo,
Basakata Fetisher of the Bolobo Region.

will one day fail him. Five, ten, fifteen times success has followed the invocation, and then, there it is, an enterprise under the same auspices fails miserably. A new nkisi, more powerful, has become ndoki, and the native returns to the fetisher and demands that he do better, always better! With the exception of certain figurines carved in wood and used as hunting fetishes, the physical representation of nkisi consists of an assortment of the

M
778

Teke F133

[illegible]

M 778 of the most disparate and incongruous objects, [22] white, black, or red clay, ngula /Ed., redwood powder/, chicken feet, heads, beaks, claws, and feathers, shells, palm nuts, etc., all mixed together in a large pot or in an old worn basket. It is from this magic treasure that the fetisher takes a pinch or two which he wraps carefully in a little bag and hands over to those who resort to him. [T 778] As for the human figurines so often found in the huts of the Bateke and Banfumu, we do not believe that they are fetishes. In our opinion, they are guardian figurines for children, carved before their birth and preserved until they reach marriageable age.

M 791 824 Some fetishers manage to gain quite a reputation, and their services are purchased for a very high fee. They are familiar with the properties of certain plants, and they keep this knowledge secret and exploit it as much as possible. It would be wrong to believe that the fetisher's practices are all based on mystification.

M 278 696 Ebendia, the high chief of the Mosengere, knew the secret of certain poisons. He knew effective remedies for certain kinds of festering wounds; he proportioned the quantity of poison at ordeals so as to make its action violent or slow, and he was familiar with an antidote which cancelled out the effects of the poison.

M 278 695 684 A few hours before our arrival at Penge, Ebendia had subjected [23] one of his wives to trial by poison, on the mere suspicion that she might have gone too far with a native during a slightly prolonged stay in the forest. Ebendia accused her of adultery, prepared the beverage, and compelled the poor woman to prove her innocence by taking the poison. The unfortunate creature rebelled. A quarrel arose, and the village natives, when informed of the matter, protested against it, to no avail, however. The old tyrant carried out the ordeal. He had been notified of our impending arrival, and after allowing the unfortunate woman to suffer horribly for nearly two hours, he gave her the antidote. Five hours later, all the effects of the poison were gone. [Ed., the text is not translated from the last paragraph, page 23, to the second paragraph, page 26.]

T 764 [26] In general the natives have a kind of cult of the dead. In the Bateke-Banfumu region, the corpse is wrapped in fabrics. The more important the deceased person is, the larger the bundle. His whole wealth in fabrics goes with him to the grave. Prior

Teke FH33
Sakata FO43

to burial, the deceased is laid out in the mortuary hut. Relatives, friends, and acquaintances sit up with the body in turn. Night and day, plaintive and monotonous chants commemorate the high deeds of the deceased, his glory, his qualities, his wealth, his power, his whole life. The burial is carried out with great pomp and ends with a general consumption of the whole supply of palm wine, malafu, and masanga [Ed., sugar-cane beer]. T 764 T [773]

M 292 516 411

Fig. 16. Ebandia, Chief of the Mosengere, Two Favorite Wives, and Principal Dignitaries.

The peoples of Lake Leopold II place the corpse in a wooden coffin. Those of the Lukenie region wrap it in mats. Both groups bury the deceased the day after death. M 764

The cemeteries are located outside the village. The relatives lay out a few broken utensils on the grave. If the deceased was a hunter of repute, they plant a long staff upon the grave, and the skull of some animal killed by the dead man is attached at the top of it. [27]

During my stay in the territory of the Baboma-Banfumu of Bokala, I was struck by the presence of a tiny hut in the center of Chief Pokei's village. It was about 60 centimeters high, 30 centimeters wide, and 50 centimeters long. I thought at first S 766 845 761

5
766 that it was a small chicken coop, but when I drew near I
945 saw that it was filled with trinkets. Puzzled, I questioned
761 a woman who had been loitering about for a while.

"Is this not my child's house?" she said.

"Where, then, is your child?"

"Is he not there?" and she pointed out a small basket hanging a few paces from the hut.

I came closer, incredulous, and to my great surprise found the mummified body of a child about two years old in the basket. The corpse was completely desiccated. The mother had fed a low fire under the basket for months and months in order to smoke, dry, and preserve her child.

I wanted to have the basket removed and to buy the little hut with the set of small things adorning it. The woman protested strongly. The natives ran up from all sides, and the old chief gave me an explanation for this unexpected gathering. [28]

"If you remove the child, what will happen to his brother? Won't his breath leave him? Can he live here if his spirit is gone? No,

Fig. 18. Batitu Woman, the Special Favorite of Isumu, Young Batitu Chief.

[illegible]

Mundele, no! Look, Mundele, look at this child," he said, pointing to a little boy three or four years old, "he and the other one (pointing to the mummy's basket) were born of the same mother on the same day. The life spirit was shared between the two! One of them died! The spirit remained among us in the brother and will remain here as long as the body of the

FO32 Mongo
[illegible] FI 37
Sakata FO43

deceased is with us! This is why we keep the body! When the child grows into an adult, when he can live on his own strength, the mummy will be carried into the forest and disappear, for its spirit will live wholly in the child grown to manhood!" [Ed., the text is not translated from the second paragraph, page 28, to the second paragraph, page 29.] S 766 845 761

[29] The social and political organization of the natives is often very complicated. S 622

T [764]

Fig. 19. Sitting up with the Dead among the Basake. The body of the deceased, wrapped in fabrics and forming a large bundle, is laid out in the mortuary hut.

Among the Basake-Baboma, each group or village is under the authority of a local chief. There is no general council of the dignitaries of different villages, no common chief.

Beyond them, each village is under the authority of a local chief, Mfumu na Buala, who bears the medal of Bula Matari [Ed. European administration]. His authority is minimal, his powers

(42 are not very extensive. He rules on matters of general interest, organizes the hunting and fishing parties, the vintage of palm wine, the preparation of sugar-cane beer, the exploitation of salt grass, the iron work, the construction of the village, and the clearing of agricultural fields. The Whites go to him for corvée labor, bearers, the collection of taxes, the supply of foodstuffs, etc. His authority hinges largely on the prestige of the superintendent. East of the Batitu, these petty medal-holding chiefs are usually mere Mfumu na Bula Matari, for the Mfumu na Buala who govern the villages along with the councils of longamo [Ed., elders, dignitaries] have avoided direct contact with the occupying powers. Thanks to the influence of our agents, these Mfumu na Bula Matari have gained a certain authority. Corvée [61] labor is gradually disappearing, the problems of communication with the agents decrease with the progress of civilization, and the Mfumu na Buala of the region east of Oshwe are beginning to wish they had the medal of Bula Matari and are trying to emerge from obscurity.

(43 Above the Mfumu na Buala stand the Mfumu na Tse, the "chiefs of the earth." Within a single tribe, there may be one, two, or sometimes three Mfumu na Tse. The boundaries of the territories over which they rule are as clearly defined as those of our provinces. Except for unusual cases of supremacy, the Mfumu na Tse of a single tribe regard themselves as totally independent of one [30] another. Only an armed conflict with a neighboring tribe may cause them to rally against a common danger. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

The influence of the Mfumu na Tse is especially strong among the riparian tribes of Lake Leopold II and among the Ipanga-Batitu. It probably exists among the Bobala-Tselima and possibly among the Bobala-Basakata-Balesa. [31]

All matters of some importance must be submitted to the Mfumu na Tse, and his judgments are accepted without question. Setting up a new village, clearing new fields, matters of inheritance, important hunting disputes, all must be submitted to the judgment of the Mfumu na Tse. His dwelling is set slightly apart [44] from the village. It includes the hut of the chief, those of his wives, and a large annex reserved for audiences. The furnishings

644 of this audience hall are quite rudimentary: a throne made of a few juxtaposed tree branches placed on a rise, and all around it a large open space with a well-beaten floor. On audience days, the Mfumu na Tse has his chair placed upon the throne, his few counselors settle themselves beside him, and the subjects may sit
653 on the ground. The Mfumu na Tse has the right to collect taxes
651 in kind. A well-defined share of each large animal, such as elephant, buffalo, or antelope, killed on the hunt, whether communal or individual, must be set aside for him. Moreover,

[592]

Fig. 20. The Great Chief Bembe, an unsociable character, Mfumu na Tse of the Wadia.

each community pays a specified sum annually as tribute to the Mfumu, and finally, for each matter referred to his judgment he must receive suitable remuneration. At regular intervals, the
643 Mfumu na Tse organizes great celebrations in which all the
533 Mfumu na Bwala in his territory may participate. He covers the expenses of these festivities, just as he must pay the musicians

(533 553) in his orchestra out of his own pocket. The right to have an orchestra and to be regularly escorted by musicians is one of the important prerogatives of the Mfumu na Tse of the Lake Leopold II region. [Ed., a passage at the end of page 31 and the first paragraph of page 32 are omitted.]

643 766 [32] The reign of each Mfumu na Tse is usually short. We have not been able to determine the reasons for this, but the fact is unquestionable. Upon the death of a "chief of the earth" among the Mosengere or Bolia, a few dignitaries carry the corpse to the cemetery of the great chiefs. The body is supposed to remain there for seven months. Meanwhile, the new chief prepares to take up [765] his duties. One night the bokoko, sacred bird of the tribe, makes its cry heard, announcing to the whole population that the spirit has

[757]

Fig. 21. Native Medicine: Cupping Among the Basakata.

appointed a successor. The petty chiefs and dignitaries gather in the village of the new Mfumu na Tse. At night, the latter comes

5 643 766 out of his hut, speaks to the people, and the *boloko* replies, "*Ngulu, ngulu, ngulu.*" A few days later, the burial of the dead chief takes place. The dignitaries are supposed to go and recover the body, place it in a coffin, [33] and have it buried with great pomp in the morning. It appears that the body remains in the chiefs' cemetery and that the coffin actually holds nothing but a tree trunk, but here again a more detailed investigation would seem indispensable. The burial is carried out with great pomp, and then the new chief is definitely installed. How does the chief acquire the secrets of his occult powers? From whom does he learn how to measure the poison, how to prepare the medicines? So many questions which are yet to be elucidated.

6 157 Aside from these secrets, the art of healing is not highly developed among the natives. A string around the forehead, cupping, and scarification are supposed to cure neuralgia. The cups consist of small gourds with a narrow hole. The native puts a few twigs of very dry grass inside it, sets them on fire, and immediately places the opening of the gourd against the skin. The combustion creates a vacuum, and suction is produced automatically. Scarification is done with a small razor-like knife. [34]

Chapter 2

Dwellings

Conditions for setting up a village. -- General arrangement of the huts. -- The typical Bateke-Bamfumu hut. -- The conical Baboma hut. -- Shape of the hut in the region of Lake Leopold II. -- Hut with arched roof on the Lukenie. -- Villages of the Sankuru-Kasai. -- Bakuba hut. -- General conclusions.

M 361 Although all the peoples in the region we visited have reached the sedentary stage, local migrations and changes of abode are rather frequent. In short, the dwelling and the village are stable only as long as the resources of the site and its environment can provide the basic needs of the community.

361/ The first essential condition is a nearby source of drinking water,
312 a stream, a marsh, or one or more natural springs. These springs are quite numerous in the region we visited. Their water is clear, limpid, and refreshing; the supply is abundant and regular in the dry season as well as in the rainy season. The natives value their
[515] benefits so highly that the women willingly go 200 or 300 meters to a spring in the forest rather than to draw water from the stream.

361/ [35] In addition to a bountiful spring, the native seeks a healthful location and takes this into account when choosing the future site for his household. The ground that suits him best is slightly raised, dry, open, and located near the forest or in the midst of a fertile plain.

Aside from their hygienic benefits, such locations afford a measure of security to the settler. At the slightest alarm, the whole community leaves both village and home to run into the forest, where they are sheltered and completely safe.

Finally, the native looks for the fertile soil essential to the welfare of his crops. The well-being and even the existence of his whole family depend in large measure on the yields from these crops.

The new site then, must fulfill all these indispensable conditions. If the place that meets these requirements is to be found in a region full of game and not far distant from a stream, marsh, or watercourse rich in fish, the native will not fail to choose such a privileged spot. These conditions will determine the duration of the native's settlement. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

361 When the community has decided to move and a location suitable
313 for a new settlement has been found, all the adult males leave to prepare the ground. This work is particularly arduous in forested areas. In the grasslands it is sufficient to cut the grass, or simply to burn it, and then to hoe thoroughly the area for the new village and its fields and to carry off all the rubbish, while the establishment of a village in the heart of the forest requires far greater effort and work. The first few days are devoted to marking out the boundaries and clearing the small trees, creepers, bushes, grass, etc. Everything that can be cut with a knife or ax is hacked down. Large tree trunks are chinked at the base; then the native heaps all the rubbish [36] from the first stage of clearing around them and

Yaelima

361 sets it on fire. Two or three days later the giants of the
313 forest topple one after another amidst an indescribable din and the joyous cries of the natives. The brushwood is quickly cut up and branches and crowns are lopped off. The large logs are left where they fall.

Nothing is more interesting to see than these barely

Fig. 22. Corner of a Batitu Village Barely Outlined.

outlined villages in the midst of the great equatorial forest. The clearing, still poorly defined, is framed by a dome of wild greenery over this small open spot where man has decided to settle. The whole clearing is strewn with thick trunks, pieces of wood, charred wood, and rubbish of all sorts. Stumps, cut about one meter from the ground, rise on every side, like so many relics of a life and vegetation recently passed away. Amidst this tortured heap of debris
341 a few very crude huts left and right, as though scattered
342 completely at random. They are really nothing but shelters, places of refuge, where the native spends the night for the time being, protected from dampness and inclement weather. Their miserable appearance, their ramshackle exterior, and the roughness of their construction

Take F1 33
Kongo FO21
Yasima

M
361
342

show [37] that the native has built them in great haste, without attaching any importance to them. He nevertheless lives there until a more permanent hut is built, and this provisional state of affairs sometimes lasts quite a long time.

These initial shelters are built without order or method. An odd assortment of materials are used. The shape of the huts varies, and, curiously enough, it usually bears no resemblance whatever to the ultimate dwelling or to the shape typical of the region.

Fig. 23. Longinipilo, a Bateke Village Newly Erected in the midst of the Equatorial Forest.

T
K
361
342

Among the Bateke and Babuende [Bwende], the hut is rectangular and on the average is twice as long as it is wide. The very low side walls are rarely higher than 1.50 meters. The door is cut into the gable end, placed a little to the side, opening on the large village square. The roof slopes away on both sides in a curve from a horizontal ridge. Its edges project considerably beyond the side walls and form a small protective roof all around the outside of the hut. The native uses this protected area to store part of his firewood supply, pottery, and other objects of lesser value.

All the huts are built separately and spaced from 10 to 15 meters apart. They stand parallel to each other, facing the main thoroughfare. [38]

Teke FI33
Kongo FO21
Sakata FO43

T K 392 As building materials, the native uses raffia stems, bamboo, rattan, and large squared branches for the framework, and grass to cover the roof. The door is sometimes made of planks. Old mats are sometimes used to reinforce the exterior covering of the walls.

The interior of the hut is divided into two rooms by a middle partition. The first room serves as a kitchen, dining room, etc., and the second one as a bedroom.

S [346]

Fig. 24. Baboma Hut of the Old Type under Construction.

T K 415 357 392 The furnishings of the kitchen are highly varied. Pots, baskets, mortars, pestles, sieves, and other utensils are hung on the walls or arranged on one side. An openwork basket hangs over a hearth made of three stones, and here the native stores his reserves of maize, dried or smoked meat and fish, etc., to protect them from rodents and dampness. A pile of wood stands in a corner, precious fuel taken from the outside stack and brought inside to dry better. Finally, there is the hens' nest, hidden and quite isolated in another corner.

T W [538]

The native stays inside the hut during the day only when it is too cold or too wet outside.

T K 352 The bedroom walls of Babuende and Betcke huts are lined with large mats. Only one or two small baskets and boxes are to be found there, in which the native keeps a few precious

T
K
352 objects and nkisi [Ed., fetishes]. There are also two or three pillows carved out of wood, a bed, and sometimes a few human figurines.

The bed is made of four small forked stakes planted in the ground. [39] The strong beams of the bed frame lie upon the forks. The "springs" are made of slats of raffia stems, and one or two large mats substitute for a mattress.

4
342 The Banfumu hut is also rectangular and divided into two compartments. The door, however, is usually cut in the side wall. The hut is placed lengthwise. The roof has a double slope with an oblique tilt and projects beyond the front of the hut to form a veranda. The ridge of the roof is horizontal.

4
[351] The chief's house is surrounded by an enclosure, and to reach it one must pass through a sort of simple labyrinth.

T
361
351 Each family has a group of dwellings occupying a given space which is often separated from the neighboring enclosure by a low fence and several banana trees. This familial grouping of the huts gives the Banfumu village a distinctive character and appearance which are not seen anywhere else. The village is made up of a series of small, elongated courtyards, separated by small banana groves and plots of peanuts, maize, etc. Certain villages are one or two kilometers in length, although they include only 25 or 30 families. [40]

S
4
T
342
177 In the Bokala region, among the Banfumu and Bakoma, we came across the conical hut with a square base. It resembles the hut of the Basonge [Songe] in its exterior appearance as well as its structural details and internal layout, except that the projecting roof over the door of the Basonge hut is missing, and the sliding door is replaced by a hinged door opening toward the outside.

This special type of native dwelling, foreign to the area, was introduced by Arabs from the east. Pokaf himself, the acknowledged and undisputed chief of the Banfumu of this region, is actually the former houseboy of the deceased Arab chief who ruled the area for nearly ten years. How did the natives come to adopt this new form of hut so rapidly? We do not know! It is possible, however, that the Arab chief was accompanied by several Baluba [Luba] or Basonge families when he arrived in the region and that the conical hut was first built in the area by these families. The Banfumu natives who fell under the influence of the chief or who accepted his authority may have copied the shape of the hut when [41] they formed a group around the new chief, thus gradually introducing this novel form, entirely different from that of the ancestral hut. It is not without interest to note that the Banfumu of this region have not lost all memory of their original crude huts. The shelter that serves in one of these villages as the hut for the nkisi of the huts has the shape of the old dwellings and curiously enough, tiny as it is, it reminds one very much of the Bateke hut.

342
177

346

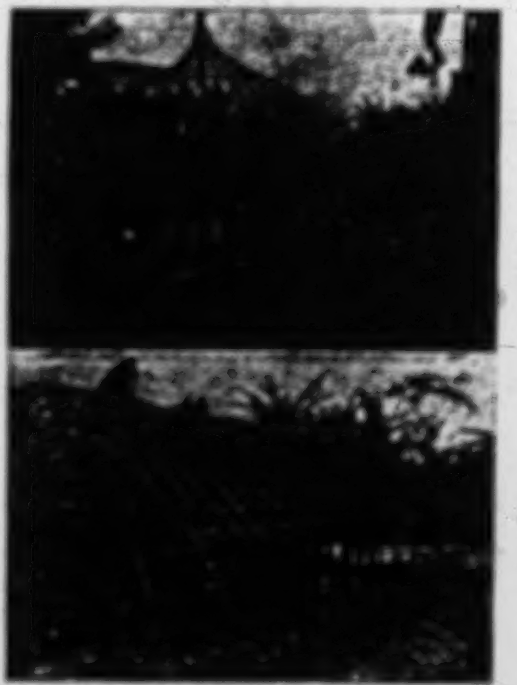


Fig. 23. (1) Babuma Hut under Construction; square base, conical roof.

(2) Banfumu Hut under Construction; rectangular base, roof with dihedral angle.

£ 361 The conical huts are not arranged in family groupings, but are built along an irregular double line. The free space between the two rows of huts forms the principal artery of the village, and the whole assemblage is surrounded by luxuriant plantings of banana trees and manioc.

M 342 The dwellings of the Baboma, Wadia, Mosengere, and all the peoples along the right shore of Lake Leopold II and the Fimi have the same appearance: rectangular base; roof with an oblique double slope, horizontal ridge; triangular gable; veranda formed by the projection of the roof from one to one and a half meters beyong the façade which faces the chief artery of the village; and an entrance through this same wall with a raised, sliding door.

M 352 The furnishings of all these huts are in general limited to

£ 546

Fig. 26. Baboma Hut for the Idol of the Hunt. In background, Basenge type hut with conical roof and square base.

kitchen utensils and a storage place in the first room and to the bed in the sleeping chamber. The bed is built on stakes from 20 to 30 centimeters high. Mats serve as a mattress, and the pillow consists of a crude wooden block which has hardly been squared, except among the Baboma who still use the small stool-pillow that we found among the Banfumu-Bateke.

£ [illegible]

M 342 All the peoples of this region build their huts with great care. After carefully marking the area of the new site, the native drives

M
342

in three large stakes to support the main crosspieces. Then he builds the vertical framework of his hut by planting strong, straight stalks all around the perimeter, 70 centimeters apart. To these vertical stalks, the native attaches horizontal crosspieces made of strong raffia stems and spaced from five to seven centimeters apart. The same method is followed for the interior partition, although weaker and thinner raffia stems are used. The space reserved for the door is left open. At this stage, the dwelling resembles a large cage, (32) fully open to the sky, with its bars

M
S
[345]

M
[353
376]

Fig. 27. Hut of the Wadia and Mosengere.

arranged horizontally. It remains in that state all through the period of time required to prepare the materials that will line the interior walls. To this end, the native cuts leaves of the nse-nse, a very common type of palm throughout this swampy region. The leaves are assembled in groups of four, the fronds having first been folded in along the rib and roughly braided. The free ends are tied with a fine thong, and the ribs are bound together at intervals of five centimeters. Once the leaves have been prepared, the native goes inside the hut under construction and begins to cover the walls. Proceeding systematically, he works from bottom to top, attaching the nse-nse leaves to the horizontal slats and placing them so that they overlap. When the wall has been covered, it is strengthened with a few slats placed vertically and tied to the outer framework

Sakata FO43
Ntomba

M 342 with rattan thongs. These walls are very strong and durable. The roof is usually covered with thatch, but it frequently happens that the native also uses panels of nse-nse to cover his hut. [43]

M 361 Among the peoples who live west of the lake, the huts are grouped in clusters of two or three and placed in two parallel lines. The free space between the clusters is very limited, so much so that at first sight all the huts seem to be continuous. The doors always open on the large street.

M 342 177 656 We also visited a number of villages where earthen dwellings, built by administrative order, stretched out the whole length of the village. As a rule, however, these huts, which we regard as an improvement from the standpoint of hygiene and comfort, were not favored by the natives. The Negro had carried out the task imposed upon him, but he refused to enjoy it. His primitive hut, which was better adapted to the necessities of his life, retained its appeal and its occupants.

M 361 342 Among the Tumba of the east shore of the lake, we observed that the hut tends to present certain characteristics relating it to the type of hut with an arched roof found among the Buli [Oli] and farther north. The ridge, instead of being straight, extends beyond the ends of the hut and dips down, giving the whole structure the appearance of a bow bent [44] chiefly at the two ends. In certain dwellings the doors are placed in the side wall facing the main thoroughfare, and the huts are built in groups standing more or less close together. In other huts, on the other hand, the door is located in the gable wall and opens on a small veranda formed by the projecting roof front. The huts built this way are placed in a line, but are separated, and although the space between the two lines forms the chief thoroughfare of the village, each hut nevertheless boasts a small individual courtyard in front of the veranda. As to the method of construction, it is identical to those we noted in the region west of the lake.

M S 361 342 Among the peoples of the lower Lukenie, the huts are also built by the same method and with identical materials. The door, however, is nearly always in the gable wall, at the end where the roof projects, slightly curved, to form the veranda. When the huts are separated, one notices again a tendency toward an arc in the

Sakata F043

Ntomba

M
S
361
342

ridge, although it is true that this is not very pronounced. It happens very frequently, however, that the natives help each other in building the village and proceed so as to form long lines of uninterrupted huts. [45] As a result, the ridgepiece is continuous and straight. The opening that serves as a door is in the gable wall and opens on a small empty space. This courtyard is common to two adjacent huts, but their doors are not placed face to face.

This type of continuous dwelling is found most frequently among the Basakata of the interior. It is characterized by the careful attention the natives give to its construction and completion.

M
361
342

As regards dwelling type and general village layout, all the peoples along the shores of Lake Leopold II and the banks of the lower Lukenie seem to belong to a single ethnic group characterized by the rectangular hut having a roof with an oblique double slope and a horizontal ridgepiece parallel to the village thoroughfare. The single huts, however, with slightly arched roofs and placed perpendicular to the main axis of the village, which we noted to the east of Lake Leopold II, reveal certain traces of an ethnic affinity with the peoples farther east. Before we proceed

Fig. 28. Tumba Hut with Rectangular Base and Slightly Arched Roof.

Before we proceed

M 361 342 643 to the study of dwellings in that region, it is well to note that among all the western populations, the hut of the great chief, that is to say, the "chief of the [46] earth," Mfumu na Tse, is built separately, a little apart from the general alignment or facing the principal street. This hut is surrounded by a fence, and the enclosure contains the royal hut, the reception palace, and the huts of the chief's wives.

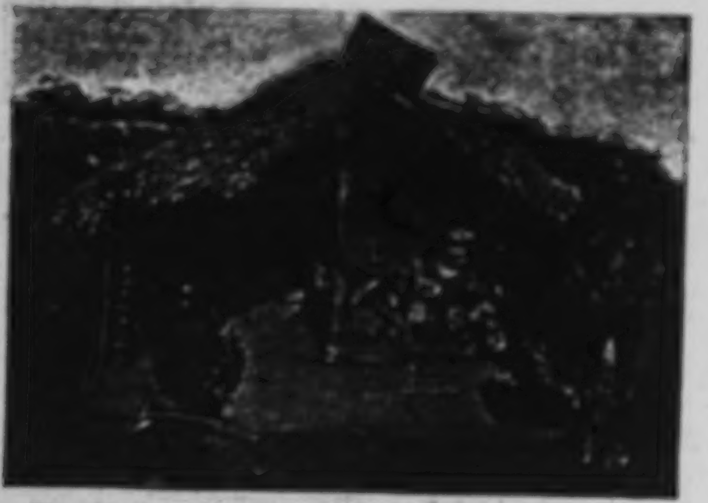
M 644 Entry into the chief's courtyard is forbidden to his subjects. Only the dignitaries are admitted there when royal audiences are held, and to receive them the chief holds court in the hut that serves as a reception building. All around the enclosure, the "chief of the earth" has special trees of the cactus family planted. This, we were assured by the future successor of the Mosengere chief of Penge, is a royal prerogative very strictly observed. The existence of this enclosure around the royal dwelling recalls the custom in Banfumu villages of arranging the huts in family groups, and it seems to indicate a certain affinity between these different tribes.

S 342 415

Fig. 29. Basakata Huts Connected by a Common Court.

M 342 In the region of the Ipanga-Batitu, besides the small hut whose roof has the oblique double slope and horizontal ridge and is covered with vegetal tiles, which serves as a secondary, temporary

establishment, we find another type of hut reminiscent of the type found north of Lake Leopold II. The base is rectangular, but the front half forms an open veranda or one closed [47] at the sides. The interior of the hut is square. The roof is arched, with a more or less pronounced curve. After first having cleaned, beaten, and prepared the interior area, the native traces the outline of his hut and erects on the perimeter and the median line the supports for the main rafters. The central stake is 50 to 75 centimeters higher than those placed at the two ends. The latter are, on the average, one meter higher than the stakes of the lateral walls. The three stakes of the median line are connected by a strong horizontal crosspiece, and a second crosspiece is laid over this. The latter must form an arc. The curve is obtained by attaching very strong lianas to the ends, from



[416]

Fig. 30. View of the Interior of a Ypanga Hut.

which the native suspends very large wooden blocks. The roof is covered with raffia stems bent at dihedral angles and attached to the ridgepole and to the two horizontal crosspieces of the side walls. The spaces between the large wall staves are filled in with smaller rods that are tied to the horizontal crosspiece. Upon this framework, the native ties raffia stalks, placed horizontally 15 or 20 centimeters apart. The gable walls are built in the

342 same way, but the tips of the vertical beams are attached to the crosspieces of the roof. The huts are covered with overlapping nse-nse by the same method as that used among the peoples of Lake Leopold II, or they are covered with the large ndele leaves that form vegetal tiles. The native proceeds to cover the roof before finishing the walls of his hut. The rows of nse-nse are fastened directly to the framework of the roof. The ndele tiles, on the other hand, are plaited into an openwork mat with the horizontally aligned holes very close together. The mat is spread over the framework of the roof and fastened to it. It often happens that the native covers the part of the hut that forms the bedroom with ndele and the roof of the veranda with nse-nse. When asked the reason for using such different materials on the same structure, Imunu, chief of the Batitu of the Oshwe territory,

Fig. 31. Batitu Huts with Arched Roof, Under Construction.

explained to us that the ndele make good vegetal tiles which are tough and in which rodents cannot nest because of the thorns, sharp as needles, with which the leaf is covered. In the nse-nse, on the other hand, rats and mice settle quite willingly. They cut the leaves to make their nests and quickly reproduce there, unless they are driven away by smoke from the hearth. "That is why," said Imunu, "we prefer to cover with ndele that part of the hut where our wives set up their hearth." [48]

The walls are usually covered with ndele leaves or with panels

35 of tree bark. Walls of nse-nse are exceedingly rare.

The door of the hut opens on the interior of the veranda. The latter is always open on the side facing the main artery of the village. Sometimes it is open both in front and to one side; it is very rarely open on all sides.

In the Bokala region and in a very few Yaelima villages, we found this same characteristic type of hut. Such cases, however, were quite rare. Most often the huts in this area had an appearance

Fig. 32. Another Form of Batito Hut, under Construction in the Village of Lengiopila.

that reminded us of the Batito type only by the presence of a veranda with a roof that was more or less curved in the extension of the main axis.

The Bokala-Yaelima hut has a rectangular base and a roof with an oblique double slope and a horizontal ridge.

The interior of the hut has two parts, one serving as living room, kitchen, and dining room, the other as the bedchamber. The door opens into the first part and is cut in the wall facing the main artery of the [48] village. All the huts are built separately [36] and laid out lengthwise in such a fashion that two parallel rows make up the village. The huts are built with stakes and raffia stems for the framework and nse-nse to cover the walls as well

Yaelima

as the roof. The natives of the Bumbuli region usually build their 342
huts quite carelessly. Although their villages are remarkably clean, the general appearance suffers a great deal from the shabby state of most of the dwellings. Even quite new huts are poorly finished, compared to those of other regions.

The furnishings of Batitu and Yaelima huts do not differ from 352
those of other regions, except in the shape of the utensils and the presence of chairs. The bed is always very low, raised barely 10 or 15 centimeters from the ground. The interior of the hut is only very rarely lined with mats. Among the furnishings one should [345]
note the large drying basket which serves as a storage place and which is hung above the hearth. It is hexagonal in shape, and

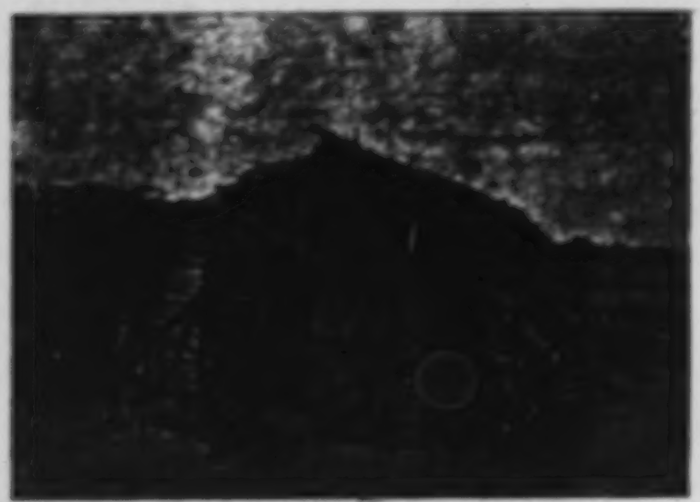


Fig. 33. Temporary Hut of the Bokala-Yaelima.

its radius varies from one to one and a half meters. Its edges are straight, the thongs by which it hangs are attached to the six corners of the hexagon, and it is made entirely in an openwork weave like that [50] of the caned chairs of Europe, a special technique of which we found no other instances in the region. No less interesting are the chairs, relatively rare among the Batitu, common among the Bokala, and in daily use among the Yaelima. Their special form is characteristic. The natives 352
sometimes take the utmost care to ornament them with carved 531
designs, and the remarkably artistic appearance of certain ones

Yaelima
[illegible]

352
331 give them in general a very interesting local ethnic character.
415 One might say as much of the carved wooden cups, the engraved
531 horns, and the vessels of artistically worked wood which up to now have been regarded as local to the region occupied by the Bakuba [Kuba] and which are found throughout the territory south of Wumbali.

342 As a rule, the hut of the Bena Dibele-Kole region is much trimmer, it is constructed much more carefully, and the work is accomplished with order and method. The shape is rectangular, the roof has a double slope, and the ridgepole is slightly arched. This curve, however slight, is nevertheless quite characteristic

Fig. 34. (1) Basketu-Bakuba Hut under Construction.
(2) Completed Basketu-Baskuba Hut.

and quite constant. It is undeniably reminiscent of the typical form of the ancestral hut.

The door is located either on the side or in the gable wall, according to whether the hut is oriented parallel or perpendicular to

the main axis [51] of the village. This door is always placed 342
rather high and closes on an inner slide. Since _one_-_one_ and _ndele_ are lacking in this region, the framework of the huts is made of stakes and pieces of raffia, and the walls and roof are covered with raffia leaves plaited flat in the form of a mat.

The huts are built singly, a method which again reminds one of the customs of the Odiwe-Bumbuli region. The native does sometimes cover his hut with grass, but this is very rare.

In this region we also observed that in certain villages the huts 361
were arranged in family groupings and that each group had a spe- 592
cial area clearly set apart from the rest of the village. The
various huts of a single group are inside a fairly solid stake fence 572
from one and three-quarters to two meters high and sometimes 351
covered with mats of raffia leaves. The doors of all the huts within an enclosure open toward the interior of the courtyard.

Fig. 35. Interior of a Lupango and Drying Peanuts, Bena Dibele-Kole Region.

The whole forms the _lupango_. By counting the number of huts in 592
a _lupango_ one may determine how many wives the chief or head of the place has, since each one has her own home. [52] The
lupango are of recent introduction and are derived from Arab in- [177]
fluence. One cannot take them into account in establishing relationships of kinship or ethnic affinity between the different peoples. There is no connection whatever between the _lupango_ of the Bena Dibele-Kole region and the familial grouping of huts

572 among the Basfunus. [Ed., the remainder of the chapter, through page 54, is not translated.]

[55] Chapter [illegible]

The Native's Means of Subsistence

Animal husbandry: chickens, goats, dogs. -- Agriculture: manioc, maize, rice, bananas, peanuts. -- Hunting: weapons, snares, nkisi, individual method, communal hunting. -- Fishing: general method, dams, basket weirs, traps, harpoons, bows and arrows, cord nets, screens.

231 The peoples of the Congo-Kasai-Lake Leopold II region and of the Lolenie do very little animal husbandry. They possess no large animals. At most one may find a few chickens, rare goats, and some hunting dogs in their villages. The dogs get a share of the game and live as best they can the rest of the time.

No care whatever is given to the goats. They wander freely during the day and graze in the forest or plain. Sometimes they venture into the planted fields, from which the hunting dogs chase them at first sight. At night they return to the village and take shelter where they will. During our stay in the village of Toipolo, they even came and disturbed us at night while we were lodged in the hut reserved for strangers. [915]

235 The chickens wander around the village and planted areas during the day and sleep [56] at night in the native's hut, where they have their nest for laying eggs and a place to hatch them.

262 439 435 The native does not eat the eggs. He sells them to agents of the state or of commercial concerns, who collect them for hatching. The chicken itself is rarely eaten by the native. Most often it goes to the kitchens of the Europeans. In 1913-14 the average price of a chicken was half a franc, that of an egg, five centimes, and the price of a goat was from five to 15 francs.

4/2 241 [83] When new fields are prepared, the first work of clearing them falls to the men. This work is done with a knife and an ax. The shape of this latter tool is the same among all the tribes: a wooden handle with a bulge at one end like a club; and a long, narrow, triangular piece of iron embedded laterally in the handle.

After clearing the brush, the men pile the rubbish at the foot of the large trunks and set it on fire. The tree, undermined at its base, finally topples over and remains where it falls.

[85] The women take charge of the other work of cultivation. This varies [57] very little from tribe to tribe, and even the various crops of manioc, maize, peanuts, rice, bananas, and sugar cane require only quite rudimentary special labor.

246 4/3 Manioc is the staple food of the tribes over most of the region we visited. The natives cultivate both sweet and bitter manioc. The latter variety is the more widespread. To prepare the ground, the native woman uses an iron hoe, triangular in shape, with a flaring base and a spike at the top. This piece of iron is embedded laterally in a rough-hewn wooden handle which bulges at the end like a club. The purpose of the club-like end is two-fold: it provides a better hold for the piece of iron, and it intensifies

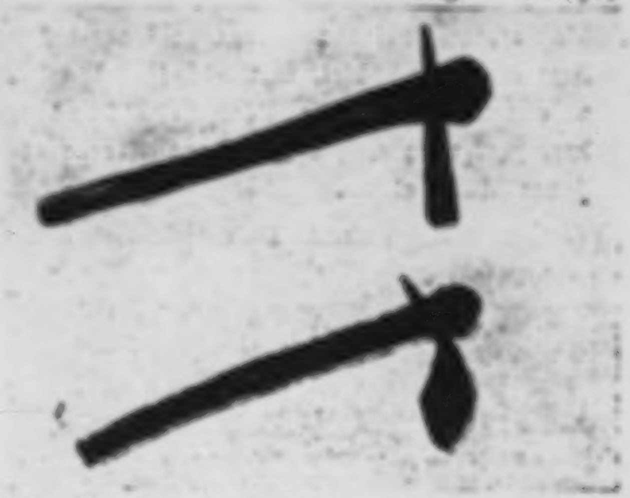


Fig. 37. Ax and Hoe from Lake Leopold II-Lukenie.

Yaelman

244

the worker's efforts without, however, making the use of the tool too tiring. 412

After the first hoeing, the woman makes little mounds, 30 centimeters high on the average and spaced about 80 centimeters apart, and inserts four or five manioc cuttings into them. 244

The upkeep of the manioc fields is limited to one or two [58] hoeings to remove the weeds. Manioc requires extremely fertile soil. Its cultivation exhausts the soil to such a point that after three or four years the native must move his fields and abandon the cleared land.

Sweet manioc attains its maximum development at the end of a year, bitter manioc after 15 or 20 months.

Fig. 38. Initial Establishment of the Village of Longiapila in a Clearing, Batitu Tribe.

The manioc tubers or roots are gathered as the family needs them. The root is good to eat at any stage of growth and at any time of year. The maximum yield coincides with the maximum growth of the plant and not with its full maturity. The average yield varies between 12,000 and 14,000 kilograms per hectare. The native woman does not wait until the plants are fully developed to start exploiting the crop. She limits her harvest to a strict minimum throughout the rainy season. At this time the manioc, swollen with water, yields only a little flour and is easilyy spoiled by soaking.

M
245 Next to manioc, bananas occupy the first rank among the native crops, at least among the peoples of Lake Leopold II, the [56] lower Lukenie, and the region between the Congo and the Kasai. Among the tribes of the upper Lukenie, cultivation of banana trees is less developed, and in the Bena Dibele-Kole region it is almost completely absent.

The natives prefer to cultivate the large banana. It is less juicy and more floury than the small one and yields larger crops. The banana groves are always set up near the village and most often directly behind the dwellings. It follows that these groves have the general shape of the village and, in a way, frame it.

Banana trees, in order to thrive, must be planted in very fertile soil which has been well cleared and deeply turned. To promote their growth and increase their yield, the natives dump into the banana groves all the waste from the kitchen, ordure, ashes, and sweepings from the regular cleaning of the village and huts. They also go into the groves to answer the calls of nature.

S
[346]

Fig. 39. Hut for the Nkisi of the Hunt and a Banana Tree with Flower and Fruit, Village of Madjuku, Bobaie Tribe.

M
[579]

M
243 Maize is not cultivated on an important scale. Beyond the post at Tolo, maize seems to be completely unknown. Among

Tek. FI33

M 243

T [243 W31]

the peoples of the Fimi, Lake Leopold II, and the lower Lukenie, the cultivation of maize is quite rudimentary. On the other hand, we encountered large fields of maize among the Bateke and especially among the Basfumu of the Kapanda territories. It is well to note, however, that the intense cultivation of maize in that region was not due to any direct use of it by the native, but to the hope of selling it profitably to the traders and workers of Leopoldville-Kinshasa.

Maize is sown in seed holes, 20 to 60 centimeters apart. The holes are dug in cleared ground as the rainy season draws near. The maize shoots appear after four days. At this time the plants are quite vulnerable to the depredations of birds. The children keep watch over the fields from morning to night for four or five days and drive the birds away with their cries.

Care of the crop includes weeding and thinning out the plants. Maize is neither hoed nor propped. It is sometimes sown as an extra crop in manioc fields. The maturity of maize is marked by the yellow, dry spathes. The harvest takes place some time after its maturity. The maize stalks are pulled out by the women and children, and the ears are cut off on the spot and carried to the village. [60]

The cultivation of rice is unknown in the region we visited, except among the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region. The ground is hoed before sowing. The rice is sown in seed holes during the first quarter of the rainy season. The care of the fields is limited to two or three weedings during the initial stage of the plant's growth. The crop must be guarded regularly and uninterruptedly from morning to night from flowering to harvest. The rice is cut with knives, ear by ear. The ears are gathered by the handful. These are put in loose sheaves and, after several days, piled in stacks. The threshing is done in the village by family groups. The native chooses a large, well-beaten area and uses long rods. Husking is done with a pestle in a wooden mortar. The husked rice is winnowed in baskets of rattan splints, which are circular and shallow with a reinforced rim. The average yield varies between 2,000 and 3,500 kilograms per hectare.

M [4/2]

Teke FO33

M 243 The cultivation of rice serves less to nourish the native than for trade. He usually sells his harvest immediately after the husking.

T 244 Peanuts thrive in the region of the Basfumu and among the Basiamba. They grow best in light soil and are not suitable for land cleared from the great forest. The crop demands a great deal of care and regular upkeep. Fields invaded by weeds yield

T M [462] nothing. The harvest takes place when the crop is mature and is the task of the women with the help of the children. The peanuts are placed in baskets carried on the back and taken to the village. The native spreads them out in the sun to dry. He turns them again and again, two or three times a day, and brings them into the hut at night.

M 244 Sugar-cane plantations are set up in marshy lowlands.

[462] [273] All the work on this crop falls to the men. These plantations are found only in regions where the natives make *masanga*, sugar-cane beer. Sugar-cane fields are especially numerous in the villages on the lower Lukenie and the Fimi.

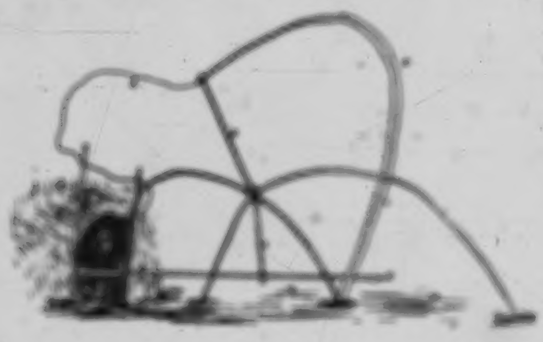
M 244 As a rule the natives also cultivate a few legumes, sweet potatoes, and yams, but on a small scale and without giving them any particular care. (41)

Hunting

M 224 462 Hunting is practiced only by men. They engage in it, not for sport, diversion, or relaxation, but for the sole purpose of procuring meat and fat.

M 224 857 From their earliest childhood, the boys get together to beat the grass and catch mice, rats, and other rodents which swarm in the bush. Nothing is more interesting than to see them at work. Ten, fifteen, or sometimes twenty of them form a large circle. Armed with sticks, they beat the grass and make an unbelievable din. Little by little the circle narrows, moving in on a small well-cleared space. The oldest, most daring and most agile of the boys keep watch over this space, their eyes alert and riveted on the edge of the grass, ready to pounce. The beaters redouble their zeal, strike, shout, gesture, and gradually drive all the rodents

224 857 toward the small clearing. Badgered and frightened, the rats, mice, etc., run madly. Not daring to break through the line of beaters, they are pushed toward the clearing, hesitate an instant before entering it, then bound in. Without moving from their places, the little hunters wait for them and catch them in passing.



A sharp, quick blow and their ribs are smashed in, their skulls broken. Not one escapes; neither their size (some rodents are as big as hares) nor bites nor scratches frighten these tots of three, four, or five years of age.

224 223 857 The children also occupy themselves by capturing birds and small rodents with nets and snares. The latter are made with a flexible stalk for a spring and a cord with a noose. A system of small sticks which automatically trigger the release compels the bird to stick its head into the noose to reach the bait. At this moment, the mechanism is released, and the victim is pulled up by the cord attached to the stalk spring.

224 The natives also set snares of the same sort in front of holes of rodents and other animals or at a place where they habitually pass.

At the village of Madjuku, I had occasion to see the mechanism of a rat snare in action. In front of a hole, two arched sticks [62] intersect. A strong rattan stalk (E) has been stuck into the ground, and two piassava cords (A and B) are tied to its tip. One of the cords ends in a noose, which is placed in front of the entrance to the hole. A small stick (C) is attached to the end of the second cord. One of the ends of this stick passes behind the intersection

224 of the two arches, and the other one is held in place by a mobile stick (D) placed transversally between the tips of the arches in such a fashion as to bar the mouth of the hole. In leaving or returning, the rodent sticks its head through the noose, and being impeded by the transverse stick (D), it pushes the stick aside with its paws, releasing the trigger stick (C) and the bent branch (B) which snaps up. The rodent is automatically caught in the noose, pulled up, and strangled. This snare is remarkably sensitive, and the rodent who tackles it is invariably caught.

The natives also set up snares for antelope. Being very observant, they quickly discover the place where an antelope passes regularly, as well as the size of the animal. They place a rattan noose at this spot and carefully hide it in the grass and leaves. The animal sticks its head through the noose in passing and is trapped. The more the animal struggles, the tighter the noose is drawn.

The native sets traps for the large flesh-eaters, hyenas, leopards, and large wild cats. [Ed., the text is not translated from the third paragraph, page 62, to the second paragraph, page 64.]

[64] Hunting the elephant and the hippopotamus involves traps, pitfalls, the spear, and the harpoon.

The pitfalls consist of large holes dug along the paths frequented by the pachyderms. These holes are three to four meters long, two meters wide, and four to five meters deep. At the bottom, the native plants wooden stakes whose ends, carved to a point, are hardened by fire. The opening is hidden by a mat of tree branches and roughly plaited creepers, covered with leaves and grass. These traps are a real danger to travelers in the country, and therefore the native is required to indicate their presence by a conventional sign prominently displayed. I first noticed these signposts between the Mosengere villages of Lokila and Gomo Erenge: a strong stake perpendicular to the ground, on top of which the native fastens a hoop and a stick. The latter is fixed obliquely to the ground in the direction of a straight line from the post to the trap. If a native neglects to place the signpost, he [65] loses his right to the game caught in the trap, and he is held responsible for any accidents that might result from his negligence.

224 Another trap, very often used for the hippopotamus, is made of a heavy iron point suspended above the path frequented by the pachyderms. During the day, they prefer to stay in the water or to sleep on a sand bank. At night, they leave their refuge to graze on the grass of the plain. More often than not the animal leaves quite visible traces of his passage on the bank as he leaves or enters the water. The native places his trap near those places,

[64]

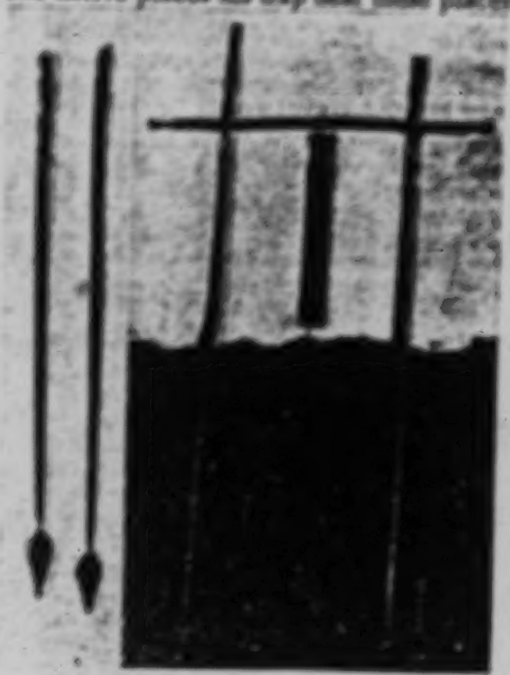


Fig. 40. Hunting Spears and Trap for Large Game, Lake Leopold II.

but avoids putting it at the exact spot where the animal comes out. Experience has shown him that the hippopotamus, being extremely cautious, is alerted by the least [65] alteration of this place and changes to another one immediately.

The iron point is embedded in a large block of wood. The whole apparatus is suspended four or five meters above the ground. A crossbar, one meter above the ground across the track, is held in place by the trigger device which controls the suspension of the

Teke FT33
Sakata FO43

weapon. As he passes, the pachyderm strikes and dislodges the crossbar, springs the trigger, disrupts the suspension, and the spear falls heavily upon him. The trap is arranged in such a way as to hit the animal on the nape of the neck. M 224

The native hunts with bow and arrow as well as with spear. The bow and arrow, however, is more a weapon than a hunting instrument. M 224 411

The peoples in the territory between the Congo and the Kasai, as well as the Baboma of the Fimi have now given up these weapons. A few privileged persons own percussion guns which are usually more dangerous to the hunter than to the hunted. When the native fires a shot, he extends his arms, directs the barrel towards the prey, and turns his head aside. If, through cunning and patience, he gets to within a few meters of the game without arousing its attention, the shot has a chance [66] of success. Ordinarily the animal is more or less gravely wounded, unless the overloaded gun explodes in the hands of the imprudent hunter.

The Bateke, Banfumu, and Baboma store powder in small receptacles made of a simple calabash or cut out of a block of hard wood. The calabashes are sometimes covered with a sheath of serpent or lizard skin to protect the powder more effectively from dampness. The wooden powder flasks are usually pear-shaped, probably to imitate the shape of the calabash. They have a wooden cover that fits very tightly into the body of the object, and the leather strap for hanging it up is attached to two holes cut in the body of the receptacle and drawn through two side openings in the cover. Very often these carved powder flasks are decorated with designs engraved in bas relief, linear motifs arranged in bands. The lines are sometimes curved, sometimes straight, and sometimes also oblique. The bottom of the powder flask is flat so that it may be placed upright [67] on a horizontal surface. The body of the powder flask extends into the straight cylindrical neck onto which the cover is fitted. S T 411 322 S T [53]

The bow with rattan thong is relatively rare. We found it only among the Tumba, Balesa, Bobale, Batete [Tete], Ipanga, Batitu, and the Pygmies. This bow is made with a rattan stem, its convex section facing out and its flat section facing in. The rattan thong is attached to the two ends after having been drawn through M 411 [171] small holes made in the body of the bow four centimeters from the tips. A shallow vertical groove is made at the end of each tip. Tension on the bow is obtained by drawing the bowstring through these notches.

The arrows are made of false bamboo, the two vanes of leaves drawn through a slot. The heads, hardened by fire, have small notches and are smeared with poison. This poison is dangerous only when quite fresh. A small dose of it will not kill, but benumbs the wounded animal.

The natives use these bows and arrows especially for hunting birds and more rarely for hunting monkeys. In the latter case, they like to use a bow made of a strong, very flexible, and very tough stalk. The average length varies between 80 centimeters and 1.10 meters. The stalk tapers gradually toward the ends which are pointed and have a stop notch. The convex side of the vertical section faces inward, the flat side outward. The cord is made of [203] banana tree fibers. The tension is constant, that is to say, the native does not slacken the bow at rest. Under tension the height of the curve of the bow is 12 centimeters; the bow's actual range is 150 meters and its useful range 100 meters, or 15 to 20 meters when shooting upward.

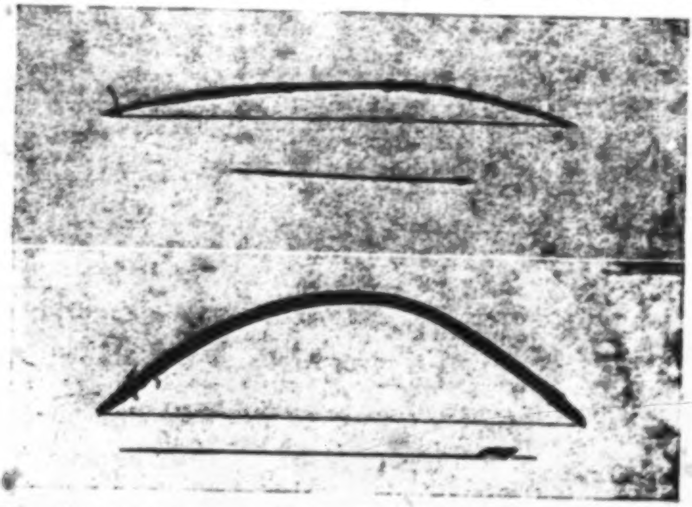


Fig. 41. Bow Strung with Cord and Arrow with Barbed Iron Head.
Fig. 42. Bow Strung with Rattan and Wooden Arrow.

M
411
[362] The manufacture of bows and arrows is practiced only by men.

M
411
322 The native chooses the wood for his arrows very carefully. It must be light and very tough. After scraping it carefully with a small knife, he carves one end into a point and cuts a notch at the other end for the bowstring. Both ends are slightly hardened by fire. The part where the vanes are to be attached is scraped with the greatest care. The lines marking the place for the vanes are drawn with the point of the knife, and the vanes are made out of half

S
[411
142
291] a feather from the wing of an eagle or guinea fowl. The native sets all [68] three vanes in place at the same time and fastens them with a fiber thread coiled in spirals.

M
[314] This fine ligature is strengthened with bulungu resin which is applied in a liquid state and thus forms a very light sheath when dry.

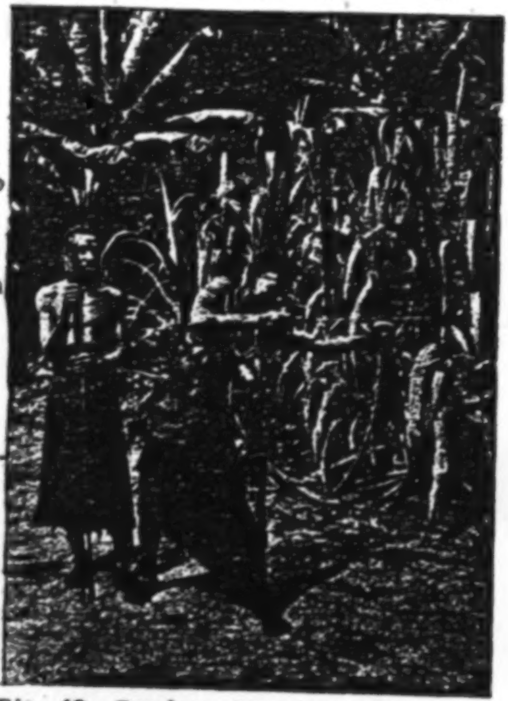


Fig. 43. Basakata Armed with Spears, Bow and Arrows.

M
411 The arrowhead ends in an elongated, conical socket into which the upper end of the wooden shaft is fitted. The general shape of the head is that of a narrow, oblong leaf, sometimes provided with one or two barbs. This shape is found throughout the Lake Leopold II and Lukenie regions. The notch for the bowstring is quite even and shallow, although among the

Yaelima

411 Yaelima it is sometimes as deep as five centimeters. The bow and arrow of the type we have just described serves both as an offensive and a defensive weapon. Its importance as a weapon must have formerly been greater. In our time wars between [721 tribes have become almost impossible. Attacks and reprisals by 578] individuals, on the other hand, are still rather frequent. This is especially true of the region east of Opombo. Every free Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima owns a bow and arrows and does not hesitate to use them either to defend himself or to attack.

224 Hunting with bow and arrow is done on an individual basis. The game taken in this way belongs wholly to the hunter. [69]

[411] Among the Yaelima we found an arrow with a removable head that is notably larger, wider, and stronger, and that is attached to the shaft by thin cords. The natives use these arrows for hunting antelope and buffalo. When the animal is hit, the arrowhead penetrates its body, and the surprised victim flees into the bush or forest. The shaft of the arrow, buffeted by the tall grass or lianas, gradually works itself loose. The head, attached to the shaft by a cord, remains in the wound. With each motion, the animal enlarges its wound. The shaft, sooner or later, is caught in the lianas or grass, with the result that the head is violently jerked from the wound, making it a mortal one. This very dangerous weapon is not widespread, and for good cause. The native can use it effectively only for a point-blank shot. The range of the bow is limited; the arrow with the removable point is heavy; the iron point is very wide and has small barbs. To succeed in planting this arrow in the body of the animal, it is necessary to creep to within several meters of the game, to string the bow without attracting the animal's attention, and to hit it in the belly. The wounded beast may seek its salvation in wild and fatal running, but it sometimes turns against its attacker. In any case, the hunter who uses these arrows cannot do so without risking great [70] danger. Although the native likes to hunt, he also fears the dangers associated with this occupation. The only ones who use these arrows are the intrepid true hunters who have inherited some of the instinct and audacity of the Batua [Twa]. Inunu, chief of the Batitu of the Oshwe region, who was audacious to the highest possible degree and feared no animal, obstacle, or danger, asserted to me that he and a few other hunters did not hesitate to attack elephants with this weapon.

Yaelima

The native most often uses his spear for hunting big game, 224
or he contents himself with setting traps.

The peoples west of the Ipanga have given up elephant hunting. During our sojourn in the region of the Bobaie, Basakata, and Balesa, the natives came to complain several times about the invasion of their manioc fields by elephants and the damage done by these inopportune visitors each time they came. They never thought of attacking the animals. To chase them away, they built fires and made an infernal din, while keeping their distance.

[291
411
301]

Fig. 44. Great Yaelima Hunter Showing his Harpoon Arrow.

In the region of the Ipanga-Batitu and among the Bokala-Yaelima, elephant hunting is rather frequent. The most daring hunters attack them with spears. This hunting is done on an individual basis. The hunter covers or smears himself with elephant dung. As he draws near, he takes a thousand precautions not to attract the attention of the animal, who is always on the alert. Once within range, he plants his spear into the under belly of the animal and gets away as fast as he can. The wounded beast

224 lunges forward at random until, exhausted by the wild ru and loss of blood, it falls for good. The hunter follows the track for two or three days without ever tiring or losing heart. He infers the probabilities of success from the loss of blood, the footprints, the length of the paces, and many other signs, and as long as any hope remains he keeps up

[41
29]

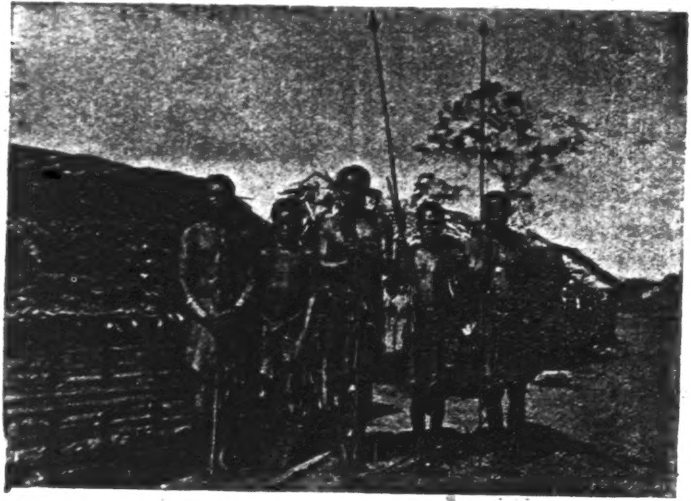


Fig. 45. Leaving for the Hunt in Yaelima Territory with Spears, Bows, Arrows, and Nets.

the chase. The animal sometimes manages to get rid of the spear. In this case, the hunter returns to the village and recounts his exploit to all who will listen. He does this not to establish a reputation, but to build up a claim against anyone who might find the animal if, by some wild chance, it should succumb to the wounds.

Communal hunting is more common. The natives use large [71] nets, spears, knives, and dogs. The group is divided into beaters, directed by a leader, and those who own nets and act as lookouts.

The first native hunt I had the pleasure to attend took place at Tua among the Banfumu.

1: Maes--51 E-5 (1913-1914) 1924 FO32 Mongo Teke FI33

224 The first native hunt I had the pleasure to attend took place at Tua among the Banfumu.

Upon arriving at the edge of the forest chosen for the hunt, the [231] chief hunter stopped, put his dog down on the ground, and ordered it to lie down and stay still. Well trained, the dog obeyed at the first sign. The leader assembled the hunters and told them he was 224 782 going to invoke the nkisi in order to ensure the success of the hut. He began:

"Why is there no fire?"

"Where, then, is the wood?"

Thereupon the men carrying the nets put their burden down and went off to the left and right to gather dry wood with which they made a pyre. A hunter squatted down and lighted the fire with his strike-a-light. When the wood caught fire, the chief beater continued:

"Where, then, are the nets? Why don't I see the little bells? What [72] has happened to the dogs?" Immediately, the nets and bells were placed in a circle around the fire, while the dogs and the hunters grouped themselves around the chief beater. He tore off a tree branch and held it over each net in turn, saying, "You will be stretched out in the forest, and you will stop the game!" Then, passing the branch over the bells and the dogs, he continued, "You will awaken the game in the forest, and you will drive them into the nets!" Next, taking a large leaf, he placed it flat over the hollow of his left fist and struck it with the palm of his right hand to make it pop with a sharp noise, saying, "May the nkisi favor us."

[534] Next, seating himself before each net, he blew twice into a small wooden whistle which Folikini, the Mfumu na Tse, had given to him along with the nkisi of the hunt, struck the nets and bells twice, and whispered several mysterious words. At each invocation, the man carrying the net and the owner of the dog made a leaf pop on their fists by striking it with their right palms.

A child brought a white chicken. The chief beater tore off its head with a sharp jerk and sprinkled the nets and bells with blood while invoking the nkisi. He then threw the chicken on the fire after sprinkling it with the red, brown, and black dust of the nkisi given to him by Folikini at the moment of departure. While the unplucked [436] chicken roasted on the fire, one of the hunters placed a bundle of small shells (native currency) on the ground. Each hunter took an equal share of these and gave them to the chief beater.

Take FI33

224 782 The latter then opened the roasted chicken and amid the shouts of the hunters threw the entrails into the fire in honor of the nkisi. Then each hunter brought a banana leaf to receive his share of the chicken. Immediately thereafter, they tore off tree branches, threw them on the fire, trampled all this, and smeared the nets, bells, dogs, bows, arrows, spears, and their own bodies with the ashes. The ceremony was over. The hunt was about to begin.

Fig. 46. Putting the Hunting Nets in Place.

224 The net bearers took up their loads and went to set up the nets in the forest.

Each net was from 20 to 25 meters long. The native stretched them slightly oblique, on a slant toward the beaters. The latter attached [73] the bells under the dogs' bellies and went to form a large arc whose ends pointed towards the ends of the nets. We followed the owners of the nets. They stationed themselves 10 or 12 paces in front of their nets, hiding in the foliage, while we stood near the nets, but at a good distance from one another. Soon the cries of the beaters, the jingle of the bells, and the barking of the dogs awakened the silent forest.

We loaded our rifles.

The chief beater's voice was heard, "Aliende go... O..O!" The dogs had just flushed some game. They chased it, and the beaters shouted, sang, made a racket, and incited their dogs.

Take F133

224 Care had to be taken so that the panic-stricken beast would not slip between them. Soon we heard a great shout, followed by a plaintive animal cry. A *buluku* (small, mauve antelope, *Cephalophus maxwelli*) had just been caught in a net. The owner rushed out from his hiding place. The small beast, frightened out of its wits, made desperate efforts to get loose, but entangled itself more and more. In a flash, the native seized it and securely tied its legs. [74]

Ordinarily he would have finished it off, but we had given orders not to kill the game for fear of harm to the skins.

A second, third, and fourth beating followed the first. We stood on the lookout all the while. Alas! Not one large catch! About three o'clock we returned to the post, followed by the hunters carrying the six captured *buluku*. The hunt had not been a very good one. Mr. Borremans told us that the natives often return with 10 or 15 of these small antelopes.

Sometimes an elephant is roused by the beaters, a disastrous occurrence for the nets and a dangerous one for the hunters. If the frightened beast plunges into the nets, it tears them loose, to the great danger of the owner who stands on watch. If the animal in its fury turns upon the dogs, the beaters have no choice but to flee as fast as they can!

224 778 Every communal hunt is accompanied by some magico-religious ceremonies. This custom is common among all the peoples we visited west of Dekese. Throughout this region, we found a small place in each village dedicated to the guardian spirits of the hunt. In the Leopoldville region and among the Bateke in general, the fetish place is enclosed by high stalks reinforced with intertwined transverse stalks. In rare instances antelope and buffalo skulls are found inside these enclosures of the *nkisi* of the hunt.

224 778 346 We found the same kind of enclosure among the Banfumungu, but instead of standing against the native's hut, it was placed in front of the entrance of a small hut with a very peculiar and characteristic shape. The roof had a double slope and a horizontal ridgepole; the side walls were rectangular and the others gabled. A small rectangular opening with a woven screen to close it on the inside was cut in the wall that faced the enclosure, and this served as a door. Inside the hut we noted a small hearth made of

224 three tiny termite mounds, a bed covered with a mat, and one or
778 two worn pots containing the oddest assortment of objects, as well
346 as ngula powder, mpembe, and black earth. It is in this hut that
the fetisher keeps the hunting fetish. [75] It was quite accidentally that I was able to observe this fact during my visit to the village of Mbomu in the Banfumu region.

Among the Banfumu of the Bokala region and the Baboma of Mushie-Bokala-Wombali, we found these same typical huts dedicated to the guardian spirits of the hunt.

Fig. 47. Baboma Hut for Nkisi of the Hunt. In the background, hut of Basonge type with conical roof and square base.

In the village of Bomu-fioti, the hut of the hunt was considerably larger and was not surrounded by an enclosure, but in front of its entrance stood a tiny hut that strongly resembled a very large hive with a pointed top and a markedly curved base. This hut was the sanctuary of the guardian fetish of the hunt. All sorts of skulls were piled around the hut, attesting to the power of the fetish.

In the Baboma village of Wombali, the hut of the nkisi of the hunt was two meters long and one meter wide. The roof and the side walls were made of lengths of rattan bent into a half ellipse.

224 The door had been cut in the front wall. The hut was thatched
778 and surrounded by a rattan fence. Inside there were a bed and
346 three nkisi pots. As for the fetish, if there [76] were one, the natives had taken it out before our visit. Animal skulls lay all around the hut.

[784] According to our information, entrance to the hut of the nkisi of the hunt is forbidden to women and to every native whose reputation as a hunter has not been established by exploits during communal hunts. On the eve of an organized hunt, that is, a communal hunt with nets, the chief fetisher or whoever is designated to lead the hunt must retire to the hut. He spends the night there without going out under any pretext and without taking any food whatever. If, for any reason, he violates these rules, the hunt must be put off until the following day.

224 When all the hunters are assembled, about five o'clock in the
778 morning, he leaves the hut with a small bag made of banana leaves in which he carries part of the magic substances taken from the nkisi pots. These substances will be used in the special ceremonies which take place at the edge of the forest just before the hunt. Upon returning from the hunt, the skull of the largest animal killed is placed in front of the hut as a token of gratitude.

When he hunts alone, the hunter whose reputation is such as to entitle him to enter the fetish hut must stay in it four days before starting out. He takes his weapons, spears, knives, bows, and arrows and keeps them inside all the while. He may leave the enclosure only to satisfy the most urgent needs, and before going out, as well as upon re-entering, he must pluck a leaf from a nearby bush, lay it over the hollow of his loosely clenched left hand, and pop it by hitting it with the flat of his right hand, in the manner we described when relating the ceremonies of the buluku hunt. Food must be brought to him by a man, and it must be taken from the portion set aside for another hunter of repute.
[834] Going out at night and all sexual relations are strictly forbidden. Upon returning from the hunt, he must lay the skulls in front of the hut and fasten the largest one to one of the stakes of the en-
224 closure. We were able to acquire two fetish objects found inside
778 these huts. The first came from the Banfumu village of Mbomu
532 and was acquired under the circumstances described earlier. This fetish is [77] carved in the shape of a human figurine and

Teke FI33
Sakata FO43

T 224 778 532

represents a man standing. The head alone has been worked with some care. The body is crudely outlined, the sexual organs are roughly indicated, the legs poorly defined, and there are no arms. A twisted cord of banana fiber is tied above the hips to represent a belt. The whole figurine was smeared with ngula paste.

S 224 778 532

The second one was purchased in the village of Bakomu and differs notably from the first. It consists of a basket of rattan splints, 18.5 centimeters tall and 27 centimeters in diameter, with a square base and filled with a compact mixture of mpembe, black earth, ngula, and finely ground iron ore. The whole mixture was sprinkled with water and chicken blood and mixed and kneaded so as to form a thick paste. This paste was poured into the basket, and the fetisher had stuck into it two figurines and a spearhead carved in wood. The figurines are very crude and worked very little. Their appearance, the worn state, and age, which are characteristic of them, gives them a very ancient stamp. It was not at all easy to acquire these fetishes. Aside from the opposition of the natives in general, we had [78] to overcome the resistance of the qualified hunters and to secure the cooperation of the fetisher.

T [224 778 532]

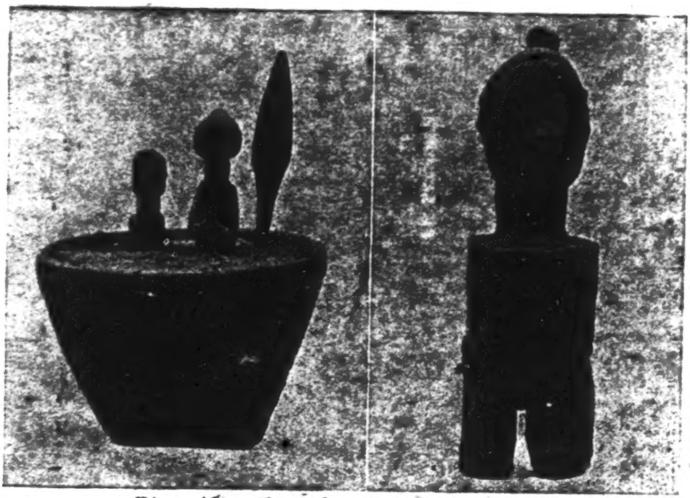


Fig. 48. (1) Baboma Hunting Fetish.
(2) Banfumu Hunting Fetish.

1: Maes--57 E-5 (1913-1914) 1924 FO32 Mongo
Sakata FO43

224
346
778 Beyond the Baboma the hut dedicated to the guardian spirits of the hunt gradually disappears. We no longer found the slightest trace of fetish figurines.

Among the Basakata and Wadia of the Fimi, as well as among the Bobaie and Balesa, we came across small and quite rudimentary structures, faintly reminiscent of the Baboma-Banfumu-Bateke customs, in several villages. The hut had given way to a small, very low shelter, open on all sides and resting against the trunk of a fine banana tree. Under this shelter we noted: four earthenware pots stuffed with a mixture of the most varied substances, a few antelope skulls, and, in front, an antelope horn planted in the ground and containing a thick, liquid substance of dubious nature. A bow and arrow were hung inside. Finally, a calabash, a termite nest, and a buffalo skull were on the ground. We vainly [79] attempted to determine the significance, use, and purpose of all these objects. The natives would only answer, "Nkisi, Mundele."

Fig. 49. Hut of Nkisi of the Hunt and a Banana Tree with Flower and Fruit, Village of Madjuku, Bobaie Tribe.

A fine bunch of bananas hung from the tree trunk, and the first fruits were quite ripe. While questioning the natives, I plucked one of these bananas. Immediately, I was beset with protests.

FO32.
Sakata FO43

S
"Did not the bananas belong to the nkisi? This bunch was taboo! 224
No one had the right to take a banana from it!" Several natives 346
rushed into the banana groves and brought back quantities of 778
bananas. They had their hands full of them. They offered all
of them to me in exchange for the one banana taken from the
tree of the nkisi, and when I finally gave it to them, they fastened it under the roof inside the nkisi shelter.

S
In the Bobaie village of Madjulu, the nkisi hut is replaced by 224
a large basket, surrounded by large blocks of wood and covered 778
with grass. A large, broken pot for cooking chikwangue [Ed., manioc cakes] was placed on top of it. Several sticks were placed around it, and at the top of two of them the natives had hung large calabashes. Here again I found it impossible to get precise information about the use or [80] significance of each of these objects. The few skulls of small antelopes inside the basket were again vaguely reminiscent of the Bateke-Bamfumu custom of huts for the nkisi of the hunt.

Among the Tumba, the Wadia on the right shore of Lake M [171]

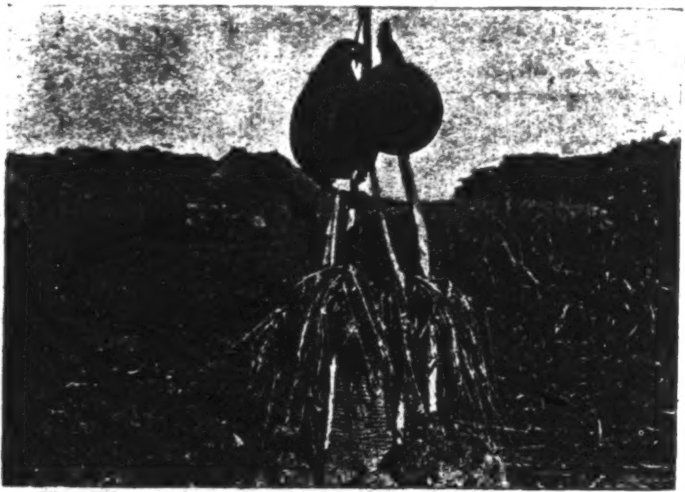


Fig. 50. Bobaie Hunting Fetish, Village of Madjuku.

Leopold II, and the Mosengere, all traces of such huts disappear. In the Wadia village of Ibali, a large pot was placed on top of a branch which ended in a trident with diverging spikes. This pot was three-fourths full of a reddish, very thick mud. A few splints

Sakata FO43
Yaelima

S 224 778 of false bamboo, two or three arrowheads, and a small bow had been stuck in this paste. At the foot of the stake the natives had piled a whole series of antelope and buffalo skulls. These remains alone were vaguely reminiscent of the hunting fetish of the Kasai region.

M S 224 778 It is possible that this very simple form of the nkisi of the hunt is also the earliest and that it is closest to ancestral custom, since the primitive shelters of the neighboring peoples and the huts characteristic of the Bateke-Banfumu tribes are actually a mere elaboration of the custom followed by the parental branch of these peoples, a custom which called for the skull of the largest animal killed during the hunt to be dedicated to the guardian spirits of the hunt and to be placed at the foot of the physical representation of these spirits.

M 224 778 In the region of Oshwe and Bumbuli we found no trace of this custom. Each village, however, possessed its hunting fetish. The one in the Yaelima village of Yanga is among the most interesting. A tall shrub stands near a group of four huts located slightly apart from the principal area of the settlement. Two forked stakes, 1.20 meters apart, stand close by, and a straight stick lies on the ground, which may be placed on the forks. A small piece of a calabash hangs by two lianas, one of which is tied to the tree, the other to one of the forked stakes. The calabash contains substances with magic power: a mixture of mpembe and black earth, forming a muddy paste. Before leaving on a communal hunt, each hunter who owns a net must walk by this fetish. The head of one of his arrows or of his spear is dipped in the small calabash, and part of the mud that sticks to it [81] is spread on the nets. Upon returning from the hunt, a piece of flesh from one of the animals killed is hung on the crossbar lying on the two forked stakes. The custom of depositing skulls does not seem to be known in the region.

The hunting fetish of the Bokala in the village of Yoshomo Monene stands in the center of the native settlement. It consists of two forked stakes which may be joined by a crossbar, exactly like the framework of the Yaelima hunting fetish. The tall shrub is replaced by an herbaceous plant with thick leaves. The calabash containing the magic substances lies on the ground between the

Yaelima

224
778 plant and one of the stakes. The customs and ceremonies observed before leaving for the communal hunt are identical to those we have just described.

224 As to the relations between the fetisher, the hunting fetish, and the individual hunter, we will ignore them, having been unable to obtain any information on this subject in these regions.

Throughout the region we visited, large-scale hunting is done communally. As a rule, all the men participate, including young men from the age of 15. [Ed., the text is not translated from the last paragraph, page 81, to the second paragraph, page 83.]

[83] The catch of the communal hunt is shared among all the families in the village, with the chief and the dignitaries having special rights.

224
622 Individual hunting does not entail any distribution, except when a buffalo, leopard, or elephant is involved. [293] The tail of the buffalo goes to the native chief who uses it as a fly-chaser and a badge of rank. [281] The skin of the leopard is reserved for the chief, who makes it into a skirt which he displays ostentatiously at important festivities and public dances. The trunk and tusks of the elephant go to the chief while the bristles go in [778] part to the hunters and [84] in part to the local dignitaries, who [301] use them to make necklaces.

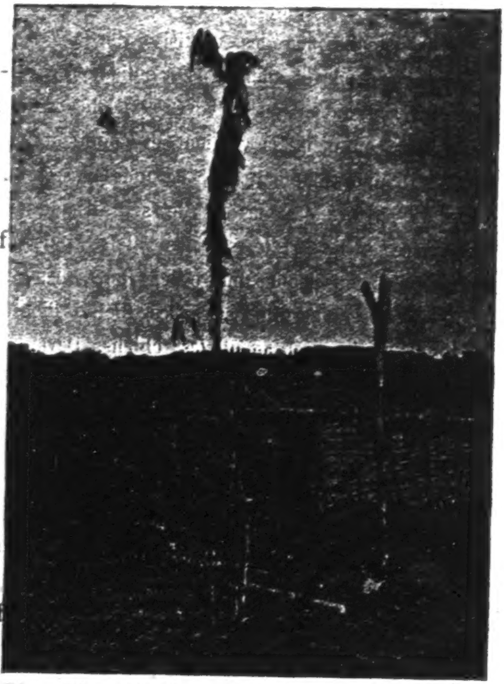


Fig. 51. Yaelima Fetish, Nkisi of the Hunt.

SAKATA FO43

Fishing

M 226 Near rivers, swamps, and lakes, fishing is one of the principal occupations of the native.

M [462] Unlike hunting which is practiced only by men, fishing is done by both men and women. The latter, however, practice it only occasionally and fish only by damming up part of a river bed or marsh. The dam is usually built during the rainy season, but as long as the water is rising, the women leave all the sluices wide open. Toward the end of the rainy season, they narrow the drain channels and set large traps before the openings. These traps are attached to strong wooden stakes on the shore near the dam. M 226 285 The traps are made of splints from the ribs of raffia leaves and are plaited in openwork with the open spaces varying in size. The exterior form is always the same. Cylindrical at one end [85] and the other end closed along the diameter, the trap resembles a large cone ending in a line at the top. These traps are built over a framework made of two, three, or four hoops. Their diameters vary according to their positions. They are set inside the trap, the largest one at the base, the smallest one toward the upper end. The transverse elements, doubled and woven alternately in and out, are spaced 10 to 15 centimeters apart and are usually made of strips of rattan. The inner trap, or entry trap, is plaited in the shape of a broad fan, conical

S M [227 285]

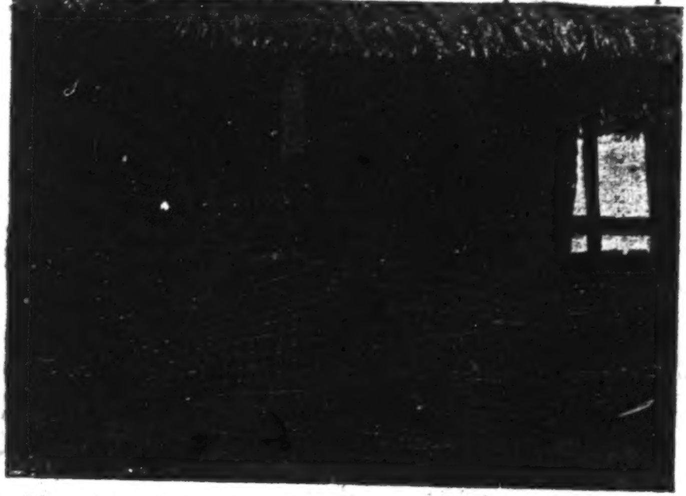


Fig. 52. Making a Fish Trap among the Wadia and Tumba.

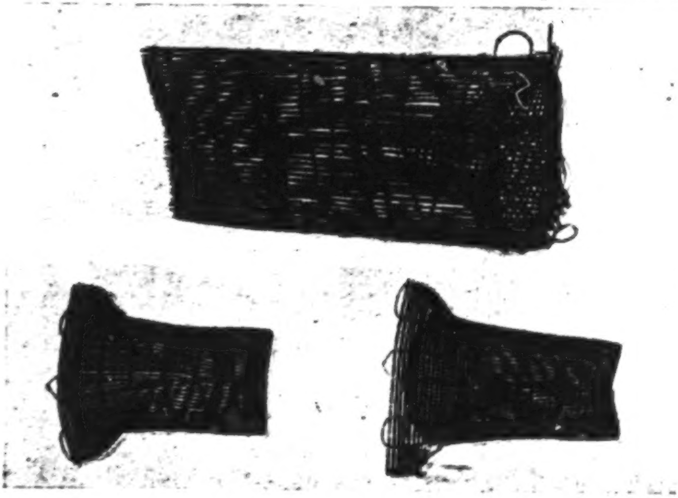
in form, with an ellipsoidal base. The open top is the entrance 226
hole. The ends of the splints overlap somewhat on the inside in 285
order to prevent the trapped fish from retracing their paths and
escaping.

These traps are made only by men. When the plaiting is done, [462]
the work is flat, and then the finished latticework is fastened to the
frame.

The trap is opened by detaching the binding that closes the top.

As the waters recede, a woman lowers the trap. Morning and 226
evening she comes to inspect it and to gather the captured fish.
[86]

When the waters have fully subsided, the women assemble and go up the river or into the swamp. Standing across the full width of the watercourse, they walk down, chasing before them the fish that remained in the dammed-off area. They make an ear-shattering din, slapping the water with broad sticks or churning it with arms and legs. The hunted and terrified fish flee wildly only to be caught eventually in the trap. If they try to break through the line of women, the latter do not hesitate to grab and fling them on the bank. [Ed., the text is not translated from the second paragraph, page 86, to the second paragraph, page 87.]



[226
285]

Fig. 53. Fish Traps used by the Peoples of Lake Leopold II.

Yaelima

226 [87] After the drive through the dammed-off area, there are usually several fish remaining that succeeded in slipping through the chain. The women then take baskets and bail the pool dry, throwing the water over the dam.

Very often the women dam up part of a marsh or stream and bail out the water with baskets without setting traps or waiting for the water level to go down.

In all three cases we find: 1) setting the trap in front of the drain channel; 2) the drive in the dammed-up area; and 3) bailing out this section. The catch is divided equally among the women who participated in the work. [88]

These three methods of fishing prevail among all the riparian peoples of the Congo, Kasai, Fimi, Lake Leopold II, and the lower Lukenie.

On the upper Lukenie, starting with the Oshwe sector, no traps are made. At most the women occasionally dam up a section of the rivers and streams of the interior and bail them out with baskets to catch the fish.

226 184 The Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima do not fish at all. They are people of the forest and not of the water. Hunting is their chief occupation, and fishing is unknown to them.

In this connection, these tribes are wholly distinct from their neighbors to the west. It must be noted, however, that even among the latter all the clans do not engage in fishing. The groups of the interior do not fish any more than their brothers of the sector of Oshwe and Bumbuli. The traps and other contrivances which we shall discuss below are unknown to both groups. In this respect, all these peoples have a common characteristic, recalling their common origin. In the lower Lukenie and farther west, however, part of the population, the Bandzali, "people of the water," have adapted themselves to the new conditions of their environment. The river became for them a source of wealth and well-being, and a part of their social activity was oriented toward the exploitation of this precious resource.

226 258 At the present time fishing and the preparation of salt are practically the only means of subsistence and unquestionably the principal occupations of all the riparian groups in the region of Leopoldville, Kwamouth, Lake Leopold II, and the lower Lukenie.

226 258 Among all the tribes of this region, we were able to distinguish clearly between the groups of the interior, whose chief occupation is hunting, and the riparian groups who prefer to fish and make salt.

Two clans arose in this fashion within a single ethnic group. They both belong to the large family known by the name of the tribe, and yet they are completely different in the habits, practices, and customs relating to that aspect of their lives.

226 During the dry season, one sees the natives from villages located two or three hours' march into the interior come to establish camps on the [89] river bank and to set up veritable fisheries. The information that follows applies to these groups and to all the peoples from Leopoldville to the sector of Tolo inclusively. The rivers, lakes, and marshes in this region are extremely well stocked with fish. As a matter of interest, we give here the list of some native names for fish noted by Mr. Bayens and used by the Bandzali of the Tolo region: kinkure mbieme, lepari, ignognienge, mpushu, lokanga, itike, mokonga, n'sombo, loana, sabere, lboie, moelo, n'ikulu, m'binga, pesule, m'butu, mondja, mshime, moekiki, lupungu, ompara, m'vunu, longelenzali, monkie, komoe, ikeke, koshoie, nokama, singa, n'guikemen, m'pio, mwiki, ekambela, lekumu, elangu, evuya, mekamo, m'beli, motume, idzore, kebaie, kupu, mokeja, kevuni, mopa lekeje, mipari.

Aside from fishing with dams, these different groups fish both individually and communally.

Individual fishing is done by the following methods.

1) Fishing with hook and line, angling. The hook is made of a very fine splint of false bamboo, folded back and held in the shape of a hook by a fine raffia fiber. This raffia fiber extends on to form the fishing line. It is attached to a splint of bamboo which serves as a float. The native does not keep watch over his line. He fastens the lines with the hooks on them to a rope of twisted fibers. The lines are spaced 30 to 50 centimeters apart. The rope is 10 to 15 meters long and is attached to a stick at either end. The native plants two stakes in the river bed. He attaches the two ends of the rope to them, taking care that it is stretched perpendicularly to the current. The lines with float and hook are uncoiled, the bait consisting of a pellet of

226 chikwangue [Ed., manioc cake] or an earthworm is fastened to the hook, and everything is thrown into the water. Under the pressure of the current, the lines are drawn out and lie parallel to each other, held at one end by the large rope stretched over the water. A fish, attracted by the bait, seizes it and swallows it along with the hook, which remains in the stomach. All its efforts to free itself merely hooks the fish more securely. The native inspects the rope four or five times during the day and pulls in the lines one by one. The hooked fish is cut loose by severing the string from the hook; it is gutted and thrown into the canoe. [90] The hook is replaced with one held in reserve until the first one is recovered while cleaning the catch.

[227]
[285]

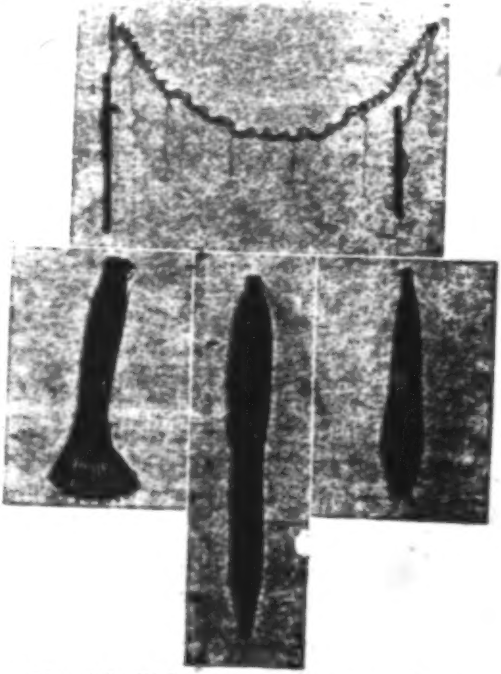


Fig. 54. Fish Traps and Lines, Lake Leopold II.

The native also fishes with a line on the bottom and an inert line without a float. The hook is larger and usually made of iron. The strong rope is coated with oil to make

226 it more durable. The bait, consisting of a piece of chikwangue, entirely covers the hook. The line is thrown into the water, weighted with stones, and attached to a stake on the bank. The native pulls in these lines only in the morning and at night. They are used only for large fish.

2) Fishing with bow and arrow. This is a method of fishing at which the natives excel. During the hot hours of the day, they settle themselves comfortably in their canoe among the grasses and wait patiently for a large fish to wander up to the surface of the water. Immediately, they bend the bow and shoot the arrow. They are fine shots and rarely miss their target. The fish is usually run through and impaled on the arrow. Hampered in its movements, it vainly tries to dive. The native puts down his bow, judges his spring, dives, grabs the fish, and climbs back into his canoe. [91]

3) Harpoon fishing is practiced especially for capturing fish that live in the mud. The native takes to this with real passion. Standing in his canoe, he lets himself be carried along by the current, advancing slowly so that no disturbance of the water will scare the fish. With a slow, regular, methodical motion, he plunges in his harpoon, guided by chance and his instinct. The jerks made by the harpooned fish trying to escape alert the experienced fisherman to his catch. He immediately increases the pressure, and then with a slow, regular, methodical motion he pulls up the harpoon, avoiding any abrupt motion that might detach the prize.

[411] The fishing harpoon is made of a bamboo shaft about 2.50 meters long onto which four wooden prongs are attached with bonds of rattan splints. At the tip of each of these four prongs is fastened an iron point which has four barbs and terminates in a conical socket.

4) Fishing with a trap placed at random in the grass of marshy banks. [92] The traps, made of rattan splints and with an opening that has spikes pointed toward the interior, vary in size, but they are all made by the same technique. The native puts bait inside and submerges the whole trap in the water. The fish, attracted by the bait, try to get it and enter the trap through the opening set on its side. This entrance, easy to negotiate from

M
226

the outside, bristles with spikes pointed toward the interior, which prevent the fish from leaving the trap. The shape of the traps for small fish is long, tubular, and narrow. They open at one end, and the entrance with spikes is set toward the middle of the trap. The traps for big fish have the shape of a truncated cone, with the top forming a straight line. The entrance, constructed on the same principle as that of the small traps, is set in the forward part, opening toward the interior. These traps are placed in front of the drain channels of dammed-up marshes and rivers.

M
226
285

5) Fishing with a trap, usually set in waters with a strong current. The trap is in the shape of a cone, its movable base serving as a lid and its tip extended by a strong, flexible strip of rattan which acts as a spring. A liana is attached to the end of the rattan. A free-swinging, trapeze-like apparatus is tied to the body of the trap. The bait is attached to a rattan splint inside the trap. This splint is tied to a small, mobile crossbar on the trapeze. The liana tied to the end of the rattan spring is drawn inside the trap through one of the openings near the supporting hoop of the entrance and is attached to the movable lid. The trap is constructed in such a way that when it is not set, the lid is closed by the pull of the rattan spring. To set the trap, the native ties toward the middle of the liana a rattan splint to which a small stick is attached. The end (A) of the latter passes behind

Fig. 55. Making a Fish Trap among the Bobaie.

S
[227
285]

M 226 285 the bar of the trapeze, and the point (B) is caught behind the mobile crossbar (C). To the latter the native ties a rattan splint, at the end of which he fastens the bait. This consists of a palm nut still covered with pulp. To reach the bait, the fish enters the trap; it takes the bait, pulls on it, and dislodges the triggering crossbar (C). The catches (A) and (B) are freed, the rattan spring is released, and the lid closes, trapping the fish. [93]

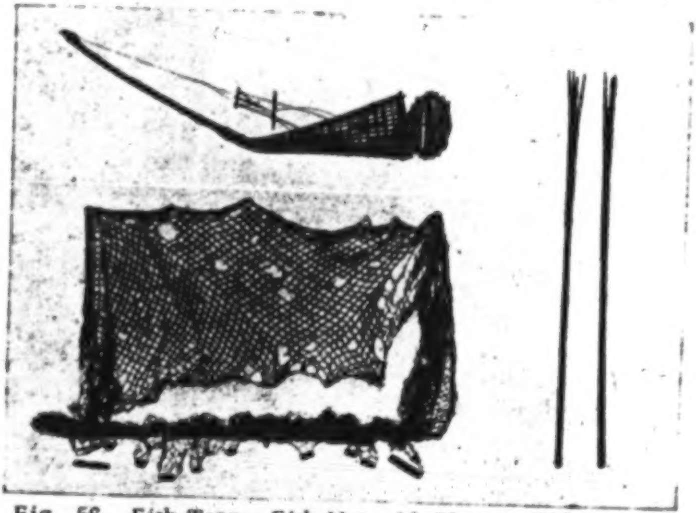


Fig. 56. Fish Trap. Fish Net with Floats. Fishing Harpoons from Lake Leopold II.

M 226 685 In individual fishing, the fish belong to the owner of the trap or to the person who set it. The native respects this right, and, moreover, custom punishes offenses very severely. Native law is rigorous to the point that a man caught red-handed in theft is liable to be driven from the community.

M 226 The yield from individual fishing is of hardly any importance. This kind of fishing is practiced only to vary the diet a little, and it is successful only because of the tremendous abundance of fish in these rivers.

M S 226 Communal fishing is much more productive. Certain tribes, or to be more exact, certain families among the peoples of the Fimi, Lake Leopold II, and the lower Lukenie make a veritable

S M 226 industry of it. This sort of thing flourishes especially among the riparian people in the country of the Basakata, Balesa, and Mosengere.

S M 226 361 In the region of the lower Fimi, as well as along the marshy banks of the lower Lulonga, native fishing camps are quite numerous. They are all of the same type and [94] never have the character of a permanent settlement. At the end of the rainy season one sees families of riparian peoples leave their villages temporarily and settle along the marshy rivers. Men and women make this move, while children, old people, and a few able-bodied adults stay in the village to guard the homes.

The fishing camps are set up in very rudimentary fashion. The huts are merely shelters, refuges.

S M [462] Gathering salt grass for making salt is the chief task of the women. The men do the fishing.

S M 226 All the methods for fishing individually are used, but the bulk of the work is done communally.

The procedures are quite varied. We will mention the following.

1) Damming the mouths of small rivers and minor tributaries, along with setting traps in front of the escape channel and the method of driving the fish described above.

S M [286 386] 2) Fishing with a net. Unlike the nets used for hunting, the fishing nets are made of raffia fibers. The type of knot is the same, but the technique is more like the one used for plaiting the hair. The native carefully dyes the fibers black in order to make the mesh invisible under water. He attaches small cylindrical sections of a very light wood to the upper part of the net to serve as floats. At the opposite edge, he attaches the sinkers, made of cylindrical pieces of baked clay. The floats and sinkers are made so that they counterbalance each other and maintain the net in a vertical position in the water. These nets are 20 to 25 meters long. If necessary, the natives use a series of nets and dam the whole river in this way. Five to ten men are stationed with large baskets along the nets. The women go up the river 100 to 200 meters, enter the water, and form a chain to drive the fish before them. These are caught in the meshes of the nets and attract the attention of the fishermen by the efforts they

S
M
226 make to free themselves. The fishermen grab them and throw them in their baskets. [95]

Sometimes the natives enclose an area on the grassy banks, move into it, and search the grass for fish. If the fish try to break away for the main channel, they are caught in the meshes of the net.

3) Fishing with screens. This method is the most common. It is easier and more productive than the others. The screens are made of long splints of rattan or raffia, placed parallel to each other one or two centimeters apart. The cross elements of rattan are spaced from 20 to 30 centimeters apart. The height of the screens varies from 66 centimeters to 2. 50 meters, and their length from 10 to 20 meters. These screens are used as dams in the river, marshes, coves, and at the mouths of small tributaries. They are fastened to stakes and sunk perpendicularly into the river bed. The natives set them up when the waters first begin to recede. A little upstream of the screens, they throw into the river a number of branches, still bearing their leaves, in such a fashion as to provide a shelter for the fish stopped by the screen. When the water is very low, the natives go a very great distance upstream. They enter the water, form a tight chain, and work methodically downstream toward the screen. All the fish are driven toward it. At 25 or 30 meters from the screen, the natives put another screen in the water. Some of the fishermen are assigned to hold it vertical. The others enter the enclosure formed by the two screens, take out the sheltering branches and grass, and begin to hunt the fish. They have openwork baskets shaped like a truncated cone. The fisherman, with the basket in front of him, sets it down on the river bed, the large opening toward the bottom. If a fish is trapped in the basket, the fisherman can tell by the light bumps against the sides caused by the fish trying to escape. The fisherman plunges his hand into the basket through the top opening, gropes about inside, seizes the fish, breaks its backbone, and throws it into the canoe or on the bank.

S
M
251 The catch is carried to the temporary village, and the fish are gutted, cleaned, and thrown on the apparatus for smoking them. This is a [96] grid made with rattan of average thickness, which rests on crossbars placed on forked stakes planted in the ground.

S M 251 The average height is 1.25 meters, the width 2.50 meters, and the length five to ten meters. The women maintain a fire under this smoking-drying apparatus night and day. It is fed with grass and other rubbish, which are not very dry so that a great deal of smoke will be produced. All the fish are turned over twice a day. After eight to ten days the operation is finished. The dried, smoked fish are carefully wrapped after being sorted and graded according to size. Part of the fish will make up the family reserve, and the rest will be used as trade goods. When the grid is almost empty, the men go up the river and start fishing again.

S M [226 285]

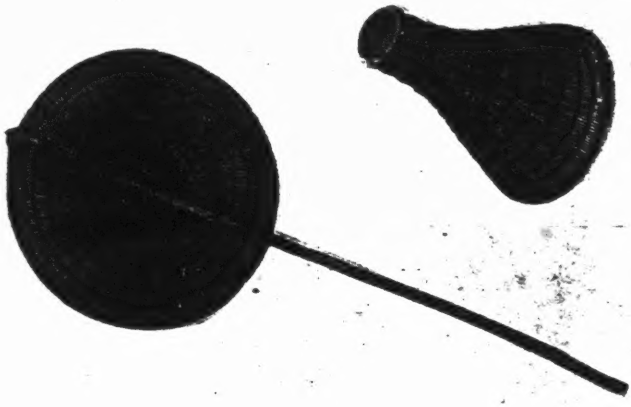


Fig. 57. Baskets for Fishing, Lake Leopold II.

S M 226 It is difficult to realize the magnitude of this industry and the unbelievable quantities of fish caught by the natives during their sojourn in the region of the salt grass. We watched one of these miraculous hauls one day, organized through the kind cooperation of Mr. Molin. The river had been dammed for only one night, the natives went up it only 150 [97] meters, this in the middle of the dry season, and yet they brought back four large baskets full of fish.

S M [622] The catch from communal fishing is shared at the end of the season. A part is reserved for the chief, the owners of the screens receive a special share, and the rest is divided among all the
000 members of the group participating in the enterprise. [Ed., a

Ntomba

paragraph beginning on page 97 and continued on page 98 is not translated.] 000

[98] On the whole, we note the following special ethnic characteristics. 241

1) Uniformity in the cultivation of manioc, the staple food of all of these peoples.

2) Undertaking the cultivation of maize under the influence of the ephemeral encouragement of Bula Matari [Ed., the European administration] among the peoples of the Congo-Kasai, and rice cultivation under Arab influence in the region of Bena Dibele-Kole. Contrary to what we noted concerning maize, the innovation introduced by the Arabs has become firmly implanted in the life of these natives, and the cultivation of rice will probably eliminate manioc eventually. 241 177

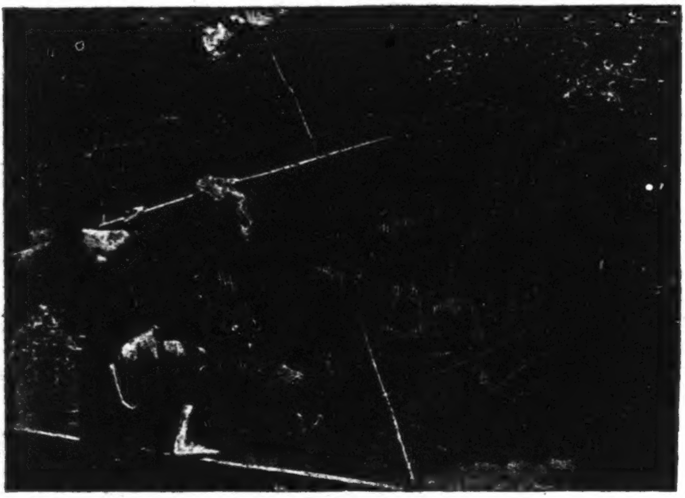


Fig. 58. Weir Fishing at a Dam among the Mosengere. Closing the Screens and Capturing the Trapped Fish.

[226]

3) Formation of a zone of sugar-cane cultivation, the development of which is in inverse proportion to the extent of the palm groves.

4) Complete absence of animal husbandry of any importance. 231

5) Uniformity in the methods of communal hunting and the gradual development of attendant religious customs and practices from east to west, corresponding to a decline in hunting by individuals with traditional weapons. This fact leads us to suppose 224 174

Ntomba

224
174 that hunting was practiced as a rule in the ancestral society without special recourse to any protective force or spirit and that primitive man relied wholly on his strength, skill, courage, and necessity. The small yield and the accidents involved in this dangerous sport probably impelled the primitives to go in groups, the first step to communal hunting. In the course of these forays, accidents must have occurred, some men being hurt and others spared. For no apparent cause, one hunt was successful and another failed. Not being able to understand the reason for these occurrence, the natives naturally ascribed their origin to spirits, from which arose the desire to gain the favor of these spirits. One can thus explain the magico-religious beliefs and practices, whose intensity, [99] elaboration, and spread are in direct proportion to the disappearance of individual hunting.

224
174 6) The existence among all the peoples of a few common fishing customs, so little developed unquestionably fish could have played only a minor role in the diet of the ancestral community. This community, therefore, must have lived in an environment ill-suited to the development of a fishing industry or too poor in resources of this kind to invite man's efforts in this direction in his struggle for existence.

7) In their migrations and displacement, certain groups settled in more favorable regions, and the families among them who settled in the immediate vicinity of well-stocked rivers and marshes adopted new fishing customs while partially giving up the hunting customs. [Ed., the remainder of the chapter, through page 100, is not translated.]

000 [101]

Chapter 4

Food

Making fire. -- Extraction of salt. -- Preparation of food. -- Manioc. -- Maize. -- Bananas. -- Meat. -- Fish. -- Peppers. -- Extraction of palm oil. -- Beverages. -- Water. -- Malafu. -- Masanga. -- Pombe. -- Stimulants. -- Hemp. -- Kola nuts. -- Tobacco.

Take FI 33

Making Fire

M 372 The natives of the Kasai-Fimi-Lukenie region make fire in three different ways.

The Bateke and Banfumungu of the river use flint and steel; the Banfumungu of the interior, the Boboma, Mosengere, Tumba, Wadia, Basakata, Bobaie, Balesa, Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and some of the Yaelima use the friction method [102] or longitudinal rubbing; and the Yaelima of the east, the Basongo-Meno, and the Bankutshu of the Bena-Dibele-Kole region obtain fire by gyration or rotary rubbing.

M [516]

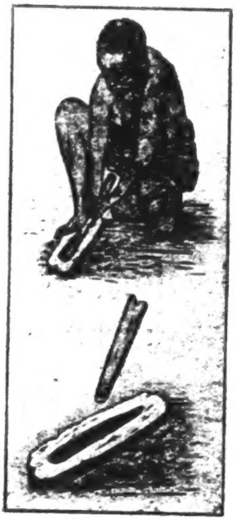


Fig. 59.
Making Fire by Friction.

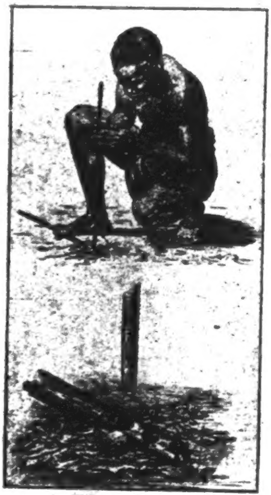


Fig. 60.
Making Fire by Rotation.

M [177] The native method tends to disappear rapidly everywhere with the introduction of matches, although most of the natives have kept their primitive strike-a-light and always carry it with them on journeys. If there are no matches or if through some circumstance -- the humidity, the crossing of a river or marsh -- the matches will not work, the native takes out his strike-a-light and makes fire by the native method.

T 372 The strike-a-light of the Bateke and Banfumungu of the river consists of an iron or steel blade from three to eight centimeters long and two to three centimeters wide, a flint (a mere

Teke F133

T
372 chip of gneiss or silex, a gunflint or quartz fragment), and tinder. Any dry and highly inflammable matter, such as dry leaves, etc., may serve as tinder, but tufts of the vegetable fiber that the natives gather from the trunks of palm or banana trees are commonly used. [103]

To make fire, the Bateke and Banfumungu of the river prepare a small bundle of dry twigs in the midst of which they set a pinch of tinder. A few strokes of the strike-a-light produce a spark, and the fire is started. A small, incandescent dot, barely visible, a trifle suffices. The native immediately blows very lightly on the tinder, fans the fire, slightly stirs the twigs, and soon the flame leaps up.

M
372 To make fire by friction or the longitudinal rubbing method, the native uses two pieces of wood, one broad, flat, and soft, the other long, more or less evenly cylindrical, and very hard.

During my journey to the interior of the Kasai-Fimi-Lukenie region, I had an opportunity to observe firsthand this method of making fire, notably at Bomu among the Banfumungu, at Mpa among the Mosengere, at Kempa among the Basakata, at Lubamiti among the Wadia, at Wambia among the Batitu, at Wumbuli among the Bokala, and, finally, at Lopori among the Yaelima.

The native proceeds in the same fashion everywhere.

When he is alone, he sets the piece of soft wood, which has a groove parallel to its axis, flat on the ground. He kneels and pins the wood under one of his knees. Holding the rod of hard wood in both hands, he vigorously rubs the point along the groove with a continual back-and-forth movement. In no time at all fine, charred wood dust accumulates at one end of the groove. In less than a minute one sees a spot ignited. The native took care to prepare the tinder in advance. He puts the little incandescent nucleus on it, blows, and the flame soon leaps up.

When there are several natives, as is usually the case, one man puts his foot on the grooved piece, while a second man kneels and rubs the end of the small rod in the groove, as though to carve it deeper.

In the gyration or rotary rubbing method used by the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region and among part of the eastern

372 Yaelima, the apparatus consists of two small cylindrical rods. [104] One of the rods, cut from relatively soft wood, has one or more notches. The other, rounded at one end, is of hard wood. The notched rod is placed over the tinder; the other one is held perpendicularly, with the round end inserted in the notch. The native gives the latter rod a rapid rotary motion by spinning it between his hands. At the same time he slides his hands from top to bottom in order to increase the pressure as much as possible.

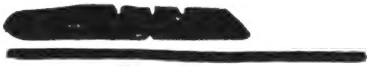


Fig. 61
Rod and Small Board with Notches.

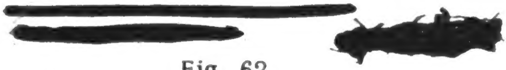


Fig. 62
Two rods, One with Notches.

The special skill consists in producing this motion with as few pauses as possible. This is why several natives usually participate. One holds the notched rod in place, a second one spins the other rod, while a third stands by ready to maintain the gyrating motion as soon as his companion reaches the bottom of the rod. The first spinner will relieve the other in turn. After several rotations, a small incandescent spot appears in the charred wood dust in the notch, and a spark falls on the tinder, which catches fire.

The areas in which these three methods of making fire are found form three distinct ethnic zones in the region visited.

The first one includes only the Bateke and part of the Banfumungu and is characterized by use of the iron blade and flint.

The second one with the system of friction or longitudinal rubbing extends from the interior of Banfumungu territory to the center of the region occupied by the Yaelima. [105]

372 The third, with the system of gyration or rotary rubbing,
177 includes the easternmost part of Yaelima territory and the whole Bena Dibele-Kole region.

Yaelima

372 177 This last method has also been noted among the Balesa, and we were able to verify that some of the natives in the region were familiar with it and used it. It is not indigenous to this tribe, however, and must have been introduced into the region by soldiers or laborers from the old Tolo post, who came from regions where this method was known.

It is also possible that the eastern Yaelima borrowed this method from the peoples of the south, although we were unable to obtain any precise information on this point. This hypothesis, however, is justified by the fact that we found the friction and gyration methods in certain Yaelima villages, and the natives preferred to use the latter method in every such instance. It must be noted that the gyration method is not only less tiring but also faster and permits the natives to take turns. It provides a maximum of yield for a minimum of work. There is, therefore, nothing astonishing in the fact that wherever the natives have had an opportunity to observe the advantages of this method, they have made a point of adopting it.

372 In our opinion, the friction or longitudinal rubbing method should be regarded as having been used exclusively in former times by all the tribes, from the Banfumungu to the Yaelima. This method may still be found among the tribes of the Dekese region, but, unfortunately, we were unable to substantiate this.

All these peoples in this respect would belong to the same ethnic group, which is clearly differentiated from the group of tribes in the Bena Dibele-Kole region.

Salt

258 The preparation of salt occupies an important place in the life of certain tribes of the Kasai-Lukenie region. Lacking both salt mines and salt water in their territory, the natives proceeded to obtain this precious condiment, indispensable to the diet, by extracting it from plants. [106]

Wherever the introduction of imported products has not eliminated the native method, the extraction of salt is a veritable national industry. The whole community participates in it.

[177] Among the Bateke, Banfumungu, Baboma, and part of the Wadia, the introduction of salt has completely eliminated the use and preparation of native salt.

Sakata FO43

M S 258 Among the Mosengere, Bobaie, Basakata, Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, on the other hand, the natives still use the primitive process.

This varies according to the region, insofar as the materials used in the preparation are concerned.

Among the Mosengere, Wadia, Tumba, Basakata, and Bobaie, the natives use only the salt grass that grows abundantly in the marshes and along the marshy banks of certain rivers in the region.

In the territory of the Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, where this precious resource is lacking, the natives use the trunks of banana trees and especially the flowers of palm trees, whose ashes are quite rich in alkaline matter.

M S [361] Salt grass is harvested toward the end of the dry season.

At this time groups of Mosengere, Wadia, Tumba, Bobaie, and Basakata of the interior leave their villages to camp along the rivers with marshy banks.

M S [342] They choose a site suitable for setting up the few huts that will serve them as shelters during their temporary sojourn in the region. These huts are usually very poorly constructed. Built hastily and carelessly, they are provisional shelters, refuges for the night, rather than dwellings.

M S 258 423 In former times the whole expanse of the marshy plain covered with salt grass was divided into sections.

Each native group had its own well-defined area and exploited it exclusively. [107]

The site for the huts occupied by each such group was determined by the location of the familial reservation or domain and was chosen so as to lie in the center of it.

The time of year when the salt grass was gathered and the length of the period of exploitation were regulated. In short, the preparation of salt was a national industry, governed by special laws to which the whole tribe had to conform.

At the present time, the groups gather salt grass wherever they think best, without regard for the customs and rights of the past. This work of harvesting the grass falls to the women.

M S 258 462 While the men are fishing, the women, provided with large knives, cut down the tall grass that grows in the mars[illegible] along

M S 258 462

the flooded banks of all the rivers in the Mosengere-Basakata region. When the nature of the ground and the level of the river permit, the grass is spread out on the spot to dry in the sun, while in flooded areas the woman loads the harvest in the canoe and takes it to the temporary village set up [108] on the bank. The dry grass is packed in stacks which are like the haystacks on our European farms.

M S 258

When a family deems that its harvest of grass is sufficient, the chief of the group prepares the incinerating grounds or furnace. Pulverized earth from small termites' nests is mixed with mud from the river. The mixture is well worked and kneaded so as to make a firm and pliant paste and is then spread over the surface of a small hole from 15 to 20 centimeters deep and one or two meters square.

M S 258 462

When this coating is entirely dry, the women begin their work. One of them loads the furnace and lights it, while the others bring in grass from the stacks.

As the first pile burns down, the woman in charge of the furnace throws in new sheaves, and the work, accompanied by a low, monotonous chant, continues without pause until the full harvest of salt grass is burned.

Fig. 63. Stacks of Salt Grass, among the Bobaie.

M S [533]

M S 258 834 462

The burning usually lasts a whole day. During this time and during the period when the furnace is being prepared, all

M S 258 [834] 462

sexual relations are strictly forbidden between the head of the family and the woman in charge of the burning.

M S 258 [285] 462

When the last sprig is burned, the fire extinguished, and the ashes cold, the women heap them in large baskets.

Meanwhile the head of the family has made a sort of large funnel out of broad and tough rattan splints, bound with fine thongs of raffia stems and lianas. These funnels vary between two and three meters in height. The diameter of the large opening is one and a half to two meters. The bottom is formed by the cluster of rattan splints, roughly tied with a broad rattan thong. This funnel is placed upright between three or four sticks planted in the ground. An earthenware jar is placed under the funnel. The women line the inside of the funnel with banana leaves, placed on top of each other in such a way as to make the sides completely [109] waterproof. They next pour the ashes from the incineration into the funnel, pressing and squeezing them as much as possible.

When the funnel is three-fourths full, the woman draws about ten pots of water, or about 50 liters, and pours them over the ashes. This water takes two or sometimes three days to spread through the ashes. When the ashes are saturated, the woman pours two or three more pots of water into the funnel. From then on there is a slow drain of water, strongly salted from the dissolution of the soluble alkaline matter contained in the ashes. The water is caught in the earthenware jar under the funnel. The woman thus obtains four or five pots of a strong salt solution and two pots of water less saturated with salt. After putting aside her six or seven pots of salt water, the woman lights a fire and puts one or several earthenware bowls over it. Into these, little by little, she pours the strong salt solution, which she allows to boil.

When the water evaporates, the first salt deposit forms on the bottom and sides of the bowl.

M S [415]

The heat from these evaporation hearths is so intense that it is impossible to come near them. The woman therefore carefully provides herself with two long ladles to refill the bowls at a distance as the evaporation progresses. The whole lot is left on the fire until all the salt water is evaporated. Even after the evaporation is completed, the woman leaves the jar over the fire, which she stokes, so as to completely dry and solidify the salt deposit. This

M
S
258
[462] deposit naturally acquires the shape of the pot, which is finally overheated and bursts, while the salt block remains intact.

When the salt is finally prepared, the family group returns to the village. The temporary installations are abandoned and may be used by other families who may do with them as they please.

M
S
258
422

The salt is divided into two parts.

One part makes up the family reserves, reckoned according to the needs of each family in the group, clan, or village which undertook the exploitation. The rest is divided equally among all the members who took part in [110] the harvest, except that the chief and the woman who was in charge of the burning receive double shares.

The salt reserved for family needs is used in the preparation of food and remains the inalienable property of the family. The share distributed to the participants in the undertaking becomes their private property .

M
S
258
422
435

Each one of them, man or woman, disposes of his share as he sees fit. Most often the natives use this as trade goods. Among certain tribes, notably the Mosengere, Wadia, Basakata, and Bobaie, the salt blocks are used as currency or as a common trade item whose value is determined by the weight.

M
S
258
435

Before our [Ed., European] penetration into the region and more especially before the introduction of legal tender and its imposition by the administration, salt played a much more important part in the economic life of these primitives.

At the present time, it is used only in local transactions.

M
326

The blacksmith and his family, for example, never participate in the preparation of salt. He exchanges the products of his trade, knives, arrowheads, or spearheads, for the stock of the salt makers. [111]

M
437

It even quite frequently happens that the salt makers sell their surplus as a mere commodity to the highest bidder. They bring it to market, display it for sale, haggle about the price in the same fashion as they do for manioc tubers, smoked fish, smoked meat, or baskets of peanuts.

M
422
562

It is singular and interesting to note that the proceeds from this sale do not entirely go to the woman who owns the salt.

Sakata FO43

M 422 562 [Ed., an example given by the author, from the third paragraph, page 111, through the fifth paragraph, page 114, is not translated.]

[114] This clearly shows that the proceeds from the sale of salt, the property of the woman, belong in equal shares to the husband and wife: to the woman because of her work, to the man because of his trouble and travel to put the product on sale.

Among the Wadia, Tumba, Bobaie, Basakata, and Balesa, I had the opportunity to observe the same fact. As long as the woman herself goes to sell her part of the communally made salt, she keeps all the proceeds of the exchange, but according to native custom, when the husband is entrusted with the sale, he is entitled to part of the proceeds.

S [258]

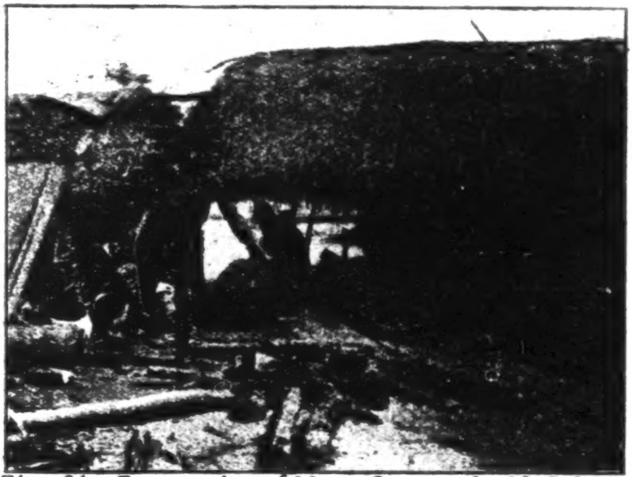


Fig. 64. Evaporation of Water Saturated with Salt, among the Basakata.

M 454 562 422 The proceeds, however, are not divided immediately after the sale. The total sum is put in a safe place, a hiding place known to both husband and wife. The couple accumulates the mitakos [Ed., a kind of metal currency]; they hoard them until the day when they both agree to divide them. Custom gives one quarter to the man and three quarters to the woman. [115]

M 258 476 This custom does not exist among the tribes east of the Balesa. Salt grass cannot be gathered there, because it is very sparse in the region. The trunks of banana and palm trees and the

258
476
flowers of palm trees are not sufficiently abundant to permit exploitation on a large scale. The women scarcely manage to gather enough material to make the salt needed for everyday life. The whole village takes part in the harvest. The incineration and extraction of the salt is done in the village by the process we have just described, but the product is divided among all the families in proportion to the number of their respective members. The quantity available is usually so small that it is barely sufficient for daily needs; hence the value of salt here is notably higher than among the peoples of the regions where salt grass is abundant. [Ed., the text is not translated from the second paragraph, page 115, to the end of the section, page 118.]

[145]

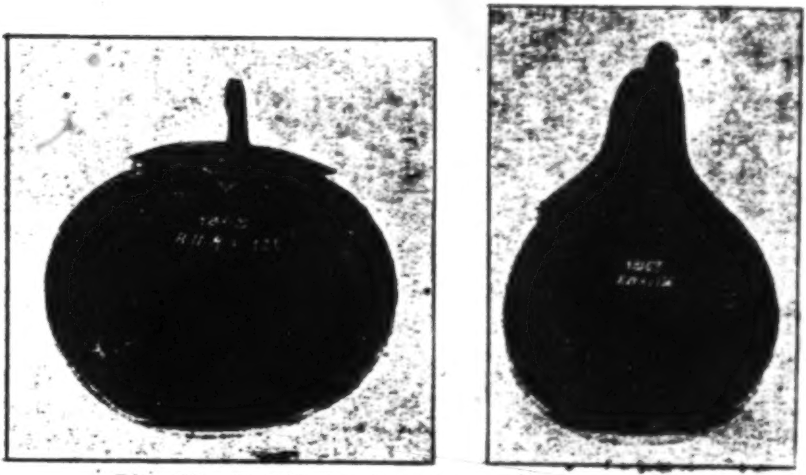


Fig. 66. Calabashes for Salt, Lake Leopold II.

[118] Preparation of Food

262 Manioc may be regarded as the principal food, the dietary staple of all the peoples in the region visited.

From the Bateke of Leopoldville to the Bankutshu of Bena Dibele-Kole, [119] all the tribes cultivate manioc, gather the tubers, soak them, and extract the flour with which they make chikwangue.

262 The natives are familiar with two kinds of manioc, sweet and bitter.

Sweet manioc is not highly valued, owing to its insipid taste and the poor consistency of the chikwangue made from it.

252 Aside from the soaking, which is done only for bitter manioc, chikwangue is prepared in the same way whether the flour comes from sweet or bitter manioc.

The first harvest of manioc tubers takes place eight to ten months after planting. The natives, however, do not begin harvesting them in earnest until the second year. Only the woman [462] does this work.

[482] The manioc tubers are piled in large baskets carried on the back and taken to the soaking well, a pond of putrid, dirty, muddy water giving off a highly unpleasant odor of putrefaction and fermentation, which is reserved for this task.

252 462 The manioc roots remain submerged from five to eight days to make them ferment and thus eliminate their bitter taste. At the end of this period the woman returns to the pond, tucks up her primitive loincloth as high as possible and enters the swamp. She sinks in up to her knees, and plunging her hands and arms into the mire, she pulls out the roots one by one and throws them on the bank. When her supply seems sufficient, she piles the roots in her basket and goes to wash them in the river. Returning to the village, she cuts the tubers, lets them dry a little in the sun, and then peels them. The Bakete, Banfumungu, and all the tribes of the Fimi-Lake Leopold II-Lukenie region, up to the boundaries of Bobaie and Balesa territory, chop the pieces of manioc root before reducing them to flour, while the Ipanga, Batitu, Yaelima and Bokala crush them between the fingers before throwing them between the fingers before throwing them in the mortar.

412 The chikwangue knife has a double-edged blade, a median rib, and a long, relatively broad oval form. It is pointed at both ends. One of these ends is [120] embedded in a wooden handle with a doubly concave vertical section.

The museum [Ed., Museum of the Belgian Congo] now has only two of these knives, but they are found in every native hut in the Kasai-Fimi-Lukenie region up to the Oshwe sector. It is, however, almost impossible to buy them from the natives. A woman, unable to do without her chikwangue knife a single day

M 442 and never having a spare one, will not let one go at any price.

M 252 462 A woman chops the manioc on a large wooden tray, a crude, slightly hollowed board roughly rectangular in shape among the Bateke, Banfumungu, and Baboma, but circular among the Tumba, Wadia, Mosengere, Bolia, Bobaie, Basakata, and Balesa.

After having chopped up the manioc tubers as finely as she can with the primitive tool at her disposal, the woman removes the woody fibers, remains of rind, and other hard bodies. She then takes the etuti with both hands and rocks it back and forth. While doing this, she is careful to shake the flour from time to time and to remove the impurities she finds in it.

S [252 516] When the flour is quite fine, the housewife sprinkles it with a little water, [121] kneads it, works it into a firm dough of a pale grayish-white color, and carefully removes every little trace of impurities. She then divides the dough into pieces the size of a cubic decimeter which she rolls into more or less symmetrical balls or into sausages 20 to 25 centimeters long.

Fig. 67. Preparation of Manioc Flour among the Bobaie. Special Form of Knife to Chop Manioc.

M [283] These balls or sausages are carefully wrapped in banana or masisa leaves, and the whole bundle is tied with very pliant rattan or raffia splints which serve as string.

Among the Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, we never found the crushing pestle [Ed., a broad, short pestle]. Instead, the woman uses a long, cylindrical pestle on a wooden mortar, a rough plank, very thick and heavy, sometimes square, sometimes round, but always quite irregular in shape. Very often, the mortar is a basket of rattan or raffia splints, rectangular and very shallow. Instead of crushing the manioc into flour, she kneads it and works the dough the same way and in the same mortar.

M
252
412

When the dough is sufficiently kneaded and all the impurities [122] have been removed, she rolls it into sausages and wraps them in banana leaves as we described above.

The Basongo-Meno and the Bankutshu crush the manioc in large wooden mortars, roughly cylindrical in shape, and use very large pestles. The height of the mortars and the length of the pestles compel the women of that region to stand when preparing manioc flour, while in the Kasai-Fimi-Lukenie region, including the Oshwe and Bambuli sectors, the women are seated for this work.

M
D
252
412

Fig. 68. Baboma Chopping Manioc.

Moreover, the former group cannot remove the fibers, hard bodies, and other impurities found in the flour in the course of their work, so they make a point of sifting it.

Dengese FO16
Take F133

M
D
252
412

The little sieve-basket has the shape of a large calotte with the rim slightly raised and the bottom plaited in openwork.

The sifted flour is gathered in small baskets, then made into dough, rolled into small cakes, and wrapped in banana or masisa leaves in the way we have just described.

M
252

The chikwangue are cooked in the same way by all the peoples visited.

The woman lays a wooden grid in the bottom of an earthenware cooking pot. She pours in water up to the level of the grid, lines the whole inner surface of the pot with banana leaves, and places the cakes or sausages one on top the other. She not only fills the pot, [123] but she piles them well above the rim and covers them with more banana leaves, which are tied together so carefully that the whole thing is hermetically sealed. The pot is placed on the fire for several hours. The chikwangue, then are cooked by the steam.

T
[412
252]

Fig. 69. Mortar with Clay Pestle (Etuti) for Manioc, Banfumu Tribe.

After being cooked, the manioc dough looks like very heavy bread, amber-colored, very slightly translucent on the edges, and of a rather soft consistency. This is chikwangue, the famous kwanga of the natives which plays the same role in their diet as bread does in ours.

M
416

Although the cooking method is the same everywhere we went, the pottery used for the cooking differs notably from one region to the next.

Yaelima

From Stanley Pool to the Bumbuli region, the natives use a 415
large earthenware vessel, generally with very little decoration on 531
the rough, irregular outside surface which is marked with vertical lines. [124]

The few specimens we collected are the only ones that the Museum of the Belgian Congo possesses.

The vessel is oval and elongated in shape, and the bottom is rounded off so little that the pottery cannot stand upright on a horizontal surface. The opening at the top is wide. Among the Balesa and Bateke, the rim is slightly raised and tilts sharply, while among the Ipanga and Batitu, the rim is wider, and its slope is less accentuated. The latter pottery, moreover, is very often decorated with two or three circular, impressed lines. As one advances eastward, the oval shape tends to disappear. The pot becomes spherical, the rim wider, and the impressed decoration more symmetrical and more painstakingly done.

252
412
516

Fig. 70. Yaelima Women Preparing Manioc.

Among the Bokala and Yaelima, the vessels used to cook the chikwangue have a bottom shaped like a spherical calotte, a rather wide, reversed rim, and a neck and body with sharp edges and distinct angles. The impressed decoration consists of two or three circular lines placed immediately above the bend

Ntomba

415 531 of the body. These parallel lines are intersected in three or four places by small groups of eight to ten little notches. In addition, the part of the body angling inward is quite often decorated with intersecting oblique lines. [125]

415 These types of pottery for chikwangue seem to be modern forms.

The very ancient kind, of which we happily were able to find a specimen still intact, has a less characteristic shape. The bottom is round and irregular; the body is more or less angled but without sharp edges; and the neck is slightly bent back but has no distinct plane surface.

252
415
412

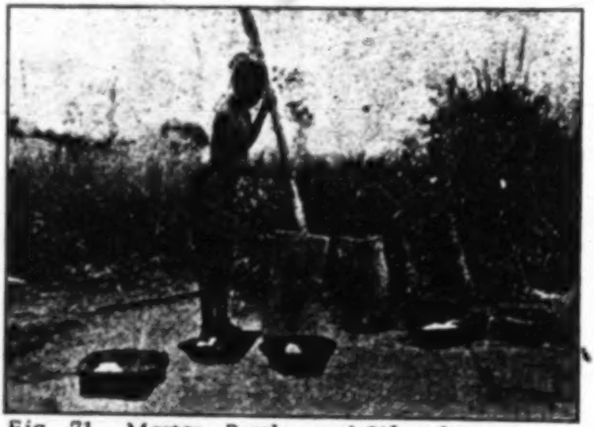


Fig. 71. Mortar, Pestle, and Sifter for Manioc Flour among the Bankutu.

252 415 The Bokala, Yaelima, etc., place a wooden grid at the bottom of the chikwangue vessel, line the inside with leaves, and pile the cakes of manioc flour in small mounds higher than the rim of the vessel. To keep these characteristic pyramids stable, they often tie a network of cords, a sort of net with large, wide meshes, to the molding of the neck. The top of this net can be opened or closed at will, and the chikwangue cakes are crammed in it as in a net. Sometimes the wooden grid is replaced by an earthenware shelf which extends beyond the rim of the vessel. This shelf is pierced with large round holes. This type of pottery, however, is quite rare. We were able to find only a few specimens.

M
The natives do not care for them very much; they regard them as impractical for preparing chikwangue, but readily use them to dry and smoke their provisions. 252 415

M
Beyond the Yaelima, notably among the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, the pottery used to cook manioc cakes [126] is more reminiscent of the old earthenware cooking pots of Europe. It is spheroid in shape, very symmetrical, with the neck curved out a little, rounded, and slightly arched. The upper part of the body is decorated with broad circular lines, small arcs, and little dots. These pots are a mottled brownish-black in color and are lightly glazed. 415 531

M
Here, too, the chikwangue are cooked by steam. It must be noted, however, that chikwangue does not play the same important role in the diet of the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, although it is still one of the chief elements even now. 252 262

M
D
The Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu also eat kifunge, a manioc bread which is prepared in the following way. The 252 415

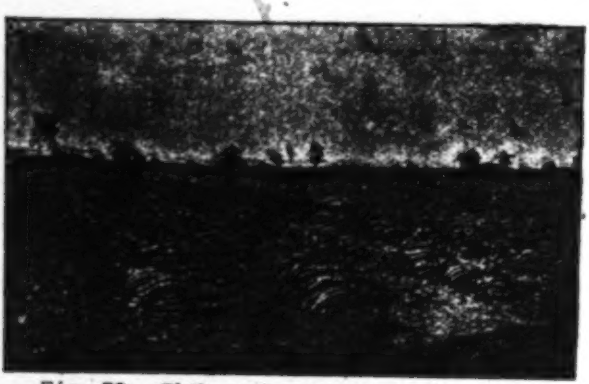


Fig. 72. Chikwangue Brought to the Post.

housewife heats water in a large earthenware receptacle with a rounded bottom. It is shaped like a wide, spherical calotte, with the body almost straight, but in any case having sharp edges, and the neck slightly flared but not arched. When the water begins to boil, she throws in the manioc flour a little at a time, stirring constantly with a [127] long spatula of polished wood. When the flour has absorbed practically all the water, the vessel is taken off the fire, and more manioc flour is added while

M
D
252

Dengese FO16
Teke FI 33

the mixture is stirred vigorously. This produces a sort of soft bread called kifunge by the natives. The Bankutshu and Basongo-Meno also use maize or millet flour to make kifunge. Both are ground in the large mortars used to make manioc flour and are sifted through the basketwork sieves. M D 252

Kifunge is always eaten hot. The housewife serves it on a wooden plate previously rubbed with palm oil. M D [264]

We thus see that the peoples of the Bena Dibele region are differentiated from the other tribes not only by their way of making manioc flour and the shape of the utensils used, mortar, pestle, sieve, and pottery, but also by the special use made of manioc flour and the use of maize and millet flour in making kifunge. There are then, in this respect, two ethnic groups which seem to be quite different from each other. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to determine whether kifunge is truly indigenous to the civilization of [128] these natives or was introduced by the Basonge-Baluba peoples of the Sankuru-Lubefu. When questioned on this subject, the natives sometimes told us that they had always made kifunge, while some old men claimed that kifunge was still unknown during their childhood.

Fig. 73. Bateke Pulverizing Manioc.

T [252 415 301 516]

As we have noted, the peoples west of the Bena Dibele-Kole region cultivate maize. This crop is of secondary importance, except in the region of the Banfumungu of Kapanda and Engrei. M T 243

M
T
243
252

Maize gathered before maturity is eaten raw or roasted over a low fire. The ears which are allowed to ripen on the stalk are carefully shelled, the kernels ground in a wooden mortar with a cylindrical pestle, and the flour is winnowed or passed through a sieve.

M
T
252
412

The mortar used to make maize flour is made from a section of a tree trunk, with a rectangular opening hollowed in the outer surface and perpendicular to the axis of the trunk. These mortars are very crude, poorly worked, and quite rudimentary. Besides these, one sometimes find others which are better made, small cubes provided with a lug or a liana. Let us note, however, that among the Banfumu southeast of Tua we found a mortar of similar shape which the natives used to prepare vegetables.

M
[252
415
291
854]

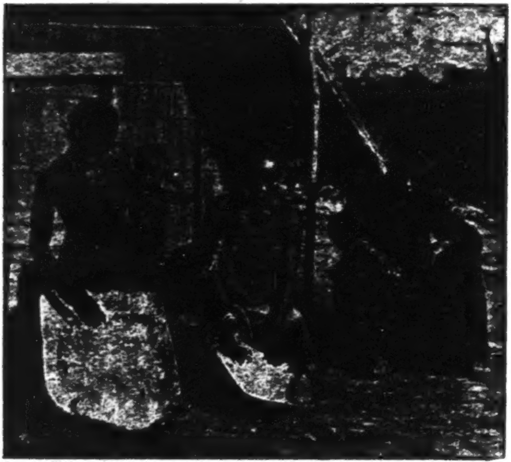


Fig. 74. Batitu Women Shelling Maize and Preparing Vegetables.

The sieves used for maize flour in this region are also a special type. The sides are made in an open weave. The general form resembles that of a large bottle with a square bottom, cylindrical body, constricted neck, and slightly flared rim.

M
T
252

The housewife mixes the maize flour with palm oil to form a somewhat thick dough. She wraps it carefully in leaves and boils it for 10 to 15 minutes. This dish, the mokwoï of the Basakata-Mosengere, is served very hot, usually seasoned a little

T M 252 with palm oil and pili-pili pepper. Whenever the opportunity arises, the native adds fish or meat to it. The dish is very highly regarded among all the peoples of the Bateke-Yaelima region, but it should be regarded as a luxury which the family can afford only on special occasions. [129]

M 252 262 The sweet manioc tuber, cooked in ashes, is a more common dish. It is served very hot with slips of manioc greens prepared as vegetables.

Sweet potatoes, which are widespread throughout the region, are peeled, boiled in water, mashed, mixed with palm oil, and served with meat or fish.

Peanuts are eaten boiled or roasted, or sometimes the women crush them raw and mix them with manioc flour or use them instead of palm oil in preparing the meals.

Although the natives eat few vegetables, except yams and sweet potatoes, their diet from time to time includes spinach, native sorrel, small tomatoes, a type of purslane, and leaves of all sorts which the women gather in the forest. The housewife pulverizes them in her small mortar with a cylindrical pestle and stews them over a low fire in small earthenware pots.

M [415] Among certain tribes, notably the Bokala and Yaelima, these small pots have an earthenware lid with a small vertical lug, while in other regions the woman covers her pot while it is on the fire with part of a calabash, a piece of bark, or the bottom of an ordinary pot.

Bananas play a major part in the native diet. From Leopoldville to Kole, we found banana trees in all the villages, both near the state posts and far into the interior of the country. Bananas are eaten raw, roasted, stewed, dried in the sun or smoked on grids. Dried bananas are reduced to flour and served as mush with other dishes.

M 262 Meat is greedily devoured by all these peoples, regardless of its origin or condition. The native must content himself with what chance brings him, the game from his hunting, and what the Mundele [Ed., White men] leave for him. The natives do not have enough practical means at their disposal to secure an abundant diet of meat. In the villages of the interior, meat is [130] seldom eaten. The prospect of a good share of meat is enough to get the native to do the hardest kind of work. In the

M 262 course of our journey, our bearers never complained about long marches, heavy loads, or fatigue, as long as they got their ration of one or two kilograms of meat every evening.

M 262 252 The native is passionately fond of meat, and nothing absolutely nothing, is wasted of the animals killed in hunting. The intestines are especially prized. The natives empty them very hastily and do not hesitate to eat them raw. Most often, however, they cut them into small pieces and boil them in big earthenware pots. The fat is very carefully collected and stored for subsequent use in the preparation of vegetables and sauces. The rest is served with vegetables, chikwangue, kifune, etc.

M T 252 The meat is cut into small pieces, seasoned with a little palm oil, pepper, and salt, and placed on the fire to boil. It is cooked in small pots which also serve as plates.

T 415 Among the western Bateke and Banfumungu(in the region of Tua, Kunzulu, and Kwamouth), these utensils are very similar to bowls in shape. The bottom is round, and the rim is straight, slightly flared or arched, and not very high.

Among the eastern Banfumungu (in the region of Tua and Bokala), on the other hand, these utensils have an altogether different shape, little known up to now: a wide, spherical calotte, whose rim, two or three centimeters wide, is bent inward and shows a distinctly horizontal surface.

S 415 Among the Baboma in the region of Bokala, Wombali, and Mushie, as well as among the western Wadia and Basakata, the rim of these bowls has the same characteristic inward curve, but the sides are much more symmetrical and better finished. Moreover, the shape is slightly different. The bottom is round and very flat; the body is shallow and curved slightly inward; and the rim is turned back in horizontally. [131]

M 415 The inward curve of the sides of some pottery, terminating in an inward, horizontal rim, is a characteristic that we find again, although much less pronounced, in the bowls used for the same purpose by the Mosengere, Tumba, Bobaie, Basakata, and Balesa. All of these peoples thus seem to have a certain ethnic relationship characterized by this special form of pottery rim. The general shape of the various vessels we gathered in this region,

M
415 however, shows us that aside from this generally uniform character these different tribes each have their own distinctive pottery. In our opinion the latter should be regarded as a derivative from the original form, known and used by the principal ethnic branch of these various peoples. Each of them has modified the original form according to its tastes, its conceptions, and local circumstances and needs, to the point where each people developed a special and characteristic form that retained only two essential elements of the original: the more or less marked curve of the sides, and the inward, horizontal rim.

M
415
531 Among the Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, the shape of the small pieces of pottery used for preparing meat is altogether different. Here we find neither a regular curvature of the sides nor an inward, horizontal rim. On the contrary, the bottom is a spherical calotte, the body distinctly angled with a sharp edge, the upper surface decorated with incised drawings, and the rim slightly sloping and curved outward. The decoration is the same as that we noted on the pottery for chikwangue in this region.

M
D
415
531 Farther east, among the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu, the shape is again quite different. The sides, which slant obliquely inward and have no rim, meet the round bottom at a sharp angle. They usually have considerable decoration with incised drawings and even some molding in relief.

M
251 To preserve meat, the natives proceed in two different ways.

For small quantities, the meat is cut into pieces weighing from one to three kilograms, impaled on a stick, and roasted over [132] a low fire. This procedure does not give very good results. Meat smoked in this way spoils after five or six days, but this does not keep the native from eating it. "It's the meat and not the smell that I eat," he says, "for after the meal the meat is gone and the smell is still with us!"

To store large quantities, the meat is cut into pieces weighing from half a kilogram to one kilogram and then boiled over a brisk fire for a little less than an hour in rather salty, well-spiced water. The pieces are then smoked on a large grid, usually set up in the center of the village. This grid, made of large rattan stems and green branches, rests on four forked stakes 90 centimeters to 1.20 meters high. A woman keeps a slow fire burning under the

M
251 grid, which gives off a great deal of smoke. The boiled meat is lightly packed and covered with large banana leaves. It remains on this grid for two or three days. At the end of this time, it is thoroughly smoked, black as coal, dry, and tough, but it keeps almost indefinitely.

The housewife takes her supply and puts it in the storage place inside her hut, where it is safe from the rats, mice, and other marauders which infest the native huts.

Fig. 75. Communal Smoking Apparatus.

M
415 The meat is usually cooked in large earthenware vessels. [133]

Among the Bateke and Banfunumgu, these vessels are shaped like irregular spheres with the top cut off.

Among the Baboma and Basakata, on the other hand, this pottery is cylindrical in form, broad, of moderate height, and has a flat bottom. Among the Bobaie, Balesa, and Batete, the bottom is rounded, broad, and shallow, and it extends into a rather high neck in the shape of a truncated cone, decorated with very even and not very artistic impressed designs. The body has sharp edges, and the small rim has a wide flare. This form is found among the Basakata, although less frequently. It seems to be quite common in the region of the Kundu [Nkundu], northern neighbors of the Bobaie, Balesa, and Batete.

M
[531]

M
D
415
531 The Ipanga and Yaelima use pottery vessels similar to those they use for making chikwangue, while the Basongo-Meno and

Dengese FO16

M
D

Bankutshu use a bell-shaped form; the bottom is a spherical 415
calotte, the body slightly curved, and the decoration consists of [531]
heavy moldings, both sunken and in relief.

These same pots are also used by all these tribes for preparing and cooking fish. M 415

The riparian peoples of the Congo-Kasai-Fimi and of the lower Lukenie, as well as the Wadia and Mosengere of the Boriempe-Lulonga, fish a great deal.

M

Fish is never eaten raw. The natives boil it or eat it dried 252
or smoked. 251

To preserve fish, the natives smoke it on large grids similar to those they use for smoking meat.

Certain peoples, notably the tribes of the Fimi and lake region and of the lower Lukenie, also use a special form of pottery, rare and heretofore unknown. We were able to bring back only two specimens, which are fortunately very characteristic. [134] M 415

Fig. 76. Rattan Belt.

This form is open at the base and closed at the top by a large disk pierced with holes. The sides are curved. The diameter of the bottom opening is a little smaller than that of the upper disk. It varies from 45 to 90 centimeters.

This drying pot, called kenge by the natives, is placed on three pieces of wood forming a tripod. Under the tripod, a woman maintains a slow fire of leaves, grass and green wood, which sends thick smoke inside the pot. The gutted fish are placed over the disk. They are left there for four or five days, exposed continually to the action of the fire and smoke. At the end of this time they are sufficiently smoked and dried to keep for several months. Naturally, these pots can be used [135] for preparing and preserving only small quantities of food. They form a part of the native house wife's equipment among these various tribes. She also uses them to smoke chikwangue, to dry bananas, manioc tubers, and ears of maize, and sometimes to smoke meat. The manioc tubers, bananas, ears of maize, and other vegetable

M
415
251

M
[291]

415 251 products to be dried are not exposed to heavy smoke, but to a small fire of very dry wood producing a low, hot flame, or, if possible, to the heat given off by a glowing bed of charcoal.

When completely prepared, protected, and wrapped in leaves, the *chikwangue* are laid above the *kenge* for six to eight hours, while the housewife maintains a charcoal fire underneath. When dried and smoked in this way, the *chikwangue* keep a very long time.

Lacking a *kenge*, a woman sometimes uses a pottery vessel with a flat bottom, pierced with small holes, and vertical sides.

[481]

Fig. 77. Two Ways of Climbing Trees.

This fits on top of an old *chikwangue* pot, *mpoko-kepinga*, whose bottom has been broken.

The *mpoko-kepinga* is placed over the fire. The woman seals the juncture between the *mpoko-kepinga* and the *kenge* with the pierced bottom, using a paste of clay and potter's earth.

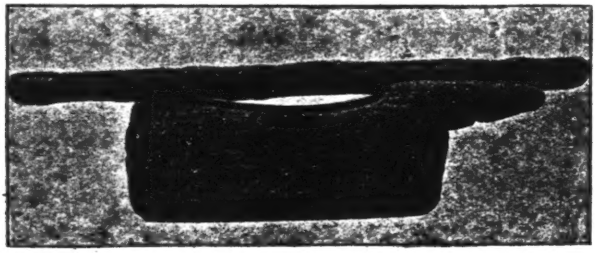
We did not find this particular kind of pottery beyond the 415
Batete area. The Ipanga-Yaelima, as well as the Basongo-Meno
and Bankutshu, do not seem to be aware of its existence and, in
any case, do not use it. [136]

I come now to the important subject of palm oil. We have 262
already noted how frequently the native housewife uses it in pre-
paring meals. This oil takes the place of the butter and fats used
in European cooking. Gathering the clusters of palm nuts and 249
making the oil are very important among all the tribes.

The remarks of Mr. Engels on this subject in his work on the Wangata [Ngata] are applicable to all the peoples we visited.

In each village one or several natives chosen from the 249
nimblest and most daring (the local daredevils) specialize in 464
gathering the clusters from the palm trees. They do this not only
for themselves, but also for others for a slight fee.

Gathering these clusters is always somewhat dangerous. The 249
native must climb to the top of palm trees which are sometimes 481
20 to 25 meters high and, once there, must work hard to disentangle and sever the cluster.



[412]

Fig. 78. Mortar and Pestle for Preparing Vegetables and Palm Oil.

The method of climbing varies according to the height of the palm trees. We noted two different procedures among all the tribes visited (see Fig. 77). [137]

If the palm tree is not high, the native climbs to the cluster by using the stubs of cut stems as steps. If the tree is very high, the native uses a rattan belt which encircles both man and tree trunk.

Nothing is more interesting than to watch a native climb up to the crown of a palm tree. He does it with truly extraordinary

249 481 skill and speed. Supported by his belt, with his feet propped against the tree trunk, he proceeds quickly by small bounds, moving the belt constantly upward. Upon reaching the root of the cluster, he stands erect or sits on one of the leaves, and with a hatchet or knife he frees the cluster, cuts it, and lets it fall to the foot of the tree. The women collect the nuts, pull off those still attached to the cluster, clean them very carefully, and carry them to the village.

252 According to whether the housewife wants to make a small or large amount of palm oil, she proceeds in one of two ways.

In the first case, she throws a few palm nuts into an earthenware vessel half full of water and puts them on the fire to boil for a good hour. When the outer part is soft, she pours off the water and puts the nuts in a small wooden mortar in order to separate the pulp from the kernels. For this purpose, she avails herself of the mortar and wooden pestle used in preparing vegetables. When the outer part is completely separated from the nut, the woman takes it and extracts the juice by squeezing it tightly in her hands. The kernels are discarded.

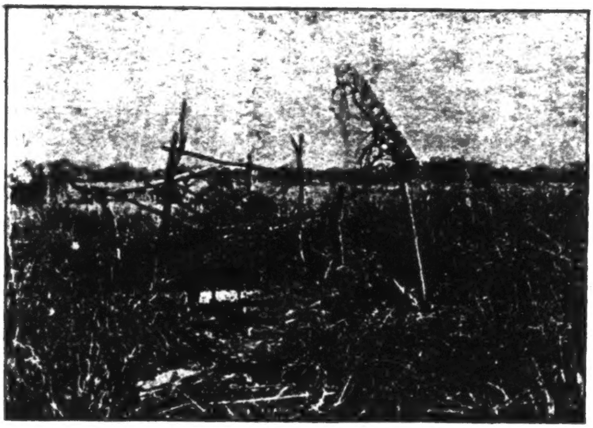


Fig. 79. Installation for Making Palm Oil.

In the second case, each village has a special installation for making palm oil. This very primitive factory usually stands slightly apart from the dwellings. Everyone has access to it, and it belongs to the entire community, but each family uses it individually.

252 It consists of a large hole in the form of a truncated cone. The diameter of the upper part varies from 60 to 70 centimeters, that of the lower part from 20 to 30 centimeters, and the depth varies from 60 to 80 centimeters. The bottom and sides are lined with pieces of raffia stems, placed [138] [Fig. 80 appears here] [139] side by side with their rounded surfaces facing the interior of the pit. The nuts, which have been slightly boiled, are poured into this funnel, which serves as a mortar. The outer part is separated from the nut with a large wooden pestle. The kernels are discarded. The pulp is taken from the hole and tightly pressed between the hands to squeeze out the oil.

Near the funnel-shaped mortar dug in the ground, there is a bench made of two or four forked stakes, graduated in height, over which the natives place large sections of tree bark. The woman throws the pulp from which she has extracted the oil on this bench, spreads it out, and lights a small fire under the wide sections of bark, which serve as drains. Under the influence of the heat, part of the oil remaining in the pulp flows out slowly and is caught in the earthenware vessel placed at the lower end of the drain. [401] Finally, whatever palm oil remains in the pulp is squeezed out by the torsion method. For this purpose, the native has set up a large stationary bar, very strong, to which he attaches one end of a pressing apparatus made of young lianas and fine rattan plaited together. The pulp, still hot, is placed in this press and wrung very tightly to extract every last drop of oil.

252 415 The natives collect and keep the palm oil in large pots covered with banana leaves, in calabashes, or, if possible, in imported bottles. Big demijohns stripped of their protective covering are in special demand for this purpose.

000 We have mentioned above the chief uses the native makes of palm oil in preparing food and the important role it plays in the diet of these primitives. Later we shall have occasion to mention palm oil again when we discuss the role it plays in native body care.

263 A word now about stimulants. Food in general, particularly meat, is always very strongly seasoned with condiments.

The most widespread stimulant is pili-pili, red pepper. This pepper, the fruit of Capsicum minimum, which is rarely more than one to one and a half centimeters long, is extremely hot. It grows

[text continues on p. 103]

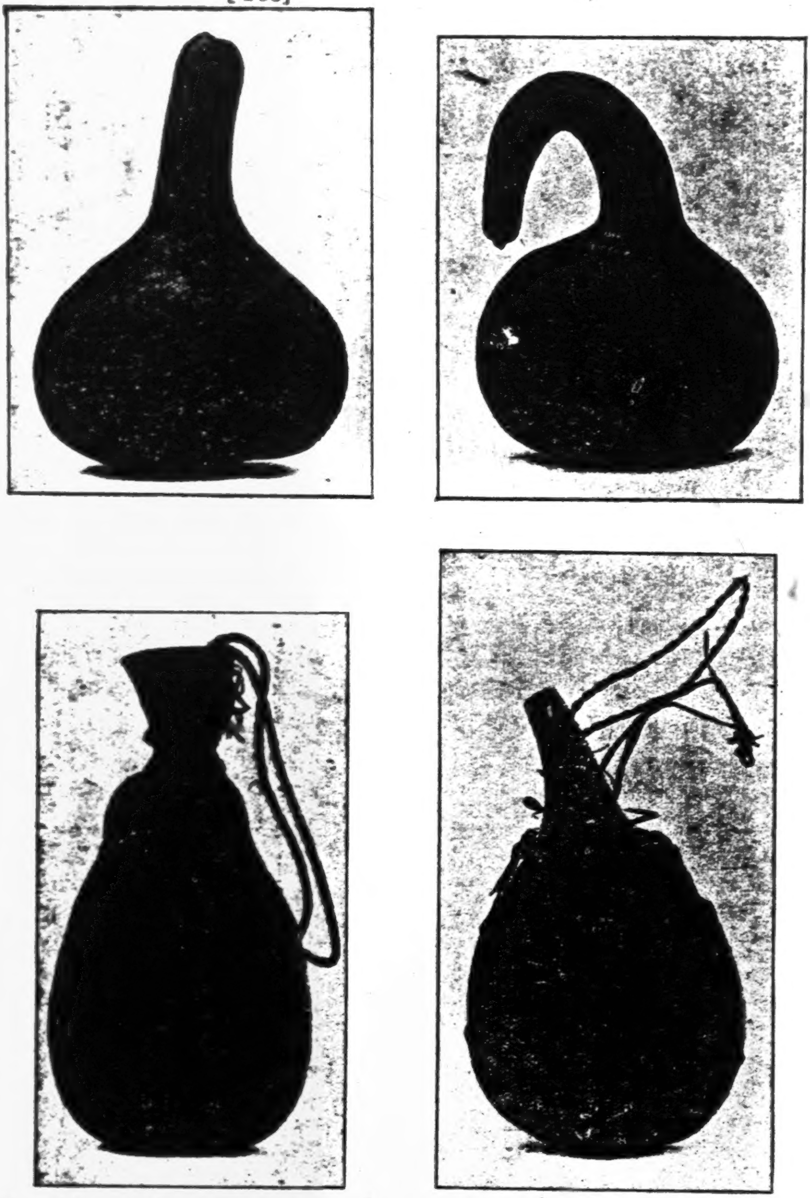


Fig. 80. Calabashes used as Receptacles for Water, Wine, Beer, and Oil.

263 wild [140] throughout the region we visited. All the tribes are acquainted with it and use it regularly.

222 Collecting and preparing pili-pili are tasks especially re-
462 served to women. Upon returning from the fields, a woman
252 spreads the fruits on a mat before her hut and lets them dry for
263 five or six days. Sometimes she uses them fresh, mixing them with palm oil enhanced with salt. The native uses this sauce to season his dishes according to taste.

252 When the pili-pili is quite dry, the woman pulverizes it in
263 a small wooden mortar with a cylindrical pestle or with a small
412 piece of elephant's tusk. The shape of the mortars used for this purpose by the different peoples of the Lukenie varies a great deal. From the Bateke to the Batete, we found only very crude mortars hollowed out from the trunk of a tree. Among the Yaelima and Ipanga this utensil is more carefully worked and finished. The shape is rather like that of a small rectangular box without a lid, but provided with a lug. Among the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, we collected very crudely shaped and primitive mortars, while others were well made and carefully carved. All of them, however, have the common characteristic of an elongated vertical form, and most of them have a leg. The pestles are always quite long.

We thus again find three ethnic zones characterized by the special shape of these utensils. Of course, this fact alone could not serve as the basis of any ethnic classification, but it might have a relative value and importance in drawing general conclusions based on the whole assemblage of the ethnic characteristics of these various peoples.

263 Once reduced to a fine powder, pili-pili pepper is mixed with salt to season food after cooking. All sauces are spiced with a generous pinch of this pepper. Meat is sprinkled with it, or even stuffed with whole peppers.

When the natives are traveling, they merely pick a few pili-pili and squeeze the juice into the food while it is cooking. [141]

276 The kola nut also is very well known as a stimulant and is widely used. The kola tree is found nearly everywhere. The natives gather the fruit and chew it. Women do not indulge.

276 842 According to native belief, the kola nut ensures the fertility of a woman if sexual relations take place the night after the man has used this stimulant.

276 The regular use of kola induces very intense nervous excitement. We noticed that the adolescents and men in their prime scarcely use it. Only the old people use it regularly. Kakua, the old native chief, chewed it from morning to night. One day I pointed this out to him, asking if he were not afraid of the dangerous effects of this overindulgence. He proudly pointed out to me the huts of his seven wives, saying, "Ask them if they don't have children!"

276 263 278 Among the stimulants we may also mention the peanut, widely used by all the tribes, a type of small ground pea, and certain tree roots known to the natives but the exact nature of which we unfortunately could not determine. It is well to note, moreover, that most of the natives use the stimulants as medicaments as well as condiments. They are used for intestinal pains, colic, and as purgatives.

462 252 In all the tribes the preparation of food and meals is exclusively the task of women. They always do it with great care. [142]

252 The kitchen, if it can be called one, is always very simple. If the weather is good, cooking is done in the open in the middle of the village, in front of the hut or behind it,

[482] [313] and very often in the shade of the banana trees. If the weather is rainy or cold, the women prepares the meals inside the hut. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

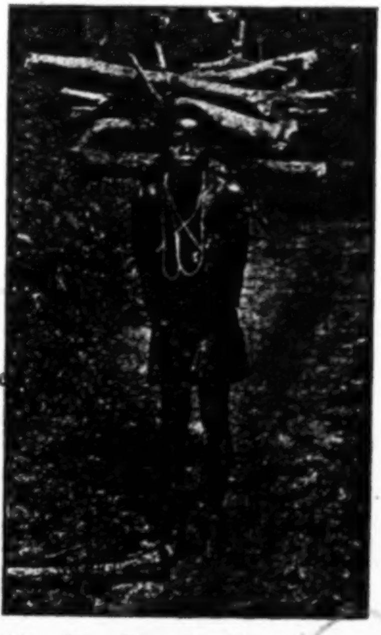


Fig. 81. Carrying Firewood.

Yaelima

264 The natives eat three meals a day, in the morning, toward noon, and at night after sunset.

The wife is never allowed to eat with her husband or to eat in the same group as he does.

[622] A chief always eats alone, far from the eyes of the common herd. [143]

Leftovers from the meals are ordinarily given to the women and children.

264 415 We did not find tables, spoons, or forks among any of the tribes we visited.

The food is put in small baskets of rattan or raffia splints, plaited in openwork and lined with leaves on the bottom. Sometimes the plate is made of wood or baked clay.

[252]

Fig. 82. Native Outdoor Kitchen, Ipanga-Batitu Tribe.

Among the Bateke-Banfumungu, we collected some earthenware plates which look a great deal like European soup plates, but are less symmetrical in shape and deeper. Among the Baboma-Wadia-Batete, on the other hand, the plates look more like our flat plates. Among the Ipanga-Yaelima, basketwork plates are chiefly used, while in the Bena Dibele-Kole region one finds the pottery plate again, a sort of broadly flared,

264 spherical calotte, and also wooden plates. Sometimes also simple leaves are used as plates, unless the food is served in the cooking pots.
[415]

The whole meal is spread on the ground. [144]

The man squats on his mat and dips leisurely in the dishes with his hand, moving from one to another according to his taste.

[532] The meal is always eaten in silence. Even when several friends eat together, they never talk during the meal.

After the meal the natives carefully wash their hands and teeth and rinse out their mouths several times.

Beverages

271
415 Water is the only beverage they drink at mealtime, and they use it quite rarely. If they do not have a wooden or earthenware cup, they use part of a calabash or simply a leaf rolled into a little cone.

Fig. 83. Water Carrier.

312
462
857
482 Water usually comes from a spring near the village. The natives use river water only when it is quite clear. The women and children have the task of fetching water, a chore which is often quite hard. I visited many villages located along or near the river, whose source of drinking water was 20 to 30 minutes away.

At certain hours of the day and more especially in the morning as the sun first comes up, the women and children set out, a calabash or water jug balanced on their heads, to fetch the supply for the day.

271
415 Water is kept in large calabashes or earthenware jugs, sheltered from the sun in a corner of the hut.

271 The shape of these water jugs varies considerably according
415 to the region, and some of them even seem to us to be characteristic of certain ethnic groups. [145]

Among the western Bateke and Banfumungu, the spherical shape with straight neck predominates.

Among the Maboma of Bokala-Wombali and the eastern Banfumungu, the shape is distinctly spherical, with a very small, funnel-like neck that is usually no more than one or two centimeters high. This form is entirely new. Fortunately, we were able to collect several specimens. The Bateke of the Stanley Pool region use a water jug that resembles the carafes imported from Europe. This shape is particularly common in the Leopoldville-Kinshasa region.

From Mushie to the region of the Basakata-Balesa, including the Wadia and Tumba, the body of the water jug consists of two parts joined at a sharp or slightly rounded edge. The bottom part is shaped like a spherical calotte; the upper part has the shape of a truncated cone. The decoration is very symmetrical. Lightly
[53] marked parallel circles cover the conical part of the body and sometimes the neck. The latter is very long, usually wider at its base than at the top and slightly swollen in the middle. This interesting shape is also found, though more rarely, among the Mosengere. Among this tribe we encountered another form, no less interesting and very little known up to the present time. The chief characteristics of this form are the flat bottom, a cylindrical, more or less symmetrical body, rounded edges, and a neck in the shape of a wide funnel.

Among the Bobaie of the northeast, the Balesa-Batete, the Ipanga-Batitu, and the Bokala-Yaelima, the water jug has a spherical body and a straight neck. This same shape is also found among the Bankutu [Wankutshu] and Basongo-Meno of the Bena Dibele-Kole region.

Let us note, however, that in the region of the Ipanga-Yaelima, water jugs are relatively rare; the natives commonly use large calabashes, very often provided with a handle and a leg of rattan or bamboo.

271 Other than with meals, the natives drink water only to slake
515 their thirst. Each time the porters come to a river, they make it a point to bathe in it and to refresh themselves. [146]

006 point to bathe in it and to refresh themselves. [146]

273 In addition to water which is the customary drink of all the tribes, we found the following beverages according to region: palm wine, malafu; sugarcane beer, masanga; and pombe, maize beer.

[415
284]

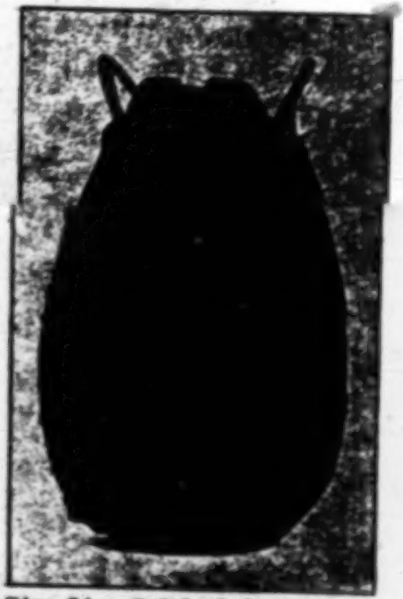


Fig. 84. Calabash for Palm Oil, also for Water.

Palm wine, the native malafu, although liked, is usually not very much in demand, especially when the native can replace it with masanga, sugar-cane beer. We found it among all the peoples, however, although actually only the Ipanga-Yaelima and the Basongo Meno-Bankutu drink it regularly.

[439] In the other regions palm wine is made particularly in the villages near government posts or commercial establishments for the benefit of the Whites. These villages usually have a professional vintager.

The vintage comes from tapping the trees. The mese palm, raffia, and the oil palm are chiefly used.

273
481 The native has three methods of climbing the trees for the vintage. The first is the one we described for gathering clusters

of the palm nuts; the second one consists of leaning a pole-ladder 273
against the palm or fastening rungs to the trunk itself; the third 481
is to dig holes in the trunk to serve as steps. The native climbs to the crown and cuts a palm leaf just below the terminal bud. He digs a rather deep opening in the wound and plants a palm leaflet in it to serve as a channeling trough. At the other end of this trough, the native fastens a calabash. The palm sap fills the hole and flows slowly [147] down the trough into the calabash. The native comes to collect it early in the morning.

When fresh, this wine seemed delicious to me; fermented, 273
I found it undrinkable!

The natives, on the other hand, went only after it has fermented for three or four days.

Another method, simpler but less profitable, is to cut down the palm tree, lop off the crown, and gather the sap that flows out. Used in this way, a palm tree may yield, at most, 10 to 15 liters of wine and is permanently destroyed. The wine, moreover, is of a decidedly inferior quality. A native would never dare offer it to the head of a post.

Fig. 85. Masanga Brewery, Basakata.

Sugar-cane beer, the native masanga, is the drink most in demand.

In certain regions, notably among the Basakata-Balesa, we found one or two large establishments for making beer in each village. These breweries are located a little outside the village. The equipment is very rudimentary. It consists of a large, cleared space with the ground well beaten, a straw roof sheltering

273 a sort of large basin resembling a canoe, two or four beating paddles, a strong stationary bar, a pressing apparatus made of lianas, a storage vat, and calabashes.

Sugar cane is grown communally on a rather large scale. 244 [148] The natives cut it shortly before it is fully ripe. Men, women, and children participate in this work. The whole harvest is carried to the brewery shed. The sugar cane, cut in pieces, is thrown into the mash tub, and two or sometimes four men crush it as much as possible with large beetles, reducing it to a sort of whitish pulp. When this pulp is sufficiently thin, the natives put it in the press made of lianas, which is attached so as to hang under the bar and over the vat. To keep the press from coiling up as a result of the twisting, they insert a stick in it perpendicular to the bar. Two men vigorously twist the press, squeezing out every last drop of the sweet juice. The liquid is caught in the vat and then poured into large calabashes and carried to the village. Masanga is truly pleasant, refreshing, and delicious when it is fresh. It has no intoxicating effect. The natives, however, do not drink it until it has fermented. They add to it the bark of a small plains shrub, put the waste from the sugar cane around the calabashes, and expose them to the sun for one or two days to induce very active fermentation.

Sugar-cane beer is always imbibed communally.

All the important ceremonies are accompanied by heavy drinking. Marriage, birth, death, burial, the return from important hunts, the appearance of the new moon, a visit from a neighboring chief, and even our arrival in certain villages are all reasons for organizing big native celebrations where the emptying of great numbers of calabashes of masanga is the order of the day. The natives gather in the shade of the big trees in the village or under the public shelter. The calabashes of masanga are set in the center or poured into big pots. Everyone drinks as much as he wants, as long as there is any left and as long as he can. Meanwhile, the music is in full swing, and there is singing and dancing. Hemp is very often smoked, and the drinking always continues up to the point of brutish drunkenness. It is hard to realize what enormous quantities of this heady beverage some natives can imbibe. Pokei, the Banfumungu chief at Engrei,

Teke F133
Dengese FO16

M
273
[579]

ordinarily does not stop until his tenth liter, and he is not the biggest drinker. Very often [149] the celebrations degenerate into bloody brawls. The drunken native flies into a rage over trifles, quarrels, and does not hesitate to use his weapons.

T
273
562

Among certain tribes, notably the Banfumungu, women under no circumstances may be present at important festivities or participate in large-scale drinking. Pokei assures us that they are excluded because of their vindictive temperament. "We men," he said, "sometimes fight during these celebrations, but the next day haven't we forgotten our quarrels? The women would also fight. Do they know how to hold their tongues even when they haven't drunk masanga? The next day they would go on quarrelling. The husbands would step in. A village quarrel would follow every celebration! No, the women may not drink masanga."

It would be a mistake, however, to believe that the women strictly observe this prohibition. Oh no! More than one has her little drop of masanga inside her hut, and on occasion intentionally pours herself a little too much. Masanga is not taboo for them!

M
273
[415]

Sugar-cane beer is served in small earthenware cups, pieces of a calabash, or wooden cups.

East of Balesa-Batete territory, masanga seems to be unknown, or at least we did not find any, either among the Ipanga-Batitu or among the Bokala-Yaelima.

M
D
273
415

Among the Basongo-Meno and Bankutu of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, the natives chiefly consume palm wine.

They also make very inferior beer from maize or millet.

To make this beer, the native crushes the maize or millet, steeps it in spring water, and lets it ferment in earthenware jars.

M
D
415
531

These jars are shaped more or less like the water jug with the spherical body, but have a very broad and higher neck. They are usually quite large. The cups used for palm wine and beer by the Basongo-Meno and Bankutu are always carved out of wood. They are found in all shapes, from a simple, undecorated small keg to a splendidly fashioned human figurine. In certain villages, notably at Tipolo and Bakoba, we found cups made of buffalo horn, decorated [150] with carved designs. Cups shaped like horns are sometimes carved out of wood. These are usually larger and more carefully decorated.

Dengese FO16
Sakata FO43

M D 415 The fact that these wooden cups are found in the Bena Dibele-Kole region is not without interest. Until the present time they had been reported only among the peoples in the region between the Kasai and the Sankuru, and certain authors even regarded them as characteristic of the Bakuba people. We shall say more on this subject later.

M 266 If cannibalism ever existed, it has disappeared. When questioned about this, the natives as a rule vigorously deny any connection with this barbarous custom, but they do not hesitate to accuse their neighbors of the worst misdeeds. In our opinion, the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region were once anthropophagous and practiced cannibalism until quite recently. It seems probable to us that on a favorable occasion they would not resist temptation even today.

M S 261 Geophagy is better known. Children eat earth among all these peoples. Among the Basakata, Lesa, Mosengere, and Wadia, all the natives and especially the women are earth-eaters. Potter's earth and the clay from the nests of certain termites are very highly prized.

The natives seem to eat earth as a delicacy and perhaps also as a medicament. To call it food would be an exaggeration, for the amount eaten is very small. [Ed., a passage is omitted from the last paragraph, page 150, to the end of the section, page 151.]

Fig. 86. Bobaie Children. One of them shows signs of geophagy.

[151] Hemp and Tobacco

M 276 The consequences of using hemp are more disastrous.

This sad practice, which seems to have been quite widespread among certain peoples, is fortunately on the wane, thanks to the vigorous intervention of the government.

M 276 In spite of a most careful search, we found only a few rare proofs of the existence of this baneful custom. [152] [Fig. 87 appears here.] [153]

T 276 Among the Banfumungu of Mpozali, however, we found samples of hemp and calabash pipes, well hidden under the bed.

Asked about the use of these pipes, Lekana, the chief of the Banfumungu of the region, first gave us an evasive answer. I asked him abruptly if he did not know what use was made of the bundle of hemp I found in the same hut. He said simply, "The White man knows everything! Why ask me what use is made of these pipes?"

T 276 778 The few pipes for smoking hemp that we collected in the village of Mpozali are decorated with feathers, beads, and small bags made of raffia fibers or rags of imported cloth, containing the most diverse substances, white clay, cowry shells, ngula, etc. All of these various things taken together make up the essential part of most of the Banfumungu nkisi or ndoki objects. Their presence alone led me to attach a significance to these pipes that I had not previously suspected.

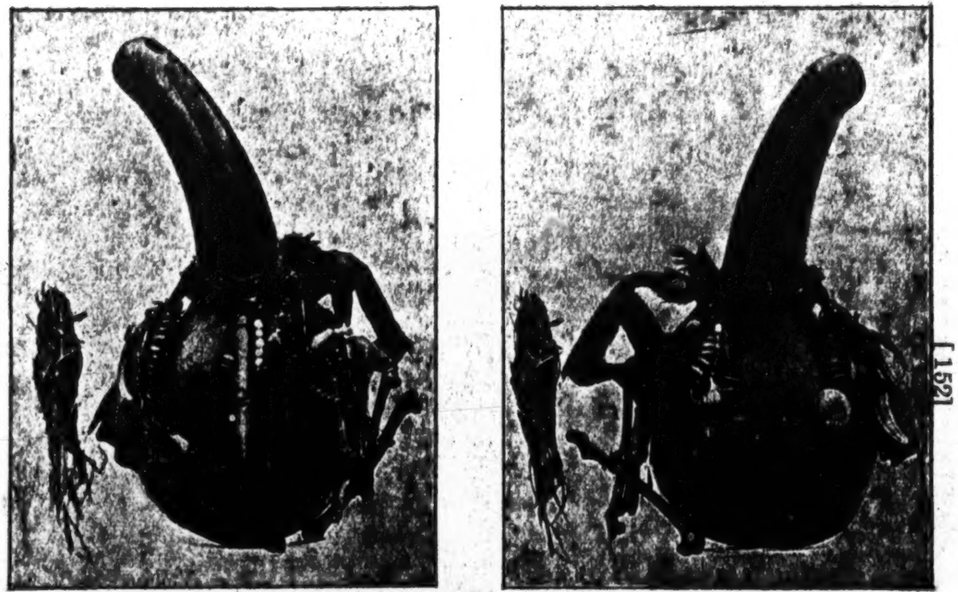
When questioned about this, the natives of Mpozali and particularly their chief, Lekana, were very definite: "Mbula Matari [Ed., European administration] has forbidden the use of hemp, but is it not nkisi?"

"Why can't we use it?"

T [757] When I explained to them the evil consequences of its use, Lekana asked me, "When we smoke hemp, do we still feel pain? Are not our sick people able to sleep after smoking hemp? Is it evil to make people forget pain and suffering, to give sleep to the sick? Is not hemp nkisi for the sick?"

I insisted, explained, argued, all in vain. Hemp and the pipes for smoking it were and would remain nkisi.

It is not only for the pure love of it, then, that the Banfumungu smoke hemp and that they do it clandestinely, since they cannot do it openly. It is not only the need to indulge a deep-rooted habit that impels them to disobey the severe laws which prohibit the practice.



[152]

Fig. 87. Pipe for Smoking Hemp, Adorned with Nkisi.
Left: rear view. Right: front view.

1: Maes--115 E-5 (1913-1914) 1924 FO32 Mongo FO32

Take FI 33

T 276 Belief in the magic force, the occult but beneficial power, of this narcotic keeps them from putting aside the hemp pipe. As long [154] as this belief endures, the Banfumungu will keep this pipe and will not give up the custom. If we could get them to understand that far from being nkisi, hemp is a ndoki and the chief cause of many sufferings, pains, and diseases, the fight against the use of hemp would be over throughout the Banfumungu region.

I would not dare to make the same statement about the tribes of other regions.

M 276 Among the Wadia of Lubamiti, the Bobaie of Lebi, and elsewhere, I collected several calabash pipes, without being able to determine, however, whether or not the natives used them for smoking hemp. None of them was decorated in any way to suggest that the natives attached any magical or religious significance to it. Incidentally, the natives regularly used these pipes to smoke tobacco.

The use of hemp, however, is general from Leopoldville to the Bena Dibele-Kole region, but the custom did not seem to us to be as widespread in the region of Lake Leopold II-Lukenie as it is south of the Kasai-Sankuru.

The shape of the calabash pipe depends mainly on the shape of the calabash itself. This varies a great deal. We believe, however, that we can divide these pipes into two categories: one including the pipes with a simple spheroidal body and a long tube; the other category includes the pipes with a double spheroidal body, a constriction in the middle, and no tube.

This latter shape is more often found in the region between the Congo, the Kasai, and the Kwango.

We cannot, however, regard it as a special ethnic characteristic of this region, because this form of calabash pipe is also found among other tribes, from whom we obtained, as we did from the Banfumungu, pipes with the simple, spheroidal body and long tube which were used to smoke hemp.

The bowl of the calabash pipe is made from a tube of wood or bamboo, or a piece of stem from a banana leaf. The native cuts a small circular opening in the lower body of the calabash and sticks the tubular bowl into it.

The bottom end of the tube is always carved in the shape of a bevel or fork. [155] [Fig. 88 appears here.] [156]

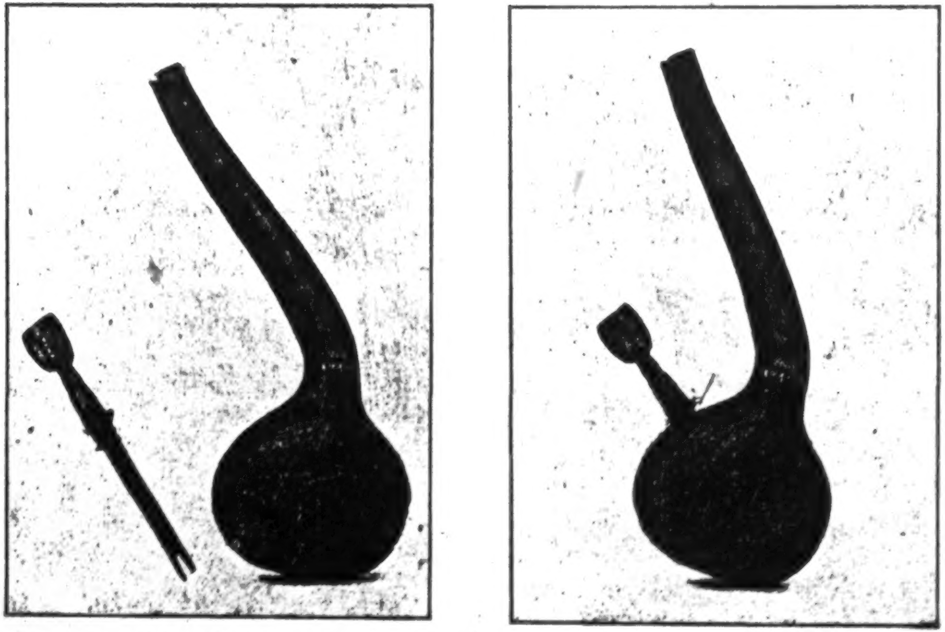


Fig. 88. Pipe for Smoking Hemp. Left: bowl and tube detached. Right: bowl and tube in place.

The hole for the mouth is cut at the top of the upper part of the calabash.

Usually very small, the hole is frequently overlaid with a thin wooden or ivory disk with a small hole in it, which is glued on with resin. We found a specimen with this special characteristic among the Tumba in the native village near Inongo.

Before using his calabash pipe, the native takes out the bowl, fills the calabash with water up to a third of the upper part and puts the bowl back in the opening. The bottom end of the tube is thus immersed in water, and the pipe is a sort of hookah.

The hemp smoke is drawn in by creating a vacuum inside the calabash. The smoke passes through the water, leaving all impurities suspended in it.

A calabash pipe found in the hut of Matari, chief of the Banfumu in the village of Kapanda near Kwamouth, has the special characteristic of a double bowl.

To smoke hemp, the native uses a simple bamboo tube stuck in the body of the calabash. To smoke tobacco, he fastens a special earthenware bowl with a considerably larger capacity on top of the tube.

The reason for using these different types of bowls follows from the way hemp and tobacco are smoked.

Hemp is smoked in small quantities at a time, and the pipe used by the Banfumungu for this purpose is his private property.

The native smokes hemp only when he feels safe from prying eyes, hidden in the bush or inside his hut with the door closed.

Tobacco, on the other hand, is smoked in the open during large gatherings, and the well-stuffed pipe passes from mouth to mouth.

As soon as the chief has drawn one or two hearty puffs, he passes the pipe to his neighbor. On such an occasion the tubular bowl, which is large enough for the small quantity of hemp smoked secretly by the native, cannot hold enough tobacco to give each member of the circle a good puff. Matari, therefore, takes care [157] to attach a bigger bowl so that the custom may be observed.

As we noted above, the calabash pipe with single spheroidal body and long tube is found chiefly in the Lake Leopold II and Lukenie region.

276 Of the seven specimens of this type that we collected, only one came from the Banfumungu, while the others belonged to various tribes of the region cited above.

The bowl is usually made of a section of bamboo or the tip from the stem of a banana leaf. All these pipes are of the hookah type.

The one we obtained from the Yaelima has a bowl cut from the kernel of a palm nut. This bowl is glued with a paste of [314] bulungu resin to a bamboo tube whose lower end is cut in the shape of a fork and submerged in the water.

The natives prefer to use this type of pipe for smoking hemp, although we noted more than once that they also use it to smoke tobacco.

The custom of smoking tobacco with a communal pipe does not seem to be practiced much by the peoples of the Fimi-Lukenie. As a rule, each native has a pipe of his own.

Among the tribes of Lake Leopold II, as well as among the Basakata, Bobaie, and Batitu, the tobacco pipe is usually made simply from the rib of a banana leaf. The native often attaches a small earthenware bowl to the lower end of it. This bowl is always very crude, and it is interesting because of its irregular shape which is long, thin, and slightly crooked. The native unquestionably got the idea for this from the shape of the pipe bowls made from the rib of a banana leaf. The latter did not stand up well under use; the bowl was burned as the tobacco was smoked. At first, the native replaced it by another, cut from a harder and tougher piece of wood, but he soon started making the bowls out of baked clay, while retaining the original shape. [158]

Pipes from this region with wooden bowls are very rare. We possess only one, which comes from the Batitu village of Longinpila.

Beyond the Batitu in the Bumbuli region, among the Bokala and Yaelima, the pipe consists of a long wooden tube, usually slightly curved and provided with a small earthenware bowl at one end and a monkey's femur at the other as a mouthpiece.

[531] Sometimes the earthenware bowl is replaced by one of wood, most often decorated with carved designs and often representing a human head. The latter type is very common in the region of Bena Dibele and Kole. Certain specimens are worked with great artistry.

Teke F133

M 276 Aside from this characteristic form, we found another which is no less interesting. The bowl and tube are always made from the hollowed branch of a special species of tree. The shape is slightly curved, and the top end slightly flared to form the bowl. At the other end of the tube, the native attaches a small spheroidal calabash with two holes, one of which serves as the mouthpiece. This calabash is lightly stuffed with raffia fibers and dry grass to filter the tobacco smoke.

M 276 531 Other than this primitive form, we collected a few pipes belonging to the same category, but with the calabash mouthpiece replaced by a wooden one, sometimes decorated with carved linear designs and with small copper strips inlaid in the wood.

-M 276 171 We found, then, two very characteristic pipe shapes in the Yaelima-Bankutsu region which seem to indicate a certain ethnic relationship among these different peoples. We do not know if these same shapes are found among the peoples of the Dekese region, but it seems quite probable to us. We found this same type along the north bank of the Sankuru between Lodi and Isaka, so the ethnic zone characterized by these two special forms of the native pipe, at least in the region south of Dekese, includes the whole area from Bumbuli to Bena Dibele-Kole. These types are also found outside this territory, notably to the north among the Bakuba and Bashilele. It must be noted, however, [159] that the pipe with a femur for the mouthpiece is extremely rare in the north, while that with a calabash mouthpiece is very seldom seen in the south. This seems to indicate that we have here a zone of contact where we once more find evidence of ethnic relationships between the peoples of this region and the tribes to the north and south. It may be inferred from this that the Bakuba and Bashilele tribes of the Kasai-Sankuru region are connected with the peoples between the Sankuru and the Lukenie and that they even have ethnic affinities with the peoples whose territory extends much farther north.

T 276 171 In the region of the Banfumu and Bateke, we find two types of tobacco pipes, one with a large bowl for communal smoking, the other smaller, with an earthenware bowl and a wooden tube and mouthpiece, used individually by both the women and the men. Along with these pipes, we also found several specimens

T
276
171
with the bowl and tube made of iron. These pipes are usually very long and cruder than the small clay pipes with wooden tubes. Moreover, it is probable that the latter were copied from imported models. We found them chiefly in villages near the large centers and the government posts. Their shape is strikingly similar to that of imported pipes.

M
T
276
171
We found this same type among the Bayanzi of the right bank of the Kasai and north of Kwamouth. These natives are thus connected with the Bateke-Banfumungu group. Thus a new ethnic zone appears, and the territory we visited may be subdivided in this respect into three ethnic regions.

The first one includes all the territory occupied by the Bateke-Banfumungu, the Bayanzi, and part of the Baboma, and it is characterized:

1) by the use of a calabash pipe, a nkisi fetish, for smoking hemp;

2) by the use of pipes with large clay bowls, for smoking tobacco communally, and the small tobacco pipe, the property of the individual, used by both men and women. [160]

The second one extends from the mouth of the Fimi to the confines of Batitu territory.

The hemp pipe is not nkisi. The tobacco pipe, very primitive, is made from the rib of a banana leaf and very often has a wooden or clay bowl. The woman smokes neither tobacco nor hemp, and the custom of smoking the pipe communally is not much in favor.

The third zone is the one where we found the wooden tobacco pipe with a calabash mouthpiece or a neck of monkey bone. It includes the whole Yaelima-Bankutshu region, taking in the Bashilele and Bakuba and, very probably, the Dengese region.

M
276
As a rule, the natives like to smoke tobacco very much. They prefer doing it when the weather is cold, maintaining that it heightens the body heat.

M
549
Tobacco is not cultivated on a large scale. The crop is always strictly limited to the needs of the person who plants it. When the native wants to smoke tobacco, he plucks a leaf from the plant, dries it at the hearth, crushes it, and reduces it to powder. A pinch of this crudely ground tobacco is placed in the

Ntomba

276 receptacle forming the pipe's bowl, and it is covered with a glowing piece of charcoal. The native strongly draws in the smoke until he has his mouth full, holds it for a few moments, and then blows it out by opening his mouth wide and turning his head slightly to one side. He frequently inhales part of the smoke, which always provokes a violent cough, brings tears to the eyes, and sometimes entails pronounced discomfort. [161]

If the natives are together in a group, they pass the pipe from one to another after taking a good puff. Those waiting for the pipe often show signs of impatience, and anyone who ventures to smoke more than his share risks a real quarrel.

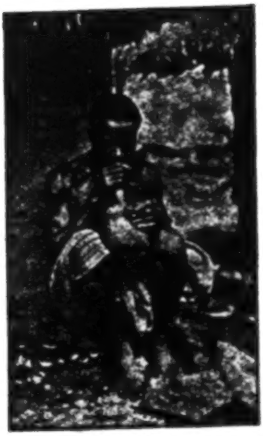
Women are never admitted to the circle of smokers, nor do they gather to smoke among themselves, but always do it in private. [Ed., the remainder of the chapter, through page 162, is not translated.]

516

Fig. 89. Monsengere Smoking Tobacco.

1: Maes--122 E-5 (1913-1914) 1924 FO32 Mongo

SAKATA FO43



276
516

Fig. 90. Wadia Smoking Hemp.

[163] Chapter 5

Care of the Body

Hygiene. -- Soap making. -- Ngula and mpembe. -- Artificial deformations. -- Depilation. -- Filing the teeth. -- Hairdos. -- Ornaments and objects suspended from the body. -- Tattooing by incision. -- Circumcision [Ed., the author does not discuss circumcision in this volume].

515 356 A person who has only limited contact with the natives tends to depict them as very careless in their grooming, ignorant of the principles of hygiene and cleanliness, and, we may say, even as foul and filthy. If, however, one has an opportunity for closer contact with these primitives, he quickly realizes the inaccuracy of these judgments which are based on hasty and superficial observation. In closely studying the native's customs, in watching him in his daily, ordinary life, one notices many small things which show us [164] that the native, apparently heedless of all hygienic measures and inattentive to cleanliness, does take into account rudimentary principles of hygiene and tries to apply them in many small ways.

356 At first glance the native hut looks like a miserable hovel. Its often dilapidated appearance, narrow and low entrance, lack of windows or ventilating shaft, the general disorder reigning in the area which is used as shelter, kitchen, etc., all are reasons for the unpleasant impression acquired from a rapid investigation. The native, however, puts a great deal of care into the construction of his dwelling. The woman works hard at cleaning the inside of her hut regularly. If, pushing our investigation further, we proceed to the area reserved for the husband and wife and closely study the organization and arrangement of what serves as the bedroom, we see that a cleanliness reigns here that stands in conspicuous contrast to the unpleasant first impression. The

356 walls are lined with mats, and the crude bed is raised off the ground to avoid unpleasant and unhealthy contact with the ground. A mat is spread over the native's bed, [165] and the pillow which is customarily used permits him to lie in a restful position.

515 The natives take a bath almost every day. They usually go to the river during the hottest hours of the day, but sometimes they do so early in the morning or in the evening. The child participates in this from an early age. Aside from these regular baths, the native often washes his whole body with warm water. [302] He then smears himself with a light film of palm oil to ensure the suppleness of the skin and to protect it from the sun's rays.

264 575 Before and after each meal the native makes a point of washing out his mouth. After the meal he brushes his teeth with a small brush made of rattan or soft wood, the fibers acting as bristles.

Fig. 91. A Scene from Native Life among the Riparian People of the Lower Lukenie.

252 264 Meals are prepared with a genuine concern for cleanliness. All the food is washed, cleaned, and boiled before being eaten. Kitchen utensils are cleaned and carefully put away. Despite the primitive conditions for preparing manioc flour, the product is as pure as if it had been prepared by an improved method

252 264 with modern machinery. Not content with the state of the utensils in which she serves the meals, the woman is careful to line them at mealtime with fresh and very clean leaves.

515 The natives keep the nails of their hands and feet cut short.

The care of the feet is explained as a hygienic measure and by the necessity of taking precautions to avoid the vermin which like to get into these places (ticks). The care of the hands can be explained only by the concern for cleanliness shown in native eating habits.

Imported soap is not yet commonly used, although we found it in a number of native huts.

388 Many native women know how to make soap. The process is very simple. Dried banana skins, trunks of papaw trees, bark, the fruits of various vegetables, and waste from palm nuts are gathered together and burned. The ashes are carefully collected and mixed with some water for boiling them. At the first ebullition, the woman removes the ashes and impurities that [166] rise to the surface. Boiling is then continued until the evaporation is almost complete. When only a thick and strupy grayish-black deposit is left, the woman takes it off the fire, washes it, and kneads it in cold water until it takes on a clearer color. She then adds palm oil, mixes it in with great care, and puts the lot back on the fire. The paste is stirred all through the boiling, which is continued until the woman obtains a mixture whose consistency is slightly firmer than that of our soft soaps. [Ed., a passage is omitted from mid-page 166 to mid-page 167.]

Native soap is used only in the care of the body.

[302 303 [167] The native does not merely smear his body with palm oil. The men and especially the women often powder themselves with takula dust. The women prepare a cosmetic with this and love to cover their whole body with it in a spirit of coquetry. This practice is so widespread among the peoples of Lake Leopold II that the manufacture of ngula has become a veritable local industry in certain areas. This is especially true of the Mosengere. In a village near the Bongo post, we counted 35 installations for making ngula powder. The simplest set of materials includes two blocks of takula or redwood, a small receptacle containing water, a handful of sand, and a small hand or painting brush. One of the

303 blocks is placed on the ground. The woman sits during the work. The second block is placed flat on the top surface of the first, which is moistened and sprinkled with sand. The woman holds the top block in both hands and rubs it back and forth with a rotary motion, taking care to keep the two grinding surfaces wet. The rubbing and the action of the grains of sand as fine graters produce a fine, red, almost impalpable powder mixed with water. The skill in this process consists of proceeding in such a way that the gritty sand is mixed as little as possible with the wood dust. The skill of some persons is so [168] great that one can find hardly any traces of sand in their ngula (1).

113 1. On this subject see the monograph on ngula and its manufacture in the Belgian Congo by Dr. J. Maes in the periodical, Congo, 1920 volume.

In the region of the Mosengere, the apparatus for making ngula is usually more elaborate. A thick piece of tree bark is used as a basin. Four or six rather strong sticks are fastened to this basin, and to these the native attaches one of the takula blocks. A special device permits this apparatus to be fastened in place. Some natives even have an improved apparatus set up under a crude shelter in front of their hut, which permits them to make ngula while standing up. Four heavy stakes driven perpendicularly into the ground support a large basin of tree bark 15 centimeters above the ground. [169] One meter from the ground, horizontal crossbars are attached to the forked ends of the stakes, and one of the blocks of takula is fastened to these crossbars. An earthenware receptacle, held in the three forks of a stake driven into the ground beside the apparatus, contains a mixture of water and a small portion of oil. A brush made of a piece of soft wood is immersed in the mixture and permits the craftsman to wet the takula block at will. A small piece of a calabash holds the sand which is rubbed on the wood to grate it to dust. Despite all the skill of the worker, this sand gets mixed into the dust and must be replaced from time to time. The person making

M
303 the ngula stands before the apparatus. The mixture of water, ngula dust, and a few grains of sand falls into the storage basin as the work progresses. When the stock is large enough, the native plaits small baskets having the shape of a truncated cone and an average capacity of one cubic decimeter. The ngula paste is packed into these baskets, and the lot is then hung under the shelter out of the sun. At the end of a few days the paste is dry. The molded cone of ngula is taken from the mold, wrapped in banana leaves, and

P
142
301
302

Fig. 92. A Batua Chief Inongo, with a Rope Headdress.

carefully tied with rattan thongs, bamboo splints, or raffia fibers.

M
438 The family supply is usually left in the storage basins of the devices for making ngula; all the molded cakes are sold at outside markets.

M
303
285 The baskets used as ngula molds are all plaited in the same way. Four rattan thongs are laid in a row across four others, without being interlaced or plaited at the points where they cross. This forms the bottom of the basket. The thongs are lifted up at the four

Dengese FO16

M 303 285 sides of this square and held in place by a binding of twisted raffia fibers. The sides are then plaited by the simplest method, that is, with the horizontal band weaving in and out of the vertical thongs. As all of these molds always have approximately the same height and diameter, the *ngula* cones are both similar in M 303 shape and quite constant in weight. The natives use them a great deal as trade goods. In some regions the *ngula* cone has become 436 a veritable currency, with a standard value from one tribe to another. [170] A market is organized regularly when steamers M 437 call at Mushie, and there the people of the interior exchange the products of their industries for the imported objects brought by the Blacks who work for the Whites. *Ngula* cones are among the principal items of trade and bring a very high price. In the Oshwe region, the old chief Kua Kua was a great *ngula* trader. He came by regularly with four or five of his wives, bringing various products from the region between the Kasai and the Lukenie to exchange for the *ngula* made in the Lokoro region.

D 303 Throughout the central Congo regions, the *ngula* used for trade has the shape of an elongated truncated cone. Among the Basongo-Meno and farther east, on the other hand, *ngula* most often is shaped in a ball. The native of these regions often uses it to decorate his pottery and wooden objects and to dye the fibers of cloth used for decoration. He keeps it in cosmetic boxes carved from *takula* wood and usually decorated with very artistic designs. He also uses it to color his hair. [Ed., a passage from the middle of page 170 to the last paragraph, page 171, is omitted.]

M 302 789 [171] Aside from *ngula*, the native sometimes smears his body with a type of white clay quite frequently found in the river beds. [172] The native calls it *mpembe*. Its use is far from being as widespread as that of *ngula*, and we believe that the native associates it with magic power rather than ornamentation. *Mpembe* is used chiefly by the peoples of the Congo-Kasai, Lake Leopold II, and Lukenie regions, up to the region of the Batitu.

M 766 We never saw a native smear his whole body with it. The few women in mourning that we saw were covered with a grayish-yellow mud and not with *mpembe*. We believe, moreover, that the use of *mpembe* is reserved to the chief, his wives, and perhaps

Take F133

M 302 789 dignitaries and their families, but it was impossible for us to prove the accuracy of our hypothesis. When questioned about this, the natives always confined themselves to uncertain and evasive replies. The native chief rarely appears at a large gathering without having his face and sometimes his arms and chest covered with lines drawn with mpembe. At all official receptions, the chief, a few dignitaries, and sometimes some of the chiefs' wives had a more or less symmetrical rectangle drawn with mpembe around the eyes.

M 304 342 We observed the following artificial deformations in the course of our journey:

1) depilation;
2) filing of the teeth;
3) tattooing by incision;
4) circumcision.

M 302 Depilation is practiced by all the peoples of the regions visited. The native plucks out every last hair on his body. Where the hair cannot be plucked, it is shaved with great care. For the parts of the body that are hard to reach, men and women help one another. Eyebrows and eyelashes are both plucked, while beards and mustaches, on the other hand, are cared for with great pride. It is very unusual to see a full beard. We ran across only one such case. The happy possessor of this beautiful [173] beard was as proud of it as he could be, and Natali, chief of the Banfumu of Kwamouth, was heartbroken to have only a few hairs on his chin while one of his dignitaries was endowed with such a fine beard.

T 302 Among the Bateke-Banfumu peoples, up to the Ipanga, the natives frequently shave the base of their scalp all around the head. Their headdress looks like a very symmetrical calotte.

M 302 Among the Yaelima we encountered men whose heads were completely shaved except for one strip just above the nape of the neck. A similar custom must have prevailed among the Bateke and Banfumu, but the unshaved part was broader.

Among the Yaelima and up to the region of the Bankutshu north of Bena Dibele, the natives shave their hair in such a way

M 302 as to broaden the forehead. The brow is sharply delineated at right angles and framed by two corners projecting over the temples.

M 302 557 Let us note that the custom of shaving part of the scalp is hardly a general one. The types of headdress we have just described are seen regularly, but by no means are worn by all the natives. It even seemed to us that they tend to be the prerogative of the chiefs, dignitaries, and their families, but we dare not assert that they constitute a right, a strict prerogative. [174]

S [302 301 142]

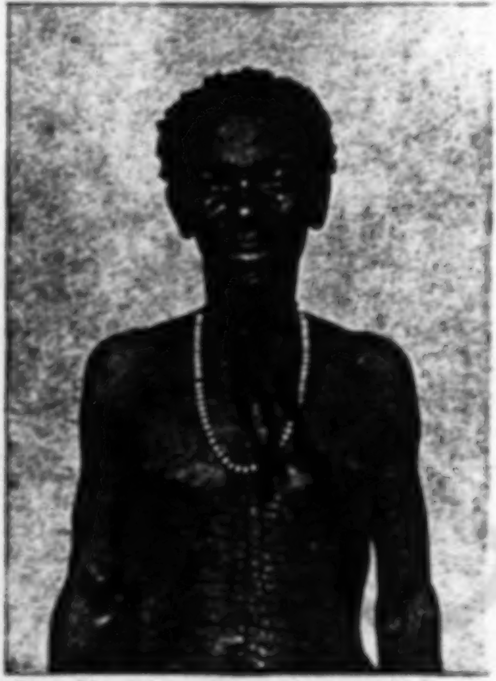


Fig. 93. Batete Type with Long Beard, Plucked Eyelashes and Eyebrows.

M S T 304 The Bateke and Banfumu file the middle upper incisors in the shape of an isosceles triangle, break them, or pull them out. We observed this custom among some of the Baboma. The majority of the Baboma, however, have their teeth filed to a point, a custom that prevails up to the Bokala region and along the north bank of the Kasai up to 23° longitude east of Greenwich. "Basongo-Meno" seems to mean "people with filed teeth" and may have

M 304

314 been the name used by the southern peoples to designate their neighbors to the north whose real name they did not know. The custom of deforming the teeth tends to disappear rapidly. The younger generation already refuses to submit to it, and we often heard the natives with filed teeth referred to as basengi, that is "savages." The deformation of the teeth is accomplished with a
[326] small iron chisel and a wooden mallet. The village blacksmith does this for a small fee. The teeth are broken with short, sharp blows while the patient is seated with his head against the knees of the blacksmith, who stands behind the patient. The operation is very painful and takes several sittings. The last ones are for the filing, which is done with a small native file.

302 The native takes special pains with his hairdo, which sometimes is a true little marve the fruit of long and patient work. Both men and women attach great importance to this. They strive [175] to surpass themselves and to achieve the most coquettish coiffure possible. Since every native is a born hair stylist and they aid each other with complete unselfishness, the hairdo that only varies from one tribe to another, but the most disparate types are found within the same tribe, according to our observation.

Fig. 94. A Balesa with a Small Goatee and with Eyelashes and Eyebrows Carefully Plucked.

A very popular method is to smear the hair with a rather thick paste of palm oil and ngula and then to separate the locks and roll them up so that they form small, very irregular balls. To enhance this hairdo, the native does not hesitate to insert peanuts into the hair, first smearing them carefully with ngula paste in order to conceal the deception.

Teke F133

Ntomba

M
302

A very common hairdo around Lake Leopold II and in the region of the lower Lukenie consists of a multitude of small, perfect braids covering the whole head, falling over the forehead, the ears, and the nape of the neck. These braids are sometimes arranged in star-shaped formations originating at the top of the head or sometimes in crossed strips; sometimes they are partially parallel and then branch away at the sides, and sometimes they are placed in concentric circles or spirals. The more civilized element tends [176] to adopt a hairdo resembling a cock's comb, single, double, or triple.

Fig. 95. Deformation of the Teeth, Lake Leopold II.

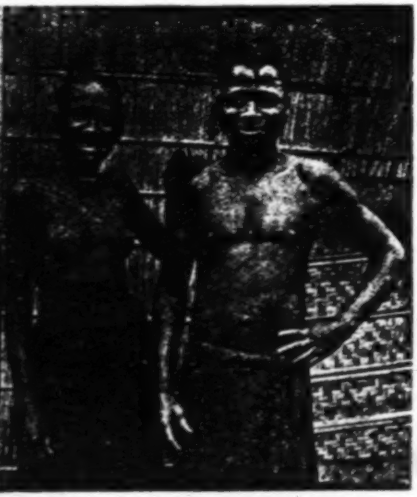


Fig. 96. Deformation of the Teeth and Headdress among the Bateke.

T
[304
302]

Among the Mosengere and Bolia, we greatly admired a hairdo arranged in an adjustable aureole. A narrow strip of hair was finely plaited all around the head. The braids were mounted on very thin raffia splints in a circular arrangement. The native could raise or lower this hairdo at will, so that he sometimes seemed to wear a very smooth calotte and at other times a fanned-out crown. This hairdo was highly prized by the Mosengere. Among the Tumba and Wadia, having the hair in an arrangement of conical bags was fashionable for the men. Banfumu women, on the occasion of great celebrations, selected a hairdo in the

Take F133
Tetela F047

M 302 shape of a big, raised, circular roll held up by a band of plaited fibers and decorated with one or two rows of cowry shells.

None of these types of native headdress, however, seemed to be a stable characteristic. We found them all more or less regularly in the various regions, without being able to characterize them as distinctly local products.

Tk 304 554 751 Some less widespread forms, on the other hand, do have a strong ethnic character. Such is the case for the chignon hairdo which prolongs the heads of the Bateke-Banfumu. This coiffure, together [177] with the general appearance of the head -- with its plucked eyebrows and eyelashes, the skull covered for the most part with little tufts of wooly hair, beard, mustache, and tattooing made with a comb on the temples and cheeks -- is indeed the typical and characteristic form, representing the artistic ideal of

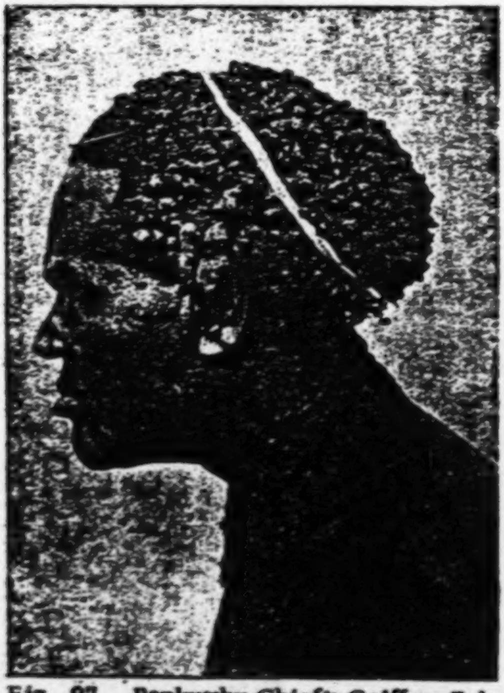


Fig. 97. Bankutshu Chief's Coiffure Enhanced with Ngula. The eyelashes and eyebrows are carefully plucked.

Tt [302]

Teke F133

T
302
554
751

of the Bateke-Banfumu. All the natives would like to adopt it, but only the great chiefs and dignitaries may thus glorify themselves. It is this model that the Bateke-Banfumu use to fashion the figurines which are often called fetishes, but which are really nkisi, protectors of the children. The form of these nkisi is the same for adults or for children, for the poor or for the wealthy. This form is found throughout the region, from Stanley Pool to the Kwango, and belongs specifically to the Bateke-Banfumu peoples, whose ethnic unity it demonstrates anew.

M
302
532

A no less characteristic coiffure is that worn by the dignitaries of the Ipanga-Yaelima region. The hair is parted in the middle, with the part running from the forehead to the nape of the neck, and the hair is gathered into one braid on each side. The braids originate just over the ears and then pass behind them to meet under the chin, where they are sometimes knotted. The hair at the top of the head used to be plaited in an upright roll over a small circumference. Only the favorite wife of the young Batitu chief still wore this ancestral coiffure when we passed through the region. This hairdo seems to have been very widespread in the region of the Yaelima and perhaps [178] much farther east. It corresponded to the local ethnic type which the sculptors followed in

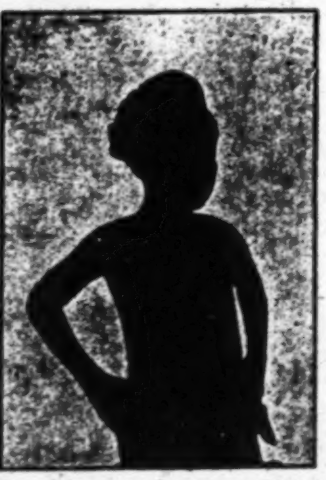


Fig. 98. Mosengere with his Hair in an Adjustable Aureole.

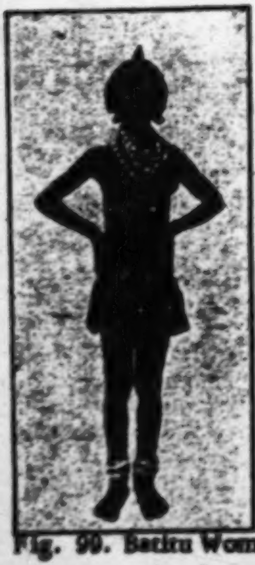


Fig. 99. Batitu Woman, Favorite Wife of Chief Inunu.

302 532 fashioning most of the statuettes, figurines and bowls that we possess from this region, which are so remarkably decorated. Moreover, we find these same forms among the Babuba and Bashilele, up to the region of the Bankutshu of Bena Dibele-Kole. These various tribes have also reproduced in their sculpture the designs of the shaved parts of the head, which are so uniform and so characteristic. In this respect these various tribes are related, and their ethnic affinity seems very clear. Despite their present remoteness from each other and the absence of all tribal intercourse, their ethnic kinship is clearly shown in the mementos they have preserved of the ancestral culture.

[142 304]

Fig. 100. Hairdos and Tattoos of Lake Leopold II.

302 161 These various observations permit us to divide the peoples into three very distinct groups.

1) The Bateke-Banfumu group, with its chignon hairdo over the nape of the neck and the rest of the head shaved or with the hair cut short.

2) The group including the Ipanga and the eastern peoples, with their hairdo of two braids passing behind the ears and under the chin and the upright roll on top of the head. [179]

3) The group including the tribes of Lake Leopold II and the lower Lukenie up to the Ipanga region, where having the hair arranged in tiny braids predominates.

301 The love of finery is more or less developed among all the peoples of the Kasai-Lake Leopold II-Lukenie region. Ornaments

Take F133

Yaelima

are worn in the hair, around the neck, on the wrists and ankles, and at the waist. M 301

From Stanley Pool to Mushie, the women slip a crown of cowries into the hair, sometimes wear bracelets of brass or glass beads on the wrist and forearm, and hang brass necklaces or imported beads strung on fibers around the neck. Very often the necklace goes from the shoulders under the arm. Throughout this region, imported ornaments predominate. Only the chiefs have retained a few special ornaments from the old days, notably the necklace and bracelet of worked brass and the necklace adorned with the teeth of leopards or lions. These latter objects are associated with a privilege, a prerogative, a right of use. M T 301 554

M [301. 516 854]

Fig. 101. Group of Batitu Women. Hairdos and Ornaments.

They are, in a way, badges of rank. In the full regalia worn by [180] Natali, a typical native petty chief, each detail seemed to have a special meaning. He had donned his finest costume in our honor and to impress us: an old tunic from the Belgian Regiment of the Guides, and a government medal around his neck on a chain, the badge of a native chief recognized by the government. He had attached a small whistle to the same chain, along with the five or six medals for his wives' taxes. Over this chain he wore the necklace of the native chiefs, made of brass and T 301 554 302

T 301 554 302 decorated with worked designs. His black skin glistened with grease and oil. His face had a wide red line of oil and ngula powder from the tip of his nose to the top of his forehead. A large circle, white above and yellow below, was painted around his right eye. His eyelashes were very long and powdered white, while his eyebrows had been carefully plucked. His head was covered with thick hair, short and woolly. It was gathered at the back into a large chignon roll, to which was fitted a secondary coiffure in small braids, dyed with ngula and shining with grease. A long blue bead dangled below this original headdress, and a long cock feather topped off the whole thing. The T [304] temples and cheeks were marked with a set of light parallel lines, a tattoo which seems to be drawn with an iron comb and which is [181] characteristic of all the Banfumungu. T [481 293] In his left hand Natali held the big walking staff, adorned at the top with a small iron bell, and he M [301 854] carried a fly-chaser made from the tail of a buffalo under his right arm, the badge of a chief. This was Natali: a native chief whose T [651] ornaments indicated his authority, recognized by the state whose medal he possessed, a polygamist who had paid the tax on his wives as attested by the little receipt plates which hung from his neck, a sorcerer and fetisher who knew the art of making nkisi and the magic powders that striped his face.

Fig. 102. A Batitu Mother and her Children, Adorned with Cowry Beads and Brass Rings.

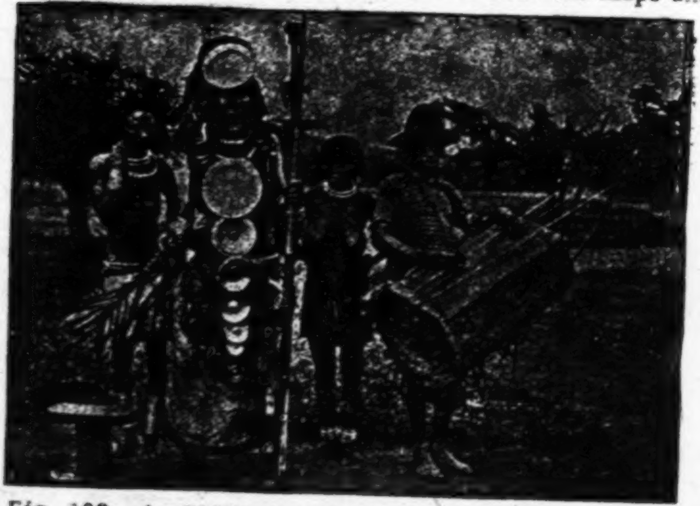
1: Maes---138 E-5 (1913-1914) 1924 FO32 Mongo FO32

SAKATA FO43

M
302
554

No less interesting is the full ceremonial regalia of the chiefs of the Lake Leopold II tribes. This varies according to the importance of the chief, but it always includes a number of cowries and one or several brass disks attached to the hairdo and the loincloth. The right to wear disks in the hairdo dates from olden times and is reserved to the chiefs and great dignitaries by ancestral custom.

The practice is found all along the Lukenie. From Lake Leopold II to Dekese, these disks have the same shape and ornamental designs. Their manufacture is reserved to the important blacksmiths upon authorization by the local Mfumu na Tse of the region. [182]



S
[291
352
534]

Fig. 103. An Old Native Chief of Lake Leopold II Adorned with his Insignia and Accompanied by his Two Favorite Wives and his Lukumbe Player.

M
[326]

Leopard skins, iron or brass bells hung from the waist, and the right to wear certain knives of a special shape at the waist are also prerogatives of the chiefs and dignitaries throughout the Lake Leopold II and Lukenie region.

We are thus confronted with various manifestations in the material life which are so many indications of the common origin or kinship of these different tribes.

301 Among the peoples of Lake Leopold II, hair ornaments are rare. Hairpins seem to be unknown; combs are made of raffia splints. A woman prefers ornaments of metal, iron, brass, or copper, while the chiefs and great dignitaries like to wear belts, necklaces, bracelets, and trimmed with cowries. The necklace of solid brass is very popular. The heavier it is, the more it is liked. We saw women wearing necklaces weighing as much as 25 pounds. These necklaces are riveted around the necks of the favorite wives of great chiefs or wealthy dignitaries. In case of divorce or separation, the owner of the necklaces removes them without regard for the suffering or cries of the victim. The women seem to be in no way inconvenienced by these cumbersome ornaments. On rare instances they wrap cloth around them to keep them from rubbing against the collarbone. [183]

[292
[293]
622]

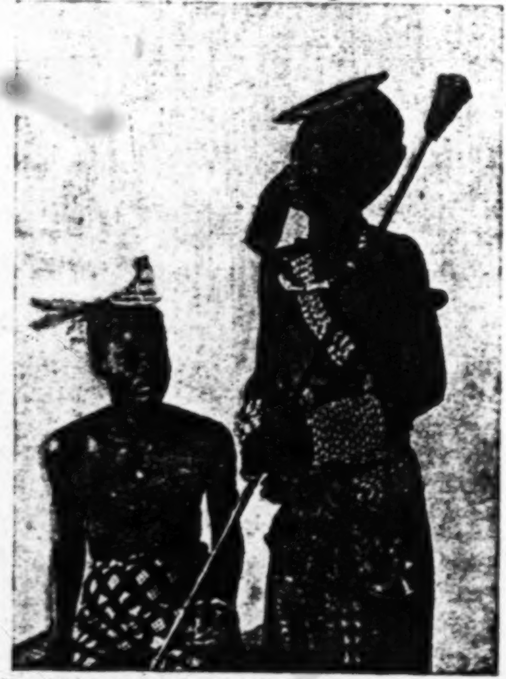


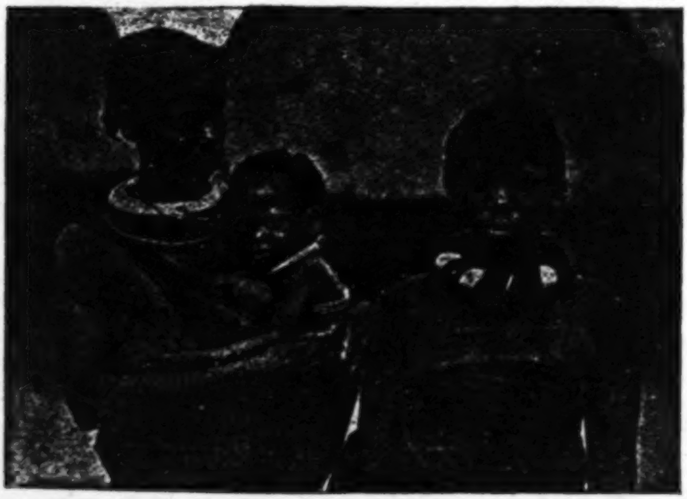
Fig. 104. Native Chief of Lake Leopold II and his Counselor, Highest Dignitary of the Tribe, both in Dress Costume.

[586]

M
301

Bracelets and anklets are relatively rare as ornaments among the Mosengere and other riparian tribes of the lake. We found them from time to time among the Bobaie and Balesa.

The elegantly dressed women of the Ipanga-Batitu and Bokala wear heavy brass rings over the ankles, brass rings on the fingers and toes, and leather belts adorned with brass beads, while the necklaces of solid brass gradually disappear as one goes eastward. Among the Yaelima and Bokala they are practically nonexistent, but the men and women like bracelets of brass wire. They wear them like a sheath from the wrist to the elbow. Except for rare exceptions, these people do not wear rings around the ankles. Some dignitaries deck themselves out with imported bead necklaces. The belt decorated with brass beads is rather commonly used. In the Bena-Dibele-Kole region, ornaments of copper and brass seem to be disappearing little by little as imported beads come in. Necklaces of glass beads, incidentally have been introduced throughout the region. [184] we visited. They are particularly in vogue among the Ipanga and Batitu women. The men prefer necklaces made of hair from elephants' tails, or a simple brass ring.



S
[301
854]

Fig. 105. Two Wadia Women and a Child, Wearing Solid Brass Necklaces.

M
[177]

Bracelets and rings of brass are worn by men from Stanley Pool to Kole. The Bokala and Yaelima dignitaries wear rings

M
301 on all the fingers of the hand. Those who can afford it even put
M them on their toes. Around the neck they wear fiber necklaces,
[778] from which they hang nkisi bags and horns. These amulet necklaces are associated with a religious idea, with magic power, rather than with ornamentation.

M
301
857 Children are usually overloaded with gaudy ornaments: white feathers stuck in the hair, necklaces and belts of glass beads, and small bells attached to the belt. In our opinion, however, these objects are not primarily intended to adorn the child, but to protect it. There is no doubt that the mother sticks the feathers in her child's hair and attaches small bells to his belt in order to find him more easily if he gets lost in the fields or in the bush. As soon as the child is old enough to find his own way and return to the village alone, bells and feathers are given up permanently. [185]

T
[292
301
302]

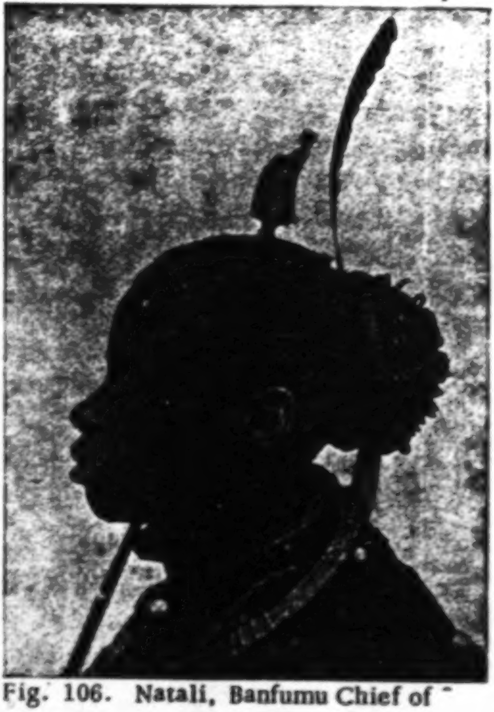


Fig. 106. Natali, Banfumu Chief of Kapanda.

M
301
171 According to their ornaments, the peoples of the Stanley Pool-Kole region are divided into five groups.

The first one includes the Bateke-Banfumu-Baboma, among whom ornaments are relatively rare for the women as well as for the men. 301 171

The second one encompasses all the peoples in the region of Lake Leopold II and the lower Lukenie and is characterized by the solid brass necklace worn by the women and the ornaments trimmed with cowries and the brass plaques worn by the dignitaries and chiefs.

The third one includes the Ipanga and the Batitu, with the belt ornamented with brass beads, rings on the fingers and toes, and solid brass rings worn above the ankles, all of which are peculiar to the women.

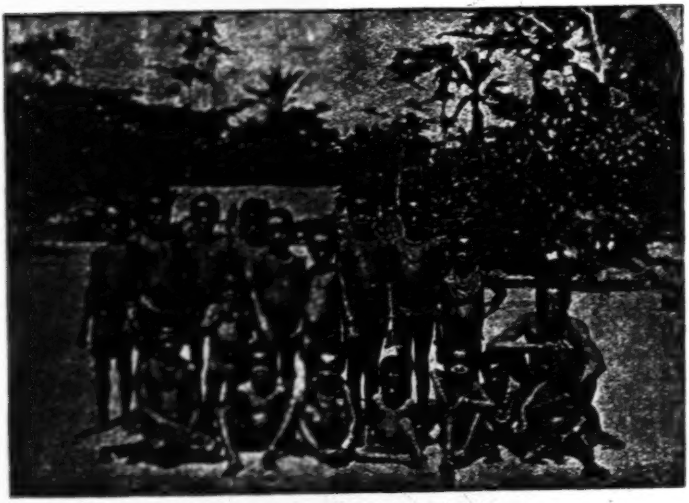


Fig. 107. A Group of Batitu Children.

142
516
855

The fourth group is characterized by the sheath of brass rings covering the arm from wrist to elbow and worn as much by the men as by the women of the Bokala-Yaelima.

The fifth group includes the Bena Dibele-Kole region, where imported ornaments have replaced the primitive ones. [186]

In addition to all these adornments used regularly in common, everyday life, the native also has ornaments reserved for show and ceremony. 301

Sakata FO43
Yaelima

M 301 We have already given a description of the dress costume of Natali, chief of the Banfumu of Kapanda.

S 643 301 293 302 For important ceremonies Chief Etoti, an old and unsociable Wadia, wore a hairdo of small braids adorned with three brass disks. He also wore a necklace made of hair from an elephant's tail, from which hung a triangular apron embellished with eight brass disks, signs of his great power and of his title as the oldest and greatest Mfumu na Tse in the whole Lake Leopold II region. His face was smeared with ngula, his eyes encircled with mpembe, and there was a long white line on each arm. In one hand he held the royal fly-chaser, and in the other, two chief's staffs.

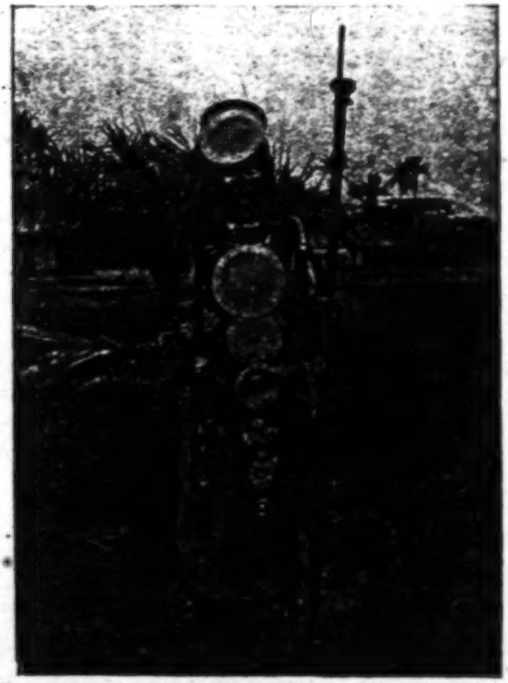


Fig. 108. Etoti, Unsociable Old Chief of the Wadia, in Full Regalia.

M 643 293 301 Kakua, the deposed Batitu chief, at all times wore his hairdo of small braids adorned with a large brass disk. His belt was decorated with a leopard skin and two iron bells, prerogatives

Yaelima

reserved to the Mfumu. The large royal knife, encased in a sheath, hung from a brass chain worn diagonally over the shoulder, and Kakua [187] never parted with his great bow and his quiver of arrows with large iron heads. 643 293 301

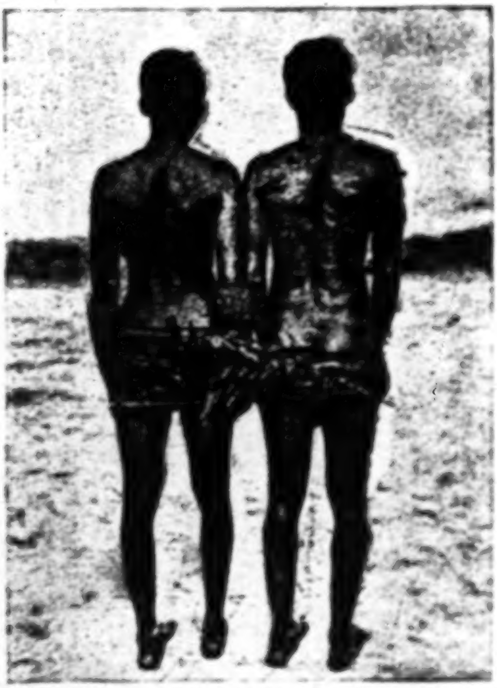


Fig. 109. Dancing Costume of the Yaelima-Bokala of the Wumbuli Region. Tattooing on the Back.

[304 301 535]

During dances and ceremonies the women attach the most unusual objects around their waists, often large bushy branches. Among the Ipanga and Batitu, as well as in the region of Wumbuli and Dekese, betrothal and wedding dances are executed in special attire, heavily bedecked with beads and cowries. 292 301 535

These ornaments are not at all consistent. They vary according to taste and the whims and means of the natives, but certain parts of the dress costume worn by the betrothed couple at the dances celebrating the engagement seem to have a special meaning, to which we shall return later.

Take F133
Sakata F043

M
304

From Leopoldville to Kole the peoples know and practice tattooing. This varies, however, from one region to another in motif and design, the symmetry of application, its extensiveness, and the manner of execution.

T
304

Among the Bateke and Banfumungu, we noted two distinct tattooings: that of the men and that of the women. [188]

S
[304]

For the men, the face is covered with striated, parallel lines, irregular, slightly concave, shallow, and covering the cheeks from the temples to near the chin. For the women, there is no facial tattooing, but the abdominal region is symmetrically covered with small lines or elongated dots in relief, placed side by side and covering the whole region extending from the pit of the stomach to the lower abdomen.

Fig. 110. Tribal Tattooing Executed by a Man, Wadia Tribe.

Fig. 111. Ornamental Tattooing Executed by a Woman, Wadia Tribe.

The males are tattooed by simple incisions, usually made at the age of seven or eight as manhood draws near. Women are tattooed at all ages.

M
304
832

Prior to our [Ed., European] penetration of the region, a young girl was tattooed before puberty, according to the information we obtained. There was a twofold reason for this: to satisfy

[text continues on p. 147]

Take F/33
Sakata F043

T
304

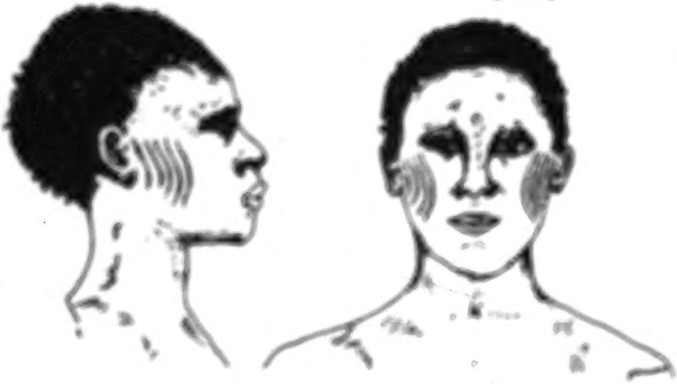


Fig. 112. Bateke-Bamfumungu Tattooing.

T
3
304

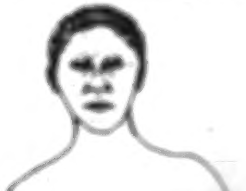


Fig. 113. Tattooing of
Bateke-Bamfumu Women.

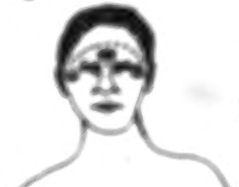


Fig. 114. Tattooing of
Wadia-Balesa Women.

304
132
[771
291] personal vanity, and to excite the male. At the present time only the latter reason accounts for the practice in the region where our influence has been effective. The introduction of European fabrics, the expansion of the economy and the progress of civilization have led the women to clothe themselves and to hide and screen a large part of the body from indiscreet glances. [189] The small primitive loincloth has given way to a toga of variable length, which hides from the public eye that part [Fig. 112 appears here] of the body which is covered with tattoos. In

[291
301
304
142]

Fig. 115. Elegant Lady of the Bokala-Yaelima Region. Tattoos, Bracelets, and Necklaces.

such cases, the woman can no longer display her tattoos for the sake of vanity. [Figs. 113 and 114 appear here] If, despite this, 304 133 some of them continue to have themselves tattooed just like the old matrons, it is because they hope to attract a man, to please him, and to be able to participate sooner in the pleasures of intimate life. When questioned on this subject, the natives are very definite. The men maintain that the raised tattoos [190] on

304
833 certain parts of the female body is very exciting to them, essentially as a result of the very pronounced movements of the woman during sexual contact. This explanation, which according to the natives seems to be the only reason for tattooing the women of certain tribes (this applies, in our opinion, to the Bateke, Banfumungu, Baboma, and, up to a certain point, to all the riparian peoples of Lake Leopold II), also enables us to explain the special character of the tattooing of Yaelima women. It extends all around the mons Veneris, follows the fold of the groin, and continues in concentric circles on the inside of the upper thighs. The tattoo scars on these parts of the woman's body are usually more symmetrical and in more pronounced relief, and these characteristics increase in direct proportion to the nearness of the pubic region. Coquetry cannot be the reason for making these raised scars. Their presence is largely hidden, even by the flimsiest and most primitive loincloth. Among certain tribes, the loincloth completely covers this part of the body, and since native women exercise a great deal of care and modesty in hiding these tattoos from the public eye, it was only with great difficulty that we were able to verify their existence. Let us note in passing [834] that despite earnest endeavors, we never were able to persuade a native woman of the interior to be photographed without her loincloth. The civilized women, whether local demimondaines or housewives, were, it is true, less [191] timid. The natives themselves make a distinction between these tattoos and those which appear on other parts of the body, notably on the arms, back, and face.

304
832 Tattoos on the back, arms, and throat are always essentially decorative. We found them especially on the women, who are coquettish by nature even among the most primitive peoples. These tattoos generally lack the characteristic uniformity which is such a clear mark of the racial tattoos. The latter are found in their most characteristic form on the men, particularly on the forehead, temples, cheeks, and sometimes the chest. Among certain tribes, the women have also taken over this artificial deformation peculiar to the men. Elsewhere, the women have special tattoos which are clearly distinct from those of the men, and, finally, among some peoples the women have no racial tattoos.

Sakata FO43
Teke F133

M
I
5
304
171

We have seen earlier that among the Bateke, Banfumungu, and Baboma, the man's characteristic tattoo consists of lines scratched on the face, while that of the woman consists of small dots in relief, juxtaposed in parallel lines, more or less horizontal, covering the body from the pit of the stomach to the lower abdomen. This same design [192] is found among the women of all the riparian peoples of Lake Leopold II and among the tribes of the Lukenie up to the Bambuli sector. It must be noted, however, that in this last region the relief is less clear and less pronounced.

M
304
171
[142]

Fig. 116. Tattooing among the Women of Lake Leopold II and the Lower Lukenie.

Moreover, as a general rule, the relief gradually decreases as one goes farther from the lake. In this respect, then, all these peoples seem to belong to the same ethnic group, and it is probable that this characteristic tattooing is one of the traits of the ancestral civilization, retained until the present time by all

M 304 171 the branches of the original group despite migrations and displacements. In the same region, the tattoo of the man is a small rosette, consisting of a large central dot and two or three concentric circles in relief, decorating the temples. In the region north of Lake Leopold II, the native usually adds to this a line of small dots all across the forehead.

M S 304 Among the Tumba, Mosengere, Wadia, and Basakata-Bobaie-Balesa, on the other hand, this line is replaced by a series of small incisions in relief which form a little cock's crest in the hollow at the root of the nose.

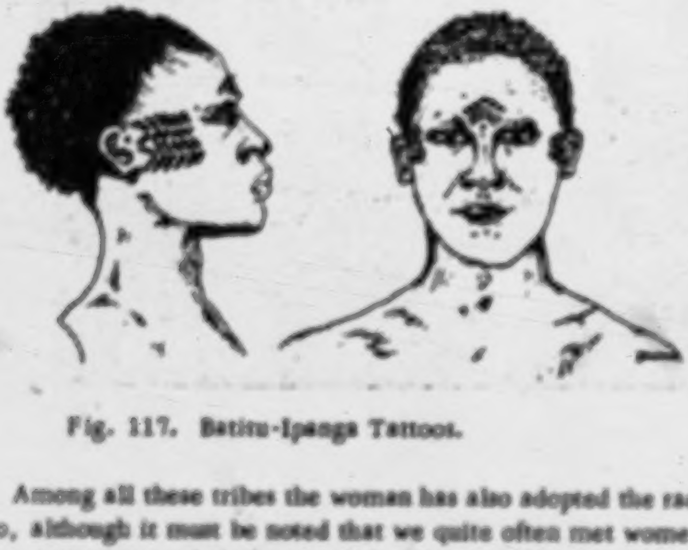


Fig. 117. Batitu-Ipanga Tattoos.

Among all these tribes the woman has also adopted the facial tattoo, although it must be noted that we quite often met women with no tattooing on their faces, while others had the rosette alone, the rosette [193] and the cock's crest, or the line crossing the forehead, and sometimes the three tattoos were combined.

This irregularity in the application of facial tattoos leads us to suppose that this tattooing is more a matter of vanity for the women of these various tribes than a practice imposed by the usages and customs, while for the men this artificial deformation is a true distinguishing mark imposed by local tradition.

M 304 Among the Ipanga and Batitu, tattoos include designs on the face and on the breastbone. The chest tattoo consists of a vertical line of small linear scars, obliquely parallel and slightly

Yaelima

bent running from the top of the breastbone to the navel. To the left and right of this main line, we see a double row of small oblique lines separated from each other by a space from one to three centimeters wide. The facial tatto consists of a double or triple row of oblique lines, arranged in such a way that they look like palm leaves, and a small cross formed by short, curved incisions at the root of the nose. According to a photograph sent by Mr. Timmermans, this same type of tattoo is also found among 304

[622

142]

Fig. 118. Imma, the Young and Excellently Endowed Batitu Chief of the Odiwe Region.

the Yaelima. We ought to note in this connection that in the course of our journey [196] through this region we did not observe this anywhere, despite numerous investigations. We therefore believe that an error was made in transmitting the information. The persons involved were probably Ipanga-Batitu who happened to be in the Yaelima region.

304 154 The tattoos of Ipanga and Batitu women differ considerably from those of the men, except for the facial designs. The lines of small dots that we observed and described for the women among the western peoples are quite widespread throughout the region. On certain women these scars are not only found on the abdomen and upper thighs, but they decorate the whole body and sometimes even the arms.

In the region of the Oshwe sector, especially near the eastern limits of the territory occupied by the Batitu, we encountered, moreover, several women whose tattoos were notably different from those of their sisters to the west. The palm-leaf designs on the temples are replaced by a series of concentric circles around a small dot in strong relief. This dot is placed half-way between the eye and the ear. These women were probably not natives of the region. In our opinion, they had come in through trade or even through abduction. They probably belonged to the Bokala or Yaelima tribe, although we were unable to get confirmation of this from the natives. Among these [195] latter tribes, tattooing is very much in fashion. The women in particular seem to be very fond of this type of ornamentation.

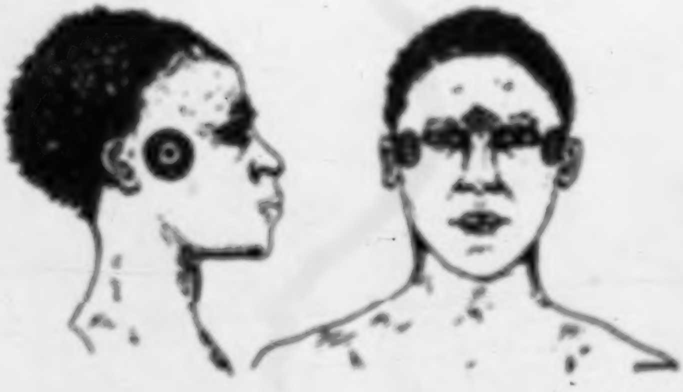


Fig. 119. Tattoos of the Lake Leopold II Tribes.

304 The designs are so many and varied that we could not attempt to provide a detailed description of them. We believe that we may divide them, on the whole, into three main classes or categories.

1) The racial or tribal tattoo.

Yaelima

This consists of a set of small curves drawn above the root of the nose, similar to those we previously noted among the Ipanga-Batitu, but usually sharper and more pronounced. This identical and characteristic motif seems to establish an affinity between these two groups, but it must be noted that the motif on the temples varies considerably from one region to another. Here we find again the rosette of the peoples of Lake Leopold II, although much larger. The concentric circles cover the temples, and very often they extend over a wider area as arcs, always concentric, are added above the cheeks. 304

Both men and women have adopted this tattoo.

2) Sexual tattoos, reserved for women. 304

These consist of scars in relief which are found on all parts of the body from just above and between the breasts to the middle of the thighs. 833

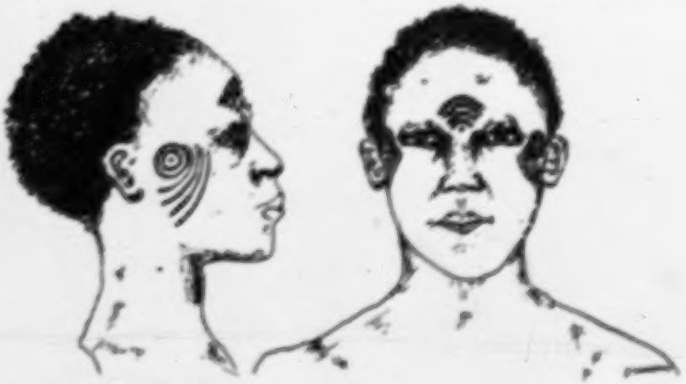


Fig. 120. Bokala-Yaelima Tattoos.

3) Ornamental or coquettish tattoos. [196] 304

These extend irregularly over all the other parts of the body, including the arms and back.

The tattoos in the second category form a series of concentric, rounded triangles whose tip is actually the mons Veneris. 304 833

The designs between the breasts and the navel vary considerably from one person to another. The rosettes and palm-leaf motif clearly predominate. The man does not use this type of tattoo, but the woman, on the other hand, takes a great deal of

M
304
833 pains with it, from which we may conclude that her chief aim is a heightening of sensation in sexual relations.

M
304 The motifs or designs in the third category are extremely varied [197] and most irregular, as we noted earlier. Aside from the concentric rosette, we saw the most varied designs: small dots, stippled lines, crescents, diamond shapes, palm-leaf motifs, and other figures cross, cut into each other, are superimposed on each other, and are mixed in such a way that the scars seem to have been scattered at random all over the body.

Men and women both have adopted these designs, but the woman seems to be especially fond of them. In this respect the Bokala and Yaelima differ sharply from their neighbors to the west, but seem to resemble closely the tribes to the east, especially the peoples of the Dekese region. Photographs sent by Mr. Van den Broeck and designated as Dengese show us the undeniable

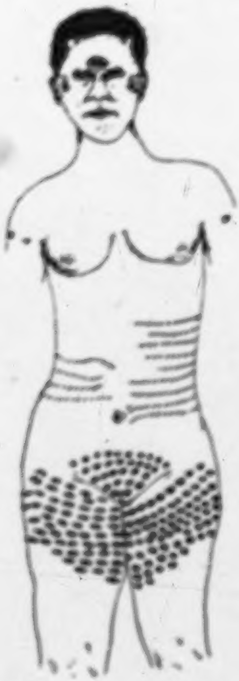


Fig. 121. Ipanga-Batitu Tattoos.

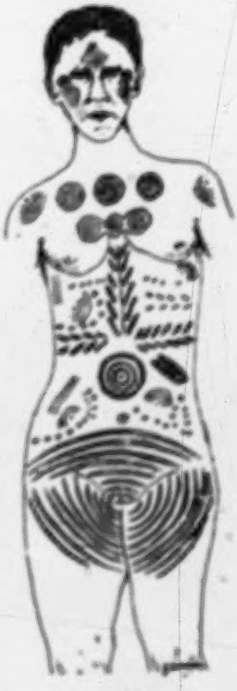


Fig. 122. Bokala-Yaelima Tattoos.

M
D
304

Dengese F016

D
M
304

likeness of their tattoo designs and those of the Yaelima. Among the Dengese, however, the designs are generally more symmetrical, and the rosette on the temple is smaller and usually framed by two or three lines of small dots, one of which sometimes extends into the forehead. Another figure, no less characteristic, consists of [198] a band of three parallel lines drawn in such a way as to form the native imbolo, which looks like two eights joined horizontally.

This motif is usually drawn above the navel and on the arm, and it is found almost exclusively on women.

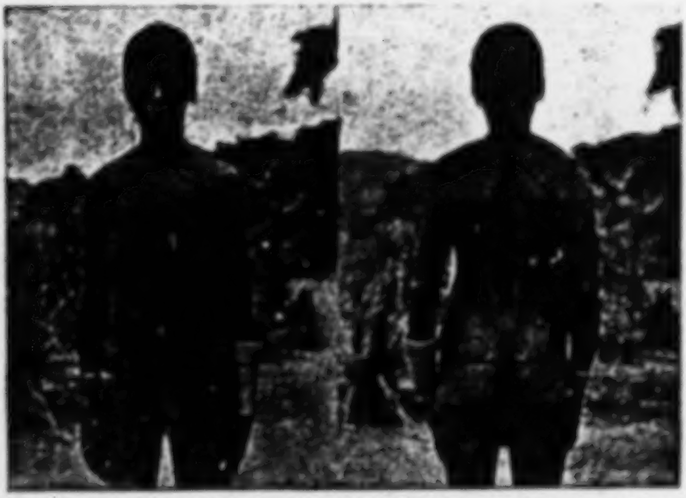


Fig. 123. Tattoos of the Bokala-Yaelima Woman, Front and Back.

Finally, the small scarified dots which adorn the neck of certain Dengese women show us that they are related as much to the eastern peoples as to their neighbors to the west.

The characteristic tattoo of the women of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, Basongo-Meno as well as Bankutshu, consists precisely of these sets of small scarified dots adorning the neck, temples, and forehead. To this must be added the design very often drawn on the upper arm. This motif, consisting of three broken parallel lines arranged in the form of a diamond with the sides shifted out of place, may be justly regarded as a special characteristic of this region.

1: Maes--156 E-5 (1913-1914) 1924 FO32 Mongo FO32
Dengese FO16

D M 304 Tattoos on the chest and the upper and lower abdomen are less uniformly worn by the women of this region, but where they do exist the design is always outstandingly symmetrical. It is formed by small juxtaposed dots in strong relief.

M 304 171 To sum up, we believe that we may divide the racial tattoos of the various populations we visited into four groups.

The first consists of the tattoo of the Bateke-Banfumungu-Baboma, made with a comb.

The second is characterized by the rosette on the temples and the semi-concentric crest at the root of the nose, and this includes all the riparian peoples of Lake Leopold II and the Lukenie, with the exception of the Ipanga-Batitu.

The third group is distinguished by the semi-concentric crest at the root of the nose and the palm-leaf designs at the temples, which we observed among the Ipanga-Batitu and up to the Bokala region.

Lastly, the fourth group is marked by the small, raised dots with which the woman of the Bena Dibele-Kole region adorns her neck and forehead, as well as by the characteristic figure on the upper arm.

We have noted earlier that, thanks to photographs by Mr. Van den Broech, we were able to verify the fact that the peoples of the Dekese sector are related particularly to their western neighbors as far as tattooing is concerned, although they [199] show strong resemblances to the eastern tribes. Their territory, therefore, should be regarded as a mixed zone or an area of transition between the two ethnic groups.

The study of the different figures of ornamental tattooing permits us to subdivide the region we visited into two large provinces.

The first one includes all the peoples who have few ornamental tattoos, and these few are not very elaborate. In this case, there are no true figures involved, for the tattoos invariably consist of small dots aligned horizontally.

This region extends from Leopoldville to Oshwe.

The second one includes the tribes with highly elaborate ornamental tattoos. This province covers the rest of the region we visited, and its major center is the Yaelima region. The study

Yaelima

304 171 we made of the many figures we saw in this region showed us that the variations are so numerous, so diverse, and so closely intertwined that it is totally impossible to use this as a basis for determining ethnic sectors with clearly-defined characteristics.

304 171 833 Finally, if we consider only those tattoo figures to which we attributed, if not a familial origin, at least a familial nature [200] (incitement to sexual relations), we see that throughout the region this type of tattoo is peculiar to women.

[307 142]

Fig. 124. Yaelima Headdress and Tattooing. Typical Longomo or Dignitary.

From Leopoldville to the confines of Batitu territory and even among some Bokala women, this tattoo consists (where it still exists) of a number of small, aligned dots, just like the ornamental tattoos.

Among the Ipanga-Batitu, these figures sometimes embellish the arms and part of the back, while among the other tribes they are less elaborate.

304 171 833 In the region of the Yaelima, Dengese, and some of the Bokala, this tattoo consists of a series of broken, concentric lines with the pubic region as the main center.

We do not know if this tattoo is also worn by the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu women, but this seems probable to us. We can, however, assert that among those peoples this tattoo does not extend to the upper thighs, except for one or two lines of small incised dots running parallel to the fold of the groin.

[142] [302]

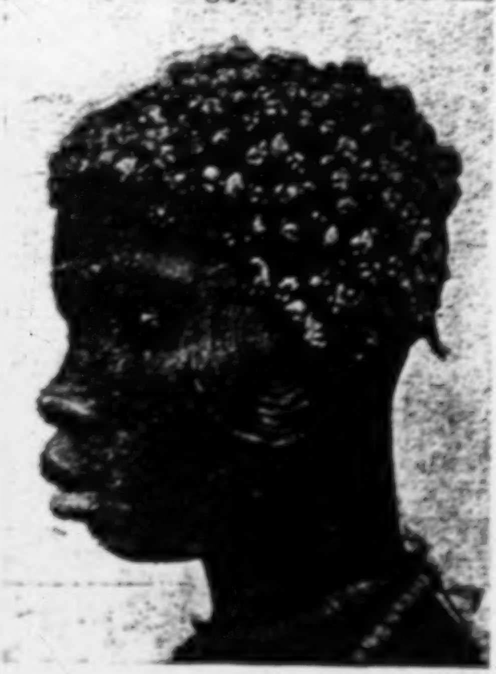


Fig. 125. Yaelima Tattoing and Headdress Adorned with Peanuts Smeared with Ngula.

The incisions for ornamental and sexual tattoos are usually made by women, although a man sometimes takes over this task.

304 The operation is carried out at very irregular intervals and at practically any [201] time of life. Moreover, it requires several sittings, usually spaced from 10 to 15 days apart.

The tattooing knife, which is also used for depilation, consists of a small, broad iron blade with a curved, very sharp cutting edge.

Sakata FO43
Teke FI33

M 304 The patient is seated. The operator draws the designs or motifs on the body with mpembe. He pinches the skin between his left thumb and forefinger and makes the line with a sharp blow of the lancet. The wound is sprinkled with powdered charcoal, mpembe, and a powder made of dried and crushed tree bark. This mixture slows the healing process. The operation is repeated three or four times until the relief of the raised scars is deemed sufficiently pronounced.

T 5 304 Among the Bateke, Banfumungu, and Baboma, facial tattoos are obtained by scratching or scraping the skin with a sort of iron comb with relatively broad, dull teeth. The operation requires only one sitting among these peoples, and the wounds are not powdered. These two procedures are explained by the difference in these tribes between racial tattoos and the scarified ornamental figures worn by the women. The former are ordinary cicatrized wounds; the latter are raised scars.

M 304 The racial tattoos are always made prior to the other figures. In 1913-14 boys and girls were compelled to have them inscribed before they reached marriageable age.

The familial tattoos are usually begun some time before the girl's marriage, and they are quickly elaborated during the last few weeks preceding the union.

As for the coquettish tattoos or ornamental figures, there seems to be no rule regarding the age at which they are applied. Sometimes even an old woman will not hesitate to acquire new incisions.

M 304 178 It is probable that the custom of tattooing will soon disappear among these peoples. The spread of the principles of European civilization will invariably suppress this primitive custom. [202]

We were able, moreover, to observe this trend during our visit to the villages of the houseboys, laborers, and soldiers of Leopoldville, Kinshasa, and other large centers. In these villages, the children and even the young men are no longer tattooed. The young girls are tattooed only slightly, and in general they have incisions only on the lower abdomen. Racial tattoos are totally lacking. On the other hand, in the villages of the interior, less influenced by the principles of civilization,

304 178 tattoos are very much in vogue at the present time. We concede that the custom of tattooing is now at its height in the region we visited.

It is probable that this custom will not long survive our penetration.

304 174 It would be very difficult to determine the approximate time of its introduction into the life of these natives. We believe, however, that we may regard racial tattoos as one of the ethnic characteristics peculiar to the contemporary culture and not as a specific custom of the ancestral civilization, transmitted from generation to generation and preserved or even elaborated by each one. The clearest proof of this fact comes from our observations of the present generation of old men. As a rule they have no racial tattoos. The old women who have no [203] trace of ornamental or ethnic tattooing are rarer. Ornamental incisions are more often lacking than tribal scars, and we encountered only rare cases where the sexual tattoos were lacking.

Fig. 126. Return from the Fields.

304
174 These facts prove that when the elders of the present generation were young, tattooing, if it was customary, was practiced with some regularity only by the women and originally had an essentially familial character in this region.

304
152 A woman bears the pain of the incisions without showing the least sign of suffering, without a complaint or a sigh. She even submits to this custom with some joy, mixed with a bit of pride, knowing that she will be held in higher esteem by the man.

This point, in our opinion, is much more important to the women among primitive peoples than one would generally suppose. It appears to us to be the leitmotiv of the major part of the variations that we observed in the grooming of the native woman.

The anxiety to please, the wishes of the man, these lead the woman to seek constantly the means that would enable her to be tattooed as soon and as often as possible. This natural desire and inner necessity are the reasons why the woman stoically bears all the torture, all the suffering. In primitive life the sexual side naturally is dominant. In this way we can explain, and in a way understand, why tattooing in the beginning was the exclusive appanage of the woman in this region and how she came to decorate the sexual organ and its immediate vicinity in order subsequently to display it; covering nearly all the body with decorations came about, perhaps, simply through coquetry.

116

116 TEXTS--a full set of pages from each processed source, arranged in page order, as a means of establishing the context for any particular slip. Sets are arranged in the numerical order of the sources. See also:

Library cases . . . . [illegible]

Annales du Musée du Congo Belge

NOUVELLE SÉRIE

MISCELLANÉES

Vol. I. Fascicule I.

NOTES SUR LES POPULATIONS
DES
BASSINS DU KASAI, DE LA LUKENIE, ET DU LAC LÉOPOLD II

PAR LE

Dr J. MAES
Chef de Section au Musée du Congo Belge,
Chef de la mission ethnographique du Congo central (1913-1914)

NOVEMBRE 1924

EN VENTE CHEZ :

Falk fils, librairie, successeur G. Van Campenhout,
rue des Paroissiens 12 A, Bruxelles.

Librairie Albert Dewit, Rue Royale 53, Bruxelles.

Des presses de J. Leherte-Courtin et Fils, Renaix.

Notes sur les populations des bassins du Kasai, de la Lukenie et du Lac Léopold II

PAR LE

DR J. MAES

CHEF DE SECTION AU MUSÉE DU CONGO BELGE,
CHEF DE LA MISSION ETHNOGRAPHIQUE DU CONGO CENTRAL 1913-14

VOLUME I.

Préface.

Les notes publiées aujourd'hui comme travail de début dans la nouvelle série de vulgarisation des Annales du Musée du Congo Belge, résultent des observations que nous avons faites au cours de la mission ethnographique dont nous avons été chargés en 1913. Elles paraissent un peu tardivement à cause de l'impossibilité de mettre nos observations au point pendant la grande guerre.

Nous avons parcouru toute la région qui s'étend entre le le Kasai, le Congo et le Kwango, visité les populations de la région du Lac Léopold II, de la Lukenie et Bas Sankuru-Kasai, passé par plus de deux cents villages situés à l'intérieur de la forêt Equatoriale, et pris contact avec certaines populations restées en grande partie en dehors de toute influence étrangère et jusqu'à un certain point hostiles à la civilisation Européenne ou même en révolte contre elle.

[p. III]

[p. II is blank]

Le but principal de notre voyage était la récolte de collections ethnographiques pour le Musée du Congo Belge. En conséquence nous n'avons guère séjourné longtemps dans une même agglomération et nos documents se rapportent essentiellement à la vie matérielle, aux industries, aux arts et métiers et plus rarement aux coutumes familiales et religieuses des indigènes.

Nous avons ramené quantité d'objets ethnographiques, près de 1500 photographies et récolté autant que possible des collections de sciences naturelles. Déjà la valeur de ces dernières a été partiellement mise en relief par une série de notices publiées dans la Revue Zoologique Africaine. Citons au passage l'étude intitulée « Odonates récoltés dans la région du Lac Léopold II » par le Dr. H. Schouteden, comprenant en dehors de divers spécimens très intéressants, deux espèces nouvelles ; l'étude du professeur Lonnberg sur les singes du Musée du Congo Belge., etc.

Une partie des documents photographiques a été utilisée pour l'illustration du Guide Ethnographique du Musée du Congo Belge, d'autres photographies ont servi de base à la publication de l'Album « Kykjes uit Congo », édité par la ville d'Anvers et distribué à tous les élèves des écoles supérieures de l'enseignement primaire d'Anvers en 1922. Toute l'illustration du présent volume, de même que celle du second qui paraîtra ultérieurement, y a été puisée et la réserve paraît encore suffisante pour servir de base à la formation d'un album de notre expédition que nous espérons pouvoir éditer quand les conditions de publication seront devenues un peu moins onéreuses.

Le principal artisan de cette riche documentation photographique et de la récolte des collections d'histoire naturelle fut Monsieur Philippe Tits, taxidermiste-photographe, adjoint à la mission ethnographique du Congo Central.

Si après avoir parcouru les notes où nous avons condensé la première partie des documents rassemblés au cours de notre expédition, le lecteur juge que nos efforts ont été couronnés de quelque succès, nous tenons à associer à cet hommage notre adjoint, dont l'activité infatigable et le grand dévouement ne nous ont jamais fait défaut.

Nous tenons à remercier également les agents, employés, fonctionnaires de l'accueil sympathique que nous avons reçu au cours de nos voyages, ainsi que de l'aide précieuse, qu'ils nous ont prêtée dans toutes nos recherches. Nous exprimons notre reconnaissance toute spéciale aux Pères de la mission de Wombali et de Bokoro. Nous devons à leur précieux concours, la majeure partie des résultats que nous avons pu acquérir dans la région des Baboma et des Basakata. Pour ces derniers le travail s'annonçait comme particulièrement laborieux et dangereux. Peu avant notre arrivée, le chef territorial en tournée d'inspection dans cette région avait été attaqué par des indigènes. Si malgré ces circonstances désavantageuses nous avons pu pénétrer jusqu'au cœur du territoire des Basakata en pleine révolte sans autre escorte que nos deux soldats chasseurs et trouver nos deux cents porteurs pour assurer le transport de nos bagages et de nos collections ; si nous avons pu y faire ample récolte d'objets et de documents, c'est grâce au concours d'un missionnaire de la mission de Bokoro, aimé et respecté dans toute la région et au prestige du Rév. P. Denis, fondateur de la mission.

Nous exprimons également notre gratitude à M. Borremans, de Tuas, à M. Lallemand, de Bumbuli et tout particulièrement à M. Molin, de Bongo, pour l'aimable assistance et le précieux concours dont ils nous ont comblés au cours de nos pérégrinations dans leurs territoires. Le mérite des documents précieux que nous avons pu rassembler dans la région si peu connue des Mosengere revient en majeure partie à l'heureuse initiative de M. Molin. Sans sa collaboration il nous eut été impossible de pénétrer jusqu'aux extrêmes limites du territoire des Mosengere et de rassembler toutes les belles collections que nous avons pu expédier au Musée d'une région à peu près inconnue jusqu'à ce jour.

A tous ceux qui nous ont aidé et assisté nous exprimons tous nos remerciments et toute notre reconnaissance.

Dr. J. MAES.

CHAPITRE I.

Le Pays et ses Habitants.

Aspect du pays. — Situation des tribus. — Caractères généraux des indigènes. — Sentiment maternel. — Le féticheur. — Croyances religieuses. — Culte des morts. — Les Mfumu. — La médecine.

La région située entre le Congo, le Kasaï et le Kwango, est couverte de hautes herbes, parsemées d'arbres rabougris ou de quelques petites forêts, dont le dôme de verdure se lève majestueux au dessus d'une plaine sans limites. Le long des rivières s'étend un rideau d'arbres dont la profondeur diminue au fur et à mesure que l'on remonte vers l'intérieur. La route tracée par le passage régulier d'interminables colonnes d'indigènes, marchant à la file indienne, serpente triste et monotone à travers ces plaines légèrement ondulées. À la saison des pluies les graminées, dont les tiges atteignent deux et parfois 2 m. 50 de hauteur, coupent la vue ; à la saison sèche, les herbes, détruites par les feux de brousse ont fait place à une plaine jaune noirâtre d'où toute vie semble bannie. De temps en

[p. 5]
[no pp 1-4]

temps, éloignés les uns des autres de 30 et parfois de 40 kilomètres, nous rencontrons un groupement de huttes entourées de quelques champs de manioc, de bananeraies et parfois de petites cultures de maïs et d'arachides. A notre arrivée les hommes nous regardent avec nonchalance, les femmes méfiantes se cachent dans leurs huttes ou se réfugient dans la forêt et les plantations, les enfants moins timides nous dévisagent avec l'insouciance caractéristique de leur âge.

FIG. 1. — En route dans la brousse et la savane de la Lukenie.

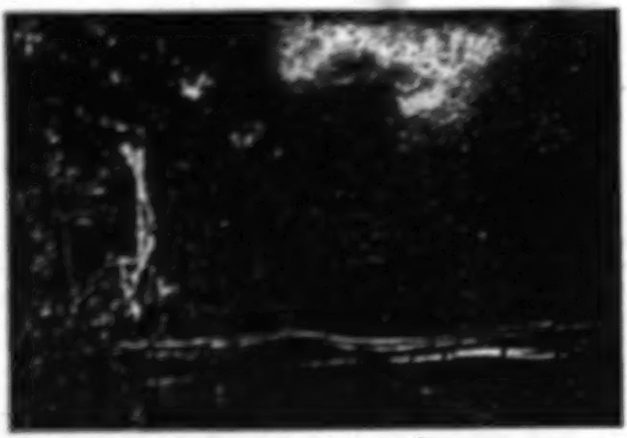


FIG. 2. — Dans la forêt Équatoriale.

Au delà du Kasai, dans la région de la Mfimi, au Lac Léopold II et le long de la Lukenie, la brousse fait place à la forêt, humide, marécageuse, sombre et mystérieuse.

Au confluent de la Mfimi et du Kasai s'étend à perte de vue une immense région marécageuse, dénudée de toute végétation arborescente, entrecoupée d'innombrables canaux, étroits et peu profonds à la saison sèche, larges au point de couvrir à peu près toute la région à la saison des pluies. Les quelques groupements d'indigènes qui habitent cette région ont construit leurs villages le long de la rivière sur un espace de terrain surélevé, à l'abri des inondations périodiques.

Dans la région forestière, les villages semblent semés au grand hasard.

Les huttes sont construites au milieu d'une large clairière, encadrées de cultures de manioc et de bananes que borde au loin la forêt non débroussée.

Telle est la région que nous avons parcourue du Stanley Pool au Kasai-Kwango, de la Mfimi au Lac Léopold II et dans tout le bassin de la Lukenie.

Les premières populations que nous y avons rencontrées appartiennent au groupe des *Bateke*. Leur territoire s'étend autour du Stanley Pool et remonte au Nord jusqu'à la Lufimi. Au delà habitent les *Banfumungu*, également appelés *Banfunguna*, *Banfumeke*, *Bawumbu*, ou simplement *Banfumu*.

Fig. 3. — Femme et enfant Bateke

Au nord du Kasai et le long des rives du Congo, habitent les *Bayanzi* ou *Babangi*. Leurs voisins de l'Est, les *Baboma* ou *Babuma*, occupent toute la région du confluent de la Mfimi et du Kasai, jusqu'à la rive gauche du Bas Kwango.

Les *Wadia* habitent au Nord des Baboma entre Nioki, Kutu et remontent le long de la *Bosiempa* et la rive occidentale du Lac Léopold II jusqu'au territoire des Mosengere.

Sur la rive gauche de la Lukenie-Mfimi entre Bokoro et Moleke, s'étend la région occupée par les *Basakata*.

Les *Mosengere* ou *Musengere* sont établis le long de l'Ubanga-Lele dans la région de Bongo. Au nord-ouest de ceux-ci, nous avons rencontré les *Bolaia*, dont le territoire dépasse les limites du district du Lac Léopold II.

Les *Bolia* occupent le pays au Nord-Est de Bongo, jusque dans la région de Bolia-Kiri.

Les *Tumba* vivent le long de toute la rive orientale du Lac Léopold II.

Les *Bokala* sont les voisins Nord des Bombaia dans la région de Isaka-Tolo.

Les *Bolima* — *Bokote*, occupent la rive gauche de la Lukenie entre Bokoro et Pokombo.

Les *Ipanga* et les *Batitu* ou *Atshitu* habitent le secteur d'Oshwe tant au Nord qu'au Sud de la Lukenie. Plus à l'Est entre la Lodima et Bumbuli, s'étend le territoire occupé par les *Bokala*.

Les *Yaelima* se rencontrent de l'Est de Bumbuli au secteur de Dekese et jusqu'au pays de Dengese.

Fig. 9. — Bankutshu.

Au confluent du Kasai-Sankuru, sont établis quelques groupes de *Bashilele*, dont le territoire s'étend bien loin au Sud entre le Kasai et le Loange.

Les *Bankutshu* également appelés Basongo-Meno, habitent la rive gauche du Sankuru jusque dans le secteur de Bena-Dibele et de Kole.

En général les indigènes ont bonne apparence, les diverses parties du corps sont bien proportionnées, à l'exception des jambes qui, particulièrement chez la femme, sont d'ordinaire peu musclées, trop longues et rarement bien formées. La taille moyenne varie de 1 m. 65 à 1 m. 70. Chose curieuse, au Kasai, au Lac Léopold II, dans la Lukenie et jusqu'au secteur d'Oshwe, la taille moyenne de la femme dépasse légèrement celle de l'homme. Ailleurs la femme est généralement plus petite et il est rare d'en rencontrer dont la taille dépasse 1 m. 68.

Au point de vue physiologique, les populations Batetela-Bankutshu, sont incontestablement supérieures à leurs voisins de l'Est. La sensibilité physique est notablement inférieure à la nôtre. Leur résistance à la faim, à la soif, aux privations et à la fatigue des longues marches est remarquable. L'acuité de l'ouïe et de la vue contraste singulièrement avec le peu de développement du goût, de l'odorat et du toucher. Là où nous ne percevons qu'une masse aux contours peu précis, les indigènes distinguent des formes nettes. Rien ne leur échappe, le moindre bruit, un son très simple sont perçus. En pleine marche ils m'indiquaient les cris des singes qui se disputaient dans les cimes des arbres. Une petite égratignure à un arbre, une branche cassée, l'herbe à peine foulée, quelques

FIG. 3. — Femmes [illegible] au village de [illegible].

traces suffisent pour leur révéler le passage du gibier. Par contre les émanations des marais boueux qui nous écœuraient, l'odeur de la chair en décomposition qui nous répugne, ou l'atmosphère surchargée de fumée épaisse qui remplit les huttes, ne les incommode nullement.

Résistant aux plus grandes fatigues, exécutant des marches forcées avec des charges de vingt à trente kilos, ces indigènes supportent les privations les plus dures sans se plaindre. Quand l'heure du repas est arrivée et que les vivres sont en abondance, ils s'en donnent de plein cœur et mangent d'un appétit qui semble insatiable. Il m'est arrivé plus d'une fois de voir un indigène absorber en un seul repas plus d'un kilogramme de chikwangue et un même poids de viande. Que ces excès occasionnent parfois un certain malaise, nul ne s'en étonnera, mais le plus souvent le noir n'en est pas incommodé.

S'il résiste aux fatigues et aux privations les plus dures, l'indigène supporte moins les variations atmosphériques. Le matin, quand il fait beau, le noir est gai, joyeux et vif. Lorsque la température s'élève et en particulier entre onze et deux heures, il est irrésistiblement porté au « dolce farniente ». À ces moments il recherche l'ombre et la tranquillité. Aux heures de midi, l'animation matinale qui égayait le village a fait place à une quiétude générale. Les champs sont déserts, les enfants se sont réfugiés dans les huttes ou rodent autour de leurs mères, à l'ombre des bananiers ou sous les branches de quelque manguier gigantesque. Les hommes sont dans la forêt ou rassemblés sous le hangar public. Vers trois heures la vie renaît au village, l'animation devient plus grande, la circulation plus intense. Le soir toute la population est sur pied. Les enfants s'adonnent de tout cœur aux jeux et amusements de leur âge. Ils badinent, courent, gesticulent, sautent, crient et s'amusent à qui mieux, mieux. Les femmes agiles et actives, circulent de tous côtés, bavardant à l'infini tout en surveillant la popotte familiale. Les hommes circulent d'un groupe à l'autre, discutant longuement les événements de la journée, ou les préparatifs du lendemain. Puis après le repas, quand la lune brillante monte majestueusement dans la nuit, les indigènes se rassemblent autour des grands foyers, et tous les villageois dansent. Au son des tambours et des chants, le rythme de la danse s'accentue et, toujours plus pressés, ils dansent et ils chantent sans jamais se fatiguer. Quand bien

FIG. 6. — Femmes [illegible] à l'heure du repas

avant dans la nuit, je me retirais sous ma tente las de les voir danser, ils continuaient infatigables jusqu'aux premières brumes du matin!

Fig. 5. — La vie au village des Mongos

Par contre quand il fait froid ou que la pluie tombe à torrents, l'indigène souffre, se courbe, grelotte, s'affaisse. Que de fois je les ai vus, assis près du feu, les jambes repliées contre le corps, les mains jointes, nouées autour des chevilles, le menton appuyé sur les genoux, le regard vide, tristes et silencieux, abrités sous le pauvre toit de ces huttes sombres, tandis qu'au dehors le tonnerre roulait et grondait, que le vent soufflait en ouragan, courbant les cimes des arbres, brisant les géants de la forêt, que d'innombrables éclairs déchiraient la nuit et que l'eau tombait à torrents. À ces moments inoubliables pour nous, l'indigène ne ressent rien de tout ce qui nous étreint. La grandeur, la majesté, la puissance et la beauté de cette nature se révélant au milieu de l'immense forêt séculaire, ne l'impressionnent pas. Il vit sa vie matérielle, il a froid et recroquevillé, il se rapproche de l'âtre pour se réchauffer au pauvre feu de son misérable foyer. Demain, tantôt peut-être, quand l'orage sera passé et que le beau soleil ardent aura séché la terre trempée et ravinée, il se lèvera, sortira péniblement de sa cachette, étendra longuement ses membres engourdis, se redressera, sourira et comme si rien ne s'était passé il dira « m'bolo bosso ». Oui l'orage a passé, le vent dort, la nature est calme, mais dans mon âme il reste quelque chose du spectacle grandiose et inoubliable de la grande tornade sous les tropiques. Chez lui rien, absolument rien, même pas un souvenir !

FIG. 6. -- Vieillards et notables dits Longomo des Yaelima.

Pauvre primitif ! Telle est sa vie, terre à terre, vivant au jour le jour, sans souvenirs du passé, sans espoirs pour l'avenir.

En général l'indigène a un caractère doux, craintif, voire même peureux, mais il n'est pas un lâche. Il est peu susceptible, aime à badiner, à jouer et se querelle avec animation. Eloquent en certaines circonstances, il a la manie des longs discours et des plaidoyers interminables. Appelé à défendre une cause ou à soutenir ses intérêts, il est d'une ténacité rare, n'hésitant pas à remonter au plus lointain de ses souvenirs pour vous convaincre du bien fondé de sa cause.

Combien de fois ne me suis-je pas amusé à écouter leurs explications interminables. Assis dans ma chaise longue, les plaideurs devant moi encadrés par une multitude de curieux qui s'amusaient passionnément aux discours de ces avocats improvisés, j'aimais à écouter leurs palabres. Ils y discutaient non seulement les faits, mais ils faisaient appel aux lois, us et coutumes de la tribu, pour mieux défendre leur cause. Puis quand la sentence était rendue et qu'elle répondait à la logique de leurs lois primitives, l'auditoire tout entier acclamait le juge improvisé.

Fig. 9. — Un orage sous les tropiques.

L'indigène a le sentiment de la justice. Il sait à certain moment reconnaître ses fautes, ses torts et se soumet stoïquement aux punitions qui lui sont appliquées. Quoique par sa nature il soit porté au vol, je dois reconnaître qu'au cours de mon voyage, les délits furent rares. Entre eux ils respectent le bien d'autrui. Les lois indigènes punissent très sévèrement le vol. Vis à vis du blanc la mentalité est tout autre. Voler les biens des « Mondele » c'est faire preuve d'une grande habileté et d'audace, à condition de ne pas se faire surprendre. Quel est le blanc qui n'a pas été victime de ces larcins, où tabac, sel, col, chemises, etc. s'égarent comme par enchantement. S'il n'y prend garde à temps, petit à petit tout son équipement y passera ! Personnellement nous avons appris à nos dépens combien peu l'on doit se fier à l'honnêteté de ces serviteurs improvisés que l'on appelle Boys. Un jour un indigène fut surpris en flagrant délit de vol. Vertement admonesté, il nous explique naïvement. Je n'ai pas volé « Mondele ». Voler c'est prendre le bien de Mondele sans qu'il le sache ! Vous avez vu que je prenais votre bien donc je ne l'ai pas volé !

L'indigène a le caractère peu franc et peu loyal. Dire la vérité, à moins qu'il n'y ait tout intérêt, lui semble peu recommandable. Le faire quand il peut y perdre, lui paraît illogique, je dirai même absurde.

En général l'indigène est indifférent au malheur d'autrui. Extérieurement il manifestera une commisération trop bruyante, imposé par la coutume. En réalité il ne s'occupe de son voisin que pour autant qu'il croit y trouver un avantage. Au cours de mon voyage j'ai eu l'occasion d'assister, à plusieurs reprises, à ces scènes extraordinaires qui suivent le décès d'un indigène. Lors de notre séjour au village du chef Pokoi, tribu Ekonda, un des notables vint à mourir. Le décès donna lieu à une grande cérémonie de deuil, tel que le veut la coutume. Toute la réserve de poudre du décédé avait servi à annoncer sa mort aux villages voisins. La douleur se fit jour par des manifestations les plus bruyantes et les plus inattendues. Les sanglots des femmes, les cris de désespoir des parents, les chants plaintifs des pleureuses, se mêlaient au roulement du tambour et aux cris gutturaux et incohérents des hommes, qui s'enivraient consciencieusement pour mieux manifester leur douleur. Toutes ces manifestations sont de la comédie. La douleur criée, hurlée est officielle et toute

Fig. [illegible]. — Danse de deuil au village du chef Pokoi Ekonda de commande. Les Baafomongo, pleurent au décès d'un voisin comme ils vont à la chasse, les femmes se lamentent et crient comme elles préparent les repas. Tout se fait comme un autre travail, parce que c'est la coutume, parce que c'est chose obligatoire.

Après les premières manifestations de deuil, vint l'inhumation. Le défunt fut enterré assez loin du village. Sur la tombe, les indigènes déposèrent une grande partie de sa fortune, des casseroles, des théières, des coffres, des poteries, un parapluie, etc., le tout préalablement mis hors d'usage. Toute la cérémonie était précédée de très copieuses libations de vin de palme et de bière de canne à sucre. Tous les invités, se firent un devoir d'y faire le plus d'honneur possible et les funérailles se transformèrent rapidement en une scène d'ivresse générale.

Les femmes du village restaient exclues des libations. Elles venaient de temps à autre, jusqu'à la hutte du défunt, y entraient pendant 15 à 20 minutes, y pleuraient et se lamentaient au plus fort, puis s'en retournaient bien tranquillement à leur besogne. De vraie douleur, de chagrin réel, il n'y avait aucune trace! Les Baafomongo n'attachent en ces circonstances de l'importance qu'aux apparences.

3

FIG. [illegible]. — Femmes indigènes en tenue de deuil, vue de face et de dos, prise au marché indigène de [illegible].

Il arrive cependant que l'indigène se sente réellement affecté par le décès d'un membre de sa famille. La mère en particulier, souffre de la mort de ses enfants, surtout s'ils viennent à lui être enlevés dans la première enfance. Le père sera plus affecté de la perte d'une fille, car elle constitue une partie de sa fortune. Au décès d'un enfant, de l'époux ou de ses frères maternels, la femme se couvre le corps de terre glaise plus ou moins blanche. Ce n'est point la terre blanche dite « mpembe » mais une boue gluante, qui donne à la femme un aspect plutôt désagréable pour ne pas dire répugnant. Le plus souvent le pagne traditionnel est remplacé par de grossières loques, trempées dans la même boue et de branches de feuillages attachées à la ceinture.

Fig. [illegible] — Enfant et sa mère, tribu des [illegible]

L'enfant en général, ne déplore que très peu la perte de ses parents. S'ils viennent à mourir, quand il est jeune, les frères et sœurs de sa mère ou de son père, prennent soin de lui et il jouira chez eux des mêmes droits, que sous le toit maternel. Si ses parents meurent vieux, il n'est que très peu affecté par leur perte et sauf les grandes lignes blanches, que les femmes se tracent sur le front, les bras et la bouche après le grand deuil, leur souvenir ne survivra que très peu.

À notre arrivée au village de Pongo, une jeune fille venait de mourir. Toute la nuit et le lendemain ce ne furent que cris et lamentations interminables. Les femmes du village arrivaient les unes après les autres dans la hutte mortuaire, se groupaient autour du cadavre et entonnaient leur chant de deuil, mélancolique, sombre et monotone. Au bout de 10 à 20 minutes, elles sortaient l'air dégagé, insouciantes et indifférentes tandis que d'autres pleureuses les remplaçaient. Seule, la mère pleurait son enfant et sa douleur moins bruyante et moins tapageuse était sincère, réelle et profonde.

Au village de Tik-ke-Tik, dans la région des Yaelima, nous fûmes témoins d'une scène analogue, à la suite du décès d'un jeune homme.

À la tombée de la nuit le corps fut enroulé dans des nattes en éclats de rotang, solidement tressées, ficelées et complètement fermées. À l'aurore le ballot mortuaire, attaché à une forte branche fut levé par deux hommes. Au lieu de prendre la rue du village le cadavre fut porté derrière la hutte puis au travers de la brousse. Quelques hommes marchant à la file indienne formèrent le cortège, terminé par la mère en toilette de deuil. La route suivie fut très irrégulière. Évitant surtout les chemins tracés, les porteurs revenaient souvent en arrière, et mirent près de deux heures pour arriver au cimetière situé à 4 km. du village.

Au retour les indigènes m'expliquèrent que ces nombreux crochets et le passage au travers de la brousse sauvage avait pour but d'égarer le mauvais esprit qui avait pénétré au village et frappé le jeune homme !

Le sentiment de l'amour maternel, existe chez la femme indigène. Grand fut le bonheur, de la mère de notre dévoué Nkasa, lorsqu'elle apprit son retour au pays. Elle avait pleuré le départ de son enfant enlevé pour la milice, et pendant sept ans, elle en avait conservé le souvenir. Aujourd'hui elle le retrouvait, grand, beau, fort, et au service d'un « Mundele na Bula matari ». Oh combien elle était heureuse de son retour !

Les indigènes aiment et respectent la vieillesse. Dans tous les villages, nous avons observé le fait. Les vieillards étaient l'objet de l'attention de la jeunesse. Leurs conseils étaient écoutés, leurs leçons suivies, leur autorité incontestablement établie et respectée. Les vieillards étaient les notables du village, les « Lomposo » de l'endroit, les amis des enfants. Les infirmes aussi étaient respectés et bien traités.

Chez les Bambamunga de la région de Bokala, nous avons rencontré une malheureuse, devenue aveugle à la suite d'une grave maladie. Elle était à charge de la communauté. Elle se rendait utile, autant que son état le lui permettait, mais elle n'était astreinte à aucun travail. Loin d'être exposée aux railleries et tracasseries des enfants, elle était leur amie et l'objet des soins et de la bienveillante attention de toutes les femmes du village.

Le respect des infirmes et des estropiés est d'ailleurs d'usage, même chez les Batua : pygmées dont nous avons visité quelques villages situés le long de la Lokoro et aux environs d'Inongo. Nous y avons rencontré un Batua estropié, qui ne pouvait marcher qu'en soulevant le pied au moyen de la main. Incapable de subvenir à ses besoins, pouvant à peine se rendre utile, il ne manquait cependant de rien, participait à toutes les fêtes, était admis à toutes les palabres et vivait au milieu de ses frères primitifs, aimé et respecté par tous.

Fig. 13. — Un albinos au marché indigène de [illegible]

Cependant il est bien rare de rencontrer, chez les indigènes, des infirmes ou des estropiés. Les enfants nés difformes, débiles et moins bien préparés à la lutte, succombent en général très rapidement, malgré les soins dont les entoure leur mère. On comprend que dans cette lutte âpre, abandonné à ses propres ressources, sans moyens de défense contre les nombreux dangers qui l'entourent, le guettent et le poursuivent, le petit noir ne peut survivre que lorsque la nature l'a doté d'une constitution solide. De là, cette grande mortalité infantile que l'on observe chez les primitifs et la beauté des types que nous rencontrons si fréquemment dans ces régions.

Les déformations naturelles sont rares.

Nous avons observé quelques cas de déformation des seins, d'éléphantiasis, de goitre, de lèpre et d'hermaphroditisme.

Le but principal de notre mission, étant l'étude des us et coutumes de la vie matérielle et journalière de l'indigène et la récolte de collections, notre séjour au milieu des différentes tribus, a été de trop courte durée, pour pouvoir étudier à fond leur vie religieuse et les coutumes qui s'y rapportant.

Fig. 19. — Déformations naturelles chez l'indigène.
1° Femme [illegible]. 2° Femme [illegible]. 3° Enfant [illegible].

Nous avons constaté, qu'en général l'indigène admet l'existence d'un esprit supérieur. Lors de mon séjour au village de Kapenda, tribu des [illegible] j'eus l'occasion d'interroger le chef à ce sujet.

Qui donc fait lever le soleil et la lune ? Qui vous donne les poissons de la rivière et les animaux de la plaine, Matali ?

Le chef me regarde un instant interloqué, puis répondit, « Nzambi va Mondele » ? N'est-ce pas « Nzambi », blanc !

Pourquoi ne vous adressez vous pas à « Nzambi », pour protéger vos cultures, favoriser la pêche et vous donner une bonne chasse, Matali ?

Voudrait-il nous aider, Mondele ?

Pourquoi pas ?

N'est-il pas exclusivement bon, esprit Batali ?

S'il est si bon, ne doit-il pas vous écouter, Batali ?

Les malheurs ne vous viennent-ils pas des Ndoki (esprits), Mondele ?

Mais, Nzambi n'est-il donc pas assez puissant pour écarter ces Ndoki, Batali ?

Les Ndoki ne sont-ils pas envoyés contre celui qui a fait du mal à un autre ? Nzambi serait-il encore bon, s'il écartait le Ndoki, qui punit le malfaiteur ? Va Mondele, Va ! Nzambi est bon, il ne fait que du bien, pourquoi l'invoquer ?

Cette petite conversation résume la conception, que se fait l'indigène de l'Être suprême. C'est par lui qu'il explique ce qu'il ne peut comprendre, mais il ne lui consacre aucun culte. Tout ce qui est profitable à la communauté et dont il ne comprend point l'origine ni la provenance, vient de lui.

A côté de cet esprit, il existe dans l'idée de ces diverses tribus une infinité d'autres esprits, les uns plus forts que les autres, qui tous, s'occupent beaucoup des indigènes. Tous sont bons en ce sens, que ce que l'on obtient d'eux est toujours avantageux à quelqu'un, tout en étant parfois très néfaste à un autre. De là l'indigène a créé les Nkisi et les Ndoki.

Le féticheur est censé pouvoir entrer en relation avec ces esprits. Il détient d'eux d'après les croyances des indigènes, le secret des plantes qui guérissent, ou qui tuent. Il peut obtenir d'eux le châtiment d'un voleur, car punir un voleur, c'est faire du bien à celui qui a été volé. Il peut assurer par leur intermédiaire une bonne pêche, garantir une chasse fructueuse, favoriser l'accouchement, guérir les maladies, etc., ou au contraire faire échouer toutes les entreprises.

Aux yeux de l'indigène tout succès dépend de ces esprits. Dès lors il tâche autant que possible de gagner leurs bonnes grâces. Avant la chasse, la pêche, l'accouchement, etc., il ira trouver le féticheur. Moyennant une rétribution sérieuse, celui-ci invoque les esprits et donne le Nkisi. Si le succès ne répond pas à son attente, l'indigène s'accuse-ra ni le féticheur, ni le Nkisi, mais un Ndoki, plus puissant que le Nkisi invoqué.

Partant de ce principe l'indigène veut expliquer tout, le succès comme l'échec, une maladie, son aggravation, la guérison, les accidents, le malheur, la défaite ou la victoire.

Êtes-vous certains de réussir dans toutes vos entreprises me demanda un jour Elanda, vieux chef des Mosongo?

Oui, lui dis-je, l'énergie et le travail suffisent, pour triompher de tous les obstacles! — Oui Mondele, le blanc est fort, nos Nkisi ne sont pas aussi grands que les Mondele et nous ne pouvons implorer vos Nkisi et vos Ndoki.

Mais Elanda, nous ne connaissons ni Ndoki ni Nkisi

Si, Mondele, le blanc d'Isango nous l'enseigne! Le blanc de Bongo, n'a-t-il pas manqué l'antilope à la suite d'un Ndoki! (Allusion à un incident de chasse du matin).

Elanda ne sait-il pas que ce fut le chien, qui chassa l'antilope au moment où le blanc allait l'abattre!

Qui donc a envoyé le chien! Ndoki ou Mondele? J'eus beau essayer, de lui faire comprendre, qu'il était dans l'erreur. Ndoki, Mondele, me répondit-il, Ndoki, et il s'en tint à son explication.

L'intervention des Nkisi et Ndoki, n'est que temporaire. Après une heureuse entreprise, l'indigène ne s'inquiète plus de l'objet que le féticheur lui remit, pour en assurer le succès. A une occasion prochaine il s'en retourne chez le féticheur, demander un nouveau Nkisi, qu'il voudrait toujours plus puissant que n'importe quel Ndoki. Malheureusement ce Nkisi tout puissant, le féticheur ne peut le trouver. Tel esprit qu'il a invoqué avec succès depuis des années, dont la puissance semblait ne ne pouvoir plus diminuer, se trouve un beau jour en défaut. Cinq, dix, quinze fois le succès a répondu à l'invocation et voilà, que tout à coup, l'entreprise faite, sous les mêmes auspices, échoue lamentablement. Un Nkisi nouveau, plus puissant, est devenu Ndoki et l'indigène s'en retourne chez le féticheur et lui demande de faire mieux, toujours mieux! Abstraction faite de certaines figurines en bois sculpté, utilisées comme fétiche de chasse, la représentation matérielle du « Nkisi » est formée d'un amalgame de choses les plus disparates et les plus hétéroclites, terre blanche, ocre, rouge, ngula, pattes, têtes, becs, ongles et plumes de poules, coquillages, noix de palme, etc., le tout mélangé dans une grande poterie ou un vieux panier usagé. C'est sur ce trésor magique que le féticheur prélève une ou deux pincées qu'il enveloppe soigneusement dans un petit cachet pour le remettre à celui qui a eu recours à son ministère. Quant aux figurines humaines que l'on retrouve si fréquemment dans la forêt du [illegible] et du [illegible] nous ne croyons point que ce soient des fétiches, ce sont à notre avis des figurines protectrices des enfants, sculptées avant la naissance et conservées jusqu'à ce que l'enfant soit devenu adulte.

Certains féticheurs parviennent à se créer une grande réputation et leurs services s'achètent à des hauts prix. Ils connaissent les vertus de certaines plantes ; ils en gardent jalousement le secret et l'exploitent au possible. On aurait tort d'ailleurs de croire que dans la pratique du féticheur tout est mystification.

Fig. 25. — Matériel de [illegible] féticheur des [illegible] de la région de [illegible].

[illegible], le grand chef des [illegible], connaissait le secret de certains poisons ; possédait des remèdes efficaces pour certaines [illegible], dosait le poison d'épreuve de façon à le rendre foudroyant ou lent et connaissait le contre-poison capable d'annuler les effets du premier.

Quelques heures avant notre arrivée à [illegible], [illegible] avait imposé l'épreuve du poison, à une de ses femmes, sur la simple supposition, qu'elle avait pu s'oublier avec un indigène pendant une absence un peu trop prolongée dans la forêt. Elandja l'accusa d'adultère prépara la boisson, et mit la pauvre femme en demeure de prouver son innocence par l'absorption du poison. La malheureuse se refusa. Une dispute s'engagea

Fig. [illegible]. — Elandja chef des [illegible], ses deux favorites et ses principaux notables

et les indigènes du village, mis au courant protestèrent. Rien n'y fit. Le vieux tyran imposa l'épreuve. Prévenu de notre arrivée prochaine, il laissa la malheureuse dans d'horribles souffrances pendant près de deux heures, lui administra ensuite un contre poison et cinq heures plus tard, tous les effets du poison avaient disparu.

Grâce à notre influence, les indigènes osaient de résister et de se soustraire au pouvoir tyrannique des grands féticheurs. L'appel fait par un nommé Elandja à l'autorité du chef de secteur, en fut une preuve évidente. Malheureusement les administrateurs, ne jouissaient en 1913-1914 ni d'autorité ni de pouvoirs assez étendus (bien entendu administrativement), pour seconder utilement les indigènes dans leur œuvre d'émancipation. La palabre de [illegible], en fut une triste confirmation. Après avoir entendu les deux partis, il ne nous restait aucun doute sur la culpabilité du vieux chef. Elandja et une grande partie des indigènes du village, demandaient justice au représentant de Bula-Matari. Le chef de secteur dans l'impossibilité d'agir ; dût se contenter de leur promettre de faire rapport à l'administration compétente et Elondja, se retira en lançant, aux récalcitrants protestataires cette apostrophe « moi et moi seul ne suis-je pas le chef » ! Elondja fût à tel point révolté de l'impuissance du représentant de Bula-Matari, qu'il déposa sa médaille de Mfumu na Bula-Matari, en disant : « si le Mundele na Bula-Matari ne peut nous défendre, s'il ne peut nous protéger, à quoi nous sert-il donc d'être chef reconnu, de servir fidèlement Bula-Matari » ?

FIG. 27. — Kakua, chef des [illegible], déporté pour meurtre rituel, et [illegible] dans la région après son retour de l'exil.

Abandonné à ses propres forces l'indigène n'ose se révolter contre l'autocratie tyrannique des chefs-féticheurs.

La puissance morale de ces féticheurs l'accable. Il tremble à l'idée qu'il pourrait devenir l'objet de leur haine et la victime de leur vengeance.

Kakua, Fumu na tsi: c'est-à-dire, chef de la terre de la région d'[illegible], avait été condamné pour meurtre rituel, déporté à [illegible] et dégradé. Au bout de quelques années d'exil, il fut autorisé à rentrer dans son pays. Peu de jours après son retour, sans appui administratif, sans médaille de Bula-Matari, malgré sa dégradation et sa déportation, nonobstant la présence d'un nouveau chef indigène, son successeur légitime reconnu par l'Etat, Kakua, avait regagné toute son autorité et tout son pouvoir !

Il parcourait sans escorte, toute la région des Iyanga-Batéla, du Nord au Sud. Il allait de village en village, accompagné de trois ou quatre hommes et partout les indigènes tremblaient devant lui. Nous l'avons vu, à Longinpolo, annonçant aux indigènes le but de notre voyage, leur indiquant nos intentions et dictant leur attitude à notre égard. Bakon, avait parlé ! Toute la population s'inclinait et obéissait. Un soir il vint me dire : Mondele peut être tranquille, Mondele aura tout ce qu'il voudra, Bakon le veut ! Effectivement, dès le lendemain les indigènes nous apportaient des vivres et des collections. Les femmes étaient rentrées au foyer, les enfants rodaient autour de nous, les hommes se prêtaient à toutes nos demandes.

Tant que ces potentats sont bien disposés à notre égard, nous avons intérêt à nous servir de leur influence pour nous introduire dans la vie indigène, gagner la confiance et la sympathie des populations et asseoir notre autorité sur les bases de l'ancienne civilisation. Nous trouvons alors en eux de précieux collaborateurs et des auxiliaires utiles. Si au contraire, craignant de perdre leur rang et leur influence, ils cherchent à s'opposer à la pénétration et au développement des lois nouvelles, notre oeuvre s'en ressentira. Il est donc de toute nécessité de combattre énergiquement ces ennemis occultes et redoutables.

Nous avons dit plus haut, que l'affection de la mère pour ses enfants et réciproquement, était assez développée chez ces différentes tribus. Par contre l'indigène ne se fait qu'une idée très vague du lien familial qui unit l'époux à l'épouse. Le mari est jaloux de sa femme, mais il ne l'aime pas. Il demandera le châtiment de l'adultère tout comme il cherche à se faire rendre justice d'un vol. La femme c'est un objet, une marchandise, qu'on achète et qu'on utilise, mais qu'on n'affectionne guère. L'unique cas d'amour conjugal que nous ayons observé, est celui du chef Isomo et sa favorite. Ils s'aimaient d'un amour réel, profond, sincère. Malheur à celui qui aurait osé porter la main sur cette femme, chercher à la séduire, tenter de la ravir.

Un jour (ainsi racontent les indigènes) un indigène travailleur du poste d'Oshwe voulut en abuser de force. La malheureuse trop faible pour échapper à l'étreinte de l'audacieux séducteur, se débattit, tout en lançant des cris désespérés. Son appel fut entendu. Armé de son couteau, [illegible] d'[illegible] à son secours. A son arrivée le ravisseur, lâcha sa proie. Une lutte s'engagea entre les deux sauvages. [illegible], cloua l'adversaire au sol. Écumant de rage, couvert de sang, il ramena sa femme au village ; heureux de l'avoir délivrée, fier du châtiment, qu'il venait d'infliger au ravisseur audacieux et coupable.

Fig. [illegible] — Femme [illegible], la grande favorite de [illegible], grand chef des [illegible].

En général les indigènes ont un certain culte des morts. Dans la région des [illegible], le cadavre est enroulé dans des étoffes. Plus grand est le ballot et plus important fut le défunt. Toute sa fortune en étoffe passe, avec lui au tombeau. Avant l'enterrement, le mort reste exposé, dans la hutte mortuaire. Les parents, amis et connaissances, le veillent et se relaient à ce devoir. Nuit et jour les chants plaintifs et monotones, commémorent les hauts faits du défunt, sa gloire, ses qualités, ses richesses, sa puissance, toute sa vie. L'enterrement se fait en grande cérémonie et se clôture par une consommation générale de toute la réserve de vin de palme, manioc et malafu.

Les populations du Lac Léopold II, placent les corps dans un cercueil en bois ; celles de la Lukenie les enveloppent dans des nattes. Les unes et les autres enterrent les défunts le lendemain du décès.

Les cimetières sont situés en dehors du village. Sur la tombe, les parents déposent, quelques ustensiles brisés ; si le défunt fut chasseur réputé, ils y planteront un long bâton au sommet duquel ils fixent le crâne de l'un ou l'autre animal tué par le défunt.

Lors de mon séjour dans la région des Baloma-Bonfumu de Bokala, je fus frappé par la présence au milieu du village du chef Pokei, d'une hutte miniature. Elle pouvait avoir 60 centimètres de haut, 30 centimètres de large 50 centimètres de long. Je crus d'abord à un petit poulailler, mais en m'en approchant, je constatais, que cette hutte, était remplie de petits bibelots. Intrigué, j'interroge une femme, qui depuis un moment rodait autour de moi.

Fig. 19. — La veillée des morts chez les [illegible]. Le corps du défunt est exposé [illegible] de la hutte mortuaire entouré de tissus et [illegible] un grand [illegible].

N'est ce pas la maison de mon enfant ? me dit-elle !

Où donc est-il ton enfant ?

N'est-il pas là ? et en même temps elle me montra un petit panier suspendu à quelques pas de la hutte.

Je m'en rapproche, incrédule, et quel ne fut ma surprise ; dans ce panier se trouvait la momie d'un enfant de deux ans environ. Le corps était complètement desséché. En dessous du panier la mère, avait entretenu pendant des mois et des mois un petit feu pour enfumer, dessécher et conserver son enfant.

Je voulus faire enlever le panier et acheter la petite hutte avec l'ensemble des menus objets dont elle était ornée. La femme protesta vivement ; les indigènes accoururent de toute part et le vieux chef, me donna l'explication de [ce] rassemblement inattendu.

Si vous enlevez l'enfant, qu'adviendra-t-il de son frère ? Son souffle ne s'en ira-t-il pas ? Pourra-t-il vivre ici lorsque l'esprit sera loin ? Non Mundele, non ! Voyez Mundele, voyez cette enfant me dit-il en désignant un garçonnet de 3 à 4 ans, lui et elle, (montrant le panier à la momie), sont nés de la même mère, au même jour. L'esprit de la vie fut partagé entre eux deux ! L'un est mort ! L'esprit est resté auprès de nous dans son frère, il y restera tant que le corps du défunt est parmi nous ! Voilà pourquoi nous conservons ce corps ! Quand l'enfant sera adulte, quand il pourra vivre de ses propres forces, la momie sera portée dans la forêt où elle se perdra, car son esprit vivra tout entier dans l'enfant devenu homme !

Dans la région des Mosengere, l'enfant défunt des jumeaux est enterré à proximité du village, le long de la route principale. Son corps reste en quelque sorte dans la vie de la communauté. L'endroit est marqué par un petit arbrisseau, une butte minuscule et quelques menus objets déposés sur la tombe. Le corps y reste tant que le second enfant n'est pas adulte. L'esprit doit rester dans le village disent les indigènes. Si le second des jumeaux vient à mourir, les parents déterrent le premier où ils détachent le panier à la momie et les deux corps sont déposés dans une même tombe.

La croyance à la survivance de l'esprit de la vie, de l'un des jumeaux dans le second est telle, que malgré tous mes efforts, malgré mes offres les plus attrayantes, je n'ai pu obtenir, ni les bibelots, ni le panier. La mère se serait fait tuer, plutôt que de laisser enlever ces reliques !

Les indigènes admettent l'existence de l'âme ou d'un esprit qui survit au corps. Cette âme doit occuper d'après les croyances locales dans la vie nouvelle, une situation équivalente à celle de la vie terrestre. Voilà pourquoi les chefs ordonnaient les sacrifices d'esclaves et de femmes, sur la tombe des notables ; et l'enterrement des victimes dans la même fosse que leur maître. Nous avons cherché à avoir de plus amples détails à ce sujet, mais ce fût en vain. Cette coutume barbare si elle ne se pratique plus à l'heure actuelle fut encore en honneur il y a peu d'années. Ce fut pour un délit de ce genre que Kakua fut condamné à Inongo il y a quelque temps. A la mort d'un des grands Longomo, conseiller principal du chef, Kakua avait fait jeter les trois plus jeunes esclaves et deux jeunes femmes dans la fosse du Longomo. A l'interrogatoire il ne nia point le fait mais l'expliqua en faisant appel à la coutume des ancêtres et à la nécessité de donner à l'esprit du Longomo défunt des compagnons pour rentrer dans la vie des esprits et lui permettre d'y occuper une place en rapport avec la situation qu'il avait de son vivant dans son village.

L'organisation tant sociale que politique des indigènes, est souvent très compliquée.

Chez les Bateke-Babomo, chaque groupe ou village, dépend de l'autorité du chef local. Point d'assemblée générale des notables des différents villages, point de chef commun.

Plus loin chaque village dépend d'un chef local, Mfumu na Buala, porteur de la médaille de Bula-Matari. Son autorité est peu importante, son pouvoir peu étendu. Il règle les questions d'ordre général, organise les chasses, la pêche, la récolte du vin de palme, la fabrication de la bière de canne à sucre, l'exploitation des herbes salines, les travaux de la forge, l'installation du village et le défrichement des terres à cultures. C'est à lui que le blanc s'adresse pour les corvées, le portage, la perception des impôts et la fourniture des vivres, etc. Son autorité dépend beaucoup du prestige du chef de poste. A l'Est des Batito, ces petits chefs médaillés, ne sont d'ordinaire que Mfumu na Bula-Matari ; les mfumu na Buala, qui administrent le village avec le conseil des Longomo, ayant évité les rapports directs avec l'autorité occupante. Grâce à l'influence de nos agents, ces Mfumu na Bula-Matari, ont gagné une certaine autorité. Les corvées disparaissent petit à petit, les difficultés des rapports avec les agents diminuent avec le progrès de la civilisation, les Mfumu na Buala de la région située à l'Est d'Oshwe, commencent à regretter la médaille de Bula Matari et cherchent à sortir de l'ombre.

Au dessus des Mfumu na Buala, se trouvent les Mfumu na Tse, les chefs de la terre. Dans une seule tribu on rencontre un, deux et parfois trois, Mfumu na Tse. Les limites des territoires qui tombent sous leur juridiction, sont aussi nettement établies que celles de nos provinces, A moins d'une prédominance toute particulière, les Mfumu na Tse, d'une même tribu, se considèrent comme absolument indépendants les uns des autres. Seul un conflit armé, avec une tribu voisine, peut les unir pour écarter un danger commun.

L'attribution de la grande médaille au chef des Bosongere donna lieu à de longues palabres, entre deux Nkumu na Tse, d'une puissance sensiblement équivalente. Les procès verbaux des grandes assemblées, qui s'organisèrent à Inongo, pour établir ce droit de priorité, doivent contenir des documents des plus précieux, sur l'organisation sociale et politique de ces populations et il est à espérer, qu'ils sortiront un jour de leur oubliette. Ebandu, le Nkumu na Tse de la région de Inongo, qui fut battu administrativement et vit octroyer la médaille à son concurrent Eketi ; ne se soumit jamais à la décision du Commissaire du district. L'unique conséquence de l'octroi de la grande médaille, fût de scinder les Bosongere, en deux groupes nettement hostiles l'un à l'autre.

Fig. 20. — Le grand chef Bombo, type caractéristique Nkumu-na-tse des Wadia.

L'influence des Nkumu na Tse, est particulièrement grande chez les tribus riveraines du Lac Léopold II et chez les Ipanga-Bolia. Elle existe probablement chez les Bokala-Tselimo et peut être chez les Bokala Bosakata-Bakena.

Toutes les questions d'une certaine importance doivent être soumises au Nkumu na To, et ses sentences sont admises sans appel. L'établissement d'un nouveau village, le défrichement de nouvelles terres, les questions de succession, les grands litiges de chasse, tout doit être porté devant la cour du Nkumu na To. Son habitation est installée un peu en dehors du village. Elle comprend la hutte du chef, celle de ses femmes et une grande maison, réservée aux audiences. L'ameublement de ce local d'audience est très rudimentaire ; un trône formé de quelques branches d'arbres juxtaposées, placé en surélévation et tout autour un grand espace libre, l'aire bien battue. Au jour des audiences, le Nkumu na To, fait placer sa chaise sur le trône, ses quelques conseillers s'installent à côté de lui et les sujets peuvent s'asseoir à terre. Le Nkumu na To a le droit de percevoir l'impôt en nature. Sur chaque grande bête tuée à la chasse commune ou individuelle, éléphant, buffle ou antilope, une part bien déterminée, doit lui être réservée. En outre, chaque communauté paye annuellement une somme déterminée comme hommage au Nkumu, enfin toute question soumise à sa jurisprudence, doit être rémunérée convenablement. Le Nkumu na Toi, donne à des époques régulières de grandes fêtes, auxquelles peuvent participer tous les Nkumu na Bisele de son territoire. Les frais lui en incombent, de même, qu'il doit entretenir de ses deniers les musiciens de son orchestre. Le droit d'avoir un orchestre et de se faire escorter régulièrement par les musiciens, est une des grandes prérogatives des Nkumu na Toi des populations du Lac Léopold II. Quand Ebandja se croyant revêtu d'une autorité administrative, vint protester près de nous contre l'attribution de la grande médaille à son concurrent Etoti, il argumenta avec force gestes : [illegible] connu au Bala Bosari, Nkumu Etoti a-t-il autant de musiciens que moi ? Nkumu Etoti peut-il posséder une trompe en ivoire prolongée par trois écrans en bois ? Les bekombe de Nkumu Etoji sont-elles aussi nombreuses et aussi grandes que les miennes ? Pourquoi n'a-t-il pas un orchestre plus puissant que le mien, si Nkumu na To Etoti est le grand chef ? Peu convaincu par cette argumentation primitive, je fis remarquer au Nkumu Ebandja, qu'il ne tenait qu'au Nkumu Etoti d'avoir une trompe plus grande et plus de Lokombe, puisqu'il pourrait les faire sculpter. Aussitôt toute l'assistance protesta vivement et Ebandja conclut : s'il peut le faire pourquoi ne le fait-il pas ? Ne serait-ce pas la guerre ?

Les [illegible] na Tee, doivent devenir nos grands auxiliaires. Nous avons pour devoir de maintenir, dans certaines limites, leur autorité et leurs attributions. Dans l'administration de la région, la perception de l'impôt, la fourniture de la main d'œuvre, l'établissement de notre autorité, le concours bienveillant du [illegible] na Tee, nous assurera un succès incontestable, son opposition, au contraire, entravera profondément notre œuvre. Toute mesure qui se rattache à l'autorité des [illegible] na Tee, doit être prise avec grande circonspection, si l'on veut éviter des perturbations regrettables.

La durée du règne du [illegible] na Tee, est généralement courte, nous n'en avons point pu établir les causes, mais le fait est incontestable. A la mort du chef de la terre des [illegible] et des Bolia, quelques notables transportent le cadavre au cimetière des grands chefs. Le corps est [illegible] y restera pendant sept mois. Pendant ce temps le nouveau chef se prépare à recueillir la succession. Une nuit le [illegible], oiseau sacré de la tribu, lance son cri, annonçant à toute la population que l'esprit a désigné le successeur. Les petits chefs et les notables se rassemblent au village du nouveau [illegible] na Tee. La nuit celui-ci sort de sa hutte, parle au peuple et le [illegible], lui répond « [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] ». Quelques jours plus tard a lieu l'enterrement du chef défunt. Les notables sont envoyés aller reprendre le corps au lieu où il fut déposé, le placent dans un cercueil

FIG. 22. — Médecine indigène.
Application des ventouses chez les Basakata.

et au matin on l'enterre en grande pompe. Il semble que le corps reste au cimetière des chefs et que le cercueil ne contient en somme qu'un tronc d'arbre, mais ici encore, une enquête plus précise me paraît indispensable. L'enterrement se fait en grande cérémonie et puis le nouveau chef, est installé définitivement. Comment le chef entre-t-il en possession des secrets de sa puissance occulte ? Par qui apprend-il à doser le poison, à fabriquer les drogues, à préparer la médecine ? Voilà autant de questions qui restent à résoudre. En dehors de ces secrets, l'art médical n'est guère bien développé chez les indigènes. Une ficelle passée sur le front, l'application de ventouses et la scarification, guérissent les névralgies. Les ventouses sont formées par de petites calebasses percées d'un trou exigu. L'indigène introduit à l'intérieur quelques brindilles d'herbes très sèches, y met le feu et applique immédiatement l'ouverture de la calebasse contre la peau. Par suite de la combustion, le vide se forme à l'intérieur et l'aspiration se fait automatiquement. La scarification se fait au petit couteau [illegible],

CHAPITRE II

L'Habitat.

Conditions d'installation du village. — Dispositions générales des huttes. — Type de la hutte Bateke-Bamfumu. — Hutte conique Babema. — Forme de la hutte du Lac Léopold II. — Hutte à toit arqué de la Lukenie. — Villages du Sankuru-Kasai. — Hutte Bakuba. — Conclusions générales.

Quoique toutes les populations de la région que nous avons visitée, soient arrivées au stade sédentaire, les migrations locales et les déplacements des pénates sont assez fréquents. En somme l'habitation et le village ne sont stables, que pour autant que les ressources de l'emplacement et du milieu suffisent aux nécessités de l'existence de la communauté.

La première condition essentielle est celle du voisinage d'une source d'eau potable, d'un ruisseau, d'un marais, d'une ou si possible de plusieurs sources naturelles. Celles-ci sont assez nombreuses dans la région que nous avons parcourue. Leur eau est claire, limpide et rafraîchissante, le débit abondant et régulier, tant à la saison sèche, qu'à la saison des pluies. L'indigène en apprécie les avantages au point, que les femmes se rendent volontiers à la source située à 200 ou 300 mètres dans la forêt plutôt que d'aller puiser l'eau à la rivière.

[p. 34]

À côté d'une source abondante, l'indigène cherche une situation salubre et il en tient compte dans le choix de l'emplacement futur de ses pénates. Un terrain un peu surélevé, sec, ouvert et situé à proximité de la forêt ou au milieu d'une plaine fertile, lui convient le mieux.

En dehors des avantages d'hygiène, ces endroits présentent un caractère de sécurité pour celui qui s'y établit. À la moindre alerte toute la communauté abandonne village et foyer, pour se lancer dans la forêt où elle est à l'abri et en toute sécurité.

Enfin l'indigène recherche un terrain fertile, condition essentielle à la réussite de ses cultures. Du bon rendement de ces dernières dépend pour une grande partie le bien-être de toute sa famille et même son existence.

L'emplacement nouveau devra donc répondre à toutes ces conditions indispensables. Si l'endroit qui y correspond peut se trouver dans une région très giboyeuse et non loin d'une rivière, marais ou cours d'eau riches en poissons, l'indigène ne manquera pas de porter son choix sur ce point privilégié. Ces conditions déterminent la durée de l'installation de l'indigène.

Rien n'attache l'indigène au sol ni au village. Les terrains exploités pendant des années, les cultures, les plantations la hutte elle-même ; le droit acquis par l'exploitation et le défrichement d'une partie de la terre inoccupée et ce sentiment inné qui nous attache nous civilisés, au village natal ; l'indigène ignore tout cela !

Lorsque la communauté a décidé le déplacement des pénates et que l'endroit propice à une nouvelle installation a été trouvé, tous les éléments adultes mâles s'en vont pour préparer le terrain. Ce travail est tout particulièrement ardu dans la région forestière. Alors que dans le pays des herbes, il suffit de couper les graminées, ou de les brûler simplement, puis de biner à fond l'espace réservé au nouveau village et ses champs de cultures et d'enlever tous les débris ; l'établissement d'un village en pleine forêt exige un effort et un travail beaucoup plus sérieux. Les premiers jours sont consacrés à la délimitation du terrain, au déblayage du petit bois, lianes, arbrisseaux, herbes, etc. Tout ce qui peut être coupé au couteau ou à la hache, est abattu. Les gros troncs sont entamés à la base, puis l'indigène entame tout autour les déchets du premier travail de défrichement et y met le feu. Deux ou trois jours plus tard, les géants de la forêt s'écroulent les uns après les autres au milieu d'un fracas indescriptible et des cris joyeux des indigènes. Le menu bois est vite débité, branches et couronnes coupées ; tandis que les gros blocs restent sur place.

Fig. [illegible] — Coin d'un village Bolia à peine défriché.

Rien n'est plus intéressant à voir que ces villages à peine défrichés, au milieu de la grande forêt équatoriale. La clairière encore mal définie, encadrée d'un dôme de verdure sauvage ce petit espace libéré où l'homme a décidé de s'établir. Toute la clairière est parsemée de gros troncs d'arbres, de débris de bois, de charbons de bois et de déchets de toute nature. Les souches des arbres coupés à 1 mètre environ du sol, se dressent de tous côtés, comme autant de témoins d'une vie et d'une végétation qui viennent de passer. Au milieu de cet amas de débris tortueux se dressent à gauche et à droite, comme semés au grand hasard quelques huttes toutes primitives. Ce ne sont en réalité que des abris, des coins de refuge, où l'indigène passe provisoirement la nuit et s'abrite contre l'humidité et les intempéries du climat. Leur aspect misérable, leur extérieur délabré et le peu de fini de leur construction, mon-hutte que l'indigène lui a construite dare-dare, sans y rattacher une importance quelconque. Cependant il y vit, en attendant, que la hutte définitive soit achevée, et ce provisoire dure quelquefois bien longtemps.

FIG. [illegible]. — [illegible], village Bakutu anciennement installé au milieu de la forêt équatoriale.

Ces premiers abris sont construits sans alignement ni méthode. Le matériel employé est des plus hétéroclites ; la forme des huttes est variable et, chose curieuse, n'a généralement aucune ressemblance avec l'habitation définitive ni la forme type de la région.

Chez les Bakutu et les [illegible], la hutte est rectangulaire et en moyenne deux fois aussi longue que large. Les parois latérales très basses n'atteignent que rarement 1,20 m. La porte est pratiquée dans le pignon, donnant sur la grande place du village et placée un peu latéralement. Le toit est à double pente, en courbe arrondie et ligne de faîte horizontale. Ses bords dépassent assez notablement les parois latérales et forment tout le long de la hutte, un petit auvent. L'indigène s'en sert pour y remiser une partie de sa réserve de bois de chauffage, des poteries et autres objets de moindre valeur.

Toutes les huttes sont construites séparément, placées parallèlement face à la grande artère et espacées de 10 à 15 mètres.

Comme matériaux de construction l'indigène emploie pour la charpente des pétioles de raphia, des bambous, des rotangs, de grosses branches équarries et des herbes pour recouvrir le toit. La porte est parfois faite en planches. Il arrive aussi, que de vieilles nattes servent à renforcer intérieurement le revêtement des parois.

A l'intérieur la hutte comprend deux pièces, séparées par une cloison médiane. La première tient lieu de cuisine, salle à manger, etc., la seconde de chambre à coucher.

Fig. 19. — Hutte Baboma — type ancien — en construction.

L'ameublement de la cuisine est des plus variés. Poteries, paniers, mortiers, pilons, tamis, et autres ustensiles sont suspendus aux parois ou rangés sur le côté. Au dessus du foyer formé par trois pierres, est suspendu un panier à claire-voie, où l'indigène dépose, à l'abri des rongeurs et de l'humidité ses réserves de viande et de poissons séchés et boucanés, du maïs, etc. Dans un coin on observe un amas de bois, combustible précieux, prélevé sur la réserve de l'extérieur et placé à l'intérieur pour mieux le faire sécher. Enfin dans un autre coin caché et bien isolé, se trouve le nid des poules.

Dans la journée, l'indigène ne se tient à l'intérieur de sa hutte que lorsqu'il fait trop froid ou trop humide au dehors.

L'intérieur de l'alcove du Baboma et du Bateke, est tapissé de grandes nattes. On n'y voit qu'un ou deux petits paniers et coffrets, où l'indigène enferme quelques objets précieux et des Nkisi ; deux, trois oreillers en bois sculpté, un lit et parfois quelques figurines humaines.

Le lit est formé par quatre petits pieux fourchus fixés en terre. Dans les fourches viennent se placer, les traverses solides du cadre du lit. Le sommier est formé de lattes de pétioles de raphia et le matelas remplacé, par une ou deux grandes nattes.

La hutte des Bankutu est également rectangulaire et divisée en deux compartiments. Cependant la porte donne généralement dans la paroi latérale. La hutte est placée en longueur, le toit à double pente et inclinaison oblique, déborde sur le devant et forme verandah. La ligne de faîte est horizontale.

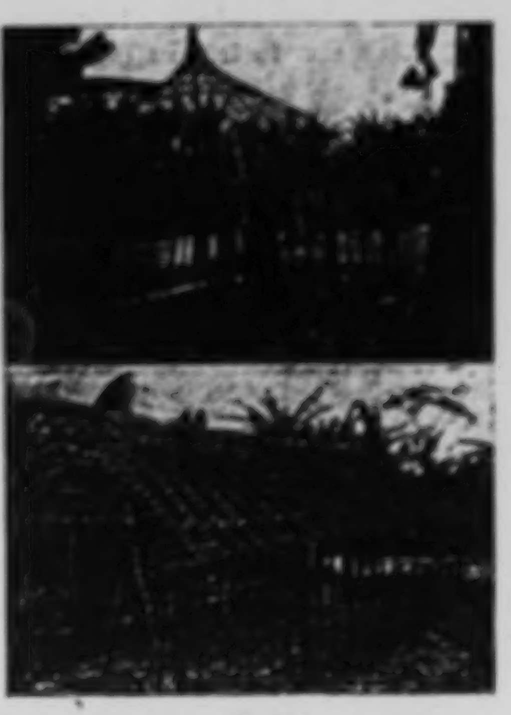


Fig. 46.

1) Hutte Bakutu en construction ; base carrée, toit conique.
2) Hutte Bankutu en construction ; base rectangulaire, toit en dièdre.

La demeure du chef est entourée d'un enclos et pour y arriver, il faut passer par une sorte de labyrinthe peu compliqué.

Les habitations sont groupées par famille, chacune occupant un espace déterminé, très souvent séparé de l'enclos du voisin par une palissade peu élevée et quelques plantations de bananiers. Ce groupement des huttes par famille donne au village Bankutu, un aspect et un cachet spécial, que l'on ne retrouve nulle part ailleurs. Le village forme une succession de petites cours allongées séparées par de petites cultures de bananes, arachides, maïs, etc. Certains villages ont 1 à 2 kilomètres de longueur, alors qu'ils ne comprennent que 25 à 30 familles.

Dans la région de Bokala, nous avons rencontré chez les Bankomo et les Bakema, la hutte de forme conique à base carrée. Elle ressemble tant à l'extérieur que par les détails de sa structure et ses dispositions internes à la hutte des Basonge, sauf que l'auvent qui surplombe la porte de la hutte Basonge fait défaut et que la porte glissière est remplacée par une porte à charnières s'ouvrant vers l'extérieur.

Cette forme spéciale de l'habitation indigène, étrangère à la région, y a été introduite par les Arabes, venus de l'Est. Pokol lui même, chef coutumier et incontesté des Bankomo de cette région, n'est en somme que l'ex-boy du chef Arabe décédé, qui a régné dans la région pendant près de dix ans. Comment les indigènes en sont-ils arrivés à adopter si rapidement cette hutte de forme nouvelle ? Nous l'ignorons ! Il est cependant possible que le chef Arabe en pénétrant dans la région, fut accompagné de quelques familles Baluba ou Basonge et que la première installation de cette hutte conique dans la région, fut faite par ces derniers. Les indigènes Bankomo, tombés sous l'influence du chef ou ayant accepté son autorité, ont peut-être imité la forme de hutte des premiers en se

Fig. 18 — Hutte du chef de chasse — Bakema — au fond la hutte du type Basonge à toit conique et base carrée.

groupant autour du nouveau chef, implantant ainsi petit à petit, cette forme nouvelle et toute différente de la hutte ancestrale. Il n'est pas sans intérêt de remarquer, que les [illegible] de cette région, n'ont pas perdu tout souvenir de leur première hutte primitive. L'abri servant de hutte au Nkisi de chacun d'un de ces villages présente encore la forme de l'ancienne habitation et chose bien curieuse elle rappelle, toute minuscule qu'elle est, singulièrement la hutte Batéke.

Les huttes obliques ne sont point groupées par famille, mais construites sur une double ligne irrégulière. L'espace libre qui sépare les deux rangées de huttes forme l'artère principale du village ; l'ensemble étant encadré de riches cultures de bananiers et de manioc.

Les habitations des Baboma, des Wadia, des Bosongo et de toutes les populations de la rive droite du Lac Léopold II, Mfimi, présentent un aspect uniforme. Base rectangulaire, toit à double pente oblique, ligne de faîte horizontale, pignon triangulaire, véranda formée par le panneau du toit débordant de 1 m. à 1 m. 50 sur la façade principale, donnant sur la grande artère du village ; entrée dans la même paroi, porte coulisse à glissière.

L'ameublement de toutes ces huttes se réduit dans ses grandes lignes, aux ustensiles de la cuisine avec le grenier réservé pour la première pièce ; au lit pour l'alcôve. Celui-ci est construit sur pilotis surélevés de 20 à 30 cm. Les nattes servant de matelas, l'oreiller est formé par un simple bloc de bois à peine équarri, sauf chez les Baboma, qui emploient encore le petit escabeau oreiller que nous avons rencontré chez les [illegible]-Batéke.

Toutes les populations de cette région, mettent un grand soin à la construction de leur hutte. Après avoir bien délimité l'aire du nouvel emplacement, l'indigène plante les trois gros piquets qui doivent supporter les traverses principales. Il forme ensuite le cadre vertical de sa hutte en plantant, sur tout le périmètre, des fortes tiges bien droites, espacées de 70 cm. A ces tiges verticales, l'indigène attache les traverses horizontales formées de forts pétioles de raphia et espacés de 5 à 7 cm. Il en fait de même pour la cloison intérieure, tout en y appliquant des pétioles de raphia de moindre force et épaisseur. L'espace réservé à la porte reste ouvert. A ce stade l'habitation ressemble à une grande cage, largement ouverte vers le ciel ; dont les barreaux sont disposés horizontalement. Elle reste dans cet état pendant tout le temps que demande la préparation des matériaux de recouvrement interne. Dans ce but l'indigène coupe des feuilles de « [illegible] » genre de palmier, très commun dans toute cette région marécageuse. Les feuilles sont réunies par séries de quatre, les barbes ayant été au préalable repliées le long de la nervure

FIG. [illegible] — Hutte des [illegible] et [illegible].

et négligemment tressées. Les extrémités libres sont percées au moyen d'une fine lanière et les nervures sont reliées de 3 en 5 cms. Les feuilles ainsi préparées, l'indigène pénètre à l'intérieur de la hutte en construction et commence le recouvrement des parois. Procédant systématiquement il passe de bas en haut, attache les feuilles de « nse-nse » aux lattes horizontales et les place de façon à ce qu'elles se couvrent les unes les autres. La cloison ainsi tapissée est consolidée par quelques lattes placées verticalement et rattachées à la carcasse extérieure par des lanières de rotang. Ces cloisons sont très solides et de très longue durée. Le toit est généralement recouvert de chaume, mais il arrive très fréquemment que l'indigène se sert également de panneaux « nse-nse » pour couvrir sa hutte.

Chez les populations de l'Ouest du Lac, les huttes sont associées par séries de deux ou de trois et placées sur deux lignes parallèles. L'espace libre entre les groupes est très réduit, au point qu'à la première vue, toutes les huttes semblent se toucher. Les portes donnent toujours sur la grande allée.

Nous avons également visité quantité de villages où les habitations en pisé, construites par ordre administratif, s'étendaient sur toute la longueur du village, mais en général ces huttes considérées par nous comme un progrès d'hygiène et de bien-être, ne jouissaient pas des faveurs des indigènes. Le nègre avait exécuté le travail imposé, mais il s'était refusé à en user, sa hutte primitive répondant mieux aux nécessités de sa vie avait gardé ses faveurs et ses hôtes.

Chez les Tumba de la rive Est du Lac, nous avons observé, que la hutte tend à présenter certains caractères qui la rapprochent du type de hutte à toit arqué, que l'on trouve dans la région de Boli et plus au Nord. Le faîte, au lieu d'être droit, se prolonge sur les deux extrémités et s'incline de façon à donner à l'ensemble, l'aspect d'un arc, dont la tension porte

Fig. 26. — Hutte Tumba à base rectangulaire et toit légèrement arqué.

spécialement sur les deux bouts. Pour certaines habitations les portes donnent encore dans la paroi latérale faisant face à l'artère principale et les huttes sont construites en séries plus ou moins rapprochées. Pour d'autres au contraire la porte est rectangulaire, dans la paroi de pignon et donne sur la petite vérandah, formée par le prolongement antérieur du toit. Les huttes construites sur ce type sont placées en ligne mais isolément et quoique l'espace entre les deux lignes forme l'artère principale du village chaque hutte a cependant, devant sa vérandah, une petite cour spéciale. Quant aux procédés de construction, ils sont identiques à ceux que nous avons notés dans la région Ouest du Lac.

Chez les populations de la Basse Lukenie, les huttes sont encore construites, d'après la même méthode et au moyen de matériaux identiques. Cependant l'entrée est presque toujours située dans la paroi de pignon et

Fig. 29. — Huttes Basakata [illegible] cour commune.

du côté du toit débordant, légèrement courbé formant vérandah. Lorsque les huttes sont isolées, on remarque encore dans la ligne de faîte, une tendance à la forme arquée, peu prononcée il est vrai. Il arrive cependant très fréquemment, que les indigènes s'entraident dans la construction du village et procèdent de façon à former de longues séries de huttes ininterrompues.

La ligne de faîte devient en conséquence continue et droite. L'ouverture servant de porte, est ménagée dans la paroi du pignon et donne sur un petit espace libre. Cette cour est commune à deux huttes voisines, mais les portes ne sont point placées en face l'une de l'autre.

Ce type d'habitation continue se rencontre le plus couramment, chez les Basakata de l'intérieur. Il est caractérisé par les soins minutieux que les indigènes mettent à sa construction et son achèvement.

Toutes les populations riveraines du Lac Léopold II et de la Basse Lukenie semblent, sous le rapport du type d'habitation et de la disposition générale des villages, se rattacher à un seul groupe ethnique, caractérisé par la hutte rectangulaire à toit en double pente oblique et ligne de faîte horizontale placée parallèlement à l'artère du village. Les huttes construites isolément, à toit légèrement arqué, et placées perpendiculairement à l'axe principal du village, que nous avons signalées à l'Est du Lac Léopold II, nous révèlent cependant certaines traces d'affinité ethnique avec les populations situées plus à l'Est. Avant de passer à l'étude de l'habitation de cette région, il convient de signaler, que chez toutes les populations de l'Ouest, la hutte du grand chef c. a. d. du chef de la

Fig. 30. — Vue sur l'intérieur de la hutte des Ypanga.

terre, « Mfumu na tse », est contruite séparément, un peu en dehors de l'alignement général ou faisant face à l'artère principale. Cette hutte est entourée d'une palissade et l'enclos renferme à la fois la hutte royale, le palais de réception et les huttes des femmes du chef.

L'entrée de la cour du chef est interdite aux sujets, seuls les notables peuvent s'y présenter à l'occasion des audiences ; pour les recevoir le chef vient siéger dans la hutte servant de batiment de réception. Tout autour de l'enclos, le chef de la terre fait planter des arbres spéciaux du genre cactus. C'est là nous assura le futur successeur du chef des Mosengere de Penge, une prérogative royale très sévèrement observée. L'existence de ces enclos autour de l'habitation royale rappelle la coutume de la disposition en groupe par famille des villages Banfumu, et semble être un indice d'une certaine affinité entre ces différentes tribus.

FIG. 31. — Huttes Batitu en construction, toit arqué.

Dans la région des Ipanga-Batitu nous rencontrons à côté de la petite hutte à toit en double pente oblique, à faîte horizontal et recouverte de tuiles végétales laquelle sert de seconde installation *provisoire*, une forme de hutte qui rappelle le type du Nord du Lac Léopold II. La base est rectangulaire, mais la moitié antérieure forme vérandah ouverte ou fermée latéralement ; l'intérieur de la hutte est carré. Le toit est arqué, d'une courbe plus ou moins marquée. L'aire intérieure ayant été préalablement nettoyée, battue et préparée, l'indigène fait le tracé de sa hutte et plante sur le périmètre et la ligne médiane les supports des solives principales. Le pieu central a 50 à 75 ctm. de hauteur en plus que ceux placés aux deux extrémités. Ces derniers ont en moyenne 1 m. de hauteur en plus que les pieux des parois latérales. Les trois pieux de la ligne médiane, sont reliés par une forte traverse horizontale, tandis qu'une seconde traverse est placée au dessus. Celle-ci doit former arc. La courbe est obtenue en attachant aux deux extrémités de très fortes lianes, auxquelles l'indigène suspend de très gros blocs de bois. Le toit est couvert de pétioles de raphia pliés en dièdre, attachés à la solive du faîte et aux deux traverses horizontales des parois latérales. L'espace entre les gros pieux des parois est occupé par des tiges d'un diamètre moins important reliés à la traverse horizontale. Sur cette charpente, l'indigène, noue des tiges de raphia, placées horizontalement à 15 ou 20 ctm. de distance. Les parois du pignon sont construites de même, mais les extrémités des madriers verticaux sont rattachées aux traverses du toit. Les huttes sont recouvertes de « nse-nse » superposées d'après la méthode en usage chez les populations du L. L. II ; ou de grandes feuilles « ndele » formant tuiles végétales. L'indigène procède au recouvrement du toit avant de terminer les parois de sa hutte. Les séries « nse-nse » sont fixées directement sur la charpente de la toiture. Les tuiles « ndele » au contraire sont tressées, sur une natte à claire-voies horizontales très rapprochées, qui elle, est étendue et fixée à la charpente du toit. Il arrive très fréquemment que l'indigène recouvre la partie de la hutte formant chambre à coucher de « ndele » tandis que le toit de la vérandah, est couvert de « nse-nse ». Interrogé sur le motif de l'emploi de ces matériaux de nature si différente dans la même construction, Imumu chef du Batitu du territoire d'Oshwe, nous expliqua que les « ndele » forment de bonnes tuiles végétales, très résistantes et que grâce aux épines, fines comme des aiguilles dont la feuille est recouverte, les rongeurs ne peuvent y nicher. Dans les « nse-nse » au contraire les rats et souris, s'installent très volontiers. Ils coupent les feuilles pour en former leur nid et s'y reproduisent facilement, à moins qu'ils n'en soient chassés par la fumée des foyers. Voilà pourquoi, dit Imumu, nous recouvrons de préférence de « ndele » la partie de la hutte où nos femmes installent leur foyer.

Les parois sont généralement recouvertes de feuilles « ndele » ou bien de panneaux d'écorce d'arbre. Les parois en « nse-nse » sont excessivement rares.

La porte de la hutte donne sur l'intérieur de la vérandah. Celle-ci est toujours ouverte du côté de l'artère principale du village, parfois sur le devant et un des côtés et très rarement de tous les côtés.

Fig. 32. — Autre forme de la hutte Batitu en construction au village de Longinpila.

Dans la région des Bokala et dans de très rares villages Yaelima, nous avons trouvé cette même forme typique de hutte. Cependant ces cas étaient assez rares. Le plus souvent la hutte de cette contrée présentait un aspect qui ne nous rappelait le type Batitu que par l'existence d'une vérandah à toit plus ou moins recourbé dans le prolongement de l'axe principal.

La hutte Bokala-Yaelima est à base rectangulaire, toit à double pente oblique, ligne de faîte horizontale.

L'intérieur de la hutte comprend deux places, l'une servant de salon, cuisine, salle à manger, l'autre d'alcôve. La porte donne dans la première place et est percée dans la paroi qui fait face à l'artère principale du village. Toutes les huttes sont construites isolément, placées en longueur sur un alignement et de façon que les deux lignes parallèles forment le village. Les huttes sont construites, la charpente en pieux et pétioles de raphia, le recouvrement en « nse-nse » tant pour le toit que pour les parois. Les indigènes de la région de Bumbuli ne mettent en général que très peu de soins à la construction de leurs huttes. Si dans les villages il règne une propreté remarquable, l'aspect général souffre beaucoup de l'état délabré de la grande majorité des habitations. Même les huttes toutes nouvelles ne sont guère bien achevées, comparativement à celles des autres régions.

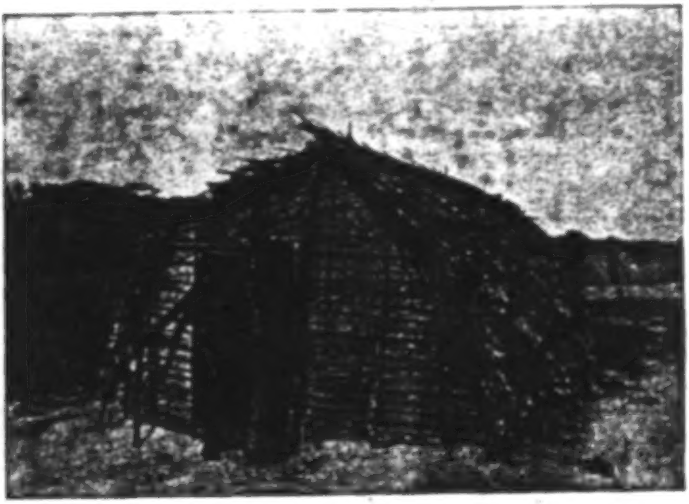


FIG. 33. — Hutte provisoire des Bokala-Yaelima.

L'ameublement de la hutte Batitu et Yaelima, ne diffère de celui des autres régions, que par la forme des ustensiles et la présence de chaises. Le lit est toujours très bas, à peine surélevé de 10 à 15 ctm. L'intérieur de la hutte n'est que très rarement tapissé de nattes. Il convient de noter dans l'ameublement, le grand panier séchoir servant de grenier, suspendu au dessus du foyer. Sa forme est exagonale, le rayon varie entre 1 et 1m. 50. Les bords sont droits, les lanières de suspension attachées aux six coins de l'hexagone et l'ensemble est tressé à jour, d'après la méthode des chaises cannelées d'Europe, technique spéciale dont nous n'avons point retrouvé d'autres applications dans toute la région. Non moins intéressantes sont les chaises, relativement rares chez les Batitu, communes chez les Bokala et d'un usage courant chez les Yaelima. Leur forme spéciale est caractéristique. Les soins minutieux que mettent parfois les indigènes à les orner de dessins sculptés et l'aspect artistique remarquable que présentent certaines d'entr'elles, leur donnent en général un cachet ethnique local très intéressant. On pourrait en dire autant des coupes en bois sculpté des cornes gravées et des vases en bois artistiquement travaillés que l'on croyait jusqu'à présent localisés dans la région occupée par les Bakuba et que nous avons retrouvé dans tout le territoire sud de Wumbuli.

La hutte de la région de Bena-Dibele-Kole, est généralement bien plus coquette, sa construction est beaucoup mieux soignée et l'ensemble est achevé avec ordre et méthode. La forme est rectangulaire, le toit à double pente et ligne de faite légèrement arcquée. Cette courbe, quelque légère qu'elle soit, est cependant très caractéristique et très constante. Elle rappelle indéniablement la forme typique de la hutte ancestrale.

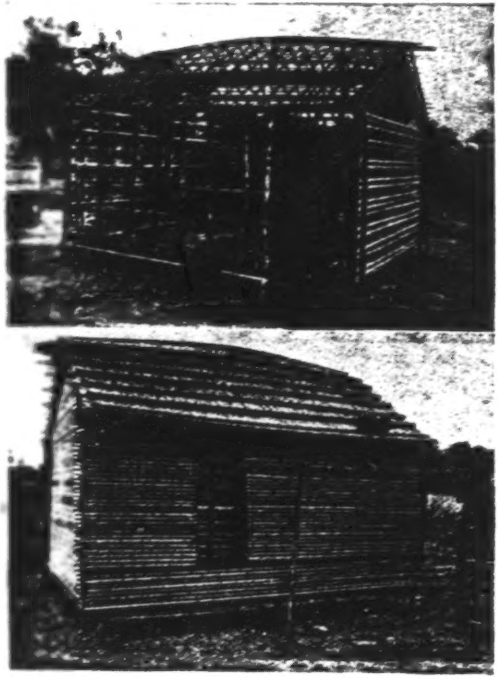


FIG. 34. — 1°) Hutte Bankutu-Bakuba en construction.
2°) Hutte Bankutu-Bankuba achevée.

La porte est située soit sur le côté, soit dans la paroi du pignon suivant que la hutte est orientée parallèle ou perpendiculairement à l'axe principal du village. Cette porte est toujours placée assez haut. Elle se ferme à glissière interne. « Nse-nse » et « ndele » faisant défaut dans toute la région, la charpente des huttes est en pieux et en éclats de raphia, les parois et le toit sont recouverts de feuilles de raphia tressées à plat en forme de natte.

Les huttes sont construites isolément, méthode qui rappelle encore les coutumes de la région d'Oshwe-Bumbuli. Il arrive mais très rarement, que l'indigène recouvre sa hutte d'herbes.

Dans cette région nous avons également pu observer que dans certains villages les huttes étaient groupées par famille et que chaque groupe formait un coin spécial nettement séparé du reste du village. Les diverses huttes d'un même groupe sont reliées par un enclos en pieux assez solides, hauts de 1 m. 75 à 2 mètres, et parfois recouvertes de nattes en feuilles de raphia. Toutes les portes des huttes d'un enclos, s'ouvrent vers l'intérieur de l'enceinte. L'ensemble forme le « Lupango ». A compter le nombre des huttes d'un Lupango, on peut établir, celui des femmes du chef ou maître de l'endroit, chaque épouse ayant son hôme.

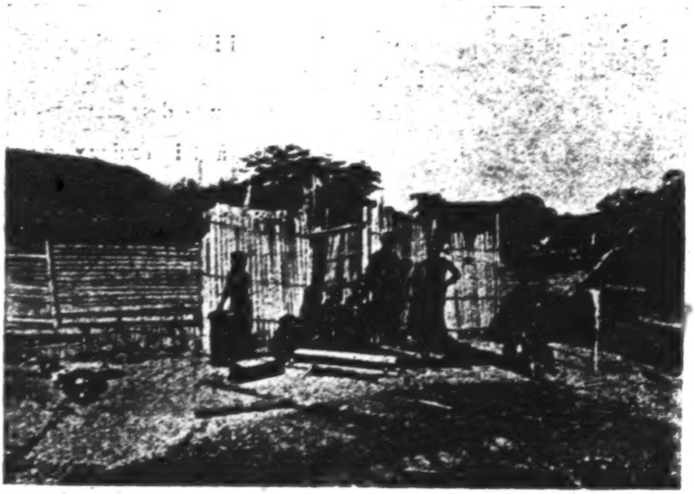


FIG. 35. — Intérieur d'un lupango et séchage des noix d'arachides. Région Bena Dibele-Kole.

Les « Lupango » sont d'introduction récente et dus à l'influence Arabe. On ne peut en tenir compte dans l'établissement des relations de parenté ou d'affinité ethniques entre les différentes populations. Entre les «Lupango» de la région de Bena Dibele-Kole et le groupement familial des huttes chez les Banfumu il n'existe aucun rapport.

Dans l'ensemble l'étude de la forme de l'habitation de ces différentes populations et de leurs dispositions générales ou particulières nous montre que contrairement à l'opinion générale ces deux facteurs sont très instables. Si nous devions classer les habitants de la région parcourue d'après la forme de leur hutte nous arriverions à cette conclusion bien singulière : existence de plus de groupes que de tribus.

Pour pouvoir en arriver à une division ethnique basée sur les caractères des us et coutumes se rapportant à cette partie de la vie indigène nous devons nous borner aux caractères généraux.

Envisagées sous ce rapport les populations visitées appartiennent toutes à un seul grand groupe ethnique, dont les caractères de l'habitation sont : la base rectangulaire et le toit à double pente, hutte des Bantu de l'Ouest !

Comme nous l'avons fait remarquer la hutte à toit conique, que nous avons trouvée autour du poste de Bokala, doit être considérée comme le résultat d'une influence étrangère et de l'infiltration d'éléments étrangers à la région.

Une étude et un examen plus détaillés des caractères spéciaux de la structure de l'habitation des diverses tribus de cette région nous montre que cette partie de la grande province ethnique de la région occidentale Africaine peut se diviser en plusieurs districts.

Le premier comprend la région occupée par les Bateke et les Babuende et est caractérisé par la hutte à *base rectangulaire, toit à double pente courbée, le faite horizontal droit.*

Cette forme type se rencontre également chez certaines populations de la région du Bas Congo et dans certains villages Banfumu.

Le second comprend le pays des Banfumu, Baboma, Wadia, Mosengere, Tumba, Bobaie, Basakata, Balesa et Batete. Il est caractérisé par la hutte à *base rectangulaire, toit à double pente oblique en diedre, le faite horizontal.*

Chez toutes les tribus situées à l'Est de la Mfimi-Lac Léopold II nous retrouvons très souvent, à coté de la hutte type décrite, des huttes à *base rectangulaire, toit à double pente oblique et ligne de faîte arquée.* Cette hutte type se retrouve, plus au Nord-Est et elle est caractéristique à la région des Ipanga et des Batitu. On la retrouve, chez les Bokala et les Yaelima, mais elle y est moins caractéristique et tend même à faire place à la hutte du second type. La hutte des Bashilele et celle de la région de Bena Dibele-Kole pourraient être classées dans ce troisième groupe, quoique la forme arquée du toit, soit très peu accentuée.

FIG. 36. — Hutte a toit arcqué de la Lokoro. Tribu Kundu.

L'unité ethnique des différentes populations peut ainsi se déduire de la forme générale, les variations locales justifient la division en trois groupes distincts dont les caractères spécifiques sont peu stables et les limites mal définies.

L'étude générale de l'orientation des huttes dans les villages, nous montre l'unité ethnique caractérisée par l'alignement en longueur qui s'observe dans toute la région.

Par contre l'étude détaillée du groupement des huttes dans la formation du village nous conduit à une division, plus ou moins différente que celle basée sur la forme type de l'habitation.

Les huttes du premier groupe sont construites isolément ou par groupe isolé la porte généralement aménagée dans le pignon donnant sur l'allée principale de l'agglomération ; celles du second groupe sont très souvent contigues par séries plus ou moins grandes et placées en longueur par rapport à la grande artère du village ; enfin celles du troisième groupe sont d'ordinaire placées isolément, orientées perpendiculairement à l'axe du village, l'entrée donnant sur la vérandah qui forme la place de devant de cette hutte. Cette disposition spéciale s'observe même dans les villages du second groupe où la hutte type du troisième groupe se rencontre. Par contre elle fait complètement défaut dans la région des Bashilele du Nord du Kasai-Sankuru et dans la région de Bena Dibele-Kole.

CHAPITRE III.

Les moyens d'existence de l'indigène

L'Elevage : Poules, chèvres, chiens. — L'Agriculture : Manioc, maïs, riz, bananes, arachides — La Chasse : Armes, pièges, nkisi, méthode individuelle, chasse en communanté — La Pêche : Méthode générale, barrages, nasses, pièges, harpons, arcs et flèches, lignes filets, claies.

Les populations du Congo-Kasaï-Lac Léopold II et de la Lukenie ne s'occupent que peu d'élevage. Elles ne possèdent point de gros bétail, tout au plus peut on trouver dans leurs villages quelques poules, de rares chèvres et des chiens de chasse ; ceux-ci participent au partage du gibier et vivent pour le reste au gré du hasard.

Les chèvres ne font l'objet d'aucun soin. Le jour elles circulent librement et s'en vont brouter dans la forêt ou dans la plaine. Parfois elles s'aventurent dans les plantations d'où les chiens de chasse les éloignent au premier signal. La nuit elles rentrent au village et se réfugient où bon leur semble. Lors de notre séjour au village de Toipolo, elles vinrent même nous déranger la nuit, alors que nous étions logés dans la hutte réservée aux étrangers.

Les poules circulent le jour dans le village et les plantations, couchent la nuit dans la hutte indigène. Elles y ont leur nid de ponte et la place pour couver.

L'indigène ne mange pas les œufs. Il les vend aux agents de l'Etat ou des compagnies, où on les rassemble pour les faire couver. La poule elle-même n'est guère consommée par l'indigène. Le plus souvent elle passe à la cuisine des Européen. La valeur moyenne était en 1913-14 de 0,50 fr. la poule, celle d'un œuf 5 ct. et le prix d'une chèvre de 5 à 15 francs.

Lors de l'établissement de nouvelles cultures, le premier défrichement incombe aux hommes. Ce travail se fait au couteau et à la hâche. La forme de ce dernier outil est la même chez toutes les tribus. Un manche en bois, terminé par un renflement en forme de massue, un fer triangulaire long et étroit encastré latéralement dans le manche.

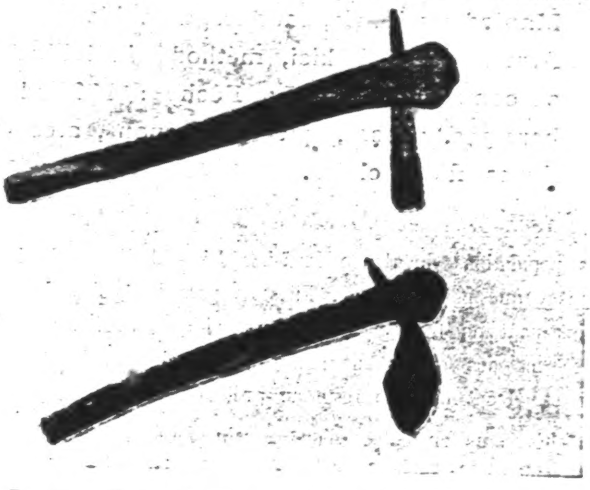


FIG. 37. — Hache et houe du Lac Léopold II. Lukenie.

Après le débroussement, les hommes entassent les déchets aux pieds des gros troncs et y mettent le feu. L'arbre sapé à sa base finit par s'écrouler et reste sur place.

Les femmes se chargent des autres travaux de culture. Ceux-ci varient très peu de l'une tribu à l'autre, et même les cultures variées de manioc, maïs, arachides, riz, bananes et canne à sucre ne demandent qu'un travail spécial assez rudimentaire.

La base de l'alimentation indigène des tribus de la plus grande partie de la région visitée est le manioc. L'indigène cultive le manioc doux et le manioc amer. Cette dernière variété est la plus répandue. Pour préparer le terrain la femme indigène se sert d'une houe en fer, de forme triangulaire à base évasée et sommet prolongé par une pointe. Ce fer est encastré latéralement dans un manche en bois grossièrement dégrossi et terminé par un renflement en forme de massue. Le but de ce dernier caractère est double : il sert à donner plus de prise à l'encastrement du fer et à renforcer le rendement de l'effort de l'ouvrier, sans cependant rendre l'emploi de l'outil trop fatiguant.

Fig. 38. — Première installation du village Longinpila dans un terrain nouvellement défriché. Tribu des Batitu.

Après le premier sarclage la femme forme à 80 cm. d'intervale, de petites buttes de 30 cm. de hauteur moyenne et y pique quatre à cinq boutures de manioc.

Les soins d'entretien des cultures de manioc se réduisent à un ou deux sarclages pour enlever les plantes adventives. Le manioc demande un terrain extrêmement fertile. Sa culture épuise le sol au point qu'après trois ou quatre ans, l'indigène doit déplacer ses plantations et abandonner le terrain défriché.

Le manioc doux atteint le maximum de son développement au bout d'une année, le manioc amer après 15 à 20 mois.

La récolte des tubercules ou racines de manioc se fait au fur et à mesure des besoins de la famille. La racine est bonne à manger à tout âge et à toute époque. Le rendement maximum coïncide avec le plein développement de la plante et non à la maturité complète. La moyenne varie entre 12 à 15000 Kg. à l'hectare. La femme indigène n'attend pas l'époque du plein développement pour commencer l'exploitation de sa culture. Elle limite la cueillette au stricte nécessaire pendant toute la saison des pluies. A cette époque le manioc gonflé d'eau, ne donne que peu de farine et se gâte facilement au rouissage.

FIG. 39. — Hutte du nkisi de chasse et bananier en fleur et à fruit au village de Madjuku, tribu des Bobaie.

Après le manioc, les bananiers occupent le premier rang parmi les cultures indigènes, au moins chez les populations du Lac Léopold II, de la

Basse Lukenie et de l'entre Congo-Kasaï. Chez les tribus de la Haute Lukenie, les cultures de bananiers sont moins développées et dans la région de Bena-Dibele-Kole, elles disparaissent à peu près complètement.

Les indigènes cultivent de préférence la grande banane ; moins succulente, elle est plus farineuse et d'un rendement plus intense que la petite. Les bananeraies sont toujours établies à proximité du village et le plus souvent directement derrière les habitations. Il s'en suit que ces cultures prennent la forme générale du village et l'encadrent en quelque sorte.

Pour réussir, les bananiers doivent être plantés dans un terrain très fertile, bien défriché et labouré à fond. Pour activer la croissance et le rendement, les indigènes déversent dans les bananeraies, tous les déchets de la cuisine, les ordures, les cendres et balayures provenant du nettoyage régulier de l'intérieur du village et de la hutte et s'y réfugient pour satisfaire aux besoins de la nature.

La culture du maïs, est peu importante. Au-delà du poste de Tolo, le maïs semble être complètement inconnu. Chez les populations de la Mfimi, du Lac Léopold II et de la Basse Lukenie, les cultures de maïs sont très peu développées. Par contre nous avons rencontré de grands champs de maïs chez les Bateke et principalement chez les Banfumu des territoires de Kapanda. Il convient cependant de remarquer, que l'intensité de cette culture dans cette région était due, non à l'utilisation directe du maïs par l'indigène, mais à l'espoir de pouvoir en écouler avantageusement le produit chez les commerçants et travailleurs de Léopoldville — Kinshassa.

Le maïs est semé en poquets, distants les uns des autres de 30 à 60 cm. Les poquets sont creusés en terrain défriché à l'approche de la saison des pluies. Le maïs lève après quatre jours. A ce moment les cultures sont très exposées aux déprédations des oiseaux. Les enfants sont chargés pendant 4 à 5 jours d'y monter la garde du matin au soir et de les éloigner par leurs cris.

L'entretien comprend un sarclage et un démariage des poquets. Les cultures de maïs ne sont ni binées ni butées. Le maïs est parfois semé en culture dérobée dans les champs de manioc. La maturité du maïs se marque par les spathes jaunes et séchées. La récolte se fait quelque temps après la maturité. Le maïs est arraché par les enfants et les femmes ; les épis coupés sur place et transportés au village.

La culture du riz est inconnue dans toute la région visitée, sauf chez les populations de Bena Dibele-Kole. Avant les semis le terrain est sarclé. Le riz est semé par poquets dans le premier quart de la saison des pluies. Les soins d'entretien se réduisent à deux ou trois sarclages donnés quand la plante est dans son premier développement. La garde des cultures doit se faire régulière et ininterrompue du matin au soir depuis la floraison jusqu'à la récolte. Le riz est coupé au couteau, grappe par grappe. Les grappes sont réunies en courtes glanes. Celles-ci sont mises en javelles et aprés quelques jours, groupées en meules. Le battage se fait au village, en communauté de famille. L'indigène choisit une grande aire bien battue et se sert de longues perches. Le décorticage se fait au pilon, dans un mortier en bois. Le riz décortiqué est vanné, dans des panniers en éclats de rotang, d'une forme circulaire peu élevée à rebord renforcé. Le rendement moyen varie entre 2000 à 3500 Kg. par hectare.

Les cultures de riz servent moins à l'alimentation de l'indigène qu'au commerce. Généralement l'indigène, écoule sa récolte immédiatement aprés le décorticage.

Dans la région des Banfumu et chez les Bankutshu, les cultures d'arachides, sont assez prospères. L'arachide se développe le mieux dans une terre légère et ne convient point aux terrains défrichis de la grande forêt. La culture demande beaucoup de soins et un entretien régulier. Les champs envahis par les mauvaises herbes sont d'un rendement nul. La récolte se fait à maturité et incombe aux femmes, assistées par les enfants. Les arachides sont placées dans des hottes et transportées au village. L'indigène les étend au soleil pour les faire sécher. Deux ou trois fois par jour, il les tourne et les retourne. Au soir il rentre la provision dans la hutte.

Les plantations de cannes à sucre, sont établies dans les bas-fonds marécageux.

Tous les travaux de cette culture sont réservés aux hommes. On ne rencontre ces plantations que dans les régions où les indigènes fabriquent le *Masanga* ou bière de canne à sucre. Elles sont particulièrement nombreuses dans les villages de la Basse Lukenie et la Mfimi.

En général les indigènes cultivent encore quelques légumineuses, des patates douces et l'igname, mais en petites étendues et sans soins particuliers.

LA CHASSE.

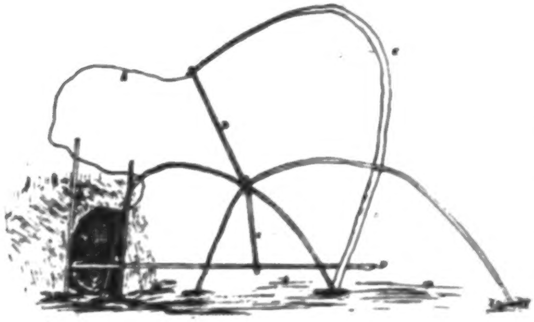
La chasse est réservée aux hommes. Ils la pratiquent, non comme un sport, un divertissement ou un délassement, mais dans l'unique but de se procurer de la viande et de la graisse.

Dès leur plus tendre jeunesse les garçons se réunissent, battent les herbes et attrapent souris, rats et autres rongeurs qui pullulent dans la brousse. Rien n'est aussi intéressant que de les voir à l'œuvre. A dix, quinze, vingt parfois, ils forment un grand cercle. Armés d'un bâton, ils battent les herbes et font un vacarme incroyable. Petit à petit le cercle se rétrécit et se déplace de façon à y comprendre un petit espace bien nettoyé. Les plus agés, les plus audacieux et les plus agiles y montent la garde ; l'œil vif, le regard fixé sur la lisière des herbes, prêts à bondir. Les traqueurs redoublent de zèle, frappent, crient, gesticulent et poussent insensiblement tous les rongeurs vers la petite clairière. Pourchassés, effrayés, les rats, souris, etc., fuyent éperdus. N'osant franchir le cordon des traqueurs, ils sont poussés vers la clairière, hésitent un instant avant de s'y engager et bondissent. Sans changer de place, les petits chasseurs les attendent et les saisissent au passage. Un coup sec, nerveux, et les voilà les côtes enfoncées, le crâne brisé. Pas un n'échappe ; ni leur taille (certains rongeurs sont gros comme des lièvres) ni les morsures, ni les égratignures ne font peur à ces bambins de trois, quatre ou cinq ans.

Les enfants s'occupent encore de capturer des oiseaux et petits rongeurs au filet et au piège. Ces derniers sont constitués par une tige flexible formant ressort et une corde à nœud coulant. Un système de petits bâtonnets à déclanchement automatique, oblige l'oiseau à engager la tête dans le nœud pour atteindre l'appât. A ce moment le jeu de petits bâtonnets se déclanche et la victime est enlevée par la ligne attachée à la tige-ressort.

Les indigènes placent également des pièges du même genre devant l'entrée des galeries de rongeurs ou autres animaux ou à l'endroit de leur passage régulier.

Au village de Madjuku, j'eus l'occasion de surprendre sur le vif le mécanisme d'un piège à rats. Devant la sortie d'une galerie, deux baguettes entrecroisées et recourbées en cerceaux ; une forte tige de rotang (E) fixée en terre, à l'extrémité de laquelle sont attachées deux cordes en piassava (A et B). L'une des cordes terminée en nœud coulant est placée le nœud ouvert devant l'entrée de la galerie. A extrémité de la seconde, est fixé un petit bâtonnet. (C) L'une des extrémités de ce bâtonnet passe derrière l'entrecroisement des deux cerceaux, l'autre est retenue par un bâton mobile, (D) placé transversalement entre les extrémités des cerceaux et de façon à barrer l'entrée de la galerie. En sortant ou en rentrant le rongeur passe la tête dans le nœud coulant, le bâton transversal (D) le gênant, il l'écarte des pattes, déclanche le bâtonnet d'arrêt (C) et la branche de tension (E) devenue libre se redresse. Automatiquement le rongeur est pris dans le nœud coulant, enlevé et étouffé par strangulation. La sensibilité de ce piège est remarquable ; le rongeur qui s'y engage est irrévocablement perdu.



Les indigènes établissent également des bricoles à antilopes. Très observateurs, ils découvrent rapidement l'endroit du passage régulier d'une antilope et la taille de l'animal. Ils placent à ce point, un nœud coulant en rotang, soigneusement dissimulé dans les herbes et les feuillages. L'animal y engage la tête au passage et s'emprisonne lui-même. Plus la victime se démène et plus le nœud se serre.

Pour les grands carnassiers, hyènes, léopards et grands chats sauvages, l'indigène place des trappes. Lors de notre séjour dans la région de Bongo, les indigènes du villages de Penge, vinrent soumettre au jugement du chef de poste Mr Molin, une palabre qui nous montra que le placement de ces trappes est réservé à des spécialistes qui sont responsables des accidents qu'ils peuvent causer.

Depuis quelques temps un léopard enlevait au village de Penge, poules et chèvres. Olondo, homme réputé pour sa science, fut appelé pour placer un piège. Il arriva, fit le « nkisi », plaça le piège et le lendemain le léopard fut pris. Il n'était pas mort. Olondo prit sa lance et d'un coup sec voulu achever le fauve. Mais il ne fit que blesser le léopard à l'épaule et sous l'exitation et la douleur, celui-ci parvint à s'échapper du piège. Une trainée de sang montra la route suivie par le fauve. Olondo rassembla les guerriers du village et les invita à se lancer à la poursuite du léopard. Il les divisa en deux groupes et prit la direction de l'un de ceux-ci. Bientôt ils arrivèrent à l'endroit où, à bout de forces, le léopard s'était caché. L'un des groupes fut invité à s'arrêter tandis que l'autre attaqua la bête. Olonde arriva le premier, et déjà sa lance menaçait le léopard, lorsque brusquement celui-ci s'élança dans le fourré. Dix pas plus loin il se heurta au barrage formé par les guerriers du second groupe. Pourchassé par Olondo, il bondit sur l'un d'eux, lui planta les griffes dans la tête et l'épaule, renversa sa victime et se préparait à l'achever, lorsque Olondo, accourut et le tua net d'un coup de lance. L'homme blessé fut transporté au village, il mit longtemps à guérir de ses terribles blessures et perdit un œil.

Or le blessé nommé Otete prétendit rendre Olondo responsable de l'accident. Olondo disait-il, avait fait « nkisi » mais il l'avait mal fait. Le léopard s'était échappé et Olondo avait alors proposé de poursuivre le fauve, mais il avait jeté un « ndoki » au moment du départ et voilà pourquoi le léopard s'était enfui et au lieu d'attaquer Olondo, s'était jeté sur lui. En conséquence il réclamait 1000 mitako de dommages et intérêts, 6 couteaux et 3 « makonga ». La demande d'Otete ne nous paraissait point fondée !

Or Ebandia grand mfumu na tze des Mosengere, nous expliqua : Lorsque Olondo fut appelé pour placer le piège et faire « nkisi » il demanda suivant la coutume 1000 mitako qui lui furent payés. Mais en retour Olando avait à tuer le léopard ce qu'il ne fit pas. Le léopard tomba dans le piège, s'en échappa et avant d'être tué, blessa Otete. N'a-t-il pas raison de demander le payement de la faute d'Olondo ? Pourquoi Olondo a-t-il réuni les guerriers pour poursuivre la bête au lieu d'établir un second, piège ? Olondo est la cause du malheur d'Otete et doit l'indemniser de ses souffrances.

Oiondo à son tour plaida sa cause et à notre grande surprise, commença par avouer que le « nkisi » du piège n'avait pas été bon ; mais ajouta-t-il le « ndoki » qui frappa Otete, n'a pas été jeté par moi mais par celui qui rendit le « nkisi » du piège inefficace. Si Otete a été blessé ce n'est pas de ma faute ; je ne lui doit donc pas le payement qu'il exige, mais je veux lui donner les 1000 mitako que j'ai reçus pour placer le piège.

La chasse aux éléphants et aux hippopotames se fait par pièges, trappes, à la lance et au harpon.

Les trappes sont formées de grands trous creusés sur les chemins fréquentés par les pachidermes. Ces trous ont de 3 à 4 mètres de longueur, 2 mètres de largeur et 4 à 5 mètres de profondeur. Dans le fond l'indigène enfonce des pieux en bois dont les extrémités, taillées en pointe, sont durcies au feu. L'ouverture est cachée par une natte de branches d'arbre et de lianes grossièrement tressées, recouverte de feuilles et d'herbes. Ces pièges forment un véritable danger pour la circulation dans le pays, aussi l'indigène doit-il en indiquer l'existence par un signe conventionnel bien mis en évidence. Entre Lokila et Gomo Erenge, villages Mosengere, j'ai constaté pour la première fois l'existence de ces poteaux indicateurs : un fort pieux fixé perpendiculairement en terre au sommet duquel l'indigène attache un cerceau et un bâton. Celui-ci est fixé obliquement en terre, en prenant pour direction la ligne droite qui conduit du poteau au piège. Si un indigène néglige le placement de l'indicateur, il perd ses droits au gibier pris au piège et est responsable des accidents qui pourraient résulter de sa négligence.

Un autre piège très souvent employé pour la chasse à l'hippopotame, est formé par une lourde pointe en fer suspendue au dessus du chemin, fréquenté par ces pachidermes. Le jour, ceux-ci se tiennent de préférence dans l'eau ou somnolent sur quelque banc de sable. La nuit ils sortent de leur refuge, pour aller brouter les herbes de la plaine. Le plus souvent l'animal à sa rentrée et à sa sortie de l'eau laisse dans la berge des traces très visibles de son passage. L'indigène installe son piège dans le voisinage de ces points, évitant toutefois de le placer à la galerie de sortie. L'expérience lui a montré que l'hippopotame, méfiant au possible, est mis en éveil par la moindre modification de l'endroit de la sortie et qu'immédiatement il en change l'emplacement.

La pointe de fer est encastrée dans un gros bloc de bois. L'ensemble est suspendu à 4 ou 5 mètres au dessus du sol. Une traverse, placée à un mètre du sol au travers du chemin ; est maintenue en place par le dispositif de déclanchement qui commande la suspension de l'arme. Au passage le pachiderme vient heurter la traverse, la déplace, fait sauter le déclanchement, rompt la suspension et la lance s'abat lourdement sur l'animal. Le piège est disposé de façon à frapper l'animal dans la nuque.

L'indigène pratique la chasse à l'arc et à la flèche ainsi qu'à la lance. L'arc et la flèche sont cependant plutôt des armes que des engins de chasse.

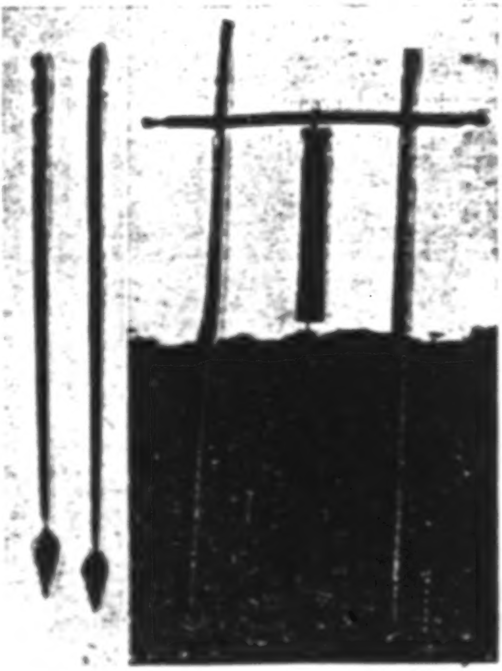


FIG. 40. — Lances de chasse et piège au gros gibier au Lac Léopold II.

Actuellement les populations du pays entre le Congo et le Kasai et les Baboma de la Mfimi ont abandonné ces armes. Quelques rares privilégiés possèdent des fusils à piston, armes généralement plus dangereuses pour celui qui s'en sert que pour le gibier. Quand l'indigène tire un coup de fusil, il tend les bras, dirige le canon vers le gibier et détourne la tête. S'il est arrivé, à force d'adresse et de patience, à quelques mètres du gibier sans éveiller son attention, le coup a chance de réussir. D'ordinaire l'animal est plus ou moins gravement blessé, à moins que le fusil surchargé n'éclate dans les mains de l'imprudent chasseur.

Les Bateke, les Banfumu et les Baboma conservent la poudre dans des petits récipients formés d'une simple calebasse ou découpés dans un bloc de bois dur. Les calebasses sont parfois recouvertes d'une gaine de peau de serpent ou de lézard, dans le but de mieux conserver la poudre à l'abri de l'humidité. Les poires à poudre, en bois sont généralement pyriformes, imitation probable de la forme de la callebasse. Elles sont munies d'un couvercle en bois s'emboitant très exactement sur le corps de l'objet et une lanière de suspension en cuir, fixée à deux œillets découpés dans le corps du récipient et passant par deux galeries latérales ménagées dans le couvercle. Très souvent ces poires à poudre sculptées, sont ornées de dessins gravés en bas relief, motifs linéaires placés en bandes. Les lignes sont tantôt circulaires, tantôt droites et parfois aussi obliques. Le fond de la poire à poudre est plat de façon à pouvoir la placer debout

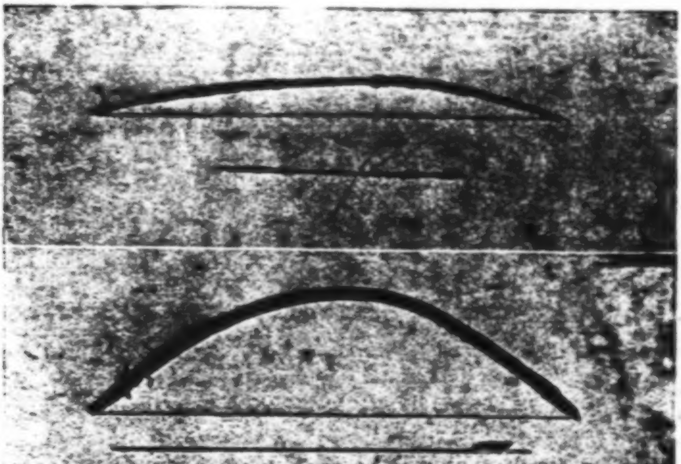


FIG. 41. — 1°) Arc à lanière de tension en corde, et flèche en fer armée d'un dard.
FIG. 42. — 2°) Arc à lanière de tension en rotang et flèche en bois.

sur un plan horizontal. Le corps de la poire à poudre est prolongé par un goulot droit, cylindrique sur lequel s'emboite le couvercle.

Le type d'arc à lanière de tension en rotang est relativement rare. Nous ne l'avons retrouvé que chez les Tumba, les Balesa, les Babaie, les Batete, les Ipanga, les Batitu et les pygmées. Cet arc est formé par une tige de rotang, section convexe externe, meplat interne. La lanière de tension en rotang est attachée aux deux extrémités, mais préalablement passée dans de petites ouvertures percées dans le corps de l'arc à 4 cms. des extrémités. La section verticale de celles-ci est munie d'une rainure peu profonde. La tension de l'arc s'obtient en faisant passer la lanière dans ces crans.

Les flèches sont faites en faux bambou, les deux ailerons en feuilles passés dans une fente. Les pointes durcies au feu sont munies de légères entailles et enduites de poison. Ce poison n'est dangereux que lorsqu'il est bien frais. Il ne tue pas à petite dose mais engourdit l'animal blessé.

Les indigènes se servent plus spécialement de ces arcs et flèches pour la chasse aux oiseaux et plus rarement pour la chasse aux singes. Dans ce dernier cas ils emploient de préférence un arc fait d'une forte tige très élastique et très résistante. La longueur moyenne varie entre 80 centimètres et 1 mètre 10. La tige est progressivement amincie vers les extrémités et terminée en pointe munie d'un cran d'arrêt. La section verticale est convexe interne, meplat externe. La corde de tension est faite en fibres de bananier. La tension est fixe, c'est à dire que l'indigène ne détend pas l'arc au repos. La hauteur de la tension est 12 centimètres en moyenne, la portée effective de 150 mètres, la portée utile de 100 mètres en longueur et de 15 à 20 mètres en hauteur.

La fabrication de l'arc et des flèches est réservée aux hommes.

L'indigène fait un choix très minutieux du bois de ses flèches. Il doit être léger et très résistant. Après l'avoir gratté soigneusement au moyen d'un petit couteau, il taille l'une des extrémités en pointe, tandis que l'autre est découpée pour former le cran de placement sur la corde. L'une et l'autre sont légèrement durcies au feu. Les sections où doivent s'appliquer les ailerons sont grattées avec plus de soin. Les lignes de placement sont tracées à la pointe du couteau ; les ailerons formés de la moitié d'une plume d'aile d'aigle ou de pintade. L'indigène les place tous les trois à la fois et les fixe au moyen d'un fil en fibres, enroulé en spirales. Cette fine ligature est consolidée par de la résine de « Bulungu » appliquée très liquide et formant en conséquence une gaine très légère après dessiccation.

Fig. 43. — Basakata armés de lances, d'arc et de flèches.

Le dard de la flèche est terminé par une douille conique, allongée, dans laquelle s'encastre l'extrémité supérieure du bois de la flèche. La forme générale de la pointe, est celle d'une feuille oblongue, étroite, parfois munie d'un ou deux crochets. Cette forme se retrouve dans toute la région du Lac Léopold II et la Lukenie. L'entaille pour la corde de l'arc est très régulière et peu profonde, mais chez les Yaelima elle a parfois jusqu'à 5 cms. de profondeur. Le type de l'arc et de la flèche que nous venons de décrire sert également d'arme offensive et défensive. Jadis son importance comme tel devait être plus grande. De nos jours les guerres de tribu à tribu sont devenues à peu près impossibles. Par contre les attaques et vengeances individuelles sont encore assez fréquentes. Ce fait s'observe plus spécialement dans la région située à l'Est d'Opombo. Tout indigène libre Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala et Yaelima, possède son arc et ses flèches et n'hésite pas à s'en servir, tant pour se défendre que pour attaquer.

La chasse à l'arc et à la flèche se fait individuellement. Le produit en revient intégralement au chasseur.

Nous avons retrouvé chez les Yaelima une flèche dont la pointe mobile notablement plus grande, plus large et plus forte, est rattachée au bois par des cordelettes. Les indigènes se servent de ce genre de flèches pour la chasse aux antilopes et aux buffles. En blessant l'animal, la pointe de la flèche pénètre dans le corps, le gibier surpris s'élance dans la brousse ou dans la forêt. Le bois de la flèche heurté par les hautes herbes ou les lianes, se détache petit à petit. La pointe de la flèche, attachée au bois au moyen de la corde reste dans la blessure. A chaque secousse l'animal élargit sa blessure. Le bois de la flèche s'accroche à un moment donné aux lianes ou aux herbes; il en résulte que la pointe est violemment arrachée de la blessure qui est ainsi rendue mortelle. Cette arme très dangereuse est peu répandue et pour cause. L'indigène ne peut s'en servir utilement qu'à bout portant. La portée de l'arc est limitée, la flèche à pointe mobile lourde, le fer est très large et muni de barbelets. Pour arriver à planter cette flèche dans le corps de l'animal il faut pouvoir se glisser jusqu'à quelques mètres du gibier, arriver à bander l'arc sans éveiller son attention et le blesser au ventre. L'animal peut chercher dans une course folle et fatale son salut; mais il arrive aussi qu'il se retourne contre son agresseur. En toute circonstance le chasseur qui se sert de ces flèches ne peut le faire qu'en s'exposant à de grands

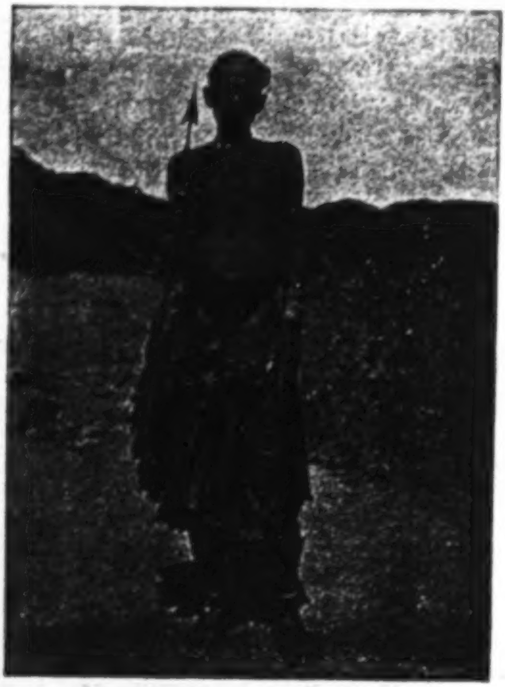


FIG. 44 — Grand chasseur Yaelima montrant sa flèche harpon.

dangers. Or, si l'indigène s'adonne volontiers à la chasse, il craint les dangers qui s'y rattachent. Seuls les vrais chasseurs intrépides, qui ont hérité quelque chose de l'instinct et de l'audace des Batua, utilisent ces flèches. Inunu, chef des Batitu de la région d'Oshwe, audacieux au possible, ne craignant ni animal, ni obstacle, ni danger, m'affirma que lui et quelques autres chasseurs n'hésitaient pas à attaquer l'éléphant au moyen de cette arme.

Le plus souvent l'indigène se sert de sa lance pour la chasse au gros gibier ou bien il se contente de placer des pièges.

Les populations situées à l'Ouest des Ipanga, ont abandonné la chasse à l'éléphant. Lors de notre séjour dans la région de Bobaie, des Basakata et des Balesa, les indigènes vinrent à plusieurs reprises se plaindre de l'invasion des éléphants dans leurs plantations de manioc et des dégats que ces visiteurs inopportuns y faisaient à chaque passage. Jamais ils n'ont songé à les attaquer. Pour les éloigner ils faisaient du feu et un vacarme infernal, tout en se tenant à distance.

Dans la région des Ipanga-Batitu et chez les Bokala-Yaelima la chasse aux éléphants est assez fréquente. Les chasseurs les plus audacieux les attaquent à la lance. Ces chasses se font individuellement. Le chasseur se couvre ou s'enduit de bouse d'éléphant. Il s'en rapproche avec mille précautions, évitant de réveiller l'attention de l'animal, toujours sur le qui-vive. Arrivé à portée utile, il plante sa lance dans le bas ventre de l'animal et s'esquive au plus vite. L'animal blessé s'élance au grand hasard jusqu'à ce que, épuisé par sa course folle et la perte de sang, il s'écroule définitivement. Le chasseur suit la piste pendant deux, trois jours, sans jamais se lasser ni perdre courage. De la perte du sang, de l'empreinte des pieds, de la largeur des pas et de bien d'autres signes, il déduit la probabilité du succès de sa chasse et tant qu'il lui reste un espoir il continue sa poursuite. Il arrive parfois que l'animal parvient à se débarrasser de la lance. Dans ces conditions le chasseur reprend le chemin du village tout en ayant soin d'annoncer à qui veut l'entendre son exploit. Il le fait non pour se créer une réputation mais pour s'assurer un recours contre celui qui viendrait à trouver l'animal, si par impossible, il venait à succomber quand même des suites de sa blessure.

La chasse en communauté est plus usitée. Les indigènes se servent de grands filets, de lances, de couteaux et de chiens. Le groupe se divise en rabatteurs, dirigés par un chef d'équipe et de guetteurs ou propriétaires de filets.

Fig. 45. — Un départ pour la chasse au pays des Yaelima
Lances. Arcs Flèches et Filets.

La. première chasse indigène à laquelle j'eus le plaisir d'assister fût celle de Tua, chez les Banfumu.

Arrivé à l'entrée de la forêt choisie pour la chasse, le premier chasseur s'arrête, dépose son chien à terre et lui ordonne de se coucher et de ne plus bouger. Bien dressée, la bête obéit au premier geste. Le conducteur rassemble les chasseurs et leur dit qu'il va invoquer le *nkisi* pour assurer le succès de la chasse et il commence :

« Pourquoi n'y a-t-il pas de feu ? »

« Où donc est le bois ? »

Aussitôt les porteurs de filets déposent leur fardeau, et s'en vont à gauche et à droite rassembler du bois sec, dont ils forment un bucher. Un chasseur s'accroupit et allume du feu au moyen de son briquet. Quand le bois prend feu, le premier traqueur continue :

« Où donc sont les filets ? Pourquoi ne vois-je pas les grelots ? Que sont devenus les chiens ? Aussitôt filets et grelots sont déposés en cercle tout autour du feu, tandis que les chiens et les chasseurs viennent se grouper autour du premier traqueur. Celui ci arrache une branche d'arbre et l'étend successivement sur chaque filet en disant : « Dans la forêt tu seras tendu et tu arrêteras le gibier ! » Et passant la branche au dessus des grelots et des chiens, il reprend : « Dans la forêt tu réveilleras le gibier, et tu le pousseras dans les filets ! » Prenant ensuite une grande feuille, il la place à plat sur le creux du poing gauche et frappant de la paume de la main droite il fait éclater la feuille avec un bruit sec en disant : « Que le nkisi nous soit favorable ».

S'asseyant ensuite devant chaque filet, il siffle par deux fois dans un petit sifflet en bois, que Folikini le fumu na tze, lui a remis en même temps que le nkisi de chasse, frappe deux fois filets et grelots et prononce à voix basse quelques paroles mystérieuses. A chaque invocation le porteur du filet et le propriétaire du chien, font éclater une feuille sur le poing en frappant celui-ci de la paume de la main droite.

Un enfant apporte une poule blanche. D'un coup sec, le premier traqueur lui arrache la tête, arrose de sang tous les filets et les grelots en invoquant le nkisi, puis jette la poule sur le feu en la saupoudrant de la poussière rouge, brune et noire du nkisi, que Folikini lui donna au moment du départ. Cependant que la poule non déplumée rôtit sur le feu, l'un des chasseurs dépose à terre un paquet de petites coquilles (monnaie indigène). Chaque chasseur en prend une part égale, et la donne au premier traqueur.

Celui-ci ouvre alors la poule rôtie, les intestins sont jetés dans le feu en l'honneur du nkisi, au milieu des cris des chasseurs, puis chacun d'entre-eux vient recevoir sur une feuille de bananier sa part de la poule. Aussitôt ils arrachent des branches d'arbres, les jettent sur le feu, piétinent le tout et enduisent filets, grelots, chiens, arcs, flèches, lances et leur propre corps, de cendres : La cérémonie est terminée. La chasse va commencer.

Les porteurs de filets reprennent leur charge et s'en vont les placer dans la forêt.

Chaque filet a de 20 à 25 mètres de longueur. L'indigène le tend un tant soit peu obliquement, incliné vers les traqueurs. Ceux-ci attachent les grelots en dessous du ventre des chiens, et s'en vont former un grand arc de cercle dont les deux extrémités s'inclinent vers celles des filets. Nous suivons les propriétaires des filets. Ils se placent à 10 ou 12 pas devant leur filet, se cachent dans la verdure tandis que nous nous plaçons tout contre les filets, mais à bonne distance les uns des autres. Bientôt les cris des traqueurs, le cliquetis des grelots et les aboyements des chiens réveillent la forêt silencieuse.

Fig. 46. — Le placement des filets de chasse.

Nous chargeons nos fusils.

La voix du premier traqueur se fait entendre. « Aliende go... O..O ! » Les chiens viennent de lever un gibier, ils le poursuivent, les traqueurs crient, chantent, font du tapage et excitent leurs chiens. Il faut éviter que la bête affolée parvienne à se glisser entre eux. Bientôt nous entendons un grand cri suivi de beuglements plaintifs. Un buluku (petite antilope mauve : Cephalophus Maxwelli) vient d'être pris dans un filet. Le propriétaire s'élance de sa cachette, la petite bête affolée fait des efforts désespérés pour se dégager, mais s'enchevêtre de plus en plus. En un rien de temps, l'indigène l'a saisie et lui lie solidement les pattes.

En temps ordinaire il l'assomme, mais nous avons donné ordre de ne pas tuer le gibier, par crainte d'abimer les peaux.

Après la première vint une seconde traque, puis une troisième et une quatrième. Tout ce temps nous avons été aux aguets. Hélas ! pas une grosse pièce ne fut prise ! Vers trois heures nous reprenons le chemin du poste, suivis des chasseurs portant les 6 Buluku capturés. La chasse n'a pas été très heureuse. Il arrive souvent que les indigènes en reviennent avec 10 et 15 de ces petites antilopes, nous dit M. Borremans.

Parfois un éléphant est pris dans la traque, chose désastreuse pour les filets et dangereuse pour les chasseurs. Si la bête affolée s'élance dans les filets, elle les arrache, au grand danger du propriétaire, placé de garde, et si furieuse, elle se retourne contre les chiens, les traqueurs n'ont que la ressource de s'enfuir au plus vite !

Toute chasse faite en communauté est accompagnée de quelques cérémonies magico-religieuses. Cette coutume est commune à toutes les populations visitées, situées à l'Ouest de Dekese. Dans toute cette région nous avons retrouvé dans chaque village un petit endroit consacré aux esprits protecteurs de la chasse. Dans la région de Léopoldville et chez les Bateke en général, l'endroit fétiche est cloturé par de hautes tiges consolidées par des tiges transversales entre-croisées. Rarement on trouve à l'intérieur de ces enclos *nkisi* de chasse des crânes d'antilopes ou de buffles.

Chez les Banfumungu, nous retrouvons le même enclos, mais au lieu d'être adossé à la hutte indigène, il est placé devant l'entrée d'une petite hutte aux formes toutes spéciales, très caractéristiques. Le toit est à double pente, le faîte horizontal, les parois latérales rectangulaires, les deux autres en pignon. Une petite ouverture rectangulaire munie à l'intérieur d'une claie de fermeture est percée dans la paroi qui donne sur la cloture et sert de porte. A l'intérieur de la hutte nous avons observé un petit foyer formé de trois termitières minuscules, un lit recouvert d'une natte et une ou deux poteries usagées contenant des objets les plus hétéroclites, de la poudre de « ngula », du « mpembe » et de la terre noire. C'est dans cette hutte que le féticheur conserve le fétiche de chasse. Ce fut tout accidentellement que je pus constater le fait lors de mon passage au village de Mbomu, dans la région des Banfumu.

Chez les Banfumu de la région de Bokala, et le Baboma de Mushie-Bokala-Wombali, nous avons retrouvé ces mêmes huttes typiques, consacrées aux esprits protecteurs de la chasse.

FIG. 47. - Hutte du Nkisi de chasse — Baboma — Au fond la hutte du type Basonge à toit conique et base carrée.

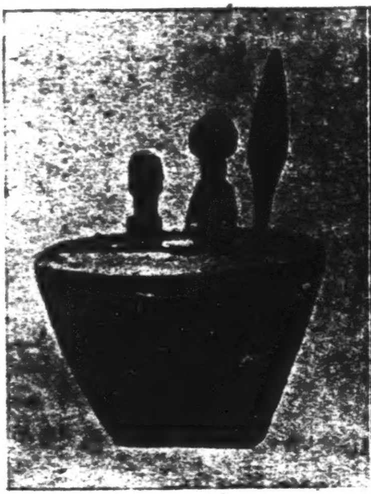
Au village de Bomu-fioti, la hutte de chasse était notablement plus grande, non entourée d'une cloture, mais devant l'entrée était construite une hutte minuscule ressemblant beaucoup à une très grande ruche à sommet pointu et fortement cintrée à la base. Cette hutte formait le sanctuaire du fétiche protecteur de la chasse. Tout autour s'accumulaient les crânes les plus variés, qui attestaient de la puissance du fétiche.

Au village Baboma de Wombali, la hutte du nkisi de chasse avait 2 mètres de long sur un mètre de large, le toit et les parois latérales étaient formés par de longs rotangs recourbés en forme d'une demie ellipse. La porte était percée dans la face antérieure. La hutte était couverte de chaume et entourée d'un enclos en rotang. A l'intérieur se trouvait un lit et trois poteries à nkisi. Quant au fétiche, s'il avait existé, les indigènes l'avaient enlevé avant notre visite. Les crânes de gibier gisaient tout autour de la hutte.

Des renseignements obtenus il résulte que l'entrée de la hutte au nkisi de chasse est interdite à la femme et à tout indigène dont la réputation de chasseur n'est pas établie par des prouesses aux chasses communes. La veille de la chasse organisée, c'est à dire la chasse au filet et en communauté le chef féticheur ou celui qui est désigné pour conduire la chasse, doit se retirer dans la hutte. Il y passe la nuit sans en sortir sous aucun prétexte et sans prendre la moindre nourriture. Si pour une cause quelconque il enfreint ces prescriptions, la chasse doit être remise au lendemain.

Au moment où tous les chasseurs sont réunis, c. a. d. vers 5 heures du matin, il en sort et emporte dans un petit sachet en feuilles de bananier, une partie des substances magiques, prélevées aux poteries « nkisi ». Ces substances seront utilisées aux cérémonies spéciales, qui se déroulent à l'entrée de la forêt, immédiatement avant la chasse. Au retour le crâne du plus gros gibier tué à la chasse, sera déposé devant la hutte en hommage de reconnaissance.

Pour les chasses individuelles, le chasseur dont la réputation est faite au point de pouvoir pénétrer dans la hutte fétiche, doit s'y retirer quatre jours avant de se mettre en marche. Il emporte ses armes, lances, couteaux, arcs et flèches et les garde à l'intérieur pendant tout ce temps. Il ne peut sortir de l'enclos, que pour satisfaire aux besoins les plus urgents et avant d'en sortir, de même qu'au moment de la rentrée, il doit arracher à un arbrisseau voisin une feuille, la déposer sur le creux de la main gauche fermée en godet et la faire sauter en frappant du plat de la main droite, ainsi que nous l'avons décrit, lors de l'exposé des cérémonies de la chasse au « Buluku ». La nourriture doit lui être apportée par un homme et prélevée sur la part réservée à un autre chasseur de réputation. Les sorties de nuit et toute relation sexuelle sont sévèrement interdites. Au retour de la chasse, les crânes doivent être déposés devant la hutte, celui de la plus grosse pièce fixée sur un des pieux de l'enclos. Nous avons pu acquérir deux objets fétiches trouvés à l'intérieur de ces huttes. Le premier vient du village Banfumu de Mbomu et a été acquis dans les circonstances décrites plus haut. Ce fétiche est sculpté en forme d'une figurine humaine, représentant un homme debout. La tête seule a fait l'objet d'un certain soin de travail, le corps est à peine ébauché, le sexe grossièrement indiqué, les jambes mal définies, les bras manquent. Une corde en fibres de bananier tordues est nouée en guise de ceinture au dessus des hanches. Toute la figurine a été enduite d'une pâte de « ngula ».



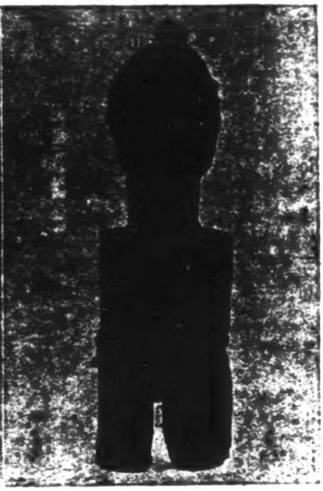


FIG. 48. — 1°) Fétiche de chasse Baboma.
FIG. 49. — 2°) Fétiche de chasse Banfumu.

Le second a été acheté au village de Bakomu et diffère notablement du premier. Un panier en éclats de rotang haut de 18,5 ctm. et d'un diamètre de 27 cms. à fond carré est rempli d'un mélange compact de « mpembe », de terre noire, de « ngula » et de minerais de fer très finement broyés. L'ensemble a été arrosé d'eau et de sang de poule, mélangé et malaxé de façon à en former une pâte épaisse. Dans cette pâte coulée dans le panier le féticheur a fixé deux figurines et une pointe de lance, sculptées en bois. Les figurines sont très primitives et très peu ouvragées. Leur aspect, l'état d'usure et de vieillesse qui les caractérisent leur donnent un caractère très ancien. L'acquisition de ces fétiches ne fût point facile. En dehors de l'opposition des indigènes en général nous eûmes à vaincre la résistance des chasseurs qualifiés et à nous assurer le concours du féticheur.

Au delà des Baboma la hutte consacrée aux ésprits protecteurs de la chasse disparait petit à petit. De figurines fétiches, nous n'avons plus retrouvé la moindre trace.

Chez les Basakata et les Wadia de la Mfimi, de même que chez les Bobaie et les Balesa, nous avons rencontré dans quelques villages de petites installations toutes rudimentaires rappelant de loin les coutumes Baboma-Banfumu-Bateke. La hutte a fait place à un petit abri très bas, ouvert à tous les vents et adossé à un beau tronc de bananier. Sous cet abri nous avons noté, quatre poteries en terre cuite bourrées d'un amalgame de substances les plus diverses ; quelques crânes d'antilopes, sur le devant une corne d'antilope piquée en terre, contenant une substance liquide, épaisse, d'une nature douteuse. Un arc et une flèche étaient suspendus à l'intérieur. Enfin une calebasse, une termitière et un crâne de buffle étaient déposés à terre. Nous avons cherché

FIG. 49. — Hutte de nkisi de chasse et bananier en fleur et en fruit au village de Madjuku, tribu des Bobaie.

vainement à déterminer la signification, l'usage et le but de tous ces objets. Les indigènes se bornaient à nous répondre : « nkisi » Mundele.

Au tronc du bananier était suspendu un beau régime dont les premiers fruits étaient bien murs. Tout en interrogeant les indigènes, j'arrachais une de ces bananes. Immédiatement je fus assailli de protestations. Ces bananes n'appartenaient-elles pas au « nkisi » ? Ce régime était tabou ! Personne n'avait le droit d'en prélever un fruit ! Quelques indigènes s'étaient lancés dans les bananeraies et en rapportaient des bananes en masse. Ils en avaient les mains pleines. Tous me les offraient en échange de la banane prise au bananier du « nkisi » et quand je finis par la leur remettre, ils la fixèrent dans la paroi intérieure du toit de l'abri à « nkisi »

Au village, Bobaie de Madjulu, la hutte nkisi est remplacée par un grand panier, entouré de gros blocs de bois et recouvert d'herbes. Une grande poterie à chikwangue, brisée, était placée au dessus ; quelques sticks étaient placés tout autour et au sommet de deux d'entr-eux, les indigènes avaient suspendus de grandes calebasses. Ici encore il me fût impossible d'obtenir un renseignement précis au sujet de l'usage ou de la

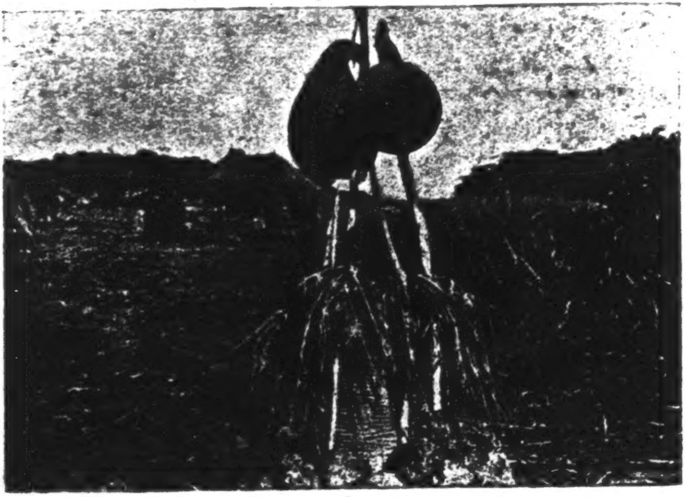


Fig. 50 — Fetiche de chasse Bobaie du village Madjuku.

signification de chacun de ces objets en particulier. Les quelques rares crânes de petites antilopes déposés à l'intérieur du panier, rappelaient encore vaguement la coutume des huttes « nkisi » de chasse des Bateke-Banfumu.

Chez les Tumba, les Wadia de la rive droite du Lac Léopold II et les Mosengere, toute trace de hutte disparait. Au village Wadia d'Ibali, une grande poterie était placée au dessus d'une branche terminée en trident aux arêtes opposées. Cette poterie était remplie aux 3/4 d'une boue rougeâtre très épaisse. Quelques éclats de faux bambou, deux, trois pointes de flèches et un petit arc étaient plantés dans cette pâte. Au pied du stick, les indigènes avaient entassé toute une série de crânes d'antilopes et de buffles. Seules ces dépouilles rappelaient vaguement le fétiche de chasse de la région du Kasaï.

Il est possible que cette forme très simple du « nkisi » de chasse soit aussi la plus primitive, et qu'elle se rattache, le plus à la coutume ancestrale, les abris primitifs des populations voisines et les huttes caractéristiques des tribus Bateke-Banfumu, n'étant en somme qu'un développement de la coutume de la branche mère de ces populations; coutume qui voulait que le crâne du plus gros gibier tué à la chasse fût consacré aux esprits protecteurs de la chasse et déposé au pied de la représentation matérielle de ces esprits.

Dans la région d'Oshwe et de Bumbuli, nous n'avons pas retrouvé trace de cette coutume. Cependant chaque village possédait son fétiche de chasse. Celui du village Yaelima de Yanga est parmi les plus intéressants. A proximité d'un groupement de quatre huttes situées un peu à l'écart de l'agglomération principale, s'élève un grand arbrisseau. Tout à côté deux pieux fourchus placés à 1 m. 20 de distance, et, à terre, une branche droite qui peut se placer dans les fourches. Une petite section de calebasse est suspendue au moyen de deux lianes dont l'une est fixée à l'arbre, l'autre à l'un des pieux fourchus. La calebasse contient les substances au pouvoir magique : un mélange de « mpembe » et terre noire, le tout formant une boue pâteuse. Avant de partir à la chasse faite en communauté, chaque chasseur propriétaire d'un filet doit passer devant ce fétiche. La pointe d'une de ses flèches ou celle de la lance sont trempées dans la petite calebasse et une partie de la boue qui y adhère est étendue sur les filets. Au retour de la chasse les indigènes viennent suspendre un morceau de chair d'une des bêtes tuées, à la traverse placée sur les deux pieux fourchus. La coutume du dépôt des crânes semble inconnue dans la région.

Le fétiche de chasse des Bokala du village de Yoshomo Monene est placé au milieu de l'agglomération indigène. Il est formé de deux pieux terminés en fourche qui peuvent être reliés par une branche transversale tout comme la charpente du fétiche de chasse des Yaelima. Le grand arbrisseau a été remplacé par une herbacée aux feuilles touffues. La calebasse aux substances magiques est placée à terre entre la touffe d'herbes et l'un des pieux. Les coutumes et cérémonies avant le départ pour la chasse en communauté sont identiques à celles que nous venons de décrire.

Quant aux relations entre le féticheur, le fétiche de chasse et le chasseur isolé nous les ignorons n'ayant pu obtenir de renseignements à ce sujet dans ces régions.

Fig. 51. — Fétiche nkisi de chasse des Yaelima.

Dans toute la région que nous avons parcourue, les grandes chasses se font en communauté. En général tous les hommes y participent y compris les jeunes gens dès l'âge de 15 ans.

J'eus à plusieurs reprises l'occasion d'assister aux grandes chasses indigènes notamment à Tua, à Bongo, à Oshwe et à Bumbuli. Celle qui fut organisée à notre intention par le chef Batitu, Inunu du village Yembé fût très intéressante.

Tous les indigènes adultes étaient rassemblés et armés de longues lances, d'arcs et de flèches. Les filets avaient été transportés depuis la veille dans la forêt. Ce fut d'abord au village un défilé de chasseurs, des danses désordonnées, des cris de guerre et d'appel au gibier, puis tout le monde se groupa et nous partimes pour la forêt.

Arrivés à l'endroit où étaient cachés les filets, tous les chasseurs s'arrêtèrent: Le grand maitre de la chasse prononça un long discours, invoqua la puissance des « nkisi » de la chasse, conseilla à ses hommes d'être courageux et pleins de confiance car ils étaient accompagnés de trois blancs dont deux envoyés par le grand Bula-Matari de Na-Mputu, pour voir comment ils vivaient et comment ils chassaient. Or les Batshitu étaient depuis longtemps de grands chasseurs. N'étaient-ils pas eux les gens de la forêt? A la fin de son discours il arrache quelques feuilles, les écrase et les frotte sur les filets, puis les chasseurs se mettent en marche, les uns pour tendre les filets, les autres pour cerner le gibier et le chasser ensuite vers les filets. Bientôt on entend la voix des traqueurs qui encouragent les chiens. Devant chaque filet, un chasseur attentif armé d'une longue lance attend le gibier pour l'achever.

Toutes ces populations ont conservé la coutume de la chasse au filet et à peu de chose près, elle se fait d'une façon identique dans toute la région. Seules les coutumes et cérémonies d'un caractère religieux ou magique s'accentuent et se développent au fûr et à mesure que nous avançons de l'Est vers l'Ouest, au point que, chez les Banfumu, elles occupent une place prépondérante dans l'organisation générale des chasses faites en communauté.

Dans la région de la Boriempe, nous avons observé une méthode spéciale, d'un usage courant pour la chasse aux buffles. Cette région est excessivement giboyeuse. Les buffles s'y rencontrent en de nombreuses bandes. Comme la contrée est très peu visitée par les Européens, le gibier y vit encore dans une sécurité relative et il y est bien moins craintif qu'ailleurs. Pour donner la chasse aux buffles, les indigènes de cette région se réunissent à cinq ou six. Chacun d'entr-eux est armé d'une ou de deux sagaies et de son couteau. Les sagaies ont généralement une lame longue, étroite à double tranchant. La hampe en bois est légère, mais très solide et très souvent terminée par une pointe en fer. Les chasseurs emmènent chacun cinq à six petits chiens, méthodiquement dressés à la chasse. Ainsi équipés les chasseurs s'embarquent et s'en vont en pirogue explorer la région. Aussitôt qu'ils aperçoivent un troupeau de buffles, ils descendent à terre. Les chiens sont muselés et transportés par les hommes pour empêcher qu'ils ne donnent l'éveil au gibier. Les chasseurs s'en rapprochent autant que possible. Deux d'entr-eux s'avancent avec mille précautions, et arrivés à portée utile, ils lancent autant que possible sur la même bête leurs sagaies. Aussitôt les autres chasseurs enlèvent la muselière et lachent leurs chiens sur le troupeau. Surpris, les buffles poussent de grands beuglements et s'enfuient au grand galop. La bête blessée ne tarde pas à se séparer du gros du troupeau et est bien vite distancée. Les chiens traqueurs, dressés à cette chasse, abandonnent la poursuite du troupeau pour s'accrocher à la victime blessée. Ils l'attaquent avec acharnement, s'accrochent aux pattes, à la queue, mordent à la gorge et au bas ventre, tout en évitant les cornes. Le buffle au paroxysme de la fureur, se défend farouchement; distribuant à gauche et à droite, coups de tête, de cornes et de sabots. Cependant les chasseurs se rapprochent, la victime harcelée de tous côtés par la bande de chiens, ne les aperçoit ou ne les remarque point. Brusquement ils s'élancent, poussent de grands cris et plongent leurs sagaies dans le ventre et la nuque du buffle. Blessée à mort, la bête s'abat. Assaillie par les chiens, qui s'acharnent toujours, elle est impuissante à se défendre davantage. L'un des chasseurs tire son couteau et d'un coup sec lui tranche la carotide.

Le produit de la chasse en communauté est partagé entre toutes les familles du village, tout en tenant compte des droits spéciaux du chef et des notables.

La chasse individuelle, ne donne lieu à aucun partage, sauf quand il s'agit d'un buffle, d'un léopard ou d'un éléphant. Du buffle la queue revient de plein droit au chef indigène, qui s'en sert comme chasse mouche et insigne de dignité. Du léopard la dépouille est réservée au chef, qui en forme un pagne, qu'il mettra bien en évidence, lors des grandes fêtes et danses publiques. De l'éléphant la trompe et les défenses reviennent au chef, les crins sont réservés en partie aux chasseurs et en partie aux notables de la localité qui s'en servent pour la fabrication de colliers.

LA PÊCHE.

Dans la région des rivières, des marécages et des lacs, la pêche est une des principales ressources de l'indigène.

A l'inverse de la chasse, réservée aux hommes, la pêche est pratiquée par les hommes et les femmes. Cependant ces dernières ne s'en occupent que très irrégulièrement et ne pratiquent que la pêche au barrage. Celle-ci consiste à endiguer une partie du lit d'une rivière ou d'un marais. La digue est généralement établie à la saison des pluies, mais tant que les eaux montent les femmes laissent toutes les écluses large ouvertes. Vers la fin de la saison des pluies, elles procèdent au rétrécissement du couloir d'écoulement et placent les grandes nasses devant les ouvertures. Ces nasses sont attachées à de forts pieux en bois fixés dans la berge de la digue. Elles sont faites en éclats de nervures de feuilles de raphia et tressées à claire-voies plus ou moins larges. La forme extérieure est toujours la même. Cylindrique à l'une des extré-

FIG. 52. — Fabrication des nasses chez les Wadia et les Tumba.

moitié, l'autre étant formée le long du diamètre, la nasse ressemble à un grand cône dont le sommet est formé par une ligne. Ces nasses se construisent sur une charpente formée de deux, trois ou quatre cerceaux. Le diamètre de ceux-ci varie suivant la place qu'ils occupent. Ils sont placés à l'intérieur de la nasse, le plus large à la base, le plus étroit vers la partie supérieure. Les ligatures transversales, alternes, internes, externes doubles ; sont espacées de 10 à 15 cms. et généralement faites en lanières de rotang. La nasse interne ou nasse d'entrée, est tressée en forme d'un large éventail, de forme conique, à base ellipsoïdale. Le sommet libre forme l'ouverture d'entrée. Les extrémités des éclats sont partiellement entrecroisées à l'intérieur, afin d'empêcher le poisson pris, de rebrousser chemin et de s'échapper.

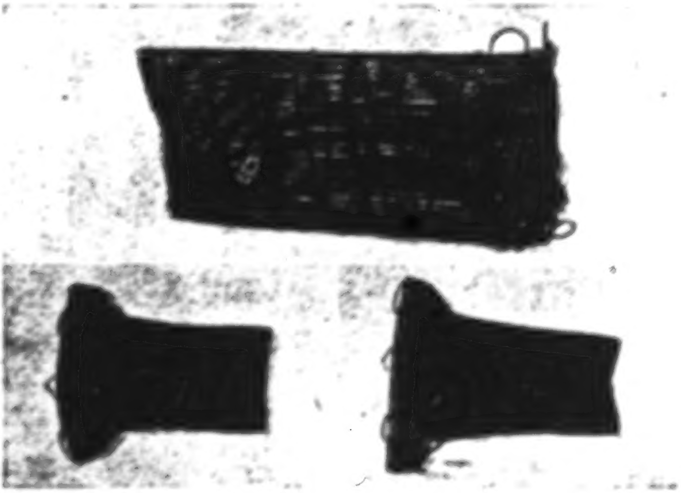


FIG. 33. — Nasses de pêche utilisées par les populations du Lac Léopold II.

La fabrication des nasses est réservée aux hommes. Le travail se fait à plat. Le treillis formé est fixé par la charpente.

L'ouverture de la nasse se fait par la ligne supérieure en détachant la ligature.

Au fur et à mesure que les eaux descendent, la femme déplace la nasse. Matin et soir elle vient inspecter le piège et enlève le poisson capturé.

Lorsque la descente de l'eau est terminée, les femmes se groupent et remontent la rivière ou pénètrent dans le marais. Occupant toute la largeur, elles descendent, chassant devant elles le poisson resté dans la partie endiguée. Elles font un bruit à tout casser, frappent l'eau au moyen de larges baguettes ou produisent des jambes et des bras un fort remous. Le poisson chassé et effrayé, s'enfuit tout éperdu et finit par se faire prendre dans la nasse. S'il essaye de rompre le cordon, les femmes n'hésitent pas à le prendre à la main et à le lancer sur la berge.

Cette chasse au poisson est des plus intéressantes. Les femmes s'y amusent beaucoup, à condition que dans la mare endiguée ne se trouve pas de poisson électrique.

Lors de notre passage à Kunzulu, nous eûmes l'occasion d'assister à une de ces chasses au poisson. Les femmes s'y adonnaient de plein cœur depuis un certain temps. Pataugeant dans la boue, frappant l'eau à tour de bras, fouillant les herbes et les racines, elles s'encourageant les unes les autres par des appels et des chants. Tout à coup une femme lança un cri perçant. Comme une volée d'oiseaux surpris, toutes les pêcheuses s'élancèrent vers la berge et se sauvèrent dare-dare. Celle qui venait de donner l'alarme fut une des premières à se trouver sur la berge. Elle se frottait énergiquement les jambes en répétant « mbisi, ndoki ! mabe ».

Intrigué, je m'en approche et je l'interroge. Elle m'explique qu'un poisson électrique l'avait touchée au passage. Comme je riais de sa frayeur, elle me lança très énergiquement « mbisi ndoki, mabe mingi ! mundele ! mingi ! mingi !

Malgré toutes mes instances, les femmes s'obstinèrent à ne pas reprendre la pêche !

Désireux de voir le poisson, cause de tant d'émoi, je fis rassembler mes hommes et moyennant la promesse d'un franc par homme et une pata (5 francs) pour celui qui enlèverait le fameux « mbisi ndoki » sept d'entr'eux entrèrent dans la mare et la chasse-pêche recommença. Les femmes se tenaient sur la berge. Curieuses, elles encourageaient les pêcheurs, mais pas une ne songea à se mettre de la partie.

Bientôt l'un des hommes poussa un cri et se sauva au plus vite. Ses compagnons surpris hésitèrent un instant et reformèrent la chaîne. Le fuyard fût l'objet des railleries des spectatrices. Honteux et confus, il retourna au milieu de ses camarades, fouilla de tous les côtés les eaux et les herbes et finit par attraper le poisson si redouté. Un nouveau cri lui échappa, mais cette fois-ci il tint bon. Les muscles contractés la figure torturée par la douleur, il enleva et lança le *mbisi ndoki* sur la berge. Puis tout fier il vint toucher le matabiche promis. Le poisson avait à peine 18 cms. de long. Voulant me rendre compte de la force de la décharge, je le pris en main. Une petite secousse, suivie de plusieurs nouvelles décharges distancées de 4 à 5 secondes, toutes peu sérieuses. Comme je plaisantais les indigènes et que je leur reprochais leur peur non fondée, un indigène m'apporta un seau d'eau et me proposa de plonger le « mbisi ndoki » dans l'eau. Je le fis et immédiatement je reçus une décharge si brutale, qu'irrésistiblement, je retirais la main. Les indigènes riaient et de bon cœur. Piqué au vif, je replongeais la main dans l'eau et j'attrapais à nouveau le poisson. Le « mbisi ndoki » lança une décharge plus forte que la première. Elle fût suivie de onze nouvelles décharges successives dont l'intensité allait en décroissant, puis le poisson devint inoffensif. L'expérience me fit cependant comprendre la crainte que ces poissons électriques inspirent aux indigènes. Pour peu qu'ils aient atteint une taille sérieuse, leurs décharges doivent être très dangereuses, si pas mortelles.

Après la chasse dans la partie endiguée, il reste généralement encore quelques poissons qui ont réussi à passer le cordon. Les femmes se munissent alors de paniers et mettent la mare à sec en déversant l'eau au dessus de la digue.

Très souvent les femmes endiguent une partie d'un marais ou d'une rivière et déversent ensuite l'eau au moyen des paniers sans établir des nasses, ni attendre l'abaissement du niveau de l'eau.

Dans les trois cas :

1°/ placement de la nasse devant l'ouverture d'écoulement de l'eau ; 2°/ chasse dans la partie endiguée ; 3°/ mise à sec de la section ; le produit de la pêche est partagé en parts égales, entre les femmes qui ont participé au travail.

Ces trois méthodes de pêche, sont en vogue chez toutes les populations riveraines du Congo Kasai, du Mfimi, du Lac Léopold II et de la Basse Lukenie.

Dans la Haute Lukenie; à partir du secteur d'Oshwe, la fabrication des nasses disparait. C'est à peine que de temps à autre les femmes endiguent une partie des rivières et ruisseaux de l'intérieur pour les vider au moyen de paniers et capturer ainsi le poisson.

Les Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala et Yaelima ne s'occupent point de la pêche. Ce sont des gens de la forêt et non point des hommes de l'eau. La chasse est leur principale occupation, la pêche leur est inconnue.

Ces tribus se distinguent sous ce rapport complètement de leurs voisins de l'Ouest. Cependant il convient de remarquer que même parmi ces derniers, tous les clans ne s'occupent point de la pêche. Les groupements de l'intérieur ne pratiquent pas plus la pêche que leurs frères du secteur d'Oshwe et de Bumbuli. Les nasses et autres engins dont nous parlerons ultérieurement sont inconnus des uns comme des autres. Sous ce rapport toutes ces populations ont un caractère commun, rappelant leur origine commune. Mais dans la Basse Lukenie et plus vers l'Ouest, une partie de la population, les *Bandzali* ou gens de l'eau se sont adaptés aux conditions nouvelles du milieu et de l'habitat. La rivière devint pour eux une source de richesse et de bien être et une partie de leur activité sociale s'orienta vers l'exploitation de cette ressource précieuse.

Actuellement la pêche et la fabrication du sel forment à peu près les seuls moyens d'existence et indiscutablement les occupations principales de tous les groupements riverains de la région de Léopoldville, de Kwamouth, du Lac Léopold II et de la Basse Lukenie. Chez toutes les tribus de cette région, nous avons pu distinguer nettement les groupes de l'intérieur, s'occupant principalement de la chasse et les groupements riverains s'adonnant de préférence à la pêche et la fabrication du sel.

Il s'estformé de cette façon deux clans dans un même groupe ethnique ; l'un et l'autre appartiennent à la grande famille désignée du nom de la tribu et cependant pour cette partie de leur vie, leurs mœurs, us et coutumes diffèrent totalement.

A la saison sèche, on voit les indigènes des villages situés à deux et trois heures de marche à l'intérieur, venir établir des campements à la rive et y former de véritables pêcheries. Les renseignements qui suivent se rapportent à ces groupes et s'appliquent à toutes les populations de Léopoldville au secteur de Tolo inclusivement. Les rivières, lacs et marais de cette région sont excessivement poissonneux. A titre de renseignement, nous donnons ici la liste de quelques noms indigènes de poissons anotés par M. Bayens et se rapportant aux Bandzali de la région de Tolo : « kinkure mbieme, lepari, ignogniengе, mpushu, lokanga, itike, mokonga, n'sombo, loana, sabere, Iboie, moelo, n'ikulu, m'binga, pesule, m'butu, mondja, mshime, mockiki, lupungu, ompara, n'vunu, longelenzali, monkie, komoe, ikeke, koshoie, nokama, singa, n'guikemen, m'pio, mwiki, ekambela, lekumu, elangu, evuya, mekamo, m'beli, motume., idzore, kebaie, kupu, mokeja, kevuni, mopa lekeje, mipari.

Outre la pêche au barrage ces différents groupes font la pêche individuelle et la pêche en communauté.

La pêche individuelle comprend:

1°/ La pêche à l'hameçon ou à la ligne.

Le hameçon est formé d'un très fin éclat de faux bambou, replié sur lui-même et maintenu en forme d'hameçon, par une fine fibre de raphia. Cette fibre de raphia est prolongée et forme la ligne de pêche. Elle est munie d'un éclat de bambou servant de flotteur. L'indigène ne s'attarde pas à surveiller sa ligne. Il attache les lignes munies de hameçons à une corde faite en fibres tordues. Les lignes sont distancées de 30 à 50 cms. La corde est longue de 10 à 15 mètres et attachée des deux côtés à un bâton. L'indigène plante dans le lit de la rivière deux pieux. Il y attache les deux extrémités de la corde en ayant soin de la tendre perpendiculairement au courant. Les lignes munies du flotteur et du hameçon sont déroulées, l'appat formé d'une boule de chikwangue ou d'un ver de terre, fixé au hameçon et l'ensemble est lancé à l'eau. Sous la poussée du courant, ces lignes sont entrainées et se placent parallèlement les unes aux autres retenues par la grande corde tendue au dessus de l'eau. Le poisson attiré par l'appat, le prend et avale en même temps l'hameçon qui lui reste dans l'estomac. Tout effort pour s'en débarrasser, ne peut que le ferrer plus solidement. L'indigène passe 4 à 5 fois pendant le jour, le long de la corde et relève une à une les lignes. Le poisson pris est détaché en coupant la fibre du hameçon, éventré et lancé dans la pirogue.

Le hameçon est remplacé par une pièce de la réserve en attendant qu'au nettoyage de la prise, l'indigène retrouve celui qu'il vient de couper.

L'indigène pratique également la pêche à la ligne de fond et la ligne dormante sans flotteur. Le hameçon est d'un plus grand calibre et le plus souvent en fer. La corde solide est enduite d'huile, pour la rendre plus durable. L'appat formé d'un morceau de chikwangue recouvre tout le hameçon. La ligne est lancée à l'eau, lestée au moyen de cailloux et attachée à un pieux fixé sur la berge. L'indigène ne lève ces lignes qu'au matin et au soir. Elles ne servent qu'à la pêche au gros poisson.

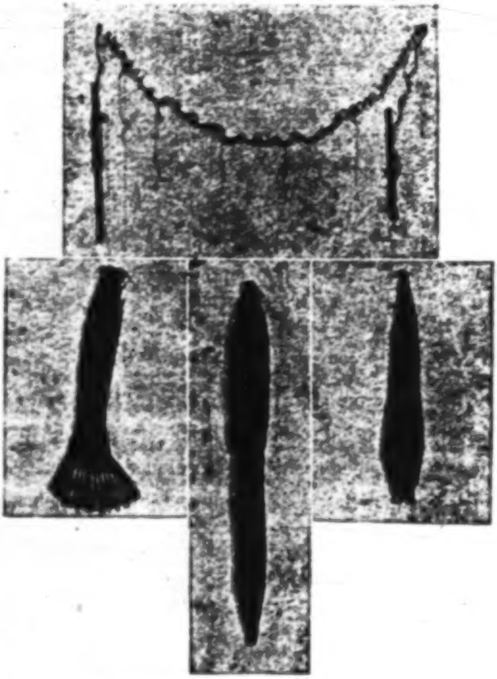


FIG. 54. — Nasses et lignes de pêche utilisées au Lac Léopold II.

2°/ *La pêche à l'arc et la flèche.* Elle est un des moyens dans lesquels les indigènes excellent pour capturer le poisson. Aux heures chaudes de la journée, ils s'installent commodément dans leur pirogue glissée entre les herbes et attendent patiemment qu'un gros poisson vienne errer à la surface de l'eau. Aussitôt ils bandent l'arc et lancent la flèche. Habiles tireurs ils ne manquent que bien rarement leur but. Généralement le poisson transpercé de part et d'autre, est enfilé sur la flèche. Gêné dans ses mouvements il essaie vainement de plonger. L'indigène dépose son arc, calcule son élan, plonge, ramène le poisson et remonte dans sa pirogue.

3°/ *La pêche au harpon*, est spécialement pratiquée pour la capture des poissons, qui vivent dans la vase. L'indigène s'y adonne avec une véritable passion. Debout dans sa pirogue, il se laisse entraîner au fil du courant, avance lentement sans que le moindre trouble de l'eau ne vienne effrayer le poisson. D'ûn mouvement lent, régulier, méthodique, il plonge son harpon se laissant guider par son instinct et le hasard. Les secousses provoquées par les efforts du poisson atteint, cherchant à s'échapper, avertissent le pêcheur expérimenté de son succès. Immédiatement il accentue la pression et puis d'un mouvement lent, régulier et méthodique il retire le harpon, évitant de détacher la prise par un mouvement trop brusque.

Le harpon de pêche est formé d'une hampe en bambou mesurant environ 2m 50 sur laquelle sont fixées à l'aide de ligatures en éclats de rotang quatre tiges en bois. Au sommet de chacune de ces quatre branches, est fixé une pointe en fer munie de quatre crochets et terminée par une douille de forme conique.

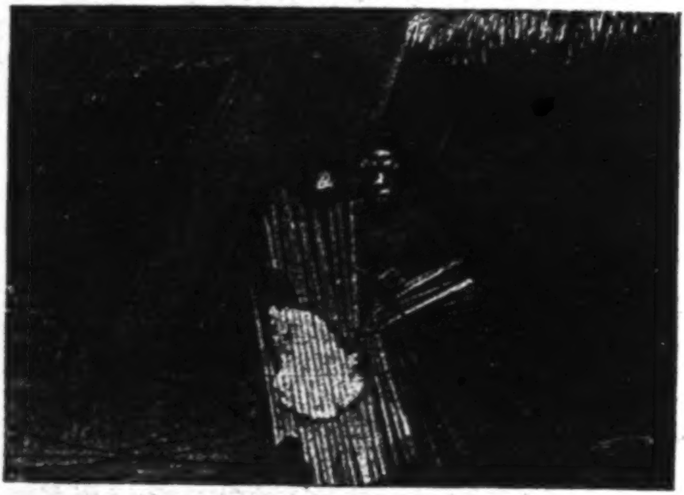


FIG. 55. — Fabrication des nasses de pêche chez les Bobale.

4°/ *La pêche à la nasse* placée au hasard dans les herbes des rive marécageuses.

Les dimensions des nasses en éclats de rotang avec entrée barbelée vers l'intérieur varient de l'une à l'autre, mais toutes sont construites d'après la même technique. A l'intérieur l'indigène dépose un appât et plonge la nasse toute entière dans l'eau. Le poisson attiré par l'appât cherche à s'en emparer et pénètre dans la nasse par l'entrée aménagée à cet effet sur le côté. Cette entrée facile de l'extérieur, est hérissée de pointes vers l'intérieur, qui empêchent le poisson de sortir de la nasse. La forme des nasses à petits poissons est longue, tubulaire et étroite. Elles s'ouvrent à l'une des extrémités. L'entrée est placée vers le milieu de la nasse. Les nasses qui servent à capturer les gros poissons ont une forme tronconique, le sommet en ligne droite. L'entrée du piège, construite sur le même principe que celle des petites nasses, est placée à l'avant de la nasse, l'ouverture vers l'intérieur. Ces nasses se placent devant les couloirs de sortie des marais et rivières endigués.

5° *La pêche au piège* généralement établi dans les eaux au courant assez intense. Le piège a une forme conique, la base mobile formant un couvercle, le sommet étant prolongé par un fort rotang flexible formant ressort. Une liane est attachée à l'extrémité de ce rotang. Un trapèze libre est fixé au corps de la nasse. L'appât s'attache à l'intérieur de la nasse à un éclat de rotang. Celui-ci est relié à une petite traverse, mobile sur les côtés du trapèze. La liane fixée à l'extrémité du rotang ressort, passe à l'intérieur de la nasse par une des mailles voisines de l'arc de consolidation de l'entrée et est attachée au couvercle mobile. Le piège est construit de façon à ce que non armé, le couvercle ferme l'ouverture sous l'effet de la tension du rotang-ressort. Pour armer le piège l'indigène attache vers le milieu de la liane, un éclat de rotang auquel est fixé un petit bâtonnet. L'extrémité (A) de ce dernier passe derrière la barre du trapèze ; la pointe (B) est mise en arrêt sur la traverse mobile (C). A cette dernière, l'indigène relie un éclat de rotang, à l'extrémité duquel il fixe l'appât. Celui-ci est formé d'une noix de palme non dépouillée de sa pulpe. Pour atteintre l'appât le poisson s'engage dans la nasse, prend l'appât, l'attire et déplace la traverse de déclanchement (C). Les arrêts (A) et (B) deviennent libres, le rotang ressort se détend et le couvercle se ferme, emprisonant le poisson.

Le poisson pris dans une pêche individuelle appartient au propriétaire du piège ou à celui qui l'a placé. L'indigène respecte ce droit, les coutumes punissent d'ailleurs très sévèrement les délits. La loi indigène est rigoureuse au point que celui qui dans l'occurrence serait pris en flagrant délit de vol, s'expose à être chassé de la communauté.

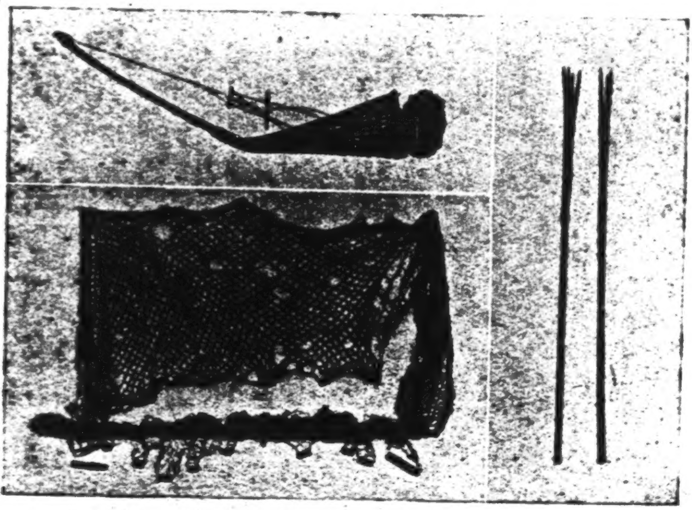


Fig. 56. — Piège à poisson. — Filet de pêche muni de flotteurs. Harpons de pêche du Lac Léopold II.

Le rendement de la pêche individuelle n'est guère très important ; elle n'est d'ailleurs exploitée que pour varier un peu le menu et ne réussit qu'à cause de la richesse énorme de ces rivières poissonneuses.

La pêche en communauté est beaucoup plus productive. Certaines tribus, ou pour être plus exact, certaines familles des populations de la Mfimi-Lac Léopold II - Basse Lukenie en font une véritable industrie. Celle-ci est particulièrement florissante chez les riverains du pays des Basakata, Balesa et des Mosengere.

Dans la région de la Basse Mfimi de même que le long des rives marécageuses de la Basse Lulonga, les installations de pêcheries indigènes sont très nombreuses. Elles sont copiées sur un type uniforme et ne présentent jamais un caractère d'établissement fixe. A la fin de la saison des pluies on voit les familles des riverains quitter temporairement leur village, pour aller s'établir le long des rivières marécageuses. Hommes et femmes s'y transportent ; les enfants, les vieillards et quelques indigènes valides restent au village pour garder les pénates.

Les campements de pèche sont établis d'une façon très rudimentaire. Les huttes ne forment que des abris, des refuges.

La récolte des herbes salines destinées à la fabrication du sel est la principale besogne des femmes ; les hommes s'occupent de la pèche.

Toutes les méthodes de la pèche individuelle sont appliquées mais la grosse besogne se fait en communauté.

Les procédés sont assez variés ; signalons :

1° L'endiguement des embouchures des petites rivières et affluents secondaires avec placement de la nasse devant le couloir d'écoulement et la chasse au poisson décrite plus haut.

2° La pèche au filet. A l'encontre des filets de chasse, ceux qui servent à la pèche sont faits en fibres de raphia. Le nœud de filochage est le même, mais la technique du travail se rapproche plutôt de celle des coiffures tressées. L'indigène a soin de teindre les fibres en noir pour rendre les mailles invisibles dans l'eau. A la partie supérieure l'indigène attache en guise de flotteurs, de petites sections cylindriques d'un bois très léger. Au bord opposé il fixe des plongeurs, formés de boudins de terre cuite. Flotteurs et plongeurs sont calculés de façon à se contre-balancer dans leur effet et à maintenir le filet placé dans l'eau dans une position verticale. Ces filets ont de 20 à 25 mètres de longueur. En cas de nécessité les indigènes procèdent par séries de filets. Ils barrent ainsi toute la rivière. Cinq à dix hommes sont placés le long des filets munis de grands paniers. Les femmes remontent la rivière sur une distance de 100 à 200 mètres, pénètrent dans l'eau, forment cordon et chassent devant elles le poisson. Celui-ci vient se faire prendre dans les mailles des filets et tandis qu'il attire l'attention du pècheur par l'effort qu'il fait pour se libérer, celui-ci se hâte de l'agripper et le lance dans sa hotte.

Parfois les indigènes encerclent une partie des rives herbeuses, pénètrent dans l'enclos et fouillent les herbes pour y capturer les poissons. Si voulant prendre le large les poissons essaient de s'enfuir ils s'enchevêtrent dans les mailles du filet.

3° *Pêche au moyen de claies.* Cette méthode est la plus courante ; elle est plus facile et de meilleur rendement que les autres. Les claies sont formées par de grands éclats de rotang ou de raphia, placés parallèlement à 1 ou 2 cms. de distance. Les lacis de tressage en rotang sont espacés de 20 à 30 cms. La hauteur des claies varie de 66 cms. à 2m50 ; la longueur de 10 à 20 mètres. Ces claies servent à établir des barrages dans la rivière, les marais, les criques et devant les embouchures des petits affluents. Elles sont fixées à des pieux et placées perpendiculairement dans le lit de la rivière. Les indigènes les mettent en place au moment de la première descente des eaux. Un peu en amont des claies ils jettent dans la rivière quantité de branches, munies de leurs feuilles, de façon à ménager un abri au poisson arrêté à la descente. Au moment où les eaux sont très basses, les indigènes remontent la rivière sur une très grande distance. Ils pénètrent dans l'eau, forment un cordon serré et méthodiquement il descendent vers la claie. Tout le poisson est chassé vers le barrage. Arrivés à 25 ou 30 mètres de la claie, les indigènes introduisent dans l'eau une nouvelle claie. Une partie des pêcheurs sont chargés de maintenir cette claie verticalement. Les autres pénètrent dans l'enclos formé par les deux claies, enlèvent branches et herbes d'abri et commencent la chasse au poisson. Ils sont munis d'un panier tronconique et tressé à claire-voies. Le pêcheur pose le panier devant lui, sur le lit de la rivière, la grande ouverture vers le bas. S'il y a du poisson pris dans le panier, le pêcheur en est prévenu par de légers heurts contre les parois, causés par les poussées du poisson cherchant à s'échapper. Le pêcheur y plonge la main en la passant par l'ouverture supérieure, fouille tout l'intérieur, saisit le poisson, lui brise la colonne vertébrale et retire la proie pour la lancer dans la pirogue ou sur la berge.

Le produit de la pêche est transporté au village provisoire, le poisson est éventré, nettoyé et jeté sur l'enfumoir. Celui-ci est formé d'un treillis en rotins d'épaisseur moyenne, soutenu par des traverses placées sur des pieux fourchus fixés en terre. La hauteur moyenne est de $1^{m}25$, la largeur de $2^{m}50$, la longueur de 5 à 10 mètres. En dessous de ces enfumoirs-séchoirs les femmes entretiennent nuit et jour un feu alimenté d'herbes et autres débris peu secs, d'où émane en conséquence une forte fumée. Deux fois par jour tout le poisson est retourné. Après 8 à 10 jours l'opération est terminée. Le poisson séché et enfumé est soigneusement emballé après avoir été trié et classé par grandeur. Une partie de ce poisson forme la réserve familiale, le reste servira d'objet d'échange. Quand l'enfumoir est à peu près libre les hommes remontent la rivière et recommencent la pêche.

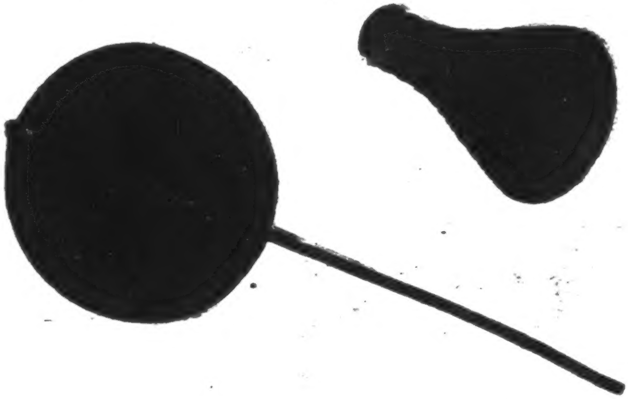


FIG. 57. — Paniers utilisés pour la pêche au Lac Léopold II.

On peut difficilement se rendre compte de l'importance de cette industrie et de la quantité incroyable de poissons que les pêcheurs parviennent à capturer pendant leur séjour dans la région des herbes salines. Nous avons assisté un jour à une de ces pêches miraculeuses, organisée grâce au bienveillant concours de M. Molin. La rivière n'avait été barrée que pendant une nuit, les indigènes ne la remontèrent que sur 150 mètres de distance et en pleine saison sèche, ils ramenèrent quatre grands paniers remplis de poissons.

Le produit de la pêche en communauté est partagé à la fin de la saison. Une part est réservée au chef, les propriétaires des claies de barrage reçoivent une part spéciale ; le restant est partagé entre tous les membres du groupement qui ont participé à l'entreprise.

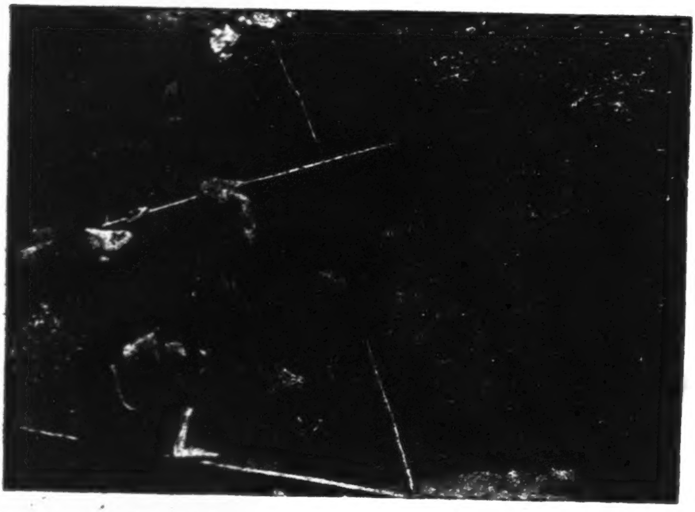


FIG. 58. — La pêche au barrage chez les Mosengere. — Concentration des claies et capture des poissons encerclés.

Pour terminer l'étude sur les moyens d'existence des populations du Kasai - Lac Léopold II - Lukenie, nous pouvons conclure que de l'ensemble des coutumes se rapportant à l'agriculture, l'élevage, la chasse et la pêche il résulte que dans ces différentes branches de la vie, le primitif subit l'influence du milieu, il a adapté ses facultés aux ressources spéciales que la nature lui mettait sous la main, en portant de préférence son activité vers l'exploitation et la mise en valeur des ressources les plus abondantes de la région. Cherchant dans la lutte pour la vie, à obtenir avec un minimum de travail un maximum de rendement, les indigènes issus d'une même branche ethnique aux caractères identiques, ont modifié petit à petit les us et coutumes. En tenant compte du milieu nouveau dans lequel ils étaient amenés par suite des migrations et du déplacement des pénates, certaines familles ou certains groupements se sont réunis pour exploiter en communauté les ressources spéciales du nouvel habitat et tandis que leurs frères de l'intérieur gardaient les coutumes ancestrales, eux ils les abandonnaient au moins partiellement et les remplaçaient par des usages adaptés aux nouvelles conditions de l'existence et du milieu dans lequel ils venaient de s'établir.

Dans l'ensemble nous notons comme caractères ethniques spéciaux :

1° Uniformité dans la culture du manioc, base de l'alimentation de toutes ces populations.

2° Sélection de la culture du maïs sous l'influence de l'encouragement éphémère de Bula Matari chez les populations du Congo-Kasai, et de la culture du riz sous l'influence arabe dans la région de Bena Dibele-Kole. Contrairement à ce que nous avons observé pour le maïs, l'innovation introduite par les arabes tend à s'implanter sérieusement dans la vie de ces indigènes et la culture du riz arrivera probablement à éliminer celle du manioc.

3° Formation d'une zône de culture de canne à sucre dont le développement est en raison inverse de l'étendue des palmeraies.

4° Absence complète de tout élevage un tant soit peu sérieux.

5° Uniformité dans les procédés de chasse en communauté et développement progressif des coutumes et pratiques religieuses s'y rapportant de l'Est vers l'Ouest, correspondant à une décroissance de la chasse individuelle à l'arme blanche. Ce fait nous permet de supposer qu'en principe dans la culture ancestrale, la chasse se pratiquait sans un recours spécial à une force ou un esprit protecteur quelconque ; l'homme primitif ne se basant que sur sa force, son adresse, son audace et la nécessité. Le rendement minime et les accidents de ce sport dangereux auront poussé les primitifs à se grouper ; premier pas vers la chasse en communauté. Au cours de celle-ci des accidents doivent être survenus, atteignant les uns, épargnant les autres. Sans causes apparantes, telle chasse fut heureuse, telle autre nulle. Les indigènes ne pouvant saisir le pourquoi de ces faits en ont naturellement attribué l'origine aux esprits, d'ou résulta le désir de gagner les faveurs de ces esprits. Ainsi s'expliquent les croyances et les pratiques magico-religieuses dont l'intensité, le développement et l'extension sont en raison directe de la disparition de la chasse individuelle.

6° Existence chez toutes les populations de quelques coutumes communes de pêche si peu développées qu'indubitablement le poisson ne peut avoir occupé dans l'alimentation de la communauté ancestrale qu'une place secondaire. Cette communauté doit en conséquence avoir vécu dans un milieu peu propice au développement de l'industrie de la pêche ou trop pauvre en ressources de ce genre pour tenter l'effort de l'homme dans sa lutte pour l'existence.

7° Dans leurs migrations et déplacements certains groupements sont venus s'établir dans des régions mieux favorisées et parmi eux les familles installées dans le voisinage immédiat des rivières et marais poissonneux ont adopté des coutumes nouvelles de la pêche, tout en abandonnant partiellement les coutumes de la chasse.

Nous nous trouvons ainsi devant un exemple typique de l'influence du milieu sur l'évolution et le développement des us et coutumes se rapportant à une partie de la vie des populations primitives de toute la région. Aussi nous ne nous croyons pas autorisés à déduire de la ressemblance des coutumes qui se rapportent à ces quatre branches de l'activité économique de la vie indigène, à l'existence d'une relation ou parenté ethnique quelconque. Seules les traces de coutumes générales, communes à toutes les populations, que nous avons relevées au cours de l'étude, pourraient éventuellement être considérées comme des indices de l'origine commune de toutes les tribus de la région que nous avons visitée.

Le fait que tous les groupements, clans, ou familles, qui sont venus s'établir dans un milieu favorable à l'industrie de la pêche ont adopté les mêmes coutumes appropriées à l'exploitation méthodique de ces ressources nouvelles, montre qu'à conditions égales d'habitat, l'homme a une tendance dans l'exploitation de ces ressources à l'adaptation de coutumes à méthodes identiques. Par contre l'identité des moyens, des outils, des objets, etc. employés à cette exploitation nouvelle, de leur technique, de leur construction, de la méthode de leur utilisation ; en un mot la ressemblance caractéristique des ustensiles, outils et engins de l'industrie nouvelle sont indiscutablement des preuves de l'existence de relations ethniques entre ces différents groupes. Or comme dans l'occurrence, ces groupes appartiennent à des tribus bien déterminées et distinctes les unes des autres, Mosengere, Basakata, Baboma, Wadia et Banfumu ; ces caractères spéciaux forment une preuve éclatante de l'unité ethnique, de l'origine commune et de la parenté ancestrale de ces différentes populations.

CHAPITRE IV.

L'alimentation.

L'allume-feu. — Fabrication du sel. — Préparation des aliments. — Manioc. — Maïs. — Bananes. — Viande. — Poisson. — Piments. — Fabrication de l'huile de palme. — Les boissons. — L'eau. — Malafu. — Masanga. — Pombe. — Les excitants. — Chanvre. — Noix de Kola. — Tabac.

L'ALLUME-FEU.

Pour se procurer du feu, les indigènes de la région du Kasai Mfimi-Lukenie, procèdent de trois façons différentes :

Les Bateke et les Banfumungu de la rivière emploient le *briquet*, les Banfumungu de l'intérieur, les Boboma, les Mosengere, les Tumba, les Wadia, les Basakata, les Bobaie, les Balesa, les Ipanga, les Batitu, les Bokala et une partie des Yaelima, se servant *de la méthode par* *friction ou frottement longitudinal ;* tandis que les Yaelima de l'extrême Est, les Basongo-Meno et les Bankutshu de la région de Bena Dibele-Kole, obtiennent le feu par *giration ou frottement rotatif.*

Partout la méthode indigène tend à disparaître rapidement devant l'introduction des allumettes, quoique la plupart des indigènes aient conservé leur briquet primitif et s'en munissent toujours quand ils vont en voyage. Si la boite d'allumettes fait défaut, ou que par suite d'une circonstance quelconque ; humidité athmosphérique, traversée d'une rivière ou d'un marais, etc ; les allumettes ne s'enflamment plus, l'indigène sort son briquet et fait du feu par la méthode indigène.

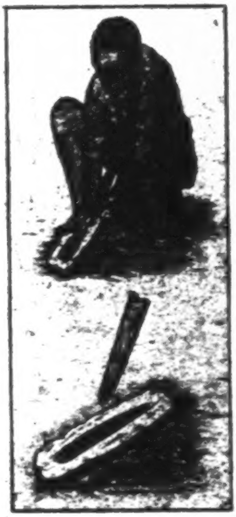


Fig 59.
Allume-feu par friction.

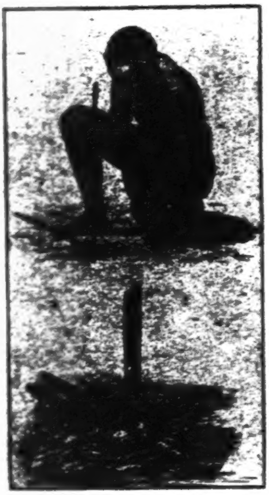


Fig. 60.
Allume feu par giration.

Le briquet des Bateke et des Banfumungu de la rivière se compose d'une lame de fer ou d'acier de 3 à 8 cms. de long sur 2 à 3 cms. de large ; d'une pierre à feu, simple éclat de gneiss, silex, pierre à fusil ou fragment de quartz et de l'amadou. Toute matière sèche et très inflammable peut servir d'amadou ; des feuilles séchées, etc., mais les houppes de fibres végétales que les indigènes recueillent sur les troncs de palmiers ou de bananiers sont d'un usage courant.

Pour obtenir le feu, les Bateke et les Banfumungu de la rivière, préparent un petit bouquet de brindilles sèches au milieu duquel ils déposent une pincée de leur amadou, quelques battements du briquet et une étincelle y met le feu. Un petit point incandescent à peine perceptible, un rien suffit. Aussitôt l'indigène souffle tout doucement dans le bouquet, active le feu, agite légèrement le plumeau de brindilles et bientôt la flamme jaillit.

Pour obtenir le feu par la méthode par friction ou frottement longitudinal, l'indigène se sert de deux morceaux de bois, l'un large et plat d'une essence douce, l'autre long et plus ou moins régulier cylindrique, mais d'une espèce très dure.

Lors de mon voyage à l'intérieur de la région du Kasai-Mfimi-Lukenie, j'eus l'occasion de surprendre sur le vif la manière de se procurer du feu par cette méthode notamment à Bomu, chez les Banfumungu ; à Mpa chez les Mosengere, à Kempa chez les Basakata, à Lubamiti chez les Wadia, à Wambia chez les Batitu, à Wumbuli chez les Bokala et enfin à Lopori chez les Yaelima.

Partout l'indigène procède de la même façon.

Quand il est seul il place à plat par terre le morceau de bois doux, creusé d'une rainure parallèle à l'axe ; s'accroupit et maintient le bois sous l'un des genoux. Tenant le bâtonnet de bois dur des deux mains, il en frotte énergiquement la pointe dans la rainure en lui imprimant un mouvement de va et vient continu. Au bout d'un rien de temps, une fine sciure carbonisée s'amasse à l'une des extrémités de la rainure. En moins d'une minute on voit y apparaitre un point en ignition. L'indigène a eu soin de préparer l'amadou d'avance. Il y dépose le petit foyer incandescent, souffle et bientôt la flamme jaillit.

Quand ils sont plusieurs, ce qui est généralement le cas, un homme place le pied sur la planchette à rainure, tandis qu'un second s'accroupit et frotte la pointe du petit bâton dans la rainure, comme s'il voulait la creuser davantage.

Dans la méthode par giration ou frottement rotatif en usage chez les populations de la région de Bena Dibele-Kole et chez une partie des Yaelima de l'Est, le briquet est formé par deux fines baguettes de forme cylindrique. L'une des baguettes, découpée dans un bois assez tendre, est munie d'une ou de plusieurs encoches. L'autre, arrondie à l'une des extrémités, est d'une essence dure. La baguette aux entailles est placée au dessus de l'amadou, l'autre tenue perpendiculairement, l'extrémité ronde encastrée dans l'entaille. L'indigène imprime à cette dernière un rapide mouvement de rotation en la faisant tourner entre les deux mains, en même temps qu'il les fait glisser de haut en bas de façon à augmenter autant que possible la pression.

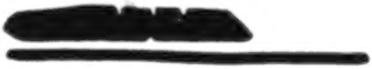


FIG. 61. — Baguette et planchette munie d'encoches.

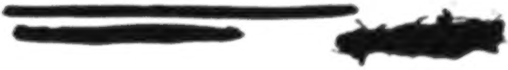


FIG. 62. — Deux baguettes, l'une munie d'encoches.

La grande habileté consiste à produire ce mouvement avec le moins d'arrêts possible. Aussi les indigènes sont-ils généralement plusieurs à ce travail. L'un tient la baguette aux encoches en place, un second fait tourner l'autre bâtonnet, tandis qu'un troisième, s'apprête à continuer le mouvement de giration aussitôt que son compagnon arrive au bas de la baguette. A son tour celui-ci relayera l'autre. Au bout de quelques séries de rotations, une petite pointe incandescente apparaît dans la sciure carbonisée de l'encoche, une étincelle tombe sur l'amadou et celui-ci s'enflamme.

L'aire de dispersion de ces trois méthodes de se procurer du feu, forme dans la région parcourue trois zones ethniques distinctes.

La première n'englobe que les Bateke et une partie des Banfumungu et se caractérise par l'usage du briquet à lame en acier et pierre à feu.

La seconde, système par friction ou frottement longitudinal, s'étend depuis l'intérieur du territoire des Banfumungu jusqu'au milieu de la région occupée par les Yaelima.

La troisième, système par giration ou frottement rotatif, comprend la limite Est du pays des Yaelima et de toute la région de Bena Dibele-Kole.

Cette dernière méthode a également été signalée chez les Balesa et nous avons pu constater que certains indigènes de la région la connaissaient et s'en servaient ; mais elle n'est pas propre à la tribu, et doit avoir été introduite dans la région par des soldats ou travailleurs de l'ancien poste de Tolo, venus de régions ou cette méthode était connue.

Il est d'autre part possible que les Yaelima de l'Est, aient emprunté cette méthode aux populations du Sud, quoiqu'il ne nous ait pas été donné d'obtenir des renseignements précis à ce sujet. Ce qui permet cependant d'émettre cette hypothèse, c'est que dans certains villages Yaelima, nous avons retrouvé les méthodes par friction et par giration, et dans ces cas les indigènes employient de préférence la dernière. Il faut noter que la méthode par giration moins fatiguante est aussi la plus rapide et permet aux indigènes de se relayer. Elle leur donne un *maximum* de rendement avec un *minimum* de travail. Rien d'étonnant en conséquence de constater que là où les indigènes ont pu en observer les avantages, ils ont eu soin de l'adopter.

A notre avis la méthode par friction ou frottement longitudinal, doit être considérée comme ayant été jadis exclusivement employée par toutes les tribus, depuis les Banfumungu jusqu'aux Yaelima. Cette méthode se rencontre, peut-être encore chez les tribus de la région de Dekese, malheureusement nous n'avons pu établir le fait.

Toutes ces populations appartiendraient sous ce rapport à un même groupement ethnique, qui se distingue nettement du groupe des tribus de la région de Bena Dibele-Kole.

LE SEL.

La fabrication du sel occupe dans la vie de certaines tribus de la région du Kasai-Lukenie, une place importante. Ne trouvant dans leur pays ni salines ni eau salée, les indigènes ont cherché à se procurer ce précieux condiment indispensable à l'alimentation en l'extrayant des plantes.

Là où la pénétration des produits d'importation n'a pas éliminé la méthode indigène, l'extraction du sel est une véritable industrie nationale. Toute la communauté y collabore.

Chez les Bateke, les Banfumungu, les Baboma et une partie des Wadia, l'introduction du sel a banni complètement de la vie l'emploi et la fabrication du sel indigène.

Chez les Mosengere, les Bobaie, les Basakata, les Ipanga, les Batitu, les Bokala et les Yaelima au contraire, les indigènes emploient encore le procédé primitif.

Celui-ci diffère suivant la région, pour autant que nous n'envisageons que les matériaux employés dans la fabrication.

Chez les Mosengere, les Wadia, les Tumba, les Basakata et les Bobaie, les indigènes se servent exclusivement des herbes salines qui poussent en grande abondance dans les marais et le long des rives marécageuses de certaines rivières de cette région.

Dans le pays des Ipanga, des Batitu, des Bokala et des Yaelima où cette précieuse ressource fait défaut, les indigènes se servent des troncs de bananiers et principalement de la fleur des palmiers dont les cendres sont très riches en matières alcalines.

La récolte des herbes salines se fait vers la fin de la saison sèche.

A cette époque les groupes de Mosengere, Wadia, Tumba, Bobaie et Basakata de l'intérieur, quittent leurs villages pour aller s'établir de long des rivières aux rives marécageuses.

Ils choisissent un emplacement favorable à l'établissement de quelques huttes, qui leur serviront d'abris pendant leur séjour temporaire dans la région. Ces huttes sont généralement très mal conditionnées. Construites en hâte et sans soins, elles forment plutôt des abris provisoires, des refuges de nuit, que des habitations.

Jadis toute l'étendue de la plaine marécageuse couverte d'herbes salines était partagée en secteurs.

Chaque groupe indigène y possédait sa section bien délimitée dont l'exploitation lui était réservée.

L'emplacement des huttes occupées par chaque groupe exploitant, était fixé et choisi de façon à se trouver au milieu de la réserve ou domaine familial.

L'époque de la récolte des herbes salines et la durée de l'exploitation étaient réglementées ; en un mot la *Fabrication du sel était une industrie nationale, régie par des lois spéciales* auxquelles toute la tribu était tenue de se conformer strictement.

Actuellement les groupes récoltent les herbes salines là où ils le jugent le plus favorable, sans tenir compte ni des coutumes ni des droits du passé. Cette récolte incombe aux femmes.

Tandis que les hommes s'occupent de la pêche, les femmes, armées d'un grand couteau, coupent les hautes herbes, qui poussent dans les marais ou le long des rives inondées de toutes les rivières de la région des Mosengere-Basakata. Quand la nature du sol et le niveau de la rivière le permettent, les herbes sont étalées sur place, pour sécher au soleil ; tandis que dans les endroits inondés, la femme charge la récolte sur la pirogue et la transporte ensuite à l'emplacement du village, installé

FIG. 63. — Les meules d'herbes salines, chez les Bobaie.

provisoirement le long de la rive. Les herbes séchées sont tassées par groupe qui dans leur ensemble nous rappellent les meules de foins de nos fermes Européennes.

Lorsqu'une famille juge que sa récolte d'herbes est suffisamment grande, le chef du groupe prépare le terrain ou four d'incinération. La terre de petites termitières finement broyée, est mélangée au limon de la rivière. Le tout, fortement travaillé et malaxé de façon à former une pâte consistante et souple, est étendu sur une petite excavation de 15 à 20 centimètres de profondeur et de 1 à 2 mètres carrés de surface.

Quand ce pavement est bien sec, les femmes se mettent à l'œuvre. L'une d'elles charge le four d'incération et l'allume tandis que les autres apportent à pied d'œuvre les herbes des meules.

Au fur et à mesure que le premier tas se consume, la femme chargée de l'incinération y jette de nouvelles gerbes et le travail se poursuit sans arrêt, accompagné d'un petit chant monotone jusqu'à ce que la récolte complète d'herbes salines soit brulée.

L'incinération dure généralement toute une journée. Pendant ce temps et pendant la période de la préparation du four d'incinération toute relation sexuelle est strictement défendue entre le chef de la famille et la femme chargée de surveiller l'incinération des herbes salines.

Lorsque la dernière brindille est brulée, que le feu est éteint et que les cendres se sont refroidies, les femmes les entassent dans de grands paniers.

Cependant le chef de la famille a confectionné une espèce de grand entonnoir en vannerie, formé de larges et solides éclats de rotang reliés par de fines lanières de pétioles de raphia et de lianes. La hauteur de ces entonnoirs varie de 2 à 3 mètres, le diamètre de la grande ouverture atteint 1m. 50 à 2 m. tandis que le fond est formé par le faisceau d'éclats de rotang reliés tant bien que mal, par une large lanière de rotang. Cet entonnoir est placé debout entre trois ou quatre bâtons fixés dans le sol. Un vase en terre cuite est placé en dessous de l'entonnoir. Les femmes garnissent toute la surface latérale interne de cet entonnoir de feuilles de bananier placées les unes au dessus des autres, de façon à rendre les parois latérales du réservoir absolument imperméables. Elles versent ensuite les cendres de l'incinération dans l'entonnoir, les pressent et les tassent autant que possible.

Lorsque l'entonnoir est rempli aux trois quarts de la hauteur, la femme va puiser une dizaine de pots d'eau, soit environ 50 litres et les verse sur les cendres. Cette eau met deux et parfois trois jours à s'infiltrer complètement. Quand les cendres sont saturées d'eau, la femme verse à nouveau deux ou trois pots d'eau dans l'entonnoir. Dès lors il se produit un écoulement lent d'eau fortement salée, par suite de la dissolution des matières alcalines solubles que comprennent les cendres. Elle est recueillie dans le vase en terre cuite placé en dessous de l'entonnoir. La femme obtient ainsi quatre à cinq pots d'une forte solution de sel et deux pots d'une eau moins saturée de sel. Après avoir remisé ses six ou sept pots d'eau salée, la femme allume son feu et place au dessus de celui-ci une ou plusieurs écuelles en terre cuite dans lesquelles elle verse petit à petit le contenu des pots à forte solution de sel, qu'elle fait bouillir.

A la suite de l'évaporation il se forme au fond et sur les parois de l'écuelle un premier dépôt de sel

La chaleur que dégagent ces foyers d'évaporation est si intense qu'il est impossible de s'en approcher de près ; aussi la femme a-t-elle soin de se munir de deux longues louches pour remplir à distance les écuelles placées sur le feu au fur et à mesure que l'évaporation avance. Le tout est laissé sur le feu jusqu'à ce que toute l'eau salée soit évaporée. Même après l'évaporation complète la femme laisse le vase sur le foyer, active le feu, de façon à sécher complètement et solidifier le dépôt de sel. Celui-ci prend naturellement la forme de la poterie, qui en fin de compte surchauffée éclate, tandis que le bloc de sel reste intact.

Quand la fabrication du sel est terminée, le groupe familial reprend la route du village. Les installations temporaires sont abandonnées et pourront à l'occasion être utilisées par d'autres familles qui en disposeront comme elles l'entendent.

Le produit de la fabrication du sel est partagé en deux parties.

L'une comprend la réserve familiale, calculée d'après les besoins de chaque famille du groupement, clan ou village ayant entrepris l'exploitation. Le reste est réparti entre tous les membres qui ont participé à la récolte, *à part égale*, sauf que le chef, et la femme qui fût chargée de surveiller l'incinération des herbes reçoivent une part double.

Le sel réservé aux besoins de la famille est employé dans la préparation des aliments et reste la propriété inaliénable de la famille. La part attribuée aux participants de l'extraction devient leur propriété privée.

Chacun, tant l'homme que la femme en dispose à sa guise. Le plus souvent les indigènes s'en servent comme objet d'échange. Chez certaines tribus notamment chez les Mosengere, les Wadia, les Basakata et les Bolaie, les blocs de sel font office de monnaie, ou d'objet d'échange d'un usage courant dont la valeur est déterminée par le poids.

Fig. 64 — Evaporation de l'eau saturée de sel chez les Basakata.

Avant notre pénétration dans la région et plus spécialement avant l'introduction du numéraire et l'imposition de celui-ci par l'administration, le sel occupait dans la vie économique de ces primitifs un rôle beaucoup plus important.

Actuellement il ne s'emploie plus que dans les transactions locales.

Le forgeron et sa famille par exemple, ne participent jamais à la fabrication du sel. Il échange les produits de son métier, couteaux, pointes de flèche ou fers de lance contre la réserve des fabricants de sel.

Il arrive même souvent que les fabricants de sel, vendent le surplus de leur fabrication comme une simple marchandise, au plus offrant. Ils l'apportent au marché, l'exposent en vente, en discutent le prix au même titre que les carottes de manioc, le poisson fumé, la viande boucanée et les paniers d'arachides.

Chose singulière et intéressante à constater, le produit de cette vente ne revient pas intégralement à la femme propriétaire du sel.

Ce fût tout à fait par hasard, que j'eus l'occasion de noter le fait.

Le 18 septembre nous étions à Tenden-Gomo, village Mosengere situé à 7 journées de marche au N. W. du poste de Bongo ; lorsque vers 5 heures du soir, tandis que je me reposais des fatigues d'une journée d'observations dans le village, le vieux chef s'amena majestueusement, suivi d'une femme et de 5 indigènes.

Palaba Mundele, dit-il, et, sans plus de façon, la séance fût ouverte.

La cause ne fut pas ordinaire et le plaidoyer fût si beau que cette affaire nous intéressa. Voici les faits :

La femme, veuve, divorcée, ou *séparée*, pour la 10ème fois d'après les dires de son dernier époux, pour la 7ème fois de son propre aveu, vint demander au Mundele, de pouvoir se divorcer pour la 11ème ou la 8ème fois. Peu importait le nombre disait-elle, c'est pour convoler en justes noces avec un jeune célibataire Mosengere de 20 ans.

Il y a 10 lunes disait-elle, j'étais sa femme et d'un geste où perçait la haine et le dégoût elle montra son dernier mari. J'avais un enfant. Il était atteint de cette maladie de *Nam-Putu* (maladie du sommeil) dont on meurt toujours ; et mon mari craignant la contagion m'envoya dans la forêt avec ordre formel d'y rester jusqu'à la mort de mon enfant ou de l'y abandonner. Je partis, je fus seule et abandonnée. Je soignais mon enfant, travaillant le jour, le veillant la nuit. Jamais mon mari ne vint me voir, ni m'apporter des vivres, ni m'aider, ni demander de mes nouvelles ou des nouvelles de mon enfant. L'enfant est mort le . . . . . lo . . . . . lo . . . . . . ilo . . . . . ilo . . . . . seule je l'ai enterré ata . . . . uta . . . . ita . . . . to . . . . seule je l'ai pleuré ndo . . . ndo . . . . indo . . . . ondo . . . . et puis j'ai repris le chemin du village. Quand mon mari me vit rentrer, il voulut m'introduire dans sa hutte et reprendre les relations ; mais je lui ai dit ve . . . . . ve . . . . . ohe . . . . . ve ! Il voulut me forcer à me soumettre nhu . . . . . nhu . . . . . nhu . . . . . ihu . . . . . ohu . . . . . Je lui ai planté mes doigts crochus dans la figure et ailleurs et il est parti ! nla . . nla . . nla . . ola . . nula . . . Depuis il n'a plus insisté hi . . hi . . ihi . . ohi . . . Je n'avais pas oublié ce que j'avais souffert, quand chassée et abandonnée, je soignais seule mon enfant dans la forêt. Aujourd'hui je veux prendre un autre mari ; moi je ne vivrai pas sans un homme. Mon mari actuel serait trop content he . . . he . . . he . . . ihe . . . ohe . . . mais il m'empêche de me marier et mon futur a peur de ses *ndoki*. Mais vous Mundele na Bula Matari, vous lui direz qu'un homme qui chasse sa femme et son enfant du foyer, qui l'abandonne dans la forêt et qui pendant des lunes ne s'en occupe plus, n'a pas le droit de la forcer à rester près de lui et que mon nouvel époux peut me prendre sans crainte. Que Bula Matari le dise.

Ce plaidoyer fût appuyé de gestes les plus extravagants et singulièrement expressifs. Rien qu'à la regarder, à l'observer, à écouter les variations de sa voix, je compris toute la cause. Elle montra comment elle avait conduit son enfant dans la forêt, combien elle l'avait soigné et caressé, comment il était mort dans ses bras, combien elle l'avait pleuré. Elle nous montra comment de ses deux mains elle lui avait creusé une tombe, et comment la haine dans le cœur elle était revenue au village quand ses yeux étaient secs et qu'elle ne savait plus pleurer son enfant. Ce furent alors les scènes mimées du retour, les propositions amoureuses de son mari, son refus, la colère puis la lutte en règle. Jamais je n'ai assisté à une scène où la mimique des sentiments et des pensées fût aussi parfaite.

Cependant le mari en question avait écouté un peu à l'écart et en dehors de la portée des doigts crochus de son épouse exaltée. Il l'interrompait de temps à autre par des exclamations et des gestes qui semblaient être des protestations. A son tour il défendit sa cause.

Je suis son 10ème époux et elle est une de mes 6 femmes. Elle ne veut plus de moi ; il m'en reste 5 et cela me suffit. Elle veut se marier avec ce va-nu-pied et il désigna le futur mari. — Ceci lui valut de la plaignante une gifle bien appliquée et donnée avec une dextérité et une habilit[illegible] qui nous en disait long. — Soit dit-il, mais qui me restituera la dot que j'ai payée à l'oncle de cette femme ?

Moi dit la femme !

Qui me remboursera les mitako que la femme a enlevés à son retour de la forêt pour les cacher ailleurs ?

Qui me rembousera les impôts que Bula Matari m'a fait payer pour cette femme ? A 2 francs par 13 lunes pendant 5 fois 13 lunes, ne voilà-t-il pas 5 fois 40 mitakos soit 200 mitakos que j'ai payés pour elle ? Qui me les rendra, Bula Matari, les mitakos que j'ai remboursés à son dernier mari, si elle s'en va ?

La femme voulut intervenir à nouveau. mais M^r^. Molin, chef territorial en tournée l'arrêta. Simplifions la question, dit-il.

Votre femme peut s'en aller et se marier à un célibataire, si la dot de 1000 mitako est restituée ! . . . Est restituée répéta l'auditoire.

L'impôt de Bula Matari ne peut en aucune façon intervenir dans la question. Ahurissement des hommes ! Exclamations de joie et satisfaction chez les femmes.

M^r^. Molin se mit à leur exposer au long et au large les raisons et les motifs qui justifiaient cette décision, mais malgré tout, les indigènes et le chef ne semblèrent nullement convaincus ni de la logique ni de la justice de cette décision. Mais Bula Matari avait dit : « ne peut en aucune façon intervenir dans la question » et ils se soumirent ! Enfin resta la question des mitakos volés.

A qui reviennent ces mitakos demanda M^r^. Molin, et l'homme et la femme se lancèrent en avant en criant : à moi !

Ecoutez Mundele, dit la femme, et si je mens qu'il le dise et je lui rendrai tous les mitakos. Quand j'étais sa femme et que mon enfant vivait encore j'allais avec lui et les autres femmes à la rivière faire la provision de poissons et récolter les herbes pour faire du sel. A qui appartiennent les cendres des herbes coupées si ce n'est à la femme ? A la femme répéta l'auditoire.

Chaque femme ne met-elle pas sa part dans le grand entonnoir d'où on extrait le sel pour la famille ; mais ne garde-t-elle pas le reste pour elle ? Ces mitakos ne proviennent-ils pas de la vente du sel que j'ai donné à mon mari pour le porter au marché ? Au marché ! A qui reviennent ces mitako Mundele ? Si ce n'est à moi !

Nve Mundele ! Nve Mundele répèta l'auditoire et le mari exposa à son tour.

Ces mitakos proviennent *de la vente du sel de cette femme* ; mais qui porta son sel au marché ? Qui le vendit ? Qui fit la route ? Qui fit le transport ? Qui rapporta les mitakos ? Ces mitakos n'étaient-ils pas *à elle et à moi* ? . . . A elle et à moi ponctua unanimement l'auditoire ?

Tranchons dit M^r^. Molin, il faut en finir et la sentence fût prononcée. Restitution de la dot sans indemnités pour les impôts payés et partage des mitakos du sel à part égale pour elle et pour lui !

Du coup la femme se précipita dans une hutte. Elle en sortit quelques secondes plus tard, chargée d'une grande hotte. Elle la déposa devant nous, enleva un paquet de mitakos, en fit le partage et dit ; ne sont-ils pas dix fois cent ? . . . Dix fois cent ! Puis son mari les enleva. Elle replongea les bras dans la hotte et en sortit une nouvelle botte de mitako, les groupa en deux séries et dit, les mitakos du sel ne sont-ils pas partagés exactement ! Et le mari enleva la moitié du produit de la vente du sel attribué à sa femme, conformément à la sentence de Bula Matari, avec sa nouvelle conquête.

De ceci il résulte clairement que le produit de la vente du sel, propriété de la femme revient à part égale au mari et à la femme. A l'une à cause de son travail, à l'autre à cause des peines et déplacements occasionnés par la mise en vente du produit.

Chez les Wadia, les Tumba, les Babaie, les Basakata et les Balesa. j'eus occasion de constater le même fait. Tant que la femme échange directement sa part du sel fabriqué en communauté, elle garde pour elle l'intégralité du produit de l'échange ; mais quand le mari est chargé de la vente il a, d'après la coutume indigène, droit à une partie du produit.

Cependant le partage ne se fait pas aussitôt après la vente. La somme totale est placée en lieu sûr, une cachette connue du mari et de la femme. Les époux entassent les mitakos, ils thésaurisent jusqu'au jour où de commun accord, ils en font le partage. La coutume réserve à l'homme le 1/4 et les 3/4 à la femme.

Cette coutume n'existe pas chez les tribus situées à l'Est des Balesa. La récolte d'herbes salines ne peut s'y faire, car elles ne poussent que très peu dans la région. Les troncs de bananier, de palmier et la fleur des palmiers ne sont pas assez abondants pour songer à l'établissement d'une grande exploitation. Les femmes parviennent à peine à rassembler les matériaux nécessaires à la fabrication du sel indispensable à la vie courante. Tout le village collabore à la récolte. L'incinération et l'extraction du sel se font au village, d'après le procédé que nous venons de décrire, mais le produit est partagé entre toutes les familles en proportion du nombre de membres de chacune d'elles. La quantité dont on dispose est généralement si restreinte qu'elle peut à peine suffire aux besoins de la vie courante, aussi la valeur du sel y est notablement supérieure à celle qu'y attribuent les populations des régions où abondent les herbes salines.

La différence que nous observons ici entre les populations Mosengere, Basakata et les tribus situées plus à l'est, ne peut être considérée comme un caractère ethnique spécifique. Elle résulte simplement des conditions locales de l'habitat de ces tribus. Elle ne peut servir de base à l'établissement d'une relation ethnique quelconque entre les différentes populations de la région, mais elle forme un exemple typique de l'influence qu'exerce le milieu sur certaines coutumes indigènes.

L'ouverture des régions de la haute Lukenie au commerce Européen élimine petit à petit la fabrication du sel par la méthode indigène.

Nous avons remis quelques échantillons de sel indigène récoltés au cours de notre voyage, à M. L'Heureux, attaché au laboratoire du Musée, qui a bien voulu nous transmettre les résultats de l'analyse.

Sel nº 1215 récolté chez les Mosengere

Pertes au feu	1,28
Insoluble	0,49
Chlorure de potasse	46,80
Chlorure de soude	39,56
Sulfate de soude	9,94
	98,07

Il faut ajouter de légères traces de nitrates,
de légères traces de fer,
des traces de chaux (0,01 °/o),
de fortes traces d'acide phosphorique (0,34 °/o),
des traces de magnésie (0,09 °/o).

Notons l'absence totale de CO_2.

Ce sel, provenant de la calcination de plantes, se présente comme du sable gris sâle. Il possède une odeur caractéristique qui n'est pas tout à fait désagréable. Il est très riche en sel de potasse : ce qui le rend impropre à l'alimentation. A haute dose, les sels de potasse provoquent l'inertie motrice des muscles sans contracture ; le cœur se ralentit et s'arrête en diastole.

Il peut servir comme engrais pour les végétaux très riches en potasse. Sa teneur en potasse est environ du double de celle des sels de Strassfurt connus de nos agriculteurs sous le nom de « Kaïnite ».

Juin 1916
(s) L'HEUREUX.

Sel n 2679.

Pertes au feu	2,12
Insoluble	0,99
Chlorure de potasse	63,46
Sulfate de potasse	32,12
	98,69

Fig. 65. — Palmier en fleur.

Il y a à ajouter des traces de K_2O, de Fe_2O_3, d'Al_2O_3, de CaO, de MgO, de P_2O_5, de Nitrate et de Na_2O.

Le sel, portant le n° 2679, a l'aspect d'un sable très fin et assez pur. La potasse est le seul élément minéral notable dans ce produit.

Il ne peut être considéré que comme engrais.

Juillet 1916.
(s) L'HEUREUX.

Sel n° 12.502.

Pertes au feu	2,32
Insoluble	0,88
Chlorure de potasse	74,23
Sulfate de potasse	21,76
	99,10

Les remarques faites n° 2679 s'appliquent au n° 12.502.

Juillet 1916.
(s) L'HEUREUX.

Sel n° 950.

Pertes à la calcination	1,74
Insoluble	0,37
Chlorure de potasse	43,93
Sulfate de potasse	35,34
	97,95

Il y a de plus, un peu de matières organiques, des traces de nitrates, de fer et d'alumine de chaux, de magnésie; l'alcalinité est forte et sous l'action de l'acide chlorhydrique, il se dégage un peu d'acide carbonique. Ce sel se présente comme du sable fin très clair.

Juillet 1916.
(s) L'HEUREUX.

Sel n° 2679 bis.

Pertes au feu	1,05
Insoluble	1,00
Chlorure de potasse	67,12
Sulfate de potasse	27,10
	96,27

Il y a à ajouter des traces de potasse, de fer, d'Alumine de chaux, de magnésie, d'acide phosphorique, de nitrate, de soude et de matières organiques.

Le sel n° 2679bis, a l'aspect d'un sable très fin, de couleur noirâtre.

Au point de vue chimique, il n'offre aucun intérêt, au point de vue botanique, il s'agirait de savoir si le produit provient d'une seule espèce de plante, s'il provient de la calcination des feuilles, des jeunes pousses, du tronc, des racines, etc...

Comme aliment il est à rejeter.

Il peut être employé comme engrais.

Juillet 1916.
(s) L'HEUREUX.

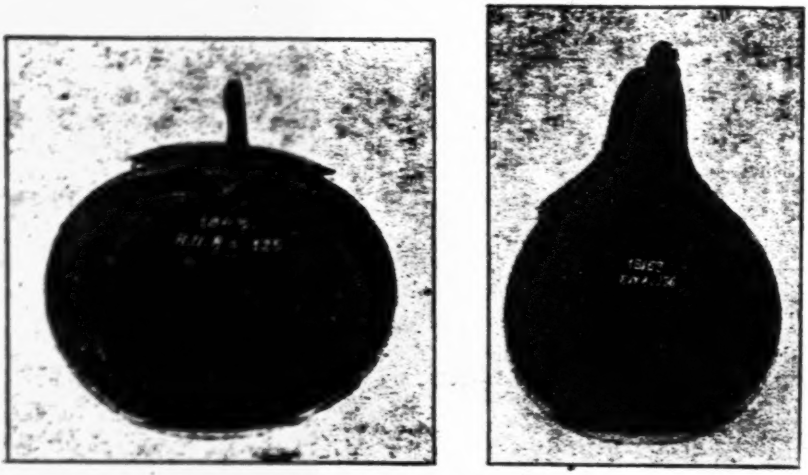


FIG. 66. — Calebasses salières utilisées par les populations du Lac Léopold II.

PRÉPARATION DES ALIMENTS,

Le manioc peut être considéré comme l'aliment principal, la base de l'alimentation de toutes les populations de la région visitée.

Depuis les Bateke de Léopoldville, jusqu'au Bankutshu de Bena Dibele-

Kole ; toutes les tribus cultivent le manioc, récoltent les tubercules, les rouissent, en extraient la farine dont ils fabriquent des chikwangues.

Les indigènes connaissent deux espèces de manioc, notamment le manioc doux et le manioc amer.

Le manioc doux n'est pas très estimé à cause de son goût fade et le peu de consistance des chikwangues.

Abstraction du rouissage, que seul le manioc amer doit subir, la préparation de la chikwangue est la même ; que la farine provienne du manioc doux ou du manioc amer.

La première récolte des carottes de manioc se fait 8 à 10 mois après la plantation. Cependant les indigènes n'entament sérieusement leurs cultures qu'à la seconde année. La femme seule s'en occupe.

Les carottes de manioc, entassées dans de grandes hottes sont transportées au puit de rouissage : une mare d'eau putride, sâle, boueuse, d'où s'échappe une odeur de putréfaction et de fermentation très désagréable, est spécialement réservée à cet effet.

Les racines de manioc y restent plongées pendant cinq à huit jours, afin de les faire fermenter et leur enlever ainsi le goût amer. Au bout de ce temps, la femme s'en retourne à la mare, se retrousse autant que le lui permet son pagne primitif, entre dans le marais où elle s'enfonce jusqu'à hauteur des genoux et plongeant les mains et les bras dans la boue elle en retire une à une les racines et les jette sur la berge. Quand sa provision lui parait suffisante, elle l'entasse dans sa hotte et s'en va la laver à la rivière. Rentrée au village elle coupe les carottes, les laisse sècher un tant soit peu au soleil, et enlève ensuite la pelure. Les Bakete, les Banfumungu et toutes les tribus de la Mfini-Lac Léopold II-Lukenie jusqu'à la limite du territoire des Bobaie, Balesa, *hachent* les sections de racines de manioc, avant de les réduire en farine; les Ipanga, les Batitu, les Yaelima et les Bokala les *écrasent* entre les doigts, avant de les jeter dans le mortier.

Le couteau à chikwangue a une lame à deux tranchants, une nervure médiane longitudinale et une forme ovale longue et relativement large. Il se termine en pointe aux deux extrémités. L'une de celles-ci s'encastre dans une poignée en bois à section biconcave verticale formant manche.

Actuellement le Musée ne possède encore que deux couteaux de ce genre. On les retrouve cependant dans chaque hutte indigène du Kasai-Mfimi-Lukenie jusqu'au secteur d'Oshwe mais il est presqu'impossible de les acheter aux indigènes. La femme ne pouvant s'en passer un jour, et n'en ayant jamais de réserve ; ne cède à aucun prix son couteau à chikwangue.

La femme hâche le manioc sur un grand plateau en bois, une grossière planche légèrement creusée, de forme rectangulaire plus ou moins irrégulière chez les Bateke, les Banfumungu et les Baboma; circulaire chez les Tumba, les Wadia, les Mosengere, les Bolia, les Bobaie, les Basakata et les Balesa.

Fig 67. — Préparation de la farine de manioc chez les Bobaie. Forme spéciale du couteau servant à hacher le manioc.

Après avoir hâché les carottes de manioc aussi finement que le lui permet l'outil primitif dont elle dispose, la femme en retire les fibres ligneux, les restants d'écorce et autres corps durs, puis elle prend *l'etuti* auquel elle imprime des deux mains un mouvement de demi roulement alternatif en avant et en arrière. Tout en faisant ce travail, elle a soin de remuer de temps à autre la farine et d'enlever les impuretés qu'elle y trouve.

Quand la farine est bien fine, la ménagère l'arrose d'un peu d'eau, la pétrit, la travaille, en forme une pâte consistante d'une couleur blanc-gris-pâle, la malaxe et en éloigne avec un soin minutieux, jusqu'à la toute dernière trace d'impureté. Elle divise alors sa pâte en morceaux de la grosseur d'un décimètre cube, qu'elle roule en boules plus ou moins régulières, ou en forme de saucissons longs de 20 à 25 cm. Ces boules ou saucissons sont soigneusement enveloppés de feuilles de bananier ou de *masisa* et le tout est entouré d'éclats de rotang ou de raphia très souples servant de lien à ficeler.

Chez les Ipanga, les Batitu, les Bokala et les Yaelima, nous n'avons nulle part retrouvé le pilon d'écrasement. La femme se sert au contraire du long pilon cylindrique et d'un mortier en bois, grossière planche très épaisse, lourde, de forme tantôt carrée, tantôt ronde, mais toujours très irrégulière. Très souvent le mortier est formé d'un panier en éclats de rotang ou de raphia de forme rectangulaire à rebords très peu élevés.

Fig. 68. — Baboma hachant le manioc.

Au lieu d'écraser le manioc pour en faire de la farine elle le pétrit et travaille la pâte de la même façon et dans le même mortier.

Quand la pâte est suffisamment travaillée et que toute trace d'impureté en a été éloignée, elle la roule en saucissons et les enveloppe de feuilles de bananier comme nous venons de le décrire plus haut.

Les Basongo-Meno et les Bankutshu, pilent le manioc dans de grands mortiers en bois, de forme cylindrique, irrégulière et se servent de très grands pilons. La hauteur des mortiers et la longueur des pilons obligent les femmes de cette région à se tenir debout pour préparer la farine de manioc ; tandis que dans la région du Kasai-Mfimi-Lukenie y compris les secteurs d'Oshwe et de Bambuli, les femmes sont assises à ce travail.

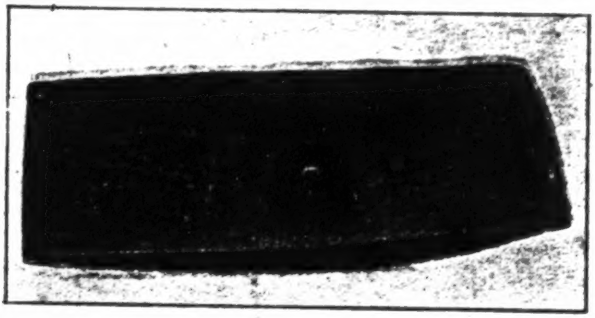


Fig. 69. — Mortier à manioc avec poterie pilon (l'étuti). Tribu des Banfumu.

En outre les premières ne peuvent enlever au cours de leur travail ni fibres, ni corps durs ou autres impuretés, qui se rencontrent dans la farine. Aussi ont-elles soin de la tamiser.

Le petit panier tamis a la forme d'une large calotte aux bords peu élevés et le fond est tressé à jour.

La farine tamisée est recueillie dans de petits paniers, puis transformée en pâte, roulée en petits pains, enveloppés de feuilles de bananier ou de masisa, comme nous venons de le décrire.

La cuisson des chikwangues se fait d'une manière identique chez toutes les populations visitées.

Au fond d'une marmite en terre cuite la femme place un gril en bois. Elle y verse de l'eau jusqu'au niveau de ce gril, tapisse tout l'intérieur de la poterie de feuilles de bananier et y place les pains ou saucissons les uns au dessus des autres. Non seulement elle en remplit le vase, mais elle en entasse encore bien au dessus du bord et recouvre le tout de nouvelles feuilles de bananier, liées et ficelées avec tant de soins et de précautions que le tout est hermétiquement clos. La poterie est placée sur le feu, pendant plusieurs heures. La cuisson des chikwangues se fait donc à la vapeur.

Après la cuisson la pâte de farine de manioc a pris un aspect de pain très gras, ambré, très légèrement translucide sur les bords et de consistance plutôt molle. C'est la chikwangue; la fameuse *Kwanga* des indigènes qui remplace dans leur alimentation notre pain.

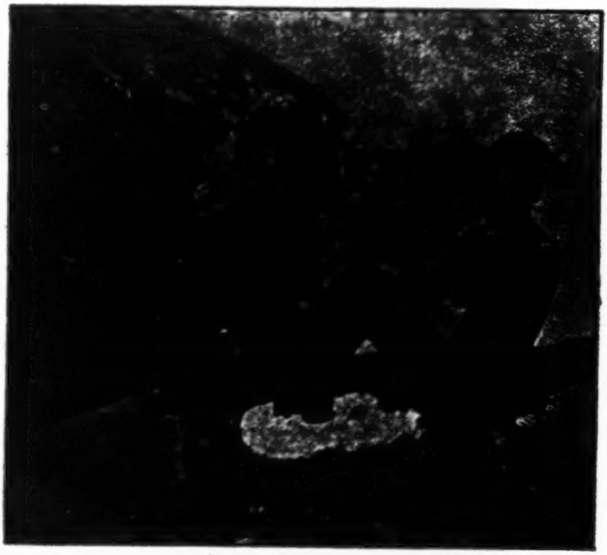


FIG. 70. — Femmes Yaelima préparant le manioc.

Si la méthode de cuisson est la même, partout où nous avons passé, la poterie employée à la cuisson diffère notablement d'une région à l'autre.

Du Stanley-Pool à la région de Bumbuli, les indigènes se servent d'un grand vase en terre cuite généralement très peu ornementé, à surface extérieure irrégulière, rugueuse, marquée de lignes verticales.

Les quelques spécimens que nous avons récoltés sont les seuls que possède le Musée du Congo Belge.

La forme est ovale, allongée, le fond si peu arrondi que la poterie ne pourrait être placée verticalement sur un plan horizontal. L'ouverture supérieure est large. Le bord peu élevé et très incliné chez les Balesa, les Bateke, tandis que chez les Ipanga et les Batitu le bord est plus large et moins incliné. Ces dernières poteries sont en outre très souvent ornées de deux ou trois lignes gravées circulaires. Au fur et à mesure que l'on s'avance vers l'Est, la forme ovale tend à disparaître. La marmite devient sphérique, le bord plus large et l'ornementation gravée plus régulière et plus soignée.

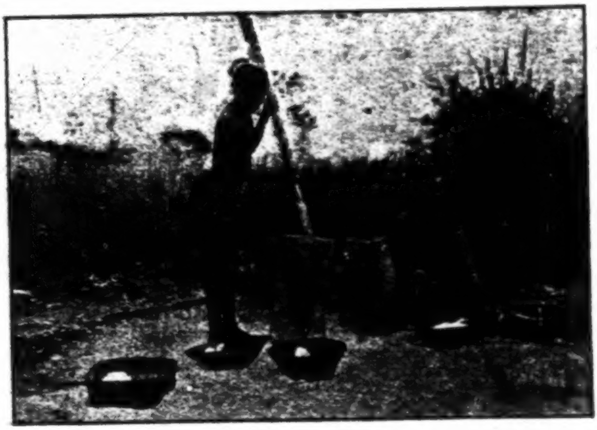


FIG 71 — Mortier pilon et tamis à farine de manioc chez les Bankutu.

Chez les Bokala et Yaelima, les vases servant à cuire les chikwangues ont le fond en forme d'une calotte sphérique, le bord renversé assez large, le col et la panse à arêtes vives et nettement coudées. L'ornementation gravée est formée par deux ou trois lignes circulaires placées immédiatement au dessus de la coudure de la panse. Ces lignes parallèles sont entrecoupées en trois ou quatre places par de petits groupes de huit à dix petits creux. La partie coudée de la panse est en outre très souvent ornementée de lignes obliques entrecroisées.

Ces types de poteries à chikwangues semblent être les formes modernes.

Les pièces très anciennes, dont nous avons heureusement pu retrouver un spécimen encore intact; présentent une forme moins caractéristique. Le fond est rond, irrégulier, la panse plus ou moins coudée mais sans arête vive, le col légèrement recourbé sans surface plane nette.

Les Bokala, les Yaelima, etc., placent un gril en bois au fond du vase à chikwangue; tapissent l'intérieur de feuilles et tassent les pains de farine de manioc en petits monticules au dessus du bord de la poterie. Pour assurer la stabilité de ces pyramides d'une nature spéciale, ils fixent très souvent un lacis en cordes, genre filet à grosses et larges mailles; à la moulure du col. L'ouverture supérieure de ce filet peut s'ouvrir et se fermer à volonté et les pains à chikwangue s'y entassent, comme dans un filet. Il arrive aussi que le gril en bois est remplacé par une cloison en terre cuite prolongeant le bord de la poterie. Cette cloison est percée de larges ouvertures rondes. Les poteries de ce genre sont cependant très rares. Nous n'avons pu en trouver que quelques spécimens. Les indigènes n'y tiennent pas beaucoup; ils les considèrent comme peu pratiques pour la préparation des chikwangues, mais ils les emploient volontiers pour sécher et fumer leurs provisions.

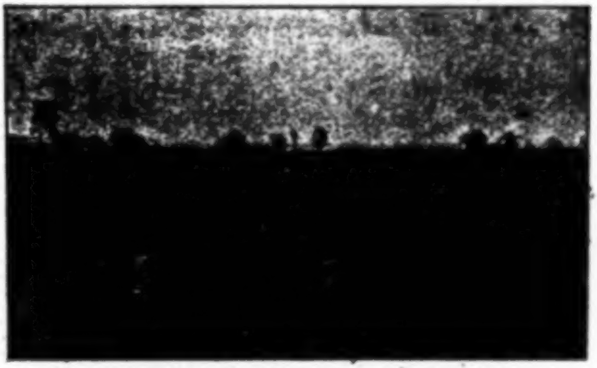


Fig. 72. — Chikwangues apportées au poste.

Au delà des Yaelima, notamment chez les populations de la région de Bena Dibele-Kole, la poterie servant à cuire les pains de manioc ressemble plutôt aux anciennes marmites en terre cuite d'Europe. La forme est sphéroïdale, très régulière, le col un peu recourbé, arrondi et légèrement cintré. La partie supérieure de la panse est ornée de larges lignes circulaires, de petites lignes placées en arcs de cercle et de petits pointillés. Ces poteries ont une couleur brune-noire marbrée et sont couvertes d'une légère couche de vernis.

La cuisson des chikwangues se fait également par la vapeur. Il convient cependant de remarquer que la chikwangue n'occupe pas le même rang prépondérant dans l'alimentation des populations de la région de Bena Dibele-Kole, quoiqu'elle en forme encore de nos jours un des éléments principaux.

FIG. 73. — Bateke triturant le manioc.

Les Basongo Meno et les Bankutshu, mangent également le *Kifunge*, pain de manioc qui se prépare comme suit : la ménagère met chauffer de l'eau dans un grand récipient en terre cuite à fond arrondi, genre de large calotte sphérique, la panse à peu près droite, mais cependant à arête vive, le col non cintré, légèrement évasé. Lorsque l'eau commence à bouillir, elle y jette la farine de manioc par petites quantités à la fois, mélange constamment le tout au moyen d'une longue spatule en bois poli. Lorsque la farine a absorbé à peu près toute l'eau, le vase est enlevé du feu et on ajoute rapidement une nouvelle quantité de farine de manioc tout en ayant soin de tourner vivement le mélange. On obtient ainsi une sorte de pain mou que les indigènes appellent Kifungo. Les Bankutshu et les Basongo Meno, se servent également de la farine de maïs ou de millet pour la fabrication du Kifungo. L'un et l'autre sont pilés dans les gros mortiers servant à fabriquer la farine de manioc et le tout est passé dans les tamis en vannerie.

Le Kifungo se mange toujours à chaud. La ménagère le sert sur un plat en bois préalablement frotté d'huile de palme.

Nous voyons ainsi que les populations de la région de Bena Dibele se distinguent des autres tribus non seulement par la manière de fabriquer la farine de manioc, la forme des ustensiles, mortier, pilon, tamis et poteries employés à cet effet; mais encore par l'usage spécial de la farine de manioc et l'emploi de la farine de maïs et de millet dans la fabrication du Kifungo. Il y a donc là, sous ce rapport deux groupes ethniques qui semblent bien distincts l'un de l'autre. Malheureusement il est bien difficile d'établir si le Kifungo est bien propre à la civilisation de

Fig. 74. — Femmes Batetela égrainant le maïs et préparant les légumes

ces indigènes, où s'il a été introduit dans leur vie par les populations Basonge-Baluba du Sankuru-Lubefu. Interrogés à ce sujet les indigènes nous disaient tantôt qu'ils fabriquaient le Kifungo depuis toujours, tandis que certains vieillards prétendaient que dans leur enfance le Kifungo était encore inconnu.

Ainsi que nous l'avons observé, les populations situées à l'Ouest de la région de Bena Dibele-Kole cultivent le maïs. Cette culture est d'une importance secondaire, sauf dans la région des Banfumungu de Kapanda et d'Engrei.

Le maïs récolté avant la maturité se mange frais ou grillé au dessus d'un petit feu. Les épis qui mûrissent sur pied, sont soigneusement égrainés ; les graines pilées dans un mortier en bois au moyen d'un pilon cylindrique ; la farine vannée ou tamisée.

Le mortier à farine de maïs est formé par un tronçon d'arbre muni d'une ouverture rectangulaire creusée dans la surface extérieure, et perpendiculairement à l'axe du tronçon. Ces mortiers sont très primitifs, mal travaillés et très rudimentaires. A côté de ceux-ci on en retrouve parfois qui sont mieux achevés, petits cubes munis d'un tenon ou d'une liane. Remarquons toutefois que chez les Banfumu du S. E. de Tua, nous avons trouvé un mortier de forme analogue dont les indigènes se servaient pour préparer les légumes.

Les tamis à farine de maïs de cette région sont également d'un type spécial. Les parois sont ajourées à claire-voies. La forme générale se rapproche d'une grande bouteille à fond carré, corps cylindrique, col étranglé et bord légèrement évasé.

La ménagère mélange la farine de maïs à l'huile de palme, en forme une pâte plus ou moins épaisse, l'enveloppe soigneusement de feuilles et la fait bouillir pendant 10 à 15 minutes. Ce plat, le Mokwoi des Basakata Mosangere est servi tout chaud, généralement un peu assaisonné d'huile de palme et de poivre pili-pili. Quand l'occasion s'en présente l'indigène y ajoute du poisson ou de la viande. Il est très estimé chez toutes les populations de la région des Batetela-Tadima, mais doit plutôt être considéré comme un plat de luxe que la famille ne peut s'offrir qu'en des circonstances spéciales.

La racine de manioc doux, cuite dans la cendre est un plat plus commun. On le sert tout chaud avec des boutures de verdure du manioc préparées en légumes.

Les patates douces répandues dans toute la région, sont épluchées, cuites à l'eau, écrasées en purée, mélangées à l'huile de palme et servies avec viande ou poisson.

Les arachides se mangent bouillies ou grillées; parfois encore la femme les écrase crues et les mélange à la farine de manioc, ou s'en sert dans la préparation des repas à la place de l'huile de palme.

Quoique les indigènes ne mangent que peu de légumes, exception faite des ignames et des patates douces, les épinards, l'oseille indigène, la petite tomate, une espèce de pourpier et toute une série de feuilles que la femme va cueillir dans la forêt, figurent de temps à autre au menu de la table indigène. La ménagère les écrase dans son petit mortier au moyen d'un pilon cylindrique et met le tout étuver à petit feu, dans de petites casseroles en terre cuite.

Chez certaines tribus, notamment chez les Bokala et les Yaelima, ces petites poteries ont un couvercle en terre cuite, muni d'un petit tenon vertical, tandis que dans les autres régions, la femme recouvre sa casserole, tant qu'elle est placée sur le feu, d'un éclat de calebasse, d'une écorce ou d'un fond d'une poterie usagée.

La banane joue un grand rôle dans l'alimentation indigène. De Léopoldville à Kole, nous avons trouvé les bananiers dans tous les villages, tant autour des postes de l'État, qu'au loin à l'intérieur du pays. La banane se mange crue, grillée, cuite, séchée au soleil et fumée au dessus des claies. Les bananes séchées sont réduites en farine et servies, bouillies, avec les autres plats.

La viande quels que soient sa provenance ou son état, est *dévorée* avec avidité par toutes les populations. L'indigène en est réduit à se contenter de ce que le hasard lui apporte, du produit de sa chasse et de ce que les Mundele lui abandonnent. Les indigènes ne disposent pas d'assez de moyens pratiques, pour se procurer une nourriture animale abondante. Dans les villages de l'intérieur on ne mange pas souvent de la viande. La perspective d'une bonne ration de viande suffit pour obtenir de l'indigène les plus lourds travaux. Durant tout notre voyage, nos porteurs n'ont jamais réclamé ni par suite des longues étapes, ni à cause des charges trop lourdes, ni au sujet des fatigues, tant qu'ils obtenaient leur ration de 1 à 2 kilogs de viande tous les soirs.

L'indigène aime passionnément la viande, et rien, mais absolument rien ne se perd, des animaux tués à la chasse. Les intestins sont tout spécialement appréciés. Les indigènes les vident très hativement et n'hésitent pas à les manger tout crus. Le plus souvent cependant ils les découpent en petits morceaux qu'ils font bouillir dans de grandes marmites en terre cuite. La graisse est très soigneusement recueillie et conservée pour servir ultérieurement dans la préparation des légumes et des sauces. Le reste est servi avec des légumes, des chikwangues, du kifunde, etc.

La viande coupée en petits morceaux, assaisonnée d'un peu d'huile de palme, de poivre et de sel, est mise sur le feu pour bouillir. Cette préparation se fait dans de petites poteries, qui servent en même temps de plats.

Chez les Bateke et les Banfumungu de l'Ouest (région Tua, Kunzulu, Kwamouth) la forme de ces ustensiles rappelle beaucoup celle des écuelles. Le fond est arrondi, le bord droit légèrement évasé ou cintré et peu élevé.

Chez les Banfumungu de l'Est (région de Tua, Bokala) au contraire ces ustensiles affectent une forme tout autre et peu connue, jusqu'à présent ; une large calotte sphérique très peu élevée, dont le bord large de 2 à 3 ctm, a été replié vers l'intérieur et présente une surface nettement horizontale.

Chez les Baboma de la région de Bokala, Wombali, Mushie, de même que chez les Wadia et les Basakata de l'Ouest, le bord des écuelles présente cette même incurvation caractéristique, mais les parois sont beaucoup plus régulières et bien mieux achevées. La forme est d'ailleurs légèrement différente. Le fond est arrondi, très plat, la panse peu élevée et légèrement incurvée, le bord rentrant horizontal.

La courbure rentrante des parois de certaines poteries se terminant par un bord horizontal intérieur est une caractéristique que nous retrouvons encore, quoiqu'elle soit beaucoup moins accentuée, dans les écuelles employées au même usage chez les Moengere, les Tumba, les Bobaie, les Basakata et les Balesa. Toutes ces populations semblent ainsi avoir une certaine affinité ethnique caractérisée par cette forme spéciale du bord de la poterie. Cependant la forme générale des divers vases que nous avons récoltés dans cette région, nous montre qu'à *côté* de ce caractère général uniforme, ces différentes tribus ont cependant chacune leur poterie particulière. Celle-ci doit *être* à notre avis considérée comme un dérivé de la forme primitive, connue et employée par la branche ethnique principale de ces différentes populations. Chacune d'entr'elles a *modifié* à son goût, ses inspirations, les circonstances et les nécessités locales, la forme primitive; à tel point qu'il s'est créé chez chacune d'elles une forme typique spéciale, qui n'a conservé de la forme originale que les deux caractères essentiels, la courbure plus ou moins accentuée des parois et le bord horizontal intérieur.

Chez les Ipanga, les Batitu, les Bokala et les Yaelima, la forme des petites poteries servant à la préparation de la viande est tout autre. Ici nous ne trouvons ni courbure régulière de la paroi, ni bord horizontal interne. Bien au contraire, le fond est une calotte sphérique, la panse nettement coudée à arête vive, la paroi supérieure ornée de dessins incisés, le bord légèrement incliné et incurvé vers l'extérieur. L'ornementation est celle que nous avons remarquée sur les poteries à chikwangues de cette région.

Plus à l'Est, chez les Basongo-Meno et les Bankutshu, la forme est à nouveau bien différente. Le fond arrondi est surmonté d'une paroi oblique interne sans rebord et placée à arête vive. Cette paroi est généralement très ornementée de dessins incisés et même de moulures en relief.

Pour conserver la viande les indigènes procèdent de deux façons différentes.

Pour les quantités peu importantes, la viande est découpée en morceaux d'un à trois kilos, enfilée sur un bâton et grillée au dessus d'un petit feu. Ce procédé ne donne guère de beaux résultats. Après cinq ou six jours la viande boucanée de cette façon se gâte, ce qui n'empêche point l'indigène de la consommer. C'est la viande et non l'odeur que je mange, dit-il, car après le dîner la viande a disparu et l'odeur nous reste!

Pour les grandes réserves, la viande est découpée en morceaux d'un demi kilog. à un kilog. ; puis mise à bouillir pendant une petite heure sur un feu vif, dans une eau assez salée et bien pimentée. Les morceaux sont ensuite boucanés au dessus d'une grande claie, généralement placée au milieu du village. Cette claie, faite de gros rotins ; de branches vertes, repose sur quatre pieux fourchus, haut de 90 ctm. à 1^{m}20. En dessous de cette claie la femme entretient un feu lent, dégageant beaucoup de fumée. La viande bouillie est légèrement tassée et recouverte de grandes feuilles de bananier. Elle reste sur cette claie deux ou trois jours. Au bout de ce temps elle est boucanée à fond, noire comme du charbon, sèche et coriace, mais elle se conserve presque indéfiniment.

Fig. 75 — Enfumoir de la communauté.

La ménagère emporte sa provision et la dépose dans son grenier, à l'intérieur de sa hutte où elle est à l'abri des rats, des souris et des autres maraudeurs qui fourmillent dans les huttes indigènes.

La cuisson de la viande se fait généralement dans de grands vases en terre cuite.

Chez les Bateke et les Banfumungu ils ont la forme d'une sphère irrégulière dont la partie supérieure a été sectionnée.

Chez les Baboma et les Basakata au contraire ces poteries ont une forme cylindrique, large, un peu élevée, à fond plat. Chez les Bolaie, les Balesa et les Batete, le fond est arrondi, large, peu élevé, prolongé par un goulot tronconique assez élevé, orné de dessins gravés, très réguliers et peu artistiques, panse à arêtes vives, petit bord très évasé. Cette forme se rencontre quoique moins régulièrement chez les Basakata. Elle semble très commune dans la région des Kundu, voisins Nord des Bolaie, Balesa, Batete.

Les Ipanga et Tadima se servent de poteries analogues à celles qu'ils employent pour la fabrication des chikwangues, tandis que les Basongo Meno et les Bankutshu, ont une poterie de forme évasée, fond à calotte sphérique, la panse légèrement cintrée, l'ornementation composée de fortes moulures creusées et en relief.

Ces mêmes poteries servent également chez toutes ces tribus à la préparation et la cuisson des poissons.

Les populations riveraines du Congo-Kasai-Mfimi et de la Basse Lukenie, ainsi que les Wadia et les Bosangere de la Boriempe-Lolonga s'occupent beaucoup de la pêche.

Le poisson ne se mange jamais cru. Les indigènes le font bouillir ou le mangent séché ou fumé.

Pour conserver le poisson, les indigènes le fument sur de grandes claies analogues à celles qu'ils emploient pour boucaner la viande.

Certaines populations, notamment les tribus de la Mfimi-Lac et de la basse Lukenie, se servent également d'une poterie d'une forme spéciale, rare et inconnue jusqu'ici. Nous n'avons pu rapporter que deux spécimens heureusement très caractéristiques de ce type.

Fig. 76. — Ceinture en rotang

Cette forme est ouverte à la base et fermée à la partie supérieure par un grand disque percé d'ouvertures. Les parois sont cintrées. Le diamètre de l'ouverture inférieure, est un peu moins grand que celui du plateau supérieur. Il varie de 45 ctm. à 90 ctm.

Ce pot séchoir « Kenge » comme l'appellent les indigènes, se place sur trois morceaux de bois formant trépied. Au centre du trépied la femme entretient un feu lent, de feuilles, d'herbes et de bois vert, provoquant à l'intérieur de la poterie une fumée épaisse. Les poissons évidés sont placés au dessus du disque. Ils y restent de quatre à cinq jours exposés à l'action continue du feu et de la fumée. Au bout de ce temps ils sont suffisamment boucanés et séchés pour être conservés pendant plusieurs mois. Il va de soi que ces poteries, ne peuvent servir

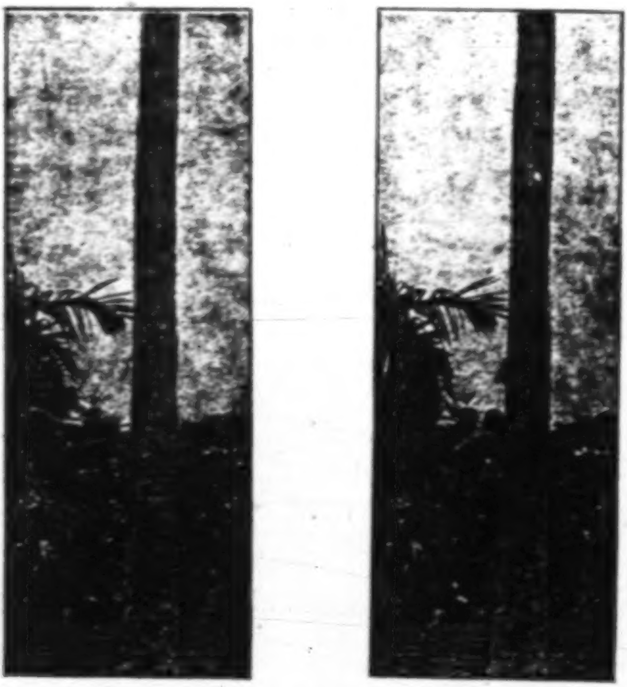


Fig. 77. — Deux manières de grimper à l'arbre.

que pour la préparation et la conservation de petites quantités de provisions. Elles font partie des ustensiles de la ménagère indigène de ces diverses tribus. Elle s'en sert d'ailleurs également pour fumer les chikwangues, sécher les bananes, les carottes de manioc, les épis de maïs et parfois pour boucaner la viande. Les carottes de manioc, les bananes, les épis de maïs et autres fruits que l'on veut sécher, ne sont pas exposés à une forte fumée, mais à un petit feu de bois bien sec, donnant une très petite flamme ardente ou si possible présentés à la réverbération d'un foyer incandescent de charbon de bois.

Les chikwangues toutes préparées, garnies et enveloppées de leurs feuilles, sont placées pendant six à huit heures au dessus du « kenge » tandis que en dessous la ménagère entretient un feu de charbon de bois. Séchées et boucanées de cette façon les chikwangues se conservent très longtemps.

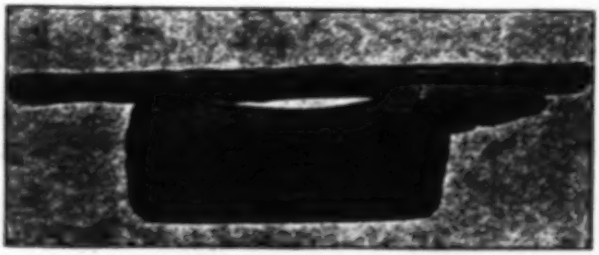


FIG. 78 - Mortier et pilon employés à la préparation des légumes et de l'huile de palme.

A défaut du « kenge » la femme se sert parfois d'une poterie à fond plat, percé de petits trous et à parois verticales. Celle-ci s'adapte au dessus d'une vieille poterie à chikwangue, « mpoko-kepinga » dont le fond a été brisé.

Le mpoko-kepinga, se place au dessus du foyer. La femme consolide et ferme les jointures du mpoko-kepinga et du vase à fond percé « kenge » au moyen d'une pâte de terre glaise et de terre à poterie.

Au delà des Batete, nous n'avons plus rencontré cette forme particulière de poterie. Les Ipanga-Yaelima, de même que les Basongo Meno et les Bankutshu, semblent en ignorer l'existence et en tout cas ne s'en servent pas.

J'en viens à l'importante question de huile de palme. Antérieurement nous avons déjà fait remarquer, combien la ménagère indigène, s'en sert fréquemment dans la préparation des repas. Cette huile remplace le beurre et la graisse de la cuisine européenne. La cueillette des régimes de noix de palme et la fabrication de l'huile est d'une grande importance pour toutes les tribus.

Ce que dit M. Engels à ce sujet dans son étude sur les Wangata peut s'appliquer à toutes les populations que nous avons visitées.

Dans chaque village un ou plusieurs indigènes, choisis parmi les plus agiles et les plus audacieux, (les casse-cou de l'endroit) ont la spécialité de cueillir les régimes du palmier. Ils le font non seulement pour eux-même, mais aussi pour d'autres, moyennant une légère rémunération.

FIG. 79. — Installation réservée à la fabrication de l'huile de palme.

La cueillette des régimes du palmier présente toujours un certain danger. Il faut monter au sommet du palmier atteignant parfois 20 et 25 mètres et là, se livrer au dur travail de dégager et de couper le régime.

Les méthodes d'ascension varient suivant la hauteur des palmiers. Chez toutes les tribus que nous avons visitées, nous avons pu observer deux façons différentes de procéder (voir fig. 77).

Si le palmier est bas, l'indigène monte jusqu'au régime en utilisant comme échelon des boutures de pétioles coupés. Si le palmier est très élevé, l'indigène se sert d'une ceinture en rotang qui encercle l'homme et le tronc du palmier.

Rien n'est intéressant comme de voir monter l'indigène jusqu'à la couronne d'un palmier. Il le fait avec une habilité et une rapidité vraiment extraordinaires. Suspendu dans sa ceinture, les pieds appuyés contre le tronc du palmier, il avance rapidement par petits bonds, tout en remontant constamment la ceinture. Arrivé à la hauteur de la racine du régime, il se dresse ou s'assied sur une des feuilles et à coups de hache ou de couteau il dégage le régime, le coupe et le laisse tomber au pied du palmier. Les femmes se chargent de rassembler les noix, enlèvent sur place celles qui sont restées attachées au régime, les nettoyent très soigneusement et transportent le tout au village.

Suivant que la ménagère désire fabriquer une petite ou une grande quantité d'huile de palme, elle procède de deux façons différentes.

Dans le premier cas, elle jette les quelques noix de palme dans un récipient en terre cuite, à moitié rempli d'eau et met le tout sur le feu à bouillir pendant une bonne heure. Lorsque le brou de la noix est devenu tendre, elle jette l'eau, enlève les noix et les place dans un petit mortier en bois pour séparer le noyau de la pulpe. Elle se sert à cet effet du pilon en bois et du mortier employés à la préparation des légumes. Lorsque le brou est complètement séparé de la noix, la femme l'enlève et en extrait le jus en le pressant très fortement dans les mains. Les noyaux sont jetés.

Pour le second cas chaque village possède une installation spéciale réservée à la fabrication de l'huile de palme. Cette usine toute primitive est généralement située un peu en dehors des habitations. Chacun y a accès et elle appartient à toute la communauté, mais chaque famille s'en sert pour son usage personnel.

Elle comprend un grand trou de forme tronconique ayant de 60 à 70 ctm. de diamètre à la partie supérieure, de 20 à 30 ctm. à la partie inférieure et une profondeur variant entre 60 et 80 ctm. Le fond et les parois sont tapissés de sections de pétioles de raphia, placées les

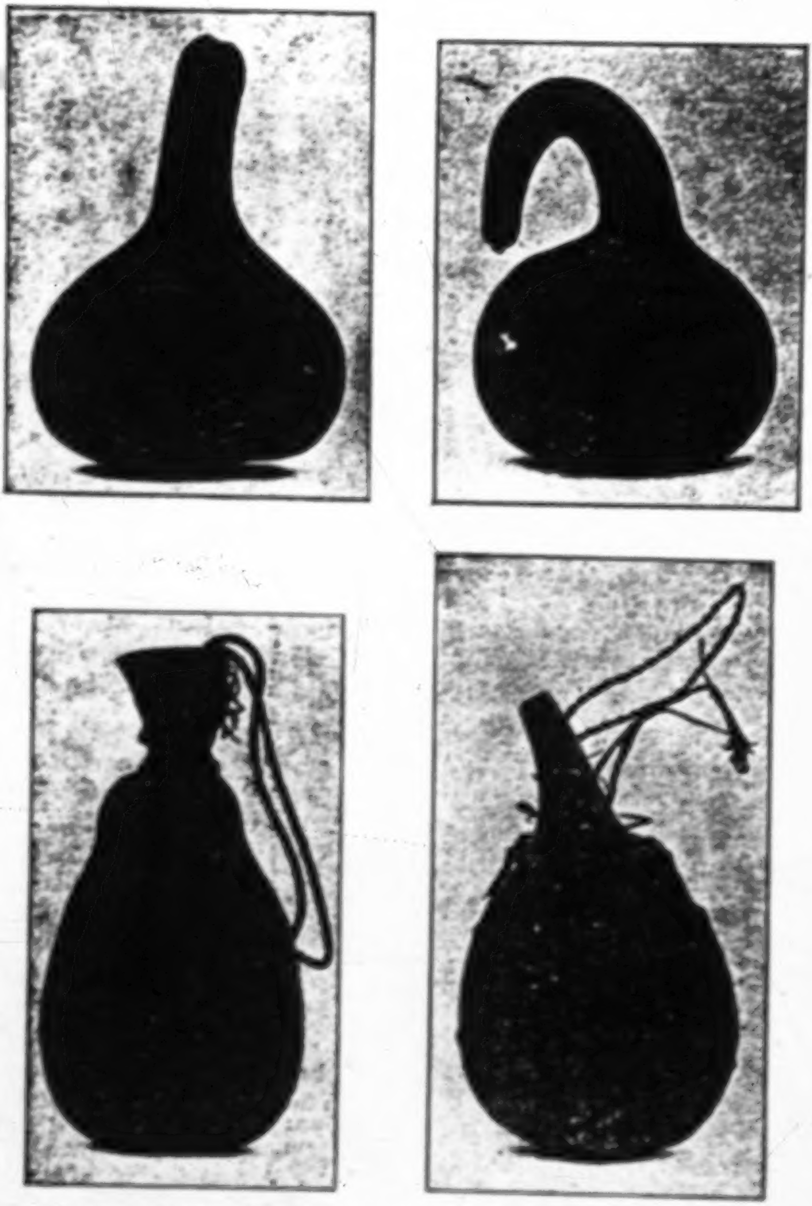


Fig. 80. — Calebasses servant de récipient pour l'eau, le vin, la bière et l'huile.

unes à côtés des autres, la surface arrondie tournée vers l'intérieur du creux. Les noix légèrement bouillies, sont versées dans cet entonnoir servant de mortier. Le brou est séparé du noyau au moyen d'un grand pilon en bois. Les noyaux sont jetés. La pulpe enlevée du trou est fortement pressée entre les mains pour en extraire l'huile.

A proximité de l'entonnoir mortier creusé en terre, se trouve un établi formé par deux ou quatre pieux fourchus, les uns plus hauts que les autres, au dessus desquels les indigènes placent des grandes sections d'écorce d'arbre. La femme jette la pulpe, dont elle a extrait l'huile, sur cet établi, l'étale et allume un petit feu en dessous des larges sections d'écorce formant gouttières. Sous l'influence de la chaleur, une partie de l'huile restée dans la pulpe s'écoule lentement et est recueillie dans le récipient en terre cuite placé à l'extrémité inférieure de la gouttière. Enfin ce qui peut rester d'huile de palme dans la pulpe en est extrait par torsion. L'indigène a construit dans ce but une grande barre fixe, très solide, à laquelle il attache l'une des extrémités d'un pressoir fait de jeunes lianes et de fins rotangs tressés. La pulpe encore toute chaude est placée dans ce pressoir et le tout est très fortement tordu de façon à en extraire jusqu'à la dernière goutte d'huile.

Les indigènes recueillent et conservent l'huile de palme dans de grandes poteries couvertes de feuilles de bananier, dans des calebasses ou si possible dans des bouteilles d'importation. Les grandes dame-jeannes dépouillées de leur emballage protecteur sont particulièrement recherchées, à cet effet.

Nous avons signalé plus haut les usages principaux que fait l'indigène de l'huile de palme dans la préparation des aliments et le rôle important qu'elle occupe dans l'alimentation de ces primitifs. Plus tard nous aurons l'occasion d'y revenir, quand nous examinerons la place qu'elle tient dans la toilette indigène.

Un mot maintenant des excitants. Les aliments en général et la viande en particulier sont toujours très fortement assaisonnés de condiments.

L'excitant le plus répandu est le pili-pili ou poivre rouge. Ce piment, fruit du capsicum minimum, qui ne dépasse guère 1 à 1,5 ctm. de long a une saveur extrêmement brulante. Il se retrouve à l'état sauvage dans toute la région que nous avons parcourue. Toutes les tribus le connaissent et s'en servent régulièrement.

La récolte et la préparation du pili-pili sont spécialement réservées aux femmes. Au retour des champs, la femme étale les fruits sur une natte, devant sa hutte et les laisse sécher 5 à 6 jours. Parfois elle les mélange tout frais à l'huile de palme rehaussées, de sel. L'indigène se sert de cette sauce pour assaisonner suivant son goût les plats du jour.

Quand le pili-pili est bien séché, la femme le pulvérise dans un petit mortier en bois au moyen d'un pilon cylindrique, ou d'une petite section de défense d'éléphant. La forme des mortiers employés à cet effet par les différentes populations du Lukenie, est assez variée. Depuis les Bateke jusqu'aux Batete, nous n'avons rencontré que des mortiers très primitifs creusés dans un tronc d'arbre. Chez lez Yaelima Ipanga cet ustensile est mieux soigné et plus achevé. La forme rappelle assez bien celle d'une petite boîte rectangulaire sans couvercle mais muni d'un tenon. Chez les Basongo Meno et les Bankutshu, de la région de Bena Dibele, Kole, nous avons récolté des mortiers aux formes très simples et très primitives, tandis que d'autres étaient bien ouvragés et soigneusement sculptés. Tous ont cependant le caractère commun d'une forme allongée verticale et sont munis le plus souvent d'un pied. Les pilons sont toujours très longs.

Nous voyons ainsi apparaître à nouveau trois zònes ethniques caractérisées par la forme spéciale de ces ustensiles. Il est évident, que ce seul fait ne pourrait servir de base à une classification ethnique quelconque, mais il peut avoir une valeur et une importance relatives dans les conclusions générales, basées sur l'ensemble des caractères ethniques de ces différentes populations.

Réduit en fine poudre, le poivre de pili-pili, est mélangé au sel, pour assaisonner les aliments après la cuisson. Toutes les sauces sont relevées, par une copieuse pincée de ce piment. Les viandes en sont saupoudrées voire même farcies de piments entiers.

Lorsque les indigènes sont en voyage, ils se contentent de cueillir quelques graines de pili-pili et en expriment le jus qu'ils égoûtent sur les aliments en cuisson.

La noix de kola est également très connue comme excitant et s'emploie beaucoup. Le kolatier se retrouve un peu partout. L'indigène récolte le fruit et le mache. La femme ne s'en sert pas.

D'après les croyances indigènes, la noix de kola, assure la fécondité de la femme pour autant que les relations sexuelles se produisent pendant la nuit qui suit l'emploi de cet excitant par l'homme.

L'usage régulier du kola provoque des excitations nerveuses très intenses. Nous avons remarqué que l'adolescent ou l'homme dans sa première force ne l'emploient guère. Seuls les gens agés s'en servent régulièrement. Kakua, le vieux chef indigène, en machait du matin au soir. Un jour que je lui en fis l'observation, tout en lui demandant s'il ne craignait pas les suites funestes de cet abus, il me montra fièrement les cases de ses sept femmes, en me disant, « demandez leur si elles n'ont pas d'enfants ! »

Dans la série des excitants nous pourrions signaler encore la noix d'arachide, très employée par toutes les tribus ; une espèce de petit pois de terre et certaines racines d'arbres connues des indigènes mais dont nous n'avons malheureusement pas pu déterminer la nature exacte. Il convient d'ailleurs de remarquer que la plupart des indigènes emploient les excitants, tant comme condiments que comme médicaments, contre les maux d'estomac, les coliques et comme purgatifs.

FIG. 81. — Transport de la réserve de bois pour le foyer.

La préparation des aliments et des repas incombe, chez toutes les tribus, exclusivement aux femmes. Celles-ci y mettent toujours le plus grand soin.

La cuisine, si réellement cuisine il y a, est toujours des plus simples. S'il fait beau, elle se fait au grand air au milieu du village, devant ou derrière la hutte et très souvent à l'ombre des bananiers. Si le temps est pluvieux ou froid, la femme prépare les repas à l'intérieur de la hutte.

La préparation des aliments et des repas ne donne nulle part lieu à une cérémonie quelconque. Cependant nous avons pu remarquer chez les Bankutshu, une coutume bien singulière.

Un jour, pendant que je discutais le prix de quelques objets ethnographiques au village d'Olombo, je vis une femme s'approcher d'un indigène et lui présenter successivement trois petites sections de pétioles de raphia. L'indigène accepta les trois éclats, en garda un, brisa le second en rendit la moitié à la femme et lui remit également les trois quarts du troisième. Intrigué par ce manège, j'en demandais l'explication à l'indigène qui me répondit :

N'est ce point ainsi que nos femmes nous avertissent que le repas est prêt ?

Et les sections de raphia ?

N'aurai-je pas trois plats, de la chikwangue, du riz et de la viande ?

Pourquoi garder l'une, briser l'autre et en remettre des parties a cette femme ?

N'ai-je pas réservé un quart de la viande, la moitié de la chikwangue à ma femme, en gardant le reste pour moi ?

Ainsi la femme vient annoncer trois fois par jour à son mari, que son repas est prêt et lui dit en même temps, de quoi il se compose. L'homme en accepte ce qui lui convient et abandonne le restant à la femme. J'ignore si cette coutume existe chez d'autres tribus, mais la chose me parait probable.

Les indigènes prennent trois repas par jour, le matin, vers midi et le soir après le coucher du soleil.

Jamais la femme n'est admise à partager le repas du mari, ni à manger dans le même groupe que lui.

Les chefs mangent toujours seuls, loin des yeux du vulgum pecus.

Les restants des repas sont d'ordinaire abandonnés aux enfants et aux femmes.

Chez aucune des tribus visitées, nous n'avons trouvé table, cuiller, ou fourchette.

Les aliments sont placés dans de petits paniers en éclats de rotang ou de raphia, tressés à jour, au fond garni de feuilles. Parfois le plat est en bois ou en terre cuite.

Chez les Bateke-Banfumungu, nous avons récolté certains plats en terre cuite ressemblant beaucoup aux assiettes à soupe d'Europe, mais moins réguliers de forme et plus profonds. Chez les Baboma-Wadia-Batete au contraire, les plats rappellent plutôt nos assiettes plates. Chez les Ipanga-Yaelima les plats en vannerie] sont surtout à la mode, tandis que dans la région de Bena Dibele-Kole, on retrouve le plat poterie, genre de calotte sphérique très évasée, et des plats en bois. Quelquefois aussi, de simples feuilles font office d'assiette, à moins que les aliments ne soient servis dans les poteries de cuisson.

Fig 82. — La cuisine indigène installée au grand air. Tribu des Ipanga-Batitu.

Le tout est déposé à terre.

L'homme s'accroupit sur sa natte et puise lentement de la main à même les plats en passant de l'un à l'autre suivant son goût.

Le repas est toujours silencieux. Même quand plusieurs amis dinent ensemble, ils ne parlent ni ne discutent jamais pendant les repas.

Après le repas, les indigènes se lavent soigneusement les mains et les dents, et se rincent la bouche à plusieurs reprises.

LES BOISSONS.

L'eau est l'unique boisson qu'ils prennent au repas, et encore n'en usent-ils que bien rarement. A défaut d'une coupe en bois ou en terre cuite, ils se servent d'une section de calebasse ou simplement d'une feuille enroulée en forme d'un petit sachet conique.

L'eau provient généralement d'une source, située à proximité du village. Les indigènes n'emploient l'eau de la rivière que lorsque celle-ci est bien claire. La femme et les enfants sont chargés de chercher de l'eau, corvée qui bien souvent est très dure. J'ai visité bien des villages situés le long et à proximité de la rivière, dont la source d'eau potable se trouvait à 20 et 30 minutes du centre.

A certaines heures du jour et plus particulièrement le matin, au premier lever du soleil, les femmes et les enfants s'en vont, la calebasse ou la gargoulette placée en équilibre sur la tête, chercher la provision pour la journée.

L'eau est conservée dans de grandes calebasses ou dans des gargoulettes en terre cuite, placées à l'abri du soleil dans un coin de la hutte.

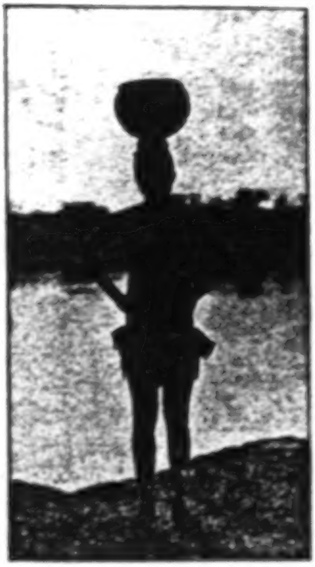


Fig. 43. — Porteuse d'eau.

La forme de ces gargoulettes varie notablement suivant les différentes régions, et certaines d'entre-elles nous semblent même caractéristiques de certains groupements ethniques.

Chez les Bateke et les Banfumungu de l'Ouest la forme sphérique à goulot droit prédomine.

Chez les Maboma de Bokala-Wombali et les Banfumungu de l'Est, la forme est nettement sphérique, munie d'un tout petit goulot, type entonnoir, n'atteignant le plus souvent qu'un à deux centimètres de hauteur. Cette forme est toute nouvelle. Nous avons heureusement pu en récolter plusieurs spécimens. Les Bateke de la région de Stanley Pool se servent d'une gargoulette et qui ressemble aux carafes d'importation Européenne. Cette forme est particulièrement commune dans la région de Léopoldville-Kinshasa.

De Mushie jusque dans la région des Basakata-Balesa, en y comprenant les Wadia et les Tumba, la gargoulette a la panse formée de deux sections soudées à arête vive ou légèrement arrondie. La section inférieure a la forme d'une calotte sphérique, la partie supérieure au contraire est tronconique. L'ornementation est très régulière. Des cercles parallèles peu accentués recouvrent la paroi tronconique de la panse et parfois du goulot. Ce dernier est très long, d'ordinaire plus large à la base qu'au sommet et légèrement élargi au milieu. Cette forme intéressante se rencontre en outre, mais plus rarement, chez les Mosengere. Chez cette dernière tribu, nous avons rencontré une autre forme non moins intéressante et très peu connue jusqu'à présent. Les caractères principaux de cette forme sont le fond plat, la panse cylindrique, plus ou moins régulière, les arêtes arrondies et le goulot en forme d'entonnoir très évasé.

Chez les Bobaie du N. E. les Balesa-Batete, les Ipanga-Batitu et les Bokala-Yaelima, la gargoulette a une panse sphérique et un col droit. Cette même forme se rencontre également chez les Bankutu et les Basongo Meno de la région de Bena Dibele-Kole.

Remarquons cependant que dans la région des Ipanga-Yaélima, les gargoulettes sont relativement rares, les indigènes se servent couramment de grandes calebasses, très souvent munies d'une anse et d'un pied en rotang ou bambou.

En dehors des repas les indigènes ne boivent de l'eau que pour calmer leur soif Chaque fois que les porteurs arrivent à une rivière, ils ont soin de s'y baigner et de s'y rafraichir.

En plus de l'eau boisson ordinaire de toutes les tribus, nous avons retrouvé suivant les régions : le vin de palme appelé malafu, la bière de canne à sucre dite masanga et le pombe ou bière de maïs.

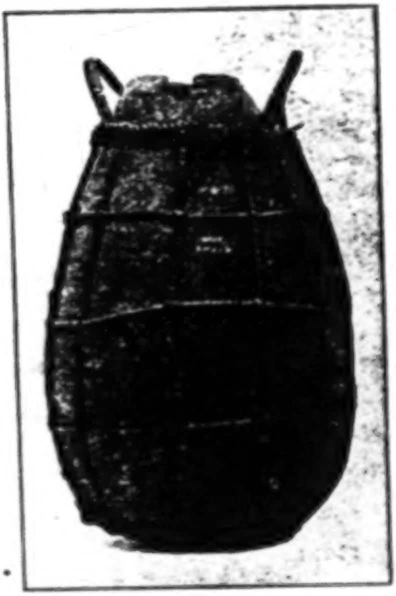


Fig. 84. — Calebasse à l'huile de palme servant également à la conservation de l'eau.

Le vin de palme, le *malafu* indigène, quoique estimé, n'est d'ordinaire pas très recherché, surtout lorsque l'indigène peut le remplacer par le *masanga* ou bière de canne à sucre. Nous l'avons trouvé cependant chez toutes les populations, mais il n'y a en réalité, que les Ipanga-Yaelima et les Basongo Meno-Bankutu, qui en font un usage régulier.

Dans les autres régions la récolte du vin de palme se fait particulièrement dans les villages situés à proximité des postes de l'État ou des installations des sociétés commerciales et au profit des blancs. Ces villages ont généralement un récolteur de métier.

La récolte se fait par incision. Le palmier *Nsese*, le raphia et l'élais, sont particulièrement mis à contribution.

Pour récolter le vin de palme, l'indigène a trois méthodes d'ascension. La première est celle que nous avons décrite pour la récolte de régimes de noix de palme, la seconde consiste, à appliquer contre le tronc du palmier une perche échelle, ou à fixer au tronc même des échelons. La troisième à creuser dans le tronc du palmier des trous servant de marchepied. L'indigène monte jusqu'à la couronne, coupe une feuille du palmier au ras du chou. Dans la blessure il creuse une ouverture assez profonde, y fixe une foliole de palmier, qui fera office de sonde conductrice. A l'autre extrémité de cette sonde l'indigène fixe une calebasse. La sève du palmier qui remplit le creux de la blessure, s'écoule lentement par la sonde dans la calebasse. De bonne heure au matin l'indigène vient la reprendre.

Frais, ce vin me parut délicieux ; fermenté je l'ai jugé inabsorbable !

Les indigènes au contraire n'en veulent que lorsqu'il à fermenté pendant trois ou quatre jours.

Une autre méthode plus simple mais moins avantageuse consite à abattre le palmier, couper la couronne et récolter la sève qui s'écoule. Un palmier peut donner de cette façon, un maximum de 10 à 15 litres de vin et est définitivement perdu. Le vin est d'ailleurs d'une qualité bien moindre ; jamais un indigène n'oserait le présenter au chef de poste.

La bière de canne à sucre, le masanga des indigènes, est la boisson la plus recherchée.

Fig. 45. — Brasserie à Masanga chez les Basakata.

Dans certaines régions, notamment chez les Basakata Balesa, nous avons trouvé dans chaque village, une et parfois deux grandes installations réservées à la fabrication de cette bière. Ces brasseries sont situées un peu en dehors du village. Le matériel est très élémentaire. Une grande place bien nettoyée, un sol bien battu, un toit en paille abritant une espèce de grand bassin, genre de pirogue, deux ou quatre battoirs, une forte barre fixe, une presse en lianes, un bac réservoir et des calebasses.

La canne à sucre est cultivée sur une assez grande échelle et en communauté. Un peu avant la maturité les indigènes la coupent. Hommes, femmes et enfants s'entraident dans ce travail. Toute la récolte est transportée sous le hangar de la brasserie ; la canne à sucre coupée en morceaux est jetée dans le bassin, où deux et parfois quatre hommes se chargent de l'écraser autant que possible au moyen de grands battoirs, et de la réduire en une espèce de pulpe blanchâtre. Quand cette pulpe est suffisamment fine, les indigènes la placent dans le tordeur en lianes, fixé au dessus du bassin réservoir, placé en dessous de la barre fixe. Afin d'empêcher la presse de s'enrouler par suite de la torsion, ils y placent perpendiculairement à la barre de torsion un bâton. Deux hommes impriment ensuite à la presse un énergique mouvement de torsion, extrayant par pression jusqu'à la dernière goutte du jus sucré. Le liquide est recueilli dans le grand bassin réservoir, puis versé dans de grandes calebasses et transporté au village. Frais le massanga est réellement agréable, rafraichissant et délicieux. Il ne produit aucun effet enivrant. Les indigènes ne le boivent cependant pas tant qu'il n'a pas fermenté. Ils y ajoutent des écorces d'un petit arbuste de la plaine, entourent les calebasses des déchets de la canne à sucre, les exposent au soleil pendant un à deux jours et provoquent une fermentation très active.

La bière de canne à sucre est toujours dégustée en communauté.

Toutes les grandes cérémonies donnent lieu à de fortes beuveries. Mariage, naissance, décès, enterrement, retour des grandes chasses, apparition de la nouvelle lune, visite d'un chef voisin et même notre arrivée dans certains villages sont autant d'occasions pour organiser de grandes fêtes indigènes, où l'absorption d'énormes quantités de calebasses de massanga est à l'ordre du jour. Les indigènes se réunissent à l'ombre des grands arbres du village ou sous le hangar public. Les calebasses de massanga, sont placées au centre, ou déversées dans de grandes poteries. Chacun y puise à discrétion, tant qu'il y en a et tant qu'il le peut. Cependant la musique bat son plein, on chante et on danse. Bien souvent on fume du chanvre et on boit toujours jusqu'à l'ivresse brutale. Nous aurions difficilement nous rendre compte des quantités énormes de cette boisson capiteuse, que certains indigènes peuvent absorber. Pokai, le chef Baalumongo d'Engwé ne s'arrête d'ordinaire qu'au dixième litre, et il n'est pas le plus grand consommateur. Très souvent les fêtes dégénèrent en rixes sanglantes. Pour un rien l'indigène enivré, se met en colère, se querelle et n'hésite pas à se servir de ses armes.

Chez certaines tribus, notamment chez les Basfomongo, la femme ne peut sous aucun prétexte assister aux grandes fêtes, participer aux grandes libations. Pokei, nous assura que c'est à cause de leur caractère rancunier qu'elles en sont exclues. « Nous, les hommes, disait-il, nous nous battons parfois au milieu de ces fêtes, mais le lendemain n'avons nous pas oublié nos querelles ? Elles se battraient aussi ; savent-elles seulement garder leur langue même quand elles n'ont pas bu le masanga ! Le lendemain elles se disputeraient encore entre-elles. Les maris s'en mêleraient. Une querelle au village serait la suite de toutes les fêtes ! Non, les femmes ne peuvent boire le masanga »

On aurait tort cependant de croire que les femmes observent strictement cette défense. Oh non ! Plus d'une boit son petit verre de masanga au fond de sa hutte et à l'occasion s'en verse volontiers un peu de trop. Le masanga n'est pas taboo pour elles !

La bière de canne à sucre se sert dans des petites coupes en terre cuite, dans des sections de calebasses et dans des coupes en bois.

A l'Est du territoire des Balesa Batete, le masanga semble inconnu, ou du moins nous ne l'avons pas trouvé, ni chez les Ipanga-Batito, ni chez les Bokala-Yalima.

Chez les Basongo Meno et les Bankutu de la région de Bena Dibele-Kole, les indigènes consomment principalement le vin de palme.

Ils fabriquent également une bière très médiocre de maïs ou de millet.

Pour faire cette bière, l'indigène fait fermenter dans des pots en terre cuite, le maïs ou le millet écrasé et trempé dans l'eau de source.

Ces poteries ont une forme qui se rapproche plus ou moins de la gargoulette à panse sphérique, mais à goulot très large et plus élevé. Elles sont généralement très grandes. Les coupes qui servent à boire le vin de palme et la bière chez les Basongo Meno et les Bankutu sont toujours creusées dans du bois. On en retrouve de toutes les formes, depuis le simple petit tonnelet non ornementé jusqu'à la figurine humaine merveilleusement ouvragée. Dans certains villages, notamment à Tipolo et à Bakoho, nous avons retrouvé des coupes en corne de buffle, ornementées de dessins sculptés. Parfois des coupes en formes de cornes sont creusées dans le bois, ces dernières sont généralement plus grandes et mieux ornementées.

La présence de ces coupes en bois dans la région de Bena Dibele-Kole n'est pas sans intérêt. Jusqu'à présent on ne les avait renseignées que chez les populations de l'entre Kasai-Sankuru et certains auteurs les considéraient même comme une caractéristique des populations Bakuba. Nous reviendrons dans la suite sur ce sujet.

L'anthropophagie si elle a existé jadis, a disparue. Interrogés à ce sujet, les indigènes ont l'habitude de nier énergiquement toute connexion avec cette coutume barbare, mais ils ne se gênent par pour accuser leurs voisins des pires méfaits. A notre avis les populations de la région de Bena Dibele-Kole étaient anthropophages et s'y adonnaient encore jusqu'en ces derniers temps. Même il nous paraît probable, qu'actuellement encore dans une occasion favorable, ils ne résisteraient pas à la tentation.

Fig. 86 — Enfants Bobala.
L'un d'eux montre les signes de Géophagie.

La géophagie est plus commune. Chez toutes les populations les enfants mangent de la terre. Chez les Basakata, les Lesa, les Bosengere les Wadia, tous les indigènes et en particulier les femmes sont géophages.

La terre à poterie et l'argile de certaines termitières sont très recherchées.

Les indigènes mangent la terre plutôt comme friandise et peut être aussi comme médicament. Prétendre qu'elle constitue un aliment serait chose exagérée, car la quantité absorbée est minime.

Nous avons soumis quelques échantillons de terre comestible, recueillis au cours de notre voyage, à notre collègue M. L'Heureux, qui a bien voulu en faire l'analyse. Voici ses conclusions : « L'échantillon a l'aspect d'une » terre glaise. Celle-ci happe à la langue, elle est grise noirâtre par les » déchets organiques qu'elle contient ; elle est assez dure au toucher, mais » se broie aisément au mortier.

» Perte à la calcination (eau-matière organique-acide » carbonique etc. —)	15,63
» Insoluble dans l'acide chlorhydrique, après désagrégation au carbonate de soude » silice blanche :	29,16
» Silice soluble	1,20
» Acide carbonique	fortes traces
» Fer	id. id.
» Magnésie	traces
» Alumine	52.80
» Chaux	traces
	98,79
Pertes et éléments non dosés	1,21
total :	100,00

Conclusion :

» Cette terre, contenant sensiblement l'alumine et la silice dans les pro-
» portions moléculaires $A'_2 O_3 - Si - O_2 - H_2O$ est un kaolin (argile
» pure) souillé de matières organiques.

» Le résidu de la calcination est blanc.

» *Elle peut très bien convenir à la fabrication de la porcelaine.*

» Cette terre ne peut servir tout simplement que de matière de rem-
» plissage destinée à tromper un estomac affamé,

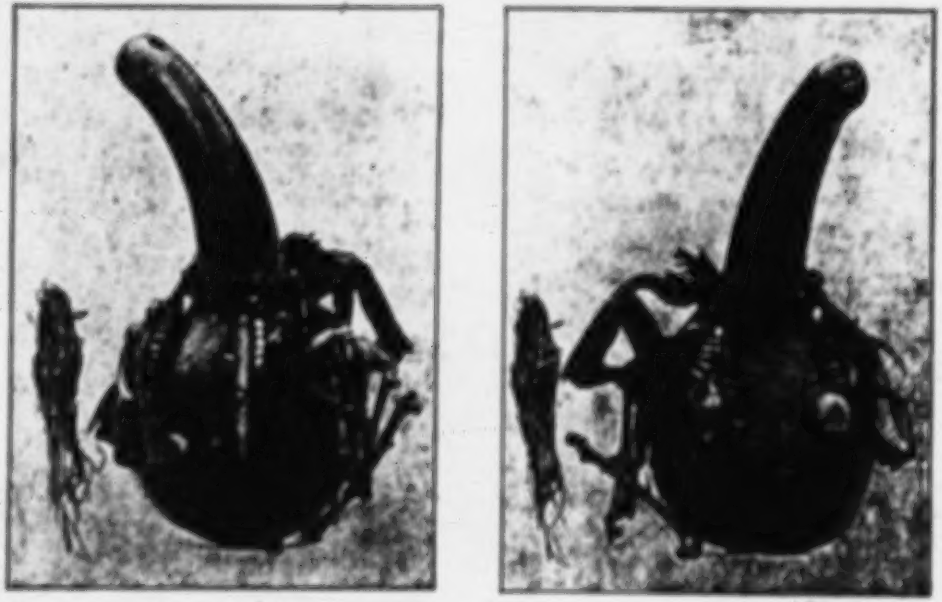
« Elle ne constitue pas un aliment, ni un condiment et elle ne peut
» avoir sur l'organisme humain et en particulier sur l'estomac, qu'une
» influence néfaste. »

CHANVRE ET TABAC.

Plus désastreuses sont les conséquences de l'usage du chanvre.

Cette triste passion, qui semble avoir été très répandue chez certaines populations, tend heureusement à disparaître, grâce à l'intervention énergique du gouvernement.

Malgré les recherches les plus minutieuses que nous avons faites ; nous n'avons pu retrouver que quelques rares preuves de l'existence de cette funeste coutume.



Vue de dos

Vue de face

FIG. 87. — Pipe à chanvre ornée de Nkisi.

Chez les Banfumungu de Mpenzi, nous avons cependant retrouvé chez des indigènes des échantillons de chanvre et des pipes-calebasses, le tout caché au fond de la couchette en dessous du lit.

Interrogé au sujet de l'usage de ces pipes, Lekana, le chef des Banfumungu de la région, commença par nous donner une réponse dilatoire. Brusquement je lui demandais s'il ignorait l'usage de la botte de chanvre que *j'avais* trouvé dans la même hutte. Il me dit simplement : « le blanc sait tout ! Pourquoi me demander à quoi servent ces pipes ? »

Les quelques pipes à chanvre récoltées au village de Mpenzi, sont ornementées de plumes, de perles, de petits sachets en étoffe de raphia ou lambeaux d'étoffe d'importation contenant des substances les plus diverses ; de la terre blanche, des écailles des cauris, du ngula, etc. Or l'ensemble de toutes ces choses hétéroclites forme la base de la plupart des objets, *Nkisi* ou *Ndoki* des Banfumungu. Leur présence suffisait à elle seule pour me porter à rattacher à ces pipes une signification que jusqu'à présent je ne leur soupçonnais pas.

Interrogés à ce sujet, les indigènes de Mpenzi, leur chef Lekana en particulier, furent très catégoriques. « Bula Matari a défendu l'usage du chanvre, mais n'est-ce pas Nkisi ? »

« Pourquoi ne pourrons nous pas nous en servir ? »

Lorsque je leur eus exposé les conséquences néfastes de cet usage, Lekana me demanda : « Quand nous fumons le chanvre sentons nous en-
» core la douleur ? Nos malades ne savent-ils pas dormir après avoir
» fumé le chanvre ? Faire oublier les douleurs et les souffrances ; ren-
» dre le sommeil aux malades est-ce faire du mal ? Le chanvre n'est-il
» pas *Nkisi* des malades ? »

J'eus beau insister, expliquer, parler, rien n'y fit ; le chanvre et la pipe à chanvre étaient et restaient *Nkisi*.

Ce n'est donc pas simplement par pure passion que le Banfumungu fume le chanvre et qu'à défaut de pouvoir le faire en toute liberté il s'y adonne en cachette. Ce n'est pas uniquement le besoin de continuer une habitude invétérée qui le pousse à éluder les prescriptions sévères qui en interdisent l'usage.

La croyance à la force magique, à la puissance occulte mais bienfaisante, de ce narcotique l'empêche de délaisser la pipe à chanvre. Tant que cette croyance existera chez lui il gardera cette pipe et n'abandonnera pas la coutume. Si nous pouvions arriver à lui faire comprendre que bien loin d'être *Nkisi*, le chanvre est un *Ndoki* cause première de bien des souffrances, douleurs et maladies, la lutte contre l'emploi et l'usage du chanvre serait terminée dans toute la région des Bafumungu.

Je n'oserais pas en dire autant des tribus des autres régions.

Chez les Wadia de Lubamiti, les Bolaie de Lebi et ailleurs encore, j'ai récolté quelques pipes calebasses, sans cependant pouvoir établir que les indigènes s'en servaient pour fumer le chanvre. Aucune d'elles n'était ornementée d'une façon quelconque permettant de soupçonner que les indigènes y rattachent un caractère magique ou religieux. Les indigènes s'en servaient d'ailleurs régulièrement pour fumer le tabac.

L'usage du chanvre est cependant général depuis Léopoldville jusque dans la région de Bena Dibele-Kole, mais la coutume ne nous semble pas avoir pris une extension aussi grande dans la région du Lac Léopold II-Lukenie, qu'au Sud du Kasai-Sankuru.

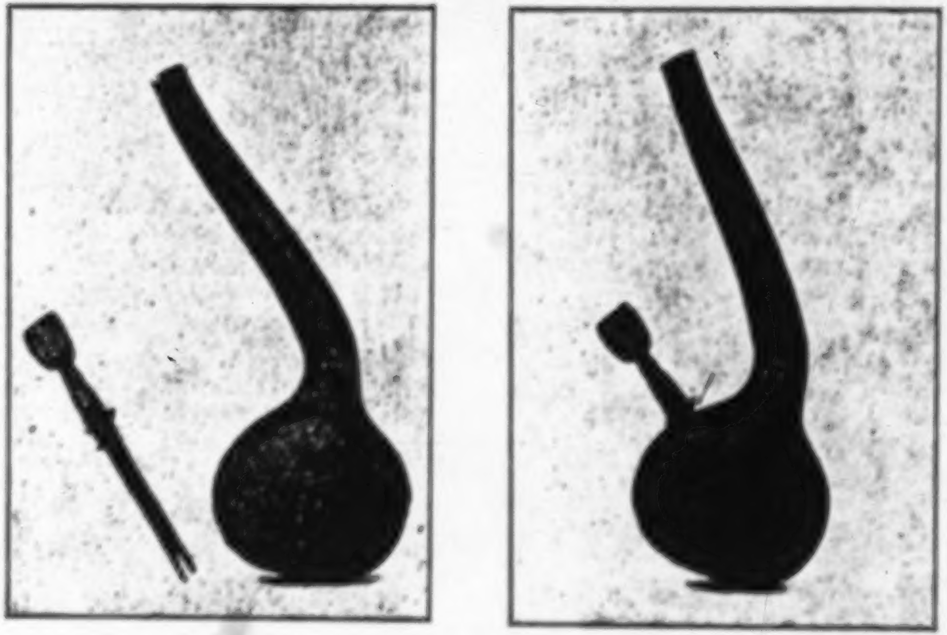
La forme de la pipe calebasse dépend essentiellement de la calebasse même. Elle est naturellement très variable. Cependant nous croyons pouvoir partager ces pipes en deux catégories ; l'une comprenant les pipes à simple panse sphéroïdale et à long tuyau ; l'autre des pipes calebasses à double panse sphéroïdale avec étranglement médiane et sans tuyau.

Cette dernière forme se rencontre plutôt dans la région de l'entre Congo-Kasai-Kwango.

Nous ne pouvons cependant y retrouver un caractère ethnique spécial à cette région, car cette forme de la pipe calebasse se rencontre également chez d'autres tribus où, de même que chez les Bafumungu, nous avons récolté des pipes calebasses à simple panse sphéroïdale et long tuyau servant à fumer le chanvre.

Le fourneau de la pipe calebasse est formé d'un tube en bois, bambou ou d'une section d'un pétiole de feuille de bananier. Dans la panse inférieure de la calebasse l'indigène creuse une petite ouverture circulaire dans laquelle s'engage le tuyau fourneau.

L'extrémité inférieure de celui-ci, est toujours taillée en forme de biseau ou de fourche.



Fourneau et tuyau détaché. Fig. 66. — Pipe à chanvre. Fourneau et tuyau en place.

L'embouchure est percée au sommet de la seconde panse.

Généralement très réduite, il arrive fréquemment, qu'un mince disque en bois ou en ivoire muni d'une petite ouverture y soit fixé au moyen de résine. Nous avons retrouvé un spécimen présentant ce caractère spécial, chez les Tumba du village indigène situé à proximité d'Inongo.

Avant de se servir de sa pipe calebasse, l'indigène retire le fourneau, remplit d'eau jusqu'au tiers du contenant la seconde panse et replace le fourneau dans l'ouverture. L'extrémité inférieure plonge ainsi dans le liquide et la pipe forme narghilé.

L'aspiration de la fumée du chanvre se produit en faisant le vide à l'intérieur de la calebasse. La fumée passe au travers de l'eau et les impuretés qu'elle entraîne y restent suspendues.

Une pipe calebasse trouvée dans la hutte de Matari, chef des Banfumu du village de Kapanda, situé à proximité de Kwamouth, présente le caractère spécial d'avoir le fourneau double.

Pour fumer le chanvre l'indigène se sert du simple tube en bambou fixé dans la panse de la calebasse ; tandis que pour fumer le tabac il adapte au dessus du tube un récipient en terre cuite formant un fourneau spécial dont la capacité est notablement plus grande.

La raison de l'emploi de ces différents fourneaux réside dans la manière même de fumer le chanvre et le tabac.

Le chanvre se fume par petites quantités à la fois et la pipe que le Banfumungu emploie à cet effet est sa propriété privée.

L'indigène ne fume le chanvre que lorsqu'il se sent à l'abri des regards indiscrets, caché dans la brousse ou au fond de sa hutte et à porte close.

Le tabac au contraire se fume au grand air, dans les grandes réunions et la pipe bien bourrée passe de bouche en bouche.

Aussitôt que le chef a aspiré une ou deux fortes bouffées il passe la pipe à son voisin. Dans l'occurrence la petite capacité du tuyau fourneau qui est assez grande pour le peu de chanvre que l'indigène fume discrètement, est trop réduite pour y bourrer de quoi permettre à chaque membre du cercle d'y puiser une bonne bouffée. Aussi Matari a-t-il soin d'y fixer un fourneau à capacité plus grande de façon à pouvoir suivre la coutume.

Comme nous l'avons fait observer plus haut, la pipe calebasse à simple panse sphéroïdale et long tuyau se rencontre surtout dans la région du Lac Léopold II et de la Lukénie.

Des sept spécimens de ce genre que nous avons récoltés, un seul provient des Bankumungu, tandis que les autres appartiennent aux différentes tribus de la région précitée.

Le fourneau est d'ordinaire formé d'une section de bambou ou de l'extrémité d'un pétiole de feuille de bananier. Toutes ces pipes forment narghilé.

Celle que nous avons récoltée chez les Yaelima est munie d'un fourneau découpé dans un noyau de noix de palme. Ce fourneau est fixé au moyen d'une pâte de résine de *Bulungu* sur un tuyau en bambou dont l'extrémité inférieure taillé en fourche plonge dans l'eau.

Les indigènes se servent de préférence de ces sortes de pipes pour fumer le chanvre, quoiqu'il nous soit arrivé plus d'une fois de constater qu'ils s'en servaient également pour fumer le tabac.

La coutume de fumer le tabac dans une pipe commune ne semble pas très en honneur chez les populations de la Mfimi-Lukénie. En général chaque indigène possède une pipe.

Chez les tribus du Lac Léopold II, de même que chez les Basakata, Bolia et les Batito, la pipe à tabac est d'ordinaire formée par une simple nervure de feuille de bananier. Très souvent l'indigène fixe *à l'extrémité inférieure de celle-ci un petit fourneau en terre cuite.* Celui-ci est toujours des plus primitifs et intéressant à cause de sa forme irrégulière, longue, mince et légèrement recourbée. L'indigène en a indiscutablement emprunté l'idée, à la forme que présente le fourneau de la pipe constituée par la simple nervure de la feuille de bananier. Celui-ci ne résista guère à l'usure ; en fumant le tabac l'indigène brula le fourneau de sa pipe. Primitivement il le remplaça par un autre, découpé dans un morceau de bois plus dur et plus résistant, mais bientôt il en arriva à se façonner un fourneau en terre cuite tout en lui gardant la forme primitive.

Les pipes à fourneau en bois de cette région sont très rares. Nous n'en possédons qu'une seule provenant des Batitu du village de Longinpila.

Au delà des Batitu dans la région de Bumbuli, chez les Bokala et les Yaelima, la pipe est formée d'un long tuyau en bois, généralement un peu recourbé et muni à l'une des extrémités d'un petit fourneau en terre cuite et à l'autre d'un fémur de singe servant d'embouchure.

Il arrive que le fourneau en terre cuite soit remplacé par un fourneau en bois, le plus souvent orné de dessins sculptés et représentant très souvent une tête humaine. Cette dernière forme est très commune dans la région de Bena Dibele et Kole. Certains spécimens sont très artistiquement ouvragés.

A côté de cette forme caractéristique nous avons retrouvé un autre type non moins intéressant. Le fourneau et le tuyau sont toujours formés d'une branche creusée d'une essence spéciale. La forme est légèrement recourbée, l'extrémité supérieure légèrement évasée formant le fourneau. A l'autre extrémité du tuyau l'indigène fixe une petite calebasse de forme sphéroïdale percée de deux ouvertures dont l'une sert d'embouchure. Cette calebasse est légèrement bourrée de fibres de raphia et d'herbes sèches servant à tamiser la fumée de tabac.

En dehors de cette forme primitive nous avons récolté certaines pipes appartenant à la même classe, mais dont la calebasse embouchure avait été remplacée par une embouchure en bois, parfois ornementée de dessins linéaires sculptés et de petites lamelles en cuivre incrustées dans le bois.

Nous avons trouvé ainsi dans la région des Yaelima-Bankutsu deux formes de pipes très caractéristiques qui semblent indiquer une certaine relation ethnique entre ces différentes populations. Nous ignorons si ces mêmes formes se rencontrent chez les populations de la région de Dekese mais cela nous semble très probable. Le long de la rive Nord du Sankuru entre Lodi et Isaka nous avons rencontré cette même forme, d'où il résulte qu'au moins dans la région Sud de Dekese, la zone ethnique caractérisée par ces deux formes spéciales de la pipe indigène comprend toute la région de Bumbuli à Bena Dibele-Kole. Ces formes se retrouvent d'ailleurs encore en dehors de ce territoire, notamment au Nord chez les Bakuba et les Bashilele. Il convient cependant de remarquer qu'au Nord la pipe munie d'un fémur servant d'embouchure est excessivement rare, tandis qu'au Sud celle munie d'une calebasse embouchure ne se rencontre que très peu. Ceci semble indiquer que nous nous trouvons ici en présence d'une zône de contact, où nous retrouvons les traces des relations ethniques qui relient les populations de cette région aux tribus du Nord et du Sud. On peut établir par là que les tribus Bakuba et Bashilele du Kasai-Sankuru, se rattachent aux populations de l'entre Sankuru-Lukenie et qu'elles ont même des affinités ethniques avec les populations dont le territoire s'étend bien plus au Nord.

Dans la région des Banfumu et des Bateke, nous trouvons deux formes de pipes à tabac, l'une à grand fourneau servant à la communauté, l'autre plus petite, le fourneau en terre cuite, le tuyau et l'embouchure en bois, employée individuelement tant par les hommes que par les femmes. A *côtés* de ces pipes nous avons également retrouvé quelques spécimens dont le fourneau et le tuyau étaient en fer. Ces pipes sont généralement très longues et ont un caractère plus primitif que les petites pipes en terre cuite et tuyau en bois. Il est d'ailleurs probable que ces dernières ont été fabriquées d'après des modèles importés. Nous les avons surtout trouvées dans les villages situés à proximité des grands centres et des postes de l'État. Elles présentent dans leur forme une analogie frappante et évidente avec les pipes d'importation.

Nous avons rencontré cette même forme chez les Bayansi de la rive droite du Kasai et au Nord de Kwamouth. Ces indigènes se rattachent ainsi au groupe des Bateke-Banfumungu. Ainsi apparaît une nouvelle zône ethnique, et le territoire que nous avons parcouru peut se subdiviser sous ce rapport en trois régions ethniques.

La première comprend tout le territoire occupé par les Bateke Banfumungu, les Bayansi et une partie des Bahoma et se caractérise :

1°/ par l'usage d'une pipe calebasse — fétiche-akisi — servant à fumer du chanvre.

2°/ l'emploi de pipes à grands fourneaux en terre cuite servant à fumer le tabac en communauté et l'existence d'une petite pipe à tabac, propriété individuelle et employée tant par les femmes que par les hommes.

La seconde s'étend de l'embouchure de la Mfimi, jusqu'aux confins du territoire des Batitu.

La pipe à chanvre n'est pas *nkisi*, la pipe à tabac, très primitive, est formée d'une nervure de feuille de bananier, très souvent munie d'un fourneau en bois ou en terre cuite. La femme ne fume ni le tabac ni le chanvre et la coutume de fumer la pipe en communauté n'y est guère en honneur.

La troisième zone est celle où nous avons rencontré la pipe à tabac en bois, munie d'une embouchure calebasse ou d'un chalumeau en os de singe. Elle comprend toute la région des Yaelima-Bankutshu y compris les Bashilele et les Bakuba et très probablement la région des Dengese.

En général les indigènes aiment beaucoup à fumer le tabac. Ils le font de préférence quand il fait froid, prétendant que cela active la chaleur du corps.

Le tabac n'est pas cultivé en grandes étendues, la culture en est toujours strictement limitée aux besoins de celui qui l'entreprend. Lorsque l'indigène veut fumer le tabac, il arrache une feuille de la plante, la fait sécher à la chaleur d'un foyer, l'écrase et la réduit en poudre. Une pincée de ce tabac sommairement pilé est placée dans le récipient formant fourneau de la pipe et recouverte ensuite d'un charbon de bois incandescent. L'indigène aspire fortement la fumée, jusqu'à ce qu'il en ait la bouche pleine, la retient pendant quelques instants et la rejette ensuite en ouvrant largement la bouche et détournant légèrement la tête. Il arrive très fréquemment qu'il aspire une partie de la fumée ce qui provoque toujours d'une toux violente, l'apparition de larmes et parfois un malaise assez sérieux.

Fig. 98. — [illegible] fumant le tabac.

Si les indigènes sont réunis en groupe, ils se passent la pipe de voisin à voisin, après avoir aspiré une bonne bouffée. L'attente du fumeur est très souvent marquée de signes d'impatience et celui qui se risquerait à prendre à la pipe plus que ce qu'il lui revient s'exposerait à une dispute en règle.

Les femmes ne sont jamais admises au cercle des fumeurs. Elles ne se réunissent d'ailleurs pas entre elles pour fumer, mais le font toujours isolément.

Comme nous l'avons dit plus haut les conséquences de l'usage du chanvre sont des plus funestes.

Au premier plaisir sensuel succède une excitation nerveuse intense. Le fumeur perd rapidement le sentiment de la réalité. Ce qui l'entoure ce qu'il voit ce qu'il touche, ce qu'il entend prend des proportions démesurées. Incapable de se dominer, de se maîtriser, il passe d'un excès à l'autre. Un rien le met en colère et le fait rugir de fureur, et un instant après il bondit de joie, gesticule, danse et chante sans rime ni raison. Puis survient l'affaissement général, la chute brusque des nerfs surexcités. Le fumeur s'assoupit et dort. Quand-il se réveille il n'a plus le moindre souvenir de ce qu'il a fait, ni de ce qui s'est passé. Il se sent très abattu et a les yeux brillants et hagards.

Les fumeurs de chanvre deviennent généralement fous et le plus souvent fous furieux.

Fig. 90. — W'adia fumant le chanvre.

Devant les ravages que produit cette funeste passion, le Gouvernement en a défendu la culture, la vente, le transport, la détention.

Malgré ces ordonnances, la sévérité de leur application, les efforts des agents et missionnaires et les effets pernicieux de l'usage du chanvre, les indigènes restent fortement attachés à cet excitant et en usent encore beaucoup en cachette, comme nous l'avons fait remarquer plus haut. Chez certaines tribus, notamment chez les Bamfumungu et les Baboma, le chanvre est considéré comme un *nkisi* ou *amulette* préservant des maladies et guérissant les malades. Ceci nous explique les nombreuses difficultés que rencontre l'administration à vaincre cette passion. La suppression totale de l'emploi du chanvre qui s'impose dans l'intérêt matériel et moral des indigènes, sera une œuvre de longue haleine. Cet excitant, cette cause de plaisirs sensuels, cette passion sacrée et qu'il croit bienfaisante, ce *nkisi*, l'indigène ne l'abandonnera qu'après une lutte longue, persévérante et énergique.

CHAPITRE V.

Les soins donnés au corps.

Hygiène. — Fabrication du savon. — Nguia et Mpembe. — Déformations artificielles. — L'épilation. — Limage des dents. — La coiffure. — Parures et objets suspendus au corps. — Tatouage par incision. — La circoncision.

Celui qui n'a été que temporairement en contact avec les indigènes a une tendance à nous les dépeindre comme des êtres peu soucieux de leur toilette, ignorant les principes d'hygiène et de propreté, disons même sales et crasseux. Pour peu que l'on ait l'occasion de pénétrer dans la vie de ces primitifs, on se rend bien vite compte de l'inexactitude de ces jugements, basés sur une observation hâtive et superficielle. En étudiant de près les coutumes de l'indigène, en l'observant dans sa vie quotidienne et régulière, on note quantité de petits faits, qui nous montrent que l'indigène, insouciant en apparence de toute mesure d'hygiène, et de soins de propreté, tient compte des principes rudimentaire d'hygiène et qu'il s'efforce par quantité de petits faits à les appliquer dans sa vie.

A première vue la hutte indigène ressemble à un taudis, son aspect très souvent délabré, l'entrée étroite et basse, l'absence de fenêtres ou de cheminée d'aérage et le désordre qui règne généralement dans la place qui sert de refuge, de cuisine, etc., sont autant de causes de l'impression désagréable que produit une rapide investigation. Cependant l'indigène met un grand soin à la construction de son habitation. La femme s'acharne au nettoyage régulier de l'intérieur de sa hutte. Si, poussant nos investigations plus loin, nous passons dans l'espace réservé aux époux, que nous étudions de près l'organisation et les dispositions de ce qui tient lieu de chambre à coucher, nous constatons, qu'il y règne toujours une propreté qui contraste singulièrement avec l'impression désagréable du premier contact. Les parois sont tapissées de nattes; le lit primitif est construit en surélévation pour éviter le contact désagréable et peu hygiénique du sol. Au dessus du lit l'indigène étend une natte;

Fig. 91. — Une scène de la vie indigène chez les riverains de la basse Lulonga.

l'oreiller d'un usage courant, lui permet de se reposer dans une attitude favorable au repos.

Presque journellement tous les indigènes prennent un bain. Le plus souvent ils vont à la rivière aux heures les plus chaudes de la journée, parfois de grand matin ou vers le soir. L'enfant y participe dès sa tendre jeunesse. Outre ces bains réguliers, l'indigène se lave souvent tout le corps à l'eau chaude. Il s'enduit ensuite d'une légère couche d'huile de palme, pour assurer la souplesse à la peau et éviter qu'elle ne souffre trop sous l'action des rayons solaires.

Avant et après chaque repas l'indigène a soin de se rincer la bouche. Après le repas il se nettoie les dents au moyen d'une petite brosse en rotang ou en bois tendre, dont les fibres constituent les soies.

Un réel souci de propreté préside à la préparation des repas. Tous les aliments sont lavés, nettoyés et bouillis avant la consommation. Les ustensiles qui servent à leur préparation sont minutieusement entretenus et nettoyés. Malgré les conditions primitives de la préparation de la farine de manioc, celle-ci est aussi pure que si elle avait été préparée par une méthode perfectionnée et un outillage moderne. Non content de l'entretien des ustensiles dans lesquels la femme sert les repas elle a soin de les tapisser au moment opportun de feuilles fraîches et bien propres.

Les indigènes ont les ongles des mains et des pieds coupés courts.

L'entretien des pieds s'explique par mesure d'hygiène et la nécessité de prendre des précautions pour éviter la vermine, qui s'installe de préférence à ces endroits (chiques) ; l'entretien des mains ne peut s'expliquer que par le soin de propreté qu'implique la façon indigène de prendre les aliments.

Le savon d'importation n'est point encore d'un usage courant quoi que nous en ayons trouvé dans de nombreuses huttes indigènes.

Beaucoup de femmes indigènes savent fabriquer le savon. Leur procédé est des plus simples. Des épluchures desséchées de bananes, des troncs de papayers, des écorces, des fruits de divers végétaux et les déchets des noix de palme sont réunis, brûlés, les cendres soigneusement recueillies et mélangées à une certaine quantité d'eau pour être bouillies. A la première ébullition la femme enlève les cendres et les impuretés qui viennent flotter à la surface. L'ébullition est continuée ensuite jusqu'à évaporation quasi complète. Quand il ne reste dans le récipient qu'un dépôt épais et sirupeux gris-noirâtre, la femme le retire du feu, le lave et le malaxe d'eau fraîche, jusqu'à ce qu'il ait pris une couleur plus claire. Elle y ajoute ensuite de l'huile de palme, délaie le tout avec grand soin et remet l'ensemble sur le feu. La masse est remuée pendant toute la durée de l'ébullition et celle-ci poussée jusqu'à ce que la femme obtienne un mélange dont la consistance dépasse légèrement celle de nos savons mous.

Deux échantillons de ce savon, *l'un* provenant des Mosengere, *l'autre* des Basakata ont été soumis à l'analyse au laboratoire du Musée du Congo Belge. Voici les résultats obtenus :

Savon n° 11500

Humidité : (110 °/₀)	1,07 %	
Cendres	9,86 %	sur matière sèche.
Corps gras total	84,24 %	» » »
Substances étrangères	2,45 %	» » »
Substances terreuses	0,22 %	» » »
Insaponifiable	9,23 %	» » »

Alcalinité des cendres en Na_2O sur cendres totales : nulle.

Conclusions :

Le produit analysé n'a de savon que le nom. C'est de l'huile végétale, (probablement de l'huile de palme) mélangée à des matières terreuses sans aucun pouvoir saponifiant.

Le Directeur du Laboratoire,
(signé) PIERAERTS.

Savon n° 11499

Humidité : (110)°	7,65 %	
Cendres	27,80 %	sur matière sèche.
Corps gras total	64,36 %	» » »
Substances étrangères	13,46 %	» » »
Substances terreuses	11,88 %	» » »
Insaponifiable	1,62 %	» » »

Alcalinité des cendres en Na_2O sur cendres totales : 28,25 %.

Conclusions :

Savon contenant une quantité de corps gras trop faible, comparativement à celle qu'accuse le savon bien fabriqué. La teneur en substances terreuses est excessive. Il est à supposer que la lessive alcaline utilisée pour la préparation de ce savon examiné n'a pas été décantée soigneusement avant son emploi.

Le Directeur du Laboratoire,
(signé) PIERAERTS.

Le savon indigène n'est employé qu'aux soins de la toilette.

L'indigène ne se contente pas de s'enduire le corps d'huile de palme, l'homme et plus spécialement la femme se saupoudrent très souvent de poussière de Tukula. Les femmes en fabriquent un fard, dont elles aiment à se couvrir tout le corps par esprit de coquetterie. Cette coutume est tellement répandue parmi les populations du Lac Léopold II, que dans certaines régions, la fabrication du ngula est devenue une véritable industrie locale. Ce fait s'observe spécialement chez les Basengele. Dans un village voisin du poste de Bongo nous avons compté 25 installations consacrées à la fabrication de la poudre de ngula. L'établi le plus simple est formé par deux blocs de Tukula ou bois rouge, un petit récipient contenant de l'eau, une poignée de sable et une petite brosse en piassava. L'un des blocs est placé à terre. La femme est assise au travail. Le second bloc est placé à plat sur la surface supérieure du premier. Cette face est humectée d'eau et saupoudrée de sable. La femme tient le bloc supérieur des deux mains y imprime un mouvement de va et vient ou rotation et a bien soin de tenir les deux faces de frottement humides. Sous l'effort du frottement et l'action des grains de sable faisant fonction de lime râpe on obtient une poussière rouge, fine, à peu près impalpable, mélangée d'eau. L'art de cette fabrication consiste à procéder de façon à ce que le sable racleur se mélange le moins possible à la poussière de bois. L'habilité de certains fabricants est si grande, que l'on parvient à peine à retrouver dans leur ngula, quelques traces de sable. (1)

Dans la région des Mosengere, le métier à ngula est d'ordinaire plus perfectionné : une forte écorce d'arbre sert de cuvette. Sur cette cuvette sont fixés 5 ou 6 bâtons assez forts auxquels l'indigène attache l'un des blocs de Tukula. Un dispositif spécial permet de fixer ce métier. Certains indigènes en sont même arrivés à établir devant leur hutte avec un [illegible] très rudimentaire un métier perfectionné, permettant de fabriquer le ngula tout en se tenant debout. Quatre forts pieux fixés perpendiculairement en terre soutiennent à 15 centimètres du sol un grand bassin en écorce

Fig. 92. — Un chef Batwa. — Isongo. — Coiffure en cordes.

---

(1) Voir à ce sujet la monographie sur le ngula et sa fabrication au Congo Belge, par Dr J. Maes dans la revue Congo, tome 1930.

d'arbre. A un mètre de hauteur, des traverses horizontales sont attachées aux extrémités fourchues de ces pieux, et sur ces traverses ils fixent l'un des blocs de Takula. Un récipient en terre cuite suspendu dans les trois branches d'un pieux fixé en terre juste à côté de l'établi, contient le mélange d'eau et d'une minime partie d'huile. Une brosse faite d'une section de bois tendre plonge dans le mélange et permet à l'artisan de mouiller à volonté le bloc de Takula. Une petite calebasse sectionnée contient la réserve de sable, qui sert à racler la poussière de bois sous l'effort du frottement. Malgré toute l'habileté de l'ouvrier, ce sable se mélange à la poussière raclée et doit en conséquence être remplacé de temps à autre. Le fabricant de ngula, se tient debout devant l'établi. Le mélange d'eau, de poussière de ngula et de quelques grains de sable, tombe dans le bassin réservoir au fur et à mesure que le travail avance. Quand le stock est assez grand, l'indigène tresse des petits paniers de forme tronconique, d'une contenance moyenne d'un décimètre cube. La pâte de ngula est tassée dans ces paniers et l'ensemble suspendu ensuite sous l'auvent à l'abri du soleil. Au bout de quelques jours la pâte s'est desséchée, le cône du ngula est moulé, détaché du moule, enveloppé de feuilles de bananier et soigneusement ficelé au moyen de lanières de rotang, éclats de bambou ou de fibres de raphia.

La réserve familiale reste en général dans les réservoirs des métiers à ngula ; toute la production moulée est écoulée sur les marchés étrangers.

Les paniers servant de moules à ngula sont tous tressés d'après une même technique. Des lanières de rotang sont placées par série de quatre en croix, sans être entrelacées ou tressées au point de croisement. Le fond du panier est formé par le cadre de croisement. Les lanières sont relevées sur les quatre côtés de ce carré et maintenues par une ligature en fibres de raphia tordues, puis les parois sont tressées à technique simple c'est-à-dire d'entrecroisement alternatif de la lanière verticale et de la bande transversale. Comme tous ces moules présentent toujours une hauteur et un diamètre approximativement uniformes, les cônes de ngula ont à la fois la même forme et un poids très régulier. Les indigènes en font un objet d'échange très employé dans leurs relations commerciales. Pour certaines régions le cône de ngula est devenu de cette façon une véritable monnaie ayant cours régulier d'une tribu à l'autre.

Au passage des steamers à Bushie s'organise régulièrement un marché, où les gens de l'intérieur échangent les produits de leurs industries contre les objets importés qu'apportent les noirs au service des Blancs. Les cônes de Ngula, comptent parmi les principaux objets d'échange et sont cédés à un cours très élevé. Dans la région de Ibeke le vieux chef Kua Kua était grand trafiquant de Ngula. Régulièrement il passait avec quatre ou cinq de ses femmes, emportant de la région de l'entre Kasai-Lukenie des produits divers, pour aller les échanger contre le Ngula fabriqué dans la région de la Lukeru.

Dans toutes les régions du Congo Central, la forme du Ngula d'échange est celle du cône allongé tronconique. Par contre chez les Basongo Meno et plus à l'Est, le ngula se présente le plus souvent sous forme de boule. L'indigène de ces régions s'en sert souvent pour l'ornementation de ses poteries, objets en bois et pour teindre les fibres des tissus à broder. Il le conserve dans des boîtes à fards, sculptées dans du bois de Tukula, d'ordinaire ornées de dessins très artistiques. Il s'en sert encore pour colorier sa coiffure.

Quelques échantillons de Ngula ont été soumis à l'analyse du laboratoire du Musée, voici les résultats des analyses.

Ngula-Bam.

Le produit préparé par les indigènes se présente sous la forme d'une masse comprimée rouge brique. Elle comprend des matières colorantes rouges, du bois en sciure, du sable. Elle renferme une notable quantité de cendres : 10,36 %.

Elle a été concassée, tamisée et traitée par de l'alcool éthylique à chaud : nous avons obtenu une espèce de sirop fortement coloré en rouge foncé. Le sirop a été filtré, puis évaporé ; il a laissé un résidu ressemblant à une couche de laque laquelle, sous la pression d'une spatule s'écaillait en paillettes mordorées, très légères.

Nous avons recherché les dissolvants de ce produit et quelques propriétés chimiques générales :

1°/ L'alcool éthylique, l'alcool méthylique et l'acétone le dissolvent complètement en beau rouge écarlate.

2°/ L'alcool amylique donne une dissolution entière, claire, d'un rouge vineux.

3°/ L'éther sulfurique le dissout incomplètement en donnant une solution claire, jaune, fluorescente.

4°/ Le chloroforme le dissout aussi imparfaitement, donne un léger trouble et une fluorescence verte-jaune.

5°/ Le benzol et le trichloréthylène ne le dissolvent presque pas et offrent une fluorescence verte.

6°/ Le tétrachlorure de carbone le dissout difficilement, la solution reste claire et est légèrement teintée de rouge.

7°/ L'acide acétique glacial pur donne une dissolution complète d'un beau rouge écarlate.

8°/ L'acide acétique à 50 %, ne dissout absolument rien.

9°/ L'eau distillée ne dissout rien.

10°/ Les solutions alcalines de potasse donnent une magnifique dissolution complète d'un beau rouge vineux foncé.

11°/ L'hydrogène sulfuré fonce la liqueur sans donner de précipité.

12°/ L'eau de chaux : la liqueur se fonce et tient en suspension un léger précipité brun lie de vin.

13°/ Alun : même action que la chaux ; le précipité est beaucoup moins abondant.

14°/ Sels de plomb : la liqueur se fonce et donne un précipité assez abondant, brun lie de vin.

15°/ Sels de fer : Le chlorure ferrique fait virer la teinture en violet foncé opaque.

16°/ Sels de cuivre : la liqueur obtenue est moins foncée qu'avec les sels de fer.

17°/ Employé comme polissage, il a donné d'excellents résultats sur l'acajou, le hêtre, le bois blanc du Canada.

Nos recherches nous indiqueront les usages industriels auxquels on pourra le destiner.

L'attaché au Laboratoire du Musée,
(signé) L'HEUREUX.

En dehors du ngula l'indigène s'enduit parfois aussi le corps d'une espèce d'argile blanche, que l'on rencontre assez fréquemment dans le lit des rivières. L'indigène l'appelle « Mpemba ». Son usage n'est de loin pas aussi généralisé que celui du ngula et nous croyons que l'indigène y rattache une force magique plutôt qu'une tendance d'ornementation. L'usage du « Mpemba » s'observe surtout chez les populations du Congo Kasai, Lac Léopold II et de la Lukenie jusque dans la région des Bolia.

Nulle part nous n'avons remarqué que l'indigène s'en enduisait tout le corps. Les quelques femmes en deuil que nous avons rencontrées étaient couvertes d'une boue jaune grisâtre et non de « Mpemba ». Nous croyons d'ailleurs que l'usage du « Mpemba » est réservé au chef, ses femmes, peut-être aux notables et à leur famille, mais il nous a été impossible d'établir sûrement l'exactitude de notre hypothèse. Interrogés à ce sujet, les indigènes se sont toujours bornés à des réponses douteuses et évasives. Le chef indigène ne se présente que rarement à une grande assemblée sans avoir la figure et parfois les bras et le buste barriolés de signes tracés au « Mpemba ». A l'occasion de toutes les réceptions officielles, le chef, quelques notables et parfois certaines femmes de chefs, avaient les yeux encadrés d'un rectangle plus ou moins régulier tracé au «Mpemba».

Les déformations artificielles que nous avons observées au cours de notre voyage sont :

1°/ L'épilation.
2°/ Le limage des dents.
3°/ Le tatouage par incision.
4°/ La circoncision.

L'épilation est pratiquée par toutes les populations des régions parcourues. L'indigène enlève jusqu'au dernier poil du corps. Ce qui ne peut être arraché est rasé avec grand soin. Pour les parties du corps difficiles à atteindre, hommes et femmes s'entraident mutuellement. Les sourcils et les cils sont également arrachés, tandis que la barbe et les moustaches sont, au contraire, soignées avec grand orgueil. Il n'arrive que très rarement que la barbe soit bien fournie. Nous n'avons rencontré qu'un cas bien caractéristique : l'heureux possesseur de cette belle barbe ou était fier au possible et Natali, chef des Banfumu de Kwamouth était navré de n'avoir le menton garni que de quelques rares poils, alors qu'un de ses notables, était doté d'une si belle barbe.

Chez les populations Bateke-Banfumu jusqu'aux Ipanga, les indigènes se rasent assez souvent la base du cuir chevelu, sur toute la circonférence du crâne. Leur coiffure présente l'aspect d'une calotte très régulière.

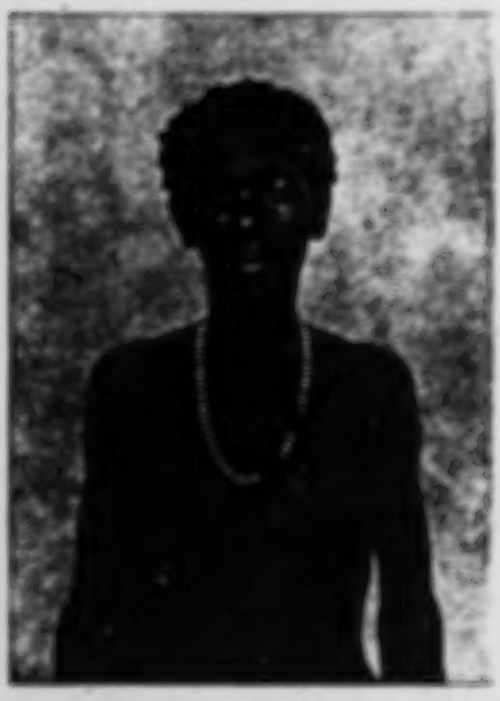


Fig. 98. — Type Bateke à longue barbe, les cils et sourcils épilés.

Chez les Tetela, nous avons rencontré des hommes qui avaient le crâne complètement rasé à l'exception d'une bande au-dessus de la nuque. Une coutume analogue doit avoir été en honneur chez les Bateke et les Banfumu, mais la section non rasée était plus large.

Chez les Tetela et jusque dans la région des Bankutshu du Nord de Bena Dibele, les indigènes se rasent les cheveux de façon à élargir le front. Celui-ci est nettement découpé en angle droit et encadré par deux coins en saillie au-dessus des tempes.

Notons que la coutume de raser une partie du cuir chevelu n'est guère générale. Les formes types que nous venons de décrire s'observent régulièrement mais ne sont point portées par tous les indigènes. Il nous a même semblé qu'elles sont un peu l'apanage des chefs, des notables et de leur famille, mais nous n'oserions point affirmer qu'il y a eu l'occurrence un droit, une prérogative effective.

Les Bateke et les Banfumu se liment les incisives médianes de la mâchoire supérieure en forme d'un triangle isocèle, les brisent ou les arrachent. Nous avons observé cette coutume chez quelques Baboma. La majorité de ceux-ci ont cependant les dents limées en pointe, coutume qui se retrouve jusque dans la région des Bakala et le long de la rive Nord du Kasai jusqu'au 21° long. E. Gr. Basongo-Meno semble signifier « gens aux dents limées » et serait le nom employé par les populations du Sud pour désigner leurs voisins du Nord dont ils ignoraient le vrai nom. La coutume de la déformation des dents tend à disparaître rapidement. Déjà la *jeune* génération ne s'y soumet plus et il nous est arrivé souvent d'entendre désigner du nom de *Basongi* c. à. d. sauvages les indigènes aux dents limées. L'opération de la déformation des dents se fait au moyen d'un petit burin en fer et d'un maillet en bois. Le forgeron du village s'en charge moyennant une légère rémunération. Les dents sont cassées à petits coups secs, le patient étant assis, la tête s'appuyant sur les genoux de l'opérateur, qui se tient debout derrière le patient. L'opération très douloureuse comprend plusieurs séances. Les dernières sont consacrées au limage qui se pratique au moyen d'une petite lime indigène.

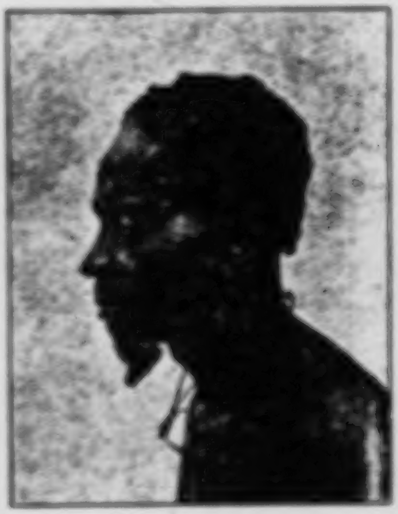


FIG. 54.
Baboma, le menton garni d'une petite barbiche.
Les cils et sourcils soigneusement épilés.

L'indigène s'occupe tout spécialement de sa coiffure ; certaines d'entre elles sont de vraies petites merveilles, fruits d'un long et patient travail. Hommes et femmes y attachent une grande importance. Ils s'évertuent à faire toujours mieux et plus coquet. Comme tout indigène est coiffeur par naissance et qu'ils s'entr'aident avec un désintéressement absolu, il s'en suit que la coiffure varie non seulement d'une tribu à l'autre, mais que nous avons observé les formes les plus disparates dans une même tribu.

FIG. 97. — Déformation des dents au Lac Léopold II

FIG. 98. — Déformation des dents et coiffure chez les Batende.

Une méthode très en vogue consiste à s'enduire les cheveux d'une pâte assez épaisse d'huile de palme et de ngula, de séparer les mèches et de les enrouler de façon à en former de petites boules très irrégulières. Pour rehausser cette coiffure, l'indigène n'hésite pas à enfiler dans la chevelure des noix d'arachides, soigneusement enduites de pâte de ngula, de façon à cacher la fraude.

Une coiffure très courante au Lac Léopold II et dans la Basse Lukenie, comprend une infinité de petites tresses achevées recouvrant toute la tête, retombant sur le front, les oreilles et la nuque. Ces tresses sont tantôt placées en étoiles partant du sommet de la tête, tantôt en bandes croisées, tantôt partiellement parallèles puis centrifuges des côtés, parfois concentriques ou placées en spirales. L'élément plus civilisé a une tendance à adopter la coiffure à grande crête de coq, simple, double ou triple.

Chez les Basengere et les Bolia, nous avons beaucoup admiré une coiffure en auréole mobile. Sur tout le contour de la tête une étroite bande de cheveux étaient tressée finement. Les tresses étaient montées sur de très fins éclats de raphia placés en couronne. L'indigène pouvait à volonté abaisser ou relever cette coiffure, d'où il résultait que tantôt il semblait coiffé d'une calotte bien lisse, tantôt d'une couronne placée en éventail. Cette coiffure était très prisée chez les Basengere. Chez les Tomba et les Wadia, la coiffure en mèches coniques était à la mode chez les hommes. Les femmes [illegible] recherchaient pour les grandes fêtes la coiffure en gros bourrelet relevé, circulaire, rehaussé par une bande en fibres tressées, ornée de une ou de deux rangées de cauries.

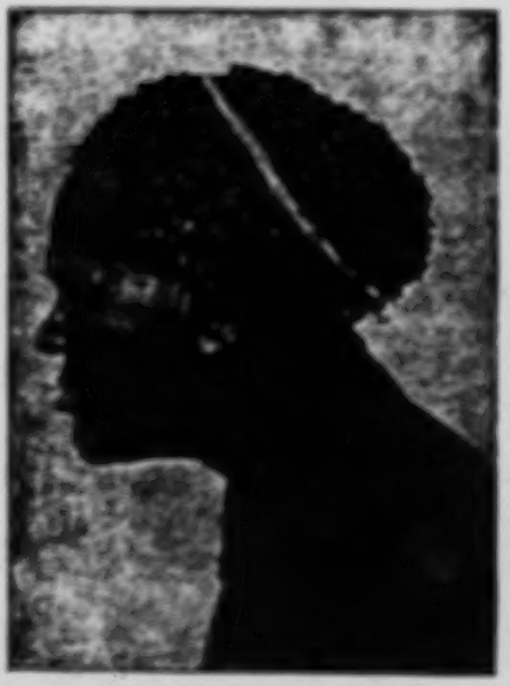


FIG. 97. — Coiffure rehaussée de raphia d'un chef [illegible]. Cils et sourcils sont soigneusement épilés.

Toutes ces formes de la coiffure indigène ne présentaient cependant aucun caractère stable. Nous les rencontrions plus ou moins régulièrement dans l'une et dans l'autre région sans que nous puissions y rattacher un caractère nettement local.

Par contre certaines formes d'un port moins général, présentent une caractéristique ethnique bien déterminée. Tel est le cas pour la coiffure en chignon prolongeant la tête des [illegible]. Cette coiffure et l'ensemble de la tête avec les cils et sourcils épilés, le crâne en grande partie couvert de petites houppes de cheveux crépus, barbe, moustache et le tatouage peigné des tempes et des joues, voilà bien la forme type et caractéristique, correspondant à l'idéal artistique des Bateke-Banfunu. Tous les indigènes voudraient l'adopter, mais les grands chefs et les notables peuvent s'en glorifier. C'est d'après ce modèle, que les Bateke-Banfunu, exécutent les figurines, souvent renseignées comme fétiches, mais qui sont en réalité des Nkisi, protecteurs des enfants. Pour les grands comme pour les petits, le pauvre comme le riche, la forme de ces « nkisi » est uniformément la même. Elle se rencontre dans toute la région, depuis le Stanley-Pool jusqu'au Kwango et spécifie notamment les populations Bateke-Banfunu, dont elle établit à merveille l'unité ethnique.

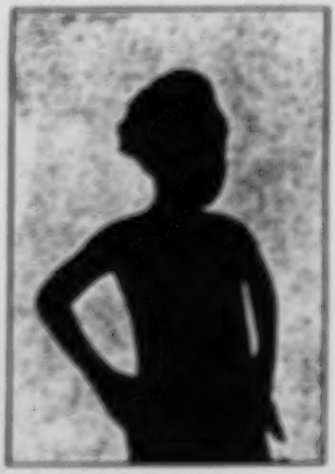


FIG. 98. — [illegible] avec sa coiffure en [illegible].

Une coiffure non moins caractéristique est celle que portent les notables de la région des Ipanga-Tadima. Les cheveux séparés par une ligne médiane partant du milieu du front pour s'arrêter dans la nuque sont réunis en deux tresses latérales. Prenant racine au-dessus des oreilles, les tresses contournent et se terminent sous le menton, où elles sont parfois nouées. Jadis les cheveux du sommet de la tête étaient tressés sur une petite circonférence en bourrelet droit. Seule la favorite du jeune chef des Batiba portait encore cette coiffure ancestrale lors de notre passage dans la région. Cette dernière coiffure semble avoir été très répandue dans la région des Tadima et peut-être

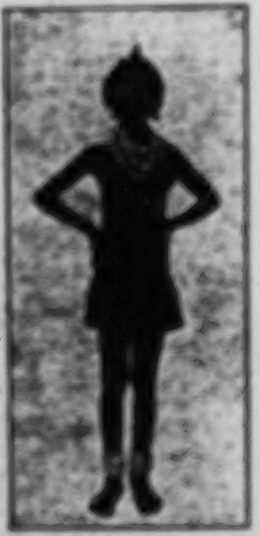


FIG. 99. — Femme [illegible] favorite du chef [illegible].

bien plus à l'Est. Elle correspondait au type ethnique de la région, d'après lequel les artistes sculpteurs exécutèrent la grande majorité des statuettes, figurines et coupes si remarquablement ornementées que nous possédons de cette région. Nous retrouvons d'ailleurs ces mêmes formes jusque chez les Bankutshu de Bena Dibele-Kole, chez les Bakuba et chez les Bashilele. Ces diverses tribus ont en outre reproduit dans leurs sculptures

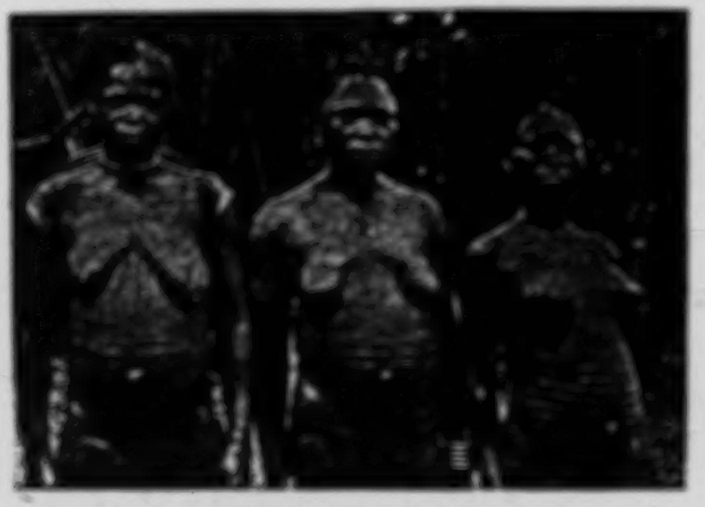


FIG. [illegible] — Coiffures et tatouages au Lac Léopold II.

les dessins des parties rasées de la coiffure, si singulière et si caractéristique. Sous ce rapport ces diverses tribus se rattachent les unes aux autres et leur affinité ethnique apparaît très nette. Malgré leur éloignement actuel et l'absence de toute relation de tribu, la parenté ethnique se dessine clairement dans les souvenirs qu'elles ont gardés de la culture ancestrale.

Ces diverses constatations nous autorisent à diviser les populations en trois groupes bien distincts :

1°/ Le groupe Ekonda-Basengele avec sa coiffure en bourrelet surplombant la nuque, le reste du crâne rasé ou les cheveux coupés courts.

2°/ Le groupe des Iyanga et populations de l'Est avec leur coiffure en deux tresses contournant les oreilles pour passer sous le menton et bourrelet droit au sommet de la tête.

B) Le groupe des tribus du Lac Léopold II et de la Basse Lukenie jusqu'aux Ipanga où la coiffure en petites tresses prédomine.

Le goût de la parure est plus ou moins développé chez toutes les populations de la région du Kasai — Lac Léopold II — Lukenie. Les objets sont passés dans la coiffure, s'attachent au cou, se portent aux poignets, et aux chevilles ou servent d'ornement à la ceinture.

De Stanley-Pool à Mushie, la femme glisse dans sa coiffure une couronne de cauris, au poignet et à l'avant-bras elle porte parfois des bracelets en laiton ou en verroterie, au cou elle suspend des colliers en laiton ou des fibres enfilant des perles d'importation. Très souvent le collier lui passe des épaules sous le bras. Dans toute cette région, la parure d'importation prédomine, mais les chefs ont conservé quelques ornements spéciaux de l'ancienne époque notamment le collier et bracelet en laiton ciselé et le collier orné de dents de léopard ou de lion. Il se rattache à ces dernières parures un privilège, une prérogative, un droit d'usage. Elles sont en quelque sorte des insignes de dignité. Dans la grande toilette de

Fig. [illegible]. — Groupe de femmes Basakata. — Coiffures et ornements.

Natali, vrai type du petit chef indigène, chaque détail semblait avoir une signification spéciale. En notre honneur et pour nous en imposer, il avait mis son plus beau costume : une vieille tunique du régiment des Guides Belges ; autour du cou une chaîne avec médaille de l'État, l'apanage du chef indigène reconnu par le Gouvernement. A la même chaîne il avait attaché un petit sifflet, et les cinq ou six médailles de l'impôt de ses femmes. Au-dessus de cette chaîne, il avait passé le collier des chefs indigènes, en laiton ornementé de dessins ciselés. Sa peau était d'un noir luisant de graisse et d'huile. Le visage était barré de la pointe du nez au sommet du front par une large ligne rouge faite d'huile et de poudre de ngula ; autour de l'œil droit était peint un grand cercle, blanc au-dessus et jaune en-dessous. Ses cils étaient fort longs, et poudrés de blanc, tandis que les sourcils avaient été soigneusement arrachés. La tête était couverte d'une épaisse chevelure, courte et crépue. A la partie postérieure, elle formait un gros chignon-bourrelet, auquel s'adaptait une petite coiffure en cordelettes tressées, teinte de ngula et reluisante de graisse. Une longue perle bleue se balançait à la partie inférieure de cette coiffure originale, et une grande plume de coq se dressait sur le tout. Les tempes et les joues étaient marquées d'une série de lignes parallèles peu accentuées, tatouage qui semble être tracé au peigne de fer et qui est

FIG. [illegible]. — Une autre [illegible] et ses enfants ornés de [illegible] perles et anneaux en laiton.

caractéristique de tous les Bantomongo. De la main gauche Natali tenait le grand bâton de marche, orné au sommet, d'une petite clochette en fer et sous le bras droit il portait le chasse-mouche queue de buffle, insigne réservé au chef. Tel était Natali ; chef indigène dont les ornements indiquaient l'autorité ; reconnu par l'État, dont il possédait la médaille, polygame ayant payé l'impôt de ses femmes, impot dont les petites plaques-quittances pendaient au collier ; sorcier, féticheur, connaissant l'art de fabriquer des Nkisi et des poudres magiques qui bariolaient son visage.

FIG. 106. — Un vieux chef indigène du Lac Léopold II, orné de ses insignes, et accompagné de ses deux femmes et de son joueur de Lokombe.

Non moins intéressante est la tenue de grande cérémonie des chefs des tribus du Lac Léopold II. Elle varie suivant l'importance du chef, mais elle comprend toujours une certaine quantité de cauris et un ou plusieurs disques en laiton attachés à la coiffure et au pagne. Le droit de porter la coiffure à disques, date d'une époque éloignée et est réservé par la coutume ancestrale aux chefs et grands notables.

L'usage s'en retrouve le long de toute la Lukenie. Du Lac Léopold II à Dekese, ces disques présentent tous les mêmes formes et motifs d'ornementation. La fabrication en est réservée aux grands forgerons après autorisation préalable du Nkumu ou roi de la région.

Les dépouilles de léopard, les cloches en fer ou en laiton suspendues à la ceinture et le droit d'y fixer certains couteaux d'une forme spéciale, forment également l'apanage des chefs et des notables dans toute la région du Lac Léopold II et de la Lukenie.

Nous nous trouvons donc en présence de diverses manifestations de la vie matérielle qui sont autant d'indices de l'origine commune ou de la parenté de ces diverses tribus.

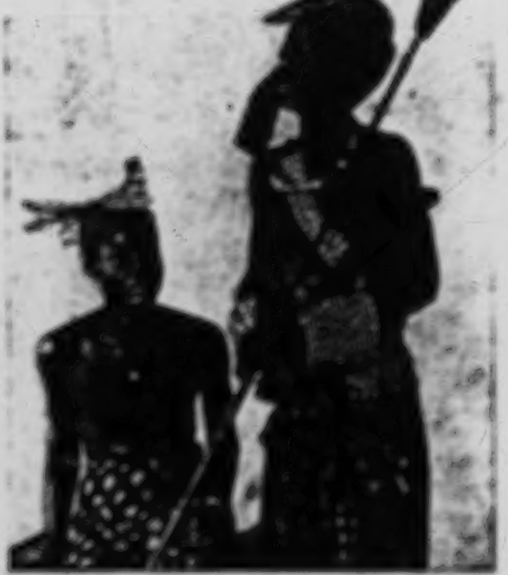


Fig. 109. — Chef religieux du Lac Léopold II et son conseiller, prêtre principal de la tribu, tous deux en costume de gala.

Chez les populations du Lac Léopold II, les ornements fixés dans la coiffure sont rares. Les épingles à cheveux semblent inconnues, les peignes sont faits en éclats de raphia. La femme recherche plus spécialement les parures en métal, fer, laiton ou cuivre, tandis que les chefs et grands notables portent volontiers des ceintures, colliers, bracelets et bonnets garnis de cauris. Le collier en laiton massif est très en vogue. Plus il est lourd, plus il charme. Il nous est arrivé de voir des femmes portant des colliers pesant jusque 15 livres. Ces colliers sont rivés au cou des favorites des grands chefs ou des notables fortunés. En cas de divorce ou de séparation le propriétaire les enlève sans se soucier des souffrances ou des cris de la victime. Les femmes ne semblent nullement être incommodées de ces parures encombrantes. Rarement elles les entourent de tissus pour atténuer le frottement de ces masses sur les clavicules.

Les bracelets et anneaux aux chevilles sont relativement rares comme parures chez les [illegible] et autres tribus riveraines du Lac. Chez les Bokala et les [illegible] nous les avons rencontrés de temps à autre.

Les grandes élégantes [illegible] et Bokala portent de lourds anneaux en laiton passés au-dessus des chevilles, des bagues de laiton aux doigts (tant des mains que des pieds) et des ceintures en cuir ornées de perles en laiton, tandis que les colliers en laiton massif disparaissent petit à petit au fur et à mesure que l'on s'avance vers l'Est. Chez les Yaelima et les Bokala on n'en retrouve pour ainsi dire plus du tout,

Fig. [illegible] — Deux femmes [illegible] et un enfant portant autour du cou des colliers en laiton massif.

mais les femmes et les hommes recherchent les bracelets en fils de laiton. Ils en forment des gaines passant du poignet au coude. On n'y porte, à de rares exceptions près point d'anneaux aux chevilles. Quelques notables s'affublent de colliers en perles d'importation. La ceinture ornée de perles en laiton y est d'un usage assez courant. Dans la région de Bena-Dibele Kole, les ornements en cuivre ou en laiton semblent disparaître petit à petit, devant la pénétration des perles d'importation. Les colliers en verroterie ont d'ailleurs pénétré dans toute la région que nous avons parcourue. Leur vogue est particulièrement grande chez les femmes Ipanga et Bolia. L'homme préfère les colliers en poils de queue d'éléphant ou un simple anneau de laiton.

Les bracelets et les bagues en laiton sont portés par les hommes, de Stanley-Pool à Kole. Les notables [illegible] et [illegible], portent des bagues à toutes les phalanges des doigts. Ceux qui en ont les moyens en mettent même aux doigts des pieds. Au cou ils passent ces colliers en fibres auxquels ils suspendent : les cornes et amulettes à Nkisi. Il se rattache à ces colliers ... une idée religieuse, un pouvoir magique plutôt qu'une recherche d'ornementation.

Fig. [illegible]. — [illegible] le chef [illegible] de [illegible].

Les enfants sont d'ordinaire surchargés de parures très voyantes, perles blanches piquées dans la coiffure, colliers et ceintures en verroterie, amulettes et grelots attachés à la ceinture. Nous croyons cependant que ces objets n'ont pas pour but principal la parure mais la sécurité de l'enfant. Il est bon de dire, que la mère fixe les plumes dans la coiffure de son enfant et attache à la ceinture des grelots et des sonnettes pour le retrouver plus facilement, s'il vient à s'égarer dans les plantations ou dans la brousse. Aussitôt que l'enfant est assez avancé en âge pour retrouver son chemin et rentrer seul au village, grelots, sonnettes et plumes sont délaissés définitivement.

D'après leurs parures, les populations de la région de Stanley-Pool Kole, se divisent donc en cinq groupes.

Le premier comprend les Bateke-Bamfunuka-Baboma où les parures sont relativement rares tant chez l'homme que chez la femme.

Le second englobe toute la région des populations du Lac Léopold II et celle de la Basse Lukenie, caractérisé par le collier en laiton massif porté par les femmes, les ornements garnis de cauris et les plaques de laiton portés par les notables et les chefs.

Fig. 107. — Un groupe d'enfants des Bolia.

Le troisième comprend les Ipanga et les Bolia avec la ceinture ornée de perles en laiton, des bagues aux mains et aux pieds et les anneaux en laiton massif portés au-dessus des chevilles, parures spéciales aux femmes.

Le quatrième se caractérise par la gaine d'anneaux de laiton, enveloppant les bras, du poignet au coude, et porté tant par les hommes que par les femmes Bokala-Yaelima.

Le cinquième comprend la région de Bena-Dibele-Kole, où les parures d'importation ont remplacé les ornements primitifs.

En dehors de toutes ces parures d'un usage régulier dans la vie courante et journalière, l'indigène a encore ses toilettes de parade et de cérémonie.

Nous avons donné une description du costume de parade de Natali chef des Bankutu de Kapanda.

Le chef Etoti, vieil inexorable Wadia portait lors des grandes cérémonies une coiffure en cordelettes tressées, ornée de trois disques en laiton. Il avait en outre un collier en poils de queue d'éléphant, auquel était suspendu un tablier de forme triangulaire orné de huit disques en laiton, autant d'indices de sa grande puissance et de son titre de plus ancien et plus grand Mbomu ou [illegible] de toute la région du Lac Léopold II. La figure était enduite de ngula, les yeux cernés de [illegible], sur les bras une longue ligne blanche. Il tenait d'une main le chasse-mouche royal et de l'autre deux cannes de chef.

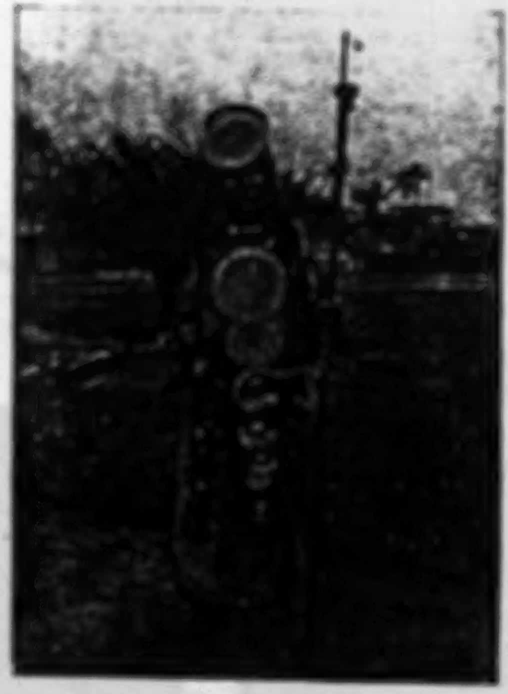


Fig. 446. — Etoti, vieil inexorable chef des Wadia en grande toilette.

Kakoo le chef déchu des Bolia, portait en toute circonstance sa coiffure en cordelettes tressée, ornée de la grande plaque en laiton. La ceinture était garnie d'une dépouille de léopard et de deux clochettes en fer, autant de prérogatives réservées au Mbomu. A une chaîne en laiton passée en bandoulière était suspendu le grand couteau royal passé dans une gaine; et Kakoo ne se séparait jamais de son grand arc ni de sa boîte de flèches armées de grands dards en fer.

Fig. [illegible]. Toilette de danse des fiancées [illegible] de la région de Wombali. — Tatouage du dos.

Lors des danses et des cérémonies, les femmes attachent à la ceinture les objets les plus hétéroclites et y fixent souvent de grandes branches touffues. Chez les Iyanga et les [illegible], ainsi que dans la région de Wombali et de Dekese, les danses de fiançailles et de mariage sont exécutées en toilettes spéciales très ornementées de perles et de cauris.

Ces parures ne présentent aucun caractère stable. Elles dépendent du goût, des caprices et de la fortune des indigènes, mais certaines parties du costume de parade que les fiancés portent aux danses des fiançailles semblent avoir une signification spéciale sur laquelle nous reviendrons ultérieurement.

De Léopoldville à Kole, les populations connaissent et pratiquent le tatouage. Il diffère cependant de l'une région à l'autre par la variété des motifs et dessins, la régularité de son application, le degré de son extension et la méthode ou la manière de son exécution.

Chez les [illegible] et les [illegible], nous avons remarqué deux tatouages distincts : celui des hommes et celui des femmes.

Chez l'homme la figure est couverte de raies striées parallèles, irrégulières, légèrement incurvées, peu profondes et recouvrant les joues, depuis les tempes jusque vers le menton. Chez la femme le tatouage du visage fait défaut; par contre le ventre est régulièrement recouvert de petites lignes ou pointillés allongés, en relief, juxtaposés les uns aux autres et recouvrant tout le corps, depuis le creux de l'estomac jusqu'au bas ventre.

FIG. [illegible] — Tatouage de race exécuté par un homme

FIG. [illegible] — Tatouage ornemental exécuté par une femme

Tribu des Wadia.

Le tatouage de l'homme se fait par de simples incisions généralement pratiquées à l'âge de 7 ou 8 ans à l'approche de la virilité. Chez la femme le tatouage se pratique à toutes les époques de la vie.

D'après les renseignements que nous avons obtenus, avant notre pénétration, la jeune fille se faisait tatouer avant la puberté. Le but était double : vanité personnelle et provocation du mâle. Seule la dernière raison justifie actuellement la pratique dans la région où notre influence s'est fait ressentir effectivement. L'introduction des étoffes Européennes, le développement de la vie économique et le progrès de la civilisation ont amené la femme à se vêtir, à cacher et à soustraire aux regards indiscrets son grande partie du corps. Le petit pagne primitif s'est transformé en une jupe plus ou moins longue, qui cache aux yeux du public la partie

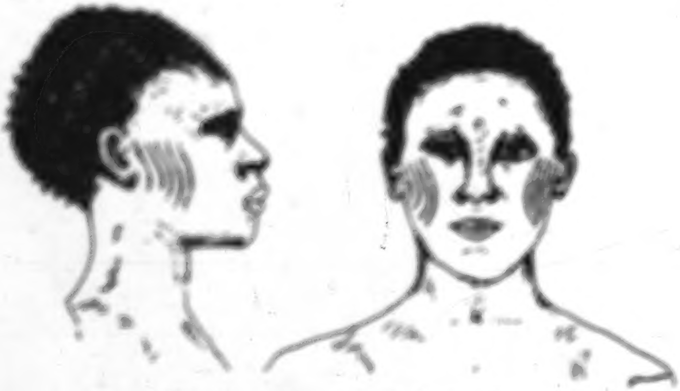
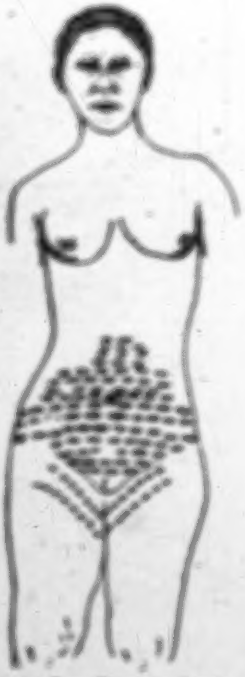


Fig. [illegible] — Tatouage [illegible]

du corps couverte de tatouages. Dès lors, la femme ne peut plus en faire un objet de coquetterie. Si malgré cela certaines d'entr'elles continuent à se faire tatouer tout comme les anciennes matrones, c'est qu'elles espèrent ainsi attirer l'homme, lui plaire, et pouvoir participer plus rapidement aux plaisirs de la vie intime. Interrogés à ce sujet, les indigènes sont très affirmatifs. L'homme prétend que l'existence des [illegible]



[illegible] — Tatouage chez la femme [illegible]

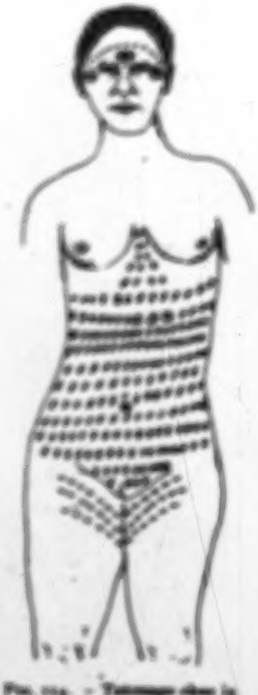


Fig. [illegible] — Tatouage chez la femme [illegible] de tatouage sur ces parties du corps de la femme est une cause provocatrice très active, résultant essentiellement des mouvements très accentués de la femme dans le contact sexuel. Cette explication qui d'après les indigènes semble être l'unique motif de l'application du tatouage chez la femme de certaines tribus, — et tel est à notre avis le cas chez les Bateke, les Bantomongo, les Baboma et jusqu'à un certain point chez toutes les populations riveraines du Lac Léopold II — nous permet également d'expliquer le caractère spécial du tatouage de la femme Yaelima, qui s'étend tout autour du mont de Venus, suit le pli de l'aine et se poursuit en cercles concentriques sur la partie supérieure interne des cuisses. Les cicatrices de tatouage de ces parties du corps de la femme généralement plus régulières et d'un relief plus prononcé, caractères qui s'accentuent d'ailleurs en raison directe du voisinage du pubis. Il ne peut y avoir une raison de coquetterie qui ait présidé au tracé de ces bourrelets cicatrisés ; leur présence est en grande partie cachée, même par le pagne le plus simple et le plus primitif, Chez certaines tribus le pagne recouvre complètement cette partie du corps et la femme indigène mettant beaucoup de soin et de pudeur à les cacher aux yeux du public [ce n'est qu'à grande peine que nous sommes parvenus à constater leur existence. Remarquons en passant que malgré de sérieux efforts nous ne sommes jamais parvenus à décider une femme indigène de l'intérieur à passer devant l'objectif non recouverte de son pagne. Les civilisées, demi-mondaines du pays ou ménagères étaient, il est vrai, moins

FIG. 113
Une élégante de la région des Bokala-Yaelima.
Tatouage toilette, bracelets et colliers

farouches. Les indigènes ont aussi fait une distinction entre ce tatouage et celui qui s'étend sur d'autres parties du corps, notamment les bras, le dos et le visage.

Les tatouages du dos, des bras et de la gorge ont toujours un caractère essentiellement décoratif. Nous les avons spécialement rencontrés chez la femme, élément coquet par nature même chez les populations de civilisation toute primitive. Il leur manque généralement le caractère d'uniformité qui spécifie si bien le tatouage de race. Celui-ci se retrouve sous sa forme la plus caractéristique chez l'homme. Il affecte en particulier le front, les tempes, les joues et parfois la poitrine. Chez certaines tribus la femme a adopté également cette déformation artificielle spécifique de l'homme ; ailleurs elle a un tatouage spécial, qui se distingue nettement de celui du sexe fort ; enfin chez certaines populations la femme n'a pas de tatouage de race.

Fig. 116 — Tatouage chez la femme du Lac Léopold II et basse Lukenie

Nous avons vu plus haut, que chez les Bateke, les Banfumungu et les Baboma le tatouage caractéristique de l'homme est formé par les raies striées de la figure, tandis que celui de la femme est constitué par de petits pointillés en relief, juxtaposés en lignes plus ou moins parallèles horizontales, recouvrant le corps depuis le creux de l'estomac jusqu'au bas ventre. Ce même dessin se retrouve chez les femmes de toutes les populations riveraines du Lac Léopold II et chez celles des tribus de la Lukenie jusqu'au secteur de Bumbuli. Il convient cependant de remarquer, que dans cette dernière région le relief est moins net et moins accentué. Il diminue d'ailleurs en règle générale au fur et à mesure que l'on s'éloigne du Lac. Sous ce rapport toutes ces populations semblent donc pouvoir être rattachées au même groupement ethnique et il est probable que ce tatouage caractéristique est un des caractères de la civilisation ancestrale, conservé jusqu'à l'époque actuelle par toutes les branches du groupement primitif, nonobstant les migrations et les déplacements. Dans cette même région le tatouage de

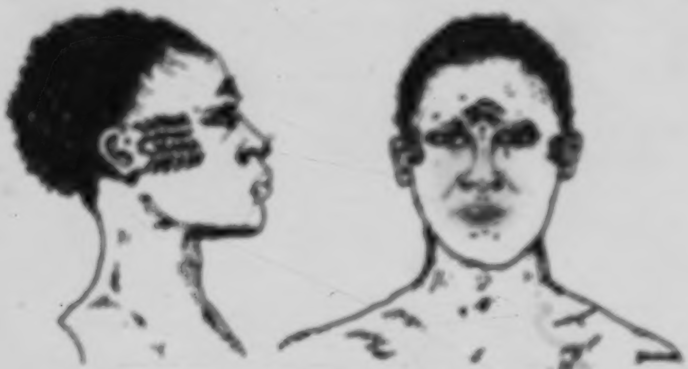


Fig. 117. — Tatouage des [illegible].

l'homme consiste en une petite rosace, formée par un gros point central et deux ou trois cercles concentriques en relief ornementant les tempes. Dans la région du Nord du Lac Léopold II, l'indigène y ajoute généralement une ligne de petits points traversant tout le front.

Chez les Tumba, les Mosengere, les Wadia et les Basakata-[illegible] au contraire, cette ligne est remplacée par une série de petites incisions en relief, formant dans le creux de la racine du nez une petite crête de coq.

Chez toutes ces tribus la femme a également adopté le tatouage de race, quoi qu'il convient de remarquer, qu'il nous est arrivé assez souvent de rencontrer des femmes n'ayant aucun tatouage sur la figure ; tandis que chez d'autres nous observons tantôt la rosace seule, tantôt la rosace et la crête de coq ou la figure traversant le front et parfois les trois tatouages combinés.

Cette irrégularité dans l'application du tatouage de la figure, nous permet de supposer que ce tatouage est plutôt une question de coquetterie chez les femmes de ces diverses tribus, qu'une pratique imposée par usages et la coutume alors que chez les hommes cette déformation artificielle forme une véritable marque spécifique imposée par la tradition locale.

Chez les Ipanga et les Batita le tatouage comprend les dessins de la figure et ceux du sternum. Le tatouage de la poitrine est formé par une ligne verticale de petites cicatrices linéaires, parallèles obliques et légèrement tordues, tracées depuis la fourchette sternale jusqu'à l'ombilic. A gauche et à droite de cette ligne principale, nous observons une double rangée de petits traits obliques, séparés les uns des autres par une bande de un à trois centimètres de largeur. Le tatouage de la figure comprend une double ou une triple série de lignes obliques, disposées de façon à figurer les palmettes et une petite crête formée par de courtes incisions courbes, tracées à la racine du nez. D'après une photographie envoyée par Mr Timmermans, ce même genre de tatouage se rencontre également chez les Yaelima. Nous devons faire remarquer à ce sujet qu'au cours de notre voyage dans

FIG. [illegible]. — [illegible], le jeune chef [illegible] des Batita de la région d'[illegible].

cette région, et malgré nos nombreuses recherches, nous n'avons nulle part pu observer le fait. Aussi croyons-nous à une erreur de transmission. Les types sont probablement des Ipanga-Batitu se trouvant peut-être accidentellement dans la région des Tadima.

Le tatouage de la femme Ipanga et Batitu, diffère assez notablement de celui de l'homme ; abstraction faite des dessins de la figure. Les lignes de petits pointillés que nous avons observées et décrites chez les femmes des populations de l'Ouest, sont très répandues dans toute la région. Chez certaines femmes, ces cicatrices s'étendent non seulement sur le ventre et le haut de la cuisse mais couvrent tout le corps et parfois même les bras.

Dans la région du secteur d'Oshwe, notamment vers les limites Est du territoire occupé par les Batitu, nous avons en outre rencontré quelques femmes dont les tatouages les différenciaient notablement de leurs sœurs de l'Ouest. Les palmettes des tempes sont remplacées par une série de cercles concentriques dont le centre est constitué par un petit point en fort relief. Ce point est placé à égale distance entre l'œil et l'oreille. Ces femmes n'étaient probablement pas originaires du pays. Elles y étaient arrivées, à notre avis, par échange ou peut-être bien par rapt. Elles appartenaient probablement à la tribu des Bokala ou des Tadima, quoique nous n'ayons pas pu faire confirmer le fait par les indigènes. Chez ces

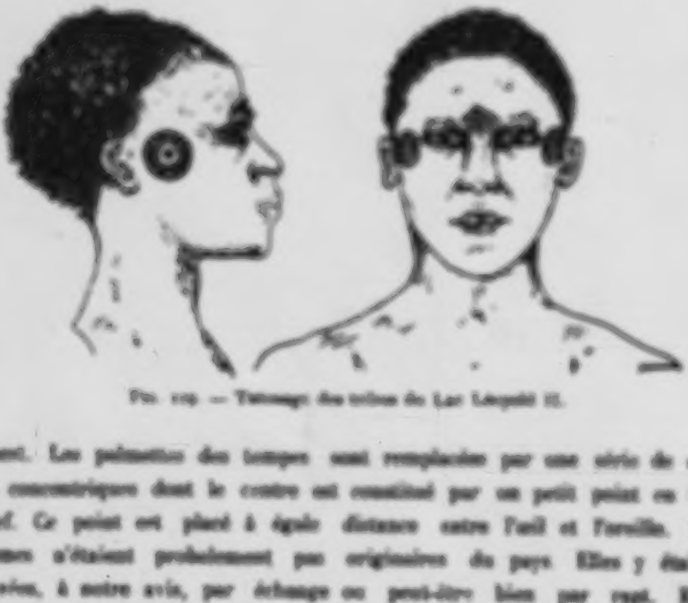


FIG. 119. — Tatouage des tribus du Lac Léopold II.

dernières tribus le tatouage est très en vogue. La femme en particulier semble affectionner très vivement ce genre d'ornementation.

Les dessins sont si multiples et si variés, que nous ne pourrions songer à en donner une description détaillée. Nous croyons pouvoir diviser dans l'ensemble les motifs en trois grandes classes ou catégories.

1°) Le tatouage de race ou de tribu.

Celui-ci comprend une série de petites courbes tracées au-dessus de la racine du nez, analogues à celles que nous avons observées antérieurement chez les Ipanga-Batitu, mais généralement plus marquées et plus accentuées. L'identité de ce motif caractéristique semble établir une affinité entre ces deux groupements, mais il convient de remarquer que le motif des tempes diffère notablement de l'une région à l'autre. Nous retrouvons ici la rosace des populations du Lac Léopold II mais beaucoup plus large.

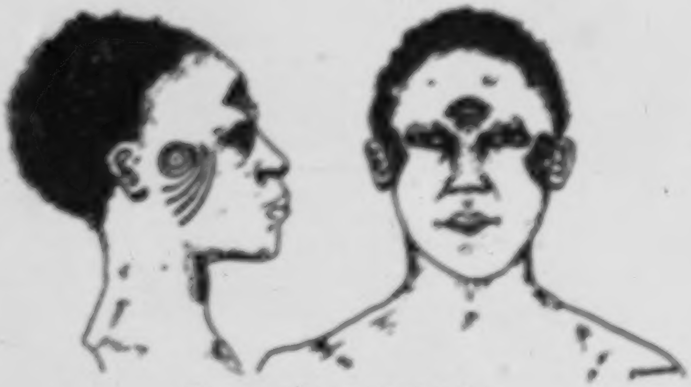


Fig. CXI. — Tatouage Bokala-Yaelima.

Les cercles concentriques s'étendent sur les tempes et se poursuivent très souvent bien au delà en arcs de cercles toujours concentriques jusque sur les joues.

Hommes et femmes ont adopté ce tatouage.

2°) Le tatouage sexuel, réservé aux femmes.

Celui-ci comprend les cicatrices en relief qui affectent toutes les parties du corps depuis la gorge des seins, jusqu'à mi hauteur des cuisses.

3°) Le tatouage ornemental ou tatouage de coquetterie.

Celui-ci s'étend irrégulièrement sur toutes les autres parties du corps en y comprenant les bras et le dos.

Les tatouages de la seconde catégorie forment une série de triangles sphériques, concentriques dont le sommet est en réalité constitué par le mont de Vénus.

Les figures entre les seins et l'ombilic sont assez variables d'un sujet à l'autre. Les rosaces et les palmettes prédominent très nettement. L'homme ne pratique pas ce genre de tatouage, la femme y met, par contre beaucoup de soins, d'où nous croyons pouvoir conclure que le but principal qu'elle poursuit est une recherche sensuelle dans les rapports sexuels.

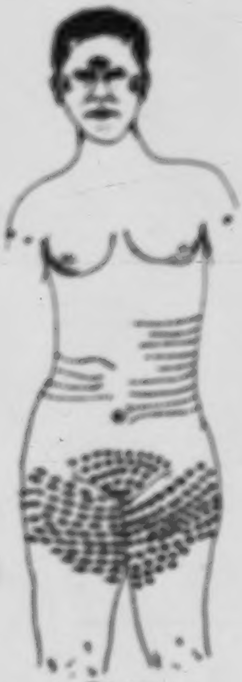


Fig. [illegible].
Tatouage [illegible].

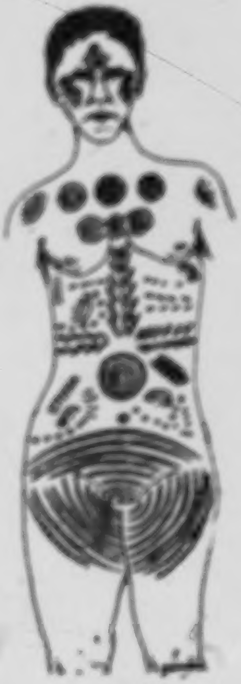


Fig. [illegible].
Tatouage [illegible].

Les motifs ou figures de la troisième catégorie sont extrêmement va-visibles et on ne peut plus irrégulières, comme nous l'avons d'ailleurs fait remarquer plus haut. Abstraction faite des rosaces concentriques, nous y avons observé les dessins les plus variés ; des petits points, des lignes de pointillés, des croissants, des losanges, des palmettes et d'autres figures s'entrecroisent, se coupent, se superposent et sont mêlés de telle sorte, que l'on croirait ces cicatrices jetées au grand hasard sur tout le corps.

Hommes et femmes les ont adoptés, mais la femme en particulier semble les affectionner. Sous ce rapport les Bekala et les Yaelima

De face. De dos.
FIG. — [illegible]. Tatouage de la femme Bekala Yaelima.

se différencient nettement de leurs voisins de l'Ouest. Par contre, ils semblent se rapprocher sérieusement des tribus de l'Est, notamment des populations de la région de Dekese. Des photographies envoyées par M. Van den Broeck et renseignées comme provenant des Dengese nous montrent en effet la ressemblance indéniable des figures du tatouage des Yaelima et ces derniers. Cependant chez des Dengese, les figures sont généralement plus régulières, la rosace des tempes plus petite et encadrée le plus souvent d'une série de deux ou trois lignes de petits points dont une se prolonge parfois sur le front. Une autre figure, non moins caractéristique est formée par une bande de trois lignes parallèles tracées de façon à former l'ambolo indigène, genre d'un double huit couché horizontalement.

Ce motif se trace généralement au dessus du nombril et sur le bras et se rencontre presqu'exclusivement chez la femme.

Enfin les petits points cicatrisés, qui ornementent le cou chez certaines femmes Dengese, nous montrent que ces dernières se rapprochent autant des populations de l'Est que de leurs voisins de l'Ouest.

Le tatouage caractéristique des femmes de la région de Bena Dibele-Kole, tant Basongo Meno que Bankutshu, consiste précisément dans ces séries de petits points cicatrisés ornant le cou, les tempes et le front. Il convient d'y ajouter, le dessin qu'elles se tatouent très souvent sur le haut du bras. Ce motif formé par trois lignes parallèles brisées, placées en forme d'un losange aux côtés déplacés, peut être considéré à juste titre, comme un caractère spécial à cette région.

Les tatouages de la poitrine, du ventre et du bas ventre, sont moins uniformément adoptés par les femmes de cette région, mais là où ils existent, le dessin est toujours d'une régularité remarquable et formé par de petits points en fort relief juxtaposés les uns aux autres.

En résumé nous croyons pouvoir diviser les tatouages de race des diverses populations que nous avons visitées, en 4 groupes.

Le premier comprend le tatouage peigné des Bateke-Banfumungu-Baboma.

Le second est caractérisé par la rosace des tempes et la crête semi-concentrique de la racine du nez et englobe toutes les populations riveraines du Lac Leopold II, de la Lukenie à l'exception des Ipanga-Batito.

Le troisième groupe se distingue par le tatouage en crête semi-concentrique de la racine du nez, et les palmettes des tempes, motifs que nous avons observés chez les Ipanga Batito et jusque chez les Bokala.

Enfin le quatrième groupe est constitué par les petits points bourrelets, dont la femme de la région de Bena Dibele-Kole s'orne le cou et le front, ainsi que la figure caractéristique du haut du bras.

Antérieurement nous avons fait remarquer que grâce aux documents photographiques de M. Van den Broeck, nous avons pu établir que les populations du secteur de Dekese, se rattachent sous le rapport des tatouages plus spécialement aux voisins de l'Ouest, quoiqu'elles présentent cependant de grandes ressemblances avec les tribus de l'Est. Leur territoire doit donc être considéré comme une zone mixte ou région de transition entre les deux groupements ethniques.

L'étude des différentes figures du tatouage ornemental, nous permet de subdiviser la région parcourue en deux grandes provinces.

La première comprend toutes les populations dont les tatouages ornementaux sont rares et peu développés. Il ne saurait être question dans l'occurrence de véritables figures ; les tatouages étant invariablement formés par de petits points alignés horizontalement.

Cette région s'étend de Léopoldville à Oshwe.

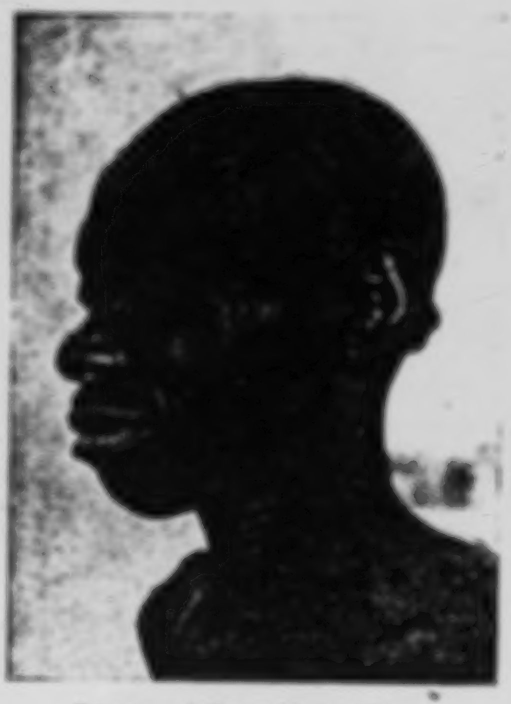


Fig. 129. — Coiffure et tatouage Yaelima. Type de Longomo ou notable.

La seconde englobe les tribus à tatouage ornemental très développé. Elle s'étend sur le restant de la région que nous avons visitée, en ayant comme centre principal la région des Yaelima. L'étude que nous avons faite des multiples figures que nous avions remarquées dans cette région, nous a démontré que les variations sont si nombreuses, si diverses et tellement entrelacées, qu'il est totalement impossible d'établir sur cette base des secteurs ethniques présentant des caractères bien établis.

Enfin si nous n'envisageons que les figures de tatouage auxquelles nous avons attribué, si pas une origine du moins un caractère familial, (provocation aux rapprochements sexuels) nous constatons que dans toute la région ce genre de tatouage est particulier aux femmes.

De Léopoldville jusqu'aux confins du territoire des Batito et même chez certaines femmes Bokala ce tatouage est formé (pour autant qu'il existe encore) par une série de petits points alignés, tout comme les tatouages ornementaux.

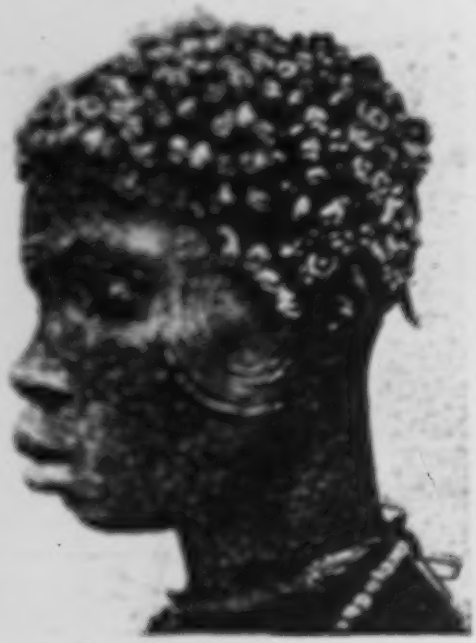


FIG. [illegible] — Tatouage Yaelima et coiffure relevée par des noix d'arachides enduites de ngula.

Chez les Ipanga Batito, ces figures ornent parfois les bras et une partie du dos, tandis que chez les autres tribus elles sont moins développées.

Dans la région des Yaelima, des Dengese et en partie chez les Bokala, ce tatouage comprend une série de lignes concentriques brisées dont le pubis forme le centre principal.

Nous ignorons si ce tatouage est également pratiqué par les femmes Basongo Meno et Bankutshu, mais la chose nous paraît probable. Cependant nous pouvons affirmer que chez ces populations, ce tatouage ne s'étend guère sur le haut des cuisses en dehors de une ou deux lignes de petits points incisés parallèles au pli de l'aine.

Les incisions du tatouage ornemental et sexuel sont généralement faites par des femmes quoiqu'il arrive parfois que l'homme s'en charge.

L'opération se fait à des époques très irrégulières et un peu à tous les temps de la vie. Elle comprend d'ailleurs toujours plusieurs séances généralement espacées de dix à quinze jours.

Le couteau de tatouage, qui est également employé pour l'épilation, est formé par une petite lame en fer, de forme évasée dont le tranchant très effilé est arrondi.

Le patient est assis ; au moyen de mpemba, l'opérateur trace sur le corps, les dessins ou motifs à inciser, pince la peau entre le pouce et l'index de la main gauche et d'un coup sec du bistouri il trace la ligne. La plaie est saupoudrée d'une fine poussière de charbon de bois pulvérisé, de mpemba et d'une poudre faite d'écorce d'arbre séchée et écrasée. Ce mélange sert à ralentir la cicatrisation. Cette opération se répète trois ou quatre fois jusqu'à ce que le relief des bourrelets de cicatrisation soit jugé suffisamment prononcé.

Chez les Bateke, les Bamfumungu et les Baboma, les tatouages de la figure s'obtiennent en griffant ou grattant la peau au moyen d'une espèce de peigne en fer, polydenté, à pointes relativement larges et obtuses. L'opération ne comprend chez ces populations qu'une séance et les plaies ne sont pas saupoudrées de poussière. Ces deux procédés s'expliquent par la différence qui existe entre les tatouages de race et les figures ornementales cicatrisées de la femme, chez ces tribus. Les premiers sont de simples blessures cicatrisées et les autres des cicatrisations en relief.

Les tatouages de race sont toujours tracés avant les autres figures ; en 1913-14 les garçons et les filles y étaient astreints avant d'atteindre l'âge nubile.

Les tatouages familiaux sont généralement ébauchés quelques temps avant le mariage de la fille pour être rapidement développés dans les dernières semaines qui précèdent l'union.

Quant aux tatouages de coquetterie ou figures ornementales, aucune règle ne semble présider à l'époque de leur application. Quand la femme se fait même déjà vieille, elle n'hésite parfois pas à se laisser tracer encore de nouvelles incisions.

Il est probable que la coutume du tatouage disparaîtra bientôt de la vie de ces populations. La pénétration des principes de la civilisation européenne, doit invariablement supprimer cette coutume primitive.

Nous avons d'ailleurs pu observer le fait lors de notre visite au village des boys, travailleurs et soldats de Léopoldville, de Kinshasa et autres grands centres. Dans ces villages les enfants et même les jeunes gens ne sont plus tatoués. Les jeunes filles le sont très peu, et ne conservent en général que les incisions sur le bas de l'abdomen. Les tatouages de race font totalement défaut. Dans les villages de l'intérieur, moins influencés par la pénétration des principes de la civilisation, les tatouages sont, au contraire très en vogue à l'époque actuelle. Nous admettons que la coutume du tatouage est actuellement à l'apogée de son règne dans la région que nous avons visitée.

FIG. 16. — Retour des champs.

Cette coutume ne survivra probablement pas bien longtemps à notre pénétration.

Il serait très difficile d'établir l'époque approximative de son introduction dans la vie de ces indigènes. Nous croyons cependant pouvoir considérer le tatouage de race comme une des caractéristiques ethniques propres à la culture contemporaine et non comme une coutume spécifique de la civilisation ancestrale, transmise de génération en génération et conservée, voire même développée par elle. La preuve la plus évidente de ce fait nous est donnée par les observations que nous avons faites sur les vieillards de la génération actuelle, ceux-ci n'ont en général pas le tatouage de race. Les vieilles femmes qui ne portent aucune traces de tatouage ornemental ou ethnique sont plus rares. Les incisions ornementales font plus souvent défaut que les cicatrisations de la tribu, et nous n'avons rencontré que de rares cas où le tatouage sexuel faisait défaut.

Ces faits nous montrent à toute évidence qu'à l'époque de la jeunesse des vieux de la génération actuelle, le tatouage, s'il était de la coutume, n'était d'application à peu près régulière que chez la femme et présentait à l'origine un caractère essentiellement familial dans cette région.

La femme supporte sans manifester la moindre souffrance, sans une plainte, ni même un soupir, les douleurs des incisions. Elle se soumet même avec une certaine joie mélangée d'un petit sentiment d'orgueil, à cette coutume sachant qu'elle gagne ainsi dans l'estime du mâle.

Ce point occupe à notre avis une place beaucoup plus importante dans la vie de la femme des populations primitives que l'on ne le suppose d'ordinaire. Il nous apparaît comme le seul motif de la majeure partie des variations que nous observons dans la toilette de la femme indigène.

La préoccupation de plaire, le désir de l'homme, amenèrent la femme à rechercher de tout temps les moyens qui lui permettraient de se faire tatouer le plus souvent et le plus tôt possible. Ce désir naturel, cette nécessité innée, sont causes que la femme supporte stoïquement toutes les tortures, toutes les souffrances. Dans la vie des primitifs, le côté sexuel prédomine naturellement. Ainsi pouvons nous expliquer et en quelque sorte comprendre, pourquoi les tatouages furent au début l'apanage exclusif de la femme de cette région, et comment elle arriva à en orner l'organe sexuel et les alentours immédiats, pour le développer ultérieurement et s'en couvrir à peu près tout le corps, fut-ce, peut-être, par esprit de simple coquetterie.

FIN DU PREMIER VOLUME

Index des illustrations.

Fig. 1. — En route dans la brousse et la savane de la Lukenie . p. 6
» 2. — Dans la forêt Équatoriale . . . . » 6
» 3. — Femme et enfant Batéke . . . . » 7
» 4. — Bankutshu . . . . » 8
» 5. — Femmes Batito au village de Longongolo . . . . » 9
» 6. — Femmes Basakata à l'heure du repas . . . . . » 10
» 7. — La vie au village des Bosangere . . . . . . » 11
» 8. — Vieillards et notables dits Lomporo des Tatiem . » 12
» 9. — Un orage sous les tropiques . . . . » 13
» 10. — Danse de deuil au village du chef Pekoi-Bokoma . » 14
» 11. — Femme indigène en toilette de deuil, vue de face et de dos, prise au marché indigène de Lusambo . » 15
» 12. — Enfant et sa mère, tribu des Bankutshu . . . . » 16
» 13. — Un albinos au marché indigène de Lusambo. . . » 18
» 14. — Déformations naturelles chez l'indigène. 1° Femme Basakata, 2° Femme Basakata, 3° Enfant Bankutshu. » 19
» 15. — Portrait de Diapula féticheur des Basakata de la région de Bokoro . . . . » 22
» 16. — Ekondo chef des Bosangere, ses deux favorites et ses principaux notables . . . . » 23
» 17. — Kabom, chef des Batito, révoqué pour meurtre rituel, en tournée dans la région après son retour de l'exil. » 25
» 18. — Femme Batito, la grande favorite du [illegible] jeune chef des Batito . . . . » 26
» 19. — La veillée des morts chez les Batéke. Le corps du défunt est exposé dans la boîte mortuaire entouré de tissus et formant un grand ballot . . . . » 27
» 20. — Le grand chef au village Bombe, type [illegible] Mbomo-na-tse des Wadia . . . . » 30
» 21. — Médecine indigène. Application des ventouses chez les Basakata . . . . » 33

[p. 205]
[p 204 is blank]

Fig. 22. — Coin d'un village Batito à peine ébauché . . . . p. 36
» 23. — Longingila, village Batito nouvellement installé au milieu de la forêt équatoriale . . . . » 37
» 24. — Hutte Bakuma — type ancien — en construction . . » 38
» 25. — 1° Hutte Bakuma en construction : base carrée, toit conique. 2° Hutte Bakuma en construction : base rectangulaire, toit en dièdre . . . . » 39
» 26. — Hutte du Nkiri de chasse — Bakuma — au fond la hutte du type Basongo à toit conique et base carrée. » 41
» 27. — Hutte des Wadia et Basongo . . . . . . » 43
» 28. — Hutte Tumba à base rectangulaire et toit légèrement arqué . . . . » 43
» 29. — Huttes Basakata reliées par une cour commune . . » 44
» 30. — Vue sur l'intérieur de la hutte des Ipanga . . . . » 45
» 31. — Hutte Batito en construction, toit arqué. . . . . » 46
» 32. — Autre forme de la hutte Batito en construction au village de Longingila . . . . » 48
» 33. — Hutte provisoire des Bokala Yaelima . . . . . . » 49
» 34. — 1° Hutte Bankutu-Bakuba en construction. 2° Hutte Bankutu-Bakuba achevée . . . . » 50
» 35. — Intérieur d'un Ipanga et séchage de noix d'arachides dans la région de Bena Dibele-Lodi. . . . . . » 54
» 36. — Hutte à toit arqué de la Lokoro — Tribu Kundu. » 55
» 37. — Hache et houe du Lac Léopold II. Lukenie. . . . » 56
» 38. — Première installation du village Longingila dans un terrain nouvellement défriché — Tribu des Batito. » 57
» 39. — Hutte des nkiri de chasse et bananier en fleur et à fruit au village de Kempe — tribu Basakata . » 58
» 40. — Lances de chasse et piège au gros gibier, au Lac Léopold II . . . . » 65
» 41. — 1° Arc à lanière de tension en corde, et flèche avec pointe en fer . . . . » 66
» 42. — 2° Arc à lanière de tension en rotang et flèche en bois, la pointe durcie au feu. . . . . . . » 66
» 43. — Basakata armés de lances, d'arc et de flèches . . » 68
» 44. — Grand chasseur Yaelima montrant sa flèche harpon. » 79

Fig. 45. — Un départ pour la chasse au pays des Yaelima. — Lances, Arcs, Flèches et Filets . . . . p. 71
» 46. — Le placement des filets de chasse . . . . » 73
» 47. — Hotte de Nkisi de chasse — Boloma . . . . . . » 75
» 48. — Fétiche de chasse Boloma. Fétiche de chasse Boshomo. » 77
» 49. — Hotte du nkisi de chasse et bananier en fleur et en fruit au village de Kempa — tribu Basakata . . . . » 78
» 50. — Fétiche de chasse du village Modjoko . . . . . . » 79
» 51. — Fétiche nkisi de chasse des Yaelima . . . . . . » 81
» 52. — Fabrication des nasses chez les Wadia et les Tomba » 84
» 53. — Nasses de pêche utilisées par les populations du Lac Léopold II . . . . » 86
» 54. — Nasses et lignes de pêche utilisées au Lac Léopold II » 90
» 55. — Fabrication des nasses de pêche chez les Bolia . » 91
» 56. — Piège à poissons. — Filet de pêche muni de flotteurs Harpons de pêche du Lac Léopold II . . . . . » 93
» 57. — Paniers utilisés pour la pêche au Lac Léopold II . » 96
» 58. — La pêche au barrage chez les Bosengere. — Construction des claies et capture des poissons encerclés. » 97
» 59. — Allume feu par friction . . . . » 102
» 60. — Allume feu par giration . . . . » 102
» 61. — Baguette et planchette munie d'encoches . . . . . » 104
» 62. — Deux baguettes l'une munie d'encoches. . . . . . » 104
» 63. — Les cendres d'herbes salines, chez les Bolia. . . . » 107
» 64. — Évaporation de l'eau saturée de sel chez les Basakata » 110
» 65. — Palmier en fleur . . . . » 116
» 66. — Calebasses salières utilisées par les populations du Lac Léopold II . . . . » 118
» 67. — Préparation de la farine de manioc chez les Bolia. Forme spéciale du couteau servant à hacher le manioc . . . . » 120
» 68. — Boloma hachant le manioc . . . . » 121
» 69. — Mortier à manioc avec poterie pilon (étoli). Tribu des Boshomo . . . . » 122
» 70. — Femmes Yaelima préparant le manioc . . . . . . » 123

Fig. 71. — Mortier pilon et tamis à farine de manioc chez les Bankutshu . . . . p. 124
» 72. — Chikwangues apportées au poste . . . . » 125
» 73. — Bateke triturant le manioc . . . . » 126
» 74. — Femmes Babila égrainant le maïs et préparant les légumes . . . . » 127
» 75. — Kalamoir de la communauté . . . . » 132
» 76. — Ceinture en rotang . . . . » 133
» 77. — Deux manières de grimper à l'arbre . . . . . . » 134
» 78. — Mortier et pilon employés à la préparation des légumes et de l'huile de palme . . . . » 135
» 79. — Installation réservée à la fabrication de l'huile de palme » 136
» 80. — Calebasses servant de récipient pour l'eau, le vin, la bière et l'huile . . . . » 139
» 81. — Transport de la réserve de bois pour le foyer . . » 141
» 82. — La cuisine indigène installée en grand air. Tribu des Ipanga-Bolia. . . . . » 143
» 83. — Porteuse d'eau . . . . » 144
» 84. — Calebasse à l'huile de palme servant également à la conservation de l'eau . . . . » 146
» 85. — Brasserie à Masanga chez les Basakata, ... » 147
» 86. — Enfants Bobaie. L'un d'eux montre les signes de Géophagie . . . . » 150
» 87. — Pipe à chanvre ornée de nkisi, vue de dos et de face. » 153
» 88. — Pipe à chanvre. Fourneau et tuyau détachés. Fourneau et tuyau en place . . . . » 155
» 89. — Basongore fumant le tabac . . . . » 160
» 90. — Wadia fumant le tabac . . . . » 161
» 91. — Une scène de la vie indigène chez les riverains de la basse Lukenie . . . . » 164
» 92. — Un chef Batua. — Inongo. — Coiffure en cordes . . » 168
» 93. — Type Bateke à longue barbe, les cils et sourcils épilés . » 173
» 94. — Batua, le menton garni d'une petite barbiche. Les cils et sourcils soigneusement épilés. . . . . . » 174
» 95. — Déformation des dents au Lac Léopold II. . . . . » 175

FIG. 96. — Déformation des dents et coiffure chez les Bateke . p. 175
» 97. — Coiffure rehaussée de ngula d'un chef Bankutshu. Cils et sourcils soigneusement épilés . . . . . » 176
» 98. — Mosengere avec sa coiffure en auréole mobile . . » 177
» 99. — Femme Batitu favorite du chef Inunu. Coiffure des notables . . . . » 177
» 100. — Coiffures et tatouages au Lac Léopold II. . . . . » 178
» 101. — Groupe de femmes Batitu. — Coiffures et ornements. » 179
» 102. — Une mère Batitu et ses enfants ornés de cauris-perles et anneaux en laiton . . . . » 180
» 103. — Un vieux chef indigène du Lac Léopold II, tribu des Wadia, orné de ses insignes et accompagné de ses deux favorites et de son joueur de Lukumbe. » 181
» 104. — Chef indigène du Lac Léopold II et son conseiller notable principal de la tribu tous deux en costume de gala. . . . . » 182
» 105. — Deux femmes Wadia et enfant portant autour du cou des colliers en laiton massif . . . . » 183
» 106. — Natali le chef Banfumu de Kapanda . . . . . . » 184
» 107. — Un groupe d'enfants des Batitu . . . . » 185
» 108. — Etoti, vieil insociable chef des Wadia de Bembe en grande toilette . . . . » 186
» 109. — Toilette de danse des Yaelima-Bokala de la région de Wumbuli. — Tatouage du dos . . . . . . » 187
» 110. — Tatouage de race exécuté par un homme. Tribu des Wadia » 188
» 111. — Tatouage ornemental exécuté par une femme. Tribu des Wadia . . . . » 188
» 112. — Tatouage Bateke-Banfumungu . . . . » 189
» 113. — Tatouage chez la femme Bateke-Banfumu . . . . » 189
» 114. — Tatouage chez la femme Wadia-Basela . . . . . . » 189
» 115. — Une élégante de la région des Bokala-Yaelima. Tatouage toilette, bracelets et colliers . . . . » 190
» 116. — Tatouage chez la femme du Lac Léopold II et basse Lukenie . . . . » 191
» 117. — Tatouage des Batitu-Ipanga . . . . » 192

FIG. 118. — Inunu, le jeune chef supérieurement doué des Batitu de la région d'Oshwe . . . . p. 193
» 119. — Tatouage des tribus du Lac Léopold II. . . . . . » 194
» 120. — Tatouage Bokala-Yaelima . . . . » 195
» 121. — Tatouage Ipanga-Batitu . . . . » 196
» 122. — Tatouage Bokala-Yaelima. . . . . » 196
» 123. — Tatouage de la femme Bokala-Yaelima de face et de dos. » 197
» 124. — Coiffure et tatouage Yaelima. Type du Longomo ou notable . . . . » 199
» 125. — Tatouage Yaelima et coiffure relevée par des noix d'arachides enduites de ngula . . . . » 200
» 126. — Retour des champs . . . . » 202

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

CHAPITRE I.

Le Pays et ses Habitants.

Aspect du pays. — Situation des tribus. — Caractères généraux des indigènes. — Sentiment maternel. — Le féticheur. — Croyances religieuses. — Culte des morts. — Les Mfumu. — La médecine p. 5 à 33

CHAPITRE II.

L'Habitat.

Conditions d'installation du village. — Dispositions générales des huttes. — Type de la hutte Bateke-Banfumu. — Hutte conique Baboma. — Forme de la hutte du Lac Léopold II. — Hutte à toit arcqué de la Lukenie. — Villages du Sankuru-Kasaï. — Hutte Bakuba. — Conclusions générales . . . . p. 34 à 54

CHAPITRE III.

Les moyens d'existence de l'indigène.

L'élevage : Poules, chèvres, chiens. — L'agriculture : Manioc, maïs, riz, bananes, arachides. — La Chasse : Armes, pièges, nkisi, méthode

p. 211

individuelle, chasse en communauté. — La Pêche : Méthode générale, barrages, nasses, pièges, harpons, arcs et flèches, lignes, filets claies p. 55 à 100

CHAPITRE IV.

L'alimentation.

L'allume-feu. — Fabrication du sel. — Préparation des aliments. — Manioc. — Maïs — Bananes. — Viande. — Poissons. — Piments. — Fabrication de l'huile de palme. — Les boissons. — L'eau. — Malafu. — Masanga. — Pombe. — Les excitants. Chanvre. Noix de Kola. — Tabac. . . . . p. 100 à 1 2

CHAPITRE V.

Les soins donnés au corps.

Hygiène. — Fabrication du savon. — Ngula et Mpembe. — Déformations artificielles. — L'épilation. — Limage des dents. — La coiffure. — Parures et objets suspendus au corps. — Tatouage par incision. — La circoncision . . . . p. 163 à 208

000

Marriage among the Nkundu
(Le mariage des Nkundó)

G. Hulstaert

Mémoires, In-8^{0}, Institut Royal
Colonial Belge, Vol. 8
Brussels, 1938

Translated from the French by Monika B. Vizedom

Human Relations Area Files

1959

[title page]

Table of Contents

Page

Introduction 1

Chapter I Preliminaries and Generalities 20

Chapter II The Marriage Agreement 95

Chapter III The Various Forms of Marriage and Pseudo-marital Unions 171

Chapter IV The Age of the Bride and Groom 213

Chapter V Obstacles to Marriage 223

Chapter VI Married Life 244

Chapter VII Polygamy 320

Chapter VIII Divorce 353

Chapter IX Death 391

Chapter X Children 433

Appendix Kinship Terminology 485

Introduction

101 This study deals with the marriage laws and customs of a large group of the Nkundó [Nkundu] people. Therefore, it would be useful at the beginning to give some general information about this people, who are very interesting from the ethnological standpoint. Then we can define the specific purpose of our investigation.

101
131 The Nkundó or Mongo occupy almost the entire length of the central basin of the Belgian Congo, from the Lulonga-Lopori [rivers] in the north all the way to Lake Leopold II, and beyond the Lukenie [River] as far as the Kasai [River]. In the west they touch the Congo River only south of the "Ruki" (1); the western part of the old Lulonga District is occupied by the Ngombe, whose territory extends as far as the Maringa [River] (known to the natives as Lǔwo) upstream from Basankusu (Basǎnkoso according to the natives). (2) In the east they may be found as far as, and even beyond, the Lomami. In the southeast they have penetrated into the northwestern part of Sankuru District. At the present time it is still impossible to delineate precisely their eastern and southeastern boundaries; the Bambólé, the Bahamba, the Mǐtuku, the Bangelengele, [4] the Balengola, the Basongola, and even the Batetela and the "Bakusu," are either Móngo or very closely related. (1)

---

1. Ruki is probably a corruption of Bolóki, a tribe of fishermen living downstream on the banks of this river, which the natives prefer to call Loilaka.

2. According to Bittremieux and Lestaeghe, a few Nkundó remain on Nsumba Island near Nouvelle-Anvers (Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 194).

101 1. See Donckerwolcke, in Kongo-Overzee, Vol. 1, p. 235, and my article in Congo, Vol. 1, p. 13. The fact that Donckerwolcke

101 classifies the Bakela (or Boyéla), who are unquestionably pure Móngo, among the Wakutshu [Wakusu] or Batetela is highly significant.

161 It is impossible to give an exact figure for the size of the population we have just defined. In any case one can estimate that it is more than a million.

184 Throughout the huge territory occupied by this people, only insignificant differences in institutions or language can be observed. Greater divergences appear in the material manifestations of culture.

101
563 In my opinion it is likely that certain groups which belong among the Nkundo-Móngo as far as culture and speech are concerned, may be distinguished from them in genealogy and history. Among these are the true Elíma or riverain people (the Bolóki, the Eleku, the Elínga of the upper Lomela and the upper Tshuapa), (2) the Ngombe tribes

2. We exclude a few Libinja and Basokó clans living near Coquilhatville, since they are clearly of alien origin. The native name for the Tshuapa [River] is Jwafa or Jafa and, higher up, Lwafa. Among the Bongandó and the Bahamba it is called the Laha.

of the Lomelà, the Mbólé, the Bakutu of the Lomela-Tshuapa (with whom one should probably include the Ntómbá and the Nkóle), (3)

3. See my article in Congo, 1931, Vol.1, pp. 21 ff.

and perhaps also the Mpámá and the Losakanyi. (4). This likelihood

4. The latter are erroneously called Losakanja by Father Schebesta in Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge, p. 199. They seem to have lived formerly on the lower Momboyo River (Luilaka); the land on which Flandria Mission has been established still bears their name.

M 101 563 does not exclude the possibility of a distant kinship, but the present state of our knowledge makes the solution to this question impossible; for very close resemblances may be explained by a common origin as well as by a period of living in close contact, and differences may be due to diverse origins [5] or to a temporary separation at a certain point in history.

P M 101 563 144 A considerable number of Pygmoids or Pygmiforms (1) (Batswá, Jŏfe, Balómbe, Bilángi, Boné) are to be found scattered among the Nkundó. They share a community of social and economic interests with their "masters." The Botswá belongs to his master and depends on him, but he is not, strictly speaking, his slave. His master not only has rights over him; he also has obligations to fulfill. Most of the Pygmoids are to be found in the western part of Nkundó territory; in the east they are very rare.

M 101 173 The Nkundó-Móngo came from the north or northeast, while the Mbólé claim to have come from the northwest, and the Bakutu from the west. (2)

M 101 A word should be said about the name of these people. Ordinarily, we call them the Nkundó-Móngo. The first of these names is used in the west and in the south, the second especially in the north and in the east. The Elángá of the Losanganya region are called the Mongo éâ Lolo, or the Upstream Móngo, by the peoples to the west of them. Foreigners call all these peoples, including the Nkundó, the Mbólé, the Bakutu, etc., by the name of Móngo. In literature one sometimes encounters the name of Lolo or Balolo. (3) But, as we have seen, *lolo* is not a proper noun but simply the word meaning "upstream"

---

1. This name was proposed by Father Schebesta, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

2. See my study, previously cited, *passim*.

3. For example, the name of the Protestant mission of the Lulonga is "Congo Balolo Mission."

101 (in other dialects translated as nkoto).

The people are called Nkundó or Móngo, never Bankundó or
101 Bamóngo. The prefix ba is often heard, as it may be used in front
193 of all proper nouns, similarly to the French usage in les Molière, les
Rubens, etc. [or the English usage: the Browns, the French, the
Nkundó]. The singular prefix bo is also used, but only rarely. [6]
I have heard it only in the expression: ale ô bonkundó mongo, "He
is a real Nkundo." This statement was made only in speaking of a
foreigner who had successfully assimilated the Nkundó language and
culture. It is possible, however, that it has a broader meaning.

Is it possible to discover an etymology for these names?
101 Móngo is a common noun signifying something excellent, expecially
a person. People say móng'ěy'ǒna, "a fine child," móng'ěy'ǒmoto,
a superb woman." (The name should be compared also with the term
imóngo, which denotes the state of being of a person who is well
thought of, prosperous, rich, etc.) The form of the word does not
change in the plural. The name Nkundó is more difficult to explain,
if an explanation is at all possible. (1) If the name is to be related
to some other word, the only possibility is the verb kundola, "to unearth what has been buried." But to unearth what? The corpses of one's enemies, in order to prove one's daring by eating them? Or copper rings, which would mean their wealth? The possibility is there, but we have no direct evidence. According to Fathers Bittremieux and Lestaeghe (on p. 195 of the article mentioned), some maintain that Nkundó means nkóló, "master." But what is the basis for this explanation? (2)

1. The word is Nkundó not Nkundu or Kundu. The assertion that the initial n is not part of the word, but is simply a nasal sound which must precede a consonant in the native sound system, shows a real lack of linguistic knowledge.

2. In contrast to the Batswá, the Nkundó and other groups are Baotó (sing. Bootó), meaning non-Batswá.

101 The explanation that I judge to be the most plausible is that Nkundó means "people of the interior." As a matter of fact, the name is almost always used in contrast to Eliñga, "riverain people," and sometimes in contrast to other groups. But the original meaning of the term was probably broadened through contact with other Negro groups and with Europeans; it may thus have become the more or less specific name of the group. Still it should be noted that if you ask a Ngombe whether his tribe is Eliñga, "riverain-fishermen," [7] he may answer you, "Among us there are Eliñgá and there are Nkundó." His reply would confirm our supposition. The word is thus a synonym of Nkondaka, which is found in several dialects at the equator. (1)

> 1. See my cited article, p. 19. I have also heard this term among the Lifumba. Nkondaka should be compared with the name Ekonda, and with bokonda, "forest on dry land," and with the verb konda, "to silt up, to be filled with alluvium, to become dry ground."

One often hears the Bombwanja contrasted with the Bokóté. In many cases Bokoté is a synonym for Nkundó, in the present-day meaning of the word. In his study of the Wangatá (Revue Congolaise, Vol. 1, 1910), Engels, who knew these peoples well since he was among other things administrator of the territory of Bokatola, already contrasted the Bombwanja and the Bokóté. It seems to me that this name is the true name of the people in question, or at least for a great portion of them. It has no other meaning in the language of the present day. Etymologically, however, it may be related to the verb kóta, "to grow old," or to another kóta, as in kóta likambo (elsewhere bótola), "to end a dispute by pronouncing a final judgment," kóta lisoló, "to have the last word in a discussion," kóta esé, "to ensure peace and order in the village," and in the verb derived from it, kótela, "to be competent, skillful."

Leaving aside the Mbólé, etc., as well as the tribes of the Lukenie [River], we can distinguish a number of different groups within the Nkundo-Móngo: the Nsongó (Mbonje), Elañgá, Bosaka, Bongandó, Boyéla, Ekonda, etc. Each of these contains a number of subdivisions or tribes.

101 We have excluded the majority of these groups from the scope of our study and have confined ourselves to a territory limited as follows: it is bound in the north by the Ruki-Tshuapa; in the east by the Salonga as far as the Mbɔ́lɛ́ boundary; in the south by a line running from the junction of the Luilaka and the Lwɛ́le to the northern boundary of the Bombwanja of the Lokolɔ́ and then to the boundary of the Ekonda; in the west by the Boloko, a tributary of the Ruki. In other words, we are considering only a very small part of the territory of the Nkundɔ́ tribes. But [8] it is the only part we have been able to investigate thoroughly. We are including the Bombwanja and the Elíngá who have settled in the area thus outlined.

101 563 The Elíngá live only along the big rivers. In our area they include in addition to the true Elíngá (of whom there are only about ten clans belonging to the Bolɔ́ki group, who have settled between Ikɛ́ngɛ́ and Bokɛ́le and Mpakɔ́, and the four or five Eleku villages on the Salonga), the Nkɔ́le and Ekonda (1) villages who have adopted the way of life and customs of the Elíngá. (2)

As to the Bombwanja, their clans may be found scattered throughout the area. They are more or less dependent on clans of other peoples with whom they live and form hamlets of a sort in a great many villages. A solid bloc of them is to be found in the vicinity of Bokátola. It is constituted as an independent district [chefferie] even though, according to "custom," it "belongs" as a *julɛ́* (pl. *baulɛ́*), "subject," or "subjugated clan" (the verb is *uja*) to certain Bokɔ́tɛ́ villages or groups. (3) It is quite possible that these

1. Related respectively to the Nkɔ́le of the Lokolɔ́ and the Ekonda of Lake Leopold II.

2. See the data on the history and life of the Elíngá published by Father Boelaert, M.S.C., in *Congo*, 1935, Vol. 2, p. 705.

3. The same is true of the Bombwanja group of the Lokolɔ́. Other clans are scattered

101
563

among the Elángá beyond the Tshuapa. All of them are beyond the scope of this study. The Bombwánja are divided into Basuné and Bonkoso, and the Boendé are considered their bónankáná (sister's son).

Bombwanja were originally Mbólé, for certain words and idioms in their dialect are reminiscent of the Lombólé.

Let us briefly enumerate the other tribes -- "pure" Nkundó -- who form the subject of this study:

101
619

1. The Injóló, "sister's son" (bonankáná) of the Ntómbá and the Bolénge who live beyond the Boloko. They are divided into three groups [9] -- Engónjó, Wesé, and Ngombe, (1) each of which comprises a subdistrict [sous-chefferie] for administrative purposes. A small segment is to be found outside the area under discussion, between the Boloko and Coq. (2)

2. The Boángí (and their subgroup, the Besombó), related to the Bokála of the Losanganya region. (3)

1. West of their territory are to be found the remains of a group of former inhabitants of the area, whom the present inhabitants call Tompoko (or Basékå Bofáka l'Eléké) but who are completely unknown to me.

2. The southern Injóló are often called Imoma.

[114]

3. On the ethnographic map of the Belgian Congo prepared and published by Dr. J. Maes, the territory of the Boangi is marked with the name "Bokuala." There is no tribe or village by that name. Unless an insulting and humiliating nickname (bokwala, "slave") is involved, the name may result from an erroneous use of the name of the present chief of the Boangi, Bokwála.

101
619

3. The Ionda, related to the Bonyanga living north of the Tshuapa.

4. The Wángatá-Ntómbá, of whom one group is settled near Igende at the junction of the Tshuapa and the Momboyo, and another on the Jwalé. Other parts of this tribe may be found near Coquilhatville (district [chefferie] of the "Tumba"), near Bokote (Ikengo district), and at the middle section of the Luilaka, between Waka and Bonkoto (Nkundêngolo, or Wafanya and "Tumba"). (4)

> 4. At the present time it is impossible to determine the exact relationship between the Ntómbá and the Wángatá. In general the latter are treated as a subdivision of the Ntómbá, together with the Inganda and the Ikengo. Moreover, we do not know yet whether these Ntómbá are related to other tribes bearing the same name which are frequently encountered (on the Lopori, in the vicinity of Lake Tumba, and Lake Leopold II, among the Bakutu, etc.), or whether these are no more than groups bearing the same name. It should be noted that on the map previously mentioned, the Wǎngatá are placed much too far north; actually they are all to be found south of the Ruki.

5. The Bakáala, who seem to be more or less related to the Wǎngatá.

6. The Bonkoso.

7. The three sister tribes of the Bongíli, the Bombomba, and the Lifumba (the Beloko are a subtribe of the latter). [10]

8. The village of Bomángola, wedged in among the Lifumda. This village contains no more than thirty taxpayers but since it belongs to the Nsongó, the oldest of all Nkundó-Móngo groups, it is considered as a separate district. (1)

> 1. Their primacy has always been recognized and respected by the Lifumba.

101
619 9. The Bongale. Three large villages belonging to this group are to be found in the territory under discussion. In order of their size they are: Bongale wǎ Botóló (among the Lifumba, between the Bonsómbé, Lolíma and Saási rivers), Bongale wǎ Ilinga (among the Bakáala, near Ikéngé), and Bongale wǎ Bo̲so̲ngú (among the Bonkoso, [563] near Bempumba). The difference between their rules of exogamy and those of the other tribes confirms the view that the Bongale are not true Nkundó. (2)

2. See Chapter V, Article III. There are several other small Bongale groups, but I do not know whether they are related to those mentioned above. Among them are those living near Bo̲nye̲ka (Busira) among the Boángi (Bokála, Boénjola). They may be descended from different ancestors who all bore the name Ngale. The same name may indicate an identical origin, but it may also be derived from different individuals whose names were the same. This statement is generally applicable.

The tribes living between the Jwalé and the Boloko, with whom the Bolénge and the Ntómbá between the Congo and the Boloko are sometimes classified, are grouped under the general name of Ilángá by the Boángí, Injó̲ló̲, and Elángá. (3)

[114] 3. The Bokele tribe listed on the above-mentioned map does not exist. Could this error be due to an incorrect extension of the name of a Boloki village near Bokúma which is called Bokélé?

The Nkundó-Mó̲ngo̲ came from the north or the northeast. (4)

[825] 4. The following note may be of interest: The stories and songs of the Nkundó indicate a

The groups under discussion here lived for a time on the banks of the Luwo (Maringa) and the [11] upper Ikelemba, (1) then under pressure from other Móngo tribes, they crossed the Tshuapa-Ruki. They evicted the Ekonda and settled in their present location. This exodus must have taken place a fairly long time ago; it is impossible to determine the date and difficult to make any estimates. In any case it must have occurred 150 to 200 years ago.

These peoples are primarily farmers; they grow chiefly
241 bananas, manioc, yams, colocasia [taro], sweet potatoes, sugar cane, and various vegetables and condiments. The food crops they grow, together with what they gather and the Elaeis palm trees provide them with a continuous and abundant food supply, as long as elephants do
[231] not interfere. Their domestic animals include chickens, goats, and
224 dogs. (2) Hunting is a pleasant change of activity rather than an

---

101
619
[825] recollection of an animal of the leopard family which they call bokonga. Their description of it corresponds to the lion. Some soldiers and other expatriates, who were also young people, shown representations of a lion immediately identified it with their bokonga.

[173] 1. It appears that between the Ikelemba and its tributary the Losálifa, there is still a bonkom tree called w'ãmenga (of bald heads) under which, according to tradition, the ancestors held their councils. Nearby there is a bosáu whose fruits never ripen.

[177] 2. Ducks have been introduced fairly recently, but they were known long before colonial times. They came from the south. Sheep have been introduced only in the last few decades, and they are found only in a few villages on the river banks in the lowlands.

224 absolute and inescapable necessity for those tribes who have Batswá,
since the latter provide them with a certain amount of the necessary
meat, though in insufficient quantity. The people hunt in groups
and individually -- in the latter case primarily by means of traps.
Fishing with nets is also very widespread, although various other
methods are also known. The picking of fruit, caterpillars, mushrooms,
222 vegetables, etc. continues to be popular.

Among trades, that of the smith is foremost. However, iron
463 casting has been abandoned at the present time. Copper is brought
in from other peoples by tribes serving as intermediaries. Wood
sculpture is rapidly disappearing. Basketry [12] remains popular.
[286] Weaving no longer exists at the present time; in fact, looms can no
longer be found in the region.

593x The family is patriarchal and the political organization corresponds
to it; there are only heads of families. Indeed, among the
Nkúndó the family is the complete nucleus and foundation of the society.
The result is a democratic and oligarchic government, but
one very different from any we would call by that name in Europe.
554 Certain men become prominent because of their intelligence, their
eloquence, their bravery, or their wealth, having great influence and
often giving the appearance of chiefs whose authority extends beyond
their own clan, but none of them has ever founded an empire. In
the past the Bongíli were the most courageous tribe, and the one most
feared. Besides, their geographic location was in their favor, as they
had the Lifumba and the Bombomba, two sister tribes, on each side
of them.

[517] The artistic tastes of the Nkúndó are directed chiefly toward
538 music and the dance. Their oral literature is also very rich; it includes,
for example, the epic of Nsongó and Lianja (1) and that

1. The most important portions of this epic have been translated and published by Father Boelaert, M.S.C., in Congo, 1934, Vol. 1, pp. 49 and 197.

of the tortoise.

771 In matters of religion the Nkundó recognize the existence of a Supreme Being: Njakomba or Mbombiándɛ́, creator and ruler of all that exists. They do not worship him in any way, however; all their religious practices are addressed to guardian and ancestral spirits. (2)

2. On the subject of the religious conceptions of the Nkundó, see a detailed study by Father Boelaert, M.S.C., in Hooger Leven, 1934, pp. 1612 and 1636, and 1935, pp. 12 and 60.

197 The language of the Nkundó is beautiful, harmonious, flexible, and rich. It has all the qualities needed to become a literary language and is admirably suited to the requirements of teaching. Furthermore, its various dialects are spoken over a considerably large territory, in fact over one of the largest language areas [13] of the Congo. 797 214 In addition to the religious and devotional books of the Catholic missions, a fairly large collection of various academic textbooks is available in this language, thanks primarily to the zeal of the Protestant missionaries. The latter have also published a complete translation of the Bible. Several vocabularies and small grammars have been compiled, and in recent years a large dictionary and an expanded grammar have been added to these, both compiled by A. and L. Ruskin of the Bongandanga Mission. For several years the Protestant mission at Bolenge has been publishing a native magazine, and the Catholic mission is pushing ahead with preparations to publish one also.

114 Father Shebesta's book, Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge, includes a chapter on the Nkundó in which the author gives a good general description of this people. Nevertheless, some of the details given must be accepted with reservations.

121 The general information given above is enough to give the reader a superficial knowledge of the Nkundó.

The purpose of this work is to give a more extensive account of their institutions pertaining to marriage.

As we have previously stated, we are considering only a portion of this people. All our statements cover only the fraction we have delimited. The family institutions of other Nkundó groups are not accounted for, as they are less known to us and we do not want

121 to present anything we have not thoroughly investigated. We have not stepped outside the geographic limits set forth except for a few incidental remarks. Although the cultural uniformity of the Nkundó-Móngo is remarkable it is not, of course, absolute. And if we have used the title Mariage des Nkundó (Marriage among the Nkundu), we have done so because it was difficult to find one which would be more appropriate for the geographic and ethnic limits of [14] this study. It is very likely that in most cases our data are valid beyond the limits we have laid out, but to generalize upon it before making a thorough study of each group would be contrary to all scientific method. The reader is therefore earnestly requested to take these remarks into account and to abstain from giving our conclusions too broad a scope.

Familial institutions in themselves and in their totality are outside the scope of this book. But since they are based on marriage, they have an important place within our framework. We must necessarily touch upon them, but we will limit our excursions into that realm to what is required to make the general description intelligible. On the other hand, the study of marriage throws a good deal of light on familial institutions.

The words "family," "clan," "group," etc. recur frequently. 128 596 614 The family is an entity smaller than the clan, and the latter is subordinate to the group. Since it is very difficult to give a precise definition, however, we have taken the trouble to make a clear distinction only when necessary. (1) [Editor's Note: Elsewhere we use them more as generic terms or even as synonyms. In order to make family relationships and the expressions used by the Nkundó to designate them more comprehensible, we are attaching an example of a genealogical table.]

113 I know of the following previous studies on the same subject:

Engels, "Les Wangata," Revue Congolaise, 1910, which also deals with marriage.

G. Kaptein, "Familieleven en -zeden bij de Inboorlingen van den Evenaar," Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 531. [15] This study covers

---

1. See Chapter V, Article III.

113 more ground than ours, since it even includes a discussion of the Mbole.

H. Brepoels, "Het Familiehoofd bij de Nkundó-Negers," Congo, 1930, Vol. 2, p. 332.

124 We have tried to make our data as complete as possible. We have given here not only the major trends and basic principles, but also the particulars, even those that seem most insignificant. They are always interesting, and sometimes more so than one may have suspected at first. All the material has been discussed over and over again, in private and in public, with very varied people at different times and places, and the points that presented the greatest difficulty were gone over countless times.

121 In general we have preferred to use the descriptive and analytic method. We have drawn conclusions and principles from the data. Although case histories naturally lengthened the text of this work, we have not hesitated to insert them at various points. They are the best means of bringing out certain rules or customs and bringing to life the psychology of our people.

121
69 In this respect a remark should be made whose importance deserves our attention for a moment. The examination of judicial cases of which we have been direct or indirect witnesses does not provide a scientific certainty about the laws -- or "the customs," to use the term so frequently applied (1). For not all [16] that is done

1. It is unfortunate that this term has become so fashionable, for it lacks precision. Indeed, it may mean simply "practice, usage," or it may be used in the legal sense of "a practice having the force of a law." Often a confusion between the two meanings is created, and all customs are considered to be legally obligatory, when actually, some practices are outside common law, and others are in opposition to it. For the sake of precision in ethnographic and ethnologieal works, it would be well to use this ambiguous term as little as possible and to distinguish clearly among legal procedures, the laws and custom or usage.

121 69 is in accordance with justice. The observation that the natives behave in one fashion or another, and that this or that palaver is often settled in a particular way, is not a sufficient basis for concluding that such is the law.

Infractions of the rules of social justice are more frequent than one would suspect. The principles are good, but often passions prevent their application, and frequently there are neither sanctions to support a weakness of will nor rewards to stimulate loyal adherence.

121 114 69 Furthermore, one should not invoke the variability and continuous transformation of native law (as does Dr. T. Seitz, for example, in Africa, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 89) without first establishing whether the judgments rendered have been in conformity with the law. The remark made by this eminent author further on in his article, "Welche Rolle dabei das Machtmoment," etc. . . . weakens his first statement and shows precisely that an accurate knowledge of legal prescriptions cannot be attained solely on the basis of the verdicts of tribunals, and that partiality often plays a considerable part. The observation made by the former governor of the Cameroons may be applied to the Belgian Congo and often to "civilized" countries as well -- partially and the abuse of power are nowhere unknown.

121 69 We must also take into account the possibility of the judges' ignorance, as well as our own difficulty in understanding their sentences, since important points of fact and law are sometimes left unmentioned, and yet are implied.

It is not surprising that there are complicated cases where it is very difficult for the natives, however intelligent and impartial, to settle the dispute and provide a fair and legitimate solution. The law cannot foresee for every case the infinite variety of personal, local, and modal circumstances that may occur.

Only the analysis and comparison of diverse cases, [17] their solutions, sanctions, and consequences, together with discussions with discreet and impartial natives who are knowing and skillful and who have learned to know us and to understand what we want to learn from them, and who are sincerely disposed to help us at the same time, can produce a rational and reasoned certainty which conforms to reality. These conditions are numerous, and it is difficult to find them

121 all fulfilled in one person. But such individuals do exist, if in the
69 person of the investigator they find sympathy, broad ideas, a lack of all European racism, understanding, a knowledge of their language, and a benevolent devotion to their interests, individually and as a group.

Even if one has the good fortune to find a native who, after
121 much experience, reaches the point where he will say spontaneously:
124 "This is done often, but it is against the law; the law says thus and so; this decision of the tribunal was partial for such or such reason," -- an infinitely valuable situation, but one which arises very rarely -- one is not thereby absolved of the need to check his statements. But the further one goes, the more it is possible to be aware of the reality and to appraise the informant's value in this sphere and the usefulness of his statements.

These considerations are particularly valuable in making the
121 distinction between obligations and social decorum or good manners,
183 between legal obligations and obligations of kinship and mutual
671 assistance. In current practice the Nkundó make no clear lines of demarcation between these categories, since they have never codified their law or attempted to set up a clear and precise classification. They feel no more need for this than, for instance, they or even we "civilized" people bother about setting up a grammar for our native tongue, which we speak correctly and without the slightest difficulty, purely out of habit.

An investigation in the legal domain is made [18] very diffi-
[124] cult by the patriarchal and feudal character of these peoples, added to the lack of writing. Not only is there an adaptation to circumstances -- the felicitous flexibility of native laws -- in which jurisprudence plays a great role, but the Nkundó, while knowing well what is lawful and what is not, generally does not clearly understand the nature of an obligation, and above all he does not know its source.

One's chances of obtaining good results in the inquiry are
121 greatly increased by the use of hypothetical cases, presented to the
124 individuals one knows best and whom one knows to be in no way involved. It is always worthwhile to use this method as a means of completing and perhaps correcting conclusions based on the examination

121 of actual legal cases. It is almost impossible to gain access to the
124 latter unless one is armed with an official order. A thorough knowledge of the language of the tribe in question is required, however, for the use of imaginary cases.

In describing various laws and practices, we have tried to reproduce the explanations given by the Nkundó and to add our own views when it has seemed appropriate to do so. The careful reader will have no trouble distinguishing between these two very different sources.

I am very well aware that many ethnologists do not like
121 chercheurs de brousse [bush explorers] to become involved in these questions, and that they prefer to receive from the latter only raw data on which they can build their theories. All ethnographers of the bush and forest will readily recognize their inadequacy in matters of theory. But this very real disadvantage due to a lack of training is offset by a definite advantage. They know the natives much more intimately, not only with respect to the immediate subject of their study, but also as regards other aspects of their lives, particularly their psychological make-up and general mentality, with which they may have had direct and daily contact for many years. [19] They are therefore more likely to come to conclusions which are in accordance with reality. The "armchair" ethnologists sometimes seem to assume that the men in the bush are capable of being no more than collectors of data. Yet the majority of them have had an intermediate education, especially in the humanities, and many of them have attended institutions of higher learning (universities and others). There are professional jurists among them, for example. Therefore, these observers are capable of reliable judgments, and many of them, through their studies in philosophy, are equipped with the rules of logic and highly developed critical powers.

It is true that it is not up to us to build theories; the range of our investigations is always limited. A knowledge of theories is very interesting and useful, but it is by no means necessary. In fact such knowledge may sometimes be dangerous, since it is easy for it to unduly influence our judgment in a way that is against the best interests of science. Thus we do not care whether our facts are in

121 conformity or in opposition to this or that ethnological theory. We are presenting the facts in their entirety, the material portion of the culture as well as its intellectual, psychological, and moral basis. Theory should be based on these facts, not the facts adapted to suit the theories.

In the text of this work the reader will find repetitions, foot-
121 notes, and references. We would have preferred to omit these,
114 since they are always tedious, but their presence was dictated by the nature of the material and by the strictly scientific nature of this work, which we wanted to retain at all costs. We hope in fact that those who wish to study it thoroughly will find these repetitions not an obstacle, but a valuable aid which will help them to obtain a total and precise picture of the material.

Although I have taken the greatest care and all possible precautions to present to the reader only facts and evidence which correspond to reality, and to document [20] everything as completely as possible, this work will inevitably contain gaps, imperfections, even one mistake or another. (1)

This material is not exempt from such faults, and it would be pure presumption to pretend otherwise. But science could not advance, nor could the practical purpose of our knowledge ever be accomplished, should we try to achieve the perfection that can be the result only of successive studies by different people, before presenting the results of our research to the public. I would be gratified if others would check my data, criticize it, and supplement and correct it wherever necessary. I hope that this work will also stimulate them to make a similar study of the other segments of the Nkundó-Mongo so that at last we may have a total picture of the matrimonial institutions of this very important people.

---

1. This is especially true with regard to the legal significance of certain practices, a most delicate point of inquiry, which has yet to be thoroughly investigated -- particularly, certain questions concerning the origin of marriage in its various forms.

114 I should like to express one more wish relevant to this subject. A number of studies by civil servants and government agents, containing a good deal of ethnographic data on various subjects, lie in bales in the bureaus of the Congo, waiting for the day when they will serve as fodder for ever-hungry termites. Would it not be possible to make these documents -- at least the better ones -- available to the public? Even if they contain gaps and errors, they will be gratefully received. They will lead other researchers to explore these questions thoroughly, and through emulation, criticism, and discussion, we will develop an increasing and more accurate knowledge of the natives, [21] their history, their way of life, their laws, their customs, and their mentality, which will be of great benefit for all colonial work.

Some of the terms used in one or another part of this study may appear too coarse. I would rather have avoided them, but I would have had to use veiled expressions and circumlocutions which would have adversely affected the clarity of this work and therefore its value, for it is intended for a purely scientific purpose. I trust the indulgent reader will therefore excuse their presence.

124 Here and there case histories are given in full. I believe that the details are not without interest, since they give a living picture of the mentality of our people. Most of the incidents were [114] collected in the vicinity of Flandria, the area with which I am most familiar. Here and there I have taken the liberty of passing judgment and of recommending solutions to certain problems. I should like to say that in these cases I am expressing opinions which are purely personal.

000 The map appended to this work makes it possible for the reader to find a tribe or village which is under discussion and shows its geographic position amidst the groups that comprise the Móngo-Nkundó people.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all those who have in some way contributed to this work: His Excellency Monsignor Ed. Van Goethem, our venerable vicar apostolic, who gave me permission to carry it out and always encouraged me in my research, understanding fully its practical value for a sensible adaptation which will enable us to establish the Church on a firm foundation; my colleagues, Father Trigalet and Father Wauters, as well as Brother Brants, who took upon

000 themselves a large portion of our joint labor, leaving me with leisure to pursue this work; all the natives who have had confidence in me and have assisted me with their valuable evidence and explanations, among them Bakutu Bonifasi, Ali Ntefeji, Mpetsi, Esal'ey'olaka, [22] Ikanya, Bolongo Lokolo, B. Ekamba, Bosembu, Piosi Isia, and countless others all of whom I cannot mention, for the list would become too long.

I am deeply indebted to the Honorary Attorney General, Mr. A. Sohier. This eminent jurist was kind enough to look over the entire manuscript and to point out obscure or ambiguous passages and indicate places that called for added explanations or revisions in the text. Thus he has made a great contribution toward the final form of this work, and a good part of its merit is due to him. [23]

Chapter I

Preliminaries and Generalities

581 Marriage is comprised of a sexual aspect, an element of attachment or affection, and a utilitarian element. Only exceptionally is a union based on but one of these. This is true not only of marital unions, but also of extramarital relationships which are not transitory.

This law, which can be considered general and universal, holds true also for the Nkundó. Before embarking on a detailed study of marriage among these people, it would therefore be useful to see what form these aspects take among them.

Let us begin with the utilitarian aspects, which can be dealt with in brief. From that angle, the Nkundó's wife is to him the person who will attend to the satisfaction of his daily needs with respect to nourishment (cooking and farming) keep his hut clean and orderly, and raise his children. Thus, for him, she is a housewife and mother.

Cases of marriage for political or economic reasons occur, but they are the exceptions, so that we can leave them out of consideration.

581 Moral qualities are often involved in the choice of a wife. But strictly speaking, the marriage is not one of reason; the cause of it is more likely to be affection.

The affective and sexual aspects of the question require longer discussion.

Therefore this chapter is divided into two parts:

I. The emotional life
II. The sexual life of the Nkundó [24]

Part 1

The Emotional Life of the Nkundó

000

[Editor's Note: The Nkundó are capable of real affection. That affection takes varying forms and attains different degrees according to the nature of the persons in question. In successive articles, we will treat:

I. Affection among relatives
II. A special form of the latter: the creation of a Bolúmbú
III. Friendship
IV. Love between husband and wife]

Article I. Affection among Relatives

152
602 The Nkundó feel a deep affection toward members of their kin group. I am of the opinion that they love them as much, if not more, than most Europeans, but are not capable of as great a devotion. To understand this condition, one need only consider that affection is instinctive. Our people say: botéma nd'ikoma, "the heart is like a package," that is to say, it does not choose the object of its love, but rather the object presents itself spontaneously. (1) Devotion on the

---

1. Or lolango ale nsembe éy'otéma, "love is an innate, spontaneous product of the heart."

152 602 other hand almost always involves reasoning and is founded on a high morality based on religion. Furthermore, the questions (of property, inheritance, etc.) which so often divide relatives from each other do not exist among the Nkundó, whose patrimony is held in common. [25] Among them the members of a family need each other absolutely and constantly; they cannot sustain the struggle for existence unless they remain well united. A man isolated from his kin is a pariah, for in all matters of importance he must count on them for help, protection, and defense. Therefore he is, so to speak, forced to make common cause with the rest of the family and to keep his proper place within it.

This may help us to understand that among these people there are fewer reasons for a cooling of family affections and more reasons for maintaining good relations. But it would be wrong to attribute their love to some kind of egoistic calculation. Their affection is sincere and spontaneous. But the above facts explain why the dis- [578] unity and quarrels which are so frequent in Europe are unknown among the Nkundó; they are settled at once and do not have time to become bitter or deeply rooted. A very rare exception does not invalidate this generalization.

1. Parents and children

593ˣ Parents sincerely love their children. Their affection is not lessened with age; there is only a somewhat greater tenderness toward the very young, whom they readily carry and fondle. The indulgence which they show for the faults of their offspring is tempered by anger when they are exasperated by misbehaviour, more often than by a rational concern for the child's training. The spouse who has not suffered from the child's error does not react against him but on the contrary is led by his affection to protect him. Parents insistently try to excuse and defend their children when they have misbehaved. (1)

(1). It should be noted that the same thing may also frequently be done among many Europeans.

Nevertheless, the general good of the clan wins out over affection.

593x [882] If the whole family [26] suffers through the misbehaviour of adolescents, the latter will not be spared by the father. But the mother will often take their sides for, not belonging to her husband's family, she allows only her heart to speak. The familial-political organization of this people requires that fondness have its limits; otherwise it could lead to disorder and anarchy.

593x 855 It cannot be said of Nkundő parents, as one often reads about other peoples of the Congo, that they do not care for their children, who are self-sufficient and obliged to provide for their own needs from the age of six or seven. Our people are always feeding and even coddling their children; even when the latter are married they are always well received in their parents' home and lavishly treated. It is quite true that the young people spend much time in the forest looking for various kinds of food, but that is part of their games and amusements, a phase of their education, and at the same time their contribution to the maintenance of the household (a contribution which cannot be omitted from any serious education, and it is regrettable that it should be omitted by so many European families. (1)

1. Education will be dealt with more extensively in Chapter X, Article VIII.

593x 581 In the matter of marriage parents generally respect the feelings of their children. A father who is motivated by avarice and, above all, by the need for a certain sum of money or its equivalent, may sometimes let the voice of self-interest predominate over that of the heart.

It goes without saying that one may encounter aberrations of fatherly feeling, but such cases are exceedingly rare. (2)

2. For an example see Chapter II, Article XI, 3, B.

593x Though parents love their children without distinction and without consideration of their faults, vices, etc., they are not exempt from a certain amount of partiality; a particular child [27] will

595 receive more attention, will get his way more readily -- as among ourselves. These preferences do not give rise to jealousy among brothers as long as they remain within the limits of fairness, which they almost always do.

[556] Some rich men who have a dominant social rank have a means of expressing their preference for one of their daughters, a means which is a demonstration of their wealth and at the same time an assertion of their position. This practice will be described in the article that follows.

The children for their part sincerely love their parents. This love is composed more of respect for the father and of more tenderness for the mother, as is the case among Europeans. The same variants of sentiment, depending on whether the child is a boy or girl, are to be found among the Nkundó. The children may be remiss in their dutiful affection and respect, but these are exceptions due to thoughtlessness, stubbornness, or sudden anger. (1) Here one does [152] not encounter the deep discord that among Europeans divides parents and children, nor the coarseness and brutality of which one reads quite often in our newspapers. Among the Nkundó these family dramas are unknown.

[155] Nevertheless, what we have said above does not exclude disobedience. The Nkundó child, too, prefers play to work and freedom to discipline. He tries to shun the commands of his parents which tie him down and keep him from frolicking with his companions. (2)

Love for the mother is especially deep. No matter how old a Nkundó may be, his feelings of tenderness for her do not decrease; he always remains her child. Whenever he feels pain, disappointment, or sorrow, one word is on his lips: ngóya, "mother." Among these

---

1. For an example see Chapter X, Article VIII.

2. One of the first words learned by a Nkundó child is mbói, "I don't want to."

593x people the innate feeling which links mother and children retains all its original spontaneity. [28]

593x 152 Nkundó parents and children do not give each other any special external signs of affection, however, as do some other peoples.

At death the sincerity of affection between parents and children is plainly visible. Their moving anguish comes to the surface noisily and often pathetically. Even older men are not ashamed to weep like children. What we have said is in no way altered by the fact that the light-heartedness of their character makes it easy for them to shift from one emotion to another. (Actually, the same thing may be noted in Europe.) (1)

1. See my article on the funeral customs of the Nkundó which is to appear in Anthropos.

2. Brothers and sisters

From the love that Nkundó children feel for their parents naturally springs their affection for their brothers and sisters, which is strong and sincere. Our remarks concerning the nature and qualities of the children's feeling toward their parents are applicable here. Such quarrels as occur seldom become bitter. On the one hand, the affection between brothers and sisters is deep and sincere, and on the other, their social and economic interdependence naturally reinforces the ties between them.

Mutual assistance is an outgrowth of their love; brothers and sisters often help each other.

After the death of his father and uncles, the eldest brother is the natural defender and protector of his younger brothers and his sisters, even though they may be married.

593x 595 152 A definite difference can be observed between the intensity of affection present among uterine brothers and sisters and the sentiments shared with others. The bonds between children of the same mother are much more intimate and their affection much greater than it is toward brothers and sisters who have different mothers. This too is entirely [29] in accordance with the universal qualities of human nature and shows that monogamy is superior to polygamy in bringing about the unity, harmony, and happiness of families.

593ˣ 152 With reference to signs of affection, grief at the time of death, etc., the observations made for parent-child relationships hold true here -- mutatis mutandis.

3. Various relatives

602 The Nkundo's affection extends toward all members of his family, that is, all those with whom he feels linked by blood and common origin. These relatives are much greater in number than in Europe, because Nkundó kinship includes many more generations. The intensity of affection decreases with the distance of the degree of kinship. But the Nkundó knows and feels that he belongs to a large family, and he remains attached to all its members. He can find a home with any of them. This accounts for the fact that in the centers, men from the same village will look for each other and consider each other "brothers." Actually, that is what they are, since in general each village consists of only a single kin group. [621]

Although here, as in the case of brothers and sisters, common interests play a part in maintaining bonds between family members, the feelings of affection are not based on selfish considerations. The latter only reinforce these feelings, which are truly innate among the Nkundó. Among the various relatives the strongest attachments are developed between grandparents and grandchildren, uncles and aunts and nephews and nieces, male cousins and female cousins, etc.

603 Among the Nkundó as among Europeans there is a very strong affection between grandparents and grandsons, even greater, one might say, than between parents and children (the expression is: bǒna [30] l'onkáná, ndekí nd'ônkáná). But the relationship degenerates into compliance and weakness on one side, and into disrespectful carelessness on the other.

604 A Nkundó loves his paternal uncles and aunts and treats them like "fathers," and his maternal uncles and aunts like "mothers." Naturally, his feelings toward them are not as affectionate as for his parents, but they are an extension of these in an attenuated form.

605 The same situation holds true for the bonds which link him to his cousins, whom he calls "brothers" and "sisters." The children of his paternal aunt are his "fathers," however.

Article II. The Bolɔ́mbɔ́

562
556
178
In the old days, if an extremely rich man wanted to show his affection for one of his daughters and show off his wealth, he made that daughter bolɔ́mbɔ́. Today this custom has almost completely disappeared. (1) It has been almost impossible to maintain the practice because of a greater distribution of wealth and the reduction of leisure due to the work imposed by the white man. This work has been imposed directly in the form of forced labor, labor on roads, economic projects, etc., or indirectly because a sum had to be raised for the payment of taxes. All this has made it more difficult to bring large numbers of people together for ceremonies lasting days and weeks. (2) Nevertheless, the custom must be described here.

562
556
[602]
When a native wanted his favorite daughter to become bolɔ́mbɔ́, he had first to obtain the consent and financial support of all his kin. Then enormous preparations were made, for everything had to be special -- beverages, various foods, dances. On the date which had been set and made known through messengers to the entire region, an enormous crowd gathered at his house. Public festivities went on day after day. In an address suited to the occasion, he announced to those assembled his intention to set his daughter up as a bolɔ́mbɔ́. Two relatives or two of the father's wives then stripped off the girl's

1. On the left bank of the Luilaka it disappeared a good many years ago. The Injóló still followed it until quite recently.

2. One might suppose that the new uses of wealth made possible by economic development would have contributed to the disappearance of this custom. Theoretically such might have been the case, but in fact these developments were not involved in the change that has been noted.

562 clothing and dressed her in valuable furs, especially in part of the
556 pelt of a striped antelope called mpangɔ́. In some villages she was
permitted to wear leopardskin in front as well as in back.

Then the father would decree (-bɛ́kya) that since his daughter
[582] had become bolɔ́mbɔ́ she would always wear furs and would stop working, and that she would be given in marriage only to a very rich and influential man, not to the first comer. Therefore, a synonym for bolɔ́mbɔ́ is bɔ̌na ɓâ boɛ́ko, "child of the decree, a child set apart, forbidden."

This ceremony may be held regardless of the child's age, at any time between three years and adolescence.

When the ceremony is ended the girl withdraws (-ulama, transitive -uja) into a hut specially prepared for this occasion, which is called ileke. Her seclusion lasts only a few months. When certain natural needs oblige her to leave the house, she goes out the back way through the banana grove and hides as much of herself as possible under a mat. She does not walk on the bare ground; her feet must not
[285] touch the earth. That is why mats are spread everywhere she steps. She does no work; her food is prepared by her mother, sister, aunt, etc., or by a slave. When it comes to her toilette, she washes her hands not in water, but in palm oil. [32] All these practices are marks of respect and honor.

When the period of seclusion is ended, the girl's father gives a second feast, with dances, drinks, etc., and the bolɔ́mbɔ́ comes out walking on mats. But there is no further ceremony. From then on the girl is no different from other girls. But she retains the sign of her distinction, the wearing of furs, and she does no housework.

The marriage of a bolɔ́mbɔ́ always occurred very late, since a
[582] man who wanted to take her for his wife had to collect a good deal of
[558] wealth before he could take the risk of asking for her hand. Should his attempt prove fruitless, he was exposed to ridicule in the whole region.

184 Among the tribes living on the left bank of the Luilaka any
556 man who was rich and of good family could ask for the hand of a
562 bolɔ́mbɔ́ in marriage. Among the Injɔ́lɔ́, on the other hand, the re-
582 quirements were more complicated. The suitor had to belong to
another tribe or group. For instance, a girl who belonged to the

184 Engɔ́njɔ́ group would be given only to a man from the Wesɛ́, the
556 Ngọmbẹ, or a neighboring tribe, but never to an Engɔ́njɔ́. All the
562 Engɔ́njɔ́ considered the bolúmbú their sister. Thus when the future hus-
582 band went to the family of the bolúmbú to ask for her hand, every village barred his way by means of a fence. All the bride price valuables which he carried with him were taken from him, and an equivalent amount in various kinds of goods, such as hens, ducks, dogs, mats, etc., was substituted for it. That is, he exchanged bride price valuables for nkomi valuables [dowry]. (1) The suitor could pass only when the village that barred his way had nothing left with which to continue the exchange. If he found his riches exhausted, he had to go back home to replenish the supply. Everything he gave in this [33] fashion was counted as bride price, jěngí (1) and everything he received was part of the nkomi [dowry]. (2)

556
562
582 It is understandable that under these conditions asking to marry a bolúmbú was a luxury that the common man could not afford. The suitor had to belong to a rich and influential family all of whose members would assist him.

When the suitor finally succeeded in clearing a passage to the father of the chosen one with sufficient treasures, the latter put no further obstacles in his way. As for the girl, she felt exceedingly honored and delighted that a man loved her so much that he would go to so much trouble and spend such a vast amount out of affection for her.

As for the rest of the proceedings, the bride price payment was made in the same way as for any other marriage. But when the

---

1. See Chapter II, Article VII.

1. See Chapter II, Article VIII.

2. See Chapter II, Article VII.

556 562 582 bride-to-be was introduced to her bridegroom, she walked toward him across a row of mats. A feast was organized to celebrate this important and joyous event. Dances accompanied with a flow of beer went on for weeks, sometimes for a whole month.

[431] The father gave his son-in-law a great many nkomɛ́ (3) objects

3. See Chapter II, Article VII.

so that the bolɔ́mbɔ́ often became yɛ̌ngaende or at least lifayǎnjoku. (4)

4. See Chapter VII, Article IV.

He did not allow his daughter to leave without giving her at least one ebɛ́sa to wait on her. (5) Thus when Bolángɛ́ w'Ioma of Lokɔ́ndola

5. See Chapter VII, Article III.

(Injɔ́lo, Ngombe) married Bonjɛ́ngɔ́, daughter of Ilɔ́njɔ́ y'Ôkákema of Bompɔ́ma (Injɔ́lɔ́, Engɔ́njɔ́) (who died in 1934), the bride received from her father four bibɛ́sa to do the work, as well as a young cousin who was to stay with her [34] to bring her firewood. In this way the father made sure that his beloved daughter would retain her honorable position as a great lady.

556 562 The husband, who wanted his wife to retain her superior status, now makes her his bolɔ́mbɔ́ as well. (1) The term was: Bɔ̌n'ɔ̌w'olɔ́mbɔ́

1. See Chapter VII, Article III. That is, unless she is his first wife. See ibid. and Article I.

átswá ɔ́ wǎlɛ́ ɔ́w'olɔ́mbɔ́ ɛ́k'ɔ̌me. He would say to those assembled: "Her father proclaimed her bolɔ́mbɔ́, and I proclaim her bolɔ́mbɔ́ as well (Is'ékáɛ́ ɔ̂ɛ́kvákɛ́, emí mpɛ́ njɔ̂ɛ́kya â ng' ɔ́kɔ́)."

What was the reason for the existence of this custom?

556 562 According to the natives it was a public assertion of the father's high social position and at the same time the greatest token of affection he could bestow on his daughter; the two things were inseparable. Not every native had the right to make his daughter a *bolɔ́mbɔ́*. On the contrary, he had to hold an especially prominent rank, that is to say, he had to be a wealthy, influential, and powerful head of a family. All the ceremonies, practices, and rules involved in this institution point in that direction. A comparison with the *bolɔ́mbɔ́* wife (1) leads additional plausibility to this explanation.

556 562 178 As we have said, this custom is in the process of disappearing completely. In certain tribes such as the Beloko, subtribe of the Lifumba, a substitute has actually been introduced. The favored daughter is dressed and adorned as before, except that European materials have replaced the furs. But the public character of the older institution has disappeared. The occasion is not surrounded with so many ceremonies. Finally, the girl is not called *bolɔ́mbɔ́*, for a new name has been invented; it is *bondelɔ́ɔ́ngola*, "the white man raises (educates) her." [35]

Article III. Friendship

572 Friendship is not unknown to the Nkundɔ́. It is founded on the same basis as in Europe. I have seen more than one instance of true mutual affection between persons who were in no way related. Among the Blacks with whom I have associated there are some whom I personally consider sincere friends and who have shown me real affection, helped me to the full extent of their powers, and shown me complete confidence. There have even been some who have not been afraid to place themselves in serious difficulties and who have gone so far as to incriminate themselves in order to clear me, thereby exposing themselves to troubles and sanctions.

---

1. See Chapter VII, Article III. Unless she is his first wife. See *ibid*, and Article I.

572
[201] Friends seldom or never give signs of their affection, apart from gifts and mutual assistance. Men are seldom seen embracing, although women do so frequently.

The Nkundó are familiar with friendship pacts (called boseka or, among the Bombwanja, likandeko) (1). Two persons of the same sex are bound to one another in friendship (kota boseka or likandeko)
[431] in the presence of a witness (ndonga), whose duty it is to deliver the gifts that are exchanged.

The conclusion of a friendship agreement is actually a custom of the women; men -- usually the husbands -- create friendship bonds only secondarily, in imitation of their wives. This pact is not automatically hereditary; the children may continue it -- through the same ndonga as their fathers -- but they are free to let it lapse. (2)

Two elements may be distinguished in the friendship pact: congeniality or affection and mutual assistance. The latter is in itself a sign of friendship, but it is not infrequently the sole reason for the pact among men who seek reciprocal support by this means. [36] As for the women, it may be said, on the contrary, that gifts are considered purely as tokens of affection and their bonds are based exclusively on affection. Often women who are very fond of each other do not bind themselves in a friendship pact but are content to show their affection in all simplicity. Men also may be very good friends without having recourse to a pact. But the conclusion of an agreement makes their relationship public and thus protects it against deleterious influences such as misunderstandings, disagreements, outbursts of anger, etc. One might say that the pact represents the addition of the element of reason to the element of emotion.

---

1. Bofilí among the Ekonda, mbale among the Batswa.

2. See also a special reason for friendship pacts in Chapter IV, Article I.

572 Unlike the affection among relatives, friendships cool and even end. This is especially true for pacts based purely on mutual assistance. Thus, if one of the friends is somewhat too stingy in comparison to the other, a rupture quickly results.

[561] The Nkundó also have especially affectionate feelings for their "age mates" (bonɛ́ngɔ́, pl. banɛ́ngɔ́), that is, for all those who were born the same day, week, month, or period as they. They feel united by special ties. Among themselves age mates consider and treat each other as brothers, help and assist each other, etc.

Their affection is natural; the sort of selfishness that may be found among "friends" is not present among age mates.

Their relationship is so close that if the occasion arises, they lend each other their wives. (1)

---

1. See Chapter VI, Article VIII, 1.

[551] Lastly, individuals bearing the same name (ndoí, pl. bandoí) show real affection toward each other; they help each other and exchange gifts. They make no pact as do the boseka, however.

It should be noted that these various bonds do not exist between persons of opposite sexes, among whom they would be condemned as concubinage. [37]

Article IV. Conjugal Love

583x The question has often been asked: how about love among these peoples? Do husbands and wives really love each other? We are not speaking here of sexual passion, which is generally present in addition to love between man and woman, but which in itself is clearly distinct from it. Love is the result of various emotions -- congeniality, affection, mutual appreciation, admiration, devotion, etc., and we judge the perfection of love according to the presence or absence of any one of these elements and their degree.

The question is by its very nature a very delicate one to answer. Actually, it is difficult to observe ~~and~~ analyze clear and precise facts pertaining to the subject. Our notion of it must of

593x necessity be derived from a logical conclusion based on a great many particular instances. Yet these might have explanations other than those we give them. Thus we could attribute the presence of true love or its absence to the effects of causes of which we are unaware. Nevertheless, we cannot keep from presenting below a few facts which will enable us to draw a conclusion that is adequately in accordance with reality.

There is no question that the love found here lacks the purity which it has among certain groups of Europeans or certain other peoples, [181] especially good Christians. No one is astonished that pagan peoples, practicing their atavistic and degrading customs, have not achieved the general delicacy of sentiment or more especially the moral height of so noble a virtue as has been nourished and developed by centuries of Christian influence.

In addition, the instability of marriage, the possibility of its dissolution, and the presence of polygamy by no means tend to develop the purity of love; on the contrary, they tend to debase it. Finally, [38] the liveliness and sincerity of family affections, which we have described in Article I, naturally result in a reduction of conjugal love -- all the more so since, because of the patriarchal structure of native society, the Nkundó needs his kin more than he needs his wife.

Thus there is much selfishness, which is one of the characteristic signs of moral decadence and little devotion. A wife will seldom remain with a husband who suffers from an incurable illness, is impotent, or has become too poor for her taste. The Nkundó consider this the natural state of affairs and are not at all ashamed to admit it, even in front of a missionary.

593x 588x The same is true of a husband's relationship to his wife. If she has become incapable of fulfilling at least one of the purposes for which he married her, why should he keep her? If she has given him sons, they will want to keep their mother, and their entreaties combined, perhaps, with a feeling of compassion for one he has loved, might persuade him to keep her. Her sons will provide for her subsistence to which their father will make a contribution from time to time, and her daughters will take care of her and prepare her food. But some men will insist on getting rid of this burden in spite of

593x 586x everything. But they only succeed if they have no sons old enough to defend their mother. Differences in behavior are due to the character of the persons involved. (1)

1. See Chapter VIII, Article I.

797 593 159 Only religion can bring about a radical change in this domain. We are still far from our goal, but a few serious Christians have already begun to adapt to the requirements of a higher morality and to deal with their wives in conformity with the sanctity of marriage though he or she may be ill. Yet it is more difficult for them to do this than for the others, since this same morality forbids [39] polygamy and all other means of satisfying passion.

An admirable case is that of Bekau Marie, daughter of Esalé D'Iámbo (Bonkoso). Her husband, Bokombeembe Pierre of Mbalá, suffered from leprosy for many years. He could no more perform the sexual act than do any real work. His wife therefore had to support herself with the help of her son. In spite of her freedom, her separation from her native village, and the ill feelings borne her by her husband's family, she did not want to leave him but decided that she would continue to devote herself to him. (1)

1. Her action is due only in part to Christian influence. That is why this case belongs here to the exclusion of some others I could describe, which are due solely to the influence of Christian morality upon the souls of the individuals.

593x 578 If there is a dispute between her family and her husband, it is hard to know in advance which side the wife will take. Similarly, if difficulties arise between the husband's family and his wife, he can take either his wife's side or that of his relatives. It is all a matter of individual temperament. Some people spontaneously lend support to their families; others on the contrary take sides with their wives. A woman or a man who without good reason habitually takes

593x 578 sides with his family against his wife does not have the approval of those who judge the conflict simply as neutral spectators. In such a case it is usually felt that the couple do not love each other very much. And often the marriage soon breaks up. But if the union is maintained nevertheless, its continuation is generally attributed to a fear of the consequences of dissolving the marriage, which would be even worse. The same sort of variation among individuals is to be found in the matter of a wife's devotion to the interests of her husband's family.

593x 596 It is not possible to compare a native household to the households of good simple people at home, where [40] the family is composed solely of parents and their children. Here it extends further; the husband's interests are also those of his parents, brothers, uncles, etc. As we will see in connection with marriage by inheritance it is not unusual for a woman to remain attached to her deceased husband's family. Others are more interested in enriching their own families.

593x 159 579 The following is a historical instance of a wife who was very devoted to her husband's interests, though there seemed to be room in her make-up for pride and personal glory. (1): Bolɔ́mbɔ́ wă nsánjí, daughter of Bokombe of Litɔ́li (Bombwanja), was married to Bonyeme w'ěnyuká of Bonganda (Bonkoso). One day (her father having died in the meantime) she went back to visit her brother, Bompelí w'ělombo, who had left Litɔ́li to settle in his maternal village, Etɔ́o of the Boɛ́ndɛ́. They began to quarrel. Bompelí maintained that Bonyeme wasn't worth much, that his wealth was exaggerated, that it was a mistake to honor him, etc. Bolɔ́mbɔ́

---

1. According to my estimates, this episode is about a hundred years old. I knew two men who had recollections of it: the eldest (Longwokó of the Basɛ́ká Bengóngó, Bongíli) was about twenty years old when it occurred. A greatgranddaughter of Bonyeme (Mputɔ́ Sofie) is now in her forties.

593 defended her husband. Finally, since they could not agree, Bompelí
159 ordered his sister not to return to her husband, so that she could be
579 married to another man. For he had decided to test the valor of Bonyeme by making war on him, and she could not see her husband taken prisoner by her own brother. Nevertheless, Bolómbó remained determined and departed in haste. When she reached her husband she told him everything. In the meantime all the Boéndé and other Bombwanja clans were taking up arms. Enyuká, for his part, passed the news on to all Bonkoso villages, as well as their relatives by marriage, dependents, and Batswá. The various groups of combatants stationed themselves near the village of Bonganda in what is today the forest of [41] Boóngónjou, between the Lomeké and the present location of Besombó, Lofelí, and Engónjó. The Boéndé army was taken unawares by the Bonkoso, who attacked and after furious combat routed them, leaving a number of dead on the field. Bonyeme proposed a peace. He took pride in not being surpassed in generosity. With a truly princely munificence he was not satisfied with only paying all the clans who had lost members but in addition sent Bompelí all that the latter needed in order to compensate Bombwanja groups for the loss of their members and, on top of this, brought him a whole fortune to complete Bolómbó's bride price.

589
587 The Nkundó are well acquainted with cases of widows who, having reached middle age, take a solemn oath not to remarry or ever go near a man again. Among the stronger sex such cases are almost nonexistent. Cases of women who, when sick and dying wanted to remain near their husbands, cited later (Chap. VI, Art. II, 4) should be noted here, as well as preferences for monogamy (Chap. VII, Art. VI, VII).

581
593 Bearing in mind the explanation given at the outset, I think I can state that most marriages contracted by the Nkundó are love matches. Marriage for political reasons or for certain material advantages have certainly existed. And especially at the present time, there are parents who push their children into marriage for the sake of financial or social gains.

Our conclusions may not be accepted by a number of colonials. Yet I feel they are valid in the limited sense indicated here. Arguments

593x against the presence of love are based chiefly on the instability of
581 unions, the high frequency of divorce, infidelity, and polygamy --
objections which we shall examine in somewhat greater detail.

To judge the situation properly, we must first distinguish
593x between the sexes, which are not at all alike in this respect. Furthermore,
562 among women [42] we must distinguish between those
who are wives of polygamous men and those who are not.

Let us speak first of all of the men. They seem superior to
the opposite sex in the matter of conjugal love, at least if we base
our conclusions on their greater fidelity. Divorce is almost always
[586] caused by the wife. As a matter of fact, this is quite natural. The
man marries at a fairly mature age and therefore becomes involved
when he is well aware of what he is doing, while the girl most often
becomes engaged before the age of discretion and is thus unable to
choose according to her own heart.

On the other hand, the polygamous man's heart must be divided.
595x As we will see suo loco, he has a special love for one of his wives.
His love for the first one deepens, becomes more rational, more deliberate,
whereas his love for his favorite would seem to be more
a matter of emotion in the strict sense of the word. As to the others,
he has usually chosen them of his own will and perhaps has even
seduced them to the point of making them leave a previous husband.
It would therefore seem unfair to deny the presence of some affection
toward them.

562 But is the term "love" still applicable? According to the
593x European point of view, conjugal love is exclusive. Among the
152 Nkundô this does not seem to be the case. It has often been said
595x that the polygamist considers his wives, with one or two exceptions,
as human capital, so many production machines. I would not deny
that the harem constitutes human capital and a source of wealth, but
in my opinion such a statement is much too extreme and absolute.
In most cases a real affection for his wives must be attributed to the
polygamist. I understand this affection to be a kind of love in
reduced proportions. And I compare this situation -- mutatis mutandis --
to that of someone who loves several friends at the same time. It is

593x possible to speak of love toward several individuals in spite of differ-
562 ences in its intensity, depending on the various persons who [43] are
595x its objects, although we may consider such a divided love as very
152 imperfect. But whatever name one calls it and however weak in intensity one finds it, it is impossible to deny its existence.

Among women, it is necessary to distinguish between wives
595x of monogamous men and those of polygamists, especially in the case
152 of "supplementary" wives. It is not hard to understand that among the latter, love is more likely to cool. Since the husband must divide his attentions and signs of affection, if only to preserve harmony, the situation could hardly be otherwise, even without the fact of very early marriages. In addition to the above-mentioned case of the cooling of affection among wives in polygamous marriages, there is no question that in these marriages, a community of souls, feelings, and interests is not established between wives and husbands to the same extent as in monogamous marriages. However, one could not state as a general rule that the wife of a polygamist does not love him, at least to some extent, depending on the individual. To maintain *à priori* that a man cannot be loved simultaneously by several women is logically inadmissible and contrary to the facts. Here it happens quite often that a wife leaves her polygamous husband for another because she has transferred her love to the latter. It is for the exceptions that proof should be required. Even if there are many of them, they do not invalidate the cases of real affection.

When a polygamist returns home after a long absence, he is often the object of affectionate demonstrations by his wives which are surprising to Europeans. The women fall at his feet, embrace his legs, roll on the ground, and perform contortions out of joy and emotion. It is true that the freedom resulting from colonization has done much to cool these fine sentiments.

Is it beside the point to quote the saying of [44] polygamists'
[539] wives: *bokungɔ ɛ́kafola bitɛ́fɛ́, lolango ɛ́kafola botɛ́ma*, "the *bokungɔ* tree divides its branches, love divides the heart"? And then there is the following fable which teaches true love: a polygamist who has three wives, is accidentally wounded and lies dying on the opposite side of the river. His wives run to the shore but find no canoe. The river is infested with crocodiles. The chief wives refuse to risk their

595^ 152 lives by swimming across; it is the least important one who throws herself in the midst of the dangers to go and help her husband.

In most cases a woman no longer feels affection for her husband when she has given her heart to a lover. She stays with him because it would be hard to do otherwise. Her husband continues to have the use of her body and her arms, but she no longer gives him a place in her heart. As this proverb so subtly expresses it:

[539] bǒm 'akwěta, ḿ bw'â nkánge; bonsámb'ákwěta, omeka é ńtegume, "the husband calls you, 'I am sick and may die'; the lover calls you, 'I will try to come.'"

595X 586x The objection concerning the frequency of divorce is difficult to handle because the question is very complicated. First of all, the fact that a couple remains together, that they remain faithful to one another, is no proof of love in a society where the idea of duty is very strong. A Christian woman may come to feel a real aversion for an unfaithful husband, yet she may remain with him out of a sense of duty, out of love for the children, etc. Conversely, in a society where the idea of duty is relaxed or does not exist spouses may readily be unfaithful to one another, although basically they love each other; if it is easy to divorce they will do so rashly, for trivial reasons, without realizing that there is still love between them. (1)

1. The Honorary Attorney General A. Sohier has informed me that the experiences of his long judiciary carreer entirely confirms my statements. Their truth is reflected in the fact that for some years now in European countries, it has been necessary to permit divorced couples to remarry each other. Thus we see that they find each other again after several years of separation.

The first of my two assertions is not to be found among the Nkundó, [45] since they have no moral concept of duty in our sense. But it sometimes happens that a couple who no longer love each other remain together because it is not possible for them to separate.

595x 586x The first part of my second assertion applies to the Nkundó, as will be apparent in the course of this description. But the second part does not, for Nkundó law and practice does not allow divorce for trivial reasons; rather the procedure involves so many particular stipulations and conditions that their fulfillment becomes quite difficult (see Chapter VIII).

Other facts should be noted. Statistics for European peoples of the present time should be closely examined and reflected upon, and conclusions should be drawn. How many divorces, broken marriages, and dramas of misconduct appear here! Nevertheless, it is impossible to conclude that there was no love among the individuals who later found themselves in these unhappy situations. It is very likely that they were married out of true love and with the best intentions. But in the course of circumstances they have allowed their love to cool. The moral framework of their lives was not strong enough to hold them back. Their surroundings often accelerate, rather than check, their fall. Social authority does not counteract the destructive tendencies, or at least not enough. If in addition inner forces of resistance are lacking, the passions triumph and finally destroy their love.

Things are no different among the Nkundó. It is only fair to take these facts into account in making comparisons, rather than passing judgment *in abstracto*. It is too easy to lose sight of these considerations, simple though they are. Especially when dealing [46] with a people so different from ourselves, we are often inclined *a priori* to consider them inferior from every point of view and in all areas, often without being aware that we are doing so.

To arrive at a reliable conclusion based on positive evidence, we would have to have complete and precise statistics. But these are lacking. Therefore, the only thing we can say is that, side by side with many women who no longer live with their first husbands, there are others whose first marriages continue until death.

Yet here again we must take care not to draw hasty conclusions. We should only consider the cases of people already dead. In addition we must exclude broken engagements from our count and include only marriages that have been legitimately contracted in the strict sense of the word -- that is, including only women for whom at least the *walo* has been paid. Furthermore, for our present purposes, we can

595x 586x only consider the marriages of adult individuals through the nkumbó, that is to say, unions that are truly and perfectly voluntary on both sides. Finally, we should exclude those wives of polygamists who prefer monogamy and have taken advantage of an opportunity to break their unions in order to enter into a marriage contract with a bachelor. It seems to me that when these reasonable considerations and restrictions are taken into account, the figures established will not argue against the stability of Nkundó marriages to the extent that one might have thought at first. Or at least that is my impression, derived from the many cases that have come to my attention and that it has been my duty to investigate thoroughly in the course of my ministry as a priest.

The 112 marriages recorded in our last two books at Flandria can be broken down as follows (1): 18 widows, (2) 6 inherited wives, [47] 1 replacement, 3 cases of women who had broken marriages entered into before puberty, 29 wives of polygamists, 18 divorced wives of monogamous men, and 37 first marriages. If we exclude the replacement, the marriages of children and of former wives of polygamists, but include widows and women who are inherited, we arrive at 37 + 18 + 6 = 61 persons for whom their present marriage is still their first, as against 18 clear-cut cases of divorce.

[797] Nevertheless, it should be noted that these figures are based on only a tiny minority of the population and on that part which, from our point of view, may be considered the best, because these people are willing to submit to the yoke of Christian morality. In addition these people are in their prime, and it is impossible to say whether later on they will persevere in these good inclinations. But in any case these instances show that faithfulness to a promise can, and in fact does, exist among the Nkundó.

595x 837 Without a doubt one of the most beautiful aspects of love in general, and marital love in particular, is conjugal faithfulness. As will be shown in detail in Chapter VI, Article VII, 2, the Nkundó do

---

1. I am excluding the 14 Batswá cases.

2. As against widows who are inherited.

595ˣ 837 not appreciate marital fidelity the same way we do. A wife's unfaithfulness is severely punished by the laws. But adultery may be discovered and known to all without causing shame or remorse. This is a marked difference between our way of thinking and that of the Nkundó. They maintain that a passing infidelity which is not followed through does not denote an absence of love for one's spouse, even if it is repeated. In spite of the implausibility of this statement, I had to accept it, for those who argued with me were so many, their positions so various, and they were really serious. Among them were a number of Christians with whom we are very satisfied and who conduct themselves admirably, as do their wives. They consider these errors to be momentary failings [48] due to passion, which permit love to remain. Indeed, often these men and women are models in the performance of their other duties. This misbehaviour is without doubt considered very serious -- their anger shows clearly that they do not consider it trivial -- but it does not exclude love and thus, as far as everything else is concerned, the spouses continue giving proof of it to each other.

Let us not forget that many elements may lead to a fall and that consciences may go far astray. On the other hand, the fact that a husband is tolerant, even to the point of exploiting his wife, does not exclude a certain love for her; a husband may be extremely indulgent and at the same time jealous to the point of crime. All that may be found among the Whites, after all. Love without the feeling of duty will not suffice to sustain a union.

Moreover, there is no dogma, no moral teaching based on religion, to restrain the instincts. And we should add that among these
[562] primitive people, the woman's natural tendency to please, to submit to a man's desires, is highly developed. In Europe these feelings are channeled by the Christian religion and its influence on society. Here they encounter no direct obstacle except for sanctions. Before marriage
[836] sexual passion and all sensations connected with it and adjunct to it can be pursued without physical, moral, or social obstacles, at least at the present time. The surroundings in which a girl grows up and the example and conversations of her companions will tend even to push her in that direction.

595x
837
548 Finally, let us not forget the spirit of gain and greed. Except in a few instances, a woman expects remuneration from a man to whom she has surrendered her body. Many infidelities may be explained by this practice, at least at the present time. But on the other hand, it should be noted that the woman's demand for a "wage" from her lover may be explained by an amorous concern; by giving the woman a gift or an amount of money the man shows [49] his regard for her; it is a demonstration of his affection for her, and the woman wants to be paid in order to be sure of her lover's love. That is not to say that such instances are common or frequent, but such a feeling is natural and actually exists in more than one case. (1)

1. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 2.

It is not surprising that the woman who lives in circumstances which are always unfavorable to chastity and marital fidelity is easily led to adultery and often falls. That is the basis of the proverb: [599] *bǒmoto ndé lofolókó, nkó ngonda ěfá'nd'ósengámé*, "the woman is a chrysalis; there is no forest where she does not hang" -- a clear condemnation of the frivolity of the daughters of Eve in the land of the Nkundó. Nevertheless, these moral criticisms in the form of proverbs can be accepted only in a general way and must be understood *cum grano salis*; they leave the door wide open for exceptions.

595x
152 In his *Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge* [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], (p. 38), Jadot has written: "The Bantu is capable of love . . . and that is all, and his wife -- no matter what has been said -- of a certain amount of marital fidelity. In general, neither the one nor the other go too far. Platonism, Petrarchism, and Romanticism are foreign to the love of the natives . . . I know . . . of cases of fierce jealousy and of beautiful faithfulness." (2)

2. See also *ibid.*, p. 208 ff.

152 We conclude that love exists among the Nkundó. This feeling is subjected to harsh attacks and is affected by many unfavorable circumstances, which may account for its imperfection and for certain

152 anomalies in its manifestations. The objections raised against the idea of its existence among the Nkundó do not prove its absence; rather they indicate the adverse conditions under which it is found, conditions which prevent its development and bring about its shortcomings or destruction. [50]

Part 2

000

The Sexual Life of the Nkundó

In this section we will examine successively:

I. The feeling of sexual modesty.
II. Preparation for sexual life.
III. Prostitution.
IV. Premarital sexuality.
V. Sexual practice.
VI. Unnatural vices.
VII. Incest
VIII. Love philtres.

Article I. Sexual Modesty

Sexual modesty is defined, at least by modern psychologists, more or less as a "a sensitive dynamism (or principle of action) of fear which is quasi-instinctive and directly related to sexual processes." (1)

1. J. De La Vaissière, S.J., La Pudeur instinctive [Instinctive Modesty], p. 13.

It is a good instinct rather than a virtue, and facilitates the practice of chastity. Understood in this sense, modesty tends to hide the sex act and anything that is closely or remotely connected with it.

Sensual excesses do not exclude the existence of modesty and, conversely, a modest person may allow himself to be led into a violation of morals. Nevertheless, the greater the development and

000 delicacy of a person's sexual modesty, the better that person is armed -- all other things [51] being equal -- against the excesses of passion. The habits of lust, on the other hand, dull and weaken the sense of modesty.

On the basis of these psychological and moral considerations as well as the facts of experience, it is impossible to say that a people is lacking in modesty simply because of the fact that they clearly have sensual tendencies and show a good deal of lasciviousness.

834 Among the Nkundó one should not expect the delicate sentiments found among some other peoples, especially those strongly influenced by Christian morality. But modesty is not unknown to them.

In the lines to follow we will say nothing more about the instinct of sexual modesty, which I think has been to a great extent blunted among the Nkundó, but of modesty in manner, which is an indication of inner modesty. The comparatively strict rules by which the Nkundó community tries to protect modesty shows that these people are fully aware of the value of that instinct as a safeguard against human weakness.

In general they hide the manifestations of sexual passion. In addition, certain practices which they favor show their attitude toward this matter; we will examine them in greater detail. It should be noted that, as we will see below, modesty among the Nkundó extends to situations where we would not consider it applicable, and vice versa, because of differences in the attitude toward certain questions.

Ethnologists in general consider the following among the chief effects (or indications) of modesty: the wearing of clothing (1) and the existence of regulations concerning the decency and [52] discretion which in word or deed should be observed between persons of the same sex and, more especially, toward persons of the opposite sex.

1. Although the wearing of clothing is a precaution arising from modesty, it has been asserted that the lack of garments is no proof of the lack of this sentiment.

1. Clothing. Nudity.

291 Until he has reached the age of discretion and even a little 855 later, the Nkundó child wears nothing more around his loins than a belt of beads or a plain string usually adorned with some amulet. Nobody is shocked by this rudimentary attire. Parents take great interest in the adornment of their children; from a very early age [301] they are seen wearing belts of trading beads, bracelets, rings around the ankles made of iron, copper, or brass, and in addition, at the present time, glass beads above the knees.

291 As the child grows older the clothing increases. From the outset there are differences on the basis of sex.

The boy acquires a thin strip of cloth which is attached to his string or belt simply by folding back the two ends. The cloth falls between his legs without being tight, allowing for great freedom of movement and the circulation of air; this is an excellent precaution against perspiration due to extreme heat, but it is not very effective protection against indiscreet looks, at least in certain positions. The fabric made of raffia may be decorated to a greater or a lesser extent. In former times there existed different kinds, which we need not describe here. The length of the hanging borders is dictated by vanity. The string was often replaced by a raffia belt or -- among prominent men -- by a leather thong.

The woman's garment consists of a broad raffia belt whose two ends are gradually narrowed, ending in cords which are tied on the [53] stomach. In the center of this belt (nkásá (1) a ball of raffia fibers is attached (bonkoko). A piece of cloth (efufa or lofufa) whose width may vary from 3 centimeters to 20 centimeters or more, depending on the age and the wearer's intensity of the feeling of modesty, is attached to the cords and falls more or less low on the body. For a [292] feast or display the efufa is replaced with a more valuable and longer [184] piece of cloth (intóló or, among the Elángá of Losanganya, ifika).

1. Or bokangá, bokangá wá nkásá. Among the Bombwanja it is called likóngâ.

291 184 The *nkásá* is unknown beyond the Jwalé and the Luilaka. In that region the women tie a string (or a belt of beads) around themselves and attach a second piece of cloth to it.

291 Thus the male garment is a rudimentary sort of shorts, open on the sides, while female dress is much more open. In general the *efufa* is an appropriate protection of one's modesty, but it is inadequate in certain positions. (2)

[611] [196] 2. It may be interesting to note that *etóo nsamányá*, or just plain *etóo*, which is the term for a man's garment, also indicates the male line of descent, while the female line is often designated by the term *nkásá* (sometimes by the word *jwǒmoto* derived from *bǒmoto*, "woman"). Let us add that *lonkundó jwǎ nkásá* means "pure, flawless Lonkundo, not corrupted by foreign influences." This expression should be compared with the following phrases: *langue maternel, moedertaal*, "mother tongue," etc.

291 177 At present the *nkásá* is no longer worn except by a few elderly inhabitants of villages far from the main communication lines. Everywhere else the ancient mode of dress has been replaced by materials imported from Europe. The women wear at least a *sangatúmbo*, a kind of short skirt which falls from their loins at least to the middle of their thighs if not further. Middle-aged men in the interior have simply changed the material of their garment but not its form. The younger ones, on the contrary, have frankly adopted the European mode of dress.

291 581 [illegible] [897] A married woman is not allowed to enter the village of her relatives by marriage (*bakiló*) or appear before them [54] without supplementing her usual attire with one or more *beleleke* (banana leaves cut into fringes). The term *bakiló* must be understood as it is meant by the Nkundó; it excludes those with whom the wife may sometimes perform the sexual act and who are called "husbands" broadly speaking.

291 581 speaking. (1) Is this custom in some way related to modesty? The

1. See Chapter VI, Article VI.

[606] same question may be raised with respect to another strict rule of decorum which forbids a man to look his mother-in-law in the face. (2)

2. For details concerning this custom, see Chapter VI, Article V, 1.

It can readily be answered in the affirmative. (3)

3. Nevertheless, see Chapter X, Article II, 3.

784 516 The rule of decorum which forbids a man to sit down on a seat where a woman is seated who is not his wife seems to me also to be dictated by sexual modesty. On the other hand, stepping over the seat under such circumstances has nothing whatever to do with this feeling. The purpose of this practice is to enable the person seated (regardless of sex) to avoid the evil repercussions of a charm or magic spell in his or her possession. (4)

4. Contrary to the explanation given by Jadot in Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge (Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 90.

291 834 Is the native ashamed to show his nakedness? Let us beware of answering this question in general terms. In order to have an idea of the situation which is sufficiently clear and precise, various cases and circumstances must be taken into account.

1) First of all it can be stated that in the normal course of daily living the Nkundó, men as well as women, do all they can to hide their genital organs. That is to say that basically they are

291 embarrassed by the glances of others. This feeling extends even to
834 other parts of the body which, irrespective of the degree of culture they have reached, most peoples try to cover. [55]

2) Between persons of the same sex and age a certain freedom
834 514 is permitted. This may be observed especially among young boys when they have to urinate. In our countries of Europe the situation is no different. I must say, however, that I have only noticed this freedom in the schools and never in the villages of the interior. Is there a gap in my observations, or should this laxity in the schools be attributed to the influence of the law of least effort (the suitable places in the schools are at some distance) and to the lack of leisure available to the pupils given the shortness of recreation periods on the one hand and their love of play on the other? It is also possible that among these boys modesty has barely made its appearance, since this feeling is strongly linked to the sexual instinct and awakens only with the latter. It would also seem that living in a group tends to reduce the power of modesty.

3) It is obvious that sexual excitement runs counter to modesty
834 832 and that sometimes -- especially among young people -- immodest acts may be used to arouse another person, especially in situations, such as bathing, which lend themselves easily to such actions.

4) Bathers, whether washing or swimming, are very careless,
515 834 especially when they are in a group of their own sex and age. In former times no doubt they did not indulge in the luxury of even a rudimentary bathing costume. But at the present time it is not at all difficult for them to obtain the small piece of cloth needed for that purpose. Nevertheless, nude bathing in rivers and streams is a common practice. It is far more frequent among women than among men. The natives with whom I have discussed the subject attribute this fact to levity and a lack of concern; but they see nothing very wrong in it. Whether or not [56] the bathers are in a group also seems to make a difference. If you surprise one or two people under such circumstances, they will hide in haste. If, on the other hand, you find a dozen, they will not move; on the contrary, they will interrupt their toilette to watch you pass. Perhaps they are simply unconcerned about their nakedness. But it is also possible that they

575 834 are reassured by the fact that they are in a group, so that no one feels singled out by the gaze of the passer-by. Washing away from major streams is always surrounded by more propriety. For this purpose a [343] small enclosure (ikomba) is built behind the hut or among the banana trees, or a small thicket is allowed to grow there. By this means the native is sheltered from indiscreet glances if he wants to take a [757] bath or give himself an enema. As a matter of fact these things are done preferably after dark.

834 152 5) Violent anger or sorrow drown out modesty, just as they momentarily destroy the use of reason and suppress all feelings which are contradictory or simply different. In this situation, too, the man shows himself superior to the woman. He is less impulsive, calmer, less prone to lose control of his actions, to be carried away by his anger. Thus he almost never strips himself bare. The woman, on the other hand, readily strips off all her clothing. This behavior is extremely common; a woman undresses completely whenever she experiences great sorrow or intense anger. Luckily for propriety's sake some friend or relative always hastens to cover at least the essential parts. For a woman who throws off her clothing exposes herself to the mockery and jeers of spectators. (1)

[593]x [578] 1. An angry woman may also undress to shame her husband; it is a way of insulting and mocking him.

833 6) The Nkundó practice sexual intercourse only at night. I believe that this custom is due to their sense of propriety, [57] supplemented by a superstitious explanation which will be described in detail in Article V.

593x 834 7) The sense of modesty has its fullest expression in relation to parents, brothers, sisters, etc. Thus it is unheard of that a son should see his mother naked: bǒ̱na áté̱náká ěsunví nvangó. If an adult daughter is ill and requires personal care (such as an enema, for example), the father has to take care of her himself if no other female relative is near by. But their sense of modesty is such that they both shed tears over the event. As a matter of fact this situation

599x
834 arises but rarely. Furthermore, if a daughter is required to perform similar duties for her father, she will undertake this obligation only
[539] with the lament: njôy'ɔ́ɛna ɛ̌kɛ 'm wimɔ́kɔ́, "I have come to see where I had my origin." Any woman who has been in that position will later know no oath more sacred than this one: la botakɔ wǎ fafɔ bǒkɛ 'm wɛ̌nɔ́kɔ la mpaka, "by my father's nakedness which I saw when he was old."

834
291 Thus we can draw the conclusion that the Nkundó are offended by nakedness and as a rule do not tolerate it. The exceptions do not invalidate this generalization; on the contrary, they tend to support it.

2. Speech. Obscenities and propriety.

521
831 In general the Nkundó see nothing wrong with using obscene expressions. They only describe them as "bad" if they become indecent.

195 If a conversation touches on matters of sex, they may wonder whether a particular topic is necessary, interesting, or entertaining; they will not ask themselves whether it is moral. For it will be apparent throughout this study they have no concept of morality strictly speaking.

The Nkundó possesses a varied and extensive list of obscene words -- nor is he alone in this respect. [58] We are not compiling a dictionary, and therefore we will not list them. What interests us are the circumstances that make these words indecent and under which a proper use of them impossible. The circumstances provide us with a criterion of the degree of obscenity of a word or expression. Let us say at once that we include in this category not only terms applied to organs and phenomena which are of a sexual nature strictly speaking, but also words pertaining to certain anatomical parts or physiological functions such as, for example, excretion, hair and tattooing found on private parts, and the female garment called efufa.
[194] We should also point out that some tribes will consider expressions obscene which do not shock others at all.

521
831
195
which do not shock others at all. (1)

1. These comments are applicable also to peoples in other parts of the world.

[554] The general rule of decorum among the Nkundó permits the use of such terms only among equals. Their use when speaking to inferiors is tolerated but not approved of. The use of obscenities when speaking to any strangers meets with definite disapproval. Among persons of different sexes the prohibition is particularly strict.

Nevertheless, the use of these expressions is judged less severely if they are uttered in a moment of anger or as a reprimand, even in the presence of a member of the opposite sex.

Exclamations of anger, vexation, and sorrow are often nothing but obscenities (2). No one is shocked by them in such situations.

2. See "Les Coutumes Funéraires" [Funeral Customs], No. 1, to be published in Anthropos.

Some elderly or more modest persons do not make use of them, however; if the habit of using a particular expression is thoroughly ingrained, they may make a slight change in its pronounciation (as is common for some of our "swear words").

195
831
514
521
576
To circumvent the difficulties caused by the need to use certain words frequently, [59] euphemisms are coined to take their place. Thus the Nkundó say: ńtswɛ bokako w'ákusa, "I am going behind the house," to indicate that they are going to urinate, and ńtsw'ɛsendɔ́, "I am going for small pieces of firewood," or ńtsw'otɛ́na lokáfa, "I am going to pick a leaf," meaning that they are going to the toilet. On the way they say: ńjeta felɛ́, "I am leaving the path" or "I am going to the forest." A husband is permitted to use accurate terminology when speaking to his wife, but it is considered very improper for her to do so in speaking to him.

514
576
When someone is satisfying a natural need, others keep a distance away from him; they will not even speak to him. Moreover, the person would not reply even if he were called. A woman will not

574 576 even answer her husband, but he may indicate his presence by coughing lightly.

574 576 578 831 Any infraction of these rules is considered a grave insult. A person offended in this manner may seek revenge by violent means, either personally or through the medium of his son, brother, etc. According to native justice he will always be in the right, even if the quarrel becomes bloody. The simple act of uttering obscenities while passing in front of a house in which there is someone who is entitled to the speaker's respect may result in reprisals by the latter. (1)

1. See Jadot, Blancs et Noirs au Congo belge [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 90.

578 834 Crude language is especially reprehensible and wounding if it contains allusions to incest or other reflections on a relative whom the speaker wants to insult. And it must be admitted that such expressions may go beyond the limits (for example: coi cum patre, matre, fratre, sorore, etc.). In connection with this topic it should be noted that reference is always made to a relative of the opposite sex to that of the person who is directly or indirectly being addressed. Furthermore, licentious talk and the use of indecorous language are more severely condemned when they take place in the presence of [554] women and old people [60] or are said by a slave in front of his master, by a Botswa in front of a Bootó (1).

1. See Introduction, footnote 2, p. 4.

578 684 834 If a man catches anyone uttering obscenities in front of his wife, especially if they are addressed to her personally, he can start action in adultery proceedings. If the woman refuses to listen to the seducer, she will not answer him, or sometimes, annoyed at the insult, she may retort by insulting his mother. She can complain, but generally she does not do so. Is she ashamed, or is she afraid that the tempter might make public some excess in her conduct which he has discovered? In any case a woman is more sensitive than a man to the

578 shame of obscenities. They say: b̌lekɛ́ mɔ̌nvi ɛ̌à bitɔ̌li ń'kɔ̌moto.
684 Bɔ̌moto ndɛ́ ndota (itɛ́lɛ̌) "A woman is a ndota snake. Just as that
834 reptile twists through the grass and rolls up as soon as it sees a man approaching, so a woman finds it difficult to endure any obscenity."

The ideal way to be sure whether an expression is actually considered indecent is to check whether it may be used in the presence of a close relative, for a Nkundɔ́ never utters an obscenity in front of such a person.

195
578
834 Among the Nkundɔ́, as in Europe, certain indelicate exclamations are so deeply rooted that they seem to have lost their original meaning, that is, most of the population no longer thinks of it at all. That a few more serious and modest individuals are still aware of it is apparent from the way they change the pronounciation of the terms in question.

Licentious expressions are never considered indecent and shock no one when they are uttered in a group or during group activities. [571] Such activities include communal fishing and hunting expeditions, [61] drinking parties, dances, funerals, and -- at the present time -- communal work on a road, a resthouse, etc.

Thus we see that in these matters there is a remarkable discretion side by side with a certain degree of tolerance, which may be carried quite far. Licentious remarks are not condemned in themselves, but only because of fortuitous circumstances, so we see that the Nkundɔ́ do not consider them from a moral point of view, as we do, but from a social one. But the fact that those are precisely the words which can become indecent and socially bad shows that the native sees in their content something shocking, shameful, some quality likely to give offense. The freedom exercised in certain cases does not alter this general conclusion but simply gives evidence of he inclinations of a passionate nature.

3. Dances

535

Nkundɔ́ dances change periodically, as is the fashion in Europe. Old dances are given up after a time and are replaced by others which are newly invented or recently introduced. The dances fashionable at the present time came from the Besongɔ́, who are by

535 far the most inventive tribe. All the dances have two distinguishable parts: the dance strictly speaking and the finale or ikɔ́eyo. The latter consists of acrobatic exhibitions or a theatrical performance. It varies with each performance and sometimes goes beyond the limits of decency, especially in certain scenes of the women's dances. Here everything depends on the attitude of the actors and spectators.

535 786 [553] The words sung are usually proper. Passages that may be less so occur only exceptionally. The exclamations of some of the male or female dancers, but mostly those of the audience when the intensity of the performance reaches a climax, are somewhat less innocent. Thus this climax [62] is the weak spot morally speaking. This is true especially of the dances performed by the women who, led on by their passion and encouraged by the cheering and applause of the spectators, make provocative movements (bitɛ́kɔ́, bembɔ́njo). A European will see nothing wrong, but the native knows the gestures and their meaning. The spectators then applaud with even greater enthusiasm, either because of sexual feelings or out of aesthetic enjoyment, for to them these movements are beautiful. All the artistic dances for women which are the fashion at the present time contain a similar phase of exaggerated excitement. It is therefore understandable that in the past the elders strictly forbade children and adolescents to attend these dances.

[586] After what has just been said, no one will be astonished to hear that these great dances are often the cause of adultery and divorce. And to a limited extent the same can be said for the men's dances, for masculine beauty is exhibited in an enticing manner.

573 535 The rhythmic motions which sometimes accompany singing during drinking parties cannot really be called dances; nothing shocking is implied by them and the words of the songs are seldom improper. Salacious songs are rarely sung in the course of daily living, but they are never omitted from funeral ceremonies.

535 [illegible] Up to now we have spoken of artistic dances, which are always very popular. They were -- and are -- reserved for certain special occasions. For ordinary circumstances the Nkundɔ́ have a few little entertaining dances which have nothing at all in common with the dance as such. They are more like games. The lyrics of the songs

535 may be ribald, but this occurs rather rarely. However, at the present
177 time, they are often actually obscene -- especially since "European-
831 style" dancing has been introduced, and more particularly in the centers, small and large, and among those who have come under [63] its influence. This kind of dancing for amusement is chiefly practiced by young people.

To the credit of morality it should be noted that mixed dancing is unknown to strictly native ways. It occurs in the centers (in the form of the mixed *bofenya* or the *baliñga*, grotesque imitations of European dances) but is spreading -- and rapidly -- to the villages of the interior. The second variety especially raises havoc, for it has a deleterious influence on morality. It has been the cause of a number of cases of adultery, divorce, palavers, and quarrels, and has been forbidden by certain chiefs and headmen, who would like to be able to severely punish anyone who dances it.

Conclusion

834 The data presented in the foregoing section forces us to conclude that sexual modesty does exist among the Nkundó. The wearing of clothing, the various prohibitions, the attitude of the older and wiser members of the community show that they experience this feeling. It is the same here as elsewhere. In certain areas it is even carried to an extreme. The exceptions should be attributed to individual deviations; and because of the reactions they provoke, they even provide conclusive evidence. The general laxity which may be observed on some special occasions does not provide material for a serious objection against the existence of modesty. Yet it is difficult to determine the reason for such an attitude which seems to contradict the rest of our data. Should it be interpreted as a yielding to human weakness, or seen as a weakening of public morality? Or is it not rather because these special circumstances make an unfavorable interpretation of such actions impossible? An allusion made in public, in a group, [64] does not have the same significance as that same allusion may have between two people, where it implies a suspicious intimacy.

834
178 It goes without saying that the feeling of sexual modesty and its various manifestations among these people are being transformed by two different currents. On the one hand, their moral laxity is increased by their contact with all sorts of other peoples, by a greater freedom, by the partial emancipation of women, and by the attraction of the large centers and their luxury. On the other hand, there is the preaching of Christian morality, although its effects are still very slight and certainly do not counterbalance the influences mentioned above.

Article II. Preparation for Sexual Life

1. The Woman's preparation

833

When a girl wishes to indulge in pleasures of the flesh, she prepares her sexual organs in advance. The preparation itself consists of "opening the way" (lifola mbɔ̌ka). This operation, which is repeated several times, is performed in hiding, preferably in the forest. The girl may or may not have companions with her who share her intentions. Each girl operates on herself. In order to gradually enlarge the organ, a girl uses progressively thicker shoots of the [824] bosɛ́ɛnga or bokaakɔ́ plant (Costus afer), making sure first to remove the tip. Later these shoots are replaced by the lombɔ́lɛ́ fruit of the boɔ̌ombɔ́ plant (Aframomum) or, more infrequently, by a young manioc tuber.

This is the general practice; exceptions are few or nonexistent. It is followed because the girls want the event to which they aspire to occur without difficulty (bɛ́lota bɛ́fɔ́v'ɔ̌keela).

833
515 In addition to this basic preparation, girls [65] also wash the private parts of their bodies. This is a cleanliness measure which they continue to practice save in exceptional cases for the rest of their lives. According to my informants, the native woman -- as a very general rule -- stresses this cleanliness as much for herself as for the sake of not repelling her husband or lover. When a girl begins to practice this personal hygiene, it is a sign that she wants to begin her sexual life.

856 864 During a girl's early childhood beginning when she is still nursing, a mother with foresight will work to make her organs as perfect as possible. By applying pressure repeatedly and for long periods, she molds, so to speak, the outside in order to make it narrow, as this quality is greatly valued by our people.

It is the mother, too, who trains the girl in her preparations for married life. She teaches her how to behave toward her future husband, and at the same time instructs her in the duties of a good housewife (see Chapter X, Article VIII).

836 864 Certain forms of behavior, although their relationship to our subject is only superficial and external, must nevertheless be mentioned. An adult man will often take in his arms a little girl who has not yet been weaned, or perhaps only slightly more developed. He considers this child to be his wife. He has paid no bride price for her. But since she is a sister, cousin, or other relative of one of his wives, she is a "wife" from his point of view; that is, not only will it be possible for him to marry her later on, but even without becoming her husband he will enjoy a certain liberty in relation to her. (1) Thus, when such a man takes his young "wife" in his arms,

1. See Chapter VI, Article V, 2.

he is enjoying an anticipation of the future and speaks to her [66] in that sense, often accompanying his words with intimate caresses.

The same practice, mutatis mutandis, may be observed on the part of a woman toward a small boy whom she can consider as her "husband."

304 582 2. Circumcision

Circumcision is generally practiced. It is usually performed at an early age. Without going into the details at this point (1) or

1. They will be found in Chapter X, Article VII.

304 582 wishing to commit myself on the reason for this custom, it is a fact that a Nkundŏ woman will refuse to marry a man who has not been circumcised. Consequently, all the natives want to undergo this operation. That is the reply given by the natives when we asked about the reason for circumcision. When we pushed the inquiry further, they added that the women abhor the deposits that form under the foreskin. I mention this explanation for what it's worth. Nevertheless, this may really be the reason that impels them.

In any case circumcision would seem to have no religious or initiatory significance.

3. Tattooing

304 932

Two kinds of tattoos exist among the Nkundŏ: purely ornamental tattoos and sexual tattoos. (2) The latter are to be found only on women. The [67] designs are located on portions of the body surrounding the sex organs and even on the outside of the latter.

---

[619] 2. I will not discuss tribal tattoos because these do not seem to exist among the Nkundŏ. The reasons for tattooing vary from people to people and from group to group. It is for this reason that they are a distinctive mark. But that does not mean that such is their purpose. The distinctions apparent among the tattoos of various tribes are not an objective but a consequence, as are, for example, the variations among national costumes in Europe. Moreover, the contacts of our people in peace or war have extended by and large only to neighboring clans or tribes, who use the same type of ornamentation as they did. And in these encounters dialect differences serve as a much better means of identification.

304
832 What brings the Nkundó to practice this second form of tattooing? First of all the following considerations must be taken into account: since a woman is by nature more eager than the man to appear beautiful, it seems altogether appropriate that her tattoos should be more abundant, more elaborate than the man's And since coquetry is a form of the desire to appeal to the opposite sex and since members of the latter are susceptible to it, the tattoos attract them. Therefore, too, the women's tattoos have been most elaborated on those parts of her body which are nearest the sex organs.

The reason for the existence of these tattoos may be that they add additional pleasure to intercourse. (1) This explanation does not seem entirely implausible. I have never been able to obtain a clear-cut or direct confirmation of this point, but it is a fact that a man sometimes makes malicious remarks to his wife if she is not sufficiently tattooed to his taste ("You, your body is as smooth as a man's"). This fact lends considerable validity to the explanation given. The persistence of these tattoos in spite of modern dress also makes it convincing, although the evidence is not entirely conclusive, considering that its significance is not diminished by the psychological explanation that follows.

The figures are placed in such a way that they converge toward the sex organ. Moreover, the men see the tattooing at some time or other, either in its entirety or in part. Clothing may cover them more or less, but at some time for one reason or another the woman uncovers them, if only partially. [68] The imagination works on what is seen and quite naturally arouses sexual desire. The accuracy of this psychological explanation can be verified even in Europe; one is tempted particularly by what one has only glimpsed,

---

1. This is the explanation given, for example, by Dr. J. Maes in Notes sur les Populations des Bassins du Kasai, de la Lukenie et du lac Léopold II (Notes Concerning the Peoples of the Kasai and Lukenie Basins and of Lake Leopold II), p. 189 ff.

304 832 and "modern" fashions, as well as some ancient ones, take this into account. In the next paragraph, moreover, we will note ananalogous phenomenon.

Both of the explanations given can be defended, since each has its value. But it seems to me preferable not to oppose them but rather to bring them together, as they probably are in the thinking of the native.

It should also be noted that a man never performs the operation of making a sexual tattoo on a woman, although a woman may indeed operate on a man. And finally it should be mentioned that the [831] specific terms designating these tattoos are considered as obscenities.

The practice of tattooing is decreasing at the present time. [178] Many boys are already without tattoos. But very few girls lack them; among them the fad has not disappeared. Some even have themselves tattooed without the knowledge of their parents and in spite of their opposition. Among the Blacks, as everywhere in the world, fashion is deeply rooted because it is natural. But the designs of the tattoos are now becoming smaller. It seems to me that this change is due, not to a reaction against tattooing as such, but rather to a modification of the style. For tattooing is a real fashion, and like all fashions it is subject to change and development. Nowadays there is a tendency to imitate the designs of other peoples of the Congo. Elsewhere, as among the Injóló, for example, an internal evolution may be observed, although it is occurring under foreign influence. The evolution is taking place chiefly in the face motifs, while those of the body are beginning to be omitted. But the sexual tattoos do not seem to be disappearing. [69]

4. Bead Belts

291/ 901/ 832 From an early age the Nkundó child is adorned with a belt of trading beads. Before the coming of the Europeans this decoration made its appearance only towards puberty and was restricted to girls. Nowadays, many men also adorn themselves in this manner. And since it is now easier to obtain the beads, women are no longer with a single string but wear several in assorted colors. They add smaller ones below the knee.

291/301/832 According to what I have been told, this type of ornament may also have a sexual significance. Normally -- and this statement is applicable only to the present time -- the beads are entirely covered by clothing and are visible only on a few occasions. If a large number of strings (as many as six, eight, or ten) or very many beads are worn, attention may be attracted to them because there will be a bulge in the clothing worn over them. Their sound will reveal their presence during a race or a dance. And according to my informants, that is enough to awaken passion. Making an allusion to the beads and especially touching them deliberately is considered as an invitation. For her part, a woman sometimes rubs them together in her fingers so that they will make their characteristic noise and thus attract a man's attention and arouse his interest.

The preceding does not mean that simply the wearing of the beads is necessarily intended for a bad purpose. Not only must such an intention be excluded in the case of serious persons, especially if they are elderly and content themselves with wearing a single string, seldom a second one to support the first. But there is also the possi-
[152] bility that a young Black beauty may adorn herself with ten or more strands out of sheer vanity, so that the whole world may see that she has so many. [70]

Furthermore, it has been shown that attention to appearance is not necessarily directed to another person. Though that may be generally true, many people like to dress for the pleasure of being well dressed, and girls who never dream of an adventure may still enjoy wearing pretty undergarments. This desire for adornment for its own sake can, no doubt, explain the belts, as well as other embellishments on more than one Nkundó woman.

We should add that those who adhere to the theory that the tattoos have an immediate sexual influence could apply such a theory here as well.

302 831 5. Depilation

All Nkundó of both sexes practice depilation of the genital organs and even the armpits. The natives believe that the hair growing

302 under the arms is related to sexuality and give it the same name as
831 they use for their pubic hair.

A person removes his or her own hair, or it is removed by a friend of the same sex. Formerly, the hairs were simply pulled out. Nowadays, many people shave with a *lotóɔ*. Moreover the practice tends to be confined to the hair connected with sexuality, but in the past everything was removed: eyebrows, eyelashes, mustaches, beards.

For the Nkundó hair removal is a form of beauty care. Their
302 explanation must be accepted, though the term "beauty care" must be broadly defined so that it will include also the depilation of parts of the body that are always hidden. This last form however, might have some relation to the tattoos: it makes tattooing easier and its effect more obvious. [71]

Article III. Prostitution

The dictionary defines prostitution as follows: "a trade which
548 consists in providing one's body for the pleasures of the public in exchange for money." In addition to this limited sense, the most important aspect of which is "in exchange for money," the word also has several broader meanings.

Prostitution is found in the world in various forms: 1) the kept woman, 2) the brothel, 3) the professional streetwalker, 4) the occasional streetwalker, 5) the married woman who has a steady relationship with a lover who pays her, 6) the woman who is the concubine of a number of men in succession and who is paid by each of them. We will examine the forms under which this misconduct has occurred and occurs among the Nkundó.

The first question we should ask is whether a Nkundó woman gave herself to a man for profit before the European occupation. It is true that a woman often demanded remuneration but, as we have already said, it is very difficult to determine whether she did so for gain or simply to be reassured of her lover"s affection. Knowing the mentality of the Nkundó woman of today, we must admit that her greed sometimes brings her to acts of venal love. One or another of them has no doubt given her body in order to possess various

548 ornaments or objects for her toilette (hairpins, for example), and it is probable therefore that individual cases of this sort occurred. But it is altogether unlikely that the practice was widespread, as it does not fit in with the economic organization of this people, among whom wealth is more or less collectively owned and, moreover, (as will be shown in Chapter VI, Article II) a woman has no property rights. [72] Therefore we can assume that there were only a few occasional prostitutes.

On the other hand, there have never been any professional prostitutes; that is, Nkundɔ́ women have never made a job out of prostitution, and the same thing may be said of the other forms listed above.

The number of prostitutes was necessarily limited, however, by the fact that the great majority of women were always married young (Chapter IV, Article I), and that adultery was severely punished (Chapter VI, Article VII).

Nevertheless, there is something which superficially resembles prostitution; that is, there is a category of girls and women whom at first glance one would be tempted to call prostitutes. Therefore it would be useful to examine the situation somewhat more closely, for though in itself it is entirely different from prostitution, it could easily lend itself to it.

548
582
882
It sometimes happens that a girl, besides the *bolɔ́mbɔ́* (a socio-political institution in no way related to the degeneration of female sexuality), is kept in the home of her parents beyond the customary age before she is given in marriage. Such a girl is called *ɛ́fɔ́tswâàla*, "the one who does not marry." She is not *bolɔ́mbɔ́*. Externally or -- to use philosophical terminology -- materially, the two customs resemble each other; but formally they are entirely different. Creating a *bolɔ́mbɔ́* involves authority and influence and is thus a public matter. Whether a girl becomes an *ɛ́fɔ́tswâàla*, on the other hand, is a private matter between father and daughter. While the creation of a *bolɔ́mbɔ́* is accompanied by public feasts and a decree officially proclaimed (*boɛ́ko*) by the father and accepted by the council of family heads [73], the establishment of a *ɛ́fɔ́tswâàla* involves no official act or ceremony.

548 The name éfótswâála does not mean that the girl will stay
582 single all her life. Her marriage is not permanently excluded; it is
882 only postponed.

As for her behaviour, the efótswâála conducts herself like any Nkundó girl. Nothing distinguishes her from her companions. If a good match is proposed to her, she marries like everyone else.

This custom -- if one can use the term -- therefore has no real connection with prostitution. All that can be said is that the girl who stays single longer and until adulthood, is exposed to more libertinism and a life of debauchery.

It also happens that parents who are angry because their
586x daughter has dissolved a marriage to a man they consider a good son-in-law prevent her from remarrying in an effort to make her return to her legitimate husband. If the parents and their child each hold to their viewpoint without yielding, such a situation can go on for many months until the wife is -- practically speaking -- no longer under the authority of her husband. And since the opposition of her parents prevents her from being married by another man, she easily comes to give herself to all. It should be added that at present this case is chiefly hypothetical. Parents no longer have the authority
[178] to thwart the desires of an adult daughter in this way; if she is stubborn they have to yield out of fear that she will run far away. And that would be to go from the frying pan into the fire. But in the past the kind of situation I have described was not unusual.

The most fertile places for the breeding and development of
548 prostitution are to be sought in the centers. The following principal
369 causes can be given:

1) Female vanity is overexcited by the sight [74] of all the dazzling riches which have been imported by white men and which are such a temptation to Negro women. It requires a considerable income to satisfy this desire to enhance one's native beauty. Ordinary laborers and artisans do not earn enough money to satisfy their wives or daughters in this respect. Mistresses of Europeans or of foreign black men, the wives of "clerks" and other representatives of Negro high society display a degree of luxury startling and striking to the rest.

369
548 2) There is a considerable excess of bachelors over eligible women.

[684] 3) The freedom to commit adultery: no sanctions were provided.[1]

[586] 4) The difficulty of finding a suitable husband experienced by many girls born in the centers. Marriages between individuals belonging to different groups (especially certain ones) seldom last. And since inhabitants of the centers have no fixed or stable residence, they intend sooner or later to go back to their tribe of origin. Serious-minded parents therefore discourage and thwart these "mixed" marriages. (1)

1. On this subject, read Jadot's fine page in Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 132, beginning: "La prostitution devait inevitablement . . . (Prostitution was inevitably . . .).

[361] In the region under discussion there are only a few lightly populated centers: plantations, government or business stations, and small commercial centers. From time to time the bachelors there satisfy their desires with the wives of their fellow workers, and especially with women who come from the interior to sell their products at market. But they do not avoid one of the consequences of prostitution, namely the spreading of venereal diseases.

It is possible to conclude that in the past prostitution existed only in a very broad sense [75] and there was very little of it. In [114] Engel's article, "Les Wangata" op. cit., he writes that among the Wangata "prostitution no longer exists." If the eminent author is using the term according to the meaning in the dictionary, we may ask on what basis he is implicitly stating that this institution existed in the past. If prostitution is broadly defined, then the facts contradict his remark, for actually it has not ceased to develop among the tribes he discussed, who are located very close to the city of Coquilhatville and its various suburbs.

[1] [i.e., in the centers.— Analyst]

548 The fact of colonization has greatly changed the situation.
178 The freedom of communication across great distances, the introduction of new and varied goods and especially of money, have had a great influence on the development of prostitution. The economic system of the people remains the same; but when the women are away from their families or their husbands, they spend their means at their own discretion. And, since the objects of adornment available to them have greatly increased, they have a personal incentive to engage in immoral conduct.

The vice has not therefore taken on European forms; modern changes have simply increased -- but in enormous proportions -- the number of occasional streetwalkers. The development of this state of affairs is encouraged by the procuring activities of certain polygamous and even monogamous men living near European centers, which give rise to the attitude of their wives. For though the husband may reap the primary financial benefit, the wife is not deprived of her little gain, and her native cupidity easily pushes her to engage without scruple in commercializing her body.

837 The women under discussion are usually married. Often they
548 have a recognized lover among the laborers in the camps, and he usually pays for their faithfulness. Thus we arrive at the married woman with a regular paying lover. [76]

This form of prostitution has developed even outside laborers' camps. It is to be found among the people on the river banks, who are more in contact with the Whites and their people and in the neighboring villages. It is especially prevalent among the Beloko, fairly near Coquilhatville, where it is spreading even among wives of monogamists. This perversion takes root all the more rapidly because it has a certain resemblance to the ancestral custom of a recognized concubinage (see Chapter VI, Article VIII, 2) and like the latter, it often does not take the form of prostitution. That is to say, the illicit relationship is not engaged in for the sake of gain. Furthermore, an arrangement is often made with the husband.

[369] As to the other forms of prostitution listed, they are still unknown in the native villages and in the small centers located in the territory studied. Some of them, however, may develop in the fairly near future.

548 In a center like Coquilhatville there are loose women who live in concubinage, first with one man and then another, a few days or weeks with this one, then the same length of time with that one; they are paid by each man but refuse to give up their freedom permanently. It is true that this city is outside the geographical limits of our study, but since it is located close to Nkundó territory and is important to them, I have touched on it briefly. No brothels are to be found there, and one does not encounter professional streetwalkers except for a few women who solicit among ship's crews. Most of the prostitutes in Coquilhatville are single girls or divorcées (legally or in fact). This disguised form of prostitution is not regulated here as it is in Leopoldville. (1) Nevertheless, the [77] government recognizes, at least in practice, the existence of a class of "free women" present in considerable numbers. Their way of life is contagious to such a degree that -- to an extent which varies greatly -- a noticeable number of girls who live with their parents but aspire to luxury have been seduced by it. (1)

[651]

1. In the capital all native women who are adult and able bodied and who theoretically are living alone are taxed 50 francs (the certificates of payment show, in addition to other information, the number, name and address of the person taxed). This tax is not the equivalent of a permit to engage in licentious behavior or libertinism. It is not called a "prostitution tax" or any equivalent name, but some Europeans call it that because it has that appearance.

In addition there is a real regulation concerning prostitution; it is the Governor General's order of November 5, 1913, which establishes cards and periodical sanitary examinations for prostitutes. It would seem to be applied in Matadi, Leopoldville, and Elisabethville.

1. According to the latest figures

549 available to me, the government recognizes the presence of 702 free women out of a population of 8,386 persons who are not permanent residents.

Article IV. Premarital Sexuality

836 Under this heading we will examine:

1. What the Nkundó think about virginity.
2. Relations between single people.
3. The Nkundó's attitude toward births outside of wedlock.

1. Virginity

The word "virginity" has a double meaning. It may signify the presence of the hymen, the wholeness of the body, or it may have the meaning given in the dictionary: "virgin, a girl who has never had intercourse with a man."

Because of the practice described in Article II, 1, Nkundó girls who remain physically virgin until adulthood are extremely rare. Even if a girl does not begin sexual life until after her body has reached maturity -- a situation which occurs rarely today but which was formerly common, (2) [78] she will not give herself up to carnal pleasures until after she has broken her hymen.

585
836 What is the Nkundó attitude toward virginity? This question must be divided into two parts:

1) Does the future husband attach any importance to the physical virginity of his fiancée? Evidently not from what we have seen.

2) Does he attach any importance to her moral virginity? That is, is it a matter of indifference to him whether or not he is the first to have intercourse with her?

---

2. See no. 2 of the present article.

585 836 To say that it makes absolutely no difference to him might be too extreme a statement. But it is certainly not very important to him, since the primary purpose of his marriage is to obtain progeny and to follow his natural instinct in an honest fashion. This does not mean that he likes to marry a woman of loose morals; quite the contrary.

171 585 836 What is the linguistic data on the subject of virginity? In an interesting paper entitled "The Principles of Bantu Marriage" (Africa Vol. 2, No. 3 (1929), p. 255), E. Torday says, "Some of the most competent philologists assure us that in most Bantu languages there is no word for 'virgin'; . . . . The Wachagga, who may be an exception, use the word 'unimpaired,' and it is perhaps in the use of similar expressions, not exclusively applied to physical virginity, that we shall find the explanation of the absence of a specific term."

585 836 192 Thus the Lonkundó have a noun: ekâté. It is derived from the root kât (the verb is -kâtema), which means "to be firmly attached, to be tenacious" (e.g., lokâtú, "tenacity"). Ekâté designates something which is difficult to open, to separate, to break up, especially fruit with a tough, hard, thick rind. It is applied to the litófé, lisénjá, and the lindongó when it is impossible to break the shell which contains the edible portion even though the fruit is ripe. [79] This term is used in a figurative sense for a woman who resists seduction, who "does not allow herself to be opened." It is not at all specific and in no way the equivalent of our word "virginity," rather it seems to signify "chastity."

Other Nkundó tribes seem to have a specific word, bokotó. I learned this term from natives living between the Ikelemba and the Tshuapa, both east and west of the Julé, as well as from some Basékâ Bǒngwalanga from the old Lulonga District. The missionaries of the Apostolic Prefecture of Basankusu use it in their publications to mean "virginity, virgin." I was not able to get an exact idea of its precise meaning, but as far as I was able to make out it is much closer to "virgin chastity" than ekâté. In any case it includes no reference to physical virginity. (1)

000

1. We should not be astonished that "primitive" tribes have no word in their language

000 which specifically expresses our idea of virginity, nor deduce from its absence that the thing itself is unknown to them. The Greeks and Romans were well acquainted with it, yet they had no precise word for it. Parthenos and Virgo mean simply "unmarried girl." The Germanic words such as Maagd and Jungfrau, which now signify "virgin," originally had the same meaning as the Greek and Latin terms.

585 836 The foregoing does not imply that every Nkundó girl is free to have sexual relations and that public opinion approves of libertinism among single people. We will examine this question in the following paragraphs.

896 164 2. Sexual relations between single people

In dealing with this question we must distinguish between relations between adults and the contacts between nonadults. We will therefore examine the two situations separately so that at the end we can attempt to explain the changes in native attitudes in this realm that have occurred. [80]

A. Before physical maturity. We will first relate what the natives tell about customary practices in the past, and then describe the practices of the present day.

In the past, sexual contacts between young people not yet marriageable were severely punished by their parents. The children were taught that those who were guilty would be struck down by a very serious illness which was inevitably fatal. This illness was called by the generic term ndota (1), and the more specific one, esɛ́mbɛ́ji.

1. Ndota is the name of the illness which is the punishment for an infraction of a sexual

836
864 prohibition under any circumstances. I have heard these same terms used also by the natives in the vicinity of Coquilhatville.

The body becomes flabby and without strength, and this weakness ends in a fatal paralysis (byongɛ nnyǎnyuka or nkatɛɛnɛ). In addition, the girls feared that their sexual organs, not yet fully formed, would be torn. They were also imbued with a very intense fear: bɔfɔlu w'aende, "the fear of males," bɔfɔlu w'ǎmato, "the fear of females." They also feared death -- bɛlotɛkɛ iwɛ. The parents added that sexual acts were free from danger only between persons of the requisite age.

836
864
838 This does not mean that children did not commit indecent acts. The game of ioto, in which little girls try to cook (and which is always one of their favorite games (2) as it probably is throughout the

2. Some boys imitate this game in order to acquire the habit of preparing their own meals. Later they benefit from it on more than one occasion.

world), often gave rise to it. Small boys joined in the game in order to taste the meal. And quite naturally they began to play at "husband and wife," more or less. Often this game involved only innocent imitations, but other times touching and exhibitions occurred between children of the same sex or of opposite sexes. This game is far more dangerous nowadays, [81] because of a change in the attitude of young people toward sexual matters.

The game of yembankongo, in which boys, imitating monkeys, chase each other through the trees and creepers can -- and does - result in reprehensible scenes.

582
178 In former times most girls were married before puberty. But their husbands did not touch them until they had completed their normal development.

582
839
864 Among some individuals the fear of sexual relations was so deeply rooted that it persisted even beyond the age limit and was

582 conquered only by repeated assaults of passion. Thus it is generally
833 known among the natives that young women used to seek refuge in
864 their mother's house when the husband wanted to begin making use of
his rights as a husband. The mother would try to persuade her
daughter to submit to the law of life. But sometimes, if her child
seemed too resistant, the mother made excuses for her and asked the
husband to consider her daughter's youth. The man usually wanted
to remain on good terms with his mother-in-law so he did not insist
and resigned himself to waiting till nature influenced the spirit and
heart of his wife.

Since young people were brought up in deep fear of dangerous relations, it should not surprise us that this feeling became a real habit and did not disappear spontaneously the moment a certain degree of liberty was permitted. As a matter of fact, could we not make similar observations in Europe?

This is the natural explanation for the praiseworthy degree of morality among adolescents in the past.

Nowadays all that has changed. The young people follow
178 where their passions lead them. Not the slightest check is placed on
836 their impulses. Parents pay only slight attention to the conduct of
864 their children. [82] It is better not to inquire into the morality of
modern youth. Husbands no longer respect the bodies of their
adolescent brides, who are themselves quite used to a sexual life and
eagerly look forward to it; and no longer know the feeling of "the
fear of men." Should we then be astonished at the frightening de-
[164] crease in the birth rate (1) and the ever increasing spread of venereal
diseases, which seem to have been unknown in the past?

The reasons for this change will be investigated further on, under the letter C.

836 B. Between adults. Here the Nkundó are very lenient. There
is a difference, however, between the socio-legal and moral view-
points, although as we shall see the latter is influenced by the former.

[562] A woman is entirely free, legally speaking, as long as the
first payment on her bride price has not been made. No man has

---

1. The natives say that in the past young wives quickly became pregnant. And now ...

562 936 [539] exclusive rights over her. Hence the proverb: Mbímbo ìle nd'âns'bimbo ífa la nkɔ́lɔ́, "boimbo fruit found under the tree have no owner; they belong to the first person who gathers them." Thus a girl for whom nothing has been paid belongs to no one. A woman free in this manner does not infringe on the rights of any man in her sexual relations. There are therefore no sanctions against her licentiousness.

936 864 Furthermore, the discovery of her activities gives rise to no shame. At most more serious parents will rebuke children who go too far -- the girls because they abuse the body and reduce their value for a prospective marriage (2), the boys because they [83] run the risk of financial difficulties (the dangers of adultery, indemnity for childbirth with death as a result, etc.).

626 936 Public opinion is even more lenient than the parents. This attitude is easy to understand: strangers need fear no unpleasant consequences. Errors of this sort are generally considered natural weaknesses, provided that they do not occur too frequently. For public opinion is hard on people who run from one to another; they are stigmatized with the name ebɔ́bɔ́, "unfaithful, flighty, without intelligence or reasoning powers," or ebɔ́ngɔ́, a stronger term with the same meaning.

936 From all the foregoing should we deduce that every woman is free to indulge fully in fornication? On the basis of the above considerations we could frankly conclude the affirmative. The behavior that can be observed from day to day fully confirms this answer. Some people stray more or less accidentally, but for others the practice quickly becomes a habit. And it can be said of all of them that

[585] 2. Not that a smaller bride price would be given for them. But a serious man would rather not take a woman for wife who has "run around" a great deal and therefore is more likely to commit adultery, to be unfaithful, and less likely to become the mother of a numerous progeny.

836 they succumb to any favorable opportunity. The validity of this generalization is not affected by extremely rare exceptions which may be encountered and which are due either to a constitutional abnormality or to an extraordinarily firm Christian conviction. How should 836 178 these observations be reconciled with the statement so often heard from natives that the situation was entirely different before the coming of the white men? It was not unusual to see young women not only abstaining from sexual relations but having such a "fear of men" that they drove away seducers and defended their chastity by hitting them with a stick.

When the woman did not accept the young man's proposition, she considered it a grave insult. The initiator was entitled to no indemnity "for blows and wounds." The woman replied only in violent terms, in word or act. [84] Often she went and insulted the mother of the guilty party. When the latter was told the reason for this behavior, she could only turn on her misbehaving son and usually gave him a good talking to; if he was young enough she gave him a good beating. Thus the girl had every right to defend herself.

If the provocation gave rise to no complications in family or society, the parents paid a lot less attention. [864] But they tried to teach their children discretion in these dangerous matters, though their instruction primarily took the form of a lesson after an error was committed, or sometimes apropos of an incident that had befallen someone else. Some parents were very severe. These attitudes were based on a vague sense of morality which was not deduced from philosophical reasoning or religious or superstitious ideas but which was innate and instinctive so to speak. In addition, the fear of excesses and eventual social consequences no doubt also played a considerable [577] role. Excesses were feared above all, and an isolated occurrence was regarded more or less as a momentary weakness.

To form an accurate picture of the situation that existed in the past, we must not lose sight of the fact that, because of very early marriages, the number of young single women was necessarily limited.

The attitude toward single men was more lenient than toward 562 836 girls, unless their behavior had any consequences and apart from the danger of their actions becoming habitual, leading inevitably to palavers.

174/836 C. An attempt to explain the modern changes. The facts themselves as much as a knowledge of human nature, together with the lenient attitude of parents and the lack of sanctions (the last two points are relevant only to relations between adults), are in direct contradiction to the statements of the natives. Should these not therefore be explained as exaggerations, stemming from a desire for national glory and a resentment of the situation created by colonization? The [124] natives whose strange assertions I have cited are elderly and serious; they demonstrate all the qualities of truthful witnesses. But are they not -- perhaps unconsciously -- laudatores temporis acti? I thought so for a long time and never allowed their statements to carry any weight. I have discussed this question over and over again, not with one or two natives, but with dozens of the most serious and sincere people, under various circumstances and in regions far removed from one another. Yet all supported the same argument, and I could never make my point of view prevail. I always received the same reply: "You Whites are not willing to believe us when we tell you what we know better than you, what is the pure truth. You are so involved in your own point of view!" Finally, before so much formal testimony -- uniform, unchanging, repeated ad nauseum in such varied circumstances as to individuals, times, and places -- my attachment to my own idea began, with some regret, to falter.

But how is it possible to resolve the contradiction between a rather broad liberty and the practice of chastity? And above all how can less than fifty years have sufficed to transform any attachment to virginity into licentiousness? The difficulty presents itself for relations between adults, but it is especially great with respect to reprehensible contacts between nonadults, because of the terrible sanction that we have described above.

The first objection may be partially met if we take into account the habit of "the fear of men," which is acquired and maintained through the severe prohibition against sexual relations before physical maturity and the terrible punishment with which the transgressor is threatened. [86]

The second objection on the other hand is much more serious. It is the one which above all has always kept me from accepting the

174 thesis of the natives. This is how it is refuted by those who contradict
136 me: "When the first black soldiers and their assistants, archers, and
[175] spear carriers were sent by the Whites to conquer us, they committed
all sorts of atrocities and permitted themselves all the licentious acts
that occurred to them. Among other things they took advantage of
young girls, even those who were not nubile. They required immature
girls to engage in sexual intercourse. They even went so far as to
force people to commit incest, uniting mother and son, father and
daughter, pointing a gun at their breasts. (1)

1. The fact that the soldiers required that immature girls be delivered over to them, because they were afraid of venereal diseases, is still notorious.

These accusations are so shocking and repugnant that one refuses to admit their veracity. Yet it is possible that they correspond to reality. For one thing, the informants are entirely reliable. For another, the account is internally consistent. As a matter of fact, scenes of the sort described seemed to have occurred at the beginning of almost all colonizations. Their authors were usually the natives of other regions rather than Whites (in our area Europeans were almost entirely absent from the first contacts between the inhabitants and the new power). By the nature of things anything can be expected at such a time. For occupations are carried out under martial law. And everyone is aware that war unleashes the human beast which -- as even contemporary history abundantly shows -- is capable of worse and more repugnant excesses.

It is possible to object to all this for, if the assertions of the natives are true, the events they describe did not give rise to a practice of incest and, consequently, need not have given rise to the far-reaching changes which we have observed. [87] But the two situations are entirely different. For licentious behavior between single people is more or less consistent with the passionate tendencies of human nature, which were mostly checked by the fear of a sanction -- a terrible sanction, it is true, but it was shown in fact to be nonexistent. Incest,

174 836 on the other hand, is extremely repugnant by nature, especially for the Nkundŏ. It is a vice which comes about only as a result of special beliefs or through a fundamental degeneration of sexuality.

The breaking up of the framework of traditional organization may furnish a partial explanation in this realm as in many others. In the case of sexual relations between single adults, it might even be deemed sufficient. As much may be said about greed, vanity, the desire for ostentation and display. These are very natural sentiments in a woman, and they were greatly stimulated by the dazzling riches imported from Europe. But these facts are not sufficient in themselves to account for everything. They are especially and entirely inadequate in explaining the considerable changes in the relations between immature children, and we are thus forced to accept the explanation given by serious natives.

3. Children born out of wedlock

848 Among the Nkundŏ, giving birth to a child outside of wedlock has never from time immemorial been considered a grave misdemeanor. It is not considered criminal, as ethnographers say it is among many other African peoples.

Furthermore, this attitude logically follows from the liberty permitted to adolescents, as described above. Neither the woman nor her lover are harassed or punished as a result. On the contrary, the grandparents joyfully receive the child, who adds to the size, power, and wealth of the clan. [88] For an illegitimate child (entombŏ) (1) 598 614 does not belong to its natural father. It is incorporated into the mother's family. It is said that he is born without a father. His

(1) Such a child is also known as bona ŏa wanĕ, "child of the sunlight," or bona ŏa bomlamboka, "child of the highway" or "of a girl of the streets." Among the Bombomba the term bokelankŏlo is also heard.

848 614 posterity constitute a separate family in the clan of his maternal ancestors; it is called *jwǒmoto* or *etóo éy'ǒnankáná* (that is, the patrilineal posterity of the sister's son). Families and clans that have originated in this manner are not particularly rare in this region. One may even find an entire village born in this manner. Thus, Mbelé of the Bombwanja-Boéndé is the *etóo éy'ǒnankáná* of Lileko. A more striking example is that of the Injóló tribe, descended from the sister of Nsimba and Eanga, who are respectively the ancestors of the Ntómbá and the Boléngé. Since the male ancestor is unknown, it is assumed that their origin is due to an extramarital conception by the mother, and that her son, Nkólóbisé, had no father. The same is true of the Wesé subtribe, *bǒnankáná* of the eldest subtribe Engónjó, as well as of the Ngombe subtribe, which is *bǒnankáná* of the Wesé.

It would be incorrect, however, to attribute the origin of all the "*jwǒmoto*" clans to illegitimate children, for they may have come into existence for other reasons. Thus it is known that the ancestors of certain clans were born of a legitimate union, but the bride price payment had not yet been completed. Then, as some sort of obstacle intervened, the relationship by marriage was broken, and the child was incorporated into the mother's clan. The obstacle which interrupts the bride price payment may be a disharmony between the engaged couple or their families, as in the case of the *Baséká Etáléngela* of the Bakáala; but it is more likely to be war or the migrations of the tribes at certain periods of their history. The latter reason may have separated more than one husband from a wife for whom he had only made an initial payment at the time her child was born.

848 The fact then that many "female" clans exist in a [89] region does not prove that illicit relationships between single people were common in the past -- especially if one also takes into account that pregnancies were formerly much more frequent than they are nowadays. It merely shows that such relationships did occur.

An illegitimate child is considered and treated by the maternal grandfather as if it were his own. No distinction is made between him and the legitimate children. He is in no way despised. He has a voice in family councils and deliberations. And since according to Nkundó notions his relationship to his first cousins is that of father to son, he

848 has precedence over them and can become head of the family after his grandfather and uncles. In his natural father's clan, on the other hand, he has nothing to say.

848
596 If a man pays the bride price for a girl who has had a child by him, he asks his father-in-law to let him have his illegitimate child. This wish is almost always granted. The father-in-law well understands his son-in-law's fatherly sentiment of love and considers it quite legitimate and proper that a father should himself possess the
x
[588] fruit of his own flesh. The only condition laid down is that because of the child the son-in-law must increase the amount of the bride price valuables by an extra slave or his equivalent. (1)

1. This transaction may even take place after the mother's death.

The father is not in a position to invoke any rights strictly speaking. The child is not considered as his because of his physical paternity, but only because of his father-in-law's kindness. If the latter were to refuse the father's request, he would not be acting in violation of justice. But his behavior would be considered as inhumane toward his daughter's husband and his grandson, and it would be criticized.

When a child is adopted by his natural father in this fashion, no one despises him for his illegitimate birth [90]. This procedure may therefore be considered to establish his legitimacy.

848
171 Nowadays, among the Beloko and their Elinga, the practice of "buying" the child has sprung up. That is, if a man does not marry a woman who has had a child by him, he pays her parents a certain amount in order to obtain the child. There does not seem to be much opposition to the introduction of this custom, which springs from an honorable feeling for paternity and its duties. Its only disadvantage is that in such a case the child may never claim any rights in his mother's clan. (1)

1. See Chapter VIII, Article IV.

848
619
585 If a stranger marries an unwed mother, he is never given the child, which remains in the mother's family. This situation is clearly distinguished from those mentioned above.

848 614 583 What happens is that when such a woman goes to live with her husband and her child is too young to remain with his grandparents, she takes him along. Later when the boy reaches adulthood, he sometimes settles with the clan of his mother's husband and produces a posterity. But he is more or less discredited by the adopting clan (and by the others). He has no political rights there, no *mpifo.* His posterity is called *mbɔ́solɛ́* (from *mbɔ́sa*, "behind" and *bolɛ́*, "clan of origin"). (2) Its members may marry members of the adopting clan, excepting of course the descendants of their common mother. They also have their own cemetery. They thus form a separate clan within the village.

The practice of "bringing a child in the sling" seems to be disappearing at the present time, because everyone wants to remain in his own clan. Government policy deprives natives who do not live with their own families of almost all their rights. Moreover, [91] today it is much easier than in the past to procure the means for establishing a home. This last problem was certainly an important reason why a man would settle with the clan of his mother's husband.

848 684 The preceding clearly shows that a lover by whom an unmarried girl has a child incurs no blame, penalty, or fine. He has no obligation to care either for the mother or the child. Neither justice nor propriety requires him to marry the unwed mother. No indemnity is exacted.

There is only one exception: that is, if the mother dies as a result of the pregnancy or the delivery, or if the child is stillborn or born sickly, deformed, or crippled. In such cases the lover has to pay a heavy indemnity (*mbɛlaka*) (1) That is why an unmarried woman who is pregnant is pressed into giving the name of her accomplice as

---

2. They also say "he was brought in the sling," *bôyɛ́lákɛ́ ndá lombɛ̌.*

1. For the child, the indemnity goes up to 50 rings; for the mother, 50 rings and a slave (or his equivalent in currency), or 75 to 100 rings.

848 684 soon as her family becomes aware of her condition. The accomplice is made officially responsible and is required to accept this responsible and is required to accept this responsibility by publicly pledging his willingness to take all consequences upon himself. This pledge like all pledges is called ndanga. It consists of a knife, a ring of copper or brass, a spear, or similar objects. (2)

2. The same custom is practiced in the case of pregnancy resulting from adultery.

Article V. Sexual Intercourse

833 Although this subject is extremely delicate and therefore difficult to investigate and describe, it does not seem pointless to note here a few details with which I have become acquainted. We will discuss in succession a few circumstances relative to the act, then rape, and finally what are called incomplete acts. [92]

1. Circumstances relative to the act

[177] The Nkundó have intercourse lying on their sides. Nowadays, natives who have had frequent contacts with Whites are beginning to abandon the old manner for that of the Europeans. The spirit of imitation probably plays some part in the transformation which is beginning, but the gradual spread of the knowledge that the European system makes conception more likely is also a factor.

Even for illicit relations our natives seldom choose the forest or near-by palm or banana groves. Usually they prefer an isolated hut, or they take advantage of the absence of witnesses who might intrude on them. At night they are generally afraid of anything that stirs in the forest.

833 753 684 The Nkundó have sexual relations only during the night. To do so in the daytime would be to risk being striken by a mortal illness called bombilé (derived from mbilé "noon," by extension, "day"),

833 753 684 which has a strong resemblance to sleeping sickness. (1) One of its symptoms is a weakness of the lower limbs. Instances are cited of individuals who were unable to resist their passions and were punished in this manner. Apparently only the woman dies. As soon as her family discovers that she is stricken, the guilty woman denounces her accomplice. The latter is held responsible and is required to pay a heavy indemnity, which may amount to several dozen copper rings.

1. It is not sleeping sickness itself, however, for that disease seems formerly to have been unknown in this area.

833 751 Here as in many other situations the Nkundó have found a way to avoid the danger. There is an antidote (nsengó), and it is water (bǎsi bale nsengó ɛ́â bombilɛ́). Thus those who are unable to control their aroused passions during the day, satisfy it in a shallow stream.

833 753 The fear of bombilɛ́ has been greatly shaken [93] by colonization. If we are to believe the natives, foreign soldiers are responsible for this change also. But the behavior of the latter could not completely destroy the ancient feeling, probably due to a natural shame which makes them seek darkness and privacy for acts of this sort.

833 [515] [842] After intercourse a native woman usually gives herself a douche. She does so for the sake of cleanliness. It often happens, however, that she does not wait long enough before doing so, and thus she neutralizes the effect of the intercourse. This is chiefly a matter of carelessness. Nevertheless, under certain circumstances she may use this means to prevent conception. (1)

1. See Chapter X, Article I, 2.

833 826 According to my informants, some women have constitutional abnormalities which repel men. As everything readily becomes public, such flaws are quickly known after marriage, though not quite as readily beforehand. Actually love can -- and often does -- cause them to be overlooked. But after the first ardor has cooled, such a situation may become a threat to the stability of a marriage. When quarrels

833 826 become somewhat violent, the women recall these flaws, to the great shame of the person who suffers from them. The same is true of the weakness of some of the men which, like an excess of sexual activity, can cause difficulties in a household.

2. Rape

839 Rape in the true sense of the word -- that is, the abuse of a woman by the use of violence -- is most unusual among the Nkundó. If a woman does not consent, the angry seducer leaves her, often insulting her to the best of his ability. I know of only one case of rape, which occurred some time ago and caused much consternation in the region. Banɛngɛ, the daughter of Iloko [94] Is Ɛ́fekele of Lofelɛ (Bongɛli), was at that time living with her mother's clan the Bonyeka (Bonkoso). She had not yet fully attained physical maturity (her breasts were still very small). One day she went into the forest and did not return in the evening. The family was alarmed, and her father and her uncle Mpɛ́nda ɛ́a Nkotonkale went to look for her. Finding traces of fresh blood, they followed them till they found Banɛngɛ's corpse buried in the *nsusulu*. She had died of hemorrhage; her sex organs, torn, showed the unmistakable signs of rape. People had their suspicions, but it has never been possible to prove the identity of the criminal. If there had been proof, he would not have escaped the mortal vengeance of the unfortunate victim's parents.

All the data I have been able to collect indicates that other instances must undoubtedly have occurred.

3. Incomplete acts

832 Here we are speaking of what moralists call *actus impudicitiae*, that is, acts whose nature physically leads to sexual pleasure.

Obscene bodily contacts between persons of opposite sex are preparatory acts which excite; even touching the breasts, the abdomen, and taking a person by the arms are included in this category.

832 Kissing between persons of opposite sex is unknown. Embraces occur on the other hand but not in public; they must be considered as preparation to approaching intercourse. (1) An extraordinarily strong passion sometimes leads lovers to engage in more intimate kissing, usually as a prelude to normal intercourse. Although some natives are not shocked by such practices, more responsible people consider them improper. [95]

Article VI. Vices "Contra Naturam"

838 1. Male homosexuality

Homosexuality has been known among the Nkundó since time immemorial, among men as well as women.

Among the former it took the form of sodomy in the past, with one particular characteristic -- for which I do not know the explanation, that is, only the younger of the two men could take the active role. Nowadays among the youth, homosexuality has begun to take on a different form; the boys who practice it lie down in the positions of husband and wife. It is reported that sometimes one of the two says from time to time to his accomplice, "This is what I do with your sister." Is this an indication that here we have homosexuality only in action but not in feeling (*in effectu* not *in affectu*, as the moralists say)?

Homosexuality among the Nkundo does not seem to be the result of a special inclination for this vice; rather it has always been a last resort open to those who could not find a natural outlet for their passions. Although we cannot approve of this depravation of instinct either on rational grounds or in adherence to the faith, we must admit that it was more excusable among these peoples whose social organization was disadvantageous to many young people. At the present time there is already much less sodomy because it has become easier to get married. As for the new form of homosexuality, it may be observed especially in places where men are kept rigidly apart from relations

---

1. See above, Part 1, Article III.

838 with the opposite sex for a long time, such as internment camps, prisons, etc.

2 Female homosexuality

Nkundó girls play at "husband and wife," and even adult married women engage in this vice. According [96] to my informants the causes are the following: first, an intense and very intimate love between two women, and second, and above all, the fact that wives of polygamists find it difficult to satisfy their passions in a natural way. Often they engage in this practice with co-wives of the same man. The greater liberty introduced through colonization could reduce its frequency, but up till now no great improvement has been observed. What is more, in establishments where girls are too severely kept away from the opposite sex, there has been an increase.

The verb used to designate these depraved acts is yamáma, "to each other, one against the other." The noun bomámo is derived from it. But these words are also used to designate a simple embrace. A more specific term is yaíkya bonsángo; the verb yaíkya (simple form: íkya) means "to press against each other."

Is there any need to say that a people like the Nkundó, whose beliefs are founded on nature, see nothing the least bit wrong with this vice? Consequently it would be desirable for educators and missionaries to draw their pupils' attention to the harm present in such practices.

3. Masturbation

839 This vice seems never to have been practiced by the Nkundó, but at the present time it is known in the large centers and in the camps; from there it gradually penetrates into the interior. Yet it seems to spread with difficulty in native society. It is understandable that a man who has acquired the habit in one of the centers does not rid himself of it without great effort; but as the natives do not have the will to corrupt others, he does not become an agent of its propagation. (1) [97]

1. In spite of frequent touching due to itching.

4. Onanism [coitus interruptus]

833 Onanism also seems to be unknown. No doubt many women have learned this vice through their concubinage with Europeans, but they have not spread it. The same may be said of involuntary onanism. For the native does not look for sensual refinements; rather he follows his natural impulse. (1)

1. The practice described in Chapter X, Article III, 3, may be slightly tainted with onanism; it could certainly lead to such a practice, but it is not caused by perversion.

Article VII. Incest

835
614 We here must distinguish between 1) sexual relations between distantly related kin and 2) between close kin.

1. Among distant relatives

Incest among distant relatives (in the Nkundó sense of the word) has existed since time immemorial. It is called lonkâna (bombaká among the Bombwanja). Lonkâna is derived from nkâna, "brother, sister." The expression liála j'ɔ̄lɔ́lɔ́, "sexual union in the village," is also used. The term lonkâna is applied to relations between members of families which are only very distantly related (not at all related, according to our notions) but between whom marriage is not permitted. Thus one hears that such and such kin groups do not marry each other (báfɔ́yakumbɔ́lɛ́) but they commit lonkâna. Two kin groups of this sort may be considered closely related clans. The groups between whom lonkâna is practiced each has its own cemetery, while those between whom it is absolutely forbidden share a common cemetery. Thus, to cite an example, the "village" [98] of Elángá l'Imomo l'Ontole (Bongíli) is composed of three kin groups, as the name indicates. The Imomo settlement is partially located in the

835 allied district of the Bombomba). The same is true of the Bo̱nto̱le̱.
614 Elángá and Imo̱mo̱, together with Ele̱ke̱ (Lokongo), comprise the posterity of the son of Ambá, who was the sister of Iloko, Eángá, and Bokungá, the latter being the ancestor of the Bo̱nto̱le. The three groups do not intermarry. Between the Elángá and the Imo̱mo̱, lonkâna relations are also not permitted, but they are practiced with the Bo̱nto̱le̱. Note that the term lonkâna is never applied to relations between truly separate clans, that is, between exogamous entities.

To define the precise limits of this practice we would have to examine each kin group separately, and this would lead us too far afield.

It should also be noted that lonkâna may be limited to an isolated act, or it can become an intermittent concubinage. The name of the practice does not change when it involves a married woman who is visiting her family. Sanctions against adultery are applicable to such a case, however, as to all others. (1) Although the relatives of the woman are more lenient than if the adulterous relations had occurred with a different lover, the husband whose rights have been infringed on makes no such distinction.

835
614
174 The custom of lonkâna seems rather strange. After all, if sexual relations between these clans are not reprehensible, why is marriage between them forbidden? This is an apparent contradiction which merits attention. Should not this practice be viewed as a relaxation of the law of exogamy? In past times all sexual relations between members of the clans under discussion would have been forbidden, a very natural phenomenon when the families originated. [99] Later the young people would have succumbed to the temptation, and little by little infractions would even have multiplied. For as the clans became increasingly extended, the temptations became more and more numerous and the rule, now detached from its natural significance because very distant kinship was involved, came to seem more or less arbitrary to the interested parties. It was supported by no sanction or

---

1. See Chapter VI, Article VIII.

835
614
174

fear. (1) Thus the very number of violations would have gradually made the practice customary. Powerless to stop it, the persons in authority, guardians of traditional morality, would have contented themselves with channeling the development and restricting it to a minimum by being lenient on the subject of extramarital relations in order to save the principle of exogamy. This explanatory hypothesis can find a little confirmation in the fact that at the very beginning of colonization when European influence was not felt as yet, there were isolated and very rare cases of marriage in opposition to the law of exogamy between members of groups which were only very distantly related but already practiced *lonkâna*. The exception then became the rule, and from then on the two groupings in question intermarried regularly and without hindrance, while other families remained under the ancient law. Thus there is the known case of Boyela village (Bakɔ́ala), which includes the Bokambɔ́, Bembakɔ́, Besɔ́lɔ́, and Bekɔ́lama (extinct), all descendants of Ngonde and one wife; his union with another spouse gave rise to the Lilekɛ́ and the Likongo, to whom Bongilɔ́, a group related through marriage (*likilo*), is attached. These two groups of families could not intermarry, but they did engage in *lonkâna*. Around the time of the first arrival of the Whites, a member of the Bembakɔ́ [100] family a certain Bonjɔ́mbɔ́ was impelled by an excessive love to violate the law of exogamy by taking Bolondɔ́ of Lilekɛ́ for his wife. As his love did not cool and the marriage proved stable, it was recognized and accepted as legitimate. Since then the two groups in question have each become exogamous.

1. Actually, no sanction is provided against marriages within an exogamous entity; everything lies in the opposition of parents and elders and in a habit which is almost innate.

835
754

2. Between close relatives

Incest between close relatives has no special name of its own. As a matter of fact, it never occurs as an outgrowth of passion. We

835 encounter it only in connection with magical practices and sorcery
154 (botɛ́, plural betɛ́), for which it is the nsimbo, that is, the condition without which the betɛ́ would lack efficacy. If the nsimbo is not observed, the botɛ́ turns against its owner and, by a reversal of its effect (bosesengano), brings death to the latter. Therefore the interested parties submit to these degrading requirements despite their natural repugnance. Depending on the case, incest with the mother, the daughter, or the sister is required. The first of these eventualities is the most repugnant to our natives. Though it goes altogether against the grain to do so, the mother submits to this ignominy to save the life of her foolhardy and greedy son.

The nsimbo of incest does not exist in all botɛ́. It even seems
[184] to have been absent from the betɛ́ which are ancient and purely Nkundó. It is found primarily in the big modern betɛ́, which have been imported from other peoples or invented on the spot since colonization. (1)

---

1. See Kaptein, in Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 534.

Article VIII. Love Philters

832 The Nkundó are familiar with two love philters, the efóndɛ́ and the bontálá. Other modern betɛ́ may produce the same effect in part or secondarily. Here [101] we will only deal with the first two, which are "pure" and ancient love philters.

The love philters (botɛ́ w'ělangyá) serve to gain the heart of a young girl as much as to entice a married woman away from her husband.

1. Efóndɛ́

Efónde (1) is a common charm. Anyone can procure it from the maker in consideration of the appropriate payment, of course. Various kinds of efóndɛ́ exist, differing as to the ingredients used, the manner

---

1. Efónde is often used as a synonym of elangyá in its sexual meaning.

832 in which they are manufactured, and consequently in the way they [824] are used. The most common ingredients are certain leaves mixed with red rouge (ngɔ́la) and a sort of lichen which forms red slabs on the bark of certain species found in the forest; the whole thing is [825] carefully wrapped in a small fur (especially the skin of the small feline iyei).

The charm is hidden under a slat of the bed where the desired one takes her nightly rest. Because this is done an ardent love for the owner of the charm will grow in her heart. Or it may be placed somewhere in a hut; then the desired woman is called in, the owner of the charm takes her arm, and the efɔ́ndɛ immediately "turns her heart." Or, still without the woman's knowledge, the charm is thrown into the fire where she cooks. If she begins to sneeze when she returns home, this is a sign that the smoke charged with mysterious emanations from the philter has pepetrated through her nostrils all the way to her heart and filled it with ardent love for the Adonis in question.

The efɔ́ndɛ is considered an ikɔ́ko, that is, a subjugation. Efɔ́ndɛ ɛkɔ́ka bɛ̀mato, "the efɔ́ndɛ masters women, has power over [824] them." The substance which prevents the efɔ́ndɛ from being efficacious is the bokai, a kind of sour vegetable. [102] The owner of the philter must abstain from eating it. For the bekai cause vomiting and if he ate any the woman would in the same manner eject her love and thus make the botɛ ineffective.

2. Bontɛlɛ

Contrary to the efɔ́ndɛ, the bontɛlɛ is a love philter which is not available to everyone; it is a charm only for dancers of the iyaya. This does not mean that all the artists who perform this dance have it, but they alone are acquainted with it. The material basis of the bontɛlɛ, as of most Nkundo betɛ, are the leaves of certain plants.

The efficacy of the bontɛlɛ is infallible. It acts not only on the beloved one, but also on any woman who involuntarily or on purpose fulfills the condition necessary to its operation. That is, as soon as a woman's head touches the arm of the possessor of the bontɛlɛ, her heart is moved in his favor; should she be married, her love for her

832 husband will change to revulsion, and she will leave him to be with her charmer.

Part 3

The Search for a Wife

584 When a young man old enough to marry believes he has the means to do so, he goes out to seek a wife. Naturally, he knows a number of girls, and as a rule he has no trouble finding one who suits him. The courtship is quite simple. As everywhere there are meet- [831] ings, visits, chats, and jokes; but there is no romanticism or sentimentality, for they are absolutely unknown to these peoples. Since they are in a hurry [103] to reach the objective of their relationship, namely conjugal life, -- and their progress toward this goal is facilitated by usages and customs -- there remains little time for poetry.

There is no specific term for courtship itself. The Nkundó simply speak of "talking with a woman," sooja bǒmoto, "looking for a woman," asa bǒmoto. The girl who is its object is referred to as bombóyó (or boambá among the Injóló).

First, the young man addresses his proposals to the girl: "ńdanga ńkokolé (ńkokumbóle) la wǎlí, "I want to take you for wife." She shows her agreement by saying, "ńkolanga wě ng' ókó, "I love you also," or more frequently, "elaká ô wě, "as you wish," jǒi ô lǐkě, "it's up to you," or something of this sort. (1)

[195]
[576]

1. Note that for the Nkundó these expressions have quite a different significance than would appear from the words. They express a real agreement and an explicit and personal consent. In fact it is considered improper for a woman to use a more direct expression.

584
431 The lovers exchange gifts. The girl gives food which her mother has provided, or which she has been able to procure herself.

584 For his part, the young man gives her some small game animals
431 (especially the big rat called *botɔ́mba*, lemurs of the genus *esɛndɛ́*, etc.) or fish. These gifts have no specific name. The man's gifts are simply called *mpatɔ́* "gift sent"; the woman's are called *botɔ́mo*, a term used for all presents given by a woman to her lover (see also Chapter VI, Article VII, 2). The verb used with this noun is *tumba*, "to make burn." Etymologically the two words are in no way related.

Sometimes the sweethearts give each other a secret mutual pledge of their desire to be married. This pledge is called *bondengɛ́* or *bonengɛ́* and consists particularly of a necklace of beads called *bafomakongo* (or, more rarely, *bisengɛ́* or *bisengɛ́la*). [103]

581 In choosing their wives, the men allow themselves to be motivated by the various factors which may influence them in this realm, such as physical or moral attractions. Wealth or social rank almost never play a part in determining the choice. Youth is easily carried away by physical attraction and passionate love. Men who are already more settled as well as the more sensible young men pay more attention to moral qualities, such as general conduct, submissiveness, goodness, gentleness, and especially diligence, careful attention to work, etc. In short, we find here the full range of individual variations that are encountered elsewhere, with the exception of marriages motivated by financial or political interests or by the degree of moral elevation that can be aroused by the Christian religion, such as pure devotion.

584 After a few days of courtship the girl lets her suitor know that if he really loves her he had better settle the matter and that consequently he must obtain her parents' consent. Meanwhile they have
[836] already had intimate relations several times; therefore the moment of official negotiations should not be delayed.

586x Seeking a wife who is already married is in no way different
587 from the procedure we have just described, but a great deal of circum-
584 spection must be used so that the husband's suspicions will not be aroused. The exchange of the secret pledge we have mentioned occurs especially in this situation.

Once the divorce is completed, the woman falls in the same category as a single girl since she is free.

Seeking a future wife in an as yet unborn child or one that is very young will be discussed in a special section (Chapter IV, Article I). [105]

Chapter II

The Marriage Agreement

581 The marriage agreement (1) is primarily arranged by means of the payment of certain valuables through the agency (Article II). The first stage is the engagement (Article III). After dealing with it, we will describe the various payments subsequently made to the father, namely the *walo* (Article IV) and the *bosóngo* (Article IX), and to the mother (Article V), as well as the gifts (Article VI). Nkundó law also requires that the woman's clan pay certain valuables (Article VII). Finally, we will examine various rules and customs pertaining to the bride price: its acceptance (Article VIII) and the use to which it is ultimately put (Article X). The chapter ends with some general remarks (Article XI) and a few considerations on the attitude adopted toward the bride price (Article XII).

Article I. The Beginning of Negotiations

584 As we have seen at the end of the last chapter, the period of courtship is not long.

---

1. These terms should be understood broadly, rather than in a strictly legal fashion. "The marriage agreement" here does not signify what is called "the marriage contract" in European law. This chapter deals with the various stages through which the condition of marriage is established among the Nkundó, and the various practices connected with this process. I have chosen this title in order to include all the multiplicity of essential and accessory elements comprised in the establishment of a marriage, as well as the various circumstances attendant upon it.

584 The young man informs his own parents of his intentions, and they make certain that this marriage merits [106] consideration and that there are no obstacles or too great difficulties that might cause trouble later on.

For the official negotiations the suitor and his father (or a substitute for the latter) go to the home of the girl's parents, who inquire as to the purpose of their visit, and when they discover that so-and-so would like to marry their daughter, they ask: "How do you want her?" (1) "I want her for my wife," he replies. Whereupon they tell him to make the necessary arrangements to make the first payment on the bride price. When the two parties have come to an agreement the parents of the intended conclude the conversation by saying: "We are not opposed; it is up to you."

[590] The formalities of the negotiations in the case of a woman who already has a husband do not differ from those for a girl who is free. Only, in the first instance the proceedings must go on with great circumspection so as not to anger the abandoned husband. In addition the woman's parents inform the suitor and his family of the amount of the bride price they must bring in order to reimburse the first husband. (2)

In cases of engagement before birth or at a very early age, the same procedures are observed, but they are adapted to the special circumstances of the situation, which will be explained in detail in Chapter IV.

After the negotiations have thus begun, the suitor's father prepares the first payment of the bride price which, accompanied by his son and the ndonga, he delivers to the future wife's family. But let us first explain the ndonga.

---

[836] 1. That is, do you want her as your legitimate wife, or are you only planning to live with her for a time? In this fashion the parents of the intended assure themselves that the suitor has serious intentions of contracting a real marriage

2. See Chapter VIII, Articles II and III.

Article II. The Ndonga

584 The ndonga is the guardian-keeper of the marriage; he is chosen by the parties involved and his participation as intermediary, witness, conciliator, or arbiter is required at every stage of the union. He is an official in the sense that his authority is derived from the very law which governs marriage in Nkundó society.

First of all, the ndonga is the indispensible intermediary for the payment of the bride price. Without him there is no legitimate marriage: Nkó ndonga ôbóka baémba ô lontubé, bõna ale ô bonto. "Without a ndonga you are throwing your valuables away at a total loss, and your daughter is but a slave," that is, she is not a wife. Legally, only the ndonga is qualified to act as witness.

The importance attached by the natives to the ndonga's participation is apparent in every moment of daily life. Thus if a woman has been beaten by her husband, her family can be heard to say: "Our daughter (sister) is no slave; she was paid for through the agency of a ndonga," bón'ôkiaó áfa bokwála, bowóngékí é la ndonga. Or she herself will retort in this manner, mutatis mutandis, to her husband or his family when in her opinion she is not being treated properly.

The absolute necessity for the participation of a qualified ndonga is very rarely mentioned by Europeans in the colonial administration. One would say that they are unaware of its importance though it is crucial.

584
178
602 In order to serve as ndonga for a particular marriage, a person must be related at the same time to both the future husband and wife or, as they say in Lonkundo, to be mbótswá. Nowadays, because of the migrations of the natives, the ndonga who meet this qualification are rare in the centers and often cannot be found at all. Therefore, it has been necessary to adapt the traditional law to the situation. Hence a practice has developed [108] under such critical circumstances which consists in taking as one's ndonga a man whose integrity is generally recognized and who has every reason to be impartial and interested in the stability of the marriage. Thus it often happens that chief catechists assume the functions and responsibilities of this role.

584 Formerly, and even today in the interior, when two young people love each other but cannot find anyone qualified to perform the

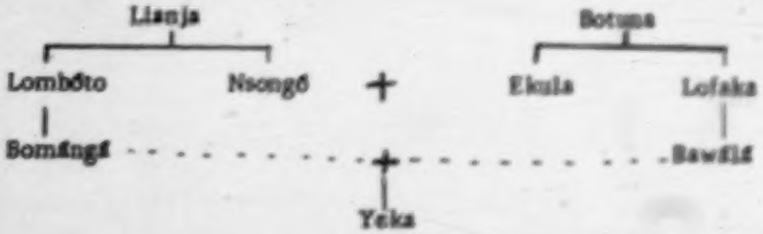
584 function of the ndonga, the parents of the young man oppose the marriage. They said: tófímɛ́jɛ́ liála línko, tófa l'ɔ́kɔfɛ́ndɛ́jɛ́ bafímbɛ́, "we do not want this marriage; there is no one to transmit the valuables." Under ordinary circumstances such an occurrence is almost nonexistent.

It is up to the husband to chose the ndonga, who is then accepted by the wife and her parents. If they are opposed to him, the husband replaces another in his stead. Though this situation rarely occurred in the past, it may be encountered under present conditions.

A woman may be ndonga just as well as a man.

Its functions are hereditary. If the ndonga dies, his son, daughter, brother, or even his wife, if she remains in her deceased husband's clan, inherit his duties and prerogatives.

Similarly, if the ndonga is absent or otherwise prevented from fulfilling his functions, members of his family may substitute for him. Thus, for example:



Yeka is a qualified ndonga for the marriage of Ekula and Nsongɔ́. But since he is still too young [109] to perform the functions of this position, his father Bomangɛ is entirely entitled to substitute for him for the time being.

There may be several ndonga for a single marriage. All have to fulfill the necessary conditions and have the same rights and duties. It is not necessary, however, that they all be present at each occasion required by law; one of them will suffice, and it does not matter which one. Theoretically, their presence as witnesses is of equal value. Nevertheless, the first one designated is known as ndonga éá ntsína, or the chief ndonga. If it is possible to find two mbɔ́tswɛ, both should be taken

584 as ndonga; if not, the one person that can be found will suffice.

The ndonga is entitled to remuneration for his services from each of the contracting parties.

When the ndanga is paid (see below), the wife's family gives him [the ndonga] a smoked botómba, a hen, or a bokúfa fish. This is a gift with the generic name of lionja (verb bonjela). It is always obligatory.

Similarly, when the walo is paid, the wife's family must first of all give him food of animal origin (bofambe), generally a botómba, a hen, or a bokúfa, as well as bananas. This present as a whole is called botómba l'oanda (1).

1. Boanda is a species of banana, but any kind may be given. As a result, nowadays people begin to speak also of botómba linkondo (or linko), or of nsóso la linko (hen and banana).

Finally after the walo is paid, the husband's family gives the ndonga 2 copper rings, and the wife's family does the same. If the amount of the bride price is very great, he may be given as many as 5 rings. The latter remuneration is called bompóngé. This word literally means a domestic animal (a dog or a goat) given as payment. Nowadays its value in copper rings (konga, pl. bakonga) is given, but the old name has remained. [110]

All these remunerations are given the generic term lómbela ndonga, "to prepare for the ndonga," and the noun balómbo (sing. ilómbo), as if there were food involved. This expression fits well with the botómba and the bananas, etc. but it is used also for the copper rings. Is this an extension of the meaning? Or should we conclude that in the past the remuneration in question was made only in foods?

If there are several ndonga, the remuneration is not therefore increased; it is one and the same, and they have to divide it among themselves.

In practice the heads of the clan or family are also present when the bride price is paid; they are influential men, who have the

584 power to settle disputes. They claim their share of the remuneration from the ndonga. According to the saying -- in archaic language -- botɛ wǎ ndonga nd'â dombiɛ, "the power (literally, "the medicine") of the ndonga resides in the judges." Not that the judges themselves have the right or the power to intervene in matrimonial palavers. But they are that many additional witnesses. If the day comes when there is a dispute on the subject of the bride price, especially at the time of a divorce, the ndonga can call on them to help him refresh his memory and thus avoid difficulties. For it can easily happen that after several years the official witness has only a vague and approximate recollection of what was paid. If the judges do not receive anything at the time of payment, they will refuse to give their assistance at the critical moment. It is therefore an intelligent policy to acquiesce to their desires even though strictly speaking they can invoke no real prerogatives.

178
587
622 At the present time the colonial government, having established districts and named chiefs, the latter have had attributed to them the right to officially act as ndonga in matrimonial matters, or at least they have taken advantage of the powers given them and done so. In general [111] they summon the judges of the district at the same time, and the matter is entered after a fashion in the register of settlements. The chief's presence as a witness may have some value, since he can provide additional testimony and writes down the amount of the bride price. But his presence, on the other hand, has the disadvantage of involving him in matters which all in all are none of his business. We are not speaking here of cases in which he or some relatives of his are interested parties in the palaver. If he would be content to be a passive witness and enter the transactions that take place, the situation would be perfect.

192
194 It is probable that etymologically the word ndonga is derived from the verb root long, intransitive longam, "to be in order, arranged," transitive longy, "to arrange, make as it should be." In addition to the word ndonga, which is used west of the Luilaka, we find the word bokɛlo used among the Bodngɛ and the Boŋyɛ (as well as the Elingɛ), and ntombi among the Injɔlɔ. The latter term could be the same word as its homonym which means "spy" and is derived from the verb

192 tomba, "to spy"; the former may be an extension of the meaning of
184 the word bokɛlo, "promise." (1)

[572] 1. Note in passing that a ndonga is also necessary for the boseka, or contract of friendship and mutual assistance. (See Chapter I, Part 1, Article III.)

Article III. The Engagement

584
585 1. The payment of the ilulɛ

The engagement begins with the first bride-price payment, which in former times was an arrow and for that reason is called likulɛ or ilulɛ. If the suitor was very rich, he sometimes gave an ingɔndɔ knife or even an empɔmɛ. A poorer one would merely give the shaft of an arrow. Nowadays 1 or 2 copper rings are given. But the original name of this payment has been retained. [554]

Arriving at the home of the father of his intended, [112] the suitor, his father (or a substitute for him), the ndonga(1) and often other relatives as well, sit down on one side of the lofɔlɛ (the court in front of a dwelling), after an exchange of the usual courtesies. The girl and the representatives of her family sit down on the opposite side. As in all matters that a Nkundɔ has to settle, the host begins by inquiring into the reason for the visit. The young man's father answers: "We have come to ask for your daughter for our son." "How do you ask for her?" "We ask for her in marriage." These preliminary negotiations are called simply ɔwana mango, "to ask each other for news."

Then the girl's father asks: "Who will bring the liloŋ (banana) or the bonyɛko (partially ripe banana), that is, the gifts?" Through this figurative expression he asks who has been proposed as ndonga. The young man's father replies: so-and-so, and so-and-so. When they have been accepted, the fiancée's father has bananas, smoked fish, and sometimes hens brought in, and the witness passes them over to the future husband's group.

584
585 When the presents have been accepted, the *ndonga* plants the arrow in the ground in front of the wife's parents. Hence the expression *-tumya likulɔ* or *-lubya likulɔ*, "to plant the arrow," which remains very much the fashion even though nowadays the *ndonga* deposits rings in its place.

2. Consent

584 Asked by her parents or the *ndonga*, or on her own initiative, -- depending on her own inclinations, -- the girl pulls up the arrow or picks up the rings and gives them to her father. That is how she expresses her consent to the proposed engagement.

Her promptness, her nonchalance, or even the recalcitrant manner in which she performs this gesture show her [113] feelings. Usually her movements are lively. As we have explained, the union will have been anticipated for some time, and a Nkundɔ girl glories in being the object of a man's love and in having a husband. Nevertheless there are cases where the girl has to be persuaded to make the decision, especially if she is still young. Within herself she is not enthusiastic about the marriage. But in the end she bows to her father's wish, preferring a union which is contrary to her desires to fairly serious trouble with her family.
584
156

Naturally we find the whole range of variations which depend on individual temperament and on circumstances. A categorical refusal must certainly be very rare. It would be the act of a very strong-willed woman. But the union would have been called off much earlier, so that such an extreme situation would not be allowed to occur.

The case of a woman who submits to the ceremonies with resistance and against her wishes is more frequent. Not only does she have to be urged and persuaded, but her frowning face expresses her discontent. She picks up the objects with an apathetic gesture, turns her back to her father, and drops the valuables behind her without even looking at him. None of the people present misunderstand the meaning of such gestures. Consequently members of the family and the notables who are present never fail to attract the father's attention to
584

584 the gravity of this situation. They try to make him change his mind
and to dissuadé him from accepting the bride price. To that end
they try to make him see the consequences of his obstinacy: at the
first favorable opportunity the woman will take flight, leading to
palavers (and in the past often war), imprisonment, all sorts of
[578] troubles, and finally the bride price will have to be returned for the
divorce. Sometimes they succeed; other times all their wisdom and
eloquence are in vain. Cupidity, the need to obtain the means of a
[156] [114] bride price for a wife (for oneself, a son, a brother, etc.) and
the profit he reaps from the union silence all other feelings. Here
again, everything depends on the character of the individual. Nowadays the greater freedom resulting from colonization has reduced the frequency of such cases. Nevertheless, because of the reasons given, they still occur. But more frequently the ceremony takes place in a normal fashion. As long as it has not taken place, no further bride-price payments are made. This fact is sufficient to show the importance of the ceremony in Nkundó law, and thus the importance of the woman's public and official consent to the marriage proposed, though this consent is not expressed in words but only implied in a special, meaningful act. Cases which seem in contradiction to this statement are clearly breaches of that law.

In normal cases the father accepts the arrow or the rings from his daughter's hands and thus establishes his consent to the engagement and consequently to the marriage.

In other forms of marriage, which we will discuss later on (Chapters III and IV), consent is expressed in an entirely different fashion.

3. Abduction

583x Even before the coming of the Europeans there were instances where lovers persisted in their desire to marry in spite of the opposition of the woman's parents. When the parents refused to accept the ijulé, the engaged pair arranged an opportunity to flee. The woman tried to win her brother over to her cause, and out of brotherly love he usually

583 accepted the arrow from the hands of the ndonga. Otherwise the latter secretly planted it in the roof of the parents of the woman who was fleeing. Later, when it was apparent that their daughter's marriage would hold good, and their son-in-law had pacified them by his good conduct towards them (giving them gifts, showing them respect, etc.), the parents no longer refused their consent. Subsequently the payments were made in the usual fashion. [115]

4. The departure of the fiancée

584 Through the payment of the ikulɛ a woman is at least partially bound to her husband (bóme). The maxim cited in the last chapter (Part 2, Article III, 2, B) is applicable here: "Boimbo fruit which is still under the tree belongs to no one." As long as a girl lives in her parents' home she is bound to no man. But as soon as someone has paid the ijulɛ, she has been "picked" and belongs to a husband.

Therefore, either immediately or within a few days, she leaves her parents and follows her husband. (1) Actually, the father may dismiss his son-in-law and promise to bring his daughter himself, or send her by someone he has delegated. Meanwhile he collects a few small provisions. When the fiancée arrives in the village of her future husband, all the inhabitants gather at the first cries of "bompɛka wä Söngölö aôvɛ, "X's fiancée has arrived," and acclaim her joyfully.

The term bompɛka is not used until that moment. (2) But does

1. As we will see suo loco (Chapters IV and VIII) this was only rarely possible in precolonial times. Nowadays it has become a common practice because of the changes that have taken place, which will be described at the places cited.

2. This word also means "engagement." The Ekonda say esengɛ or chengɛ.

584 not a woman become bompɛka through the payment of the ikulɛ? That is what I had always understood, and it seemed logical to me. But in the course of a discussion on the subject, natives contradicted me and said that I was entirely mistaken. I could not make them accept the idea that although a woman is called bompɛka when she arrives in her fiancé's clan, she actually becomes bompɛka with the official payment of the ikulɛ, so that nothing but a manner of speaking is involved. They said, "No, as long as a woman has not gone to her husband she is not bompɛka."

"But after all," said I, [116] "a very minor difference is involved; the essential thing is in any case the payment of the ikulɛ.

"It is true that a woman belongs to her husband from the time the ikulɛ is paid, but she is nevertheless not called bompɛka. She is not given that name until she leaves her parents and goes to her husband's home."

"But why?"

[621] "Because otherwise the man runs the risk of being mocked and ridiculed. Suppose that after the ikulɛ he comes back home alone. His future wife is to join him in a few days. He announces the great news to his friends. Then on the day set she does not appear. What shame for him! On the other hand, if everything is kept secret until the moment when no change is to be feared, there are only cries of joy."

On the other hand, this data should be related to the indisputable fact that the payment of the bride price alone very seldom establishes a marriage according to the laws and customs of the various peoples of the Congo. There is almost always another ceremony which in most cases is the handing over of the woman. Because of these facts we are inclined to consider the explanation of the Nkundɔ, an explanation of convenience which shows the practical aspect of the rule but does not account for it. It actually does not explain why a woman does not become bompɛka from the time of the payment which establishes the engagement. On the other hand, it is undeniable that she is not given that name until she has arrived at the home of her husband. It is possible that the fundamental reason for this phenomenon has been forgotten or lost sight of by the natives. The explanation which fits best with the facts that are certain is that the essential

584 element of the engagement is not the payment of the ikulɛ but the woman's act of leaving her family and joining the man to whom she is engaged. (1) [117]

> 1. I am deeply grateful to the attorney general, Mr. A. Sohier, for having drawn my attention to a comparison of these practices with the law and practice of other peoples of the Congo and having made me investigate the legal aspect of this question.

5. The fiancée's arrival at her husband's home

As I have said, the fiancée is welcomed by her husband's clan and enthusiastically acclaimed by the population in general.

According to most cases, her husband-to-be receives her and takes her to his home or to that of his parents. The latter await her arrival, having gathered together their daughters, sisters, and various relatives and associates. The fiancé introduces the woman of his choice to them. She is greeted in the usual fashion: "w'ǒng'ôôkita; ôôyɛ; ôôɛtswa, etc.." depending on the extent of their previous intimacy.

Then gifts are given to the fiancée. First the parents-in-law give her a welcoming gift, called bosambelo, literally translated as "handclasp." It usually consists of a ring or a knife. Then they give her their hands. (1) Following them, all relatives and associates

[586]

> 1. The Nkundo clasp hands as a sign of friendship. The gesture is a sort of greeting. They don't press the hand,as do Europeans but place the hands lightly over each other and then withdraw them, rubbing gently.

must do the same. The men usually give a ring and the women a knife. These objects are considered as part of the bride price, and the

584 woman sends them to her family. Distant relatives fulfill their obligations by bringing meat or fish, and nowadays also money or some small present, which is not included in the bride price.

The husband's gifts consist of a small knife and a few (5) arrows (at the time of the Independent State a bundle of copper wires called *ngelo* or *mitako* and at the present time 5 or 10 francs, for example). These presents from the husband are not *bosambelo*, for he does not give his fiancée his hand; they are *yěkola* (greeting) and are not part of the bride price. The woman sends them to her parents.

If the husband does not yet have a house or cultivated fields of 591 his own, [138] as was formerly often the case, (1) the engaged couple live in the hut of the parents for the time being. The woman obtains food from her mother-in-law's fields and prepares it at the hearth of the latter, until the young man has built his hut and established his own fields.

Nowadays it no longer happens that a young man who wants to take a wife still lacks his own house. From the time of puberty on, young men moved by the desire for freedom leave the parental home and build huts for themselves where they can live alone or with some companion or other and enjoy their freedom.

6. The life of the engaged couple

584 The *bompaka* lives in the home of her husband, goes there to talk to him and to sleep with him. During the first three or four days she does not work, unless she is a very active person. Subsequently she takes care of all the household tasks and prepares meals at the hearth under the supervision of her mother-in-law. Only after a few weeks, when she has become accustomed to her new way of living, is she introduced to the customs of her new family; only

---

[734] 1. Orphans were almost the only ones who had their own houses and cultivated fields. Of course, we are not speaking of men who were previously married.

584 then does she acquire her own establishment. From that moment on she lives permanently with her husband-to-be.

She has come from her parents' home empty handed, without any utensils whatsoever. In her new dwelling she finds everything. Her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law give her what she needs: baskets, pots, gourds, mats, mortars, pestles, and even chickens.

It will be apparent from the preceding that there are no particular rites or ceremonies nor is any special attire worn.

584 585 By this time the bompɛka is already considered a wife; [119] she has all the rights and duties of that status: cohabitation, household tasks, etc. Everything she produces or earns belongs to her husband. Her own family no longer has any rights to the fruits of her work. If, after the payment of the ikulɛ and before any further payment, [586] the husband discovers that there are relations between his fiancée and another man, the latter is considered an adulterer and is liable to the sanctions designed to check such infractions. The older the woman, the greater the indemnity, which may be as high as 5 to 10 rings (see Chapter VI, Article VII).

It is logically consistent with what we have described that the fiancé has no special name. Since he is actually a husband, that is what he is called (bɔme).

During this period the engaged pair get to know each other physically and morally (sexual relations, work, temperament, virtues, faults). A figurative expression is used to describe what happens -- bɛkɛngola mpokɛ, "they are trying out the pot." The explanation [585] [252] for this saying is that before a new pot (mpokɛ) is used, it is placed on a shelf above the fire and left there for several days, so that it will harden and become heat resistant. If it cracks it is not suitable for food preparation; if not, one can cook in it without fear. This process is called bɛngola mpokɛ, and the term has been transferred to the trial period of the newlyweds. Thus it is a sort of novitiate, and the English term which can be used to approximate this situation most closely is clearly "engagement," "engaged."

This first period can last several months. Meanwhile the husband seeks the valuables needed for the ndanga payment.

7. The ndanga

583x Originally the ndanga for marriage was the payment of a
584 knife (hence it is still called [120] ifakɛ, "knife"); it was later replaced by 2 to 5 copper rings, and now by 5 to 10 or even more.

At the present time ikulɛ and ndanga tend to merge, since both have become payments of rings, and they are often given together at the same time without being distinguished one from the other.

In the main the handing over of the ndanga takes place in the same manner as the payment of the ikulɛ, but with greater solemnity. The young man and his father (or a substitute for the latter), together with the ndonga and a few close relatives, especially the mother, go to the home of the fiancée's parents. They are received with the usual marks of courtesy and affection. They sit down on one side of the loɛnjɛ, and the woman's family sits on the opposite side. First of all, the latter ask for news, that is, they inquire into the purpose of the visit. The young man's father answers: "We have come to pay the ndanga," toôy'ɔkɛkya ndanga (or ifakɛ) meaning literally, "we have come to hang the ndanga (or the knife)." Then the father-in-law gives the ndonga a gift of welcome (lionja). It is a smoked botɔ́mba, or one or two bokɔ́sa fish, or a hen; a bunch of bananas is added.

The fiancé and his family will receive, for example, a goat, a dog, and some hens, which are considered part of the nkɔmɛ (see below, Article VII), as well as meat, smoked fish, and a few bunches of bananas, which he will dispose of with his wife and family and which are not considered part of the nkɔmɛ but are simply a present.

They then proceed to the payment of the ndanga valuables. It must be done through the medium of the ndonga, who also had to hand over the presents, etc. It is not necessary that the fiancée participate nor even that she be present. [121]

Sometimes when the ndanga is paid, the woman's family ask for beɛ́ngo gifts which should theoretically be made only on the occasion of the next payment, (see below, Article VI). Sometimes the husband satisfies these requirements; other times he gives only a pledge (wɛ̌ko). He could also refuse the greedy parents. But he

584 cares too much for his wife, so he acquiesces to their desires without
585 a murmur.

What is the purpose and the significance of the *ndanga*? The natives reply: the *ndanga* is given so that the daughter would not burn herself at the fire, *bŏn'ŏkñŏ ɛfŏy' ŏlongola tsɛ̆*. This is a sign that the man takes responsibility for any accident (represented by the general term "burn") which might befall his fiancée. In the hands of the woman and her family, it constitutes public and official evidence against the husband. (1) Consequently, it is also a guarantee to the parents that the husband will take care of their child and treat her properly.

But what then is the *ikulɛ*'s reason for being? The Nkundŏ reply: "The *ikulɛ* is evidence, a sign that the woman belongs to a particular man."

In practice, then, there is hardly any difference between the purposes of the two payments. Actually they have identical consequences, both with respect to the duties and rights of the engaged couple and to the indemnity to be paid under certain circumstances.

Thus if a woman runs away with her lover and he has not given the *ikulɛ*, and some accident befalls her, her family can make no claim as they have no evidence against him. In former times this would have been a purely hypothetical situation; nowadays it does occur, but it is quite unusual in the native areas.

Nevertheless, a slight difference may be noted between the explanations for the two payments given by the natives. [122] The *ikulɛ* is simply proof of the engagement; the *ndanga*, on the other hand, is the recognition of responsibilities and their acceptance. The fiancé beats his breast, as they say (*ɛyakɛndela ntɔ́lɔ́*).

We have said that the *ikulɛ* and the *ndanga* are in the process
178, of merging. This development is probably due to the fact that both
583
584 payments are made nowadays in the form of brass or copper rings.

---

1. Hence, probably, the origin of the word *ndanga*. The root is *langa*, "to love," "to desire," therefore "to accept." In Lokonda, see *lolanga*.

584 585 178 But if the indicated difference between them were fundamental, this fact would by no means provide a sufficient explanation. On the other hand, if it were only a slight nuance without practical consequences, it would not, it seems to me, adequately explain the existence of the two payments, especially since in the past quite a long time could elapse between them.

174 583 584 Therefore we can wonder whether the basis of a greater difference might not be found in the hypothesis of its being a primitive custom.

For instance, the ikulɛ could have been the payment accompanying a proposal of marriage comparable to our European engagement. Then, when unresolvable palavers developed out of this situation, a system may have been devised which would not prevent disputes from arising but would make possible their resolution according to proper and just legal regulations. This system would have been the payment of a ndanga.

While this is a possible explanation, it is not a very plausible one. Native law appears in all domains so reasonable, cautious, and wise, and so well adapted to circumstances, that it would hardly have left a way open to so great a source of difficulties in so important a matter. Such a possibility can hardly be admitted by any one who is even slightly familiar with the mentality of the Nkundó. Then, too, the modern blending of the ikulɛ and the ndanga suggests that one of two is duplicating the function of the other. And the consequence of this development would have been the uniting of the two payments into one, with a single purpose, or more probably, in conformity with the general practice, the transferring of the significance of a pledge, theoretically assigned to the ndanga, to the ikulɛ. [123] The existence of a single engagement payment would have been much more in accordance with the present hypothesis than the practice of making two distinct payments, which are independent and separated in time. We should add here that the acceptance of a responsibility is always and under all circumstances accompanied by the handing over of a ndanga.

We could conceive of a second hypothesis, which seems more in accordance with reality. The ikulɛ may originally have been an engagement payment, as in the first hypothesis, only the girl may

174 584 585 not have accompanied her husband to his home. She would have remained with her parents, and her fiancé would probably have had permission to visit her and to have sexual relations with her; as we have seen in the preceding chapter, native law does not oppose such relations. Since the mutual desire for cohabitation could not be put off for the period of time -- often long -- required before the bride-price payment itself could be arranged, the girl's parents would have given their child permission to follow her heart's inclinations which -- let us repeat -- could provoke only difficulties of a legal, "civil" nature. And before the fiancé could take his future wife home with him, he had first to reassure the parents and free them from their responsibility by taking it upon himself in an official manner, that is, by giving proof of his willingness to accept all the consequences of his action. In Lonkundo such a pledge is called *ndanga*. Later on, the time of cohabitation may have been begun earlier, by permitting it from the time of the *ikulɛ*. Thus in practice the reason for the existence of the *ndanga* would have been transferred to the *ikulɛ*, and the *ndanga* would have been retained simply as a payment imposed by custom, until the day when the overthrow of ancient customs made the Nkundɔ perceive the logical consequences of the facts, resulting in the merging of the two payments into one. This hypothesis is also confirmed by the fact that the very name *ikulɛ* is tending to disappear, [124] yielding to the use of the single term *ndanga*. Finally, to align this hypothesis with the facts pertaining to the term *bompɛka* presented in number 4, we must assume that in the past the fiancée moved to the home of her husband only after the *ndanga* and consequently became *bompɛka* only at that time.

8. The breaking of an engagement

584 The breaking of an engagement does not involve great legal difficulties. Both the man and the woman are free to break it if they find that they are basically incompatible, or that the prospects for happiness are not good, or for any other reason. There are certain practical stipulations, however.

584 A young man who renounces his fiancée places her in the hands of the *ndonga*, who sends her back to her family.

The woman who does not want to continue their life together leaves her fiancé, perhaps telling him and perhaps not, first goes to the *ndonga* and then returns to her parents (nowadays she sometimes does not see the *ndonga*, although not doing so must be considered an infraction of the rule).

In practice she may also go directly to another man. Formerly it was dangerous to do so, since a war could result, and such an action was considered against the law. At the present time the greater freedom resulting from colonization has eliminated the dangers involved. Thus this lack of proper procedure has become more frequent and is even coming to be recognized as normal.

584 585 In any case, even if the woman has neglected to go to the *ndonga*, the latter is sent by the fiancé to examine the situation and to claim restitution of the payments that have already been made.

Strictly speaking, the breaking of the engagement consists in the restitution of the *ikulɛ-ndanga* through the mediation of the *ndonga*. But, as we will explain more fully in the chapter on divorce, gifts given by the woman's family are deducted. [125] Complete restitution of everything must be made. The woman's family cannot even invoke the work done by their daughter for the husband's benefit.

583 177 584 Nowadays, however, the custom of dividing the amount of the bride price in excess of the *nkomɛ* (1) is taking hold. The woman's parents demand a certain indemnity because they consider that the husband has lost the right to his valuables; if they do not withhold them altogether, it is because of the respect and embarrassment they feel toward the *ndonga*, who is related to the fiancé as he is to them.

The natives try to explain this change in the ancestral law as follows:

1) An engagement is meant to develop into a regular marriage, and that is its only validity. The fiancé's right to the woman's work

(1) See below, Article VII.

584 is based solely on the nature of this state, which is a direct prepara-
583 tion for married life. Therefore, if the union is not completed, the
177 fiancé is enriched at the expense of the parents-in-law.

2) When an engagement is broken, the parents lose the legitimate and normal expectation of a full bride price; they consider this loss lucrum cessans.

The natives' justification is not sufficient to explain the origin
584 of the change, however, for:
583 1) It seems likely that the Nkundó have simply imitated the
174 practice of other peoples of the Congo with whom they have become
177 acquainted since colonization, and that their explanation is but an
explanation of convenience.

2) The reasons invoked in favor of the change are not new; they were equally valid in the past, and such as they are and in themselves they are therefore insufficient.

3) If we examine the reason concerning the benefit that the fiancé derives from the [126] woman's work, we find that it is based on a fallacious argument. For Nkundó law recognizes, on the one hand, the legitimacy of this gain and, on the other, the right of each party to break the engagement. Simply the breaking of the engagement cannot, therefore, result in the payment of an indemnity, since one cannot possibly be punished for having made use of a right.

4) The above objection is also applicable to the second reason given by the Nkundó: the possibility of the bride price not being paid is inherent in the essence of the engagement, since both parties are free not to go through with the union.

Thus the reasons given as such must be rejected.

Nevertheless, it is possible that modern circumstances have to some extent modified the nature of the problem. Thus:

1) The introduction of European wage labor and trade has given the Blacks a new idea of wealth. Consequently, the benefits reaped from the engagement have become much greater (through the development of trade and the availability of more varied goods and greater riches), and therefore the economic value of a woman has increased in considerable proportions.

Theoretically, these changes might justify some indemnification. In practice, however, economic development has increased the

583 amount of the engagement payment and thus counterbalances the in-
584 crease of the profit brought by a woman.

174 Indemnification for economic reasons would also have one
177 good result, namely that it would prevent a possible skewing of the system into a form of exploitation which would consist of taking fiancées for a time when they are needed for some special work and sending them back when the work is finished. [127]

But it must be noted that though the precaution may be good in itself, it is not called for under present circumstances, for the Nkundó do not even think of such a corruption of engagement customs.

2. Colonization has considerably reinforced -- or perhaps even introduced -- in native thinking the idea that the favors of a woman deserve a salary. I think that these circumstances have contributed much more to the origin of the new practice than economic changes -- or rather, that the justification for it is primarily based on this idea of venal love. And in that case we have before us a pretium stupri of a sort that could foster prostitution, and which is therefore in opposition to morality and public order.

Just as we must applaud the normal developments of the custom and its adaptation to the possibilities of social and moral elevation that colonization has created, so we must react against its corruption, aberrations, deviations, and a drift toward the exploitation of faults and vices.

Another objection against the innovation may be made on the grounds of its inconsistency within Nkundó law. Since there is no indemnification in the case of divorce, how is it possible to accept it in the case of the breaking of an engagement, which is a much weaker commitment than marriage itself? It is true that a Nkundó engagement is almost a marriage, since it includes cohabitation, etc.; nevertheless, it is not as tight a bond as a permanent union, from which it is clearly distinguished. The new custom leads logically to the conclusion that it is preferable to complete the union and make it definitive by paying the entire bride price and then to break it by means of a real divorce, which does not involve this financial loss.

Finally, although an indemnity based on the increase in the fiancé's profit from the engagement cannot be [128] condemned as

585 unjust in itself, it certainly becomes so if it is considered a penalty
584 inflicted for the rupture. For the indemnity is restricted to the man,
174 whether or not he is in the wrong. Furthermore, to accept an indemnity
177 even when the engagement is broken because of the woman tends to favor frauds and real swindles on the part of the woman and her parents, in short a kind of traffic in women.

It is also evident that the rich (polygamists) suffer much less
[585] from the innovation than do monogamous men, especially those who
[174] adopt monogamy as a principle and more especially the Christians, who do not condone divorce. Thus I am of the opinion that the desire to defend polygamy against the doctrine of the missionaries is not entirely unrelated to the transformation of this custom.

000 All these considerations show that the question is highly complex and that it would be better if the ancient custom were restored.

If the breaking of the engagement is due to wrongs, the new custom could perhaps be tolerated, though it is not without serious dangers, but the indemnity should be imposed exclusively on the party at fault. Furthermore, the wrongs would have to be serious, and on the other hand, the indemnity would have to be, not in the nature of a forfeit, but of a payment of damages commensurate with the extent of the damage suffered and the seriousness of the wrong. And here those cases should especially be considered where the breaking of the engagement is accompanied by proceedings of a vexatious and insulting nature. And though it is a very delicate task to evaluate all these elements, we must not forget to take them into account.

It seems to me that the ancient law must still be maintained when the engagement is broken simply because of a change of feelings for which neither party is to blame, if such a case occurs. For it is better not to innovate than to innovate too fast. [128]

Article IV. Walo -- Bomboluku

583^{x} The walo or bomboluku is the bulk of the bride price paid for a marriage. Between the payment of the ndanga and that of the walo, 585 months, even years, may elapse. In the past there was no hurry at all. Only if the father of the woman needed the bride price to obtain a wife for himself, for a son, or a cousin, etc., was the period [118] shortened. Nowadays, however, those who are entitled to the bride price urge the shortening of the interval before the _walo_ payment because of the overexcitation of their desire for riches, on the one hand, and also because it gives the young people a possibility of leaving their tribes and regions and going into the centers to find the means of earning more money, dressing more luxuriously, satisfying their vanity and their desire for freedom, not to mention libertinism or even worse. Nor has the one reason present in the past disappeared -- on the contrary. And as a result of all that, as soon as the interval becomes a little long to the girl's father's taste, he readily brings the situation to the attention of the chiefs established by the administration, who are always ready to deal with matrimonial cases as much for the financial gain involved as for the increase in their prestige resulting from their involvement in this most important realm, in which according to ancestral law they have no right whatsoever to intervene, for the simple reason that this law knows no chiefs or headmen in the European sense.

1. Terminology

585 192 The term _walo_ is used by the Bonkoso, the Bongili, the Bombwanja, and the Ionda; _bombolako_, on the other hand, is used by the Wangata, the Bakala, the Lifumba, the Injolo, and the Bofongi (as well as the Elinga and the Losangonya). The Bombomba use the term _eloombela_ in imitation of their neighbors, the Ekonda.

This last term may be related to -lómba, [120] "to prepare food." This derivation should be compared with what we have said in Article II about the remuneration of the _ndonga_. I have been unable to discover the etymology of _bombolako_. Let us try our luck with _walo_.

In accordance with the rules of Nkundó etymology, this word could be related to the root _-al_, or to _-alal_, which is an intensifier derived from the former. No example of the simple root exists at present, as far as I know. But there are derivative forms: _alaj_ and _alal_, or _-aol_ which results from the elimination of the first "l."

585* 192 -Alej means "to place in layers," as for example one would place eggs in a basket, bricks in an oven. The noun derived from this word is jwalo, "layer" and, by analogy, "shelf." By extension it is used to signify whatever is placed between layers to protect them, and also the lining of a garment. It is difficult to find a relationship with the word walo here.

-Aol may be used as an intensifier and also to reverse the meaning or a word. The latter use results in a noun ending in a final "o" as in jwaló of aola bangánjo, "to pour out the vegetables." Thus it must be excluded.

In its other meanings this verb occurs in combination with several nouns. It occurs first of all with walo when this word is used to signify the beating for small game, (1) In addition it is used to mean "to collect and gather weeds, chaff, sweepings, ashes." The action is called jwalo.

The most natural conclusion is certainly that the noun under discussion should be placed together with -aol in the meaning given last. The word would then refer to the relatively large amount of valuables demanded. As a matter of fact, the act of gathering chaff, etc., is practically and physically identical with the act of picking up rings, etc. A difficulty stands in the way of this explanation, however; [131] the expression is not -aola walo, but eola walo, or eola bošimbá not only for this particular payment but also, mutatis mutandis, for the various payments and presents connected with marriage, such as funeral payments and gifts given at the time of death. (1)

In any case the term walo has not the slightest etymological connection with the word walí, "spouse," nor with the root -bal, "to marry."

---

1. The expression tumba walo is also used.

1. This verb -eola indicates rather the quantity of objects picked up and is used in many other combinations. A noun njeló means "a large number of objects" (especially fish).

2. The nature of walo valuables

583x The walo primarily consists of copper and brass rings. Wrought
[301] metal objects (bifeko), such as spears, knives, or axes are also added.
[326] Nowadays a part may be made up of simple brass or iron (steel) bars.
[435] Goats may be given in addition; a she-goat is worth 5 to 6 rings (nowadays 10), and a he-goat, 3 to 4 bakonga (nowadays 6 to 7). One or more elónjɛ bells are greatly prized as gifts.

583x
435 Payment in iron or copper chains (bengɛ́-nyola), in various kinds of bead necklaces, and in leopard's teeth has almost entirely disappeared. Formerly, certain kinds of beads had great value; the big, round bluish-white ones (lonyɔ́ngu, pl. nnyɔ́ngu) were worth 1 konga each, the big, oblong blackish ones, cylindrical or rectangular in shape, 2 to 3 centimeters in diameter and 5 to 10 centimeters long (called nkángɛ́) were worth one slave or, nowadays, 20 to 25 bakonga each.

583x Copper (konga) and brass (kɔ́ngo) are the most important of all. Thus paying the bride price is often referred to as ɛnga la kɔ́ngo la konga.

The statement by R.P. Kaptein (in Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, pp.
[114] 452-543) that original valuables were the benkata, the bingetele, and the mitako is based on an error. [132] The first two types of valuables, also called bendɔ́ngu by some tribes, were used exclusively by the Ntómbɛ of Lake Tumba and the adjacent Ekonda (Bosanga, Balɛ́ngó, Lonyanyanga, etc.). The mitako, known in Lonkundo as ngelo,
[436] singular longelo, are not native; this monetary unit was introduced by the Independent State.

The practice of making the payment at least partially in
[177] money or in objects of European origin (such as fabrics, blankets, sewing machines, trunks, household utensils, etc.) is gradually being introduced. Before the crisis it was already very popular among "white people."

3. The source of the valuables

A young man obtains the valuables for the bride price in various ways. The most usual way and the one which also conforms best to the Nkundó's familial and social regulations is the use of valuables

583 received as bride price for a sister, aunt, niece, cousin, etc.

If he has no female relatives (ofóanyí, bomona), or if no bride price to which he is entitled remains, he may receive a part or all of the needed capital from his father. The various members of his family each obtain either 2, 5, or from 10 to 20 rings for him [454] that they have been able to save from bride prices they have received or which they have acquired as belonga (see Chapter VI, Article V, 1), as any kind of remuneration (for work, for judging in a palaver, for mediation as nkonga, etc.), the sale price for animals, streams, or ponds, or as damages or settlement of some debt.

585 602 Indeed the worst mischance that may befall a man in love is not to have a bride price readily available and to have to set out in search of the necessary valuables anywhere he can find them. These trips take a good deal of time. For these things are not done with the great speed of nervous Europeans. He cannot simply send a message [133] to uncle X or to the husband of aunt Y, or even go to them and explain the purpose of the visit, and expect to be able to leave at once with a present. His hosts keep him for days and weeks. "Wait a bit, I will find some for you; stay a while longer, then we'll see; it's been so long since we've seen you, you can't leave so fast," etc. Quite often in fact it is entirely in the young man's interest not to leave in a hurry; he must sometimes perform a great many small services for them to win their good will, and it is even expected that he will perform larger tasks such as helping with clearing, building a hut, hunting, etc. A European would need the patience of an angel. But even the young natives, who are sometimes relatively nervous and excited, especially because they want to conclude the matter of the bride price, and who in any case do not as yet possess the calm of the older people to whom they go, must be capable of resignation and perseverance. Hence the proverbs: lokámo ntfúundólólá bakonga ndá [539] lifaya, "haste will not dig up rings in foreign territory" (bakonga are often buried in the ground for better safekeeping -- a useful precaution particularly in the past, when there were brawls between villages, and raids), and bomwa w'ìnkfóf ntfóingólólá bakonga ndá lokendo, "a child's mouth does not unroll rings in the course of travels" ("unroll" -- that is, from the feet of the wife of the relative being visited).

583 602 Thus there is no special family treasure upon which the various members can draw to obtain wives. But since bride prices paid out generally come from bride prices received, and all the wealth which comes to the family as such (that is, which is not the result of purely individual and personal work by one member) is to some extent owned by the members in common, it may be said in a sense that all the members of a family share rights in the wealth of the group. However, their rights exist only to the [124] extent of their kinship and as regulated by the family council.

Even members of the family who are not legally required to do so are not unwilling to give to a relative whatever portion they can save for him. Nevertheless, I know of isolated instances where assistance was refused, either out of avarice or of opposition to the proposed marriage. But such a refusal is a neglect of the duties of kinship, and its gravity depends on the relationship between the individuals involved. (1) A refusal on the part of the mother's family almost never occurs. For they have been enriched by the bride price received for the young man's mother, and consequently he is always entitled to the bride price paid for one of the daughters of his mother's nkita (a nkita is a woman obtained by means of the bride price that has been paid).

583 604 Therefore he goes to his maternal uncle (nyangō-mpámé (2) or nya-ngóbóka among the Wángatá, Bokála, and Lifumba). This uncle always helps him, whether his means are great or small. Under certain conditions the nephew may even claim rights over his uncle's harem. But here we must distinguish between different cases. (Let us

1. Remember what has already been said, namely that we must always clearly distinguish among duties imposed by law and those imposed by kinship, friendship, decorum, courtesy, and social proprieties.

2. Literally, "male mother."

585 604 not forget that we are speaking of a young man who has not yet received a wife in his own clan.)

1) The uncle has priority rights if he has only one wife, even if she is the nkita of the nephew's mother. If that wife cannot live in peace with her husband, however, and if she is always trying to break up the marriage and go to another man, the husband's family can itself intervene and assign the wife to the nephew, if the couple love each other. By this means they try to prevent her from going elsewhere; it is preferable that she remain within the kin group. For if the marriage is broken and she leaves them, the family becomes involved in a long restitution process, [125] giving rise to numerous difficulties and to an end of revenue -- if that expression can be used -- from bride-price valuables.

2) If his uncle has two wives, the nephew can claim rights only over the one acquired by means of his own mother's bride price. The exception cited under item 1) holds even more true in this case.

In the two situations cited above, however, the family tries to appease the nephew by assigning to him the expected bride price of a female cousin. They do not yield to his demands unless no other solution is available.

3) If his uncle has several wives (four, five, or more), the nephew has the right to take one of them, if none of them were acquired by means of the bride price paid for the uncle's sister, that is, the nephew's mother.

585 604 428 If any of these eventualities materialize, the nephew is required to leave his father's clan (wisé) and to enter his mother's family (bonyangó). Actually, he is not averse to doing so. For we may suppose that in his father's kin group he has neither wealth nor future, while in that of his uncle he finds all he needs. He is considered his uncle's own child, and even has seniority over his cousins. He is their father (isé) and consequently has precedence over them; and he can succeed his uncle as family patriarch. Moreover, upon his uncle's death he always inherits one of his widows and becomes the first -- and often the only -- successor after the brothers of the deceased. (1)

1. This inheritance right is valid even if he continues to live in his own clan, in which case, however, it is impossible for him to become the chief or only heir.

593 609 These rights prevail even if the nephew has wealth at home. In that case -- which is extremely rare since ordinarily he prefers to remain with his own clan -- he does not make use of them if his uncle has only two or three wives (whom, however, he can inherit), [596] or if other close relatives [136] are in need. For to do so would show a great lack of affection for the family ([illegible]), and he would be severely reprimanded.

Because of all that, the nephew ([illegible], "sister's son") sometimes abuses his rights. That is the basis for the following proverbs: [illegible], "the leopard takes the owner of the hunting enclosure" (that is to say, the hunter); [illegible], "the nephew abducts the uncle's wife even in his own domain"; [illegible], "a nephew is a stick overhead." This last proverb is the Nkundo version of the sword of Damocles.

In short, a nephew has a right to the assistance of his maternal uncle if he settles with him and is adopted by him. Upon the death of his uncles he becomes heir and head of the family. But his rights are second to those of his uncle's brothers, who are also his "mothers." If he remains in his own clan, he receives help and can even obtain the bride price of one of his female cousins born of his mother's [illegible]. He may even receive part of the inheritance, if it is large. His rights are based on the fact that his uncle was enriched by the valuables given him by the nephew's clan in payment for his sister's marriage.

593 596 Finally, if a young man does not even have any close relatives, because all are deceased, and if for some reason he has no patrimony (because of dissipation, debts, exploitation of the weak by the strong), he is forced to procure the bride price through his own labor: carving, hunting, fishing, setting elephant snares, making traps and hunting enclosures, clearing fields, or, nowadays, working in the service of the Whites. In former times there was also the possibility of war or raids by which he could obtain valuables or prisoners to sell as slaves. The wealth which someone acquires by his own work is called [illegible] ([illegible], etc.) [illegible] (literally, "by the strength of his arms"). [137]

4. The amount of the walo

583* Formerly the amount of the walo averaged 20 to 30 bakonga, or their equivalent. The value of any object included in the bride [436] price could be calculated in copper, so that the konga was, so to speak, the monetary unit of the Nkundó.

At the present time in the districts near Flandria, the minimum is from 55 to 60 rings. Among the Bolɔngɛ and the Injɔlɔ the rings [434] are noticeably bigger and their weight in copper or brass is greater; there the minimum can be 30 rings. Elsewhere the figure is a good deal higher.

The price of the walo generally exceeds the minimum, which is found rather rarely. The average is about 60 to 80 rings. The number of 200 is reached only in extremely rare cases and it is exceeded even less frequently (see cases given below).

Differences in the amount of the walo are due primarily to the relative wealth of the contracting parties, the husband's valuation of his wife, the greed of the latter's parents, and the size of the bride price demanded for the woman they want to obtain with their daughter's (sister's) bride price. The cases of women who have left their previous husbands also must not be forgotten, for the new bride price must serve to reimburse him.

The amount of the walo may also be increased to satisfy the [556] vanity of the woman, who wants to appear superior to her companions, or of the husband, who wants to be recognized as very wealthy. (1)

1. The man who pays a great deal for his wife is given the honorific epithet etɔ́kobwo, "wells and mushrooms." All can find as much water as they want at wells, and there the mushrooms multiply. Thus many can benefit from the riches brought by the son-in-law.

[578] It is not unusual to hear of a woman boasting in the course of a dispute: "I am not a slave; my husband paid so-and-so much for me. [130] But you -- your husband doesn't love you, or else he is poor, for he paid only so much."

583 The husband has a second reason for making the walo large: by this means he can bind his wife and his in-laws more closely to him. For the larger the walo, the more difficult it would be to reimburse the husband and therefore to break the marriage. Thus a man will pay a larger amount for a woman he cares for particularly. For their part, his parents-in-law will say: "We must remain on good terms with our son-in-law, for he is generous and wealthy." And if there is a palaver in the household and their daughter wants to leave -- or actually leaves -- her husband, they will be all the more inclined to do everything in their power to smooth out the differences and make her return to her husband's house. They will say, "We have collected so many valuables from him, how would we find the means of reimbursing him?"

583 587 If a daughter remarries, her parents can demand not only the amount required to reimburse her first husband, but also a supplement for themselves. It is not considered proper to ask too much, however; 10 or 15 rings are usually enough. It follows that a woman's bride price rises with the number of husbands she has had.

583 The chief reason for the amount of the walo being reduced has always been, and still is, the payment of the bosongo (see Article IX) at the same time with, or immediately after, the walo. It explains the low walo payments in cases 21, 25, 27 and 28b in the list which follows. Nowadays there may be new reasons. Among Christians, for example, a brother may want to help his widowed sister so that she will not have too long to wait before remarrying; or orphans born somewhere in a distant center may have been more or less abandoned by their families (as in case 17). To give some idea of the walo amounts, 583 [illegible] I have copies a few cases out of our bride-price records of Flandria Mission. Next to the women's names I have indicated their tribe of origin, then the amount paid for them (in bakonga), and finally the year of marriage. [120] The numbers at the left denote their order in our books. (1)

1. These records are kept because we require that at least the walo be paid before the marriage is celebrated. I should point out that, in an isolated instance, the [illegible] may

have been included in the amount given for the walo.

No.	Name	Tribe	Amount of Walo (in bakonga)	Year
2.	Bolumbu Monica	Bonkoso	100	1929
4.	Ilumbe Sofia	Bombwanja	80	1929
12.	Lokole Maria	Elinga	100	1930
13.	Baata Joanna	Bakaala	60	1930 (?)

2. The same for her sister, Ijanga Paulina (no. 14).

No.	Name	Tribe	Amount of Walo (in bakonga)	Year
16.	Bonkiki Clara	Elinga (Bosaa)	100	1930
17.	Bolumbu Paulina	Bombwanja	56	1930
18.	Ilonga Teresa	Bongili	95	1930
19.	Lomboto Maria	Bombwanja	100	1930
20.	Bawala Catherina	Bombwanja	85	1930
21.	Ilumbe Josephina	Bombwanja	60	1930
22.	Botsinanya Teresa	Bongili	73	1930
23.	Bolenga Joanna	Bombwanja	60	1930
24.	Euma Amanda	Bongili	160	1930
25.	Ifoongo Gerdina	Bombwanja	50	1930
27.	Baongi Martha	Bombwanja	56	1930
28.	Nyonyi Loisa	Bombwanja	50	1930
28a.	Laota Joanna	Bombwanja	90	1930
32.	Bolumbu Emilia	Bombwanja	90	1930
33.	Iloko Bonifacia	Bakaala	70	1930
34.	Bolumbu Maria	Wangata	80	1930
36.	Isaka Gerdina	Bombwanja	65	1931
(148)				
38.	Mbenga Clara	Bonkoso	80	1931
38a.	Wetsi Teresa	Bongili	70	1931
38b.	Wambela Loisa	Bonkoso	54	1931
40.	Efoloko Martha	Bombwanja	67	1931

2: Hulstaert--127 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
-Nkundo

585

No.	Name	Tribe	Amount of Walo (in bakonga).	Year
43.	Ambe Joanna	Wangata	100	1931
44.	Bokanga Catharina	Wangata	0 [sic]	1931
49.	Isia Joanna	Bakaala	70	1931
51.	Imbenda Teresa	Bombwanja	60	1931
52.	Bolumbu Loisa	Bakaala	72	1931
53.	Boalalambe Loisa	Bombwanja	120	1932
62.	Ilonga Maria	Bombwanja	90	1932

For the sake of comparison here are some other examples taken from the same register:

1. Cases of bride prices paid in other valuables, as well[*] as bakonga:

8.	Eambela Joanna	Elinga	15 b.+ 1200 fr.	1929
20.	Mbolako Bonifacia	Bonkoso	50 b. + 250 fr.	1930
26.	Nsombo Joanna	Bombwanja	33 b. + 1250 fr.	1931
42.	Mboyo Loisa	Injolo	60 b. + 500 fr.	1931

2. Cases from more distant tribes:

11.	Yonjwa Clara	Boangi	56	1930
5.	Njoo Josephina	Elinga-Bonyanga	62	1929
7.	Nsombo Henrica	Elinga-Bonyanga	51	1929
21.	Boyambe Bonifacia	Elinga-Bonyanga	75	1930
13.	Efonge Martha	Iondo	80	1930
28b*.	Oyaongonda Martha	Boangi	50	1931
28a**.	Bokota Paulina	Injolo	60	1931
28a***.	Nsombolo Paulina	Boangi	50	1931
48.	Bongolo Martha	Elinga-Iondo	80	1931

[141] Ngombe and Ekonda cases have been omitted.

585 In the second register only three out of sixty-eight cases show a payment of over 100 bakonga (no. 24: 121; no. 44: 120; no. 66: 120); there is one Wangata-[illegible] case of a payment of 202 (no. 10). The latter like the Bombomba have raised the amount of the bride price above 200; they imitate the Elenda, who have really misused the freedom brought by the white men (see Article XI, 2).

5. Paying the walo

583
585 On the day agreed upon, the young man, his father, and the ndonga go to the home of the fiancée's parents. Other close relatives make sure to attend this remarkable event if they are not detained elsewhere. After the usual greetings but before any other step is taken, the woman's family offers the ndonga a dish of bananas and some animal food (often bonfumbe, bor, or bokilo fish). Then they give the husband various foods: meat or smoked fish (a basketful, for instance), several bunches of bananas, and then, through the medium of the ndonga, a dog, a goat, and some hens which must be included in the nkomi (see Article VII).

Then they inquire for news, that is, they begin to explain and discuss the matter of the bride price. If the woman's family is not satisfied, the discussion is prolonged, and the young man adds the supplement required (usually such a possibility is foreseen in advance and some extra valuables are left with a relative or associate). Sometimes certain rings or knives are not considered suitable; then two may be counted as one, for example, or the objects that have been refused are replaced with others of better quality.

The ndonga places the valuables in front of the group of the woman's relatives.

It is not indispensable that the woman and her fiancé be present. Thus it sometimes occurs that one or the other of the pair is absent. But such cases are very rare and usually occur [142] if it is very difficult for the individual to be present because, for example, he or she is in the service of a European, or if they themselves do not want to lose a few days or weeks and are sure that their respective fathers get along very well with each other so that everything will go beautifully. Usually, the couple themselves want to be there as much as their parents want them to be, for this is a very important matter.

583* 587 If the woman has not yet publicly given her consent because -- as may happen in the case of remarriage after a divorce -- ikulɛ, ndonga, and walo are all being paid at the same time, she now performs that ceremony. We need not describe it again; it is performed as indicated in Article III, 2. But in this instance the woman hands her father one or two rings, or a ring and a knife.

579* 585 Subsequently, the ndonga conveys the valuables to the woman's parents. He asks the husband: yɛlɛ bɛfɛmba lá walo, "bring the walo valuables." The latter replies: "Here they are; hand them over to my father-in-law." The witness takes a few rings and places them in front of the latter, or rather he touches them and makes a gesture of pushing them toward the woman's parents, and they pull them toward themselves.

As soon as the walo is paid, the bompɛka becomes walɛ or "wife." As has already been said, this word has no connection with walo, or with the root bal, "to marry"; etymologically it is related to analogous terms denoting "wife" and "woman" in other Bantu languages.

Article V. Valuables for the Mother

583* 593 Directly after he has conveyed the walo valuables to the woman's father, the ndonga asks the husband to pay the valuables for her mother: yɛlɛ ntaa la nkando [142] yǎ nyang'ěy'ǒna, "bring the goat and the nkando for the child's mother." The following gifts are given:

1) At least one nanny goat and sometimes two or more according to the situation; never a billy-goat.

[301] 2) Two nkando, which are copper spirals worn on the legs. Formerly, two more for the arms were also required, and old women are still sometimes seen wearing them, but they have become much rarer than the spirals worn on the legs. Instead of nkando, the Elingɛ, the Wǎngata, the Bakɔ́la, and the Ionda use the term mongɛ. (1)

---

1. In Lokonda the term is njɛkɛ.

593x 3) In the past the mother was also entitled to a *bongombwɛ*
431 or *bongombwɛ* (depending on the dialect) (2) a heavy copper necklace.
[301]

2. The Lokonda term is *lonkaɛ*.

It was worth 5 *bakonga*. Nowadays this type of adornment has disappeared almost entirely. It is no longer demanded, for the mother prefers more interesting objects (see the following article).

Furthermore, at the present time substitutions for the goat and the *nkando* are being asked for in the form of shoes, suits, fabrics, etc.

The mother justifies her demands by recalling the suffering she has endured in bringing her daughter into the world and bringing her up. The valuables she receives belong exclusively to her and her family; they never pass into her husband's clan. She wears the *nkando* herself, or, if she already has some, she gives them to her sister or her brother, who may have need of them for his wife's bride price. The goats she similarly keeps or gives to her family, depending on her own preferences. Upon her death these valuables are inherited by her relatives, never by her husband or even her own children.

Obviously, the mother's clan has exclusive rights over this payment.

[586] The situation does not change if the mother divorces the girl's
[432] father and is married to another man. The "mother's" valuables [144] still belong to her. Even if the separation occurs before her daughter's marriage, she retains her rights to *nyang'ëy'ëna*.

If she dies before her daughter's marriage, the valuables to which she would have been entitled are given to the representative of her clan (her father, brother, sister, uncle, etc.)

[587] In case of divorce the husband must be reimbursed for these valuables as for all the rest; but the restitution must be made by the mother's clan, who has received them.

If the husband does not have the valuables for the mother on hand, he gives her a pledge for the payment (*wéko*; verb, *ékya*), consisting of one or two knives or *bakonga*. He could never settle

585ˣ 431 a palaver concerning the bride price without giving at least this pledge. He will then fulfill this obligation as quickly as possible, because most mothers-in-law are so eager for this payment that if the son-in-law is too slow in giving them satisfaction, they do everything to break up the marriage. And often they succeed. They will win their case before the tribunal, unless they have been too short of patience.

Article VI. Presents, or beɛ́ngo

After the bulk of the bride price has been paid to the wife's mother and father, her parents as well as various other members of the family demand various small payments and presents called beɛ́ngo (sing. boɛ́ngo) from the husband. The noun is derived from the verb -bɛ́nga which is only used with it. An analogous reciprocal form, [92] -bɛ́ngana means "to touch one another, to collide." Was the original meaning of -bɛ́nga "to attract to oneself?" Or are the two verbs totally unconnected etymologically? Whatever the case, these terms are also used to denote the remuneration received by judges for settling a dispute. [145]

There are many varieties of beɛ́ngo; some are used by particular groups and unknown elsewhere. The various relatives claim them without following any predetermined order. But in any case it is necessary to go through the ndonga. Each relative therefore tells him what he wishes in a voice loud enough for everyone present to hear; and it is the ndonga who passes the request on to the husband. "Give this or that boɛ́ngo to so-and-so," he will say. Note also that the payment of these beɛ́ngo is not absolutely essential. Often requests are only partially fulfilled; others may be refused with some excuse, "In-law, I cannot satisfy you; I do not possess such an object." Thus the marriage arrangement is neither hindered nor delayed because everybody cannot be satisfied. The principal boɛ́ngo for the father (1) and sometimes that of the mother (2) are exceptions.

Let us go into some of the particulars concerning the various beɛ́ngo thus requested:

1) Ifaká l'ásongá b'ís'éyána, "knife and spears for the girl's father." This consists of a knife and five spears (or more, depending

583 on the husband's wealth). Theoretically, the knife should be an efambe.
431 In practice it is sometimes possible to substitute an empfite in an
[412] attractive wooden sheath amply adorned with "copper-plated nails." At other times the knife and spears may be replaced by their corresponding value in bokonga. This is considered the most important
[675] bofngo, and therefore no one gives up his claim to it. If the son-in-law cannot present it to his father-in-law immediately, he promises to do so later, and his father-in-law does not fail to make use of any opportunity to remind him of his promise. Some men insist on a walo as pledge. Others are satisfied with a piece of loasi or a bosongo (splinter or part of the trunk of a palm tree), which the husband gives to the ndonga as a token of acknowledgement of his debt and as evidence of his willingness to pay it as soon as he has the means. Some men, however, insist so strongly on the bofngo that they will not accept the walo [146] before they have received it. Thus, one day recently, Lomenga à'Ilonó (Bongili) refused to accept the walo for his daughter Ekofo, engaged to Bokungó w'ankóyó (of Bongili, Ndongó). He insisted that the father of the latter, Bokungó w'is'éy'ongilió first go back to get his bofngo. Since he was unable to find five spears, he substituted for them a second knife and a copper ring; these were accepted by old Lomenga. Shortly thereafter the same thing happened to Bokungó of Boonola (Bongili), who wanted to pay the walo for his fiancée Ngolé of Bofinko (Bombwanja), the sister of Bongondé, clerk of the Bombwanja. The woman's family refused to take the bride price before receiving the ilaká l'akongó b'is'éy'óne bofngo.

11 Byákó byá nyang'éy'óna, "porcupines for the mother."
[251] This present consists of two or three fresh or smoked porcupine. Bosomba, baasó birds, or bokóba fish may be substituted for them. The substitution of hens is not well regarded, because they are within the realm of the nkomí. If someone does not have the means to satisfy this requirement, he gives the mother two copper rings saying ndiká bakonga báfé yósomba byákó bíkó, "here are two copper rings; go and buy yourself some porcupines." Fabrics are sometimes substituted nowadays.

589*
431

One must be careful not to confuse this bosongo with biko byǎ nyang'ëy'ŏna, an expression frequently heard. The latter includes any payment to the mother and includes the goat and the nkando as well as the bosongo discussed above and others. The word used in this case is not bikó, singular ikó, "porcupine," but rather biko, singular wiko, "price, value" and derived from the verb -ika, "to set a price."

3) Lokolé: a brother or a cousin of the wife asks for a bonga. He beats the gong (lokolé) in order to make noise and thus force the husband to satisfy him. That is how this bosongo seems to have originated. In practice people simply demand a [147] present. The racket can sometimes last for quite a while. But the elders do not allow the gathering to be disrupted if the husband does not have precisely the gift that would give satisfaction.

4) Bakolé, or bofufwé: the woman's brothers stick a piece of the trunk of a banana tree (bofufwé) into the ground, so that young relatives of the husband may shoot arrows (bakolé) at it. These are then removed by young members of the wife's family who, at the present time, are sometimes given money -- 5 francs, for instance.

[589]
[723]

5) Wamólé: prisoner's rope, that is, a rope to which war prisoners were formerly tied, two by two (a system now imitated for prisoners of the colonial law enforcement agencies and administration). In the past the patriarch, or head of the family, demanded a bonga or a knife as indemnity against the possibility that he or members of his family might be imprisoned as a result of a war caused by the woman being married. Nowadays the chiefs set up by the administration and given the rights of family heads by the European authority have also claimed rights to this bosongo whose significance, purpose, and even name have completely changed as a result. It is now called bonyolio w'ôkanji, "the chief's chain." It is clear that this payment has become something which it was not meant to be.

[illegible]
[illegible]

6) Etóka: a heavy wooden fork, fastened to the neck. This is a present claimed by the mother, by one of the father's other wives, or by a wife of the woman's brother, against the possibility that they may have to undergo torture by means of the fork because of the woman whose bride price is being paid. This could happen if she were

[585] to leave her husband and he, in revenge, were to lay hands on her
[591] mother or on one of the other wives of the clan. (1) [148]

1. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 4, (1), and Chapter VIII, Article II, 1.

[524] 7) Lomeló, a wide shoulder strap made of fur or braided bekumbu reeds (Calamus sp.), though valuables of equal worth (one knife or a bonge) may be given. Nowadays this bofongo consists of 2 or 3 rings; it goes to the mother in compensation for the wearying burden of carrying and nursing her daughter. (1)

1. Note that when a mother-in-law brings a child into the world, her son-in-law sends her a shoulder strap of lienge otterskin or a bonge of equivalent value. He does not repeat this gift at each birth, however.

[583] 8) Bonfosó byâ ntod: leaves of the bonkongé bush used to remove, wipe off, and carry away (tóta) a child's excrement. This bofongo consists of a ring and goes to the mother as compensation for her performance of these tasks. In the absence of the mother, it is claimed by another of the father's wives or by a female relative of the mother.

[583] 9) The bojingá, "hunting net," is demanded in many villages for no special reason. Certain clans, however, scoffed at by others because they have few members, officially ask a man belonging to one of the latter and wishing to marry one of their daughters to bring a net, saying: "You make fun of us because we have no people; bring us a hunting net to surround and enclose us, since we are not many." Thus the village of Boyela of the Bokála, never gives one of its members in marriage without this bofongo.

[583] 10) wéngé w'ekeé: a bofongo which is not known everywhere but which is customary in certain groups, for example among the Bokála. One of the woman's relatives takes a piece of a young thorny trunk of the wéngé tree. Having scraped one end of it, he holds this

583* end in his hand and offers the other to the husband, saying, "Take it."
431 The husband naturally refuses and extricates himself by means of a knife or a piece of copper. [149]

11) *Bofongo w'Éyao*, or "weeds." These are demanded by some clans because the husband's clan scoffs at them on account of the number of weeds and chaff they allow to grow in their village instead of keeping it clean. One or two rings are given.

12) *Engumbé*: known in some groups, such as the Bakáala, where it is the last one demanded. It is a *bofongo* of authority. (1)

[62] 1. An *engumbé* is a temporary hut in a newly settled village. The family patriarchs are the first who must go and live there in order to urge the others to follow and to exorcise all the evil of possible magic spells.

claimed by the patriarchs of the families belonging to the grouping from which the woman has come. Formerly, the amount went as high as 3 to 5 *bakonga*, depending on the number of families, groups of families, or clans related through marriage that were living in the
[77] same village. Now the payment is made primarily in European currency, and the amount may be 50 francs, for example. This *bofongo* is later divided among the various kin groupings related to the wife's family.

Various male and female relatives of the woman ask for assorted small objects, such as a small knife (*ilféka*), a native razor (*longé*), a pin for braiding hair (*bonfongé*), a needle (*nsongé*), a necklace of blue beads (*bisongóla*), etc.

Nowadays many other objects are also demanded: clothing, dishes, etc. Thus, one day on the occasion of a single bride-price payment, I heard demands for the following objects:

For the father, a pair of trousers and a jacket, because when the woman was a young child she soiled his clothing without troubling herself about the matter.

For the mother, a bed, because worries about her daughter often kept her from resting.

583* For an aunt, a basin, because she had washed the child.

431 For a brother, a pair of shoes or slippers, because the girl had worn his shoes during the courtship, etc., etc. [150]

All these befongo are included in the sum total of the bride price. Should the occasion arise, they must be returned with the rest.

In addition to the befongo asked for and received by the woman's relatives, others are demanded by members of the husband's family. As in the case of the former each person voices his claims according to his desires and without any predetermined order but must always do so through the ndonga. The gifts chiefly consist of furs of the [illegible] esofo otter, the lifoka monkey, bonkofo and yonsi felines; a joint of game (monkey, antelope, etc.), a mat, a pot, a hunting net, a carrying bag (bokonole), a bead necklace, etc. Nowadays these may [illegible] also be various items introduced by the Europeans: items of clothing, fabrics, saucepans, dishes, etc. This category of befongo is included in the sum total of the nkomi (see the following article). If the nkomi is given immediately, the parties proceed with this payment. Then the ndonga(s) are remunerated as stated above; each party gives him at least 2 rings.

Finally, the woman's father says to the husband: "In any case, be on your way; we will collect the nkomi and bring it to you." Whereupon the husband leaves; if he prefers to wait for his wife he remains, and returns home when the items of the nkomi have been collected.

Article VII. Nkomi

Nkomi is the name for the objects which the wife's family gives to the husband. The term likomo is also sometimes used. The [illegible] Injolo say likoma, the Wangata, Bakala, Ioanda, and Bolongo say likomi. All these words are derived from the same verb -koma, "to wrap up, to make a package," (1) for the nkomi valuables are

1. The Bolo say lilonga from the verb -longa, which has the same meaning as -koma.

95* generally packed in baskets or [131] in bongenja (or betete), which
96 are baskets woven of palm leaves.

Some ethnologists have introduced the expression douaire, "dowry," (1) to designate the goods given by the woman's family to

1. See for example Tardy, in Africa, Vol. 2, no. 3, p. 278.

the man's family. Actually, the word dot would be a much better translation, because it corresponds more closely to the nature of these payments. But this would require changing the terminology adopted, and the introduction of another term (such as marriage payment) for what is generally understood by the word dot, whose use is in any case unfortunate. [Translator's note: Hulstaert uses dot, which would literally be translated into English as "dowry," to designate the payments mad by the husband and his family to the wife's family. However, I h employed the term "bride price" in accordance with the usage of English-speaking anthropologists.]

Furthermore, the word douaire already has a precise and accepted meaning, so that its use in this context would lead to confusion. That is why I prefer provisionally to use an entirely new term, and to translate nkomf as contre-dot [literally, counter-dowry]. (2)

2. This term was suggested to me by Attorney General A. Sohier.

[Translator's note: The term "dowry" has been used to designate this payment in the translation.]

The nkomf consists of hens, ducks (3), salt, mats, pots, gourds

[illegible] 3. Ducks have been introduced fairly recently; the Nkundo maintain that their ancestors did not have any, and that they got them from the Ekonda. In their classification they place them under the category of chickens.

593 and, if the woman's family is wealthy, a goat and formerly even a
431 slave. Nowadays, objects of European manufacture are also given.

To give the impression of being a great lord, an unusually
[567] wealthy family head sometimes gave human beings as a dowry. These were preferably Batswá or, if possible, dependents (*bitúmbá*) who only changed masters up to a certain point. Actually it was the father's intention to glorify his daughter by turning them over to her; they had to assist her through various services, and her descendants became their "owners."

Thus Mpumu, one of the ancestors of the Bofaló (of the Bonwanja tribe) had received the slave, Bosiéfbali, as part of the nkomi from Ilefó, father of his wife, [132] Lifomi of Mbilingá (Lifoló, Ekonda). The descendants of this slave comprise the Bosiéfbasiléfé and Bonoba clan [sic], who have settled with the Bosikojo and the Bongangé. (1)

1. See also the example cited in
Chapter III, Article V.

593 Even real estate can be included in the nkomi. Thus a fish-
431 ing territory (such as a stream, creek, pond, fishing holes) or a sec-
425 tion of a palm grove may be given (2). Like the gift of human beings,

2. But never land or forests.

such property is given only by a very wealthy family head. If he is not sole owner (and in practice he can be only in the case of fishing territory), he must obtain in advance the consent of the co-owners, whether they be brothers or heads of other families. Since it must be assumed that he is intelligent enough not to give away a piece of property which they themselves need, he always obtains their consent. In fact, anyone who opposed the gift would be considered to have acted maliciously toward the woman, who is also his "daughter," in depriving her of this source of pride.

The objects given as nkomi are the property of the husband. The greatest part of it he gives to his wife's nkolo, that is to the

583 female relative thanks to whom he was able to obtain this wife (see
431 below, Article X). He keeps a small part for himself and, in agree-
596 ment with his wife, uses it according to his needs. When husband and wife are on good terms, he consults her before giving away or selling any of it. And if she wishes to dispose of any of it, she asks his permission. Thus they work the matter out aimiably. But legally it all belongs to the husband. Should he want to use it for gifts or for any payment of his own, his wife can make no claim; she will not win her case before the law. But from a practical point of view, it is much wiser to come to an agreement in advance and thus avoid any annoyance
583 or quarrel.

431 The size of the *nkomí* depends on the wealth of the woman's
[586] parents. Not only is a large one a point [152] of honor and esteem;
[519] it is also a means of increasing the stability of the marriage and securing harmony. The bigger the *nkomí* the more obliged the husband is to treat his wife well and see that she is content with him, out of fear of having to return the entire fortune if the marriage should ever be broken.

The *nkomí* may be very large, even as great or greater than the bride price; in these extreme cases the girl is spoken of as
[192] *lifaya-njoku*, for like an elephant (*njoku*) she goes to live elsewhere (*lifaya*) because of all the riches she carries with her. The term *njokwobwo* is also used; literally, it refers to a kind of mushroom which grows in abundance all over the *bonfil* tree. (1)

> 1. The use of these terms is not specifically confined to the situation described above. They are also applied to any stranger who settles in, or simply passes through, the village, bringing many riches -- to the white men, for example.

576 With reference to this subject an old custom should be men-
583 tioned. Because of his love for his daughter and a desire for renown,
431 a father might give his son-in-law a quantity of *bakonga*, in varying amounts but enough to pay for the acquisition of a wife, hence bride-price valuables, so to speak.

583[x] Although given by the father-in-law to his son-in-law and therefore
431 part of the nkomɛ, yet these valuables have neither their significance
586 nor their purpose. They are disbursed at the time of the payment of the ikulɛ. This practice was customary only among men who were unusually wealthy and influential, that is, family heads who occupied prominent positions in native society. It was never omitted for a bolɔ́mbɔ́ (see Chapter I, Part 2, Article II). The woman's father gave these valuables to his son-in-law, saying: "I am giving you my daughter in marriage. She has always occupied a high position; she is of a very good family. I want her to retain her prominent rank. Therefore here is a bride price; go and get yourself a second wife with these rings, so that my daughter will have her ukita [154] from the very first day. Then come back and pay me the bride price for her."

The woman who was honored by such preferential treatment was called yɛ̌ngaende. This word is composed of the roots ɛ́ng, "to acquire by means of a bride price," and ende, "a man (vir)." The name comes from the fact that she herself paid the price for her husband, so to speak, and did so even before he paid the bride price for her.

The Nkundɔ́ have given up this manner of ostentatiously dis-
[178] playing their wealth, so that the custom we have just described now belongs to the past. Nevertheless there are still women who bear the
[551] name Yɛ̌ngaende, in memory of some ancestor who had been the object of this honor which put her in a privileged position, a royal position, so to speak.

583[x] From all the foregoing it will be apparent that marriage payments are not unilateral in Nkundɔ́ law and practice. Rather, there is a mutual handing over of goods. Although the goods given by each party differ clearly from one another, they all have an economic and financial value. Therefore we can speak of a real reciprocity in these payments. And although the husband has to furnish the largest and highest amount, it would be wrong to say that he alone must "pay for his spouse," for though he does actually "pay for his wife," she must to a certain extent "pay for her husband." That is what the

583x Nkundó often express through the reciprocal form -ánga, bokiló l'okanga bé-ngana, "father-in-law and son-in-law are acquired through marriage payments." Thus many men try to come as close as possible to the amount of the bride price in the nkomí payment, so that there will be a certain balance between the two. Then to keep that balance between the assets, every payment of the bride price is equaled by new nkomí valuables. The purpose of this action is to equalize the influence of the two contracting parties lest that of one become excessive and predominant, a development which is not always conducive to the stability of the marriage and harmonious relations.

Article VIII. Acceptance of the Bride Price

583x
596 When the husband, his family, and the ndonga have departed, the valuables brought are collected and placed before the woman's father. In the family hierarchy this task falls to the father's sons and younger brothers. Then the elders deliberate on how to use them. They bend down (bósunama), as the Nkundó say in their metaphorical language. Here as in all gatherings of family councils and deliberations of any jury, the father is asked to give his opinion. But without even making a statement, he immediately yields the floor to someone to whom he owes respect -- his elder brother, his nephew (that is, his sister's son), etc. The latter does likewise, yielding to the next person, and so the process continues. Finally, the father is again asked to speak; he asks the others each to take from the heap whatever object he wants whether it be a ring, a knife, or a spear. Together with the family patriarch he decides what to do with the bride price that has been received. They have to act in accordance with the laws of justice in protecting the rights of all and of each individual (see below, Article X).

583x What happens if the parents do not accept the bride price placed before them? Such a thing can happen. The following is a recent case: Etanda, daughter of Isia of Esókolokóló (Bolénge, Bakáala) was engaged to Eanga of Bofeka l'Asumba (Wángatá), who had paid the ikulá and the ndanga for her. At the time of the walo

583 payment when all were gathered, the *ndanga* gave the woman's father 50 *bekonga*. Ilia did not accept them because he did not think that his daughter's union with Eanga promised sufficient [154] stability. Therefore he asked the *ndanga* to keep the valuables as deposit until the day the union became strong. Events showed that Ilia was right. Barely a few months later the pair broke up. The *ndanga* returned the valuables to Eanga's father, and the marriage never took place. In the native view, the *walo* had not been paid in this case, since the woman's father had not accepted the valuables. Therefore one could not say it was a real marriage.

583 581 Though such cases are not common, this occurrence is not unique and shows how seriously the natives take the matter of marriage. Their attitude is far removed from the one attributed to them by certain writers. It is only that the freedom resulting from colonization destroys ancestral rules and sanctions without replacing them with at least their equivalent, bringing about a state of moral and social disorder in this sphere and giving free rein to lust.

583 Up to the present we have examined the three payments known as *ikulɛ*, *ndanga*, and *walo*, as well as the mother's valuables. Together with the *bekóngo*, they are grouped under the inclusive term *jéngɛ*, which also covers other payments such as gifts of welcome to the fiancée, presents on the occasion of later visits, etc. In practice, therefore, the term includes all the payments except the final one, as yet to be discussed. Strictly speaking, it signifies payments made in order to obtain a wife, exclusive of subsequent payments.

Jéngɛ is derived from the verb root *éng*, which means to make the marriage payments, to acquire a wife by means of them. It is impossible to translate these terms into a French or English equivalent, so we are forced to use expressions which are more or less inappropriate, such as "pay," "obtain," "acquire," "buy," "payment," "purchase," etc., and which have entirely different equivalents in Lonkundo. Therefore, never maintain before a Nkundó that his people buy [157] their wives; he will express great indignation at such a monstrosity. His word for "buy," is *sómb*, and in his mind it has nothing in common with *éng* or *sɔ́ng* (see below).

587] The expression for being the object of a bride-price payment is *kug bakonid*, literally, "to make valuables fall." Hence the name *Ôtwákonid*, "one who is the object of a payment of valuables."

As we have said, it is possible to make all the payments described at the same time. This is done only in the case of remarriage. All the valuables are handed over at the same time, and there is no longer any distinction between the three payments.

Article IX. The *bosóngo*

1. The nature of the *bosóngo* and the relevant terminology

The *bosóngo* is the last portion of the bride price. It consists of the payment of a slave or the equivalent value in currency. Hence the very common term *bonto*, which strictly speaking means "man" but is used to mean "slave" ("He is only a man," they say; that is to say, a slave; *nfíta la bonto, la linto*, "I possess him as a slave"). The word which actually means "slave," *bokwéla*, or *bontambo* among the Elíngá and the Bolyá, (1) is never used in relation to the bride price.

1. Elsewhere the terms *bofumbo* or *bifumbo* are also used.

The Ekonda, however, do use the term *ilongó*, which is a synonym of *bokwéla* and means "slave" in the strict sense of the word. The neighboring Nkundó tribes also use it, probably as a result of their influence. The Bombwanja, the Bongili, the Bokuwo, and the Bombomba likewise do so. (2)

[569] 2. The Batswá never make this payment.

[592] The noun *bosóngo* (*lisóngé* among the various Elíngá groups) is derived from *sóng*, "to pay this part of the bride price." Thus a man will say to his son-in-law, *ošólí ôfenga bíko'ôkáná, yákáká yósóngé*, "You have already paid the *jóngi* for my daughter; now come [158] and pay the *bosóngo*." The definition given by Ruskin (*Dictionary of the Lomongo Language*, p. 67: "*bosóngo*: the passing over of a

579* daughter or ward in marriage without reference to her wishes, money paid for a slave wife," and p. 314, [illegible]: the same) therefore does not correspond to the sense in which these terms are used by the Nkundo tribes under discussion.

Another term for this payment is tsinola bonto (lingo'). I know of no other use of the verb tsinola.

An expression which brings out the idea of its being a last payment is bumbola bonto (ligongé). The verb bumbola means to strike the last blow in felling a tree. (1) [112]

1. Note that bumbola also means "to take in marriage."

[567] Formerly, the payment of a real slave, that is, of a human being, was absolutely obligatory. Nowadays, since slavery has been [585] abolished, the worth of a slave in bokonga has been substituted; it consists of 25 rings, or of 15 to 20 if they are especially beautiful. (2)

2. In the past, the price of a slave was from 10 to 15 rings.

To distinguish between these forms of the bosongo, the Nkundo say bont'ôw'aôwé (ligongé y'ôswé), "a slave with hair," therefore a human being, or bont'ôw'akonga (ligongé y'ôkonga), "slave in copper rings."

583* Batswá, instead of slaves, could be given as bosongo. They 565 were not reduced to slavery, however, but remained in the same position as before, except that they changed masters.

Sometimes a master who wanted to be rid of an incorrigible Botswá gave him away as a real slave in a bosongo. In that case it was as if a slave in the strict sense of the word had been given.

In other instances the master acted with the more or less explicit consent of the Botswá. Those who were thus handed over as a bride-price payment were usually women. [158] Since in matrimonial matters of the Batswá, the Boató master fulfills the role of "Father," he is entitled to the girls' bride price and has the duty of

583 obtaining wives for the boys. Therefore he can turn a Botswá girl
563 belonging to him over to his father-in-law. The father-in-law never takes this woman as his wife or as a wife for one of his relatives; but he gives her in marriage to one of his own Batswá or to a stranger of that race who pays him a bride price for her. Socially and financially the result is exactly the same as if the son-in-law had made his payment in the form of a slave.

Thus the bride price paid by Lokonda jw'ĕsano y'ĕnkanja of Ngombe (Bongili) for Bokutu of the Bosáká Elongama (Bosombé, Bombwanja) and used by the latter's cousin, Bofénda of Efékola (Bongili) to obtain for wife, Iloa of Ilóongó (Bongili), consisted of 60 rings and the woman Ómámenga (Antonia) of the Mbélanga clan of Botswá. Ómámenga was later married to Wanja (Pius), a Botswá belonging to her new masters.

[567] There may be two or more slaves, for the same reasons that determine the size of the walo. The Bombwanja are only exceptionally satisfied with a single one. But all the slaves always comprise a single bosóngo.

583 The bosóngo is not part of the jéngí. The natives say bosóngo émí ék'omóngó, "the bosóngo is entirely separate." Their statements on this subject are markedly categorical.

A characteristic expression which designates the entire bride price is bafémbá la bonto, "rings and a man" (slave). The rings are the jéngí; they are valuables of a purely material nature. The bosóngo is, on the contrary, a human being.

There is no term in Lonkundo which covers both kinds of payments. The whole cannot be expressed precisely in a single word.

583 In the vicinity of Flandria, however, the young people [160]
178 are beginning to confuse the two words jéngí and bosóngo and to use one in place of the other. (1) [Editor's note: The confusion today is

---

1. The young people from Injóló who are about twenty years of age and whom I have known at Flandria Mission and in their own settlements, do not confuse these terms but distinguish clearly between them.

583 178 probably due to the penetration of the Lombwanja dialect and its rather strong influence, even in relation to other words, on the dialect of the Bongili and Bokone, as well as in central Flandria.] Among the Bombwanja, *-ɛ́ng* and *bosongo* are synonyms of the Lokɔ́nɔ́ *-ɛ́ng*, *jɛ́ngi*. For the payment of a slave they use only the word *ilengɛ́* and the expression *-lebya ilengɛ́*, "to give a slave." But the old people loudly protest against this confusion and consider it an error, a mix-up, a corruption of the language.

583 The *bosongo* used to be paid at the same time as the *walo* or shortly thereafter. Nowadays years may pass between the two payments. If the husband is too slow in meeting his obligation, the wife's family complains. Often when their daughter visits her parents, they prevent her from returning to her husband as a means of coercing him into making the payment. As in the case of the *jɛ́ngi*, it is up to the husband to bring the payment; the wife's family is not expected to fetch it.

We have said that copper rings may be substituted for the slave. No other objects -- such as knives, for example -- come under consideration. If the rings are to be counted as *bosongo*, they must be explicitly designated as such by the husband or by the *ndonga*. If the intention is not verbally expressed they will be considered *jɛ́ngi*, since they are the kind of valuables used for the latter payments.

583 431 The *bosongo* is the final and definitive bride-price payment. This does not mean that the husband does not thereafter have to pay in certain circumstances. On the contrary, financial transactions are terminated only by death. But [161] subsequent payments spring from other obligations which follow the final completion of the marriage agreement though they result from it. Such are, for instance, the *belonga* (gifts brought when visiting), valuables given at the time of a death, the *nkunji* (funeral payment), and assistance to members of the wife's damily (for example, in the settlement of a bride price). Or perhaps the wife's mother comes to help her daughter at childbirth; when she goes back home her son-in-law gives her a farewell present (*bolingako*), such as 4 *bakonga*. The statement of natives that the *jɛ́ngi* never ends -- *jɛ́ngi ilifolile elakɛ ńk'iwɛ* -- should be interpreted in the light of these practices.

585 * The bońngo must be handed over under any circumstances, even if divorce or death precede it. If a husband refuses to pay he loses his rights over one of the daughters in his wife's family, whose bride price would compensate with interest for the economic and social loss suffered by the woman's clan. (1)

1. See Chapter VIII, Article IV, and Chapter IX, Article IX, 2.

2. The value and consequences of the bońngo

How important is the bońngo today? In answering this question a distinction must be made between two aspects of the problem: the financial aspect and the legal aspect.

1) Financially, the bońngo, first of all, completes the payment of the bride price and thus produces the highest degree of theoretical stability possible in a Nkundó marriage. That is the meaning of the following expressions: bólό wă lißla ńk'ɔmɔ, "the strength of the marriage (its stability) is to be found in the slave,"; l'ońngo bómo to ńsóngwa wălí, "by means of the bońngo the woman completely becomes the wife"; or wălí ńsóngwa ɔ̂nǎ, "the wife becomes completely yours." Since, as I have explained, the bońngo terminates the payment of the bride price [162], the woman's parents no longer have any excuse for taking her away from her husband, and they become even more desirous of maintaining this union in which such great interests are at stake.

585 × 178 567 Apart from the value of wealth per se, there is also its social influence. In this respect we must make a distinction between the past and the present:

a) At the time when the bońngo was necessarily a flesh and blood slave rather than a slave in rings, it was naturally valued more than the walo. Twenty-five bakonga (for the walo) and two slaves were preferable to 50 bakonga and one slave even though, if the payments were reduced to the monetary unit in copper, the latter was greater. This fact is easily explained. "In the past," say the old people, "we had very little copper, and the smelting of iron was a

583 hard and lengthy task. The *walo* paid for our mothers was greatly in-
567 ferior to what we see nowadays. In the majority of cases our fathers
178 paid no more than 15 or 20 rings and iron objects. But they gave a greater number of slaves. It was not unusual to hand over five or even ten slaves for a wife. Consequently, the *bosóngo* was a good deal more important than the *walo*. At the present time the white men have introduced a great deal of copper and brass; and the abundance of these metals is the cause of the increase in the price of the *walo*. On the other hand, it has become more difficult, and finally altogether impossible, to obtain slaves; that is why the *bosóngo* has been lowered. Finally, we have had to substitute rings for persons."

583 b) Nowadays, though the idea of the importance of the
178 *bosóngo* to the family is still alive, because it is the last payment and therefore a permanent settlement of the financial question, its monetary importance and therefore, in a certain perspective, its social importance for the receiving clan, has greatly diminished. This has happened because [162], like the payments that precede it, it has become a payment of copper rings. In places where the bride price is paid in money and in valuables introduced by the Europeans, the importance of the *bosóngo* quite naturally decreases even more rapidly.

583 2) From the legal standpoint the question is entirely different. The *bosóngo* results in no new relationship between the spouses. The woman's name does not change; she is called *wálí*, as before. The idea that she becomes a wife completely at this time is based, as we have said, only on the fact that the marriage theoretically becomes completely stable. This supposed stability is derived from the handing over of the last payment, which leaves the parents no excuse for taking their daughter away from her husband. It does not come from any new legal act.

That this is so is clearly demonstrated in the following fact: if the woman dies before the *bosóngo*, there is no palaver, as there is if she dies before the *walo* is paid. Her husband is not required to pay an indemnity (*mbólaka*). But he is required to complete the

583 payment of the bride price with the bonkúgo as he was committed to do through the payment of the ikulá and the ndongo. If he does not, the bond between him and his father-in-law is automatically broken, and consequently he is unable to obtain another wife to replace the deceased, and he loses the rights over one of his own daughters. Actually, we will have to come back to this question in Chapter IX, Article IX, 2.

These rules show how great a difference exists between the walo and the bonkúgo: in the one case, upon the death of the woman prior to the payment, an indemnity is imposed for a transgression in the eyes of the law; in the other, there is a transaction to stabilize the financial rights of the clans involved.

From all the above considerations we may conclude that because of the special nature of the payment, the bonkúgo is very important for the stability of the marriage and the social position of the woman's clan. But from a legal point of view it is far less important than the walo, through which a woman becomes truly [164] a wife; for the payment creates no new social relationship either between the spouses or between the husband and his in-laws.

Article X. Purpose of the Bride Price

593 Theoretically, the bride price is meant to procure a wife for
601 one of the members of the family that has received it.

The woman who is married thanks to the bride price paid for another is called the latter's nkita. It seems to me that this word is etymologically related to nkínó, "profit, benefit" (the verb is -kitola). In the final analysis, both words may be derived from the root -kit, "to become."

[184] A synonym of nkita is bongíli (bongíli). It is used primarily by the Injóló but it is also known, though seldom employed, by the other tribes.

The woman whose bride price has served to procure the nkita is the latter's nkóló (literally, "mistress"). The Injóló as well as the
[596 593] Bolingí also call her by the more tactful name, nyangóngili, "mother

583 of the bongiji." (1)
601
[595]

1. This term also designates the wife of a polygamist who has brought along one of her relatives as co-wife; she is the nyangingili (sic) of the latter. (See Chapter VII, Article IV.)

For "to obtain a nkita" the Nkundo say -umba nkita, literally, "to fell a nkita," as one fells a tree or an adversary. Or they may say -bêta nkita, "to possess a nkita" (umba or bêta so-and-so, la nkita). "To become a nkita" would be rendered as -kwɛ nkita, "to fall into being a nkita."

583 596 The hierarchy of those entitled to the bride price is based on the general hierarchy of family members, which gives precedence to the older generations and, within each generation, to the older members. Consequently, as long as a member of the family having the title of ise (father) is unmarried (unless he is physically or mentally incompetent), no bôna (son) is entitled to a bride price, even if it is that of his own sister. Within the same generation, the older members have precedence over the [165] younger ones, but boys have priority rights to the bride price of their uterine sisters. (1)

1. For limitations and exceptions to this right, see Chapter IV, Article II.

It occurs quite often, and was even more frequent in the past, that the person entitled to the bride price is still too young to get married, either in reality or in the opinion of his "fathers." (2) The

2. See ibid.

bride price is consequently used for the benefit of another member of the family. The creditor reaps the benefits later in the form of inheritance.

[602] Even if the woman or women meant for him should die or be taken in slavery, he can obtain the bride price of a cousin to which

no one has direct rights (for instance, if she is an only child) or that of his mother's *nkita's* daughter, as we will see below. 605

In these instances there is a temporary suspension of rights or rather a change in the individual entitled to them. These adjustments are made very frequently and can affect several people. Bride prices may even fall to fairly distant relatives, even in the maternal line. The transactions are performed by the patriarchs for the greatest good of the family as a whole. New rights benefiting the person originally entitled to the bride price are being created, and the woman married by its means has become the equivalent of a *nkita* in relation to him -- as is the following instance: 607

Bakutu b'Olónge (Boniface) of Bombéŋga w'Ekenda (Bosombé, Bombwanja) has a sister Wánzi, whose bride price serves to provide his paternal uncle, Elongama ey'Itutu, with a wife, Ilefe of Ilóongo-Bongîli. Bakutu's rights over his niece, Bakutu, daughter of Bolófo, are transferred go Boféndo d'Ekóhola, son of his paternal great-aunt Ilfika and therefore, in Nkundó terminology, to his father. As a result he obtains the rights over the bride price of Wángi, the daughter of his uncle [166] and Ilefe. At the same time he acquires a certain authority over Boféndo, the beneficiary of the bride price that was originally intended for him, and over the latter's children.

When the bride price is meant to procure a *nkita*, there is nothing to prevent the remainder, should there be any, from being used to pay a debt, a fine, etc., or, more especially, from being given to a relative so that he can procure a wife for himself.

If, in an exceptional case, the bride price is not used for its original purpose, this deviation constitutes an infraction of the law, because it is a violation of the rights of the girl for whom the bride price was paid, for she is thus deprived of her *nkita* and consequently of certain advantages. It may happen, however, that there is a conflict between this law and some other. In such cases of circumstances beyond one's control, it is up to the legal authorities to determine which of the two has priority. [608]

Such was the case of Boléi, daughter of Ifolé y'Engámé, of the Baafiki Longwâne of Bonjoku (Bonkoso). She was married to Bombélenga

593 601 of Likoló. The bride price went to her uncle Bonfiló, because her father had been taken prisoner of war by the Bongale. The family council decided to free Ifolí before contemplating the acquisition of a wife. Bonfiló therefore paid his brother's ransom. Naturally, Bolifi was greatly annoyed to have to submit to this decision but, taking everything into consideration, she too thought that the liberation of her father had priority over her right to a nkita, of whom she was now deprived. For although the Bongale were able to obtain a wife thanks to the ransom, the wife was not Bolifi's nkita, since each family takes only its own members into consideration.

593 602 601 As we have already implied, the nkóló derives certain advantages from "possessing" a nkita. Her superior position, from the Nkundó point of view, entitles her to respect and to some assistance. An even greater advantage is her right to the dowry. As we have [167] seen, a husband keeps a small part of the dowry for household necessities; the greater part of it goes to the nkóló. Finally, the son of the nkóló has the right to his say in his mother's clan, because it has been enriched by means of valuables paid by his father's clan. He also has the right to cultivate land belonging to his mother's clan and to settle on it. Furthermore, when a member of his mother's clan is enabled to obtain a wife by means of these valuables, he has certain rights over the children of his mother's nkita, and even over the nkita herself. (1)

1. See above, Article IV, 3, and Chapter III, Article II.

In relation to the children of his mother's nkita -- whom he calls his bokwá (2) or his mother's bonkita (bonkita bákúsé bákí ngóya) --

2. Singular bokwá. The term is derived from the verb -kwá or -kwé, "to fall" (see above).

the nkóló's son has the following rights:

1) The right to respect and assistance.

2) The right to sit on the family council which decides on the division of the inheritance (so that the deceased's own son cannot have

595* a share of his father's goods without the consent of his nkóló or the
601 use of the bride prices received for the daughters.
607 3) If he cannot obtain a wife through his own clan, he is entitled to the bride price of one of his bokwé if it is not first needed by one of her own uncles or brothers. The rights of the latter have priority over that of the nkóló, unless he settles in his mother's clan. For in that case his rights have precedence over those of the brothers (though never those of an uncle), and he is next in line, after his uncles, to become head of the family. Since he is sister's son, the uncle's children call him "father" just as they call his mother, their paternal aunt, by the name of isómoto ("female father"). He himself calls his first cousins bána, "children," and thus has precedence over them. [168]

Thus the rights to authority over the daughters of the nkita on the part of the nkóló's son are limited by the rights of the uncles and, to a certain degree, of the brothers. (1) But in the inheritance

[169]

of widows the rights of the nkóló's son operate fully, and he may claim the one acquired by means of his bokwé's bride price, who in a way is his nkita (when she is assigned to him they say bala ĩkó nkita, "here is your nkita").

These rules can result in multiple transactions and in a repeated transferring of rights from one of the two clans to the other as well as within the same clan.

The nkóló's grandsons call the nkita's grandsons nkwé y'ĩmbió, "the excrements of valuables" (an expression which is not at all disrespectful or shocking) because the rights derived from the relationship of nkóló and nkita are almost without force. In favorable circumstances they are limited to a little respect and assistance. And if the nkóló's grandsons have no other kinship tie with the paternal clan of their second cousins, they cannot even call them by that name.

---

1. In his study "Het Familiehoofd bij de Nkundo-Negers" [The Family Head among the Nkundó Negroes], Congo, 1930, Vol. 2, p. 322, Father Brepoels somewhat exaggerates the rights of the nkóló's son.

593 602 607 Thus the person who is herself the object of a bride price is the nkita. The first generation born of the nkóló calls her bonkita. In the third generation the term nkwé y'ĕfinkó is applied to the relationship.

For example:

mother	Lokóli'ó	nkita of Bolumbe
son	Imana	bonkita of Ilongó
mother	Lokóli'ó	nkita of Bolumbe
son	Imana	bonkita of Ilongó
grandson . . .	Enfika	
mother	Lokóli'ó	nkita of Bolumbe
son	Imana	bonkita of Ilongó
grandson . . .	Enfika	nkwé y'ĕfinkó of Lifāko

[609] [169] The bonds between the nkóló's grandsons and the nkita's grandsons are loosened because respect and authority between grandparents and grandsons are more or less nominal; in practice they no longer exist. (1)

1. See Chapter VI, Article VI.

If the nkóló leaves no descendants, the nkita's sons are freed from any obligation. Just as the Nkundó like to be able to call someone their nkita or their bokwé so, too, they take pride in not belonging to a nkóló.

593 607 Men who bear the title of nkóló may, under given circumstances, have duties towards their bonkita, especially the obligation of taking active part in getting together the amount of a bride price. If the nkóló has provided his bonkita with a wife, the latter must treat him like his father (giving him assistance, the father's portion of the meat of a game animal, etc.).

587* 607 The mutuality of the rights of nkíé and nkita is well expressed in the saying, Osokáé fosokáé wě, "possess me so that I may possess you." It is like do ut des.

591* 601 183 (608) It is possible to judge from the preceding descriptions that the bride price has a considerable influence on family relations. Although the Nkundó system is clearly and manifestly patriarchal, the custom of the bride price and its logical consequences give it certain features which make one think of a matriarchy. This situation comes about quite naturally. Since the bride price is wealth it represents power in society. Through marriage this power is transferred from the husband's clan to the wife's, which is enriched in goods and persons by the bride price that has been received. In a sense, the husband is the provider of his wife's clan. And the child can truthfully maintain that his clan was enriched thanks to his father. As a matter of fact, for the Nkundó, this consideration above all others is the basis for their demands of whatever rights they possess in the mother's clan. [170] The relationship between a woman and her nkita and between their respective children is founded solely on the bride-price system of marriage and has nothing to do with matriarchy. (1)

1. But the above considerations may furnish one source of explanation for the origin of that family system.

Consequently, it is unnecessary to erect complicated theories or engage in tortuous speculations in order to explain the creation of this system or to justify it. It is quite simply the outcome of the payment of a bride price in valuables that are of no use except in connection with a similar purpose.

Nevertheless, although the system of the nkita is a natural and logical consequence of marriage by means of a bride price, it is not a necessary consequence. The bride price exists in all the tribes of the Congo, but it does not seem to have resulted everywhere in the institution of the nkita.

593* 174 114 607 What has given rise to this institution among the Nkundó? Father Brepoels (loc. cit., p. 3339) gives the following explanation:

174 583 184 607 "The sale (sic) of the woman and her loss of liberty must naturally have aroused her indignation. The man probably had a great deal of difficulty in persuading her to resign herself to it. It was necessary to arrange for some compensation and that is how the system of the nkita originated. That is how the woman acquired rights over her nkita and how nonexistent prerogatives were attributed to her children: they became the superiors, the "fathers" of the mothers' family . . . . The elders, the wealthy, profited from this system, which released them from any concern for their daughters; the girls could be sold while they were still very young and then if, later, they complained of the injustice that had been done them, the elders consoled them by reminding them of their rights and those of their sons over the nkita and her offspring . . . moreover, this system released the elders from their duty of obtaining wives for their sons and removed any reason for the latter to claim their father's wives."

This explanation for the origin of the nkita system is unthinkable, for it is entirely contrary to everything [171] we know about the nature of Nkundó marriage. But it seems plausible that the fact that the old father benefited from this institution helped it to flower and spread. Native greed also may have played a role.

583 174 607 Nevertheless, we must seek beyond the operation of causes which have contributed to the spread and retention of the system in Nkundó society for those that led to its origin.

Need we invent complicated hypotheses for this purpose? It seems to me that we need not; we can be satisfied with the native explanation: the nkóló's rights over the nkita spring naturally from her dominance over the latter, for the nkita's marriage was made possible by the valuables paid for the nkóló; whereas the rights of the nkóló's sons over the nkita's children are derived from the fact that in the Nkundó hierarchy the relationship of the latter to the former is that of "son" to "father."

The secondary causes mentioned above, together with the necessity of reconciling the interests of the various members of the family, subsequently amplified the system.

583 607 Exceptionally it may happen that a mother becomes her daughter's nkita. Such was the historic case of Bekombe of Belondó (Bonjolu) and her daughter, Mbélé. The daughter's bride price was

583 607 used by her father, Nkombe ěy'otsilo of Bolɛkola (Bonjoko), to pay a supplement for his wife Bekombe. On this account the latter became her daughter's *nkita*. The double bride price served to obtain the wife Lintamba for Iseli y'engumu, Bekombe's brother and Mbɛlɛ's uncle, and Lintamba thus belonged to both mother and daughter, but the two did not fight about the matter.

One person can have two or more *nkita*, especially if her bride price is so large that it can be used to obtain several wives. Such is the case of Mputɛ (Sofia) of the Bosɛlɛ Mbangɔ of Bongonde (Bombomo). Her first husband, Mpɛnda of Lofoli, paid 40 rings and a slave. With this sum Mputɛ's uncle, [172] Mbangɔ ěy'akoso (who had settled with the Elɛngɛ l'Imome, his mother's clan), paid the bride price for Bonjɛlɛ of Ilɛɛlongo. (1) In the meantime, Mpɛnda was killed in a fight with his brother, Iloko. Mputɛ married Elɔngola, Mpɛnda's nephew, but then he died after two or three years of marriage. She was then married to Lokonga of Lɔ̌ngɛ (Nkɔlɛ), whose life was not much longer, and finally to Bakutu (Boniface) of Bombɛnga w'Ekonda (Besombɔ, Bombwanja), who paid a considerable bride price. A part of this bride price was a compensation to the family of the last husband, and another portion was used by Mbangɔ to acquire as wife, Bongelɛ of Ekɛkola. By means of the bride price paid by Lokonga, Mbangɔ (Joseph), a first cousin of Mputɛ, obtained the wife Bolɛjɛ (who came from the londa). Lastly, Bakutu gave Bonjɛkyɛ (Christophe) of Losɛlinga, a distant cousin of Mputɛ, the necessary bride price to marry Embongɛmbembɛ of Lɔ̌ngɛ, who on this account also became the *nkita* of Mputɛ, though not in the strict sense of the term. Mputɛ thus has four *nkita*, although not all of them are living.

[782] [727] 1. During a war against the Ilɛɛlongo, this woman had been captured by the Elɛngɛ, who wanted to sacrifice her to the *ikenɛ* at a feast which terminated the mourning. But Mbangɔ begged the notables to let her live because he loved her very much and wanted to marry her.

583x
607 On the other hand, as we have seen, two women may have one nkita in common, especially if their combined bride prices have been used to obtain a single wife. In such a case the two bankóló and their descendants share their duties and prerogatives. In practice this situation arises only if the two bankóló are uterine sisters, but seldom in the case of other relatives. It does occur occasionally, however, as for instance in the case of Bolófo w'ímeka and Bolúmbú w'ikofo. Both were daughters of Bakutu b'is'éy'olónjó of Bokenda (Besombo), but they had different mothers (Mbélá and Wǎngi, respectively). Their joint bride prices were used for the marriage of Bolófo wǎ Ekákásá Bonkúfo w'ǒbé (son of Bakutu and Wǎngi) to Bokungú of Engónjó (Bonkoso). [173]

Article XI
General Remarks on the Payment of the Bride Price

583x
843 A few general comments should be added to all the foregoing ideas and rules concerning bride price.

1) During a woman's pregnancy no payment of any kind may be made. This principle is stated by the Nkundó, and they strictly adhere to it. Pregnancy, however, must be understood as a pregnancy which is clearly visible to everyone, that is, the period of bokeka, and not that of the beginning, bofoswa, (1) during which payments may still be made.

If one inquires into the reason for this prohibition, one receives the reply that if payments were made during the bokeka the woman would have great difficulties in delivery and would stand very little chance of escaping death. (Pregnancy is considered a dangerous condition. Of a pregnant woman, the Nkundó say: akékí la léfa, "she is blocked by the sun," or "the sun stands across her path," that is, she is between life and death.) That is the only explanation given for the prohibition. Is it perhaps connected in some way with the belief in the elímá? (See Chapter X, Article II, 1).

---

1. See Chapter X, Article II, 3 and 4.

589x 581 2) A woman's family is not permitted to keep a double bride price for her during the lifetime of her husband -- that is, for the same marriage. If she is divorced, and her new husband pays the parents a bride price, they are required to return the bride price paid by the first husband. Thus, only a single bride price remains in their hands. This stipulation is probably intended to avoid a traffic in bride prices, something which is entirely illegal. Moreover, since the bride price constitutes the marriage, a double bride price in the situation indicated would make the woman the wife of two men at the same time, a situation which would be altogether contrary to the native concept of [174] marriage, despite their leniency with respect to certain types of concubinage. (1)

1. These will be discussed below, Chapter VI, Article VIII, 2.

One instance which took place around 1878-80 came close to infringing upon this law, though strictly speaking it did not violate it; it is rather non contra sed praeter legem. By his first wife, Wětsi de Likolí, Bakutu b'ìs'ɛ́y'olɔ́ngɔ́ of the Basɛ́k Ɛ́longama (Besombɔ́) had a son, Bolɔ́njɔ́, and a daughter, Imote. The daughter married Lofalanga of Mpámá (Nkɔ́le), and with her bride price he procured a second wife, Mbɛ́lá of the Basɛ́ká Nkamba or Bofɛ́tola (Bonkoso). His son, Bolɔ́njɔ́, fell in love with her and took her away from his father who had grown fairly old and up to that time had neglected to provide him with a wife. Old Bakutu was furious and went so far as to threaten to kill his son. But the family intervened and judged the father to be in the wrong. The latter submitted to the family decision and finally quieted down. He yielded Mbɛ́lá and went even further. In order to spare his son malicious innuendoes and being shamed by comments made by other people, because he possessed a woman obtained in an abnormal fashion, he paid another bride price for Mbɛ́lá, consisting of 40 rings and 2 Batswá as bosɔ́ngo. As a result the Bofɛ́tola clan received two bride prices for the same woman, but they came from the same man and were given for a plausible reason. No grievances resulted; on the contrary, the payments had advantages. For both parties were satisfied: the Basɛ́ká

583x Nkamba were doubly enriched; their daughter was honored beyond 581 expectations and had acquired two nkita. The Basɛ́k Élongama had the expense, but their renown and glory could only increase as a result. Furthermore, Mbɛlɛ's son thus acquired a very strong position in his mother's clan where his power would be greater because of his relationship to the double progeny of two of his mother's nkita.

A true exception to this rule is permitted in the case of [175] marriage by purchase (Chapter II, Article VII) and in case a woman takes refuge from her husband with another man (Chapter VIII, Article II, 3, (2)). But the rule is not the least weakened by these exceptions, for both types of union are entirely outside the usual rules and patterns, and it can even be said that they are not real marriages.

3) Right to the bride price

583x

A. Is the right to a bride price permanent? In other words, is a bride price acquired permently?

To answer this question we must anticipate what will be said later in this work. Therefore we will limit ourselves here to noting the conclusions from data which will be presented later in extenso. (1)

---

1. See Chapter VIII, Article III, 5, and Chapter IX, Article VII.

583x In case of divorce, restitution of valuables must be made by both 586x sides. On the contrary, if a spouse dies their acquisition remains permanent.

If restitution were not made in case of divorce, the divorcée would be prevented from remarrying. This seems to be a concession to human frailty. That is the only logical explanation I can think of for the existence of these two rules which are diametrically opposed to each other: permanent acquisition and acquisition only for the duration of the marriage. My explanation is supported by all other stipulations of Nkundɔ law which are pertinent to the matter.

B. Those who are entitled to the bride price

585x 596 It is apparent from everything we have said that the bride price is placed in the possession of the father of the woman for whom it has been paid. In his absence it goes to his eldest brother or, if his bɔ̌nankɛ́nɛ́ has settled there and inherited the father's authority, he is the one to receive the bride price of his niece (cousin in our terms). Otherwise it goes to the eldest son. In short, the rights to a bride price are passed down in the order of the family hierarchy.

The mother's clan receives the copper spirals, the goat, and certain of the beɛ́ngo. [176]

There are circumstances, however, under which this order can be destroyed so that the father's clan does not get the slightest portion of the bride price. This happens if the daughter who is to be married has left her father's clan for a sufficiently good reason and has been adopted by her mother's family. The following is a historic example of such a case:

583x 596 691 The events took place at Bompɔ́ma (Injɔ́lɔ́) between 1890 and 1900. One of the inhabitants, Ilɔ́njɔ́ yǎ Nsɔmbɔla had had two children by his wife, Eale of Bokɛ́ndela (Boɛ́ngɔ́): a boy, Mpulûnɛ́ne and a girl, Ɛmbɔ́mbi. The girl was abducted by one of the black soldiers who had come to occupy the region and was taken by him to his native village, somewhere near Coq. The wife of another man from Bompɔ́ma, named Isɛ̂ntulu, was carried off and taken away by another soldier. Ilɔ́njɔ́ owed Isɛ̂ntulu a dog. The latter took advantage of the disorder caused by the beginning of the occupation to demand his due with violent threats. Ilɔ́njɔ́, having no dog and probably frightened, handed his son over to his creditor. Isɛ̂ntulu hastened to find the soldier who had taken his wife and offered to give the latter the slave boy in exchange for her. The pair came to an agreement, and the soldier took away the boy, who died in his master's hands in a manner unknown to me.

Still during the time of the Independent State, Ɛmbɔ́mbi was able to make her way back to her country. Passing her mother's village, she heard how her father had acted toward her brother Mpulûnɛ́nɛ. Indignant, she decided not to continue on her way; she

583 declared that she was breaking with her father and wished instead to
596 live at the home of her maternal uncle Isɛ́la. After a time, a cer-
691 tain Belekɛ́ came to ask for her in marriage and paid the bride price
to Isɛ́la.

In 1922, Ilɔ́njɔ́ went to Bokɛ́ndela and presented a complaint to Chief Efɔ́le against Isɛ́la, because the latter had taken his daughter's bride price. Efɔ́le, assisted by the messenger Bongimɛ́ and by notables, decided in favor of the accused; Since the plaintiff had gravely offended his daughter by delivering her brother into [177] slavery, which resulted in his death, he first had to be reconciled with her. If she accepted his apologies, the father would receive her bride price. They agreed on the nature of the reconciliation gift (boɔ́ndo): Ilɔ́njɔ́ would pay a goat. Since he did not have it with him he handed over his knife as a pledge (wěko). Iomɛ́, the bɔ̌nankɛ́nɛ́ of Isɛ́la (who by then had died), promised to make restitution of the bride price and in anticipation paid 12 rings and 3 knives. Ilɔ́njɔ́ went back home. They awaited him in vain; they did not see him again -- neither him nor his goat.

Act three: February, 1933. Efɔ́le, Bongimɛ́, and the rest had been removed as a result of a reorganization of districts. Bokwɛ́la had been made chief of the Boɛ́ngɛ́. The district tribunal began to function again, and our Ilɔ́njɔ́ took advantage of the situation and recommenced his attack. He brought complaint against Iomɛ́ and against Isɛ́la's brother, Engongolo, who was not there in 1922 but who now had returned home. On March 6, 1933 the palaver was settled. Naturally, the men who newly held their authority found this a good opportunity to strengthen their position and did the exact opposite of their predecessors. They condemned Iomɛ́ and Engongolo and decided in favor of Ilɔ́njɔ́.

Here we see a real abuse of power. For according to Nkundɔ́ law, only Ilɔ́njɔ́ was in the wrong. He had conducted himself badly all the way down the line. His daughter had no obligation to recognize him as father, since he had virtually disowned her in the first place. And her mother's clan could have, even should have, received the bride price (see also the case described in Chapter IX, Article IV).

Article XII. The Attitude Toward the Bride Price

583x
562 1. What is the woman's attitude toward the bride price?

Only we Europeans can ask such a question. To the Nkundó mind it is superfluous -- in fact it is really stupid. The bride-price system is the normal system [178] of marriage. The Nkundó do not conceive of marriage in any other way. Without the payment of a bride price there is no marriage; the woman is not considered to be a wife, she is simply a slave. This notion is a necessary consequence of the bride-price system. Thus it is not surprising that the woman is very much attached to this system, and that under normal conditions -- that is, when there is no European influence -- she does not want any union without a bride price, for she would then be a slave. This is obvious. All these ideas are held together like the links of a chain.

2. Our attitude toward the bride price

589x
648 At the beginning of colonization the Europeans, government agents as well as missionaries, viewed with repugnance a marriage system based on the payment of a bride price. In their eyes it was neither more nor less than the sale of women and therefore a form of slavery. They felt they should counteract it by abolishing the bride price and introducing marriage in the European manner, which seemed more consistent with man's free nature. Many Blacks employed by the Whites as soldiers, laborers, etc., were thus married without bride price. Nevertheless, no direct action was taken against the system. Later it became apparent that it would be harmful to abolish this ancestral custom before it was possible to replace it with a better system. (1) In the end it was realized that the payment

1. It is not even enough to substitute a better system; those who are to benefit from it must understand it and be convinced that it is better.

583^x 648 of a bride price was not at all a purchase. (2) [179]

> 2. One reason why Europeans were so slow in getting a realistic picture of the nature of the bride price was undoubtedly their lack of linguistic knowledge. The natives did not know the Lobangi language spoken to them first nor the Lingala used later, and so perforce in these languages they used (and still use) terms whose meaning is vague and broad. Thus they said -- and still often say -- the word sómba, "to buy," for "marriage," although their own language contains terms which are very precise.

Having gradually become informed as to the true nature of the bride price, a number of Europeans began to favor a return to the old system. Some took a radical and intransigent stand on the matters; others approached the question in a more reasonable manner, taking into account the changes that had resulted from colonization. It was perceived that the natives were not yet ready for the abolition of their ancestral laws and that marriages without a bride price rarely lasted, in part because the old sanctions had not been replaced with new measures adapted to the circumstances. Finally the government as well as the missions more or less strictly required that the matter of the bride price be settled before a "civil" or a "religious" marriage ceremony.

583^x 182 Many Europeans wish for the abolition of the bride-price system because it seems inferior to them. And actually in the present circumstances of time and place, it does constitute an obstacle to the evolution of the natives toward a better social and moral condition. (1)

> 1. This is especially true of the consequences of the nkita system.

But such an abolition is neither practicable nor expedient. This system penetrates and molds, so to speak, the whole familial and social life

583x 182 of our peoples. Its pure and simple abolition would upset their established order completely. First their mentality has to change, and that end can be accomplished only gradually, since a moral change is involved. And the present state of these peoples is not sufficiently evolved for the abolition of the bride price to be beneficial. Here, if ever, the axiom: nihil leges sine moribus is valid.

000 But what might perhaps be done in that direction now is to place a limitation on the amount of the bride price. This measure should be strictly enforced to make sure that it is carried out -- although in practice its enforcement would be very difficult, for at the beginning [180], many interested parties would try to circumvent it. If good results are to be obtained, an efficacious repression of adultery and the frequency of divorce should accompany the limitation on the bride price. It would be a first step towards the ideal. Others could follow according to the extent of the natives' evolution toward a higher level of morality.

Apropos of these considerations we should like to say a few words concerning:

583x 177 3. Traffic in bride prices

This term may be taken to mean two different things. It may be used to refer to a general increase in the amount of the bride price, which has reached enormous proportions since the European penetration of the area. Or it may refer to the increase in the bride price of a single woman for successive marriages, from which her family profits.

The first meaning of the term refers to a fact, namely that the amount of the bride price has increased considerably. The reason for this development is the increase in material wealth resulting from colonization. Riches are more easily acquired. But we should not exclude the role of the greed of many parents, which has also increased. It is the most important and can reach scandalous proportions in areas where the bride price is paid in European goods (money, fabrics, appliances, utensils); in such regions, as for example among the riverain people of the Lower Congo, it goes up to and easily exceeds 2,000 francs. Think of what this amount represents, especially in times of economic depression. (1)

177 583x 465 435

1. For the sake of comparison, here are some average figures for 1934:

589x
177
[465]
[435]

Wages	fr.	20.00 to 25.00	
Copal, per kilogram . . .		0.50 to 0.70	
Palmettos		0.10 to 0.20	
Palm nuts		0.05 to 0.10	

Inevitably the action of one man leads another to follow suit for -- need I repeat? -- everything is interdependent.

Another reason may be, and sometimes is, involved. It is the desire [181] of a husband to bind a woman more securely to him by paying a lot for her. This is certainly a praiseworthy feeling, especially considering the women's readiness to resort to divorce. Its practice, however, is full of dangers. If it is limited to an isolated case, that is, to a single monogamist who gives his entire fortune for his only wife, the danger is minimal. Such is the case of one of our catechists who paid an enormous amount, without its having the slightest repercussion on his region. But the danger is very great if a man does this to establish a harem, especially if for that purpose he entices the wives of others. Thus, for instance, a man to whom the administration gave great political powers caused a fantastic increase in the general bride price among the Ekonda of the north. (1)

1. One factor which helped increase the bride price among the Wangata and other tribes in the vicinity of Coquilhatville has been described by Father Kaptein in Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 544. Since his study is written in Dutch, I think it would be useful if I translated the whole text here:

"When the first Europeans arrived at Leopoldville and Brazzaville, fabrics and other European articles soon made their appearance in Coquilhatville. The chiefs Yoma of Boyeka, Ibuka of Boyere (Boyela), Yamba of Eala; Nkake of Bokele, etc., went up the Tshuapa and Ikelemba rivers and, by means of these goods, bought slaves, women, and ivory.

583^x
177 "When they returned home, they acquired wives in their region and paid for them with the slaves and women they had purchased cheaply by means of European products. They paid three or four slave women for a wife in their region. The arrival of the Whites and of foreign Blacks taught them the number nkesi (10,000), a word which they thought meant 1,000 and which in the past they had called 10 nkoto or 10 x 100.

"The Europeans soon became involved in native palavers concerning women. This was inevitable in the Black Country. When the [182] Blacks brought their palavers before the Whites they either did not want or did not dare to say:

'I paid for this woman with 3 other women'; they would say, 'I paid for this woman with 3 nkesi of mitako,' that is, 3 x 1,000 mitako. In the meantime, the words nkoto and nkesi acquired their significance of 1,000 and 10,000 respectively. But people continued to say that a woman had been paid for with nkesi through either an error of the Whites, or the greed of polygamists, or both. Later, several women actually were paid for with nkesi, especially when the mitako became the official currency of the Congo. Actually, this development was not surprising, since the polygamists had a monopoly on women, and it was very much in their interest to increase the price.

"Formerly the price of wives was no higher in Wangata than elsewhere. Only 5 bakonga were paid for many wives, for instance, at Bokala near Bamanya, a village under the jurisdiction of Chief Yoma of Boyeka."

583x 177 It would be good to counteract that much increase in bride prices. For there is a danger that it will condemn to bachelorhood many young men who could otherwise build a home out of the fruits of their own labor. [182]

583x 586x The second meaning of the term "traffic in bride prices" has a more precise application. After a divorce all the valuables must be returned to the husband. Consequently, the new husband must pay at least as much as the first, and in general he even has to add a supplement for the family who, after all, have incurred expenses for the palaver. And so it continues. Thus the more husbands a woman has in succession, the more her bride price increases. It seems to me that this practice is in no way to be condemned. The increase is reasonable. For it not only constitutes some compensation to the woman's family for their troubles but, in addition it may exercise a good influence on the social condition of the people. If it is to have such an influence, divorce must not become a means of satisfying greed (in general, at the present time, it has not yet become such a means), and the increase must not be excessive.

000 In such cases the increase in the bride price can thus have a wholesome effect on the morality and stability of marriages by making men afraid of marrying a divorcée and, as a result, making women more cautious and less flighty. Here everything depends on caution, restraint, and supervision on the part of responsible authorities. [183]

4. The reason for the existence of the bride price

583x 174 This is a question which should not be asked of the natives; they do not know how to answer it. Nor do the facts provide any certainty. All that can be attempted is the construction of a hypothesis which fits the reality.

The following explanatory theories have been put forward: that it is a compensation to the woman's family for the loss of a member (see, for example, Seitz in Africa, Vol. 3, p. 85, and also Torday in Africa, Vol. 2, p. 275, under "Exchange"); that it is a payment for fecundity; and finally, that it is a guarantee of the

589 174 stability of the marriage and harmony in the household (see, for example, Torday, *loc. cit.*, pp. 274 ff.).

It is apparent from the description of the payment of the bride price that the Nkundo data tends primarily to support the last of these three theses, though the first is not excluded and perhaps both can be combined in a single explanation.

The bride price includes one portion which is somewhat special, namely the *bosɔ́ngo.* Now what is the reason for the existence of this special payment? Although later in the text (Chapter VIII) we will note some relevant facts concerning the refunding of the bride price, which may provide a clearer understanding, we can already indicate here a few explanations that have been put forward. Various colonials have often suggested that the slave is demanded as a replacement for the woman, that the loss sustained by her family with respect to her activities (childbearing, work) (1) had to be compensated for by handing over a human being who could work for the family and give them children (the children of a slave always remained dependents of their father's master). This explanation is clearly an application of the compensation theory to the case of the *bosɔ́ngo*. And with reference to this special portion of the bride price, the rules of Nkundɔ́ law favor the hypothesis in question. [184] A man who has not made this last payment loses his rights over one of his daughters, whose bride price enriches the mother's clan by providing the means for procuring another wife. The explanations given by the natives, however, give the impression that this rule is a sort of sanction, though in reality it is not, as we have seen.

5. The essential component of the bride price

583x As we have seen, the bride price consists of several payments: the *ikulá* and the *ndanga*, both promissory payments; the *walo*, which is the first part of the actual bride price, and the *bosɔ́ngo*, which completes the bride price. The *belonga*, etc. need not be considered.

---

1. See Chapter VI, Article II.

583ˣ Which of these payments is the essential component of the bride price? The *ikulá* and the *ndanga* can unquestionably be excluded. The nature, purpose, and names of these payments as well as the title accorded to the woman after they have been handed over show that they are simply engagement payments. Of the other two payments, we can conclude that the *walo* is the essential one. For the *bosóngo* adds nothing legally to the marriage, and its significance lies only in secondary matters which need not be repeated here.

6. The role of the family

589ˣ
596 As we have seen, it is always the father or his successor, who arranges everything, who takes care of everything, who plays the leading role. A marriage cannot be arranged in the absence of the head of either the husband's or the wife's family.

As this book is being written, a young man, Ikotama of Bongíli (Liókó, Ekonda), who is in possession of the valuables necessary for the bride price of his intended, Etúli, daughter of Mpokú of Lofelí (Bongíli), has for many months been awaiting the arrival of his uncle Eḳamba, who is head of the family [185] and who has been detained by his duties, as catechist of the Protestant mission at Longa.

Although the mother receives a certain portion of the bride price, she has no right to intervene in establishing and arranging her child's marriage. Her husband informs her of everything and even pays more or less serious attention to her views, opinions, and wishes; but he does so solely out of the spirit of harmony and conjugal love, not because she has the slightest rights, legally speaking.

This would be the place to make a synthesis of what we have seen up to now and to try and deduce from it the legal concept of Nkundó marriage. But since some very important questions still remain to be studied, this synthesis must be put off till the end of Chapter III. [186]

Chapter III

The Various Forms of Marriage and Pseudo-marital Unions

581 Various forms of conjugal union exist in Nkundó law and practice, although not all of them reach the same degree of perfection, and certain ones are only known among some of the tribes under discussion.

The word "marriage" is translated into Lonkundo as liála. It is used in the broad and universal sense as well as in the narrow, as is the verb from which it is derived, bál. This verb designates a sexual union per se, even if it is illicit. Thus the Nkundó say íy'áfé bale ô liála, meaning that the relations between two people (adulterers or unmarried persons) are not isolated acts but part of a continuous relationship which takes the form of concubinage and therefore externally resembles marriage.

A man who marries, that is, the husband, is mbáli. But this is a general term, and it is not used to describe his relationship to his spouse; the word for "husband" in this specific sense is bǒme. The person who has paid the bride price is njéngi (from the root -éng). He may be someone other than the mbáli, as the examination of marriage by inheritance (Article II) will show.

583ˣ After returning briefly to the typical marriage arranged as we have described in the preceding chapter, we shall examine in detail the other forms of marital and pseudo-marital unions found among the Nkundó. As described in the articles to follow, the Nkundó forms of union are:

I. Marriage by Nkumbó
II. Marriage by inheritance
III. The marriage of a Bosóló, which is a special case of II
IV. Replacement
V. The gift of a wife, or Boóngá
VI. Exchange
VII. Purchase

Another form of union is the marriage of a slave, but we will leave its discussion for Chapter VII (Article V).

Article I. Marriage by Nkumbɔ́

583x A marriage arranged as we have already described is a standard marriage, called liála jǎ nkumbɔ́. Nkumbɔ́ means "the act of taking in marriage in the standard manner"; the verb is -kumbol and the intransitive -kumbwa, "to be taken in marriage." The transitive form is applied only to the husband, the intransitive only to the wife. That is, the woman's role of being taken in marriage must needs be expressed by the intransitive-passive form, whereas the man's act is expressed by the transitive.

A marriage by nkumbo is a marriage with a free woman by means of the payment of a bride price directly to her parents through the medium of a ndonga.

583x 586x This form of marriage is adhered to whether the wife is a girl who has not previously been married or whether she has already had a fiancé or a husband. In the latter case the union only becomes a marriage by nkumbɔ́ after the divorce. (1)

1. See Chapter VIII, Articles II and III.

The latter case differs from the former in that the persons involved must proceed with great circumspection as long as the bride price has not [188] been returned, so as to avoid provoking the abandoned husband's wrath and its consequences (fights, wars), and in that the woman's parents must reimburse him for the bride price he has paid. In the interim the woman may return to her family, or she may go directly or indirectly to her new lover. But in the past the latter was seldom done, as it could have led to very unpleasant consequences. This course of action was open only if the new husband was a rich man, who would pay the bride price without delay, or one who was feared for his courage, his fervor in battle, his power, or the great numerical superiority of his clan, his dependents, and his Batswá. For the previous husband retains his rights as long as restitution of the bride price has not been made.

589x The Nkundɔ́ consider marriage by nkumbɔ́ to be the perfect marriage. This will become more apparent through the examination of the other forms of marriage described below.

Article II. Marriage by Inheritance

587
428 This form of marriage is called liála jǎ lisangó or simply lisangó. The meaning of lisangó is "inheritance," from the verb sangol, "to inherit." The word is used in the broad sense and is applicable to any object.

The death of a husband does not in itself free his widow. She remains bound to the deceased's family.

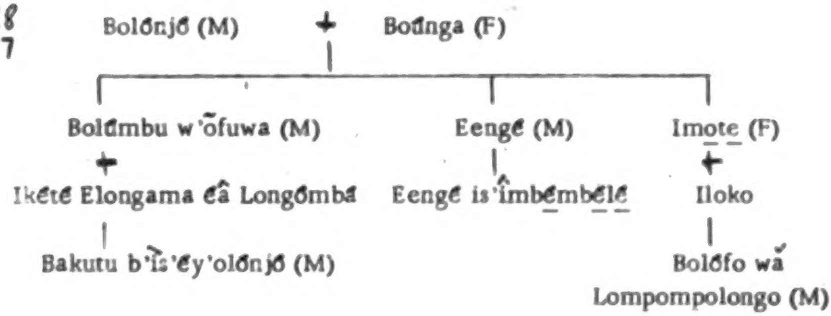
After the celebration of the end of mourning, the widows of the deceased, required to abstain from all sexual relations until that time, go back to their respective families. During the last period of mourning they have already had the opportunity of being courted or of resuming their relationships with their former lovers, whether or not they are relatives of the deceased husband.

A person wishing to marry the widow must address himself to her own family. Therefore, except in the case of the bosóló, to be discussed in the article which follows, the distribution of wives among the heirs cannot be considered as a distribution [189] of persons as such. Rather it is a division based on the valuables which these persons represent. Theoretically, the wives are inherited by the brother of the deceased, but other relatives, especially nephews, may have partial or total rights over one or another among them. (1) These rights are based on the source of the bride prices by means of which the wives were acquired. We have already touched on this subject in the preceding chapter in relation to certain relatives. Still other situations may arise, but instead of going into a long discussion I shall explain them by giving two case histories.

---

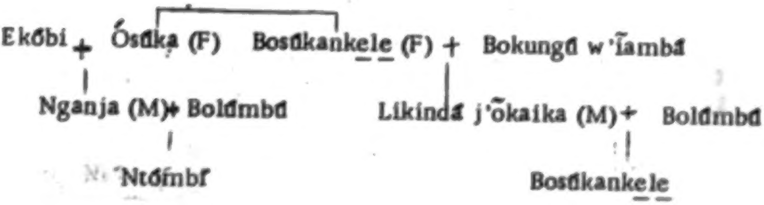
1. See Chapter II, Article IV, 3, as well as Article X.

428
587


Bolónjó (M)
+
Boúnga (F)
Bolúmbu w'õfuwa (M)
Eengé (M)
Imote (F)
+
Ikété Elongama éâ Longómbá
Eengé is'îmbémbélé
+
Iloko
Bakutu b'ĩs'éy'olónjó (M)
Bolófo wǎ
Lompompolongo (M)

Imote of Eleke (Bongíli), one of the Lokongo clans, married Iloko of Imomo (Bongíli). With valuables received from his mother's family their son, Bolófo, married three women: Wǎngi, Bosoí, his favorite, and a slave from Bolaká (Wǎngatá). When he died, his widows went to the Eleke clan which was the source of his wealth. Two claimants appeared: Eengé (first cousin of the deceased but in [601] Nkundó terminology his son) and Bakutu of Bokenda (Besombó) also a first cousin, and considered one by the Nkundó. They were to divide the widows. But both of them chose the deceased's favorite and quarreled over her. In the end she was assigned to Bakutu who was the "father" of his rival and the "elder brother" of the deceased. The slave also went to Bakutu, (2) while Eengé had to be satisfied with the first wife. But he and his clan retained a right over these women and their [190] progeny. This is rather an old case; in fact two grandsons of Bakutu and Ikándó respectively, whom I know very well personally, are now between fifty and sixty years old.

The following is a more recent example:


Ekóbi
+
Ósúka (F)
Bosúkankele (F)
+
Bokungú w'ĩambá
Nganja (M)
+
Bolúmbú
Likindá j'õkaika (M)
+
Bolúmbú
Ntómbé
Bosúkankele

---

2. Who yielded her to Ikándó y'ãngamba of Eleke.

428 587 Two sisters, Osɔ́ka and Bosɔ́kankele of Ikengo, Ntɔ́mbɛ́ (Wǎngatɛ́), were married respectively to Ekɔ́bɛ́ of Likɛ́ala (Besombɔ́, Bombwanja) and Bokungɔ́ of Bombɛ́nga wǎ Ikolɛ́ (Besombɛ́. Nganja married Bolɔ́mbɔ́ of Iɛ́mbo (Bonkoso). When Bolɔ́mbɔ́ became a widow she was inherited by Likɛ́ndɛ́, the first cousin of the deceased on his mother's side, so that the patrimony would not be scattered. She gave Likɛ́ndɛ́ a daughter, Bosukankele, whose bride price he used to get himself a wife, Bombɔ́la (Teresa), daughter of Ilito of Bolɛ́ngɛ́ (Bongíli). At Likɛ́ndɛ́'s death the rights returned to Ntombɛ́ (Joseph) in the person of the widow Bombɔ́la, the nkita of his uterine sister.

587 428 585x If the legitimate heir, or some other close relative of the deceased, wants to marry a widow, he consults the head of the family and then goes to the woman's parents and gives them bekooli (1),

1. The plural of the noun derived from the verb koola, "to seek, to take for someone," hence, "objects in order to go and take someone."

which consists of 1 to 3 copper rings, added to the amount of the bride price. This gift shows the suitor's respect for the woman's family. (2) If after a time the woman no longer wants to stay with

2. In addition to this native interpretation another may be given which is more profound and of a legal nature. This will be done further on (Article IX).

him, but loves another close relative, the latter also brings his bekooli. This is expected of him even if the woman has not gone home in between, but has gone directly from one man to the other.
[431] [191] The bekooli of the first man are then returned.

If the new husband is only distantly related to the deceased, (1)

[601]

1. In that case he is called eɔ́to ɛ̂ nsɔ́ngɛ́, literally "relative from the summit," as against eɔ́to ɛ́â ntsína, "relative of the base," therefore a close relative.

428
589x
587 against eóto éâ ntsína, "relative of the base," therefore a close relative.

431 he must not only bring bekooli to the woman's parents but also give a bompéngé called nsǎsangó or bosangójwé a goat, a dog, or 5 to 10 copper rings, depending on the circumstances) to the heir. This is not part of the bride price, which is a payment to the woman's family. It is a gift intended to assuage the feelings of the heir and to secure or strengthen his good will. It is equivalent to a request for permission to cohabit with this woman and to profit by her work.

428
587 Thus we must distinguish between two types of marriage by inheritance:

1) The new husband and heir belongs to the immediate family of the deceased; he is eóto éâ ntsína -- a son, brother, uncle, nephew, or cousin.

2) The new husband and heir is distantly related; he is eóto éâ nsóngé.

In the first instance the marriage is considered fairly stable and difficult to break, but nevertheless more easily dissolved than a marriage by nkumbó. With how much difficulty it is dissolved depends on the degree of kinship. The reason given by the Nkundó for the greater ease with which such a marriage is broken is that the heir-husband did not himself pay the bride price; he only received the woman from someone else. Thus, if he no longer wants her, he justifies sending her away by saying, "It was not I personally who paid your bride price." For her part, the woman will invoke the same reason, mutatis mutandis. In all other respects the union is like a marriage by nkumbó. Therefore, [192] when the woman leaves her husband the term kófa is used here as in the case of a marriage by nkumbó.

428
587
471 The second type of marriage by inheritance is clearly different from the first. The new husband is not a husband from the legal standpoint; he is only a husband in the improper sense, physically. In spite of the nsǎsangó paid by the common-law husband, the legitimate heirs, hence the close kin of the deceased, especially the relative who was entitled to the woman and to whom she was given when the

471/
587 inheritance was divided, remain her masters. This is apparent from
428 all the consequences resulting from the situation:

1) Children born of the union belong, not to their natural father, but to the owners of the woman, the bankɔ́lɔ́. They are the ones who will eventually consent to the children's marriages and receive their bride prices. They alone have the right to give the
[553] children a name.

2) The man functioning as husband has only partial rights to the results of the woman's activities. Thus, if she finds a treasure buried in her field, captures a fleeing slave, or finds any valuable object that has been abandoned or lost and whose owner is not known, such as, for example, rings, objects of worked metal, elephant tusks, etc., these will not belong to her husband, as they would in a marriage by nkumbɔ́, but to the masters. The latter are also entitled to a part of the fruits of her labor: fish, caterpillars, and even food she has prepared.

3) If, on some occasion or other, the new husband wishes to make a gift or a payment to the woman's family, he has to request the intervention of the husband-owner. He therefore asks the latter to accompany him, saying: ɔ́ndakɛ́ likilɔ́, "make me acquainted with my parents-in-law; introduce me to them." They go there with the ndonga.

428
587 It may even happen that the bosɔ́ngɔ has not been paid yet and that the common-law husband has the slave [193] or the equivalent valuables needed for the payment. With the permission of the owner and accompanied by the ndonga he may make this payment. Nevertheless, he obtains no additional rights over the woman.

If one day the woman returns to the immediate family of the deceased, who are her "masters," the latter must make restitution to the common-law husband for these supplementary valuables and for all the payments he has made. If any stranger marries her by nkumbɔ́, the entire bride price is returned to the heirs of the deceased, who must reimburse the man who has acted as her husband for all the bride-price payments he has made.

428 This practice of ndǎlaka likilɔ́ is not without disadvantages.
587 It may be feared that the heir deny that the payments were made and refuse to reimburse the man for them. His refusal is facilitated by the fact that the ndonga involved is the same one who participated in arranging the marriage agreement. Thus, there is a tendency to omit the practice.

Note that the expression ndǎlaka likilɔ́ is not applied only to this situation; it is also used in the obvious sense -- for instance, when the man is simply to make the acquaintance of the woman's
[431] family without presenting any payment (though of course it is in-
[574] conceivable that such a visit would be made without bringing presents), or in the case of a man who wants to be united with a relative of the wife of one of his relatives or friends.

4) Any presents given by the woman's family to the common-
[431] law husband, for instance during a visit or for a service rendered, etc., do not belong to him; by right they go to the heirs. If the latter are kindly disposed toward him, they will allow him the usufruct of a portion of these goods, but he has no right to them strictly speaking.

429 5) If the woman breaks this union the verb used is not -kɔ́fa
586 but -kumbwa, "to be taken in [194] marriage." If she returns to a
587 close relative of the deceased, that is, to one of his bankɔ́lɔ́, the Nkundɔ́ say that "she has returned to her husband," aɔ̂lut'ɛ̌ka bɔ̌m'ɔ̌kaɛ́. For his part, the man who has taken the woman in common-law marriage may repudiate her at any time. He says to her: kendá ɛka baɔ́m'ǎkɛ́, emí ntsíkwɛ̌ngáki, "go to your husbands; I did not pay your bride price." The valuables he has given as nsásangɔ́ will be refunded.

6) Lastly, if the woman dies while living with this man, he has to pay an indemnity (-foma mbálaka), usually a slave or its equivalent, to the legitimate heirs.

428 Thus the second type of marriage by inheritance has none of
587 the characteristics of a legitimate Nkundɔ́ marriage. The husband has only the enjoyment of the woman. Only the heir of the deceased may truly and legally call her his "wife." Usually a woman involved in such a union is called the heir's "thing" (yɔ̌mba). The heir is called her "owner," her "master," and the term "husband" is reserved for the man who cohabits with her.

428 Because of all these obvious differences, the Nkundɔ́ tend to
587 consider this second type of union nonmarital. It resembles actual
581 marriage only externally; in the final analysis, the difference is fundamental, since it has none of the specific properties of a marriage. Therefore such a union is not a marriage, but a continuous concubinage.

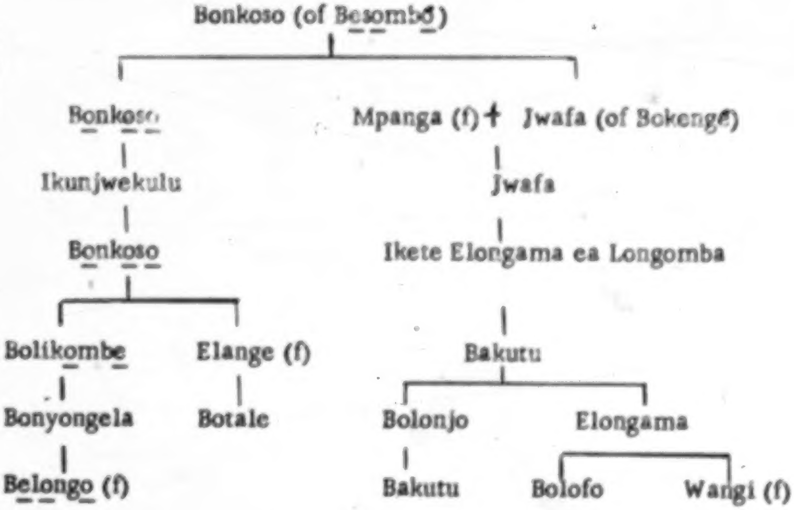
A man who cohabits in this manner with a woman for whom others have paid the bride price is often the object of humiliating allusions. He is treated as nkolasangɔ́, "inheritance taker" (that is, of inherited women). If a woman involved in the type of union described quarrels with one who has been "bought" in the regular manner, the latter will sometimes clap her hands (-foma losɛ́ka) to indicate her superiority. That is why such a woman is sometimes called wálɛ ɔ̂a fomalosɛ́ka in contrast to the other. [195]

Present-day circumstances make all this even more clearly
[797] apparent. Nowadays, even pagan natives almost everywhere are aware of the intransigence of the Catholic Church on the question of the indissolubility of a marriage which has been effected through the religious ceremony. For this reason the "masters" of a woman who is legally theirs but who is actually living with another man in the manner described, will not permit her to enter into a religious marriage with this man unless he pays the bride price.

Therefore we may consider the type of union described above a concubinage which does not satisfy the moral conditions for a true marital union. As to the first type of marriage by inheritance, namely a union with a close relative of the deceased, the question is more complicated; but it is my opinion that such a marriage is valid from the moral standpoint. I hope, however, that in order to attain greater certainty on this point, others will re-examine the case in the light of the various aspects of the solution that have been presented.

The following historic case pertaining to individuals whose genealogy appears below will illustrate the preceding discussion:

428
587
581


Bonkoso (of Besombó)
Bonkoso
Mpanga (f) + Jwafa (of Bokengé)
Ikunjwekulu
Jwafa
Bonkoso
Ikete Elongama ea Longomba
Bolikombe
Elange (f)
Bakutu
Bonyongela
Botale
Bolonjo
Elongama
Belongo (f)
Bakutu
Bolofo
Wangi (f)

Elongama (the younger) married Ikókó of Bongíli, daughter of Bolékélá wǎ Nkunja and Tómpénda. After his death, his widow was taken as inheritance [196] by Bonyongela, to whom she gave a daughter, Belóngó. Bakutu (the younger) and his first cousin Bolófo were the ones who disposed of the daughter's bride price and were responsible for the marriage palavers; her father, Bonyongela, (since deceased) and his brother, Bonkoso, were not. Out of kindness, Bonyongela was given 18 rings. Bolófo added the other 30 to his sister Wǎngi's bride price to obtain his wife Ióngó (of Likolí, now deceased). After x number of years, Ikókó left Bonyongela for Botálé, a sister's son who, being a close relative, gave no nsǎnsangó. That which had been paid by Bonyongela was returned to him by Bakutu, since the union was broken. Five years later, Ikókó left Botálé with whom she was dissatisfied because he was lazy and did not bring her enough game, clothing, etc. She went to live with Ilumbé of Ngombe Mbálanga (Bongíli), who was a distant maternal relative and therefore gave the prescribed nsǎsangó.

Another instance turned up recently (May, 1933). One of our Christians, Babolá Michel of Ianda (Bonkoso) wanted to take a wife.

428 He had set his heart on Bolúmbɔ́, daughter of Ntando ɛ́y'ilengu of
587 Bofalambɔ́ka. Upon the death of Bolúmbɔ́'s husband, Esalɛ́ ɛâ
581 Lonkongɔ́, (in 1926), she had been asked for by Bombɔ́ngo, a distant relative of Esalɛ́. Proceeding in the customary fashion, Bombɔ́ngo had made his request through the medium of his elder brother Engambí and had paid a bompɔ́ngɔ́ of 4 bakonga and 20 francs. In the meantime, Babolɛ́ reached adulthood; he left our school and returned to his native village. Being a true nephew of Esalɛ́ ɛâ Lonkongɔ́, he had a direct right over this woman, who left Bombɔ́ngo. Since the latter protested, however, the priest was faced with a moral problem; the question was whether or not there was a real marriage between Bombɔ́ngo and Bolúmbɔ́. If there were, there would be no question of a marriage between Babolɛ́ and Bolúmbɔ́, since the Church could not break a valid marriage between Christians. I have said above that a union of the sort involved in this case is not, in Nkundo eyes, a typical marriage. However, I wanted to have every assurance and to be as certain as possible. To that end, I went to Bonjoku at the time of the tax collection. I found many men gathered there. I raised the question of marriage by inheritance. The discussion ended on the unanimous expression of the opinion that in the instance involved nothing opposed the new marriage. The men gathered there added that all similar cases are rather a sort of concubinage accepted by ancestral law, but lacking all characteristics of a true marriage.

In order to avoid the many disadvantages inherent in this second form of marriage by inheritance, the husband, if he has any wealth, will do everything he can to collect the valuables needed for the bride price and pay his father-in-law. The latter will use the bride price to reimburse the heir. By making this payment, which is handed over through a new ndonga designated by him, the husband obtains complete possession of the woman. The marriage by inheritance than changes into a marriage by nkumbɔ́. The besangɔ́jwá which the husband had previously given the heir must be returned, and the heir's ties with the woman are broken by these formalities.

[579] It sometimes happens that the heir takes a very dim view of this new payment and takes offense. In the past a war, through illegal, could result -- after which, as always, the matter was settled just the same.

428 587 581 On the other hand, it also happens sometimes, and even quite often, that although the woman loves her "husband" (in the improper sense) she does not want any change. At heart she remains attached to the kin of her deceased husband, through her love for him or because of her affection for his family, who have always treated her well. It is not unusual for the common-law husband to encounter unalterable opposition to a regular marriage. The woman may [198] [578] even take such offense at the proposal that she will leave the man for a close relative of the deceased.

In this type of situation another sort of development may also occur, although it is quite rare. For example, there is the case of Lowâka, daughter of Bompókó of Bontole. After the death of her husband, Botóna of the Basɛ́ka Ilóka (Lofelí), she was taken in marriage by one of his relatives, Nsenge, who gave the prescribed besangójwá to Imomo of Bofalambóka, Botóna's bonankáná. After a certain time Imomo, who had had a slight palaver with Nsenge, did not want the situation to continue. He demanded a regular marriage so that he could make use of his rights to Lowâka's bride price. Nsenge agreed and paid 60 bakonga to the woman's parents, who reimbursed Imomo. Imomo returned the besangójwá he had received, and thus Lowâka became the true wife of Nsenge.

One can see that the gamut of individual variations comes into play here, depending on the temperament and the feelings of the persons involved. But the most common practice is for the widow to remain attached to the family of the deceased or to remarry in the prescribed fashion.

In the latter case the widow goes to a man who is not related to the deceased, either immediately after mourning or after a period of conjugal life with the heir. The latter is entitled to a reimbursement of the bride price. The new husband must make all the customary payments through the medium of his own ndonga, exactly as he would for a first marriage by nkumbó. Consequently, this union is not considered a "marriage by inheritance," with which it has nothing in common.

428 587 431 In any marriage by inheritance -- that is, where no bride price payment is involved -- the husband, whether he be the heir or

428 587 431 simply a relative of the deceased, must give the woman a present called isangó, or inheritance gift. The woman either hands this gift over to her family or keeps it for her personal needs. In any case [199] it is not considered a part of the bride price.

Finally, when a widow remarries, either by inheritance or by a new nkumbó, her husband must make her a present of one or two rings or knives of equivalent value before having conjugal relations with her. This present is given either on the same day as the isangó or on another, depending on the circumstances. It is called boángá, "couch," or, more commonly, ikondeyantangé (from -kondeya, "to make someone get on," and ntangé "bed"). It is a gift of consolation for widowhood. This gift of ikondeyantangé is probably what Engels referred to in his study on the Wǎngata we have already cited, when he spoke of "buying off mourning."

428 587 An examination of marriage by inheritance shows that the widow is free to remarry a man of her choice, whether he be the heir or another relative of the deceased or some stranger. The only exception is a woman who has been willed to someone by the deceased. (1) If the heir subsequently does not fulfill his obligations toward her, she can react the same way as in a marriage by nkumbó. As for the special case of the bosóló, we will deal with it separately.

Another law may be deduced from the facts observed: as long as no new bride price is paid, the woman continues to belong to the family of the deceased. Only a restitution of the bride price breaks the contract and destroys all its consequences. (2)

---

1. The Nkundó scrupulously observe the stipulations of a will (boango or bowâko) because they fear the vengeance of the deceased. When a person expresses his last wishes he usually adds the threat, "If you don't carry out my wishes, you will follow me in death."

2. We will come back to these points in Article IX, and in Chapters VIII and IX.

428 Lastly, these facts demonstrate collective ownership within
587 the clan or the extended family. When a close relative, such as Bosɛ́lɛ́ for instance, marries a widow, he considers her legally as his legitimate spouse, just as she was the legitimate spouse of the deceased. [200] No new bride-price agreement is necessary, since the preceding one continues to be valid. The only new element introduced is that another person in the family of the deceased enters into a marriage bond with the widow. Whether the person marrying the woman is the legitimate heir or a close relative makes no difference because of the community of interests that exists (the children belong to Bosɛ́lɛ́ as much as to the heir, for example). (1)

1. We will come back to this question further on (see Article IX).

887 Because of the superficial resemblance between different situations, it should be mentioned here that the enjoyment of a woman in a common-law relationship is not asked for exclusively in the case of a widow. Such a request may also be made in connection with the wife of a polygamist while the husband is still living, but this is done only by a close relative and even then is not well regarded. Usually the situation is as follows: a man falls in love with one of the wive's in his relative's harem, and she shares his sentiments. He takes her home with him. There is a palaver. The husband is furious, breaks of all relations with the seducer, and wants no more of his invitations or his gifts, which means the quarrel is serious. Therefore, other relatives intervene to try and reconcile the two adversaries; seeing that there is no way to prevent the cohabitation of the pair or judging that such action would not be expedient, they try to pacify the legitimate husband. Through the agency of his elder brother, the lover sends him a gift in entreaty. The husband, finding no one on his side, bows down before the *fait accompli*, accepts the gift (*bompángá*), and yields the enjoyment of the woman. Instead of going about the matter in this cavalier fashion, the lover may also make his request in the normal manner. If for one reason or another the lovers want to stop living together, they separate without further

837 ceremony. If the husband is kindly disposed toward them, he gives back to his relative the valuables the latter has paid, and the incident is closed. [201]

That is what happened some time ago to Insɛlo, of Bokenyola (Bonjoku). (1) In the harem of his maternal uncle, Efonja Is'Ôfuwa, who was originally from Bonjoku but had been integrated into the Bongale, he had noticed a certain Mbilɛ́eyenga, originally from Bosáá, and "his heart was rent asunder," as the Nkundɔ́ say. Through the agency of his older first cousins Mpetsɛ ɛâ Lingomo, ye sent Efonja a bompángá of 6 rings, asking him to be kind enough to allow him to cohabit with this woman. His request was well received. But after a certain number of years their passion cooled, and Insɛlo wished to contract a proper marriage to give himself posterity. He therefore parted from Mbilɛ́, who went back to her husband. The latter returned the 6 rings to Insɛlo, because he did not want to enrich himself at the expense of a relative.

Article III. The Bosɔ́lɔ́

428 The marriage of a bosɔ́lɔ́ is a special form of the inheritance
587 of women.
768 The term bosɔ́lɔ́ is used everywhere. The Injɔ́lɔ́ also use a synonym, njɛ́mɔ́, an incorrect term derived from the verb ɛ́mola, "to make [someone] get up." Thus they say ɛ́moja bǒna njɛ́mɔ́, "to give the child (son, daughter) a bosɔ́lɔ́. (2) Among the Beloko and their Elɛ́ngá the term bombɛ́jɛ is used as well as bosɔ́lɔ́.

On the day when the widows are "lifted from the ground" and

---

2. The Elanga tribes in the Losanganya region also use this expression.

1. Now chief of the Bonkoso.

428
587
768

permitted "to return to the bed," (3) all those entitled to the rights of a father -- that is, those who have precedence, whether men or women -- gather with the sister's son to proceed with the ceremony. As always, each person yields his right to speak out of mutual respect, Finally, the eldest again has the floor [202]; it may be the deceased's father, brother, or paternal aunt (*isómoto*). This individual who is in charge, makes a short speech appropriate to the occasion, and then gives one of the widows to the first-born of the children (*nsómí*). He takes the latter's preferences into account, having made sure of them in advance. The widow is given to him with the statement: "We have wrested for you the *bosóló* which your father has left you," *tókokumela bosóló bǒkí isé okotsíkéláká*. The actual meaning of *kumá* is "to seize by pulling toward oneself, to pull up," and includes the idea of strength. The word is primarily used in such expressions as *kuma baílo*, "to pull up weeds," *kuma nsálá*, "to pull out feathers," etc. But it is also employed whenever anything is taken or pulled forcefully toward oneself, as in *kuma mbombo*, "to pull a *chikwangue* out of a heap."

The *bosóló* is always given to the first-born, regardless of sex, to the exclusion of the other children. If the eldest is a girl, she passes the *bosóló* on to her brother, first-born among the boys. This is a real seniority right, and it must be bought, or rather paid for, by the brother by giving his sister a present which most frequently consists of hens, money, small useful objects, or often a quantity of beer. The same rule applies if the eldest yields his right to a younger brother because the latter is passionately in love with her or -- nowadays -- because he does not want to take a second wife.

---

3. See "Les Coutumes funeraires des Nkundo" [The Funeral Customs of the Nkundó] (in press, *Anthropos*). The Elíngá perform this ceremony only a few days after the burial; the Boangi do so even before it. The Injoló are beginning to imitate the Elíngá.

428 In addition a bɔ́solɔ́ is also given to the bɔ̌nankáná. Only the
768 eldest son of the sister whose bride price was used by the deceased may
587 claim this right. If the bride price of the nephew's mother was not involved in the establishment of the harem which is to be divided, he is only entitled to a bosɔ́lɔ́ who is not someone else's nkita, that is, who was acquired by means of riches procured through the deceased's own efforts. If the deceased obtained wives with the bride prices of two sisters, both of whom have left sons, only the eldest son of the eldest sister has this right. (1) [203]

> 1. It may happen that one of the sons of the deceased is disinherited because of the rights of the bɔ̌nankáná. If that happens and the latter at least has a wife or can obtain the necessary valuables in his father's clan, he is supposed to yield the woman to his unfortunate cousin. This is a duty imposed by the love of family (liɔ́ta), and he may not evade it.

The practice of handing over a bosɔ́lɔ́ to relatives other than the son or daughter of the deceased seems to be an extension of a right originally reserved for his child.

The desires of the person entitled to the bosɔ́lɔ́ are taken into account when she is handed over. However, the eldest son can never obtain his father's favorite; only an elder brother may inherit her.

It is thus possible for a son to receive his own mother as bosɔ́lɔ́, but only if there are no other widows and if he has no way of obtaining a wife. Naturally, he may not marry her. She is given to him so that when she remarries he will receive the amount of the bride price which will be repaid.

If the deceased leaves no harem but does leave a good deal of other wealth, the bosɔ́lɔ́ consists of some object of great value. This practice would seem to indicate that the word bosɔ́lɔ́ is applied to a woman only by an extension of its basic and original meaning, "inheritance by right of seniority."

428 768 587 As soon as the bosólό is assigned to the person entitled to her, she leaves the group of widows and goes to the home of her new husband. From then on she may cohabit with him, since from that moment the pair are absolved from the observance of the regulations and prohibitions of mourning. Because of her affection for her deceased husband and her sorrow, the woman sometimes begs her new husband to be patient and wait a while. Her wishes are respected, for a refusal to acquiesce would be a very serious offense, which could lead to an immediate rupture of the relationship.

The woman chosen as bosólό may refuse the husband for whom she is intended, though such cases are rare and in the past were even unknown. The following instance [204] goes back to 1932: Mpia of Mbanja "acquired" Bôngongo of Ilángá as wife for his eldest son, Bompelɛ́. But the young man did not want her. So as not to waste his money, the father incorporated the woman into his harem. When the old man died, Bôngongo was given to this same Bompelɛ́ as a bosólό. This time it was she who did not want him, and, to make matters worse, all the other widows also refused. Subsequently, a second cousin of Bompelɛ́ named Bosɛ́njá wanted to marry Bôngongo. But out of spite, Bompelɛ́ did not want to yield her to him except against the payment of a bride price.

Even if the woman makes no objection -- and she generally does not -- and accepts the new husband without loving him, either out of indifference, or to be able to come out of seclusion, or for any other reason, she may always find a way to leave him, if she wishes, for another close relative whom she prefers. This fact indicates that, although theoretically the union of the bosólό is supposed to be more stable than a simple marriage by inheritance, in practice it is not; and it does not attain the degree of permanence characteristic of a marriage by nkumbό. The reason is probably to be found in the fact that the union with a bosólό and the ordinary form of marriage by inheritance are fundamentally identical, and the rights of the family play a great role in both of them. The following is a recent case history: Ifungá, daughter of Esukúlu of Bongangá (Boɛ́ndɛ́) and widow [684] of Bolɛ́kɛ́lá of Bongíli was assigned as bosólό to her husband's eldest son, named Boongo. Later she claimed that she did not love Boongo but

428 that she wanted to become the wife of his brother Ekamba. Ekamba
768 did not object. But very soon she broke this union as well. This time
587 the chief decided she was going too far and to please Boongo, who
684 had settled with his mother's clan of which he also was a member, he
sentenced her to several weeks in prison. All sensible people approved of the chief's attitude. In spite of the suppression of such excesses, a suppression which is necessary, the woman's freedom is protected.

We have already indicated that from a moral point of view the
428 marriage of a bosóló may be considered on the same level as the in-
768 heritance of any woman if she remains among the close kin of the
587 deceased. The only difference is that such a union is somewhat more difficult to break.

Article IV. The Replacement or Substitution

586 When a marriage is broken, instead of completing the divorce
587 by restitution of the bride price, the woman's family often has recourse to the practice of replacing the divorcée by one of her relatives (such as a sister, cousin, or niece). The act of replacement, as well as the woman substituted, is called bankitsá. (1) This name is plural noun derived from kita, "to become," kitana, "to replace, to succeed." The singular would be linkitsá, but it is never applied to this situation.

The substitute usually does not object to the social obligation that falls upon her, unless she feels an unusual repugnance toward the husband. In that case an attempt is made to find someone else in the family. A family may go so far as to take one of its members away from her husband in order to substitute her for the divorcée, especially if no other substitute is to be found and if they care more about the marriage that has been broken than about her union.

The Nkundó give the following justifications for the practice of substitution:

---

1. The Ekonda say nkitsá.

586x 587 1) The reference for the continuation of a happy relationship by marriage as against the creation of a new one which has yet to prove itself.

2) The desire to avoid the palavers and troubles involved in the process of restoring the bride price and to hasten in providing the husband with a new wife even if there has been no undue delay in reimbursing him).

3) Concern for the children born of the union which has been broken. [206] This is a very important reason, for it is completely in the children's interest that their stepmother should be a close relative who considers them her own children and who is therefore to be preferred over an entirely strange woman.

583x 586x 587 Just as there is no restitution of the bride price in the case of a replacement, so there is no new bride price to pay. But it is inconceivable that the visits necessary for the negotiations should be made without gifts. Thus a replacement inevitably results in an increase of the bride price, since the new payments made on each occasion are added to the former bride price. The more successive replacements are made, the more the amount of the bride price is likely to increase. Thus I have known instances where a bride price which at the beginning consisted of 100 rings had in the end reached the sum of close to 300 rings.

586x 587 In the opinion of the Nkundó the handing over of a bankitsá constitutes a true and valid marriage. But it is not a new union but simply the transfer to a different person of obligations which have never ceased to exist, which derive from a marriage agreement that has never been annulled. Thus the woman for whom the bride price was paid is known as the one who began, or founded, the marriage, the second woman simply succeeding her in it: X. ámangákí liála, Y. aôsulungana (manga, "to begin," or bondola, "to found," or mámola, "to begin [at the very beginning]"; as against sulungana, "to succeed [someone]," kitana, "to replace," mumola, "to continue"). For them a true succession to a position is involved. The replacement is not simply physical and external; it is fully legal in the same way that an heir apparent succeeds his father as king (there

586* is only one royal power and dignity which continues to exist through the
587 various individuals invested with it) or as in law when, in spite of a change in the identity of the debtor, there is no novation. (1) [207]

1. We will return to this question in Article IX.

Because of the way the Nkundó view this substitution, the bankitsá occupies the same rank in the harem as the woman she is replacing, and she is handed over to the husband by the same ndonga who participated in arranging the initial agreement.

What evaluation should be placed on this union by substitution from the standpoint of natural law? Does it bear the taint of a real vice or does it not? The right of civil powers to break a marriage legitimately contracted is debated. (1) Let us assume that this right exists

1. At the present time the affirmative opinion has almost been abandoned by Catholic philosophers, jurists, and moralists.

and, furthermore, that the woman being substituted really consents. Her view, as well as the view of everyone around her, is that this is a matter of submitting to a family duty imposed by the laws which govern her people. One may wonder whether this requirement can be defended before basic principles of the law in general and in the light of morality. In any case the unanimous opinion of the natives that this substitution constitutes the continuation of a marriage through another person is certainly false. It is undoubtedly the result of an insufficient analysis, which leads them to lose sight of the crux of the problem by focusing primarily on the involvement of the clan in the marital union (see Article IX).

Whatever the case may be, it is possible to say without fear that in the great majority of cases a native woman submits to this law because she considers her submission an obligation which, for the good of her family, she is not permitted to escape.

[197] Moreover, the younger generation is beginning to oppose this practice. For example, here with the Sisters there is a young daughter

586ˣ 587 197 of Bofmbo, named Ngongo, who was given to Bokungɛ́ of Bongíli as a replacement for her sister Ilumbɛ́ when she was a very small child. Since she was not yet nubile she continued to live with her parents. When they became Christians, Ngongo was also baptized. On the other hand, [208] Longála, a son of Bokungɛ́, had become a catechumen and, after coming to the school, was baptized. His father yielded Ngongo to him as his future wife. Ngongo (who was now about seventeen) wanted nothing to do with this marriage. It was not that she refused to have Longála as her husband; she did not want to be married simply as a *bankitsɛ́*. She insisted on a marriage by bride price, in spite of the difficulties involved in the procedure, which was doubly useless and, for the Nkundɔ́, stupid.

587 583ˣ There is a second form of substitution: *replacement after death*. When a man has lost his wife and both he and the parents of the deceased want to maintain their alliance, he brings them 20 to 25 rings through the medium of the *ndonga* for the purpose of obtaining a new wife. This payment is called *ibɔ́leɔ́ko*, a term derived from *-bɔ́l*, "to beat" (for instance the clay in the ground) and *eɔ́ko*, "the site of a house." The Injɔ́lɔ́ designate it by a different name which however has the same meaning. It is *sangɔ́lɛ́kojɛ́*, "the inheritance of a dwelling site."

The procedure is as follows: When the widower has fulfilled all his funerary obligations and, at the end of his second visit to his parents-in-law, he is about to take leave of them, they ask him:

"Well, you're leaving. What are you planning to do now?"

He answers, "I loved your daughter very much. She is dead, and I have buried her. I have fulfilled all my duties. I have always lived on good terms with you, and I would like to continue our relationship. But first I must consult my family. Then we will see." That is how he expresses his wish to continue being their son-in-law. After asking his relatives' opinion, he returns to his father-in-law with the *ibɔ́leɔ́ko*. "Here, I bring you the *ibɔ́leɔ́ko*; I come to beat the house site; give me a wife." The father-in-law will have already chosen the daughter, sister, or other relative who is to replace the deceased and has already privately mentioned her to his son-in-law.

587 583x He hands over to him the woman intended for him, saying "Here is your wife." (1)

> 1. Among the Ekonda, the ibɔ́leɔ́ko payment has no special name. Moreover, before giving the husband a substitute, the parents require 20 to 30 additional rings which are supposed to pay for the mother's mourning and are therefore called basɛ́ki ba nyangɔ́.

For a replacement after death, as for one after a divorce, the parents-in-law will sometimes take a daughter from her legitimate husband so that she may serve as substitute.

The 20 to 25 rings comprising the ibɔ́leɔ́ko are only the beginning of the payment. A complete bride price is required, as it is for a marriage by nkumbɔ́, but the subsequent installments are not as large as for ordinary marriages. Nevertheless, the replacement is thought of as the continuation of a pre-existing union, though this concept is less apparent here than in relation to a substitution due to divorce. Consequently, in a harem the substitute assumes the same rank as was held by the deceased.

The replacement after death is made for the same reason as after a divorce.

Although the two types of replacement resemble each other in that both involve the substitution of one wife for another, there are considerable differences between them.

A substitution of another wife following divorce does not result in the payment of another bride price nor, consequently, in the standard expression of the woman's consent. But on the contrary, the payment of another bride price is required for a replacement after death, and there is a public expression of consent. It occurs when the husband pays the valuables comprising the ibɔ́leɔ́ko and is done in the same way as in a direct marriage by nkumbo. These two differences, and especially the second, make the replacement for a deceased wife a standard marriage from the legal standpoint. [210]

Article V. The Offer of a Wife

4/26
583

This type of "marital" union can be more readily and clearly explained by an example than by a long description. Suppose that a man named Eale is in need of valuables to terminate some sort of palaver (pertaining to a debt, a fine, an indemnity, a bride price to be paid, etc.). Since he has none and the matter is urgent, he borrows from Ekamba and offers him his daughter Wětsi. This offer is the means of persuading Ekamba to give the valuables Eale has requested. As a result Wětsi belongs to Ekamba, who now has a husband's rights over her. She is not a slave. She could be called a security, but that is not the name used by the Nkundó. They have a term which specifically designates this status, boóngá.

The term boóngá is used by all the tribes under discussion. (1)

> 1. Also among the Ekonda, although in keeping with the general rule of dialect variation they say bowóngá.

The Injóló alone call such a woman simply wǎji óâ njélá, "a wife that was brought," and therefore taken without a bride price and without the husband's initiative. The expression used for "to give a woman in boóngá "is kúndela Ekamba boóngá. It reveals the origin of the term. Boónga actually signifies a piece of wood, a switch. In this case the reference is to a moderately thick branch which is placed across a small well and which, when attached to another stick of a different thickness, can function as a lokolé. Kúndela is a form of kúnda ("to hit," "to strike") which expresses the relationship with an indirect object. Thus the original meaning of the expression is "to strike the boóngá in order to get someone to help." The mention, not of the lokolé, but of its substitute, is intended to express the fact that a given individual is at an impasse and is asking for the means to extricate himself from it. The matter is serious and urgent; he hasn't time to look for the proper instrument, but in [122] his haste he must be satisfied with the first means he sees by which he can call someone who might save him from his distress.

426 583 Another expression used is foma losɔ́ka, fomela N. losɔ́ka, "to strike a losaka," that is, a clapping of the hands. The idea involved is the same as above: a man who sees no way out of his difficulties is represented as clapping his hands to attract the attention of someone who can help him. His action is a call for help. Therefore the term losɔ́ka is sometimes used to designate the woman, through the same type of analogy that leads to the use of the word boóngɔ́.

Although the husband has full conjugal rights over the boóngɔ́ and her activities, she is not strictly speaking his wife. It may simply be said that she belongs to him, and the fact that she belongs to him gives him the rights of a so-called husband. He has no obligations toward her, as he would have in an ordinary marriage. Thus in the example given above, if the woman dies while living with Ekamba, her father has no claim, even if no bride-price payment has been made, because he gave his daughter to Ekamba on his own initiative. If the boóngɔ́ runs away from her owner he is entitled to a normal reimbursement of the valuables lent by him and to an additional 10 to 20 rings (or more, in proportion to the size of the loan) as damages for his loss. This supplement is due him even if he has paid a bride price to the woman's father for a legitimate marriage.

For if he loves this woman there is no reason why he cannot marry her properly. He will be especially willing to do so because as long as she remains simply a security, she is viewed with contempt and mocked by her fellows. They say, "You are not a wife, you are only a boóngɔ́; there is no difference between you and a slave, for your husband has not paid a bride price for you."

Once the bride price is paid the boóngɔ́ becomes a real wife, and all the rules of law are applicable to this [212] union, which from then on is a normal marriage in every way comparable to a marriage by nkumbɔ́. As to the loan, it is then included in the total amount of the bride price.

426 583 675 The pawning of a woman is also carried out through the mediation of a ndonga who, however, bears a special name, ndonga ɛ́â ntsíkoónda, which is literally translated as "witness of I have not asked you." He is thus contrasted with a ndonga in the usual sense for the

426 following reason: a true ndonga is designated by the husband while,
583ˣ in this instance, on the contrary, the intervention is requested by
675 the girl's father. Consequently, a man who takes a boɔ́ngɛ as security
against a loan is not obliged to recognize him as a proper official
witness. This witness is not a ndonga of a marriage, but he must
bear witness to the security agteement.

When a woman given as boɔ́ngɛ ran away from her owner, the latter attacked the ndonga and, if he found an opportunity, made him prisoner. If the matter were not settled, he could reduce the ndonga to slavery. But if he did so, he had to expect vengeance on part of the ndonga's family, although, according to the usual and legitimate norm, their vengeance should rather be directed against the man who asked for their relative's intervention. For it is he who is responsible for everything and who rightly should bear all the consequences. The exception, which sometimes really occurred, was due to the idea that "might is right" which, here as in "civilized" countries, is often true. (1)

1. This situation is not the only one in which a ndõnga ɛ̂a ntsikoońda participates. The intervention of such a person may also be required under other circumstances. For example, Esalɛ́ of Bonkoso was taken prisoner by Isia of Bongíli. Mpetsí was related to Esalɛ́ and bound by friendship to Isia. He begged the latter to give Esalɛ́ back his freedom and guaranteed the payment of the ransom; he thus became a ndonga ɛ̂a ntsikoońd. If the payment is delayed too long, Isia will take vengeance upon Mpetsí and even has the right to abduct his wife as compensation.

When a man who has received a boɔ́ngɛ wants to marry her properly he designates his own ndonga, who must fulfill [213] all the conditions required. Thus the ndonga who participates in the pawning is not the ndonga of the marriage. However, since the former has

426 participated in handing over the *boóngɛ*, he is usually allowed the
583 honor of being a supplementary witness to the chief *ndonga*.
675 Everything that has been said shows clearly that the offer of a *boóngɛ* may in no way be considered a marriage, even though it has some of the external characteristics of a marital union.

A very similar practice but one which now belongs to the past is that of offering a woman in begging for peace (*boóndo*). The following is an example from history: (1) At the time when the peoples now living in this area were still settled near the sources of the Ikelemba, there was a war between the families of Mpumo, ancestor of the Boɛ́ndɛ, and Lonyango, ancestor of the Bonkoso. The latter, defeated, called for help from the family of Bokungɔ, their *bonankɛ́nɛ* and one of the ancestors of the Bongíli. Bokungɔ's family inflicted a stinging defeat [illegible] Mpumo.

Mpumo was frightened and begged for peace, offering Bokungɔ his sister Mbɛlaka. Bokungɔ accepted. But since he liked this woman, he wanted to contract a regular marriage with her. Therefore he paid a high bride price. But as Mbɛlaka was of a good family, she declared that she did not want to go to her husband alone and insisted that her father send an *ebísa* with her. (2) Her relative Wela of Ngombe (Boímbo) was assigned to her. But the old father, wanting to show off his wealth, went even further and added a second *ebísa*, namely Euɗɛ, daughter of Bokelɛ of Bokɛtola, his maternal uncle. Finally, to complete this already ample dowry, Mpumo gave his daughter several men who were *Mpɛmɛ* (dependents) "to work the bellows in Bokungɔ's iron foundry." [214] Among them, according to the story, were Bokuka, Líkítɛ, Engota, Lofalanga, and others.

---

1. We are giving this story in detail because it is a living illustration of certain manifestations of Nkundó social life.

2. See Chapter VII, Article IV.

426 583 675 Similarly, Mpumo received Lifomɛ, daughter of Ikɔ́lɛ́ as a boɔ́ndo. Her brother, Ndyɛ̂ntíkala, ancestor of the Mbɔ́ngɛ (Liɔ́ko, Ekonda), offered her to Mpumo in asking for peace. Mpumo married her in the regular manner. In his fight against the Ekonda this same Mpumo in the same manner obtained Boɔ́ngɔ́, the sister of Bangɔ́ndɔ́ of Mpɛ́njwɛ (Wɛ̂yɛ).

Since the victor in war usually wanted to marry the woman in the proper fashion by paying a bride price, the handing over of a relative as boɔ́ndo may be compared to the practice common in Europe in the Middle Ages, when a prince would marry his daughter or sister off to a competitor or an adversary to seal the peace between them. In both cases, therefore, a kind of political marriage is involved.

Article VI. Exchange

583x 184 When they speak of the exchange of women (yenjɛ, from the verb enja, "to exchange" in general), the tribes under discussion do not all refer to the same thing. According to the situation, several types of exchange may be distinguished.

1) The pure Nkundɔ́ have a practice of exchanging daughters, sisters, relatives. This exchange is always carried out through the payment of bride price and the agency of a ndonga. Thus two regular marriages by nkumbɔ́ are involved, and the term "exchange" is only very inappropriately applied to them. The two men who give each other their sisters in marriage are each contracting an ordinary marriage according to the usual norms.

2) Sometimes the term "exchange" is applied to the practice of ikɛkelo, which is better explained through an example than by a long discussion. Suppose that Eale marries the woman Ámbɛ. Lokio, Eale's sister, [215] is married to Isia. Ámbɛ leaves her husband for one of Isia's relatives. At the first opportunity Eale detains his sister Lokio at his home, thus taking her from her husband, and since his wife Ámbɛ does not return to him, he hands his sister Lokio over to another [illegible] in marriage. Or suppose that Eale has married one of Isia's relatives, and Isia has married a relative of Eale. If one of the wives leaves her

583 x husband, he takes his own relative back and gives her away in mar-
184 riage elsewhere, using his right of ikɔ́kelo. (1)

> 1. This noun is derived from the verb kɔ́kela, "to guarantee," meaning in this case "to guarantee possession of one's bride-price valuables, one's capital."

As these descriptions show, the custom involves an exchange which is forced rather than voluntary and spontaneous. Nevertheless, it is sometimes called an exchange because it does not involve a divorce strictly speaking; there is no restitution of bride price by either party.

The two situations above therefore correspond only very inaccurately to the idea of an exchange of women. In the first instance, one cannot even speak of an exchange of wives.

3) Among the Bombwanja there is a practice which comes closer to the idea. The following is a historical example: Ikɛ́tɛ́ loves Eanga, a widow of Ekofo's father. Ekofo in turn loves Ilonga, widow of Ikɛ́tɛ́'s father. They exchange these two women, who are their wives by right of inheritance. It may even happen that Ikɛ́tɛ́, who is very fond of Eanga, gives Ekofo a woman from his own harem who loves this man. These exchanges are made without the payment of a bride price, but through the agency of the ndonga who previously participated at the first nkumbɔ́.

This is a real exchange of women. As we have seen, it may be made in two ways -- an exchange of widows or the exchange of a widow for a real wife. From the standpoint of law and justice the two situations are identical; the women exchanged belong to the men exchanging them, who are legally [216] their husbands. But only in the second instance is there an exchange of a woman who is a wife not only legally but actually, with all the rights and duties of a wife. But such a wife is given only by one of the parties. This is still not the exchange of wife for wife strictly and properly speaking.

The distinction we have made between a wife by law and a wife by fact is of some importance. Actual conjugal life introduces

585x 184 a new element from the legal standpoint. This is clearly apparent in the repugnance with which these same Bombwanja who practice the form of exchange just described regard an exchange pure and simple, which will be described below.

The exchange of widows is also practiced by the Elíngɛ. Like the Bombwanja, they also have the two forms of quasi-exchange described at the beginning of this article.

4) On the other hand, a true exchange of wives exists among the riverain peoples known as the Bodyɛ and the Longa (1); in their dialect it is called iengyɛ. Two men exchange wives. If the bride price of one is greater than that of the other, the difference is refunded. Such an exchange is carried out with the consent of the women involved.

583x 184 152 [837] Let us see how such an exchange usually comes about. Imagine two men, Bokulɔ and Mpolɛ, with their respective wives, Mbindo and Bafɔnɛ. Suppose that Bokulɔ falls in love with Bafɔnɛ, the wife of Mpolɛ, and the pair become involved in an adulterous relationship. There is a cooling of Bafɔnɛ's love for her husband Mpolɛ; she performs fewer and fewer services for him, etc. The same thing happens to Bokulɔ's relationship with his wife Mbindo. The latter is jealous; her patience is soon at an end. She discusses the matter with Mpolɛ, her rival's husband. "See how your wife deceives you; she no longer loves you. My husband is forsaking me [217] for her; he no longer loves me. This is a challenge to you as well as to me. If you are a man (1), pick up the challenge."

---

1. They live near the mouth of the Salonga (in the villages of Bonsela, Pomputɔ, Nkɔse, Bombomba, Isakɛ, etc.)

1. "Man" in the sense of vir (jwende); the meaning is: "If you have any courage, show that you are not a coward."

583x According to the native view, a man must take this woman
184 home for the sake of his honor. If he did not do so, he would be-
152 come the butt of malicious comments and scorn on the part of all,
both men and women. He would be considered a coward, just as in
European "cultured" society a man is considered a coward if he does
not pick up the glove thrown down by his adversary.

The rejected woman's hatred for her husband is transformed into a love for the man who has been similarly hurt by her rival. The joint misfortune of the pair creates a mutual feeling of affection. The woman is accepted as wife and is thus saved from dishonor. The man, on his part, feels affection for the woman who offers him her heart and preserves his good name. Harmony is at last established among all four of them, the two men arrange the matter of bride price in the way we have described, and then they live in peace without any enmity toward one another.

589x This way of handling the situation is very strange to us, be-
581 cause it is indefensible from the point of view of a sound philosophy
184 and of Catholic morality. But it seems normal to the natives. The
pagan conscience has no trouble coming to terms with it, since no
pagan law explicitly prohibits such behavior. Everyone comes to an
agreement in the end, and that is all their conscience requires.
Everything considered, there is no infraction of the rights of any
individual, and since the native mentality is not concerned with
morality as we conceive of it, this solution seems altogether natural
to them.

Nevertheless, the ethnic groups who do not practice this true exchange in no way approve of it. Not that they fail to understand the psychology underlying this practice; on the contrary, if the situation arises they accept it. But they condemn [218] the legal procedure. They require that the two marriages be broken in the regular fashion and that two new marriages be contracted. That is, they demand the restitution and payment of the bride prices through the ndonga and through the respective parents of the women. For them therefore an exchange is not a true marriage, but a sort of sale and purchase. Also, from their point of view, the women who have been exchanged are slaves and not wives, because they live with their

583 men although their first marriage has not been broken and no new
581 marriage agreement has been concluded.

184 The data given above provides no confirmation in the
[114] Nkundó tribes under study of the statement made by Engels "Les Wangata [The Wangata]," *Revue congolaise*, 1910, p. 35) that among the Wangata "her husband can exchange her . . . . she can make no protest." (1)

1. The Ekonda apply the term *lienjɛ* only to an exchange of daughters or sisters. They have a specific term: *mpɛ́ngɔ́*. Note, by the way, that certain Mbɔ́lɛ́ tribes who practice a true wife exchange designate it by the same name: *impɛ́ngɔ́*.

Article VII. Purchase

432 The purchase of women is not practiced by the Nkundó tribes
562 under discussion here nor even by the Bombwanja. The practice is to
5[illegible] be found only among the Elingɛ. What is involved is not a marriage by means of a bride price but a real purchase; that is, a man buys a woman from her husband for a certain sum. He does not go through the woman's parents, as in an ordinary marriage by bride-price payment, but addresses himself directly to the husband.

In general it is the woman who makes the proposal that a man buy her in this manner. Sometimes a man wants to take a woman and
[121] first comes to an agreement with her. Before the Europeans arrived such a situation generally led to a war between clans or villages. After an armistice the palaver was settled, and the [219] purchaser paid the husband. Nowadays, since the Nkundó no longer dare to
[117] fight because of the legal sanctions that inevitably follow, when a woman abandons her husband for another man who wants to buy her, the parties involved bring the palaver before the judges. As the woman wants only her new husband, and as, on the other hand, war and the punishment of women have been abolished, the first husband has no

586* alternative but to yield and settle the amount to be paid. (1)
432
562

> 1. This is the situation that has prevailed up to the present. The native tribunals have been given the power to punish the offenders and they are therefore obliged to decree the punishments designated. In my opinion, if the legitimate husband brings complaint, the court should decide in his favor, not only because the purchase of a woman is involved but also because there is a question of polyandry, since the marriage has not been dissolved.

432
562
583 The amount that the purchaser must pay the husband corresponds to the amount of the bride price. But since the valuables do not pass through the hands of the woman's family, the first marriage has not been dissolved. Thus the word used is not *jɛ̌ngí* but *lisɔ́mbí* (from the verb *-sɔ́mba*, "to buy"), a term applicable to any purchase. The Nkundɔ́ also say *bɔsɔ́mbana endɛ́ la njɛ́ngi*, "he makes a purchase from the husband" (literally, "from the payer of the bride price"). Instead of valuables equivalent to the bride price, the purchaser may give the husband a live woman to replace the woman purchased.

It is a common practice for the husband, in that case, to demand a second woman as well, who is a wife or relative of the purchaser, as an *ebísa* to the first. She does not have to be a real *ebísa*, that is, a relative of the first woman. She is an *ebísa* only in a very inaccurate sense. She bears a special name, *inukambɛ́nga*, "gatherer of pepper," to indicate her role as a helper serving the woman who has been handed over in payment or acquired by means of the purchase price.

Finally, the purchaser (*bosɔ́mbi*) must establish the bonds of alliance between himself and his new parents-in-law. For that purpose he makes a payment of valuables to them in addition to the original pride price. Although in practice [220] this payment

432 constitutes a bride price, it does not bear that name because its legal
562 significance is not the same. The specific name for this particular
583x payment is isongyambóka, from -songya, "to add something new"
and mbóka, "path." Thus the new husband adds a new alliance. The verb songa or songya is also used under other circumstances: for a new tile or leaf that is added on to a damaged spot on a roof, for a patch on a piece of clothing, or for something that has been newly introduced. The term therefore seems to indicate that what is involved is not a new marriage but rather a modification grafted on to the old one. Furthermore, the term is often used pejoratively. One may thus suppose that this custom is not very ancient, but of course the evidence is not sufficient.

589x It is apparent from the above that the purchase of a woman is
432 a difficult and expensive operation. A kind of second bride price
(isongyambóka) and a second wife (inukambénga) cost quite a fortune. In the past the purchaser also had to pay indemnities to the families of men killed in combat (he might have had to pay as much as 100 rings, for the price of one "corpse" was 15 to 20 bakonga, the monetary value
[626] of a man) (1). One gets the impression that, though for reasons unknown to us the tribes in question permitted the exchange of women in their laws and customs, they did so unwillingly, and that the persons in authority increased the difficulties, so to speak, in order to frighten the amateurs and to reduce the number of cases to an inescapable minimum.

One might wonder why men do not hesitate in the face of such great financial difficulties. Psychologically, it seems entirely plausible that a man who is in love with another's wife and has the necessary wealth would in his passion throw himself into such an adventure. Probably that is how the practice originated. But this likelihood does not explain the existence of a purchase, since the breaking of the first marriage and the committment to a new one could just as well be

---

[727] 1. Five dead were an enormous number in this sort of "war."

432 583x carried out by the ordinary means of the payment and restitution of a bride price.

At the present time cases of purchase are becoming increasingly 432 rare. This change is probably due to a wider distribution of wealth 589x which has produced a second change, namely that the man makes the 626 initial proposal rather than the woman, who did so according to the ancient custom.

The woman's invitation is public. The man must reply for the sake of his honor. As in the case of an exchange among the Boóyɛ́, he can only escape mockery by following through. If he did not, he would be considered a coward. He would be treated as a pariah; his wife (wives) would leave him, and he would no longer be included in the company of his fellows or at their meals.

Although strictly speaking the matter is outside the limits of this study, it seems to me that it is not irrelevant to mention, for the sake of comparison, that wife purchase is also practiced among the Ntɔ́mbɛ́ (Wañgatɛ́, Ikengo) and the Bolɛ́ngɛ́ (or Bofijí) between the Congo and the Boloko. They call it by the same name -- isɔ́mba, "purchase," and the man who buys in bosɔ́mbi, "purchaser." The woman always invites the man by sending him a piece of the ribs of a banana leaf, called a bonengɛ́. She does this publicly; she hands the bonengɛ́ to a relative or friend and says to him out loud and in front of everyone, "Take this bonengɛ́ to so-and-so for me, so that he will come and buy me."

The same custom still exists in certain Ekonda settlements [184] under the jurisdiction of the Bikoro station, such as the Lonyanyanga, Bosango, Balíngo, Babonja, etc., but not in the others, which are within the territory of the Kiri (Buli) station. It is called ehɔ́mbaka or esɔ́mbaka (the root and [222] the meaning are the same as those of lisɔ́mbɛ́ and isɔ́mba). Since these peoples are neighbors of the above-mentioned Ntɔ́mbɛ́ and of other Ntɔ́mbɛ́ living near the lake which bears their name (in a distorted form) and since, on the other hand, the rest of the Ekonda do not know this custom, we may assume that it was introduced to them by their neighbors to the north and to the west.

432 If we examine the data on the geographical distribution of
583x this custom in relation to the ethnic nature of the practicing tribes,
174 we are led to assume that it is not of Nkundɔ́ origin. The tribes that do not practice it do not approve of it among their neighbors; rather they hold them in contempt because of it, since for them a purchased woman is a slave. Thus they make fun of them saying, "They sell their women like slaves or goats." Could this be evidence that the Ntɔ́mbá-Bolɛ́ngɛ́ are not pure Nkundɔ́, or that they have been subjected to foreign influences? Would the same be true of the riverain tribes who practice the purchase of women?

Article VIII. General Conclusions

581 Having analyzed in detail the various forms of marriage and pseudo-marital unions among the Nkundɔ́, we must now make a synthesis.

Certain kinds of unions are considered legitimate marriages by the Nkundɔ́ although they differ to some degree from the standard marriage because they are adapted to special circumstances. Among these are a widow's marriage with the heir of the deceased and a marriage by replacement after a divorce. As for ourselves, we can go along with native opinion, for when these unions are concluded in the normal fashion they involve nothing which is contrary to our conception of a valid marriage. (1)

> 1. This is true of a replacement after divorce only when the dissolution of the previous marriage is legitimate and valid in every respect.

Other types of union, on the other hand, are not considered by the Nkundɔ́ [223] to correspond, or only very imperfectly, to their idea of a regular marriage. The union of a widow with a distant relative of the deceased is only a sort of legitimate concubinage. The offer of a wife as security, the exchange or purchase of women, are considered as absolutely inferior forms of union. Therefore it is better to designate these by the term "pseudo-marital unions." For although they are accepted as legitimate by the tribes among

58/ which they are practiced, they seem to be tolerated rather than approved.

Thus there is room for action on the part of the native courts against these very inferior forms of union, and in fact such action is favored in the text of the Recueil à l'usage des Donctionnaires et des Agents du service territorial du Congo belge [A Collection for the Use of Officials and Agents of the Territorial Service of the Belgian Congo], (1930 edition, p. 375).

In the lines we shall devote to an examination of the nature of Nkundő marriage, we may therefore clearly exclude these pseudo-marital unions.

Article IX. The Nature of Nkundő Marriage

Having come to this point in our study, we must make a synthesis of the principal conclusions provided by our analysis thus far and try to deduce from it an idea of the essence of Nkundő marriage.

In Bantu ethnology marriage is defined more or less as "a bond between two persons of opposite sex which creates a particular social status and economic position for the spouses and gives legitimacy to their progeny." (1) This definition is quite different from the philosophical one, which is narrower in requiring a firm contract between man and wife for a mutual handing over of exclusive rights over the body in relation to the acts of procreation.

In what respects does Nkundő marriage conform to or [224] disagree with these definitions? Or rather, what definition should we

---

1. See Recommandations pour l'étude de la famille [Recommendations for the Study of the Family], published by l'Institut international pour l'étude des langues et civilisations africaines [The International Institute for the Study of African Languages and Cultures].

581 give of Nkundó marriage, and what is its legal nature? First let us briefly recall certain facts essential to the problem by adding some observations which will appear in the pages to follow but which are indispensable here if we are to obtain a picture of the whole. Then we will try to deduce the legal basis of Nkundó marriage.

According to Nkundó law, the indispensable conditions necessary for a legitimate marriage are the following:

1) The payment of a bride price.
2) One or more qualified witnesses who act as intermediaries in this payment.

The stability of the marriage is weakened by the recognition of divorce, which is inevitable in a society like this one. But everything is done to limit its frequency -- the payment of bride price and dowry, opposition on the part of family authorities, etc. (1)

1. See Chapter VIII, Articles I and II.

The extent to which the spouses have exclusive rights to each other's bodies will be examined in Chapter VI. Let us say only that adultery is not considered lawful, although the Nkundó conception of it is quite different from our own that they permit some departures from the principle of fidelity and tolerate certain forms of license.

581/584 A very important question for our purpose is that of consent. But it is very difficult to examine because the natives relegate it to a place of secondary importance, while they stress the factor of the bride price. This should not surprise us because the material and palpable nature of the latter holds their attention more readily. (2)

2. This same observation may be made about impious Europeans with respect to legal questions and other matters.

Note first of all that for the Nkundó [225], a lack of consent never casts doubt on the validity of a marriage. One finds many women who refuse the husband for whom they are intended as replacements by invoking the fact that the bride price was not paid for them,

581 that is, that they did not consider themselves the contracting parties.
584 But to my knowledge, their opposition is not considered to invalidate
the marriage. I say "to my knowledge" because there is much confusion in the native mind on this question, and it is possible that later discoveries will show that the Nkundó attach a greater importance to consent than we perceive at the moment. As a matter of fact, the inclusion of a ceremony expressing consent in a normal marriage is an indication in that direction.

Let us now examine our data on the value of consent and its expression.

Except in an unusual case, which we are justified in leaving out of consideration in this synthesis since it does not influence our conclusions, there is always consent by the spouses in a standard marriage. Such a consent is first attained in private and then revealed to the parents, who give their approval. At the time of the first bride-price payment, the fiancée expresses her consent by a public and official act, while the husband shows his in accompanying his father in all the proceedings and in taking his intended to his home. In the eyes of the Nkundó that is entirely sufficient.

Another question arises in this connection. The consent of the couple is expressed at the time the ikulá is paid. And the real payment of the bride price occurs only later, without a renewal of consent. Can the expression of consent at the beginning, at the time of engagement, be considered sufficient, since it is virtually continuous? In my opinion there is no reason why it should not be.

In the case of a marriage by inheritance, the usual formalities
581 of the expression of consent are omitted, because [226] no new bride
584 price is paid. Nevertheless, we note that the heir must go and fetch
587 the widow from her family and make a special payment. The Nkundó explain this action as a mark of respect toward the widow's family, but we may interpret it as an expression, adapted to the particular situation, of the new husband's wish to marry this woman. The woman's willingness to accompany the heir is really a manifestation of her consent to the union. This interpretation is confirmed by the legal requirement that another bekooli payment be made by each of the

581 deceased's relatives who wishes to marry the widow, while the bride
584 price contract remains unchanged. This payment, unlike the bride-
587 price agreement, does not come from the family; it is clearly a personal act of the man who wants to take the widow for his wife.

In the case of a replacement after divorce, the external expression of consent is more vague, since it is limited to the husband's overture's to his father-in-law on the one hand, and the fact that the woman goes with the husband, on the other. The same must be said of the inheritance of a bosóló (Chapter III, Article III). It would be contrary to reality, however, to conclude that because the form of the woman's consent is less prominent, such consent does not exist; with respect to these questions, their attitude is entirely different from ours. To be a replacement is considered a duty and accepted as such. Psychologically, the acceptance of this duty often involves consent; it does not exclude the presence of the will any more than the duty to submit to holy commandments, and to religious and civil laws. Even reverent fear, the fear of punishments, etc., does not prevent a free exercise of the will, although they do diminish it. Nevertheless, there are cases where fear or constraint can be so great as to remove freedom completely. [227]

581 With respect to unions before maturity (Chapter IV), the
584 question is even more difficult. Only the engagement is made in early childhood. The husband's consent is expressed in a manner which is entirely adequate. Since the union does not move from a tentative stage to a final one before the girl approaches puberty, she may be considered capable of giving her consent sufficiently to make a valid marriage, and she gives this consent in going to the home of her husband. Nevertheless, if we compare this expression of consent with those we have observed in the other types of union, it seems very much attentuated and greatly inferior to them.

We may therefore assume that in a general way and under ordinary circumstances freedom is safe and consent is expressed in an adequate fashion.

581 Having recapitulated these facts, let us try to define the legal nature of Nkundó marriage. In ecclesiastic law and in European civil law, a marriage is effected through the official exchange of

581 mutual consent. For the Nkundó a marriage is effected through the official payment of a bride price, and to this payment is added the consent of the spouses, which is manifested more or less clearly depending on the type of union but which we have recognized as sufficient.

The bride-price and dowry payments comprise a contract between the families of the couple. This agreement between the families is considered by the Nkundó to constitute a marriage. For them the consent of the couple is secondary -- an attitude which is quite natural, considering the limitations of their analysis, as we have already seen. In European civil law, in addition to the legitimate exchange of consent which constitutes the marital union, there exists an explicit or tacit marriage agreement or contract by which financial questions are settled; it is only secondary to the marriage. The attitude expressed by this law is thus the very opposite of that taken by the Nkundó. [228]

Nevertheless, although our natives consider consent as altogether secondary in constituting a marriage, we can examine this question thoroughly and make a legal analysis of it; however, we must base our conclusions solely on facts observed.

The manifestation of the spouses' consent to a marriage is essentially a real contract from the legal standpoint and may be termed a conjugal pact: they express their desire to be united in marriage and do so in the manner prescribed by law. The fact that the Nkundó attribute a secondary importance to this contract does not destroy its reality.

Therefore, whatever the relative importance attached to them by the Nkundó, we can say with certainty that their marital union includes in reality two components: the bride-price agreement and the conjugal pact or expression of consent.

In ethical natural law marriage is a contract between the spouses: their consent is what constitutes the marriage. For the Nkundó, on the contrary -- at least according to their statements, explanations, etc. -- a man and woman become husband and wife through the payment of a certain portion of the bride price. If they

58| made a thorough analysis of the question, they would find a categorical opposition between their system and the philosophical and legal nature of marriage. But a pact of consent does in fact exist -- though to our people it is secondary -- and it constitutes an integral element in the complex of acts and ceremonies which comprise their marriage agreement. Therefore their marriage conforms to the philosophical definition.

How should we picture the relationship between the conjugal pact and the bride-price agreement? I think that if we go to the legal basis of the matter, we can make the following statement: Nkundó spouses give their [229] consent to a union such as they conceive of it; they want to become husband and wife according to the practices which are prevalent in their community and the rules prescribed by their law. They express their willingness to conform to these rules and practices. In a marriage by *nkumbó*, the union is first tentative (the engagement) and then, after the payment of the *walo*, final. It is as if the spouses-to-be said, "We want to be husband and wife, and we will actually become husband and wife as soon as our respective families carry out the essential portion of the bride-price agreement." This agreement is a kind of necessary condition for the marriage contract but, in their limited analysis, the Nkundó explain it as the sole element constituting the marriage. From the legal standpoint the ultimate consent of the engaged pair depends on the subsequent fulfillment of the bride-price agreement. The situation is basically the same with respect to premature unions. For other forms of marriage we can adopt an identical interpretation, *mutatis mutandis*. Thus in the case of inheritance the heir and the widow add their consent to the pre-existing and continuing bride-price agreement. And the case of a replacement does not differ from the preceding instances.

It is possible to raise the objection that the Nkundó do not consider inheritance and replacement as new marriages, but rather as continuations of a union which persists in spite of a change in the spouses as individuals. The answer to that objection is implicit in the principles stated above. For, because of the obvious inadequacy of their analysis, they do not perceive the existence of a contract of

581 consent; they do not distinguish between this conjugal pact which changes and the bride-price agreement which alone persists. And since for them the bride-price agreement is essential, while the conjugal pact is secondary, they pay attention only to the former. Thus we can legitimately interpret their statements on the nature of unions by inheritance and by replacement [230] as referring to the bride-price contract. Thus the fact that each relative of the deceased who wishes to marry the widow must make an individual payment (bekooli), while the clan contract continues unchanged demonstrates the effective reality of the distinction between the familial bride-price agreement and the individual conjugal pact.

To summarize all these considerations: we think that we are justified in giving the following definition: Nkundó marriage is a conjugal contract between a man and a woman which is firm in itself and is linked to a bride-price agreement of prescribed nature and formalities between their families.

Therefore we can conclude that the essential nature of Nkundó marriage conforms to the definition of that institution in general as given in ethics and that it fulfills all the necessary conditions. (1)

(1) I am very grateful to Attorney General A. Sohier for having, in a very specific way, drawn my attention to the legal aspect of this question and having thus suggested that I make a thorough investigation of it.

[231] Chapter IV. The Age of the Bride and Groom

582 The Nkundó may marry at any age. Their law contains no stipulation on the subject. Nevertheless, it was customary in the past for a girl to be married very young, while the boys could not take a wife until they had reached a really advanced age. Nowadays the time of marriage for the ever increasing number of girls and for the boys has been pushed forward almost universally. Let us examine the situation in detail, distinguishing between the sexes.

Article I. Girls

584 According to Nkundó custom it is acceptable for an expected child, not yet born or still very young, to be promised in marriage to X or Y. This practice was formerly very common and is still quite prevalent today. It is called *banda bǒna* or *bǒmoto*, literally, "to count a child" or "to count a woman." The *ikulá* is paid at the time of the promise. Later the matter is carried out in the usual fashion; the other parts of the bride price are paid either while the fiancée is young or, preferably, at the time when she goes to her husband.

584 855 Until that time, if one of the girl's relatives is already a wife of a polygamist husband-to-be or of one of his relatives, the child is brought up in her husband's family from a fairly early age, depending on the circumstances. She lives with her relative. She may be barely seven or eight years old, for example. If no one in her husband's clan can take care of her, [232] she spends only one or two weeks there to become acquainted, little by little, with people and places; she repeats the visit from time to time. Her mother accompanies her, for being so young she could not get used to being there alone, without support, without her parents. Therefore it is necessary to wait till she is old enough to be somewhat independent and able to manage by herself. That time usually comes around the [145] beginning of puberty, thus sometime between the ages of twelve and fifteen.

584 833 Like an adult woman, she is already called *bompáka* or *wǎlí*, depending on the portion of the bride price that has been paid. She has all the duties and privileges of a wife: sexual relations, food preparation, care of the household, etc. There is no set date or age for the beginning of cohabitation. This matter is settled between the husband and his parents-in-law. The latter do not have the right to [606] delay the time, even if their daughter is still too young, but they can make use of their great influence over their son-in-law. The modern [178] [571] generation is not shocked by sexual relations between an adulterer [sic] and a girl who has not reached puberty. Besides, all is in order from the legal standpoint; since the man has paid the bride price, he is the

584 833 legitimate husband and is entitled to his wife. Everything depends on his personal attitude, his passion, or his respect for the body of his young wife. If he is reasonable he will be very careful during his relations with her or will abstain altogether, so as not to "damage" her body. But from the legal standpoint he may do as he chooses. Thus there are adults who have regular relations -- one way or another -- with a wife whose breasts are not in the least developed. In such cases marital relations take place before nubility. (1) The consequences with respect to the birth rate may easily be guessed. [233] It may also happen that the husband himself has not reached puberty. This fact presents no obstacle to cohabitation. As soon as he feels that he is a man, he builds his hut and the couple live there together. In all these cases the girl often goes to her parents' home, and sometimes her visits extend for weeks during which she does not see her husband.

Formerly things did not work out in this fashion. The young wife often refused to participate in the sexual act, especially if the husband was considerably older than she. Her reaction was due to her natural modesty and timidity, together with her education. A polygamous husband usually respected her feelings, till she gradually came around. When her normal physiological development was completed and her love reached a sufficient intensity, she would begin to follow her instincts. In the light of what was said in Chapter I, Part 2, Article IV, 2, A, we may readily accept our informants' statements on this score; the situation seems altogether natural.

---

[882] 1. Note that the immature girl is not called *filingo* in Nkundó, as Engels ("Les Wangata," *Revue congolaise*, 1910, p. 36) maintains. This word is but the Nkundó transformation of the word *virgo*. There is no specific term for "prepubescent." A girl who is not yet a woman but is no longer a child is called *itembeleke*.

584
572 When an engagement is arranged for an expected child, the events may betray the hopes of the parents; and the child for whom the ikulā has been paid may turn out to be a boy. This mischance is dealt with in the following manner: either the suitor waits for the birth of a girl, or an alliance of friendship and mutual assistance (boseka, see Chapter I, Part 1, Article III) is established between him and the newborn child. Such an alliance is called liāla jǎ jwende, "the marriage of men," (matrimonium viri). In no case is restitution made for the ikulā that has been paid. If the friendship between the two men remains unbroken later, it results in the marriage of the daughter of the man for whom the ikulā was paid before his birth, to the man who paid it or to his son or grandson. No new ikulā is paid for such a marriage; the payment of the bride price simply has to be completed in the usual fashion.

584 A man may acquire a young child for himself, or for a son, a younger brother, etc. In the past the former was more frequently the case, for the old men kept the women for themselves and wanted [234] to benefit from having them before leaving them to the youths as inheritance. But the latter situation also arose.

The purpose [of obtaining a young child as wife for a relative] was to prevent inexperienced youths who were not able to defend themselves from being deprived of the means of obtaining a wife should the father die prematurely and the heirs monopolize the harem and bride-price valuables to their own profit, which theoretically they have a right to do. This practice is thus a means of favoring a son or other relative by furnishing him with a wife earlier than is customary. Nowadays this is even a stronger reason than in the past, because boys marry earlier than formerly. [178]

Other reasons for obtaining a child as a wife are involved in the two above-mentioned instances. There is a greater certainty of getting one's money's worth; valuables can disappear for various reasons during long unproductive years.

584
855 But the most fundamental reason, in my opinion, is the one very often invoked by the Nkundō, namely the opportunity of personally attending to the future wife's education. There is no

584 855 question but that it is in the husband's interest to take care of it himself. He can accustom her from childhood on to special circumstances, to the laws of the clan, to the particular habits (virtues, faults, way of living, etc.) of his family, his wives, and, last but not least, himself. He can mold her according to his tastes and desires. Enormous advantages result from his success in doing so. This does not mean that he takes care of her personally, for he knows he is not a born educator. He therefore usually prefers to hand this [593] task over to his mother (or aunt or sister), who enjoys this obligation and likes to help her son and to participate directly and intimately in his household.

584 572 A childhood engagement between their respective offspring often results from an alliance between "friends." If the children later on do not want the marriage, that is all there is to it. Restitution of payments is made, or a substitution is arranged. Such a situation arose while this book was being written. [235] At least twenty years ago, Lokóta of Bolíngo and Insílo of Bonjoku made a bond of friendship (boseka). The former begot a boy (Ituwó), the latter a girl (Lokoku). The parents arranged the engagement of their children by means of the ikulá payment. When Ituwó grew old enough to marry, he had no desire to marry Lokoku, for his heart was taken by another. But he had a younger brother, Itoko, who had affectionate feelings for Lokoku. Ituwó explained the situation to his mother (since his father had died in the interim), and she resumed the relationship with Insílo. They all came to an agreement without difficulty. Itokó therefore married Lokoku in place of his elder brother, after paying the bride price for her.

584 If a little girl is not satisfied with the union that has been arranged she is free, according to the rules of law, to break it -- and not simply by failing to give her consent. Note that in such a case the husband is not entitled to any compensation for having raised this child.

In spite of the advantages involved in childhood unions, they should be rigorously held in check, since the affections often stray from bonds formed at such an early age. More should be done to

584 safeguard freedom, and the impression should not be given that childhood unions are encouraged -- as it sometimes is -- by the exemption of immature wives of polygamists from a supplementary tax.

There is no law requiring an elder sister to be married before a younger one, but such is the common practice. Exceptions are made only under certain circumstances, and particularly if the younger girl finds a suitor earlier than the older one, a reason which includes and sums up all the others (such as disadvantageous physical and psychological tendencies of the older sister).

178
584 This practice of marrying daughters off before maturity is beginning to change because of the increase in freedom which has been introduced by colonization. Nevertheless, as this change is not especially advantageous [236] its manifestations are still very slight. The Christian education of parents must of necessity delay the time of the daughter's marriage and will do so ipso facto as soon as Christian influence becomes sufficiently strong in the region.

Article II. Boys

582 Except in the rare instances of an engagement of two young children, it was formerly the common and normal practice for men to remain bachelors for many years after puberty. The old men tended first to their own wants, and the youths had to wait their turn, like their elders. This was considered entirely natural. Later on they could establish a home and "profit" from life. Meanwhile they found a little compensation with the wives of certain relatives or of others, if the opportunity arose.

592
561 To explain this state of affairs we can invoke the political organization of Nkundó society, which is based on age. It is therefore natural that those possessing authority should have its external [556] signs, and one of the foremost of these is the wealth manifested in the possession of wives. But, as we will point out later, the present situation greatly weakens this explanation.

582
585 It is more natural to consider the delay in the marriage of young men a logical consequence of the marriage of girls at an early age. Suppose that a boy is fifteen years old while his sister,

582 whose bride price will fall to him, is only three. At that age, she
583 is married. The children's father is in a hurry to use the capital he has received, small as it is, rather than to let it lie unproductive and run the risk of losing it one day for some reason or other. Therefore, he uses it to obtain a wife, often a child, for himself or his brother. Thus the boy is deprived of the means which would enable him to establish a home when he attains adulthood. He will have to wait till he can acquire new wealth, either through his own work, or thanks to the assistance of [237] various relatives, or through the death of his father or his uncles, or -- frequently -- from the bride price of a daughter to be born to his sister's nkita. In the last instance, which formerly occurred very often, he was obviously forced to wait many years. Thus in the example cited in Chapter II, Article X, had the events occurred a few decades earlier, Bakutu would have had to wait for the bride price of his cousin Wǎngi, who was a good twenty-five years younger than he. If he had then been given the first part of the bride price, he would probably still have had to wait over ten years before becoming a husband in the full sense of the word, because the ikulɛ would have been used for an engagement with a very young child. More probably he would have been considered too young; the bride price would have been used for the benefit of another, and he would have had to wait another indeterminate number of years. Once the practice of marrying girls when they are small children is accepted, there is no other way out; everything is linked, and the result is inevitable, given the mentality of this society.

582
428
585
The elders' power to act in this way to their own advantage stems from the collective nature of the people's inheritance system (Chapter II, Article X and XI, 3, B). A bride price goes to the family; the right of the individual members is not personal or exclusive but is derived from their position in the hierarchy within the group.

Nevertheless, the fact that a man may claim priority to the bride price of his uterine sister over a brother born of a different mother seems to indicate that he originally held the chief rights to these valuables. The exercise of this right is postponed, and the concomitant transfers result.

582 We have spoken of the unproductivity of the bride price.
583x This is a Nkundó notion, and it is accurate only because the old men want to satisfy themselves before their sons. Actually, they could very easily reconcile their desire that the bride price should be productive with the aspirations of the youths, at least in many instances. All they would need to do would be to use the valuables they have received for their sons' benefit by acquiring girls of the same age for them. The productivity of the valuables would not diminish [238] in the least, of course, since the goods would remain in the family. On the contrary, it would be increased because a
[842] greater number of progeny would probably be born. But our natives knowledge of physiology does not seem to be sufficiently developed
[181] for them to come to this conclusion. And even more probably their egoism has greatly clouded their intelligence and silenced the voice of good sense and fatherly love to make it possible for them to multiply the number of their wives and thus increase the easy satisfaction of their sensuality, augment their wealth, and reinforce their social position. It will be their sons' turn after their death.

561 This situation is aggravated by the fact that, except for the
428 bosólo, the brothers, not the sons, of the deceased inherited the
595x widows, who thus remained in the hands of the old men.

582 Because of their attitudes the old men monopolized most of the women. They established large harems for themselves, so that it was very difficult for the young men to find a woman to marry; they had to consider themselves lucky if their father provided them with a child.

Thus it was unheard of that a young man between twenty and
582 thirty years old should marry, except for a few instances where a
178 man acquired a child who was to become his wife after a number of years. Men were usually forty years old or older before they married.

Nowadays the situation has changed entirely; the attitude of the old men favors the young much more and has become almost normal. The great majority of fathers, if they have the means, procure a wife for their sons as soon as the latter are old enough to express a desire for one. This improvement is due to the fact that it has become

582 178 much easier to get married. A great number of young men who would still be bachelors had they lived under the old regime now have wives. The young people leave home to go and work for the Whites, and the parents feel sorry for their sons and do not want to see them leave without a wife [239] to take care of them and prepare their food. This feeling has dealt the old custom a severe blow. And even for the young men who stay at home, it is no longer so difficult to obtain a wife. Paternal love has here triumphed over egoism.

Furthermore, the elders have been forced to take a more humanitarian attitude because, since the European occupation has given the young women a new freedom, they have abandoned their husbands and fled to the centers where, under the protection of the Whites, they have joined lovers who are as young as they. Therefore, it was much more intelligent to obtain a wife for their sons in an honest fashion rather than to expose themselves to loud palavers by the abandoned husband.

From all the preceding description it is clear that the man was considerably older than his wife. But because of the inheritance of widows it also happened -- and still happens -- that a man acquired wives who were older than he. When young men marry at the present time, many wives are definitely younger than their husbands; many adolescents have received prepubescent little girls for wives.

As a general rule a Nkundó woman does not like her husband to be much older than she, and she likes it even less if he is younger. Nowadays unions between persons of the same age increase continually. This increase is due more to the remarriage of divorcées, who prefer husbands of their own generation to the old men who first paid for them, than to first marriages between equals. The influence of Christian couples is called upon to play a great educational role in normalizing the situation of the girls.

561 582 The boys must marry in turn, according to age, because of the seniority rule which regulates social relations. That is the rule, but it may be mitigated by the application of another rule, namely the one pertaining to the direct or indirect rights to a sister's bride

582 561 price. The rights of a polygamist's sons over their sisters' bride prices are not absolutely equal [240]. One of them can oppose the decision that one of his brothers, born of a different mother not related to his, should benefit from the bride price paid for his uterine sister. His right will incontestably prevail. But if he has other sisters, it is his duty out of brotherly love to help his less fortunate brother. If both of them have uterine sisters, there may be an exchange of bride-price rights which will hurt no one. Finally, if only the younger brother has a sister, his right to her bride price is precisely defined and personal, and it may therefore happen that he marries before his elder brother. But unless the mother is absolutely opposed to any such arrangement, an attempt is usually made to settle the matter in a friendly fashion by assigning the future bride price of a niece or cousin to the younger brother. The rules as we have explained them hold absolutely only for the present time. They also existed in the past, but the delay in the sons' marriages, as described above, resulted in a transferring of rights which could completely upset this order. Since, in practice, many men began their married lives after the death of their fathers or uncles, thus with inherited wives, the elder brothers benefited from the rules before the younger ones did. (1)

593 x 579 Lastly, the eldest son may be deprived of his rights for certain reasons, such as a serious failure in his duties of respect and submission to his father. To punish him his father may curse him publicly, declare that he has lost his position as eldest son, and forbid him to acquire a wife. This practice is no longer common today; it would have little effect, for the young man would go and seek his fortune elsewhere. But history has left us some examples like that of Ikété ya Lonkinja, the first-born son of Ikété Elongama éâ Longómbá, the ancestor of the Bombénga wĭ Bokenda family (Besombó).

---

1. See also Chapter II, Article X.

Chapter V. Obstacles to Marriage

M 582 There is no specific term in Lonkundo for an "obstacle to marriage." General terms are used, as in our European languages.

Our people make no distinction between obstacles which nullify a marriage and those which are prohibitive in nature. Therefore, we will simply speak of obstacles without making any distinctions among them.

Article I. "Race"

M P 592 593 The question of a diversity of races can be considered only with reference to the Batswá. Marriages with them are strictly forbidden. Nkundó rules of behavior are very strict with respect to relations between Baotó and Batswá. It is unheard of that opposite sexes of the two races should mingle, even for a simple conversation. There would then obviously be no question of marriage.

M P 587 588 Among the Bilángi, a Batswá tribe of the Injóló of the Salonga-Luilaka (who absolutely refuse to be called Batswá or Balímbe), there have been two cases of such unions to my knowledge. Two Baotó women were involved, both, by a singular coincidence, from Lotángonda (Injóló, Engónjó). One was Njalí, daughter of Yole and sister of Lomélé, the other Nsombola, sister of Limpema.

Njalí was taken in marriage by Bakao of Ikindatói. She wanted children desperately and, not having had any by her two successive Nkundó husbands, she ran away to the Bilángi in hopes of having better luck there. [242] She was not disappointed in her expectations. She gave birth to four sons: the eldest, Bonkono, who died some years ago; Bakao (Georges), who died in 1933; two sons, Bonkoré (Louis) and Joke (Henri), who are still alive. In 1933 the descent of the four numbered thirteen sons, six daughters, four grandsons, and one granddaughter. But there was never a legitimate marriage between Bakao and Njalí since no bride price was paid. And the descent have formed a small Bilángi clan, which is dependent on the grandmother's clan (Ilongó of Lotángonda).

P
M
565
578 The second case is somewhat more recent. It occurred at the beginning of the European penetration of the area. During the general upheaval at that time, the natives of Bosóka village (Bilángi of Lingonja) took advantage of the absence of many adult men whom the soldiers had taken on an expedition against the Mbole. They were able to capture a woman named Nsombola and take her home with them. She loved one of the men of Bosóka, and after many years, he "purchased" her for the price of two slaves. She lived there happily until quite recently, when she was overcome with a desire to return to her own race. (She leaves no descendants.)

In this second instance, then, the Nkundó bowed to the woman's wishes and, in accepting a bride price for Nsombola, gave in to the inevitable. This example shows that they can be flexible in their customary requirements if the situation warrants it.

Nevertheless, there have been no admirers or imitators of these exceptional cases, and the opposition against unions between the two races remains firm. Mixtures are not desired. The position which the hybrid family of Bakao occupies in the village of Lotángonda is highly significant. For it is an exception to the rule applicable to such cases, namely, that a child who has no legitimate father is incorporated into his mother's clan. The descendants of Bakao and Njalí are dependents of Lotángonda and are a part of it politically, but [243] they are not included in the kin group. For they have inherited a Bilángi nature from their father, and therefore, contrary to the logic usually applied, they have not become relatives of their ancestress. Here, too, the "racial principle" has prevailed against common law.

P
M
[851]

P
M
563
588
595 Nor does one hear of temporary relationships or concubinage between them. I know only of one instance; its outcome was not happy, and it did not invite imitators. It happened around 1913. A certain polygamist, Lokóta of Bokeke (Bombwanja) fell in love with the wife of Bonkingó, who at the present time is headman of Bosáola (Batswá of Ntómbá, Bombwanja). He became the laughing stock of the entire region, but because of his love, it did not deter him. In his own household, however, the situation was more serious. One of his wives (Ambángela) soon left him. The others refused him their bodies

P
m
563
588
[595] and prepared for divorce. Consequently, Lokōta was obliged to give up his unreasonable love, and in the end everything was set to rights. (1)

1. No children were born as a result of that relationship.

Instances of mixing have occurred because of colonization, outside the usual environment, between Batswá and members of tribes which are not acquainted with this race. At the Bokūma Mission there lives a Botswa woman of the Ekonda who was taken away by foreign soldiers and had two children by a Mbole man. These children are held in contempt by both the Baoto and the Batswá in the vicinity, and they will only be able to marry if they settle in their mother's clan. . . .

In the veterans' village of Ingende there lives a Botswa of Boūlama (Bombwanja) who married an Urundi woman while he was a soldier in the war. She probably did not know her husband's race. They came to this region, and the marriage has proved to be excellent, and the wife has always remained deeply attached to her husband. Their five children are not treated with the slightest contempt. Their situation would undoubtedly [244] be different if they lived in truly native surroundings, where they would certainly be incorporated into the Batswá.

P
178
565
598 The introduction of the Batswá into the economic life of the Europeans and their training in its may favor, and result in, a mixing of the races. The wealth thus placed within their reach may serve to seduce some of the more lascivious or greedy Baoto women, particularly those who always hang about the centers, camps, and markets and in whom vice has extinguished all feelings of propriety and honesty. The danger increases when Batswá bachelors are hired as laborers for some purpose and sent far from home to do their work, especially if the proportion of married men in the group is insufficient.

P
178
164
563
588 This is not a description of an existing situation -- for the barrier between the two races is still impassable -- but of a possibility that is not out of the question, as an occurrence in 1932 would indicate. The

P
178 doctor who was in charge of the dispensary at Flandria at that time
588 informed me of the case of a Botswa fruit harvester in the service of
563
164 the H.C.B. who had syphilis of unquestionably sexual origin.

M
Though a racial difference constitutes an obstacle to marriage,
582 a tribal or ethnic one does not. Where the geographic situation permits, true Nkundó, such as the Elíngá, marry members of neighboring groups such as the Ngombe, the Mbole, or the Ekonda.

Article II. Social Status

M
Among the Nkundó a difference in social status is not an
554 obstacle to marriage. They have no social classes strictly speaking.
582 They differentiate between those with authority, those who are in-
[565] feriors, and the individuals or families who are not entitled to their
[571] word in political matters; but these ideas do not come into play in ordinary social relations, [245] and especially not with respect to marriage. A person may belong to a clan which is inferior, subject, dependent, foreign, or descended from a slave; nevertheless he may marry even a member of the group's senior clan. These distinctions are in the realm of politics; a marriage is a matter of law, affection, and good relations based on the payment of a bride price.

M
Actual slaves are an exception, but here a distinction must
567 be made between the sexes. Unions with slave women were very
582 common, but they were not marriages strictly speaking. Before a real marriage was entered into, the woman was set free. More details on this subject will be given in Chapter VII, Article V. For men the situation is altogether different. The condition of a slave was not only inferior, it was dishonorable, though a bit less so than among the Ancients. It might be overlooked if the love between the pair was unusually ardent, and there are a few clans descended from a "free" woman and a slave man, who were united in a proper and legitimate marriage for which the master paid the bride price.

There is no longer any opposition to the union of a "free" person with the descendant of a mixed marriage. The children may always claim kinship with their maternal ancestors who in these

582
567 matters are more important than the father's ancestry. (1)

[554] 1. Among the Nkundó no shame is attached to not knowing the family of one's father. But not to be able to name the mother's clan is a great dishonor for it proves that she was a slave.

There is less opposition to the first generation born of a couple who were both slaves than for their parents, and it progressively decreases with each succeeding generation. There is practically no opposition now to the grandsons. The reason seems to be that although receiving a wife from one's master in a regular marriage does not constitute emancipation (nsikó, nsikola) for the slave, [597] it is a kind of adoption (wěmya, -émya). [246]

Article III. Kinship

582
835 Marriage between members of the same kin group (isangano, bosangema, from the verb -sangema, "to be related") is forbidden. But how far does such a kin group extend? It is impossible to give a general rule. On the one hand, it is certain that if two groups are not descended from a common ancestor there is no bond of kinship between them, even if they live side by side. But on the other hand, it is not possible to say that all those who are descended from the same ancestor are relatives and that marriage is forbidden between the various branches of the grouping they comprise. The question therefore amounts to knowing by which ancestor the exogamous grouping is defined. A decision on this point may only be made through the examination of each case individually.

614 It is impossible to deduce anything from the meaning of the term clan, for it is usually defined as "a grouping of families united to one another by kinship." This leaves us back where we started. The characteristics usually given for a clan are: generic name,

614 totemic bond (1), collective responsibility, and exogamy, and do not provide a solution either. For the elements of this definition must be complementary to one another to provide an adequate intension, and it is impossible to determine the limits within which they operate among the Nkundó.

Thus we would have to make a list of all the groupings of these people and examine them in order to find out which ones correspond to the idea of an exogamous clan. And this is not feasible. Nevertheless, for the sake of illustration, here is the genealogy of the Bongíli:

Their ancestor Tólenjou had two sons, Iloko and Bokungá, and a daughter, Ǎmbá, by one wife. By two other wives he had Eángá, father of the Ikengya, and Efoloko, father of the [247] Bolénge. Iloko's progeny gave rise to the villages of Ifutó, Mbángé, and Lofelí; Bokungá's progeny to Boambá (and Ifoku), Ndongó, Bolongwankoi, Etoóntálé, Bontálé, Lokónola (part of Imomo), and Betoló l'Ibela (whose people live with the Boambá). Through Ǎmbá there originated the villages of Elángá, Imomo, and Eleke (the latter together with Bolongwankoi from the village of Lonkongo).

Tólenjou
|
Bokungá
|
Bengóngó
|
Enkéké
|
Longwokó
(died at a very old age in 1933)

---

1. Totemism does not seem to exist among the Nkundó. In any case it is not apparent here as it is elsewhere.

614 Thus we have five groups which are exogamous; marriage is forbidden within each group, but not with members of the other groups. The little genealogy above gives some idea of the antiquity of the line and of the distance which separates its present members from the founding ancestor of the tribe. It should be noted that each exogamous group is subdivided into several villages, clans, and families. The same limits appear to be set with respect to the maternal line; marriage with the descendants of brothers and sisters of the ancestress, wife of the ancestor of the exogamous grouping, is forbidden. (1)

1. Note that lonkâna relations are practiced within each of the five exogamous groups, but not between the descendants of the same ancestress, wife of one of the ancestors, and of her bibísa. See Chapter I, Article VII, 1.

In investigating this subject the family of the ancestress must be taken into account as well as the paternal line.

In order to be able to define an exogamous group precisely, it is therefore necessary to study not only several villages, but also various tribes. For a single group may be composed of several families who live far from each [248] other and have sometimes become attached to groupings of people who are only very distantly related or even complete strangers. In such a case therefore a single village may include several exogamous groups.

614
621
Such is the case of the Bɔ́endɛ́, descended from the ancestor Ilumbɛ́ yǎ Mpumo. From his first wife, Eúmɛ́, arose the Etɔ́o groups, from his other wives, the Bongangá groups. They do not marry among themselves but are a good example of a complex composition.

The Etɔ́o are dispersed in four villages:

1) Etɔ́o of Lotɔ́lá
2) Etɔ́o of Bakovɔ́ or Mbúlanɛ́ne, both Basɛ́ká Bombɔ́ngo
3) Etɔ́o of Mbɛ́mbɛ́ or Basɛ́ká Bofííyolo
4) Etɔ́o of Bosánjo or Basɛ́ká Eɔ́ngo

614 621 The Bongangá are divided as follows:

1) Bongangá, in the narrow sense of the term (Basékå Inanó, B. Bolaká, B. Bongéngé, B. Bandúwá, B. Lokókómyá)

2) Bongangá of Bakoyó, or Bolíma

3) Bongangá of Mbómbé or Basékå Botúna

Thus Lotólá, Bakoyó, and Mbómbé each have an Etóo group and a Bongangá group. The Bongangá, in the narrow sense of the term, have in addition a "slave" group named Batsína, a part of which is located with the Bosánjo. A foreign clan is settled with the Etóo of Lotólá; they are the Bofalambóka, descendant of a man named Ekonda (Imbolo) and his sister who was married to Mbete, a slave from Bompángá (Wǎngatá) who was freed by his master.

Many villages have foreign groups living with them such as descendants of slaves (*ekwála*), or others (Ekonda, Bombwanja, groups related by marriage called *likilo*, *mpámá* or *bowélé*, and *mbúsolá*, (1) etc.). [249]

[609] 1. *Mpámá* or *bowélé* are any foreigners who were formerly invited by the group patriarch to remain with him in order to carry out certain tasks, especially metal-working. *Mbúsolá* is the term applied to a child born to a woman out of wedlock (Chapter I, Part 2, Article IV, 3). Such children are also called *nkio y'ǎóme*, "the husband's flying dogs," because they are not his own children but are attached to their mother's husband in the fashion of these animals, who attach themselves to trees when they sleep.

[848] [825]

614 582 If we add the descendants of relatives who have married into other more or less remote groupings, the prohibition against marriage on account of kinship applies to a good many people. In accordance with the law of exogamy, such a kin group may be widely dispersed geographically, and it is understandable that it is not always easy to

M
614 untangle all the threads. Thus it happens that young people form
582 relationships with the intention of marrying without knowing that they are related; they are warned only by the opposition and ensuing explanations of the elders.

We may conclude that marriage among descendants of a common ancestor is generally prohibited if they live in the same village. It is frequently permitted on the other hand, if they belong to different villages, provided that they are not, at the same time, related to one of the ancestresses.

M Clearly, it is difficult to say what precise degree of kinship
582 formed the basis for the prohibition of or permission for a marriage
835 between descendants of a common ancestor, or what are the boundaries of an exogamous grouping.

It is also apparent from the preceding observations -- as
M from the examination of affinity as an obstacle to marriage -- that
[611] the descent from a common mother is a more important factor than descent from the father. This does not give proof of a form of matriarchy, though it could be the remains or the beginning of one,
M or could provide a partial explanation for one. It stems quite simply
[842] from the Nkundó notions concerning procreation, in which they
M attribute the major role to the mother. There is also the fact that
[602] greater shame is attached to being united with a person descended
M from the same woman, and finally the fact that they feel a stronger
[593] affection for the mother than for the father (a sentiment [250] which is accentuated by polygamy). The three causes are closely related.

M Finally, it should be noted that there is a group among the
184 Nkundó we are discussing which is less strict than the others in this
582 matter. The relatives among whom marriage is prohibited is definitely more limited; that is, their exogamous groupings are more limited. The people in question are the Bongale (see Introduction), and the same phenomenon may be observed among the Elingá. (1)

P
[582] 1. The Batswá are still more liberal, and in this respect their practices differ very little from ancient European laws and customs.

684
582 There is no sanction against the infraction of the law of exogamy. There is only the opposition of the parents and patriarchs, and a quasi-innate habit.

582
614 Note also that members of certain clans frequently marry members of certain others, among whom they prefer to choose their wives. Therefore a good proportion of the women married into any given family will belong to one particular clan. The Wafé (Bakâala), for instance take a great many of their wives from among the Bongale w'ôtóló.

[174]
582
614 We may reasonably assume that the ancestors of related groups, who now marry among themselves, formerly practiced exogamy. If this assumption is correct, it must be admitted that with the progressive growth of families, this rule has been relaxed in certain respects so that the present situation has resulted. Consequently, it would not be surprising if these legal provisions became even less rigorous in the future. Actually, some young people have begun to [178] violate the rules of exogamy and their example has freed the whole family. (2) Thus the Bokâtola maintain that their two groupings,

2. See Chapter I, Article VII, 1.

Bompela and Ilóngé, who now intermarry, formerly comprised a [251] single exogamous entity. Contemporary instances appear here and there, but they remain very rare, even between persons who are very distantly related, and much rarer between close kin. (1) For the

1. A recent case was that of Elímâ and Bolófe, who both belonged to the exogamous group of Bokenyola of the Bonjoku, but one belonged to the Basékâ Bokóyó family and the other to the Basékâ Njoli.

Nkundó still feel very strongly about this law. The bulk of the people are entirely opposed to any laxity or violations and the patriarchs and notables act against them with all their power. But the strength of

582 614 their intervention is greatly reduced by the fact that much of their authority has been shifted to the chiefs named by the colonial administration, and also by all the contingencies of modern life. Since on the other hand, the young people are gradually breaking the ancient limits in order to acquire greater freedom, the elders will one day have to yield to them.

Article IV. Affinity

582 602 Affinity among the Nkundó should not be understood to have the meaning given in European civil or ecclesiastic law. Marriage is forbidden with all persons who are bakiló (Sing. bokiló). (2)

2. Contrary to the statement by Father Kaptein (Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 541).

Therefore one must know what persons are called bakiló, a fairly complicated problem for us Europeans.

To make the matter more understandable, certain considerations must be developed before giving the general rules.

1. General considerations

1) Affinity is not as great an obstacle to marriage as kinship. It is possible to obtain a sort of "dispensation," and for many degrees of affinity, divorce or death removes the barrier. But there are transgressions [252], and, except for the few indicated above, these do not occur in cases of kinship.

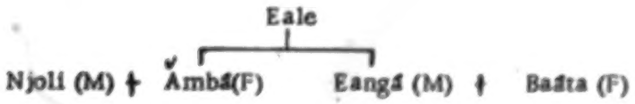
The following legitimate reasons for a "dispensation" are given: a danger that the patrimony will be scattered because of the infidelity of a wife who absolutely refuses to remain with her husband, added to the difficulties of a divorce palaver and the subsequent reimbursements, and -- a reason closely linked to the one just given -- a passionate love between the two people who are relatives by marriage.

582 602 The dispensation is given by the ndonga acting with the family council, which often yields before the fact, particularly if the second reason is involved. (1)

> 1. "To give a dispensation" is translated as kilola. A marriage contracted with a legitimate dispensation or one accorded because of the pressure of the accomplished fact is called kilókilólá, or "an affinity which is not maintained according to the regulations."

[671] 2. Contrary to European law, which recognizes only a direct affinity between husband and his wife's family, Nkundó law also recognizes an indirect affinity, so that a person is affinally related even to the spouses of his wife's relatives. That is, each person is affinally related, not only to his spouse's kin, but also to their relatives by marriage. Thus, in the example below, Njoli and Baáta are true relatives by marriage, though indirect ones. (2)

> 2. The Nkundó do not make a terminological distinction between the two types of affinity. We are using the terms "direct" and "indirect" for the sake of convenience and clarity.



There is an important difference between the two types of affinity: direct affinity is a much greater obstacle to marriage than indirect affinity, and exceptions are made only rarely and only for certain degrees of relationship.

582 602 576 3) A distinction must be made between "superior" and "inferior" relatives, that is, between those who have [253] precedence

582 and those who owe submission and respect. The "superior" relatives
602 [576] are the ascendants, uncles, aunts, etc., in short, all those bearing
the title of "father" or "mother," as well as elder brothers (elder
[601] sisters, elder cousins, etc.), who are batómóló (sing. botómóló).
The "inferiors" are the descendants, those who are called "children"
(bǎna): sons and daughters, grandsons, nephews, nieces, younger
brothers or sisters, and those who are classed with them and called
bakáné (sing. bokáné).

[599] 4) Polygamy and the inheritance of widows introduce another
[587] element. We will see that although persons of certain degrees of
affinity may not marry, the prohibition is lifted to permit the inheritance of widows.

5) Our term "relatives by marriage" the Nkundó term and
bakiló are not synonymous, even with respect to direct affinity. When
we use the term "relatives by marriage" here, we are speaking in
Nkundó terms. They do not consider certain persons whom we would
include in that category as "relations by marriage." Such persons
[601] are included in the group which as a whole is designated as likiló
or bakiló, but when properly and accurately referred to they are
called bóme, "husband," or wáli, "wife," because they may marry
each other and therefore affinity, strictly speaking, cannot be applied
to them. In other words, for the Nkundó, affinity is the relationship
of a person with (only) those of his spouse's relatives whom he is forbidden to marry. It is well to bear in mind the double meaning of
this term.

2. The rules

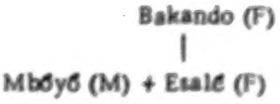
1. Direct Affinity

582 A. Marriages are prohibited in the direct line. Nevertheless,
603 in accordance with consideration number 4, a son or grandson may
606 inherit or marry the widows of his father or grandfather, but not the
reverse. [254]

2: Hulstaert--236 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

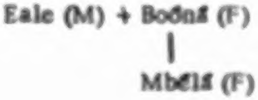
582
606
603

Example 1


Bakando (F)
Mbɔ́yɔ́ (M) + Esalɛ́ (F)

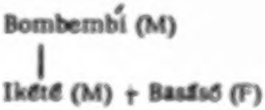
Mbɔ́yɔ́ may never marry Bakando.

Example 2


Eale (M) + Bɔɔ́nɛ́ (F)
Mbɛ́lɛ́ (F)

Eale may never marry Mbɛ́lɛ́.

Example 3

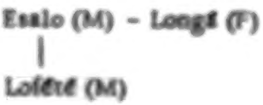

Bombembí (M)
Ikɛ́tɛ́ (M) + Basɛ́sɔ́ (F)

Bombembí may never marry Basɛ́sɛ́. (1)

[681]
[580]

1. If after the death of his son Ikɛ́tɛ́, Bombembí wanted to marry his widow, the mother of the deceased would be so angry and ashamed that she would irrevocably leave him. Such conduct on the part of a father during his son's lifetime would give the son full rights to vengeance (assassination, war with the help of the mother's clan, etc.), for it would be equivalent to a real disavowal of his son. But the case is purely hypothetical.

Example 4


Esalo (M) - Longɛ́ (F)
Lofɛ́tɛ́ (M)

Lofɛ́tɛ́ may marry Longɛ́.

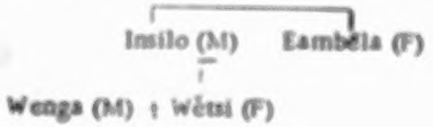
N. B. The same rules apply to grandparents and grandsons.

582
604

B. Members of different generations in the collateral line: Marriage with older, "superior" relatives of the spouse is forbidden. The Injɔ̃lɔ̃ sometimes make an exception for an aunt of the spouse after the latter's death, but this practice is very much frowned upon.

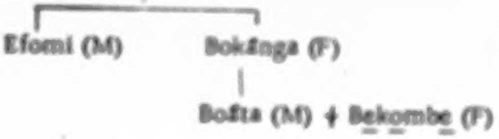
Marriage with the spouse's inferior, younger relatives is permitted.

Example 5


Insilo (M)
Eambela (F)
Wenga (M) ‡ Wetsi (F)

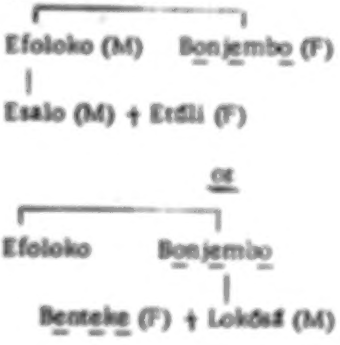
Wenga may not marry Eambela (with the exception noted).

Example 6


Efomi (M)
Bokánga (F)
Bofta (M) ‡ Bekombe (F)

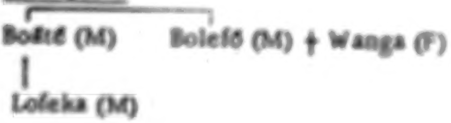
This case is identical with the preceding one.

Example 7


Efoloko (M)
Bonjembo (F)
Esalo (M) ‡ Etóli (F)
or
Efoloko
Bonjembo
Benteke (F) ‡ Lokóá (M)

Marriage is forbidden in any event [255]

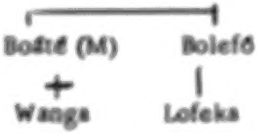
Example 8


Boátó (M)
Bolefó (M) ‡ Wanga (F)
Lofeka (M)

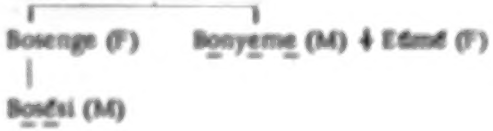
Lofeka may marry Wanga.

582
604 Example 8 (continued)

or


Boété (M)
Bolefó
Wanga
Lofeka

Example 9

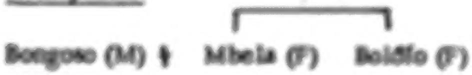

Bosenge (F)
Bonyeme (M)
Eúmé (F)
Bonési (M)

Bonési may marry
Eúmé.

The same rules apply equally to great-uncles and great-aunts, and to cousins who are not equals (related as "father" and "son"; see the table of kinship relations and terminology in the appendix).

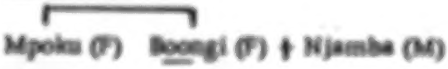
582
607 C. Equals in the collateral line: The degree of relationship is of no importance, for example, marriage with an older sister (or cousin) of the spouse is forbidden; marriage with a younger sister is permitted. The same rule applies to women, but after the husband's death an exception is sometimes made in the elder brother's favor in order to facilitate inheritance arrangements. Only the Boángé -- like [18] the Elángá of Losanganya -- make no distinction between elder and younger siblings and always permit the marriage. They are even beginning to be imitated by the Injôlô.

Example 10


Bongoso (M)
Mbela (F)
Bolófo (F)

Bongoso may marry
Bolófo.

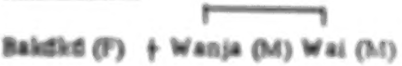
Example 11


Mpoku (F)
Boongi (F)
Njamba (M)

Njamba may not marry
Mpoku.

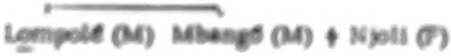
SR2
607

Example 12


Bakɛ́kɔ (F)
ǂ
Wanja (M)
Wai (M)

Wai may always marry Bakɛ́kɔ [256].

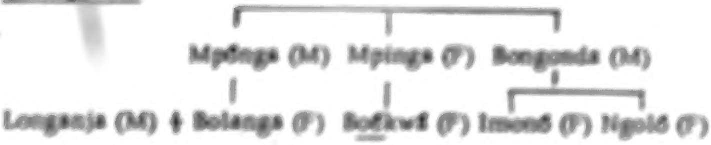
Example 13


Lompolɛ́ (M)
Mbangɔ́ (M)
ǂ
Njoli (F)

Lompole may not marry Njoli. Very rarely an exception is permitted.

SR2
605

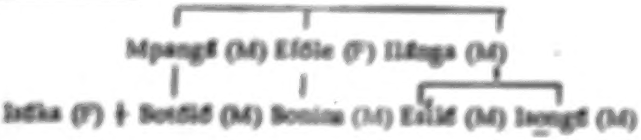
Example 14


Mpɛ́nga (M)
Mpinga (F)
Bongonda (M)
Longanja (M)
ǂ
Bolanga (F)
Boɛ́kwɛ (F)
Imonɔ́ (F)
Ngolɔ́ (F)

Longanja may not marry his elder cousins, but he may marry the younger ones with the exception of Boɛ́kwɛ who is bɔ́nankɛ́nɛ and has a "father's" rank (see above).

Similarly:

Example 15


Mpangɛ (M)
Efɔle (F)
Ilɛnga (M)
Iɛfka (F)
ǂ
Botɛlɔ (M)
Bonina (M)
Ealɛ (M)
Isongɛ (M)

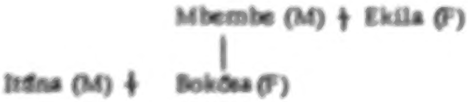
Only Botɛlɔ's younger cousins may marry Iɛfka. Bonina is bɔ́nankɛ́nɛ, therefore "father," and consequently included among the uncles (see B, above).

[Q2] Note, finally, that the more distant the relationship, the less strict the prohibition, that is, dispensations and exceptions are more easily accepted.

2. Indirect Affinity

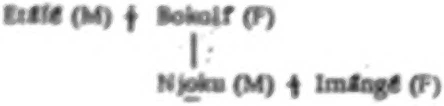
582
606
604
A. Marriage among those of lineal relationship is forbidden but certain exceptions are permitted. There are two possibilities: with the father's wife (Example 16) and with the son's wife (Example 17).

Example 16



If Bokósa dies or is divorced from Iténa, the latter may marry Ekila, but this exception is not often made because they would be very open to unkind criticism. [257]

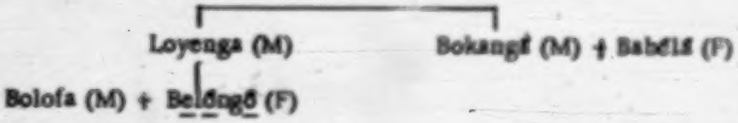
Example 17



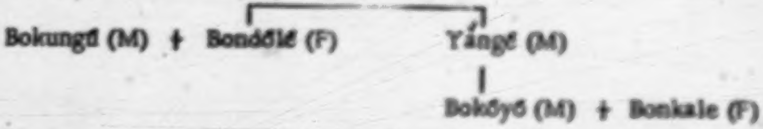
After Bokolí's death Etáfé is permitted to marry Imángé. Such a marriage is more leniently regarded if Etáfé himself paid the bride price for Imángé, for in that case he is preserving his capital in marrying her. This consideration may also apply during Bokolí's lifetime, if Imángé does not want to remain with Njoku. Under such circumstances, however, Njoku's mother would oppose the marriage with all her power. If Etáfé does not listen to reason, he can expect [586 a divorce or even war with Bokolí's clan, to whom he is doing a great injury by taking away his stepson's wife. After divorce Bokolí's kin may refuse to give Etáfé her new bride price and may give it directly to Njoku so that he can obtain a wife to replace the one that was taken from him.

582
604 The same rules are applicable to aunts and uncles, but they are less strict:

Example 18 (comparable to Example 16):


Loyenga (M)
Bokangɛ́ (M) + Babɛ́lɛ́ (F)
Bolofa (M) + Belɔ́ngɔ́ (F)

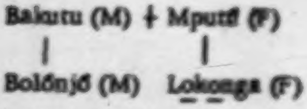
Example 19 (comparable to Example 17):


Bokungɔ́ (M) + Bondɔ́lɛ́ (F)
Yángɛ́ (M)
Bokɔ́yɔ́ (M) + Bonkale (F)

582
595
605
[602] B. Marriage between affines who are collaterally related through their lineal relatives:

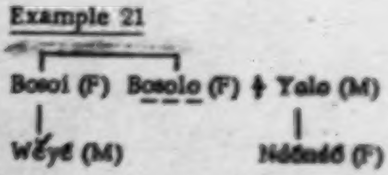
a) Marriage between descendants [of the lineal relatives through whom the affinity is established] is strictly forbidden. Thus, the children of two spouses may not marry each other; they are considered brothers and [258] sisters. The same rule applies to two half-cousins (Example 21).

Example 20:


Bakutu (M) + Mputɛ́ (F)
Bolɔ́njɔ́ (M)
Lokonga (F)

Marriage between Bolɔ́njɔ́ and Lokonga is strictly prohibited.

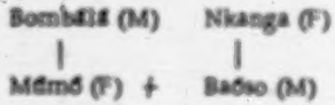
Example 21


Bosoi (F)
Bosolo (F) + Yolo (M)
Wɛ̌yɛ́ (M)
Nɔ́ɔ́ndɔ́ (F)

Marriage between Wɛ̌yɛ́ and Nɔ́ɔ́ndɔ́ is prohibited.

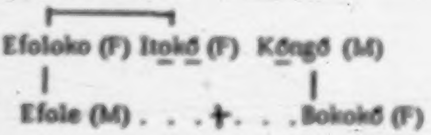
592 b) Marriage between ascendants [of the lineal relatives through
602 whom affinity is established] is forbidden, but an exception is made when the affinity is broken by death.

Example 22:


Bombélé (M)
Nkanga (F)
Mémó (F)
Baóso (M)

Marriage between Bombélé and Nkanga is forbidden,

Example 23


Efoloko (F)
Ito̱kó̱ (F)
Kó̱ngó̱ (M)
Efole (M)
Bokokó (F)

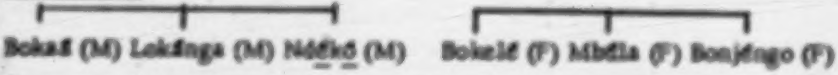
Marriage between Ito̱kó̱ and Kó̱ngó̱ is forbidden, but permitted upon the death of either Efole or Bokokó,

Dispensations and violations of this rule do occur.

C. Affinity in collateral line arising from a marriage between relatives in collateral line: The rules are the same as for direct affinity in collateral line (see above, no. 1), C.)

Example 24

[60]

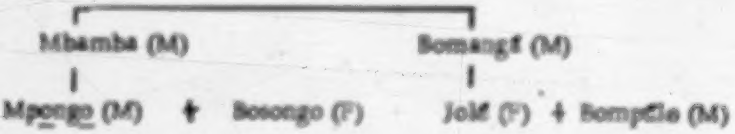

Bokaé (M)
Lokénga (M)
Ndé̱kó̱ (M)
Bokelé (F)
Mbéla (F)
Bonjéngo (F)

Bokaé is married to Bonjéngo. Neither he nor Lokénga may marry Bokelé, and Ndé̱kó̱ may not marry Mbéla [Translator's note: the table shows Ndé̱kó̱ to be female, but I have corrected the error]. If he had married Bokelé, Ndé̱kó̱ could marry Mbéla. Furthermore, if Bonjéngo were Mbéla's senior, then Lokénga could also marry Mbéla. [259]

The same rule applies to cousins:

572
605

Example 25

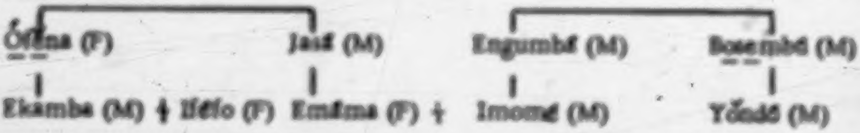

Mbamba (M)
Bomangɛ (M)
Mpongo (M)
Bosongo (F)
Jolɛ (F)
Bompɛlo (M)

Marriage between Bompɛlo and Bosongo is forbidden.

As the degrees of relationship grow more distant, the obstacles increasingly lose their force, so that exceptions are more readily accepted.

One point remains to be noted, although it has already been mentioned several times. Cousins (male or female) who are [601] bɔ̌nankɛnɛ are "fathers" to their cousins according to Nkundɔ́ law; they are therefore treated as aunts or uncles. For them the prohibition is very severe, especially if they are nyangɔ̌kilɔ́, "mother" of a relative by marriage.

Example 26


Ɔ́tɛ́na (F)
Jasɛ (M)
Engumbɛ (M)
Bosembó (M)
Ekamba (M)
Ilɛ́lo (F)
Emɛma (F)
Imomɛ (M)
Yɔ́ndɔ́ (M)

Ekamba is Jasɛ's bɔ̌nankɛnɛ and therefore Emɛma's "father." Ilɛ́lo, his wife, is therefore Emɛma's mother. Emɛma is Yɔ́ndɔ́'s bokilɔ́. Consequently, Ilɛ́lo is the mother of Yondɔ́'s bokilɔ́ and therefore Yondɔ́'s nyangɔ̌kilɔ́. Marriage between Ilɛ́lo and Yɔ́ndɔ́ is strictly prohibited, though it is not prohibited between Emɛma and Yɔ́ndɔ́ (see Example 18).

Adulterous relations among these various persons will be discussed in Chapter VI, Article VI, 2. [260]

Chapter VI

Married Life

593 As soon as an engaged pair begin to live together, as described above, they acquire all the rights and duties of married people. No special ceremony marks the consummation of the marriage.

To translate "married life" the Nkundó use the noun ibanelo, from the verb bálana, which is the reciprocal form of the root -bal, "to get married." The noun, like the verb, is used in the physical as well as the moral and social sense. Our terms "household" and "family" have no exact equivalents in their language. The only term they have is ilongo, denoting the family in the broad sense that includes all related persons; but it could easily be adopted to translate our European terms. (1)

> 1. From the absence of a specific name, we cannot conclude that the thing itself is lacking. The Nkundó have a family in the sense of a household, though their idea of it and their organization is different from that of many peoples. But the word familia had a very different meaning among the Romans than that given to the French word, which also has a double meaning.

In this chapter we will examine the position of the spouses in relation to each other: the division of labor, property, various rights and duties, the relationship of the spouses with their families or relatives by marriage, and, finally, extramarital sexual relations.

Article I. The Division of labor

462
593 The care of the household falls to the woman. It includes the preserving and preparation of food, the cleaning of the hut and the court, the planting and care of the fields and various crops, and the care of the [261] children. She also fishes with scoops and does

462 basketwork (mats, baskets, scoops). Among the Elinga women mold
913* and fire the pots. It is also the woman who gathers the small pieces of firewood for which a knife and a machete are adequate; the large pieces of wood which must be cut with an axe are brought by the husband. She, too, is the one who gathers the vegetables, mushrooms, and caterpillars. She tends to the extraction of oil, makes the salt, and goes to the markets. And she also takes care of the farmyard.

A man, for his part, gives his attention not only to various political and social pursuits, but also to those tasks which are more difficult, more dangerous, more in conformity with his nature and constitution, such as hunting, fishing, cutting clusters of palm nuts, working in wood and metal, building the hut and annexes, weaving the nets and screens for fishing, felling the forest for cultivation (the woman burns the growth, then plants and cares for the crops).

Thus the division of labor is well regulated. Each one takes care of the task that suits his nature. We are not too astonished at the fact that a man never helps his wife, or vice versa; each limits himself to his own sphere. The Nkundó would consider it shameful to participate in the work of the opposite sex. Neither one nor the other complains about the matter. Besides, the fact that a woman has most of the trouble in the household, especially if there are several children, is in conformity with the nature of things. Consequently, we would be mistaken in considering the Nkundó woman a beast of burden and her husband a lazy profiteer. (1) [262]

1. Compare what I have said with what was written by Father Dubernet in Missions Catholiques, 65th year, no. 3185, August, 1933, p. 387: "Except for the rare few who are in a position of wealth, the woman, among the Blacks we have known, tends to her household tasks more or less like a good peasant back home. She has seldom seemed to us the beast of burden that others have been pleased to describe."

Article II. Property

573 x 614 Through marriage, a woman does not become a member of her husband's clan. If for example she is born into the Bofɛ́tola clan, she remains all her life bosɛ Bofɛ́tola, "member of the Bofɛ́tola [764] clan," and her corpse has to be buried in her native soil. In case of divorce and remarriage, the new husband does not refund the bride price to the former one; he pays the woman's parents, and they reimburse the forsaken husband.

573 x 421 All the wife's activity, however, is directed toward the good of her husband and his family, and this is so from the time of the ikulɛ payment. Her parents have no further rights over their daughter. All the fruits of her labor are her husband's property.

If she finds objects that have no owner, such as, for example, elephant tusks or buried copper rings of which no one claims ownership, they do not belong to her nor to her family, but exclusively to her husband. If he shares with his parents-in-law, he does so out of affection and respect for them. He has no legal obligation to do so, but propriety and cordial relations impose a certain duty on him.

Profits from the sale of the products of her industry (such as foods for market, mats, salt, pots, baskets) belong not to her but to her husband.

Even whatever she acquires during a visit to her parents, everything she finds while she is with her family, the fish she catches, the caterpillars she gathers in the forest there, all that belong exclusively to her husband.

It sometimes happens that a woman infringes on the husband's rights in this respect. If he is kind he will generally let her do as she [577] pleases. Severity on his part would be attributed to a lack of affection toward his wife or a lack of delicacy toward his parents-in-law, and he would even be criticized for being stingy (never unjust!), a more serious criticism than the others from the Nkundó point of view. [263] Dishonest conduct on the part of a wife, however, may give rise to incidents, and even to serious ones. That is what happened in the historic case of Efoloko of Ikengya (Bongɛli), who was married to [578] Mpokú of Imomo. She had gone fishing at home and had given all her fish

593^{x} to her brother Bolómaóngá. Her husband did not press the point. But
421 at a meeting where much beer was consumed, his companions teased
518 him for his excessive leniency, which they explained as a weakness
on his part. Mpokú hereupon went into a rage, and the result was a
bloody war between the two clans.

593^{x} A husband is expected to provide for his wife and to set aside
421 a fair portion of profits gained for her clothes, her utensils, etc., or
quite simply to give her the means to take care of her own needs and
those of the house.

Thus, although the husband is the sole legitimate owner of the fruits of his wife's labor, another law requires him to give her the amount she reasonably requires for her maintenance. If the wife appropriates the profits without informing her husband in advance, her action is an infraction of the law. If the husband does not give his wife what is necessary and useful to her to the extent that he is able, his action, too, is an infraction of the law.

Fish caught by the wife are cooked, and those that remain are smoked and thus preserved for the use of the household as a whole. If a husband is not too badly disposed toward his wife, he will let her have a portion for her family.

The fields set up jointly by the couple (the man cuts the forest, the woman burns and clears the field, plants and cares for the crops) are the husband's property. The fruits of the field are used for their joint maintenance and that of their children. Profits from the sale of a portion of them are for their common use. They settle these matters between themselves as do most European families. Naturally, there are infractions in this respect also, and one spouse or the other sometimes enlarges his share for his own benefit or that of his parents, or disposes of goods without communicating his intention do so to the other in advance. [264] But all decent people disapprove of such behavior. (1)

1. There is a fable which teaches the right attitude to adopt in such situations.

593x
421
[586] If one day the marriage is dissolved, the wife may no longer claim any right to the fields, utensils, clothing, etc. She does not inherit from her husband. When she herself dies, her family has no right to anything she may have left except, of course, to valuables she has received on the occasion of the marriage of one of her daughters. (2)

2. See Chapter II, Article V. For fuller details, see Chapter VIII, Article V, and Chapter IX, Articles IV and VII.

593x
672
421 The woman's position with respect to property has yet another consequence; a husband is responsible for damage caused by his wife. He is the one who must pay the indemnity. The same is true for any debts she may have contracted. If she has borrowed, her creditor claims his due not from the woman nor her family, but from her husband. He alone is recognized as legally responsible, since he alone has the rights to his wife's economic activity, and profits as well as losses from it. Afterward he has the right to scold and even beat his wife for causing him this financial injury. However, an exception is made in cases where the woman's family officially acknowledges, by publicly paying a ndanga before witnesses, that she is at fault and thus frees the husband of any responsibility.

We may thus draw the following conclusions:

1) A woman is not an owner.

2) However she has the right to a reasonable amount for her various needs. This right is not a true property right (jus in re); it is a right to what is necessary for subsistence (jus ad rem).

3) Thus it is not possible for a woman's parents to inherit the goods which her husband has placed at her disposal [265].

4) A wife never acts in her own name but as her husband's agent; therefore he is legally responsible.

2: Hulstaert--249 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

Article III. Relations between Spouses; Their Various Rights and Duties

593x Spouses are obliged to fulfill the duties and perform the tasks
833 incumbent upon them .

It is difficult to say just how far the sense of duty to fulfill
the debitum conjugale extends among the Nkundó. Normally, they
very frequently fulfill this obligation toward each other. But after a
good quarrel they abstain, either through mutual consent or because
one of them refuses. If one of the parties fails seriously and repeatedly
[586] in this respect, the question is resolved by a divorce. The response to
temporary lapses is limited to reprimands, disputes, blows, and other
common reactions. It should be added that continence is required
[834] during the ekelé period after the birth of a child and after setting up
a new hunting enclosure (lokombo) or a new fishing weir (bosaka),
before the third piece of a game or fish is caught.

1. Meals

593x A couple never take their meals together. The husband eats
264 the food prepared for him and served to him by his wife alone, with
his grown sons, or with friends or relatives. The wife herself eats
with her small children, her daughters, or her female relatives. The
two sexes never mingle at meals.

593x The same rule applies to talks, but it is much less strictly
521 maintained; it is not rare to find that, for one reason or another,
women participate in the conversation of men.

It will not be long before, through the influence of Christianity, [266] women will generally be admitted in the conversations of the opposite sex. Developments with respect to mixed meals will come with much more difficulty; in practice the question has not even been broached.

593x Thus one finds a kitchen next to the bedroom or separated from
343 the hut; in addition to being the place where food is prepared, it is
where the woman spends her day. The kitchen is sometimes a
[354] structure separated from the dwelling itself, sometimes a part of the
house separated from the bedroom by a partition containing a door.

2: Hulstaert--250 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

593ˣ 343 Polygamists as well as some monogamists have a kind of shed where they receive their friends, take care of their affairs, eat their meals, etc. (1)

> 1. Such a shed is called esamba by the Bombwanja, ingɔ́mba by the other tribes. The Beloko, like the Ntɔ́mbá and Bolɛ́ngɛ́ located between the Congo and the Boloko, say bongɔ́mbo. The Ekonda say ewánga.

[626] A man who is frequently found in the kitchen or who likes to rest there is the butt of ridicule by both men and women. He is called ikɔ́mbelinga (derived from bolinga, "smoke," and kɔ́mba, "to dodge; to turn the head away in order to protect the eyes against smoke").

2. Illness

593ˣ 758 A wife is required to nurse her husband if he is ill, together with his other wives if he is polygamous and, in case of serious illness, with the aid of his female relatives (mother, sisters). Even if they are married and living at a distance, they come to take care of a brother or son; it behooves their husbands to be reasonable and not to try and forbid their absence or prevent this exercise of their duty, for otherwise a man runs a great risk of seeing his wife leave him for good, outraged by this demonstration of his lack of affection for her family.

Together the wives and relatives seek medications and prepare the appropriate potions.

When a wife is ill the husband's female relatives usually come to see her, console her, and administer what care they are capable of giving; as a rule they are well disposed toward the wife of their son, brother, etc. The husband, for his part, must seek medications and help his sick wife. I recall a great palaver apropos of this question. During the illness of his wife Efetsɛ́, a certain Bokangá continuously had relations in his hut with another woman. The matter became public. The guilty husband was

593 required to re-establish peace and harmony by means of a considerable
758 boɔ́ndo, for having failed to take care of his wife and for having shown complete thoughtlessness and indifference.

If the illness becomes prolonged or serious, neither the hus-
593 band nor his relatives have the leisure to nurse or take care of her.
758 To remedy this situation and at the same time give the woman's
672 parents the satisfaction of being able to help their daughter themselves, the husband sends her to them. He takes her there himself or calls them to come and get her. He communicates the news by sending his ndonga who bears a token payment (ndanga, loákako) such as a knife, a copper ring, etc. This ndanga is a pledge, evidence for the family that their daughter was ill on arrival and did not acquire her infirmity while with them. Without this pledge they would not want to take her; they would prefer to treat her in her husband's home. Or if the husband were to send her home without a ndanga, they would call the ndonga to witness this infraction of the rules. Or the fact that the husband has done this might be considered as a repudiation of his wife, pure and simple. In any case the husband would be in the wrong, and under these conditions the legal responsibility for his wife's death would fall entirely on him (see Chapter IX, Article X).

593 When the wife is cured, her parents send a message to their
758 son-in-law to urge him to come and take his wife back.

Even if they have not been invited by the husband, the wife's parents come to see their daughter when they hear of her illness [268] in order to take her away with them and care for her. She usually follows them, but she is not required to do so since she belongs to her husband. People even cite the names of women who despite the insistence of their families did not want to be cared for at home, but have preferred to die in their husband's arms, so to speak. Among them were Bolɔ́mbɔ́ w'îkofo of Bombɛ́nga w'ɔ̂kenda (Besombɔ́) married to lembe y'ilongo of Engɔ́njɔ́; Baleko of Nsekɛ́ married to Eanga ɛ́â Jatɛ́ of Nkɛ́lengo; Iombe of Bosáá married to Bokɔ́lɔ́mbwá of Iálá; Balengola of Ntɔ́mbá (Bombwanja) married to Lompoko of Mbelɛ́; Mpɛ́mbɛ́ of Bonganda (Bonkoso) married to Imbamba of Bonjoku;

593* 158 Efala of Longa married to Ìfolí of Bokɛ́nyola (Bo̱njo̱ku); Basɔ́sɛ́ of Mbelɛ́ married to Nke̱ngo̱ of Litɔ́li.

If the woman went to her family in good health and contracted an infirmity there, her parents are responsible for it. They are obliged to nurse her and to assume all the expenses due to her treatment. After she is cured they send her back with a quantity of nkomɛ for her husband. Usually the matter ends there. If relations between the two families are not very good, however, the husband will claim an indemnity, which varies with the situation and to which he is entitled even if he does not claim it.

This stipulation of the law holds even if the woman has gone to see her mother, father, etc., at the time of an illness or for any other reason.

It does not hold, on the other hand, if the wife has been ordered to go to her parents by her husband, or if she has fled the home shared with her husband because of ill treatment or of serious failings on his part; this point will be explained below in number 3. In such cases the husband is legally responsible for the illness.

Certain situations may arise which are intermediate to the ones discussed. Thus, for example, a wife may make a visit on her own initiative [269] but for her husband's good. Theoretically, he should win the case. Note, finally, that a stay of only twenty-four hours is not considered sufficient to make responsibility for an illness fall on the wife's family.

178 595* 758 672 797 Colonization has produced an entirely new situation. Colonial law has given the extra wives of polygamists the freedom to go to a mission in order to be instructed in the Christian religion and to contract a monogamous marriage (provided the customary rules governing the dissolution of marriages are observed). Such a woman may fall ill at the mission. If her illness has no troublesome consequences, it does not result in a dispute. But if the illness becomes chronic and in some way detrimental to the abandoned spouse, it may do so.

The polygamists declare that they are free of any responsibility, which they place on the woman's family. But the family has

178 nothing to do with it; it is unjust to bring them into the matter.
595x Since this legislation is intended to combat polygamy, it is natural
758 that the polygamous husband be the one who suffers from it.

672 The following is a recent example of this situation: Mbóyó
797 Julienne, sister of Botúna Jean of Balondó, married to a polygamist
by the name of Insílo of Bokenyola (Bonjoku), went to Bokuma Mission, where she contracted an incurable illness. (1) Because of her illness she found it impossible to remarry. She therefore left the mission but was no longer accepted by the husband she had lived with so that she had to live in her brother's home. Insílo insisted that her brother reimburse him for the bride price, maintaining that in going to the mission, the woman had divorced him; his real reason, however, [270] was that she had become unfit to fulfill the duties of a wife. Since Mbóyó did not fall ill in his home, he held her family responsible.

593x 3. Abandonment of the home shared by the couple

586x In the case of serious failings on the part of a husband, a woman's usual weapon is to leave their common home and return to her father's house. If the reason for her flight is serious, it is up to the husband to go and bring her back. She will not return on her own initiative. If he refuses to make the first step, he will be accused as much by public opinion as by his parents-in-law of not loving his wife, and a rupture will become inevitable. It is therefore his duty to go to his wife's parents. They will ask him to explain the situation. The wife, too, will say what she thinks. The parents will settle their difference. Whether or not the ndonga is present will depend on the

---

1. It was a sort of illness with nervous symptoms. From a scientific viewpoint, it is more than likely that she had this illness before her arrival at the mission, although it was only manifested there. But the natives do not make this distinction, so it is not relevant to our topic.

593x gravity of the situation. In general, the wife's parents judge im- 586x partially, because they value the stability of the marriage. If the husband feels that he has been wronged, he can always appeal to the ndonga, but ordinarily there is no need to do so and the matter is settled in a friendly fashion and in private. If the woman is found to be in the wrong, her parents scold her and take her to task. Pro- [431] vided with some gift (two or three bakonga, for example), they return her to her husband, advising her to behave in a more suitable fashion in the future. Should she resist, her parents will not hesitate to use threats and curses, and these seldom fail to have their effect. Nowadays women have become more emancipated, and it does sometimes happen that such a woman will scorn her parents' decision, especially if she has a lover somewhere beyond the reach of family justice. If it is the husband who is in the wrong, his wife will not go back with him until he has begged her to do so by paying a few copper rings or other valuables, the amount depending on the seriousness of the situation. This act on the husband's part is ex- [576] pressed by the verb bǫ́nda [271] and the noun bǫǫ́ndǫ, terms which do not apply specifically to this case only but are used whenever pardon is asked for a serious offense. This payment is not a fine or indemnity; it is more closely equivalent to the apologies and retractions customary among Europeans.

593 At the present time some women go back to their families for very slight reasons. Freedom and a greater ease of communica- 577 tion, together with a desire for emancipation, which is no longer 578 held back by the rein of ancestral sanctions, are the cause for this state of affairs. They are still held back somewhat by the risk of a rupture of the marriage, a possibility which they generally would rather not see realized, especially if the bride price is quite large.

In the past, if a woman was married a short distance away from her parents, she could always run away to them when there were domestic disputes. Even if the route led through other villages, it [487] was always possible to take a direct path through the forest, for such paths exist everywhere; they go around the villages in between so that, in case of conflict or danger of assassination, a traveler can go his way without being seen. When a woman was married into a

593 distant village, the situation was different. Not only did she run
574 many grave risks on the way, but it was not easy for her clan to
578 intervene on her behalf and to obtain respect for her rights by means
of force. It can be readily understood that if a wife found herself
alone and isolated, without effective support from her family, her
husband and parents-in-law could feel free to do her many injustices
if they were unkindly disposed toward her, unless the ndonga was
sufficiently influential to keep them within limits. Hence the proverb
[589] bol'ôsíkɛ́, mbila ñgɛ́ likwɛ́la, "If the native village is far away,
peace (in the household) is like slavery." [272]

In the course of domestic quarrels an exasperated husband may shout at his wife: "Go away, go home." Usually she simply goes to the home of some female relative to wait till calm returns. But sometimes she may take his words literally and go home. When her parents are informed of what has happened, they tell their daughter that she is in the wrong. Such a thing cannot be taken tragically. The husband has acted in a moment of bad humor and extreme indignation. He did not really send her away or repudiate her. There is no question of hate or indifference. Thus the matter is not taken seriously, and when the wife calms down, her parents persuade her to go back to her husband. If he likes her enough the matter ends there; it is forgiven and forgotten. Even if, having gone to her family under these circumstances, the woman becomes ill or dies there, she herself is responsible. Thus sending her away in that manner is not in any way taken seriously; it has nothing in common with a repudiation and cannot even be compared with a wife's flight because of bad treatment.

To summarize, if a wife leaves the house in which she lives with her husband, he is obliged to go and fetch her whether she is in the right or in the wrong. On the other hand, parents will send a daughter back to her husband if she is too easily angered and runs away over trifles. The following are generally acknowledged as serious and justifiable reasons for flight: serious failures in fulfilling marital duties, punishments or repressions without just cause, excesses in just punishments.

593x 606 578 We should add that in some households, difficulties arise rather easily during the visits of parents or parents-in-law, because of the sensibilities, incompatibility of character, or discontent of one party who may consider the other guilty of discourtesy, lack of delicacy, disrespect, or stinginess toward the visiting parents. The same is true for the rearing of children. [273]

4. Punishments

593x 578 Nkundó law permits a husband to inflict corporeal punishment (bikɔ́njwɛ́, sing. ekɔ́njwɛ́) on his wife, its nature varying with the seriousness of the case. Obviously these sanctions, expressly permitted by law, [576] cannot give rise to claims on the woman's part or result in the obligation to pay a boɔ́ndo. [Editor's note: Unless, of course, the husband -- acting in excess of his rights -- is more violent than the occasion warrants for under such conditions, the wife, supported by her family, attacks the husband, who is then [619] forced to acknowledge the harm he has done and make reparation by means of a boɔ́ndo.] If she is hurt she may claim a supplementary payment called liombo (from the verb bomba) or "bandage" (for the wound); it consists of 5 rings or more, depending on the situation. [626] The loss or breaking of a tooth is considered a serious injury. For this is a real injury to the woman and, in the case of front teeth, to her beauty. (1) Of course, as explained above, the wife will first have run home, and it is there that the dispute is examined.

593x 578 667 For the sake of a clearer understanding, let us go into a few details concerning the penal stipulations of Nkundó law in relation to the life of a married couple.

Usually, in a simple domestic quarrel, the couple does no more than tell each other some home truths, seasoning their speeches

[304] 1. Because they are filed, the incisors are much less resistant than normal teeth. Teeth filing is practiced for reasons of b[illegible]y.

578 593 684 with a few vulgarities. If the woman goes beyond that, her husband gives her a good slap, but he cannot allow himself to exercise his muscles further upon her.

If a woman's tongue is too voluble and she permits herself to deliver gross insults without a suitable reason, her lack of respect is considered punishable. It is not considered proper [578] to right this wrong by means of blows, however, although in practice impetuous young men do not always restrain themselves. The sanction preached by tribal wisdom is the man's abstention from food prepared by the guilty wife, and his refusal to perform the conjugal act. A Nkundó woman is very sensitive to such measures. If she is really recognized to be in the wrong and peace is not promptly re-established, the wife's [524] family will beg the husband to calm down and offer him a bofiodo, which may be as great as the value of a dog.

593 578 In the course of a quarrel a Nkundó woman may resort to a roundabout way of expressing her feelings; instead of cursing her husband directly she will address herself to a domestic animal which passes in front of her. The man is naturally not deceived, and the effect is identical.

What we have said applies to ordinary insults such as to wish a person's death, which may be expressed in the following ways: owɛ "drop dead," nkoi ɛkokumbɛ, "may a leopard get you"; njwɛ ɛkokɔtɛ, "may a snake bite you"; ólówɛ ɛ? "aren't you dying?"; okona, "why don't you get sick"; bákotómbɛ ndá ngɛlo, "may you be carried to the cemetery"; bákokundɛ, "may you be buried." Invectives based on physical defects or designed to humiliate a man fall in the same category. For instance a woman may call her husband bololɛ or etula, "a nobody," or imemelo, "idiot," or inyanyama, "beast," etc.

If, on the other hand, the woman in her volubility attacks her husband's parents, the matter becomes more serious. The Nkundó react very badly to verbal excesses directed toward them. Whether he is subject to teasing on their account or to insults such as "eat your mother (or father)," or to obscenities in relation to them, or whether the speaker "disinters" deceased parents in evoking their memory. (1)

---

[195] 1. For the sake of documentation on Nkundó psychology and morals, here is the Latin text

> 593x of a few fashionable expressions: *vulva*
> 578 *matris tuae, comede matrem in clitoride,*
> 195 *coi cum matre*. The same expressions, *mutatis mutandis*, are used with reference to a person's father, brother, or sister. The expressions used for "disinterring" are *okundola ilongo, isé, nyangó*, etc., that is, "exhume your family, father, mother, etc., or *bejwó békí*, "your corpses," that is, your deceased parents (this last expression especially excites a strong reaction).

578 the effect does not vary greatly. [275] The only difference is in
593x the intensity of rage and of the reactions, which depends on the individual temperaments of the interested parties.

578 A Nkundó is greatly outraged by obscenities hurled at him by
593 his wife, especially if she attacks him in public. His reaction is al-
627 ways violent. Usually it comes to blows, a thrashing, and sometimes the knife. But if the husband wants to remain within the limits of the law, he cannot injure or, more especially, kill his wife on his own authority. Before going any further, he must bring his case before the *ndonga*. His family is invited to the meeting and, if possible, so is the wife's father. The outraged husband presents his case and warns the persons assembled that one day his exasperation will lead him to take up the knife. Having taken his case before qualified persons, the husband can from then on go ahead and avenge himself for the disgraces his wife may inflict on him; it is lawful for him to do so. If the guilty woman starts again, no one can accuse her husband of wronging her, for she herself is at fault and he has warned her in accordance with all the rules of the law.

593x Modern young people do not always follow this procedure.
578 But their revolutionary spirit often brings them reprimands and often
[578] gets them into great difficulties. The elders jealously guard their authority, and no one may reproach them for doing so. Therefore in a palaver of this sort, a father will sometimes foresake his son.

M
593
578 Since the impetuous youth did not want to observe the ancestral custom and considered his strength superior to the law, his action is not justifiable. We must admire among many of the old natives the innate feeling of justice and impartiality that makes them disapprove of and condemn their own children. Furthermore, if the passionate avenger of his honor does not change his ways and endeavor to combat the thoughtless violence of his temperament by replacing it with a sense of measure, his marriage will not last. And he will be the one [276] accused of having caused the break. The matter is clear; it is quite true that the woman started it. The husband therefore had all the trumps in his hand. Why, then, did he not use them? If he had followed the procedure required by law he would have gained his case all the way down the line.

The fact that a husband must first inform the ndonga and the family authorities does not mean that he has not the right to punish his wife in a violent fashion. This practice is observed to avoid excesses and abuses. The husband is not given the freedom to do as he pleases. Recourse to the representatives of family authority may be considered as a kind of delegation of their power.

These legal provisions of the Nkundó are truly wise. While they give an outraged husband the right to punish his wife and, therefore, to hold her in check, the law imposes a rein on the impetuousness of unthinking anger. Furthermore, by requiring that these matters be made public, they avoid interminable discussions and palavers on the subjects of fines to be paid, etc.

M
[682] In the past certain men were capable of becoming exasperated by the disgrace to the point where they were no longer able to master their rage. Women were killed for this reason. The Nkundó say that a man would not let himself be carried to this extreme unless driven to it by the great love he bore his wife. This comment has a psychological validity. Nevertheless, such an action was not praised and could even produce a war.

M
593
578
P
636 It sometimes happened that an enraged man who wanted to kill his wife under such circumstances was prevented from doing so because he had to abstain from assassination to maintain the efficacy (nsimbo) of a practice (bote) in his possession. He therefore had

M
593 recourse to the assistance of a third party who -- for remuneration,
578 of course -- undertook to carry out his project. This task was usually
[579] confided to Batswa, who did not disdain this type of work, which
was quite suited to their taste.

The fact that the law gives the husband the right to punish his wife [277] for the type of oratory under discussion meant that a wife had to exercise some discretion in her choice of expressions. Fearing violent reactions, she often spoke the more serious insults softly.

M
178 Since the European penetration women are more daring. For
578 their husbands fear European justice, which follows principles entirely
593 different from their ancestral law. Thus they complain bitterly of
562 the insolence of their wives: "We have become slaves; the women are now all-powerful. They may do as they please, for we can no longer do anything to them." But as soon as native courts are sufficiently educated and are freed from what an eminent colonial jurist has called "the jurisdiction of palavers" (1), they will no doubt effect a salutary change in this situation.

M
562 The emancipation of women is one of the factors that have
586 increased the frequency of divorce. For a man who cannot avenge continuous outrages remains dominated by shame, and the presence of the one who is the cause of it must become unbearable in the long run; whence the indifference, antipathy, hate, and the inevitable results of that permanent confusion in the household.

M
593 Men among whom the feeling of modesty was highly developed
762 hanged themselves out of shame instead of attacking the guilty wife.
577 That is what many natives have maintained in talking with me.
[681] Nevertheless, I have no knowledge of a present-day example. When this happened, the wife's family no longer took action against their daughter. Nor were they obliged to pay an indemnity, although their child had brought about the death. They simply had to acquit

---

1. See A. Sohier, Bulletin des Séances de l'Institut Royal Colonial Belge, Vol. 6, 1935, 1, p. 60 and passim.

593a 577 762 themselves of the usual and ordinary obligations incumbent upon them on the death of a son-in-law. Should this be taken as a kind of implied condemnation of suicide? [278]

593a 578 627 626 The wisdom of the elders recommends to youth that they not let anger lead them to brutal acts even where, legally, it is permissible to use force. They do not act in such a way through a policy of adaptation to the present regime. Even before the arrival of the white men, they gave lessons in calm and self-mastery. For serious blows, wounds, and especially homicide could have deplorable consequences legally and even politically (war). They preferred recourse to punishments, such as abstention from food and the refusal of *debitum conjugale*, which although less violent, are not without efficacity. In that way they were also spared the vexation of in-laws, whose pity would be aroused by the wounds and bodily suffering of their child or sister.

576 593b One thing that deserves blows or a good whipping because it is considered a serious failure in the fulfillment of the duties of married life is indifference and negligence in housework. A husband may safely deal forcefully with the situation, although he must first inform the qualified authorities. The following are some examples of such faults: the wife does not give the necessary attention to the kitchen, her children, the cleaning of the hut and court; she neglects her crops, does not go fishing, makes no attempt to obtain salt, etc.; in short, she does not give the required time and care to the tasks incumbent upon her. She herself, her children, and her house remain disgustingly filthy, her fields and banana groves are invaded by weeds and her pantry is devoid of utensils and food, while she wastes her time doing nothing or rather spends it running about the village, going to one woman's house, chatting with another, spending the better part of her day gossiping. The Nkundó does not put up with this sort of behavior, and no one can reproach him. Even other men and the woman's companions condemn [279] such conduct. Often the woman is ridiculed, and on occasion she may hear unflattering comments such as *bɔ̃mot'ɔ̃w'asolɔ́, efufa etɔ́ngamaka*, [521]
"a gossip, her cloth is to the side," that is, the interminable chatting

593 to which she devotes her time, sitting on a couch or a log, so oc-
578 cupies her attention that she is no longer aware that her narrow
834 garment is no longer in its proper modest position, and the gossip is
therefore exposed to shame and ridicule.

592 In addition to giving his wife a good whipping, the husband
578 also brings out his vocabulary of invective and sarcasm. The woman does not run the risk of complaining, for she knows in advance that she will be placed in the wrong. Nevertheless, the discreet husband will not go too far. The elders suggest that the young people moderate the violence of their expressions. For, they say, "a woman is more sensitive to it than a man; she might go and hang herself
[825] in the *forest*," lĭkinya ayakóma lóí la nsónyi. "lĭkinya (the ant) will hang herself one day out of an excess of shame" (this is a reference to the way this insect bites into a blade of grass or some other object and dies rather than let go). "And above all," they say, "do not extend your insults to your wives' parents, for they could urge their daughters to leave you."

With respect to adultery, the punishments prescribed in Nkundó law will be examined below in Article VIII.

It is apparent from the preceding description that the Nkundó attach relatively little importance to the outpourings of loquacious eloquence characteristic of the weaker sex as long as they do not go beyond limits or degenerate into outrageous and ignominious insults. The elders teach youth to be calm in the face of these demonstrations of the declamatory art at which most Negresses are as adept as our fishwives at home.

They say that a woman is like an elephant: bŏmoto ale
[562] ó njoku. There is nothing to be done about her. It is futile [286] to try and speak gently to her; she does not even listen. To impose silence on her is impossible. To try and calm her, make her listen to reason, is a waste of effort. It is the same with an elephant: He
[825] can perhaps be chased away with cries and noise, but he will destroy the crops nonetheless.

The fact that a woman readily opens her mouth is not considered a sign that she does not love her husband. The Nkundó even

[illegible] dare to maintain that a woman's speaking out about her husband is a
[illegible] sign of affection. On the other hand, a woman who instead bewails her lot softly and quietly saying, ngóya fikeke lóí l'ômi'ond aa?, ("mother, what shall I do with this husband?"), will not be with him long. Her complaint is chiefly egoistic, while the other seeks the good of her spouse and her household.

As we have already mentioned, the perfect punishment, and one frequently employed in ordinary cases, is a husband's refusal to eat food prepared by his wife or to wash with water she has drawn or boiled. It is a type of reprimand to which she is sensitive. The husband's aversion must not last too long, however, for it could lead to
[illegible] a breaking up of the marriage, more especially since in the end the woman would begin to suspect infidelities -- which do occur.

The fact that Nkundó law does not allow the husband complete freedom and clearly limits his rights does not in any way exclude the occurrence of infractions. The mass of human beings is always inferior to the moral ideal imposed by legislation. But these provisions of Nkundó law do protect a woman against her husband's excesses. We have already cited the expedients available to her: abandonment of the home shared with her husband; legal apologies (bofondo), indemnity for injuries (liomba). In addition, a wife who has been wronged will abstain from foods (such as meat or palm nuts) given her by her husband and, even more important, will refuse to have sexual relations with him. And for our people this is a great affront. In order to re-establish a normal and peaceful situation, a husband often has to pacify [281] his spouse by means of a bofondo. In addition to the measures mentioned, a wife may of course use insults, of which every native has a rich and varied collection.

No one can condemn or reprimand a woman for abusing a lazy husband. If he does not go to the hunt and bring back game, if he neglects the building or repair of the house, if he is too much of a laggard, if he does not fell the forest to set up food crops, it is clearly he who is in the wrong, and he will find no one who will approve of his conduct and condemn his wife. If he turns out to be incorrigible, it will not be long before the marriage is broken, according to the axiom
[illegible] ing to the axiom elóng'ey'ômoto ńk'olófo, "the woman's victory is divorce."

594 If a woman injures her husband during a quarrel he may not
593 retaliate, for she is recognized as inferior and weaker than he. The
577 husband's weapon is abstention from any food, drink, baths, etc., that she offers him. To re-establish peace she must pay a bofɔndo. Nevertheless, nowadays some impetuous men no longer like to observe these rules; they want to act with violence come what may. But they are strongly reprimanded by the old men, who maintain that it is unworthy of a man to retaliate against a weaker being. This traditional attitude of the Nkundɔ́ seems to me to indicate a sort of chivalrous nobility based on two feelings, justice and pride. It becomes more understandable when we know that similar conduct is
[565] expected with regard to Batswa, inferiors, and subjugated clans (baulɔ́, sing. julɔ́) in their respective spheres. (1) Thus a Boɔto may

1. See below, Articles V, VI, and VII, 4, B.

not apply the law of retaliation to a Botswa. Under certain circumstances, a julɔ́ clan may, with impunity, take what they please from the banana groves of the master's clan, etc.

Note also that it is very much out of place for a man [282] to strike his wife or punish her in any way in the presence of her parents,
[602] brothers, etc. In fact, this is a very grave offense. And, according to the code of honor, the brother (cousin, etc.) must pick up the glove and fight his brother-in-law to avenge the insult. In many cases the matter ends in a divorce. For such conduct takes away the combined feeling of modesty and embarrassment (nsɔ́nyi) that the two parties normally feel toward one another.

Finally, we must note that the various payments made as bofɔndo are included in the total amount of [illegible] or nkɔmí, respectively.

In order to more clearly illustrate the Nkundɔ́ attitude con-
593 cerning the relationship of husband and wife, it might be of interest to
591 cite a few proverbs pertaining to the subjects discussed above:

1) Bacingɔ bakɔ́ndaka wăjɔ̌ ntaka; Lombɔ́molɔ́ afɔ́ndaka Ntsilɔ la nganja. "All the others slap their wives (but) Lombɔ́molɔ́ beats Ntsilɔ with a stick." (This is a reference to a historical fact.)

593[x] 2) Ofɔ́ɔ́n'ilólɔ́, wɛ̃ ɛ́k'onjembe, "If you do not put up with 597 excesses of speech (on the part of your wife) you (will remain) a bachelor." (Because this is an innate fault of all women, and it is not a major one.)

3) Otámb'ɔ̂mwa al'ɛ̃ mbɔ́ka, "Do not answer the mouth, it is a road" (it has no end).

4) Bolɛ́ 'á wǎlɛ́, ófɔ́ɔ́n'ompɛ́lo, "A mean woman, you (nevertheless) do not refuse the warm bath (she has prepared for you)." (Do not attach much importance to her unpleasant statements. What are they in comparison to the services she performs for you?)

5) Ɛ̌kí'm'ólámbɛ́lɛ́ la wɛ̃li w'ótámɛ́yɛ́, jɔ́ɔ́ ɔ́ wílima ɔ́ɔ́n'anto ólangɛ́ ńdambe bitɔ́kɔ́ botɔ́ɔ́?, "When I prepared (the food) by moonlight, you were not satisfied; nevertheless (now that it is) dark and [282] you don't see anyone, you would like me to prepare six baskets?" (It is implied that the wife addresses her husband, who is dissatisfied with the food but nevertheless wants her to prepare more of it.)

6) Itɔ́kɔ́ lokɛ́mo ɛ́k'ɔ̂m'ankolanga, "A little (food) basket is highly praised if your husband but love you." (Love appreciates even the slightest thing. Discontent springs from a lack of affection.)

7) Etuka iɔ́fɔ́ŋɔ, wǎj'ɔ́ky'ɔ̂wɛ́i, "A flashy widow, (but she is that way because she is) the wife of (another, who is) dead." (You criticize her; but don't you treat her like someone else's wife? Then what are you complaining about?)

8) Ɛ̂nkɔ́ɔ́mbɛ́lɛ́ wɛ̃ jwende, baíso ng'ɔ̂hɔ́ŋɔ: ɔ́kita nd'ɛ̂ŋombe, baíso ng'inkɔ́ɔ́i, "When a man takes you in marriage, (his) eyes (are) like (those of a) bɔ́ŋkɔ́ŋɔ (a wild cat); you arrive in his house, (his) eyes (are) like (those of a) inkɔ́ɔ́i (a kind of frog with protruding eyes). (At the beginning of a marriage a husband is extremely obliging and kind; but after a while he puts on a sullen face and gets angry at the least provocation.)

9) Emangɛ́ lilɛ́la, mpɔ́ɛ́ ɛ́kɔ́ngola, "The beginnings of marriage are honeymoons." (But afterwards . . . .)

10) Wǎli nd'ɛ̌tɔ́ɔ, wokɛ́nda wokɛ́ka, "A wife is a kind of material; strike her, cover her." (She is a delicate object; strike her when she deserves it, but do so with calm and a sense of proportion; hold the stick with one hand and cover her body with the other.)

Article IV

Relations Between the Wife and Her Family

585* 614 Through marriage, a woman does not enter into her husband's family. She continues to belong to her own clan of origin and continues to submit to the special regulations [204] of her family (_bokumo_) (1) The _bokumo_ pertaining to parturition is excepted, for

> 1. The _bokumo_ are special regulations governing a given clan, particularly prohibitions against partaking of certain foods (animal or vegetable) always or only at certain times. The punishment for a transgression is a kind of itching which covers the whole body. One might think this is totemism, but the idea of kinship to the forbidden being is entirely absent.

because of the child she must observe the _bokumo_ of her husband's clan in this realm.

593^A 594 Although the wife is completely dependent on her husband for everything else -- work, property, etc. -- she remains bound to her own parents by obligations of respect, love, and assistance. She has to visit them from time to time, but too great a frequency in these visits meets with disapproval. It is impossible to give a rule defining the proper number. The answer must be provided by good sense. Sensible people prefer that the wife not make too many of these trips. Even her own parents want this to be so. For repeated attentions of this sort are considered evidence of a lack of love and attachment for her husband.

[626] Women who very faithfully stay in their homes and only rarely visit their parents, sometimes yield in face of the teasing of their companions. For the Nkundó is very sensitive to spiteful comments of that kind. Among current expressions there is one that has become a popular saying and is sometimes sung during dances:

593^x 574 ötswékë liéla otswëk'olé, béfôkolaka mbók'éy'olé la ngom'a nkolé. "If you are married go back to your parents, or you will be taught the way with drums and gongs," that is, "when you are dead." (2)

[764] [765] 534 2. A woman is buried in her own native clan. Her corpse is transported there to the accompaniment of drums and horns. The lokolé gong announces her death.

593^x 602 A married woman may not evade the duty of helping her relatives under special circumstances (pregnancy, illness, serious accidents, death). This obligation [285] is not limited to her mother and father, but extends to all her relatives; the closer the degree of kinship, the stricter the obligation.

[626] Besides, love of family is sufficiently developed so that there is no danger of the woman forgetting herself too much in this realm. And a husband who would like to prevent her from fulfilling these elementary duties would be much criticized by all and should expect a dissolution of the marriage.

593^x 574 342 592 It was said above that a husband builds a hut for his wife. His relatives often assist him in this task. But it also happened -- in the past, for colonization has removed the possibility of it -- that the woman's father wanted to build his daughter's house himself or at least to make the pavement out of clay brought from her native land. This act was a demonstration of wealth and politico-social importance as well as proof of fatherly affection. The husband, for his part, was honored to have married the daughter of such an important man and loved her all the more. Thus a number of women say that "they only cooked on ancestral soil." This soil was brought in baskets across distances up to 50 kilometers by Batswa and by men of the woman's clan or village. Her father could do it because of his great influence and regal rewards (bokóndo, verb kónda) were distributed during a feast (ntóko) given for the workers and their relatives after the task was completed. This was done for Bompeli, daughter of Bokombe of Liféli (Bombwanja) married to Bonyeme w'enyuka of the Baséké Mbangó (Bonkoso); for Beluka, daughter of

573 longo of Bokɛ́kyɛ́ (Boselo, Bombwanja), married to Bokaa is 'Ifonda
574 of Bowɛ́lɛ́; for Mbalaka, daughter of Bolekela wa Imangaiso of the
342 Baɛ́kɛ́ Lokuli (Bongíli), married to Mbuli is'ea Wela of Bombóngo
556 w'Etefa (Bongale) (1) [286]

[551] 1. She bore the name of Mbɛ́laka (meaning indemnity), because her father had solemnly proclaimed (-bɛ́kya) and publicly promised that he intended, one day, to place himself in the position of having to pay an indemnity because of his daughter, as proof of his love. Indeed [782] when Mbɛ́laka was married, he killed one of his wives, cut her into pieces, and sent the "meat" to his son-in-law as "the first hen" that his wife would prepare for him. But he did not have to pay [682] [684] the indemnity because the victim's clan was too weak to attempt a war; they did not dare to make a claim and, in order to avoid even greater misfortunes, they resigned themselves to this revolting ignominy.

Article V

Relations Between the Husband and His Wife's Family

606 As has already been said, kinship by marriage is called likiló,
607 and relatives by marriage are called bokiló, bakiló. Mbótsoló is a term of respect for very close relatives by marriage (father-in-law, mother-in-law, sometimes brother-in-law or sister-in-law). When there is a considerable age difference between two affinal relatives, the elder one sometimes calls the younger bokilówalɛ́. This happens most frequently when the son-in-law is so young that he can still be considered a child. This term can even be used by an elder brother

606
607
with reference to the young wife of his junior. (1)

> 1. The second component of this term is used by some Elinga as a synonym of bokiló. It should be related to walé, a term which among the Mbole and the Bakutu denotes a girl who is bolómbé or a woman who has just given birth (the same is true among the Ekonda).

The present practice is to exclude from among the bakiló these persons with whom marriage is permitted. They are more frequently called "husband" or "wife."

The opposite of bokiló is bokanga. The bakanga are members of the family that has received the bride price, while the bakiló are those who have paid it. In common practice the word bokiló is often used in place of bokanga, but never the reverse. Bokiló l'okanga is the expression denoting the whole group.

606
1. Father-in-law and mother-in-law

A husband owes respect, love, and assistance to his parents-in-law. This point is vital to harmony in the home. In this sphere a wife is very intolerant [287] of forgetfulness and even more of ill will. Offensive comments, insults pointed at parents-in-law even in their absence result in serious difficulties. Sometimes a husband expresses his bad humor or anger against his spouse in that way. This kind of behavior never wins approval, unless his in-laws first insulted him. The law of retaliation applies fully in this situation. The Nkundó say: ôsawá mbóngó l'ǒndamba olóngaka nk'ǒndamba, "He who replies to evil comments is in the right, not the one who began." For a fuller discussion of this topic, see above (Article III).

606
577
93
To remain on good terms with his parents-in-law, the husband must visit them from time to time. By the very nature of things, his visits are less frequent than those of his wife. One reason why they cannot be too frequent is that the husband must bring gifts at each visit (belanga). One does not go to one's parents-in-law empty handed.

606
574
431 The extent of the riches brought depends on circumstances. Some greedy persons hope for large gifts if their daughter's marriage proves stable. Others prefer not to receive too much, lest they be required to give back an equal amount and -- if they are not especially wealthy -- thus find themselves one day in great financial difficulties. For the [585] belonga are added to the sum total of the bride price and must therefore be restored, should the occasion arise.

The parents-in-law do not allow their son-in-law to depart without giving him countergifts as a farewell (belingako). These take the form of hens and ducks, and their value is added to the total amount of nkomí.

Neither son-in-law nor parents-in-law like to see the generosity of the other party exceed their own, except in a few unusual cases. As a matter of fact, this is a very intelligent policy; equality is maintained on both sides, so that there can be no reproaches on the grounds of greed or stinginess [288], and if the marriage should be dissolved, it would be easy to re-establish equilibrium.

A son-in-law is expected to help his father-in-law to an extent which varies with the situation and with his means. He may fell the trees of the forest for him or set up a field, he may build him a house or make a hunting enclosure (lokombo), etc. A good son-in-law never fails to fulfill these obligations, and the father-in-law does not let him leave without having given him some present.

It is very important to a wife that her husband acquit himself conscientiously of these duties of visiting and assisting her parents. His failure to do so would lead to serious palavers and their usual consequences.

The father-in-law, for his part, does not fail to help his son-in-law in his various tasks. When the work is completed, the latter gives him a bolingako of a few copper rings, which are included in belonga.

The visits of a woman's parents to their son-in-law are more frequent. It is their way of showing their love for him and their daughter and their interest in the household. The visits can last weeks and months, whether only one or both of the parents come. If they stay too long, they are accepted with less enthusiasm. Gifts (bolingako) must always be brought out when the farewells are said.

606 574 586 593 Even if the parents' union has been dissolved and the mother has remarried, she does not cease to visit her daughter and son-in-law. If her new husband seems not to agree to her going, difficulties result. And if he does not change his attitude, his behavior may cause his wife to leave him in order to return to her first husband, the girl's father.

606 574 431 583 Thus, visits are accompanied by an exchange of gifts which are belonga if given by the son-in-law, and part of the nkɔmɔ valuables if given by the father-in-law. Farewell gifts are belonga [289] and part of the bride price if given by the son-in-law, part of the nkɔmɔ if given by the father-in-law.

These same rules apply, mutatis mutandis, to various relatives on each side with respect to visits made, services rendered, and presents given on these occasions.

606 One very strict law regarding relations between son-in-law and parents-in-law should be noted: a man is forbidden to see the face of his wife's mother. This prohibition is scrupulously observed by all. He is allowed to see her face only once, at the beginning of the marriage, "to learn to know her so that they can avoid each other." If, for example, they meet while traveling in the forest, they must turn their backs to each other. Usually the woman turns her face toward the edge of the path to let her son-in-law pass. They greet each other by word of mouth, ask for each other's news, but do not shake hands or look at each other. It is funny for us to see a woman visiting her son-in-law. The two place themselves on each side of a partition or in two corners, and they talk in that way, asking for news, carrying on a discussion, etc., without seeing each other. Sometimes mother-in-law and son-in-law find themselves in each other's presence unexpectedly, in the forest or in the fields, without having seen each other approach or having been warned by anyone. They immediately turn their backs on each other; the man excuses himself and quickly disappears, even if to do so he has to plunge into a dense forest full of prickly and tangled creepers.

This law extends also to the husband's very close relatives, such as his younger brothers (who are also "husbands"), and to all

606 women called "mother," such as the mother's sisters and the father's wives. The law does not seem strictly applicable to these persons, but seems to cover them by extension. On the other hand, there is no comparable law with regard to a woman and her father-in-law.

606 578 A violation of this prohibition results in a great palaver, for it is considered a serious lack of respect. It may produce a serious domestic quarrel. [290] A wife will refuse to perform the conjugal act with her husband because he has looked at his mother-in-law. That is why people help each other by warning each other of the "danger" when their respective mothers-in-law arrive.

Compensation for the offense may be made by the payment of a boóndo of several bakonga to the mother-in-law. As long as the payment has not been made, the wife will not fulfill her conjugal duties. After it has been made, everything goes back in order. If it is proved that the situation came about involuntarily, there is no palaver and no payment is required. Nowadays the best Christians tend to give a boóndo once and for all to definitively settle any palaver that may occur in the future and to avoid the obligation of having to submit to this prohibition, since they are beginning to vaguely perceive its uselessness.

[551] A man is even forbidden to pronounce the name of his mother-in-law in her presence, even to address or call another person of the same name. In such a situation he must resort to a surname or paraphrase. Usually he addresses her as mbómoló. An infraction of this rule results in the same punishment as if a man were to look at his mother-in-law.

606 If we ask the Nkundó to give us the reason for this custom, as it is so strange to our point of view, they reply that they are ashamed or embarrassed to see the women who begot their wives, and that to do so would be a grave offense to her. The custom is a means of expressing the respect a son-in-law owes his mother-in-law, and of avoiding unceremonious behavior or too great a familiarity toward her. That is all the explanation they give. For our philosophical turn of mind, it does not exhaust the subject. We are tempted to look for a connection between the intimate relations of the married couple and

606 the act of procreation on the part of one of them. Perhaps this idea is latent in the native mind, or at least is at the basis of this rule. The fact that this hypothesis applies only to the wife's mother-in-law [mother?] does not weaken it; for in native eyes [291] the other instances are entirely without importance. (1)

1. See, for example, Chapter II, Article X, and Chapter V, Articles II and III.

606
292 Another regulation pertaining to the mother-in-law requires that she -- and all the women who are given the same title in current usage -- may appear in her son-in-law's village only when dressed in a bolelekɛ. A bolelekɛ is a banana leaf, either green or dried, which has been torn in several places perpendicularly to the large central rib, and constitutes the first and principal sign of mourning. [765] Moreover, Batswa women must also dress in this manner before entering a Baotó settlement. The following reason is given for the rule in the second instance: a Botswá woman's dress consists of a lolímba, a belt of small braided ropes about 10 centimeters long. Although in ordinary positions the lolímba provides fairly good protection, it is not considered adequate to really stop all indiscreet looks. And it is popularly believed that if a Bootó sees a Botswá woman's genital organs, she will die. Might we conclude from this last explanation that there is a fundamental connection between the reasons that necessitate the wearing of a bolelekɛ in these three instances? Or is the mother-in-law to imitate a Botswá woman and thus show a certain subordination to her son-in-law?

2. Female relatives

607
837 As long as they are free, that is, as long as no bride-price payment has been made for them, a woman's sisters or cousins are considered by her husband as his wives, and he calls them so (baálí). This term is applied only to relatives of a generation below that of the true wife or to members of the same generation who are younger than she and with whom marriage [292] is permitted. It is therefore never

607 extended to relatives with whom marriage prohibited, such as nieces
837 who are *banankɛ́nɛ́*, who are his wife's "mothers." (1)

1. See Chapter V, Article IV and the examples cited there (for instance, examples 25, 26, 17).

When such relatives of the wife marry, the situation changes. They belong to another man, and a continuation of the same practice as when they are single produces very serious cases of adultery. There are differences depending on the degree of affinity, however. In addition to the usual sanctions against adultery, other measures may be taken, especially the dissolution of the marriage. An especially serious case, but one which is more or less hypothetical, would be adultery between a man and his father-in-law's wife; a special feeling of shame is connected with it, and our Nkundó say that the two persons are like a Botswá and his master. Misconduct with the wife of a brother-in-law (or cousin-in-law) is also a very serious matter. The latter may take his sister (or cousin) away from the guilty husband and thus break the marriage. The same applies to adultery with a *nyangôndiló*.(1)

1. See Chapter V, Article IV and the examples given there (for instance, examples 25, 26, 17).

3. Legal matters

606
685 Here we must examine the manner in which breaches of the law are settled between parents-in-law and son-in-law. It is known that among these peoples justice, in the strict sense of the word, is one of the most prominent aspects of social legislation. Theft is one of the principal causes for shame and was formerly severely punished. The thief, especially if he continued to repeat his offence, could be sold as a slave.

606
685
If one of the wife's relatives were found guilty of stealing from his (or her) relative by marriage, or even from one of the latter's relatives, the family tribunal was assembled. Out of consideration for the ties of kinship between the thief and the wife and in order not to sadden her and her family, the guilty person was not sold as a slave. He was simply turned over to the woman [293] and her family, and they were told: "Here he is; he has been found guilty of theft and should have been reduced to slavery. Out of respect for you, however, we are not selling him; we are rolling (*-kilimola*) him toward you. Take him as bride price and add him to the sum of the *bosango*." Thus the matter was settled in a friendly fashion. If subsequently there was a divorce, the wife's family had to restore not only the bride price that had been paid but also an additional slave for the member of their group that the husband had yielded in this fashion. Thus, the transaction was not at all a fictional one.

Conversely, the same procedure was adopted in relation to a relative of the husband who had violated the rules of justice to the detriment of a member of the family related by marriage. But in that case the extradition of the guilty party was considered as the addition of a slave to the amount of the *nkomf*.

[579] Hence the saying: *bokiló ntɛ́wɛ́kɛ́ ndá ngond'ëy'okanga*, "a parent-in-law cannot die in the forest of his relatives by marriage."

The situation is no different nowadays. The only change is that, instead of giving back a slave if a dissolution of the marriage occurs, the equivalent value is paid in copper rings, etc.

[72]
62
The same customs governed conduct toward prisoners of war. For instance, in the course of a war Eale became the master of Bombolo, whose cousin is married to Iloko, a close relative of Eale. Iloko interceded with Eale in order to obtain Bombolo's freedom, and Bombolo was sent home but was to be considered as *bosango*. The liberated prisoner thus was classed as a slave given as part of the bride price, as in the preceding case, and all the appropriate rules were followed.

4. Treason

628
602 Treachery and treason between relatives by marriage were not unusual. The proverb says bomɔ́ng'ɛ́kulu nd'ɔ́kilɔ́, "treason exists [294] chiefly on the part of relative by marriage." Not that this happened through any fundamental maliciousness apart from perhaps some rare exception. But in case of a war or particularly of a vendetta, relative by marriage did not hesitate to betray his in-law and thus send him to his death.

We shall limit ourselves to giving two case histories which are well known to the current generation. (1)

1. I do not know exactly when these events occurred. In any case they date back to the time of the Independent State and to the beginning of the occupation.

At the time when the Ingende post was occupied by the white "Itumbambíle" and that of Ilɔ́ngɛ by "Bosɔ́njɛ," some men from
[266] Bofílɛ (Ikɔ́kema y'ɛ́kelo, Bombwanja) surprised an inhabitant of Bokukɛ (wĺngatɛ), killed him, and ate him. Shortly thereafter Lokwa jw'ɔ̀yelɛ́, a man from Bofílɛ, went to visit his sister Efɔ́mɛ, who was married to Imbilɛ́ is'ɛ́y'ɛ́mola of Ikonjɛ. It happened that the latter was a maternal uncle of the victim of the Bofílɛ men. Was Lokwa unaware of this relationship? Or did he trust his brother-in-law? Whatever the case he was well received. Nevertheless, Imbilɛ́ had not forgotten his nephew's assassination and went to inform his close kin of this good opportunity to avenge the murder. One evening they broke into the hut that had been placed at the visitor's disposal and found him there with his sister Efɔ́mɛ and his wife Lompoko. The
[266] two women managed to escape, but Lokwa was taken, killed, and eaten. Naturally, his sister Efɔ́mɛ did not return to her husband, and there was no question of a restitution of the bride price.

The second case dates from the same period. Two Batswa of
[266] Mbɛ́langa (Ekɔ́ombɛ́le, Bongili), Bokɔ́ngo and Bolɔ́yengɛ, surprised Mboko Ilombɛ of Bofílɛ in the forest, killed him, and ate him.

621 602 Some time thereafter, a man named Bengóngó from the Ndóngó village of the Bengili went to Bofílɛ to visit his sister Bosáka, who was married to Eale éé Bofekɛ. The latter told him that the village was enraged because of the assassination of one of their people by the Batswa of the Bengili. He advised him to go [295] and hide in the fallow ground lest excited men come upon him and revenge themselves on him. He led his brother-in-law there himself. Therefore he knew the exact location of his hiding place and ran to betray him to the others. They encircled the fallow ground and easily found [664] poor Bengóngó, who was pitilessly massacred and eaten. His sister Bosáka never knew of her husband's treachery; she thought that despite all his precautions, the other inhabitants had discovered her brother's hiding place. (1)

[649] 1. We should not be too astonished that during that period the Europeans did not intervene in these wars, vendettas, massacres, and acts of cannibalism. They let the natives do as they pleased among themselves and demanded only that they leave them alone and render them services and tribute. They had other things to do in those times. The white men Ãmbɛ and Bainãkɛ, of whom the natives still speak with respectful fear, were the first to begin punishing acts of barbarism in this region.

602 This hypocrisy on the part of the husband toward his wife and brother-in-law is due to the presence of two opposing feelings within him -- on the one hand, the love of his family and the feeling of solidarity which engenders hate and the desire for vengeance; on the other, love for his spouse. As these feelings are in complete contradiction with each other, he cannot reconcile them. But at least he can preserve appearances.

[534] This situation is referred to in the following proverb: bokílɔ ékwɛ́ndɛ́, wɛ́ngɔyɛ eyalo, "If your bokílɔ has hidden you, change

602 shelters." There is another, which is cruder: bokiló tótowe nkálá:
559 bafumba bálóka mbá, emi ńkoláka wě, "relative by marriage, let us go to the palm grove; the bafumba ants (Dorylus wilverthii) eat palm nuts; I will eat you." The following saying, applied to someone who is always trying to clear himself, is a more or less involuntary accusation: mpɔ̂lí ôkiló, ńdíla é mpóngo; mpóngo y'ôkiló nsako ngá mbwá, "I do not eat my relative by marriage; on the contrary, I dip (food) in his fat; an in-law's fat is as tasty as a dog's." [296]

Nevertheless, a man never goes so far as to cause the death
602 of his sister's daughter's or other relative's husband. Or, as the
621 Nkundó say, one does not kill a person by whom one has been enriched. What is the reason for this distinction? According to our people it is the affection they feel toward their sister, daughter, etc.; they love them too much to pain them by taking away their husbands.

This treacherous and barbarous conduct is therefore directed by the bokiló toward the bokanga, that is, by those who have paid the bride price to those who have received it, but never the reverse.

Appendix

000 This appendix pertains to each of the three preceding articles. Therefore it may reasonably be placed here. It does not deal with any special law nor with a custom that is legal, universal, or common. It is concerned with isolated cases. But it seems to me that the few lines to follow are not without interest, since they give a good indication of the mentality that may be found among these people.

[illegible] It may happen that a woman has a complaint or feels she has cause to be dissatisfied with one of her relatives, for example her brother. In her opinion he may not be sufficiently kind and generous toward her, or he may treat her in a manner she considers unfair. In a moment of anger she reveals her feelings to her husband and incites him to avenge her by injuring or even killing the one who has offended her.

That is what happened several decades ago to Bosele w'Ompowangé of Boléngo (Bongili) (who died in 1932, a very old man). His wife Dumbé was very dissatisfied in that her brother did not give

62 her gnough gifts. She addressed her husband as follows: *bejwó bɛ́kɛ́*
578 *ómomɛ́lɛ́ nkɔ́na, alekɛ ompímaka tɔ́ma.* "Your corpses (deceased parents), kill my brother for me, he always refuses to give me [297] presents. (1) Whereupon Bosela took his weapons and went off.

> 1. This is one of the most serious insults. But a person to whom it is addressed considers it a duty to take up the order or invitation made in those terms. It is a sort of forced oath, and it is called *tɛ́na ndaɛ, afeya (tɛ́nela) X ndaɛ*. These terms may apply to many other situations: a call for help during a war, assistance in inflicting an ordeal, assistance in the *iloá* (society of those who do not observe funerary abstinence), etc. A person may address himself in this manner, and in that case the expression corresponds to our word "oath," "to take an oath."

Being a good psychologist, he made no mistake about his wife's personal feelings. He knew that he was involved in a dangerous impasse: if he disappointed his wife's expectations, she would be furious; on the other hand, if he took his brother-in-law's life, she would be even angrier. The thing to do was to resort to a trick. When he entered the forest he had the good fortune to come upon a *bɔende* antelope, which he slaughtered. He removed the liver and went home carrying this organ, still fresh and warm, in his hand. He presented it to his wife, saying, "Here is the liver of your brother whom you asked me to kill." There followed a violent scene. The woman, beside herself, began to weep for her dead brother, and in her anger she ran off, shouting at her husband: "Oh! You no longer love me, since you have assassinated my brother; you will not see me again." When she arrived at the home of her family, she found everyone going about their usual occupations; there was no sign of death or, more especially, of murder. Her astonishment increased

602 578 when she found her brother in good health and full of life. She could not believe her eyes. In an instant the whole family was alerted and gathered together. She explained what had happened. They quieted and consoled her; they praised her husband for having behaved so intelligently. She was congratulated. For he could have done what she had told him, so she had reason to rejoice that he loved her so well and wisely. Thus, a few days later, she quietly returned to her husband.

An entirely different course of events, and a fatal one, occurred in the case of [280] Bok'Éfea of Bompelo (Bokátola) who was married to Elíngé of Bofílá (both are still alive). The woman continuously went back to her family. Her husband, exasperated, threatened one day to kill her brother Eale; when he was gone she would be more inclined to stay home. He actually fulfilled his threat. His wife went into a terrible rage, but she nevertheless remained faithful to her husband. The bow used to shoot the murderous arrow has been preserved by its owner as a souvenir.

Article VI

Relations Between the Wife and Her Husband's Family

602 Naturally, a wife must be on the best of terms with her husband's family, with whom she is in continual contact. She owes respect to his parents and elders. If she does not manage to live in peace with them as well as with her husband's sisters, etc., the marriage will not last. Misunderstandings, disputes, squabbles, and, above all, insults and spiteful comments will force her to leave. Therefore, such contingencies can be put into the category of motives which lead the man's family to interfere in his marriage. There is a constant concern among the Nkundó to avoid the dissolution of the union due to extreme incompatibilities, because any break-up causes enormous difficulties, as we will see *suo loco*.

It is very hard to discern whether the small services the wife is expected to render her husband's family are legal obligations or simply requirements of social decorum. A momentary omission

602 brings forth reprimands on the part of the husband and his parents
which obviously can easily degenerate into quarrels. If the omissions
are so frequent and of such a nature that they can no longer be explained
as simply forgetting, a whim, or a fit of peevishness, but
[299] are taken to indicate spitefulness or vulgarity, the matter is
[627] brought before the nkonga (who is often assisted by the family tribunal)
or brought before the authority constituted by the woman's kin. If
in spite of everything the expected improvement does not take place
the break-up is inevitable.

The husband's father and mother extend the same affection to
606 their son's wife as they feel toward him. They consider her their
own child, and it is not unusual to find that their love for the wife
equals their feeling for their own son. She is only a relative by marriage,
but out of affection for her they call her their child. She, for
her part, does not use toward them the term bokonga (or bokilo) but
[609] out of filial respect calls them "father" and "mother." Exceptions
to this practice may be found, however.

606 If the father (and those who fall in the same category such as
224 uncles, elder brothers, etc.) kills a large game animal, he is expected
to give his son's (or brother's, etc.) wife a piece of meat,
whose size depends on the number of daughters-in-law he has and
which consists of one or several chops (bohalaho) (1) and the piece at
the nape of the neck (bonimbya).

Illicit relations between the husband's father and his daughter-
606 in-law would be an unheard of crime. The same would be true with
835 respect to any of the "superior" relatives. (2) The laws regulating

---

1. Called liemo among the Bolongo and
the tribes of the Losangonya.

[178] 2. Only the Boangi -- like the Elanga
[104] of the Losangonya -- allow relations between
a brother and the wife of his junior,
and they are already beginning to find
imitators among their neighbors to the
southeast, the Ingelo.

[illegible] the relations between a wife and her husband's parents are closely connected with the rules pertaining to the prohibition related to affinity and seems to spring from the same source. Therefore it will be useful to have in mind what we have said in the preceding chapter, Article IV.

607 The husband's elder brothers treat his wife as their sister. The wife calls her husband's sisters [300] *bakilɔ*, but out of respect she often gives them the title of "mother." (1)

[601] 1. Among the Elɔngɔ the wife also calls her husband's sisters *bongíli* (pl. *bangíli*); they call her *bǒnongíli* (pl. *bǎnangíli*). A wife often calls her husband's mother *nyangôngíli*. *Bǎnangíli l'ǎnangíli* means "the brother's wives and their sisters-in-law."

587 After the husband's death, as has been said *suo loco*, his father or his brother may marry his widow. But this practice is not well regarded and is permitted only rarely, chiefly when the scattering of the family patrimony is feared or if the two interested parties have an unusual love for each other.

697 642 With respect to children or younger brothers and all those who fall into that category, the situation is altogether different. Illicit relations with wives of their father, grandfather, uncle, elder brother, or elder cousin, are judged much less severely. Generally, misconduct does not give rise to claims for payment, or the payment is demanded "for form's sake" and consists of a hen and a bunch of bananas. By means of this payment the guilty one recognizes his error and renders homage to the right of his elder.

[illegible] In general public opinion condemns these relations and often with great severity. The question of degree of kinship as well as other considerations result in a great diversity among the cases, so we will examine each situation separately and distinguish each time between the husband's reaction and that of public opinion.

837
626
579
593 A. A woman's misconduct with her husband's son does not result in the payment of an indemnity. Nevertheless, the husband who has been wronged takes action; he defends his rights and is enraged, whether the situation is very serious or not, and especially if he is monogamous. If he has several wives, he is more apt to pass over the matter, unless it involves his favorite. Sometimes he takes revenge by striking the guilty son's mother, taking her hens away from her, etc. But such action may lead to complications: [301] the brother of the woman so treated might intervene, and if the reaction of the husband who has been wronged is too violent or recurs too often, a divorce may result. In any case the father never hurts his heedless son's wife, since he loves her like his own daughter.

The father may apply a direct sanction against the offender by delaying the acquisition of a wife for him and refusing his blessings for his son's travels and undertakings -- still a serious thing in purely native society.

Such relations are always greatly criticized by public opinion, even if relatives intervene on the culprit's behalf. The latter is disgraced as a result; he is mocked with the epithet etɔ́onjɔ́lɔ́, to which [578] often is added the explicative phrase l'ɔ́ála banyangɔ́ b'áningɔ́. Etɔ́onjɔ́lɔ́ is derived from etɔ́ɔ, "masculine clothing" and, figuratively, "virility in the physical sense," and from bɔ́lɔ́, "strength." Thus the epithet implies that the culprit is so virile that he goes so far as to unite even with his brothers' mothers.

587
626 Marriage with the father's widow after his death is legitimate. Nevertheless, if the widow has left children, public opinion does not entirely refrain from judgment and though the severity of the criticism cited above will be attenuated, it may still be heard. Such was the case of Yokɛ́ of Bokenyola (Bonjoko), which is well known in this region. He married Lokokɛ́, widow of his father Isɛ́lo y'Okɛ́tola and mother of Isɛ́lo Antoine, present chief of the Boshoso. (1).

1. With reference to the above-mentioned attitude, an exception must be made with regard to the inheritance of a widow by right

587
626
of seniority (she is then called bosílê --
see Chapter III, Article III). The giving
of a widow who is in the position described
is preferably avoided.

587
626 Illicit relations between a son and his father's wife are judged with especially great severity if the young man's own mother is still alive. He is reproached for his behavior in terms which are clear and crude: Oŭy'ôsangenya mbindo ìkǎ la mbindo y'ìsǒ ǒ nyangô, "you unite your stains (impurities) with those of your father and [360] mother"; Ouě ôk'oki wǎ wimâkôlê, "you are returning from whence you came." To these expressions is often added ôwa lôi ɛl olokí lilóka, "you will die because of your too great wickedness." To the [361] Nkundô this last statement is a kind of curse, and if it is repeated by several persons it will not fail to have its effect. Or, to speak as our people do, if everyone greatly wails over and against this man, he will really die. (1)

1. This attitude of the Nkundô may be
one of the reasons why widows are as-
signed not to the son of the deceased, but
to his brother.

If the son in question is not married, especially if he has already reached a relatively advanced age, and if he approaches the wives of his polygamous father, the matter is considered less serious. The latter cannot be too angry, especially when only isolated instances are involved; for other relatives will allow their affection for this young man to speak, since they are aware of his passion and therefore understand his temptations and follies. They would intervene to pacify the father and urge him to prevent the repetition of such occurrences by obtaining a wife for his son. In exceptional cases the family council may even judge the father to be in the wrong because of his hardness toward his son and may allow the latter to take his father's wife away from him (never, however, the first wife, the favorite, or the bolômbu); such was the case we described in

587
626 Chapter II, Article XI, 2. But such a situation is far from ideal in Nkundó eyes and is permitted only if, on the one hand, the son ardently loves the woman and, on the other, if the father is too slow in obtaining a wife for him.

587
602 Here then we observe a conflict between two feelings: a husband's jealousy and the affection of a father and various relatives. That is why it is difficult -- as in many situations -- to draw the line between what is permitted and what is forbidden. From what has preceded and from the general explanations given by natives, we can conclude, however, that: [303] 1) relations between a woman and her husband's son are forbidden and severely judged, but with much more leniency than in the case of "superior" relatives; 2) the [577] father may not go to extremes in repressing misconduct nor ask his own son to pay an indemnity, since to do so would be to enrich himself through his child's misbehaviour, and the latter would have no means of paying him except through him or his mother's clan -- and it would be very unjust and inappropriate to force him to have recourse to the latter.

595
587
607 9. A younger brother calls his older brother's wife wālī, or wife, and she calls him bóme, or husband, because they may marry one another. Therefore adulterous relations may also be found among them. But in practice some distinctions must be made.

If the younger brother is not married and the elder one has a harem, -- a state of affairs which was very common in the past but today is very rare -- the situation is analogous to the one described above in relation to a father's wife except that there is greater indulgence toward the culprit.

If the elder brother is monogamous and the younger brother a bachelor, relations of the latter with the former's wife when the husband is present are forbidden. If the younger brother nevertheless yields to the temptation, he is condemnable. The husband may not claim an indemnity. But in revenge he may procure for himself a "make-believe indemnity" (nyongo éá bolikande) by felling one of the culprit's banana trees, taking away his chickens, moving his hut, taking some other similar action. The purpose of these acts, according

595 627 837

to our people, is to inspire the young man with a little more respect for his elder. The latter may not go to extremes, however, (as for example by fighting his younger brother), for fear of being censured for a lack of brotherly love. (1) Besides, the valuables with which he obtained his wife [304] belong in one sense to both brothers. If the two brothers have different mothers, the elder has many more trumps in his hand. And if in addition his mother's clan has provided the entire bride price or a major part of it, he would win his case entirely as regards the indemnity, although the duty of brotherly love, and therefore of leniency, would still remain. In the case of isolated misdeeds there must always be this leniency. But if the misconduct is frequently repeated, the culprit's excuses no longer carry much weight.

If the younger brother, too, is married, the matter takes on a totally different aspect. Since he has a wife of his own, he no longer has any excuse for satisfying his passions by adulterous means. It is true that the injured husband is still obliged to moderate his anger and its manifestations, but he can obtain more financial satisfaction. The indemnity he claims, however, must be added to the guilty wife's bride price; for it is inconceivable that he enrich himself at his brother's expense. If he himself obtained his brother's wife for him, he may take her away and give her to another brother, cousin, etc., or even take her for himself, in spite of the impediment of affinity. However this is an exceptional case and only applied if the misconduct has been serious and repeated and the culprit has taken an insolent attitude.

If the husband is not present, because he is on a trip or the younger brother has met his sister-in-law while she is staying with her family or traveling elsewhere, the younger brother is entirely free

1. A slight brotherly punishment is not taken seriously, particularly if the younger brother is considerably his junior; it is permitted, especially where the younger brother has erred repeatedly.

to have relations with her. If the woman refuses to have relations with her brother-in-law, the latter often reports her ill will to her husband, who will reprimand her or even strike her because she does not love his own brother, and will accuse her of having lovers: [illegible]. Since there is more affection between brothers born of the same mother, the husband's anger would then be even greater. A lack of affection on the part of his wife arouses her husband's suspicions on the question of her fidelity because Nkundo women are extremely ready to yield to temptation. [301] Therefore if she refuses her own brother-in-law-husband, she must be obtaining satisfaction elsewhere. This reasoning may be false, but it is based on a frequency of cases. The husband's attitude does not show a lack of jealousy; on the contrary, it proves its existence.

If the younger brother meets his sister-in-law in the home of her family, they will intervene on his behalf. They will tell her to receive "her husband" well, to prepare food for him, to clean the hut set aside for him. They will even force her to cohabit with him for the entire duration of his stay in their village. By this means they seek to avoid palavers with their son-in-law. If the woman's antipathy toward her brother-in-law is so great that she cannot be made to submit to him, they sometimes give their visitor another of their daughters (or cousins, etc.), younger than his brother's wife, to perform wifely duties for him.

All those designated as [illegible] in Nkundo terminology fall into the same category as a younger brother (thus younger male cousins are also included). The seriousness of the conflict that may arise on this question and of its consequences vary in proportion to the degree of kinship between the individuals involved.

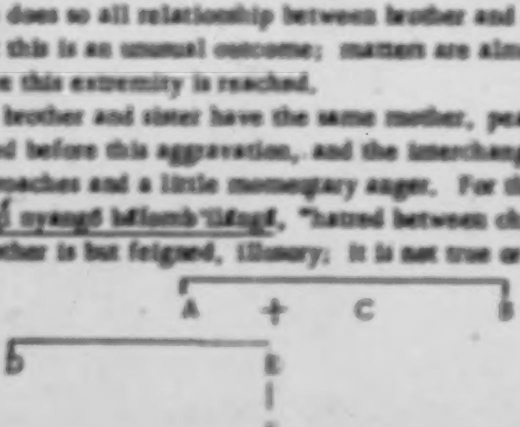
C. The position of a nephew ([illegible]) in relation to his maternal uncle's wives is to a great extent comparable to that of a son in relation to his father's wives. The fact that marriage is effected through the payment of a bride price gives the nephew greater freedom; for the uncle was enriched through the marriage of his

604 nephew's mother. There is no question of indemnity, except that of
587 "respects," to show the nephew's submission, and it consists of a hen and
576 a bunch of bananas. If the nephew refuses to make this gesture of
593 deference and submission, he is considered in the wrong and the entire family gangs up on him in order to save the authority and hierarchy of the family. "You are offending your uncle," they say, "no doubt you want him to die so that you can take his place and profit from the inheritance." And the offended uncle, after being patient for a few days, may demand a real indemnity. [306] But then other considerations become involved, and a new situation is created.

Actually, the young man's mother often -- though not always -- takes his side and turns on her brother. Two situations may arise:

1) The nephew's mother may not be born of the same mother as the uncle. In that case she seldom refrains from intervening on her son's behalf. She reproaches her brother for his hardness and his lack of affection for her, especially if the adulterous wife is her nkita, that is, if she were acquired by means of the bride price paid for her. She will say, "To whom do you owe this wife? And yet you demand riches from my son. Give me back my bride price, so that I may get him a wife." The uncle also gets angry, and sometimes accedes to his indignant sister's request and returns her bride price. If he does so all relationship between brother and sister is broken. But this is an unusual outcome; matters are almost always settled before this extremity is reached.

2) If brother and sister have the same mother, peace is always re-established before this aggravation, and the interchange is limited to a few reproaches and a little momentary anger. For the proverb says, [illegible], "hatred between children of the same mother is but feigned, illusory: it is not true or real."



604 837 576 579 An uncle (see D above) is not entirely free to cure his nephew's (F') passion unless he is the nkólo of his sister (E), that is, unless the mother (C) of his sister (E) is the nkita of his aunt (B), [307] who is the sister of his father (A). Indeed in that case his sister may not complain, for she owes him respect and submission; her subordination to her brother and master is greater than the gratitude he owes her for any riches he may have obtained through her or on her account.

603 837 D. In the case of the relationship of a grandson (bonkána) to his grandfather's wives, his freedom is, in practice, complete. Actually, among the Nkundó the affection of a grandfather (nkóko) for his own grandson often exceeds his love for his own son and completely degenerates into weakness. (1) The grandfather puts up with all his grandson's carryings-on, his whims, all his teasing, his insults, etc.

After illicit relations the grandson sometimes carries his insolence so far as to spontaneously send his grandfather a "mock" indemnity in the form of a basket filled with stones in the place of copper rings.

606 603 837 Although the grandfather treats his grandson with good humor, public opinion does not favor the latter's conduct, though it is more lenient than in the cases described above. The public reaction, as well as the sending of the "mock" fine, shows that in principle these relations are censurable and condemned. Because of present circum- [78] stances, particularly marriage at an earlier age than in the past, the age difference between a grandson and his grandfather's wives has increased considerably in the constantly growing number of cases, and their relations have proportionately decreased. (2) [308]

---

1. As happens very often also in Europe.
See Chapter I, Part 1, Article I, 3.

[116] 2. We have seen above that other Nkundó tribes are even less strict in these matters. On the other hand, the Ekonda, a Nkundó group living on Lake Leopold II, have a

609 837 636 184 higher morality -- in our terms. Among them the question of relations between a woman and her husband's son, younger brother, etc., does not even arise. Have they been influenced by some neighboring tribe? Or must we attribute the inferior morality of some of the tribes in this respect to decadence.

837 682 The following conclusions emerge from this long description:

1) Relations between a man and the wife of his son, younger brother, etc., in short of anyone inferior to him in the family hierarchy, are always strictly prohibited and never occur.

2) They do occur on the other hand between an inferior and the wife of his senior and superior. The degree of kinship between the husband and the culprit plays a considerable role in determining the seriousness or triviality of an infraction, the sanctions applied, and the various consequences. Some relations are accepted, others are censured with varying degrees of leniency, still others are pitilessly criticized.

3) In these matters a distinction may be made between two aspects:

a) the husband's reaction and the repression of the illicit relations;

b) the judgment of public opinion;

or:

a) the financial aspect;

b) the moral aspect -- to use that term for want of a better one.

Sometimes a third element comes into play, namely the intervention of the family on the side of the culprit against the injured husband who, for one reason or another, is in the wrong himself.

682 837 684 a) The usual sanction for adultery is, for the man, an indemnity to pay. But such a payment cannot be made since no financial transaction -- strictly speaking at least -- may be made

602 837 591 within a group of close kin; seeing that, from a certain standpoint, property belongs to all the members, each sooner or later receiving or inheriting from the other. But in cases where other sanctions can be imposed, they are considered legitimate. [309]

b) Except in the case of relations between brother and sister-in-law -- within the limits described above -- public opinion is 626 837 682 severe in its judgment, even more severe than for ordinary cases of adultery, although because of the more tangible nature of the sanctions imposed against the latter, these seem on the surface to be considered more serious; many natives even have that impression. Or at least that is the first impression that spontaneously comes from their explanations; currently, they stress the indemnity, and in their accounts of ancient proceedings and violent sanctions, they forget the other aspect. Others do not distinguish between the two sides of the problem, or distinguish between them only very poorly. Only in going to the bottom of things do they -- like ourselves -- become aware of the two aspects and the importance of not confusing them.

The leniency we observe in certain cases on the part of the interested parties who have been wronged, and sometimes on the part of public opinion, does not seem to us to have been explained as a leniency based on principle nor as a legitimation of these relations (except in the case of brothers within the limits indicated). They seem rather to spring from the affection they have for the culprit, their sympathy for his condition as a bachelor, a certain community of interests, and finally from an evaluation of certain other elements that may be involved (such as a fundamental jealousy in the case of brothers).

622 181 The great distinction made by the Nkundó in this realm as in others between inferior and superior relations is based on their conception of authority, which is patriarchal, therefore paternal. What is involved is not so much a fear of power as a reverent awe -- although the first should not be excluded. In their eyes an inferior does not exist for the benefit and advantage of the superior, but the reverse; authority exists for the good of the inferior, who to preserve hierarchy and order must submit to the [310] superior. The superior's duty to help his inferior (in his difficulties, his palavers, his poverty),

[illegible] to be liberal and generous toward him and therefore to make goods available to him, to be lenient in matters concerning justice and property and obliging in conjugal matters -- as long as the principle of authority remains secure is based on the same idea. The exploitation of an inferior by his superior is entirely contrary to the basic nature of Nkundó authority, while the reverse is entirely in conformity with it. (1)

1. This attitude may account -- at least to some extent -- for the liberties that the natives readily take with the European, their superior or master, such as domestic thefts, inappropriate requests, the kind of begging and lack of respect for authority that we are accustomed to seeing, etc.

Article VII. Adultery

[illegible] For the Nkundó, adultery is an illicit union between a man and a married woman. From the moment the [illegible] is paid for a woman, any relations with her by a man other than the husband-to-be are considered adulterous.

1. Terminology

There is no exclusive or specific term in Lonkundo by which our word "adultery" may be translated. There are a number of words in the language which are only partially equivalent to it.

1) First of all, the Nkundó speak of [illegible], a term denoting steady and continuous relations with a woman who is a complete stranger, that is, who is not related in any way. The word designates the relationship as well as the persons involved. This type of adultery is also called a [illegible] or [illegible] (from the verb [illegible]) -- that is, a secret, as against a true [illegible] (which will be

837 discussed in the next article). The Bombwanja, the londa, and the Injɔlɔ call it lɔ́ngola, "(any) act performed in hiding" (from the verb ɔngola). The londa also use [311] the term ekundɛ (from the verb kunda, "to bury), which refers to "something that is buried or hidden under a heap."

Nowadays there is a tendency to apply the term lisɛ́mbɛ, without any qualification, to adultery of this sort, at least if it is not limited to a single act. The woman and her lover are both called bosɛ́mbɛ (pl. basɛ́mbɛ).

2) If only an isolated act takes place, it is called yɛ́tɔ́ (from the verb ɛta, "to call"). But this term may also be applied to unmarried persons. Strictly speaking, it denotes a single union and not continuous relations. Certain tribes (the Injɔlɔ, the Elíngá) also have the word efongo (for instance in the expression nyang'ɛ'efongo, "indemnity for a single instance").

3) The term lonkâna (bonkakɛ among the Bombwanja) designates adultery between persons belonging to a single exogamous entity and, by extension, between persons belonging to different families but comprising a single settlement.

As the word itself indicates, the relations involved take place between "cousins" in the broadest sense of the term.

837
192 The natives gave me an account of the etymology of the terms bongombe and lonkâna, which it may be useful to repeat here. They are believed to have been invented by fickle wives and their lovers in order to hide their illicit love affairs. Even of old there were relations between the Nkundɔ and the Ngombe. A Ngombe who appeared in a Nkundɔ village was the object of the curiosity of all the young people. A man going to his paramour (or vice versa) or coming back at a very late hour could reply, if suspicions were aroused, that he had been to see the Ngombe. The same trick could be used in a case of lonkâna. I am passing on this explanation for whatever it's worth -- (for lonkâna, for instance, the etymology I cited at the beginning seems a good deal more natural), [312] it may be of interest at some time to have it noted and preserved in writing.

837 [196] 4) To indicate a tendency toward adultery (especially on the part of women) the Nkundɔ use the verb fâloka which literally denotes clothing that is too big and that flies in the wind. The noun loyɔ́ or boyɔ́ is also used.

The verb used for discovering a case of adultery is tɛ́mbola, the noun is ntɛmbɔ.

Occasional or permanent adultery has always been very common. This fact is undoubtedly due to the relative ease with which it is possible to escape discovery and consequent sanctions. A woman [578] going to visit her family cannot possibly be followed or watched by her husband; the distances make such surveillance difficult and, furthermore, it would have disastrous consequences for the stability of the marriage, since neither the woman nor her family would put up with it. Other partial causes are lasciviousness, polygamy, etc., as we will see later in the text.

2. Gifts

837 431 [462] An adulterous man and woman send each other presents; his consist of meat, arrows, etc., hers of food and various small objects. A woman's gifts to her lover are called lotémo (the noun used with the verb tumba, "to make burn" (1). Very young relatives generally serve as intermediaries. Note that a woman rarely sends her son, for she has reason to fear that the gift would not reach its destination; the boy would give himself a treat with it. She can have more confidence in a daughter.

A man's gift is called by the generic term ntomɔ́, "a gift that is sent, a dispatch." [312]

In isolated cases (yɛ́mi) a man sends an arrow, some small object, beads, meat, etc. Nowadays money or cloth have been

---

1. Note that the noun and the verb are not etymologically related. Perhaps lotémo might be related to téma, "to show, to designate." The Ekonda call this gift elika. See Chapter II, Article I.

837 substituted for all these items. As a rule the woman demands some
437 remuneration although there are exceptions, which may be frequent or rare, depending on the region and on the nature of the persons involved. They are due to extraordinary passion or to the woman's love for her lover. (1)

1. See Chapter I, Part I, Article IV.

3. Evidence of adultery

837 The strength of the evidence may vary.
684 1) The strongest evidence is finding the couple _in flagrante delicto_. No objection will hold up against it, and it constitutes for the application of the severest sanctions. The act must be observed by the husband. The testimony of a third party is never introduced. If another person discovers the adultery and favors the husband, that person will inform the latter so that he can take precautions in order to catch the culprits personally. If it is discovered by the woman's father or other close relative who favors the husband,
[686] he informs the latter and, if possible, calls him to witness the infraction himself. If he does so, the husband must give the indemnity to his father-in-law. This is not a legal obligation but one imposed by good relations and decorum, since the father-in-law has shown good will and affection toward his son-in-law.

2) A wife's admission is almost as important and always decisive. Such a confession mitigates her husband's anger toward her and directs it chiefly toward her accomplice. Therefore most women do not hesitate to denounce their paramours if they feel somewhat cornered. (On the other hand, women never denounce each other.) [214]

3) A third form of evidence can be obtained by surprising the lovers while they are planning a meeting. The husband can accuse them on the spot and try to extract a complete confession from his wife on the subject of the past or the future. If possible he assures himself of the co-operation of witnesses. If he foresees a denial on his wife's part, he lets the occasion pass and looks for a good opportunity to surprise the culprits in the act. Regardless of the

537 wife's inclinations, a husband often will not intervene at once; he
649 will give no sign of what he has observed but will skillfully seek an opportunity to observe the pair in flagrante delicto, so that he can take more violent action. This approach is absolutely necessary if he has nothing but suspicions, even if they are well founded. To act otherwise would not have great results and would show a lack of judgment -- often true of young, inexperienced husbands or ones with too irascible a temperament. An intercepted message bearing an invitation or an acceptance has the same practical value.

This form of evidence is weaker than the two preceding ones -- unless these are added -- and justifies only certain sanctions.

4) The sight of lovers giving gifts, either from hand to hand or through an intermediary (" with so-and-so's compliments") also has its value as evidence. But here again the best approach is to use this evidence as a means of obtaining the wife's confession. That is the only practical value of discovering gifts in the wife's possession. If a wife finds no explanations that will pacify the husband, she is forced to admit the act and denounce her accomplice.

4. Sanctions

649 Nkundo law includes several sanctions against adultery some of which are applicable to the spouse, some to the accomplice, and some to an intermediary (ekund). There are differences [315] in the application of these sanctions depending on the gravity of the case (for instance, repetition of an offence or a habitual offence), the inclinations or temperaments of the persons involved, and the value of the evidence. Although the sanctions are legitimated by law, most of them are applied at the spouse's initiative; but in some instances the authority of the family as well as that of the nkanga have to be involved. Therefore the following varied situations should be pointed out:

A. A husband's sanctions against an adulterous wife.

a) In the case of a delicto flagrante, the husband may beat his wife, wound her, and even kill her. Neither she nor her family have the right to complain. If he kills her he is no longer entitled

684 [illegible] to a reimbursement of the bride price, any more than if she had died of natural causes. In past times death under these circumstances usually resulted in a war between clans. But this extreme situation actually arose only very rarely; if the man was excessively jealous and had other wives or the means to obtain them, or was embittered by persistent and incorrigible infidelity. Most frequently a husband's foresight of the loss he would sustain, in the last analysis keeps him from such drastic action. He limits himself to beating or injuring the culprit or to applying other forms of chastisement or punishment (see below under b); see above, Article III, 2.

If the husband has sufficient evidence, of the sort described above, but has not caught the culprits in the act, the wife can expect a good whipping, accompanied by a whole string of vulgar expressions and assorted insults (femina foetidissima, tempore menstruationis putor tuus venit in nares omnium hominum, etc.) as well as [578] [illegible] a heap of obscenities pertaining to the female genital organs. The husband who acts in this manner is not reprimanded. On the contrary, he acts thus out of jealousy; our Nkundó say that his anger is an anger of love.

In these punishments the Nkundó above all recognize the exasperation that springs from legitimate jealousy. That is why the husband acts on his own initiative. Besides, when he [314] finds himself confronted with the fact it would be psychologically difficult for him to calm himself first in order to go and inform the [illegible].

It was extremely unusual for a man to kill his wife calmly and deliberately. Such a thing happened only if her infidelities were continuous and she had erred in many other ways as well. And even then this conduct was found only in certain extremely cruel families. It was known that [illegible] Ōkungū and [illegible] [illegible] had acted in this fashion; both were members of the Bongili ([illegible]), a family which, in its songs, boasted of eating their own wives.

b) Tortures. The husband may also have recourse to several types of torture. Most important among them are the following:

1) The [illegible], which is the standard torture so to speak. It is a heavy wooden fork which is attached to the neck. It prevents

[i.e., a husband's killing his wife for adultery [illegible]]

[illegible] movement and therefore serves as the Nkundó prison. But in addition, if it is applied for a long time, it becomes a real torture; the skin becomes painful and comes off, inflammations readily appear, and bugs sometimes lodge there.

As soon as the woman's family hears (through the *ndonga*) that she is being so tortured, they often come and beg her husband to [576] free her. To pacify and propitiate him, they offer him an *ad hoc* payment, that is, a *bofinja* of a few copper rings. Generally, he yields to their entreaties. A good relationship and his respect toward them require that he not remain indifferent to their supplications, especially as he needs them for the stability of the marriage and the good functioning of the household.

2) *Bokongwanyi*, or handcuffs, which consist of sticks attached either to the wrists or to the ankles (to prevent walking), or to both arms and feet. Two sticks were used, one above and one below, with the limb placed in between, and they were tied with ropes that were attached and fastened in notches made at [217] each end of the sticks. In rare instances the wrists were bound. To increase the pain and immobility, the ropes were shrunk and hardened by pouring water on them. These handcuffs were generally added to the *etoko* and were never applied alone.

3) *Exposure to the bites of nkonghó ants.* In the region under [illegible] discussion, I have never heard the people speak of exposure to *bafomba* (*Dorylus*), or even to the venomous *bosálfoláfone*. This fact contrasts with the practice of other Mongo tribes and with the content of certain legends (evolution?).

4) *The pouring of water containing pepper* into the vagina. Sometimes the genital organs were rubbed with crushed pepper.

5) *Exposure of the sex organs to fire.* A burning log was held near them.

The last two types of torture were the most dreadful.

We can add one last form of punishment which is derived from the same legal rules, although it is not a torture:

[illegible] 6) *Nudity.* The husband tears off the guilty woman's garments and thus exposes her to public shame. Even if she resorts to using leaves, no one mistakes the situation, and her shame is only partly reduced.

684
578
[illegible]
591
Any of the types of evidence listed above is sufficient to legitimize the application of one or another of these penalties. Nevertheless, the husband is required first to notify the older members of his family and the *nkonga*, who do not permit him to act unless the misdeeds have occurred repeatedly. The readiness to accord the husband permission depends on the temperament of the interested parties and on a great many circumstances, the most important of which is the respective social prominence of the parties involved.

The need to ask permission of the "fathers" and the *nkonga*, which we have already encountered in reference to other situations (above, Article III, 4), does not weaken the husband's rights [318], but it limits their use. It is not a legal obligation but one that is imposed for family reasons, which are as follows:

1) The respect due to the "fathers" in this as in all important matters;

2) The respect due to the *nkonga*, who in marital matters is the husband's superior and whose intervention must be called upon in any serious situation;

3) The repercussions of any inconsiderate or rash action on the entire family (enmities, wars, etc.).

If forbearance and patience are fruitless, no one can blame the husband any longer. And when the woman's family compares the censurable conduct of their daughter with the generosity of their son-in-law, they will naturally be inclined to find that he is in the right and so usually will not intervene against him.

Note also that the Nkundó invoke the need to maintain their honor as justification for the obligation to notify the authorities. They must be able to inform the unfaithful woman's clan and thus safeguard their good reputation as defenders of order and public peace.

684
593
A woman whose husband loved her very much was subjected to the *enfka* only. He would reprimand her and strike her, and would try to correct her behavior by means of gentleness and leniency.

As we will see *suo loco*, a husband who is exasperated by the incorrigible infidelity of a wife whose [illegible] of other widely

684 586 duties is also unsatisfactory, may sometimes resort to divorce or to selling her into slavery, but rarely to killing.

Colonization has abolished torture, slavery, killing, and the
684 legitimacy of assassination. A husband has no other sanction against
178 an unfaithful wife than to insult and beat her. And even there European law forces him to restrain himself lest he commit excesses which [318] involve him in a trial before the white man's court. Fortunately for marital fidelity, a reaction in favor of the repression of adultery has recently begun, following the official establishment of native jurisdiction. In the not too distant future, this reaction will culminate in a return to ancestral law in a form adapted to present circumstances.

B. Against the accomplice, the injured husband has the right
684 to make use of two sanctions: violence and the payment of an
576 "indemnity."

1) If the husband catches the accomplice in the act, he always has the right to wound him, or even to kill him, or reduce him to slavery. The last two forms of vengeance were not practiced unless the respective villages of the husband and the culprit were fairly distant from each other and not bound to each other by any special ties (friendship, mutual assistance, or affinity). This reservation existed because of consideration for the offender's relatives, the desire not to bring them excessive sorrow. Another cause for caution and calm is the economic or military inferiority of the husband's clan, or the fearlessness, the valor in battle, in a word, the strength of the culprit's family. A special case which makes all other considerations disappear is adultery with a favorite, whose husband's love for her is especially passionate and jealous.

If the offender's adultery was not limited to a few isolated acts but was becoming a real habit, or if he had already seduced many women, resulting in many palavers for his family, the husband could be bolder. For the rake's clan too would finally be exasperated with his incorrigible and disastrous misconduct and would rather be rid of him. (1) [319]

---

1. See also Chapter VIII, Article II, 2, A.

465 The risk of being wounded, reduced to slavery, or killed, often cools the adulterer's passion. Therefore, the more the husband showed that he was fearless, violent, physically powerful, or of a high social position, the more his wives and their lovers were on their guard. Certain men were so jealous of one of their wives and so determined to take vengeance with extreme severity that the tempters did not even dare to think of approaching her.

2) The payment of an indemnity seems to be the standard sanction. It is the only one that remains legal at the present time; consequently it is coming more and more to the fore.

Any of the types of evidence examined above justify the claim for an indemnity.

The indemnity may be minimal, consisting of 2 to 5 copper rings, or heavy, going up to 20 to 30 rings or a slave. The maximum is always demanded for adultery with a favorite. The size of the payment depends on the persons involved, the relationships that bind them, the frequency of misconduct, and the nature of the action observed. For instance, if the husband catches the couple when arranging a meeting or exchanging gifts, the indemnity will be small; if, on the other hand, he has caught them *in flagrante delicto*, it will be high.

[432] A man who demands a high indemnity must expect to be treated the same way should the occasion arise. The application of the law of retaliation in that case is fully approved by Nkundo opinion.

466 [illegible] [433] In addition to the situations examined in the preceding article, there exists another which does not result in an indemnity claim. It arises if the culprit belongs to a class of slaves or is in some other way subject or inferior (*[illegible]* or *[illegible]*). (1) Even

1. Strangers who are settled with a tribe or group but are in no way related to them.

if the husband catches the culprit in the act, he politely asks him to go away and leave his house [301] and his wife: *[illegible]* Here is true Nkundo courtesy in practice. It might certainly happen that a husband who was too jealous or impetuous would wound, kill, or sell his rival. But this was an exception and was always condemned since it was absolutely lacking in chivalry. In any case there can never be any question of demanding an indemnity; such an act would be absolutely shameful.

The culprit is notified of the demand for an indemnity by the *nkonga*, who in difficult cases is accompanied by various notables. If the husband foresees strong opposition on the debtor's part, he gives the *nkonga* a special present of a bunch of bananas and two fish (or a hen) "so that he would not be forced to eat the rival's food."

A persistent and categorical refusal to pay the indemnity is unusual. For it can have serious consequences: the taking in custody followed by enslavement because of debt, or [the taking of] compensation in the person of his wife or of a relative, or the retention [by her relatives] of a relative of the creditor who is married into the debtor's clan (*ilifaka*). Since these practices of taking hostages and of bodily constraint have been abolished, there remains the intervention of the courts, seconded by the police.

What is the Nkundó idea of this payment which we have called an indemnity in order to facilitate its description? The question is difficult to answer. Here are the linguistic facts which may provide elements of the solution:

The payment for adultery is called *nyongo*, and the word is used together with the verb *ka*, "to give." The expression is equivalent to the verb *lingola fifa* (from which the noun *bofifo* is derived). It signifies "payment" in the broadest sense and thus also covers our words "pay," "salary," "remuneration." In addition to its application in the case of adultery, it is also used in many other situations, such as remuneration for work, payment for a service, etc. *Nyongo* does not mean "compensation," which is called *bowifila*, nor "a payment making amends [272] and apologizing for an offense," which is *bibolo*, nor "indemnification" (*nsiflaka*). What the expression has in common with the last term is the concept of a [illegible] payment rightly owed, and in the absence of an adequate translation, "indemnity" is still the least inaccurate. (1)

[illegible]

One point remains to be noted. The two forms of punishment, violence and indemnity, may not be combined, and this principle is applied in all situations (2). Should this prohibition be construed as an implicit condemnation of violent measures? Or have we here the use of a system of settlement? It is difficult to settle this question, and actually the two explanations overlap at least in part.

[illegible] It is not without interest to note that, in order to justify sanctions against the accomplice, the Nkundó invoke his frequently dominant role in adultery. Actually they reason that a woman is weak by nature; her emotions predominate, she is easily led and resists enticement only with difficulty. A man on the other hand is more reasonable, better able to control himself. Sanctions enacted and applied against the wife alone would not only leave out the punishment of one of the two culprits,but they would also be inadequate for the preservation of social order, since the woman remains exposed to succumbing out of weakness in spite of the penalties. The severity of Nkundó law with regard to the corporal punishment of the wife, which exists in spite of these considerations, are explained in terms of the woman's sensitive nature and of the power her husband has over her which he lacks in relation to her accomplice.

---

1. The words used for "reward" are bokondo, which is a reward for an unusual service, like the capture of a leopard or another "royal" animal (nyam'ě'ekofo, such as a python, an eagle, etc.) or a beautiful dance, and mbuteji, which is a reward for small services.

2. For example, see also Chapter VIII, Article III, 1.

C. Against a husband and his accomplice. There is no
684 specific sanction in Nkundó law against a husband's adultery, [323] but an outraged wife may take revenge on him, as on her rival. Her weapons against her husband include invective, the refusal of food, drink, baths, and finally of debitum conjugale. These are appreciable punishments about which the husband can in no way complain, for he would be found entirely in the wrong. The woman's actions stem from a legitimate jealousy. Sometimes her feeling
[834] becomes so intense that she tears off her clothing and stands before her husband completely naked; this shames him greatly and constitutes a stinging reproach. Invectives flow out of the wife's mouth in torrents: ilolé ing, itutula ing, inyanyama iné, owé lói ô ndé
[578] nyongo, ndé ntémbó, "that imbecile, that good for nothing, that beast, one day you'll die of penalties, of being caught in flagrante delicto . . . ." Then there is a whole string of the usual in-
[562] sults. Our Nkundó say that the more abundant the insults, the greater is the woman's love. She may carry on like this for days, even for weeks. Her responses to her husband's adultery are thus of the same sort as those she makes use of under other circumstances.

If a jealous wife sets fire to the hut in which her husband yielded to his passion, no one can reproach her. The damage was caused on her husband's account.

Against the woman accomplice, the wife may use more violent means. She may fight her, strike her, even injure her. The rival's husband will demand a liombo, or payment "for blows and wounds," which has to be paid not by the wife's family, but by the guilty husband. Thus in the final analysis it is again he who is punished. If the offending woman is killed, it is again the unfaithful husband who is obliged to pay an indemnity to the widower. (See Article II.)

One form of punishment to which a wife likes to have recourse to take revenge on her adulterous husband and his accomplice if she catches them in the act is to pour a pot of hot or boiling water on their bodies. [324]

684 [571] D. Against the go-between (1) Nkundó law permits all sorts

1. The Nkundó generally use go-betweens to tender invitations to women; these are frequently children between the ages of six and fourteen. The disastrous effect of such a practice on the bringing up of young people is easily understood. In some groups it has inflicted a real moral evil.

of invective, blows, and a good whipping. Formerly the most serious situation arose if a woman was called directly. In the past, if favored by circumstances (especially the social position of the families involved), certain of the more jealous and bold men caught the go-between and sold him as a slave. This punishment was entirely legitimate, even though the person for whom the go-between acted was the one primarily guilty and therefore the prisoner's family could attack him on that account. People cite the rather recent historic case of Bonkéké is Iloko of Ikengo (Ntómbé, Wéngaté), who sold a Botswa named Bompéte into slavery because the latter had brought a lover's gift to Wáfya, his favorite.

684 582 581 E. Conclusion. In examining the various sanctions that Nkundó law provides against adulterers and their accomplices, we are struck by a noticeable difference among the cases. Although a wife has certain means to check her husband's misconduct, she is unquestionably less well armed than he. This is a logical consequence of the nature of Nkundó marriage. A husband defends his "property," whereas a wife is not an "owner." Furthermore, in this realm the requirements are stricter for a woman than for a man. Even in Europe the misconduct of a man is judged very differently than a woman's weakness, the latter being considered much more serious and shameful, even though -- in an absolute sense -- the two are equal. Finally, the system of polygamy plays a role, for it tends to weaken a wife's love and consequently her jealousy, so

681 591 592 that she becomes accustomed to her husband's relations with various other women. Consequently, the reaction of the women in general [316] against adultery is much weaker than that of the men. Moreover, because of this same system, a woman is much more exposed to weakness, and stronger sanctions are therefore necessary to insure her fidelity.

Finally, there is one last reason for considering a woman's misconduct as more serious. It is the danger of conception through adultery, with all the attendant consequences: risks for the pregnant woman, forced continence for the husband, etc. (1)

1. See no. 6 below as well as Chapter I,
Part 2, Article IV, 3, and Chapter X,
Article II, 3.

562 684 From the description of sanctions it is apparent that in spite of the woman's inferior position, Nkundó law does not leave husbands the full and complete freedom which, according to certain writers, they are accorded among other peoples. Even if the means of repression available to the wife do not incontestably prove that the husband has an obligation of conjugal fidelity -- and the wife's legal status explains a great deal -- the fact remains that the ndonga as well as public opinion approve of even her violent reaction, proving that she is right and the husband wrong.

5. Public opinion

626 637 Public opinion is fairly lenient in relation to isolated instances (yětsi, efongo). It clearly recognizes the error involved in infringing on the conjugal rights of another, but the error is attributed to human weakness. In the case of habit the situation is different; it is criticized frequently and severely. Habitual sinners [317] are called efãfókã (from the verb fafoka, literally "to flutter" and figuratively "to flirt"), ebóngã or ebãbóngã (from the verb bãbonga) or ebãbóã (from bâboa) "to flutter, to be flighty and fickle." These epithets are applied primarily to women, who are more subject to this failing than men.

626 The shame attached to the discovery of this sort of misconduct in the better circles in Europe is unknown among the Nkundó. This is natural since isolated instances are readily excused. As to the habitual offenders, they are sensitive [326] to the above-mentioned epithets but will not correct their ways on this account any more than people in other parts of the world.
(57)
[152]

837 An adulterous husband is criticized as much as an adulterous wife in spite of the difference in the means of repression which Nkundó law provides for their respective misconduct.
626
684

Public opinion therefore corroborates the conclusion toward which our examination of sanctions has pointed, namely that adultery is condemned by the Nkundó. Opinion is not based on the existence of the sanction but seems to spring from their innate mentality, which makes them perceive adultery as a disorder.

6. Aggravating circumstances

837 If a case of adultery is followed by conception, it becomes especially serious, and for the husband as much as for the natural father. Indeed the latter must assume all the consequences. When circumstances permit the husband makes his wife denounce her accomplice, and she does not refuse to do so. The husband then calls a meeting and demands a pledge (ndanga) from the culprit, who in that way acknowledges that he is at fault and shows his willingness to assume all responsibility. If there is a miscarriage or the child dies during delivery, the natural father must pay the legal father an indemnity of "a slave" or more (sometimes 50 *rings*); a smaller indemnity is required for a child who is only deformed or sickly. If the mother dies the indemnity consists of a slave and 50 *rings*, and it may go as high as 100 *rings*.
682
672

In the interim the husband no longer goes near his wife. He leaves her to her lover, who must "preserve the foetus" and observe all the rites and practices associated with pregnancy and childbirth, since, physically, he is the *father*. (1) [327]

---

1. For fuller details see Chapter X, Article II, 3. For analogous practices

673
597
[845] in the case of an unmarried mother, see Chapter I, Part 1, Article III, 3.

[843] Adultery also becomes especially serious during the period preceding childbirth when there is a special prohibition against it, as endangering the lives of both mother and child, as we will explain in Chapter X, Article III.

7. Remarks and general conclusions

571
[726] 1) In former times the offense of adultery, even in its mildest form, that is, an isolated act, was one of the chief causes of "wars" between villages. Sometimes both sides called on their relatives by marriage to assist them, and the result was a general upheaval.

577
595 2) As a rule a husband wants his wife to be faithful. Doubtless there are exceptions. Most if not all of them were formerly found among the old polygamists. At their age they were disgusted with continual palavers, and their experience as men had taught them that they often became angry and uselessly complicated their little lives. They preferred to close their eyes, like good old Bonsofe w'Ilolongi of Isako (the Bombwanja clan of the Bolyā). He came to see me in the Christian village of Bombomba through which I was passing at the beginning of March, 1933. I asked him why he was adorned with so many bells, and he answered naively, "I always wear them. That way my wives know of my coming already from a distance. It gives them time to stop slandering me and to send their lovers away." When I expressed my surprise that he did not want to catch them in the act in order to punish them and end their infidelities, he answered me with a smile, "No, Father, jealousy . . . is for the young. As for me, I have seen so much of it that I no longer have any desire to get angry and make palavers for these trivialities."

558
577
595 Since the coming of the Europeans some unscrupulous men -- especially polygamists -- have been engaging in [328] a kind of procuring. They send their wives to commit adultery in order to be able to catch them in the act and thus enrich themselves. Or else they lend their wives for one night or more to laborers or soldiers who are

[illegible]
837
593 bachelors in law or in fact.

Knowing their wives' weak and sensual natures, some men save the rings that come to them as indemnities -- today as in the past. When this capital has grown sufficiently, they use it to acquire a new wife. The latter is in a sense the other wife's *nkita*, and she is called, rather crudely, *nkita é' efufa*, *efufa* being the piece of cloth (apron) worn by the women. Such action does not mean that the husband wishes to speculate in immorality. He simply profits from what is a fact. But this attitude could easily degenerate, and at the present time the danger that it might is no longer imaginary, although for the moment things have not gone that far. Watchfulness on the part of administrative authorities can avoid all exploitation of marital infidelity by preventing the development of this evil or checking it where it already exists.

837
593 The attitude toward a spouse's adultery varies greatly with different situations. These variations spring not only from the temperament of the injured party -- this goes without saying -- but also from the way the one guilty of adultery fulfills other marital obligations. This is particularly true with respect to a woman's "weaknesses." If she otherwise shows herself to be a devoted wife who is attentive, respectful, hard working, and one who takes the interests of her husband and children to heart, in a word, a good housewife, her husband will regret her infidelities, but he will pay less attention to these failings, since she compensates for them by many good qualities which show that she seriously loves him and lets herself go solely out of weakness. On the other hand, if a wife becomes neglectful, [329], disagreeable, and disrespectful, the change will indicate that something other than just weakness is involved, that her love for her husband has cooled and has chosen another object.

This is the sound philosophy of conjugal life among the Nkundó, as it is proclaimed and taught by all their old men and sages.

837 3) In spite of the terrible sanctions against adultery, it would appear that this offence has always been common. Certain events, such as deaths, feasts, and dances which last long into the night, are especially conducive to laxity. But even under ordinary

[837] circumstances, the dark of evening provides strong provocation. A noisy crowd of young people is often deliberately aroused for the purpose of hiding such frolics. Women especially are the ones to start the scene (called iole). They begin with "games," pinching, etc. Sometimes those who are bolder cry out, iole o! by way of a signal. These irregularities are sometimes agreed upon in advance; other times they are provoked without any advance agreement. The husbands intervene, but it is very difficult for them to catch the culprits.

[577] [837] 4) It would seem that according to Nkundó notions, adultery is not a moral fault, even in the broadest sense of the term, and not punishable by a nonearthly power of religion or superstition, which would intervene to re-establish the order that has been disrupted. Rather one has the impression that their law pertaining to it is purely social. Not that I want to say that this law and its sanctions do not, in the last analysis, spring from a moral idea; but if this moral idea exists, it is very vague and confused and is not expressed by our people. In practice all attention is focused on the sanctions because of the injury to property rights. There never seems to be the slightest reference to a moral religious idea. [320]

And this is probably the chief reason for the frequency of adultery in spite of the sanctions, for while these undoubtedly reduce the evil they are powerless to stop it. But this statement does not apply exclusively to our people. Every law is an ideal. Sanctions attempt to ensure that it is observed. But the masses never attain the intended goal. When some individuals are superior to the ideal imposed by law, it is because society falls short in performing its task, as is the case in Europe today. Among the Nkundó, law and society are superior to the morality of individuals. Besides, sanctions though necessary have never sufficed to assure perfect obedience of laws: nihil leges sine moribus. Good morals must come from considerations that are superior to particular laws and the basis for them.

Although, as we have seen, the Nkundó do not connect the subject at hand in any way with their religious understanding, how can we explain the praiseworthy conduct of many individuals? In my opinion although the Nkundó are not aware of the relationship between the law and its ultimate legislator, they are not without a certain vague, innate feeling that adultery is immoral, and this is corroborated by

837 their sense of the personal injustice involved. But they do not reason
577 out these feelings; they follow them spontaneously, blindly.

There is a greater awareness of the social evil in adultery. But it is based not on the philosophical considerations of this harm in itself, but on the consequences of individual cases for the proper functioning of society -- palavers, financial difficulties, enmities, quarrels, wars.

This it seems to me is the present state of their ideas. It does not preclude the possibility that the law and sanctions against adultery may rest on an ultimate basis of moral ideas. And more particularly it is quite possible that the moral idea [321] operates only in the form of a feeling of the great principles of fundamental natural law which is innate to all human reason.

837
177
8) No one will be astonished if we say that colonization, far from reducing the frequency of adultery, actually contributed to its considerable increase. The abolition of native penalties and punishments together with a great freedom of movement could not help but lead, naturally, to this state of affairs. Every informed colonial who is in close contact with the natives is aware of the situation. "The prohibition of corporal punishments which, according to custom, were the sanctions imposed against a woman's adultery have brought about a license whose extent can be measured by the degree to which a group is subject to our occupation. The forgetfulness if not the contempt for the promises of marriage is nowhere carried so far as in places where the customary disciplines have been completely re-
[113] moved." (Maj. Engels, Bulletin Soc. Belge, Et. Col., cited in Congo, 3rd year, Vol. 1, p. 77, April, 1922). That is why various persons have repeatedly called for sanctions against adultery to replace the ancestral means of repression that have been abolished.

But the decrees hoped for have never passed beyond the stage
692 of mere projects. Fortunately, another step, and a fundamental one,
177 has been taken in the meantime through the establishment of native
837 jurisdiction (1926). Under the guidance and control of European authorities, native courts will turn the helm halfway back to the ancient sanctions, adapting these all the while to the new conditions created by colonization and by the introduction of more humanitarian

177 ideas. Nevertheless, great care must be exercised not to go to ex-
695 tremes in introducing these ideas to the point where a society only
671 just beginning to emerge from a pagan barbarism because of the presence of a civilization based on Christianity, is treated as an equal of European communities. Native society must evolve gradually and harmoniously. Rushing is often synonymous with breaking, and it is always a [300] great mistake. And in the matters under discussion, the abolition of sanctions which, in spite of their imperfection and their inadequacy for fulfilling the whole task, have been shown to have a real efficacy, has removed all the coercive power of Nkundó law. A sentimental and excessive humanitarianism must yield before the native society's right to respect for its vital institutions -- unless these are entirely to be condemned -- and therefore before the necessity for severe punishments which it cannot do without for the moment. For our natives are not yet ready for a complete abolition of their customary sanctions, since they still lack a new foundation that would replace their fear of the ancient penalties. Let us therefore take care not to take all means of punishment away from husbands and wives, even if they seem somewhat violent from our viewpoint. Finally, there is no sense in overstressing a respect for members of the weaker sex, who by their very nature sometimes need punishment for the greater good of the whole community. Moreover, as for this respect, our Nkundó do not understand it at all; the way we conceive of it is entirely opposed to their mentality and their laws. Therefore, everything will work out more easily if the native courts are given sufficient latitude to act in the spirit of their ancestral law and if their activity is guided by a constant, informed, and sympathetic control whose sole aim is the healthy evolution of native society.

600 If it is applied within these limits and under these conditions, Nkundó law can redress many wrongs and help to save native society from the abyss into which it is in danger of falling. In spite of its faults and imperfections, it is preferable not only to the system of freedom (or license) which has reigned for many years, but also to

[illegible] new legislation emanating from the European power, a very slow and complex system (the law against adultery which has been requested for decades is still in the realm of studies and projects), lacking in flexibility and the ability to adapt to the very varied circumstances of the peoples of the Congo. A law is needed only for the persons who do not fall within the jurisdiction of the native courts, in order to preserve harmony and impartiality in the exercise of justice, since native society must of necessity feel its effects.

Article VIII. Relations Permitted to the Wife

837 In this article we will examine the relations a wife may have -- under certain conditions -- with various persons. According to our law, such relations would be adulterous, but Nkundó law does not consider them as such. From this arises the difference between this article and the preceding one. Such relations may be 1) transitory or 2) permanent (concubinage).

1. Transitory relations

837 561 [574] A wife is permitted to have sexual relations with her husband's age mates (*baningá*, sing. *boningá*). (1) When one comes to

1. See Chapter I, Part 1, Article III.

the home of another in the course of travel, the host lends his wives to the visitor, saying: "Here is your house; here are your wives." If he is monogamous he leaves his house and his spouse at the visitor's disposal and goes to bed elsewhere alone. If a woman who is traveling arrives in the village of one of her husband's age mates, the latter -- as soon as he learns of her presence -- invites her to stay in his home for the length of her stay. When they say good-by he gives her a present for her husband" with the boningá's compliments." When one visits another, wives are often exchanged.

571 Such is the practice among age mates who maintain good and true relationships. They have free access to each other's wives, and [306] their actions cannot give rise to claims or fines. Nor if one is more "stingy" in the native view than another, can the latter start palavers with him on that account. But such an attitude will result in a cooling of the cordiality of their relationship, and refusals will be reciprocated.

Age mates do not demand indemnities from each other because it is not fitting for one to enrich himself at the other's expense. This rule applies even to "private" relations, to a simple "call," occurring without the lending described above. But if one of them goes too far, that is if he avails himself of another's wife two or three times without the latter doing likewise, a palaver may arise. The husband will believe that he has been wronged and will demand an indemnity. If his companion refuses on the grounds of the relationship which unites them, he may receive a reply such as the following: boníngá bosángela ndé basí é? "Is the age-mate relationship a means for acquiring wives?" A regular battle may follow, and the husband is the one who will win the case before the court.

There are no relations permitted between men and women age mates. Such relations would be considered typical adultery.

The relations between a man and his age-mate's wife are therefore permitted not in themselves, but because of the husband's willingness to have them occur. Furthermore, the husband is not strictly required to yield his wife to him. That he does so is a
571 matter of good friendship, harmony, payment for services, and mutual respect and affection. From the purely matrimonial point of view, the terrain is free and neutral since, they say, the relations involved are purely private between them, and each one does what he thinks best.

837 In addition to the boníngá, the Nkundó have a relationship
572 called boseka, "friendship," "friend." (It is called bokandeko among the Bombwanja). (1) In contrast to the practices that prevail between

1. See Chapter I, Part1, Article III.

587 572 age mates, the friendship pact has no connection with the wives of the men involved. If [331] there is a very firm friendship between them, one may lend his wife to the other in some situation or other, but this is a fairly rare occurrence. The Nkundó say that the bosako relationship is for mutual assistance only.

If a case of adultery occurs, the husband has every right to demand an indemnity, but if the occurrence is not repeated, he never goes to extremes, and, because of the friendship, he may ask as little as 2 or 3 rings. If the occurrences are repeated without reciprocity, however, the husband often makes a great to-do; he demands a large indemnity and breaks the friendship pact.

Instead of demanding an indemnity some men give their [593] friend a gift (mpósí) asking him to stop the illicit relations. Often this action is but a subterfuge to relax the other's vigilance so that, feeling freer, he will be more easily apprehended.

587 557 Between persons bearing the same name (ndoí, pl. bandoí), (1) there is no free access to wives, nor are persons of opposite sexes ever considered ndoí. Such relations would be considered concubinage or pure and simple adultery.

To summarize, a certain freedom of access to each other's 587 wives exists among age mates, but it is subject to the expressed or tacit consent of the respective husbands. These relations are not considered adulterous. Such freedom does not exist with respect to other categories of persons. But these, nevertheless, had to be mentioned here because the similarity among the kinds of relationship discussed might produce errors in the reader's mind, and because in certain parts of the Congo such persons fall into the same category as Nkundó age mates.

2. Concubinage

595-x 587 Concubinage (called lisámbá among the Bokote, ingke among the Bombwanja as well as the Ekonda) is a union [335] between

---

1. See Chapter I, Part 1, Article III.

595 587 a man and another's wife which is legitimate, regulated, officially acknowledged, and accepted. It is not a marriage; there is no bride price nor are there witnesses other than the woman herself; the wife does not belong to the secondary husband, and in case of a rupture of relations, there is no restitution of valuables however numerous they may be. A man who in this manner purchases the right to cohabit with the wife of another does so because of poverty; he does not have the means to pay a bride price for this woman or [336] any other. Therefore he is disdained and scorned by his fellows. To a certain extent the husband and the lover share a common life; they give each other presents and food, help each other, eat together, and call each other bakalí, the same name by which wives of a polygamist address each other.

Such a concubinage can last fairly long. It is usually difficult to break, for the legitimate husband takes such a breaking up badly and considers it an injustice. If the husband is rich and influential, it is dangerous for the partner to dissolve the relationship for he will have to count on the husband's wrath. Thus in the past such a union could continue for many years (in that case it was called [illegible]) until the lover (bonsɛ́mbɛ́, pl. bansɛ́mbɛ́) was rich enough to free himself. Often it continued for an entire lifetime, and the partner settled in the lofɔnjɛ (a place occupied by a man and his wives) of the husband (linsɛ́mbɛ́ jǐ njelɛ́ngwɛ́, enjwɛ́ki); he thus became like the husband's child. Nowadays this custom has become much less common because of the freedom resulting from colonization as well as the greater possibility of acquiring wealth. This diminution shows that the practice is not ideal, even in native eyes, and is only a last resort resulting from the state of the distribution of wealth.

A man who desires to live in concubinage with another man's wife has some relations with her in secret and then makes the matter public. For that purpose he gives the woman a knife or a few bakonga to take to her [337] husband. Or he may even call a meeting of the patriarchs and pay the husband in front of them. To make a concubinage public in this way is called ója linsɛ́mbɛ́, "to make

316 the concubinage come out," (the intransitive of the verb is filo), or
317 teja (tela) lisafumbá, "to bring out into daylight, to make public."

The payment for the right of concubinage is called [illegible], although it may also be designated simply by the term lisafumbá (tego). To show his agreement the woman's husband sends the partner a dog or a few hens (2, 3, 5, or more, depending on his wealth or his satisfaction). The intermediary is not the woman involved but one of her co-wives. Nor is one of the husband's children ever charged with this office. Thereafter, the two partners [fn] regularly give each other gifts. The husband's presents are all called bofúmo (the generic term given to all presents from a woman to her lover), while those of the other man are called by the term mpendi, "package, gift sent" -- also a generic term.

Often the woman herself urges her lover to make their concubinage public because she wishes to regularize the situation as she fears its possible consequences. Sometimes she threatens to break off all relations, but usually she nevertheless succumbs to temptation.

As soon as the concubinage is made public in the manner described, that publication itself renders it legitimate. The expression used for the act of contracting such a union is teja lisafumbá.

If a woman's official lover catches her in the act of adultery, he does not denounce her to her husband but personally demands an indemnity as if he himself were the legitimate husband. If the culprit refuses to pay him, the lover breaks off relations with the woman and denounces her to her husband. Thus the adulterer is punished in any case, and from his point of view it is preferable to pay the bosafumbá, who will be satisfied with a smaller indemnity. [338]

Since the woman does not belong to her lover, he has no rights whatsoever to the fruits of her labor or to her children, who are considered her husband's. But the partner has a right to expect that the woman will prepare food for him. The husband, for his part, has the right to his partner's assistance. The social situation is therefore entirely in the husband's favor. The lover's only gain is to have access to a woman whom he could not otherwise have obtained. But the respect due to the legitimate husband prohibits him from freely availing himself of the woman while he is in the village.

[illegible] Some men are strict on this point, while others are more tolerant.
837 Clearly, the technique of such men is most subtle. The more a wife's lover is permitted his freedom, the greater is the likelihood that other women, who prefer a young man passionately enamoured of them to their husband, will ask the polygamist to marry them. A
[592] man who is sufficiently wealthy and influential can in this manner build up a harem from which he does not benefit physically but which assures him of a dominant social position.

This practice exists almost exclusively in conjunction with polygamy, but cases do occur among monogamists. And among more "civilized" tribes, such as the riverain people of the Lower Congo, a tendency in that direction is developing.

A request for concubinage made by a relative of the husband cannot be considered in the same category with the situation we have just examined. Such a request is more closely related to the request for an inherited wife (see Chapter III, Article II). The difference is obvious. The only thing the two situations have in common is the fact of legitimate cohabitation with another man's wife. One perceives this immediately upon comparing the two.

Article IX. The Family's Role in Marriage

[illegible] We have found that there are situations in which a woman is to some extent considered and treated as the wife not only of her husband, but also of certain of his relatives (Article VI). Moreover, we have seen in Chapter II the big role that the families play in the arrangement and continuation of their children's marriage. In discussing the question of the inheritance of wives, we have seen that the close relatives of the deceased have rights over the widow; one of them may marry her without any obligations toward the chief heir, and the new union is not a new marriage but a continuation of the previous marriage, which is not broken in spite of the first husband's death. A similar observation was made in relation to the practice of wife replacement (Chapter III, Article IV).

All this leads us to raise a question: To what extent does the family have collective rights over the wife? The following answer is

the one which seems to me to conform to reality.

A wife is acquired by means of a payment of valuables. These valuables belong chiefly and in the first instance to the one who has obtained them, either through the marriage of his daughter or sister or through his own efforts. In the last instance, the husband has more direct and personal rights over his wife. In the first instance, the closer the husband's kinship with the woman who has furnished the bride price through her marriage, the stronger are her rights over the wife. Other members of the family, however, also have secondary rights over her in proportion to their position. For they are bound to the husband by ties of kinship as descendants of the same ancestor and therefore share in varying degrees the duties and rights of the moral entity based on a community of blood. [260]

The family's participation in the husband's rights is based on the one hand on the economic nature of the marriage agreement and, on the other, on the solidarity of clan and family.

That is why a marriage continues despite death. From the personal point of view it is broken -- so that, for example, the woman may subsequently become another person's legitimate wife, which she could not have done during the first marriage, but from the financial and social point of view it continues to exist. The same is true for wife replacement. As to the relations of a younger brother with his elder brother's wife, they are permitted only under certain conditions which are clearly defined and limited. This fact proves that the younger brother may only very inaccurately be termed "husband." The woman does not have two husbands; she has only one: the elder brother. The relations with the younger brother are permitted not as a personal tie, but only because of the community of financial interests between the brothers, and the elder's pity for his unmarried junior.

Everything considered, and despite all, a woman has only one husband. Taking into account the explanations given and the description of the formalities through which certain persons may intervene in their relative's household and the extent to which they may do so, it is apparent that a husband's rights over his wife are basically personal and exclusive in spite of his recognized prerogative to yield these rights to others.

Chapter VII

Polygamy

95 The Nkundó have no polyandry except for the few instances discussed in the last chapter which vaguely resemble it. The polygamy we are dealing with here is therefore polygyny, which is the general rule. Monogamy does exist but -- apart from extremely rare exceptions -- it is not voluntary. As soon as a monogamist has the means to acquire additional wives, he does not fail to take advantage of the opportunity. In spite of all the many sayings criticizing the difficulties involved in living peacefully with several wives, the Nkundó still try to build harems for themselves (afímbola ndongé, umba ndongé, "to line up a harem," "to fell a harem").

Polygamy in the grand style, lopango, is unknown. It would be interesting if government statistics were published concerning the proportion of polygamists to women who make up their harems. To the extent that one can tell by simple observation, the bigamists appear numerous. Ten wives is already a great number.

Only certain of the wives comprising a harem are called by special terms: the first wife (bomítsa), the favorite (nkínde), and the woman of rank (bolómbé), and to them the category of the bilóa may be added. The others are simply called baálí, "wives."

Article I. The Bomítsa

The bomítsa is the first wife the polygamist married. She is mistress of the house. She is responsible for the care and [342] supervision of the lofánjí (the area including the huts and annexes). It is to her house that the husband brings the game and the fruits of the palm trees and divides them. In the husband's absence, the duty and privilege of dividing them falls to her. She also settles quarrels among the wives that arise in his absence. If he goes away alone and is a long time in returning, she sends one of the other wives to take care of him and serve as his companion. Finally, she is supposed to try and increase the size and importance of the harem.

595 The bomɛ́tsa takes her task to heart, for her husband's glory is her own as well. The bomɛ́tsa is conscious of her role in spite of the presence of a favorite, for it is less that of a wife in the sexual sense of the word than of a wife who is mother of the family. It is of a higher order than the roles of the other wives; it is more serious, more unselfish, and based on a deeper love and a more deliberate will. According to the native point of view, it is rightly the source of a legitimate pride; it is an honor, while the position of the favorite is closer to an object of vanity. Therefore the bomɛ́tsa likes to show her importance.

It may seem strange to us that the bomɛ́tsa puts her heart into working to increase the number of women in the harem. But this is altogether natural for the Nkundó. The growth of the harem is a source of glory, and she has been brought up to this attitude since her youth. After the first order, her affection becomes more serious. She becomes a perfect matron in the Roman manner. Although she continues her relations with her husband and takes care of her children, she is chiefly occupied with her duties as mistress of the whole family. Her husband loves her with a deeper and more reasoned emotion than he shows toward his other wives. Without cease he shows his consideration and attachment for her. If she is sterile it is very likely that he will give her a child belonging to his family or born of a wife who has left him, so that she can bring it up as if it were her own.
[343]

591
362 The bomɛ́tsa's house is located at the right end of the row of wive's huts. She deserves this location because of her function as bomɛ́ngɔ́ lofɔ́jɔ́, "owner, mistress of the polygamist's compound. The Nkundó say: ɛ́tɛ́la lofɔ́jɔ́, "she stretches, or extends, her husband's group of dwellings in order to enlarge it."

595 A polygamous husband undertakes nothing of importance without first consulting the bomɛ́tsa (be it the creation of a bolɛ́mbɔ́ or a nkɛ́ndɔ́, or the acquisition of new wives, etc.). He respects her and treats her with deference, as if she were his mother, our people say.

[729] The bomɛ́tsa is the only one of all the polygamist's wives who plays a part in the acceptance of the Nkundó offensive and defensive

595x 789 magic known as yoli. She alone participates in the ceremonies that accompany it; with her husband she eats half of the hen that has been killed for that purpose, and on that night she alone may share his bed. Finally, only with her, to the exclusion of the co-wives, may the husband eat the fish called wengɛ́, and only she may and must burn the leavings. Otherwise the magical practice would turn against its owner.

595x [724] When a piece of game is divided, the bomátsa is entitled to the lintála (the lower portion of the breast), which would go to the man's mother (or his father's or his elder brother's wife) were he a bachelor.

In the bomátsa's absence, her place is taken by her ebísa (see below, Article IV) or by the wife who follows her in seniority. At her death, the same rules govern her succession.

The name bomátsa is probably derived from the root mátsa, "to begin." She is the one who founds the family. Sometimes she is also called ikɔ́kɔ́yɔ́njemba, literally "bachelor's love." The Bombwanja say itɔ́kɔ́yɔ́njemba (the Ekondà, nkámukolo).

In addition to the bomátsa, reference is sometimes made to [344] bomátsa w'ǐáli, or "bomátsa of the left." The bomátsa in the strict sense of the term is contrasted to the latter as bomátsa w'ǐlɔ́me ("of the right"). The bomátsa of the left is a polygamist's second [592] wife. She is given this name because her house is at the left end of the loánjá. She has no special rights or duties, however, unless the actual bomátsa delegates to her the task of looking after her end of the compound. If the harem is large, the husband may set aside [224] for her a special portion of the game, called itɔ́mbantáta, or nape of the neck. In her absence it goes to the eldest daughter.

Article II. The Favorite

595x 556 All polygamists of any importance have a favorite wife, or nkɔ́ndɛ́. But only the rich and the notables have a true nkɔ́ndɛ́. The minor polygamists, of course, imitate the others (nkɔ́ndɛ́ ɛ́â weɔ́lí or ɛ́â itsiɔ́, "without great importance"), but they do so without

595 great ceremonies because they lack the necessary wealth.

596 The bomɛ́tsa is never nkɔ́ndɛ́. But before he makes one of his wives a nkɔ́ndɛ́ a husband must ask the advice and approval of the [431] bomɛ́tsa. For that purpose he presents her with a bompɛ́ngɛ́ (a dog, a goat, some rings), which expresses his recognition of her right and authority and at the same time is intended to secure a favorable response. If the bomɛ́tsa does not agree, the matter is not followed through. But that situation is only hypothetical. In practice the bomɛ́tsa yields to her husband's preferences, since he has recognized her rights in the proper fashion.

When a husband wants to create a nkɔ́ndɛ́, he first makes all the preparations, brews the sugar-cane beer and collects all the riches that are to be distributed. Then he invites the neighboring villages and calls together his relatives. On the assigned day, the assembly having gathered, the chosen wife puts on her most beautiful garments and adorns herself with her richest ornaments. She [352] seats herself on a magnificent boɛ́nga [345] (a portable couch) (1) in front of the audience. Her husband then announces to those assembled that henceforth this woman is to be his favorite; woe unto the man who has the temerity to seduce her or even show affection toward her -- he will be a dead man (or he will have to pay an [684] enormous indemnity of 25 to 50 bakonga). In the past it often happened that a seducer was killed or reduced to slavery without further ado. When the husband has paid 25 rings or more to the wife's family and gifts have been distributed to the assembled patriarchs, his words are ratified by the assembly, and henceforth the contract between them and the husband is sealed. Dances, song, and drink follow.

[292] The favorite wears no special garb. She wears the same clothing as all the other women and wears furs only for dances.

---

1. See the excellent drawing in Engels, Les Wangata [The Wangata], (Revue Congolaise, Vol. 1, no. 4, p. 483, 1910).

595x She does no work in the farm or kitchen. She always has an ebísa to wait on her. If her family has no member they can let her have, she will borrow an ebísa from a distant relative or a friend.

A nkɔ́ndɛ́ does not travel on foot; she is carried in a hammock [492] (hunting net). Her husband accompanies her on foot, however. But [556] this was done only for a true nkɔ́ndɛ́ of a rich man, and the custom is disappearing today.

A favorite may not leave her husband, even to go and see her parents. In the past some men were so jealous of their favorites [514] that they would not allow them to satisfy even their most private needs unless they themselves or some sentinel (usually a Botswá) stood watch. A man could not even go into the vicinity of her hut, which is built just behind the husband's shed. For although the husband is sometimes tolerant of the passions of his other wives, he always shows [152] an intransigeant jealousy [346] in relation to his favorite. He never travels without having her accompany him.

The favorite has the honor of performing small personal serv- [515] ices for her husband; she cuts his hair, helps him in the removal of body hair, scratches his pustules from ringworm or prickly heat, anoints him with oil, paints him with ngɔ́la, and, in a word, performs all the tasks connected with his appearance and hygiene.

595x 766 Out of love for his favorite, her husband can buy her corpse for the price of a slave (in kind or in money). By doing so he obtains the right to have it buried beside his own while those of the other wives must be buried with their native clans. That is why in some regions a husband calls his favorite his ikundaka (from kunda "to bury"). Nevertheless, if her husband dies before she does, his heirs may not trouble themselves about his wishes and no longer require that the favorite be buried in their cemetery. That is what happened to Bongɔ́la of Bongíli, whose husband Ikilinganya of Bongangá (Boɛ́ndɛ́) had paid the price of two slaves for this right. When the husband has [224] killed large game, the favorite, like the bomátsa, has the right to receive her personal predetermined portion (boando). Her part is the neck or a chop, which in her absence, goes to the sons or their wives. The other wives do not have the same right; each one obtains only an ordinary piece (liondo).

595x Thus a favorite is in every way the object of her husband's
[431] preference. He divides with her all presents he receives, while the other wives are not included in this expression of generosity.
[853] But in the matter of sexual relations, apart from his trips, he has obligations to all of them. The most he can do is to add one night to the usual number (see below).

The co-wives adapt fairly well to this preferential system. Nevertheless, there is a good deal of backbiting on account of it. It may also happen that one or another of the wives is jealous to the point of being unable to bear it. [347] The signs of her rancor
[586] multiply, and a divorce results in the end.

The *nkɔ́ndɛ́* does not have to go into mourning for anyone
[765] other than her husband. Even then she does not remove her clothing. But she does not have to abide by mourning regulations either for her parents or her own children.

Like the other wives, the favorite is passed on through inheri-
[587] tance. But she cannot be taken as a *bosɔ́lɔ́* by anyone except an elder brother of the deceased.

595x *Nkɔ́ndɛ́* is the specific term by which a favorite is designated.
192 Its etymology is unknown to me. The word is used everywhere, although the Injɔ́lɔ́ often say *lokílo* (whose etymology is equally obscure). Another less common (older?) term known to the Bonkoso, Bongili, Wɛ́ngatɛ́, and Bakɛ́ala is *bongilɛ́* or *bongijí* (1). In addition to the term *ikundaka*, already cited, there is also the word *ebɛ́lɛ́kɛ́*, a generic term meaning "preference, predilection" or, when applied to a child or a slave, "an object one does not want to dispose of." The favorite is also called *ɛ́fɔ́kɛ́tɛ́mɛ́*, "untouchable," because other men may not have relations with her.

---

1. The Ekonda call the favorite *bokɔ́lo*. The Elanga of Losanganya say *bofilɛ́*, a name borne by certain women among the Nkundɔ́ between Jwalɛ́ and Boloko. Might this also be an old name?

595x 192 Qualifying expressions are sometimes added to the name nkónde: eâ boánga, referring to the boánga on which the favorite is seated during the ceremony in which her position is established, and eâ konjo, "true." The two terms are used as opposed to a nkóndé eâ weólí, whose position is established without any special ceremony, in imitation of a true, officially recognized favorite.

The expression for "making a nkóndé" is ója nkóndé, "to make a nkóndé come out," because she is proclaimed as such before the public gathering. Nowadays one often hears the expression téna nkóndé, a term which is very probably transferred from the bolúmbú. (See the next article.) [348]

Article III. The Bolúmbú

595x 554 The polygamist who by birth or influence is recognized as the primus inter pares of a group of clans and who, to use the Nkundó term, is jọkọ j'ésé (1) has the exclusive right to make one of his wives a bolúmbú. Therefore, doing so was not, as with a favorite, a matter of wealth and preference, but rather a mark of influence and authority.

In relation to this subject, here is a historical incident showing how an attack on this law resulted in a mysterious punishment, interpreted by the natives as an intervention from beyond the grave for the protection of the ancestral order. The events occurred at Besombó (Bombwanja), in the Bongilá family. Bonkoso w'Ílumwa had married Eyeke of Bokúma and by her had his eldest son

---

[614] 1. Nowadays one would call him the chief. But actually he was not a chief; he was simply the most respected and influential member of the oligarchy of clan patriarchs. This oligarchy constituted the political administration of the Nkundó, and from time to time an eminent personality gained recognition within it.

596
557 Ikunjwɛ̂kulu. (2) But before her marriage to Bonkoso, Eyeke had already given birth to another boy, Mbɛ́o, whom she brought with her "in the shoulder strap." (3) Subsequently, Mbɛ́o acquired much wealth and built a large harem for himself. He wanted to show his important position and decided to make one of his wives a bolɔ́mbɔ́. Thereupon, his uterine brother Ikunjwɛ̂kulu became furious and called together the three other family heads of Besombɔ́: Elongama éâ Longɔ́mbɔ́ of Bokenda Embombɔ́ of Ikolɛ́, and Esola of Befɔ́sola. He said to them: "Come and see the extraordinary and astonishing thing that is happening. Mbɛ́o came with my mother in the shoulder strap. How then does he dare to create belɔ́mbɔ́?" They examined the facts and were very angry [349]. They called a meeting of all the family heads of all the neighboring villages in order to explain the case to them. Seated under the tree where the deliberations were held, all the men spent a long time awaiting Mbɛ́o's arrival. As he was too long in coming, one of his wives was sent to ask him to hurry. She found him dead, already quite stiff.

A bolɔ́mbɔ́ is created much later than a favorite, for a polygamist can attain the necessary social position only at a fairly advanced age.

The choice of a bolɔ́mbɔ́ is not a matter of preferential love. It is not a question of relations within the harem, but of the statement of the husband's social importance. Usually he chooses a woman who belongs to an influential clan and is a model of conjugal life and good breeding. She is certainly the object of special affection on his part, but not of a preference in love. Note again that the bomâtsa can never become bolɔ́mbɔ́, but she must be consulted and her opinion is decisive. Thus her own ebísa is often chosen as bolɔ́mbɔ́.

---

2. For his genealogy see Chapter III, Article II. A great-grandson of this Ikunjwɛ̂kulu is, I should say, approximately fifty years old.

3. See Chapter I, Part 2, Article IV, 3.

595* 554 On the day set aside for establishing the position of the bolɑ́mbɑ́, there is a great feast. All the clans and neighboring villages that have been invited gather at the home of the polygamist in question. He presents the woman to them and addresses the gathering: "Here is the woman whom I want to make my bolɑ́mbɑ́, as I have already announced to you. Today I am making public the decision I already made a long time ago. Be it known to all that no man may touch her, or he will be severely punished." Then two women (in rare instances, two men) hold the woman, and the husband unfastens her belt and rips off all her clothing. Then the assistants tie a rope or a belt of mpangá (striped antelope) skin around her, and to it they attach various furs. From that day [292] until her death she may no longer wear the clothing (bitóo) of other women; she must always [350] be dressed in furs. Hence her name, bolɑ́mbɑ́ wa bɑ́kótó, "bolɑ́mbɑ́ with furs." Then her husband gives her pots of palm oil with which she will have to cover herself. Two men approach her; they are chosen among the handsomest in the village (1) (married or single) and are

[609] 1. They are then (sic) relatives of the husband. Nkundó law dictates that no stranger shall perform a function of the slightest importance -- not even that of silencing a gathering. According to their saying, bofaya áfótẹle lokáanga, "a stranger does not cut up a guinea hen."

[301] richly adorned with furs, belts of mpangá, beads, raffia fabrics with jagged edges, copper rings on their ankles, etc. Stepping in rhythm, they lead her to the house intended for her which is [351] [324] surrounded by a fence of bofẹko posts (Ricinodendron africanum) held together with palms. This hut with its fence is called ilẹke.

There the bolɑ́mbɑ́ will reside for months and years (up to three or more, they say). She is secluded there, so to speak, [514] and may not go out. If she needs to go to the banana groves for her personal needs, she covers and surrounds herself with a mat so that no one will see her.

595ˣ that no one will see her. She lives in this house in the company
554 of her ebísa, her daughters, some female relatives, or even another of her husband's wives, who must wait on her, prepare food for her, etc., and who go out and enter freely. Her husband also enters at will and spends the usual number of nights with her. No other man is permitted to enter the enclosure.

During her period of seclusion, the bolɔ́mbɔ́ may not do the slightest work. She does not wash with water, but only with palm oil. She walks only on mats. She is also exempt from mourning for her parents. (Compare with Chapter I, Part 1, Article II.)

When the period of seclusion comes to an end, the husband announces the coming-out feast. There is merrymaking, dancing, and drinking. Mats are spread from the door of [351] the hut of seclusion all the way to the middle of the street. The two men who brought the woman to the hut come again and, taking her by the arms at the entrance to the enclosure, lead her over the mats. The ceremony thus ends without further ado.

The bolɔ́mbɔ́ is henceforth free and acts like any other woman except for the wearing of furs. She may work, draw water, cook, travel, visit her parents, etc. But her husband's
[563] honor and his reputation as a rich man require that he give his
[567] bolɔ́mbɔ́ one or several slaves, or Batswa, or -- as is more frequently done -- one or two bibísa, who are supposed to take
[357] care of her housework and thus free the princess.

595ˣ Adultery with her -- after her seclusion -- is more
554 severely punished than misconduct with an ordinary woman as
837 regards the indemnity to be paid. But as a flagrant insult, it is
614 considered very serious indeed, not so much as an infringement or marital rights as an attack on the honor of the whole clan or group of clans involved. Thus, while adultery with a nkɔ́ndé, for instance, is a private matter, arousing the husband's jealousy and anger, misconduct with a bolɔ́mbɔ́ is a public offense. The whole clan is enraged -- for they believe that their honor has been attacked, and all the members together press for vengeance for

595x
554 this outrage (nkɛlɛ eleki ɛy'olɔ́mbɔ). It is a kind of national dis-
831 honor. This observation also clearly pinpoints the great differ-
614 ence between the favorite and the bolɔ́mbɔ.

The following custom should be mentioned in this con-
595x nection: if any man, even a stranger or one who comes from a
721 great distance, comes and -- over the fence -- strikes the roof
554 of a bolɔ́mbɔ's ilɛkɛ of seclusion with his elefɔ́ (1) as a call to war, the whole village is obliged to take up arms to defend him. All the men [352] accompany him and unite with his family against the enemy clan, whatever the distance may be. The Nkundɔ́ say that the act of touching the bolɔ́mbɔ's hut infuriates the entire clan and makes them take up arms without hesitation. (1)

595x
554 One last indication of the social nature of this institution is the fact that the bolɔ́mbɔ has the right to sit beside her husband at public gatherings and feasts, a prerogative which she alone of all women possesses. With her is a boy or girl who serves as her "boy" and carries the seat (boánga) on which she sits.

When a bolɔ́mbɔ dies her husband may put another in her place. To do so he repeats the ceremony described above. It is called sangoja bolɔ́mbɔ, "to make succeed to the title of bolɔ́mbɔ."

As we saw in Chapter I, Part 1, Article II, a man may even make his daughter a bolɔ́mbɔ.

---

[554] 1. A wooden bell (see Congo, 1935, Vol. 2, p. 366, figs. 4 and 5).

1. Compare the result of a serious offense, whose effect is entirely in the offender's favor, to analogous cases described previously, for example in Chapter III, Article VII; Chapter VI, Article V, 4, Appendix; and below in Chapter VIII, Article II, 3, (2).

2: Hulstaert--331 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

595^x 554 The name bolɛ́mbɔ́ seems to come from the fact that for an instant during the installation ceremony the woman is naked. In fact in certain dialects the word means "nudity."

[557] Nowadays this name is common among Nkundɔ́ women (rarely men), but it does not indicate that they are bolɛ́mbɔ́. The name is borne in memory of ancestresses or relatives who had that position and is transmitted in the family like any other name.

[184] All the tribes under discussion here use the same term, bolɛ́mbɔ́. The Bombomba alone say boálɛ́. (2)

> 2. Elsewhere, as in the Losanganya region, among the Bosaka, etc., the bolɛ́mbɔ́ is called ekila (interdiction, taboo).

It is clear from everything that has been said that the nkɔ́ndɛ́ and the bolɛ́mbɔ́ have nothing in common with each other. [353] The two institutions are decidedly different. Nowadays they are beginning to be confused with each other, however. [178] For the installation of a bolɛ́mbɔ́ has become extremely rare, and in some regions it has already disappeared. The colonial government has established districts and appointed chiefs in charge of them. Very frequently, they are not those who in the purely indigenous order would have been the most influential men, the masters, those who would have the biggest say in their society, who would be said to have the joko, the first place.

As far as I have been able to observe, the other tribes on the equator also have the two types of wives with special positions, who bear names which vary with the dialects.

171 595^x 554 Do the Ntɔ́mbá and the Bolɛ́ngɛ́ between the Boloko and the Congo have only the bolɛ́mbɔ́? That is the conclusion one draws from Engels' study of the Wangata (Revue congolaise, Vol. 2, no. 1, p. 33). If that were so, the frequent contacts with this people may have increased the confusion even more. Natives who are strangers to the Bolɛ́ngɛ́ tribe but who have lived many years among them as catechists, have maintained, however, that

171 they distinguish very clearly between the *bolɔ́mbɔ́* and the
595x favorite. They even added that the *nkúmú* enjoy no privileges
534 in this realm. (1)

> 1. The institution of the *nkúmú* is not very widespread among the tribes treated in our study. (See "Les Coutumes funéraires des Nkundɔ́ [Funeral customs of the Nkundo]," in *Anthropos*) (in press).

In the course of a visit I myself made to the western Bolɛ́ngɛ́ (in September, 1933), I learned that a man who had a special position could have two *belɔ́mbɔ́*; the *bomɛ́tsa* proposed her *ebísa* as candidate, and the second wife did the same for hers. Thus there was a *bolɔ́mbɔ́ w'ìlóme* and a *bolɔ́mbɔ́ w'ìáli* (the latter more especially called *ekila*. I also observed that they made a very clear distinction between *bolɔ́mbɔ́* and [354] *nkɔ́ndɛ́*, just like the peoples treated in this study.

As to the function of messenger, which is attributed to the *bolɔ́mbɔ́* by Engels (as well as by Father Kaptein, in *Congo*, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 532), it is not performed more by her than by any other woman in the harem. Any of them, without distinction based on rank or date of marriage, may be charged with a mission. The only custom of this sort which involves such a distinction is found among the Bolɛ́ngɛ́-Ntɔ́mbá living between the Congo and the Boloko. It is as follows: an influential
[728] man sometimes sent his *belɔ́mbɔ́* (one or two) to stop a quarrel, or even a battle between two villages. When she intervened, the opposing parties made a truce, pending the arrival and the decision of her husband in person.

Article IV. The Ebísa

595x An *ebísa* is a woman taken as wife by the husband of one
583x of her relatives -- a sister, aunt, or older cousin. The relative

595* [585] is the one who brings her to her husband and is, at the same time, ndonga for the payment of the bride price, which is made as for any woman. The expression is: X aôlutela bokúnɛ́ Y ebísa, "X repeats her sister Y ebísa."

In case of the elder's absence or upon her death, the ebísa replaces her or inherits all her rights in the household.

The elder relative cares a great deal about having her ebísa, because as a result she rises in her husband's estimation and she herself has an assistant in her work and a confidante in her troubles. The ebísa herself has the advantage of not being alone or abandoned at the beginning of her marriage, but of being able to count on a protector and guide, and if her elder occupies a privileged rank in the harem, she has the certainty of sharing her prerogatives and the likelihood of one day succeeding her. [355]

The term ebísa is used by the Nkundɔ́ between the Jwalɛ́ and the Boloko, and by the Ionda. The Bombwanja designate such a woman by the name loambwá or loambyá. The Boángɛ and the Injɔ́lɔ́ also call her loambyá. (1)

[184] 1. The Bonyanga say mbambwá or loambwá. Out of respect they sometimes call her bongíli and the woman who has brought her nyangôngíli. (See also Chapter II, Article X, and Chapter VI, Article VI.) The Ekonda call her bombúha or bombúsa (mbúsa, "last").

Ebísa may be related to the root bís, from which is de-
[192] rived the verb bisingana, "to be united." Loambwá or loambyá are derived from bamb, which means: 1) "to be united" and 2) "to follow" (in order, in rank).

These names indicate the nature of this marriage that does not arise from direct relations between husband and wife but is established through the medium of another.preceding marriage. Or to express the situation in Lonkundɔ́: áfa liála j'ɛ̌ndɛ́ mɔ́ngɔ́, ámana l'eɔ́to mbamáná, "this is not a marriage which comes

595x from her personally; she attaches herself to her relative and follows her in her marital union."

The name *ebísa*, as well as the functions involved, may be improperly extended to a relative who is fetched by a woman so that she may become the wife not of her husband, but of one of his relatives. Sometimes she is even intended for a man who belongs to another clan, which is related by marriage, but for whom there is prohibition on marriage with the first clan. For instance, Bolɔ́mbɔ w'ɔ̌fuwa of Eleke (Lokongo) came to fetch her sister Eengɛ́ for Bompata w'iselema, who belonged to the Befɔ́sola clan which, like her husband's clan (Bombɛ́nga), was part of the village of Besombɔ́.

Article V. Slave Women

595x
567 In times past a polygamist could have one or several slaves in his harem whom he treated as wives. They were war prisoners whom he himself had captured, or had bought from others, or received as [356] *bosɔ́ngo*. As a rule no bride price was paid for them, and in leaving, they retained their status of slaves. This fact did not prevent a husband from loving them like real wives. But their rivals respected them less and, especially on the occasion of quarrels and disputes, reminded them of their inferiority.

[177] Since slavery has been abolished by colonization, many former slaves have returned to their respective families. Others, on the contrary, have not wanted to take advantage of the freedom granted them and have preferred to remain faithful. In such cases the husband paid the usual bride price for them with all the appropriate formalities. Only recently (1932) Ifolɛ, a [583] Belondɔ́ man (Bonjoku) thus paid a bride price of 63 *bakonga* to his wife Ǎmbɔ's family. Ǎmbɔ was originally from Bokukɔ (Boɔ́ngɛ) but had been abducted at the beginning of the European occupation. Ifolɛ had inherited her from Bakɔ́nongo of the Basɛ́kɔ Mbangɔ́ (Bonkoso) thanks to the intervention of his great-uncle Mpetsɛ who had paid 7 rings on his behalf as the customary *bompɔ́ngɔ* called *nsɔ̌sangɔ́*.

357
585 A slave woman may be chosen as a favorite. Since this choice is a matter of preference, there is no reason why not. This is not true of the rank of bolɔ́mbɔ́, which can never be attained by a slave, as an examination of this eminent position clearly shows. The following slave women are cited among those who were made nkɔ́ndɛ́ by their husbands: Bolɔ́nge by Bakengɔ́ ba Lokolí of Nsekɛ́; Bokɛ́tu by Ekányaka ɛ́y'ondɔ́kɔ́ of Etɔ́ontálɛ́; Ntsimbo by Bombengɛ́lá of Etɔ́ontálɛ́.

When a polygamist felt a very special love for a slave, and had the means to do so, he would enfranchise her and then pay a regular bride price for her. In order for this to happen the woman's family had to intervene, either on its own initiative or by invitation of the husband. Once the ransom was paid, the woman was free. She returned home, and her husband followed her to pay the bride price; thus she became a regular wife on the same basis [357] as any other woman. The procedure was the same whether the slave had been captured personally by the husband or had been bought or acquired as part of a bride price or by some other means.

Such was the case of Bolɔ́mbɔ́, daughter of Boɛ́kwá of Boɛ́ndɛ́ (Bombwanja), who was taken by Esalɛ́ of Ekɔ́kola and bought by Efoloko of Lofelí. She was enfranchised at her father's initiative, and he subsequently married her off in a regular fashion. Another case was that of Etáka, daughter of Elongama ɛ́a Longɔ́mbá of Besombɔ́, who was married to Bonyongela of Bowɛ́lɛ́. During a war she was taken prisoner by Betɔ́kɔ́ of Ekɔ́kola, who wanted to marry her properly and therefore contacted Elongama. The latter arranged the matter of the ransom and took his daughter with him. Then Betɔ́kɔ́ went to Besombɔ́ to pay the bride price. (1)

[727] 1. Almost all slave women were reduced to their condition, directly or indirectly, because of a war. If they were already married, their marriages were considered as dissolved. Under the circumstances it

> 567 595x 727 could not be otherwise. In such
> matters each group took care only
> of its own interests; and none of
> the procedures usually accompanying
> the dissolution of a marriage were ob-
> served. However, the husband was
> entitled to an indemnity, in the form
> of persons or valuables, from the mem-
> [672] ber of his clan who had fomented the
> war and was held responsible for all
> its consequences, whatever the way in
> which he had provoked it. If neces-
> sary, this member could be forced to
> pay. If he did not have the means to
> pay indemnities, he himself was re-
> duced to slavery, if the influence of
> the families involved did not prevent
> this occurrence. When the woman
> was enfranchised and a new bride price
> was paid for her, her family was ex-
> pected to reimburse her former husband.

Since, at present, slavery has been abolished, ransom can no longer be paid. A master who wishes to enfranchise a slave woman who has remained faithful to him, simply gives her family the bride price and then goes with his wife to her home to receive the dowry.

Article VI. Life in a Harem

595x Wives of the same husband address each other among themselves as bakalɛ́ (sing. bokalɛ́). Their husband calls them all baálí, [358] "wives." All except for true slaves are married by means of a bride price. A woman's sons call their mother's bakalɛ́ baálí, "wives," but out of respect toward the older ones

595x at least, they use the name banyangɔ́, "mothers." Daughters use only the second term. (See Chapter VI, Article VI.)

A polygamist may have a house of his own, but he is often 592x satisfied with a shed, where he spends his days when he is not 595 called elsewhere by his pursuits; he eats his meals there, receives his guests, etc. This shed is called ingɔ́mba (or esamba), (1) exceptionally jɔjá. The last term refers to the location of this "parlor," which is by itself in front of the row of wives' huts, sometimes in the middle of the street; in rare cases it is placed on the opposite side of the street, facing the women's huts.

Each woman has her own hut, consisting of a fairly large area, open in front, which serves as a kitchen, and a smaller room with a bed. Or she may have a kitchen in the form of a shed, and a separate house a slight distance away which serves as a bedroom.

The huts are placed in a row stretching around both sides of the husband's house, if he has one. The nkɔ́nde's house is right next to the husband's or behind his shed. The bomátsa's is at the far left, and so on. The bolúmbú has no special place. The ebísa's hut is next to her relative's.

Some polygamists are beginning to build double houses. On each side of a common kitchen there are the bedrooms of two women under the same roof. This has been done by Bokwála, the present chief of the Boángɛ́ at Bokála (2). In each double hut he has placed one elderly woman and a younger one. Thus, he explained to me [359] one day, the old ones watch over the young ones, and as a result there are fewer instances of adultery.

595x A husband has obligations toward all his wives. He must bring firewood to each and take care that each one has her land to

---

1. Depending on the dialect. For other names, see Chapter VI, Article III, 3, note.

2. Since deceased.

595x cultivate. Whatever food he has been able to obtain (from hunting and fishing, the fruit of palm trees, etc.) must be impartially distributed by the bomátsa. He is required to eat food prepared by each one, either on the same day or, more frequently, each in turn.

595x 833 The same holds true for their intimate relations. He must divide his nights equally among them all and in turn (-kafa mpóngó). Usually he spends three or four nights with the same one. He is not allowed to favor one wife over another. He may add an extra night to the usual number only in favor of the bomátsa or the favorite. If he wants to have continuous relations with the favorite, he goes on a trip with her for a real or invented reason.

Partiality is sharply criticized and gives rise to violent domestic quarrels. It may result in the breaking up and dispersion of the harem. It is very badly tolerated, especially in sexual matters. The husband must therefore watch himself carefully and respect the rights of each and every one. Exceptions are made only with regard to women who occupy a special rank in the harem, and then only with respect to the privileges or duties that go with the position.

On their set nights, the women go to cohabit with their husband in his house. He seldom goes to their houses unless he has no hut of his own. Each wife knows her turn, and none of them are ashamed to let the others know when it comes. On the contrary, it is sometimes in their interest to do so.

595x There is no sharing of property among co-wives except in the case of a bibísa. Each one takes care of her own household, does her own cooking, cares for her own children, cultivates her [360] own crops. Each one has her own tools and utensils. They may help each other if they wish to, however. Especially for fishing they often go together, particularly for scooping ponds.

Article VII. Monogamy

The Nkundó do not esteem monogamy. It is polygamy
595x that they desire. If a man has only one wife, that is because he
522 is poor. Thus he is made fun of and called etula or bololé, "a
nobody," or bosó, "a weak man." Songs dealing with this theme
[533] can often be heard during drinking parties, especially among the
Elinga. All this is a great obstacle in the struggle against
polygamy. Not only is the Nkundó tempted by the material ad-
[152] vantages of polygamy, but he is unable to bear teasing. He is
extremely sensitive to humiliation and is the slave to other men's
respect.

In spite of all this, and apart from the influence of the
595x Christian religion, monogamous marriages that were not simply imposed by necessity but were spontaneously desired, have existed in the past and still exist, although they are extremely rare. Here are the names of a few men who wished to remain united to one woman, although they had the means to establish a harem for themselves. I have chosen them at random from two villages: Bonjoku-Bonkoso (27 taxpayers in 1931) and Bongíli wǎ Ndongó together with the affinally related clan Ilekó (47 taxpayers in 1931).

Bonjoku-Bonkoso:

Esalé éâ Ekutu of Bokenyola married to Iombe of Nkélengo;
Bokató of Bokenyola married to Wanga of Likolí;
Bofanga w'ǒfónge of Bokenyola married to Baléngola;
Itéé yǐ Lokékola of Bofétola married to Nkúmú of Bongale.

All died before 1895.

Bongílí:

Nsenge (still alive) married to Toyôngwa of Elánga. Even when he was widowed, he did not want to remarry, because of his attachment to his deceased wife.
Efoloko éâ Bonkóngyá married to Bambóla of Boálá;
Bongelé married to Bakóko of Bompángá;
Bolómbe w'embengá married to Bokelé of Ekóla;
Lofalanga of Ilekó mǎrried to Imote of Besombó. After his wife's death, he remained a widower until he himself died.

515 The others remarried after the deaths of their wives, but always actually remained monogamous, like Eanga ɛâ Jatâ of Nkɛlengo, who is now married for the third time.

If you ask natives why they want to remain monogamous in spite of their wealth and in the face of the fact that all the polygamists make fun of them, they will answer, "I want only one wife."

"But, after all, why do you want only one?"

Bosísɛ wǎ Njakomba, "God has so ordained," that is, "God has made me this way."

There is no term to denote monogamy. However, a woman who is her husband's only wife is called impɔ́mbonjemba, a word the last segment of which means "bachelor." A monogamist is sometimes called yunama, a noun derived from the verb unama, "to be inclined, bent toward," because he is always leaning toward the woman, who is continually at his side. The term is used to tease him, but figuratively it very well expresses the special affection of the husband for his wife, and which deserves to be preserved and honored in this way. [362]

Article VIII. The Women's Attitude Toward Polygamy

Before the arrival of the Europeans, polygamy met with no opposition or contradictions of any kind. It was considered an entirely natural and normal condition. I imagine that the Nkundɔ́ who heard the first attacks on this deep-rooted custom must have been more than astonished. But it is difficult to tell what the women thought in those past times. Thus we will do better to examine current present-day facts in order to deduce what they now think of their position in the harem, although from the psychological standpoint this is a very delicate question.

Note first of all that it is impossible to give a general rule; all men are not made from the same pattern. There are women who like to be part of a harem. Others prefer monogamy, either because they oppose being handed over to a man who is already married, or after coming to blows with their husband, they make

595 arrangements for a regular marriage with a lover, or they leave the polygamist under the protection of the Whites to go to a center or a mission.

1. A preference for monogamy

595 797 We will not deal with daughters of Christian parents under this heading, in order not to falsify the problem, which we are discussing from the psychological, not the religious point of view.

1) Women who oppose being handed over in marriage to a man who is already married are rare. It is possible that such a refusal is due to one of the following causes: the desire to be bolɔ́mbɔ (or ɛ́fɔ́tswɛ̂ɛla), (1) a natural desire for complete freedom, an antipathy for the suitor, or an abnormal constitution. Such cases must be [363] eliminated, since they prove nothing for or against the question raised.

But there are other instances where marriage is clearly postponed for the sake of entering into a monogamous union. Yet, under present circumstances, the desire to embrace the Christian religion is almost never absent. I have known several cases of adult single women who came to the mission to be married there while preparing for baptism. Most of them did not have the courage to persevere, however.

A greater number remain with their parents even if they want to be admitted to the Church. The life of single women at the mission is not exactly the easiest, either from the material viewpoint or as regards freedom. For even a sincere desire to participate in a monogamous union does not exclude human weakness or constitute a certificate of saintliness. These girls remain subject to the impulsiveness of their passions. It is quite true that even at the mission they can find the means to satisfy it, for it is impossible to watch over them to such a point that they would be unable to escape. But precisely because of this surveillance, which is close in spite of everything, they cannot freely let themselves go. While at home no one pays any

---

1. See Chapter I, Part 1, Article II, and Part 2, Article III.

595x 797 attention to their deviations, at the mission the discovery of any misconduct results at least in a reprimand, which is always disagreeable, and often in a fairly long postponement of the baptism they ardently desire. Therefore these women usually prefer to circumvent the difficulty by waiting until a young man who is Christian or a catechumen asks for them in marriage.

595x 2) Most girls do not oppose polygamy. Education and traditional custom do not lose their power in a few years. Besides, the girls are often not really aware of the exact situation at the time they are asked for in marriage. Later, [364] when polygamous life no longer satisfies them, they try to arrange a marriage with a bachelor.

[797] In a number of cases the decisive reason is the desire to become Catholic. In others, religion does not enter into consideration. Only those can be examined here, for the value of the first group is greatly reduced by the presence of the religious motive.

If a woman leaves her husband because of personal antipathy to him or certain of her co-wives, and not because of any opposition to the system of polygamy, she takes the easiest and most direct way out by going to another polygamist, who has the means for repaying her bride price. This occurrence is more frequent than the preceding ones. Therefore we can make a division between the two possible situations and conclude that a preference for monogamy is present when a woman leaves a polygamist to marry a bachelor.

3) Other women take advantage of the freedom that colonization has produced by going to live with a bachelor in one of the centers. There may be a variety of motives behind such an action: a desire for luxury, a desire to be united to a man whom they love but who does not have the necessary wealth to marry them in the usual fashion, or a real desire for a monogamous union. (1) Today the last reason is rather rare.

1. At the present time the flight toward the centers has already become difficult,

595x but it is still possible. Everything depends on the degree of surveillance of the authorities. In large settlements their task is not always easy.

595x
797
4) A woman who abandons her polygamous husband and asks to be admitted to a mission may be motivated either by an aversion to polygamy or by a religious reason. First of all, we must make a distinction here between Catholic and Protestant missions. For if the woman goes to a Protestant mission, it is possible that only the first motive is involved. [365] For the Protestant mission accepts wives of polygamists for baptism without requiring them to break with the custom. Only the husband is excluded. (1) Therefore, they do not leave him when they become Christian but continue participating in the life of the harem as before. Thus, if any of them go to the Protestant mission all the same, we can conclude that they do so solely out of a preference for monogamy. But I do not know whether such cases actually occur, or in what proportion. It is to be hoped that a Protestant missionary will examine this exceedingly interesting question.

With reference to the Catholic missions, one or the other of the two motives may be involved. Usually both are present in the same person, for the Catholic religion does not permit polygamy either on the part of man or woman. According to the colonial law of the Congo, a woman has the right to break a polygamous union for the sake of a monogamous one. The polygamist's wife who asks to live at the mission wants to become Catholic and at the same time to contract a monogamous marriage. She has both objectives in mind. Persons of this sort must therefore be excluded from our discussion. As a matter of

U

1. I am speaking only of the specific region with which we are dealing in this study. Therefore, generalizations should not be made from these statements.

595x [787] fact, women who do not wish to become Catholic take the paths described in 2) and 3).

5) There are even women who prevent their husbands from becoming polygamous. If he loves them a great deal, he will yield in the end, even if personally he would very much like to build a harem for himself. This was done by Mputɔ́ (recently deceased, February 3, 1933), wife of Bofɛ́nda, chief of Ekɔ́kola. Bofɛ́nda was rich and tried more than once to acquire other wives. He even took them home and paid the bride prices -- for example, for Iloa of Bongíli. But Mputɔ́ made life unbearable for them and thus forced them to leave. She absolutely wanted to keep her husband, [366] to whom she had given two boys and three girls, for herself alone.

We can therefore conclude that among a minority of Nkundɔ́ women there exists a real preference for monogamy, even if we leave out of consideration all those who may be impelled by religious reasons. But most of them are in no way opposed to polygamy.

2. A preference for polygamy

Most Nkundɔ́ women like polygamy and prefer it to monogamy. They make fun of a impɔ́mbonjemba and are proud of the large number of wives in their husbands' harems.

Their indifference or aversion to monogamy can be explained on the basis of habit or atavism. But what is the basis for their marked preference for polygamy despite all its disadvantages? I asked this question of a number of polygamists' wives. Naturally, they first invoked the custom, (1) except for those who had known me for a long time. But the serious reason they gave was the greater comfort of life in a harem.

---

[609] 1. This is the standard explanation a native hands out to a foreigner or to someone he does not know or by whom he thinks he is unknown.

595* Since there are many wives, they have much less work in preparing the husband's food, regardless of whether the co-wives divide the days among themselves or cook for him every day. Therefore, the fields they have to prepare and care for are less extensive, there is less firewood to fetch, less manioc to soak, fewer vegetables to grow, etc. On the other hand, if a monogamous husband has visitors, his wife's work never ends.

In addition to this reason there is another, which is not admitted but is given categorically by impartial natives; it is freedom or license. The wife of a monogamist is always bound to her husband and can absent herself [367] only with difficulty. Her husband wants to have her near him, both for food and for conjugal relations. A polygamist's wife is a good deal freer. Even her prolonged absence does not disturb her husband unless he suspects infidelity or is excessively jealous. Furthermore,
[837] since the various wives have their specific nights, she has more freedom to give herself to her lovers. For many wives this is the chief reason for their preference for polygamy -- we are speaking, of course, of the situation today.

Article IX. Children of a Polygamist

The various children of a polygamist live with their respective mothers, who must provide their sustenance and bring them up. Usually the other wives are strangers to them, and their contacts with them are not much more frequent than with the other women in the village. If a special affection binds their mother to her co-wives, children also become involved, just as they are involved in the antipathies, dissensions, and rivalries of the harem. Usually they respect their father's wives, especially the elderly ones. But later a boy may allow himself to be carried away by passion and have illicit relations with one of the younger wives.

595 Since each child remains with its own mother, and the father visits her only intermittently, a child's affection for the father will be less than that for the mother. The larger the harem, the greater the distance between the children and their father. Nevertheless, they respect and love him, and some of them may become very much attached to him. But paternal authority and affection develop with much more difficulty than in a monogamous household.

Among themselves the children treat each other as brothers and sisters. But children of the same mother have a much more intimate love for one another [368] than for the rest. Each wife's children form a small separate group, more united among themselves. All their lives they make a distinction between "brothers and sisters through the father" and "brothers and sisters through the mother." But apart from this difference, they love each other truly and sincerely. Certainly, the rivalries of their respective mothers are communicated to them, but once a matter is settled the incident is closed, and they continue to feel that through their father they are of the same blood.

In the more or less distant future, their posterity will form separate and distinct families because, although they are children of the same father, they were born to different mothers. In the tribes under discussion, the rank their female ancestors occupy in the harem produces no special distinctions among their posterities, as is true among other Nkundɔ́ groups (for instance the Boyɛ́la, where a distinction is always made between ilɔ́me and iɛ́li families (that is, families of the left and right). The distinction on this subject made by Father Schebesta (in Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge, p. 234) is erroneous. The term etɔ́o and nkɛ́sɛ́ have only the first meaning he assigns to them, that is "male line" and "female line."

The children of a wife and those of her ebísa are considered uterine brothers and sisters. Therefore -- even after their mothers' death -- they continue like them to receive the same single portion in the division of game, etc.

595x 554 In little domestic quarrels, the bomátsa's children like to take advantage of the top rank occupied by their mother. Later, they will have the right to priority, before their brothers, in matters of inheritance and family authority.

595x 567 578 The children of slave women are loved by their father in the same way as their brothers and sisters. However, they are often the object of manifestations of contempt and humiliation on the part of others, especially verbal ones, but only when disputes arise. In particular, they have to submit to the insult of having it said [369] that they are without bonyangó, "a maternal clan." This is one of the most serious insults that can be inflicted by a Nkundó. Nevertheless, their father protects them as much as he can.

[428] The child of a slave woman has no right to an inheritance. Clearly, he lacks for nothing. But he has no political rights, even if he is his father's first-born.

595x 567 The posterity of a slave are not considered as such in matrimonial matters, as we have pointed out in Chapter V, Article II. If the groups descended from free women are extinct, the rights of the clan are inherited by the posterity of a slave, to the exclusion of related clans whose ancestors were entirely free.

595x What is the effect of the system of polygamy on the birth rate? There has been much debate on this question for it is very difficult to answer. Complete statistics well compiled from detailed methodical lists would be necessary. For it is a fact that in many monogamous households the woman is the former wife of a polygamist and for that reason can no longer be counted as a monogamist's wife. In addition it would be necessary to exclude from monogamous households those women who did not marry until an advanced age, after having lived freely for a fairly long time, for example in the centers.

In my opinion the birth rate is endangered above all by the need for individual love and the difference in the ages of the spouses, which is inseparable from the system of polygamy as it now exists. The polygamist's wife instinctively seeks another

595 man who corresponds better to her heart's desires. In the past, at least in small-scale polygamy, the situation was not the same as it is today. Because of the constraint of traditional laws, limited freedom, lack of good communications, a husband's respect for his young wife's body and the lack of venereal diseases, conditions must have been much more favorable to the birth rate. [370]

Article X. Causes of Polygamy

Under this title we can deal with two quite different and distinct things: 1) the motives that push the Nkundó toward polygamy; 2) the causes that led to the origin of that practice.

The first question can be answered through a methodical observation of facts. The second, on the contrary, is in the realm of history. Thus the two do not coincide in any way, and it would be a mistake to confuse them.

Only the ethnographic problem falls within the framework of this study. But our conclusions can help to explain the historical documents, if any exist, or to clarify a hypothesis concerning the origin of the practice in the past.

What are the reasons by which the Nkundó justify practicing polygamy? They are: 1) social influence, 2) fame, 3) concern over keeping the capital in the family, 4) precautions against a wife's illness, death, or divorce, and 5) the desire to increase the number of children.

595 556 1) A man's social influence grows in proportion to the number of his wives, for they and their children's marriages increase the number of his affinal relationships with other clans. These strengthen his military position. Furthermore, through the system of official concubinage -- which is impossible in a monogamous system -- he can secure dependents.

The more wives a man has, the more he is respected, listened to, and feared. This correlation is neither necessary nor infallible, however, for a polygamist of weak character may have

595x 556 less influence than a monogamist or bigamist who is intelligent and fearless. And in the present circumstances one meets monogamists who, because of either their economic situation or their social or political position, enjoy a much greater authority [371] than many polygamists. Intellectual and moral superiority on their part is beginning to make its value felt.

2) *Fame and vanity*. Because of the very nature of the marriage system, which is intimately bound to -- not to say based on -- financial transactions, the number of wives determines the extent of a man's wealth. And here as everywhere wealth has a fascination; it is considered a mark of superiority. Vanity seizes upon it. And since the possession of wives is the most obvious expression of wealth, the Nkundó see it as a superior means by which to acquire great renown and an illustrious name.

3) *A concern over keeping the capital in the family*. Personal wealth consists almost entirely of metals (especially copper) and domestic animals. Thus this is the capital involved in the financial transactions accompanying marriage, and in that way it is invested with interest (children, work, influence).

595x 556 157 Like all pagan people the Nkundó are essentially covetous and egoistic. They do not like to give but want everything for themselves. Except for persons to whom he is bound by natural ties or sincere affection, a Nkundó does not help others except through interdependence or in the hope of reciprocity in some form or other. Thus when he possesses an excess of wealth, even [431] if it is considerable and entirely superfluous, he does not yield it. The idea would never occur to him to give a few copper rings to an indigent bachelor, for example, if he is not forced to do so because of interdependence in the family. Thus, if there are more girls than boys, the excess bride price will be used by him to augment the number of his own wives. For in order that his daughter not be deprived of her *nkita*, the bride price received must be used again as a bride price. Note that this reasoning has but a limited validity. It is a fact that the ancient custom [372] was for the father to take all his daughters' bride prices for himself, as we have seen in Chapter IV. He did not become polygamous because of excess [bride price] ; he was polygamous before his sons married.

595x 556 Even if a fortune was acquired through a man's own efforts, he would reproach himself if he did not make productive use of it for himself. And under the circumstances the surest investment is in a harem.

Finally, since a wife represents financial value, the Nkundó likes to inherit those of his deceased relatives in order to incorporate them in his own harem or to obtain the means of enlarging it by means of them.

That is the explanation for the Nkundó statement that the wealth of the family (lokutu) cannot pass into the hands of strangers. It is not only a personal desire that impels them to act in that manner; but they feel the collective will of the family behind them. And in this will, as well as in the reprimands and the teasing which are inevitably the consequences of a more independent attitude, lies one of the chief causes of so much backsliding on the part of men who seem permanently won over to the practice of monogamy.

595x 4) A precaution against accidents, such as illness, death, or divorce. This reason is often given: "What would I do," they say, "if I had only one wife, and one day she fell ill, left me, or died? I would be alone. There would be no one to take care of me or feed me. The Whites have their "boys," but we Blacks have only our wives." This reasoning is not without validity, but it does not seem to express the whole truth for, although nothing surpasses his own home for meals, a bachelor can always count on the kind assistance of his female relatives and sisters-in-law. The chief argument is more from the sexual angle. [373] It is not unusual to find women who advise their husbands to take a second wife for that reason. In case of divorce or death the difficulty can be solved through remarriage. But this imposes a certain delay for the collection of bride-price valuables and, above all, for the negotiations. In the case of illness the difficulty is much greater.

In any case, such accidents cannot justify true polygamy, for bigamy or trigamy would be quite sufficient to avoid the inconveniences cited. And yet no one seems to be satisfied with two or three wives when he has the means to acquire more.

595* 842 5) The desire to increase the number of children is one of the reasons most frequently given; it is the chief, and sometimes the only, one cited by ethnographers. There is no question that it has a great deal of validity, for the Nkundó like to have many children. It is one of the things on which they pride themselves as well as a powerful means for reinforcing a social position (and we are thus led back to the first reason cited).

The question of knowing whether polygamy actually does favor the birth rate is irrelevant here, even if the results of a comparison were clearly against this system and were it proved that "the more wives a polygamist has, the fewer children he has." For the Nkundó never make this statistical computation. He sees only the principle: several women give more children than one. And for them, that is the gist of the matter. Furthermore, the interest of the people as a whole does not appear on the [151] horizon of the Nkundó's thoughts and feelings: they think only of themselves, and in their egoism, they consider only their own interests.

595* 831 6) To all these reasons given by the Nkundó to justify the practice of polygamy, we must add a sixth, which they never mention, sensuality. Without colonization it would have been difficult for us to make this statement. [374] But the new state of affairs shows several flaws in our people's arguments. We have already pointed out some of them. Furthermore, all the reasons mentioned up to now do not suffice to account for the existence of polygamy. They do not explain why in the past the old men wanted to keep all the women to themselves, or why a given individual becomes a polygamist. It is a fact that for more than one man none of these alleged reasons have been involved. It is also known that several natives have acquired fortunes by European work (as clerks, salesmen, traders, etc.) in order to be able to establish a harem, though there could have been no motive of vanity or gain in social influence. On the basis of my knowledge of circumstances, persons, and places, I am convinced that even for some natives living in their villages, the primary purpose was clearly sexual. I am acquainted with more than one such case.

595 831 x And it is not difficult to understand this fact. For indeed polygamy constitutes a legitimate and easy means by which a man may enjoy several women without being bothered by palavers, difficulties, etc. The mentality of many men who care little about moral laws as well as the tendency of a disordered instinct to multiply its objects only confirm this observation. Often one sees men who were monogamists at first begin by taking a second wife out of passion. Then gradually their passion becomes greater rather than appeased, and so a harem is built up progressively.

595 178 x The changes introduced by colonization in the economic life of this people have not resulted in a decrease of polygamy. In the absence of exact figures we must be satisfied with simple visual observations, but in certain regions one has the impression that the harems have become smaller but, on the other hand, that the number of polygamists has increased, and therefore [375] the desire for polygamy, that is, its affective cause, has [651] not diminished. Nor does the extra tax frighten or stop the polygamists. The great means for changing the Nkundó attitude in this realm will always be the action of the missions and the penetration of Christian ethics, seconded by a government attitude favoring monogamy. (1)

[648] 1. The favorable attitude of the colonial government toward monogamy is expressed chiefly in the permission given to a polygamist's extra wives to abandon their husband in order to contract a monogamous union, preferably in a mission, under the supervision of missionaries.

[177] Another means, undoubtedly secondary but still important, is the example of European couples. The Blacks are imitative, and native women envy the lot of the white woman, so that European households are propaganda for monogamy when they behave well.

Chapter VIII

Divorce

586 × In Nkundó law there are two ways of breaking up a marriage. divorce and death. We will discuss these in two separate chapters.

In divorce a marriage is dissolved either through a reimbursement of the bride price or the substitution of another wife.

[768] In the case of death, on the other hand, there is no bride price reimbursement; the wife's death ipso facto dissolves the marriage. The husband's death, on the contrary, does not dissolve it; it is continued with the widow until her own death or until divorce. (1)

1. This statement is to be understood in accordance with the explanation given in Chapter III, Article IX.

Article I. Reasons for Divorce

The Nkundó believe that a marriage can be dissolved. This cannot be done freely at the desire of the contracting parties but must conform to a procedure an essential component of which is the participation of the ndonga. It cannot be dissolved because of trivialities, but only for serious reasons, or at least reasons that appear serious to the natives.

The valid reasons for divorce can be reduced to the practical impossibility of the couple's continuing to live together, such as. 1) serious and repeated failures to fulfill conjugal duties, and especially any incorrigible tendency to adultery; 2) an incompatibility of temperaments which results in disputes, quarrels, and rows; 3) a grave and incurable illness. /377/

The first two causes inevitably lead to divorce. In the case of the third, a distinction must be made between a husband's illness and his wife's.

If the husband is ill and his wife abandons him for that reason, the divorce becomes complete when she remarries.

586ˣ 672 If the wife is ill she may have become ill at her husband's home or elsewhere and these two possible situations must be considered separately. In the first instance there is no cause for divorce, since responsibility for her illness rests entirely with the husband. On the other hand, if the wife contracted her illness while staying with her family, the family must shoulder the responsibility, and if her illness is incurable, the husband can have recourse to divorce. But this is not so if the wife has gone to her parents' home in response to her husband's express order, or if she ran away from the husband's for reasons which are just and reasonable. Some situations may give rise to violent disputes. Such is the case, for example, of an illness during a visit undertaken at the wife's own initiative but for the good of the husband. Theoretically, he should win the case. Also, a stay of twenty-four hours is not considered sufficient to place the responsibility for the illness on the wife's family. (1)

1. For details see Chapter VI, Article III, 3 and 4. See also Chapter IX, Article X.

586ˣ The difference between the consequences of the husband's illness and his wife's is of a practical nature. A husband who suffers from an incurable illness or one that takes too long to cure is usually (though not always) abandoned by his wife. If no other man pays a bride price for her, the marriage continues. If the woman finds a lover, he pays the bride price, which is turned over to the first husband, completing the divorce. But it is not possible to say that the man's illness per se is a cause of divorce, for the wife is under an obligation to take care of a sick husband. [378] But in practice neither of the two families involved demand the application of this law. All yield to the wishes of the woman, who will refuse to continue a union that has so little attraction for her.

Thus illness is not a legally valid reason for divorce. But in practice it is recognized as a situation that can result in the dissolution of a marriage.

[842] Although the Nkundó ardently desire children, sterility

586ˣ 842 is not invoked as a reason for divorce. Yet there are many sterile women. To obtain the fulfillment of his desires, a man will have recourse to polygamy. He will try to obtain the valuables he needs in order to acquire another wife. If he does not have the financial means, he could make life difficult for his wife through petty annoyances and meanness of the kind that are not likely to place him in the wrong. In that way he could drive her into leaving him, and thus recover the cost of the bride price. But such behavior is only hypothetical; it could happen here and there, but I know of no instance. In any case a husband never invokes sterility in order to break up a marriage. Therefore, contrary to what happens elsewhere, the question is not raised in Nkundó law.

586ˣ Included among the factors that make the continuation of marriage impossible is a husband's violations of sexual prohibitions during pregnancy or after childbirth, exposing the wife to mortal danger. For through his misconduct the husband becomes guilty of an implicit repudiation, and the wife's father will make use of his right to protect his child's life. (1)

1. See Chapter X, Article II, 3.

The remaining reasons are those given at the beginning, which can be reduced to the impossibility of continuing the marriage due to an incompatibility of temperaments, the cooling of love, serious offenses, especially if repeated, [379] serious and continual failures in the performance of duties, and faults that dishonor the culprit. (1) The habit of stealing, in particular, must be mentioned in this last category. Women who steal, even small things like manioc, fish, or meat, end in provoking most husbands' antipathy

1. For example, adultery with a relative by marriage -- see Chapter VI, Article V, 2, and Chapter V, Article IV, no. 2., ex. 17.

586x if they do not break themselves of this fault and, then, are detested. The result is endless palavers and quarrels, which inevitably lead to divorce. For this failing is considered very shameful. Note that laziness or heedlessness in a spouse may also lead to divorce.

Divorce is frequent among the Nkundó. These people do not try to correct their failings by the imposition of any restraints. As initial love gradually becomes less passionate, continual daily contact makes the less agreeable sides of a person's temperament more apparent. And when it is not tolerated or gives rise to serious wrongs, the marriage inevitably breaks up. There are more divorces in marriages by inheritance and substitution than in marriages through a direct payment of the bride price.

The preceding data show that although the legitimacy of divorce is accepted in Nkundó law, its acceptance exists only because it is necessary, so to speak. As a matter of fact, before a situation reaches that point, the difficulties have been obvious for a long time, and the parents and especially the ndonga will have had to intervene more than once in order to re-establish the troubled peace and strengthen the tottering union. They only give in when there is no possibility of settlement. [380]

Article II

Ways of Dissolving a Marriage

586x
178 The simplest and ideal manner of dissolving a marriage, so to speak, is a separation with the consent of the families involved and especially of the ndonga. At the present time it is the only procedure -- except for running far away -- that is permitted. Since the reorganization of districts, however, the chiefs and the courts have more and more monopolized, or had assigned to them, the function of official witnesses. (1)

---

1. It is not my intention to deny the right of the chief and the courts to intervene in matrimonial litigation,

586ˣ
178

> for this right was recognized by the written laws which have assigned the functions formerly exercised by the "fathers" of families to them. But they are required to act in conformity with the common law, and therefore to listen to the ndonga and report to him.

Before colonization the Nkundó often used other means.

586ˣ Before exploring the question of bride-price reimbursement, we will examine these various actions. For greater clarity we will distinguish between the customs of the pre-European regime and actual practice. Two specific cases will be described at the end.

1. In the past

Let us again make a distinction between two situations:

A. First hypothesis: a wife left her husband. She ran away to her family, first informing the ndonga. If she did not go to him but went straight home instead, the ndonga felt that he had been disregarded, and serious consequences followed, for he inevitably found her in the wrong. That is why this situation very seldom arose. [381] The woman explained her conduct to the ndonga. It was his duty to reconcile her and her husband. A divorce never took place without many interventions on the part of the ndonga.

1) If in spite of all attempts the woman was absolutely unwilling to stay with her husband and definitely left him, the result [721] in most cases was war, unless, of course, the husband also did not care to continue the unhappy union. In such a case he was satisfied with claiming a reimbursement of the bride price. The war, like all others, ended in peace and indemnification; nothing further was discussed. The war was fought against the woman's clan if restitution of the bride price was delayed or not made. However, if the woman went to another man without first going to her family, the abandoned husband declared war on his rival and left his parents-in-law in peace.

586ˣ
682 2) Sometimes the abandoned husband took revenge on his rival by assassinating him. If the possibility was open to him --

586x and this was generally the case -- he did not kill him personally
682 but assigned the task to someone else -- his son, his younger
[563] brother, or nephew, etc. Preferably, he hired a Botswá. The price for this service was 20 copper rings, the sum of the bride price paid
[672] for a Botswá woman. Nkundő law places the entire responsibility for an assassination and all its consequences upon the person who orders it performed. Certain of the Batswa specialized in this field. Among them (of those dependent on the Bombwanja) were Esenge of Bokengé, Mbőlókó of Bombembe, Wai w'ìtúmola of Bakoyó; Lůwá jw'îtómbengándá (died in 1933) also of Bakoyó; Botómba wá Lokio and Mpótő éy'Ilókó of Mbanja (still alive).

The scorned husband had still other means of taking revenge
586x or obtaining indemnification. He made use of them only if the occasion was favorable or if he was not in a position [382] to go into expensive adventures such as a war or an assassination. They were the following:

3) Ikákelo: (1) A relative of his who was married into the unfaithful wife's clan could be prevented from returning to her husband.

4) The seizure of one of the wives of his recalcitrant father-in-law, or of one of the latter's relatives. This action is called by the generic term lowáála, which signifies "compensation." (2)

The prisoner was usually put in an etáka (a wooden fork fastened to the neck) (3) to prevent her flight and hasten the reimbursement of
[567] the bride price. If the matter was not settled she became a slave.

---

1. See Chapter III, Article VI.

2. The woman who was seized was called nginda and her descendants, if there were any, were known as bonginda.

3. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 4, A, b), (1).

586ˣ One way or the other, the question was thus settled for both sides.

The term universally employed to signify the breaking up of a marriage by the wife is bokófo, derived from the verb kófa. This word is not used for a wife's repudiation by her husband. Therefore, its meaning is not equivalent to "divorce"; it means rather "to break the union with the husband." The transitive causative form (kófya) means "to provoke this break." It actually does happen that the woman's family causes the dissolution of a marriage for the sake of a more advantageous union. This should be understood in the context of what we have explained concerning reasons for divorce. Serious failures in the husband's fulfillment of his duties to his parents-in-law are mainly involved here. [587] The remarriage of a divorcée is described by the generic term kumbwa, "to be married to someone."

B. Second hypothesis: a husband wanted to get rid of his wife. Old natives stated very categorically that such behavior on the husband's part was due not to the cooling of his love, but to [383] incorrigible conduct on the wife's part. He was reduced to this extremity by the impossibility of continuing conjugal life with her.

586ˣ 584 He did everything in his power to forestall the flight of his wife by making the first move. After having vainly tried to bring her around through the intervention of her parents and especially the ndonga, he had recourse to one of the following means, which he could in fact use successively. But first he was required to inform the witness and to obtain his approval as well as that of the family authorities. The measures were as follows:

[584] a) Submission to the etɔ́ka, a heavy wooden fork fastened to the neck. When the husband has placed the etɔ́ka on his wife, the ndonga informed her parents of what had happened. They could then come and free their daughter by returning the bride price. If the husband applied the etɔ́ka against the wishes of the witness, the latter could release the prisoner. But in so doing he became guarantor of the reimbursement of the bride price; he became personally responsible for it.

586ˣ The husband was authorized to keep his wife under this form of torture for months. If his parents-in-law would not or could not

586* make it possible for him to recover his claim, he had recourse to the second means:

b) Reducing his wife to slavery (bonvamó, from the verb 586* nyamola). The husband had the right to use this means immediately, 587 without having first tried the étaka. But such action was not approved of and was undertaken only if the woman's family were themselves exasperated by the endless suits and the continual shame that their unworthy daughter caused them.

The reduction of a woman to slavery usually caused a war, [721] for her clan would not put up with such an insult. In some instances they did not seek revenge, however, either out of fear, because they did not feel in a position to resist, or because they recognized that the husband had good reasons for what he did. [384]

The woman's relatives could subsequently buy her back. (1)

[181] 1. If the Nkundó sold an Elinga woman into slavery, her people never troubled them with a war. For they did not know how to attack, were not good at marching, were strangers to the forest, and were inferior in military valor. Therefore they were satisfied with buying back their kinswoman.

In some instances, not wanting to be exposed to further palavers or further shame caused by their daughter's continued misconduct after having bought her back, they left her to her fate. Their love for their child and their desire to preserve their honor and good reputation were in conflict, and which of the two sentiments triumphed depended on circumstances of men and things. In such a situation, as with respect to theft and other habits that brought dishonor, it was not rare (nor is it even today) to find that the desire to preserve honor triumphed over affection or financial interests.

Before reducing a wife to slavery, even more than before [584] confining her to the etɔ́ka, a man was required to communicate his intentions to the ndonga. Otherwise, the latter would declare war

586x on his own authority, for the offense was considered very serious.
[584 We can assume that the reason for this rule was to allow time for
[567] the woman's family to intervene and keep their daughter from be-
coming a slave by refunding the bride price paid for her.

c) In exceptional instances an exasperated husband resorted to the *immolation* of his wife when someone died. People cite the case of Bengóngó of Bongilá (Besombó, Bombwanja), who had his wife, Litúli of Bontole, decapitated at the *ikweſ* at the death of his father, Bengóngó byá Yese.

If the woman had children old enough to intervene on her
behalf, her husband could be prevented from carrying out his
violent intentions. The proverb says, *Mbótsi ntáwáká*, "a mother
[599] does not perish." The husband also abstained if the woman had
[595] a co-wife (*ebſsa*) who was her sister or other close relative -- either
out of a feeling of shame, [385] or out of fear of undesirable
repercussions. Sometimes, when a husband was caught between his
wish to use the *etáka* and his shame or his fear of the *ebísa*, he hid
[601] the wife who was confined by this fork. Preferably, he asked a brother-in-law to give her hospitality. In that way he got around the difficulty to a great extent, because through the law of exogamy such an arrangement placed the wife in another village, sometimes a considerable distance away. This practice was called *isángyá*; *tómba walſ isángyá*.

Instead of resorting to the procedures listed, a husband could
586x also place his wife in the hands of the *ndonga*. However, it was a
584 very unusual thing to do. The natives maintain that such action
was due to a lack of affection for the wife, together with the husband's certainty that he could recover his valuables -- either because he was assured that his father-in-law was well disposed toward him (and would reimburse him or provide a replacement), or because he knew he could use the *ikákelo*.

As we have said, *direct repudiation* was extremely rare. Here we are not speaking of repudiation caused by a wife's incorrigible misconduct -- which we have just discussed -- but of repudiation against the wife's wishes. If it did occur the husband was expected to hand her over to the *ndonga*, and the latter, seeing

586 584 that there were no further means for a reconciliation, returned her to her parents. No violence was used against her, nor could the husband demand an immediate and direct reimbursement of the bride price. The husband had to wait until the wife he had repudiated found a new husband and the latter had paid a bride price for her. If the parents-in-law showed ill will toward him, however, [721] they could expect a war.

586 The conclusion that can be drawn from the preceding data is that although Nkundó law is very severe against the wife who does not acquit herself of her marital obligations, it does not leave the husband entirely free to do as he pleases. Ancestral law demanded grave reasons as the basis for any measures he took against her, [386] and the application of this law was well regulated. The differences between the various situations are an eloquent demonstration of this fact.

As we have seen above, the term bokófo is not applied to repudiation by either party. In the case of the husband the Nkundó say that he atóna, "no longer wants her"; the noun is lotóno. This term does not apply specifically to this situation; it refers to any person or thing one does not want. The special manner in which the wife is sent back by being handed over to the ndonga is also called by a generic term émola, "to cause to start moving, to make go away"; the noun is njémó.

2. At the present time

586 178 Considerable changes have been introduced as a result of colonization. Wars, torture, human sacrifice, and slavery have been abolished. The possibilities are now reduced to the woman's flight, with or without notification of the ndonga, or a repudiation pure and simple. The intervention of the ndonga is only rarely omitted; it is still considered important. As a matter of fact, it would be against his financial interests to make an enemy of him. A woman who leaves her husband returns home, goes directly to another man, or lives a debauched life in some center, large or small. There is nothing left but to proceed with the refunding of the bride price. Thus everything is reduced to its simplest form.

A Nkundó woman is held back only by the fear of punishment and other consequences of her action, or by her love for her husband.

586 178 In the past, when that love began to cool or became less passionate, fear caused her to make an effort and frequently everything was put in order again. Modern freedom, on the contrary, invites her to break all fetters. As a result, a temporary annoyance which in the past would have been taken care of, or some domestic difficulty that would have been smoothed out under the old regime, nowadays is enough to break up the marriage permanently. [387]

Thus it is understandable that the substitution of the present state of affairs for the ancient customs has caused divorces to increase in scandalous proportions.

The arrival of Negro soldiers (strangers or men from the Congo) dealt the first blow to Nkundó family organization, and the blow was almost fatal. Native authority, which was familial and patriarchal, was abolished from the outset. The chiefs who were subsequently set up by the European power had more to worry about than the preservation of marital morality, even when they did not tend (as was unfortunately too offen the case) to favor easy divorces in order to appropriate the women themselves and thus build a harem. The colonial administration found itself faced with the unknown. It took them time to learn about the past and present situations. Furthermore, the administration was occupied with other problems: the pacification of tribes, the stabilization of the occupation, assistance to the colonization that was just beginning, to trade, and to missions, as well as the various organizations, roads to be opened and maintained, etc. In addition the work involved in the establishment and development of centers, the police, the various forms of transportation, the establishment of industry, and the religious misions drew away from their usual surroundings a large number of young people who needed companions, real or substitute wives to satisfy their passion. All this caused great ravages in native society. Morality suffered greatly, and consequently so did the birth rate.

In the course of recent years, however, things have become more normal and stabilized, and the colonial administration has begun to repair the wrongs it caused. This complete change must be whole-heartedly applauded. The efforts that have been made to check the chaos of family affairs and put it in order can have nothing less than full approval.

586x 692 178 In spite of the opposition of several old-fashioned chiefs, [388] the native courts that were recognized or established by the decree of 1926 have begun to make use of the powers the government has assigned to them. They are called upon to play a great role in setting matters right, especially if their work is closely supervised and regularly checked. To accomplish this end, these courts must continue to act in the spirit of the ancient laws, taking into account only the change in circumstances (1).

1. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 7.

586x 178 The chief measure for the restoration of order advocated by the natives is the imprisonment of the wife who attempts a divorce. This practice would be a continuation of the custom of applying the etɔ́ka and an adaptation of it to present circumstances. Like the former practice, it would have a double effect: it would restrain flightiness and license, on the one hand, and, on the other, it would ensure the reimbursement of the bride price in cases where no reconciliation is possible. But its execution would be taken out of the husband's hands and handed over to the chief. Europeans who are in contact with the natives and concerned about the social order also favor this evolution of the common law.

Another way of combating such a situation would be the use of pressure against the guilty woman's parents, chiefly through the imprisonment of her mother. This measure has no basis in ancient law, except for war -- which did not touch the mother and actually was only moderately useful -- and the system of compensation (lowɔ́ɔ́la) -- which depended on the availability of opportunities and was used through the husband's own initiative. This practice therefore cannot be approved as such, but it might be acceptable in cases where the parents are really at fault. For instance, they may have in one way or another incited their daughter to break her marriage although she had no acceptable reason for doing so, or, although a legitimate declaration [389] of divorce has been made, they might refuse to make restitution of the bride price. (1) And

1. A drastic and indiscreet application

586x 178

> of this rule, however, could trouble the religious feelings of native Christians and thus produce an effect that is the reverse of the one desired. A religious marriage is in fact indissoluble, and in such cases the obligation to make restitution would be equivalent to a recognition that a religious union could be dissolved. And not only would the native consider this an opposition between the public authorities and Christian morality, but in addition the stability of marriages in general would greatly suffer.

here it must be noted that certain parents use hypocritical circumventions rather than openly showing their refusal. This is how they go about it: if the woman has really abandoned her husband and he, for good reasons such as those given above, no longer cares for his wife with whom he can no longer live (especially if he is monogamous), the question of reimbursement arises. The woman, in connivance with her parents, who do not want to make restitution of the bride price, publicly and officially declares that she is not leaving her husband and wishes to return to the conjugal household, whereas her only intention is to help her parents avoid paying the bride-price valuables. In time she will manage to get out of it one way or another.

3. Special cases

586x There are some rather special cases in the dissolution of marriage. The first has occurred more frequently since colonization, while the last has practically disappeared.

586x 937 587 1) Njangó. This word is the noun form of the verb angola, "to seduce or lead astray" (another's wife, his laborer, his slave, etc.). Therefore, it is a generic term, but it is primarily applied to the seduction of a married woman in order to make her leave her husband. It therefore denotes a man's act. Of the woman it is

586 simply said that she has left her husband (aɔ̂kɔ́fa) and has been taken
837 in marriage by X (aɔ̂kúmbwa ɛ́ka Sóngɔ́lɔ́). Having fallen in love
587 with another man's wife [390] and desiring to marry her, a man
tries to win her favor. If she consents he collects the valuables
necessary for the bride price. He then asks the woman to come to
him and pays the bride price as for any marriage.

Instead of going directly to her seducer, the woman may also first go to her parents, especially if they are in favor of her plan. If they are not she would not succeed, because they would prevent her from carrying it out.

Cases of njangó were formerly rare because they were risky.
[721] As a matter of fact, they constituted a casus belli. Anyone who
undertook such a venture had to be in a position to take the conse-
[178] quences of his act, especially with respect to the payment of an in-
demnity. Nowadays, on the other hand, these occurrences are much
more frequent, even when the new husband does not have the means
to pay the bride price at once. Nevertheless, the reversal in gov-
ernment policy is beginning to produce good results. The woman,
or her mother, is often imprisoned; rarely the seducer. This penalty
is often sufficient to restore order. But to keep from being exposed
to further difficulties caused by the woman who no longer loves
him, the abandoned husband sometimes refuses to take back his
unfaithful wife.

The rarity of cases in former times as well as the fact that
[671] they constituted a legitimate reason for war shows that the njangó
did not have the approval of Nkundɔ́ law but that it was more or less
considered an infraction.

2) Taking refuge. Because of the change in circumstances,
586 the practice of taking refuge is no longer common today. It used
577 to be done as follows: A woman who absolutely wanted to leave
her husband and had no means of doing so, since no man had asked
for her in marriage and her parents were powerless to help her, went
secretly to a rich and influential man whom she would have liked
as a husband. She arrived unexpectedly, stood before him, or even
threw herself at him, crying, [391] Bejwɔ́ bɛ̌kɛ̌! ónjéngé,

586 577 tonjójákɛ́! (1) "Your deceased parents! Pay the bride price for me,

1. Or analogous terms.

do not chase me away!" In such circumstances, the insult of invoking a man's deceased parents is like an ultimatum; it imposes an obligation which the person thus addressed cannot escape. (2)

2. See Chapter VI, Article V, 4, Appendix.

Therefore the man in question could not send the woman away; he had to take her under his protection. He called his kin group and explained the situation to them. If his close relatives agreed -- and it was their duty and honor to -- they instructed him to pay the bride price for her. But the abandoned husband intervened to prevent this transaction. Either he declared war, or he begged his rival to return his wife to him. If he took the first course, the two [727] adversaries paid indemnities for the warriors fallen in battle on their respective sides after the hostilities were terminated; then when peace was concluded, the matter was settled all the same, and the woman succeeded in her purpose. If the husband took the second alternative, and the man who received the fugitive was disposed to yield to his request, the latter would ask the husband for a payment (nyongo) that would free him from the obligation imposed on him by the wife's "oath." This payment was a sort of indemnification for the insult and for the blemish on his honor. Therefore the amount was fairly high: 20 to 25 copper rings, equaling the price of a slave.

The woman was surrendered either because the man to whom she had addressed herself did not love her, or because he and his family did not want to get involved in any disputes.

For the husband, war was a bad expedient; he would necessarily lose. The correct and ideal procedure was to try and have his wife returned to him. This fact is an indication that recourse to arms was an infraction of the law rather than a legitimate means. [392]

It could also happen that the man kept the woman but did not immediately pay the bride price. This occurred either if a

586* continuous state of enmity existed between his clan and the husband's,
577 or if the husband owed him a substantial debt, one that clearly equaled the woman's bride price. In the first case a new war followed almost inevitably. Later on the woman's family contacted the new son-in-law. The gifts they brought were considered the dowry, and he began to pay the bride price. But there was no question of reimbursing the bride price to the first husband; relations between him and the woman's clan were completely broken. The difference between this situation and the standard procedure described above lies precisely in the fact that there is no restitution. In the case of a debt there was no restitution either. The woman's flight constituted a compensation (lowáála) and was therefore so designated (N. aôkenda ndá lowáála). If the husband lodged a complaint, the judges sent him a piece of bofofó (1) to let him know that they did not want to concern themselves with his case, which he himself knew to have very poor grounds. Even the members of his own clan prevented him from making war; they knew perfectly well that the wrong was entirely on their relative's side.

The practice of taking refuge that we have just described was simply known as bejwó, bŏmoto áótswá bejwó, because that word was the principal one in the ultimatum.

As we have said above, the custom here described disappeared
178 with colonization. Even though the scope of this study does not ex-
586* tend to the Nkundó who are settled north of the Tshuapa, it [393]
577 may be of interest to note that an evolution of this custom is taking
shape in the Losanganya region. If a woman is condemned for
leaving the conjugal household and imprisoned, she asks someone
to marry her -- if the opportunity presents itself. If the man accepts

---

[202] [628] 1. The bofofó is a piece of dried banana leaf which has been rolled up and tied with two knots (or more, as the case required). To indicate the end of a palaver, the bofofó is cut in two (or more) pieces, with a knot in each piece. One piece is sent to each interested party.

178 her proposal, he collects the bride price and produces it before the
586x chief. With the consent of this authority, he pays it to the woman's
577 parents, who make restitution to the husband. (1)

1. See also Chapter III, Article VI.

x 3) War. The last of the special ways in which a marriage
586 may be broken is the following: If a woman were captured in a war
727 and not freed, thus becoming a slave, by that very fact her marriage
was broken. Under the circumstances it could not have been otherwise, since each group was concerned only with its own interests. As we have seen in the preceding chapter, the slave was incorporated into the harem of one of the members of the clan who took her prisoner, or she was sold to some man for this purpose. If her real husband did not have the means to free her -- and we are speaking under that assumption, for if he did the union would not be dissolved -- he was unable to oppose what was done. Nevertheless, he was entitled to indemnification by the member of the clan who was responsible for the war, and he could use force to support his claim. If the woman were freed by her family, and her owner then paid them a bride price in order to contract a regular marriage, the former husband had a right to a return of the bride price paid by him. (See Chapter VII, Article V).

x In concluding this account, we should note that a woman who
586 has left her husband to go to another man may return to the first
one [394] after a fairly long time has elapsed. There may be two reasons for such a return:

Either the woman does not find what she was looking for with her new husband and finds her hopes deceived, or in comparing her present situation with the life she had previously led she regrets her action. Knowing the love her former husband always bore her, she risks returning to him, and usually she is not rejected.

Or the new husband finds that after having paid part of the bride price he is unable to fulfill the rest of his obligation. Since a woman does not wish to be a wife without bride price -- outside of modern exceptions -- she turns back.

586 x Naturally a return is not the absolute and necessary consequences of the causes given. The woman can also go to a third man. But a return to the first husband is not too unusual, though it should not be thought of as frequent. (1) Because of the reception given a woman who returns, this practice proves that in most cases it is the woman who causes the divorce.

Article III. Restitution of the Bride Price

1. The obligation to make restitution

The two basic principles are:

1) The dissolution of a marriage must take place by means of the restitution of the bride price.

2) The obligation to make restitution falls upon the wife's family.

The second principle is clear, and its application presents no difficulties. The same is not true of the first. [395]

First of all, it is the restitution of the bride price that completes the divorce. As long as the husband has not been reimbursed, the woman continues to belong to him. But as the interval between the payment of the new bride price and restitution to the abandoned husband may be fairly long, according to present practice the latter is not permitted to exercise his rights over his wife once the second payment has been made. From that moment on he has the right to be reimbursed, and it is only up to him to go and collect what is due him. In the past he could make war. But as we have already seen, the hypothetical situation presented was extremely rare and occurred only when the husband had the means to prevent a new union before the reimbursement occurred. If the woman was physically able to go to a new husband before the restitution of the bride price (by means of direct repudiation, flight without the

---

1. Among Europeans the remarriage of divorced couples also occurs, though it is not frequent.

586x husband's knowledge, or taking refuge) and did so, her remarriage was illegal. Before the law the new husband was simply a thief, since he held a person near him over whom he had no rights. For this reason the husband could declare war on him, which he was not permitted to do in the other case, the question of his marriage being a matter between him and his wife's family.

Another consequence of that legal ruling is the following: If the woman who has left her legitimate husband wishes to return to him, she can advise him of her intention by a secret message. She asks him to come and get her at the moment when her lover is to pay the bride price (ndanga or walo, depending on the instance). She urges the latter to meet his financial obligations. On the day set the legitimate husband, accompanied by his ndonga, goes and hides near the place where the payment is to be made. At an opportune moment he comes out of his hiding place [684] and seizes the valuables that have been set out, saying to his rival: "I have caught you in adultery with my wife; these valuables belong to me as indemnity." [396] The woman's family takes his side, and the husband who has seduced her finds himself at a disadvantage and is sent away empty handed, for he is clearly entirely in the wrong.

If the legitimate husband belonged to an influential family he might risk the assassination of his rival if he saw a possibility. But then the situation was complicated by a war.

Furthermore, if the fugitive becomes pregnant as a result of her relations with her lover before the procedure of bride-price payment and reimbursement has been carried out, the child belongs, not to the natural father, but to the abandoned husband, who remains its legal father.

178
586x Nowadays everything has changed. A woman who leaves her husband cannot legitimately cohabit with another man. But during the past years no sanction remained. The imprisonment of the divorcing woman (mentioned above) could revive the ancient law while adapting it to circumstances. Furthermore, since the marriage is not dissolved, the alleged second husband could be condemned by the native courts for complicity in adultery.

586 x In most cases the husband and his parents-in-law try to
continue their relationship despite the breakup. If the woman per-
sists in not wanting to go back to her husband despite the pressure,
the entreaties, and even the curses of her family, the parents sub-
[587] stitute a sister or relative (bankitsa) for her, unless, of course, no
relative is available. For in that case they must resign themselves
to the restitution of the bride price and a permanent dissolution
of the relationship. No new bride-price payment is made for the
substitute, as the original bride price is valid for the new union,
as we have explained in Chapter III, Article IV.

Finally, there is an exception to the general principle:
there is no restitution of the bride price if for some reason there
is equivalent compensation of some sort. Nowadays this excep-
tion is seldom encountered, as will be apparent from the following
details: for example, such an exception occurs if the right of
ikákelo has been exercised, or if the wife of one of the relatives-
in-law has been seized. Even if the amount of one bride price is
larger than the other, the excess is not returned. Nor is there any
obligation to restore the bride price if the wife has been reduced to
slavery or has been killed. There are also the cases of the dissolu-
tion of marriage cited in Chapter V, Article IV, 2, no. 2, ex-
ample 17, and in Chapter VI, Article V, 4. If the breakup caused
[727] a war and the number killed on each side was considerable (three,
five, six corpses), the matter rests there; when the families of
those killed have been indemnified, there is no more talk of re-
imbursement. Occasionally, an influential and rich man who at
the same time was spiteful or excessively proud, would take up
arms a second time. He claimed that he would not stop until he
had the bride-price valuables in his hands. Such behavior met with
disapproval everywhere, and even his own family tried to stop him.
If the opposing clan was sufficiently strong and stubborn in the
struggle, the husband obtained nothing at all. But the desire to
[555] get revenge or to be famous as a warrior sometimes caused a man
to scorn financial losses. Finally, according to the notions of our
natives, a case of enmity between two clans (which we have cited
in relation to a woman's application for refuge) should be included
in the category of compensations.

586x The obligation to make restitution of the bride price falls upon the woman's father or the one who has replaced him (father, uncle, son, brother, etc., in accordance with the family hierarchy). He is responsible not only for everything that he received personally, but also for all that was paid to any member of the family. All these payments actually comprise the same single bride price, and all these persons together are represented by him. It is up to him to call them together for the discussion and examination of the payments made. [398] And if disputes arise, it is up to them to iron them out among themselves. The father need not personally have seen or known of the payments; the testimony of the ndonga is sufficient. If one or another of the relatives has acted wrongly by neglecting to make payments known to the person who is responsible, the latter can only place the blame on that relative. In no case can he refuse to make restitution of the valuables. The new husband should not be implicated in any way.

As to the mother's part, she and her clan must make restitution of whatever they have received, and they must do so even if she has broken with her daughter's father. The father summons her and asks her to return the valuables. This arrangement seldom leads to difficulties. In no case can the mother's portion be demanded from the father.

Finally, the Nkundó require that the reimbursement is made totally and all at once. They do not permit installments or intervals between them (as they do for the bride-price payment); they probably wish to avoid further disputes and endless palavers. Exceptionally, the parties come to a friendly agreement and permit a delay needed to collect some item or small portion of the valuables to be restored.

586x
572 As we have seen above, the restitution must be made entirely between the husband and the wife's family. The new husband must not participate. His only duty is to pay a bride price to his parents-in-law. He has no obligations toward the former husband. The latter cannot turn to him to recover his valuables. He can only claim them from the woman's family. Hence the axiom: njéngi la njéngi ntákímánáká, "the two husbands cannot pursue each

586 other." (1)
[672]

1. Except, of course, if the new husband puts himself in the wrong by taking the woman home with him before the divorce is completed (see above).

The term for making restitution of the bride price is [192] úndoja (baúmbá, jěngí, etc.); [399] its intransitive form is úndola ("to recover the cost of the bride price," and the passive is únjwa, "to be restituted." The noun is njúndó or wǔndó ("restitution," "reimbursement").

2. Methods of making restitution

The woman's father can pay back the bride price in two ways:

1) By means of valuables received from the new husband. In this case the more the latter hastens his payment, the sooner the new union will be made final.

2) By means of his own wealth, lontumú or bokakata (ekakata), an intensitive derived from likata, "hand." This method of payment settles the matter more quickly and avoids complaints lodged by the former husband. Sometimes restitution is made in this manner to show wealth and generosity.

In such a case the father acts spontaneously of his own free will. But can he be required to thus make restitution with his own wealth?

Yes. If the bride price is still in the hands of the woman's family, it must be returned immediately. This rule is easily understood, for under these circumstances no practical difficulty stands in the way of reimbursement.

Although as a rule the bride-price valuables will already have been spent for the acquisition of another wife (the nkita), this is not always the case. For example, only a very short time may have elapsed between the conclusion of the marriage and the divorce. But such a case was and is rare. Instances where the bride price was still in the family's possession were even rarer in the past, for people did not want bride-price wealth to remain

586x unproductive. Nowadays, they occur somewhat more frequently. [586] A feeling of generosity has developed toward sons and younger brothers, and the valuables are often set aside for their use.

If the bride price has already been transferred, the solution [400] is less clear cut. Under the old regime the matter was fairly clear, which is no longer true at present. But let us proceed by stages.

In the past the question was as follows: Theoretically it was assumed that the woman's family was not in a position to make restitution. In practice, however, they managed to do so, either by substituting another woman, or by borrowing the needed valuables, or by giving the husband a bride price received by one of the divorcée's relatives. The husband had certain means of forcing his father-in-law to pay (see above). Other times the notables of the clan were moved by a threat of war. They unceasingly urged restitution, and unless the debtor himself was the most influential member of the group and of an unyielding nature, he gave in to their entreaties. If, on the other hand, the husband did not have recourse to the means mentioned, he simply had to wait until his father-in-law received a new bride price.

178x 586 Nowadays the ancient customs have been abolished, and the whole question has changed as a result. Nevertheless, in spite of the external changes, the colonial administration wishes to act in the spirit of ancient native laws.

By establishing regular native courts and giving them the right to judge in accordance with the laws of the tribes themselves, adapted to changed circumstances, the decree of April 15, 1926 has armed these courts with the means of working for this adaptation. But in practice it has not yet been accomplished. This fact must be attributed to the difficulties of finding a solution which would, on the one hand, perpetuate the spirit of the ancient system and, on the other, satisfy legitimate aspirations toward better regulations, aspirations which as a matter of fact are favored by the colonizing power. In this connection one must think especially of the gradual abandonment of polygamy.

The European authorities do not seem to have come to a clear decision as yet with respect to what method of restitution

178 should be adopted under present circumstances [401], and this
586x question is actually within the jurisdiction of the native courts. (1)

1. As to the imprisonment of the woman seeking a divorce -- an adaptation of the etáka, this practice was first condemned but its legality has been recognized recently (in April, 1935).

Among the natives, opinion is divided. Two plans for a solution are discernible.

A. A strong tendency is developing to maintain the distinction mentioned above between the breakup of a marriage caused by the wife and the husband's repudiation of her. In itself this distinction is good, but it is subject to a serious drawback, namely, the danger of exaggerating the importance of the latter situation. For, as we have seen, if a husband repudiates his wife, it is usually her own fault.

This tendency results in the following difference in the procedure recommended for the respective situations:

1) If it is the wife who runs away, her family should make restitution by means of its own wealth. If they try to avoid doing so or delay too long, the woman seeking divorce or her mother should be imprisoned. The latter can usually be gotten hold of more easily than the former, and even if catching the daughter presents no special difficulties, the fact remains that the imprisonment of the mother is usually more efficacious.

The criticisms that must be made against this system are as follows:

a) It advocates sanctions against the mother, who should not be implicated unless it is proved that she is at fault. (2)

2. See above, Article II, 2, last paragraph.

178 The traditional laws permitted sanctions against the wife herself.
586 As to war, it caused both sides to suffer but had little effect on the divorcing woman's mother. Furthermore, compensation through seizure of the divorcée's mother or of one of the father-in-law's wives was only a haphazard method and could be applied only under favorable circumstances. It was not decided upon by the authorities [402] but was a capture by surprise, on the purely personal initiative of the abandoned husband. Consequently, in my opinion, it should not be tolerated, unless the mother's responsibility in the breakup is proved.

b) Although the imprisonment of the wife can have two purposes and its practice have two effects -- the reduction of the frequency of divorce through punishment of the culprit, and a hastening of the restitution of the bride price -- it is important to distinguish between them in theoretical discussion. Imprisonment as a punishment has already been considered. Here we will deal with it solely as a means of obtaining restitution of the bride price or shortening the delay. Considered in this light, it is bodily constraint. It cannot be applied to the wife, who has no obligation, but to the father if he fails in the fulfillment of duties imposed on him by law -- that is, if he refuses to proceed with the reimbursement which the law requires him to make, or if he fails to take steps which will enable him to make it (or even if he is convicted of negligence in his duty to intervene in order to make his daughter respect her promises). In practice the father would really have to be in the wrong and his ill will be established. The imprisonment of the divorcing woman would avoid the prosecution of her father for a situation which he himself is powerless to prevent.

c) The tendency cited could prevent polygamists' wives from contracting monogamous marriages and, as a result, could oppose the spirit of the law. It would not be difficult to eliminate this drawback, however.

Since the written law favors monogamy, a regular and serious control of the activity of native courts would actually be sufficient.

2) If the breaking up of the marriage is caused by the

178 586 husband, the proponents of this system require a restitution of the bride price [403] only when a new bride price has been paid, or rather as soon as the woman has a new husband. Some go even further and claim to impose only a partial restitution; a portion of the bride price would be kept by the wife's family as a punishment for the husband's offense.

We must raise the following points against this rule:

a) Far from having a basis in common law, it is in flagrant opposition to it (see above and further on).

b) It also has the disadvantage of setting up a certain impediment to the development of stable monogamous marriages. Not for monogamous marriages per se, for in the case of a pagan or a Protestant there is no difficulty, and the rule does not harm them. If their marriage is not successful, they can always resort to divorce so that this rule does not apply to them. They can continue to cohabit with their wives until the latter leave them. For a Catholic the situation is entirely different. He knows that his religious marriage is indissoluble. But before contracting a marriage, the local ecclesiastic discipline at the present time requires him to pay a bride price and, consequently, to become involved in a common-law union and submit to its laws even though in his conscience he cannot consider such a union as marriage. The same thing applies -- mutatis mutandis -- to a catechumen who is to be baptized and thus to elevate his common-law and legal marriage to the level of a sacrament. Suppose that his wife wants to remain with him -- sincerely or in order to save her parents from the expense of reimbursement -- but that her temperament turns out to be unsuitable to married life or that her conduct is not at all in accordance with Catholic morality. Should this situation arise, the husband would be exposed to extremely grave consequences. For whatever the case, [404] their life together will be unbearable in the long run, and one day the wife will leave her husband, who will find himself in a very painful dilemma as a result: either he will have to remain a bachelor or find himself in flagrant opposition to his conscience. It is therefore wise for this woman to leave him while there is still a way to straighten out the situation. The solution described here presents difficulties that would dishearten many men. And this would be to the detriment of an evolution toward a higher moral level

178 and a better social order, although the normal functioning of native courts could in part prevent this difficulty by requiring the woman's father to hasten the repayment of the bride price.
566

B. The serious disadvantages inherent in the system we have just described have caused another part of the population to seek a solution that would avoid them. The Christians in particular are the ones who advocate it. But since they have as yet very little influence in the political domain, the chances are slim that their point of view will carry. In their opinion the reimbursement of the bride price should be required in all cases, and immediate restitution would be required only if, at the time of the breakup, the bride price had not yet been spent. They also accept imprisonment as a sanction against the divorcing woman.

This system, too, is open to criticism: it is hardly in accordance with the spirit of traditional native law, which allowed the husband to use means of his own to obtain immediate reimbursement.

It is my opinion that we must take the present state of affairs into consideration, with the sole idea of protecting the social order through the stabilization of marriages on the one hand, and on the other, the evolution toward a better order by favoring [405] monogamous unions in accordance with colonial legislation and administrative practice. (1)

It should be noted that natives in various localities maintain that the first system described is favored by the Europeans. That is their answer to the objection -- which I have made more than once -- that their solution does not conform to their traditional law. Actually at the present time, the administration does not seem to support their system. But it is difficult for me to believe that it is simply an explanation to their advantages, for I have heard it

---

1. See also Chapter VI, Article VII, 7, and the article on "The Native Reaction Against Divorce," Congo, 1936, Vol. 1, p. 11.

178 from more than one native who was clearly and truly wronged
586x by the system. For these reasons, it would not seem impossible that before the native courts were organized, some government agent had spoken and acted in approval of the system in question.

This digression on the subject of the practice to be adopted with reference to the reimbursement of the bride price has become long. But special emphasis is necessary because of the crucial importance of this question in the future development of native society.

3. The formalities of restitution

586x The only formality involved in the restitution of the bride
584 price is the obligation to carry it out through the intervention of the ndonga(s). Since he is the official witness, he is the one who is qualified to say what has been paid. There is no recognized obligation to make restitution of any payment or gift that has not passed through his hands or that he has not seen. Sometimes certain payments actually have been made without his participation, and restitution for them cannot be demanded. The official witness has had no knowledge of them, and he is consequently [406] under no obligation to take them into account. But the possibility of friendly transactions always remains.

Should the ndonga all have died in the interim, the procedure would not be adversely affected, for Nkundó law recognizing the inheritance of that office. The brother, son, or other relative of the deceased can act in his name, and sometimes long before his death he will have given the latter all the necessary and useful explanations. The testimony of the successor is recognized as legal and valid.

Moreover, the ndonga may be assisted by other upright and influential men who were present when the payments were made and who can corroborate or even correct his testimony. It is clear that this practice was established by common law for the sake of obtaining the best possible results in the exercise of justice.

586x 584 The custom is all the more easily understood since there are many different payments, separated by intervals and made throughout the duration of the marriage. Therefore long arguments and contestations occur.

It is not pointless to draw special attention to the necessity of the ndonga's testimony in the reimbursement of a bride price, for this rule is not always properly observed. For example, I know of the following case: A ship's captain from Upper Ikelemba took a girl from this region as concubine. The absence of a ndonga and the omission of a real bride price showed their desire not to involve themselves in a legitimate marriage. Nevertheless, the man paid valuables (especially money and fabrics) to the woman's parents. By the end of the concubinage, which lasted many years, the sum total of these gifts had risen to a value of more than 1,000 francs. After the separation, the husband demanded the possession of the daughter born from the union. The court charged with examining the case commanded -- with the approval of the administrator and in accordance with customary rules (see the next article) that restitution of the [407] payments made should be carried out and assigned the child to its natural father. The woman's father had a sufficient sense of honesty to return the gifts -- even though, legally, he had no obligation to do so -- but he claimed his daughter's child. However the court was not willing to hear his claim, although according to Nkundó law they should have recognized his right.

Apart from the participation of witnesses, no special formality is involved in the restitution of the bride price. It is carried out in accordance with the rules prescribed by Nkundó customs and conventions, appropriate for any discussion held in a family or clan gathering. When everything is settled, the person entitled to the reimbursement collects his due and takes it with him.

586x 4. Gifts and payments subject to restitution

Restitution must be made of all payments made by both sides; the bride price in all its parts, the mother's portion, gifts, payments at the time of death, etc., made by either side, the dowry (nkomí), and various presents. All these are subject to restitution.

586 The position of the individuals who have paid or received the valuables does not matter, as long as they are really members of the kin group and the payment is attested to by the ndonga's testimony. But the father alone is indebted to his son-in-law.

At the end of the discussion on the quantity and nature of the valuables, the amount for each side is added up. Then one is subtracted from the other, and the remaining amount is given to the party entitled to it. Supposing that the bride-price valuables add up to a total of 125 copper rings (1), while the nkomɛ (dowry paid by the wife's family) comes to a sum of 60 rings. The husband is entitled only to 125 minus 60, that is to 65 rings. If the bride price and dowry are equal, no restitution payment [408] is made. If the dowry exceeds the bride price, the husband is the one who must repay the surplus. Nevertheless, in practice strictness is not carried to an extreme, and the husband may even be allowed 10 rings or so out of an obliging courtesy. But this only happens if the woman has given him no progeny. For if the husband accepted those rings and did not make the payment which is theoretically required of him, he would lose his rights over his children, all of whom would belong to their maternal clan from then on. The act of calculating the difference between the bride price and dowry is called umanya; the intransitive of the term is umana (ŋgɛ la nkomɛ bǒmana).

The dowry is generally deducted from the presents (belonga), but if the belonga are not sufficient, the valuables that are lacking are subtracted from the bride price itself.

The boséngo (1) is never included in the accounting, however,

Our natives say that it constitutes a separate payment, which is not

---

1. As was said in Chapter II, all payments can be reduced to a value in copper rings.

1. See Chapter II, Article IX.

588x to be touched. Even if the belonga and other payments total less than the bride price, nothing can be subtracted from the bosóngo. It must always be returned in its entirety.

As to slaves or domestic animals, not only are they subject [472] to the reimbursement law, but in addition restitution must be made of all their progeny, even when it includes several generations. This regulation applies to the maternal line (compare it with the ancient Roman adage: partus sequitur ventrem). Hens and ducks are excepted, however.

To indicate that each side must make restitution of absolutely everything that has been paid, the Nkundó use the expression: lá nsongi lá lotéé, "even the needle and the tiny razor."

[409] The reimbursement of the bride price in a case where the woman is returning to her first husband is governed by no special rule. The second husband simply obtains restitution of what is due him. The wife's family often appeals to the first husband's generosity in order to hasten the reimbursement.

If the woman leaves her second husband as well as her first, without the latter having been previously reimbursed, restitution is made to both.

We have seen that the first husband can seize his rival's bride-price valuables as indemnity for the damages the latter has caused him. The woman's family is not required to return those valuables, since they have not received them. This affair therefore does not concern them and involves only the two rivals. In spite of the first husband's every right, such an action often resulted in war. Because of the fear of quarrels and other unpleasant consequences, this custom is no longer practiced. Nevertheless, the idea is not dead as the following case shows. It occurred in 1932.

Engóngó de Lǒngá (Nkóle) made the acquaintance of Bosénjá, 586x daughter of Bokelá wǎ Yelemeya of Ntómbá (Wǎngatá). She was 587 married to a Lǒnga (Ekonda) laborer named Isongú, a native Boángí, but left her husband to follow her new lover. The latter paid the ikulá -ndanga (9 rings and 35 francs). After a certain number of months, the union broke up. Bosénjá was found unsuitable as a wife. Among the faults with which she was reproached was a lack of affection for her fiancé's mother and other relatives, and a

586x failure to help or respect them. After the union broke up, Bokelé,
587 the woman's father, refused to make restitution of anything whatsoever. His answer to Engóndó was, "You should have left another man's wife alone."

Yet all this was in flagrant opposition to Nkundó law. 1) Engóndó was wrong to take another man's wife home with him. 2) Isongú could have taken Engóndó's valuables away from him at the time the latter was making the payment; it was his right. But 3) Bokelé was also in the wrong. The question [410] of seduction and adultery was none of his business but Isongú's. If he did not like Engóndó's behavior, he could have handled the situation differently. Now he had valuables to which he no longer had any right; he had to return them.

Conclusion

586x The nature of the reimbursement of marriage payments and the various circumstances under which it is made might suggest the conclusion that these goods are not acquired permanently, but rather that they constitute securities. The few exceptions where there is no reimbursement could not change this view. In fact the reason for them is clear -- compensation for that which is not restituted is made in other ways. (1)

[721] 1. This observation -- like others made earlier -- might lead us to believe that in the mind of the Nkundó war and other bloody practices are only means which have little to recommend them and that basically our people disapprove of them.

Nevertheless, this conclusion does not hold up if we compare all the foregoing with what occurs when a marriage is broken through death. For in the latter case nothing at all is returned; everything that was given by each party remains permanently theirs. No payment is demanded even for the children (see below).

584x What is the reason for this fundamental difference? The reason that one is forced to accept is that -- originally and essentially -- the valuables paid at marriage become the property of the recipient party. Restitution in case of divorce is necessitated by circumstances -- without it the woman could not remarry. It is a concession to her weakness. Of these two rules which are diametrically opposed to each other, restitution and nonrestitution, the one must have been original and primary, the other secondary and additional. The latter is the rule for divorce.

[411] This conclusion is strongly supported by all the other stipulations of Nkundó law pertaining to divorce, the reasons for it and the proper procedure.

Article IV. Payment for Children

The rule that requires the restitution of the valuables paid, in their entirety, includes a limitation we are going to consider. That limitation is the payment for children.

If children are born to the union which then is dissolved, their father must leave the woman's family 10 to 15 (nowadays up to 20 and 25) copper rings for each child, whether boy or girl. If not enough valuables remain to him after the deduction of the dowry, he must make up the deficit by other means. A man who does not give the necessary valuables no longer can claim any rights over his children, who henceforth belong to their mother's family.

If the divorce occurs before the husband has paid the bosóngo, he is also required to do so in order to obtain the right to his children. If he refuses to fulfill his obligation, the wife's family can take one child away from him as compensation.

It is during the discussion concerning the restitution of the bride price that the husband must relinquish the goods required to settle the position of the children. When the total amount of valuables to which he is entitled have been made known to him by the ndonga, he must deduct the amount of the payment for the children and give it to the wife's family. The omission of this

586 act is equivalent to giving up his rights.

The wife's family makes no effort to keep the children born of a broken marriage. On the contrary, they insist that the husband pay the necessary valuables in order to retain his rights over his legitimate progeny. Nevertheless, they cannot force him to do so; the father is entirely free either to take his children or [412] to choose a given portion of the bride price in preference to them. But he is obliged to choose between the two alternatives.

855 586 All the natives care about their children. Therefore an indifference to them and preference for getting back the entire bride price is altogether unusual. Instances such as the following do occur, however.

Bumba, daughter of Loókà of Bokenyola (Losenge, Bomwanja) was married to Elímîlele of Loséli. After some years of marriage, the latter repudiated his pregnant wife for reasons unknown to me. Although attempts were made to show him the stupidity of his act, nothing would move him. Bumba returned to her brother Ifásó and there gave birth to a daughter. Ifásó asked the father to come and see his child and at the same time be reconciled with his wife. Elímîlele refused. After a time, Bumba was married to another man, but that marriage did not last. A bankitsá was substituted for her, and she was married to Bokóngo of Bokengé. The latter paid a bride price of 80 rings for her. Elímîlele was asked to come and get what was due him. This time he came. He took everything, without leaving the slightest thing as payment for his daughter. He was asked to leave 25 rings in order not to be deprived of his rights over his child. He wanted to hear nothing of this suggestion; he preferred to take back his bride price in its entirety. The daughter, Bombúla, is about to marry Bolongólokolo of Bompela (Bokátola). The bride price to be paid will be received by her mother's clan, and her father will receive nothing at all. He can never claim the slightest payment from his son-in-law. Besides, the latter is not legally his son-in-law; for from the legal standpoint Elímîlele is not his father-in-law. Bombúla, for her part, is no longer required to recognize her father, since he has disowned her. She belongs solely to her mother's clan, and her father's family can never again make any claim upon her or her descendants.

586x 598 178 Finally, note that in the "lowlands" of the region [413] under discussion, payment for a natural child is beginning to be made regardless of whether the beginning of the bride price has been paid, or whether no payment at all has been made. In the past there was no question of such a practice, for the child would have been considered a slave in his father's clan and in the neighboring villages. And actually in the villages of the interior and in practically all of the region under consideration, that attitude has not changed. It is in the European centers, under the influence of Christian ideas, that these new ideas develop. In practice, cases do not occur except when the individuals in question are natives of very distant villages and are established permanently (to the extent that this term can be used) in their extra-customary residence.

Article V

The Position of Former Spouses and Their Children

586x Once the palaver concerning the reimbursement of valuables is settled, the former spouses become strangers to each other.

Their families sometimes continue relations with each other, however. In fact we have seen that a divorced woman may be replaced by a relative in her conjugal role. In such a case relations by marriage result from the continuation of the marriage agreement. (1)

(1) See Chapter III, Article IX.

Except in cases where a substitution occurs, all ties between the former spouses and their clans are thus broken.

The divorced wife can no longer claim the slightest right to the fields she has established on the land cleared by her husband. In general, all the fruits of her various activities remain the property of the husband; she herself [414] has no further right to them. In our time, however, it is not unusual for a man and wife who are

586 separating permanently to divide between them certain gains from their joint labor such as money, clothing, fabrics, and household utensils. (1)

1. See Chapter VI, Article II.

As to the children born of such a marriage, they live either with their mother or with their father, depending on the circumstances. They go visiting from one to the other. They almost always remain with their mother while they are still very young. As soon as they begin to be able to take care of themselves (between the ages of 8 and 14, depending on the case), they go to live with their father. The girls often remain with their mothers longer than the boys, sometimes even until they marry.

The parents do not create difficulties or unhappiness for themselves over this question. It is only when a child remains more or less continuously with one of the two that the other's attachment is expressed in jealousy.

When the time comes to receive the bride price, the parents lay claim to their respective rights. When the boys wish to take a wife, the father must procure the amount needed for the bride price. If a young man does not obtain satisfaction, he can always address himself to his maternal uncles, who will not fail in the duty imposed by family love -- unless they do not find the means -- and their clan will have acquired another household.

In short, divorce separates the spouses and breaks the special alliance between the two families, but the children continue to treat their parents as if they were still united. And they do so in a completely natural fashion, without any strife. For the Nkundó this matter is quite simple, and they are perfectly accustomed to it, since divorces are not that rare. [415]

Article VI

Magic Practices Pertaining to Divorce

586x 789 It seems to me not without interest to devote a few lines to the magic practices prevalent among our peoples and used on the occasion of divorce. We are not speaking of love philters; strictly speaking they would not be appropriate here. (1) We will therefore limit ourselves to giving a general idea of the practices used to prevent a wife from leaving her husband, to avenge a divorce, or to make a fugitive return.

As we shall see, these objectives often become intertwined.

1) The trinity ikétáki-itóko-ntómbá is considered by the natives as three related practices. We see it more as three forms of a single practice.

All three originated with the Ntómbá of Lake Tumba and [177] were introduced to the Nkundó -- directly or indirectly -- by certain Ekonda tribes living between the two peoples. This introduction took place in modern times. The practices were unknown here before colonization. Even at the present time they have not spread everywhere; they have not yet crossed the Momboyo. The chronological order of their introduction is first ikétáki, second itókó, third ntómbá.

The animating spirit of these practices is the leopard. Their primary purpose is to call back an unfaithful wife and, if she obstinately refuses, to kill her or her seducer. Secondarily, they also serve to cause the death of any enemy whatever, especially in reprisal.

The three practices differ with respect to their manufacture and method of use. We cannot go into all the relevant details, for they are outside the framework of this study. [416] It is sufficient to say that the owner of the charm to whose powers he resorts first calls the woman by blowing into an antelope horn,

---

1. See Chapter I, Part 2, Article VIII.

586x 789 especially very early in the morning at the crowing of the cock. (1)

1. The natives also use this means to call their children who long ago left for the "lowlands" and whose return they ardently desire.

If the one who is called does not return, the charm will take revenge either on her or on her lover, depending on the desire of the person operating it. Another intervention on his part is then required, however, and it varies according to the form used. Note that according to the native view it is impossible for the wife not to hear the call, no matter how far away she may be. If she does not return, it is because she is being obstinate and deserves to be punished.

The spirit of vengeance alone is involved in:

586x 754 [237] 2) The *ngondé*. This charm comes from the Coquilhatville region or even further away. The word *ngondé* is the Lolíngá form of the Lonkundó word *nkondé*, which means "gavial." The teeth of this reptile actually play a part in its composition. It is used to punish any thief by death. Therefore it has been declared effective against anyone who tries to seduce the wife of another. It will cause the culprit's feet to swell and to open with pus. Like the above practices, this one has not yet crossed Momboyo.

832 177 Such usages like many others have therefore been recently introduced. Before the arrival of Europeans in these parts, only love philters were known. However, it is easily understandable that the Nkundó gladly and confidently received these new practices which are so useful -- in their opinion -- and operate in a domain of capital importance for which colonization has deprived them of their ancient sanctions and means of prevention. [417]

Chapter IX

Death

Since the subject of our study is only Nkundó marriage, we
152 will examine matters relating to death only from this limited stand-
593x point. As to the general aspects of the question, the reader will
761 find them in our article on the funeral customs of the Nkundó,
about to be published in Anthropos.

Article I. Sorrow and Mourning

In the study cited above, a word was said concerning the varying degrees of intensity that may be reached in the sorrow caused by the death of a cherished being.

Of course the suffering does not always exclude a mixture of egoistic elements, such as regret of the financial loss involved in the death of a wife and the obligation of continence and various other prohibitions of widowhood. This is rather natural and does not merit discussion. On the other hand, it would be unjust and contrary to the truth to attribute all the sadness to those base feelings. In general, this sorrow must also be taken as evidence of a true love which is often its primary cause. Exceptions do occur, however, for instance in the case of an old woman who has been inherited by a polygamist.

When we compare the various manifestations of sorrow at the death of a spouse with those observed at the death of a relative, we note certain practices specific to the former case. One might say that at the death of a spouse, the signs of sorrow reach a culminating point [418], as if native law wished to underline the predominance of the relationship created by marriage over the bonds of kinship and thus manifest its agreement with divine law.

Nevertheless it is clear that practice does not always correspond to theory, here any more than elsewhere. We should not be astonished in not finding among the natives a perfect and ideal love

152 free of all egoism. When even among peoples universally recog-
761 nized as superior, self-pity during the pain felt on the death of
593x someone beloved is neither rare nor reprehensible, can we be shocked that our natives experience similar regrets? Do we condemn a young widow who, although sincerely and intensely regretting the husband she loved tenderly and whom death has just removed from her affection, thinks at the same time of the unhappy situation in which she and her small children find themselves as a result? And is not the reasonable hope of finding someone who will take care of her and the orphans an effective and legitimate consolation that will help her to endure the trial?

All things considered, it is therefore not at all surprising that our Blacks react that way. And it is quite natural that, in practice, they should suffer more from the death of a father and especially a mother or a child than from the loss of a husband or wife. The situation here is entirely different from that in Europe. And the system of polygamy, with all its consequences, is not exactly discouraging to egoism and favorable to an ascension toward the ideal of a more sublime love.

. Therefore we should not be surprised that a wife at the death of her husband laments: ngɔ́y'ɔ̌m'ɔ̌kámí ɔ́ye! ("Mother, my husband, ah!"); but at the death of a child or a mother or father she wails: ngɔ́ya njɔ̂lélengana ɔ́ye! ("Mother, I am bereft, ah!"), thus expressing a more intense sorrow. For a father or a mother cannot be replaced, but she will always find someone who will want to marry her. As to a child, between it and its parents there is more of a life in common [419] than between spouses under the system of polygamy. More marks of tenderness are also exchanged between mother and child than between native couples.

Immediately after his wife's death, a husband is surrounded
764 by all the women of the village who come and mistreat him. They
152 x vie with each other in smearing him with charcoal smut, soil, and
593 mud, and in rubbing him with the plant called linsǎnsǎ, which causes a stinging rash comparable to that caused by nettles in Europe. There are no relatives among the women who engage in this

152 rough behavior, only strangers married to village men (those known
593x as báajâála). This ill treatment is often extended to close rela-
764 tives of the widower, that is, to those whom the women in ques-
tion call báome, "potential husbands," never to fathers and higher
relatives. (1) The purpose of this practice seems to be to intensify,

1. See Chapter V, Article IV, 1, no. 3, and Chapter VI, Article VI.

by physical pain, the sorrow caused by death. In addition, provocatively obscene words, gestures, and movements remind the widower that from then on he must be continent, as described in extenso in the study cited above.

765 Afterwards, relatives dress the widower in a lisáki, a banana leaf which is torn all over horizontally. For all other mourning garments, as well as for all regulations and prohibitions that apply to all cases, see the detailed study.

The ill treatment described is not inflicted on the widow. It is meted out exclusively to men.

The general rules pertaining to seclusion apply to a widower; in fact they are especially severe for a man. His kinswomen prepare his simple meals. However, if his relations with his father-
[587] in-law were excellent, the latter sends a woman [420] to him who will attend to his needs. She often becomes his wife when, after the lifting of mourning, he brings the ibóleóko (Chapter III, Article IV).

During the entire first period of seclusion, he cannot go anywhere, at least ostensibly. If he needs to go out, he must go through the back. If he wants to visit a relative or friend, he must go behind the huts, in the banana grove, even if it is evening. In a[illegible] case, he may not leave the village. Such was the ancient law, though nowadays it is observed less and less.

Furthermore, he cannot have the slightest contact with any woman who is not a relative. He cannot even shake her hand, greet her out loud, or look at her even in passing.

165 Incontinence is severely punished by the deceased; she molests the culprit and even drags him or another person who is in mourning to the grave.

[352] [171] The severity of the seclusion is lessened at the time of the ceremony which marks the widower's return to a small bed raised above the ground. It is made from tree trunks or branches in the manner of the Batswá. The widower is washed by the deceased's elder sister and then is led to the bed by his elder brother's wife. He receives a knife from his father, and from then on is permitted to perform his usual tasks.

A widower (or widow) must purchase gradual dispensations from prohibitions of foods, in contrast to relatives, who are simply released (Coutumes funéraires [Funeral Customs], Vol. 2, no. 2, E). This distinction shows the fundamental difference that exists between mourning for a spouse and for a relative. In the first instance, it is a strict social obligation from which he can be absolved only by a purchase, a compensation, or commutation of sorts; in the second instance, it is a convention from which a person is freed without any ceremony or compensation. The fact that this regulation is extended to the close relatives of the widower (or widow) does not lessen the validity of this conclusion. On the contrary, it corroborates it. For [421] the persons to whom the rule applies remain clearly in the affinal line; the regulation is never extended to relatives of the deceased.

After the death of a husband, his widows and the wives of his close relatives buy dispensations from the deceased's kinswomen. After a wife's death, the husband and his close relatives buy them from their own wives. The total amount of the purchase made by all the persons involved must be divided. Half goes to the women who have married into the clan; the other half is kept for the family of the deceased.

Like all periods of mourning, that of the widower -- with all the regulations and prohibitions involved -- ends in a great feast. When the family of the deceased have performed their duties, they organize a second feast at their own home, and the widower is

765 expected to attend. It is usually at this time that the negotiations occur relative to a replacement for the deceased (Chapter III, Article IV).

Article II. Seclusion of Widows

As I have described in the article cited, widows (bituka, sing. etuka, or, among the Bombwanja, besámanyi, sing. bosámanyi) are compelled to remain in seclusion for a long time. Before the ceremony of being lifted from the ground, they are ostensibly not permitted to go out. Later they are allowed more freedom; they can go everywhere to do their work, even to the markets. But they are required to spend their nights in the communal seclusion hut.

[624] A widow who did not conform to these rules would meet with serious criticism. She would be said to have not loved her husband (and consequently suspected of having caused his death by sorcery). Moreover, she would be exposed to the avenging anger of the deceased, who would disturb her sleep, thrash her if she went to the forest alone, [422] or would even come to take her into the next world with him.

Insofar as possible all the widows are brought together in one and the same hut. To complete their separation from the world, the entrance is closed by means of a circle of palms, the same as for the seclusion hut of a nursing woman, a bolúmbú, or a woman possessed by the spirit of bongóli (yebola). This is to prevent widows from having relations with passers-by.

The name of the seclusion hut is lokásá (the same as the word for "leaf."). The Bombwanja use the word lokombí (from komba, "to shut," "to enclose"); the Injólō and the Boángí say lonkíndá. (1)

---

1. The Ekonda use the word itálé.

765
587 During the last period of seclusion, although the widows may not be visited by lovers who wish to court them with the object of

M 765 587 marriage after the end of mourning, they have the right to accept various foods and firewood from them. But a rather dim view is taken of these services rendered by strangers, that is, by persons not related to the heirs. For theoretically the widows belong to the heirs and are their wives, since the financial marriage agreement continues. (2) Nevertheless, if these men are not at enmity with the heirs, they encounter no opposition. For once the period of seclusion is terminated, the widows are free to go back to their respective families and be taken in marriage by anyone able to pay the bride price. Nevertheless, suitors are not permitted to enter the seclusion hut even in the last period. They must therefore transmit presents through the agency of the biúnanyí (sing. eúnanyí), that is, the relatives of the deceased.

M 765 This last period begins with the ceremony of being lifted off the ground. The widows are made to get up onto the beóngá --
M P [352] [513] [423] bákondeja bituka ndá beóngá. The beóngá consist of split branches of the parasol tree, placed on long branches, which are in turn attached to posts, forming a small primitive bed, which is the usual bed of the Batswá that is sometimes also used by the Baotó, if the latter have nothing better. From then on the widows can rest on these; they may "rise from the ground." The parasol tree branches are called beóngá (sing. boóngá), "dead, dry wood." The same root is also used with other prefixes: eóngá, pl. bióngá; loóngá, pl. mbóngá. The verbs used are áta, "to split, rend" or fanja, "to cut." Nowadays the severity of this custom is mitigated by the substitution of beánga, transportable wicker beds, for the beóngá.

The ceremony is accompanied by a few dances and a bit of beer. The head of the family addresses the widows as follows: "We have split beóngá for you; climb up on them." Then he presents them with a few hens, given by relatives of the deceased. The widows prepare them and eat them all.

---

2. See Chapter III, Article IX.

765 On that occasion the head of the family hands over to the first born of the deceased the bosóló to which he is entitled. As described in Chapter III, Article III, he thus receives one of the widows as his wife. She immediately leaves the group of widows; from then on she is no longer bound by any mourning obligation and goes to live with her new husband. If she loved the deceased very much, however, she asks the heir to leave her alone for a time; and her wishes are always respected.

The seclusion ends in a great feast that closes the period of mourning. It is during this feast that the inheritance, of which the widows also form a part, is divided. We will deal with it in Article V. [424]

Article III. The Burial

764 The husband's burial involves no ceremony or special rules differing in any way from those for any other person. However, his kinswomen must "buy the tomb," that is, they must pay a few rings to the women married into the family to obtain permission for the interment. This payment should be compared with those made to obtain dispensations from alimentary prohibitions.

The people buried simultaneously and in the same grave as the body of an influential man are never his widows, but solely his slaves. (1)

A Nkundó must be buried in the land of his ancestors in the clan cemetery. Since these people operate under a system of exogamy, the corpse of a married woman is naturally transported to the village of her birth in order to be buried there.

Before it is transported the corpse receives the usual care with the accompanying sacrifices. It must be kept in the husband's house for at least one night. And this custom is still observed at present. In the past the corpse remained there for days on end,

---

1. See Coutumes funeraires (Funeral Customs), Vol. 5, no. 2.

764 for it was necessary first to celebrate the farewell feast, and the widower's family had to gather to discuss the matter and collect the valuables needed for the funeral payment (see the article which follows). Only after all that did the young men belonging to the [482] husband's family take the mortal remains upon their shoulders -- wrapped in a mat or enclosed in a coffin, depending on the case.

If possible all the husband's relatives take part in the procession. The pallbearers walk at the head. The men are armed with bows and arrows, knives and sticks, seldom with spears. The women accompany them [425], wailing. The husband and, if necessary, a few relatives carry with them the various objects they will need for the payments. Some men have a lotótsi (an [534] ocarina) (1) or an antelope horn on which they play intermittently. (2)

1. See my "Note sur les Instruments de Musique à l'Equateur (Note on Musical Instruments at the Equator)" in Congo, 1935, Vol. 2, July, p. 187, figs. 1 and 2 (p. 199).

2. Sometimes there is also an accompaniment of drums.

[201] At the time the corpse is lifted and while passing through villages between their own and their destination, the lokolé is struck with regular and equal blows (-kémya) to announce the arrival of the funeral procession.

584 764 The chief personage among those who follow the corpse is not the husband, but the ndonga. He may never be absent at that time. Even if the husband is deceased and the procession is that of a widow who has not remarried, the ndonga must always be in the party. The duty of bringing the corpse of a married woman is above all his.

The ndonga may go ahead of the procession to inform the family of the deceased of her death, and if there is a great distance between the wife's village and the husband's, he may not be able

764 [584] to return to join the procession, or may be able to do so only with difficulty.

The act of carrying a corpse to its native clan is not designated by any specific term. The expression is simply tsíka iláka, "to go and return the corpse."

764 431 In one or more places near the entrance to the village, a barrier (bokáko, lokombí, or loálaka) made of posts and palms is set up. There the relatives of the deceased, armed, wait for the procession of the husband's relatives, who are also armed, and forbid them to continue their march. Before passing, the latter must make a payment. The valuables given are called byĕkọ by'ôkáko or simply bokáko (or loálaka). The family of the deceased calls to the procession, "Halt! You will not pass here." The latter reply, "We come to bring [426] you the corpse of your child; we want to break down the barrier. Let us pass; here are [584] the gifts." The ndonga hands over a knife, a brass or copper ring, or some equivalent object (for instance, money, nowadays). Thereupon the members of the deceased's clan move away. The bǎnambótswá (persons related to both clans) break down the barrier, and the procession passes, headed by the ndonga and the bǎnambótswá. The husband follows the coffin.

764 579 In the past it was almost always necessary to force a passage through the barrier. The wife's family did not want to open and the husband's family did not want to pay, and so they came to blows. The group bearing the corpse tried to break down the barrier, while their adversaries tried to prevent them from doing so. The arms used in that struggle were chiefly pointed sticks which the members of the two camps threw at each other; more rarely, arrows were used. The specific name for this sort of brawl is ekòkélá. Certain clans specialize in this sport. Thus between Boímbo and Lileko, there is a regular battle every time. In such serious cases the barrier is heavily fortified; the posts are thick and hard, and intertwined with thorny creepers (bokau, longolí, wanganjála, etc.) and thorny shrubs (wĕngé, etc.). A quantity [825] of venomous biting ants (bafumba, mbómbá, byŏmbo, etc.) are added. If the brawl becomes serious, the ndonga and the other bǎnambótswa intervene and impose peace by requiring the husband's clan to pay.

764 579 Nevertheless, it may happen that the husband's family, while unable to vanquish their adversaries, persist in spite of everything in their desire not to pay. They run away and return home, abandoning the corpse in the hands of the family of the deceased. But this is a very serious offense. It is therefore considered simply as a breaking of the alliance between the two families. The husband need not bring funeral payments, for they will be refused in any case. Henceforth he can no longer [427] present a bride price to obtain a substitute for the deceased. Furthermore, he loses his rights over his children, whose maternal clan he has disowned, and if the matter is not settled in one way or another, he no longer has the right to the bride prices that will be paid for his daughters. And to add to his troubles, he risks being molested by the spirit of the deceased.

When the husband's party succeeds in opening a passage, the opposing clan hastens to defend the succeeding barrier. In fact, if the procession must pass through several clans or groups related to the wife (her mother's clan, grandfather's clan, grandmother's clan, etc.), each group sets up its own barrier,

If there are no more barriers, the struggle is ended. But in any case the husband must pay the valuables demanded for passing through. When the procession arrives at the village, the question of funeral payments is settled, and these "tolls" are included in the accounting.

In the past a brawl was usually inevitable. And even now they occur more frequently than we would suspect. But the violence has been reduced to a few light wounds. Some clans arrange the matter amicably without resorting to action. But only very seldom do they neglect to put up a barrier. Nevertheless, cases do occur here and there under the pressure of chiefs who favor the penetration of European notions of public peace and tranquility. In these instances the parties involved merely pay regular indemnities at the time of the palaver concerning funeral payments. A great friendship between the two clans involved sometimes favors this more humane type of behavior.

764 When the family of the deceased bars the route to the
578 funeral procession, they are manifesting the anger provoked by the
152 death of one of their members. [428] For they feel anger and
[584] resentment, in spite of the fact that the *ndonga* carries a spear at the head of the procession as a sign that they come as friends, without evil intentions.

This does not mean that the natives attribute the cause of death to the husband and his family. In most cases they are convinced that the latter could not prevent it. Although they express themselves in those terms: *lóótoomela bǒna* (*nkâna*, *eóto*), "you have killed our child (sister, relative)," they do not maintain that the husband's clan has really killed her, but only that she died among them. Under the circumstances do they feign anger to obtain valuables, for example? I do not think so. The Nkundó do not say that they simulate anger; they categorically state that they feel it and that they want to show it in the manner described. We should not be astonished at this since -- as we have noted in the study on the funeral customs of the Nkundó (*Les Coutumes funéraires des Nkundó*), the emotions of anger and sorrow seem to be intimately related among these peoples.

When the funeral procession passes through the last barrier,
764 that which bars the entrance to the village, the husband's clan puts down the body, and it is subsequently lifted up by the family of the deceased, who carry it into the house of the head of the family. They are followed by the *ndonga*, the *bǎnambótswá*, the husband, and his relatives. The family of the deceased wail over her. Her kinswomen (*biúnanyi*) show their sorrow-anger by mistreating the clan wives (*baájáála*), by smearing their bodies with mud, dressing them in *basáki*, and hitting them with stinging plants (*bansǎnsá*). For the deceased is the *baájâála*'s "husband," that is, a kinswoman of their husbands. The *baájâála* treat the widower and his relatives in the same way, because "their husband" has died among them.

The corpse is thus deposited in the hut of the head of the family. Each time that kinswomen who are married elsewhere arrive [429] to mourn over the deceased, the *baájáála* forbid them

764 to enter the funeral hut. First they are required to go to the far end of the village, weeping for the deceased, to show their sorrow.

As I have said in the study cited, it often happens that after some time the lamentations slacken and the women keeping watch begin to chat. One day I was present during a quarrel on [578] this subject between the bíínanyí and the baáŋóála. The former were reproaching the latter for not weeping any longer: "After all it is your husband," they said. The others replied, "It is your kinswoman; therefore it is up to you to weep. Are your eyes so dry that they no longer contain tears?"

Sometimes the husband and his close relatives do not participate in transferring the body, because they have not yet succeeded in collecting the necessary valuables. Actually it is entirely legitimate for them to stay at home in such a case, in order not to be exposed to endless discussions and the ridicule of the entire region. In other instances the husband's family belongs only to a small clan, and therefore they do not dare to appear in the village of the deceased. They are afraid that they will not be able to defend themselves properly against the ill treatment that would be inflicted upon them by the women married into the clan to which they go. For in fact these women would mistreat them by throwing mud at them or smearing them with it, and by striking their bodies with stinging plants called benánsí. For they consider that the widower, whom, by extension, they also call their husband, and his close relatives have killed their husbands' kinswoman.

In such cases the corpse is brought by distant relatives of the husband. The ndonga apologizes for the husband to the parents-in-law and tells them that he will come later to settle everything. The clan of the deceased receives the corpse and continues to perform the last tributes to it. If the husband has remained in his own village only out of fear of ill treatment, [430] he often waits only until nightfall and then takes advantage of the darkness to follow his wife's corpse.

The corpse must remain in the head of the family's house for at least one night.

764 Before proceeding with the burial, the two families settle the question of funeral payments, which we are about to examine. A "farewell feast" is given by the clan of the deceased. The interment itself has no special features, so that it will suffice to refer the reader to the study of this subject that has been cited.

766 As we noted in Chapter VII, Article II, a husband can buy the corpse of his favorite. Unless the execution of this intention meets with some obstacle, the corpse is not transported to the favorite's native clan but is buried next to the husband's tomb in his clan cemetery. As a result, all that accompanies the transporting of the corpse is omitted, as is the funeral payment which is compensated for by the purchase of the corpse. The husband or his family only send the wife's relatives the payment that usually accompanies the news of her death.

Article IV. Funeral Payments

764 As we have just said, before the husband proceeds with the transportation of a deceased wife's corpse, he collects the valuables to pay the nkunjí. This is the term (derived from the verb kunda, "to bury") that designates the various payments a widower is required to make to the clan of the deceased.

First of all, as soon as the death is known, the ndonga goes to the parents of the deceased and brings them the nsango (news), which consists of a copper ring or a knife. He presents them with these, saying: "Know that your daughter so-and-so has just died."

At every barrier the procession must cross to reach the village of the deceased, the husband must make payment of some object [431] (usually a knife or a ring) in order to obtain free passage. [594] The ndonga always serves as intermediary. These payments are called byfẽg by'ikâko or simply bokâko, lokâlaka (barrier), or, among the Bombwanja, ifakâ yĩ ekâlaki, "knife for felling (the barrier)."

The ndonga walks at the head of the funeral procession; he (or another bonamóórwá who takes his place) carries a spear

764 to which a piece of raffia cloth is tied. When the procession has crossed the last barrier, the official witness goes ahead and plants the spear in the roof of the head of the family's hut. Hence the name applied specifically to this spear: itúwansambá (from túwa, "to pierce," and mambá "roof"). The spear signifies that the widower's family is not coming with evil intentions, but that they are moved by feelings of the greatest friendship -- wɛ̂ka te tɔ́fɔ́yɛ́ l'etumba; tɔ́fɔ́yá ndé ólotsíkela iláká y'ɔ́na.

The piece of cloth is a sign of respect for the mother of the deceased, in memory of the pain she suffered in giving birth to her daughter and the care she exercised in her upbringing, and as consolation for the terrible blow that has come to her in the death of her child. She will wear this cloth after the end of mourning. If the mother has died before her daughter, this cloth goes to one of the mother's sisters, aunts, or other relatives, who is in some sense her substitute. It is therefore a payment to the mother's clan.

The spear and the cloth are usually designated by the common name likongá l'etóo, "spear and cloth." A knife, particularly an ingóndá, can be substituted for the cloth, but the name etóo is retained. Nowadays the cloth is no longer given, but a knife which is given the name etóo is always substituted for it. (1) Nevertheless,

[286] 1. The reason for this substitution is, first of all, the greater value of the knife and, second, the near impossibility of obtaining raffia cloth (see Introduction).

in memory of [432] the ancient custom, a piece of European cloth is often attached to the end of the spear.

When the corpse has been deposited in the head of the family's hut, the two clans greet each other in the usual fashion. The women continue to weep for some time. The husband's clan
[262] go and sit at a little distance. Then the relatives of the deceased
[431] instruct their wives to collect the presents to give the widower,

764 These consist of various foods: manioc, bananas, smoked meat
431 or fish, caterpillars, salt, hens, etc., one or several dogs
[262] (bompángɔ́) that are alive (mbwá ɛ́ɛ̂ nkunja, "dog with hair") or their value in specie (2 rings or 1 ring and an equivalent knife, which for this purpose is called mbwá ɛ́ɛ̂ baúmbá or ɛ́ɛ̂ bakonga), as well as a knife for killing and cutting up animals called loólolá. The biúnanyi and the baájɔ̂ɔla each brings his part. Note that this gift never includes vegetables (bimukɛ́lá).

When everything is collected and considered adequate, the
764 ndonga is called, together with the deceased's own sons, so that
584 they can thus give their opinion and later have a good basis for testimony. As remuneration for his services, the ndonga receives a payment (nyongo) of a bokósa fish or a botómba rat, as well as a bunch of bananas (for which a ring is sometimes substituted). With reference to this subject I should like to recount an interesting part of the negotiations at which I was present one day. The ndonga expressed his dissatisfaction with the fact that he was given only a single bokósa. "It is so little," he said, "in comparison with all the trouble I had to take. I had to settle the matter of the bride price; I had to reconcile man and wife when they quarreled; I had to intervene many times; I always had to run between the two clans; for many years I wore myself out without ever having any rest. And for all that trouble I get such small recompense." I was asked my opinion. I could only express approval of the ndonga's view. One of the relatives [433] of the deceased also considered him to be right: "He was always obliged to come and go between the two families; his voice has become hoarse from his endless interventions in palavers and quarrels; he well deserves that another bokósa be added." Everyone sided with our opinion, and the ndonga was satisfied.

After receiving his present, the ndongá detaches himself from the group. Together with the other banambósswá and any intelligent strangers who may be present and might be able to give an opinion to settle an incidental argument, he sits down between the two opposing clans, a slight distance from each.

764 584 All the payments must pass through the ndonga. He is the one who transmits the desired objects from one group to the other. He intervenes in the disputes that arise in order to settle them and re-establish peace. He explains the various points of view, elucidates some consideration whose significance the other group does not seem to fully comprehend, etc.

As has already been said many times, there can be several ndonga. Legally all of them can intervene personally or through their officially recognized representatives. Thus, several months ago (1933) at Bonjoku, Baémbe, wife of Ikomo of Besombó, was present at a nkunjí discussion. No one paid any attention to her. At one point she threw herself into the discussion by reprimanding the chief ndonga and the families involved, asking them on what basis they were excluding her from this affair. Did not her husband have the right to intervene? Was he not also a ndonga? Since he had gone fishing in the Jwalé, it was impossible for him to come. [576] She could therefore legitimately substitute for him. Then why was she being left out? She was quickly pacified, and the persons involved admitted that she was right and apologized for their forgetfulness and negligence.

764 584 431 The wives of the deceased's clan place the gifts of food at the ndonga's feet. The bokíné (the youngest) of the clan goes and explains to him what they are and for whom [434] the gifts are intended. (1) One portion goes to the bakalé of the deceased, that is, the baéjáfla of the husband's clan; another portion goes to the baóme (the husbands), that is, to the widower and his family; a third part is set aside for kinswomen of the deceased who have come from villages into which they are married in order to be present at the funeral.

764 The clan of the deceased first asks the other clan "for news" (bola mango). The latter reply that one of their members had

---

1. In the Nkundó hierarchy it is always the youngest who is charged with the execution of all such small tasks, at the behest of the head of the family.

764 married the daughter of the first clan, and she had lived happily with her husband, performed conjugal services for him, and had begotten children for him. Subsequently she fell ill, as they were informed at the time, and now God has taken her away and they have come to bring the corpse back to them. The wife's clan replies: "That is understood, but before we continue to ask each other for news, do accept the present (*lionja*) which we offer you." Thereupon the *ndonga* enumerates all that has been collected and passes it to the widower.

769
431 The foods thus given are a friendly welcoming gift, therefore they are not counted as a payment nor, furthermore, as part of the *nkomɛ*. Only the domestic animals are considered such. They can be eaten on the spot or kept alive. Since the prepared food is a present, it must be eaten on the spot. Theoretically, none of it may be taken home. If it is taken home for some reason or other, however, it is still forbidden to allow anyone to eat of it who was not present at the funeral gathering. As for the raw food, the recipients are free to carry it away if some is left over.

764
578 Disputes may arise on the subject of the dog -- such as one I witnessed one day. The presents offered included the equivalent of the value of a dog in rings rather than a living dog. [435] The head of the widower's family demanded a dog in flesh and blood. The reason he gave was that many of his *bifanyɛ* had come to the funeral and, as an expression of his thanks for their condolences, he wanted to give them a dog. As he would not yield, the wife's family had to replace the two rings with the animal demanded.

Then the *ndonga* explains to the family of the deceased that he has already brought the *mango*, the *lilongá*, and the *esóo*. Nowadays it happens that the spear and the cloth are not given until this time, especially if the families refrain from erecting barriers and fighting. In such cases the payments of passage are made at the same time. If the two settlements are very near each other, the people are even beginning to omit the sending of the *mango*; a *bonambónwá* goes and confirms the news of the death, which is already expected and which the *lokolé* will just have announced.

164 Then the members of the wife's family, one by one, demand various payments. Every request arouses discussion, for it is fashionable to prolong these palavers. One side and then the other examines the pros and cons. The widower's family acts as if they needed a little urging, for if they did not, the ceremony would no longer resemble a palaver (which it really is) but would seem like a simple payment of no importance.

When the wife's family has enumerated the presents of food that have been offered and accepted and the payments that have already been made, they begin to ask that the other nkunjí valuables be brought. The widower's clan explain their point of view, and a member of the wife's clan immediately begins to beat the gong (lokolé), which is nearby. It is no longer possible to understand a word of what the husband's spokesman is saying. Full of fortitude and an African's patience, the latter continues his discourse. But finally he realizes that he has to stop. He therefore asks that the lokolé be silenced. Naturally, he has no success. The wife's clan dryly replies: "If you want us to stop, bring us a ring." [436] Thus the husband is forced to pay, and when he does the noise of the lokolé stops at once, and the discussion can continue. For this reason that first payment is called lokolé. (1)

1. The pressure exercised to obtain it is called isesenganya yá lokolé. It should be compared with the identical practice at the time of the payment of the bride price (Chapter II, Article V, 3).

Then a young and vigorous relative of the deceased leaves his group. He acts angry, strikes his hands, and defies the widower's clan: "Send one of your men to fight me, for I am furious that you have allowed my kinswoman to die of starvation." He is answered with many protestations: "We are friends; we have no hostile feelings. It is not our fault that our wife is dead." The first speaker repeats his statement and his challenge, and continues to reproach them with the death until he is given a ring called bonkita, meaning "starvation."

2: Hulstaert--409 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundo

Another young member of the clan of the deceased seats himself midway between the two groups. An etáka (a wooden fork) is placed on his neck, and he says: "This is how you would have treated me if my sister had left you. I ran the risk of having to suffer because of her and you. Compensate me for that." And he does not go away until he has received a ring, which for that reason is called etáka. (2)

> 2. This representation only approximates reality, for the young man would not have been treated thus. The wife herself is the one who would be placed under the etáka. But the young man represents the entire clan as a whole.

Subsequently, various payments each consisting of a ring or a knife are demanded with many imitative and symbolic gestures (in the manner described for the two above). They are:

ilɛmɔ (besáfoga l'ilɛmɔ), because of the potions that the deceased prepared for her husband.

bantsingɛ -- the packages of food that she cooked in ashes for him. [437]

bafonda -- the pieces of palm nut she prepared for him. (These pieces are represented by a few little lumps of earth placed on leaves.)

nkɔ́ngi -- the eyelashes she plucked out for him.

bokɛngɔ -- because she cut his hair (-kɛnga).

nsili -- the lice she removed from his head. (Note that this payment can be combined with the preceding one and can then consist of a single kɛnga for both.)

bompílo -- the hot baths she heated for him.

mouka -- baskets of fish, because she went fishing for him.

bafɔngɔ́ -- the litter on which the corpse was transported.

bakɔmbɔ -- the creepers with which the corpse was tied.

betówa (itówá) -- the banana tree trunks on which the corpse rested. (The corpse, in a mat or coffin, is set on two banana tree trunks placed crosswise.)

764 bikọfọ -- the heavy branches upon which lay the bed in which the woman died.

lǒngo -- a hoe (real or replaced by a ring) to dig the grave.

ifaká -- a knife (ditto) to dig the grave.

yǎndá -- an axe (ditto) to cut the roots that would be found at the site of the grave. (1)

[781] 1. One day I saw the iron bar given as yándá refused by the wife's family because it was the same one they themselves had given to help the husband pay the nkanga (doctor-sorcerer) for his divination (bolíngó) during the wife's illness.

bombɛ́mbé wǎ nyang'éy'ọ̌na -- a belt for the mother of the deceased, so that she can wear it during mourning.

bọtsá w'ílaká -- the head of the corpse, in honor of those who wail over the deceased while sitting near her head, that is, [438] to say, the very close relatives. This is the last and largest payment, consisting of 3 to 5 rings.

All these payments together comprise the nkunjí and, with the exception of the nsango, the likọngá l'etóo, and the byẹ̌ko by'ôkáko, they are a kind of beéngo. (1) Not all the beéngo are equally large. Therefore, all of them are not always claimed. The smallest ones -- bakẹmọ, bantsingá, baóndo, nkọ́ngi, bọkẹngọ, nsili, bompúlo, mpuka -- are often omitted.

Even some of the others may be left out. The matter depends not only on the friendliness of feeling between the two groups, but chiefly on the number of children to which the woman in question has given birth. If the woman was sterile, her family is less demanding. But if the deceased had several children, they do not yield, arguing that their daughter was a source of great profit to her husband's clan.

---

1. See Chapter II, Article V.

In every case at least a few *beéngo* in addition to the 764 *bombémbé* and the *botsá w'îlaká* are always claimed. The latter payments can never be omitted. The belt is a payment made exclusively to the mother and by rights it goes to the mother's clan.

The higher the amount of these funeral payments, the more 764 606 607 the son-in-law is welcome. The alliance is perfect. Therefore, not only will the wife's family reciprocate his fine feelings by adding a few more dogs, but in addition the son-in-law will be well received and successful in his application when, after the period of mourning, he brings the sum of the *ibóleóko* in order to obtain a substitute for the deceased. (2) In addition, if the relations with his in-laws have been excellent, he will easily obtain the substitute in advance, so that she can care for him during the entire mourning period.

There are severe sanctions against the omission of the 764 689 funeral payments. [439] Neglecting to send the notification gift alone is enough to set these in motion. They are: the breaking off of the affinal relationship; the loss of the children, since the father's offense is equal to a repudiation; and finally molestation of the culprit by the spirit of the deceased. Thus at Bokátola (Bompela) one can find two boys, Botétsí and Ikembá, the children of Bonyongela of Ilángá and Etáka of Bokátola. They have now been incorporated into their mother's clan, because their father did not send a *nsango*. On stronger grounds the same is true for the whole *nkunjí*.

Article V. The Social Position of a Widow

In Chapter III, Articles II and IV, we have already noted 768 587 that in the eyes of the Nkundó, the death of the husband does not dissolve a marriage. The union continues, and even after mourning it is not broken *ipso facto*. Even to have the woman taken and treated as a wife by another man is not enough to end it. As

---

2. See Chapter III, Article IV.

768 587 long as there has been no restitution of the bride price, the widow continues to "belong" to the heirs of the deceased and to be their wife in the sense described in the chapter cited above, Article IX. The various forms in which this marriage can be continued *post mortem* have been described in Chapter III, Article II.

There we also saw that nothing prevents the widow from remarrying outside the inheriting family and therefore from becoming involved in a really new and different union. On the other hand, nothing obliges her to do so. She is entirely free. The only exception -- if this instance can be called an exception -- is a widow who is the object of a will, and a *bosóló* (Chapter III, Article II, *in fine*, and Article III). As to the latter, it is even difficult to consider her remarriage to the eldest son of the deceased as a limitation on her freedom. For although according to law it is obligatory, in practice it is voluntary and accompanied by guarantees of freedom that are adequate for ordinary cases. Indeed, it is known that she agrees [440] to this union. And she can always resort to divorce if later the heir disappoints her or if the continuation of the union becomes morally impossible.

It would be useless and tedious to repeat all that we have said on this subject in Chapter III. Let us simply reiterate that the distribution of widows should not be understood as a distribution of persons, depriving them of the freedom to be directed by their wills and their hearts, but rather as a distribution of the bride-price claims which they represent. The legal freedom to remarry remains as complete as it is when they are unmarried. This freedom may be subject to influences and even to real attacks, whose seriousness varies with the circumstances, but these are matters of fact and not of law.

If the widow considers herself -- or is considered -- too old for remarriage, or even if she desires to remain continent in faithfulness to her deceased husband, she may continue to reside with the clan of the deceased, instead of returning to her own family. The heirs usually do not oppose such an action and respect her wishes. If she has children or grandchildren there is no question about it; they are glad to keep their aged mother or grandmother near them.

2: Hulstaert--413 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

Article VI. The Economic Position of a Widow

736 As long as her seclusion lasts, a widow continues to live with the family of her deceased husband. 768 She supplies herself with food from the crops she has grown. The tools her husband has given her remain in her hands, and she makes use of them as soon as she can. As to the various utensils which must be destroyed, they are replaced by others lent her by the family of the deceased, for she may no longer use those which served her in her husband's lifetime.

In order to better express the magnitude of their mourning, the Nkundó often refrain [441] from using the products of the farms established by the deceased. Therefore, instead of continuing to cultivate the existing crops of manioc and vegetables, the widow prefers to seek provisions in the fields of the close relatives of the deceased. Or a man who has already chosen her may place his fields at her disposal. If neither of these sources is available and she wishes to observe the rule rigorously, she must purchase what she needs in this realm.

736 768 421 As we have seen in Chapter VI, Article II, a widow has no claim to the fruits of her labors. Neither the money she has earned and which is intended for the common needs of the household, nor the crops she has set up, nor the fish she has caught, nor the caterpillars she has gathered in the forest belong to her. Everything goes to the heirs. Her property is limited to objects she may have received as her personal share in her daughter's bride price, or as some other payment belonging exclusively to the mother.

If the widow remains in the family of the deceased, however, her fields, tools, etc., are left to her, for under those conditions there is no reason to take them away from her. But if she [781] remarries elsewhere, the heirs are pitiless. A Nkundó does not want the family wealth to be scattered or squandered in any way. The law says lokutu lǒkfsó lófótsw'înyamó, "our patrimony can not be alienated."

736 768 In point of fact the widow is treated more favorably, at least in the best instances. If her relations with the family have been good, they will not refuse her some small object that she

736 may wish to keep. In exemplary unions she is allowed to keep
768 the mats she has woven with her own hands, and the goods she received from her husband -- fabrics, beads, hens, even goats and dogs, and even sometimes what she has acquired through joint efforts with her husband (crops, livestock) -- are divided equally. The division is usually carried out with a generous attitude toward the widow, and if there is only one object of a kind the tendency is to let her have it. [442] Such conduct springs from pure generosity, for -- as has already been said -- the woman has absolutely no claim. In the past it followed only upon extraordinarily happy unions, and particularly in consideration of the relationship between the two families and the affection of one of the immediate heirs for the widow.

At the present time the influence of the missions is increasing
736 the number of instances of generosity toward the widow and starting
768 an inclination to make it a general rule. Thus good Christian
797 families -- if they are not thwarted by their pagan relatives -- leave the widow those objects she personally used, such as clothing, utensils, a trunk, and even a sewing machine.

Article VII. Economic Effects of Death

1. Bride price and dowry

768 The death of one of the spouses dissolves a marriage only
583x from a certain point of view and only as a union between two specific individuals. A marriage is absolutely broken only by the death of both spouses (or by divorce).

Unlike divorce death does not bring about any repayment either of the bride price or of the dowry (nkgmf). When the wife dies, all these payments remain in the hands of the respective parties. When a husband dies, the widow continues to belong to the heirs; she is part of the inheritance. The children belong to the father and his family; no new payment for them is necessary.

768
583x Therefore there is a very great difference between the consequences of divorce and of death. In divorce the bride price must be considered more or less like a deposit. In case of death, on the contrary, it remains permanently in the hands of those who have acquired it. This difference weakens the theory that maintains that the bride price is only a guarantee; rather, it tends to favor the theory that it is a compensation for the loss experienced by a clan when it gives one of its members in marriage. In case of divorce the clan's loss [443] is nullified, since the woman returns to her family or -- as is the usual outcome -- remarries and becomes the object of a new bride-price payment. The death of a woman, on the other hand, makes the clan's loss permanent rather than bringing an end to it. This does not mean that the bride price does not constitute a guarantee; in reality it is one. But this guarantee is an effect of the bride price, not the reason for its existence -- which is something altogether different.

2. Inheritance from the husband

768
428
178 Since we are not dealing with Nkundó property laws, the question of inheritance is not, strictly speaking, within the realm of our study. Nevertheless, we cannot refrain from saying a word about it, since the study of marriage must naturally contain a chapter on children. Thus we shall examine the question from that particular angle. What interests us here is knowing what rights children have over their father's inheritance. We have already dealt with the position of the widow in the preceding article.

The inheritance from the deceased includes three parts:

1) The bride-price valuables, that is, everything that is used chiefly to obtain a wife: copper and brass rings, iron objects, widows and daughters insofar as they represent bride-price valuables.

2) Domestic animals: goats, dogs, hens, ducks.

3) Real property: fruit trees, fields and crops, hunting enclosures, fishing places; and personal property: nets, hunting snares, bows and arrows, shields.

The bride-price valuables become the common property of the close relatives. Each one receives his share of the inheritance.

768 The widows are awarded to the brothers, uncles, and nephews
428 (bǎnankáná) of the deceased, in accordance with their position in
178 the group hierarchy and their respective rights, [444] which may
derive from financial assistance lent to the deceased so that he could obtain one of his wives, or from the application of the nkita system. Rings (bakonga) and iron objects (bifeko) are distributed in the same manner. Similarly, unmarried daughters are assigned to various relatives -- that is, the "fathers" who preside at the division of the inheritance discuss and specify which persons have the right to receive the bride prices that will later be paid for them. Of the sons only the eldest receives a wife or a certain amount of bride-price valuables as bosólo. (1)

1. Chapter III, Article III.

That is the traditional rule. Nowadays a far-reaching change has already taken place. The sons of the deceased are no longer excluded from the distribution. They are given either a wife, or a sufficient quantity of rings, or the right to the bride price of a sister or a cousin, if it is possible. For the rest see Chapter II, Article IV, 3 and Article XI, 3, 13, and Chapter IV, Article II.

The domestic animals go to the biúnanyí, who take them home to their husbands and they are thus included in the amount of the dowry. A few goats, however, might be given to one of the men in the kin group who needs them to complete the payment of a bride price.

As to the other property (real or personal), they pass directly to the sons. The first born receives the lion's share and the most precious items, but the younger sons are not excluded in the distribution.

It should be noted that a will may affect this distribution by assigning a specific object to a given son, or by excluding one of the heirs with whom the deceased has had a serious quarrel. Such a will is always executed, because the Nkundó fear the vengeance of the deceased, who causes anyone guilty of an

768 infraction to follow him in death. It is obeyed even if [445] it is
428 manifestly unfair. They fear reprisal by the deceased, such as that
178 which is thought to have happened after the death of Iloko is Efekele
of Lofelí. He had killed his own brother, Mpɛ́nda ɛ̂â nkotonkale,
[682] because the latter had tasted freshly brewed beer instead of leaving
that honor to him -- an action which constituted an extremely serious offense. But since the punishment was out of all proportion to the act, the whole family united against the murderer, who was obliged to flee. At his death he disinherited all his brothers in favor of his sons. This will, considered unreasonable and unfair, was not respected; Iloko's only brother, Bondélé wǎ Wǐlima, took Bonyengú, the favorite, for himself. But he soon died, and his death was attributed to Iloko's vengeance. Several years ago the family met to finally settle the matter of the inheritance. The largest portion was set aside for Iloko's sons, but one part was awarded to other relatives who were not named in the excluding clause, which referred only to the Basɛ́ká Banángá, that is, to Iloko's own brothers.

Sons are never disinherited. If one of them behaves very badly toward his father, when the latter dies he refuses him his benediction (bokako w'ɔ̃lɔ́tsi) and curses him bokako wǎ tu yo).

3. Inheritance from the wife

768
428 As we have seen in Chapter VI, Article II, a wife has no rights of ownership over the fruits of her own labors or of the couple's joint efforts. Consequently, her family can make no claims as regards inheritance; there is nothing to inherit.

Although all the fruits of the wife's activities belong to the husband, most men do not require that their rights be rigidly respected. They leave a part, or the whole, to the family of the [446] deceased, as is done in the case of a widow. (1) After the feast at the end of mourning, the two clans make an inventory of the property in question. Usually whatever products of her work the woman has left are divided equally between the two clans. Some

---

1. See the previous article.

768 428 men are generous enough to renounce all of it. If the deceased had an ebísa, or if the parents-in-law give their son-in-law a substitute, the possessions fall to her. She even inherits the fields [culture] that have been set up by her kinswoman, to the extent that they have not been destroyed. Under other circumstances the cultivated lands [plantations] are never left to the family of the deceased.

The only items to which a woman is entitled strictly speaking are the various portions of the bride price and similar payments awarded to her by Nkundó law: goats and spiral bands and the mother's gifts as part of the bride price; the cloth and belt given at a funeral. At a wife's death these possessions pass to her clan, if she has not previously given them to her relatives. In no case may they be appropriated by the husband.

Finally, when a wife dies she may leave a tool (knife, hoe, etc.) to her daughter. This custom is observed particularly by very active women in order to inculcate their daughters with the love [523] of work. Such an object often became an heirloom, transmitted from mother to daughter for several generations. It is called botsíkéjwá (from tsíkela, "to leave to"; see the Latin reliquiae) or, among the Bombwanja, elíli. These terms are also applied to other objects included in the inheritance when these are considered separately (altogether they are called lokutu, "patrimony," "property," or lisangó, "inheritance"). Such a botsíkéjwá can never be appropriated by a husband. [447]

Article VIII

Death of the Fiancé Before the Payment of the Bride Price

768 584 Here we shall deal with the situation resulting from the death of a husband during the engagement, after the payment of the ilíulá or the ndanga but before the walo. The procedure for dissolving an engagement may already lead us to suppose that death also breaks it without any special difficulties. And in fact, if the fiancé dies the woman is free. Therefore she may go home, and the family of the deceased is reimbursed for the payments that have been made.

768 584 She can also remain in her fiancé's family and there be taken in marriage by one of his kinsmen. If everything favors the continuation of the union, the new husband-to-be pays the bride price, but he need not repeat the engagement payments, which retain their validity. If he belongs to a distant branch of the family, however, the kin of the deceased will not want to give up their property, and the new fiancé himself will have to acquit himself of all the bride-price obligations, beginning with the ikulá.

[763] Sometimes the dying man, in making his last requests, enjoins his family to maintain the alliance. In that case one of his kinsman must marry the woman. If later on a breakup becomes inevitable, the spouses separate. For that matter, if the woman lacks the inclination to remarry in her fiancé's kin group, she will not be forced to do so.

This practice is based on the stipulation of Nkundó law that engaged persons have all the duties and privileges of married couples.

[587] There is nothing among the Nkundó that resembles a levirate. Even in the case we cited of a last will, the obligation derives solely from the sacred nature of that will. [448]

Article IX

The Death of the Woman Before the Payment of the Bride Price

Two situations must be distinguished: 1) The woman dies during the engagement; 2) she dies before the bosóngo.

1. Before the walo

As has already been said, engaged persons enjoy all the duties and privileges of a married couple. If the girl dies the fiancé must fulfill all obligations toward the deceased and her family (transporting the corpse, sacrifices, nkunjí). But his obligations do not end there.

Through the payment of the ndanga (and, in practice, already through the ikulá) he is considered responsible for any accident that might befall his fiancée in his home; and he has assumed the

168 obligation of completing the union by subsequent payments.

584 The consequence of this fact is that if the fiancée dies before he has fulfilled his obligations, he is forced to pay a large indemnity (*mbálaka*) to his parents-in-law, who have been disappointed and deprived of their rights. The amount of this payment varies. Usually it is about equal to what ordinarily would have been paid as the *walo*, whence comes the expression used in these cases: *énga iláká* (*ikombe* among the Injóló and the Boángí), "to pay the bride price for the corpse."

Sometimes the woman's family is less demanding. This is especially true if they are very fond of their son-in-law and know that he is wealthy and generous enough to considerably increase the amount of the *nkunjí*, the *ibóleóko*, and the bride price for a substitute. The principle of the indemnity is secure, but its external form is altered and made less humiliating.

In other cases the woman's family raises the amount to be paid as indemnity, either out of greed or because they are not pleased with the union or even opposed to it (this happened rarely in the past but has become more frequent nowadays). [449] Under such circumstances, up to 100 and 150 rings are demanded, as in the following instance which occurred quite recently. Ilumbé of Mpámá (Boéndé) took Lokokú of Bongíli wǎ Ndongó for his wife. He paid 10 rings as *ilmlá-ndanga*. When some time later he brought 40 rings for the *walo*, his father-in-law considered them insufficient (and he was entirely right). The small amount of valuables showed the son-in-law's poverty and foreshadowed his insolvency, so Lokokú's family was not greatly pleased with the marriage. Consequently, they refused to accept the rings, which therefore remained on deposit with the *nd*[illegible]. After two years of cohabitation, Lokokú died (July 16, 1933). The family of the deceased demanded 100 rings. Ilumbé could not invoke any excuse or attenuating circumstance. For if he had wanted to fulfill his obligations, he could have done so, as the interval was long enough, and if he knew he did not have the means, he should have given up the woman.

768 584 In the past the widower and his family sometimes refused to pay, with the result that the parties took up arms. The right of war was involved. For when the hostilities ended, the culprit was required to indemnify all the families on his side for any member who was killed or wounded. Therefore he ran the risk of seeing all his property confiscated and being sold as a slave if they did not suffice. He found it was wiser simply to submit to normal sanctions rather than run such serious risks.

The situation with which we are dealing in this article may involve further complications if the woman has been living with her own family, or if she belongs to another man whose bride price has not yet been refunded. But it is preferable to deal with these complications in separate articles.

768 2. Before the *bọsọ́ngọ*

If the woman dies before the *bọsọ́ngọ* is paid, the widower is not required to pay an indemnity. However, he must complete the bride price by handing over "the slave." [450]

If he does not do so: (1) the alliance is broken *ipso facto*, and therefore he cannot bring the *ibőleóko* and does not receive a substitute; 2) the family of the deceased is entitled to one of the daughters if there are any, or to one of the boys if there are none. This is a compensation for the loss of the *bọsọ́ngọ*.

Naturally, the woman's family can in practice refrain from claiming their rights. Thus, they may do so out of regard for their son-in-law who is influential, generous, and well disposed toward them, in anticipation of greater financial and social benefits. The similar remarks made throughout this study have already [157] familiarized us with the "broad-mindedness" of these peoples.

It might be observed that this situation is in no way different from the preceding one, since the woman's family is indemnified in either case. But, first of all, if the woman has left no children, the situation is not at all identical. Secondly, even if the financial aspect of the two situations is the same, the legal aspect is entirely different. The taking of a child and the refusal to accept the *ibőleóko* are not considered as compensation. The

768 Nkundó categorically state that the situation now under discussion does not result in the payment of an indemnity.

This observation again brings out the basic difference between jengí and bosóngo, which we have already discussed in Chapter II, Article IX, 2 and Article XII, 5, and suggests that the walo constitutes the marriage agreement, whereas the bosóngo is the substitution of a person for the one that is lost to the clan through the marriage of one of their members.

Article X

A Woman's Death at the Home of Her Own Family

768 We have already drawn the reader's attention several times
593 to the fact that a husband is responsible for his wife because, in
672 accordance with the clan agreement between the families, she "belongs" to him. [451] The consequence of this stipulation of Nkundó law is that the husband assumes all risks relating to the wife; hence he must take upon himself all the damages resulting from her death. There are exceptions to this general rule, however, under the following two circumstances:

1) If the wife dies while at the home of her own family.

2) If the wife dies after having left her own husband for another.

In this article we will examine the first of these two possible situations, leaving the second one for the next article.

If a wife dies while at her own family's home, an exception is made if certain conditions are fulfilled. There are several situations possible:

1) The wife returns to her family because she is exasperated with the unfair treatment she receives from her husband. He may not be fulfilling his duties toward her, may be mistreating her unjustly, etc., as we have seen in Chapter VI, Article III The situation becomes unbearable. In that case the husband is clearly in the wrong, and the wife has the right to seek a little peace in her parents' home. Under such conditions, if she dies before the

768 husband has come to take her back through arranging a palaver by
672 means of a boóndo, he has no right to complain. He himself
593 brought on such difficulties by his unfair way of behaving. He is obliged to make the funeral payments. Because of the strained relations between him and his father-in-law, the affinal relationship is broken. That is why he will ordinarily refuse to pay the nkunjɛ, at least when he has had no children by this woman. If he omits the payment even though there are progeny, the children are taken from him by their mother's family.

This situation seldom arose in the past. Young and impetuous husbands were almost nonexistent. The old men kept the women for themselves. Age and experience with life had made them more settled, calmer, more reasonable, so they did not throw themselves into adventures [432] whose outcome were necessarily to their disadvantage. Since today men marry considerably younger, such situations can arise more easily; although, on the other hand, a permanent dissolution of the marriage occurs most frequently before the possible development described.

2) The wife leaves her husband without just reason and, having returned to her family, dies there. In the past such a situation was quite rare (Chapter VIII, Article II, 1, A). If no war occurred before the death of the fugitive (a war automatically terminated the affair), the husband had every right to reimbursement or to a substitution of another wife for the deceased. The situation is therefore identical to the one that follows. But there is no longer any question of sending back the corpse, and if the husband wants to break the alliance permanently he does not even need to pay the nkunjɛ.

Nowadays this situation has become far more common. It presents no special difficulty; the ancient custom continues to be observed.

It is almost trifling to mention that the matter of total or
768 partial reimbursement of the bride price can be handled through
593 friendly transactions between the husband and his parents-in-law. The following case is typical: Bonjelɛ of Ifimbo (Bonkoso) inherited Bofɛlɛ, daughter of Lokɛlɛmbɛ is Ibele of Bongenda. After some years she left her husband, returned home, and died. Her father

368 583 sent the notification gift and even added dogs to it, because he was interested in keeping the affinal relationship. The corpse was not sent since the woman had died of an infectious disease and the body was decomposing rapidly so that contagion was feared. Lokálímbá presented the widower with his youngest daughter Mbangó as a substitute. But since she was quite young, Bonjeló did not want her. He was satisfied with an indemnity because -- after all -- he too wanted to remain on good terms with his father-in-law. The latter sent him 22 rings as an ilongó (slave), and thus the matter was closed. [453]

368 672 585 3) The wife has returned to her family on her own initiative in order to visit her parents, nurse them, or to participate in her family's communal fishing, to get her supply of edible caterpillars, or for any other reason. In such a case the responsibility passes from the husband to the parents. The family must notify the husband of the death (always, of course, through the ndonga). When the husband receives the news he accuses his parents-in-law, saying: lóómbomela walí, "You have killed my wife." He demands that the corpse be sent to him so that he can wash it, adorn it in an appropriate manner, and mourn for the deceased. Subsequently he sends the corpse back with the ndonga and demands that another wife be substituted for the deceased or, if none is available, that the bride price be returned to him. As long as his father-in-law does not fulfill his obligations, the husband will not bring the funeral payments. Moreover, if the family of the deceased is recalcitrant or too slow, he will practice ikákelo, that is, he will hold one of his kinswomen who is married into the clan of the deceased in order to obtain her bride price. In this way he will obtain the valuables to which he is entitled; the two bride prices balance one another and the matter is settled permanently. In that case he naturally retains all his rights over his children.

This solution applies on even stronger grounds if the wife's family themselves have called her home.

If the wife falls ill in her parents' home, it may happen that her husband wants to care for her himself.' He will demand

761 a pledge (ndanga) from his father-in-law to the effect that the
672 illness started in his home. If he neglects to take this precaution
593 and his wife dies, he has no legal means to claim indemnification.

4) A solution identical to the one described above is applied even if a wife goes to her parents for her husband's personal benefit in order to get him something he needs, such as beer for a [454] feast, valuables with which to settle a palaver, etc. It holds true even if the husband has sent her expressly for this purpose.

This situation easily gives rise to violent disputes, however. The wife's family tries to reject the husband's claims by objecting that it is he himself who sent his wife, or at least that she came to them solely for his sake. Nevertheless, in the end the husband is the one who is right and who wins the case. (1)

1. A stay of twenty-four hours is not considered sufficient to place the civil responsibility for an illness, nor therefore for death, on the wife's family.

5) The wife goes home ill. As we have seen in Chapter VI, Article III, 2, the parents are not willing to nurse their daughter unless their son-in-law -- always through the ndonga -- gives them a ndanga in testimony of the fact that she was ill when she left him. The husband thus recognizes his responsibility for all possible consequences of the illness. Consequently, he can make no claims in case of death.

Since the civil responsibility for the death falls to the husband, the latter is notified by the ndonga, but the family does not send him a notification ring. The ndanga for the illness takes the place of this payment. The widower asks that the corpse be brought to him so that he can perform the last rites, and this request is always granted. There is nothing special about the rest of the procedure; everything takes place as if the wife had died in her husband's home.

6) The wife is repudiated by her husband. In the past this happened only if the woman behaved very badly and showed herself to be incorrigible. As we have seen in Chapter VIII, Article II, 1, no. 2, the husband did not send her back to her family; he

768 fastened her to a fork (*etɔ́ka*) until he was reimbursed. Sometimes 672 the *ndonga* intervened to free her, but by doing so he took upon 593x himself the responsibility of making restitution of the bride price. In this last [465] instance, if the wife died in the home of her family, the husband was entitled to reimbursement just as he would be in case of a divorce. Thus we come back to the situation described under 2) and 3), the forms varying according to whether or not the widower wanted to continue the affinal relationship.

[178] Nowadays the situation has changed entirely. The colonial administration no longer permits the use of the *etɔ́ka*. Consequently, a man who wants to get rid of his incorrigible wife acts in such a way that she will leave him of her own free will. And the situation is again that described in 2).

If the husband has sent his wife away himself by placing her in the hands of the *ndonga*, his parents-in-law will refuse him an indemnity or any restitution of the bride price and often will not even accept the *nkunjɛ́*. They answer his demands by telling him that he should not have repudiated the wife whom he freely chose for himself. Thus most men resort to the procedure described in the next paragraph. There are circumstances, however, under which this mode of action is more difficult; this is so especially in the case of monogamists, since its execution requires several weeks, sometimes several months. In the interim the wife does as she pleases and neglects her husband, so that the latter practically finds himself a bachelor.

787 Evangelization has added a second difficulty. Catholic 768 marriage is indissoluble. Catechumens and Christians who wish to 672 marry must therefore be careful. Before admitting them to re-593 ligious marriage, we require that at least the *walo* be paid. But the young men know the temperament and value of their fiancées only through experience. In almost every case therefore they have this experience at home before the *walo*, in accordance with their ancestral custom. Then, if one of the two parties is pagan (which happens very often), the disciplinary rules of the Catholic missions in the Congo require that they spend a minimum of six months

797 preparing at a mission station or catechumenate [436]. During
761 the experimental period, the engaged pair sometimes find faults
672 in each other which lead them to foresee a married life filled with
595 difficulties and resulting in a breakup. Therefore it is preferable that they carry out the required measures before marriage. The woman is usually the source of the difficulties. The female sex has hardly been touched by evangelization, chiefly because pagan parents, who do not oppose the Christianization and education of their boys, take their revenge on the girls. What they fear particularly is the girls' opposition to premature marriages or their flight to the centers. For those people, therefore, it is almost impossible to get round the difficulty in such a way. As the situation is not provided for in traditional law and, furthermore, most of the natives who hold power are clearly indifferent, if not hostile, to evangelization and the stability of Christian marriage, these special circumstances are not taken into account in any way, to the great detriment of the young people who are thus caught between their consciences and their temporal interests (which in this instance have strong repercussions on their moral life). The attitude of almost all the chiefs and judges in this matter is not contrary to ancestral law -- since the situation was unknown -- but it is certainly opposed to the spirit of that law.

7) The couple go to the home of the wife's family together.
672 Illness and death that come unexpectedly during such a visit are
761 imputed solely to the husband, who retains all the risks except,
595 of course, if the husband returns home but his wife does not follow him, remaining with her parents. Indeed in such a case we fall back on the solution described in 2).

8) Here we come back to the possibility indicated at the end of Article IX, 1., namely that of the wife who dies in her [437] family's home before the walo is paid. If the husband is in the wrong (see under 1), 5), and 7), the solution given in the article in question retains all its validity; the husband's "responsibility" remains intact. In the other instances it is reduced but not taken away. Actually, two laws are in conflict. On the one hand, there is the "responsibility" of the husband who has not fully acquired

761
672
595
himself of his obligations, and, on the other, the "responsibility" of the woman who did not remain with her husband. To draw a comparison from the realm of accounting, there are two sides, debit and credit. But the latter lies chiefly on the side of the woman's family, for at the time of death the woman is not yet a wife in the full sense of the word. Consequently, the husband must pay an indemnity. But the fact that his fiancée died at home with her family is for him an extenuating circumstance as a result of which the indemnity is reduced, so that he need only pay about a half, that is, around 25 to 35 rings.

Conclusions

The explanations given may seem a little wordy. Nevertheless, it was useful to indicate all the diversity of possible situations in order to deduce the rule and to grasp the basis of the system from actual facts. Everything considered, it would thus appear that the husband assumes all risks with regard to his wife, and that he must bear all the damages resulting from her loss. She really belongs to him and not to her family in spite of any impression one may have that on the contrary the woman belongs more to her parents than to her husband. For even in the instances where she dies in her parents' home, having gone there for a justifiable reason, her death is considered an injustice toward her husband, since a wife's place is in the conjugal home. Such is the general rule. Exceptionally, in special instances defined by law, a woman's parents reassume the risks for her, that is, they again become responsible for her. [456]

Article 33

A Wife's Death in the Home of Another Man

761
672
Here we will consider what happens if a woman who has left her husband and gone to another man dies in the home of the latter before the restitution of the bride price to the former. Two situations may arise:

Ml 672

1) The walo may have been paid by the second husband, but restitution to the first husband may not yet have been made. The latter is entitled to reimbursement of the bride price just as he would be if the woman had not died (Chapter VIII, Article III), whereas the rules given in the preceding article are applicable to the new husband.

2) The walo may not yet have been paid; in that case the second husband must conform to the rules given in Article IV, 1 and Article X, 8). The first husband must recover the valuables to which he is entitled in accordance with the rules indicated in Chapter VIII, Article III.

Here are two recent instances:

Ilomɛ́ yă Lokombe, daughter of Ilotema of Bosnole wă Yuyokonda (Bongili), was married to Baleka of Nkɔ́lenjɔ́lɔ́ (Losange, Bombwanja). One day she went to Bempumbɔ́ to be baptized by the Protestant missionary. On her way back she was delayed by Ilombɔ́ of Ilombo (Boikoto), who wanted to marry her. He gave Ilotema an ikulɛ́. Shortly thereafter Ilomɛ́ died. Ilombɔ́ was obliged to pay a large indemnity, equaling the entire bride price, to Ilomɛ́'s father, who in turn had to reimburse Baleka.

Ãmbɔ́, daughter of Nkɛ́lenge of Ifanɔ́ (Bongili) was married to Yɔ̃njwa of Boimbo. She left him for Bongɛ́ngɔ́ of Bosambɔ́, who paid the ikulɛ́. One day when Bongɛ́ngɔ́ was returning from a trip, Ãmbɔ́ ran to meet him in order to bid him welcome. But in her haste she struck the root of a shrub, stumbled, and fell. Her fall must have caused internal injuries, for she was forced to remain in bed and died shortly thereafter. Bongɛ́ngɔ́ was obliged [430] to pay an indemnity of 30 rings plus two slaves, or a total of 80 rings, to Nkɛ́lenge, who in turn reimbursed the first husband.

The case is comparable to that of a wife's death which occurs in her husband's home but is caused by another man -- who either had daily relations with her or caused a pregnancy which resulted in her death. The responsibility in either case falls upon the lover, who must indemnify the husband. The indemnity is always very large, equaling the amount of a bride price or more. (1)

1. See Chapter I, Part II, Article V, 1, and Chapter VI, Article VII, 6.

768 672 178 Colonization has given rise to a new legal situation which is not provided for in Nkundó traditional law. If a woman takes advantage of the freedom permitted her by colonial legislation and goes to a mission to obtain instruction and make a monogamous marriage, and then contracts an illness from which she dies (at the mission, in the hospital, or even in the home of her family -- a question of place which has no legal importance), we find ourselves confronted by an entirely new situation. The husband no longer considers the woman his wife since she has left him, even though theoretically she continues to retain that status. On the other hand, she has not gone back to her family or gone to live with another man.

Polygamous husbands want to throw the "responsibility" back upon the woman's parents. But actually they have no part in the events, and it is unfair to involve them in the situation.

[171] They do not bring the mission into the matter. As a matter of fact, the mission performs a service to the woman and to society as a whole in trying to elevate it morally and culturally.

What should one think of this situation? In the preceding article we have seen that the husband assumes all risks in relation to the wife. Certain exceptions to this rule [480], which we have explained, have been formulated in Nkundó law; but outside of them, the law retains its dominion, since the exceptions are narrowly defined. Thus it applies to the situation with which we are dealing, and consequently the damages must remain on the husband's account.

Moreover, this interpretation is to be encouraged for the following reason:

The purpose of the legislation involved is to protect freedom in this matter of capital importance and to favor monogamy and the gradual abandonment of polygamy. Polygamists -- as a group -- must perforce suffer from it in one way or another. It is inconceivable that a struggle against an abuse would not affect the persons guilty of it.

Such cases are still very rare, but their frequency may increase with the progress of evangelization.

768 672 682 In terminating this discussion we must make one point that is related to both of the last two articles. The cause of death has no

768 legal importance. The solutions given are the same whether the
672 cause of death be organic or criminal. If the latter is the case,
682 however, the murderer must pay an indemnity, which is given to
the person who has been wronged, whether it be the woman's husband or her family; in any case he thus satisfies the requirements of justice.

A woman may be murdered while she is visiting one of her husband's kinswomen in accordance with her husband's wishes. In that case the sister-in-law's husband bears the responsibility. He must indemnify the victim's husband, and he himself is entitled to indemnification by the murderer. To simplify this procedure, the murderer can make his payment directly to the widower; justice is still safeguarded. But in no case does the indemnity go to the victim's father, for legally and economically it belongs to the husband, not to the father, who is indemnified through the funeral payments. [461]

Conclusions

1) A marital union is broken by death only for the person who
581 dies. For the one who remains alive, the dissolution is completed
768 only after other procedures. If the husband dies the widow remains
the wife of the heirs and is free only after restitution of the bride price has been made. At the death of the wife the husband can marry a substitute.

A widow's remarriage without restitution of the bride price
581 (and therefore without a new bride price), or that of a widower
587 with a substitute, is considered a continuation of a pre-existing
768 union which has not been dissolved. This continuation is not
absolute, however. Actually, it is perfect only in the case of the husband's death, in which case his kin group inherits all his rights and therefore also the rights to the wives he has acquired by means of his capital. On the other hand, if a widower is to continue the relationship after his wife's death, he must pay another bride price.

The difference between the two instances is due to the connection of the bride price with the "ownership" of a woman; she remains subject to it and as a result becomes legally the spouse

768 of her husband's heirs after his death. Only her own death takes
591 all power away from the bride price, which then becomes a purely
587 material value.

That is why the Nkundó expression "continuation of marriage" is ambiguous. For a widower the marriage continues from the standpoint of ties between families. But from the legal point of view there is a new marriage, since he pays a new bride price for the substitute, and there is therefore an entirely new contract. Only for a widow does the marriage really continue, as long as there is no divorce between her and the deceased husband's heirs. The agreement retains all its validity in her person, whereas the husband's obligations are transferred to the heirs. There is only a change of the persons subject to the agreement, which is therefore in no way annulled. The question here is a substitution in the role of husband. [462]

The preceding should be understood as relating to the financial agreement or bride-price contract as we have explained in Chapter III, Article IX. For the conjugal pact or consent agreement is annulled by death, since an heir as well as a widow must interpose new acts in order effectively to become man and wife. What the Nkundó call the continuation of marriage is therefore only the continuation of the bride-price agreement between the families, and not of the conjugal pact between individuals.

It would be desirable to have a moralist thoroughly examine the philosophico-theological validity of the continuation of this marriage after the death of one of the parties. Personally I think that for the widow, and on condition that nothing else opposes it, it is valid. For consent is expressed by the man through the payment of the bekooli and by the woman through the act of accompanying the man as his wife.

2) From the economic standpoint, death does not change
768 the situation that existed during life. The various bride-price valuables remain in the hands of the respective parties. The difference between the consequences of death and those of divorce are therefore very clearly delineated, as was indicated in the Conclusion of Chapter VIII, Article III.

3) These legal and financial rules confirm the conclusion

768 drawn in Chapter VI, Article II and those that follow, that a wife belongs to her husband legally as well as in fact, even though she does not leave her clan.

4) They also support the conclusion of Chapter II, Article IX, 5, that for the marriage agreement the walo is the essential element among the various bride-price payments.

5) Finally, they demonstrate the legal priority of the conjugal union above the clan and family society in spite of facts that can often be observed which would appear to contradict this statement.

Chapter X

Children

A study of marriage would be incomplete without a chapter

600 on the subject of children. Their procreation and education constitute the finis operis, the natural result of the married state, a state which for man, as a reasonable being, is the only legitimate form of carrying out the propagation of his species, the specific objective of sexual life.

This subject could be expanded more extensively than is possible here. We will pass in silence over a number of interesting facts related to it which fall outside the limits set for this work. For example, we will exclude the question of adoption, since it does not deal with children in connection with marriage, but only within the general rubric of family and society.

Even within these limits this chapter alone would comprise an entire volume were it treated with the fullness it merits. We must therefore confine ourselves to generalities and discuss only those particular situations which are most frequent and common.

As to the order of discussion to be followed in this chapter, and after a few preliminary notes (Article I), we will examine in succession:

Article II. Conception and pregnancy
Article III. Childbirth

000

Article IV. Nursing
Article V. Naming
Article VI. The question of twins
Article VII. Circumcision
Article VIII. Education
Article IX. Rights over the children [464]

Article I. Preliminaries

1. Generalities

842 The Nkundó like to have children. Not only do they like to have daughters, as some too superficial colonials sometimes maintain, but they like to have boys just as much. It is true that a daughter carries the hope of a bride price and all it represents for polygamists eager for pagan glory and carnal pleasures; yet a real preference for children of the weaker sex is seldom observed. What one does encounter, just as in Europe for that matter, is a desire to have a child of a particular sex when, for example, the other is already abundantly represented in the household. Thus a native who already has several boys but no girl or only one, will make offerings to obtain a sister for the boys. That he should do so is hardly astonishing since among these people a sister is the proper and sometimes the only means by which a man can acquire a wife. On the other hand, a father whose progeny are exclusively, or almost exclusively, members of the female sex ardently desires the birth of a son, an heir to the fruits of his labor and someone who would be able to aid and assist him in his old age by building him a hut, clearing the forest for him, and bringing him game or the products of fishing.

842
855 Actually one seldom hears these preferences expressed. The impression one gets is rather that the Nkundó love their children as such and also because, whatever their sex, they greatly contribute to the reinforcement of his social position; the two motives are inseparable in practice.

It is sometimes maintained that the natives do not refuse to have children because their coming does not inconvenience them in any way, nor do they impose crushing financial obligations

842 upon them; their upbringing costs them nothing, whereas among
855 Whites the maintenance, dress, food, instruction, and occupational placement involve considerable expenses. It cannot be [465] denied that while the modern European is exacting from all these viewpoints, enchained and blocked by an ever growing multitude of needs, the material life of the native is simple and his necessities are reduced to an indispensable minimum. Nevertheless, it can hardly be said that it is as easy for him to raise a large family with many children as it is to have the responsibility of a smaller number. Without speaking of clothing -- especially at the present time -- there is the food for growing children, which forces him to clear a greater expanse of forest and to work harder at the various ways of fishing and hunting; and when the time comes for the sons to find wives, he is the one who must arrange to procure the valuables needed for a bride price.

For their part, Nkundó women like to transmit life as much as the men, if not more so. Pregnancy may make them disagreeable and grumpy and sometimes cause them pain, but they put up with it and, as a very general rule, do not think of depriving themselves on that account of the happiness of giving birth to a cute little creature, of nursing it, of carrying it in their arms or on their shoulders. The difficulties and pains of maternity do not repel them. Although later, during the payment of her daughter's bride price, a Nkundó woman's greed will lead her to loudly claim the payment due her and even sometimes destroy her child's love because of delaying this financial operation, the delay does not come to their minds until the time comes.

In short, the Nkundó woman feels a perfectly natural, maternal love for her child.

There are of course exceptions to this general rule. And
842 the contrary would be astonishing for a pagan population who give
855 free rein to all their passions or, at least, restrain them only very
152 [466] slightly, and whose love is far from the perfection one may find among a people ennobled by fifteen centuries of Christianity. Moreover -- as all the preceding pages testify -- our Nkundó are not fashioned from a uniform mold notwithstanding the impression given by certain colonial and ethnological works. All the individual

592 differences can be found here, although they are less apparent to
855 a European observer since we usually approach the natives as a
152 group and our contact with them is often too impersonal.

2. Abortion

847 great enemy of maternal love is the practice of abortion, which has always been known to the Nkundó. Here we cannot describe all the prescriptions used for that purpose. It will be sufficient to enumerate the reasons for which they have recourse to this practice. They are as follows:

) A woman's lasciviousness: the procreation and subsequent care of a child to some extent prevent the indulging in carnal pleasure. Formerly this cause of abortion was nonexistent or very [178] rare. Needless to say, it has become more common, especially in the centers where it is constantly on the increase and where, in addition occasional or regular "housekeepers" learn new means of sterilization and abortion.

) A woman's antipathy or persistent anger toward her husband may encourage her to prevent conception or destroy its effect.

) An excessive weakening of the mother's organism caused by a large number of conceptions and childbirths at too short intervals.

4 The encumberance and the difficulty of watching, carrying, and taking care of many small children -- bɔ́lota bokɔkɔsano [467] [535] [illegible]. This reason is especially important for well-known dancers.

It goes without saying that several of these motives may be combined in the same person. For instance, I knew of a woman who aborted at the time of her eighth child. Her recurrent pregnancies, together with continuous work, had greatly reduced her strength. A palaver with her husband was the last straw; she decided to get rid of the fruit she carried in her body.

Outside of these exceptions the natives of this country ardently desire their own continuation through a large number of progeny. (1)

---

[114]

1. The same is not true elsewhere. Examples to that effect are cited from regions that are

947 [184] already more "civilized," such as the neighborhood of Coquilhatville and the Losanganya region.

847 848 Attention should be drawn to the danger of an increase in abortions for a new reason, namely the shame of giving birth outside of wedlock. As we have seen in Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 3, premarital pregnancies have existed since time immemorial without resulting either in remorse or in palavers. Through the teaching of Christian morality, the feeling of shame must sooner or later be extended to this phenomenon. In explaining the evil of fornication, care should therefore be taken to insist on the fact that transgressing the Fifth Commandment by abortion is a far greater evil.

947 845 Voluntary abortion is not considered a moral error by the Nkundó. (2) In their eyes an imperfectly formed fetus, not viable,

2. An attitude which also exists in Europe at the present time, according to Haenecour in Kultuurleven, Vol. 6, no. 1, p. 21 (1935), and the brochure by Prof. D. Schockaert quoted there.

947 [766] [774] is not yet a man. It is only a human being in the process of formation, in potentia. Hence the custom of burying the aborted child in the [468] hut or quite near it. Thus the spirit responsible for the pregnancy will see that it is respected and repeat its benevolent action. (1)

1. Others explain this custom by saying that the fetus already has a soul which remains near the tiny body and will take the first opportunity to re-enter the mother's body.

But if it is voluntary an abortion is always a wrong against family and society, for it deprives the family of a member on whom

847] they could count. Nevertheless, if it happens to a young unmarried mother, little or no fuss is made over it because no one can feel wronged; at most the culprit is scolded. For a married woman, on the other hand, it is one of the most serious infractions. Her husband has an immediate right to the fetus that would have become his child. He cannot beat or mistreat the offender in punishment, for her condition will not permit violence, but he can abandon her to her fate by refusing her all assistance, in particular by refusing to bring her firewood, the heat of which she greatly needs under such circumstances. For she has done him an enormous wrong and has acted with real malice (*aônjokel 'inkúnyɔ́*, he says), since he married her chiefly so that she would give him descendants. If she dies it is her own fault. Even her family will not support her, for
[482] they would be accused of being involved in the crime; inevitably they would lose the case and be condemned to indemnify the husband.

843 An abortion which is ascertained to be involuntary [i.e., a miscarriage] is treated like an accident or an illness and the appropriate legal stipulations are applied to it. Thus if it happens while the woman is at her parents' home, the responsibility for it falls on them. Usually the palaver is settled in a friendly manner; the family makes a few *nkgmɛ́* payments, and the question is closed. If relations between the husband and his son-in-law are somewhat strained, the dispute may be drawn out and may result in the breaking up of the marriage. If the woman dies from the accident, the rules given in Article X of the preceding chapter come into play. [469]

Article II. Conception and Pregnancy

842
153 The Nkundó have only a partial notion of the phenomena of conception. They are well aware of which acts cause the procreation of children. They have a perfect knowledge of anatomy and a rich vocabulary pertaining to sexual life. But they know only as much about physiological processes as experience can teach them. Furthermore, they believe that the act of procreation must be repeated several times in order to produce its natural result. Now,

Note,

842 833 [843] finally, that sexual relations are strictly forbidden to them during menstruation (-kona or éna nsóngé, literally "to be ill from" or "to see the moon," and other similar expressions). The reason given is that a woman in that difficult condition should be spared all additional annoyance.

1. Elímá

842 776 The Nkundó attribute the procreation of children sometimes to God (Njakomba) and sometimes to spirits (elímá, pl. bilímá). God forms (-ánga) the children in the mother's womb, but at the same time the bilímá provide the men among the progeny. (1)

There is no point in trying to make the natives resolve this apparent contradiction; they would not succeed. They simply state the two points. I say "apparent contradiction," for as the Nkundó admit that the bilímá are subject to Njakomba, the contradiction is not real, and the two propositions can be [470] reconciled by explaining the intervention of the spirits as an operation which is dependent on divine action: they are secondary, intermediary causes, although our natives do not make this philosophical analysis.

To explain all the beliefs pertaining to spirits would be to go outside the framework of this study. Nevertheless, we cannot leave out those details which closely touch on our subject.

---

[192] 1. Contrary to what is reported by Father Lestaeghe (Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 363) concerning the Ekonda, the tribes that I have known never address prayers for children to God, although they attribute the gift of children to Him. This matter does not concern God (Njakomba or Mbombiándá) directly, but rather a particular elímá.

Sterility, which is a common phenomenon here, is not imputed to sorcery but is considered an innate flaw. Natives usually claim that God refuses them children.

776 There is a large number of diverse spirits, and almost
823 every village has several in its territory Each one has its own habitat in some singular place or object which stimulates the imagination: enormous trees, oval hollows which form ponds of a sort (jɛ́mbo, pl. baɛ́mbo), steep slopes, extraordinary pieces of limonite, whirlpools in streams and rivers, etc

The Nkundó pray to the bilímá in order to obtain children.
776 For that purpose they make offerings of food and money. To test
842 someone's feelings toward it, an elímá may come to him in the evening or at night in the guise of a known person and ask for some small present. Unhappy is he who shows himself to be stingy: he will be deprived of the object of his desire, or his child will be premature or born sickly or deformed.

783 In addition to taking a generally friendly attitude toward
842 the spirit, another means of ensuring his intervention is open to a
776 woman. She can procure some kaolin (pongo) at the spirit's habitat (a jɛ́mbo, preferably). In the evening she mixes it with some plants. She smears her abdomen with this mixture, known
[843] as isaá. She continues the treatment throughout her pregnancy: it has the property of removing everything in her which is of such a nature that it might oppose the spirit (ákɛ́kola lokeko jwá bilíma bíle ndá likundú).

Certain water spirits are known for their generosity, for
776 instance Ilɔ́mbɔ́lombé or Ekɔ́talombé of Mpakó, [471] who is
842 considered to be a female being. She goes on distant voyages to seek a supply of children. On her return she appears to someone and communicates the news to him so that he may spread it. But she orders all women who desire her favors to observe some form of abstinence. Sometimes she sings to amuse or calm the children On that day mothers must not use songs to pacify their little ones or to put them to sleep and can use only soft words for that purpose. Otherwise the child would die, for to do so would be to disregard the old elímá's kindness.

Sometimes the spirits give signs of their blessing. A woman
[787] who is bathing on the shore just at the time a cargo arrives there will soon see her most intimate wish fulfilled From forest spirits

776 842 [791] women receive other signs: an unexpected obstacle in the form of a stone, a stump, a root, the capture of a tree frog which comes and jumps onto the shoulder, etc

A spirit loves and protects only a child he himself has given. He abhors and hates to the death the living gifts of his fellow spirits. If there are several *bilímá* in the vicinity of a single village, however, the Nkundó explain the absence of the usual rivalries by considering them as related; one is the husband, another the wife, others the children; that is why they do not oppose each other.

776 843 Thus an *elímá* is hostile to any fetus not of his creation. Nevertheless, his spiteful action only begins at the end of several weeks, and even then the pregnancy must have gone far enough to be visible (*ëmi jóhela isómbá*) Does it take time for him to obtain evidence that the fruit in question is undoubtedly his own gift?

In any case the consequence of this belief is that a woman who has been pregnant for several months cannot long [472] reside in foreign parts, and one who, after conception, has accompanied a husband who has gone to work elsewhere, returns to her village to complete the last period of pregnancy and to deliver,

However, there is an antidote (*nsengó*) against this murder- [751] ous action of the spirits. It may be obtained from a person who knows the recipe (this person is not the *nkanga* or "doctor"). The protective compound is wrapped in a bit of cloth and, by means of a thread of fibers from the *lokóal* creeper, is tied in the middle of a rope braided with the fibers of the *ikuluyafndé* bush, which the threatened woman ties around her hips. (1)

[114] [115] 1. These data on the subject of the *elímá* is diametrically opposed to the ideas of Father Schebesta (*Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge*, p. 241, and W. Schmidt, *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee*, Vol. 4, p. 322), based on the word of his interpreter, Bern. . Bongonga of Bodiama (Bombwanja) (now deceased), who was

843 776 114 115 obliged in my presence to retract his statements under the pressure of crushing objections on the part of a considerable number of other natives See also Father Boelaert, Hooger Leven, 1935, p. 60, and Congo, 1936, Vol. 1, p. 42, as well as Hulstaert, Congo, 1936, Vol. 2, p. 670.

2. The beginnings of pregnancy

843 777 The first months following the cessation of menstruation are called bofoswa. The oral expression is -foswa jémi (jémi meaning "fetus")

A woman who has just conceived no longer has any success in looking for caterpillars or in fishing (by scooping, whether with balɛ́ngɛ́ hooks or drugs, called lisola). She is unable to catch anything while the efforts of her companions are fruitful. That is because the bofoswa is wěká, that is, a cause for a lack of success (bómoto ôa wěká éfókte) Note that this word may be derived from the verb ěka, "to place an obstacle."

The husband of a woman in this condition is no better off. His wife's wěká is communicated to him as well as to all those of his relatives who [473] live in the same village or, as the natives say, ékć mpoké emókoló, "one who eats from the same pot," and okisé ilombe ímɔkoló, "one who lives in the same house." Friends are not harmed, even if they live in the same settlement as the pregnant woman, nor are relatives living elsewhere.

The wěká brings misfortune to anyone tainted with it. Thus if he goes hunting, he will return empty handed; if he participates in a war he will be wounded. Furthermore, if there is a leopard in the vicinity he will choose to kill that man. An elephant will detect his presence and try to kill him. A snake will bite him more readily than another. At market he will be charged more for everything.

This burdensome situation continues during the entire period of pregnancy, hence until the birth of the child.

843
777 The Nkundó know an antidote (nsengó or losenjó), however, a means of getting rid of such annoying obstacles. Of the three known processes the last is especially common at present.

[125] 1) The husband (or any person to whom the wɛ́kɔ́ is attached and who wants to be rid of it) picks up a nkôngolí chilopod, naturally by means of a leaf, encloses it in a large leaf which he binds with a thin creeper, and makes a small package of it, as one makes a package of meat, fish, etc. He gives this package to his wife, who thinks it contains food and opens it without any suspicion. But when she sees the detested arthropod, she throws it far from her with cries of disgust, while her husband says to her, "You are the one who remains with the wɛ́kɔ́." As a result he himself is freed from it.

2) A second means is to take the pregnant woman by the nose when an opportunity presents itself and to say to her: "May the wɛ́kɔ́ remain attached to you."

[252]
[264] 3) The woman prepares some imbóndó (manioc leaves [474] salted and dipped in palm oil). The two spouses eat it together contrary to the usual practice. But the husband arranges matters in such a way that his wife gets the last mouthful and keeps the leaf which serves as a plate and represents the wɛ́kɔ́. Then the husband says to her, "Keep the wɛ́kɔ́ for yourself."

The wɛ́kɔ́ cannot be detached from the woman, for she is the bomóngo wɛ́kɔ́, "the owner of the wɛ́kɔ́," the one who is the basis for it. For her it continues until the child is on the point of being born (elakí ô jómi jéndela, literally "he has come to the end of his growth," or jótekama, "has turned to one side"), and thus, in practice, until the birth of the child.

[752] If a first wife dies at the beginning of her first pregnancy, a cesarian operation must be performed on her. The fetus is removed (it is still no more than an embryo -- ilángéla or bokelé, literally "an egg," or ilóngó, literally "blood") so that it can be buried behind the hut. An omission of this practice would result in the death through pregnancy of the deceased's husband's other wives or of the women he will subsequently marry.

3. The period of prohibitions

[843] When a pregnancy is far advanced -- about two or three months before delivery (a period which has now been reduced to one or two weeks) -- the Nkundó proceed with the "preservation of the fetus" (bákomba jémi, "they preserve the fetus," or bákaka jémi, "they fasten the fetus"). The period called bokeka or bokeko begins at that moment and does not end until after childbirth. The oral expression is lókaka bokeka, "to bind the period of sexual prohibitions." (1) This term also extends to all special prohibitions (bekila) resulting from this condition. [472]

For the first pregnancy the period begins with the following [766] ceremony: The woman's mother smears her daughter's head and [302] all of her body with a red paint called ngóla. This paint, usually used as make-up, is used here as a mark of affection and given to honor and congratulate the future mother on this happy occasion. When the ngóla is somewhat hardened, the mother smears her daughter's hair with it and rolls the hair into little balls, using an iron bosingá, which is the instrument usually used for hairdressing. Then she gives her daughter a hen and some bananas to eat. From then on the pregnant woman may no longer eat hens, for the consumption of this bird (which the Nkundó place in the same category [262] as ducks) and its eggs would stop the normal development of the fetus. The ceremony is called fla bongata (ejaka among the Bombwanja), "to smear with red paint in little balls."

The woman's father and the husband's kin feel strongly about being present at this ceremony, for it is considered very important. I know of an intense palaver which occurred because

---

[834] 1. The expression lókaka lilonká is also used. A similar period of sexual prohibitions called by the same name still exists for, among other things, circumcision, the construction of a hunting enclosure, and the setting of elephant traps.

[illegible] a woman's mother proceeded with the ceremony in the absence of the husband and his family. The latter were furious. They revealed the matter so that if anything should happen later to the mother or the child the law would be on their side. In that way the husband could evade responsibility and place the blame on his wife and her family so that they would have to pay an indemnity.

The pregnant woman does not remove the paint for three or [illegible] four weeks after the ceremony. Nowadays the use of paint having [illegible] disappeared except for certain occasions and among older persons, it is left on for only one night. In addition the surface smeared has been reduced to a line in the middle of the head or even one single spot.

[illegible] During this ceremony the Bombwanja have a public confession [illegible] (*etamo*) of the lovers. But since the Boleki wait until after delivery, we will deal with it later on.

On the night following the ceremony described, the couple [illegible] [476] "fasten the fetus" through their carnal union. Were they to omit this act, the child would die before birth.

For subsequent pregnancies the fastening of the fetus is no longer preceded by the same formalities.

The couple continue to have relations during the entire [illegible] period of pregnancy "in order to open an easy passage for the child." [illegible] On the other hand, they must strictly observe marital fidelity. [illegible] Nevertheless, a polygamist may have relations with his other wives.

In addition to this essential act, the interdict also includes a secondary part: the couple may not even commit acts even very remotely related to procreation. Thus they may not:

1) Touch in any way whatsoever -- even to shaking their hands -- persons with whom they have had adulterous relations; such persons must therefore be avoided.

2) Sit next to such persons.

3) Look at them.

4) Enter a house or apartment where they are.

5) Eat "from the same pot."

6) Lie in another couple's bed.

7) Other persons may no longer sleep in the bed of the couple bound by the *bokoka*.

843 837 This law requiring a most strict fidelity lasts until the end of the bokeka for the husband, but until the weaning of the child for the wife. It is especially strict for the period of seclusion (see below, Article III, 3).

The violation of the essential stipulation of this interdict (-fénda bokeka) results either in the death of the woman during pregnancy and especially during seclusion or in the death of the child later on. [477]

A. If the woman dies during this period, the suspicion is placed a priori on her husband. The Nkundó say aófénda wǎlí, "he has transgressed against his wife." Unless he can prove his innocence through public actions, the judgment of a magician, or autopsy[sic].

If the woman has been the victim of a seducer, he is held responsible and must pay a large indemnity equivalent to the bride price that was paid for the deceased. If no other man is involved, the affair has no consequences.

843 763 754 845 853 In the past the combined autopsy and Caesarian section was always performed. It had a dual purpose: to remove the child and to examine the mother. If the operation revealed the existence of a "stomach" (likundú), the deceased was of a noxious (lilgka) nature or constitution and therefore caused the death of her child. If the child remained alive, it proved that he was of a magically superior nature and was able to resist the natural evil spells of his mother, which thus turned against their unwitting author. (1)

1. The Nkundó believe that only animals have a "stomach" (likundú). If a human being has one, that is, if his viscera are large, curved, in compartments, in a word, abnormal, that person is an evildoer. He commits evil acts voluntarily or, most frequently, unknowingly. Some men with a likundú can be recognized by the fact that they eat their nails, hair, etc. The Nkundó must certainly have observed relationships between this habit and a deformity of the stomach.

853 The child is given to a wet nurse (a kinswoman, a stranger, a Batswa woman, depending on who is available).

847 If the mother's body shows no signs of evil-doing or of
845 "the hatred of others," it is thought that her death was caused
843 by evil spells on the part of the child. Thereupon some kill the child to prevent it from doing harm during its whole life; others, on the contrary, spare it despite everything.

843 If the husband (for it is he above all who is involved, since he is most exposed to possible lapses) has unfortunately been guilty
837 of misconduct, his wife has only a slim chance [478] of salvation. Nevertheless, it is still possible for her to be saved, on condition that from then on her husband abstain from any sexual act and from all the accidental gestures and actions described above. The least he can do under these circumstances is to inform his wife of his indiscretion so that she can take precautions. If he wants to
[672] ward off any possibility of causing his wife's certain death, he sends her home and gives his father-in-law a pledge (*ndanga*) through which he recognizes his guilt and shows his intention to assume the entire responsibility for his misdeed. An upright man prefers to act in this fashion, for he never knows whether one day he will not inadvertently violate one of the prohibitions.

B. The child's death is the result of the putrefaction of
853 the mother's milk, the mother being thus incapable of nursing.
837 As in the preceding case, the offense is a priori imputed to the husband -- *iaé aboma bóna la ndota*. (1) Since he has wronged no one but himself, no palaver ensues; the "natural" punishment is sufficient. This does not mean that he is not the object of evil tongues; people point at him and at times remind him of his misdeed. To remove the blame from himself, he can resort to

[853] 1. *Ndota* is an illness caused by the violation of prescriptions of a sexual nature (See Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 2, A).

695 an ordeal or ask a magician's judgment or a magical practice to
787 reveal the culprit. The culprit who is discovered is not subject to any social sanction; he is punished by the ordeal itself or the spell cast against him.

[684] If the mother's adultery is proven through her having been caught in the act, her seducer is considered guilty. He must pay the death indemnity (20 to 30 copper rings). The woman is not at all involved as far as society is concerned; it is a matter between her and her husband.

In order to prevent any harmful effect on the child, the
757 Nkundó resort to a potion called bondandeza, which will be ex-
854 plained in [478] the next article, 3. "Medication" by scarification might also be mentioned. This therapy is applied to the parents as well as to the child. If the father is wealthy, he invites the wife's family to come and perform the operation themselves. As in all comparable situations, the invitation is accompanied by the handing over of a pledge, and farewell presents (belingelo) are given at the end of the visit. In addition the wife very often goes to live with her parents for some time after her seclusion in order to increase the efficacy of the treatment.

The sanction incurred for a violation of the secondary
843 stipulations is less serious. For instance, the pregnant woman suffers
[684] from violent migraines, which often cause fainting and sometimes make delivery very difficult; thus they can even cause death. The husband is seldom bothered by these headaches. But he takes great pains to faithfully observe the law in order to spare his wife such painful consequences and to avoid the death of the child being born.

Apart from sexual abstention and the rules connected with it, the couple are also subject to various prohibitions which are clearly based on superstitious ideas. Thus:

1) They must neither go down into a well nor dig in the earth. The woman would die, for it is as if they were digging her grave.

2) They must not carry anything together with another person, for that is how corpses are carried, and such carrying would be the cause of death, through imitation of the woman's funeral procession.

847 3) They must not climb up on the roof (they are not forbidden to climb a palm tree in order to cut off nuts).

4) They must not eat animals killed by a carnivore (leopard,
847 crocodile, etc.), or the child would die a sudden and unnatural
262 death like the victims of such wild beasts. [400]
825 5) They must abstain from animals such as porcupines, anteaters, certain birds, crocodiles, and gavials, (1) who are in the habit of living in the hollows of trees or in dens. The delivery would be very painful if they ate them, for the child would roll up and crouch in the mother's womb. Fish that find shelter in passageways do not produce such consequences and are therefore eaten.

6) They must not eat turtles (2). A very difficult birth is feared, for the turtle withdraws into its shell and encloses its end extremities as in a vise, and the child would do the same.

7) They must not eat the head of a monkey. The child would be born with deep-set eyes resembling the monkey's.

8) They must not eat the large antelope known as mbuli, because it has a long neck and flabby flesh, and the child would acquire the same defects.

[141] 9) They must not eat the linfifi fish, which would cause migraines, since it swims fiercely without direction.

The results of bokeka and the obligations resulting from it
591 are connected with natural paternity. Thus, if a woman becomes
847 pregnant as a result of relations with a regular, recognized lover, the latter must assume all responsibility. He is required to "fatten the fetus" and to observe all the regulations pertaining to the

1. In this region women never eat snakes or bats (bolóma, bongidé, Bokyé).

2. In some tribes (Bongili, Bonkoso) women always abstain from eating such reptiles.

843 __bokeka.__ The same is true if the pregnancy is the result of adultery;
837 the natural father must bear all the consequences of his act. The husband is absolved from them and has no relations with his wife until the end of this particular pregnancy. The culprit must give him a pledge by which he publically recognizes his responsibility, and he is expected to fulfill all the duties of a husband. Therefore he may have relations with the woman during her entire pregnancy without paying additional indemnities. If any accident befalls the mother or the child, he is made to pay a large indemnity.

Note finally that, as we have pointed out in Chapter II,
[583] Article III, no bride-price payment can be made from the time the pregnancy becomes visible until after the end of the period of seclusion.

843 To facilitate childbirth the previously mentioned concoc-
844 tion of various leaves mixed with kaolin (__mpe__) is continuously ap-
757 plied to the abdomen. Medical scarifications on the abdomen are also performed.

Finally, as the time of delivery approaches, special douches
[278] made from a concoction of the bark of the __bofinko__ tree (1) are administered. All these treatments are called __bote byâ bobotoji__, that is, medicines (for the purpose) of an easy delivery.

---

1. Certain douches, especially the one made of __bofinko__, are also used as abortive agents.

Article III. Birth

844 1. Delivery

A woman remains with her husband for childbirth; she does not go home to her family. Only exceptionally does she give birth elsewhere -- for instance, if she has been sent home for one reason or another, or during a trip, while working in the fields, near a stream, or a spring, etc. Such sudden unexpected deliveries

844 are not too rare. (3)

2. Ease in delivery is called [illegible];
difficulty is called [illegible].

A husband asks his mother-in-law to come and help her daughter. Other kinswomen of the husband or the wife do not refuse [452] their services either. Among them there is always one who is more expert in these matters and who acts as a midwife ([illegible]).

The delivery takes place in the banana grove behind the hut; there is light and air there. In the house it would be more difficult.

The husband cannot be present at this event. His presence would make it difficult and painful. The farther away he is, the better. The prohibition is not rigid, however; if there is no one to help his wife (as in the case of an unexpected delivery in the forest, etc.), he will have no hesitation whatsoever in helping her with all the power and skill at his command.

To facilitate the arrival of the child, the midwife gives [778] the wife a potion to drink "in order to make slippery" ([illegible]), and administers a douche containing [illegible] bark.

If the pains continue for several days and all medication is 754 without results, it is assumed that some evil spell ([illegible]) is at work. To neutralize it the woman in labor is "blessed" (-[illegible]). For that purpose her family and that of her husband each bring a stalk of the [illegible] plant ([illegible]). Two kinswomen, each with the stalk of her respective clan, squeeze out the sap with which they smear the woman's abdomen. After that the delivery takes place in a normal fashion.

847 756 M The nkanga (doctor-magician) only intervenes when a woman has already had several miscarriages or when all her children die. If he is consulted he invariably attributes such misfortunes to the action of spirits of the deceased, who may be appeased by offerings and the promise that a manifestation of their will be heeded with respect to the naming of the child. Usually he adds that a few alimentary prohibitions must be observed until the child is weaned.

(00) alimentary prohibitions must be observed until the child is weaned.

[5] As soon as the child is born, the women present announce the happy event with shouts, and someone runs to inform [483] the father. The latter (or a kinsman) communicates the news by means of a lokolé. For a boy the message is: Batsiki falafala, bokúta bóñáñáñá likongé la ngowa, ayíme lokendo ndá likundú, etc., (1) "The mats are spread; he who holds spear and shield has come from the journey in the womb." For a girl, bokúta ... ngowa is omitted and the words iankaanka y'ëlíato, "sweet friendship of woman" are substituted. (2)

The news is greeted with cries of joy in the whole village, and everyone runs to admire the child and congratulate the mother. They do not enter the house. No feast heightens the general rejoicing.

Then, if the child is a boy, the father or a man in his family places himself in front of the child, who is presented to him at the entrance to the hut or on the porch if there is one. He holds a spear and threatens as if he were about to attack the child, shouting: "Ha! ha! ha!," and gesticulating like a warrior. Then he takes the little hand and makes the child hold the spear, saying to him: "Be a strong man, make war bravely." (3) The

---

1. Elsewhere the term is ikokíscia. Or: bongólá la mpifo bíkókisela bele foléfolé, "bowels and livers have come down, are outside."

2. Other terms exist in certain tribes (See Anthropos, Vol. 30, 1935, p. 635 ff.)

3. If later in life a boy lets himself be frightened, he is asked, "Was that ceremony not performed when you were barely born?"

851 birth of a child involves a few prohibitions which affect the whole village and apply to the Batswá as well as the Baotó. They do not affect inhabitants of a portion of the village which is separated by a swamp from the group where the happy event has occurred. Those bound by the prohibitions may no longer go to "work" -- that is, to work in the fields, fetch food or firewood, build a hunting enclosure or a fishing weir, or work at the building or repair of a house. An infraction of this rule would result in the destruction of the fruit of all their labor: the fields would no longer produce, and no beast or fish would be caught. This deadly influence would [494] extend to all crops, etc., no matter whom they belong to. Nevertheless, there is nothing wrong in fetching firewood from the forest, harvesting manioc from a ripe field, or cutting the fruit of the palm.

Strictly speaking, these prohibitions touch only persons who have seen the newborn child. But since no one fails to go and admire it, all are subject to them. The prohibitions remain in effect until the umbilical cord is detached. [844] Some tribes, however, have the more convenient custom of limiting its duration to the day of the child's birth.

2. The hygiene of mother and child

[844] 846 The umbilical cord ([illegible]) is cut near the middle. An incision is made near the infant's navel. Each day a concoction of herbs is poured on the part of the cord that is still attached and white sand is put on it to make it dry more rapidly. When the end falls off, a powder made of scorched banana is applied to the wound.

In order to prevent the weakening of a woman's abdomen, it is bound with a belt made of bands of the dried bark of the banana tree (ekoti).

The assistants wash the mother and child. On the mother they place dried leaves or bark of the banana tree which have been carefully crumpled. They are put on like panties to catch the blood and are replaced by new ones whenever necessary. Nowadays pieces of cloth are often used; they are put on like a man's garment.

846
515 In order to facilitate the flowing out of all the blood, the mother is given hot baths. However, they are not begun before noon, for the Nkundó say that in the morning and evening it is too cool and the blood is not sufficiently fluid. Those who have been [171] in greater contact with the Whites give the mother beer or wine to drink. The hot baths are administered behind the hut in an en- [341] closure set up for the occasion. They are of two kinds: baths by sprinkling (bompšlo wă mbĭlomba) and steam baths (bompšlo w'Ělángó). For the first method [485] very hot water is used, and by using a bunch of palms, the woman's abdomen, loins, and ribs are sprinkled. In the second method a pit is dug and large leaves (or a basin) containing boiling water are placed in it. Three or four strong, wide sticks are placed on top, and the woman is seated on them. She is wrapped in several mats to which, today, one or two blankets are added. She is left thus exposed to the action of the steam for several minutes. According to the natives, it is the ideal system because it makes all the blood come out, or almost all. Some people first give a sprinkle bath, and then follow it with a steam bath; others are satisfied with one or the other, depending on the circumstances. In any case more than one bath is never given in one day. This care may be given for one or two weeks, or it may stop after two or three days. The effect of "civilizing" is more inclined to the latter. But no Nkundó would want to omit the baths, for the woman's life is at stake.

After the bath the woman is carefully rubbed and dried, [302] and then anointed with oil mixed with red paint.

From time to time, usually every second day, she is given a douche.

846 As long as the mother remains weak, a large fire is maintained in her hut to keep her warm, and the doors are closed by means of palms. The husband and his relatives fetch the firewood. But the first log must be cut and brought by the husband who, to use the Nkundó expression, must "remove the violence" (lonola lofasl). In the beginning the woman lies down on a bokoge right near the fire. She turns the front of her body toward it. The fire plays a great role in her quick recovery. She is very well cared

846 for and fed so that she may regain her strength rapidly. [486]

3. Seclusion

After childbirth the mother remains secluded (-ilama) in her hut for several weeks -- two, three, or more, depending on circumstances and especially on her husband's social position. Her seclusion is called jalé. The hut bears the same name, or else it is called jenga, "palm leaf." Sometimes the term ekolé is also applied to it, denoting the period of seclusion with all the special regulations it involves. These are as follows:

[846] 1) Meals. In some tribes the woman may already eat on the day of the delivery. But among others she is only permitted to drink. The reason for this fast is given in the form of a legend. One day long ago a Batswa asked his master for a little medicine, but the master refused to give it to him. The master's wife had just given birth. Annoyed by the refusal, the Batswa cursed his master, saying: "From now on your women will have to fast the day they give birth." (1) Another explanation is that at sometime in the past someone refused food to a slave who was about to be sacrificed at a feast of the lifting of mourning. Tribes and villages that do not give any reason of this sort permit a woman to eat in the evening, if the delivery takes place in the morning.

A mother's first meal is prepared by a woman who has performed the carnal act the preceding night. She goes to draw water, and on her return she fastens or attaches over the door of the seclusion hut a piece of palm (jenga) or, among the Bombwanja, a piece of dried banana leaf; in this way she informs everyone that it is a house of ekolé. Then she prepares the food, which consists of

[264] bananas with fish or a hen in palm-oil sauce. It is eaten by the mother and her husband as well as the cook. Their very young children may also delight in it, but [487] the older ones, approaching puberty, may not. The newborn child is given a tiny bit of the sauce to taste.

---

1. Batswa women never fast under such circumstances.

846
[850] For a young unmarried mother, the meal is prepared by a girl who has not reached puberty or a woman who is quite old, that is, by someone who does not engage in sexual intercourse.

2) Various regulations. From the time of the preparation of the first meal until the end of the bokeka, that is, until the day the umbilical cord becomes detached, the hearth of the seclusion hut is sacred, so to speak. Apart from the couple and the assistants, no one may enjoy it or profit from it, either to light anything from it or eat anything that has been prepared there. However, some men have a means of lifting the prohibition pertaining to the fire. Upon the hearth and all the hearths of the village or a group of houses, depending on the situation, they let fall a few drops of a special concoction.

It is also forbidden to sweep or pick up the ashes from the fire. Everything must stay put until the umbilical cord of the new-born child becomes detached.

During the entire period of seclusion, the mother is assisted by a kinswoman (or one of her husband's kinswomen; among the Bombwanja there are always two), who is the wojisa, "the one who makes the seclusion" (from the verb oja). The seclusion should not be thought of as that of a hermit; the mother may go out as soon as her condition permits, and the helper goes about her occupations, but she does not do so more than necessary. Rather the hut is a house of prohibitions.

During this period the mother and her helper do not do farm
[834] work. In addition they must abstain from carnal relations and from all contacts with the opposite sex, in conformity with the customs explained in Article II, 3, above. The ekila extends to the husband and to any other person who enters the hut. Any infraction results in the death of the mother or the child in the same manner as in the case of the bokeka (see loc. cit.) . [437]

3) The end of the bokeka. When, at the end of four or five days, the umbilical cord becomes detached, the news is announced to the whole village, so that everyone may go back to their work that has been suspended. The following night the father
[831] and mother perform the conjugal act to "destroy the bokeka and

846 to be able to nurse the child together." This does not mean that 837 from then on they may have regular sexual relations, for these are not permitted until after the end of seclusion. But if they were to omit the act at this time, they would have to abstain from it until the child is weaned. The Nkundó say that the act is performed "only a little." For many it becomes masturbation; others withdraw before obtaining the effect of the act. In no case may the act reach its natural climax. The reason for this practice is unknown to me. Perhaps it is done in order not to molest the woman while she is in a painful condition.

The next day the ashes in the hearth of the seclusion hut 846 are swept out, and the fire becomes "ordinary"; anyone may use it and eat food prepared on it.

6) The umbilical cord is dried on the boifió (a tray or shelf) and then buried at the foot of a young banana tree planted for that purpose, preferably under a bonkoné tree if possible. The ashes and sweepings from the seclusion hut are thrown there. The banana tree is called nkindá. (1) Its fruit may be eaten only by the child's

[illegible] 1. This is a generic term used for any banana tree planted for a special purpose (a magical practice, a game, etc.).

[illegible] grandfather and grandmother. If another person eats it, he will be punished with a headache of a nervous type.

The umbilical cord is always buried in the father's native 846 soil. People who are far from home (laborers for the Whites, etc.) [illegible] preserve the umbilical cords of their children with great care in order to take them back [480] when they return to their village, or send them back when a favorable opportunity arises. The Nkundó hold to this usage tenaciously, because a person whose umbilical cord is not buried in the lands of his paternal clan has no authority in the group. The person involved would meet with the following objection: ntákokúndela lokolé, ntákokundela lokolé, ôyakitanya ngômo? ele nk'oyôyo. "The lokolé was not beaten for you, your

[illegible] umbilical cord was not buried; how dare you boast? You are but a
[illegible] stranger." Therefore this custom constitutes a sort of matriculation into the family. If anyone wants to be entirely certain of a Nkundó's clan, he has only to look for the place where his umbilical cord was buried.

5) The end of seclusion is marked by a few ceremonies.

[illegible] A. A meal. Early in the morning of the day set, the hus-
[illegible] band goes and cuts a bunch of fruit of the palm tree, and the helper goes and picks manioc leaves (nowadays leaves and fruit collected the day before are sometimes used). The helper crushes all of this to make a dish of food. While she cooks it over the fire, she shaves a little hair off the mother, plucks out one eyebrow, and cuts one of her nails. Then she does the same to the child. The helper moves away, and the father comes in. His wife subjects him to the same treatment, and he reciprocates, doing the same to the child. The rubbish is simply thrown away without any ceremony. This practice has no special name; the Nkundó say: bäyenisa belongo, bäyalongo, "They shave each other's heads."

When the vegetables are ready, all the women of the vil-
[illegible] lage are gathered together. A little pit is dug in front of the hut. A large leaf is placed in it to serve as a dish, and the vegetables are poured into it. The mother, the helper, and all those assembled eat. Except for a few small boys no representatives of the stronger sex are present. When the meal is completed, [438] the leaf that served as a plate and those that served as spoons are buried in the pit. Today the more advanced of the population use a European plate and spoons. The meal and the vegetables eaten are called losanganya, "reunion," because the entire village is united in partaking of them, or lofanjola, "dispersion," because it is the prelude to the end of the boleko.

B. Then follows the ceremony of separation (-sîsa bofoló, or, among the Ingôlô, bokfelifela). (1) The bofoló is the mid-rib

[78]

1. The expression and the ceremony designated by it are used whenever an important matter, such as a trial, etc., is to be terminated.

846 of a dried banana leaf. Three knots are tied in it. The helper holds it in one hand and with the other cuts off the first knot, which she carries away with her. The mother keeps her end in her hand and presents the other to her husband. She receives the knife from the hands of the helper and cuts between the two knots so that each spouse carries away his end. Each time the parties involved say, "We have cut the bofoló; we are separating; go away." Having thus bid each other farewell, each fastens his end to the roof of the seclusion hut.

846 This ceremony ends the period of seclusion and puts an end to the ekeló prohibitions. From then on the couple may have sexual
857 relations together, the helper can resume her usual life, and adultery on the part of the father can no longer harm the child or the mother. Note, however, that the child's immunity to the father's misconduct implies one condition: the father must not take it on his knees the day he commits adultery. By the following day the effects of his act have been nullified. A woman can discover her husband's infidelity through his refusal to take the child. Often she makes use of this means to obtain a confirmation of her suspicions. Some men abstain from all misconduct solely to guard against any such possibility. Adultery may have a harmful influence on the child even after it is weaned if it has a weak constitution. [490] All this seems to indicate that the reaction is considered to be physical and direct rather than a sanction based on religion or superstition.

846 Nkundó therapeutics include an antidote, however; it is
759 called bondandota (from ndota "an illness caused by the infraction of prohibitions of a sexual nature"). It consists of a potion made
[276] from the sap of an aroid bearing the same name, which is mixed with the sap of the libôlôlolo plant. If for some reason or other the couple have been away from each other for a fairly long time, they sit or stand face to face and take the child on their knees, which touch each other, and each one makes the child drink the potion twice, once from each hand, making sure to turn its face toward him [or her]. Usually the couple also drink some of the brew, though it is intended primarily for the child. Without these precautions the relations between the pair and the father's

854 taking the child would cause the child's death. The same precau-
767 tion is also in order if the husband goes on a trip before the child's birth and does not return till after the delivery.

846 We have just seen that the harmful effects of the father's misconduct on his child's life is effectuated through the father's
853 act of taking the child on his knees. Thus the Nkundó speak of *bafongó b'ǎsé*, "a father's bad knees," to indicate his reprehensible
[754] conduct, and they say that the *bondandota* potion is administered to the child so that it will not die because of the father's bad knees. (1)

1. The expression *bafongó b'ǎsé* is also used when an undertaking which requires continence is unsuccessful. (See Article II, 3).

When a child has painful and persistent diarrhea, it is often
753 interpreted as the effect of the father's infidelity. As soon as they
854 become aware of it, the couple separate for some time, and the father no longer touches the child. [491]

Contrary to what one reads on this subject about other peo-
837 ples of the Congo, Nkundó couples do not have to remain continent
846 beyond the period of seclusion. The separation ceremony gives the
767 husband back the freedom of action he had before his wife's pregnancy. For the wife the *bokeka* remains strict with respect to illicit relations until the child is weaned. However she, too, may regain her freedom by having recourse to an antidote, the ingredients of which she purchases from a person who holds the secret. The ingredients are placed in a small antelope horn which is then stopped
[776] up by means of *bolakó* (resin from the *Symphonia globulifera*). The interested party wears it about her loins on a string or a bead belt or, preferably, on a special creeper. This amulet protects the child's life from the harmful influence of the mother's acts of adultery, but it does so only on condition that she does not separate herself from the child, as we will explain further on. This procedure

837 is not morally condoned, and a woman who resorts to it does not
834 escape criticism. She is compared to a goat, who does not have
167 a regular and steady husband: ilónya bóna lontaa, "she nurses her child as a goat does." (1)

1. The opposite of lónya lontaa, -- if it is used to show the contrast -- is lónya bonkonki.

846 When the separation ceremony is ended, the mother is adorned with all her ornaments and goes out to walk in a procession through the village. The child is carried by an older sister, a niece, etc. He is taken around the village, bósangya bóna l'esiko. Small presents are offered him everywhere -- an arrow, a small knife, a hairpin, etc. There is no feast, however; if that honor were accorded him he would die of it (for when someone dies, there is always a feast of farewell in his honor). [460]

Article IV. Nursing

853 During the first few days after birth an infant does not suck the milk of its mother, since it is "too hot." He is fed by a third person, preferably a relative.

On the third day the following occurs:

853 757 1) The mother's breasts are massaged (-kolola bafie). For this purpose the Nkundó use leaves of the lókó creeper and the bilongyá plant (Adenostemma viscosum Forst.), a green leaf from a banana tree called bolongo, several pieces of peeled sugar cane, the tips of the dried leaves of any banana tree, and sometimes other plants are added as well. All the ingredients are crushed, then boiled, and white sand and a bit of red paint are mixed in with them. The mixture is called nkengé. It is prepared by the women who are in charge of massaging the breasts. The lókó leaves, however, must be picked by the father. He goes to the forest early in the morning and first shakes the creeper so that all leaves that are not firmly attached will fall off. Then he climbs it and picks the desired

[illegible] quantity of leaves, which he puts in his little basket called [illegible].
[illegible] If a leaf falls in the course of this operation, he must stop and throw away all that he has picked up to that point. The massage cannot take place on that day for it would cause the child to die falling and withering like a leaf. The father must start all over again the next day.

There are always two masseuses: one of the husband's kinswoman and one of the wife's. (1) They crush the leaves in

1. The [illegible] sometimes permit a man to perform the massage.

[illegible] the same single mortar ([illegible]). The mother meanwhile must make her public confession, of which we will speak again in a moment. When the substances intended for rubbing have been prepared, the two masseuses begin their operation, which must be quite painful. The husband's relative takes care of the right breast, the wife's concentrates on [494] the left. (1)

1. This is a natural arrangement for our people; the term used to indicate "husband" (bóme) is undoubtedly etymologically related to the one denoting "the right" ([illegible]), and there is some likelihood that the same is true for wālï (wife) and [illegible] (left).

They energetically massage the breasts from the top to the bottom with the mixture. After a few minutes they test the milk by letting a few drops run out onto a burning fragment of pottery. If the reaction is normal the mother begins to nurse. If on the other hand, the milk curdles and solidifies ([illegible] [illegible]) like rubber, it is a sign that it is of bad quality because of the presence of an internal boil in the breast, called [illegible]. In that case the knowledge and skill of a woman expert is called upon. The latter rubs the leaves of a creeper between her hands in order to extract

853 the sap, which she then mixes with water. The resulting liquid is
757 oily and foams like soap. She places a few drops on a piece of banana leaf and makes a sachet of it. She holds this against the breast for a certain time until the boil, similar to a blood clot or a piece of liver, leaves the breast and enters the sachet. She then shows it to those present. From then on the mother can nurse her child without fear; her milk has become healthy and normal.

2) The mother's public confession must include the names
857 of all the men with whom she has had carnal relations since the
853 child's conception. Other groups, such as the Injâfi, extend this
684 obligation even to instances preceding that moment but which
783 have not been declared at a previous occasion. The confession is public. The mwasaso related to the husband begins to crush the leaves to be used in rubbing the breast; as she moves the pestle and says to the mother, "Name a man." The mother replies by giving a name. The mwasaso says nyongo, "indemnity." Then all those present say yangâ, yangâ, yangâ, "absolved." Then it is the other mwasaso's turn, and she interrogates the mother in the same way. The process continues till all the names have been cited. If [486] the mother cites the name of a man who is a close relative of her husband and who therefore does not need to pay an indemnity, the mwasaso does not reply nyongo. Instead a member of the husband's clan makes the gesture signifying
[20] exemption: he holds the kernel of a palm nut (bolikâ) in his left hand and throws it by means of a small board which he holds in his right. Among the Injâfi the man takes two kernels and strikes them against each other and then throws them away. Were the woman to suppress a name the child would die. If she has no admission to make, she replies, "No one besides my husband."

The indemnity that must be paid by those who are obligated to do so consists of a hen and a bunch of bananas (or their cash value) which are to be given to the mwasaso, who will then divide them. Were the accused to refuse, the husband would demand a regular indemnity from him after the end of the seclusion.

The Bombwanja have this confession at the time of the
[784] weaning of the fetus. A few old women married into the clan carry out the interrogation. The kernel of the fruit of the palm is thrown by means of a knife.

857 Note, finally, that the confession is restricted to married
763 women. It is never expected of a young unmarried mother. There-
853 fore it would seem to be a practice connected with marriage (a social institution) and not with childbirth (a physiological phenomenon).

This confession is called esato or lotato, from the verb
[412] -tata, "to confess," (for which the generic term, sanga, "to say," is sometimes substituted).

I was unable to find any reason for this practice other than that of avoiding the death of the child. It is evident, however, that this explanation does not exhaust the question, although it is entirely possible that the original and deeper meaning has been lost without leaving any trace in the minds of the present generation. (488)

3) During the entire duration of nursing, the mother must
853 not be separated from her child. For the usual circumstances of
853 daily life, this rule is broadly interpreted; but during sexual relations it is strict, and no exceptions or excuses are permitted. Negligence under these circumstances would inevitably bring about the death of the child by ndeta as soon as the mother took it back. This rule holds for legitimate relations as much as for illicit ones. Therefore the mother must always keep her child at her breast.

4) If at some point during nursing, the milk no longer flows
853 in sufficient quantity, the mother is given a potion consisting of
[751] the extract of the bark of the bolingo tree (which has a fruit con-
[276] taining a very sweet milky sap). Then she eats vegetables called lonkfa. (1)

1. The leaves of this plant are also ordinarily eaten as vegetables, but they are consumed especially by those who possess the modern magical practice known as boyeli.

5) An accident to which the Nkundó attach great importance
[262] is the rejection or vomiting of milk into the mouth of an adult, even if the person affected is the infant's mother. Such a person

853 262 may not eat meat if the child is male, or fish if it is female, until the child in question is grown and kills either an animal (or bird) or a fish, according to the case, and has given it to the victim of the accident. If the child dies young, the person is accused of having violated the prohibition and is obliged to pay a large indemnity. This extremity is not usually reached, however, for the one to whom the accident has befallen scrupulously keeps away from everything that might cause this sort of murder. Then, if death occurs and he has nothing with which to reproach himself, he can resort to an ordeal or to the verdict of a test based on superstition. [563] In addition in villages that have Batwa, a woman of that race must nurse the child for an instant after the accident before its mother gives it her breast again. [497]

854 6) The child is carried on the shoulder, and as soon as it is capable of holding on, on the hip. It does not take many weeks for it to become accustomed to that position. When the mother has to hold it for a long period of time (during a march, on a trip, etc.), she puts it in a scarf-shoulder strap ([illegible]), made from creepers that are scraped and woven as for a mat, or from a cloth of raffia fibers, or even from a pelt (nowadays it is often made from a piece of European cloth). The scarf must be sturdy, for were it to tear and the infant fall, far-reaching consequences would result; all of that woman's subsequent children would be condemned to die in the mother's womb or during the period of nursing.

As the child grows it is sometimes carried astride the mother's back, either because she does not like to be separated from it, or because the tyranny of the little one forces her to keep it with her even during her work, errands, and even dances. She remedies this awkward situation if possible by resorting to the assistance of an older girl, a young niece or cousin, or a little boy from among the immediate kin.

When the child rests during the day, it is laid on an ordinary bed or on a movable bed ([illegible]), without any special arrangements. It has no difficulty sleeping soundly on such hard couches.

862 7) Weaning. Although a child is gradually accustomed to solid food, it does not stop nursing. As it grows older, the nursing times are spaced farther and farther apart. But the child

[illegible] does not really stop nursing till it is about two years old, and sometimes two and a half if it has a weak constitution.

Weaning is not accompanied by any ceremony or feast. In order to break the child's habit, the mother smears her nipples with the sap of the [illegible] fruit (a kind of small sweet pimento or [illegible] eggplant) or with a pimento-pepper extract ([illegible]). Sometimes she leaves the child with some relative (daughter, sister, etc.) for a time [430] while she lives elsewhere.

As we have seen above, after weaning, the [illegible] period comes to an end for the mother, and her infidelities no longer have repercussions on the life of her child.

[illegible] 8) If the mother dies while the infant is still being nursed, [illegible] the task of nursing is turned over to some woman who is disposed to undertake it even a [illegible], and there always is one. After the child is weaned the woman is suitably recompensed. The use of [illegible] goat's milk is unknown.

[illegible] 9) Young children frequently suffer convulsions. This illness is thought to be caused by birds, and for that reason it is called [illegible] [illegible] (bird). The Nkundo try to prevent it by hanging an amulet around children's necks; it is usually the clavicular triangle of a hen's carcass. In addition they know a remedy whose purpose is to strengthen the nerves: the child is laid on a mat stretched out anywhere on the road of the hut. An eyewash ([illegible]) is prepared from the sap of leaves from the [illegible] bush and extract of [illegible] (fruit of the [illegible]). Using a leaf shaped into a horn, a few drops are put into the child's eyes. Then the father or some other relative pulls out the mat from under the child and lifts it several times, shouting: [illegible].

[illegible] 10) No special importance is attached to teething. But a child whose upper teeth come in before the lower ones (a defect called [illegible]) is considered abnormal. Therefore he is forbidden to eat the first fruits of hunting or fishing in an enclosure ([illegible]), lest the latter lose their productivity.

Article V. Name Giving

553 Naming does not occur on any predetermined date. It is not delayed without a special reason. No feast or ceremony accompanies the event. The father simply puts colored powder on the child's forehead as a sign of joy.

It is the father's right to choose a name for his child. Sometimes he asks for the family's opinion. Preferably he gives names of his relatives, deceased or living, or sometimes his own. But it is proper to respect the mother's feelings also. Failure to take them into account could provoke the woman to cause an abortion in order to punish him for being so willful as to neglect her family.

[844] A painful childbirth, like the repeated death of preceding [847] children, is often attributed to the rancor of a dead person who is discontented. In such a situation the Nkundó await the verdict [787] of a dream, or they have recourse to the judgment of a nkanga (doctor-magician) in order to be able to satisfy the irascible dead.

If the situation recurs too often, the calamity is attributed 553 to a rivalry between dead persons who are fighting over which of 551 their respective names should be given to the newborn; the envious loser kills the child. In order to avoid such mean vengeance and make everyone content while satisfying none, the father gives the child a neutral name or a Batswa name, such as Botswá, Sáka, Ékilima (nameless), Botsilɔ́ (lack of success, bad luck), Litɔ́li (dead without known cause), etc. If the child has already received a name, but for one reason or another the inauspicious fury of a ghost is feared, it is always possible to change from that name to another.

Children are usually given the names of relatives of the same sex. Exceptions are sometimes made, however, if one of the sexes is not sufficiently represented among the progeny, in which case the bearer of the name can always change it later, and he almost always does. Nevertheless, there are [500] no specifically male or female names, except for those that consist of the relative form of a verb, such as Ósámba, "the coquette," Óyémengo, "she who comes with plenty," Ótánji, "she who excels." Finally, certain names are sometimes used for either sex.

551 The etymology of most names is impossible to trace, and they have no meaning. Some are borrowed from the nomenclature of the realms of nature or of things, but no attention is paid to their original meaning, and allusions to it -- sometimes attempted by certain Europeans -- are either not understood or badly received. Other names are dictated by the child's constitution, for example Ókunjoló, "who will be buried even today," or Báwâólóí, "one dies only later." (1) Names sometimes also commemorate a special event, such as a great mourning (Báwâ, "they die"; Bálela, "people weep"), a rivalry (Báunela, "they fight for," meaning that two men are rivals for the possession of the mother of the child to whom the name is given). Finally, some names carry the meaning of a saying, such as Báwake, "all men must die," etc.

1. Both names are intended to prevent allusions to the child's debility and to express the equivalent of the saying: it is but a life of languor.

In closing let us repeat that persons who bear the same [572] name are often bound by a special friendship, give each other presents, and help each other. However, such a relationship does not entitle persons of different sexes to have intimate relations with each other, and if they do so such relations are treated as concubinage or simply adultery.

Article VI. Twins

845 ✓ Although for the Nkundó the birth of twins (baása, sing. jása), does not have the importance that other peoples attach to it [501], it does have some special features, the chief of which is the absence of the prohibitions and regulations that go with ordinary births. Twins are free from all common prohibitions; they are fulíngú. (1) Let is examine the details.

1. This is true even with respect to abstentions during mourning.

845 [202] The event is announced by the usual signal, but the signal is doubled or, if the children are of different sexes, the signal for each sex is given once. It is followed by the dance beat: two [535] or three long and two short.

The next day the father's relatives go outside the village, 845 778 preferably to a crossroads. On each side they plant a stalk of lokófolólókó. All around the stalk they spread a little heap of small branches and various leaves called ilkó. It is a sign and a place of benediction and good fortune. Each passer-by stops, picks two leaves, places one on each pile, spits on it, and says twè.(2) Then

2. Onomatopoeia for "spit."

they clap hands and twice sing out, yelí yeye. Such behavior brings the benediction of the twins upon a person's journey, his undertakings, his marriage. The umbilical cord as well as the placenta and membrane are buried under the heap.

845 382 [384] Every morning the mother and father draw two stripes with kaolin on the middle of their foreheads and on their arms, above and below the elbow. They do the same to the twins. (3) They

3. Sometimes a double stripe is added at the temples The kaolin may be used pure or mixed with the red paint called ngóla.

continue doing so until the child is weaned. If after that time one of the children falls ill, they begin again treating him in this manner until he is cured, taking care not to omit his brother, lest he too fall ill. For while these designs are signs of joy, they are [751] above all a prophylactic measure against children's fever (ikótswáki), [502] called wásanyi when it occurs in twins or in a child following them, and manifests itself chiefly by tumors of the head and face.

845 551 Twins are invariably called Mbóyó and Bokétu, names given to the first born and the second respectively, whatever their sex. The Bombwanja (like the Ekonda) use the names Mbóó and Mpia, respectively. The mother takes the name of Ǎmbá.

845 However, these names are not used exclusively by such persons;
551 they may be given to others as well. The father, on the other hand, does not receive a new name; but he bears the title is'éy'âfé, which literally means "father of two." (1) Twins are also said to be Åmbâmba (pl. byÅmbâmba) from the verb -âmba, "to accept, to receive," because they are permitted to accept and to take everything, since none of the usual prohibitions apply to them.

The mother of twins is not required to go into seclusion
845 (nyang'éy'afsa ilóko wakelé). The shed belonging to the head
593 of the clan, that is, the one in whose home important animals (leopards, etc.) are dismembered, is set up for her. (2) The shed is closed by means of palms. Neither the parents, nor the helper, nor the persons who enter this place are required to observe continence or the other prohibitions involved in ekelé.

All the members of the kin group come to greet the twins
845 and give each one a present (hens, knives, arrows, food), which is received by the father or the mother. Whenever anything is given to one of the twins, even if it is the smallest object, the same must be given to the other; otherwise the latter would die. If the mother takes one in her arms, the other one must also be picked up, either by her or by the father. If she strikes one, she must also strike his brother. This [503] duality therefore applies to everything, and with even greater reason to nursing.

If a twin child cries or is ill, the parents must sing and
[534] dance to the accompaniment of a lokolé and a ngbeno drum, a ceremony called -bénga bafsa. If someone invites a twin or his

1. Among the Ekonda he is called Buka.

2. Therefore, at the bonaonga place or the place of dismembering important animals (nyama ya bikofo, literally "superb animals").

845 parents to the dance, they must go. When the mother passes a
[178] crossroads or the dwelling place of a spirit or an [illegible] (a place where the Nkundó gather for magical practices, oracles, etc.), she also sings and dances in honor of the spirit, so that he will favor her
845 children. Various songs are popular, such as: Elima ë'Àmɔlá
573 tongɔlɔla yelí yeye, "Spirit of Àmɔlá, do not weep; (1) [illegible] la

1. Tongɔlɔla is an archaic form still in use among the Ekonda, etc

[illegible] ë'Àmɔlá [illegible] [illegible], [illegible] bilingɔ yelí yeye, "Àmɔlá's [illegible] and [illegible], do not bruise yourself, do not stir, do not eat bilingɔ mushrooms"; [illegible] 'a [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] yelí yeye, "[illegible] and [illegible], I surround my mother with abundance"; [illegible]'a [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] yelí yeye, "I shall fall ill, and yet I will walk (be well)"; [illegible]'a [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] yelí yeye, "difficult childbirth," etc.

845 Foods forbidden to twins are the mushrooms called bilingɔ
262 (or bilingɔndo or [illegible]), the [illegible] antelope, and the [illegible] yam, which is also forbidden to parents whose child is not yet weaned. (2)

2. This prohibition extends to all food cooked in pots in which such forbidden foods have been prepared. The extension is characteristic of all alimentary prohibitions.

845 When traveling, the parents of twins gird themselves with the
487 creeping plant called boyayenge, or wear it like a strap over the shoulder The mother also attaches a bell to it. Their hair is often
[301] adorned with two feathers from the tail of a gray parrot ([illegible]) and two feathers from a white hen. [504]

845 The greeting to parents of twins and their reply must always
576 be double: w'ɔ́ná w'ɔ́ná, the reply om'ɔ́ná om'ɔ́ná; ɔ́lyé, ɔ́lyé, the reply bɔ́ka bɔ́ka. Note that the last greeting is not replied to differently

576
845 from the others. They thus rank with the great notables of the past. [sic]

845 When the children grow up and become self-sufficient, all the special regulations lose their force and they become like
591 everybody else. Nothing distinguishes them from the rest in marriage, death, etc. No preference is shown for or against them. But their descendants will again produce twins.

845 Thus the Nkundó consider twins as extraordinary children, but they do not carry this view to extremes. They are pleased to receive two children at a time, although they believe that under such circumstances the pregnancy and delivery are more dangerous for the mother. That is why she is called [illegible] since, despite the seriousness of the situation, she did not die. This epithet is also applied to the father and to the twins, probably for the same reason as well as because of their immunity with respect to prohibitions. If the twins are of different sexes, however, the mother is not as likely to be called [illegible], since she is [illegible], "harmful." (1)

1. See above, Article II, 3.

845 It is apparent from the above description that twins are
787 considered to be somewhat tainted with magic. The existence of
757 this belief is confirmed by the prohibition against throwing anything (stone, palm kernel, etc.) onto their hut, the same prohibition applying to anyone who possesses a charm or practices sorcery or protective magic. In addition they possess a certain innate ability to cast a spell over the activities (hunting, fishing) of others. That is why persons who are afraid of being harmed by them smear themselves with kaolin in the same way as do such children and their parents. [301]

845 The Nkundó have had cases of triplets, but they are extremely rare. The youngest of the three is called [illegible], or [illegible], or [illegible]. The only special practice with reference to the youngest one is that he can never be ordered to do any work, be sent to carry a message, run any errand, etc., [illegible].

845 In other respects he is not differentiated from the other two. Greetings are not tripled in the case of triplets.

A child born directly after twins is called Wotsji (from otsja, "to repeat"). He is in no way different from other children.

Article VII. Circumcision

Circumcision is generally practiced. It does not have to 307 be performed at any particular age. It is usually done during childhood before the tenth year. The more timorous put it off until puberty or even later. Special customs of individual clans sometimes set a time. Thus, a man of the village of Bosombó is not allowed to be circumcised until he has killed an animal at the hunt. On the other hand, the season during which circumcisions are performed is specified: they must take place during the period when the water level is low.

The operation may be performed by any man who is expert at it. It is carried out behind the huts. No one but the boys being operated on and their fathers are present. The boys stand in a group somewhat apart from the proceedings but place themselves so that with their eyes they can follow the treatment to which their companion is being subjected. The patient squats. One of the elderly assistants places his hands over the boy's eyes so that he cannot see what is happening. The person performing the operation has already dug a small pit to catch the blood. He pulls the foreskin, ties it with a string, and then uses ashes to trace the line which must be followed by the empóng knife that is used on such occasions. When the blood has stopped flowing, he chews some bondóngó [824] pepper (Aframomum . . .) or, preferably, [506] a caudal fin of [825] the ngolo fish and then spits it onto the wound. The resulting sensation is very painful. But the patient shows that he is brave; for if he cries he is mocked by his companions.

As long as the wound is not healed, the boy must not use [262] manioc leaves (bangfoju) or manioc bread in the preparation of bosombó or lofto. Nor may he eat the skin, head, or tail of fish.

While the wound is healing, the boy who has been circumcised is cared for, washed, etc., by his mother or, if he has reached

845 puberty, by his father. The performance of this rule entails continence (bekeka) for the person who undertakes it, even with respect to the spouse. A violation of this rule prevents healing of the wound or at least makes the process very long and difficult. (1)

[855] 1. A similar bekeka applies to anyone nursing a large gangrenous ulcer (wálí).

The foreskin that has been cut off is dried on the boliló (tray or shelf). Then no one bothers with it any longer, and it usually remains there, dusty and dirty, for an indefinite period of time if the rats leave it alone.

In the custom the young people are beginning to neglect [177] the native skilled in circumcising and resort instead to European surgeons.

Circumcision is not an occasion for feasts or ceremonies. [illegible] Sometimes a man who is rich and vain will give a feast, but this is not at all a common practice.

The term "to circumcise" is translated in Lonkundo as téna bongwé, "to cut off the foreskin." The less vulgar term and one used much more frequently is téna nsongé, "to cut off the tip." A much too decent circumlocution is téna batói, "to cut off the ears."

The reason for this custom has already been given in Chapter I, Part II, Article II, 2.

Article VIII. Education

From an early age a Nkundó child must perform various 861 small services for his parents, especially in the household; he is 857 asked to draw water, fetch firewood, take care of a little brother or sister, etc. The demands for such services are addressed chiefly to girls, but boys are not at all exempt. By the very nature of things, however, the latter are less frequently asked to help.

Quite early a boy may accompany his father on trips, at meetings, legal debates, etc. The father makes a bow and arrows for him and teaches him the art of using them. The great pastime

857 868 for young boys is hunting and fishing by all sorts of methods suitable for their age. Little by little an adolescent learns the usual tasks and everything that he needs to know in order to survive and obtain food and shelter. His instruction is completed by his companions and above all by the exigencies of life.

A girl learns housework and farming. Very early her mother braids a small basket for her in order to accustom her to carrying loads. She also participates in the women's fishing.

In general one has the impression that the girls are far more active than the boys. But I think that this difference is due to the fact that the boys are almost always in the forest, while the girls remain in the village and are therefore noticed more. As a matter of fact in our missions it cannot be said that the boys work less well than the girls, quite the contrary.

The girls practice the culinary art, not only with their mothers but also -- as in Belgium -- in a game ([illegible]).

The children do not study the history, laws, and traditions 867 869 of their clan or tribe. They learn them in the [308] course of events, either by hearing them described or by asking questions. Often their parents explain such matters on their own initiative, not according to a definite program but rather when opportunities arise. A young man can learn many things especially by accompanying his father on visits, on trips, at meetings and deliberations, or by listening attentively to the performances of troubadours who play the longombe (mandolin). The astonishing knowledge of usages and customs, ancestral laws, history, the wisdom of the ancients, proverbs, fables, etc., possessed by some youngsters, to the point of excelling their elders, can be explained by their faithfulness in following papa instead of continuously enjoying the freedom of the forest. I have encountered more than one instance of this sort which was explained primarily on the basis of the boy's attachment to his father.

The Nkundó child begins to hum popular tunes and imitate [illegible] the rhythmic movements of the dancers when he is barely able to walk. Little girls, especially, practice special dances of their own. Then, little by little, the children mix with the group of adult dancers and are able to join the chorus, though they must remain in the rear.

868 Parents teach their children the trades that they themselves know: forging, wood sculpture, the weaving of mats and baskets, pottery making, etc.

867 With respect to ethics, the children learn a great deal from experience, but parents do not fail to teach them rules of politeness, decorum, good breeding, and the great principles of social relations. As in Europe, however, there are degrees of concern or indifference in this realm. The moral code taught is the one the parents themselves practice. It is centered above all on family and society: respect toward members of the family, mutual assistance, respect for the welfare of others, fear of the opposite sex, etc. But all of it has a naturalistic basis: the reason given for adherence to such precepts is limited to the unpleasant consequences [101] that would otherwise result. Reprimands and even corporal punishments for infractions are not unknown. But they are chiefly due to exasperation and therefore mixed with anger and without any continuity or consistent idea. Once the anger has passed the threats remain sterile. For punishment the parents [861] resort chiefly to blows, but other penalties are also common. For instance, one of our catechists when he was young (between 1880 and 1890) had removed a little bird trapped in a snare belonging to one of his cousins. As soon as his father heard what he had done, he gave the youngster a good scolding and made him go to bed without supper.

As a girl approaches puberty, her mother teaches her the rights and duties of a married woman. She teaches her how to behave and conduct herself in order to be a good wife and mother. She does this so that her daughter may find a good husband, and so that the union may be stable and not produce too many palavers or trouble.

Formerly, children were not allowed to see the dances of adults. They were chased away and had to amuse each other. This was an excellent means for preserving morality among the youth and retaining their respect for their elders. Therefore it is most regrettable that it has been abandoned.

881 When the children reach puberty, they no longer like to sleep in their parent's home. The parents do not send them away, but on the other hand, they do not oppose this desire on the part of young people which, they say, springs from a feeling of modesty. The boys go one way, the girls another; for example, they may appropriate an unoccupied hut belonging to their father or go to close relatives, or they may try and find a place in quarters occupied by a group of boys or girls. If no house is available, the boys band together to build a hut which they share. Nowadays they begin very early [330] to build individual huts or one for two, in order to thus enjoy a greater freedom.

861 On the trees in the forest one finds a kind of hard mushroom called [illegible]. When a child begins to speak, the mushroom is placed between his teeth, so that he will bite into it and thus learn not to express himself thoughtlessly but to hold back his words ([illegible]) and think before speaking.

One can often observe parents and other persons actively helping children to express themselves correctly, especially in correcting mistakes, pronunciation, and errors with regard to proper nouns, by giving them the proper words and even explaining grammatical forms and subtle distinctions between certain terms. "This is how it must be said; that means something else. This plant is called thus and so, etc."

861 Therefore, although a Nkundó child is very free to spend his days as he pleases and, perforce, learns many things through personal experience, it would be wrong to say that his parents are not interested in his education and do not contribute to it. They participate actively by their advice, their explanations, and their demonstrations. Needless to say, their role is neither as important nor as continuous as in many civilized societies. Besides it is very difficult, and often unfair, to compare our people's situation with that of Europeans; the difference in circumstances is too great. But we must point out in all fairness that the Nkundó do make efforts in this realm, although the results are hardly apparent with respect to moral education (1), because there are many flaws, gaps,

1. We will say no more about material and economic education, which can not be criticized.

6. errors, and obstacles, the most important of which should be considered. [511]

1) First of all education begins too late. To be crowned with success such efforts should be begun as early as possible. And among the Nkundó, a child is not considered old enough to be given lessons or punished until he is fairly well developed (usually at about six years of age).

2) In their pedagogy the Nkundó do not take into account the relationship between cause and effect with respect to the acquisition of bad habits. They react against censurable actions, but they do not attack their roots by opposing the beginning of them. Thus, they do not understand that if the desires and whims of a small child, for example with respect to nursing, demands for food, the desire to be fondled and carried, etc., are continually satisfied, he will necessarily become an unruly little tyrant who wants to be satisfied in every way.

3) The Nkundó have no systematic idea or consistency in correcting faults and punishing misbehavior; as we have seen, punishment by Nkundó parents most frequently takes the form of sudden explosions of anger and indignation. The purpose of the punishment is not apparent to the child, and the only result obtained is a fear of being chastised. There may be fortunate exceptions, but these are surely extremely rare. Generally, parents follow the impulse of the moment, and the youngsters take advantage of these impulses. The gravity of such a situation stands out clearly in the following case history: Isia (now a man between thirty and forty) was amusing himself by shooting arrows. One of his father's wives, named Bokeli, appeared, accompanied by Bakutu, a young sister of Isia. The youngster reproved Bokeli: "What are you doing here with my sister? If she is hit by an arrow, the palaver will be yours." The woman insulted him. The boy threatened to shoot at her. Thereupon his father, Bolékálá, intervened, saying, "If you dare touch my wife, I [512] will kill one of your mothers." (1) Isia's retort was to shoot at Bokeli saying,

1. That is, either his mother (Botafnanya) or her sister and ebfsa, Basfmi.

[illegible] "Well, then, let them both die." (2) His father wanted to catch

2. That is, if my mother is to die, you, Bokelli, will die also (a common retort in such cases).

him, but the agile youngster fled to the forest. As he did not return home that evening, everyone became frightened. Finally, he answered the call of his aunt Bongilia and came back. The moral of the story: everyone was happy to see him again, and there was no more question of punishment. (3)

3. According to the Nkundó jurisprudence, the wrong was actually on Bokelli's side because she started the insults. But the reaction was excessive, nevertheless.

An even stronger example is that of Esald (now between forty and fifty), who was insulted by his mother Bosala for some misdeed. He shot at her and wounded her on the forehead. To flee his father's anger he withdrew to the forest. He was called and came back. That ended the palaver. (4)

4. As a matter of fact, a Nkundó fable teaches that a person should not be left under the sway of rage, especially if he has withdrawn to the forest, because he may become a misanthrope as a result, producing even more deplorable consequences (vagrancy, murders, etc.).

595
86 4) There is a lack of cooperation between the spouses. Each one acts on his own initiative and out of his own indignation. More than that they contradict each other; one will punish the child, and the other tries to protect it, either directly or indirectly, by reprimanding the spouse.

593
861 Women in particular are very intolerant of having anyone touch their children, even the child's own father. This fact can be attributed in part to a lack of any unity of feeling between the spouses and partly to maternal love, which is purely natural, psycho-physiological, so to speak.

Measures taken against a child who has misbehaved often

593
861 result in serious domestic quarrels, sometimes followed by the wife's flight to her family. Such was the case of Bekoto b'Ofengi (born around 1880). His father, Bolekaji, had forbidden him to peel a piece of sugar cane [512] in a clumsy and wasteful manner. The boy did not want to listen to reason. Next thing you know he had cut a deep wound in his finger. "What did I tell you!" shouted the father. "Now you are punished for your disobedience." Thereupon the mother, Mbilå, flew into a rage. "Oh! You are killing my child!" and so on. She rolled up her mats, took her baskets on her back, and took the path leading to her village.

Nkundó casuistry includes the case -- which seems hypothetical or at least belonging to the past, for I have never known or heard of a real instance -- of a man taking revenge on his wife for having insulted his child. His revenge took the form of ordering the child to go and kill a goat belonging to her mother's clan, thus obliging the child to pay an indemnity to the owner, so that the mother finds herself thus being punished by her family. The father's right to do this is recognized in Nkundó jurisprudence. But from the standpoint of education the solution is far from ideal.

8) The influence of the kin group also plays a great role.

602
861 The Nkundó are very much attached to their families. Their children are at home everywhere in the group. A wife has very close ties to her own family. The father's brothers and sisters are a child's "fathers"; his maternal aunts and uncles are his "mothers." A child's real father does not do much to defend his son against scolding or punishment from his own close kin but does not readily accept the intervention of his wife's family, and vice versa. And again the child can take advantage of such dissension. The situation occurs quite frequently although there are many exceptions.

6) The parent's opposition to reprimands by strangers is
861 even greater as a general rule. They try to cover up and justify
869 the faults of their progeny, whom they will fiercely defend. The
children naturally know all this and take advantage of it.

7) The polygamous household, with all its rivalries among
595-6 co-wives, cannot but accentuate all such [314] adverse effects
596 on the children's education. The conflicts, spiteful comments,
861 palavers, etc., are easily extended to the children. And each
wife defends her own.

8) Everything is public; there are no secrets; everything
591 is known, seen, and heard. People do not restrain themselves
861 and the presence of children does not stop the flow of insults and
obscenities which anger provokes. The young people see many
things it would be better for them not to know. They are present
at domestic quarrels and are witnesses to dissensions. All this is
increased by life outdoors, in the street, and by the thinness of
partitions.

9) Another factor is added nowadays: the facility of com-
177 munications and the presence of European stations. Boys can al-
591 ways run away and find shelter with the Whites or their native em-
861 ployees. The girls seek out kinswomen who live at such stations,
even though they must help a little with the housework, in the
hope of later enjoying a greater freedom and living in luxury.
Parental influence and authority are naturally weakened as a result.

10) Finally, Nkundó education lacks any solid basis, any
861 religion or religious morality. Everything is based on natural,
physical fear: the fear of punishments (physical or based on super-
stition), harmful consequences of bad actions (palavers, difficulties,
fines, indemnities, sometimes the shame of being caught -- as in
theft). It is especially this lack of religious motivation that makes
their moral education bear so little fruit. As the Nkundó are
accustomed to this imperfect state, they do not feel the need for
000 such a foundation. That is why it is so difficult to instill any moral
conscience into them. The patient and perservering action of the
great Christian truths with their institutions for moral formation
(uninterrupted preaching, confession, prayer) are needed to endow

(592) this people with a sense of duty, that individual conscience of which they are so imperatively in need. [515]

Article IX. Rights Over the Children

593* 591 Without repeating everything on this subject that is to be found at various points in this work, it is nevertheless appropriate to summarize here the various considerations and conclusions concerning the rights over children.

The great principle dominating the entire question is the Roman adage: Pater is est quem nuptiae demonstrant. The legitimate husband is the legal father of his wife's child. Without marriage the natural father has no rights.

584 591 593* Consequently, children conceived in adultery belong exclusively to the husband (Chapter VI, Article VIII). Since relations with a widow who is not yet legitimately remarried is adultery, a child born as a result of such relations is legally the heir's child. (Chapter III, Article II). The same rule, mutatis mutandis, applies to a divorcée before a regular remarriage (Chapter VIII, Article III, 1).

The child of an independent woman has no legal father. Consequently, it belongs to the mother's family and remains illegitimate (otomolá; otomolá ĕkáká is the name by which his grandfather calls him). (Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 3.) But if the natural father marries the mother, he can obtain the child by paying an extra "slave" for it. In any case he must pay the complete bride price. If he does not marry the mother, he has no rights whatsoever over the child; however, this rule is in the process of changing in the northwest corner of the region under discussion (Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 3).

This legitimation is not required if the pregnancy began after bride-price payments were begun. It can take place even after the mother's death by means of the above-mentioned payment. Such cases of posthumous legitimization sometimes occur in relation to children born of extra-customary [extracoutumiere] unions contracted during the early period of colonization. [516]

861
595 A father's rights over his child are not unassailable. He can lose them, especially if he neglects to fulfill certain duties because such conduct is equivalent to disowning. Among the duties whose neglect results in the loss of rights over the children are the following:

1) The completion of the bride price.

2) The fulfillment of funerary duties (burial, payments).

3) The relinquishment of a portion of the bride price to be restituted in case of divorce.

4) The performance of duties toward the child. Only instances of gross negligence, constituting real abandonment, enter into consideration here -- especially an illegitimate refusal to obtain the means for a son to get married. The case cited in Chapter II, Article XI, 3 and similar instances also fall into this category.

Conclusions

58 At the end of this work we shall sum up the conclusions it suggests to us:

1) Among the Nkundó marriage consists of a union between a man and a woman, constituted through the payment of certain valuables. This payment is made by the husband, through the intermediation of one or more official witnesses, to the wife's parents; it is counterbalanced by a payment of valuables on the part of the woman's family to the husband and his family.

2) There are various sorts of conjugal unions which differ somewhat from this standard form: the inheritance of a widow by a distant relative of the husband; the substitution -- during life or after death -- of a kinswoman who continues the union begun by a woman now deceased or divorced; [517] the offer of a wife in exchange for the performance of an important service; a certain kind of exchange and, in some tribes, purchase; and union with a slave.

3) Apart from the question of the Batswa, obstacles to marriage are due to kinship and affinity.

4) Married life is regulated by rules which are well defined and wise, but infractions are committed. Adultery is condemned and repressed, but the Nkundó concept of it is not the same as ours, and they accept certain exceptions.

5) Polygamy is highly regarded; the practice is governed by definite rules, and the first wife occupies a rank of precedence in the family and in society.

6) Divorce is permitted under fairly strict conditions, and the dissolution of marriage is regulated by suitable laws.

7) Legal stipulations which must be adhered to at the time of death demonstrate the precedence of marriage over blood ties and prove that a wife really belongs to her husband, although she remains a member of her own clan. Furthermore, the husband's death does not break the marriage for the widow.

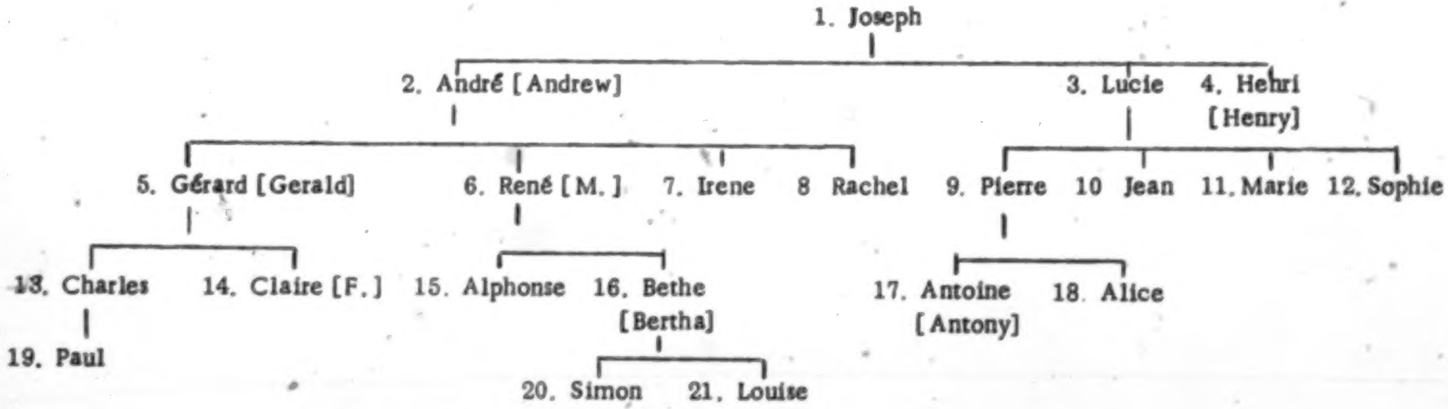
8) Children belong to the legal father.

On the whole, we can conclude that although the Nkundó's marriage institutions are not without defect from our point of view, they nevertheless appear well organized and in no way "savage." They give an impression of clarity and wisdom, adaptability and flexibility, unity and logic -- wonderful qualities which many European legal systems can envy and which demonstrate the remarkable organization the interesting Nkundó people have been able to attain. [518]

Appendix

Kinship Terminology. Genealogical Table

(N. B. To facilitate a clear indication of sexes, we are using European names [for the same purpose, English names are in brackets where they differ from the French.])


1. Joseph
2. André [Andrew]
3. Lucie
4. Henri [Henry]
5. Gérard [Gerald]
6. René [M.]
7. Irene
8 Rachel
9. Pierre
10 Jean
11. Marie
12. Sophie
13. Charles
14. Claire [F.]
15. Alphonse
16. Bethe [Bertha]
17. Antoine [Antony]
18. Alice
19. Paul
20. Simon
21. Louise

2: Hulstaert--486 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

601

1. For 1 – 13 and 14 are bonkánola, pl. bankánola.
For 13 and 14 – 1 is nkǫ́kǫǫlǫ, pl. bankǫ́kǫǫlǫ.
2. For 2, 3, and 4 – 13 and 14 are bonkána, pl. bankána.
For 13 and 14 – 2, 3, and 4 are nkǫ́ko (nyangó), pl. bankǫ́kǫ (nyangó).
3. For 1 – 2, 3, and 4 are bǒna, pl. bǎna.
For 2, 3, and 4 –1 is isɛ́, pl. baisɛ́ (relative to the first person, fafá, pl. bafafá).
4. For 3 – 9, 10, etc., are bǒna, pl. bǎna.
For 9, 10, etc., – 3 is nyangó, pl. banyangó (relative to the first person, ngóya, bangóya).
5. For 5 – 6 is bokúnɛ́, pl. bakúnɛ́.
For 7 – 8 is bokúnɛ́, pl. bakúnɛ́.
For 6 – 5 is botómóló, pl. batómóló (relative to the first person; mâlɛ́, bomâlɛ́).
For 8 — 7 is botómóló, pl. batómóló (relative to the first person; mâlɛ́, bamâlɛ́).
6. For 5 and 6 – 7 and 8 are nkâna, pl. bankâna.
For 7 and 8 – 5 and 6 are nkâna, pl. bankâna.
7. For 5, 6, 7, and 8 – 3 is isómoto, pl. baisómoto (for the first person; faómoto, pl. bafaómoto).
For 3 – 5, 6, 7, and 8 are bónankáná, pl. banánkáná.
8. For 9, 10, 11 and 12 – 2 and 4 are nyangômpámɛ́, pl. banyangômpámɛ́ (or nyangóbika) (for the first person; ngômpámɛ́, bangôpámɛ́).
For 2 and 4 – 9, 10, 11, and 12 are bǒnankáná, pl. bǎnankáná.
9. For 13 and 14 – 6 is isɛ́ (ɛ́y'ǒnolu).
For 6 – 13 and 14 are bǎna.
10. For 15 and 16 – 5 is isɛ́ (ɛ́â mpaka).
For 5 – 15 and 16 are bǎna.
11. For 13, 14, 15, and 16 = 5, 6, 7, and 8.
12. For 14 – 20 and 21 are bǎna.
For 20 and 21 – 14 is nyangó.
13. For 13 – 20 and 21 are bǎnankáná.
For 20 and 21 – 13 is nyangômpámɛ́.

601

14. For 9, 10, 11, and 12 – 5, 6, 7, and 8 are bǎna.
For 5, 6, 7, and 8 – 9, 10, 11, and 12 are baisɛ́.

15. For 9, 10, etc. – 13, 14, 15, and 16 are bankána.
For 13, 14, 15, and 16 – 9, 10, 11, and 12 are bankɔ́kɔ.

16. For 5, 6, 7, and 8 – 17 and 18 are brothers and sisters, and vice versa.

17. For 13, 14, 15, and 16 – 17 and 18 are baisɛ́.
For 17 and 18 – 13, 14, 15, and 16 are bǎna.

18. For 19, 20, and 21 – 4 is nkɔ́kɔɔlɔ.
For 4 – 19, 20, and 21 are bankánola.

19. For 19 – 15 is isɛ́.
For 15 – 19 is bɔ̌na.

20. For 19 – 14 and 16 are baisómoto.
For 14 and 16 – 19 is bɔ̌na.

21. For 19 – 20 and 21 are baisómoto.
For 20 and 21 – 19 is bɔ̌na.

2: Hulstaert
101, 131, 563, 619

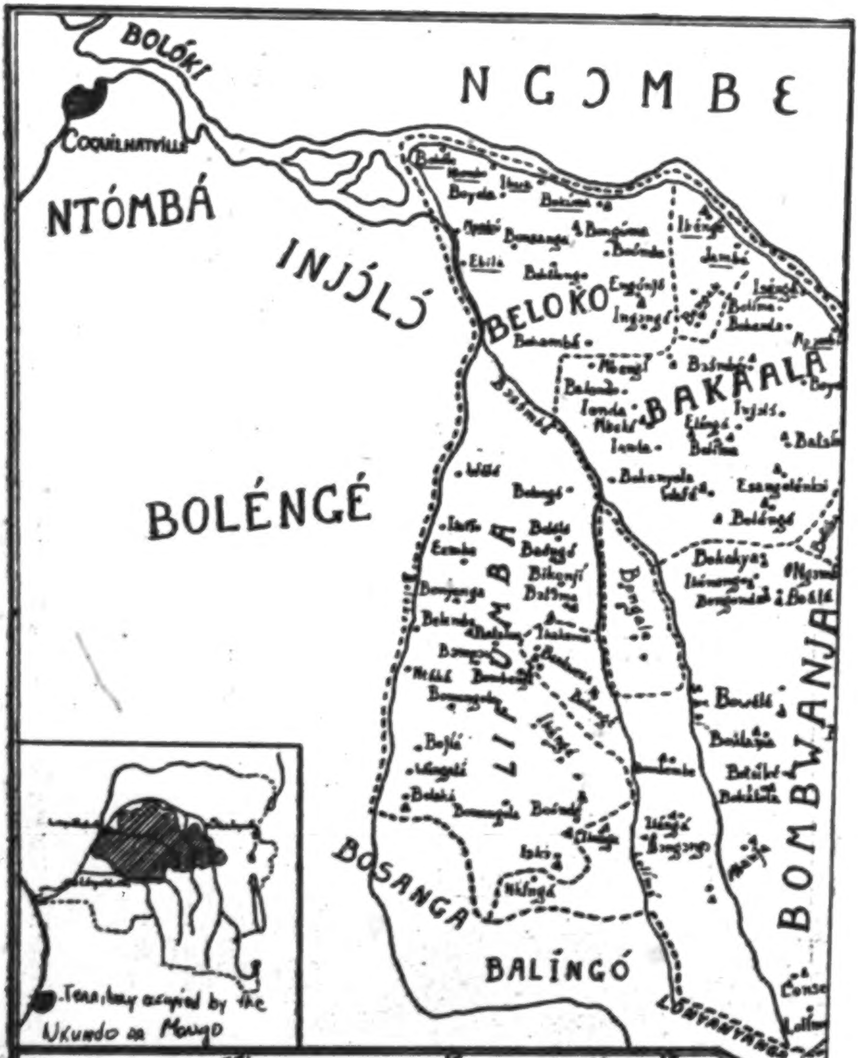
Mongo FO32

/The division of sections in the end map is as follows:/

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H

2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

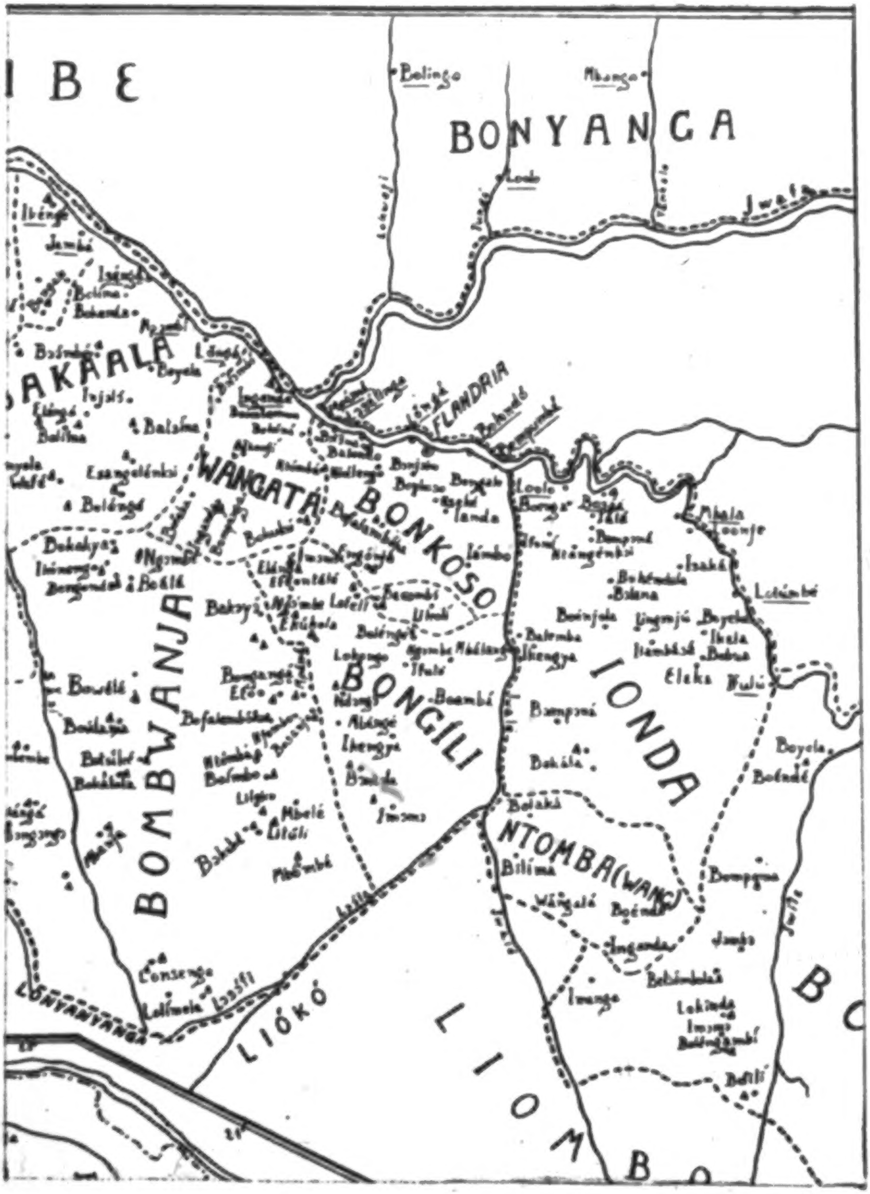
101
131
563
619


BOLÓKI
COQUILHATVILLE
NGƆMBE
NTÓMBÁ
INJƆ́LƆ́
BELOKO
BAKAALA
BOLÉNGÉ
BOMBWANJA
BOSANGA
BALÍNGÓ
Territory occupied by the Nkundu or Mongo
Congo
NTÓMBA

[End Map (A)]

2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

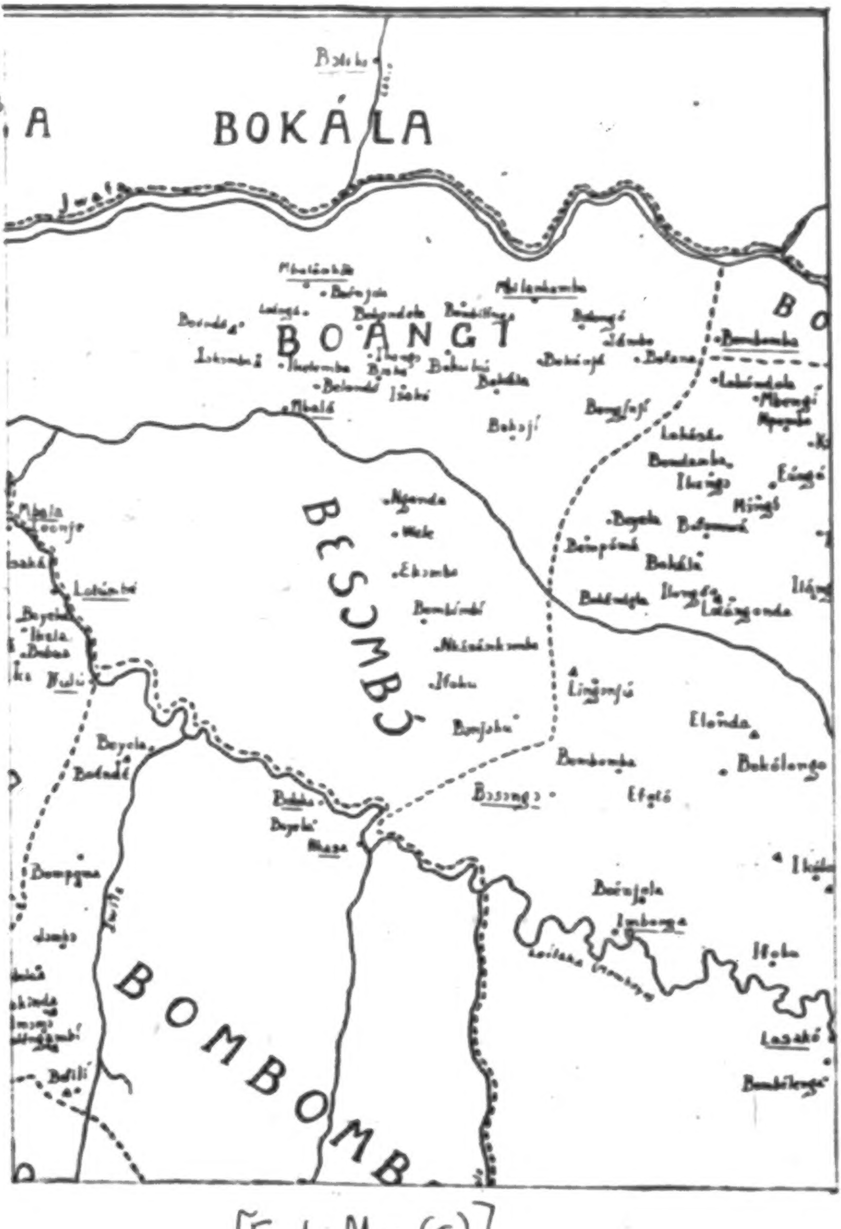
101
131
563
619


IBE
Bolingo
Mbongo
BONYANGA
Loolo
Jwala
Ibenge
Jambé
Bolima
Bokonda
AKAALA
Bosombé
Boyela
Injolo
Etangé
Balima
Balsima
Ingende
WANGATA
Esangelenkoi
Bolengé
Bokakyas
Bongondo
Bolili
FLANDRIA
Bokondo
Bonjoko
Bongale
BONKOSO
Ionda
Iombo
Loolo
Bongo
Bompond
Bokotola
Bolana
Boinjolo
Mbala
Loonje
Isaka
Lotumbé
Boyela
Ikala
Botma
Eleka
Kulu
Balomba
Ilenga
IONDA
Bamponi
Bokala
BONGILI
Boambé
Ilenga
Ikenge
Bakoya
Mbole
Bokele
BOMBWANJA
Bosatambika
Boatélé
Bosolapa
Bosombo
Bongange
Ntomba
Bokala
NTOMBA(WANGI)
Bilima
Wangalé
Boende
Bompona
Ingende
Jamba
Bokondakai
Lokinda
Imonge
Bolili
Boyela
Bolende
Imanga
Consenga
Lolimola
LONYANYANGA
LIOKO
LIOMBO
BO
BO

[End Map (B)]

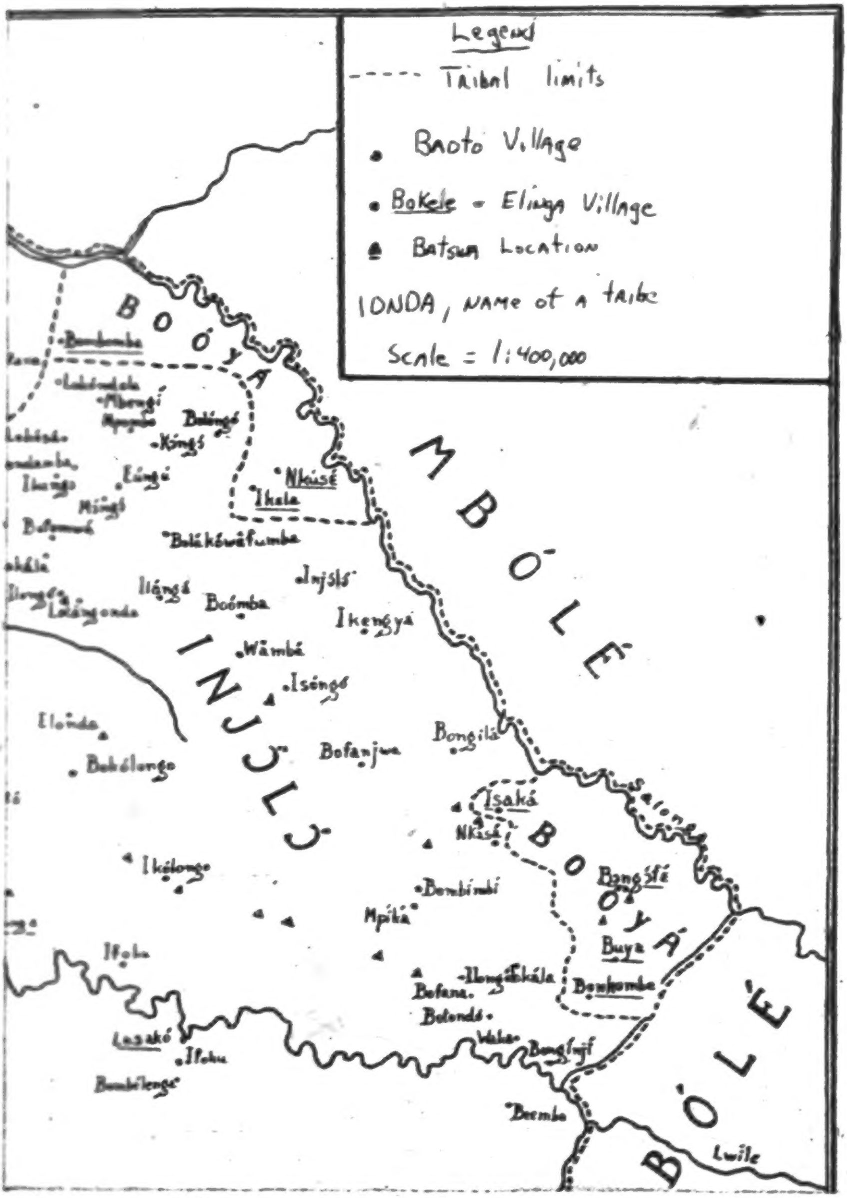
2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

101
131
563
619


A
BOKÁLA
BOANGI
BO
BƐSƆMBƆ́
BOMBOMB
Bombomba
Lokóndola
Mbongi
Ngonda
Ekombe
Bombímbí
Lingonjú
Elonda
Bokólongo
Bombomba
Boyela
Bompona
Imbonga
Ilofo

[End Map (C)]

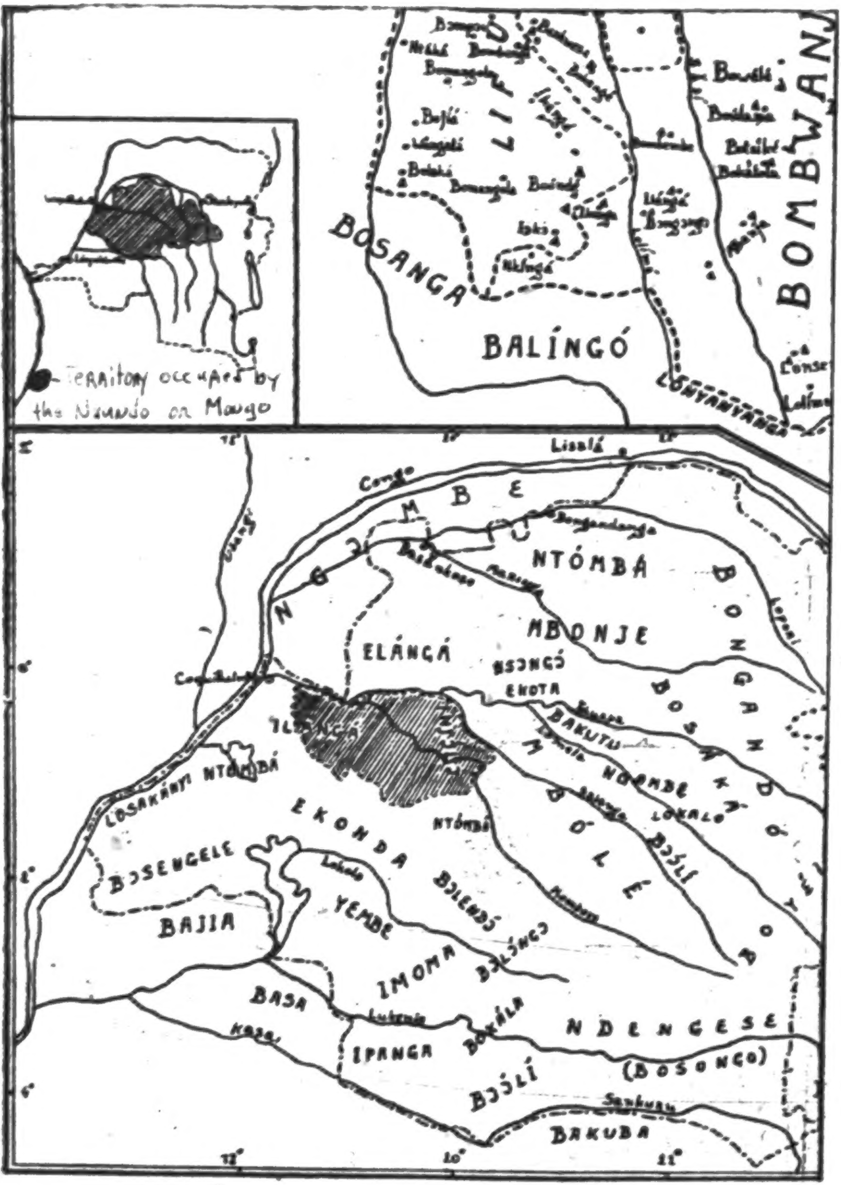
101
131
563
619


Legend
Tribal limits
Baoto Village
Bokele - Elinga Village
Batsun Location
IONDA, name of a tribe
Scale = 1:400,000
BOÓYA
MBÓLÉ
INJƆLƆ
BOÓYA
BÓLÉ
Bombomba
Mbongí
Bolɔ́ngɔ́
Kóngó
Nkúsé
Ikela
Elingá
Mɔ́ngɔ́
Bolɔ́kówáfumba
Injɔlɔ
Ilángá
Lokángonda
Boómba
Ikengya
Wámbá
Iséngé
Iloonda
Bokólongo
Bofanjwa
Bongilá
Salonga
Isaká
Nkúsé
Bombimbi
Bangɔ́lé
Buya
Mpiká
Ikólongo
Ifoku
Ilongá Ekála
Bofana
Bolondó
Bomkomba
Waka
Bongíngí
Lusakó
Ifoku
Bombólenge
Bombo
Lwile

[End Map(D)]

2:Hulstaert ~~M 5~~ (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

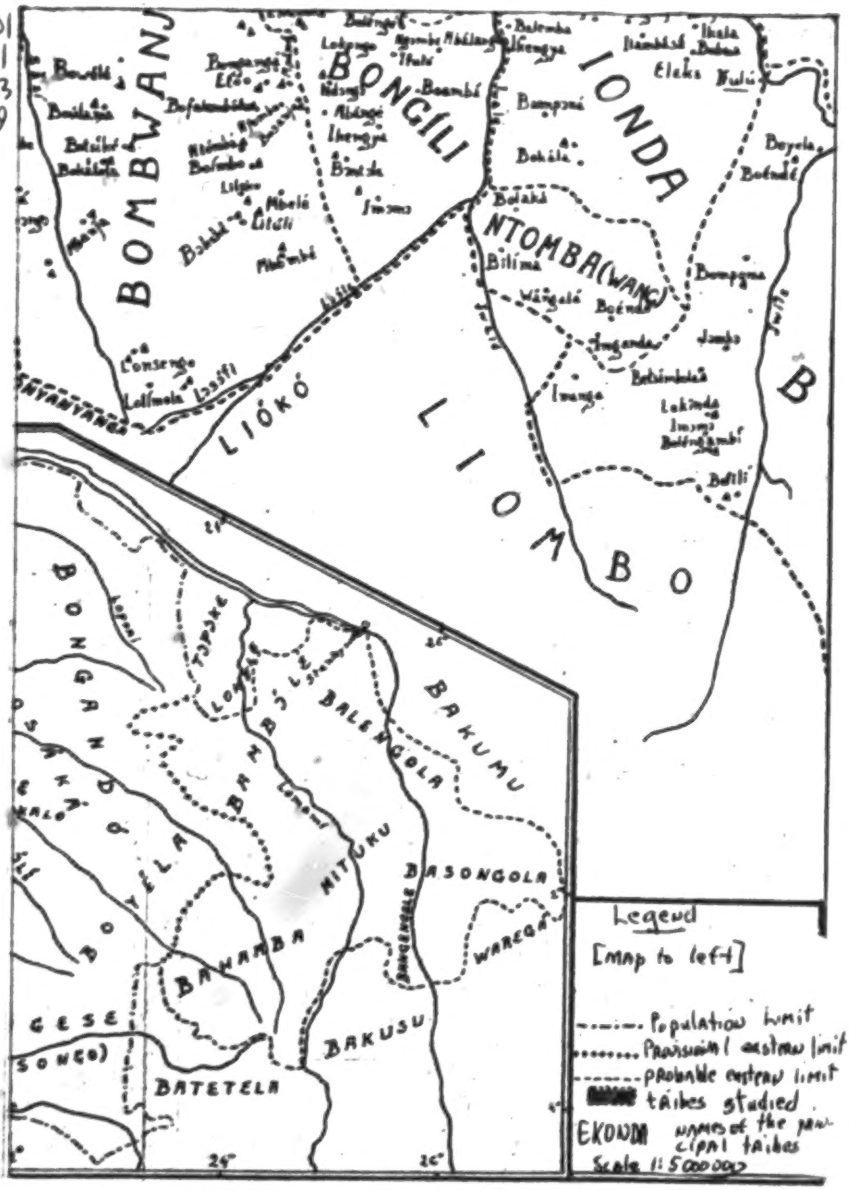
101
131
563
619


Territory occupied by the Nkundo or Mongo
BOSANGA
BALÍNGÓ
LI
BOMBWANJ
Bowélé
LONYANYANGA
Lisalá
Congo
N G O M B E
Bongandanga
NTÓMBA
MBONJE
ELÁNGÁ
BOSONGÓ
ENOTA
BAKUTU
Busira
Lomela
NKANDE
LOKALO
B O N G A N D O
B O S A K Á
M B Ó L É
BOŠLÍ
Coquilhatville
ILANGA
LOSAKÁNYI NTÓMBÁ
E K O N D A
NTÓMBÁ
BOSENGELE
Lukenie
BAJIA
YEMBE
BOLENDÓ
IMOMA
BOLÓNGÓ
BASA
Kasai
IPANGA
BOKÁLA
N D E N G E S E
(B O S O N G O)
BOŠLÍ
Sankuru
BAKUBA
Lopori

[End Map (E)]

2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

101
131
563
619

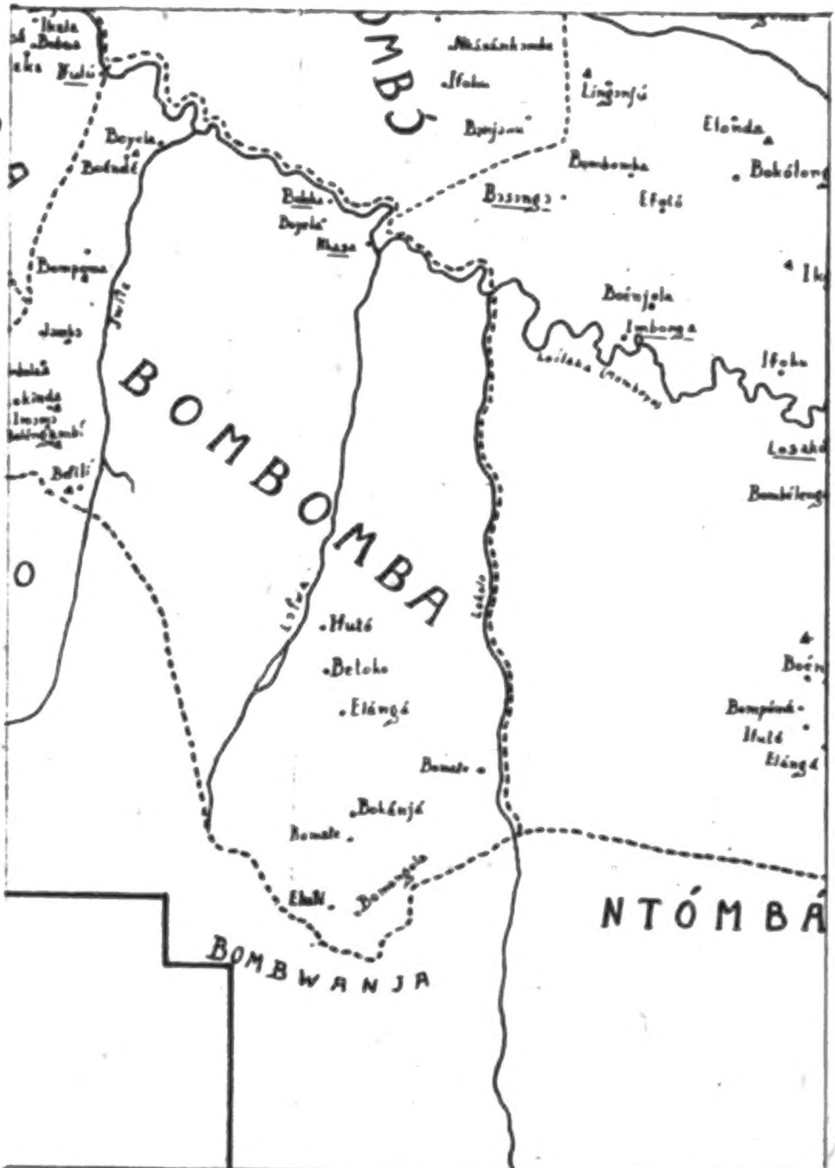


BOMBWANJ
BONGILI
IONDA
NTOMBA(WANG)
LIOKO
LIOMBO
B
Bokala
Bilima
Bompona
BONGANDO
BOTELA
TOPOKE
BAMBOLE
BALENGOLA
BAKUMU
MITUKU
BASONGOLA
WAREGA
BAMAMBA
BAKUSU
BATETELA
GESE
SONGO)
21°
24°
26°
Legend
[Map to left]
Population limit
Provisional eastern limit
probable eastern limit
tribes studied
EKONDA names of the principal tribes
Scale 1:5000000

[End Map (F)]

2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

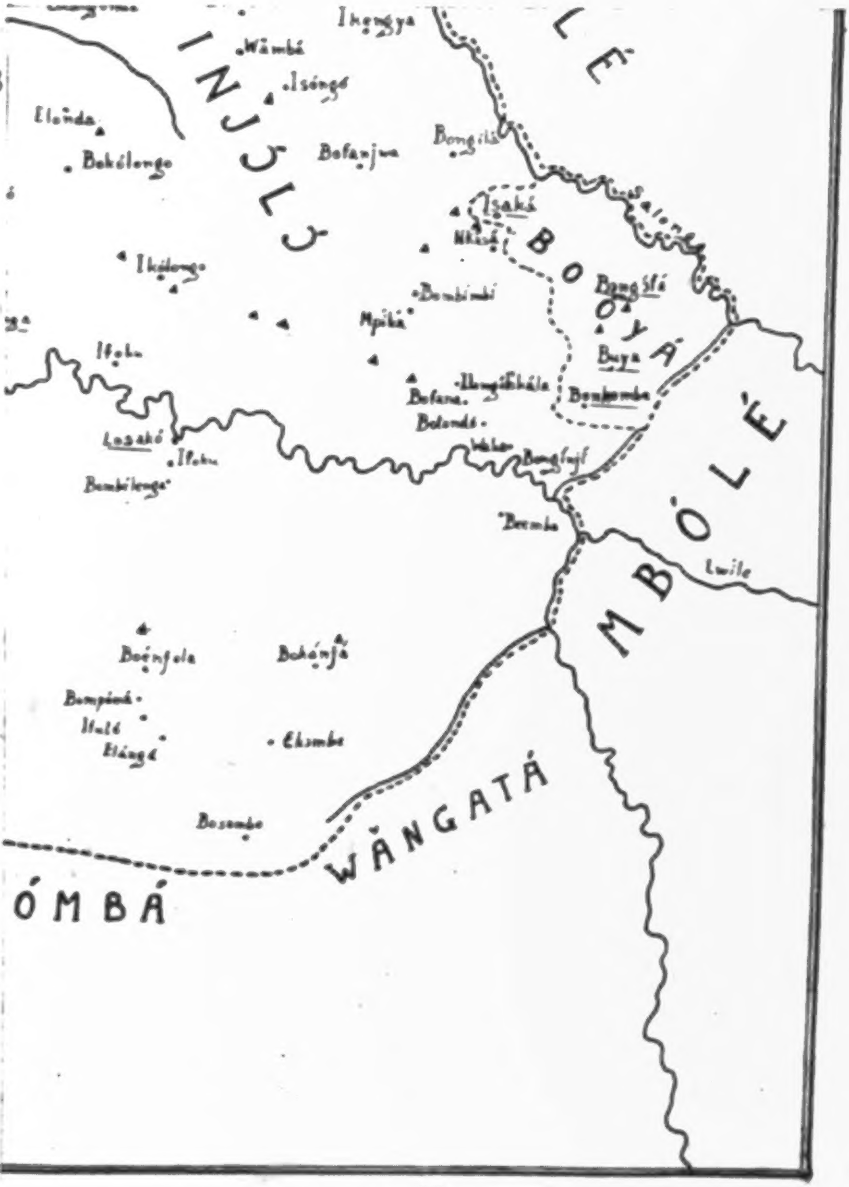
101
131
563
619


Ikala
Bobua
Nului
Boyela
Bofudé
Bompgona
Jambo
Befili
BOMBOMBA
MBƆ
Nkɔsánkɔmba
Ifoku
Bonjɔsu
Lingonjú
Elonda
Bokólong
Bombomba
Bɔsɔngɔ
Efɛlɔ́
Boonjola
Imbonga
Ifoku
Losakó
Bombilong
Bokɛlɛ
Bokaa
Boyela
Mbaya
Lofua
Huló
Beloko
Elángá
Bomate
Bokánjá
Bomate
Ebali
Bomangola
Bompéná
Huló
Elángá
NTÓMBA
BOMBWANJA
O

[End Map (G)]

2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

101
131
563
619


INJƆLƆ
LÉ
Ikongya
Wămbá
Isóngó
Elonda
Bakólongo
Bofanjwa
Bongilá
Isakó
Nkasá
BOOYÁ
Bongílá
Buya
Bonkomba
Ikólongo
Bombimbi
Mpiká
Ilongá Bála
Bofana
Bolondó
Waka
Bongíují
Ifoku
Losakó
Ifoku
Bombilonga
Bomba
Lwile
MBÓLÉ
Boónjola
Bokánjá
Bompánú
Ilulé
Elángá
Ekombe
Bosombo
WĂNGATÁ
ÓMBÁ

[End Map(H)]

2: Hulstaert
583

Mongo FO32

/For information concerning the mode of marriage and bride-price among the Nkundu, see category 116, pp. 81-82, 101-104, 109-172, 175-176, 190, 192-206, 218-220, 270-271, 332-333, 334, 414-415, and 423-424./

2: Hulstaert
586

Mongo FO32

/For information concerning divorce and termination of marriage among the Nkundu, see category 116, pp. 34-35, 38, 40-42, 56, 66, 67, 94, 96, 130, 160, 168, 172, 178, 189-192, 202-203, 236, 240, 248, 249, 253-254, 260, 271, and 353-390./

2: Hulstaert
593

Mongo FO32

/For information concerning family relationships among the Nkundu, see category 116, pp. 11, 22-26, 33-39, 51-52, 108, 139, 217, 222, 244-268, 271, 283, 285-289, 297, 299-300, 309, 391-393, 422-423, 424-428, 479-480, and 482-483./

2: Hulstaert
595

Mongo FO32

/For information concerning polygamy among the Nkundu, see category 116, pp. 25, 38-44, 220, 224-225, 235, 241, 252-253, 283, 308-309, 315-318, 320-352, and 481./

INSTITUT ROYAL COLONIAL BELGE

MÉMOIRES

KONINKLIJK BELGISCH KOLONIAAL INSTITUUT

VERHANDELINGEN

[p. i]

[p. ii is blank]

2: Hulstaert FO32 Mongo

INSTITUT ROYAL COLONIAL BELGE

Section des Sciences Morales et Politiques

MÉMOIRES

KONINKLIJK BELGISCH KOLONIAAL INSTITUUT

Afdeeling der Staat- en Zedekundige Wetenschappen

VERHANDELINGEN

In-8° — VIII — 1938

BRUXELLES
Librairie Falk fils,
GEORGES VAN CAMPENHOUT, Successeur,
22, Rue des Paroissiens, 22.

1938

Marcel HAYEZ, imprimeur de l'Académie royale de Belgique
Rue de Louvain, 112, Bruxelles.

2: Hulstaert FO32 Mongo

LE
MARIAGE DES NKUNDÓ

PAR

LE R. P. G. HULSTAERT,
Missionnaire du Sacré-Cœur au Congo Belge.

Mém. Inst. Royal Colonial Belge.

Mémoire présenté à la séance du 18 mai 1936.

[p. 2]

LE
MARIAGE DES NKUNDÓ

INTRODUCTION.

La présente étude traite des lois et coutumes matrimoniales d'un groupe important du peuple Nkundó. Il est donc utile de commencer en donnant quelques généralités sur cette peuplade hautement intéressante au point de vue ethnologique, pour ensuite limiter l'objet direct de nos investigations.

Les Nkundó ou Mǫ́ngǫ occupent presque toute l'étendue de la cuvette centrale du Congo belge, de la Lulonga-Lopori, au Nord, jusqu'au lac Léopold II, et au delà de la Lukenie jusqu'au Kasai. A l'Ouest ils n'atteignent le fleuve Congo qu'au Sud du « Ruki » (1); la partie occidentale de l'ancien district de la Lulonga étant occupée par les Ngǫmbę, qui, en amont de Basankusu (indigène Basǎnkoso), ont poussé une pointe jusqu'à la Maringa (indigène Lǔwo) (2). A l'Est ils atteignent et même dépassent le Lomami. Au Sud-Est ils pénètrent dans le Nord-Ouest du district du Sankuru. Actuellement il est encore impossible de déterminer exactement les limites à l'Est et au Sud-Est : Bambǫ́lę́, Bahamba, Mïtuku, Bangęlęngẹlẹ, Balengola, Basongola, voire les Batẹtẹla et les « Bakusu », sont ou des Mọ́ngọ ou leurs tout proches parents (1).

---

(1) Ruki est probablement une déformation de Bolóki, tribu riveraine de pêcheurs habitant l'aval de cette rivière, que les indigènes appellent plutôt Loflaka.

(2) D'après BITTREMIEUX et LESTAEGHE, l'île Nsumba près de Nouvelle-Anvers garde encore quelques Nkundó (*Congo*, 1922, I, p. 194).

Il m'est impossible de donner le chiffre total exact de cette peuplade telle que nous venons de la délimiter. En tout cas, on peut l'estimer à plus d'un million.

Les institutions et la langue de ce peuple ne présentent, dans tout l'immense territoire qu'il occupe, que des différences insignifiantes. Des divergences plus fortes existent dans les manifestations matérielles de la culture.

A mon avis, il est probable que certains groupes, s'ils appartiennent au peuple Nkundó-Mọ́ngọ par leur culture et leur idiome, s'en distinguent cependant généalogiquement et historiquement. Tels sont les véritables Elíngá ou Riverains (Bolóki, E̲lẹku, Elíngá de la Haute-Lŏmela et de la Haute-Tshuapa) (2), les tribus Ngọmbẹ de la Lŏmela, les Mbólé, les Bakutu de la Lŏmela-Tshuapa (auxquels il faut vraisemblablement assimiler les Ntómbá et les Nkọ́lẹ) (3); peut-être aussi le Mpámá et les Losakanyi (4). Cela n'exclut pourtant pas la possibilité d'une parenté éloignée, mais, dans l'état actuel de nos connaissances, il est impossible de trancher la question : des ressemblances assez étroites pouvant s'expliquer aussi bien par l'unité d'origine que par la cohabitation temporaire, comme des divergences par la diversité d'origine ou par la séparation momentanée à une certaine époque de leur histoire.

---

(1) Cfr. DONCKERWOLCKE, dans *Kongo-Overzee*, I, p. 235; et mon article dans *Congo*, 1931, I, p. 13. Le fait que M. Donckerwolcke range parmi les Wakutshu ou Batẹtẹla les Bakẹla (=Boyéla), qui sont indiscutablement de purs Mọ́ngọ, est très significatif.

(2) Près de Coquilhatville habitent quelques clans Libinja et Basọkọ́, que nous excluons, puisqu'ils sont nettement d'origine étrangère.

La Tshuapa est appelée par les indigènes : Jwafa ou Jafa. Plus haut : Lwafa. Chez les Bongandó et les Bahamba : Laha.

(3) Cfr. mon article dans *Congo*, 1931, I, pp. 21 et suiv.

(4) Ces derniers sont nommés, erronément, Losakanja par le P. SCHEBESTA, dans *Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge*, p. 199. Ils paraissent avoir habité autrefois sur la Basse-Momboyo (Loflaka); le terrain sur lequel est installée la Mission de Flandria porte encore leur nom.

Disséminés parmi les Nkundó, se trouvent un assez grand nombre de Pygmoïdes ou Pygmiformes (1) (Batswá, Jǫ́fę, Balúmbę, Bilángi, Boné), qui avec leurs « maîtres » forment une communauté d'intérêts économiques et sociaux. Le Bǫtswá appartient à son maître, dépend de lui, mais n'est pas, à proprement parler, son esclave. Le maître n'a pas que des droits sur lui; il a aussi des devoirs à remplir. La plupart de ces Pygmoïdes se trouvent dans la partie Ouest du territoire nkundó; dans l'Est ils sont très rares.

Les Nkundó-Mǫ́ngǫ sont venus du Nord ou Nord-Est, tandis que les Mbólé prétendent être venus du Nord-Ouest et les Bakutu de l'Ouest (2).

Il nous faut dire un mot du nom de cette peuplade. Nous l'appelons d'ordinaire Nkundó-Mǫ́ngǫ. Le premier nom est employé à l'Ouest et au Sud, le second surtout au Nord et à l'Est. Déjà les Elángá de la région de Losanganya sont appelés par les groupes situés plus à l'Ouest : Mǫ́ngǫ éá Lolo = Mǫ́ngǫ d'en amont. Les étrangers désignent ce peuple, inclusivement des Nkundó, Mbólé, Bakutu, etc., sous le nom de Mǫ́ngǫ. Dans les écrits on rencontre parfois le nom de Lolo, Balolo (3). Or, comme nous venons de voir, *lolo* n'est pas un nom propre, mais signifie tout simplement : amont (que d'autres dialectes traduisent par *nkoto*).

Le peuple s'appelle Nkundó ou Mǫ́ngǫ, jamais Bankundó ou Bamǫ́ngǫ. Le préfixe *ba* s'entend bien, comme il peut s'employer devant tous les noms propres, à peu près de la façon du français : les Molière, les Rubens, etc. Le préfixe singulier *bo* s'emploie aussi, mais rarement.

---

(1) Nom proposé par le P. SCHEBESTA, *o. c.*, p. 170.

(2) Cfr. mon étude citée, *passim*.

(3) Cfr., par exemple, le titre de la Mission protestante de la Lulonga : « Congo Balolo Mission ».

Je ne l'ai entendu que dans l'expression : ale ô bonkundó mongo = c'est un véritable Nkundó, et cela uniquement en parlant d'un étranger, qui s'est bien assimilé la langue et la culture nkundó. Toutefois, il se pourrait qu'il eût un sens plus large.

A ces noms peut-on trouver une étymologie ? Mọ́ngọ est un nom commun signifiant quelque chose d'excellent, particulièrement une personne. *Mọ́ng'ěy'ọ̌na*, dit-on, = un enfant tout à fait bien; *mọ́ng'ěỵ'ǒmoto* = une femme superbe. (Comparez aussi *imọ́ngọ* = état d'être tout à fait bien, prospère, riche, etc.) Au pluriel il ne change pas. Pour Nkundó, l'explication est plus ardue, si même elle est possible (¹). S'il est en rapport avec un autre mot, ce ne peut être qu'avec le verbe *kundola* = déterrer ce qui avait été enfoui. Mais déterrer quoi ? Les cadavres des ennemis, pour les manger, comme preuve de leur hardiesse ? Ou des anneaux de cuivre, ce qui signifierait leur richesse ? C'est possible, mais nous n'en avons aucune preuve directe. Selon les PP. Bittremieux et Lestaeghe, dans l'article mentionné, p. 195, d'aucuns prétendent que Nkundó signifie « nkóló » = maître. Sur quoi cette explication est-elle basée (²) ?

L'explication que je juge la plus vraisemblable est que Nkundó signifie « gens de l'intérieur ». D'ailleurs le nom est presque toujours employé par opposition à Elíngá = Riverains, parfois à d'autres groupes. Mais le sens originel du mot a probablement été élargi par le contact avec d'autres peuples nègres et avec les Européens; il peut ainsi être devenu plus ou moins le nom spécifique de la peuplade. Toutefois il faut remarquer que si l'on demande à un Ngọmbẹ si sa tribu est Elíngá = riverain-

---

(¹) Le mot est Nkundó, pas Nkundu ni Kundu. L'assertion que le *n* initial n'appartient pas au mot, mais n'est qu'une nasale dont l'euphonie indigène a besoin devant une autre consonne, provient d'une réelle insuffisance de connaissances linguistiques.

(²) Par opposition aux Batswá, les Nkundó (et autres peuplades) sont Baotó (sing. Bootó) = non-Batswá.

pêcheur, il peut vous répondre : « Il y a chez nous des Elíngá et des Nkundó ». Ce qui confirme notre supposition. Et ainsi ce mot est synonyme de Nkondaka, qu'on trouve dans plusieurs dialectes de l'Équateur (1).

Par opposition aux Bombwanja, on entend souvent le nom Bokóté. En beaucoup de cas c'est un synonyme de Nkundó, dans le sens actuel du mot. Dans son étude sur les Wăngatá (*Revue congolaise*, I, 1910), ENGELS, qui a bien connu ces populations, ayant été, entre autres, administrateur du territoire de Bokátola, a déjà opposé Bombwanja à Bokóté. Ce nom me semble être le véritable nom propre de la peuplade en question, du moins pour une grande partie. Il n'a pas d'autre signification dans la langue courante. Pourtant, étymologiquement, il pourrait être en connexion avec le verbe *kóta* = devenir vieux; ou avec un autre *kóta* = *kóta likambo* = (ailleurs *bútola*) = terminer les discussions en rendant un jugement définitif; *kóta lisoló* = avoir le dernier mot dans une causette; *kóta esé* = assurer la paix et l'ordre dans le village; et avec le verbe dérivé : *kótela* = être capable, habile.

Laissant hors considération les Mbólé, etc., ainsi que les tribus de la Lukenie, nous distinguons dans le peuple Nkundó-Mǫ́ngǫ s.s. divers groupes : Nsǫngǫ́ (Mbonje), Elángá, Bosaka, Bongandó, Boyéla, Ekonda, etc., comprenant chacun une quantité de subdivisions ou tribus.

Notre étude exclut la majorité de ces groupes et se restreint au territoire délimité comme suit : au Nord, la Ruki-Tshuapa; à l'Est, la Salonga jusqu'à la limite des Mbólé; au Sud, une ligne allant du confluent de la Loilaka et de la Lwílę et rejoignant la limite Nord des Bombwanja de la Lokoló, ensuite la frontière des Ekonda; à l'Ouest, la Boloko, affluent du Ruki. Nous n'envisageons donc qu'une minime partie du territoire et des tribus nkundó. Mais c'est la seule partie que nous ayons pu étudier à fond. Nous tenons compte des Bombwanja et des Elíngá, qui sont établis dans la région ainsi circonscrite.

---

(1) Cfr. mon article cité, p. 19. J'ai encore entendu ce terme chez les Lifumba. Rapprochez de Nkondaka le nom Ekonda, et *bokonda*=forêt sur terre ferme, et le verbe *konda*=s'ensabler, s'alluvionner, devenir terre ferme.

Les Elíngá habitent seulement le long des grandes rivières. Ils comprennent, dans notre région, outre les Elíngá proprement dits (dont nous n'avons qu'une dizaine de clans appartenant au groupe des Bolóki et qui sont installés de Ikéngé à Bokéle et Mpakú, plus les quatre ou cinq villages Ẹlẹku sur la Salonga), les villages Nkǫ́lę et Ekonda (1) qui ont adopté le genre de vie et les coutumes des Elíngá (2).

Quant aux Bombwanja, on en trouve des clans éparpillés un peu partout et plus ou moins dépendants d'autres clans avec lesquels ils cohabitent; ils forment des sortes de hameaux dans un grand nombre de villages. Un bloc compact se rencontre aux alentours de Bokátola. Il est constitué en chefferie indépendante, bien que, d'après la « coutume », il « appartienne » à titre de *julé* (pl. *baulé*) = sujet, clan assujetti, subjugué (verbe *uja*), à certains villages ou groupes Bokóté (3). Il est bien possible que ces Bombwanja soient originairement des Mbólé : certains mots et locutions de leur dialecte rappellent le lombólé.

Énumérons rapidement les autres tribus — Nkundó « purs » — qui font l'objet de cette étude :

1° Les Injǫ́lǫ́, « fils de la sœur » (*bǫ́nankáná*) des Ntómbá et Boléngé d'au delà de la Boloko. Ils se divisent en trois groupes, formant, administrativement, chacun une sous-chefferie : Engónjó, Wesé, et Ngọmbẹ (1). Une petite fraction se trouve hors du territoire envisagé, entre la Boloko et Coq (2).

---

(1) Respectivement apparentés aux Nkǫ́lę de la Lokoló et aux Ekonda du lac Léopold II.

(2) Cfr. les données sur l'histoire et la vie des Elingá publiées par le R. P. Boelaert, M. S. C., dans *Congo*, 1935, II, p. 705.

(3) Il en est de même du groupe Bombwanja de la Lokóló. D'autres clans se trouvent éparpillés parmi les Elángá d'outre Tshuapa. Ils sortent tous du cadre de cette étude. Les Bombwanja se divisent en Basuné et Bonkoso, plus leur *bǫ́nankáná* (fils de la sœur) les Boéndé.

2° Les Boángí (et leur sous-groupe les Bẹsọmbọ́), apparentés aux Bokála de la région de Losanganya (3).

3° Les Ionda, apparentés aux Bonyanga d'au Nord de la Tshuapa.

4° Les Wăngatá-Ntómbá, dont un groupe habite près d'Ingende, au confluent de la Tshuapa et de la Momboyo, et un autre sur la Jwalé. D'autres parties de cette tribu se trouvent près de Coquilhatville (chefferie des « Tumba »), près de Bokote (chefferie Ikẹngọ), et sur la moyenne Loilaka, entre Waka et Bonkoto (chefferie Nkundệngọlọ́, ou Wafanya et « Tumba »).

5° Les Bakáala, qui semblent être plus ou moins apparentés aux Wăngatá.

6° Les Bonkoso.

7° Les trois tribus sœurs des Bongíli, Bombomba et Lifumba (les Beloko forment une sous-tribu de ces derniers).

---

(1) A l'Ouest de leur territoire se trouvent les vestiges d'une population antérieure que les habitants actuels nomment Tompòko (ou Baséká Bofáka l'Eléké), mais qui m'est totalement inconnue.

(2) Les Injọ́lọ́ du Sud sont souvent appelés Imoma.

(3) Sur la Carte ethnographique du Congo belge, dressée et éditée par le Dr J. MAES, le territoire des Boangi est occupé par le nom Bokuala. Il n'existe là aucune tribu ou village de ce nom. A moins qu'il ne s'agisse d'un sobriquet injurieux et humiliant (*bokwála* = esclave), le nom peut être une application erronée du nom de Bokwála, chef actuel des Boangi.

(4) Il est pour le moment impossible de déterminer exactement la relation entre Ntómbá et Wăngatá. Généralement, ces derniers, avec les Inganda et les Ikẹngọ, passent pour une subdivision des Ntómbá. En outre, nous ne savons pas encore si ces Ntómbá sont apparentés à d'autres tribus du même nom qu'on rencontre fréquemment (sur la Lopori, aux environs du lac Tumba, du lac Léopold II, chez les Bakutu, etc.), ou s'il s'agit simplement de groupes homonymes. Remarquons que sur la carte précitée les Wăngatá sont placés beaucoup trop au Nord; de fait ils se trouvent entièrement au Sud du Ruki.

8° Le village de Bomángola, enclavé dans les Lifumba, qui ne réunit qu'une trentaine de contribuables, mais qui, puisqu'il fait partie des Nsọngọ́, groupe aîné de tous les Nkundó-Mọ́ngọ, est constitué en chefferie indépendante (1).

9° Les Bongale. Les trois gros villages qui se trouvent dans le territoire étudié sont, selon l'ordre de l'importance numérique : Bongale wǎ Botóló (chez les Lifumba, entre les rivières Bonsómbé, Lolíma et Saási), Bongale wǎ Ilinga (chez les Bakáala, près d'Ikéngé) et Bongale wǎ Bọsọngú (chez les Bonkoso, près de Bempumbá). La divergence dans la loi de l'exogamie qui existe entre eux et les autres tribus justifie l'opinion que les Bongale ne sont pas des Nkundó purs (2).

Les tribus qui habitent entre la Jwalé et la Boloko, auxquelles on ajoute parfois les Boléngé et les Ntómbá d'entre Congo et Boloko, sont réunis par les Boángí, Injọ́lọ́ et Elángá sous le nom global d'Ilángá (3).

Les Nkundó-Mọ́ngọ sont venus du Nord ou du Nord-Est (4). Les groupes dont nous traitons ici ont habité pendant un certain temps sur la Lǔwo (Maringa) et sur la

---

(1) Cette primauté a de tout temps été reconnue et respectée par les Lifumba.

(2) Voir chap. V, art. III. Il existe encore d'autres petits groupes Bongale, dont je ne sais pas s'ils sont apparentés à ceux-ci; par exemple près de Bonyẹka (Busira), chez les Boángí (Bokála, Boénjola). Il se peut qu'ils descendent d'ancêtres différents, mais *portant tous* le nom de Ngale. Un nom identique peut indiquer l'identité d'origine. Mais il peut aussi provenir de personnes différentes, mais homonymes. Cette remarque a une valeur générale.

(3) La tribu Bokele citée sur la carte déjà mentionnée n'existe pas. L'erreur ne proviendrait-elle pas d'une extension indue du nom d'un village Boloki près de Bokúma et appelé Bokélé ? Ou du nom d'un chef ou notable quelconque de la région, appelé Bokelé ?

(4) Note peut-être intéressante : les Nkundó ont souvenance, dans leurs fables et chants, d'un animal de la famille du léopard et qu'ils nomment *bokonga*. Leur description correspond à celle du lion. Des soldats et autres expatriés, ainsi que les jeunes gens, à la vue des représentations de cette bête, l'ont immédiatement identifiée avec leur *bokonga*.

Haute-Ikelemba (¹), puis, sous la poussée des autres tribus Mọ́ngọ, ont traversé la Tshuapa-Ruki. Après avoir chassé les Ekonda, ils se sont installés à leur emplacement actuel. Cet exode doit avoir eu lieu il y a assez longtemps; les calculs à ce sujet sont impossibles et les estimations malaisées. En tout état de cause, il doit y avoir vraisemblablement de cent cinquante à deux cents ans.

Ces populations sont surtout agricoles; elles cultivent principalement : bananes, manioc, ignames, calocasia, patates, canne à sucre, légumes divers et condiments. Les plantations alimentaires, jointes aux palmiers Elaeis et aux produits de cueillette, leur assurent une nourriture continuelle et abondante aussi longtemps que les éléphants ne s'en mêlent pas. L'élevage comprend les poules, des chèvres et des chiens (²). La chasse est plutôt un changement agréable d'occupations qu'une nécessité absolue et inéluctable pour les tribus qui possèdent des Batswá, puisque ceux-ci leur fournissent une certaine quantité — bien qu'insuffisante — de la viande nécessaire. On s'y adonne en commun comme en privé. Cette dernière forme se pratique surtout au moyen de pièges. La pêche aussi se fait beaucoup avec des nasses, mais divers autres procédés sont également connus. La cueillette reste toujours en honneur (fruits, chenilles, champignons, légumes, etc.).

Comme métiers nous trouvons avant tout la forge. La fonte du fer est actuellement délaissée. Le cuivre leur vient d'autres populations par des tribus intermédiaires. La sculpture du bois disparaît rapidement. La vannerie

---

(¹) Il paraît qu'entre l'Ikelemba et son affluent la Losálifa se trouve encore un arbre *bọnkọm* surnommé *w'ámẹnga* (des têtes chauves), sous lequel, d'après la tradition, les ancêtres ont tenu leurs assemblées, et, tout près, un *bosdú* dont les fruits n'arrivent jamais à maturité.

(²) Les canards sont d'introduction relativement récente, mais étaient connus longtemps avant la colonisation. Ils sont venus du Sud. L'introduction des moutons ne date que des dernières décades, et on ne les trouve que dans quelques villages riverains du Bas.

est toujours en honneur. Le tissage n'existe plus à présent; on ne trouve même plus aucun métier dans la région.

La famille est patriarcale et l'organisation politique y correspond : rien que des chefs de famille. C'est chez les Nkundó que la famille est parfaitement la cellule et la base de la société. Il s'ensuit un régime démocratique-oligarchique, mais dans un sens tout autre que celui que nous donnons à ce terme en Europe. Certains hommes s'imposaient par leur intelligence, leur éloquence, leur courage, leurs richesses, exerçaient une influence prépondérante et prenaient ainsi souvent l'aspect de chefs dont l'autorité s'étendait au delà de leur clan, mais ils n'ont jamais donné origine à un empire. La tribu la plus vaillante et la plus crainte était celle des Bongíli, qui, d'ailleurs, étaient favorisés par leur situation géographique, ayant de chaque côté une tribu sœur dans les Lifumba et les Bombomba.

Les goûts artistiques des Nkundó sont tournés surtout vers la musique et la danse. Leur littérature orale aussi est très riche et comprend entre autres l'épopée de Nsongó et Lianja (¹) et celle de la tortue.

Au point de vue religion, les Nkundó reconnaissent l'existence d'un Être Suprême : Njakomba ou Mbombiándá, créateur et ordonateur de tout ce qui existe. Pourtant, ils ne lui rendent aucun culte; celui-ci s'adresse exclusivement aux génies et aux mânes (²).

La langue de ce peuple est belle et harmonieuse, souple et riche; elle a toutes les qualités pour devenir une langue littéraire et est admirablement appropriée aux besoins de l'enseignement. De plus, dans ses divers dialectes, elle s'étend sur un territoire considérable, qui est une des aires

---

(¹) Les plus importantes parties ont été traduites et publiées par le R. P. Boelaert, M. S. C., dans *Congo*, 1934, I, pp. 49 et 197.

(²) Voir sur les idées religieuses des Nkundó une étude détaillée du R. P. Boelaert, M. S. C., dans *Hooger Leven*, 1934, pp. 1612 et 1636, et 1935, pp. 12 et 60.

linguistiques les plus vastes du Congo. Outre les livres de religion et de piété des Missions catholiques, elle possède déjà une importante collection de manuels classiques divers, grâce surtout au zèle des Missionnaires protestants, qui ont édité aussi une traduction complète de la *Bible*. Plusieurs vocabulaires et petites grammaires ont été composés, auxquels sont venus s'ajouter ces dernières années un grand dictionnaire et une grammaire plus développée, tous deux de la main d'A. et L. RUSKIN, de la Mission de Bongandanga. Depuis plusieurs années, la Mission protestante de Bǫlę́ngę́ édite une revue indigène, tandis que la Mission catholique pousse activement les préparatifs pour publier la sienne.

Le livre du R. P. SHEBESTA : *Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge*, contient un chapitre sur les Nkundó, dans lequel l'auteur donne sur ce peuple un bon aperçu général. Certains détails, toutefois, appellent quelques réserves.

Ces données générales sur les Nkundó peuvent suffire à faire leur connaissance superficielle.

Le dessein du présent ouvrage est d'exposer plus à fond leurs institutions matrimoniales.

Comme nous l'avons déjà dit, nous n'envisageons qu'une partie de ce peuple. Toutes nos affirmations s'étendent uniquement à la fraction que nous avons délimitée. Nous ne tenons aucun compte des institutions familiales d'autres groupes nkundó, parce qu'ils nous sont moins bien connus et que nous n'avons rien voulu affirmer sans l'avoir approfondi. Tout ce que nous nous sommes permis en dehors des limites géographiques tracées se borne à quelques remarques accidentelles. Bien que le peuple Nkundó-Mǫ́ngǫ montre une étonnante unité culturelle, celle-ci n'est évidemment pas absolue. Et si nous avons adopté le titre général de *Mariage des Nkundó*, c'est qu'il est difficile d'en trouver un meilleur satisfaisant au caractère ethniquement et géographiquement limité de cette étude. Il est bien vraisemblable que dans la majorité des cas la valeur de nos données dépasse les limites assignées, mais il serait contraire à toute méthode scientifique de les généraliser avant une étude approfondie de chaque groupe. Le lecteur est donc instamment prié de tenir compte de cette remarque et de ne pas donner à nos conclusions une portée trop étendue.

En elles-mêmes, et dans leur entier, les institutions familiales restent en dehors du sujet de ce livre. Mais comme elles se fondent sur le mariage, elles entrent pour une bonne part dans notre cadre. Nécessairement nous devons donc y toucher, mais nous bornons nos incursions dans leur domaine aux exigences de la compréhension de l'exposé général. D'un autre côté, l'étude du mariage jette une vive lumière sur les institutions familiales.

Les mots : famille, clan, groupe, etc. reviennent fréquemment. La famille forme une entité plus petite que le clan, et ce dernier est subordonné au groupe. Pourtant, comme il est fort ardu d'en donner une définition exacte, nous ne nous sommes mis en peine d'en faire la distinction nette que là où la chose était nécessaire (1). Ailleurs nous les employons plutôt comme termes génériques, voire comme synonymes. Afin de rendre mieux compréhensibles les relations de parenté et les expressions par lesquelles les Nkundó les désignent, nous annexons, à titre d'exemple, un tableau généalogique.

Voici les études antérieures sur le même sujet qui me sont connues :

Engels, Les Wangata, dans *Revue congolaise*, 1910, qui traite aussi du mariage;

G. Kaptein, Familieleven en -zeden bij de Inboorlingen van den Evenaar, dans *Congo*, 1922, I, p. 531.

---

(1) Voir chap. V, art. III.

dont le cadre est plus large que le nôtre, puisqu'il parle même des Mbole;

H. BREPOELS, Het Familiehoofd bij de Nkundó-Negers, dans *Congo*, 1930, II, p. 332.

Nous nous sommes attaché à réunir une documentation aussi complète que possible. Non seulement sont indiqués les grandes lignes et les principes fondamentaux, mais aussi les détails, même ceux qui paraissent les plus insignifiants. Ils ont toujours leur intérêt, qui souvent est plus grand qu'on ne l'avait d'abord soupçonné. Tout a été discuté et rediscuté, en privé et en public, avec des personnes très diverses et dans des lieux et des temps tout différents, et les points les plus difficiles sont revenus sur le tapis à je ne sais combien de reprises.

De façon générale, nous avons préféré employer la méthode descriptive et analytique. Des données nous avons tiré les principes et les conclusions. Bien que des exemples historiques dussent inévitablement allonger le texte de cet ouvrage, nous n'avons pas craint d'en intercaler à divers endroits : ils sont supérieurs à tout pour faire bien ressortir certaines règles ou coutumes et pour montrer sur le vif la psychologie de nos gens.

A ce propos il est utile de faire une remarque qui, par son importance, mérite bien que nous nous y arrêtions un instant. L'examen des cas juridiques dont nous sommes les témoins directs ou indirects ne suffit pas à engendrer la certitude scientifique sur les lois, — ou « les coutumes », pour employer ce terme si répandu (1). Car tout ce qui se fait n'est pas conforme à la justice. La constatation que l'indigène agit de telle ou telle manière et que souvent l'une ou l'autre palabre est tranchée de telle ou telle façon ne suffit nullement pour conclure qu'ainsi est la loi.

---

(1) La vogue dont jouit ce terme est regrettable, car il manque de précision. Il peut signifier, en effet, simplement « pratique, usage », ou être employé dans son acception juridique : « usage ayant force de loi ». Une confusion s'établit souvent entre les deux sens; elle porte à considérer toute coutume comme juridiquement obligatoire, alors qu'il y a des usages étrangers au droit coutumier et d'autres qui lui sont opposés. Pour l'exactitude des ouvrages ethnographiques et ethnologiques, il serait souhaitable d'employer le moins possible ce terme amphibologique et de bien distinguer entre droit, loi et coutume ou usage.

Les infractions aux règles de la justice sociale sont plus fréquentes qu'on ne le soupçonnerait. Les principes sont bons, mais les passions en empêchent maintes fois l'application, et souvent nulle sanction ne vient soutenir la faiblesse des volontés ni aucune récompense stimuler l'observation loyale.

Aussi ne doit-on pas invoquer la variabilité et la transformation continuelle du droit indigène (comme le fait, par exemple, le Dʳ Th. Seitz, dans *Africa*, III, n° 1, p. 89), tant qu'on n'a pas préalablement établi si les jugements rendus sont conformes au droit. La remarque que l'éminent auteur fait plus loin : « Welche Rolle dabei das Machtmoment », etc..., infirme sa première affirmation et prouve précisément qu'on ne peut pas se baser uniquement sur les sentences des tribunaux pour apprendre à connaître exactement les prescriptions juridiques, et que la partialité joue souvent un grand rôle. L'observation de l'ancien gouverneur du Cameroun peut s'appliquer au Congo belge, et parfois aussi dans les pays « civilisés ». Nulle part on n'ignore la partialité et l'abus de pouvoir.

Il faut tenir compte aussi de l'ignorance possible des juges et de la difficulté que nous avons à comprendre leurs sentences, où des points de fait et de droit importants sont parfois passés sous silence, sous-entendus.

Qu'il y ait des cas compliqués où il est très difficile aux indigènes, même intelligents et impartiaux, de trancher le différend et de donner une solution équitable et justifiée, cela n'est pas étonnant. La loi ne saurait prévoir tous les cas dans leur infinie variété de circonstances personnelles, locales et modales.

Seules l'analyse et la comparaison de diverses affaires, de leurs solutions, sanctions et conséquences, jointes à la discussion avec des indigènes prudents et impartiaux autant qu'avisés et experts, ayant appris à nous connaître et à saisir ce que nous désirons savoir d'eux et en même temps sincèrement disposés à nous aider, peuvent engendrer une certitude raisonnée et raisonnable, conforme à la réalité. Ces conditions sont nombreuses et très difficiles à rencontrer réunies dans la même personne. Mais pareilles personnes existent, si de la part de l'investigateur elles rencontrent la sympathie, la largeur d'idées, d'absence de tout racisme européen, la compréhension, la connaissance de leur langue, le dévouement bienveillant à leurs intérêts individuels et sociaux.

Même si, chose infiniment précieuse, mais extrêmement rare, on a la chance de trouver un indigène qui, après une longue pratique, arrive à vous dire spontanément : « Ceci se fait souvent, mais c'est contraire à la loi; la loi est telle et telle; telle solution du tribunal est un acte de partialité pour telle ou telle raison », on n'en est pas pour autant dispensé de la nécessité de contrôler ses affirmations. Mais plus on avance et plus on se rend compte de la réalité et de la qualité de sa valeur dans ce domaine et du cas qu'on peut faire de ses dires.

Ces considérations valent surtout pour la distinction entre obligations et convenances sociales ou politesse, entre obligations de justice et obligations de parenté et d'entr'aide mutuelle. Dans la pratique courante les Nkundó n'en font pas la démarcation nette, parce qu'ils n'ont jamais codifié leur droit ni cherché à faire une classification claire et précise, dont ils ne sentent aucun besoin, pas plus, par exemple, que ni eux ni même nous, « civilisés », ne nous préoccupons de faire une grammaire de notre langue maternelle que nous parlons correctement et sans aucune difficulté, uniquement par habitude.

L'investigation dans le domaine juridique est rendue très ardue par le caractère patriarcal et féodal de ces populations, joint à l'absence de l'écriture. Non seulement il existe une adaptation aux circonstances — flexibilité heureuse des lois indigènes — dans laquelle la jurisprudence joue un grand rôle, mais aussi les Nkundó, tout en sachant pertinemment ce qui est licite et ce qui ne l'est pas, ne discernent d'ordinaire pas bien la nature d'une obligation, ni surtout sa source.

L'obtention de bons résultats est grandement favorisée par la position de cas hypothétiques à des personnes qu'on connaît plus intimement et qu'on sait être entièrement hors de cause; moyen qu'il y a toujours intérêt à utiliser pour compléter, sinon rectifier, les conclusions basées sur l'examen de cas juridiques réels, examen qui est pratiquement impossible aux personnes non munies d'un mandat officiel. La position de cas imaginaires requiert toutefois une connaissance approfondie de la langue de la tribu en question.

Dans l'exposé des lois et pratiques diverses, nous tenons à reproduire les explications qu'en donnent les Nkundó, et à y ajouter, là où cela nous semblait opportun, nos considérations personnelles. Le lecteur avisé n'aura pas de peine à distinguer ces deux sources si différentes.

Je sais bien que beaucoup d'ethnologues n'aiment pas que les « chercheurs de brousse » se mêlent de ces questions et qu'ils préfèrent ne recevoir d'eux que des faits bruts sur lesquels ils pourraient bâtir leurs théories. Tous les ethnographes broussards ou silvestres reconnaissent sans peine leur infériorité théorique. Mais ce désavantage réel par manque de préparation est contrebalancé par un avantage appréciable. Ils connaissent bien plus intimement les indigènes, non seulement pour ce qui concerne le sujet direct de leur étude, mais aussi quant aux autres manifestations de leur vie avec lesquelles ils peuvent être en contact direct et quotidien pendant de longues années (surtout la psychologie et la mentalité générales), ce qui les rend plus aptes à porter un jugement conforme à la réalité. Les ethnologues « en chambre » semblent parfois supposer que les broussards ne sont capables que d'être leurs pourvoyeurs de matériaux. Or, la majorité, si pas tous, ont fait des études moyennes, voire les humanités, et beaucoup ont parcouru les écoles supérieures (universités ou autres). Parmi eux se trouvent des juristes de carrière, etc. Ces observateurs possèdent donc des qualités de jugement sérieuses et nombre d'entre eux, par leurs études philosophiques, possèdent les règles de la logique et ont un sens critique aigu.

Il est vrai qu'il ne nous appartient pas de construire des théories : nos domaines d'investigation sont toujours limités. La connaissance des théories est très intéressante et fort utile, mais nullement nécessaire, parfois même dangereuse, parce qu'influençant facilement notre jugement d'une façon indue et partant nuisible à la science. Aussi n'avons-nous cure de la conformité ou de l'opposition de nos données avec l'une ou l'autre doctrine ethnologique. Nous présentons les faits dans leur entier, la partie matérielle comme le fond intellectuel, psychologique et moral. C'est sur eux que la théorie doit se baser; ce n'est pas aux faits à se plier aux théories.

Dans le cours de cet ouvrage on trouvera des répétitions, des références, des renvois. Nous aurions préféré les omettre, parce qu'ils sont toujours fastidieux. Mais ils étaient inévitables dans pareille matière et nous y étions astreint par le caractère strictement scientifique que nous avons voulu à tout prix conserver à notre travail. Nous espérons même que tous ceux qui voudront l'étudier à fond trouveront dans ces redites, au lieu d'un obstacle, une aide précieuse qui leur facilitera une vue intégrale et exacte de la matière.

Malgré tous mes soins et toutes les précautions prises pour ne présenter au lecteur que des faits et des informations conformes à la réalité, et pour réunir une documentation aussi complète que possible, il est inévitable que ce travail contienne des lacunes, des imperfections, voire l'une ou l'autre erreur (¹).

La matière étudiée ne saurait en être entièrement exempte, et affirmer le contraire serait de la pure présomption. Mais la science n'avancerait pas et le but pratique de nos connaissances ne serait jamais atteint si, avant de livrer au public les résultats de nos recherches, nous attendions la perfection qui ne peut être engendrée que par des études successives, faites par diverses personnes. Aussi serais-je récompensé si d'autres voulaient contrôler mes données, les critiquer, les compléter et les corriger là où c'est nécessaire. J'espère en outre qu'ils trouveront dans le présent ouvrage un stimulant qui les excitera à étudier de même les autres fractions des Nkundó-Mǫngǫ, pour que, enfin, nous obtenions une vue d'ensemble sur les institutions matrimoniales de ce peuple si important.

A ce sujet, est-il permis d'émettre un dernier vœu ? De nombreuses études faites par des fonctionnaires et des agents du Gouvernement, contenant une somme considérable de données ethnographiques diverses, dorment dans les fardes des Bureaux congolais en attendant de servir un jour de pâture aux termites jamais rassasiés. Ne serait-il pas possible que ces documents — au moins les meilleurs, — soient livrés au public ? Même s'ils contiennent des lacunes et des erreurs, ils seront accueillis avec gratitude. Ils entraîneront d'autres chercheurs à approfondir ces questions, et de l'émulation, des critiques, des discussions jaillira une connaissance toujours grandissante et toujours plus parfaite des indigènes, de

---

(¹) Il en est ainsi particulièrement de quelques pratiques dont il reste à approfondir la portée juridique, étude délicate entre toutes. Signalons spécialement certaines questions de la genèse de l'union matrimoniale dans ses diverses formes.

leur histoire, de leur vie, de leurs lois, de leurs mœurs, de leur mentalité, au grand bénéfice de l'œuvre coloniale tout entière.

Certains termes employés dans l'une ou l'autre partie de cette étude peuvent paraître trop crus. J'aurais préféré les éviter. Mais cela aurait nécessité le recours à des expressions voilées et à des périphrases nuisibles à la clarté et donc à la valeur de l'ouvrage qui a un but purement scientifique. Le bienveillant lecteur voudra donc bien les excuser.

A divers endroits des exemples historiques sont relatés tout au long. Je crois que les détails n'en manquent pas d'intérêt, parce qu'ils font saisir sur le vif la mentalité de nos gens. La majorité en a été recueillie aux environs de Flandria, région qui m'est la plus familière. Çà et là je me suis permis de porter des jugements et de préconiser des solutions à certaines difficultés. J'aime à déclarer qu'il s'agit dans ces cas d'opinions strictement personnelles.

La carte annexée à cet ouvrage permet de retrouver les tribus et villages dont il est question et indique leur position géographique dans l'ensemble des groupements qui composent le peuple Mǫ́ngǫ-Nkundó.

Je tiens à exprimer ma sincère gratitude à tous ceux qui ont contribué de quelque façon à ce travail : S. Exc. M^gr^ Ed. Van Goethem, notre vénéré Vicaire Apostolique, qui m'en a permis la composition et m'a toujours stimulé dans mes recherches, dont il comprend tout l'intérêt pratique pour une saine adaptation qui doit nous permettre d'établir l'Eglise sur des bases solides; — mes confrères les RR. PP. Trigalet et Wauters, ainsi que le R. Fr. Brants, qui, en prenant sur eux une grande partie de la besogne commune, m'ont laissé plus de loisirs pour ce travail; — tous les indigènes qui m'ont donné leur confiance et m'ont aidé de leurs précieuses informations et explications, comme Bakutu Bonifasi, Ali Ntefeji, Mpẹtsi, Esal'ey'olaka, Ikanya, Bolongo Lokolo, B. Ekamba, Bǫsęmbu, Piosi Isia, et tant d'autres que je ne puis citer tous, car la liste s'allongerait démesurément.

Je dois une grande reconnaissance à M. le Procureur Général honoraire A. Sohier. Cet éminent juriste a eu l'extrême obligeance de revoir tout le manuscrit me signalant les passages amphibologiques ou obscurs et indiquant les endroits où un supplément d'explication ou une revision du texte serait souhaitable. Il a ainsi puissamment contribué à donner à ce travail sa forme ultime, et par conséquent une bonne part du mérite de cet ouvrage lui revient.

CHAPITRE I.

PRÉLIMINAIRES ET GÉNÉRALITÉS.

Le mariage comporte un côté sexuel, un élément d'affection ou de tendresse et un élément utilitaire. Il est exceptionnel qu'un de ces éléments soit la composante exclusive de l'union. Non seulement cela est vrai de l'union matrimoniale, mais aussi des relations irrégulières non momentanées.

Cette loi, qu'on peut admettre comme générale et universelle, vaut aussi pour les Nkundó. Il est donc utile, avant d'aborder l'étude détaillée du mariage chez cette peuplade, d'examiner comment ces éléments s'y présentent.

Commençons par le côté utilitaire, sur lequel nous pouvons être bref. De ce point de vue, l'épouse est pour le Nkundó la personne qui s'occupera à satisfaire ses besoins quotidiens d'alimentation (cuisine, plantations), qui fera régner dans sa case l'ordre et la propreté, qui élèvera ses enfants. C'est donc pour lui la ménagère et la mère.

Des cas de mariage pour motif politique ou économique se présentent; mais ils sont exceptionnels, de sorte que nous pouvons omettre d'en tenir compte.

La considération des qualités morales intervient souvent dans le choix d'une épouse. Mais à proprement parler il ne s'agit pas alors de mariage de raison; c'est plutôt l'affection qui en est cause.

Quant à l'élément affectionnel et au côté sexuel de la question, il est indispensable que nous nous y arrêtions plus longuement.

Ce chapitre est donc divisé en deux parties :

I. La vie affective;
II. La vie sexuelle des Nkundó.

PREMIÈRE PARTIE.

La vie affective des Nkundó.

Les Nkundó sont capables d'une réelle affection. Celle-ci prend des formes diverses et atteint des degrés différents selon la qualité des personnes qui en sont l'objet. Nous traiterons dans des articles successifs :

- I. De l'affection entre parents;
- II. D'une forme spéciale de celle-ci ou de la création d'une *Bolúmbú;*
- III. De l'amitié;
- IV. De l'amour entre conjoints.

ARTICLE I. — L'AFFECTION ENTRE PARENTS.

Le Nkundó porte aux membres de sa parenté un amour profond. Je suis d'avis qu'en général il les affectionne aussi vivement — si pas plus — que la plupart des Européens, mais sans être capable d'autant de dévouement. Pour expliquer cet état d'âme, il suffit de considérer que l'affection est quelque chose d'instinctif : *botéma nd' îkǫma*, disent nos gens, le cœur est comme un paquet, c'est-à-dire il ne choisit pas l'objet de son amour; c'est celui-ci qui s'offre spontanément à lui (¹); tandis que le dévouement inclut presque toujours un raisonnement et se fonde sur une haute moralité à base religieuse. Ensuite, les causes qui, chez nous éloignent si souvent les parents les uns des autres (questions de propriété, d'héritage, etc.) n'existent pas chez les Nkundó, qui connaissent la

---

(¹) Ou *lolango ale nsęmbę éy' otéma*=l'amour est un produit spontané, inné, du cœur.

la collectivité du patrimoine. Chez eux, les membres de la famille ont un besoin absolu et constant les uns des autres: ils ne peuvent lutter contre la vie que s'ils se tiennent bien unis. Un homme isolé de sa parenté est un paria, car dans toute affaire de quelque importance il doit compter sur elle pour l'aider, le protéger, le défendre. Il est donc pour ainsi dire forcé de faire cause commune avec le reste de sa famille et d'y garder le rang qui lui convient.

Ceci peut contribuer à faire comprendre qu'il y a chez cette peuplade moins de causes de refroidissement de l'affection familiale et plus de raisons pour maintenir la bonne entente. Mais il serait faux d'attribuer leur amour à une espèce de calcul égoïste. Leur affection est sincère et spontanée; seulement les faits indiqués expliquent pourquoi les désunions et les brouilles, si fréquentes en Europe, sont inconnues chez les Nkundó; elles sont liquidées au plus tôt et n'ont pas le temps de s'envenimer ou de s'enraciner. Une exception rarissime ne détruit pas la règle générale.

§ 1. Parents et Enfants.

Les parents aiment sincèrement leurs enfants. Leur affection n'est pas entamée par l'âge; il n'y a qu'une plus grande tendresse vis-à-vis des tout jeunes, qu'ils portent et choient volontiers. L'indulgence qu'ils témoignent à l'égard des défauts de leur progéniture est limitée par la colère lorsque les écarts les exaspèrent, moins souvent par le souci raisonné d'éducation. Le conjoint qui n'a pas souffert de la faute ne réagit pas contre son enfant, mais, entraîné par son affection, le protège plutôt. Les parents tâchent d'excuser et de défendre avec acharnement leurs enfants qui ont mal agi (¹). Toutefois, le bien commun du clan l'emporte sur l'affection. Aussi, lorsque la famille

---

(¹) Constatations qu'on peut souvent faire également chez nombre d'Européens.

entière pâtit des manquements des adolescents, ceux-ci ne seront plus épargnés par leur père; mais leur mère se met souvent de leur parti, car n'appartenant pas à la famille de son mari, elle ne laisse parler que son cœur. L'organisation familiale-politique de cette peuplade exige que la tendresse soit limitée; sinon elle conduirait au désordre et à l'anarchie.

On ne peut pas dire des parents Nkundó, comme on le lit souvent au sujet d'autres Congolais, qu'ils ne se soucient plus de leurs enfants qui peuvent se suffire à eux-mêmes et qui seraient ainsi obligés, dès l'âge de six à sept ans, de pourvoir personnellement à leurs besoins. Nos gens ne cessent de nourrir, voire de choyer leurs enfants : même mariés, ceux-ci sont toujours bien accueillis au foyer maternel et copieusement servis. Il est bien vrai que la jeunesse est beaucoup en forêt à la recherche de diverses sortes de vivres, mais cela fait partie de leurs jeux et amusements, rentre dans le programme de leur éducation et est en même temps leur contribution à l'entretien du ménage (contribution qui ne peut être absente d'aucune éducation sérieuse et qu'il est regrettable de voir faire défaut dans tant de familles d'Europe (¹).

Dans l'affaire du mariage, les parents respectent, en règle générale, les sentiments de leurs enfants. Poussé par la cupidité et surtout par le besoin qu'il a d'un certain montant de valeurs, un père laisse parfois prédominer la voix de l'intérêt sur celle du cœur.

Il va sans dire que des aberrations du sentiment paternel peuvent se rencontrer, mais elles sont rarissimes (²).

Si les parents aiment tous leurs enfants sans distinction et sans égard à leurs défauts, vices, etc., ils ne sont pourtant pas exempts d'une certaine partialité; comme chez nous, l'un ou l'autre est l'objet de plus de prévenan-

---

(¹) Il sera traité plus amplement de l'éducation dans le chapitre X, art. VIII.

(²) Cfr. un exemple au chapitre II, art. XI, 3°, B.

ces, de plus de condescendance, etc. Ces préférences n'engendrent pas chez les frères la jalousie, pourvu qu'elles restent dans les limites de l'équité, ce qu'elles font pratiquement toujours.

Certains hommes riches occupant un rang social prépondérant ont un moyen d'extérioriser leur prédilection pour une de leurs filles, moyen qui est en même temps une ostentation de leur richesse et une affirmation de leur position. Cette pratique sera décrite dans l'article suivant.

De leur côté, les enfants aiment sincèrement leurs parents. Comme chez les Européens, leur amour est fait plus de respect envers leur père et est plus tendre envers leur mère. On trouve chez les Nkundó les mêmes variantes dans le sentiment, selon qu'il s'agit des garçons ou des filles. Les enfants peuvent manquer à leur devoir d'affection et de respect; mais ce sont des exceptions dues à la légèreté, à l'entêtement, à la colère brusque (¹). On ne voit pas ici ces dissensions profondes qui parfois, chez les Européens, divisent parents et enfants, ni ces grossièretés et brutalités qu'on lit assez fréquenmment dans nos journaux : chez les Nkundo, ces drames de famille sont inconnus.

Toutefois ceci n'exclut pas la désobéissance. L'enfant nkundo lui aussi préfère le jeu au travail et la liberté à la discipline. Il tâche de se dérober aux ordres de ses parents qui le lient et empêchent les ébats avec ses compagnons (²).

L'affection est particulièrement profonde envers la mère. Quel que soit l'âge que le Nkundó ait atteint, sa tendresse pour elle ne diminue point : il reste toujours son enfant. Dans toute peine, toute déception, tout chagrin il a sur les lèvres le mot : *ngóya* : maman. Le sentiment inné qui lie mère et enfants conserve chez cette peuplade toute sa spontanéité native.

(¹) Voir un exemple au chapitre X, art. VIII.

(²) Un des tout premiers mots que l'enfant nkundó apprend est « *mbói* » : je ne veux pas.

Les parents et enfants nkundó ne se donnent pourtant pas de marques extérieures spéciales de leur affection, comme il s'en rencontre chez d'autres peuples.

Au décès on peut constater sur le vif la sincérité de l'affection entre parents et enfants. Leur douleur émouvante est extériorisée bruyamment et souvent pathétiquement. Même des hommes âgés n'ont pas honte de sangloter comme des enfants. Que la légèreté de leur caractère les fait passer facilement d'un sentiment à un autre n'infirme en rien notre affirmation. (On peut d'ailleurs en constater autant en Europe.) (¹).

§ 2. Frères et Sœurs.

De l'amour que les enfants nkundó portent à leurs parents dérive naturellement l'affection qu'ils témoignent à leurs frères et sœurs, et qui est sincère et vive. Les remarques que nous avons faites au sujet de la nature et des qualités de ce sentiment des enfants à l'égard de leurs parents s'appliquent également ici. Les brouilles qui peuvent se produire s'enveniment rarement. D'un côté l'affection entre frères et sœurs est sincère et profonde, et de l'autre l'interdépendance sociale et économique renforce tout naturellement ces liens.

L'entr'aide découle de l'amour; les frères et sœurs se rendent fréquemment service.

Après le décès du père et de ses oncles, le frère est le défenseur et protecteur naturel de ses puînés et de ses sœurs, même lorsqu'ils sont mariés.

Il existe une différence notable de degré dans l'intensité de l'amour entre frères et sœurs utérins et les autres. Les liens entre enfants de même mère sont beaucoup plus intimes et leur affection plus chaude qu'envers les frères et sœurs de mères différentes. Ceci encore est entièrement

---

(¹) Voir mon article sur les coutumes funéraires des Nkundó, à paraître dans *Anthropos*.

conforme à la nature humaine universelle, et prouve la supériorité de la monogamie sur la polygamie pour l'union, l'entente, le bonheur dans les familles.

Pour ce qui est des marques de l'affection, du chagrin à l'occasion du décès, etc., les mêmes constatations peuvent se faire — *mutatis mutandis* — que pour les relations entre parents et enfants.

§ 3. Parents divers.

L'amour du Nkundó s'étend à tous les membres de sa famille, c'est-à-dire à tous ceux auxquels il se sent uni par la communauté de sang et d'origine. Ceux-ci sont beaucoup plus nombreux qu'en Europe, puisque la parenté nkundó comprend bien plus de générations. L'intensité de l'affection diminue progressivement avec l'éloignement des degrés. Mais le Nkundó se sait et se sent toujours appartenir à la grande famille et reste attaché à tous les membres dont elle se compose. Chez tous il trouve un domicile. C'est ce qui rend compte de ce que, dans les centres, les hommes d'un même village se recherchent et sont tous « frères », ce qu'ils sont effectivement, puisque, d'une façon générale, chaque village ne forme qu'une seule et même parenté.

Si, ici comme pour le cas des frères et sœurs, la communauté d'intérêts joue un rôle dans le maintien de l'attachement aux membres de la famille, ce sentiment n'est pourtant pas basé sur des considérations égoïstes: celles-ci ne font que renforcer l'affection qui est, chez le Nkundó, véritablement innée. Parmi les divers parents, l'amour est le plus développé entre aïeux et petits-enfants, entre oncles et tantes et neveux et nièces, entre cousins et cousines, etc.

Comme chez les Européens, l'affection entre aïeux et petits-fils est très vive, plus tendre, dirait-on, qu'entre parents et enfants (comme l'exprime le dicton : *bǫ̃na* *l'onkáná, ndeki nd'ônkáná*), mais dégénérant en débonnaireté et faiblesse, d'un côté, et en un laisser-aller d'un air irrespectueux, de l'autre.

Le Nkundó aime et traite ses oncles et tantes paternels comme ses « pères », ses oncles et tantes maternels comme ses « mères ». Évidemment, les sentiments qui l'animent à leur égard ne sont pas aussi affectueux que ceux qu'il porte à ses parents, mais ils en sont la prolongation atténuée.

Dans la même mesure il en est ainsi des liens qui l'unissent à ses cousins et cousines, qu'il nomme ses « frères » et « sœurs ». Mais les enfants de sa tante paternelle sont ses « pères ».

ARTICLE II. — LA BOLÚMBÚ.

Aux temps anciens un homme extrêmement riche créait *bolúmbú* une de ses filles, pour marquer son affection pour elle et faire ostentation de ses biens. Cette coutume est actuellement en pleine disparition (¹). La division plus grande des richesses; la diminution des loisirs causée par les travaux imposés par le Blanc, soit directement : corvées, routes, travaux économiques, etc., soit indirectement, par la nécessité de se procurer le montant des impôts; la difficulté conséquente de faire de grandes concentrations de peuple pour assister à ces cérémonies et fêtes durant des jours et des semaines; tout cela en a rendu la pratique quasi impossible (²). Pourtant, il nous faut la décrire ici.

Lorsqu'un indigène voulait que sa fille aimée devînt

(¹) Sur la rive gauche de la Loilaka, elle a disparu depuis des années déjà. Les Injǫ́lǫ́ l'ont encore pratiquée jusque tout récemment.

(²) On pourrait supposer que les nouvelles utilisations de richesses procurées par le développement économique aient contribué à la disparition de cette coutume. Théoriquement ce fait aurait pu avoir eu cette influence; mais pratiquement il n'est pour rien dans le changement constaté.

bolúmbú, après avoir obtenu le consentement et le concours pécuniaire de toute sa parenté, d'immenses préparatifs étaient faits : boisson, vivres divers, danses; tout devait être extraordinaire. Au jour fixé et porté à la connaissance de toute la région par des messagers, une affluence énorme de monde se réunissait chez lui. Des réjouissances publiques avaient lieu durant des jours et des jours. Dans une harangue de circonstance, le père annonce à l'assemblée son intention de constituer sa fille *bolúmbú*. Deux parents ou deux femmes de son père arrachent à la fille les habits qu'elle porte et la revêtent de fourrures précieuses, principalement d'une partie de peau de l'antilope rayée *mpangá*. Certains villages lui permettaient le port de la peau de léopard, tant devant que derrière.

Ensuite le père décrète (*-békya*) que sa fille, étant devenue *bolúmbú*, ne quittera jamais le port des fourrures, qu'elle ne travaillera plus, qu'elle ne sera pas donnée en mariage au premier venu, mais uniquement à un homme très riche et influent. D'où le synonyme de *bǫ̌na óâ boéko* = enfant de décret, enfant réservée, interdite.

Cette cérémonie peut avoir lieu quel que soit l'âge de l'enfant, depuis trois ans jusqu'à l'adolescence.

La cérémonie terminée, la jeune fille se retire (*-ulama*, transit. *-uja*) dans une case spécialement aménagée à cet effet, nommée *ilękę*. Cette réclusion ne dure que quelques mois. Si certains besoins l'obligent à quitter la demeure, elle le fait par derrière, dans la bananeraie, se dissimulant autant que possible sous une natte. Elle ne marche pas sur le sol nu; ses pieds ne peuvent pas venir en contact avec la terre. C'est pourquoi des nattes sont étendues partout sous ses pas. Elle ne fait aucun travail; ce sont sa mère, sa sœur, sa tante, etc., ou une esclave qui lui préparent la nourriture. Quant aux soins de toilette, elle ne se lave pas les mains à l'eau, mais à l'huile de palme.

Toutes ces pratiques sont des marques de respect et des signes d'honneur.

Lorsque la réclusion touche à sa fin, le père donne une seconde fête, avec danses, boisson, etc. La *bolúmbú* sort sur des nattes. Mais il n'y a aucune nouvelle cérémonie. Désormais la jeune fille ne diffère en rien de ses congénères; elle ne garde que son signe distinctif : les fourrures, et elle ne s'occupe pas des travaux du ménage.

Son mariage était toujours fort retardé, car l'homme qui désirait la prendre comme épouse devait réunir une quantité considérable de valeurs avant de pouvoir se risquer à demander sa main. En effet, si sa tentative restait infructueuse, il s'exposait à la risée de toute la région.

Chez les tribus habitant la rive gauche de la Loílaka, tout homme riche et de bonne famille pouvait demander une fille *bolúmbú* en mariage. Au contraire, chez les Injọ́lọ́, la chose était plus compliquée. Le prétendant devait appartenir à une autre tribu ou à un autre groupement. Par exemple, une fille appartenant aux Engónjó n'était donnée qu'à un homme des Wesé ou des Ngọmbẹ, ou d'une tribu voisine, jamais à un membre des Engónjó. Tous les Engónjó considéraient la *bolúmbú* comme leur sœur. Aussi, lorsque le futur mari se rendait chez la famille de la *bolúmbú* pour demander sa main, chaque village lui barrait le chemin au moyen d'une palissade-clôture. On lui prenait toutes les valeurs dotales qu'il portait avec lui, en leur substituant l'équivalent en biens divers : poules, canards, chiens, nattes, etc., c'est-à-dire qu'ils faisaient l'échange de valeurs dotales contre des valeurs de *nkọmí* (¹). Ce n'est que lorsque le village qui barrait la route n'avait plus de quoi continuer l'échange, que le prétendant pouvait passer. Si celui-ci voyait sa provision de richesses épuisée, il était forcé de rentrer chez lui pour la renouveler. Tout ce qu'il donnait de cette

---

(¹) Cfr. chap. II, art. VII.

façon était compté comme dot=*jèngí* (1), et tout ce qu'il recevait faisait partie du *nkọmí* (2).

On le comprend, dans ces conditions demander en mariage une *bolúmbú* était un luxe que le vulgaire ne pouvait se permettre. Le prétendant appartenait nécessairement à une famille riche et influente, dont tous les membres l'assistaient.

Lorsqu'il avait enfin réussi à se frayer un passage, avec un trésor suffisant, jusqu'au père de l'élue, celui-ci ne mettait plus d'obstacles à son désir. La jeune fille, de son côté, était honorée au possible et enchantée de ce qu'un homme l'aimait au point de se donner tant de peine et de débourser tant de valeurs par affection pour elle.

Pour le reste, le paiement de la dot se faisait comme pour tout autre mariage. Seulement, pour être présentée à son mari, la future s'avançait sur une rangée de nattes. Et une fête était organisée pour célébrer l'heureux et important événement. Des danses, aspergées d'un déluge de bière, avaient lieu et duraient des semaines, voire un mois entier.

Le père donnait à son gendre une grande quantité d'objets de *nkọmí* (3), de sorte que la *bolúmbú* devenait souvent *yěngaende*, ou au moins *lifayǎnjọku* (4). Il ne laissait partir sa fille qu'après lui avoir adjoint au moins une *ebísa* pour la servir (5). Ainsi, Bonjéngó, fille d'Ilónjó y'Okákema, de Bompóma (Injóló, Engónjó) (décédée en 1934), lorsqu'elle fut prise en mariage par Bolángé w'Ioma, de Lokóndola (Injọlọ, Ngọmbẹ), avait reçu de son père quatre bibísa, pour s'occuper de ses travaux, plus un jeune cousin qui devait rester auprès d'elle pour lui chercher le bois de chauffage. De la sorte, le père assurait à sa fille bien-aimée la continuité de sa situation honorable de grande dame.

---

(1) Cfr. chap. II, art. VIII.

(2) Cfr. chap. II, art. VII.

(3) Cfr. chap. II, art. VII.

(4) Cfr. chap. VII, art. IV.

(5) Cfr. chap. VII, art. III.

Voulant faire persister la position prépondérante de son épouse, le mari, de son côté, la créait sa *bolúmbú* (1) : Bǫn'ôw'olúmbú átswá ô wâlí ów'olúmbú ék'ôme. Il disait à l'assemblée : « Son père l'a proclamée *bolúmbú*, et moi je la proclame *bolúmbú* de même (la'ékáé ôékyákí, em mpé njôékya â ng'ǫ́kǫ́) ».

Quelle est la raison d'être de cette coutume? D'après les indigènes, c'était une affirmation publique de la prépondérance sociale du père et, en même temps, — les deux choses sont inséparables, — la plus grande marque d'amour qu'il pouvait donner à sa fille. N'importe quel indigène n'avait pas le droit de constituer sa fille *bolúmbú*. Il devait, au contraire, occuper un rang social particulièrement en vue, c'est-à-dire être chef de famille riche, influent et puissant. Toutes les cérémonies, pratiques et règles observées dans cette institution indiquent cette direction. Et la comparaison avec la femme *bolúmbú* (1) ajoute encore à cette explication une plus forte probabilité.

Comme nous l'avons indiqué, cette coutume est en pleine voie de disparition. Dans certaines tribus, comme les Beloko, sous-tribu des Lifumba, on commence actuellement à lancer un « ersatz ». La fille de prédilection est parée et ornée comme autrefois, les fourrures étant remplacées par des tissus européens. Mais le caractère public de l'institution ancienne a disparu. On ne fait plus autour de sa création toutes les cérémonies. Enfin on ne l'appelle plus *bolúmbú*, un nouveau nom ayant été inventé : *bǫndę́lóóngola* = le Blanc l'élève (l'éduque).

---

(1) Cfr. chap. VII, art. III. A moins qu'elle ne fût sa première épouse. Cfr. ibid. et art. I.

ARTICLE III. — L'AMITIÉ.

L'amitié n'est pas inconnue du Nkundó. Elle se fonde sur les mêmes bases qu'en Europe. J'ai connu plus d'un exemple d'une réelle affection mutuelle entre personnes nullement apparentées. Personnellement, je compte parmi les Noirs que j'ai fréquentés des amis sincères qui m'ont témoigné une réelle affection, m'ont aidé de tout leur pouvoir et fait preuve d'une entière confiance; il y en a même qui n'ont pas craint de s'attirer pour moi des embarras sérieux et qui, pour me disculper, sont allés jusqu'à s'accuser eux-mêmes et s'exposer à des difficultés et à des sanctions.

Outre les cadeaux et l'assistance mutuelle, les amis se donnent peu ou pas de marques de leur affection. Les embrassements existent, mais ils sont rares entre hommes, tandis qu'on les voit fréquemment entre femmes.

Les Nkundó connaissent le pacte d'amitié (*boseka* ou, chez les Bombwanja, *likandeko*) (1). Deux personnes du même sexe se lient d'amitié (*kọta boseka ou likandeko*) en présence d'un témoin (*ndonga*), à qui il incombe de transmettre les présents mutuels.

La conclusion du traité d'amitié est proprement une coutume des femmes; ce n'est que subsidiairement, par imitation, que les hommes — généralement leurs maris — se lient d'amitié de la même façon. Ce pacte n'est pas héréditaire d'office, mais les enfants peuvent le maintenir, — avec le même *ndonga* que leurs pères, — comme aussi il leur est loisible de ne pas le reprendre (2).

Nous pouvons distinguer dans le pacte d'amitié deux éléments : la sympathie ou l'affection et l'entr'aide. L'assistance mutuelle est, en soi, une marque de l'amitié; mais il n'est pas rare, entre hommes, qu'il soit la cause et la raison exclusives du pacte dans lequel ils cherchent un soutien réciproque. Chez les femmes, au contraire, on peut affirmer que les cadeaux sont uniquement considérés comme preuves d'affection et que c'est ce sentiment seul qui est à la base du lien. Souvent les femmes qui s'aiment beaucoup ne se lient pas au moyen d'un pacte d'amitié et se contentent de se prouver en toute simplicité leur affection. Les hommes aussi peuvent être d'excellents amis sans recourir à la conclusion d'un pacte. Mais la conclusion d'un traité rend publique leur relation et par conséquent la protège contre des influences délétères, comme seraient des incompréhensions, des dissensions, des colères, etc. On dirait que c'est l'élément raison qui s'ajoute à l'élément sentiment.

---

(1) *Bofili* chez les Ekonda, *mbele* chez les Batswa.

(2) Voir encore une cause particulière de pactes d'amitié au chap. IV, art. 1.

Contrairement à l'affection entre parents, l'amitié se refroidit, voire périt. Ceci vaut surtout pour les pactes dont l'entr'aide est la seule base. Ainsi, si un des deux amis est par trop avare en comparaison de l'autre, on en arrive vite à la rupture.

Le Nkundó porte encore une affection particulière à ses compagnons d'âge (*boningá*, pl. *baningá*), c'est-à-dire à tous ceux qui sont nés le même jour, semaine, mois ou époque que lui. Il se sent uni à eux par des liens spéciaux. Entre eux, les compagnons d'âge se considèrent et se traitent comme des frères, se prêtent aide et assistance, etc.

Cette affection est naturelle; l'égoïsme, qu'on peut trouver entre « amis », n'existe pas entre compagnons d'âge.

Leur relation est si intime qu'ils se prêtent, le cas échéant, leurs épouses (⁹).

Enfin, les homonymes (*ndoi*, plur. *bandoi*) se témoignent mutuellement une réelle affection; ils s'entr'aident et se remettent des cadeaux. Ils ne font pourtant pas de pacte, comme pour le *boseka*.

Il faut noter que ces divers liens n'existent pas entre personnes de sexe différent; ils seraient condamnés comme concubinage.

(⁹) Cfr. chap. VI, art. VIII, § 1.

ARTICLE IV. — L'AMOUR CONJUGAL.

Maintes fois la question a été posée : Qu'en est-il de l'amour chez ces populations? Les conjoints s'aiment-ils réellement? Nous ne parlons pas de la passion sexuelle, qui, d'ordinaire, s'ajoute à l'amour entre homme et femme, mais qui, en soi, en est bien distincte. L'amour est une résultante de divers sentiments : sympathie, affection, appréciation mutuelle, admiration, dévouement, etc., et, selon la présence ou l'absence d'un de ces éléments et le degré qu'ils atteignent, nous qualifions la perfection de l'amour.

La réponse à la question est, de par la nature même des choses, extrêmement délicate. En effet, il est difficile d'observer et d'analyser des faits nets et précis. L'idée que nous nous en faisons doit nécessairement provenir d'une conclusion logique basée sur une quantité de cas particuliers. Ceux-ci pourraient avoir une autre explication que celle que nous donnons. Il peut nous arriver, en effet, d'attribuer à l'amour véritable ou à l'absence d'amour les effets d'autres causes que nous ne remarquons pas. Pourtant, nous ne pouvons nous abstenir de faire suivre quelques données qui nous permettront la formation d'un jugement suffisamment conforme à la réalité.

Il est incontestable que l'amour n'a pas ici la pureté qu'on lui trouve dans certaines catégories d'Européens ou d'autres peuples, surtout chez les braves chrétiens. Il n'est étonnant pour personne que des populations païennes avec leur atavisme de coutumes dégradantes ne soient pas arrivées à la finesse du sentiment en général, ni surtout à la hauteur morale d'une vertu si noble nourrie et développée par des siècles d'influence chrétienne.

Ensuite, l'instabilité du mariage, sa dissolubilité et l'existence de la polygamie, loin d'être aptes à développer la pureté de l'amour, tendent plutôt à l'avilir. Enfin, la vivacité et la sincérité de l'affection familiale, que nous avons exposée à l'article I, conduisent tout naturellement à la diminution de l'amour conjugal, d'autant plus que le Nkundó a, de par la constitution patriarcale de la société indigène, un plus grand besoin de sa parenté que de son conjoint.

Aussi trouve-t-on beaucoup d'égoïsme, un des signes caractéristiques de la décadence morale, et peu de dévouement. Il est rare qu'une femme reste chez son mari atteint d'une maladie incurable, impotent ou devenu trop pauvre à son goût. Les Nkundó trouvent la chose toute naturelle et ne montrent aucune honte de l'avouer, même devant le missionnaire.

Il en est de même du mari envers sa femme. Si elle est devenue incapable de lui faire atteindre au moins un des buts pour lesquels il l'a épousée, pourquoi la garderait-il chez lui? Si elle lui a donné des fils, ceux-ci tiennent à garder leur mère, et sur leurs instances, jointes peut-être à un sentiment de compassion envers celle qu'il a aimée, elle pourra rester. Ses fils s'occuperont de sa subsistance, avec de temps en temps un petit apport de la part du père, et ses filles la soigneront et lui prépareront les aliments. D'autres hommes s'obstinent malgré tout à se débarrasser de cette importune. Mais ils ne réussissent que lorsqu'ils n'ont pas de fils en âge de défendre leur mère. Les différences dépendent du caractère individuel des personnes (¹).

Dans ce domaine, il n'y a que la religion qui puisse apporter un changement radical. Quoiqu'on soit encore très loin du but à atteindre, certains chrétiens sérieux commencent déjà à se plier aux exigences de la morale supérieure et à traiter leur conjoint(e), même malade, conformément à la sainteté du mariage, bien que la chose soit plus ardue pour eux, cette même morale leur défen-

---

(¹) Cfr. chap. VIII, art. 1.

dant la polygamie ou tout autre moyen de satisfaire la passion.

Un cas admirable est celui de Bekau Marie, fille d'Esalé d'Iámbo (Ɓonkoso). Son mari, Bọkọmbeembe Pierre de Mbalá, est depuis de longues années atteint de la lèpre. Il est incapable, tant d'accomplir l'acte que de faire n'importe quelle besogne sérieuse. La femme doit donc subsister par ses propres moyens et avec l'aide de son fils. Malgré la liberté, l'éloignement de son village natal et les mauvais sentiments de la famille de son mari envers elle, elle n'a pas voulu le quitter et est décidée de continuer à se dévouer à lui (1).

Dans un différend entre sa famille et son mari, il est difficile de dire d'avance pour qui la femme prendra parti. De même si des difficultés surgissent entre sa famille et son épouse, le mari peut aussi bien se ranger du côté de sa femme que de celui de ses parents. Tout dépend des tempéraments individuels. Il y a des personnes qui spontanément soutiennent leur famille; d'autres, au contraire, font bloc avec leur conjoint. Une femme ou un homme qui, sans raison valable, se déclare d'une façon habituelle pour sa famille contre le conjoint n'est nullement approuvé par ceux qui observent le conflit en simples spectateurs neutres. Aussi juge-t-on qu'alors les époux ne s'aiment pas beaucoup. Souvent la rupture ne tarde pas à se produire. Si pourtant l'union tient malgré tout, il faut généralement l'attribuer à la crainte des conséquences encore plus graves d'une dissolution. Les mêmes variations individuelles se retrouvent dans l'attachement de la femme aux intérêts de la famille de son mari.

Nous ne pouvons pas comparer le ménage indigène aux ménages des simples braves gens de chez nous, où la famille se compose exclusivement des parents et de leurs enfants. Ici, elle est plus étendue : les intérêts du mari sont aussi ceux de ses parents, frères, oncles, etc. Pourtant, comme nous le verrons à propos du mariage par héritage, il n'est pas rare de trouver des femmes qui demeurent attachées à la famille de leur mari défunt. D'autres tendent plus à enrichir leurs propres familles.

---

(1) Ce cas n'est dû à l'influence chrétienne que partiellement. C'est pourquoi il a sa place ici à l'exclusion de quelques autres que je pourrais relater, mais qui sont dus exclusivement à l'action sur les âmes de la morale du Christ.

Voici un cas historique où la femme s'est montrée très dévouée aux intérêts de son mari, quoiqu'une certaine place semble devoir être laissée à l'amour-propre et à la gloire personnelle (1) : Bolúmbú wá nsánjí, fille de Bǫkǫmbę de Litúli (Bombwanja), est mariée à Bǫnyęmę w'ényuká de Bonganda (Bonkoso). Un jour elle rentre voir son frère (son père étant décédé entre-temps), Bǫmpęlí w'ę̀lǫmbǫ, qui a quitté Litúli pour l'établir dans son village maternel, Etóo des Boéndé. Ils se mettent à disputer. Bǫmpęlí prétend que Bǫnyęmę ne vaut pas lourd, qu'on exagère ses richesses, qu'on le glorifie à tort, etc. Bolúmbú défend son mari. Finalement, ne pouvant se mettre d'accord, Bǫmpęlí enjoint à sa sœur de ne plus retourner chez son mari, afin qu'elle soit mariée à un autre homme. Car il est décidé à prendre la preuve de la valeur de Bǫnyęmę en lui faisant la guerre; et elle ne peut pas admettre que son mari soit fait prisonnier par son propre frère. Malgré tout, Bolúmbú s'obstine et part en hâte. Arrivée chez son mari, elle lui raconte tout. Entre-temps, tout Boéndé et d'autres clans Bombwanja prennent les armes. Enyuká, de son côté, communique la nouvelle à tous les villages Bonkoso, leurs alliés, clients et Batswá. Les divers groupes de combattants se postent près du village de Bonganda, dans la forêt actuelle de

---

(1) D'après mes évaluations, cet épisode est vieux d'à peu près cent ans. J'ai encore connu deux hommes qui en ont gardé souvenance : l'aîné (Longwokó des Baséká Bongóngó, Bongili), avait alors environ 20 ans. Une arrière-petite-fille de Bǫnyęmę (Mpútú Sofie) est maintenant dans la quarantaine.

Boóngónjǫu, entre la Lomeké et l'emplacement présent de Bęsǫmbǫ́, de Lofelí et d'Engónjó. L'armée Boéndé est attaquée à l'improviste par les Bonkoso et, après un combat acharné, est mise en déroute, laissant sur le champ de bataille plusieurs morts. La paix est proposée par Bǫnyęmę. Il met sa fierté à ne pas se laisser surpasser en générosité. Non content de payer aux clans qui ont perdu des membres, il envoie, par une munificence vraiment princière, toutes les valeurs dont Bǫmpęlí a besoin pour indemniser les groupes Bombwanja éprouvés par la perte d'un des leurs; et par surcroît, il lui porte toute une fortune à titre de complément dotal pour Bolúmbú.

Les Nkundó connaissent bien des cas où une veuve ayant atteint un certain âge prend l'engagement solennel de ne pas se remarier, de ne plus s'approcher d'aucun homme. Dans le sexe fort, les cas sont pratiquement inexistants. Renvoyons aussi aux cas, cités plus loin, de fęmmes qui voulaient supporter la maladie et mourir chez leur mari (chap. VI, art. III, § 4), ainsi que les préférences pour la monogamie (chap. VII, art. VI et VII).

Sous le bénéfice de l'explication donnée au début, je pense pouvoir affirmer que la grande majorité des mariages contractés par les Nkundo sont des mariages d'amour. Le mariage politique ou d'intérêt a certainement existé. Et, à présent surtout, on trouve des parents qui poussent leurs enfants au mariage par intérêt financier ou social.

Cette conclusion n'est peut-être pas admise par nombre de coloniaux. Pourtant il me semble qu'elle s'impose, dans le sens et les limites indiquées ici. On argue surtout de l'instabilité des unions, de la fréquence des divorces, de l'infidélité et de la polygamie, objections que nous allons examiner un peu plus en détail.

Pour juger convenablement, il faut commencer par distinguer entre les sexes, les situations n'étant pas du tout comparables. Ensuite, pour ce qui est des femmes, il faut distinguer encore entre les femmes de polygames et les autres.

Parlons d'abord des hommes. Ils semblent être supérieurs à l'autre sexe par rapport à l'amour conjugal, si nous nous basons sur la plus grande fidélité. Le divorce est presque toujours causé par la femme. Ceci est d'ailleurs tout naturel : l'homme se marie à un âge relativement avancé, s'engage donc en pleine connaissance de cause, tandis que la fille est fiancée le plus souvent avant l'âge de raison et ne peut donc laisser parler son cœur.

Par contre, le polygame doit partager son cœur. Comme nous le verrons *suo loco*, il porte un amour spécial à une de ses épouses. Envers la première, son affection devient plus profonde, plus raisonnée, plus de volonté, tandis que l'amour qu'il porte à la favorite semble plutôt question de sentiment au sens strict du mot. Quant aux autres, généralement il les a choisies de son propre gré, et peut-être même il en a séduit au point de les amener à quitter leur mari précédent. Il paraît donc injuste de nier l'existence d'une certaine affection envers elles.

Mais peut-on encore lui appliquer le nom d'« amour »? Dans notre psychologie européenne, l'amour conjugal est exclusif. On dirait que chez le Nkundó il n'en est pas ainsi. Bien souvent on entend prétendre que le polygame considère ses femmes, à l'exception d'une ou de deux, comme capital humain, comme machines à produire. Sans nier que le harem constitue un capital humain et soit une source de richesses, il m'est avis que l'affirmation est beaucoup trop radicale et absolue. Dans la généralité des cas il faut attribuer au polygame des sentiments de réelle affection envers ses femmes. Je comprends cette affection comme une espèce d'amour de proportion réduite. Et je compare cette situation — *mutatis mutandis* — à quelqu'un qui aime simultanément plusieurs amis. On peut parler d'amour envers plusieurs, malgré les différences d'intensité, d'après les diverses personnes qui en sont l'objet, quoique nous puissions considérer cet amour partagé comme très imparfait. Mais quel que soit le nom qu'on lui applique, et si faible que soit le degré d'intensité qu'on lui reconnaisse, il est impossible de nier son existence.

Parmi les femmes, il faut distinguer entre femmes de monogames et femmes de polygames, surtout les « supplémentaires ». Il se comprend sans peine que chez ces dernières l'amour est plus sujet au refroidissement. Le mari étant obligé de partager ses faveurs et les marques de son affection, ne fût-ce que pour conserver la bonne entente, il saurait difficilement en être autrement, sans parler des mariages en bas âge. Outre la cause précitée du refroidissement de l'amour chez les épouses polygames, il est incontestable que la communauté d'âmes, de sentiments et d'intérêts ne s'établit pas entre elles et leur mari aussi complètement que dans l'union monogame. On ne peut pourtant pas poser comme règle générale que la femme de polygame n'aime pas son mari, du moins dans une certaine mesure, qui évidemment varie avec les sujets. Prétendre, à priori, que l'homme ne saurait être simultanément l'objet de l'amour de plusieurs femmes est inadmissible en logique et contraire aux faits. Ici on voit assez fréquemment qu'une femme quitte son mari polygame pour un autre, et cela parce qu'elle a reporté son amour sur ce dernier. Les exceptions devraient être plutôt prouvées. Même si elles existaient nombreuses, elles n'excluraient pas les cas d'une réelle affection.

Le retour d'un polygame au milieu des siens après une longue absence suscite souvent de la part des épouses des démonstrations amoureuses qui étonnent l'Européen. Elles se jettent à ses pieds, enlacent ses jambes, se roulent par terre et se contorsionnent de joie et d'émotion. Il est vrai que la liberté produite par la colonisation a beaucoup fait refroidir ces beaux sentiments.

Est-il hors de propos de citer le dicton des femmes de polygames : *bokungú ákafola bitáfé, lolango ákafola botéma* = l'arbre *bokungú* ramifie ses branches, l'amour partage le cœur? Et cette fable qui enseigne l'amour véritable : un polygame qui a trois femmes se trouve accidentellement blessé et mourant de l'autre côté de la rivière. Ses femmes ayant couru à la rive n'y trouvent pas de pirogue. La rivière est infestée de crocodiles. Les principales épouses refusent de risquer leur vie en passant l'eau à la nage, et c'est la moindre qui se lance à travers tous les périls pour aller aider son mari.

C'est surtout lorsqu'une femme a donné son cœur à un amant qu'elle ne porte plus d'affection à son mari. Elle reste auprès de lui parce qu'elle saurait difficilement faire autrement. Son mari continue d'user de son corps et de ses bras, mais elle ne lui donne plus place dans son cœur; comme l'exprime si finement ce proverbe : *bŏm'ăkwĕta, ḿbw'ă nkánge; bonsámb'ákwĕta, omeka é ńtęngumę* = le mari t'appelle, « je suis malade à en mourir »; l'amant t'appelle, « je vais essayer de m'y rendre ».

L'objection tirée du divorce est difficile à manier, parce que la question est très complexe. Tout d'abord, le fait pour des époux de rester ensemble, de se montrer fidèles, n'est pas une preuve d'amour dans une société où la notion du devoir reste forte. Une femme chrétienne peut en arriver à concevoir une véritable aversion pour un époux infidèle et cependant demeurer avec lui par devoir, par amour pour ses enfants, etc. Réciproquement, dans une société où la notion du devoir se relâche ou n'existe même pas, des conjoints seront aisément infidèles, bien qu'au fond ils s'aiment; si le divorce est facile, ils en useront en coup de tête, pour des motifs futiles, sans s'apercevoir qu'en réalité l'amour subsiste entre eux (¹).

Le premier cas ne se rencontre pas chez les Nkundó,

(¹) M. le Procureur Général honoraire A. Sohier me fait savoir que l'expérience de sa longue carrière judiciaire confirme absolument ces données, qui sont si vraies que depuis quelques années on a dû puisqu'ils n'ont pas la notion du devoir moral dans notre signification. Mais il arrive que des époux qui ne s'aiment plus, restent ensemble parce qu'ils n'ont pas la possibilité de se séparer.

La seconde affirmation s'applique aux Nkundó dans sa première partie, comme il ressortira de la suite de cet exposé; mais nullement pour ce qui est de la deuxième partie, puisque le droit et la pratique nkundó, au lieu d'admettre le divorce pour des motifs futiles, en entourent au contraire la procédure de stipulations et conditions si nombreuses et minutieuses qu'ils le rendent plutôt difficile (voir chapitre VIII).

Constatons d'autres faits. Qu'on examine attentivement les statistiques chez les peuples européens à l'époque actuelle; qu'on y réfléchisse un peu et qu'on en tire les conclusions. Que de divorces, que d'unions rompues, que de drames de l'inconduite! Pourtant, impossible de conclure à l'absence d'amour chez les personnes qui en arrivent plus tard à ces situations malheureuses. Elles peuvent très bien s'être mariées par amour véritable, et avec les meilleures intentions. Mais de par les circonstances, elles ont laissé refroidir leur amour. Le cadre moral de leur vie n'était pas assez solide pour les retenir. Le milieu, au lieu de freiner, accélère souvent le mouvement vers la chute. L'autorité sociale ne réagit pas ou pas suffisamment contre les tendances destructrices. Si en outre il leur manque la force intérieure de résistance, les passions prennent le dessus et, finalement, détruisent l'amour.

Chez les Nkundó, les choses ne se passent pas autrement. Il n'est que juste d'en tenir compte et de faire la comparaison au lieu de porter un jugement *in abstracto*. On perd trop facilement de vue ces considérations pourtant si simples. Et cela particulièrement lorsqu'il s'agit

---

admettre dans des pays d'Europe que les époux divorcés pouvaient se remarier l'un avec l'autre. On en voit qui se retrouvent ainsi après plusieurs années de séparation.

d'un peuple si différent, que nous sommes enclins, à priori et souvent sans nous en rendre bien compte, à considérer comme inférieur à tous points de vue et dans chaque domaine.

Pour pouvoir nous former un jugement adéquat et l'étayer sur des preuves positives, nous devrions posséder des statistiques complètes et exactes. Or, elles font défaut. La seule chose que nous pouvons donc affirmer c'est que, à côté de beaucoup de femmes qui ne vivent plus avec leur premier mari, il y en a d'autres dont le mariage initial continue jusqu'à la mort.

Ici encore il faut se méfier des conclusions hâtives. Nous devrions ne considérer que les personnes décédées. Ensuite, il faudrait exclure les ruptures de fiançailles et s'en tenir uniquement aux mariages légitimement contractés et les prendre au sens strict, c'est-à-dire n'englober que les femmes pour lesquelles au moins le *walo* ait été versé. En outre, pour la présente matière, il est nécessaire de prendre en considération uniquement les mariages par *ǹkumbó* de personnes adultes, donc des unions vraiment et parfaitement libres de part et d'autre. Enfin, on devrait exclure les femmes de polygames qui ont des préférences pour la monogamie et ont profité d'une occasion pour rompre leur union, afin de contracter mariage avec un célibataire. Il me semble que les statistiques qu'on établirait en tenant compte de ces considérations et restrictions raisonnables, ne seraient pas tellement en défaveur de la stabilité des unions qu'on le penserait à première vue. Voilà du moins l'impression que m'ont laissée les nombreux cas qui sont venus à ma connaissance et que, de par l'obligation de mon ministère de prêtre, j'ai dû examiner à fond.

Sur un total de 112 cas matrimoniaux inscrits dans nos deux derniers livres de Flandria, nous trouvons les proportions suivantes (1) : veuves, 18 (2); héritées, 6; remplaçantes, 1; unions d'impubères rompues, 3; femmes de polygames, 29; femmes de monogames divorcées, 18; mariage initial, 37. Si nous excluons les remplaçantes, les unions d'enfants et les anciennes femmes de polygames, puis ajoutons les veuves et femmes héritées, nous obtenons une proportion de 37 + 18 + 6 = 61 personnes qui en sont toujours à leur premier mariage, contre 18 cas de divorce nettement caractérisés.

---

(1) Je retranche les 14 cas des Batswá.

(2) Par opposition aux veuves héritées.

Il est pourtant à noter que ces statistiques ne sont basées que sur une infime minorité de la population et sur la partie qui peut être considérée comme la meilleure à notre point de vue, puisqu'elle veut se soumettre au joug de la morale chrétienne. En outre, ce sont des personnes dans la force de l'âge; il est donc impossible de dire si plus tard elles persévéreront dans ces bonnes dispositions. Mais, en tout cas, elles prouvent que la fidélité à l'engagement peut exister et existe de fait chez les Nkundó.

Une des plus belles qualités de l'amour en général et de l'amour matrimonial en particulier est sans contredit la fidélité conjugale. Comme nous le verrons en détail au chapitre VI, art. VII, § 7, n° 2, le Nkundó n'a pas du tout la même appréciation que nous de la fidélité conjugale. L'infidélité de la femme est punie — et sévèrement — par les lois. Mais l'adultère, même découvert et connu par tous, n'engendre ni la honte ni le remords. Il existe une divergence notable entre notre façon de penser et les conceptions des Nkundó. Ceux-ci soutiennent que l'infidélité passagère, non suivie, même si elle est répétée, ne dénote pas l'absence d'amour pour le conjoint. Malgré l'invraisemblance de cette affirmation, j'ai dû me rendre : mes contradicteurs étaient si nombreux, de positions si différentes, d'un sérieux réel; il y a parmi eux plusieurs chrétiens dont nous sommes très satisfaits et qui, tant eux-mêmes que leurs épouses, se conduisent admirablement bien. Ils traitent ces fautes de défaillances momentanées et passionnelles, qui laissent subsister l'amour. Très souvent même ces hommes et ces femmes sont des modèles dans l'exécution de leurs autres devoirs. Ces fautes sont jugées très graves, sans aucun doute, — leurs fureurs montrent bien qu'ils ne les considèrent pas comme des futilités, — mais elles n'excluent pas l'amour dont, pour le reste, les conjoints ne cessent de se donner des preuves.

N'oublions pas que tant d'éléments peuvent amener une chute et que les consciences peuvent être très dévoyées. D'autre part, le fait qu'un mari se montre tolérant, exploite même sa femme, n'est pas exclusif d'un certain amour; un époux peut être extrêmement indulgent et en même temps jaloux jusqu'au crime. Tout cela se retrouve d'ailleurs chez les Blancs. L'amour sans le sentiment du devoir n'est pas un soutien suffisant d'une union.

En outre, aucun dogme, aucune prescription morale à base religieuse ne met un frein à l'instinct. Ajoutons que dans ce peuple primitif, la propension naturelle de la femme à plaire, à se soumettre aux désirs de l'homme est fortement développée. En Europe, ces sentiments sont canalisés par la religion chrétienne et son influence sur la société. Ici, ils ne rencontrent aucun obstacle direct, hormis les sanctions. Avant le mariage, la passion sexuelle avec toutes les sensations annexes et connexes peut — du moins à l'époque actuelle — s'exercer sans entrave physique, morale ni sociale. Le milieu dans lequel grandit la jeune fille, les exemples et conversations de ses compagnes la poussent encore davantage dans cette voie.

Enfin, n'oublions pas l'esprit de lucre, la convoitise. A part quelques exceptions, la femme exige une rémunération de l'homme à qui elle a livré son corps. Beaucoup d'infidélités peuvent être ainsi expliquées, du moins à l'époque actuelle. Il faut pourtant remarquer que, d'autre part, le fait que la femme exige un « salaire » de l'amant peut s'expliquer par une préoccupation amoureuse; en offrant à la femme un cadeau ou une somme il lui montre qu'il tient à elle; c'est une preuve d'affection à son égard, et la femme se fait payer pour être sûre de l'amour de son amant. Cela ne veut pas dire que ce soit commun ni fréquent; mais ce sentiment est naturel et existe en réalité dans plus d'un cas (¹).

Il ne faut donc pas s'étonner que, vivant dans des circonstances toujours défavorables à la chasteté et à la fidélité conjugale, la femme se laisse aisément entraîner à l'adultère et qu'elle tombe bien souvent. C'est là-dessus que se base le proverbe : bǒmoto ndé lofolókó, nkó ngonda ěfá'nd'ọ́sẹngámẹ́ = la femme est une chrysalide, point de forêt où elle ne pende; ce qui stigmatise bien la légèreté des filles d'Ève au pays nkundó. Pourtant, ces critiques de mœurs en proverbes ne peuvent être acceptées qu'au sens général et doivent se comprendre *cum grano salis;* elles laissent la porte grande ouverte aux exceptions.

Dans son *Blancs et Noirs*, p. 38, Jadot écrit : « Le Bantou est capable d'amour... tout court, et sa femme, — quoi qu'on en ait dit, — d'une certaine fidélité conjugale. Généralement, ni l'un ni l'autre n'exagèrent. Le Platonisme, le Pétrarquisme et le Romantisme sont étrangers aux amours indigènes... Je connais... des cas de farouches jalousies et de belle fidélité » (²).

Concluons que l'amour existe chez les Nkundó. Ce sentiment a à subir de rudes assauts et est influencé par une quantité de circonstances défavorables, qui peuvent rendre compte de son imperfection et de certaines anomalies dans ses manifestations. Les objections qu'on fait contre son existence ne prouvent pas son absence, mais les mauvaises conditions dans lesquelles il se trouve et qui empêchent son développement ou engendrent ses défaillances ou sa destruction.

(¹) Cfr. chap. VI, art. VII, § 2.
(²) Cfr. encore *ibid.*, p. 208, seq.

DEUXIÈME PARTIE.

La vie sexuelle des Nkundó.

Dans cette division nous examinerons successivement :

1° Le sentiment de la pudeur;
2° La préparation à la vie sexuelle;
3° La prostitution;
4° La sexualité prématrimoniale;
5° L'exercice de la sexualité;
6° Les vices contre nature;
7° L'inceste;
8° Les philtres d'amour.

ARTICLE I. — LA PUDEUR.

La pudeur est, du moins par les psychologistes modernes, définie à peu près comme « un dynamisme (principe d'activité) sensitif d'appréhension quasi instinctive en relation directe avec les processus sexuels » (¹).

Ce n'est pas une vertu, mais plutôt un bon instinct qui donne une certaine facilité à l'exercice de la chasteté. Ainsi comprise, la pudeur incline à cacher l'acte sexuel et tout ce qui, de près ou de loin, a quelque rapport avec lui.

Les excès de la sensualité n'excluent point l'existence de la pudeur, et vice versa, une personne pudique peut se laisser entraîner au dérèglement des mœurs. Toutefois, plus la pudeur est développée et délicate chez une personne donnée, mieux celle-ci est armée — toutes choses

---

(¹) J. DE LA VAISSIÈRE, S. J., *La Pudeur instinctive*, p. 13.

égales par ailleurs — contre les excès passionnels, comme, d'autre part, l'habitude de la luxure émousse et affaiblit la pudeur.

Il résulte de ces considérations psychologico-morales, comme des données de l'expérience, qu'on ne peut conclure à l'absence de la pudeur chez une population en se basant sur le seul fait qu'elle est nettement portée à la sensualité et qu'elle fait preuve d'une forte dose de lascivité.

De la part des Nkundó il ne faut pas s'attendre à cette délicatesse du sentiment qu'on rencontre chez certains autres peuples, là surtout où la morale chrétienne a exercé une forte influence. Mais la pudeur ne leur est pas inconnue.

Dans les lignes qui suivent nous ne parlerons plus de cet instinct de pudeur, — que je crois plutôt émoussé chez les Nkundó, — mais de la pudeur du comportement, qui montre l'existence de la pudeur intérieure. Les règles relativement sévères au moyen desquelles la communauté nkundó tâche de protéger la pudeur, prouvent que cette peuplade se rend parfaitement compte de la valeur de cet instinct comme garantie de la faiblesse humaine.

D'une façon générale, ils cachent les manifestations de la passion sexuelle. En outre, certaines pratiques en honneur chez eux nous montrent leur état d'esprit en cette matière; nous allons les examiner plus en détail. Il est à remarquer que, comme nous le verrons plus loin, la pudeur chez les Nkundó s'étend à des cas auxquels elle reste étrangère chez nous, en raison des différences de vues sur certaines questions, et vice versa.

Les ethnologues indiquent généralement comme effets (ou signes) principaux de la pudeur : le port de vêtements (¹) et l'existence de prescriptions sur la décence et

---

(¹) Quoique le port de vêtements soit une précaution inspirée par la pudeur, il est avéré aussi que l'absence de l'habillement ne prouve pas le défaut de ce sentiment.

la retenue à observer, en paroles ou en actes, entre individus du même sexe, et surtout à l'égard des personnes de sexe différent.

§ 1. Vêtement. Nudité.

Jusqu'à l'âge de raison, et même un peu au delà, l'enfant nkundó ne porte autour des reins qu'une ceinture de perles ou une simple ficelle, ornée généralement de quelque amulette. Personne ne s'offusque de cet habillement rudimentaire. Les parents se soucient davantage de la parure de leurs enfants; dès le jeune âge on voit apparaître des colliers et des ceintures de perles de traite, des bracelets, et aux chevilles des anneaux en fer, en cuivre ou en laiton, auxquels s'ajoutent — actuellement — des verroteries au-dessous du genou.

Avec l'âge, le vêtement croît progressivement en ampleur. Dès le début il est diversifié selon le sexe.

Le garçon reçoit une mince bande d'étoffe attachée, par simple repliement des deux bords extrêmes, à la ficelle-ceinture. Elle passe entre les jambes sans être serrée; elle laisse, par conséquent, une grande liberté de mouvements et permet la libre circulation de l'air : excellente précaution contre la transpiration due à la chaleur excessive, mais protection peu efficace contre les regards indiscrets, du moins dans certaines attitudes. Le tissu, en fibres de raphia, peut être plus ou moins orné. Il en existait, jadis, diverses espèces, que nous n'avons pas à décrire ici. La longueur des bords retombants est dictée par la vanité. La ficelle était souvent remplacée par une ceinture en raphia, ou — chez les notables — par une lanière en cuir.

Le vêtement féminin consiste en une large ceinture en raphia dont les deux extrémités se rétrécissent graduellement et se terminent en cordes, qui se nouent sur le ventre. Au centre de cette ceinture (*nkásá*) (1) est fixée une boule en fibres de raphia (*bonkoko*). Une pièce d'étoffe (*efufa* ou *lofufa*), d'une largeur variant de 3 à 20 cm. et davantage, selon l'âge et l'intensité du sentiment de la pudeur, est attachée aux cordes terminales et retombe plus ou moins bas. Pour l'habit de fête ou de parade, l'*efufa* est remplacée par une étoffe plus riche et plus longue (*intọ́lọ́;* ou chez les Elángá de Losanganya : *ifika*). Le *nkásá* est inconnu au delà de la Jwalé et de la Loílaka. Dans cette région-là, la femme se ceint d'une corde (ou ceinture de perles) qui retient une deuxième pièce d'étoffe.

Le vêtement masculin est donc une sorte de culotte rudimentaire ouverte sur les côtés, tandis que la femme est vêtue beaucoup plus librement. D'une façon générale, l'*efufa* constitue une sauvegarde convenable de la pudeur. Pourtant, dans certaines attitudes il est insuffisant (2).

A présent, le *nkásá* n'est plus porté que par quelques vieilles habitant les villages éloignés des grandes voies de communication. Partout ailleurs l'ancien habillement a fait place aux étoffes d'importation européenne. Les femmes portent au moins un *sangatúmbo*, sorte de petite jupe descendant des reins à mi-cuisses, ou au delà. A l'intérieur, les hommes d'un certain âge ont simplement changé la nature du tissu, mais non la façon de le porter. Les plus jeunes, au contraire, ont franchement adopté la mode européenne.

La femme mariée ne peut venir dans le village de ses parents par alliance (*bakiló*), ni se présenter devant eux, sans compléter son costume au moyen d'une ou plusieurs *bẹlẹlẹkẹ* (feuilles de bananier déchiquetées en franges). Il faut comprendre le terme de *bakiló* au sens qu'y attachent les Nkundó, c'est-à-dire en excluant ceux avec lesquels l'acte sexuel est parfois permis et qui sont nommés « maris » au sens large (1). Cette coutume aurait-elle quelque rapport avec le sentiment de la pudeur? La même question peut se poser au sujet de cette autre règle sévère de bienséance qui défend à un homme de regarder sa belle-mère en face (2). On peut répondre sans crainte par l'affirmative (3).

---

(1) Ou *bokangá*, *bokangá wá nkásá*. Chez les Bombwanja : *likóngá*.

(2) Il peut être intéressant de noter que l'habillement des hommes appelé *etóo nsamángá*, ou *etóo* tout court, indique aussi la lignée masculine, tandis que la lignée féminine est souvent désignée par le terme *nkásá* (parfois aussi par *jwómoto*, de *bómoto* : femme). Ajoutons encore que *lonkundó jwá nkásá* signifie : du lonkundo pur, sans fautes, non abâtardé par des influences étrangères. Qu'on rapproche cette expression des locutions suivantes : langue maternelle, moedertaal, mother-tongue, etc.

La règle de bienséance qui interdit à un homme de s'asseoir sur le siège où se trouve une femme, qui n'est pas son épouse, me semble également dictée par la pudeur. Au contraire, l'enjambement dans ces conditions n'a aucun rapport avec ce sentiment. La raison de cette pratique est d'éviter à la personne assise (sans égard au sexe) le contre-effet néfaste d'un charme, d'une pratique d'envoûtement qu'elle possède (4).

L'indigène a-t-il honte de montrer sa nudité? Méfions-nous ici d'une réponse générale. Aussi, afin de donner une idée suffisamment claire autant qu'exacte, il faut tenir compte des différents cas et des circonstances.

1° Tout d'abord, on peut affirmer que le Nkundó, tant homme que femme, dans les circonstances ordinaires de la vie, fait tout son possible pour cacher les parties honteuses. C'est dire qu'en principe il se sent gêné par les regards d'autrui. Ce sentiment s'étend même aux autres endroits du corps que les peuples en général, sans distinction du degré de culture qu'ils ont atteint, s'efforcent de recouvrir.

---

(1) Cfr. chap. VI, art. VI.

(2) Pour les détails concernant cette coutume, cfr. chap. VI, art. V, n° 1.

(3) Cfr. pourtant le chap. X, art. II, § 2.

(4) Contrairement à l'explication de JADOT : *Blancs et Noirs au Congo belge*, p. 90.

2° Entre personnes du même sexe et du même âge, une certaine liberté est admise. On peut l'observer surtout entre jeunes garçons, lorsqu'ils ont à satisfaire leur « petit besoin ». Dans nos pays d'Europe, la situation n'est guère différente. Cependant, je dois dire que persoqnellement je n'ai constaté cette liberté que dans les écoles et jamais dans les villages de l'intérieur. Cela viendrait-il d'un manque d'observation de ma part, ou faudrait-il attribuer ce relâchement à l'influence de la loi du moindre effort (les endroits plus convenables étant, dans les écoles, situés à une certaine distance) et au peu de loisir que laissent aux élèves les courtes récréations d'un côté et l'amour du jeu de l'autre? Il se pourrait aussi que chez ces garçons la pudeur fût à peine ébauchée (ce sentiment intensément lié à l'instinct sexuel ne s'éveille qu'avec celui-ci). D'autre part, la vie en groupe semble bien atténuer la force de la pudeur.

3° Il est évident que l'excitation sexuelle va à l'encontre de la pudeur, et que parfois — chez la jeunesse surtout — les actes impudiques sont employés pour provoquer une autre personne, et cela plus particulièrement dans des circonstances qui s'y prêtent mieux, comme, par exemple, le bain.

4° Car les baigneurs, qu'il s'agisse de soins de propreté ou de la natation, sont fort insouciants, du moins quand ces exercices ont lieu en groupe de compagnons ou de compagnes. Sans doute, autrefois, ils n'avaient pas le luxe d'un costume de bain, même rudimentaire. Mais actuellement il ne leur est nullement difficile de se procurer la menue pièce d'étoffe nécessaire. Pourtant le nudisme au bain dans les rivières et ruisseaux est fort pratiqué. Le fait est de loin plus commun chez les femmes que chez les hommes. Les indigènes avec lesquels j'ai discuté sur ce sujet l'attribuent à l'insouciance et la légèreté; on n'y voit d'ailleurs pas grand mal. La question de groupe semble jouer aussi son rôle ici. Surprenez dans ces circonstances une ou deux personnes, elles se cacheront en hâte. Trouvez-en une douzaine, elles ne se détourneront pas; au contraire, elles arrêteront leur toilette pour vous regarder passer. Il peut y avoir là simple insouciance; mais on peut admettre aussi que le fait d'*être en groupe* les rassure, puisque personne ne se sent individuellement objet du regard. Les soins de propreté, en dehors des cours d'eau, sont toujours accompagnés d'une plus grande décence. A cet effet, un petit enclos (*ikomba*) est construit derrière la case ou dans la bananeraie; ou bien on y a laissé croître un petit bosquet. De cette manière l'indigène est à l'abri des regards indiscrets lorsqu'il désire prendre un bain ou se mettre un lavement. D'ailleurs ces opérations ont lieu de préférence quand il fait sombre ou obscur.

5° La colère et le chagrin violents éclipsent la pudeur, comme ils enlèvent momentanément l'usage de la raison et suppriment tout sentiment contraire, ou même simplement différent. Ici encore l'homme se montre supérieur à la femme. Il est moins impulsif, plus rassis, moins exposé à perdre le contrôle sur ses actes, pour se laisser emporter par la colère. Aussi ne se dénude-t-il pour ainsi dire jamais. La femme, au contraire, a tôt fait de s'arracher tout habit. La chose est tellement ordinaire qu'un fort chagrin ou une sérieuse colère entraîne toujours la femme à se dévêtir complètement. Heureusement pour la décence, il y a presque toujours une parente ou amie qui se hâte de couvrir au moins l'essentiel. Car la femme, en rejetant ainsi ses habits, s'expose à la risée et aux quolibets des spectateurs (7).

6° Les Nkundó ne pratiquent l'acte sexuel que de nuit, ce qui me semble être inspiré par un sentiment de décence, auquel est venue s'ajouter une explication superstitieuse, comme nous l'expliquerons en détail à l'article V.

---

(7) Une femme en colère peut encore se dévêtir pour faire affront à son mari; c'est une façon de l'insulter, de le ridiculiser.

7° C'est à l'égard des parents, frères et sœurs, etc., que le sentiment de la pudeur atteint son apogée. Aussi est-il inouï qu'un fils voie la nudité de sa mère : *bǫna álęnáká ésunyí nyangó*. Si la maladie d'une fille adulte exige des soins intimes (lavement, par exemple) et qu'aucune parente ne soit à proximité, le père sera bien forcé de s'en occuper lui-même. Mais ils ont un tel sens de la pudeur que tous deux en verseront des larmes. Le cas, d'ailleurs, se présente rarement. D'autre part, si la fille se voit dans la nécessité de donner les mêmes soins à son père, elle ne se soumet à cette obligation qu'en se lamentant : « *njóy'ǫ́ęna ékí'm wímáká* : je viens voir d'où j'ai tiré mon origine ». Et toute femme qui a été dans ce cas n'aura pas plus tard de serment plus sacré que celui-ci : « *la botaká wá fafá bökí 'm wę́náká la mpaka* : par la nudité de mon père que j'ai vue à un âge avancé ».

Nous pouvons donc conclure que la nudité offense le Nkundó et qu'en général il ne la supporte point. Les exceptions, au lieu d'infirmer cette règle en démontrent plutôt l'existence.

§ 3. Paroles. Obscénité et décence.

En principe le Nkundó ne voit aucun mal à proférer des paroles obscènes. Il ne leur applique l'épithète de « mauvaises » que lorsqu'elles deviennent indécentes.

Si une conversation porte sur des questions sexuelles, il pourra se demander si un tel sujet est nécessaire, intéressant ou amusant; il ne se demandera pas s'il est moral. Car, ainsi qu'il apparaîtra dans tout le cours de cette étude, il ne possède pas la notion de moralité au sens strict du mot.

De ces mots obscènes, le Nkundó — et en ceci il n'est pas le seul de son espèce — possède toute une liste bien fournie et variée. Nous ne faisons pas un dictionnaire, et, partant, nous ne les citons pas. Ce qui nous intéresse, ce sont les circonstances qui rendent ces mots indécents, et font qu'on ne peut les employer convenablement. Ce sont précisément ces circonstances qui nous fournissent le critère du degré d'obscénité d'un mot ou d'une expression. Disons immédiatement qu'on fait rentrer dans cette catégorie non seulement les termes s'appliquant aux organes et phénomènes sexuels proprement dits, mais aussi les mots se rapportant à certaines parties anatomiques ou fonctions physiologiques, tels l'excrétion, les poils et les tatouages intimes, l'habit féminin *efufa*. Notons encore que certaines tribus considèrent comme obscènes des expressions dont d'autres ne s'offusquent nullement (1).

La règle générale de la décence nkundó est que ces termes sont seulement permis entre égaux. Envers des inférieurs, l'usage en est toléré, mais peu recommandable. Il est même nettement désapprouvé à l'égard d'étrangers quelconques. Entre personnes de sexe différent la défense est particulièrement sévère.

Toutefois, ces expressions sont jugées moins graves lorsqu'elles sont proférées dans un mouvement de colère, ou comme réprimande, même en présence des personnes du sexe.

Les exclamations de colère, de dépit, de chagrin ne sont souvent que des obscénités (2). On ne s'en scandalise pas. Pourtant, des personnes âgées, ou plus décentes, s'en abstiennent; ou si l'habitude de telle ou telle expression est invétérée, elles en déforment plus ou moins la prononciation (tout comme cela se pratique pour certains « jurons » de chez nous).

Pour contourner la difficulté, certains mots qui doivent être employés fréquemment sont remplacés par des euphémismes. Ainsi on dit : « ńtewá bokako w'ĩkusa = je vais derrière la maison », pour signifier qu'on va uriner; « Njôtsw'ẽsɛndú = je vais chercher du menu bois de chauffage », ou : « njôtsw'ótéma lokásá = je vais cueillir une feuille », pour indiquer qu'on se rend au W.C. En route on dit : « ńjɛta felé = je quitte le sentier, ou je me rends en forêt. » Il est pourtant admis que le mari emploie la terminologie propre en s'adressant à sa femme. Mais l'inverse est très inconvenant.

---

(1) Remarques qu'on peut appliquer aux populations d'autres parties du monde.

(2) Cfr. *Les Coutumes funéraires*, § 1, sous presse dans *Anthropos*.

On se tient à distance de quelqu'un qui satisfait un besoin naturel; on ne lui adresse même pas la parole. Cette personne, d'ailleurs, ne répondrait pas, pas même à un appel qu'on lui lancerait. Une femme s'abstient même de répliquer à son mari; mais celui-ci peut signaler sa présence en toussant sèchement.

Toute infraction à ces règles est considérée comme une injure grave. Celui qui se trouve ainsi offensé peut se venger par la violence, soit personnellement, soit par l'intermédiaire de son fils, frère, etc.; la justice indigène lui donne toujours raison, même si la rixe est devenue sanglante. Le seul fait de proférer des obscénités en passant devant la maison où se trouve quelqu'un qui a droit au respect peut entraîner des représailles de sa part (1).

Ces crudités de langage sont particulièrement répréhensibles et blessantes quand elles contiennent une allusion d'inceste ou autre par rapport à un parent de la personne qu'on veut offenser. Et il faut avouer qu'elles peuvent dépasser les bornes (comme : *coi cum patre, matre, fratre, sorore, etc.*). A ce sujet, notons que, dans ce cas, l'allusion se rapporte toujours à un parent de sexe opposé à celui de la personne à laquelle on s'adresse directement ou indirectement. En outre, les propos licencieux ou les inconvenances de langage sont considérés comme plus graves lorsqu'ils sont tenus devant des femmes et des anciens.

---

[1] Cfr. Jadot, *Blancs et Noirs au Congo belge*, p. 96.

et de la part d'un esclave devant son maître, d'un Bọtswa devant un Bootó (9).

Lorsqu'un homme surprend quelqu'un proférant des obscénités devant sa femme, spécialement si elles lui sont adressées personnellement, il peut intenter un procès d'adultère. Si la femme refuse d'écouter le séducteur, elle ne lui répond pas, et, parfois irritée de l'injure, elle riposte en insultant la mère de l'offenseur. Elle pourrait porter plainte, mais généralement elle ne le fait pas. Est-ce par honte, ou bien de peur que le tentateur ne publie sur son compte l'un ou l'autre excès de conduite qu'il a surpris? En tout cas, la femme est plus sensible que l'homme à la honte d'une obscénité : *óleki nsónyi éá bitóli ńk'ómoto*. — *Bómoto ndé ndota* (*itáfá*) : la femme est un serpent *ndota*. Comme ce reptile se faufile dans les herbes et s'y enroule dès qu'il s'aperçoit de l'approche d'un homme, de même la femme ne supporte que mal toute obscénité.

Le moyen idéal de s'assurer si une expression est réellement considérée comme indécente est de vérifier si elle peut se dire en présence d'une proche parente. Car devant une telle personne, le Nkundó ne se permet jamais une obscénité.

Tout comme en Europe, certaines exclamations scabreuses sont tellement enracinées qu'elles semblent avoir perdu leur sens primitif, c'est-à-dire que la généralité de la population ne pense plus du tout à la signification originale. Quelques personnes plus décentes et sérieuses s'en rendent pourtant encore compte, comme le prouvent les changements qu'elles font subir à la prononciation des termes.

Les expressions licencieuses ne sont jamais considérées comme indécentes et personne ne s'en offusque lorsqu'elles sont proférées en groupe, ou lors d'occupations en groupe. Telles sont : la chasse ou la pêche en commun, les beuveries, les danses, les funérailles et — actuellement — le travail en commun à une route, à un gîte d'étape, etc.

---

(9) Cfr. Introduction, note 2, p. 6.

Dans cette matière nous constatons donc, à côté d'une retenue remarquable, aussi une certaine tolérance, qui peut aller loin. Les propos licencieux ne sont pas condamnés en eux-mêmes, mais uniquement à cause de certaines circonstances accidentelles, ce qui montre que le Nkundó ne les considère pas, comme nous, du point de vue *moral*, mais *social*. Seulement, le fait que ce sont précisément ces mots qui peuvent devenir indécents et socialement mauvais prouve que notre indigène voit dans leur contenu quelque chose de choquant, de honteux, une qualité apte à offenser. La liberté, dans certains cas, n'infirme pas la conclusion *générale*, mais indique seulement l'inclinaison de la nature passionnée.

§ 2. Danses.

Les danses des Nkundó *se renouvellent* périodiquement, à l'instar de la mode d'Europe. D'anciennes danses sont, après un certain temps, délaissées et remplacées par d'autres, nouvellement inventées ou récemment introduites. Les danses actuellement à la mode sont venues de chez les Bɔsɔngɔ́, la tribu inventive par excellence. Dans toutes on peut distinguer deux parties : la danse proprement dite et le bouquet ou *ikóeyo*. Celui-ci consiste en prouesses acrobatiques ou en une représentation théâtrale. Il varie avec chaque exécution et dépasse parfois les bornes de la décence, spécialement dans certaines scènes de danses féminines. Tout dépend ici de la mentalité des acteurs et des spectateurs.

Le texte du chant est d'ordinaire convenable. Ce n'est qu'exceptionnellement que quelques passages le sont moins. Moins innocentes encore sont les exclamations lancées par certains danseurs ou danseuses, mais surtout par le public aux moments où l'ardeur de l'exécution atteint son point culminant. Aussi, ce point culminant constitue-t-il le point faible, moralement parlant. Ceci se constate surtout dans les danses de femmes. Entraînées par leur passion et stimulées par les applaudissements et les acclamations des spectateurs, elles font des mouvements provocants (*bitékó*, *bembónjo*). L'Européen ne remarque pas le mal; mais l'indigène connaît ces gestes et leur signification. Les spectateurs acclament avec un redoublement d'enthousiasme, soit par émotion sexuelle, soit par jouissance esthétique, car pour eux, ces mouvements sont beaux. Toutes les danses artistiques pour femmes actuellement en vogue contiennent une phase pareille d'excitation exagérée. Aussi comprend-on la sévérité avec laquelle les vieux défendaient, jadis, aux enfants et adolescents d'assister à ces danses.

Après ce qui vient d'être dit, on n'étonnera personne en affirmant que ces grandes danses sont souvent la cause d'adultères et de divorces. Et, dans une mesure restreinte, cela vaut également pour les danses d'hommes, car la beauté masculine y est exhibée d'une façon attrayante.

Les mouvements rythmiques qui accompagnent parfois les chants pendant les beuveries en commun ne méritent pas le nom de danses; ils n'impliquent rien de choquant et le texte est rarement scabreux. Dans les circonstances ordinaires de la vie les chansons impudiques sont rares, mais elles ne font jamais défaut dans les cérémonies funéraires.

Jusqu'ici nous n'avons parlé que des danses artistiques, toujours en grande faveur. Elles étaient — et sont — réservées à certaines occasions particulières. Pour les circonstances ordinaires les Nkundó connaissent quelques petites danses d'amusement qui n'ont rien de commun avec la danse proprement dite. Ce sont plutôt des jeux. Le texte du chant peut être licencieux, mais l'est plutôt rarement. A présent, pourtant, — surtout depuis l'introduction de danses « à l'européenne », et particulièrement dans les grands et petits centres et chez ceux qui en ont été influencés, — il est très souvent réellement obscène. Cette espèce de danse d'amusement est surtout pratiquée par la jeunesse.

A l'actif de la moralité on doit noter le fait que les danses mixtes sont inconnues du pur indigène. On les voit dans les centres (qu'on pense au *bofenya* mixte, ou au *balingá* : grotesque contrefaçon de la danse à l'européenne), mais elles se propagent — et rapidement — dans les villages de l'intérieur. La dernière espèce surtout fait fureur. Elle exerce sur la moralité une influence néfaste. Nombre d'adultères, de divorces, de palabres, de rixes ont été causés par elle; et certains chefs et capitas l'interdisent, et ils aimeraient pouvoir punir sévèrement ceux qui s'y livrent.

Conclusion.

Tout ce qui précède nous oblige à conclure à l'existence de la pudeur chez les Nkundó. Le port des habits, les diverses prescriptions, la mentalité des membres les plus âgés et les plus sages de la communauté prouvent qu'ils connaissent ce sentiment. Celui-ci est essentiellement le même qu'ailleurs. Dans certains domaines il est même poussé à l'extrême. Les exceptions sont à mettre au compte des aberrations individuelles et — par la réaction qu'elles suscitent — ont même une valeur probante. On ne peut pas trouver matière à une objection sérieuse contre l'existence de la pudeur dans la tolérance générale que l'on constate à certaines occasions particulières. La raison de cette attitude, qui nous semble en contradiction avec les autres faits, est sans conteste très difficile à déterminer. Serait-ce une condescendance à la faiblesse humaine, ou faut-il y voir un affaiblissement de la moralité publique? Ou n'est-ce pas plutôt parce que les circonstances visées enlèvent aux actes toute possibilité d'interprétation défavorable? Une allusion faite en public, dans un groupe, n'a pas la même portée, n'indique pas l'intimité suspecte que la même allusion entre deux personnes.

Le sentiment de la pudeur chez cette population et ses diverses manifestations sont, cela va sans dire, en voie de transformation sous l'influence de deux courants différents : d'un côté, la licence des mœurs augmentée par le contact avec toutes sortes d'autres races, par la liberté plus grande, par l'émancipation partielle de la femme et l'attraction des grands centres et leur luxe; d'un autre côté, par la prédication de la morale chrétienne, dont les effets sont pourtant encore bien faibles et certainement ne contrebalancent pas l'influence mentionnée en premier lieu.

ARTICLE II. — PRÉPARATION A LA VIE SEXUELLE.

§ 1. Préparation de la femme.

Lorsqu'une jeune fille désire s'adonner aux plaisirs de la chair, elle prépare préalablement ses organes. La préparation proprement dite est d'« ouvrir la voie » (*lifola mbóka*). Cette opération, répétée à plusieurs reprises, se fait en cachette, de préférence en forêt, avec ou sans compagnes qui partagent son intention. Chacune opère sur elle-même. Afin d'obtenir l'élargissement progressif de l'organe, la jeune fille emploie les bourgeons toujours plus gros de la plante *bosáánga=bokaakó* (*Costus afer*) (dont elle a soin d'enlever la pointe), qui sont finalement remplacés par un fruit *lọmbọ́lẹ́* de la plante *bọsọ́ọmbọ́* (*Aframomum*), ou, plus rarement, par une jeune carotte de manioc.

Cette pratique est générale : il doit se trouver peu ou pas d'exceptions. Les jeunes filles s'y adonnent pour que l'acte, auquel elles aspirent, se fasse sans accroc (*« bálota báfóy'ōkeela »*).

En plus de cette préparation fondamentale, les jeunes filles se font des toilettes intimes. C'est une mesure de propreté, qu'elles continuent, à moins d'un cas exceptionnel, durant toute la vie. D'après mes informateurs, la femme indigène — en règle très générale — tient à cette propreté, tant pour elle-même que pour ne pas rebuter son mari ou amant. Quand une jeune fille se met à pratiquer ces soins hygiéniques, c'est un signe qu'elle veut commencer la vie sexuelle.

Pendant la toute première jeunesse, dès la période consacrée à l'allaitement, la mère prévoyante travaille à donner aux organes de sa fillette le plus de perfection possible. Par des pressions réitérées et longtemps continuées, elle en modèle — pour ainsi dire — la face externe, afin d'en obtenir le rétrécissement, qualité fort prisée par nos gens.

C'est encore la mère qui éduque sa fille dans la préparation à la vie conjugale. Elle lui enseigne en même temps la façon de se comporter vis-à-vis de son mari futur et lui inculque ses devoirs de bonne ménagère. (Cfr. chap. X, art. VIII).

Il nous faut mentionner encore certaines façons d'agir des Nkundó, quoiqu'elles n'aient qu'un rapport purement extérieur et superficiel avec le présent sujet. Fréquemment un homme adulte prend dans ses bras une fillette non encore sevrée, ou déjà plus développeé, n'importe. Cette enfant est considérée par lui comme son épouse. Non qu'il ait payé la dot pour elle. Mais étant la sœur, cousine, etc., d'une de ses femmes, elle est, à son point de vue, une « épouse », c'est-à-dire que non seulement il pourra l'épouser plus tard, mais encore que, sans être son mari, il jouit d'une certaine liberté à son égard (¹). Or, un homme pareil, prenant sa jeune « épouse » dans ses bras, se délecte dans la prévision de l'avenir et lui adresse

---

(¹) Cfr. chap. VI, art. V, § 2.

la parole dans ce sens, souvent en accompagnant de caresses intimes son allocution.

La même pratique se rencontre, *mutatis mutandis*, de la part d'une femme à l'égard d'un garçonnet qu'elle peut considérer comme son « mari ».

§ 2. Circoncision.

La pratique de la circoncision est générale. D'ordinaire elle a lieu en bas âge. Sans entrer ici dans plus de détails (¹), ni vouloir me prononcer sur le but de cette coutume, il est un fait que la femme nkundó refuse de s'unir à un incirconcis. Par conséquent, tout indigène tient à se soumettre à cette opération. C'est la réponse que les indigènes donnent à nos questions sur le motif de la circoncision. En poussant l'interrogatoire plus à fond, ils ajoutent que la femme abhorre la présence des dépôts qui se forment sous le prépuce. Je donne cette explication pour le prix qu'elle m'a coûté. Il se peut pourtant que ce soit là le véritable motif qui les inspire.

En tout cas, la circoncision ne semble avoir aucun but religieux ni d'initiation.

§ 3. Tatouages.

Il existe chez les Nkundó deux sortes de tatouages : le tatouage purement ornemental et le tatouage sexuel (²). Ce dernier se rencontre seulement chez la femme. Les

---

(¹) Qu'on trouvera au chap. X, art. VII.

(²) Je ne parle pas de tatouage tribal, parce qu'il me semble ne pas exister chez les Nkundó. Les motifs du tatouage varient de peuplade à peuplade et de groupe à groupe. De ce fait ils constituent un signe distinctif. Mais cela ne veut point dire qu'ils sont intentionnés comme tel. La distinction posée par le tatouage entre diverses tribus n'est pas un but, mais une conséquence, comme, par exemple, aussi les costumes nationaux en Europe. D'ailleurs, les rapports, pacifiques ou guerriers, de nos gens s'étendaient exclusivement — ou à peu près — aux tribus ou clans voisins, donc affectant les mêmes motifs ornementaux qu'eux. Et dans ces rencontres, le dialecte sert bien mieux à se reconnaître.

dessins sont situés sur les parties du corps environnant les organes sexuels et jusque sur l'extérieur de ces derniers.

Qu'est-ce qui incite les Nkundó à pratiquer cette dernière forme? Tout d'abord, nous devons tenir compte des considérations suivantes : comme la femme est, de sa nature, plus désireuse de paraître belle, il est tout indiqué que son tatouage soit plus abondant, plus développé que celui de l'homme. Et comme la coquetterie est une forme du désir de plaire à l'autre sexe, qui, de son côté, y est sensible, le tatouage attire celui-ci. Il s'ensuit aussi que le tatouage de la femme atteint son développement maximum sur les parties du corps qui sont les plus proches des organes sexuels.

La raison d'être de ces tatouages peut être une certaine jouissance supplémentaire dans l'acte (¹). Cette explication n'est pas dépourvue de vraisemblance. Quoique je ne sois jamais parvenu à en obtenir la confirmation nette et directe, il est un fait qu'un homme fait parfois des allusions malveillantes à l'adresse de sa femme insuffisamment tatouée à son goût (« Toi, ton corps est lisse comme celui d'un homme »). Cette constatation donne à l'explication citée une grande valeur. La persistance de ces tatouages, malgré l'habillement moderne, possède également quelque force probante, bien qu'elle ne soit pas absolue, attendu qu'elle garde son poids dans l'explication psychologique qui suit.

De par leur disposition, les figures convergent vers l'organe sexuel. D'autre part, les hommes ont vu, à l'une ou l'autre occasion, le tatouage, soit en entier, soit en partie. Même si les habits le couvrent plus ou moins, pourtant, un jour ou l'autre, pour une raison quelconque, la femme les met à découvert, ne fût-ce que partiellement.

(¹) Explication donnée, par exemple, par le Dr J. MAES, dans : *Notes sur les Populations des Bassins du Kasai, de la Lukenie et du lac Léopold II*, pp. 199 et suiv.

L'imagination, travaillant sur ces données de la vue, excite tout naturellement le désir sexuel. L'exactitude de cette explication psychologique peut se vérifier même en Europe; on est surtout tenté par ce qu'on ne fait qu'entrevoir, et les modes « modernes », tout comme certaines modes anciennes, en tiennent compte. Au paragraphe suivant nous constaterons d'ailleurs un autre fait analogue.

Les deux explications données peuvent se défendre, car chacune a sa valeur. Il me semble pourtant préférable de ne pas les opposer l'une à l'autre, mais plutôt de les unir, comme — probablement — elles le sont dans l'idée de l'indigène.

Il reste encore à noter qu'un homme n'effectue jamais sur une femme l'opération du tatouage sexuel, tandis qu'une femme opère bien sur un homme. Enfin, les termes spécifiques désignant ces tatouages sont considérés comme obscénités.

La pratique du tatouage est actuellement en décroissance. Beaucoup de garçons n'en possèdent déjà plus. Mais rares sont les filles qui s'en abstiennent, La manie n'a pas disparu chez elles. Certaines se font même tatouer à l'insu de leurs parents et malgré leur opposition. La mode est, chez les Noires comme partout au monde, une chose fortement enracinée, parce que naturelle. Seulement, ici les figures diminuent en ampleur. Ceci me semble dû, non à une réaction contre le tatouage comme tel, mais à une modification de la mode. Car le tatouage est une véritable mode et, comme toute mode, est sujet au changement, à l'évolution. Il existe actuellement une tendance à imiter les dessins d'autres peuplades congolaises. Ailleurs, comme chez les Injǫlǫ, on constate une évolution interne, quoique sous des influences étrangères. L'évolution se produit surtout dans les motifs de la face, tandis que ceux du tronc commencent à être omis. Mais les tatouages sexuels ne semblent pas disparaître.

§ 4. Ceintures de perles.

Dès le jeune âge l'enfant nkundó se voit orner d'une ceinture de perles de traite. Avant la pénétration européenne, cette garniture ne faisait son apparition que vers la puberté et était restreinte aux filles. A présent, plusieurs hommes aussi se parent de cette façon. Et les perles étant maintenant plus faciles à obtenir, les femmes ne se contentent plus d'un seul rang, mais s'en mettent plusieurs de couleurs variées. Elles en adjoignent de plus petits au-dessous du genou.

D'après les informations qui m'ont été fournies, ce genre d'ornement peut aussi avoir une signification sexuelle. Régulièrement, il est entièrement couvert par les habits — nous parlons de l'hypothèse actuelle, la seule où vaut le cas — ce n'est qu'à quelques occasions qu'il devient visible. Si le nombre de cordons est grand (on va jusqu'à 6-8-10) ou le volume des perles considérable, la surélévation des habits à l'endroit correspondant peut y attirer l'attention. L'ouïe constate leur présence pendant une course ou une danse. Or, d'après mes informateurs, cela suffit à éveiller la passion. Le fait d'y faire allusion et, à fortiori, d'y toucher délibérément est considéré comme une invitation. De son côté, la femme les meut parfois des mains pour leur faire produire leur bruit spécifique et ainsi y attirer l'attention d'un homme, afin de le provoquer.

Ce qui précède ne signifie pas que nécessairement et toujours le simple port de ces perles soit voulu dans un but mauvais. Non seulement il faut exclure cette intention chez les personnes sérieuses, surtout si elles sont âgées, qui se contentent d'un seul cordon, rarement d'un second, servant de soutien au premier; mais encore il peut arriver qu'une jeune beauté noire se ceigne d'une dizaine dans un but de pure vanité, afin que tout le monde puisse constater qu'elle en possède une grande quantité.

Mais, en outre, il est avéré que les soins de beauté ne s'adressent pas nécessairement à une tierce personne. Si cela est la règle générale, il n'est pas moins vrai que bien des personnes aiment à s'habiller pour le plaisir d'être bien habillées, et des jeunes filles qui ne rêvent d'aucune aventure peuvent aimer de jolis dessous. Cette recherche de la parure pour la parure peut, sans doute, rendre compte des ceintures — voire d'autres soins de beauté — chez plus d'une femme nkundó.

Ajoutons que ceux qui adhèrent à la théorie de l'influence sexuelle immédiate du tatouage pourraient l'appliquer également ici.

§ 5. Épilation.

Tout Nkundó, sans égard au sexe, pratique l'épilation sur les parties et même sous les aiselles. Les poils qui croissent en cet endroit sont considérés par les indigènes comme ayant un rapport avec la sexualité. Ils leur appliquent d'ailleurs le même nom qu'à la pilosité plus intime.

Cette épilation est faite par la personne même, ou bien par un compagnon ou une compagne, respectivement. Autrefois, les poils étaient simplement arrachés. A présent, beaucoup les rasent avec un *lọtẹ́ú*. En outre, la pratique tend à se restreindre aux seules pilosités sexuelles, tandis que jadis tout y passait : sourcils, cils, moustache, barbe.

Pour les Nkundó, les épilations sont des soins de beauté. Leur explication paraît devoir être admise, en donnant toutefois au terme « soins de beauté » un sens large pour y faire rentrer l'épilation des parties du corps qui restent toujours cachées. Cette dernière sorte pourrait toutefois être en rapport avec le tatouage : facilité de l'établir et en obtenir les effets.

2: Hulstaert FO32 Mongo

ARTICLE III. — LA PROSTITUTION.

Le dictionnaire définit comme suit la prostitution : « métier qui consiste à livrer son corps aux plaisirs du public, pour de l'argent ». Outre cette signification stricte, dont l'élément le plus important est : « pour de l'argent », le mot est encore employé dans plusieurs autres sens plus larges.

La prostitution se rencontre dans le monde sous diverses formes : 1° la femme entretenue; 2° la maison de tolérance; 3° la racoleuse professionnelle; 4° la racoleuse occasionnelle; 5° la femme mariée qui a un amant régulier et payant; 6° l'irrégulière qui vit en concubinage successivement avec l'un, puis avec l'autre, toujours en se faisant payer. Nous allons examiner les formes sous lesquelles cette inconduite se présentait et se présente chez les Nkundó.

La première question à nous poser est celle de savoir si avant l'occupation européenne la femme nkundó se donnait par esprit de lucre. La femme exigeait souvent une rémunération. Mais, nous l'avons déjà dit, il est très difficile de décider si elle agissait ainsi par esprit de lucre ou simplement pour s'assurer de l'affection de son amant. Vu la mentalité de la femme nkundó à l'époque actuelle, nous pouvons admettre que sa cupidité l'a quelquefois poussée à l'amour vénal : certains objets de parure ou de toilette (épingles à cheveux, par exemple) ont sans doute séduit l'une ou l'autre à se livrer afin de les posséder, et il est probable que de la sorte des cas individuels se soient présentés. Mais la généralisation est tout à fait invraisemblable, parce qu'elle ne s'accorde pas avec l'organisation économique de la peuplade, où les biens sont plus ou moins collectifs, et surtout où, comme nous l'exposerons au chapitre VI, article II, la femme n'a aucune propriété.

Nous pouvons donc admettre qu'il a existé un nombre restreint de racoleuses occasionnelles.

Au contraire, il n'y a jamais eu de racoleuses professionnelles, c'est-à-dire la femme nkundó n'a jamais fait de la prostitution un métier. On peut en dire autant des autres formes énumérées ci-dessus.

Il nous faut remarquer que la fort grande majorité des femmes ont toujours été mariées dans leur jeunesse (chapitre IV, art. I) et que l'adultère était sévèrement puni (ch. VI, art. VII), circonstances qui ont nécessairement limité le nombre des prostituées.

Nous trouvons cependant un semblant superficiel de cette méconduite, c'est-à-dire qu'il existe une catégorie peu nombreuse de jeunes filles et de femmes auxquelles on serait tenté à première vue d'appliquer l'épithète de prostituées; il est donc utile d'examiner un peu plus attentivement les faits, qui, s'ils sont en eux-mêmes entièrement différents de la prostitution, peuvent toutefois y donner lieu facilement dans le sens décrit.

En effet, outre la *bolúmbú* (qui n'a rien de commun avec la dégénérescence de la sexualité féminine, mais qui est une institution de caractère social et politique), on rencontre des filles qui sont retenues chez leurs parents jusqu'à un âge plus avancé que de coutume, avant d'être données en mariage. Une jeune fille pareille est nommée *éfótswâála* = celle qui ne se marie pas. Elle n'est pas *bolúmbú*. Extérieurement, ou — pour employer la terminologie philosophique — matériellement, les deux coutumes se ressemblent. Mais formellement elles diffèrent du tout au tout. La *bolúmbú* est une question d'autorité, d'influence, est donc du domaine public. L'*éfótswâála*, au contraire, est une affaire privée entre le père et la fille. Alors que la création d'une *bolúmbú* est accompagnée de fêtes publiques, d'un décret officiellement proclamé (*boéko*) par le père et agréé par l'assemblée des chefs de famille, la constitution d'une *éfótswáála*, au contraire n'est l'objet d'aucun acte ni cérémonie officiels.

Le nom d'*éfótswáála* ne veut pas dire qu'elle restera célibataire toute sa vie. Son mariage n'est pas définitivement exclu, mais seulement ajourné.

Pour sa conduite, l'*éfótswáála* se comporte comme toute jeune fille nkundó. Rien ne la distingue de ses compagnes. Lorsqu'un bon parti se présente elle se marie comme tout le monde.

Cette coutume — si on peut employer ce terme — n'a donc aucune connexion réelle avec la prostitution. Tout ce qu'on peut dire est que la fille restant célibataire plus longtemps et en plein âge adulte est exposée à un plus grand libertinage et à une vie de débauches.

Il arrive aussi que des parents, courroucés par la rupture du mariage de leur fille avec un homme qu'ils considèrent comme un bon gendre, l'empêchent de se remarier, afin de la forcer à retourner chez son mari légitime. Tant les parents que leur enfant restant chacun sur son propre point de vue, et ne cédant pas, cette situation peut persister durant de longs mois, de sorte que la femme, pratiquement, ne se trouve plus en puissance de mari. Et comme l'opposition de ses parents l'empêche d'être prise en mariage par un autre homme, elle est facilement amenée à se donner à tous. Il faut ajouter qu'à présent ce cas est plutôt théorique. Les parents ne possèdent plus l'autorité ancienne pour contrecarrer de la sorte la volonté de leur fille âgée : si elle tient tête, ils sont bien forcés de céder, de peur de la voir s'enfuir au loin. Et ce serait tomber de Charybde en Scy[illegible] Mais, jadis, des situations pareilles n'étaient pas si rares.

Le terrain propice par excellence pour l'éclosion et le développement de la prostitution doit être cherché dans les centres. On peut donner comme causes principales :

1° La vanité féminine, surexcitée par l'exposition de toutes les éclatantes richesses importées par le Blanc, et qui tentent si fort les négresses. Il faut des revenus importants pour satisfaire ce désir de se rehausser la beauté native. Les travailleurs et artisans ordinaires ne gagnent pas assez d'argent pour satisfaire sur ce point leurs épouses ou filles. Les maîtresses d'Européens ou de Noirs étrangers, les femmes de « clercs » et d'autres représentants de la haute société nègre étalent un luxe qui crève les yeux à leurs congénères.

2° L'excédent considérable de célibataires sur le nombre de femmes disponibles.

3° La licence de l'adultère : aucune sanction n'était prévue.

4° La difficulté pour beaucoup de jeunes filles, nées dans les centres, de trouver un mari convenable. Les mariages entre gens de peuplades différentes (surtout certaines d'entre elles) ne tiennent qu'exceptionnellement. Et comme les habitants des centres n'y ont pas de résidence fixe et stable, ils ont l'intention de retourner tôt ou tard dans leur tribu d'origine. Ces mariages « mixtes » sont donc déconseillés et contrecarrés par les parents sérieux (1).

Dans la région qui nous occupe il ne se trouve que quelques petits centres peu peuplés : plantations, postes du Gouvernement ou de Compagnies, petits centres commerciaux. Les célibataires se satisfont de temps à autre avec les épouses de leurs cotravailleurs, et surtout avec les femmes qui viennent de l'intérieur vendre leurs produits au marché. Un des effets de la prostitution : la propagation des maladies vénériennes, n'en est pour cela pas évité.

Nous pouvons conclure qu'autrefois la prostitution n'a existé que dans son acception très large et dans des proportions réduites. Dans son article cité (p. 32), Engels écrit que chez les Wangata, « la prostitution n'existe plus ». Si l'éminent auteur emploie le terme dans la signification donnée par le dictionnaire, on peut demander sur quoi il se base pour affirmer de cette façon implicite que l'institution a existé autrefois; s'il le comprend au sens large, les faits contredisent sa remarque; car, en réalité, la prostitution n'a cessé de se développer chez les tribus dont il traite et qui se trouvent à toute proximité du centre de Coquilhatville et de ses divers faubourgs.

---

(1) A lire la belle page de JADOT, *Blancs et Noirs au Congo belge*, p. 132 : « La prostitution devait inévitablement... ».

De par le fait de la colonisation, la situation a beaucoup changé. La liberté des communications à des distances considérables, l'introduction de richesses nouvelles et variées, de l'argent surtout, ont eu une grande influence sur le développement de la prostitution. Le régime économique de la peuplade est resté le même; mais éloignées de leur famille ou de leur mari, les femmes disposent librement de leur avoir, et l'augmentation des objets de parure fait qu'elles trouvent un profit personnel à se livrer à l'inconduite.

Le vice n'y a donc pas pris les formes européennes; les changements modernes ont simplement accru, — mais dans des proportions énormes — le nombre des racoleuses occasionnelles. Le développement de cet état est favorisé par le proxénétisme de certains polygames, et même monogames, habitant près des centres européens, lequel engendre chez leurs femmes cette attitude. En effet, si c'est le mari qui en profite pécuniairement en tout premier lieu, la femme n'est pas frustrée de son petit bénéfice, et sa cupidité native la pousse aisément à se livrer sans scrupule au commerce de son corps.

Les femmes dont il est question sont, pour la plupart, mariées. Souvent elles ont parmi les travailleurs des camps un amant attitré, qui généralement rémunère cette fidélité. Nous en arrivons ainsi à la femme mariée qui a un amant régulier et payant.

Cette forme s'est développée même en dehors des camps de travailleurs. On la trouve chez les *riverains* — plus en contact avec les Blancs et leurs gens — et dans les villages voisins, spécialement chez les Beloko, plus près de Coquilhatville, où elle a gagné même des monogames. Il est à noter que cette perversion s'implante d'autant plus facilement qu'elle a une certaine analogie avec la coutume ancestrale du concubinage *reconnu* (voir chapitre VI, article VIII, § 2) et que, comme celui-ci, elle ne prend pas, dans beaucoup de cas, la forme de la prostitution, c'est-à-dire que les relations coupables ne sont pas voulues dans un but de cupidité. En outre, il y a souvent un arrangement avec le mari.

Quant aux autres formes *énumérées*, elles sont encore inconnues dans les villages indigènes et dans les petits centres situés dans le territoire étudié, où, pourtant, certaines d'entre elles peuvent, dans un avenir plus ou moins rapproché, se développer.

Dans un centre comme Coquilhatville il existe des femmes irrégulières qui vivent en concubinage successivement avec l'un, puis avec l'autre, quelques jours ou semaines avec celui-ci, puis autant avec celui-là, en se faisant payer et en refusant d'aliéner définitivement leur liberté. Cette localité se trouve, il est vrai, en dehors des limites géographiques de notre étude; mais à cause de la proximité et de sa situation en territoire nkundó, on peut m'excuser d'en toucher un mot. Il n'y a pas de maisons de tolérance, et l'on n'y rencontre pas de racoleuses professionnelles, à l'exception de certaines femmes qui se livrent aux équipages des bateaux. La plupart des prostituées de Coquilhatville sont des jeunes filles ou des divorcées (de droit ou de fait). Cette forme larvée n'y est pas réglementée comme à Léopoldville (*). Cependant, le

---

(*) Dans la capitale, en effet, il est perçu une taxe de 10 francs sur les femmes indigènes, adultes et valides, vivant théoriquement seules. (Cfr. les certificats de paiement délivrés qui, en outre, indiquent le

Gouvernement reconnaît, du moins en pratique, une classe de « femmes libres », dont le nombre est considérable et dont le genre de vie est contagieux jusqu'à entraîner — à des degrés fort variés — une partie notable des jeunes filles qui vivent chez leurs parents, mais qui aspirent au luxe (1).

ARTICLE IV. — SEXUALITÉ PRÉ-MATRIMONIALE.

Sous cette en-tête nous examinerons :

1° Ce que les Nkundó pensent de la virginité;

2° Les rapports entre célibataires;

3° L'opinion des Nkundó sur les naissances extramatrimoniales.

§ 1. Virginité.

Le mot virginité a un double sens. Il peut signifier : présence de l'hymen, intégrité physique ou correspondre à la définition du dictionnaire : « vierge : fille qui n'a jamais eu de commerce avec un homme ».

La pratique décrite ci-dessus à l'article II, § 1, fait que les jeunes filles nkundó qui sont restées physiquement vierges jusqu'à l'âge adulte sont nécessairement rarissimes. Même dans le cas — actuellement d'une grande rareté, mais autrefois commun (2) — d'une fille qui ne

---

numéro, le nom et l'adresse de la contribuable). Cette taxe n'est pas l'équivalent d'une permission de licence et de libertinage. Elle n'est pas nommée : de prostitution, ou autre terme analogue, mais certains Européens l'appellent ainsi parce qu'elle en a l'air.

En outre, il existe une véritable réglementation de la prostitution : c'est l'ordonnance du Gouverneur Général du 3 novembre 1931, qui institue des cartes de prostituées, avec visites sanitaires périodiques, et qui semble être appliquée à Matadi, Léopoldville et Elisabethville.

(1) D'après les dernières données statistiques que je possède, le Gouvernement autorise à Coquilhatville, sur une population extra-coutumière totale de 6.266 personnes, 797 femmes libres.

(2) Cfr. le présent article, sous le § 2.

commence la vie sexuelle que lorsque son corps a atteint le développement normal, elle ne s'adonnait au plaisir charnel qu'après s'être déchiré l'hymen.

Quelle est l'opinion des Nkundó sur la virginité? Il faut distinguer cette question :

1° Le futur attache-t-il de l'importance à l'intégrité physique de sa fiancée ? D'après ce que nous avons vu, non, évidemment.

2° En attache-t-il à sa virginité morale, c'est-à-dire lui est-il indifférent de n'être pas le premier à avoir avec elle un commerce charnel?

Que cela lui soit absolument indifférent serait peut-être une affirmation trop radicale. Mais il n'y attache en tout cas pas grande importance, puisque le but principal est pour lui de se donner une progéniture et de suivre d'une façon honnête l'instinct naturel; ce qui ne signifie nullement qu'il aime épouser une femme de mœurs légères, au contraire.

Quelles sont les données de la linguistique par rapport à la virginité? E. Torday, dans l'intéressante étude intitulée : The Principles of Bantu Mariage (dans *Africa*, II, n° 3, p. 255, 1929), dit : « Some of the most competent philologists assure us that in most Bantu languages there is no word for « virgin »; ... The Wachagga, who may be an exception, use the word « unimpaired », and it is perhaps in the use of similar expressions, not exclusively applied to physical virginity, that we shall find the explanation of the absence of a specific term. »

Le lonkundó possède ainsi un substantif : *ekáté*. Il est dérivé du radical *kát* (verbe *-kátema*) = être fortement attaché, être tenace (*cfr.* *lokáitá* = ténacité). *Ekáté* désigne quelque chose de difficile à ouvrir, à séparer, à désunir, et spécialement des fruits à écorce dure, coriace et épaisse, comme le *likáfé*, le *liaénjá*, le *lindongó*, lorsque, bien que mûrs, on ne parvient pas à en briser la coque qui contient la partie comestible. Or ce terme est appliqué, au figuré, à une femme qui résiste à la séduction, qui « ne se laisse pas ouvrir ». Cette dénomination n'est donc nullement spécifique et n'est d'ailleurs pas l'équivalent de notre mot virginité, mais signifie plutôt chasteté.

D'autres tribus nkundó semblent connaître un mot spécifique : *bǫkǫtǫ́*. Je l'ai appris par des indigènes d'entre-Ikelemba-Tshuapa, tant à l'Est qu'à l'Ouest de la Julé, ainsi que par des Baséká Bóngwalanga, de l'ancien district de la Lulonga. Les missionnaires de la Préfecture Apostolique de Basankusu l'emploient dans leurs publications pour « virginité, vierge ». Je n'ai pu me former une idée exacte de sa signification précise. Mais pour autant que j'aie pu m'en rendre compte, il se rapproche beaucoup plus de « chasteté virginale » que *ekáté*. En tout cas, il ne contient aucune allusion à la virginité physique (1).

Ce que nous venons de voir n'implique pas que toute jeune fille nkundó soit libre de s'adonner aux rapports charnels et que l'opinion publique approuve le libertinage des célibataires. Nous examinerons cette question dans les paragraphes suivants.

§ 2. Rapports sexuels entre célibataires.

Dans cette question nous devons distinguer les relations entre adultes des rapports entre non-adultes. Nous examinerons donc les deux cas séparément, pour, à la fin, tenter une explication des changements survenus dans l'attitude des indigènes dans ce domaine.

---

(1) Il ne saurait nullement nous étonner que des tribus « primitives » ne possèdent pas dans leur langue de terme spécifique pour exprimer notre idée de virginité, ni en déduire qu'ils ne connaissent pas la chose. Les Grecs et les Romains la connaissaient bien, et pourtant ils n'avaient aucun mot propre pour la désigner. Parthenos et Virgo signifient simplement : jeune fille, non mariée. Et les mots germaniques, comme Maagd, Jungfrau, qui maintenant ont le sens de vierge, avaient originairement le même sens que les termes grec et latin.

A. — *Avant la maturité physique.* — Relatons d'abord ce que les indigènes racontent sur la coutume du vieux temps, pour décrire ensuite la pratique actuelle.

Anciennement les relations entre jeunes gens non encore nubiles étaient sévèrement défendues par les parents. Ceux-ci enseignaient que les coupables sont frappés d'une très grave maladie, amenant inévitablement la mort. Cette maladie était nommée *ndole* = terme générique, et plus spécifiquement *ezímbéji* (1). Le corps devient flasque et sans vigueur; la langueur se termine par une paralysie mortelle (*byongé nnyányuka* ou *nkalááná*). Les filles redoutaient, en outre, que leurs organes, encore imparfaitement formés, ne se déchirent. Aussi étaient-elles imprégnées d'une peur très accentuée : *bofola w'ánde* = crainte des mâles; *bofola w'ámato* = crainte des femmes. *Bólotáki iwó* : ils craignaient la mort. Les parents ajoutaient que ces actes n'étaient exempts de danger qu'entre personnes ayant atteint l'âge requis.

Cela ne veut pas dire que les enfants ne commettaient pas d'actes impudiques. Le *jeu de iolo*, où les fillettes s'essaient à la cuisine (et qui est toujours, comme probablement partout au monde, un de leurs amusements préférés (2), y donnaient souvent lieu. Des garçonnets s'y joignaient pour goûter les repas. Et, tout naturellement, on en venait à jouer plus ou moins « à mari et femme ». Souvent tout se limitait à des imitations innocentes. Mais, d'autres fois, ces scènes occasionnaient des attouchements et des exhibitions, soit entre compagnes, soit entre enfants de sexe différent. Actuellement, ce jeu est beaucoup plus dangereux, à cause du changement d'attitude de la jeunesse à l'égard des choses sexuelles.

---

(1) *Ndole* est le nom de la maladie qui est la punition d'une infraction de l'interdit sexuel, dans n'importe quelle circonstance. J'ai également entendu ces mêmes termes dans la bouche d'indigènes des environs de Coquilhatville.

(2) Certains garçons imitent ce jeu, pour s'habituer à préparer eux-mêmes leurs repas. Plus tard, ils pourront en tirer profit à plus d'une occasion.

De même le yembankongo, jeu dans lequel les garçons imitent les singes en se poursuivant dans les arbres et sur les lianes, pouvait donner — et donne — lieu à des scènes répréhensibles.

Autrefois, la plupart des jeunes filles étaient mariées avant la nubilité physique. Mais elles n'étaient pas molestées par leurs maris avant qu'elles aient atteint le développement normal.

Chez certaines personnes, cette crainte des relations était enracinée au point de persister même après l'âge limite et n'était vaincue que par des assauts réitérés de la passion. Ainsi est-il universellement connu des indigènes, que de jeunes femmes se réfugiaient chez leur mère lorsque leur mari voulait commencer à user de son droit d'époux. La mère tâchait de persuader à sa fille de se soumettre à la loi de la vie. Mais parfois, voyant son enfant par trop rébarbative, elle l'excusait auprès du mari et le priait d'avoir des égards pour sa jeunesse. Généralement, l'homme tenant aux bonnes relations avec sa belle-mère, n'insistait pas et se résignait à attendre l'action de la nature sur l'esprit et le cœur de son épouse.

La jeunesse ayant été éduquée dans cette crainte profonde des relations dangereuses, il ne saurait nous étonner que ce sentiment, devenu une véritable habitude, ne s'évanouisse pas spontanément au moment précis où une certaine liberté était octroyée. Ne peut-on pas, d'ailleurs, faire des constatations analogues en Europe ?

C'est ainsi que s'explique naturellement le degré assez louable de moralité que possédaient les adolescents à l'époque ancienne.

A présent, tout ceci a radicalement changé. La jeunesse suit l'inclination de ses passions. Plus le moindre frein n'en retient la fougue. Les parents ne se soucient plus que très médiocrement de la conduite de leurs enfants. Aussi ne faut-il pas se demander ce que vaut la moralité de la jeunesse moderne. Les maris ne savent plus respecter le corps de leurs épouses adolescentes, qui, d'ailleurs, depuis longtemps habituées à la vie sexuelle, y aspirent vivement et ne connaissent plus le sentiment de « la peur des hommes ». Comment, dès lors, s'étonner de cette effroyable baisse de la natalité (1) et de l'extension toujours croissante des maladies vénériennes, qui semblent n'avoir pas été connues autrefois ?

Les raisons de ce changement seront recherchées plus loin, sous la lettre C.

B. — *Entre adultes.* — Ici, les Nkundó sont d'une grande indulgence. Il y a pourtant une différence entre le point de vue juridico-social et le point de vue plutôt moral, qui est cependant influencé par le premier, comme nous allons le voir.

Juridiquement parlant, aussi longtemps qu'un début de paiement dotal n'a pas été fait, la femme est entièrement libre. Aucun homme ne possède sur elle un droit exclusif. D'où le proverbe : Mbímbo île nd'âns'ómbo ífa la nkôlô : les fruits du boimbo qui se trouvent sous l'arbre n'ont pas de propriétaire; ils appartiennent au premier qui les ramasse. Ainsi une jeune fille pour laquelle rien n'a été payé n'appartient à personne. Par ses relations sexuelles, une femme ainsi libre ne lèse le droit d'aucun homme. Ses licences ne sont donc pas sanctionnées.

En outre, aucun sentiment de honte ne s'attache à leur découverte. Tout au plus, certains parents, plus sérieux, gourmandent-ils leurs enfants qui exagèrent : les filles, parce qu'elles s'abîment le corps et diminuent leur valeur en vue d'un mariage futur (2), les garçons, parce qu'ils s'exposent à des difficultés financières (danger d'adultères, indemnité pour accouchement à issue mortelle, etc.).

---

(1) Autrefois, disent les indigènes, une jeune épouse ne tardait pas à devenir enceinte. Et maintenant...

(2) Non pas qu'une moindre dot sera versée pour elles. Mais un homme sérieux préférera ne pas prendre comme épouse une femme qui a beaucoup « couru », qui de ce fait est plus encline à l'adultère, à [illegible], et a moins de chances de devenir la mère d'une nombreuse progéniture.

L'opinion publique est plus indulgente encore que les parents. La chose se comprend aisément: les étrangers n'ont à redouter aucune conséquence fâcheuse. En cette matière, ils considèrent les fautes comme des faiblesses naturelles. A moins, toutefois, qu'elles n'arrivent trop fréquemment. Car l'opinion publique est sévère pour les personnes qui courent de l'un à l'autre et qui sont stigmatisées du nom de *ebàbjá* = inconstantes, légères, sans intelligence ni raisonnement, ou de *ébóngá* = même signification, mais plus forte.

Faut-il déduire de tout cela que toute femme libre s'adonne pleinement à la fornication ? D'après les considérations précédentes, nous pourrions conclure franchement par l'affirmative. Les faits qu'on peut observer journellement confirment cette réponse du tout au tout. Chez certains, les écarts sont plutôt accidentels. Mais chez beaucoup ils deviennent vite une habitude. Et de tous on peut dire qu'ils succombent à toute occasion favorable. Une exception rarissime qui peut se rencontrer et qui est due, soit à une anormalité constitutionnelle, soit à une conviction chrétienne extraordinairement ferme, ne saurait évidemment infirmer la règle. Dès lors, comment concilier avec ces constatations l'affirmation, si souvent entendue dans la bouche des indigènes, que, autrefois, *avant la venue des Blancs*, la situation était tout autre ? Il n'était pas rare de voir les *jeunes* femmes, non seulement s'abstenir des relations sexuelles, mais même avoir une telle « crainte de l'homme », qu'elles chassaient les séducteurs et qu'elles défendaient leur chasteté à coups de bâton.

Si la *femme* n'acceptait pas la proposition du *jeune* homme, elle la considérait comme une injure grave. Le provocateur n'avait aucun droit à une indemnité « pour coups et blessures ». La femme ne lui répondait pas autrement que par des violences en actes ou en paroles. Souvent elle allait insulter la mère du coupable. Celle-ci, s'étant fait exposer le motif de cette façon d'agir, ne pouvait s'en prendre qu'à son mécréant de fils, et d'ordinaire elle le semonçait vertement; et s'il était assez jeune, elle lui administrait une bonne rossée. La jeune fille avait donc plein droit de se défendre.

Si la provocation n'avait donné naissance à aucune complication sociale ou familiale, les parents s'en souciaient bien moins. Seulement, ils tâchaient d'inculquer à leurs enfants la réserve dans cette matière dangereuse, mais plutôt sous la forme de leçon après une faute, ou parfois à l'occasion d'un incident arrivé à autrui. Certains étaient d'une grande sévérité. Cette attitude reposait sur un vague sentiment de moralité, non pas déduit d'un raisonnement philosophique, ni d'idées religieuses ou superstitieuses, mais inné et, pour ainsi dire, instinctif. En outre, la crainte des excès et des conséquences sociales éventuelles y entrait sans doute aussi pour une bonne part. Car ce qu'ils redoutaient surtout, c'était l'exagération, un cas isolé étant plutôt considéré comme faiblesse passagère.

Pour nous former une idée exacte de la situation ancienne, nous ne devons pas perdre de vue que, de par les mariages précoces, le nombre de jeunes femmes célibataires était forcément restreint.

A l'égard des hommes célibataires, l'opinion était plus indulgente. A moins qu'il n'y ait eu de suites quelconques, et à part le danger de l'habitude, qui menait inévitablement à des palabres.

C. — *Essai d'une explication des changements modernes.* — Tant les faits actuels que la connaissance de la nature humaine, joints à l'attitude indulgente des parents et à l'absence de sanctions (ces deux derniers points seulement pour les relations entre adultes), s'opposent diamétralement à ces affirmations des indigènes. Ne faut-il donc pas les mettre sur le compte de l'exagération, du désir de glorification nationale et de blâme envers la situation engendrée par la colonisation ? Les indigènes, dont je cite les propos si étranges, sont âgés et sérieux; ils montrent toutes les qualités de témoins véridiques. Mais ne sont-ils pas — inconsciemment peut-être — des *laudatores temporis acti*? Je l'ai longtemps pensé, et me suis toujours refusé à attacher de la valeur à leurs dires. Cette question, je l'ai discutée et rediscutée, non avec l'un ou l'autre indigène, mais avec des dizaines de personnes parmi les plus sérieuses et sincères, et cela dans diverses circonstances et dans des régions fort distantes l'une de l'autre. Or, tous soutiennent la même thèse; et il m'a été impossible de faire prévaloir mon point de vue. Toujours je recevais la même réponse : « Vous autres, Blancs, ne voulez pas nous croire quand nous vous disons ce que nous savons pourtant mieux que vous et ce qui est la pure vérité. Vous êtes tellement enlisés dans votre manière de voir ! » Finalement, devant tant de témoignages formels, uniformes, constants, répétés à satiété dans des circonstances si variées de personnes, de temps et de lieu, on sent, quoique à regret, fléchir l'attachement à sa propre idée.

Mais comment résoudre l'antagonisme entre la liberté plus ou moins étendue et l'observation pratique de la chasteté? Et surtout, comment moins de cinquante ans ont-ils suffi pour transformer l'attitude virginale en dévergondage? La difficulté vaut pour les relations entre adultes, mais elle est particulièrement ardue à résoudre pour les rapports répréhensibles entre non-adultes, à cause de la terrible sanction que nous avons expliquée plus haut.

La première objection peut être résolue en partie, si nous tenons compte de l'habitude prise et conservée de la « crainte de l'homme », causée par la défense sévère des relations avant la maturité physique, et le terrible châtiment dont la transgression de cette prescription était menacée.

La seconde objection, par contre, est beaucoup plus sérieuse. C'est elle surtout qui m'a toujours retenu d'adhérer à la thèse indigène. Voici comment mes contradicteurs la réfutent : « Lorsque les premiers soldats noirs et leurs aides, archers et teneurs de javelots, étaient envoyés par les Blancs pour nous soumettre, ils commettaient toutes sortes de cruautés et se permettaient toutes les licences qui leur passaient par la tête. Entre autres choses, ils abusaient des jeunes filles, même non nubiles. Ils obligeaient à l'acte sexuel des impubères. Ils allaient même jusqu'à forcer des gens à l'inceste, à unir mère et fils, père et fille, le fusil braqué sur leurs poitrines (1).

Ces accusations sont tellement choquantes et répugnantes, qu'on se refuse à en admettre la véracité. Il est pourtant admissible qu'elles soient conformes à la réalité. D'une part, les témoins sont de toute confiance. De l'autre, les critères internes ne font pas défaut. En effet, des scènes pareilles semblent s'être passées dans les débuts de presque toute colonisation. Leurs auteurs étaient des indigènes d'autres régions plutôt que des Blancs (pour notre région, les Européens étaient presque partout absents des premières prises de contact entre les habitants et le nouveau pouvoir). De par la nature des choses, on peut-là s'attendre à tout. Car les occupations se faisaient sous le régime de la loi martiale. Et personne n'ignore que la guerre déchaîne la bête humaine, qui — l'histoire, même contemporaine, le prouve abondamment — est capable des pires et des plus répugnants excès.

On pourrait objecter contre tout ceci que, si les faits affirmés par les indigènes sont vrais, ils n'ont pourtant pas donné origine à la pratique de l'inceste et que, par conséquent, ils auraient tout aussi bien pu ne pas engendrer les changements profonds que nous constatons. Nous devons répondre que les deux cas sont nettement différents. Car la licence entre célibataires est plutôt conforme à l'inclination passionnelle de la nature humaine, qui n'était surtout retenue que par la crainte d'une sanction, terrible il est vrai, mais qui s'est montrée inexistante en fait, tandis que l'inceste est extrêmement répugnant de sa nature, spécialement pour les Nkundó. Ce vice ne provient que de croyances particulières ou d'une dégénérescence foncière de la sexualité.

---

(1) Il est encore de notoriété publique qu'on se faisait livrer des impubères par crainte des maladies vénériennes.

La rupture du cadre de l'organisation ancestrale peut, dans ce domaine comme dans beaucoup d'autres, fournir une explication partielle. Pour le cas des relations entre célibataires adultes, elle pourrait même être estimée suffisante. On peut en dire autant de la cupidité, de la vanité, du désir d'ostentation et de pompes, sentiments si naturels à la femme et qui ont été fortement excités par les richesses éblouissantes importées d'Europe. Mais à eux seuls ces faits ne suffisent pas à rendre compte de tout. Particulièrement pour ce qui regarde les changements considérables dans les relations entre impubères, ils restent complètement en défaut; et nous sommes ainsi obligé d'accepter l'explication donnée par les indigènes sérieux.

§ 5. Naissances extramatrimoniales.

Les naissances *extramatrimoniales* sont jugées par les Nkundó — depuis des temps immémoriaux — comme sans gravité et n'ayant donc pas ce caractère criminel que, d'après les ethnographes, elles revêtent chez beaucoup de peuples africains.

Cette attitude découle d'ailleurs logiquement de la liberté laissée aux adolescents, comme nous venons de l'exposer. Ni la femme, ni son amant ne sont importunés ni punis pour cet événement. Au contraire, l'enfant est reçu avec joie par les grands-parents. Il accroît le nombre, la puissance et la richesse du clan. Car un enfant illégitime [*entombó* (¹)] n'appartient pas au père naturel. Il est incorporé dans la famille de sa mère. On dit de lui qu'il est né sans père. Sa descendance constitue une famille à part dans le clan de ses aïeux maternels; elle est dénommée *jwómoto*, ou *elóo éy'ɔ̧nankáná* (c'est-à-dire descendance patrilinéale du fils de la sœur). Les familles ou clans qui ont cette origine ne sont pas excessivement rares dans cette région. On peut trouver même un village entier qui est né de cette façon. Ainsi, Mbelé des Bombwanja-Boéndé est *elóo éy'ɔ̧nankáná* de Lileko. Plus fort encore : la tribu des Injɔ̧lɔ̧ est la descendance de la sœur de Nsimba et Eanga, ancêtres respectifs des Ntómbá et des Bolɛ́ngé. Comme l'ancêtre masculin est inconnu on suppose que son origine est due à une conception extramatrimoniale de la mère et que le fils de celle-ci, Nkɔ́lɔ́bisé, n'avait pas de père. Il en est de même de la sous-tribu des Wesé *bɔ̧nankáná* de la sous-tribu aînée Engɔ́njɔ́, ainsi que de la sous-tribu Ngɔmbɛ̧, *bɔ̧nankáná* des Wesé.

Il serait pourtant contraire à la réalité de faire remonter l'origine de tous les clans « *jwómoto* » à un enfant naturel. En effet, d'autres causes peuvent avoir agi. Ainsi, il est connu de certains clans que leur ancêtre était né d'une union légitime, mais avant le versement total de la dot; puis un obstacle quelconque s'étant interposé, l'union a été rompue, et l'enfant était incorporé au clan maternel. L'obstacle à l'interruption du versement dotal peut être la désunion entre les fiancés ou leurs familles, tel le cas des Baséká Etáfɛ̧ngɛ̧la des Bakáala; mais surtout une guerre ou les pérégrinations des tribus à certaines époques de leur histoire. Cette dernière cause peut avoir séparé plus d'un mari de la femme pour laquelle, à la naissance de l'enfant, il n'avait effectué que le versement initial.

Le fait donc que maint clan « féminin » existe dans une

(¹) On le nomme aussi *bɔna bá* [illegible] = enfant de la lumière solaire, et *bɔna bá* [illegible] = enfant de la grand'route ou d'une fille des rues. Chez les [illegible] on entend encore le terme = [illegible].

région ne prouve pas que les relations coupables entre célibataires étaient communes autrefois, — surtout si l'on tient encore compte de ce que, jadis, les grossesses étaient bien plus fréquentes qu'à présent, — mais uniquement que des cas se présentaient.

L'enfant illégitime est considéré et traité par son grand-père maternel comme son propre enfant à lui. Aucune différence n'est faite entre lui et les enfants légitimes. On ne l'en méprise nullement. Il a son mot à dire dans les assemblées et délibérations familiales. Et comme dans la conception nkundó il est avec ses cousins germains dans la relation de père à fils, il a la préséance sur eux et peut devenir chef de famille après son grand-père et ses oncles. Au contraire, dans le clan de son père naturel il n'a rien à dire.

Lorsque quelqu'un verse la dot pour la jeune fille qu'il a rendue mère, il demande à son beau-père de lui laisser son enfant naturel. Presque toujours il est donné suite à son désir. Le beau-père comprend très bien le sentiment d'amour paternel qui anime son gendre et il juge très légitime et convenable que le père possède lui-même le fruit de sa propre chair. La seule condition posée est que le gendre augmente, à cause de cet enfant, la quantité des valeurs dotales, sous la forme d'un esclave supplémentaire ou de son équivalent (7).

Car il ne peut invoquer aucun droit strict. L'enfant ne lui appartient pas du fait de sa paternité physique, mais uniquement par la bienveillance de son beau-père. Si celui-ci veut le lui refuser, il ne manque pas à la justice. Seulement, cette façon d'agir serait considérée comme inhumaine envers le mari de sa fille et envers son petit-fils, et critiquée.

Adopté dans ces conditions par son père naturel, cet enfant n'est méprisé par personne pour sa naissance illégitime. Cette procédure peut donc être considérée comme une véritable légitimation.

---

(7) Cette opération transactionnelle peut même avoir lieu après la mort de la mère.

Actuellement, chez les Beloko et leurs Elíngá, on commence à « acheter » l'enfant, c'est-à-dire qu'un homme, n'épousant pas la femme qu'il a rendue mère, donne aux parents de celle-ci une certaine somme afin d'obtenir l'enfant. L'introduction de cette coutume ne semble pas rencontrer beaucoup d'opposition. Elle découle, d'ailleurs, d'un sentiment honorable de la paternité et de ses devoirs. Son seul inconvénient est pour l'enfant, qui ne pourra jamais faire valoir aucun droit dans le clan de sa mère (¹).

Si un étranger épouse une fille-mère, jamais on ne lui cède l'enfant, qui reste dans la famille de sa mère. Ceci marque nettement la différence avec les cas mentionnés jusqu'ici.

Ce qui arrive, c'est qu'une femme pareille, en se rendant chez son mari, apporte avec elle son enfant trop jeune pour rester chez ses grands-parents. Plus tard, le garçon, atteignant l'âge adulte, se fixe parfois dans le clan du mari de sa mère et procrée une descendance. Pourtant il est plus ou moins déconsidéré par le clan adoptant (et par les autres). Il n'y jouit d'aucun droit « politique », n'y a pas de « *mpifo* ». Sa descendance est nommée *mbúsolá* (de *mbúsa* = derrière, et *bolá* = clan d'origine) (²). Elle peut se marier avec le clan adoptant, sauf, évidemment, avec les descendants de la mère commune. Elle a également son propre cimetière. Elle forme donc un clan à part dans le village.

Les cas d'« apporter un enfant dans la bandoulière » semblent disparaître actuellement. Chacun tient trop à rester dans son propre clan. La politique gouvernementale fait perdre pratiquement tout droit aux indigènes qui ne résident pas dans leur propre famille. Puis, on peut trou-

---

(¹) Cfr. chap. VIII, art. IV.

(²) On dit aussi : « il a été apporté dans la bandoulière » [illegible] [illegible] ».

ver chez soi les moyens de se constituer un foyer bien plus facilement qu'autrefois. Car ce dernier souci était certainement pour beaucoup dans l'établissement d'un homme dans le clan du mari de sa mère.

Il ressort clairement de ce qui précède que l'amant qui a rendu une jeune fille mère n'encourt aucun blâme, aucune pénalité, aucune amende. Il n'a pas le devoir de prendre soin, ni de la mère, ni de l'enfant. Il n'est pas obligé, soit en justice, soit par convenance, d'épouser la fille-mère. On n'exige de lui aucune indemnité.

Il n'y a qu'une exception : c'est lorsque la mère meurt des suites de la grossesse ou de l'accouchement, ou encore lorsque l'enfant vient au monde mort, débile, difforme, estropié. Dans ces cas, en effet, l'amant doit payer une forte indemnité (*mbálaka*) (1). C'est pourquoi, dès que la famille de la femme extramatrimonialement enceinte s'aperçoit de son état, elle la presse de confesser le nom de son complice. Celui-ci est rendu officiellement responsable et est obligé de reconnaître cette responsabilité en donnant publiquement un gage de sa volonté d'en assumer toutes les conséquences. Ce gage, comme tout gage, est nommé *ndanga*. Il consiste en un couteau, un anneau de cuivre ou de laiton, une lance, ou objets similaires (2).

ARTICLE V. — L'ACTE CONJUGAL.

Bien que cette matière soit extrêmement délicate pour l'investigation comme pour la description, il ne me semble pas dépourvu d'utilité de noter ici les quelques détails qui en sont venus à ma connaissance. Nous traiterons successivement de quelques circonstances de l'acte, puis du viol, enfin des actes dénommés incomplets.

---

(1) Pour l'enfant, l'indemnité atteint jusqu'à 50 anneaux; pour la mère 20 anneaux plus un esclave (ou son montant en espèces), ou 75 à 100 anneaux.

(2) La même coutume se pratique dans les cas d'une grossesse adultérine.

§ 1. Circonstances de l'acte.

Les Nkundó posent l'acte conjugal couchés sur le côté. A présent, les indigènes qui ont été en contacts fréquents avec les Blancs commencent à délaisser l'ancienne façon, pour adopter celle des Européens. L'esprit d'imitation joue probablement un rôle dans cette transformation naissante, mais aussi la connaissance qui s'infiltre peu à peu que ce système favorise les chances de conception.

Même pour les relations interdites, nos indigènes ne choisissent que rarement la forêt, une palmeraie ou bananeraie proches. D'ordinaire ils préfèrent une case isolée, ou profitent de l'absence de témoins qui pourraient les importuner. C'est que, de nuit, on a passablement peur de tout ce qui se meut en forêt.

Le Nkundó n'a de rapports que pendant les heures nocturnes. Leur pratique diurne provoquerait une maladie mortelle, nommée *bombilé* (de *mbilé* = midi, par extension : jour), et qui présente de fortes ressemblances avec la maladie du sommeil (1). Un des symptômes est l'affaiblissement des membres inférieurs. On cite des cas de personnes qui, n'ayant su résister à leur passion, ont été punis de cette façon. La femme seule, paraît-il, y laisse la vie. Dès que le fait est constaté par sa famille, la coupable dénonce son complice. Celui-ci est rendu responsable : il est obligé de payer une forte indemnité, qui peut monter à plusieurs dizaines d'anneaux de cuivre.

Comme dans beaucoup de matières, les Nkundó ont pourtant trouvé le moyen d'éviter le danger; il existe un antidote (*nsengó*): c'est l'eau = bási bale nsengó éà bombilé. Ainsi, ceux qui, de jour, ne parviennent pas à maîtriser leur passion surexcitée la satisfont dans un ruisseau peu profond.

La crainte du *bombilé* a été terriblement ébranlée par la colonisation. S'il faut en croire les indigènes, ici encore les soldats étrangers en portent la responsabilité. Leurs manières d'agir n'ont pourtant pas pu détruire complètement le sentiment ancien. Ceci est probablement dû à la honte naturelle, qui, pour des actes pareils, cherche l'obscurité et le secret.

---

(1) Ce n'est pas la maladie du sommeil, qui semble avoir été inconnue dans ces parages autrefois.

Après les rapports, la femme indigène fait d'ordinaire sa toilette intime. Elle agit ainsi par soin de propreté. Pourtant, il arrive souvent qu'elle n'attende pas assez longtemps, et de ce fait elle neutralise l'effet de l'acte. Ceci est surtout question d'insouciance. Toutefois, elle peut employer ce moyen pour empêcher la conception dans certaines circonstances (1).

D'après mes informateurs, certaines femmes présentent des anormalités constitutionnelles qui rebutent les hommes. Comme tout devient aisément public, ces défauts sont vite connus après le mariage, moins vite avant. D'ailleurs, l'amour peut passer — et souvent passe — outre. Mais après le refroidissement de la première ardeur, cette situation peut devenir un danger pour la stabilité de l'union. Dans les querelles un peu violentes les femmes se rappellent ces défauts, à la grande honte de la personne qui en souffre. Il en est de même de la faiblesse de certains hommes, qui, comme le défaut par excès, peut susciter des difficultés dans le ménage.

§ 3. Viol.

Le cas de viol, au sens propre du mot, c'est-à-dire l'abus d'une femme par l'emploi de la violence, est tout à fait exceptionnel chez les Nkundó. Si la femme ne consent pas, le séducteur en colère la laisse, tout en l'insultant souvent de son mieux. Je n'ai connaissance que d'un cas, déjà ancien, qui a provoqué une grande consternation dans la région. Il s'agit de Banángá, fille de Ilóko la Efekele, de Lofelí (Bongíli), mais qui, à cette époque, habitait son clan maternel Bọnyẹka (Bonkoso). Elle n'avait pas encore atteint la complète maturité physique (ses seins étaient encore très petits). Un jour, étant allée en forêt, elle ne revint pas le soir. La famille, ayant été alarmée, son père et son oncle Mpénda éà Nkọtọnkale partirent à sa recherche. Voyant des traces de sang encore fraîches, ils les suivent et trouvent le cadavre de Banángá enfoui dans les « *nsusulu* ». Elle était morte par hémorragie : ses organes, déchirés, portaient la marque indubitable du viol. On a bien eu des soupçons, mais l'identité du criminel n'a jamais pu être prouvée. Si l'on avait eu des preuves, il n'aurait pas échappé à la vengeance mortelle de la part des parents de l'infortunée victime.

---

(1) Cfr. chap. X, art. 1, § 2.

L'ensemble des données que j'ai pu réunir indiquent que d'autres cas ont sans aucun doute dû se présenter.

§ 3. Actes incomplets.

Nous traitons ici de ce que les moralistes appellent *actus impudicitiae*, c'est-à-dire des actes qui, de leur nature, conduisent physiquement à la délectation sexuelle.

Les attouchements obscènes entre personnes de sexe différent sont des préparatifs et des excitations; on y range même les attouchements sur les seins, le ventre, voire la prise par le bras.

Les baisers entre personnes de sexe différent sont inconnus. Les embrassements, au contraire, sont pratiqués, mais n'ont pas lieu en public, et l'on doit les considérer comme proche préparation (1). Une passion extraordinairement forte entraîne parfois les amants à des baisers plus intimes, généralement comme prélude aux rapports normaux. Si certains indigènes ne s'offusquent pas de ces pratiques, elles sont considérées comme inconvenantes par les gens plus sérieux.

---

(1) Cfr. ci-dessus, 1re partie, art. III.

ARTICLE VI. — VICES « CONTRA NATURAM ».

§ 1. Homosexualité masculine.

L'homosexualité est connue par les Nkundó depuis des temps immémoriaux, et cela tant par les hommes que par les femmes.

Chez les premiers elle prenait autrefois la forme de la sodomie, avec cette particularité, dont j'ignore l'explication, que le plus jeune seul était agent actif. A présent elle commence à prendre, chez la jeunesse, une autre forme, où les garçons qui s'y livrent se couchent dans la position de mari et femme. On rapporte que parfois l'un d'eux dit entre-temps à son complice : « C'est ainsi que je fais avec ta sœur ». Y aurait-il là un indice de ce que cette sorte d'homosexualité est uniquement dans l'acte, non dans le sentiment (*in effectu*, non *in affectu*, comme disent les moralistes) ?

L'homosexualité ne paraît pas provenir d'un goût spécial pour ce vice, mais avoir toujours été un pis-aller à la disposition de ceux qui ne trouvaient aucun dérivatif naturel pour leur passion. Quoique ni devant la raison, ni devant la foi nous ne puissions approuver cette dépravation de l'instinct, on doit avouer qu'elle était plus excusable chez ces populations où le régime social était défavorable à de nombreux jeunes gens. Actuellement, la sodomie est déjà beaucoup réduite, en raison de la plus grande facilité de se marier. Quant à la nouvelle forme d'homosexualité, on l'observe surtout dans les lieux où les hommes sont tenus strictement et longtemps à l'écart des relations avec l'autre sexe, comme des internats, prisons, etc.

§ 2. Homosexualité féminine.

Les jeunes filles jouent « mari et femme », et même des femmes adultes, mariées, s'adonnent à ce vice. D'après mes informateurs, les causes en sont : un amour intense et très intime entre les deux femmes, mais surtout la difficulté, pour des épouses de polygame, de satisfaire de la façon naturelle leur passion. Souvent elles s'y adonnent entre coépouses du même homme. La liberté plus grande introduite par la colonisation pourrait faire diminuer sa pratique. Mais jusqu'à présent on ne constate pas de grande amélioration. Qui plus est, dans les établissements où les jeunes filles sont tenues trop sévèrement à l'écart de l'autre sexe, on peut en voir augmenter la fréquence.

Le verbe employé pour désigner ces actes vicieux est *yamáma* = se tenir l'un contre l'autre. D'où le substantif *bomámo*. Mais ces mots servent également à désigner l'embrassement tout simple. Un autre terme plus spécifique est *yaikya bonsángo*; le verbe réciproque *yaikya* (forme simple : *ikya*) veut dire « se presser l'un sur l'autre ».

Est-il besoin de dire qu'un peuple naturaliste, comme les Nkundó, ne voit pas le moindre mal dans ce vice? Il serait donc souhaitable que les éducateurs et les missionnaires attirent l'attention de leurs pupilles sur la malice de pareilles pratiques.

§ 3. Masturbation.

Ce vice, que les Nkundó ne semblent jamais avoir pratiqué, est actuellement connu dans les centres importants et dans les camps, et de là pénètre peu à peu à l'intérieur. Pourtant, il ne semble se répandre que difficilement dans la société indigène. On comprend qu'un homme qui, dans un centre quelconque, en a contracté l'habitude, ne s'en défasse pas sans grande peine; mais comme l'indigène n'a pas la volonté corruptrice, il ne s'en fait pas le propagateur (*).

(*) Nonobstant les attouchements fréquents dus aux démangeaisons.

§ 4. Onanisme.

L'onanisme semble également inconnu. Sans doute, beaucoup de femmes ont, par leur concubinage avec des Européens, appris ce vice; mais elles ne l'ont pas répandu. Nous pouvons en dire autant des cas d'onanisme involontaire. C'est que l'indigène ne recherche pas les raffinements sensuels, mais se laisse plutôt aller à sa pente naturelle (*).

ARTICLE VII. — L'INCESTE.

Il nous faut distinguer ici : 1° les relations sexuelles entre membres de la parenté éloignée; 2° entre proches parents.

§ 1. Dans la parenté éloignée.

Dans la parenté éloignée (au sens nkundó du mot) l'inceste est connu depuis des temps immémoriaux. On l'appelle *lonkána* (chez les Bombwanja : *bombakó*). *Lonkána* dérive de *nkána* = frère, sœur. On dit aussi *lóála j'ólálá* = union sexuelle dans le village. Sont dénommées *lonkána* les relations entre membres de familles apparentées seulement de très loin (qui dans notre conception ne sont plus parents du tout), mais entre lesquels le mariage n'est pas permis. Ainsi on entend dire : tel et tel groupement ne se marient pas (*bófóyakumbálá*), mais ils commettent le *lonkána*. On pourrait considérer deux groupements pareils comme deux clans étroitement apparentés. Les groupements entre lesquels le *lonkána* est pratiqué possèdent chacun son propre cimetière, tandis que ceux entre lesquels il est absolument proscrit ont un cimetière commun. Ainsi, pour citer un exemple, le « village »

(*) La pratique décrite au chap. II, art. III, § 3, n° 3, est peut-être entachée d'onanisme; elle peut certainement y conduire, mais elle n'est pas causée par la perversité.

d'Elángá l'Imǫmǫ l'Ǫntǫ́lę (Bongili) est, comme le nom d'ailleurs l'indique, composé de trois groupements. Le bloc des Imǫmǫ se trouve en partie dans le Sud de la chefferie (une autre partie est située en la chefferie alliée des Bombomba). Il en est de même de Bǫntǫ́lę. Avec Elękę (Lokongo), Elángá et Imǫmǫ forment la descendance du fils d'Ambá, sœur d'Iloko, Eángá et Bokongá, ce dernier étant l'ancêtre des Bǫntǫ́lę. Or, les trois groupements ne se marient pas entre eux. Elángá et Imǫmǫ ne permettent non plus des relations de *lonkána*, tandis qu'ils les pratiquent avec Bǫntǫ́lę. Notons que le terme de *lonkána* n'est jamais appliqué aux relations entre clans réellement distincts, c'est-à-dire entre entités exogamiques.

Pour fixer exactement jusqu'où peut s'étendre cette pratique, il faudrait examiner chaque groupement à part. Or, cela nous mènerait trop loin.

Il est encore à noter que le *lonkána* peut se limiter à un acte isolé, ou devenir un concubinage intermittent. La pratique ne change pas de nom lorsqu'il s'agit d'une femme mariée qui vient en visite dans sa famille. Pourtant, les sanctions contre l'adultère sont applicables à ces cas, comme à tout autre (1). Bien que les parents de la femme soient plus tolérants que pour les relations adultères avec un autre amant, le mari lésé dans ses droits ne fait, lui, aucune distinction.

Cette coutume du *lonkána* paraît assez étrange. En effet, si les relations sexuelles entre ces clans ne sont pas répréhensibles, pourquoi le mariage est-il défendu? Il y a là une contradiction apparente qui mérite l'attention. Ne faut-il pas y voir l'indication d'une tendance au relâchement de la loi de l'exogamie? Anciennement, toute relation sexuelle aurait été interdite entre membres des clans envisagés, phénomène bien naturel à l'origine des familles. Plus tard, des jeunes gens auraient succombé à la tentation et même peu à peu les infractions se seraient multipliées : c'est que, en raison de l'extension des clans, les tentations devenaient de plus en plus nombreuses, et la règle, détachée de son rapport naturel, puisqu'il s'agissait désormais d'une parenté extrêmement éloignée, paraissait aux intéressés plus ou moins arbitraire; elle n'était d'ailleurs soutenue par aucune sanction ni par aucune crainte (1); ainsi, le nombre même des fautes commises aurait petit à petit fait entrer la pratique dans les mœurs. Impuissants à réagir, les détenteurs du pouvoir, gardiens de la moralité ancestrale, se seraient contentés de canaliser le mouvement et de le limiter au minimum, en se montrant indulgents pour les relations libres, afin de sauver le principe de l'exogamie. Cette hypothèse explicative peut trouver une petite confirmation dans le fait que, déjà au début de la colonisation, alors que l'influence européenne était encore nulle, des cas, isolés et très rares, se présentaient de mariages contraires à la loi exogamique, entre membres de groupes apparentés seulement à un degré fort éloigné, mais qui pratiquaient déjà le *lonkána*. L'exception est ensuite devenue règle, et dorénavant les deux groupements en question se marient *entre eux régulièrement* et sans entraves, tandis que les autres familles sont restées soumises à l'ancienne loi. Ainsi le fait connu du village Boyela (Bakáala), qui comprend les groupes Bokamblé, Bembakó, Besúló et Bekólema (éteint), descendants de Ngọndẹ avec une femme, tandis que d'une autre épouse sont issus Lilęké et Likongo, auxquels est adjoint Bongilá, groupe allié (*likilé*). Ces deux groupes de familles ne peuvent pas se marier, mais s'adonnent au *lonkána*. Or, vers l'époque de la première arrivée des Blancs, un membre de la famille Bembakó, un certain Bonjúmbú, poussé par un amour excessif, enfreignit la loi exogamique en prenant comme épouse la femme Bolondó de Lilękę. L'amour ne se refroidissant pas et l'union se prouvant stable, le mariage fut reconnu et admis comme légitime. Depuis lors, les deux groupes en question sont devenus exogamiques.

---

(1) Cfr. chap. VI, art. VIII.

---

(1) De fait, aucune sanction n'est prévue contre les mariages à l'intérieur d'une unité exogamique : tout se résume à l'opposition des parents et des vieux et à l'habitude quasi innée.

§ 2. Entre proches parents.

L'inceste entre proches parents ne porte pas de nom propre et spécial. Il n'a d'ailleurs jamais lieu pour des motifs passionnels. Il ne se rencontre qu'en relation avec des pratiques d'envoûtement et de sorcellerie (*boté*, pl. *beté*) dont il constitue le *nsimbo*, c'est-à-dire la condition sans laquelle ces *beté* resteraient inefficaces. Si le *nsimbo* n'est pas observé, le *boté* se retourne contre son possesseur et, par un effet à rebours (*bosesengano*), lui cause la mort. C'est ce qui fait que les intéressés se soumettent, malgré toutes les répugnances naturelles, à ces exigences dégradantes. D'après les cas, l'inceste est imposé avec la mère, la fille, la sœur. C'est la première éventualité qui répugne le plus à nos indigènes. Quoique tout à fait à contre-cœur, la mère se soumet à cette ignominie pour sauver la vie à son fils imprudent et cupide.

Le *nsimbo* d'inceste n'existe pas dans n'importe quel *boté*. Il paraît même avoir été absent des *beté* anciens et purement nkundó. On le trouve surtout dans les grands *beté* modernes, introduits d'autres peuplades ou inventés sur place depuis la colonisation (*).

ARTICLE VIII. — PHILTRES D'AMOUR.

Les Nkundó connaissent deux philtres d'amour : l'*efóndé* et le *bontólá*. D'autres *beté* modernes peuvent avoir partiellement ou subsidiairement le même effet. Ici,

---

(*) Cfr. [illegible], dans *Congo*, [illegible], I, p. [illegible].

nous ne traitons que des deux premiers, qui sont des philtres d'amour « purs » et anciens.

Le philtre d'amour (*bolé w'élangyé*) sert tant pour gagner le cœur d'une jeune fille que pour débaucher à son mari une femme mariée.

§ 1. Efiondé.

L'*efiondé* (*) est le charme commun. N'importe qui peut se le procurer chez le fabricant, moyennant rétribution convenable, s'entend. Il existe diverses sortes d'*efiondé* d'après la diversité des ingrédients et du procédé de fabrication et, par suite, du mode d'emploi. Les ingrédients les plus usités sont certaines feuilles mêlées à du fard rouge (ngólá) et à une sorte de lichen qui forme des plaques rouges sur l'écorce de certaines essences forestières; le tout soigneusement empaqueté dans une petite fourrure (spécialement la peau du petit félide iyei).

On cache ce charme sous la traverse du lit où la désirée doit prendre son repos nocturne. De ce fait, son cœur concevra un amour ardent pour le possesseur du charme. Ou bien on le place quelque part dans une case; ensuite on y appelle la femme convoitée; on lui prend le bras, et immédiatement l'*efiondé* lui fait « tourner le cœur ». Ou encore le charme est, toujours à l'insu de la femme, jeté dans le feu où elle fait sa cuisine. Si, en revenant à son foyer, elle commence à éternuer, c'est le signe que la fumée, chargée des émanations mystérieuses du philtre, a pénétré par les narines jusqu'à son cœur et l'a remplie d'un amour ardent pour l'Adonis.

L'*efiondé* est considéré comme un *ikfiko*, c'est-à-dire un assujetissement. *Efiondé ákfiko bámato* = l'*efiondé* maîtrise, exerce le pouvoir sur les femmes.

L'interdit propre à l'*efiondé* est le bokai, sorte de légume

---

(*) *Efiondé* est souvent employé comme synonyme d'*elangyé* dans son sens sexuel.

aigre. Le possesseur du philtre doit s'en abstenir. Car les *bekai* causent des renvois de l'estomac, et de même la femme renverrait son amour et rendrait ainsi le *boté* inefficace.

§ 3. Bonálá.

Contrairement à l'*efóndé*, le *bonálá* n'est pas un philtre d'amour commun à tous, mais un charme réservé aux danseurs d'*iyaya*. Cela ne veut pas dire que tous les artistes de cette danse le possèdent, mais eux seuls le connaissent. Comme la masse des *boté* nkundó, la base matérielle du *bonálá* sont les feuilles de certaines plantes.

Le *bonálá* atteint son effet infailliblement. Il n'agit donc pas seulement sur la personne aimée, mais sur toute femme qui satisfait, involontairement ou de propos délibéré, à la condition d'efficacité : dès que la tête d'une femme touche le bras du possesseur du *bonálá*, son cœur tourne en sa faveur, et si elle est mariée, l'amour qu'elle porte à son époux se change en répugnance : elle l'abandonne pour rejoindre son charmeur.

TROISIÈME PARTIE

Recherche d'une épouse.

Quand un jeune homme en âge de se marier croit en avoir les moyens, il va à la recherche d'une épouse. Evidemment, il connaît nombre de jeunes filles et, généralement, il n'a aucune difficulté à en trouver une qui lui convienne. La fréquentation est toute simple : rencontres, visites, causettes, blagues, comme partout; mais aucun romantisme ni sentimentalisme; choses absolument inconnues de nos populations. Comme ils ont hâte d'arriver au terme de leurs relations, la vie conjugale, — ce que favorisent les us et coutumes, — il ne reste que peu de temps pour la poésie.

La fréquentation ne porte pas de terme propre et spécifique. On dit tout simplement sanja bómoto = causer à une femme, ou asa bómoto = chercher une femme. Celle qui en est l'objet est appelée bombóyá (ou, chez les Injóló, bosendá).

Les propositions du jeune homme sont d'abord adressées à la jeune fille : « ńdanga ákokolé (ákokamolélé) la wálí = je désire te prendre comme épouse ». Elle manifeste son accord en lui disant : « ńkolanga wę ng'ókó = je t'aime de même », ou plutôt : « elakó ó wę = comme tu veux »; « jói ó likę = c'est ton affaire », ou termes analogues (¹).

Les amants se font des cadeaux. La jeune fille donne de la nourriture que sa mère lui remet, ou qu'elle est parvenue à se procurer elle-même. De son côté, le jeune homme lui offre certains petits animaux de chasse (surtout le grand rat bolókoba, des limaciens du genre esíndá, etc.) ou des poissons. Ces présents ne portent pas de nom spécifique. De la part de l'homme, ils s'appellent simplement mpaló = cadeau envoyé; de la part de la femme boléma, usité pour tout don fait par une femme à son amant (cfr. aussi ch. VI, art. VII, § 2). Le verbe qui est employé avec ce substantif est lomba = faire briller, qui n'a avec lui aucun rapport étymologique.

Parfois les amoureux se donnent un gage mutuel et secret de leur volonté de se marier. Ce gage, appelé bondongé ou bonangé, consiste spécialement en un collier de perles bajondikonga (ou, plus rarement, bisangá ou bisangajila).

(¹) Notons que ces expressions ont, pour le Nkundo, une portée tout autre que celle du sens direct des mots. Elles expriment un réel accord et consentement explicite et personnel. Pour une femme, il est d'ailleurs malséant d'employer une expression plus directe.

Dans le choix de leurs épouses les hommes se laissent conduire par les divers motifs qui peuvent exercer une influence dans ce domaine : attraits physiques ou moraux; les richesses et le rang social n'entrent pour ainsi dire jamais en ligne de compte. La jeunesse est aisément entraînée par l'attrait physique et l'amour passionnel. Les hommes déjà plus rassis ou les jeunes gens plus sensés font plutôt attention aux qualités morales : conduite générale, soumission, bonté, mansuétude, et surtout activité, application soigneuse, etc. Bref, nous trouvons ici toute la gamme des variations individuelles qu'on rencontre ailleurs, hormis les mariages d'intérêt financier ou politique, et les motifs d'une haute élévation morale que peut susciter la religion chrétienne, comme le dévouement pur.

Après quelques jours de fréquentation, la jeune fille fait savoir à son courtisan que, s'il l'aime réellement, il serait temps d'arranger leur situation et que, par conséquent, il doit obtenir le consentement des parents. Entretemps, ils ont eu déjà plusieurs rapports intimes; il convient donc de ne pas retarder le moment des pourparlers officiels.

La recherche d'une épouse qui est déjà au pouvoir de mari ne diffère pas de ce que nous venons de décrire; seulement on doit user d'une grande circonspection, afin de ne pas éveiller les susceptibilités du mari. C'est surtout dans ce cas que se pratique la remise du gage secret dont nous avons parlé.

Après la consommation du divorce, la femme est assimilée à une jeune fille, puisqu'elle est libre.

La recherche comme future épouse d'une enfant non encore née ou en très bas âge aura sa place dans un chapitre spécial (ch. IV, art. 1).

CHAPITRE II.

ÉLABORATION DU CONTRAT MATRIMONIAL. — DOT.

L'élaboration du contrat matrimonial (*) se fait, dans les lignes principales, au moyen du versement de certaines valeurs par l'intermédiaires de témoins qualifiés (art. II). Elle débute par les fiançailles (art. III). Ensuite, nous exposerons les divers versements ultérieurs au père, walo (art. IV) et *bonjngo* (art. IX), et à la mère (art. V), ainsi que les cadeaux (art. VI). En outre, le droit nkundó impose même au clan de la femme le paiement de certaines valeurs (art. VII). Enfin, nous examinerons diverses règles et coutumes concernant la dot : son acceptation (art. VIII), [illegible] destination (art. X), pour terminer par quelques remarques générales (art. XI) et quelques considérations sur l'attitude adoptée à l'égard de la dot (art. XII).

ARTICLE I. — DÉBUTS DES POURPARLERS.

Comme nous l'avons vu à la fin du chapitre précédent, la période de la *fréquentation* n'est pas longue.

Le jeune homme ayant informé de ses projets ses propres parents, ceux-ci s'assurent que ce mariage mérite

---

(*) Cette terminologie doit être prise dans son sens large et non dans sa signification strictement juridique. Contrat matrimonial ne signifie donc pas ici ce qu'en droit européen on appelle le « contrat de mariage ». Ce chapitre traite des diverses phases par lesquelles passe chez les Nkundó la constitution de l'état conjugal et les pratiques qui s'y attachent. J'ai choisi ce titre afin de pouvoir y englober la multiplicité des éléments essentiels ou accessoires qui composent la genèse de l'union conjugale et des diverses circonstances qui l'accompagnent.

considération et qu'il n'existe pas d'empêchements ou de trop grandes difficultés qui pourraient plus tard causer la brouille.

Pour les pourparlers officiels, le prétendant, accompagné de son père (ou du remplaçant de celui-ci), se rend chez les parents de la choisie, qui s'informent du but de la visite, et ayant appris qu'un tel désire la main de leur fille, ils demandent : « Comment la veux-tu? » (1). — « Je la désire comme épouse. » Là-dessus ils lui disent de s'arranger pour faire le premier versement dotal. Les deux parties s'étant mises d'accord, les parents de la future concluent en disant : « Nous ne nous opposons pas, c'est votre affaire. »

Les formalités des pourparlers ne diffèrent pas, qu'il s'agisse d'une jeune fille libre ou d'une femme qui a déjà un mari. Seulement, dans ce dernier cas, aussi longtemps que le divorce n'a pas été consommé, on doit procéder avec une grande circonspection, pour éviter d'éveiller les susceptibilités de l'époux abandonné. En outre, les parents de la femme font savoir au futur et à sa famille le montant de la dot qu'ils devront apporter afin de pouvoir rembourser le premier mari (2).

Quant aux fiançailles avant la naissance ou dans la prime jeunesse, on y observe la même procédure, mais adaptée aux circonstances spéciales du cas que nous expliquerons en détail dans le chapitre IV.

Après ces débuts des pourparlers, le père du prétendant prépare le premier versement dotal, qu'il va, accompagné de son fils et du *ndonga*, remettre à la famille de la future épouse. Expliquons d'abord ce qu'est le *ndonga*.

---

(1) C'est-à-dire comme épouse légitime; ou, as-tu l'intention de cohabiter seulement pendant un certain temps? De cette façon, les parents de la future s'assurent de la volonté sérieuse du prétendant de contracter un mariage en règle.

(2) Cfr. chap. VIII, art. II et III.

ARTICLE II. — LE NDONGA.

Le *ndonga* est le gardien-conservateur du mariage choisi par les parties et dont l'intervention comme intermédiaire, témoin, conciliateur ou arbitre est obligatoire à chacune des phases de l'union. C'est un personnage officiel en ce sens qu'il tient son autorité de la loi même qui régit le mariage dans la société nkundó.

Tout d'abord, le ndonga est l'intermédiaire absolument indispensable dans le versement de la dot. Sans lui, pas de mariage légitime : *Nkó ndonga ótóka baómbá ó lonkubó, bóna ale ó bondo* = Sans ndonga tu jettes tes valeurs en pure perte, et ta fille n'est qu'une esclave, c'est-à-dire elle n'est pas épouse. En droit lui seul a qualité pour témoigner.

L'importance que les indigènes attachent à l'intervention du ndonga ressort dans la vie courante à tout instant. Ainsi, qu'une femme ait été battue par son mari, on peut entendre sa famille dire : « Notre fille (sœur) n'est pas une esclave; elle a été payée par l'intermédiaire d'un ndonga : *bón'ókisó éfa bokwála, bótóngáki é la ndonga.* » Ou elle-même ripostera de cette façon, *mutatis mutandis*, à son mari, ou à la famille de celui-ci, quand, à son avis, on ne la traite pas convenablement.

Cette nécessité absolue de l'intervention d'un *ndonga* qualifié n'est relevée que très rarement par les Européens de l'Administration coloniale. On dirait qu'ils ignorent son importance, pourtant capitale.

Pour être capable de servir de ndonga d'un mariage déterminé, il faut être apparenté à la fois aux deux futurs époux, ou, comme on dit en lonkundo, être *mbóléranó*. Actuellement, comme, à cause des pérégrinations des indigènes, les ndonga possédant ces qualités sont rares dans les centres, et souvent complètement introuvables, force a été d'adapter à ces circonstances la loi ancestrale. De là s'est introduite l'évolution qui consiste à prendre comme *ndonga*, dans ces circonstances critiques, un homme reconnu généralement comme intègre, ayant toutes les raisons d'être impartial et intéressé à la stabilité du mariage. Ainsi trouve-t-on souvent des catéchistes en chef qui en assument les fonctions et les responsabilités.

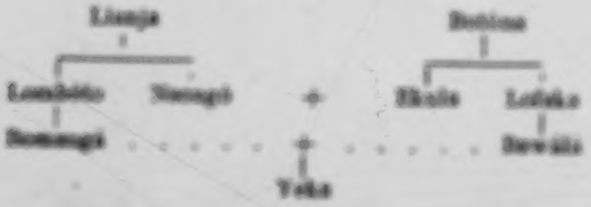
Jadis, et à l'intérieur encore maintenant, lorsque deux jeunes gens s'aiment, mais qu'il ne se trouve personne qui réunisse les qualités requises pour l'exercice de la fonction de *ndonga*, les parents du jeune homme s'opposent au mariage : *Bifímɛ́jɛ́ lúála linko, bifa l'ôkofɛ́ndɛ́jɛ́ bakómbé* = nous ne voulons pas de ce mariage; il n'y a personne pour transmettre les valeurs ». Dans les circonstances ordinaires, pareille éventualité est pratiquement inexistante.

Il appartient au mari de choisir le *ndonga*, qui ensuite est agréé par la femme et ses parents. Si ceux-ci font opposition, le mari le remplace par un autre. Quoique autrefois ce cas ne se présentait guère, pourtant, dans les conditions présentes, on peut le rencontrer.

Une femme peut être *ndonga* aussi bien qu'un homme.

Les fonctions sont héréditaires. Au décès du *ndonga*, son fils, sa fille, son frère, même sa femme, si elle reste dans le clan de son mari défunt, lui succèdent dans ses devoirs et droits.

De même, en son absence, ou s'il est empêché, il peut être remplacé par eux. Ainsi, par exemple :



Yoka est un *ndonga* qualifié pour le mariage d'Ekolo et Nsongé. Mais comme il est encore trop jeune pour en exercer les fonctions, son père Bomangá peut en tout droit le remplacer entre-temps.

Pour le même mariage il peut y avoir plusieurs *ndonga*. Tous doivent remplir les conditions requises et ont les mêmes devoirs et droits. Il n'est pourtant pas nécessaire qu'ils soient tous présents à chaque intervention requise par le droit : un seul, et n'importe lequel suffit. Leurs témoignages se valent en théorie. Pourtant le premier désigné est connu comme *ndonga éé nkina*, ou *ndonga* principal. S'il est possible de découvrir deux [illegible], on doit les prendre tous deux comme *ndonga*; sinon on peut se contenter du seul individu trouvable.

Pour ses services, le *ndonga* a droit à une rémunération de la part de chacune des parties contractantes.

Au versement du *ndonga* (*cfr.* plus loin) la famille de la femme lui donne un *bokómba* [illegible], une poule ou un poisson *bolóóa*. C'est un présent qui porte le nom générique de *liónja* (verbe *bonjola*). Toutefois, il est obligatoire.

De même, lors du paiement du walo, avant toute autre chose, la famille de la femme lui présente des vivres d'origine animale (*bofambo*), particulièrement un *bokómba*, une poule ou un bolóóa, plus des bananes, le tout désigné par le terme général de *bokómba l'osanda* (*).

Enfin, après le versement du walo, la famille du mari lui remet deux anneaux de cuivre, et la famille de la femme en fait autant. Si le montant de la dot est très élevé, on va même jusqu'à cinq anneaux. Cette dernière rémunération s'appelle *bompángá*. Le sens propre de ce mot est un animal domestique (chien ou chèvre) donné en paiement. Actuellement on donne sa contre-valeur en anneaux de cuivre (*longa*, pl. *balonga*); mais le nom ancien est resté.

(*) *Bosanda* est une espèce de bananes, mais on donne n'importe quelle sorte. D'où, à présent, on commence à parler aussi de *bokómba la* [illegible] (ou [illegible]). On ajoute : [illegible] (poule et bananes).

Pour toutes ces rémunérations on emploie le terme générique : *lémbela ndonga* = préparer pour le *ndonga*, et le substantif : *balémbo* (sing. *ilémbo*), comme s'il s'agissait d'aliments. Cela concorde bien avec le *bolémba* et les bananes, etc., mais est tout de même usité pour les cuivres. Nous trouvons-nous devant une extension de la signification? Ou faudrait-il conclure qu'au temps jadis la rémunération en question consistait uniquement en vivres?

S'il y a plusieurs *ndonga*, leur rémunération n'en est point augmentée; elle est unique, et ils n'ont qu'à se la partager.

Dans la pratique assistent encore au paiement de la dot les chefs de clan ou de famille, hommes influents qui ont pouvoir de juger les différends. Ils réclament au *ndonga* leur part de la rémunération. Selon le dicton, — en langage archaïque, — *bolé wä ndonga nd'é dombé* = la force (littéralement la médecine) du *ndonga* réside chez les juges. Ce n'est pas parce que les juges comme tels ont droit ou pouvoir d'intervenir dans les palabres matrimoniales. Mais ils sont autant de témoins supplémentaires. Le jour où surgira un différend à propos de la dot, spécialement à l'occasion du divorce, le *ndonga* pourra les convoquer pour l'aider à rafraîchir sa mémoire et ainsi lui éviter des embarras. Car il peut très bien se faire qu'après plusieurs années le témoin officiel n'a plus qu'une souvenance approximative et vague des valeurs versées. Si les juges ne reçoivent rien, ils se récuseront au moment critique. Il est donc de politique intelligente d'acquiescer à leur désir, quoique, à strictement parler, ils ne puissent invoquer aucun droit véritable.

Actuellement, le Gouvernement colonial, ayant constitué des chefferies et nommé des chefs, ceux-ci se sont vu attribuer le droit d'intervenir d'office comme *ndonga* dans les affaires matrimoniales; ou du moins ont-ils profité des pouvoirs leur concédés pour ce faire. Généralement, ils convoquent en même temps les juges de la chefferie et l'affaire est inscrite tant bien que mal dans le registre des jugements. L'assistance du chef comme témoin peut avoir de la valeur, puisqu'il ajoute son témoignage et que le montant dotal est inscrit. Mais, d'autre part, elle a l'inconvénient d'introduire le chef dans des affaires qui, somme toute, ne le regardent point. Sans parler des cas où lui-même ou des parents à lui sont intéressés dans la palabre. S'il se contentait d'être témoin passif et d'inscrire l'acte des transactions, la chose serait parfaite.

Etymologiquement, il est probable que le mot *ndonge* dérive du radical verbal : *long*, intrans. *longam* = être en règle, être arrangé; trans. *longy* = arranger, rendre comme il faut. Outre le mot *ndonga*, employé à l'Ouest de la Loilaka, nous trouvons chez les Boángi et les Boíyá (comme chez les Elángá) : *bokólo*, et chez les Injɔ́lɔ́ : *nkombi*. Ce dernier mot pourrait être le même que son homonyme, signifiant espion, du verbe *kombe*, espionner; le premier est peut-être une extension du sens du mot *bokólo* = engagement (*).

ARTICLE III. — LES FIANÇAILLES.

§ 1. Versement de l'ikulá.

Les fiançailles débutent par le premier versement d'une valeur dotale, qui anciennement était une flèche, et, de là, s'appelle *likulá* ou *ikulá*. Si le prétendant était très riche, il donnait parfois un couteau *ingóndá* ou même *empótę*. Un plus pauvre pouvait se contenter d'un simple manche de flèche (bompako). A présent on donne un ou deux anneaux de cuivre. Mais le nom primitif de ce paiement a toujours été conservé.

S'étant rendus chez le père de la future, le prétendant,

(*) Notons, en passant, qu'un ndonga est aussi requis pour le [illegible] ou contrat d'amitié et d'entr'aide. (Cfr. chap. I, 2e partie, art. III.)

son père (ou le remplaçant), le (les) *ndonga*, et souvent d'autres parents encore, s'asseyent d'un côté du *loánjá* (cour devant l'habitation), après l'échange des marques usuelles de politesse. La jeune fille et les représentants de sa parenté s'asseyent du côté opposé. Comme dans toute affaire qu'un Nkundó a à arranger, l'hôte commence par s'informer du motif de la visite. Le père du jeune homme répond : « Nous venons demander ta fille pour mon fils. » — « Comment la demandez-vous? » — « Nous la demandons en mariage. » De ces pourparlers préliminaires on dit simplement : *ésama nsango* = se demander réciproquement des nouvelles.

Ensuite le père de la jeune fille questionne : « Qui va transmettre la *linkɔ* (banane) ou le *bonyáku* (banane encore imparfaitement mûre), c'est-à-dire les cadeaux? ». Par cette expression figurée, il s'enquiert de la personne proposée comme *ndonga*. Le père du jeune homme lui répond : un tel et un tel. Ceux-ci ayant été agréés, le père de la fiancée fait apporter des bananes, du poisson fumé, parfois des poules, que le témoin transmet au groupe du futur.

Après l'acceptation des présents, le *ndonga* fixe la flèche en terre, devant les parents de la femme. D'où la locution, toujours très en vogue, de *-sanya ikulá*, ou *-bakya likulá* = planter la flèche; quoique, à présent, le *ndonga* dépose les anneaux.

§ 6. Consentement.

Invitée par ses parents ou par le *ndonga*, ou bien de sa propre initiative, — selon les dispositions personnelles, — la jeune fille arrache la flèche, ou ramasse les anneaux, et les remet à son père. C'est la façon d'exprimer son consentement aux fiançailles proposées.

Par sa promptitude ou sa nonchalance, voire la manière récalcitrante dont elle exécute ce geste, elle manifeste les sentiments qui l'animent. En règle générale elle agit vivement. Comme nous l'avons expliqué, l'union a été préparée depuis quelque temps déjà, et la jeune fille nkundó se glorifie d'être l'objet de l'amour d'un homme et d'avoir un mari. Pourtant, il se présente des cas où la fille, surtout si elle est encore jeune, se fait presser avant de se décider. C'est qu'intérieurement elle n'est pas enthousiaste de ce mariage. Mais, finalement, elle s'incline devant le désir paternel, préférant une union contre son gré que s'exposer à des tracasseries plus ou moins graves de la part de sa famille.

Il est évident qu'ici nous rencontrons toute l'échelle des variations d'après les tempéraments individuels et les circonstances. Un *refus* catégorique doit certainement être très rare. Ce serait le fait d'une femme particulièrement énergique. Mais celle-ci se serait retirée depuis longtemps déjà, sans laisser les choses arriver à cette extrémité.

Plus fréquent est le cas d'une femme qui se soumet à la cérémonie en regimbant et à contre-cœur. Non seulement faut-il insister et la presser, mais sa mine renfrognée exprime son mécontentement. Elle prend les objets d'un geste apathique, tourne le dos à son père et laisse tomber les valeurs par derrière, sans même le regarder. Personne dans l'assistance ne se trompe sur la portée de ces gestes. Aussi les membres de la famille et les notables présents ne manquent-ils pas d'attirer l'attention du père sur la gravité de la situation. Ils tâchent de le faire changer d'avis et de le dissuader d'accepter la dot. A cette fin ils lui mettent sous les yeux les conséquences de son obstination : à la première occasion favorable, la femme prendra la fuite; d'où palabres (et autrefois guerre, souvent), emprisonnement, tracas divers et finalement restitution de la dot pour divorce. Parfois ils réussissent; d'autres fois toute la sagesse et toute l'éloquence restent vaines : la cupidité, la nécessité d'obtenir les moyens pour payer la dot pour une épouse (personnelle ou destinée à un fils, frère, etc.) et le profit qu'il escompte de l'alliance imposent silence à tous les autres sentiments. Ici encore, tout dépend des dispositions individuelles. Actuellement, l'extension de la liberté par la colonisation rend les cas moins fréquents. Pour les raisons indiquées, ils se produisent pourtant encore. Mais le plus souvent, la cérémonie se déroule de façon normale. Aussi longtemps qu'elle n'a pas eu lieu, le versement de la dot ne continue point. C'est assez indiquer l'importance que le droit nkundó y attache, et combien ce droit tient à l'expression publique et officielle, bien que non exprimée par paroles, mais seulement impliquée dans un acte spécial et significatif, du consentement de la femme au mariage proposé. Les faits contraires sont de pures infractions.

Dans les cas normaux, le père accepte la flèche ou les anneaux des mains de sa fille, et ainsi établit son consentement aux fiançailles et, par conséquent, au mariage.

L'expression du consentement diffère entièrement de ce que nous venons de décrire dans les autres formes de mariage que nous étudierons plus loin (chap. III et IV).

§ 4. Fuite.

Même avant l'arrivée des Européens il se présentait des cas où deux amants persistaient, malgré l'opposition des parents de la femme, à vouloir se marier. Les parents refusant d'accepter l'ikulá, les fiancés arrangeaient une occasion favorable pour fuir. La femme tâchait de gagner à sa cause son frère, qui par amour fraternel acceptait d'ordinaire la flèche des mains du solonga. Ou bien celui-ci la fixait en cachette dans le toit de la maison des parents de la femme en fuite. Plus tard, l'union de leur fille tenant bien et le gendre les ayant amadoués par sa bonne conduite à leur égard (cadeaux, manifestations de respect, etc.), ils ne refusaient plus leur consentement. Ensuite les versements continuaient de façon normale.

§ 4. Départ de la fiancée

Par le fait du versement de l'íkulá, la femme est liée, au moins partiellement, à son mari (bómé). C'est l'application de l'axiome déjà cité au chapitre précédent, IIe partie, art. III, § 2, B : « Les fruits du boímbo qui se trouvent encore sous l'arbre n'appartiennent à personne. » Tant qu'une *jeune fille* est chez ses parents elle n'est liée à aucun homme. Mais dès que quelqu'un a versé l'íkulá, elle est « ramassée » et appartient à un mari.

Aussi quitte-t-elle ses parents pour suivre son mari (¹), soit immédiatement, soit après quelques jours. Le père peut, en effet, congédier son gendre et promettre de lui conduire sa fille, personnellement, ou en déléguant quelqu'un. Entre-temps, il réunit quelques petites provisions. Lorsque la fiancée arrive chez son *futur*, ce sont des acclamations de joie chez tous les habitants du village, accourus aux premiers cris : « *bompáka wá Sóngólé abyá* : la fiancée de X... est arrivée ».

Ce n'est qu'à partir de cet instant que ce terme de *bompáka* est employé (²). N'est-ce pas par le versement de l'íkulá que la femme devient *bompáka*? Je l'avais toujours compris ainsi. Et ce me semblait logique. Mais dans une discussion sur ce sujet, mes contradicteurs indigènes me mirent en tort sur toute la ligne. Pas moyen de leur faire admettre que si une femme est nommée *bompáka* à son arrivée dans le clan de son fiancé, c'est qu'elle l'était devenue effectivement de par le versement officiel de l'íkulá et qu'il s'agit uniquement d'une façon de parler. « Non, disent-ils, tant que la *femme* n'a pas rejoint son mari elle n'est pas *bompáka*. » — « Mais, enfin, il n'y a

---

(¹) Comme nous verrons dans la suite (chap. IV et chap. VIII), ceci n'était que rarement possible aux temps précoloniaux. À présent c'est devenu la pratique courante, à cause des changements produits, que nous mentionnerons aux endroits cités.

(²) Ce mot signifie aussi [illegible]. Les fiancés disent [illegible] ou [illegible].

qu'une différence tout accidentelle : de toute façon, la chose essentielle est le versement de l'ikulá. » — « Il est vrai que la femme appartient à l'époux dès le paiement de l'ikulá, mais pourtant elle ne porte pas encore le nom de *bompáka*. Elle ne le reçoit que lorsqu'elle quitte ses parents et se rend chez son mari. » — « Mais pourquoi cela? » — « Parce que, sinon, le fiancé s'exposerait à la risée et à la moquerie. Supposons qu'après l'ikulá il rentre chez lui, seul. Sa future le rejoindra dans quelques jours. Il annonce la grande nouvelle à ses amis. Puis, le jour fixé, la promise ne paraît point. Quelle honte! Au contraire, si la chose est gardée secrète jusqu'au moment où il n'y a plus de changement à craindre, il n'y a que des cris d'allégresse. »

D'autre part, il est utile de rapprocher de ces données ce fait incontestable que le seul paiement de la dot réalise très rarement, dans les lois et coutumes des différentes peuplades congolaises, le mariage; il s'y ajoute presque toujours une autre cérémonie, qui est, dans la majorité des cas, la tradition de la femme. Ces données nous inclinent à considérer l'explication des Nkundó comme une explication de convenance, qui indique l'intérêt pratique de la règle, mais ne la justifie pas. En effet, elle ne rend pas compte de la raison pour laquelle la femme ne devient pas *bompáka* dès le paiement de fiançailles. D'autre part, il est indéniable qu'elle ne reçoit ce nom qu'à partir du moment où elle arrive chez son époux. Il est possible que les indigènes aient oublié ou perdent de vue la raison profonde de ce phénomène. L'explication qui concorde le mieux avec les faits positifs est que l'élément essentiel des fiançailles ne consiste pas dans le paiement de l'ikulá, mais dans l'acte par lequel la femme quitte sa famille et rejoint son fiancé (*).

(*) Je remercie vivement M. le Procureur Général A. Sohier d'avoir attiré mon attention sur la comparaison avec le droit et la pratique d'autres peuplades congolaises et de m'avoir fait approfondir la base juridique de cette question.

§ 5. Arrivée de la fiancée chez son mari.

Comme je l'ai dit, elle est accueillie dans le clan de son mari par les acclamations universelles de la population enthousiaste.

D'après les cas, le futur la reçoit et l'introduit chez lui ou chez ses parents. Ceux-ci, attendant son arrivée, sont réunis avec leurs filles, sœurs, et diverses parentes et alliées. Le fiancé leur présente sa choisie. On la salue de la façon usuelle : « w'ôm; otikila; osyá; otéfoswa, etc. », selon le degré de leur intimité antérieure.

Ensuite on procède à la tradition de cadeaux à la fiancée. D'abord les beaux-parents lui offrent un présent de bienvenue, dénommé bosambelo, qui, littéralement, se traduit par : « poignée de mains » et qui consiste en un anneau ou un couteau. Puis ils lui donnent la main (1). A leur suite, tous les parents et alliés doivent en faire de même. Généralement les hommes remettent un anneau et les femmes un couteau. Ces objets sont considérés comme parties de la dot et la femme les envoie à sa famille. Les parents plus éloignés satisfont à leur devoir en apportant de la viande ou du poisson et actuellement aussi de l'argent ou quelque menu cadeau, qui n'est pas englobé dans la dot.

De son côté, le mari lui offre en présent un petit couteau, quelques (5) flèches (aux temps de l'État Indépendant un faisceau de nsapo = mitako = fils de cuivre, et à présent, par exemple, 5 ou 10 fr.). Ces présents du mari ne sont pas bosambelo, car il ne donne pas la main à sa fiancée, mais yêkola (salutation), et ne font pas partie de la dot. Ils peuvent être envoyés par la femme à ses parents.

Si le mari n'a pas encore de maison ni de cultures propres, — cas qui était très fréquent autrefois — (1), les fiancés habitent provisoirement dans la case des parents, et la femme va chercher la nourriture aux champs de sa belle-mère et la prépare au foyer de celle-ci, jusqu'à ce que le jeune homme ait construit sa case et établi ses cultures à lui.

---

(1) Les Nkundó se donnent la main en signe d'amitié. C'est une sorte de salutation. Ils ne se [illegible] pas la main comme les Européens, mais posent doucement l'une sur l'autre, puis la retirent en frottant légèrement.

Actuellement il n'arrive plus qu'un jeune homme qui veut prendre femme n'ait pas encore sa propre maison. Dès l'époque de la puberté le désir de la liberté pousse les jeunes gens à abandonner le toit paternel et à se construire leur case personnelle, où ils peuvent habiter seuls, ou avec l'un ou l'autre compagnon, et jouir de la liberté.

§ 6. Vie des fiancés.

La *bompáka* habite chez son mari, y va causer et dormir avec lui. Les trois ou quatre premières journées elle ne travaille pas, à moins qu'elle ne soit d'une nature très active. Dans la suite elle s'occupe de tous les travaux du ménage, prépare le repas au foyer et sous la surveillance de sa belle-mère. Ce n'est qu'après quelques semaines, lorsqu'elle s'est habituée à son nouveau genre de vie et qu'elle s'est initiée aux usages de sa nouvelle famille, qu'elle a ses propres installations. Dès cet instant elle habite définitivement chez son fiancé.

De chez ses parents elle est venue les mains vides, sans ustensiles quelconques. Elle trouve tout dans sa nouvelle résidence. Ses belle-mère, belles-sœurs lui donnent ce dont elle a besoin : paniers, pots, calebasses, nattes, mortiers, pilons, poules même.

Il appert de tout ce qui précède qu'il n'y a ni rites, ni cérémonies spéciales, ni accoutrements propres.

La *bompáka* est déjà considérée comme épouse; elle en à tous les droits et devoirs : cohabitation, soins du ménage, etc. Tout ce qu'elle produit, tout ce qu'elle gagne appartient à son mari. Sa famille à elle n'a plus aucun droit sur les fruits de son activité. Si après le versement de l'ikulá et avant tout paiement ultérieur le mari découvre des relations de sa fiancée avec un autre homme, celui-ci est considéré comme adultère et devient passible des sanctions qui répriment cette infraction. L'indemnité à payer est d'autant plus forte que la femme est plus âgée, et monte de cinq à dix anneaux (cf. chap. VI, art. VIII).

---

(1) Il n'y avait pratiquement que les orphelins qui avaient leurs maisons et cultures propres. Nous excluons évidemment des hommes déjà mariés précédemment.

En concordance logique avec ce qui précède, le fiancé ne porte pas de nom spécifique. Puisque de fait il est mari, on le nomme ainsi (bóme).

Pendant cette période, les fiancés apprennent à se connaître physiquement et moralement (relations sexuelles, travail, tempérament, qualités, défauts). On l'exprime par la locution figurée : *bakóngola mpoké* — ils essaient le pot, dont voici l'explication : avant d'employer un pot (*mpoké*) nouveau, on le pose sur l'étagère au-dessus du feu et le laisse là durant quelques jours, afin qu'il durcisse et devienne résistant à la chaleur. S'il se fêle, c'est qu'il ne convient pas à la préparation des aliments; sinon on peut y bouillir sans crainte. C'est ce qu'on nomme : *ikóngola mpoké*. De là ce terme est transféré à la période d'essai des nouveaux mariés. C'est donc une sorte de noviciat, et le terme français qui peut traduire avec la meilleure approximation possible cette situation est bien « fiançailles, fiancés ».

Cette première période peut durer plusieurs mois. Entretemps le mari cherche les valeurs nécessaires au versement du ndanga.

§ 9. Le ndanga.

Le ndanga pour le mariage était originairement le paiement d'un couteau (d'où l'on entend encore le nommer :

ifakó = couteau), remplacé ensuite par 2 à 5 anneaux de cuivre, et maintenant par 5 à 10 et davantage.

Actuellement, *ikulá* et *ndanga* tendent à se fondre, étant devenus tous deux un paiement d'anneaux, et ils sont fréquemment donnés conjointement et en même temps, sans les distinguer.

Dans les grandes lignes, la remise du *ndanga* suit la même marche que le versement de l'*ikulá*. Elle se fait seulement avec plus de solennité. Le jeune homme et son père (ou le remplaçant de celui-ci), accompagnés du *ndonga* et souvent de quelques proches — en premier lieu la mère, — se rendent chez les parents de la fiancée, qui les reçoivent avec les marques usuelles de politesse et d'affection. Ils s'asseyent d'un côté du *loánjá*, la famille de la femme se plaçant au côté opposé. Tout d'abord, ceux-ci demandent des nouvelles, c'est-à-dire s'informent du but de la visite. Le père du jeune homme répond : « nous sommes venus verser le *ndanga* = *toóy'ókákya ndanga* (ou *ifakó*), ce qui, littéralement, signifie : nous sommes venus accrocher le *ndanga* (ou le couteau). Ensuite le beau-père donne au *ndonga* un cadeau de bienvenue (*lionja*). C'est un *bokómba* fumé, ou un ou deux poissons *bolía*, ou une poule; on y ajoute un régime de bananes.

Le fiancé et sa famille reçoivent, par exemple, une chèvre, un chien, quelques poules, qui sont considérés comme faisant partie du *nkomí* (cfr. plus loin, art. VII), et de la viande, du poisson fumé, quelques régimes de bananes, dont il disposera avec sa femme et sa famille, et qui ne sont pas considérés comme partie du *nkomí*, mais constituent un simple cadeau.

Ensuite on procède à la remise des valeurs du *ndanga*, qui se fait obligatoirement par l'intermédiaire du *ndonga*, qui a dû également transmettre les cadeaux, etc. Il n'est pas requis que la fiancée intervienne ici, ni même qu'elle soit présente.

Il arrive que lors du versement du *ndanga* on réclame déjà les cadeaux = *beéngo*, qui, en théorie, ne devraient être demandés qu'à l'occasion du paiement suivant (cfr. plus loin, art. VI). Parfois le mari satisfait à ces exigences. D'autres fois il se contente de donner un gage (*wẹ̀kọ*). Il pourrait également débouter les parents cupides. Mais comme il tient trop à la femme, il répond sans murmures à leurs désirs.

Quel est le but et la signification du *ndanga*? Les indigènes répondent : on donne le *ndanga*, afin que la fille ne se brûle au feu = *bọ̀n'ókisó áfóy'ólongola tsá*. » C'est un signe que le fiancé assume la responsabilité de tout accident (représenté par le terme général de brûlure) qui pourrait arriver à la fiancée. Dans les mains de la femme et de sa famille, il constitue une preuve publique et officielle contre le mari (1). Conséquemment, c'est aussi une garantie pour eux de ce que le mari prendra soin de leur enfant et la traitera convenablement.

Mais, alors, quelle est la raison d'être de l'*ikulá* ? Les Nkundó répondent : « L'*ikulá* constitue une preuve, un signe de ce que la femme appartient à un tel. »

Pratiquement, il n'y a donc guère de différence entre les motifs des deux versements. De fait, leurs conséquences sont identiques, tant pour ce qui est des devoirs et droits des fiancés, que pour ce qui regarde l'indemnité à payer le cas échéant.

Ainsi, si une femme s'enfuit avec son amant sans que celui-ci ait donné l'*ikulá*, et qu'il lui arrive quelque accident, la famille ne peut rien réclamer, car elle ne sait rien prouver. Autrefois ce cas était hypothétique; actuellement on peut le rencontrer, mais dans les milieux indigènes il reste tout à fait exceptionnel.

Cependant, une nuance se constate dans l'explication que donnent les indigènes de ces deux paiements.

---

(1) D'où, probablement, l'origine du mot. Radical : *langa* = aimer, vouloir, donc accepter. Cfr. en lokonda : *iolanga*.

L'*ikulá* serait une simple preuve; le *ndanga*, au contraire, serait la reconnaissance et l'acceptation des responsabilités : le fiancé se frappe la poitrine (*éyakóndela ntólé*), comme on dit.

Nous avons dit que *ikulá* et *ndanga* sont en voie de se fondre. Ceci est probablement dû à la circonstance que tous deux se font actuellement sous forme d'anneaux de cuivre ou de laiton. Mais à lui seul ce fait ne suffit nullement à fournir une explication adéquate, si la différence indiquée est fondamentale. Une petite nuance sans conséquences pratiques me semble insuffisante pour expliquer ces deux paiements, étant donné surtout qu'entre l'un et l'autre un assez grand laps de temps pouvait jadis s'écouler.

Aussi, nous pouvons nous demander si l'on ne pourrait pas trouver l'indice d'une différence plus profonde dans l'hypothèse d'une coutume primitive.

Par exemple, l'*ikulá* aurait été le paiement d'une demande en mariage, comparable à nos fiançailles d'Europe. Ensuite, des palabres sans issue naissant de cette situation, on aurait imaginé un système qui permettrait désormais, non d'éviter les différends, mais de les résoudre selon des règles juridiques propres et équitables. Ce système serait le paiement d'un *ndanga*.

Cette explication est possible, mais peu probable. La loi indigène, qui, dans tous les domaines, se montre si raisonnable, si prudente et sage, si adaptée aux circonstances, aurait-elle laissé la voie libre à pareille source de difficultés dans une matière si importante ? La chose est presque inadmissible pour quiconque est un peu accoutumé à la mentalité des Nkundó. Et puis, la confusion moderne de l'*ikulá* et du *ndanga* insinue qu'un des deux fait double emploi. Or, la conséquence en aurait été d'unir les deux paiements et de leur assigner un but identique, ou plutôt — conformément à la pratique — de transférer à l'*ikulá* la signification de gage, qui, théoriquement, est propre au *ndanga*. L'existence d'un seul paiement de fiançailles s'accorderait bien mieux de la présente hypothèse que ne le fait l'existence de deux versements distincts, indépendants et séparés dans le temps. Ajoutons encore que l'acceptation d'une responsabilité se fait toujours et dans toute circonstance par la tradition d'un *ndanga*.

Aussi peut-on imaginer une seconde hypothèse qui paraît plus conforme à la réalité. Originairement, l'*ikulá* aurait été un paiement de fiançailles, comme dans la première hypothèse, mais la jeune fille n'aurait pas accompagné son mari chez lui : elle devait rester chez ses parents, probablement avec permission au fiancé de la visiter et d'avoir des rapports avec elle, à quoi, nous l'avons vu au chapitre précédent, la loi indigène ne s'oppose pas. Le désir mutuel de cohabitation ne pouvant patienter pendant le laps de temps souvent long qui était requis pour l'arrangement du versement de la dot proprement dite, les parents de la fille auraient donné à leur enfant la permission de suivre l'inclination de son cœur, ce qui, répétons-le, ne soulevait que des difficultés d'ordre juridique, « civil ». Or, pour que le fiancé pût prendre chez lui sa future, il devait d'abord tranquilliser les parents et les libérer de leur responsabilité, en l'assumant lui-même d'une façon *officielle*, c'est-à-dire en donnant une preuve de sa volonté de supporter toutes les conséquences de son acte. Un gage pareil s'appelle en lonkundó : *ndanga*. Plus tard, on aurait encore avancé la date du début de la cohabitation, en le permettant dès l'*ikulá*. De ce fait, la raison d'être du *ndanga* aurait été, en pratique, *transférée* à l'*ikulá*, et le *ndanga* aurait été conservé comme simple paiement imposé par la coutume, jusqu'au jour où le bouleversement des coutumes anciennes a incité les Nkundó à tirer les conséquences logiques des faits, en fondant les deux paiements en un seul. Ceci est encore confirmé par le fait que l'appellation même d'*ikulá* tend à disparaître pour faire place à l'unique terme de ndonga. Enfin, pour faire concorder cette hypothèse avec les données du § 4 concernant le terme de bompáka, nous devons supposer qu'autrefois le transfert de la fiancée de sa famille chez son mari n'avait lieu qu'après le ndonga et par conséquent qu'elle ne devenait bompáka qu'à ce moment.

§ 6. Rupture des fiançailles.

La rupture des fiançailles ne comporte pas de grandes difficultés de droit. Tant l'homme que la femme sont libres de rompre s'ils trouvent que leurs caractères ne s'accordent pas, ou que leur union ne promet pas d'être heureuse, ou pour tout autre motif. Il existe pourtant quelques stipulations d'ordre plutôt pratique.

Le jeune homme répudiant sa fiancée la remet entre les mains du *ndonga*, qui la renvoie dans sa famille.

La femme ne voulant plus continuer la vie commune quitte son fiancé, en l'avertissant ou non, et, passant par le *ndonga* (actuellement même parfois sans voir ce dernier, ce qui doit être considéré comme une transgression de la règle), rentre chez ses parents.

Dans la pratique, elle peut aussi se rendre directement chez un autre homme. Ceci était, jadis, dangereux, parce que pouvant engendrer une guerre, et était considéré comme contraire à la loi. A présent, la liberté plus grande produite par la colonisation a fait cesser les dangers inhérents à cette façon d'agir. Aussi cette absence de procédure est-elle devenue plus fréquente et commence même à être reconnue normale.

En tout cas, même si la femme a omis de passer par le *ndonga*, celui-ci est envoyé par le fiancé pour examiner la situation et pour réclamer la restitution des versements déjà exécutés.

Car, à proprement parler, la rupture des fiançailles consiste dans la restitution de l'*ikulá-ndonga*, par l'entremise du *ndonga*. Mais on en déduit les cadeaux donnés par la famille de la femme, comme nous l'expliquerons plus amplement au chapitre sur le Divorce. Tout doit être intégralement restitué. La famille de la femme ne peut même pas invoquer le travail fait par leur fille au profit du mari.

A présent toutefois, la coutume entre en vogue de partager l'excédent du montant de la dot sur celui du ndómi (7). Les parents de la femme exigent une certaine indemnisation parce qu'ils considèrent le mari comme ayant perdu les droits à ses valeurs; et s'ils ne les lui retiennent pas entièrement, c'est à cause du respect et de la gêne qu'ils ressentent à l'égard du ndonga, apparenté au fiancé comme à eux-mêmes.

Ce changement de la loi ancestrale, les indigènes tâchent de le motiver comme suit :

1° Les fiançailles sont destinées à s'épanouir en mariage régulier et n'ont de valeur que sous cet aspect. Le droit du fiancé sur l'activité de la femme n'est fondé que sur la nature de cet état, préparation directe à la vie matrimoniale. Si donc l'union ne se parachève pas, le fiancé s'est enrichi aux dépens de ses beaux-parents.

2° La rupture fait perdre aux parents l'espérance légitime et régulière d'une dot intégrale; cette perte est considérée par eux comme *lucrum cessans*.

Pourtant, cette justification indigène ne suffit pas à expliquer l'origine de ce changement. Car :

1° Vraisemblablement les Nkundó ont simplement imité la pratique d'autres populations congolaises qu'ils ont appris à connaître depuis la colonisation, et leur explication n'est qu'une explication de convenance.

2° Les motifs invoqués en faveur du changement ne sont pas neufs; ils valaient aussi autrefois, et tels quels et en eux-mêmes ils sont donc insuffisants.

3° Si nous reprenons le motif du bénéfice retiré par le fiancé de l'activité de la femme, nous trouvons que le raisonnement repose sur un sophisme. Car la loi nkundó reconnaît, d'un côté, la légitimité de ce bénéfice et, de l'autre, le droit pour chacune des parties de rompre les fiançailles. Le seul fait de la rupture ne peut donc donner lieu à indemnisation, puisqu'il est inadmissible qu'on soit puni pour avoir usé d'un droit.

---

(7) Cfr. plus loin, art. VII.

4° Cette objection vaut également pour le second motif invoqué par les Nkundó : la possibilité de la perte de l'espérance est inhérente à l'essence des fiançailles, puisqu'elles réservent la liberté des parties de ne pas réaliser l'union.

Donc, en eux-mêmes, les motifs allégués doivent être rejetés.

Toutefois, il est possible que certaines circonstances modernes ont modifié plus ou moins l'aspect du problème. Ainsi :

1° L'introduction du salariat et du commerce européen a donné aux Noirs une nouvelle notion de richesses. De ce fait, le bénéfice retiré des fiançailles a beaucoup gagné en importance (développement du commerce, richesses plus grandes et plus variées) de sorte que la valeur économique de la femme a augmenté dans des proportions considérables.

En théorie, ces modifications pourraient justifier une certaine indemnisation. En pratique, toutefois, l'évolution économique a fait accroître le montant du paiement de fiançailles, ce qui contrebalance l'augmentation du bénéfice apporté par la femme.

L'indemnisation, pour cause des avantages économiques, aurait en outre l'heureux effet d'empêcher la déviation possible du système vers une exploitation qui consisterait à prendre des fiancées pour le temps où l'on en a besoin pour un travail extraordinaire et à les renvoyer ce travail fini.

A quoi il faut remarquer que si la précaution est bonne en soi, elle n'est pas indiquée dans les circonstances présentes, car les Nkundó ne pensent même pas à pareille déformation des fiançailles.

3° La colonisation a considérablement *renforcé* — voire peut-être introduit — dans l'esprit des indigènes l'idée que les *grâces d'une femme* méritent un salaire. Je pense que cette circonstance a contribué beaucoup plus que les changements économiques à l'origine de la pratique nouvelle; ou, plutôt, que pour justifier celle-ci on s'est surtout basé sur cette idée de l'amour vénal. Or, dans ce cas nous nous trouvons devant un *pretium stupri* de nature à développer la prostitution, donc contraire à la morale et à l'ordre public.

Et autant on doit applaudir aux évolutions normales de la coutume et à son adaptation aux possibilités d'ascension morale et sociale créées par la colonisation, autant devons-nous réagir contre ses déviations, ses égarements, ses déraillements, sa dérive vers l'exploitation des défauts et des vices.

La concordance du droit nkundó suggère une autre objection contre l'innovation. Comme le divorce ne donne lieu à aucune indemnisation, comment approuver celle-ci dans le cas d'une rupture de fiançailles, qui sont un engagement bien moins fort que le mariage lui-même ? Il est bien vrai que les fiançailles nkundó sont presque un mariage, puisqu'elles comportent la cohabitation, *etc.*; néanmoins, elles ne constituent pas un lien aussi étroit que l'union définitive, dont elles sont nettement distinctes. La coutume nouvelle mène logiquement à la conclusion qu'il est préférable de parfaire l'union, de la rendre définitive par le versement de la dot intégrale, pour la rompre ensuite au moyen d'un divorce authentique qui n'entraîne pas ce dommage financier.

Enfin, si l'indemnité pour cause d'augmentation du bénéfice que le fiancé a retiré des fiançailles ne peut pas être condamnée comme injuste en soi, elle l'est bien si elle est considérée comme une pénalité infligée pour la rupture. Car elle est restreinte au fiancé, qu'il y ait de sa part tort ou non. En outre, admettre l'indemnité même quand la rupture est due au fait de la femme est de nature à favoriser les fraudes, une véritable escroquerie de la part de la femme et de ses parents, une espèce de trafic de femmes.

Il est encore évident que les riches (polygames) pâtissent beaucoup moins de l'innovation que les monogames, surtout ceux qui adoptent la monogamie comme principe, plus particulièrement les chrétiens, qui n'admettent pas le divorce. Aussi suis-je d'avis que le désir de défendre la polygamie contre la doctrine des missionnaires n'est pas entièrement étrangère à la transformation de la coutume.

Il appert de toutes ces considérations que la question est fort complexe et qu'il serait préférable de voir la loi ancienne rétablie en honneur.

Si la rupture est due à des torts, la coutume nouvelle, bien que non exempte de dangers sérieux, pourrait pourtant être tolérée, mais l'indemnité devrait frapper exclusivement la partie qui est en faute. En outre, il faudrait des torts graves et que, d'autre part, il ne s'agisse pas d'une indemnité forfaitaire, mais de dommages-intérêts en rapport avec l'importance du dommage et la gravité de la faute. Et ici il faut surtout songer aux cas où la rupture serait accompagnée de procédés qui lui donnent un caractère injurieux ou vexatoire. Et bien que l'appréciation en soit très délicate, on ne peut d'aucune façon omettre de tenir compte de ces éléments.

La conservation de la loi ancienne s'impose toujours, il me semble, lorsque la rupture provient d'un simple changement des sentiments sans faute de part ni d'autre, si le cas se présente. Car il vaut mieux n'innover rien que d'innover trop vite.

ARTICLE IV. — WALO — BOMBULAKU.

Le *walo* ou *bombulaku* est la masse de la « dot » à payer pour un mariage. Entre le versement du *ndonga* et celui du *walo*, des mois, voire des années, peuvent s'écouler. Autrefois, on n'était pas du tout pressé. La seule cause qui faisait raccourcir le délai était le besoin que le père de la femme avait de la dot, afin de se procurer une femme à soi-même, ou à un fils, cousin, etc. Actuellement, pourtant, la surexcitation du désir de richesses, d'un côté, et de l'autre, la possibilité pour les jeunes de quitter leur tribu et leur région pour aller dans les centres chercher les moyens de gagner plus d'argent, de s'habiller plus luxueusement, de satisfaire leur vanité et leur désir de liberté, pour ne pas dire licence ou pire encore, poussent les ayants droit à la dot à réduire le délai du versement du *walo*, sans que l'unique raison qui existait auparavant soit disparue, au contraire. Et comme conséquence de tout cela, dès que le délai devient un peu long au gré du père de la fille, celui-ci va facilement en saisir les chefs établis par l'Administration, qui sont toujours disposés à s'occuper des cas matrimoniaux, tant à cause du bénéfice pécuniaire qu'ils en escomptent, que pour accroître leur prestige en s'ingérant dans un domaine si important, où la loi ancestrale ne leur reconnaît pas le moindre droit d'intervention, pour la simple raison qu'elle ignore capitas et chefs au sens européen.

§ 1. Terminologie.

Le terme *walo* est employé par les Bonkoso, Bongili, Bombwanja, Ionda; *bombulaku*, au contraire, par les Wángatá, Bakáala, Lifumba, Injɔ́lɔ́ et Boángi (et les Elángá de Losanganya). Les Bombomba l'appellent, à l'imitation de leurs voisins, les Ekonda, *elámbela*.

Ce dernier mot pourrait être en rapport avec *-lámba* =

préparer les aliments. Qu'on compare ce que nous avons dit, à l'article II, sur la rémunération des ndongo. L'étymologie de *bombalaka* ne m'apparaît nullement. Toutefois la fortune pour walo.

D'après les règles de l'étymologie nkundó, ce mot peut être en connexion avec un radical *-al*, ou avec un dérivé à sens augmentatif-intensitif *-alol*. Je ne connais aucun exemple actuellement existant du radical simple. Mais nous trouvons des formes dérivées : *alej*, et *alol*, ou, après expulsion du premier l, *-aol*.

-Alej signifie = disposer en couches; par exemple, des œufs dans un panier, des briques dans un four. Le substantif qui en dérive est *jwalo* = couche, et par analogie : rayon d'étagère, et, par extension, ce qu'on met entre les couches pour les protéger, et encore : la doublure d'un vêtement. Il est difficile de rapprocher ici le mot walo en cause.

-Aol existe tant avec un sens augmentatif-intensitif qu'avec un sens *réversif*. Ce dernier donnerait un substantif avec o final haut. Comme dans *jwaló*, de aola *longánjo* = déverser des légumes. Il doit donc être exclu.

Avec les autres sens, ce verbe entre en combinaison avec plusieurs substantifs. D'abord avec walo, dans le sens de faire la chasse au rabat du menu gibier [1]. Ensuite, on l'emploie dans le sens de : rassembler et ramasser les herbes, l'ivraie, les balayures, les cendres. L'action se nomme *jwalo*.

La conclusion la plus naturelle est certainement de mettre le substantif sous discussion en rapport avec -aol dans son dernier sens. Ce serait une allusion à la quantité relativement grande de valeurs déposées. D'ailleurs, l'action de ramasser les ivraies, etc. et celle de ramasser les anneaux, etc. sont pratiquement et physiquement identiques. Pourtant une difficulté s'oppose à cette explication : c'est qu'on ne dit pas -sola walo, mais sola walo, sola bakimbá, tant pour ce versement particulier que [illegible] confondu pour les paiements et présents divers qui sont liés au mariage, tels que les paiements funéraires et les cadeaux à l'occasion du décès (*).

---

[1] On dit aussi *tomba* walo.

En tout état de cause, le terme walo n'a pas la moindre connexion étymologique avec le mot wáli = épouse, ni avec le radical -bal = épouser.

§ 5. Nature des valeurs de walo.

Le walo consiste surtout en anneaux de cuivre ou de laiton. On y ajoute des objets forgés (*bifeko*), comme des lances, des couteaux, des haches. Une partie peut être, actuellement, en simples barres de laiton ou de fer (acier). En outre, on peut donner des chèvres, une femelle équivalant à 5-6 (maintenant 10) anneaux, un bouc à 2-4 (à présent 6-7) bakonga. Une ou plusieurs cloches *elónjá* sont fort prisées.

Le paiement de chaînes en fer ou en cuivre (*bengónyola*), de colliers de diverses sortes de perles, de dents de léopard n'existe pratiquement plus. Autrefois certaines perles avaient une grande valeur, telles les grandes rondes blanc bleuâtre (*lonyóngu*, pl. *nnyóngu*), valant 1 *konga* pièce; les grandes oblongues, cylindriques ou rectangulaires, noirâtres, de 2-3 cm. de diamètre sur 5-10 cm. de longueur (*nkóngé*), valant un esclave ou, actuellement, 20-25 bakonga pièce.

C'est le cuivre qui a la plus grande importance, cuivre rouge (*konga*) ou jaune (*kóngó*). De là, payer la « dot » s'entend souvent exprimer par *ónga la kóngó la konga*.

L'affirmation du R. P. Kaptein, dans *Congo*, 1922, I, pp. 332-343, que les valeurs primitives étaient des *benkata*, des *bingelele* et des *mitako* repose sur une erreur.

(*) Le verbe -sola indique plutôt la quantité d'objets qu'on ramasse et est employé dans beaucoup d'autres combinaisons. Un substantif *ejolé* signifie une grande quantité d'objets (spécialement de poissons).

Les deux premiers genres de valeurs, appelés aussi bendjongo dans certaines tribus, étaient employés uniquement par les Ntómbá du lac Tumba et les Ekonda limitrophes (Bosanga, Balingá, Lonyanyanga, etc.). Les mitako, en lonkundo : *nsoŋgɔ, s. lɔsoŋgɔ*, ne sont pas indigènes ; ils étaient l'unité monétaire introduite par l'État Indépendant.

Le paiement, au moins partiel, en monnaie ou en objets d'origine européenne (étoffes, couvertures, machines à coudre, malles, ustensiles de ménage, etc.) s'introduit lentement et, avant la crise, était déjà fort en honneur entre « gens de Blancs ».

§ 4. Provenance des valeurs.

Le jeune homme obtient les valeurs pour le paiement de la dot de diverses façons. La plus commune et en même temps la plus conforme au statut familial et social des Nkundó est l'emploi des valeurs dotales reçues pour une sœur, tante, nièce, cousine, etc.

S'il n'a pas de parentes (*ekánanyí, bonsána*) ou qu'il n'en reste plus à la dot desquelles il a droit, il peut recevoir de son père une partie ou la totalité du capital dont il a besoin. Les divers membres de sa famille lui procurent qui 2, qui 5, qui 10-20 anneaux qu'ils ont pu épargner sur des dots reçues, ou qu'ils ont touchés comme *belonga* (*Cf.* chap. VI, art. V, § 1), comme rémunération d'une prestation quelconque (travail, jugement de palabres, intervention comme *ndonga*, etc.), comme prix de vente d'animaux, de ruisseaux, d'étangs, comme dédommagement ou en acquit d'une dette quelconque.

C'est bien le plus grand contretemps pour un amoureux que de ne pas trouver toute prête la dot, mais de devoir aller à la quête des valeurs un peu partout. Ces déplacements lui prennent un temps considérable. Car tout cela ne va pas en grande vitesse avec une nervosité à l'européenne. Il ne suffit point d'envoyer une missive à l'oncle X ou au mari de la tante Y, ni même de se présenter chez eux et exposer le but de la visite, pour pouvoir immédiatement repartir avec un cadeau. On le retient pendant des jours et des semaines : « Attends, je vais t'en chercher; reste encore un peu, nous verrons ensuite; il y a si longtemps qu'on ne t'a plus vu, tu ne peux t'en aller si vite, etc. » Très souvent même, le jeune homme a tout intérêt à ne pas quitter ses hôtes; il doit parfois gagner leur bienveillance en rendant quantité de menus services, et même par des prestations plus importantes, comme l'aide au défrichement, à la construction d'une case, à la chasse, etc. Pour des Européens il faudrait une patience d'ange. Mais même aux jeunes indigènes, qui parfois sont relativement excités et nerveux, surtout par le désir de terminer l'affaire dotale, et qui, en tout cas, ne possèdent pas encore le calme des personnes plus âgées chez lesquelles ils se sont rendus, il faut souvent une grande dose de résignation et de persévérance. D'où les proverbes : *bokámo nkáfundólákó bakonga ndé lifaya* = l'hôte ne déterre pas d'anneaux à l'étranger (on enterre souvent les bakonga pour les mieux garder, précaution utile surtout jadis aux temps des bagarres entre villages et des razzias); et *bonsua w'ôkámé nkásingólákó bakonga ndé lokendo* = la bouche d'un enfant ne déroule pas les anneaux en voyage (déroule, c'est-à-dire des pieds de la femme du parent visité).

Il n'existe donc pas de trésor familial spécial dans lequel les divers membres puissent puiser pour se procurer des épouses. Mais comme les dots versées proviennent, en principe, des dots reçues et que, d'autre part, pour toutes les richesses provenant de la famille comme telle (c'est-à-dire non produites par l'activité strictement privée et personnelle d'un membre) les Nkundó admettent une certaine communauté de propriété, on peut dire, dans un sens, que tous les membres de la famille ont un droit solidaire aux richesses communes, mais uniquement dans la mesure de la parenté et conformément à la réglementation imposée par le conseil familial.

Même les membres de la famille qui n'y sont pas obligés en stricte justice, ne se montrent pas réfractaires à donner à leur parent la part qu'ils peuvent lui réserver. Pourtant je connais des cas isolés où l'on refuse l'assistance, soit par avarice, soit par opposition au mariage projeté. Pourtant, il y a là un manquement aux devoirs de parenté, plus ou moins grave d'après les relations entre les personnes en cause (1). Ce refus n'existe pratiquement pas de la part de la famille maternelle. Car celle-ci s'est enrichie par la dot reçue pour la mère du jeune homme, qui, de ce fait, a toujours droit à la dot payée pour une des filles de la nkita de sa mère (nkita = femme acquise au moyen de la dot versée).

Il se rend donc chez son oncle maternel (*nyangompáme* (2), ou chez les Wángatá, Bakáala, Lifumba : nyangóbóka). Celui-ci l'aide toujours, s'il en a tant soit peu les moyens. Le neveu peut même, sous certaines conditions, faire valoir des droits sur le harem de son oncle. Mais il faut bien distinguer les cas. (N'oublions pas que nous parlons d'un jeune homme qui n'a pas déjà reçu d'épouse dans son propre clan.)

1° Le droit de l'oncle prime, s'il n'a qu'une seule femme, même si celle-ci est la nkita de la mère du neveu. Toutefois, si cette femme ne sait vivre en paix avec son mari, et qu'elle tâche toujours de rompre le mariage et de se rendre chez un autre, la famille même du mari peut intervenir pour assigner l'épouse au neveu, si les deux s'aiment. On veut, par là, éviter qu'elle se rende ailleurs : il est préférable qu'elle demeure dans la parenté. En effet, la rupture implique la famille dans un long procès de restitution, source de difficultés nombreuses et cessation de rapport — si l'on peut s'exprimer ainsi — des valeurs dotales.

---

(1) Rappelons la remarque, déjà faite, qu'il faut toujours bien distinguer entre devoir de justice et devoir de parenté, d'amitié, de bienséance, de politesse, de convenance sociale.

(2) Littéralement : mère masculine.

2° Si l'oncle a deux femmes, le neveu ne peut faire valoir de droit que sur celle qui a été acquise au moyen de la dot touchée pour sa propre mère. L'exception citée sous 1° vaut à fortiori ici.

Dans les deux cas cités jusqu'ici, la famille, toutefois, tâche de calmer l'ardeur du neveu, en lui assignant la dot future d'une cousine, et ne cède à ses instances que si aucune autre issue ne se présente.

3° Si l'oncle possède plusieurs femmes (quatre, cinq ou davantage), toutes acquises avec des valeurs étrangères à la dot de sa sœur, mère du neveu, ce dernier a toujours le droit de prendre une de ces femmes.

En toute hypothèse, le neveu est obligé de quitter son clan paternel (*wisé*) et d'entrer dans la famille de sa mère (*bonyangó*). Il n'y est d'ailleurs pas opposé. Car dans la parenté de son père il n'a — par supposition — ni richesse, ni avenir, tandis que chez son oncle il trouve tout ce qu'il lui faut. Il y est considéré comme propre enfant, voire comme *chef* de ses cousins et cousines. Il est leur père (*isé*) et, de ce fait, a la préséance sur eux, et il peut succéder à son oncle comme patriarche de famille. En outre, à la mort de son oncle, il hérite toujours d'une de ses veuves et devient le premier — souvent l'unique — successeur après les frères du défunt (*).

Ces droits valent même si le neveu a des richesses chez lui. Dans ce cas, — rarissime, puisque d'ordinaire il préfère demeurer dans son propre clan, — il ne les exerce pourtant pas si l'oncle n'a que deux ou trois femmes (dont pourtant il peut hériter), ou si d'autres proches parents

---

(*) Ce droit à l'héritage vaut même s'il continue à résider dans son propre clan; auquel cas, pourtant, il lui est impossible de devenir héritier principal ou unique.

sont dans le besoin. Car il manquerait gravement à l'amour familial (*lólá*) et il en serait sévèrement réprimandé.

C'est en considération de tout cela que le neveu (*bɔ́nankíná* = fils de la sœur) exagère parfois ses droits. Là-dessus se basent les proverbes : *nkɔi ákumb'omingɔ́ lokombo* = le léopard prend le propriétaire de la clôture de chasse (c'est-à-dire le chasseur); *bɔ́nankíná éfɔmola nyangoempámá wálí nd'éóko* = le neveu ravit à l'oncle son épouse même sur son propre domaine; *bɔ́nankíná ale ingonja y'ilóko* = le neveu est un bâton au-dessus (de la tête), édition nkundó de l'épée de Damoclès.

Bref, le neveu a droit à l'aide de son oncle maternel, s'il se fixe chez lui, et est adopté par lui. A la mort des oncles il devient chef de famille et héritier. Mais son droit ne vient qu'après celui des frères de l'oncle en question, qui sont ses « mères » aussi. S'il demeure dans son propre clan, il est aidé, peut même obtenir la dot d'une de ses cousines, nées de la *nkíta* de sa mère, et reçoit une part de l'héritage s'il est abondant. Ces droits sont basés sur le fait que l'oncle s'est enrichi grâce aux valeurs lui cédées pour le mariage de sa sœur, par le clan du neveu.

Enfin, si le jeune homme n'a même pas de proches parents, tous étant morts, et que pour une raison quelconque (dissipation, dettes, exploitation du faible par le fort) il n'ait pas de patrimoine, force lui est de se procurer la dot par son travail personnel : sculpture, chasse, pêche, placement de pièges d'éléphants, de trappes, de clôtures de chasse, défrichement, ou, actuellement, travail au service des Blancs. Autrefois il avait encore la ressource de la guerre ou des razzias, qui lui permettaient de se rendre maître de valeurs ou de prisonniers à revendre comme esclaves. La richesse que quelqu'un a ainsi acquise par sa propre industrie s'appelle *baúmbá* (*bakonga*, etc.) *bá mpambɔ́ɔ́kɔ* (littéralement : de force des bras).

§ 4. Montant du walo.

Autrefois le montant moyen d'un walo était de 20 à 30 bikonga, ou leur équivalent, n'importe quel objet entrant dans la composition de la dot pouvant être ramené à une valeur en cuivre, le *nkonga* étant pour ainsi dire l'unité monétaire nkundó.

Actuellement, dans les chefferies avoisinant Flandria, le minimum est de 35-40 anneaux. Chez les Boangi et Injolo, les anneaux étant notablement plus grands et contenant un poids plus élevé de cuivre ou de laiton, le minimum peut être de 20. Ailleurs il atteint un chiffre bien plus élevé.

Généralement, le prix du walo dépasse ce minimum plutôt rare. La moyenne approche de 60 à 80 anneaux. Il est extrêmement rare qu'on atteigne 200 et surtout que ce chiffre soit dépassé (Cfr. des cas ci-dessous.)

Les *différences dans le montant* du walo proviennent surtout de la *richesse relative* des parties contractantes, du prix que le mari attache à sa femme, de la cupidité des parents de celle-ci, du montant de la dot *réclamée* pour la femme qu'ils veulent se procurer avec la dot de leur fille (sœur), sans oublier les cas où, la femme ayant quitté un mari précédent, la nouvelle dot doit servir au remboursement de celui-ci.

Le montant du walo peut encore être augmenté pour satisfaire la vanité de la femme qui veut paraître supérieure à ses compagnes, ou du mari qui désire être reconnu comme très riche (1). Dans une dispute, il n'est pas rare d'entendre une femme se glorifier : « Je ne suis pas une esclave, mon mari a versé pour moi autant et autant; — toi, ton mari ne t'aime pas, ou il est pauvre, il n'a versé qu'autant ».

---

(1) A l'homme qui paie beaucoup pour sa femme on applique l'épithète honorifique de *[illegible]* « puits et champignon. Au puits, tous peuvent trouver de l'eau à satiété; de leur côté, les champignons pullulent. Ainsi beaucoup peuvent profiter des richesses apportées par le gendre.

De la part du mari, il existe une seconde raison : se mieux attacher la femme et les beaux-parents. Plus le walo est élevé, moins il est facile de rompre l'union, car plus il y aura de difficultés pour rembourser. Aussi verse-t-on une plus grande somme pour une femme à laquelle on tient davantage. Les beaux-parents, de leur côté, diront : il faut rester en bonnes relations avec notre gendre, car il est généreux et riche ». Et lorsque survient une palabre dans le ménage et que leur fille veut quitter ou quitte effectivement son mari, ils seront d'autant plus disposés à faire tout ce qui est en leur pouvoir pour aplanir le différend et lui faire réintégrer le domicile conjugal. « Nous avons touché tant de valeurs, diront-ils, où trouverons-nous de quoi rembourser ? »

En cas de remariage de leur fille, les parents peuvent exiger, outre le montant requis pour rembourser le premier mari, un supplément pour eux-mêmes. Pourtant, il n'est pas de mise d'exagérer : on se contente d'une dizaine ou quinzaine d'anneaux. Il s'ensuit que plus un femme a eu de maris successifs, plus sa dot est élevée.

La cause principale qui fait *diminuer* le prix du walo a été toujours et est encore de payer le *bosongo* (*cfr.* art. IX) simultanément avec le walo, ou immédiatement après. Ceci explique le walo minime des cas 21, 25, 27, 28 *b* de la liste qui suit. Actuellement, une nouvelle raison peut se trouver entre chrétiens, lorsque, par exemple, une *frère* veut aider sa sœur veuve à ne pas devoir attendre trop longtemps le remariage (cas 28); ou pour des orphelines nées quelque part dans un centre éloigné, et ainsi plus ou moins délaissées par leur famille (cas 17). Pour donner une idée du montant du walo, je transcris quelques cas de nos cahiers de dots de la Mission de Flandria. Derrière les noms des femmes j'indique la tribu d'origine, puis la valeur *versée* (en *bakonga*), *enfin* l'année du mariage. Les numéros du début marquent les numéros d'ordre dans les cahiers (¹).

N°.	Noms.	Tribu.	Walo payé (bakonga).	Année.
2.	Bolumbu Monica	Bonkoso	100	1929
4.	Ilumbe Sofia	Bombwanja	80	1929
12.	Lokole Maria	Elinga	100	1930
13.	Baata Joanna	Bakaala	60	— (²)
16.	Bonkiki Clara	Elinga (Bosaa)	100	—
17.	Bolumbu Paulina	Bombwanja	56	—
18.	Ilonga Teresa	Bongili	95	—
19.	Lomboto Maria	Bombwanja	100	—
20.	Bawala Catharina	-	85	—
21.	Ilumbe Josephina	-	60	—
22.	Botsinanya Teresa	Bongili	73	—
23.	Bolanga Joanna	Bombwanja	60	—
24.	Eume Amanda	Bongili	168	—
25.	Ifoonge Gerdina	Bombwanja	50	—
27.	Boongi Martha	-	56	—
28.	Nyonyi Loisa	-	50	—
28a.	Loota Joanna	-	90	—
32.	Bolumbu Emilia	-	90	—
33	Iloko Bonifacia	Bakaala	70	—
34.	Bolumbu Maria	Wangata	80	—
36.	Isaka Gerdina	Bombwanja	65	1931

(¹) Ces cahiers sont tenus, parce que, avant de célébrer le mariage religieux, nous exigeons qu'au moins le *walo* ait été payé. Je dois noter que, dans les montants indiqués, il se peut que, dans un cas isolé, le montant de l'*ikulá-ndanga* ait été englobé dans le *walo*.

(²) Idem pour sa sœur : Ijanga Paulina (n° 14).

N°.	Noms.	Tribu.	Walo payé (bakonga).	Année.
38.	Mbanga Clara	Bonkoso	80	1931
38a.	Wetsi Teresa	Bongili	70	—
38b.	Wambela Loisa	Bonkoso	54	—
40.	Efoloko Martha	Bombwanja	67	—
43.	Amba Joanna	Wangata	100	—
44.	Bokanga Catharina	"	40	—
49.	Isia Joanna	Bakaala	70	—
51.	Imbanda Teresa	Bombwanja	60	—
52.	Bolumbu Loisa	Bakaala	72	—
53.	Boalalamba Loisa	Bombwanja	135	1932
62.	Ilonga Maria	"	90	—

A titre de comparaison, voici quelques autres exemples pris dans le même registre :

1. Cas de dots avec d'autres valeurs :

8.	Eambela Joanna	Elinga	15 h. + 1800 fr.	1929
30	Mbakako Bonifacia	Bonkoso	59 h. + 250 fr.	1930
35.	Nsombe Joanna	Bombwanja	33 h. + 1250 fr.	1931
42.	Mboyo Loisa	Injolo	60 h. + 300 fr.	—

2. Cas de tribus plus éloignées :

11.	Yonjwa Clara	Boangi	56	1930
5.	Njou Josephina	Elinga-Bonyanga	68	1929
7.	Nsombe Henrica	"	54	—
31.	Boyamba Bonifacia	"	75	1930
15.	Efanga Martha	Ionda	50	—
38a'.	Oyasengamda Martha	Boangi	50	1931
38a".	Bokuta Paulina	Injolo	40	—
38a"'	Nsombola Paulina	Boangi	50	—
48.	Bonguló Martha	Elinga-Ionda	80	—

Les cas des Ngǫmbę et des Ekonda ont été omis.

Dans le cahier II, sur 68 cas, seulement 3 dépassent la centaine (n° 24 : 131; n° 44 : 130; n° 66 : 120), et un cas des Wăngatá-Ntómbá 202 (n° 12). Ces derniers font monter la dot au-dessus de 200, tout comme les Bombomba, et à l'imitation des Ekonda, qui ont réellement abusé de la liberté apportée par les Blancs. (cf. art XI, § 3.)

§ 5. Versement du wale.

Au jour convenu, le jeune homme, son père et le *ndonga* se rendent chez les parents de la fiancée. D'autres proches, qui ne sont pas retenus par ailleurs, ne manquent pas d'assister à cet événement remarquable. Après s'être salués de la façon usuelle, et avant toute autre chose, la famille de la femme offre au *ndonga* un plat de bananes et de nourriture animale (souvent *botómba*, ou poule, ou poisson *bokósa*). Ensuite elle présente au mari des vivres divers : viande ou poisson fumés (par exemple un panier), quelques régimes de bananes, puis, par l'intermédiaire du *ndonga*, un chien, une chèvre et des poules, qui doivent être comptés dans le *nkǫmí* (cf. art. VII).

Ensuite ils se demandent des nouvelles, c'est-à-dire ils vont exposer et discuter l'affaire de la dot. Si la famille de la femme n'est pas satisfaite, la discussion se prolonge, et le jeune homme ajoute le supplément exigé (généralement ils ont prévu cette éventualité et déposé chez un parent ou allié quelques valeurs supplémentaires). Parfois certains anneaux ou couteaux sont jugés inconvenables : alors on compte, par exemple, deux pour un, ou l'on remplace les objets refusés par d'autres de meilleure qualité.

Les valeurs sont déposées par le *ndonga* devant le groupe des parents de la femme.

La présence du fiancé et de la femme n'est pas indispensable. Aussi trouve-t-on des cas où l'un ou l'autre soit absent. Mais ces cas sont rares et sont dus à une grande difficulté de pouvoir assister, par exemple s'ils sont retenus au service d'un Européen, ou si eux-mêmes ne tiennent pas à perdre quelques journées ou semaines, alors que leurs pères respectifs s'entendent bien entre eux et qu'ainsi ils sont rassurés que tout marchera à merveille. D'ordinaire, tant eux-mêmes que leurs parents tiennent à leur présence, car il s'agit d'une affaire de grande importance.

Si le consentement de la femme n'a pas encore été publiquement donné, parce que, comme cela se présente pour un remariage après divorce, *ikulá*, *ndanga* et *walo* sont versés simultanément, c'est à ce moment qu'elle intervient pour cette cérémonie. Nous n'avons plus à y revenir; elle se déroule comme décrit à l'article III, § 2. Seulement, dans le cas présent, elle remet à son père un ou deux anneaux, ou un anneau plus un couteau.

Après cela, le *ndonga* transmet les valeurs aux parents de la femme. Il invite le mari : « *yélá baúmbá bǎ walo* = apporte les valeurs du *walo* ». Celui-ci lui répond : « Les voici, transmets-les à mon beau-père. » Le témoin prend quelques anneaux et les dépose devant ce dernier; ou plutôt, il les touche en faisant le geste de les pousser vers les parents de la femme. Ceux-ci les attirent vers eux.

Dès le versement du *walo*, la *bompáka* devient *wǎlí* = épouse. Comme il a été dit déjà, ce mot n'a rien à voir avec *walo*; ni avec le radical *bal* = marier, mais est en connexion étymologique avec les termes analogues employés dans d'autres langues bantoues pour femme, femina.

ARTICLE V. — VALEURS DE LA MÈRE.

Immédiatement après la transmission des valeurs du *walo* au père de la femme, le *ndonga* invite le mari au versement des valeurs de la mère : « *yélá nlaa la nkando* yé *nyang'éy'ǫ́na* = apporte la chèvre et les nkando de la mère de l'enfant. » On donne donc :

1° Au moins une chèvre, parfois deux ou davantage, selon les cas, jamais un bouc.

2° Deux *nkando* = spirales en cuivre qu'on porte aux jambes. Autrefois on en exigeait encore deux autres pour les bras, que l'on voit encore parfois portées par de vieilles femmes, mais qui sont devenues bien plus rares que les spirales des jambes. Ce terme de *nkando* est remplacé par *nsongá* chez les Elíngá, lés Wăngatá, Bakáala et Ionda (¹).

3° Naguère la mère avait encore droit à un *bǫngęmbwá* ou *bǫngǫmbwá* (d'après les dialectes) (²), collier massif en cuivre. Sa valeur était de cinq *bakonga*. Actuellement, ce genre de parure ayant presque complètement disparu, il n'est plus réclamé; la mère préfère des objets plus intéressants (cf. art. suivant).

En outre, aux temps présents, on commence à réclamer le remplacement de la chèvre et des *nkando* par des souliers, des habits, des tissus, etc.

La mère justifie ses exigences en invoquant les peines qu'elle a endurées à mettre sa fille au monde et à l'élever. Ces valeurs sont la propriété exclusive de la mère et de sa famille; jamais elles ne passent au clan du mari. Elle-même porte les *nkando*, ou, si elle en a déjà, elle les donne à sa sœur ou à son frère, qui peut en avoir besoin pour la dot de sa femme. De même elle garde les chèvres ou les donne à sa famille, d'après ses propres préférences. A sa mort, ce sont ses parents qui en héritent, jamais son mari ni même ses propres enfants.

Ce versement est donc manifestement un droit exclusif du clan maternel.

La chose ne change pas si la mère, après divorce, s'est remariée à un autre homme. Les valeurs « maternelles »

(¹) En lokonda : *njękę*.

(²) En lokonda : *lonkaá*.

continuent à lui appartenir. Même si la séparation a eu lieu avant le mariage de sa fille, elle conserve son droit de « *nỵang'éy'ǫ̌na* ».

Si elle était morte avant le mariage de la fille, les valeurs lui destinées par le droit sont données au représentant de son clan (son père, frère, sœur, oncle, etc.).

En cas de divorce, ces valeurs doivent, comme tout le reste, être remboursées au mari; mais le devoir en incombe au clan maternel qui les a reçues.

Si le mari n'a pas en main les valeurs destinées à la mère, il lui remet un gage de paiement (*wę̌kǫ*, verbe : *ékya*), consistant en un ou deux couteaux, ou *bakonga*. Jamais il ne parvient à arranger la palabre dotale sans au moins ce gage. Il s'acquittera ensuite de ses obligations, et le plus vite possible, car la plupart des belles-mères sont tellement avides de ce paiement que leur gendre tardant trop à les satisfaire, elles mettent tout en œuvre pour rompre le mariage. Et souvent elles réussissent. Devant le tribunal elles obtiendront gain de cause, à moins que leur patience n'ait été par trop courte.

ARTICLE VI. — CADEAUX OU BEÉNGO.

Après le versement de la masse de la dot au père et à la mère de la femme, tant ceux-ci que divers membres de la famille réclament au mari divers menus paiements et cadeaux, dénommés *beéngo* (s. *boéngo*). Ce substantif dérive du verbe *-bénga*, qui n'est employé qu'avec lui. Une forme réciproque analogue : *-béngana*, signifie se toucher l'un l'autre, entrer en collision. Le sens primitif de *-bénga* serait-il donc : attirer vers soi ? Ou les deux verbes n'auraient-ils aucune connexion étymologique ? Quoi qu'il en soit, ces termes servent également à désigner les rétributions données aux juges pour l'arrangement d'un différend.

Il existe une grande variété de *beéngo*; plusieurs sont propres à certains groupes et inconnus ailleurs. Les divers parents les réclament sans suivre un ordre déterminé. Mais de toute façon il faut qu'on passe par l'intermédiaire du *ndonga*. On lui exprime donc son désir, assez haut pour être compris de toute l'assemblée; et c'est lui qui transmet au mari la requête : « Donne tel ou tel *boéngo* à un tel. » Notons encore que ces *beéngo* ne sont pas un paiement absolument indispensable. Souvent les requêtes ne sont exécutées qu'en partie; les autres sont déboutées avec une excuse quelconque : « Beau-parent, je ne puis pas te satisfaire; je ne possède pas cet objet. » Aussi l'élaboration du contrat matrimonial n'est-elle pas entravée ni retardée par l'impossibilité de satisfaire tout le monde. Excepté pour le *boéngo* principal au père (1°) et parfois pour celui de la mère (2°).

Entrons un peu dans les détails des divers *beéngo* qu'on demande ainsi :

1° *Ifaká l'akǫngá b'ìs'éy'ǫ̀na* = couteau et lances du père de la fille. C'est un couteau et cinq lances (ou davantage d'après la richesse du mari). Théoriquement, le couteau doit être un *efamba*. En pratique on peut parfois lui substituer un *empútę* dans un beau fourreau en bois bien orné de « clous cuivrés ». D'autres fois on admet le remplacement du couteau et des lances par leur valeur correspondante en *bakonga*. Ce *boéngo* est considéré comme le plus important. Aussi ne renonce-t-on jamais à le réclamer. Si le gendre ne peut pas le donner à l'instant même, il s'engage à le payer plus tard, et le beau-père ne manquera pas à l'occasion de lui rappeler sa promesse. Certains exigent un *wę̃kǫ*. D'autres se contentent d'un bout de *loasi* ou d'un *bosóngó* (éclat ou partie de tige de palme), que le mari remet au *ndonga* en signe de reconnaissance de sa dette et comme preuve de sa volonté de la payer dès qu'il en aura les moyens. Certains hommes, pourtant, y tiennent si fort qu'ils n'agréent pas le *walo* avant d'avoir reçu ce *boéngo*. Ainsi, un de ces jours, Lomanga d'Ifutó (Bongíli) ne consentit pas à recevoir le *walo* pour sa fille Ekǫfǫ, fiancée à Bokungú w'ĭkáyá (de Bongíli, Ndǫngǫ́). Il a exigé que le père de celui-ci, Bokungú w'ĭs'éy'Ingilá, retourne d'abord chercher ce *boéngo*. Comme il ne trouva point les cinq lances, il les remplaça par un second couteau et un anneau de cuivre; ce qui fut accepté par le vieux Lomanga. A un court intervalle, la chose se répéta pour Bokungú de Bǫntǫlẹ (Bongíli), qui voulait payer le *walo* pour sa fiancée Ngẹlẹ́ de Boímbo (Bombwanja), sœur de Bǫngǫndẹ́, greffier des Bombwanja. La famille de la femme refusa de prendre la dot avant d'avoir reçu ce *boéngo* de *ifaká l'akǫngá b'ĭs'éy'ǫ̆na*.

2° *Byĭkó byă nyang'éy'ǫ̆na*= les porcs-épics de la mère, consistant en deux ou trois porcs-épics frais ou fumés. Ils peuvent être remplacés par des *betómba*, des oiseaux *baatá*, ou des poissons *bekósa*. On n'aime pas leur voir substituer des poules, parce que cette volaille est du domaine du *nkǫmí*. Si l'on n'a pas de quoi satisfaire à cette obligation, on donne à la mère deux anneaux de cuivre : « *máká bakonga báfé yósombe byĭkó bĭkẹ́*= voici deux anneaux de cuivre, va t'acheter les porcs-épics ». Actuellement, on les remplace parfois par des étoffes.

Il faut faire attention de ne pas confondre ce *boéngo* avec ce qu'on entend souvent : *byiko byă nyang'éy'ǫ̆na*, qui sont n'importe quel versement fait à la mère et englobent donc aussi bien la chèvre et les *nkando* que ce *boéngo* et d'autres. Il ne s'agit pas de *byĭkó*, sing. *ĭkó*= porc-épic, mais de *byiko*, sing. *wiko*= prix, valeur, du verbe *-ika*= fixer un prix.

3° *Lokolé* : un frère ou cousin de l'épouse réclame un *konga*. Il bat le gong (*lokolé*) pour faire du tapage et ainsi forcer le mari à le satisfaire. Cela paraît être l'origine de ce *boéngo*. Pratiquement on se contente de demander un cadeau. Parfois le tapage peut durer un certain temps. Mais les vieux ne permettent pas qu'on trouble l'assemblée, si le mari n'a pas précisément de quoi contenter.

4° *Bakulá*, ou *botúwá* : les frères de la femme plantent en terre un morceau de tronc de bananier (*botúwá*), pour que les jeunes parents du mari y lancent des flèches (*bakulá*), qui sont retirées par les jeunes membres de la famille de l'épouse. Actuellement, ceux-ci reçoivent parfois de l'argent, par exemple 5 francs.

5° *Wambá* : corde de prisonnier, c'est-à-dire une corde à laquelle, autrefois, on liait les prisonniers de guerre, deux à deux (système imité à présent pour les prisonniers de l'Administration ou de la Justice coloniales). C'était, jadis, le patriarche ou chef de famille qui réclamait un *konga* ou un couteau comme indemnité anticipée pour l'emprisonnement (personnel ou des membres de sa famille) qu'il aura peut-être à subir à la suite d'une guerre future, occasionnée par cette femme. Actuellement, les chefs établis par l'Administration, qui se sont vu attribuer par l'autorité européenne les droits des chefs de famille, se sont également approprié le droit à ce *boéngo*, qui, de ce fait, a changé complètement de signification, de destination, même de nom. On le nomme maintenant : *bǫnyǫǫ́la w'ǒnkonji* = chaîne du chef. Comme on le voit, ce paiement est devenu un contresens.

6° *Etáka* : lourde fourche de bois, attachée au cou. Il est réclamé par la mère, ou par une autre femme du père, ou par l'épouse du frère de la femme, en prévision de la torture de la fourche, qu'elles auront peut-être à supporter dans l'avenir à cause de la femme dont on paie la dot, c'est-à-dire le jour où elle abandonnera son mari et où celui-ci, pour se venger, parviendra à mettre la main sur sa mère, ou sur une des autres épouses du clan (¹).

(¹) Cfr. chap. VI, art. VII, § 4, n° 1; et chap. VIII, art. II, § 1.

7° *Lǫmbę́* : large bandoulière en fourrure, ou tressée en lianes *bękǫmbę* (Calamus sp.), ou sa valeur (1 couteau, ou un *konga*). Actuellement on donne **2-3** anneaux. C'est un *boéngo* de la mère, en guise de rémunération pour la fatigue qu'elle a ressentie en portant et en allaitant sa fille (¹).

8° *Betótswá byǎ nkwá* : feuilles de l'arbuste *bonkongé*, employées pour enlever, essuyer et transporter (*tóta*) les excréments (*nkwá*) de l'enfant. Ce *boéngo* d'un anneau constitue un dédommagement des soins de la mère dans ce domaine. En l'absence de la mère, il est réclamé par une autre femme du père, ou par une parente de la mère.

9° *Filet de chasse* (*bojángá*) réclamé dans beaucoup de villages sans raison spéciale. Pourtant, certains clans qui sont en butte à la raillerie des autres, comme étant peu nombreux, réclament d'office à l'homme appartenant à un de ceux-là et qui désire épouser une de leurs filles, la livraison d'un filet, disant : « Vous vous moquez parce que nous n'avons pas de population; apportez-nous un filet de chasse pour nous entourer et nous clôturer, puisque nous ne sommes pas nombreux. » Ainsi, le village de Boyela, des Bakáala, ne cède jamais une de ses membres en mariage sans ce *boéngo*.

10° *Wěngé w'ǎę́kę́* : *boéngo* qui n'est pas connu universellement, mais qui est propre à certains groupements, par exemple chez les Bakáala. Un parent de la femme prend un morceau du jeune tronc épineux de l'arbre *wěngé*. Il en a raclé l'extrémité qu'il tient en main et présente l'autre au mari, en disant : « Tiens-le ». L'autre, évidemment, se refuse, et se libère au moyen d'un couteau ou d'un cuivre.

(¹) Notons ici qu'à l'occasion de la mise au monde d'un enfant par sa belle-mère, le gendre lui envoie un baudrier en peau de loutre *liengé* ou un *konga* équivalent, cadeau qui ne se répète pourtant pas à chaque naissance.

11° *Boéngo w'ẹ̌yau*, ou des herbes, exigé par certains clans, parce que le clan du mari se moque d'eux, à cause de la quantité d'herbes et d'ivraies qu'ils laissent pousser dans leur village, au lieu de le tenir propre. On donne 1 ou 2 anneaux.

12° *Engumbá* : connu dans certains groupements, comme les Bakáala, où il est le dernier réclamé. C'est un *boéngo* d'autorité (¹) réclamé par les patriarches des familles du groupement dont est issue la femme. Il se montait autrefois à 3-5 *bakonga*, selon le nombre de familles ou groupes de familles ou clans alliés dans le même village. Maintenant, on paie surtout de la monnaie européenne, par exemple 50 francs. Ce *boéngo* est ensuite partagé entre les divers groupements parents de la famille de l'épouse.

Divers parents et parentes de la femme réclament de menus objets variés, comme : un petit couteau (*iféeka*), un rasoir indigène (*lọtẹ́ú*), une épingle à tresser les cheveux (*bosóngó*), une aiguille (*nsọngɩ*), un collier de perles bleues (*bisẹngẹ́la*), etc.

Actuellement, on exige encore bien d'autres objets : habits, vaisselle, etc. Ainsi, à un seul et même versement dotal j'ai entendu, un jour, réclamer :

Pour le père : un pantalon et une veste, parce que la femme, étant jeune enfant, lui a sali les habits sans se gêner;

Pour la mère : un lit, parce que fréquemment les soucis pour sa fille ont empêché son repos;

Pour une tante : un bassin, parce qu'elle a lavé l'enfant;

Pour un frère: une paire de souliers ou de pantoufles, parce que la jeune fille a coqueté avec ses chaussures à lui, etc., etc.

(¹) *Engumbá* est une case provisoire d'un village nouvellement installé. Ce sont les patriarches des familles qui les premiers doivent aller y résider pour engager les autres à les suivre et pour conjurer tous malheurs d'envoûtement possibles.

Tous ces *beéngo* sont englobés dans le montant total de la dot. Les cas échéant, ils doivent être restitués comme le reste.

A côté de ces *beéngo* réclamés et touchés par les parents de la femme, d'autres sont demandés par les membres de la famille du mari. Comme pour les précédents, chacun émet des prétentions selon ses désirs et sans ordre déterminé, mais toujours par l'intermédiaire du *ndonga*. Ce sont surtout : des fourrures de la loutre *ęsǫ́fę*, du singe *liúka*, des félides *bǫnkǫ́nǫ* et *yę̌nyi*; une pièce de gibier (singe, antilope, etc.), une natte, un pot, un filet de chasse, un sac porte-objets (*bokúmbé*), un collier de perles. Et, actuellement, divers objets d'introduction européenne : pièces d'habillement, tissus, casseroles, vaisselle, etc. Cette catégorie de *beéngo* est englobée dans le montant total du *nkǫmí* (cf. art. suivant). Si le *nkǫmí* est donné immédiatement, on y procède. Puis on rémunère le(s) *ndonga*, comme il a été dit ci-dessus; chaque partie lui donne au moins deux anneaux.

Enfin, le père de la femme dit au mari : « Pars toujours, nous allons réunir le *nkǫmí* et nous irons le porter chez toi. » Là-dessus le mari part, ou, s'il préfère attendre sa femme, il reste, pour rentrer chez lui dès que les objets du *nkǫmí* sont rassemblés.

ARTICLE VII. — NKOMI.

Nkǫmí est le nom porté par les objets que la famille de l'épouse donne au mari. On dit parfois aussi *likǫmǫ*. Les Injǫ́lǫ́ emploient *likǫma*; les Wǫ̌ngatá, Bakáala, Ionda et Boángí : *likǫmí*. Tous ces mots dérivent du même verbe -*kǫma*=emballer, empaqueter (1). En effet, les valeurs du *nkǫmí* sont généralement emballées dans des paniers, ou des *bẹngọnjọ* (=*bẹlẹlẹ*)=paniers tressés en feuilles de palmier.

---

(1) Les Boóyá disent *lilǫnga*, du verbe -*lǫnga*, même sens que -*kǫma*.

Certains ethnologues ont introduit l'expression *douaire*, *dowry* (1) pour désigner les biens donnés par la famille de la femme à celle du mari. En réalité, le mot « dot » serait une bien meilleure traduction, parce que correspondant mieux à la nature de ces versements. Mais ce serait bouleverser la terminologie adoptée, et il faudrait trouver un autre terme (comme paiement de mariage) pour ce qu'on entend communément par le mot « dot », qui, de toute façon, est appliqué fort malencontreusement.

D'autre part, le mot douaire, ayant déjà une signification précise et reçue, est de nature à prêter à confusion. C'est pourquoi je préfère user provisoirement d'un terme tout à fait neuf et traduire *nkọmí* par contre-dot (2).

Le *nkọmí* consiste en poules, canards (3), sel, nattes, pots, calebasses, voire, si la famille de la femme est riche, une chèvre et, autrefois, même un esclave. A présent on donne aussi des objets de fabrication européenne.

Pour se donner l'air de grand seigneur, un chef de famille particulièrement riche donnait parfois comme contre-dot des êtres humains. De préférence c'étaient des Batswá, ou, si possible, des clients (Mpámạ́), qui ne changeaient de maître que jusqu'à un certain point. En effet, dans l'intention du père, cette livraison était une glorification de sa fille, à laquelle ils devaient assistance sous forme de services divers, et dont la postérité devenait ensuite leur « propriétaire ».

Ainsi Mpumo, un des ancêtres des Boéndé (Bombwanja), avait reçu en *nkọmí*, d'Ikólé, père de sa femme

---

(1) Cfr. par exemple, TORDAY, dans *Africa*, II, n° 3, p. 279.

(2) Ce mot m'a été suggéré par M. le Procureur Général A. SOHIER.

(3) Les canards sont d'introduction plus récente : les Nkundó prétendent que leurs ancêtres n'en possédaient point et qu'ils les ont reçus de par les Ekonda. Dans la classification ils les font entrer dans le genre poule.

Lifomí, de Mbúngá (Liókó, Ekonda), l'esclave Bonkútulú, dont la descendance constitue le clan Bonkútambélá et Batsína, établi avec les Bosánjo et Bongangá (¹).

Même des biens immeubles peuvent entrer dans la composition du *nkọmí*. Ainsi on donne un domaine de pêche (ruisseau, crique, étang, puits), ou une partie de palmeraie (²). Comme pour le cas précédent, cela n'est le fait que d'un chef de famille très riche. S'il n'est pas propriétaire exclusif (ce que, pratiquement, il ne peut être que pour des domaines de pêche), il a besoin du consentement préalable des copropriétaires, soit ses frères, soit les chefs des autres familles, d'après les cas. Comme il est assez intelligent, il faut le supposer, pour ne pas aliéner une propriété dont ils ont besoin eux-mêmes, leur consentement lui est toujours acquis. Celui qui s'opposerait serait d'ailleurs traité de malveillant envers la femme, qui est aussi sa « fille », en lui refusant ce titre de gloire.

Les objets donnés en *nkọmí* sont la propriété du mari. Il en remet la plus forte part à la « *nkóló* » de sa femme, c'est-à-dire à sa parente, grâce à laquelle il a pu se procurer cette épouse (cf., plus loin, art. X). La petite partie est conservée par lui-même. Il en dispose pour ses besoins de concert avec son épouse. En bonne entente, le mari consulte sa femme avant d'en donner ou vendre. Et si elle-même désire les aliéner, elle lui en demande la permission. Ils s'arrangent ainsi à l'amiable. Mais en droit, le tout appartient au mari. S'il veut en user pour des cadeaux ou pour tout paiement personnel, sa femme n'a point à réclamer : elle n'obtient pas gain de cause devant la justice. Mais du point de vue pratique, il est bien plus sage de se mettre préalablement d'accord, afin d'éviter tout froissement et toute brouille.

Le *nkọmí* est plus ou moins important d'après la richesse. Un montant élevé est non seulement un point

---

(¹) Cfr. aussi l'exemple cité au chap. III, art. V.

(²) Mais jamais de terres ou forêts.

d'honneur et de gloire, mais constitue en outre un moyen pour rendre le mariage plus stable et un gage de bonne entente. Plus le *nkọmi* est élevé et plus le mari est tenu de bien traiter sa femme et de faire en sorte qu'elle se plaise chez lui, de peur de devoir restituer toute une fortune si le mariage est jamais rompu.

Il peut être extrêmement élevé, voire égaler la dot, ou la surpasser; dans ces cas extrêmes, on parle de *lifayó-njọku*; en effet, la jeune fille va habiter ailleurs (*lifaya*) comme un éléphant (*njọku*), à cause de la masse de richesses qu'elle apporte avec elle. On parle encore de *njọkwobwo* = espèce de champignons qui abondent partout sur l'arbre *bosúlú* (1).

A ce sujet, il nous faut mentionner une vieille coutume. Par amour pour sa fille et par désir de glorification, le père donne à son gendre une quantité plus ou moins grande, mais suffisant à l'acquisition d'une épouse, de *bakonga*, donc de valeurs dotales proprement dites. Quoique données par le beau-père à son gendre, et faisant donc partie du *nkọmi*, ces valeurs n'en ont pourtant ni le sens ni la destination. Elles sont versées dès le paiement de l'*ikulá*. Cette coutume n'est de pratique courante que chez les hommes particulièrement riches et influents, c'est-à-dire les chefs de famille occupant dans la société indigène un rang prépondérant. Elle n'est jamais omise pour une fille *bolúmbú* (chap. I, IIe partie, art. II). Le père de la femme remet les valeurs à son gendre en lui disant : « Voici, je te donne ma fille en mariage. Elle a toujours occupé un rang élevé; elle est de très bonne famille. Je veux qu'elle conserve sa position prépondérante. Voici donc une dot; va te procurer une seconde épouse avec ces anneaux; pour que ma fille ait sa *nkila* dès le premier jour. Tu reviendras ensuite me payer la dot pour elle. »

---

(1) Ces termes ne sont point spécifiques. Ils s'appliquent également à tout étranger qui vient s'établir, ou qui simplement passe dans le village, muni d'une grande quantité de richesses. Par exemple les Blancs.

La femme qui est l'objet d'une telle préférence et d'un si grand honneur s'appelle *yèngaende*. Ce mot est composé des radicaux : *éng*= acquérir par « dot », et *ende*= homme (*vir*). Parce que de cette façon elle paie elle-même, pour ainsi dire, la dot pour son mari, et cela avant que lui-même ne l'ait fait pour elle.

Les Nkundó ayant abandonné cette façon de faire ostentation de leurs richesses, la coutume que nous venons de décrire appartient désormais au passé. Pourtant on trouve encore des femmes qui portent le nom de Yèngaende, en souvenir d'une aïeule quelconque qui avait été l'objet de cet honneur lequel créait une situation privilégiée et pour ainsi dire royale.

Il appert de tout ce qui précède que, dans le droit et la pratique nkundó, les paiements matrimoniaux ne sont pas unilatéraux. Il existe plutôt une tradition mutuelle de biens. Quoique ces biens soient, de part et d'autre, d'une nature nettement différente, ils ont tous une valeur économique et financière. Nous pouvons donc parler d'une réelle réciprocité dans ces paiements. Et, bien que le mari doive fournir le capital le plus élevé et le plus important, il serait faux de dire que lui seul doit « payer son conjoint », car si effectivement il « paie sa femme », l'épouse aussi doit, dans une certaine mesure, « payer son mari ». C'est ce que les Nkundó expriment fréquemment par la forme réciproque de *-énga* : « *bokiló l'okanga béngana*= beau-père et gendre s'acquièrent par dot ». Aussi beaucoup d'hommes tâchent-ils, dans le paiement du *nkǫmí*, d'approcher aussi près que possible le montant de la dot au sens strict, de façon à obtenir un certain équilibre. Ensuite, pour conserver cet équilibre entre les capitaux, ils compensent chaque versement de nature dotale par de nouvelles valeurs de *nkǫmí*. Par cette façon d'agir on veut obtenir une constance plus ou moins égale dans les influences de chacune des deux parties contractantes, de peur que l'une d'elles ne devienne excessive et prépondérante, ce qui ne serait pas toujours favorable à la stabilité de l'union et à la bonne entente.

ARTICLE VIII. — ACCEPTATION DE LA DOT.

Après le départ du mari, de sa famille et du *ndonga*, le père de la femme fait ramasser et déposer devant lui les valeurs versées. Dans la hiérarchie familiale cette tâche incombe à ses fils et à ses frères puînés. Puis, les aînés se concertent sur l'emploi qui devra en être fait. Ils s'inclinent (*básunama*), comme disent les Nkundó dans leur langage figuré. Ainsi que dans toutes les réunions de conseils familiaux et les délibérations d'un jury quelconque, le père est invité à dire son opinion. Mais sans même se prononcer il passe immédiatement la parole à un autre auquel il doit le respect; son frère aîné, son neveu-fils-de-sœur, etc. Celui-ci en fait de même, en laissant la parole au suivant, et ainsi de suite. Finalement, elle revient au père, qui invite les autres à prendre chacun dans le tas l'objet qu'il désire, qui un anneau, qui un couteau ou une lance. De concert avec le patriarche de la famille, il décide de la destination à donner à la dot reçue. Ils sont obligés d'agir d'après les règles de la justice, en sauvegardant les droits de tous et chacun (cfr., plus loin, art. X).

Qu'arrive-t-il si les parents n'acceptent pas la dot déposée devant eux? La chose peut se produire. Et voici un cas récemment arrivé : Etanda, fille d'Isia, d'Esǫ́kǫlǫ-kǫ́lǫ́ (Boléngé, Bakáala), est fiancée à Eanga, de Bofeka l'Asumba (Wǫ̂ngatá), qui a payé pour elle l'*ikulá* et le *ndanga*. Au moment du paiement du *walo*, tous étant réunis, le *ndonga* remet au père de la femme 50 *bakonga;* Isia ne les agrée pas, parce que l'union de sa fille avec Eanga ne lui paraît point présenter de garanties suffisantes de stabilité. Il prie donc le *ndonga* de conserver les valeurs en dépôt jusqu'au jour où l'union se montrera solide. Les événements ont donné raison à Isia. En effet, à peine quelques mois se sont écoulés que la rupture se produit. Le *ndonga* rend les valeurs au père du fiancé et le mariage n'est pas réalisé. Dans ce cas, aux yeux des indigènes, il n'y a pas eu versement de *walo*, puisque le père de la femme n'a pas accepté ces valeurs. On ne peut donc pas parler ici d'un mariage véritable.

Ce cas, qui sans être fréquent n'est pourtant pas unique, prouve le sérieux que les indigènes apportent dans l'affaire du mariage. Ils sont loin de l'état d'esprit que certains auteurs leur attribuent. Ce n'est que la liberté de la colonisation, si elle brise les lois ancestrales et leurs sanctions sans les remplacer par au moins l'équivalent, qui amène un état de désordre moral et social dans ce domaine, en laissant libre carrière à la convoitise.

Jusqu'ici nous avons examiné les trois versements : *ikulá*, *ndanga* et *walo*, plus les valeurs de la mère. Avec inclusion des *beéngo* ils sont groupés sous la dénomination globale de *jěngí*. Celui-ci comprend d'ailleurs encore d'autres paiements, par exemple cadeaux de bienvenue à la fiancée, cadeaux de visite ultérieurs, etc., et signifie donc, pratiquement, tous les paiements qui ne sont pas le paiement final, dont nous allons traiter. Au sens strict, il indique les versements faits pour obtenir une épouse, à l'exclusion des paiements ultérieurs.

Jěngí dérive du radical verbal *éng*, qui signifie payer ces valeurs-là, acquérir une épouse au moyen de ces valeurs. Il est impossible de traduire ces termes par un équivalent français. Nous sommes donc forcé d'employer des expressions plus ou moins impropres, comme : payer, se procurer, acquérir, acheter, paiement, achat, etc., qui en lonkundo sont rendues par de tout autres mots. Ne prétendez donc jamais devant un Nkundó qu'ils achètent les femmes : il vous exprimerait toute son indignation d'une monstruosité pareille. Pour acheter il dit : *sómb*. Dans son idée cela n'a rien de commun avec *éng* ou *sǫ́ng* (cfr. infra).

Etre objet d'un versement de dot se dit : *kwę́ baúmbá*, littéralement = « tomber des valeurs ». D'où le nom *Ókwaúmbá* = celle qui est l'objet d'un paiement de valeurs.

Comme nous l'avons dit, il est possible de payer simultanément les versements décrits. Cette façon de faire ne se rencontre que pour un remariage. Toutes les valeurs sont déposées ensemble, et l'on ne fait plus aucune distinction entre les trois versements.

ARTICLE IX. — LE BOSONGO.

§ 1. Terminologie et nature du bosóngo.

Le *bosǫ́ngo* est la partie ultime du versement dotal. C'est le paiement d'un esclave ou de sa valeur en espèces. De là le terme très usité de *bonto* = proprement : homme, mais dans l'application : esclave (ce n'est qu'un homme, dit-on, c'est-à-dire un esclave; *njôáta la bonto, la linto* : je le possède comme esclave). Le terme propre pour esclave, *bokwála*, ou chez les Elíngá et Boóyá : *bontamba* (¹), n'est jamais employé en matière de dot. Pourtant les Ekonda se servent du terme *ilęngę́*, qui est synonyme de *bokwála* et signifie esclave au sens propre du mot. Les tribus nkundó voisines l'emploient aussi, probablement sous leur influence. Ainsi font les Bombwanja, Bongíli, Bonkoso, Bombomba (²).

Le substantif *bosǫ́ngo* (chez les divers Elíngá : *lisǫ́ngí*) dérive de *sǫ́ng* = payer cette partie de la dot. Ainsi un homme dit à son gendre : « *oósll'ôénga bǫ́n'ôkárh, yákáká yôsǫ́ngę́* = tu as déjà payé le *jèngí* pour ma fille, viens

---

(¹) Ailleurs on dit encore bodembo ou bómbo.

(²) Les Batswá ne font jamais ce versement.

maintenant payer le *bosóngo* ». L'explication, donnée par Ruskin (*Dictionary of the Lomongo Language*, p. 67 : *bosóngo* : the passing over of a daughter or ward in marriage without reference to her wishes, money paid for slave wife, et p. 314, *sóngya* : idem), ne concorde donc pas avec le sens que donnent à ces termes les tribus nkundó dont nous traitons.

Un autre terme pour ce paiement est : *tsinola bonto* (*ilengé*). Je ne connais aucun autre cas d'emploi de ce verbe *tsinola*.

Une expression qui fait ressortir le caractère de paiement ultime est *kumbola bonto* (*ilengé*). Le verbe *kumbola* signifie couper la dernière entaille dans un arbre pour achever de l'abattre (1).

Autrefois on exigeait absolument un véritable esclave, c'est-à-dire une personne humaine. Actuellement, l'esclavage étant aboli, on le remplace par sa valeur en *bakonga*, qui est de 25 anneaux, ou, s'ils sont particulièrement beaux, de 15 à 20 (2). Pour distinguer ces formes du *bosóngo* on dit : *bonťôw'abwó* (*ilengé y'âbwó*) = esclave à cheveux, donc un être humain; et *bonťôw'akonga* (*ilengé y'âkonga* = esclave en anneaux de cuivre).

Outre des esclaves, des Batswá pouvaient être donnés en *bosóngo*. Ils n'étaient pourtant pas réduits en esclavage, mais restaient dans la condition qu'ils occupaient auparavant. La seule différence est qu'ils changeaient de maître.

Parfois le maître voulant se défaire d'un Botswá incorrigible, le donnait en *bosóngo* à titre de véritable esclave, auquel cas nous revenons à la livraison d'un esclave proprement dit.

Dans les autres cas on agissait avec le consentement plus ou moins explicite du Botswá. D'ordinaire c'étaient des femmes qui étaient ainsi livrées comme paiement dotal. Comme dans les affaires matrimoniales des Batswá le maître Bootó remplit l'office de « père », il a droit à la dot des filles et a le devoir de procurer des épouses aux garçons. Il peut donc livrer à son beau-père une fille Bǫtswá, qui lui appartient. Le beau-père ne prend jamais cette femme comme épouse pour lui ou sa parenté, mais il la donne en mariage à un de ses propres Batswá, ou à un étranger de cette race, qui lui verse la dot pour elle. Socialement et financièrement la chose revient absolument au même que si le gendre avait payé un esclave.

---

(1) Notons que *kumbola* signifie aussi prendre en mariage.

(2) Autrefois le prix d'un esclave était de 10 à 15 anneaux.

Ainsi, la dot payée par Lokonda jw'ĭsano y'ĭnkanja, de Ngǫmbę (Bongíli), pour Bakutu, des Basékà Elongama (Bęsǫmbǫ́, Bombwanja), et employée par le cousin de celle-ci, Bofénda, de Ekúkola (Bongíli), pour se procurer la femme Ilǫa, de Ndǫngǫ́ (Bongíli), consistait en soixante anneaux et la femme Ómâmęnga (Antonia), du clan Bǫtswá de Mbálanga. Celle-ci fut ensuite épousée par un Bǫtswá de ses nouveaux maîtres, Wanja (Pius).

Il peut y avoir deux ou plusieurs esclaves, pour les mêmes raisons qui déterminent le montant plus ou moins élevé du *walo*. Les Bombwanja ne se contentent d'un seul qu'exceptionnellement. Mais tous ne forment toujours qu'un seul et même *bǫsǫ́ngǫ*.

Le *bǫsǫ́ngǫ* ne fait pas partie du *jĕngí* : *bǫsǫ́ngǫ ĕmí ńk'omóngó*=le *bǫsǫ́ngǫ* est tout à fait à part, disent les indigènes. Et à ce sujet leurs affirmations sont particulièrement catégoriques.

Une expression caractéristique pour désigner l'entièreté de la dot est *baúmbá la bonto* = anneaux et homme (esclave). Les anneaux sont le *jĕngí*; ce sont des valeurs purement matérielles. Le *bǫsǫ́ngǫ*, au contraire, est une personne humaine.

En lonkundo il n'existe aucun terme englobant les deux sortes de versements. La totalité ne peut être exprimée exactement et par un mot unique.

Pourtant, dans les environs de Flandria, les jeunes commencent à mêler les deux mots *jèngí* et *bǫsǫ́ngǫ* et à les employer l'un pour l'autre (¹). La confusion moderne est probablement due à la pénétration du dialecte lombwanja, qui exerce, même pour d'autres mots, une assez forte influence sur le dialecte des Bongili et Bonkoso, ainsi que dans le centre de Flandria. Chez les Bombwanja, en effet, *-sǫ́ng* et *bǫsǫ́ngǫ* sont synonymes du lokóté : *-éng, jèngí*. Pour le paiement d'un esclave, ils n'emploient que le mot *ilęngę́* et l'expression *-lekya ilęngę́*=donner un esclave. Les vieux protestent pourtant vivement et traitent cette confusion de faute, de brouillamini, de corruption de la langue.

Autrefois le *bǫsǫ́ngǫ* était payé en même temps que le *walo*, ou peu après. A présent, des années peuvent s'écouler entre les deux. Si le mari tarde trop à satisfaire à son obligation, la famille de l'épouse réclame, et souvent, à l'occasion d'une visite de la femme à ses parents, ceux-ci retiennent leur fille et l'empêchent de retourner chez son mari, qu'ainsi ils veulent contraindre à payer. Tout comme pour le *jèngí*, c'est au mari de le porter, et non à la famille de la femme de le quérir.

L'esclave peut être remplacé, avons-nous dit, par son équivalent en anneaux de cuivre. D'autres objets, par exemple des couteaux, n'entrent point en considération. Pour que les anneaux valent comme *bǫsǫ́ngǫ* ils doivent être expressément désignés comme tels par le mari ou le *ndonga*. Si la volonté n'est pas exprimée verbalement, ils sont considérés comme *jèngí*; puisque, de leur nature, ils appartiennent à ce paiement.

Le *bǫsǫ́ngǫ* est le versement ultime et définitif de la dot. Ceci ne veut pas dire qu'après cela le mari ne doive plus payer dans certaines circonstances. Au contraire, les transactions financières ne finissent qu'à la mort. Mais les

---

(¹) Des jeunes gens des Injǫ́lǫ́, d'environ 20 ans, tant chez eux que ceux que j'ai connus à la Mission de Flandria, ne font aucune confusion et distinguent nettement les deux termes.

paiements ultérieurs sont dus en raison d'autres obligations, postérieures à la conclusion définitive du contrat matrimonial, bien qu'en découlant. Tels sont les *belonga* (cadeaux de visite), les valeurs données à l'occasion d'un décès, le *nkunjí* (paiement funéraire); puis des cas d'assistance à un membre de la famille de l'épouse (par exemple pour la constitution d'une dot). Ou encore la mère de la femme viendra aider sa fille lors d'un accouchement; quand elle rentre chez elle, son gendre lui offre un cadeau d'adieu (*bolingako*), par exemple quatre *bakonga*. C'est dans ce sens qu'il faut interpréter l'affirmation des indigènes que le *jěngí* ne se termine jamais : « *jěngí lifósíle elaká ńk'iwá* ».

De toute façon et en toute supposition, le *bǫsǫ́ngǫ* doit être livré, même si le divorce ou la mort interviennent avant. Le refus de payer fait perdre au mari les droits sur une de ses filles, dont la dot compensera, avec intérêts, la perte économique et sociale subie par le clan de la femme (¹).

§ 2. Valeur et effets du bǫsǫ́ngǫ.

Quelle est maintenant l'importance du *bǫsǫ́ngǫ*? Dans la réponse il s'agit de bien distinguer deux aspects du problème : l'aspect financier et l'aspect juridique.

1° Du point de vue financier. Tout d'abord, le *bǫsǫ́ngǫ* parachève le versement de la dot et ainsi produit la plus grande stabilité théorique qui puisse être obtenue dans un mariage nkundó. C'est dans ce sens qu'il faut comprendre les expressions : « *bôló wâ liála ńk'onto* = la force du mariage (sa stabilité) se trouve dans l'esclave »; « *l'ǫsǫ́ngǫ bômoto ákólongwa wâlí* = par le *bǫsǫ́ngǫ* la femme devient parfaitement épouse »; ou : « *wâlí ákólongwa ôkę̂* : l'épouse devient parfaitement tienne ». En effet, comme par ce versement le paiement de la dot est entièrement

---

(¹) Cfr. chap. VIII, art. IV, et chap. IX, art. IX, § 2.

terminé, dans le sens expliqué, les parents de la femme n'ont plus aucun prétexte de la ravir à son mari et tiennent encore davantage à cette union, où de si gros intérêts sont engagés.

La richesse, outre sa valeur en elle-même, a encore une influence sociale. De ce point de vue nous devons distinguer :

a) Aux temps où le *bosóngo* était nécessairement un esclave en chair et os, et non un esclave en anneaux, il était tout naturel qu'on y attachât une plus grande valeur qu'au *walo*. On préférait vingt-cinq *bakonga* (de *walo*) plus deux esclaves à cinquante *bakonga* et un esclave, bien que, en ramenant le tout à l'unité monétaire en cuivre, on avait plus dans le dernier cas. Ceci s'explique aisément. Autrefois, disent les vieux, nous possédions très peu de cuivre et la fonte du fer était une besogne dure et longue. Le *walo* payé pour nos mères était très inférieur à ce que nous voyons de nos jours. Dans la majorité des cas, nos pères n'ont versé qu'une quinzaine ou une vingtaine d'anneaux et objets en fer. Mais ils donnaient un plus grand nombre d'esclaves. Il n'était pas rare de livrer pour une femme cinq ou même dix esclaves. De ce fait, le *bosóngo* était d'une importance bien plus considérable que le *walo*. Actuellement, les Blancs ont introduit laiton et fer en quantité; c'est cette abondance qui a fait augmenter le prix du *walo*. D'autre part, il était devenu plus difficile, et finalement impossible de nous procurer des esclaves; c'est pourquoi le *bosóngo* a baissé. Enfin, nous avons dû substituer les anneaux aux personnes.

b) A présent, quoique l'idée de l'importance familiale du *bosóngo* soit toujours vivante, à cause de son caractère de versement ultime et d'arrangement définitif de la question financière, son importance pécuniaire, et donc, sous un certain angle, sociale pour le clan récepteur, a beaucoup diminué. Et cela parce que, tout comme les paiements précédents, il est devenu un versement d'anneaux de cuivre. Dans les endroits où tous les paiements dotaux consistent en monnaie et en valeurs d'introduction européenne, l'importance du *bǫsǫ́ngǫ*, tout naturellement, décroît encore plus rapidement.

2° Au *point de vue juridique*, la question est tout autre. Le *bǫsǫ́ngǫ* ne produit aucune nouvelle relation entre les époux. La femme ne change pas de nom : elle reste, comme auparavant, *wǎlí*. Qu'elle devient parfaitement épouse, cela n'est basé, comme nous l'avons dit, que sur la stabilité théoriquement parfaite qu'acquiert le mariage, grâce à ce paiement final, qui enlève aux parents toute raison de ravir leur fille à son mari, et nullement grâce à une nouvelle opération juridique.

Ceci est encore clairement prouvé par le fait suivant : au cas où la femme meurt avant le *bǫsǫ́ngǫ*, il n'y a pas de palabre, comme au décès sans *walo*. Le mari ne doit pas payer d'indemnité (*mbálaka*). Seulement il doit parachever les versements dotaux par le *bǫsǫ́ngǫ*, ce à quoi il s'est engagé en payant l'*ikulá* et le *ndanga*. Sinon l'alliance entre lui et son beau-père est du fait rompue, d'où impossibilité d'obtenir une nouvelle épouse en remplacement de la défunte et perte de ses droits sur une des filles. Nous devons d'ailleurs revenir sur cette question au chapitre IX, article IX, § 2.

On voit la grande différence que ces règles prouvent exister entre *walo* et *bǫsǫ́ngǫ*; d'un côté, indemnité supposant une faute juridique; de l'autre, transaction pour équilibrer les droits financiers des clans en cause.

Nous pouvons conclure de toutes ces considérations que le paiement du *bǫsǫ́ngǫ* est, par sa modalité pécuniaire spéciale, d'une grande importance pour la stabilité de l'union et pour l'influence sociale du clan de la femme, mais, du point de vue juridique, il est bien moins important que le *walo*, puisque celui-ci rend la femme véritablement épouse, tandis que le versement final ne crée aucune nouvelle relation sociale, ni entre les époux, ni entre le mari et ses beaux-parents.

ARTICLE X. — DESTINATION DE LA DOT.

En principe, la dot reçue est destinée à procurer une épouse à l'un des membres de la famille qui l'a touchée. La femme épousée grâce à la dot versée pour une autre est appelée la *nkita* de celle-ci. Ce mot me semble être en rapport étymologique avec le mot *nkitó*=gain, bénéfice (verbe : *-kitola*). En dernière analyse, les deux mots pourraient dériver du radical *-kit*=devenir.

Un synonyme est *bongíli* (*bongíji*), surtout employé par les Injǫ́lǫ́, mais connu aussi, quoique peu usité, par les autres tribus.

La femme dont la dot a servi à l'obtention de la *nkita* est la *nkóló* (littéralement : maîtresse) de celle-ci. Les Injǫ́lǫ́ et aussi les Boángí lui donnent encore le nom plus délicat de *nyangôngíji*=mère de la *bongíji* (¹).

Pour exprimer : obtenir une *nkita*, on dit *-umba nkita* = littéralement : abattre une *nkita*, comme on abat un arbre ou un adversaïre. Ou *-báta nkita*=posséder une *nkita* (*umba* ou *báta X. la nkita*). Devenir *nkita* se traduit *-kwẹ́ nkita* = tomber en *nkita*.

La hiérarchie des ayants droit est déterminée par la hiérarchie générale des membres de la famille, d'après l'ancienneté de la génération et, dans la même génération, d'après l'âge. Par conséquent, aussi longtemps qu'un des membres ayant titre d'*isé* (père) est célibataire (à moins qu'il ne soit incapable, physiquement ou moralement), un *bǫ̌na* (fils) n'a pas droit à la dot, fût-ce de sa propre sœur. Dans la même génération, les aînés passent avant

---

(¹) Ce terme désigne également la femme d'un polygame qui a amené une de ses parentes comme coépouse, dont elle est la *nyangôngili*. (Cfr. chap. VII, art. IV.)

les puînés, mais les garçons ont le droit primordial sur la dot de leurs sœurs utérines (¹).

Il arrive assez souvent, et le cas était anciennement encore bien plus fréquent, que l'ayant droit à la dot est encore trop jeune pour se marier, soit en réalité, soit au jugement de ses « pères » (²). De ce fait, la dot est employée en faveur d'un autre membre de la famille. Le bénéfice en reviendra au créditeur, plus tard, sous forme d'héritage.

Même si la ou les femmes lui ainsi destinées venaient à faire défaut par la mort ou par la capture en esclavage, il lui reste l'issue de recevoir la dot d'une cousine sur laquelle personne n'a un droit direct (étant, par exemple, enfant unique), ou celle d'une fille de la *nkita* de sa mère, comme nous le verrons ci-après.

Dans ces cas il y a suspension temporaire du droit, ou plutôt changement de la personne qui en est l'objet. Ces règlements sont très fréquents et peuvent atteindre plusieurs personnes. Les dots peuvent échoir même à des parents assez éloignés, voire dans la lignée féminine. Ces transactions sont faites par les patriarches, pour le plus grand bien commun de la famille. Des droits nouveaux naissent en faveur de l'ayant droit originel, la femme épousée au moyen de ces valeurs étant pour lui l'équivalent d'une *nkita*. En voici un exemple :

Bakutu b'Ŏfóngé (Boniface) de Bombénga w'ŏkenda (Besọmbọ́, Bombwanja) a une sœur Wĕtsĭ, dont la dot sert à fournir à son oncle paternel Elongama éy'ituta la femme Ikọ́kọ́ de Ndọngọ́-Bongíli. Le droit de Bakutu sur sa nièce Bakutu, fille de Bolófo, est transféré à Boténda d'Ekúkola, fils de sa grand'tante paternelle Etáka, donc — en terminologie nkundó — à son père. De ce fait, il obtient le droit sur la dot de la fille (Wăngi) de son oncle

---

(¹) Pour la limitation de ce droit et les exceptions, cfr. chap. IV, art. II.

(²) Cfr. *ibidem*.

et d'Ikọ́kọ́, et en même temps il acquiert une certaine autorité sur le bénéficiaire de la dot qui lui était primitivement destinée, c'est-à-dire sur Bofénda, ainsi que sur les enfants de celui-ci.

La dot étant réservée à l'obtention d'une *nkita*, rien n'empêche que l'excédent, s'il y en a, soit employé au paiement d'une dette, d'une amende, etc., ni, à fortiori, qu'il soit donné à un parent pour le mettre dans la possibilité de se procurer une femme.

Si, exceptionnellement, la dot est détournée de sa destination naturelle, il y a infraction, parce que violation du droit de la fille, objet du versement. En effet, de la sorte elle est privée de sa *nkita*, dont elle aurait tiré certains avantages. Il se peut pourtant qu'une autre loi entre en conflit avec celle-ci. Dans ces cas de force majeure, il dépend de la jurisprudence d'examiner laquelle des deux doit primer.

Tel fut le cas de Bọlẹ́i, fille de Ifolí y'ŏngúmá, des Baséká Lọngwâne de Bọnjọku (Bonkoso). Elle fut mariée à Bombélenga de Likolí. La dot fut touchée par son oncle Botóló, car le père de Bọlẹ́i avait été fait prisonnier de guerre par les Bongale. Le conseil de famille décida de libérer Ifolí avant de songer à l'acquisition d'une femme. Botóló paya donc la rançon pour son frère. Évidemment, Bọlẹ́i fut très contrariée de devoir se soumettre à cette ordonnance, mais, tout compte fait, elle aussi jugea que la libération de son père primait son droit à une *nkita*, dont maintenant elle se trouve privée. Car, bien que les Bongale, grâce à cette rançon, se soient procuré une femme, celle-ci n'est pas la *nkita* de Bọlẹ́i, chaque groupement familial ne tenant compte que de ses propres membres.

Comme nous l'avons déjà insinué, la *nkóló* retire certains avantages de la « possession » d'une *nkita*. Elle a droit au respect et à une certaine assistance à cause de sa position supérieure, selon la mentalité nkundó. Un avantage plus considérable a regard à la contre-dot. Ainsi qu'on l'a vu, une petite partie de ce paiement est conservée par le mari pour les besoins du ménage; la majeure partie revient à la *nkóló*. Enfin, le fils de la *nkóló* a le droit de dire son mot dans son clan maternel, qui s'est enrichi avec les valeurs payées par son clan paternel, le droit aussi d'installer des cultures sur les terres du clan maternel et d'y fixer sa résidence. En outre, un membre du clan de sa mère ayant été mis dans la possibilité de se procurer une épouse au moyen de ces mêmes valeurs, il a un certain droit sur les enfants de la *nkita* de sa mère, voire sur la *nkita* elle-même (1).

A l'égard des enfants de la *nkita* de sa mère, — qu'il nomme ses *bękwá* (2), ou les *benkita* de sa mère : *benkita bĕkáḿ bĕkí ngóya*, — le fils de la *nkóló* a :

1° droit au respect et à l'assistance;

2° droit de siéger dans le conseil familial qui décide du partage de l'héritage (de sorte que le propre fils du défunt ne peut partager les biens de son père sans le consentement de son *nkóló*) ou de la destination à donner aux dots des filles;

3° dans le cas où il ne peut avoir de femme dans son propre clan, le droit de toucher la dot d'une de ses *bękwá*, si elle n'est pas d'abord nécessaire à un des propres oncles ou frères de celle-ci, le droit de ces derniers primant celui du *nkóló*, à moins que celui-ci ne vienne se fixer dans le clan maternel. Car dans ce cas, son droit prévaut contre celui des frères (jamais de l'oncle) et il devient chef de famille, après ses oncles. En effet, étant fils de la sœur, les enfants de l'oncle l'appellent père, tout comme ils désignent sa mère, leur tante paternelle, du nom d'*isómoto* (=père féminin). Lui-même nomme ses cousins germains *băna* = enfants et a donc la préséance sur eux.

---

(1) Cfr. *supra*, art. IV, § 3; et chap. III, art. II.

(2) Sing. *bǫkwá*, dérivé du verbe -kwá ou -kwę́ : tomber (cfr. ci-dessus).

Les droits de maîtrise du fils de la *nkóló* sur les filles de la *nkita* sont donc limités par le droit des oncles et, dans un certain degré, des frères (¹). Mais à l'héritage des veuves le droit du fils de la *nkóló* revit et il peut réclamer celle qui a été acquise avec la dot de sa *bǫkwá*, qui, en quelque sorte, est sa *nkita* (*balá ěkę nkita* = voici ta *nkita*, lui dit-on en la lui assignant).

Ces règles peuvent donner lieu à des transactions multiples et à des transferts répétés des droits de l'un à l'autre des deux clans et à l'intérieur du même clan.

Les petits-fils de la *nkóló* nomment les petits-fils de la *nkita* : *nkwá y'ăúmbá* = excréments de valeurs (locution qui n'a rien d'irrespectueux ni de choquant), parce que les droits provenant de la relation de *nkóló* à *nkita* n'ont pratiquement plus de vigueur. Dans les circonstances favorables tout se limite à un peu de respect et d'assistance. Et si les petits-fils de la *nkóló* n'ont aucun autre lien de parenté avec le clan paternel des petits-cousins, ils ne peuvent même plus leur appliquer cette dénomination.

Par conséquent, la personne objet elle-même du versement dotal est la *nkita*. La première génération de la *nkóló* l'appelle *bonkita*. Dans la troisième, les relations deviennent *nkwá y'ăúmbá*.

Par exemple :

mère . . .	Lokónjó . . .	nkita de Bekombe
fils	Imana. . . .	bonkita de Ifangá
mère . . .	Lokónjó . . .	nkita de Bekombe
fils	Imana } . . .	benkita de Ifangá
petit-fils . .	Etsina }	
mère . . .	Lokónjó . . .	nkita de Bekombe
fils	Imana	bonkita de Ifangá
petit-fils . .	Etsina	nkwá y'ăúmbá de Litáola

(¹) Dans son étude : *Het Familiehoofd bij de Nkundo-Negers* (CONGO, 1930, t. II, p. 332), le R. P. BREPOELS exagère un peu les droits du fils de la *nkóló*.

La raison du relâchement des liens entre petits-fils de *nkóló* et petits-fils de *nkita* est qu'entre grands-parents et petits-fils le respect et l'autorité sont plutôt nominaux; dans la pratique ils n'existent plus [1].

Si la *nkóló* ne laisse pas de postérité, les fils de la *nkita* sont libérés de toute obligation. Comme le Nkundó tient à pouvoir nommer une personne sa *nkita*, ou son *bọkwá*, de même se glorifie-t-il de ne pas dépendre d'un *nkóló*.

Les hommes qui ont titre de *nkóló* peuvent, de par les circonstances, avoir des devoirs envers leurs *benkita*, notamment celui d'intervenir activement dans la constitution d'une dot. De leur côté, si le *nkóló* a fourni une épouse à son *bonkita*, ce dernier doit le traiter comme son père (assistance, part du père à la répartition de la viande de chasse, etc.).

La mutualité de ces droits entre *nkóló* et *nkita* est bien exprimée par la locution : *ómbáté ńkoáté wẹ̌* = possède-moi que je te possède ». C'est comme le *do ut des*.

D'après les explications qui précèdent, on peut juger de l'influence considérable exercée par la dot dans les relations familiales. Bien que le régime des Nkundó soit manifestement et nettement patriarcal, le système de la dot avec ses conséquences logiques lui donne un certain aspect qui pourrait faire penser au matriarcat. La chose est toute naturelle. La dot étant une richesse, elle représente une influence sociale. Par le mariage, cette influence est transférée du clan du mari à celui de la femme, que la dot reçue enrichit en biens et en personnes. Le mari est en quelque sorte le pourvoyeur du clan de son épouse. Et l'enfant peut, en toute vérité, prétendre que son clan s'est enrichi grâce à son père. De fait, c'est avant tout sur cette considération que le Nkundó base l'exigence de tous les droits quelconques qu'il possède dans son clan maternel.

---

[1] Cfr. chap. VI, art. VI.

Les relations entre une femme et sa *nkita* et entre leurs enfants respectifs sont fondées uniquement sur la nature dotale du mariage et n'ont rien à voir avec le matriarcat (¹).

Aussi, n'est-il pas nécessaire d'échafauder des théories compliquées ou des spéculations ardues pour expliquer la naissance du système et le justifier. C'est la conséquence toute simple du paiement de la dot en valeurs qui ne peuvent guère être utiles qu'à un remploi du même genre.

Toutefois, si le système de la *nkita* est une conséquence logique et naturelle du mariage par dot, ce n'en est pas une conséquence nécessaire. La dot existe dans toutes les tribus congolaises, elle ne paraît pourtant pas avoir amené partout l'institution de la *nkita*.

Qu'est-ce qui y a donné naissance chez les Nkundó? Le R. P. Brepoels (*loc. cit.*, p. 339) l'explique comme suit : « La vente (*sic*) de la femme et la perte de sa liberté devaient naturellement la révolter. L'homme a probablement eu grand'peine à l'amener à se résigner. Il fallait lui aménager une compensation; et c'est là-dedans que le système de la *nkita* trouve son origine. C'est ainsi que la femme obtint des droits sur sa *nkita* et qu'à ses enfants furent attribués des droits qui n'existent nulle part : ils devinrent les supérieurs, les « pères » de la famille de leurs mères... Les vieux, les riches profitaient du système, qui les déchargeait de tout souci au sujet de leurs filles : ils pouvaient les vendre toutes jeunes, puis, si, plus tard, elles se plaignaient de l'injustice qui leur avait été faite, ils les consolaient en leur rappelant leurs droits et ceux de leurs fils sur la *nkita* et sa progéniture...; en outre, ce système déchargeait les vieux du devoir de procurer des femmes à leurs fils et enlevait à ceux-ci toute raison de réclamer des droits sur les épouses de leur père. »

Cette explication de l'origine du système de la *nkita* est inadmissible, car elle s'oppose complètement à tout ce

---

(¹) Quoique ces considérations puissent fournir un élément d'explication de l'origine de ce système familial.

que nous savons sur la nature du mariage nkundó. Mais il est vraisemblable que le profit procuré par cette institution aux vieux papas en ait favorisé l'éclosion et l'extension. On peut y joindre l'influence de la cupidité native.

Pourtant, en dehors de l'action des causes qui ont contribué à la pénétration et à la conservation du système dans la société nkundó, il faut rechercher celles qui y sont donné origine.

Devons-nous pour cela imaginer des hypothèses compliquées ? Il me semble que non; nous pouvons nous contenter de l'explication indigène : les droits de la *nkóló* sur la *nkita* découlent naturellement de sa prépondérance sur celle-ci, car le mariage de la *nkita* a pu être réalisé grâce aux valeurs versées pour la *nkóló*, tandis que les droits des fils de la *nkóló* sur les enfants de la *nkita* proviennent de ce que dans la hiérarchie nkundó ceux-ci se trouvent vis-à-vis de ceux-là dans la relation de « fils » à « père ».

Les causes secondaires mentionnées ci-dessus, jointes à la nécessité de concilier les intérêts des divers membres de la famille, ont ensuite amplifié le système.

Il peut arriver, exceptionnellement, que la mère devienne la *nkita* de sa fille. Tel le cas historique de Bękǫmbę de Belondó (Bǫnjǫku) et de sa fille Mbélá. La dot de celle-ci est versée par son père Nkamba éy'ǫntǫlę, de Bofétola (Bǫnjǫku), comme supplément pour sa femme Bękǫmbę. De ce chef, celle-ci devient *nkita* de sa fille. La double dot sert pour procurer à Ifolí y'ǒngúmá, frère de Bękǫmbę et oncle de Mbélá, la femme Lintamba, qui donc appartient à la fois à mère et fille; mais les deux ne sauraient se faire de difficultés à ce sujet.

Une même personne peut avoir deux ou plusieurs *nkita*, si notamment sa dot a été si considérable qu'elle a pu servir à l'obtention de plusieurs épouses. Tel le cas de Mputú (Sofia) des Baséká Mbangó de Bonganda (Bonkoso). Son premier mari, Mpénda de Lofelí, verse 40 anneaux et un esclave. Avec cette somme, l'oncle de Mputú, Mbangó éy'akoso (installé dans son clan maternel Elángá l'Imọmọ), paie la dot pour Bọnjọ́lọ́, de Nkélengo (1). Sur ces entrefaites, Mpénda avait été tué dans une bagarre avec son frère Iloko. Mputú se marie avec le neveu de Mpénda, Elóngola, puis celui-ci étant mort après deux ou trois ans de mariage, à Lọkọnga, de Lǒngá (Nkọ́lẹ), qui n'a pas eu plus longue vie, enfin à Bakutu (Boniface) de Bombénga w'ǒkenda (Bẹsọmbọ́, Bombwanja), qui paie une dot considérable, dont une partie sert à la restitution en faveur de la famille du dernier mari, et dont une autre partie est employée par Mbangó pour l'acquisition de la femme Bọngẹlí d'Ekúkola. Avec la dot payée par Lọkọnga, un cousin germain de Mputú, Mbǎngó (Joseph), s'est procuré la femme Boléjá (originaire des Ionda). Enfin, Bakutu donna à Bọnjẹ́kyá (Christophe) de Lọsẹ́linga, cousin éloigné de Mputú, la dot nécessaire pour épouser Embongàmbembe, de Lǒngá, qui, de ce chef, devient aussi la *nkita*, bien qu'au sens impropre, de Mputú. Celle-ci a donc quatre nkita qui, toutefois, ne sont plus toutes en vie.

Par contre, nous l'avons vu, deux femmes peuvent avoir une *nkita* commune, si, notamment, leurs dots réunies ont servi à l'acquisition d'une seule épouse. Dans ce cas, les deux *bankóló* et leurs descendants sont solidaires dans les devoirs et droits. Pratiquement, cette situation ne se produit que lorsque les deux *bankóló* sont sœurs utérines, rarement entre autres parentes. Des cas peuvent pourtant se présenter, comme celui de Bolófo w'ĭmeka et Bolúmbú w'ĭkọfọ, toutes deux filles de Bakutu b'ĭs'éy'olónjó, de Bokenda (Bẹsọmbọ́), mais de mères différentes (respectivement Mbélá et Wǎngi), dont les dots ont servi solidairement au mariage de Bolófo wǎ Ekákásá Bonkúfo w'ǒbé (fils de Bakutu et Wǎngi) avec Bokungú, d'Engónjó (Bonkoso).

---

(1) Dans une guerre contre Nkélengo, cette femme avait été capturée par les Elángá, qui voulaient l'immoler à l'*ikwẹi* lors d'une *fête* de fin de deuil. Mais Mbangó pria les notables de la laisser en vie, parce que, l'aimant beaucoup, il désirait l'épouser.

ARTICLE XI.

REMARQUES GÉNÉRALES SUR LE VERSEMENT DE LA DOT.

A toutes ces notions et règles sur la dot, il nous reste encore à ajouter quelques remarques générales.

1° *Durant la grossesse* de la femme, aucun versement dotal ne peut avoir lieu. C'est le principe qu'énoncent les Nkundó et auquel ils tiennent fermement. Seulement, il faut entendre grossesse par grossesse visible, nettement perceptible à tous, c'est-à-dire la période du *bokeka*, et non le début (*bọfọswa*) (¹), pendant lequel le versement peut toujours se faire.

Si l'on demande la raison de cette interdiction, on reçoit comme réponse que sinon la femme aura de grandes difficultés à accoucher et qu'elle n'aura pratiquement pas de chances d'éviter la mort. La grossesse est considérée comme un état dangereux. D'une femme enceinte on dit : *akéki la jěfa* = elle est bloquée par le soleil, le soleil est en travers de son chemin, c'est-à-dire elle est entre vie et mort. C'est toute l'explication qu'on obtient. Y aurait-il quelque connexion avec la croyance à l'*elímá* ? (Cfr. chap. X, art. II, § 1.)

2° *Une double dot* ne peut pas être conservée pour la même femme du vivant de son mari, donc pour le même mariage. Après le divorce, le nouveau mari versant les valeurs dotales aux parents, ceux-ci sont obligés de restituer la dot du premier mari. De la sorte il ne reste entre leurs mains qu'une seule dot. Probablement cette stipulation a-t-elle pour raison d'être d'éviter le commerce de la dot, chose absolument illégale. En outre, comme la dot constitue le mariage, une double dot, dans le sens indiqué, rendrait la femme épouse de deux hommes à la fois, ce qui est tout à fait contraire à la conception indigène du

---

(¹) Cfr. chap. X, art. II, §§ 3 et 4.

mariage, nonobstant leur indulgence à l'égard d'un certain concubinage (1).

Signalons ici un cas arrivé vers 1878-1880, qui ne va pas à l'encontre de cette loi, mais frise quand même la transgression, et qui est plutôt *non contra sed praeter legem*. Bakutu b'Is'éy'olónjó des Basék'Élongama (Bęsǫmbǫ́) a eu de sa première femme, Wêtai de Likolí, un fils Bolónjó et une fille Imǫtę. Avec la dot de celle-ci, mariée à Lofalanga de Mpámá (Nkǫ́lę), il se procure une seconde femme, Mbélá des Baséká Nkamba ou Bofétola (Bonkoso). Le fils Bolónjó en tombe amoureux et la ravit à son père, qui, étant devenu passablement vieux, avait jusque-là omis de lui procurer une épouse. Làdessus, fureur du vieux Bakutu, qui va jusqu'à menacer de tuer son fils. Mais la famille intervient et donne tort au père. Celui-ci se soumet au jugement familial et finalement se calme. Il cède Mbélá et va même plus loin. Pour éviter à son fils de méchantes allusions et lui épargner la honte des dires d'autrui, comme s'il possédait une femme obtenue d'une façon anormale, il verse pour Mbélá une nouvelle dot de 40 anneaux plus 2 Batswá comme *bosóngo*. De ce fait, le clan Bofétola a touché deux dots pour la même femme, mais provenant du même homme, et pour une raison plausible, ce qui, loin de donner lieu à des abus, a procuré beaucoup d'avantages. Car les deux parties étaient contentes : les Baséká Nkamba s'enrichirent doublement; leur fille était honorée hors mesure et recevait deux *nkita*; de l'autre côté, les Basék'Élongama ont dû débourser, mais leur bon renom et leur gloire ne pouvaient que s'en accroître. Ensuite, le fils de Mbélá a obtenu ainsi une très forte position dans son clan maternel et une influence plus grande par la double progéniture des deux *nkita* de sa mère.

Une exception réelle à cette règle est admise dans l'union par achat (chap. III, art. VII) et dans le cas de refuge (chap. VIII, art. II, § 3, n° 2). Elle ne l'infirme pourtant nullement, car les deux unions sortent totalement des cadres ordinaires et des règles générales et peuvent être considérées comme n'étant pas de vrais mariages.

---

(1) Dont il sera question plus loin, chap. VI, art. VIII, § 2.

3° *Le droit à la dot.*

A. — Le droit à la dot est-il *définitif ?* En d'autres termes, la dot reste-t-elle définitivement acquise ?

Pour répondre à cette question nous devons anticiper sur la suite de cette étude. Nous nous bornerons donc à ne signaler que les conclusions des données qui y seront exposées *in extenso* ([1]). En cas de divorce, les valeurs doivent être restituées de part et d'autre. Au contraire, en cas de décès de l'épouse, elles restent définitivement acquises.

La non-restitution en cas de divorce empêcherait le remariage de la divorcée. Ce semble être une concession à la faiblesse humaine. C'est la seule explication logique que je conçoive — confirmée d'ailleurs par toutes les autres stipulations du droit nkundó relativement à la matière — de l'existence de ces deux règles diamétralement opposées : acquisition définitive et acquisition limitée uniquement à la durée de l'union.

B. — *Les titulaires du droit à la dot.*

Comme il appert de tout ce que nous avons dit, la dot est prise en possession par le père de la femme pour laquelle elle a été versée. A son défaut, c'est l'aîné de ses frères, ou son *bǫnankáná*, — s'il est établi chez lui et a hérité de son autorité, — qui touche la dot de sa nièce (cousine). Sinon, c'est l'aîné des fils. En un mot, ils se succèdent dans l'ordre de la hiérarchie familiale.

Au clan maternel reviennent les spirales en cuivre, la chèvre et certains *beéngo*.

---

[1] Cfr. chap. VIII, art. III, § 5, et chap. IX, art. VII.

Seulement, il existe des circonstances qui peuvent bouleverser cet ordre, de sorte que le clan paternel ne touche pas la moindre partie de la dot. Cela arrive quand la fille à marier a, pour une raison suffisamment grave, quitté son clan paternel et a été adoptée par la famille de sa mère. En voici un exemple historique :

On est à Bompóma (Injọlọ́), entre 1890 et 1900. Un des habitants, Ilónjó yâ Nsọmbọla, a eu de sa femme, Eale de Bokéndela (Boángí), deux enfants : un garçon : Mpulûnẹ́nẹ, et une fille : Embọ́mbi. Celle-ci est enlevée par un des soldats noirs qui étaient venus occuper la région, et emmenée par lui vers son village d'origine, quelque part près de Coq. Un autre homme de Bompóma, nommé Isêntulu, voit sa femme enlevée et emmenée par un autre soldat. Or Ilónjó devait un chien à cet Isêntulu. Celui-ci profite du désordre causé par le début de l'occupation pour exiger avec force menaces son dû. Ilónjó n'ayant pas de chien, et probablement pris de peur, livre au créancier son fils. Isêntulu n'a rien de plus pressé que de rejoindre le soldat et lui propose d'échanger sa femme contre ce garçon esclave. Ils tombent d'accord et le soldat emmène le garçon, qui, d'une façon que j'ignore, meurt entre les mains de son maître.

Encore du temps de l'État Indépendant, Embómbi parvient à regagner son pays. En passant par son village maternel, elle apprend la façon dont son père a agi envers son frère Mpulûnẹ́nẹ. Indignée, elle ne continue plus sa route, mais déclare qu'elle rompt avec son père et désire demeurer auprès de son oncle maternel, Isála. Après quelque temps, un certain Belekú vient la demander en mariage et paie la dot à Isála.

En 1922, Ilónjó s'amène à Bokéndela et dépose plainte au chef Efóle contre Isála, pour avoir touché la dot de sa fille. Efóle, assisté du messager Bongimá et des notables, tranche en faveur de l'accusé : le plaignant ayant gravement offensé sa fille par la livraison de son frère en esclave, ce qui a occasionné sa mort, doit d'abord se réconcilier avec elle. Si elle accepte les excuses, le père recevra la dot. Ils se mettent d'accord sur la nature du droit de réconciliation (*bǫǫ́ndǫ*) : Ilónjó payera une chèvre. Comme il ne l'a pas avec lui, il remet son couteau comme gage de paiement (*wę́kǫ*). Iomí, bǫ̀nankáná de Isála (décédé depuis), s'engage à restituer la dot, et verse déjà anticipativement 12 anneaux et 2 couteaux. Ilónjó rentre chez lui. On l'attend vainement; on ne le revoit plus, ni lui, ni sa chèvre.

Troisième acte : Nous sommes en février 1933. Efóle, Bongimá, etc., ont été destitués, comme conséquence de la réorganisation des chefferies. Bokwála a été investi chef des Boángi. Le tribunal de chefferie a commencé à fonctionner, et notre Ilónjó en profite pour revenir à la charge: il dépose plainte contre Iomí et le frère d'Isála. Engongolo, qui n'était pas sur place en 1922, mais est maintenant rentré chez lui. Le 6 mars 1933, la palabre est tranchée. Les nouveaux tenants de l'autorité, naturellement, y trouvent une occasion favorable pour affermir leur position et font juste l'opposé de leurs prédécesseurs, en condamnant Iomí et Engongolo et en donnant gain de cause à Ilónjó.

Or, voilà un réel abus de pouvoir. Car, en droit nkundó, Ilónjó seul est en faute. Il a mal agi sur toute la lignée. Sa fille ne devait plus le reconnaître comme père, puisqu'il l'avait, le premier, virtuellement reniée. Et le clan maternel pouvait, voire devait, en toucher la dot (*cf.* aussi le cas expliqué au chap. IX, art. IV).

ARTICLE XII. — L'ATTITUDE A L'ÉGARD DE LA DOT.

§ 1. Quelle est l'attitude de la femme à l'égard de la dot ?

Nous seuls, Européens, pouvons poser pareille question. Devant l'intelligence du Nkundó elle est superflue; non, réellement stupide. Le régime de la dot est le régime matrimonial normal. Le Nkundó ne conçoit pas le mariage d'une autre façon. Sans versement de dot, pas de mariage : la femme est considérée non comme épouse, mais comme une pure esclave. C'est une conséquence nécessaire du système dotal. Aussi constatons-nous sans étonnement que la femme est très attachée à ce système et que dans les conditions normales, c'est-à-dire en dehors des influences européennes, elle ne veut pas d'une union sans dot, qui la mettrait dans une condition d'esclave. C'est une vérité à la Palisse. Tout, dans cet ordre d'idées, se tient comme les anneaux d'une chaîne.

§ 3. Notre attitude à l'égard de la dot.

Au début de la colonisation, les Européens, agents du Gouvernement comme missionnaires, considéraient avec répugnance le système matrimonial basé sur le versement d'une dot. A leurs yeux, ce n'était ni plus ni moins que la vente des femmes, donc une forme d'esclavage, contre laquelle il fallait réagir en abolissant la dot et en introduisant le mariage à l'européenne, plus conforme à la nature libre de l'homme. Nombre de Noirs occupés chez les Blancs, comme soldats, travailleurs, etc., furent ainsi mariés sans dot. Pourtant, aucune action directe ne fut entreprise contre le système. Plus tard on commença à s'apercevoir qu'il était nuisible d'abolir la coutume ancestrale avant d'avoir pu la remplacer par un régime meilleur (1). Puis on finit par se rendre compte de ce que le versement d'une dot n'était nullement un achat (2).

---

(1) Il ne suffit même pas de le remplacer par un régime meilleur; il faut que ceux qui en bénéficient le comprennent et soient convaincus qu'il est meilleur.

(2) Une des causes qui ont retardé une vue plus réelle sur la nature de la dot est sans doute le manque de connaissances linguistiques chez les Européens. Les indigènes ne savaient pas la langue bobangi d'abord, lingala ensuite, qu'on leur parlait, et ils employaient donc forcément (et emploient encore) des termes à sens vague et large. Ainsi ils usaient — et usent souvent encore — pour le mariage le mot *sómba* = acheter, quoique leur langue possède des mots bien nets.

Etant ainsi peu à peu avisés de la véritable nature de la dot, plusieurs Européens commencèrent à prôner le retour au régime ancien, d'aucuns d'une façon radicale et intransigeante, d'autres d'une manière plus raisonnable, en tenant compte des changements produits par la colonisation. On avait constaté que les indigènes ne sont pas encore mûrs pour l'abolition des lois ancestrales et que les unions sans dot ne tiennent qu'exceptionnellement, en partie parce qu'on avait omis de remplacer les sanctions anciennes par des mesures nouvelles adaptées aux circonstances. Finalement, tant le Gouvernement que les Missions demandèrent, avec plus ou moins de rigueur, l'arrangement de l'affaire dotale avant d'admettre les époux au mariage « civil » ou « religieux ».

L'abolition du système dotal est dans les vœux de beaucoup d'Européens parce qu'il leur paraît inférieur. Et, de fait, il constitue, dans les circonstances actuelles de temps et de lieux, un obstacle à l'évolution des indigènes vers un meilleur état moral et social (1). Mais cette abolition n'est ni réalisable, ni même opportune. Ce système pénètre et pour ainsi dire pétrit toute la vie familiale et sociale de nos populations. Son abrogation pure et simple bouleverserait complètement leur ordre établi. Il faut d'abord que la mentalité change, et ce but ne peut être atteint que graduellement, puisqu'il s'agit d'un changement moral. Or, dans l'état actuel de ces populations, l'évolution n'est pas suffisamment avancée pour que l'abolition de la dot soit bienfaisante. Si jamais, c'est ici que vaut l'axiome : *nihil leges sine moribus*.

Mais ce qui pourrait peut-être déjà se faire dans cette voie, c'est la limitation du montant de la dot. Un contrôle sévère — très difficile en pratique — devrait assurer l'application de cette mesure, à laquelle, au début, maint intéressé cherchera à se soustraire. Pour obtenir d'heureux effets, cette limitation devrait être accompagnée de la répression efficace de l'adultère et de la fréquence des divorces. Ce serait un premier pas vers l'idéal. D'autres pourraient suivre au fur et à mesure que les indigènes évoluent vers un degré supérieur de moralité.

---

(1) Il faut penser surtout aux suites du système de la *nkíta*.

Ces considérations nous invitent à dire quelques mots du :

§ 2. Commerce de la dot.

Par ce terme on peut entendre deux choses différentes. Ou bien on veut dire que le montant général des dots a augmenté dans des proportions énormes depuis la pénétration européenne. Ou bien on parle de l'augmentation de la dot d'une seule femme, pour des mariages successifs et au profit de sa famille.

Dans le premier sens il est exact que le montant de la dot a considérablement augmenté. La cause en est l'accroissement des richesses produit par la colonisation. Il y a une plus grande facilité d'acquisition. Mais nous ne devons nullement exclure la cupidité de beaucoup de parents, qui en est également accrue. Celle-ci est la plus grande et peut atteindre des proportions scandaleuses dans les régions où, comme chez les riverains du Bas, la dot est payée en richesses européennes (argent, tissus, machines, ustensiles) et où elle atteint et dépasse aisément 2.000 francs. Songez à ce que cela représente, particulièrement aux époques de dépression économique (¹). Inévitablement, l'exemple de l'un entraîne l'autre, car — faut-il le répéter? — tout s'enchaîne.

Une autre cause peut agir, et agit parfois. C'est le désir

(¹) Voici, à titre de comparaison, quelques chiffres moyens de 1934 :

Salaire	fr.	20.— à 25.—
Copal, le kg.		0.50 à 0.70
Palmistes		0.10 à 0.20
Noix de palme		0.05 à 0.10

du mari de s'attacher la femme d'autant plus fermement qu'il a payé davantage. Ce sentiment est certainement louable, surtout en considération de la facilité avec laquelle la femme recourt au divorce. Sa mise en pratique, toutefois, est pleine de dangers. Si elle demeure limitée à un cas isolé, c'est-à-dire à un seul monogame qui consacre toute sa fortune à son épouse unique, le danger est minime. Tel le cas d'un de nos catéchistes qui a versé des sommes énormes, sans que son exemple ait eu la moindre répercussion sur la région. Mais elle est très grave si un homme la met en pratique pour la constitution d'un harem, spécialement lorsque, à cet effet, il débauche les épouses d'autrui. Ainsi, un homme auquel l'Administration a dévolu une grande influence politique a-t-il fait monter dans une proportion fantastique le prix général des dots chez les Ekonda du Nord (¹).

Contre une augmentation pareille des dots, il serait utile de réagir. Car pour beaucoup de jeunes gens elle crée le danger de les condamner au célibat, alors que, autrement, ils pourraient, avec le fruit de leur travail personnel, se constituer un foyer.

(¹) Une cause qui a agi sur l'augmentation des dots chez les Wangata et autres tribus voisines de Coquilhatville est décrite par le R. P. Kervyn, dans *Congo*, 1922, I, p. 544. Comme l'étude a été rédigée en néerlandais, il me paraît utile de traduire ici le texte en entier :

« Lorsque les premiers Européens furent arrivés à Léopoldville et à Brazzaville, les tissus et autres articles européens ne tardèrent pas à faire leur apparition à Coquilhatville Les chefs Yoma de Boyeka, Ibuka de Boyere (Boyela), Yamba de Eala, Nkake de Bokele, etc., remontaient les rivières Tshuapa et Ikelemba et, au moyen de ces marchandises, achetaient des esclaves, des femmes et de l'ivoire.

« Rentrés chez eux, ils acquéraient des épouses de leur région et les payaient avec les esclaves et les femmes qu'ils avaient achetés à bon marché au moyen des produits européens. Pour une femme de leur région ils payaient 3 à 4 femmes esclaves. L'arrivée des Blancs et de Noirs étrangers leur apprit le chiffre *nkęsi* (10,000), mot qui dans leur idée représentait 1.000 et que, autrefois, ils nommaient 10 nkoto ou 10 × 100.

« Les Européens ne tardèrent pas à devoir intervenir dans leurs palabres de femmes. La chose est inévitable au Pays Noir. Lorsque les

Dans le second sens, le terme de commerce des dots s'applique plus exactement. Après le divorce, toutes les valeurs doivent être restituées au mari. Par conséquent, le nouvel époux doit payer au moins autant que le premier, et, en règle générale, il doit même ajouter un supplément pour la famille, qui, d'ailleurs, a dû se mettre en frais pour cette palabre. Et ainsi de suite. Plus donc une femme a eu de maris successifs, plus la dot monte. Dans ce sens, le commerce de la dot ne me semble nullement condamnable. L'augmentation est raisonnable. Car, non seulement elle constitue pour la famille de la femme une certaine compensation pour ses tracas, mais, en outre, elle peut exercer une bonne influence sur l'état social de la population. Pour cela il faut que le divorce ne devienne pas un moyen de satisfaire la cupidité (ce que, d'une manière générale, il n'est pas encore à présent) et que l'augmentation ne soit pas exagérée.

Dans ces cas, l'augmentation peut donc avoir un effet salutaire sur la moralité et la stabilité des unions, en effrayant les hommes de prendre pour épouse une divorcée et, par contre-coup, en incitant les femmes à plus de prudence et à une moindre légèreté. Ici, tout est question de mesure, de prudence et de surveillance suivie de la part des autorités responsables.

Noirs présentaient aux Blancs leurs palabres, ils n'osaient ou ne voulaient pas dire : « J'ai payé cette femme avec 3 autres femmes »; ils disaient : « j'ai payé cette femme avec 3 *nkęsi* de mitako », c'est-à-dire 3×1.000 mitako. Entre-temps, les mots *nkoto* et *nkęsi* obtenaient leur valeur de 1.000 et 10.000. Mais on continuait à dire qu'une femme avait *été* payée avec des *nkęsi*, et cela par l'erreur des Blancs ou par la cupidité des polygames, ou par les deux ensemble. Plus tard, plusieurs femmes furent de fait payées au moyen de *nkęsi*, lorsque, notamment, le mitako était devenu la monnaie officielle du Congo. Ce n'était d'ailleurs pas étonnant, car les polygames tenaient au monopole des femmes et avaient tout intérêt à augmenter le prix.

« Autrefois, le prix pour les femmes n'était pas plus élevé à Wangata qu'ailleurs. Beaucoup de femmes n'ont été payées que de 5 *bakonga*, comme, entre autres à Bokala, près de Bamanya, village dépendant du chef Yoma de Boyeka. »

§ 4. Raison d'être de la dot.

Cette question ne doit pas être posée aux indigènes : ils ne savent pas y répondre. Les faits, non plus, ne donnent aucune certitude. Tout ce qu'on peut tenter est de construire une hypothèse qui concorde avec la réalité.

Comme théories explicatives nous trouvons : celle de la compensation donnée à la famille de la femme pour le membre qu'elle perd (par exemple Seitz, dans *Africa*, III, p. 85; cfr. aussi Torday, *Africa*, II, p. 275, Exchange); celle d'un paiement de fécondité; enfin, celle de la garantie de la stabilité du mariage et de la bonne entente dans le ménage (cf., par exemple Torday, *loc. cit.*, pp. 274 et suiv.).

Il appert de l'exposé du paiement de la dot que les faits constatés chez les Nkundó sont plutôt favorables à cette dernière thèse, quoiqu'ils n'excluent pas la première et que, peut-être, ils unissent les deux en une seule explication.

La dot comprend une partie un peu spéciale : le *bọsọ́ngọ*. Or, quelle est la raison d'être de ce paiement particulier? Quoique nous devions encore signaler plus loin certains faits du remboursement de la dot (chap. VIII), qui peuvent en donner une compréhension plus nette, nous pouvons déjà indiquer quelques essais d'explication possible. Il a été souvent suggéré par des coloniaux divers que l'esclave serait requis pour remplacer la femme : la perte que subit la famille dans son activité (enfants, travail) (¹) devrait être compensée par la livraison d'un être humain qui pourra travailler pour elle et lui donner des enfants (les enfants d'un esclave restant toujours clients du maître de leur père). Cette explication est manifestement l'application particulière au *bọsọ́ngọ* de la théorie de la compensation. Et pour cette partie spéciale de la dot, les règles du droit nkundó sont favorables à l'hypothèse

---

(¹) Cfr. chap. VI, art. II.

en question. En effet, l'homme qui n'a pas effectué ce paiement ultime perd ses droits sur une des filles, dont la dot enrichira le clan maternel, en lui procurant les moyens d'obtenir une nouvelle épouse. Toutefois, les explications des indigènes font plutôt comprendre cette règle comme une espèce de sanction, ce que, en réalité, elle n'est pourtant pas, ainsi que nous l'avons vu.

§ 5. Élément essentiel de la dot.

Comme nous l'avons vu, la dot consiste en divers versements : *likulá* et *ndanga*, tous deux paiements d'engagement: *walo*, première partie de la dot proprement dite, et *bọsọ́ngọ*, partie qui parfait la dot. Les *belonga*, etc., peuvent être laissés hors de considération.

Or, de ces paiements, lequel est l'élément essentiel de la dot? Incontestablement, nous pouvons exclure *likulá* et *ndanga*. Tant la nature, le but et le nom de ces versements que le titre qu'ils font donner à la femme prouvent leur caractère de simples paiements de fiançailles. Des deux autres versements, nous pouvons conclure que c'est le *walo* qui est l'essentiel. Car le *bọsọ́ngọ* n'ajoute aucun caractère juridique nouveau propre à l'union, et son intérêt ne se révèle que dans des questions accessoires, qu'il est inutile de répéter ici.

§ 6. Le rôle de la famille.

Comme nous l'avons vu, c'est toujours le père, ou son successeur, qui arrange tout, qui s'occupe de tout, qui paraît au premier plan. Une affaire de mariage ne se conclut point en l'absence du chef de famille, tant du côté du mari que de celui de la femme.

Pendant la composition de ce travail, un jeune homme, Ikotama de Bongíli (Líókó, Ekonda), en possession des valeurs nécessaires au paiement de la dot pour sa future, Etúli, fille de Mpokú, de Lofelí (Bongíli), attend depuis de longs mois l'arrivée de son oncle, Ekamba, chef de famille, retenu par ses fonctions de catéchiste de la Mission protestante à Longa.

Quoique la mère reçoive une certaine part de la dot, elle n'a pourtant aucun droit d'intervenir dans la constitution et l'arrangement du mariage de son enfant. Son mari porte tout à sa connaissance, écoute même plus ou moins sérieusement l'exposé de ses vues, opinions et désirs, non parce qu'elle y a le moindre droit en justice, mais uniquement par esprit d'amour conjugal et de bonne entente.

⁂

Ce serait le lieu ici de faire la synthèse de ce que nous avons vu jusqu'à ce moment et d'essayer d'en déduire la conception juridique de la nature du mariage nkundó. Mais comme il nous reste à étudier diverses questions fort importantes, nous sommes obligé de remettre cette synthèse à la fin du chapitre III.

CHAPITRE III.

DES DIFFÉRENTES FORMES DE MARIAGES ET UNIONS PSEUDO-MATRIMONIALES.

Le droit et la pratique nkundó connaissent diverses formes sous lesquelles l'union conjugale peut se présenter, mais qui n'atteignent pas toutes le même degré de perfection, et dont certaines ne sont connues que par l'une ou l'autre partie des tribus envisagées.

En lonkundo, mariage se traduit par *liála*. Ce mot s'emploie tant au sens large et universel qu'au sens restreint, tout comme le verbe dont il dérive : *bál*, qui est usité pour désigner l'union sexuelle comme telle, même illégitime. Ainsi on dit : *íy'áfé bale ô liála*=les rapports entre ces deux (adultères ou célibataires) ne sont pas des actes isolés, mais des relations suivies, prenant la forme d'un concubinage et ainsi ayant une ressemblance extérieure avec le mariage.

Mbáli est celui qui épouse, donc mari. Mais ce terme est général, sans relation avec la conjointe, car dans ce sens mari se dit *bŏme*. *Njéngi*, du radical *-éng*, est celui qui a payé la dot. Ce peut être une personne distincte du *mbáli*, comme le démontrera l'examen du mariage par héritage (art. II).

Après un court retour sur le mariage type dont nous venons de décrire, au chapitre précédent, l'élaboration, nous examinerons d'une façon détaillée les autres formes d'unions matrimoniales et pseudo-matrimoniales en vogue chez les Nkundó. Ce sont, dans des articles successifs :

I. Le mariage par Nkumbó;
II. Le mariage par héritage, dont
III. Le mariage d'une *Bosóló* constitue une particularité;
IV. Le remplacement;
V. L'offre d'une épouse, ou *Boóngá*;
VI. L'échange, et enfin
VII. L'achat.

Une dernière forme est le mariage d'une esclave, dont nous réservons l'étude au chapitre VII (art. V).

ARTICLE I. — MARIAGE PAR NKUMBÓ.

Le mariage dont nous avons déjà décrit l'élaboration est le mariage type, appelé *liála jă nkumbó. Nkumbó* est l'acte du verbe *-kumbol*=prendre en mariage de la façon typique, et dont l'intransitif est *-kumbwa*=être prise en mariage. La forme transitive n'est appliquée qu'au mari: la forme intransitive ne vaut que pour l'épouse. Donc, de la part d'une femme, l'acte d'être prise en mariage est nécessairement exprimé par la forme intransitive-passive, et l'acte de l'homme par la forme transitive.

Le mariage par *nkumbó* est le mariage avec une femme libre, par versement direct de la dot aux parents de la femme avec entremise d'un *ṇdonga*.

Cette union existe, soit qu'on épouse une jeune fille qui n'a pas encore été mariée auparavant, soit qu'elle ait déjà eu un fiancé ou un mari. Dans ce dernier cas, l'union ne devient mariage par *nkumbó* qu'après le divorce (¹). Il diffère du premier par une grande circonspection dans la façon de procéder, — aussi longtemps que la dot n'a

---

(¹) Cfr. chap. VIII, art. II et III.

été restituée, — afin d'éviter la colère du mari abandonné et de ses conséquences (bagarres et guerres), et, de la part des parents, par le remboursement de la dot. La femme peut être rentrée dans sa famille, ou bien s'être rendue. directement ou indirectement, chez le nouvel amant. Ce dernier cas était rare, parce que gros de suites fâcheuses. Il n'était possible que quand le nouveau mari était un homme riche, qui paierait la dot sans tarder, ou redouté pour son courage, son ardeur combative, ses influences. la grande supériorité numérique de son clan, des clients et Batswá. Car aussi longtemps que la dot ne lui a pas été restituée, les droits de l'ancien mari restent.

Les Nkundó considèrent cette espèce d'union matrimoniale comme étant le mariage parfait. Ceci deviendra plus clair par l'examen des autres formes de mariage que nous allons expliquer.

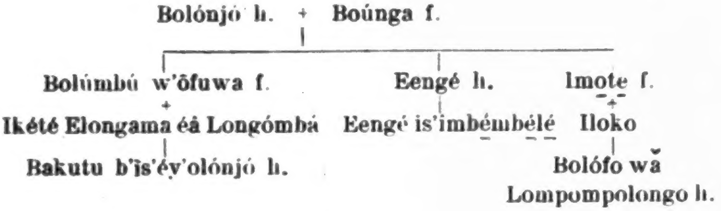
ARTICLE II. — MARIAGE PAR HÉRITAGE.

Cette forme s'appelle *liála jă lisangó*, ou *lisangó* tout court. *Lisangó* signifie héritage, du verbe *sangol* = hériter, et a le sens tout large, s'appliquant à n'importe quel objet.

La mort du mari ne rend pas, *ipso facto*, la liberté à la veuve. Elle demeure liée à la famille de son époux défunt.

Après la fête de fin de deuil, les veuves, qui jusque-là avaient dû s'abstenir de toute relation sexuelle. rentrent dans leurs familles respectives. Pendant la dernière période du deuil, elles avaient déjà eu l'occasion d'être courtisées, ou avaient repris leurs relations avec leurs amants antérieurs, parents ou non du mari défunt.

C'est à sa propre famille que la veuve doit être demandée en remariage. A l'exception de la *bosóló*, dont il sera question à l'article suivant. le partage des femmes entre les héritiers ne peut donc être considéré comme un partage de personnes comme telles, mais uniquement au titre des valeurs pécuniaires qu'elles représentent. En principe, elles reviennent au frère du défunt, mais d'autres parents, surtout neveux, peuvent avoir des droits totaux ou partiels sur l'une ou l'autre d'entre elles (¹). Ces droits sont basés sur l'origine des dots avec lesquelles les veuves ont été acquises. Nous y avons déjà touché au chapitre précédent, quant à certaines personnes. Encore d'autres cas peuvent se présenter. Au lieu d'entrer dans un long exposé, expliquons ceci plutôt par deux cas historiques :



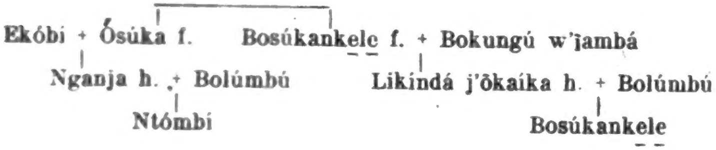
Imotę, de Elękę (Bongíli), un des clans de Lokongo, est mariée à Iloko de Imǫmǫ (Bongíli). Avec les valeurs reçues de sa famille maternelle, leur fils Bolófo épouse trois femmes : Wăngi, Bosoí, favorite, et une esclave originaire de Bolaká (Wăngatá). A sa mort, les veuves appartiennent au clan Elękę, source de sa richesse. Deux prétendants se lèvent : Eengé (cousin germain du défunt, mais, en terminologie nkundó, son fils) et Bakutu, de Bokenda (Bęsǫmbǫ́), autre cousin germain, mais effectif devant la mentalité nkundó. Ils doivent se partager les veuves. Mais tous deux ont jeté leur dévolu sur la favorite et se la disputent. Finalement, elle est assignée à Bakutu, qui est le « père » de son rival et le « frère aîné » du défunt. L'esclave échoit également à Bakutu (²), tandis qu'Eengé doit se contenter de la première épouse. Mais lui et son clan conservent un droit sur ces femmes et leur

---

(¹) Cfr. chap. II, art. IV, § 3, et art. X.
(²) Qui la cède à Ikáudó y'ăngamba de Elękę.

progéniture. Cet exemple est assez ancien : deux petits-fils de Bakutu et d'Ikándó que je connais personnellement très bien ont maintenant entre 50 et 60 ans.

Voici un exemple plus récent :


Ekóbi + Ósúka f.
Bosúkankẹlẹ f. + Bokungú w'ĩambá
Nganja h. + Bolúmbú
Likíndá j'ŏkaíka h. + Bolúmbú
Ntómbi
Bosúkankẹlẹ

Deux sœurs Ósúka et Bosúkankẹlẹ, de Ikẹngọ, Ntómbá (Wăngatá), sont mariées respectivement à Ekóbí de Likáala (Bẹsọmbọ́, Bombwanja) et à Bokungú de Bombénga wă Ikolé (Bẹsọmbọ́). Nganja épouse Bolúmbú de Iámbo (Bonkoso). Devenue veuve, celle-ci est héritée — pour que le patrimoine ne se disperse pas — par le cousin germain maternel du défunt, Likíndá, auquel elle donne une fille Bosúkankẹlẹ, dont le père emploie la dot pour se procurer la femme Bombúla (Teresa), fille d'Ilito de Boléngé (Bongíli). A la mort de Likíndá les droits reviennent à Ntómbí (Joseph), dans la personne de la veuve Bombúla, *nkita* dẹ sa sœur utérine.

Si l'héritier légitime, ou un autre proche du défunt, désire épouser une veuve, il se rend, après avoir pris le conseil du chef de famille, chez les parents de la femme et leur donne des *bekooli* (¹) = 1 à 3 anneaux de cuivre, qui seront ajoutés au montant de la dot. Ce cadeau est une preuve de son respect pour la famille de la femme (²). Si après un certain temps la femme ne veut plus rester avec lui, mais aime un autre proche parent, celui-ci porte aussi ses *bekooli*: même si la femme n'est pas d'abord rentrée

---

(¹) Substantif pluriel dérivé du verbe *koola* = chercher, prendre pour quelqu'un; donc des objets pour aller prendre quelqu'un.

(²) A côté de cette interprétation indigène nous pouvons en donner une autre, plus profonde et de nature juridique, ce qui sera fait plus loin (art. IX).

chez elle, mais a passé de l'un à l'autre. Les *bekooli* du premier sont restitués.

Si le nouveau mari n'est apparenté au défunt qu'à un degré éloigné (¹), il doit, outre les *bekooli* aux parents de la femme, donner à l'héritier un *bompángá* dénommé *nsâsangó* ou *bosangójwá* (chèvre, chienne, ou cinq à dix anneaux de cuivre, d'après les circonstances), qui ne fait pas partie de la dot, — celle-ci étant un payement à la famille de la femme, — mais est un cadeau destiné à ménager les susceptibilités de l'héritier et à gagner ou affermir sa sympathie bienveillante. Il équivaut à demander la permission de cohabiter avec cette femme et de bénéficier de son activité.

Nous devons donc distinguer deux sortes de mariage par héritage :

1° Le nouveau mari héritier appartient à la famille immédiate du défunt; il est *eóto éâ ntsína* : fils, frère, oncle, neveu, cousin;

2° Le nouveau mari héritier est d'une parenté éloignée: il est *eóto éâ nsǫ́ngę́*.

Dans le premier cas le mariage est considéré comme assez stable, difficile à rompre, mais pourtant plus facilement dissoluble qu'un mariage par *nkumbó*. La difficulté ou la facilité de la dissolution sont en rapport avec le degré de parenté. La raison que donnent les Nkundó pour la plus grande facilité de rupture est que le mari héritier n'a pas versé la dot lui-même : il n'a fait que la recevoir d'autrui. Aussi, s'il ne veut plus de la femme, il motive le renvoi en disant : « Ce n'est pas moi en personne qui ai payé la dot pour toi ». De son côté, la femme invoquera, *mutatis mutandis*, la même raison. Pour le reste, l'union est comme un mariage par *nkumbó*. C'est pour-

---

(¹) On le nomme *eóto éâ nsǫ́ngę́* = littéralement : parent du sommet; contre *eóto éâ ntsína* = parent de la base, donc rapproché.

quoi, lorsque la femme abandonne son mari, on emploie le terme *kófa*, tout comme pour un mariage par *nkumbó*.

La deuxième sorte de mariage par héritage est nettement différente. Le nouveau mari n'est pas le mari juridique: il n'est mari qu'au sens impropre, matériel. Ce sont les héritiers légitimes, donc les proches parents du défunt, et plus spécialement celui auquel la femme échoit de droit dans le partage de l'héritage, qui en restent les maîtres, et cela malgré les *nsásangó* payés par le mari usager. Cela appert de toutes les conséquences qui découlent de cette situation :

1° Les enfants qui naissent de cette union n'appartiennent pas au père naturel, mais aux propriétaires de la femme, aux *bankóló*. Ceux-ci, éventuellement, acquiesceront aussi à leur mariage et en toucheront la dot. C'est encore eux seuls qui ont le droit d'imposer un nom aux enfants.

2° Le faisant fonctions de mari n'a droit à l'activité de la femme que partiellement. Ainsi, si elle découvre un trésor enfoui dans son champ, qu'elle prenne un esclave en fuite ou trouve un objet quelconque de valeur délaissé, perdu, sans propriétaire connu, par exemple des anneaux, des objets forgés, des défenses d'éléphants, etc., ce n'est pas au mari qu'ils appartiennent, comme dans le mariage par *nkumbó*, mais aux maîtres. Ceux-ci ont encore droit à une partie des fruits de son industrie : pêche, chenilles, nourriture préparée même.

3° Si à une occasion quelconque le nouveau mari désire faire un cadeau ou versement à la famille de la femme, il doit demander l'intervention de l'époux propriétaire. Il le prie donc de l'accompagner : « *óndaké likiló* = fais-moi connaître mes beaux-parents; introduis-moi chez eux ». Ils s'y rendent avec le *ndonga*.

Il peut même se faire que le *bọsọ́ngọ* n'ait pas encore été versé et que l'époux non-propriétaire possède l'esclave ou les valeurs équivalentes. Avec la permission du propriétaire et accompagné du *ndonga* il pourra exécuter ce paiement. Pourtant il n'en reçoit aucun droit supplémentaire sur la femme.

Si celle-ci, un jour, retourne dans la famille immédiate du défunt, chez ceux qui sont ses « maîtres », ces derniers doivent restituer ces valeurs supplémentaires et toutes celles qui ont été versées par le mari « usager ». Si elle est prise en mariage par *nkumbó* par un étranger quelconque, la dot entière est restituée aux héritiers du défunt, qui doivent rembourser à l'homme qui a fait fonction de mari toutes les valeurs dotales qu'il a versées.

Cette pratique de « *ndălaka likiló* » n'est pas sans inconvénients. Il est, en effet, à redouter que l'héritier nie ces paiements et en refuse le remboursement. Cela est d'autant plus facile que le *ndonga* qui est intervenu est le même que celui qui a fonctionné dans l'élaboration du contrat matrimonial. Aussi remarque-t-on une tendance à l'omettre.

Notons que l'application de cette expression de *ndălaka likiló* n'est pas restreinte à ce seul cas. Il s'emploie aussi au sens obvie; ainsi lorsqu'il s'agit simplement de faire la connaissance de la famille de la femme, sans qu'il soit question de paiement, quoique, évidemment, pareille visite ne se conçoive point sans cadeaux; ou encore pour un homme qui désire s'unir à la parente de l'épouse d'un sien parent ou d'un ami quelconque.

4° Les présents que la famille de la femme fait au mari usager, par exemple à l'occasion d'une visite, d'un service rendu, etc., ne lui appartiennent pas, mais reviennent de droit aux héritiers. Si ceux-ci sont bien disposés à son égard, ils lui laissent l'usufruit d'une partie de ces biens, mais il n'y a aucun droit strict.

5° A la rupture de cette union par la femme on n'emploie pas le verbe *-kófa*, mais *-kumbwa* = être prise en mariage. Rejoint-elle un des proches parents du défunt, donc un de ses *bankóló*, on dit d'elle : « *aǒlul'ěka bǒm' ǒkáé* : elle est retournée chez son mari ». De son côté, l'homme qui a reçu la femme en usage peut à n'importe quel moment la répudier. Il lui dit : « *kęndá éka baóm' ǎkę̌, eḿ ntsikwěngákí* = va chez tes maris, je n'ai point payé la dot pour toi ». Quant aux valeurs données par lui en *nsǎsangó*, elles lui sont remboursées.

6° Enfin, si la femme meurt chez cet homme, il doit payer aux héritiers légitimes une indemnité (*-foma mbálaka*) qui est généralement un esclave ou sa valeur.

Cette deuxième sorte de mariage par héritage n'a donc rien qui caractérise le mariage légitime nkundó. Le mari n'a que l'usage de la femme. Ce n'est que l'héritier du défunt qui en toute vérité et légalité peut l'appeler épouse. D'ordinaire une femme engagée dans une telle union est plutôt appelée sa chose (*yǒmba*). Lui-même s'intitule son propriétaire, son maître, et l'on réserve le terme de mari à celui qui cohabite avec elle.

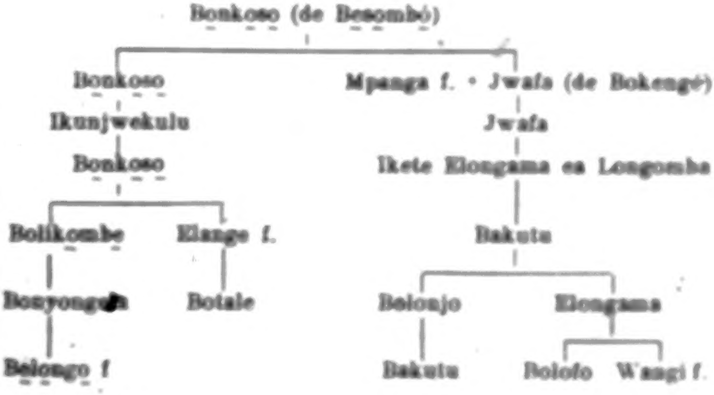
C'est à cause de toutes ces divergences manifestes que les Nkundó considèrent cette seconde espèce plutôt comme une union non matrimoniale. Avec le mariage proprement dit elle ne montre qu'une ressemblance extérieure : au fond la différence est essentielle, puisqu'elle n'en possède aucune propriété spécifique; ce n'est donc pas un mariage, mais un concubinage régulier.

Aussi un homme qui cohabite de cette façon avec une femme pour laquelle d'autres ont payé la dot est souvent l'objet d'allusions humiliantes. Ainsi il est traité de *nkolasangó* = preneur d'héritages (dans le sens de femmes héritées). Dans une dispute avec une femme pareille, sa congénère « achetée » régulièrement se permet parfois de battre des mains (*-foma losáka*) pour signifier sa supériorité. C'est la raison pour laquelle cette dernière est parfois appelée *wǎli óá fomalosáka*, par opposition à l'autre.

Les circonstances actuelles font encore mieux ressortir tout cela. Presque partout les indigènes même païens connaissent à présent l'intransigeance de l'Église catholique dans le domaine de l'indissolubilité du mariage religieux. Pour cette raison les « maîtres » ne permettent pas à une femme qui en droit leur appartient, mais qui de fait cohabite de la façon décrite avec un autre homme, de se marier religieusement avec celui-ci, à moins qu'il ne paie la dot.

Nous pouvons donc considérer cette dernière sorte d'union comme un concubinage qui ne satisfait pas aux conditions posées par la morale pour une union matrimoniale véritable. Quant à la première sorte, union avec un parent immédiat du défunt, la question est plus compliquée; mais j'opine pour sa valeur au point de vue moral. J'espère pourtant que d'autres voudront, pour plus de certitude, réexaminer le cas à la lumière des éléments de solution donnés.

Pour illustrer ce qui précède, citons un exemple historique des personnes dont voici la généalogie :


Bonkoso (de Besombó)
Bonkoso
Mpanga f. • Jwafa (de Bokengé)
Ikunjwekulu
Jwafa
Bonkoso
Ikete Elongama ea Longomba
Bolikombe
Elange f.
Bakutu
Bonyongwa
Botale
Bolonjo
Elongama
Belongo f
Bakutu
Bolofo
Wangi f.

Elongama (jr) épouse Ikǫ́kǫ́ de Bongili, fille de Bǫlę́kę́lá wá Nkunja et Tómpénda. Après sa mort, la veuve est prise en héritage par Bonyongela, auquel elle donne une fille Bẹlọ́ngọ́. Ce sont Bakutu (jr) et son cousin germain Bolófo qui disposent de la dot et sont responsables de ses palabres matrimoniales, à l'exclusion de son père Bonyongela (décédé depuis) et du frère de celui-ci, Bọnkọsọ. Par complaisance on a cédé à Bonyongela 18 anneaux. Les 30 autres ont été ajoutés par Bolófo à la dot de sa sœur Wǎngi pour se procurer la femme Ióngó (de Likolí, actuellement décédée). Après *x* ans, Ikọ́kọ́ abandonne Bonyongela pour Botálé, fils-de-la-sœur, qui, étant proche parent, ne donne pas de *nsǎsangó*. Ce qui avait été payé à ce titre par Bonyongela lui est restitué par Bakutu, puisque l'union est rompue. Cinq ans après, Ikọ́kọ́ quitte Botálé, dont elle n'est pas satisfaite, parce qu'il est paresseux et ne lui procure pas assez de gibier, de vêtements, etc. Elle se rend chez Ilumbé de Ngọmbẹ Mbálanga (Bongíli), qui, étant parent éloigné du côté maternel, donne les *nsǎsangó* réglementaires.

Un autre cas se présenta un de ces jours (mai 1933). Un de nos chrétiens, Babolá Michel, de Ianda (Bonkoso), veut prendre femme. Il a jeté son dévolu sur Bolúmbú, fille de Ntando éy'ilengu de Bofalambóka. Celle-ci, après le décès de son mari, Esalé éà Lonkongá (en 1926), avait été demandée par Bombóngo, parent éloigné d'Esalé, comme de coutume, par l'entremise de son frère aîné Engambí, et en versant un *bompángá* de 4 *bakonga* plus 20 francs. Entre-temps, Babolá a atteint l'âge adulte : il quitte notre école et rentre dans son village natal. Comme il est le neveu direct d'Esalé éà Lonkongá, il a un droit strict sur cette femme, qui quitte Bombóngo. Seulement, comme celui-ci est protestant, une question morale se pose au prêtre : il s'agit de savoir s'il existe un véritable mariage entre eux. Car, dans l'affirmative, il ne saurait être question de mariage entre Babolá et Bolúmbú, l'Église ne rompant pas un mariage valide entre chrétiens. Conformément à ce qui a été dit ci-dessus, une union comme celle du cas présent n'a pas, aux yeux des Nkundó, la nature du mariage type. Je voulais pourtant avoir tous mes apaisements et tâcher d'obtenir la plus grande certitude possible. A cet effet, je me rendis à Bǫnjǫku au moment de la perception de l'impôt. J'y trouvai beaucoup d'hommes réunis. Je soulevai la question du mariage par héritage. L'entretien se termina par l'opinion unanime que dans le cas proposé rien ne s'opposait à la nouvelle union. Tous les cas pareils, ajouta-t-on, sont plutôt une espèce de concubinage admis par la loi ancestrale, mais ne présentant aucune propriété d'un véritable mariage.

Afin d'éviter les inconvénients nombreux inhérents à cette seconde sorte de mariage par héritage, le mari, s'il a quelque richesse, fera tout son possible pour réunir les valeurs de la dot qu'il versera à son beau-père et que celui-ci emploiera au remboursement de l'héritier. Du fait de ce versement, qui se fait par l'intermédiaire d'un nouveau *ndonga* désigné par lui-même, la femme lui appartient pleinement. Et le mariage par héritage se change en mariage par *nkumbó*. Les *besangójwá* que l'époux avait donnés à l'héritier doivent lui être restitués, le lien qui l'unissait à cette femme étant rompu par ces formalités.

Il arrive que l'héritier voie ce nouveau versement de très mauvais œil et qu'il s'en trouve offensé. Autrefois cela pouvait donner lieu à une guerre, illégale il est vrai; après quoi, comme toujours, l'affaire s'arrangeait quand même.

D'autre part, il arrive aussi, et même assez communément, que la femme, tout en aimant son « mari » (au sens impropre), ne veut nullement du changement. Elle reste attachée de cœur à la parenté de son mari défunt, par amour pour celui-ci, ou par affection pour la famille qui l'a toujours bien traitée. Il n'est pas rare que le « concubin », lui proposant de l'épouser régulièrement, se heurte à une opposition irréductible. La femme peut même en être offusquée au point de l'abandonner pour un proche parent du défunt.

Dans ce domaine, un autre cas encore peut se présenter, bien qu'il soit plutôt rare : c'est celui, par exemple, de Lowåka, fille de Bompúkú de Bọntọlẹ. Après la mort de son époux, Botúna des Basékà Ilúka (Lofelí), elle est prise en mariage par un parent à lui, Nsẹngẹ, qui donne les *besangójwá* réglementaires à Imọmọ de Bofalambóka, *bọ́nankáná* de Botúna. Après un certain temps, Imọmọ, ayant eu une petite palabre avec Nsẹngẹ, n'entend plus maintenir la situation; il exige un mariage régulier pour rentrer dans ses droits dotaux sur Lowåka. D'accord avec celle-ci, Nsẹngẹ verse soixante *bakonga* aux parents de la femme, qui remboursent à Imọmọ. Ce dernier rend les *besangójwá* reçus et Lowåka devient ainsi la véritable épouse de Nsẹngẹ.

On le voit, on trouve ici toute la gamme des variantes individuelles selon les tempéraments et les sentiments des personnes en question. En conclusion, ce qui est le plus répandu, c'est l'attachement à la famille du défunt, ou le remariage en règle.

Dans ce dernier cas la veuve se rend chez un homme non apparenté, soit immédiatement après le deuil, soit après un certain temps de vie conjugale avec l'héritier. Celui-ci a droit au remboursement de la dot. Le nouveau mari doit faire tous les versements usuels par l'intermédiaire de son *ndonga* à lui, tout comme pour un mariage à *nkumbó* initial. Et de la sorte on ne donne plus à cette union le nom de mariage par héritage, avec lequel elle n'a rien de commun.

Dans tout mariage par héritage, que le nouveau mari soit héritier ou simplement parent du défunt, c'est-à-dire lorsque aucun versement de dot n'est intervenu, le mari doit donner à la femme un cadeau nommé *isengó*, donc cadeau d'héritage. La femme remet ce présent à sa famille ou le conserve pour ses besoins personnels. En tout cas, il n'est pas considéré comme faisant partie des valeurs dotales.

Enfin, pour tout remariage d'une veuve, que ce soit par héritage ou par nouveau *nkumbó*, le mari doit, avant d'avoir avec elle des relations conjugales, lui offrir un présent d'un ou deux anneaux ou couteaux équivalents. Ce cadeau se donne, soit le même jour que l'*isangó*, soit un autre, selon les cas. Il s'appelle *boingé* = couchette, ou, plus communément, *ikondeyantangé* (de *-kondeya* = faire monter sur, et *ntangé* = lit). C'est un cadeau de consolation après le veuvage. Contrairement à l'*isangó*, il fait partie de la dot. C'est probablement à ce cadeau de l'*ikondeyantangé* qu'Engels fait allusion lorsque, dans son étude citée sur les Wangata, il parle de « racheter le deuil ».

De l'examen du mariage par héritage il ressort que la veuve est libre de se remarier à l'homme de ses préférences, que ce soit l'héritier ou un autre parent du défunt, ou un étranger quelconque. N'est exceptée que la femme qui a été léguée par le défunt (¹). Si plus tard l'héritier ne satisfait pas à ses obligations envers elle, elle pourra réagir comme dans un mariage par *nkumbó*. Quant au cas spécial de la *bosálo*, nous allons en traiter.

Une autre loi se déduit des faits observés : aussi longtemps qu'aucun nouveau versement de dot n'est intervenu, la femme continue à appartenir à la famille du défunt. Seule la restitution de la dot rompt le contrat et le prive de tous ses effets (²).

Enfin, on y constate la propriété collective dans le clan ou la grande-famille. Un proche parent, Bosálo, par exemple, épousant la veuve, la considère en droit comme sa conjointe légitime, tout comme elle l'était du défunt;

(¹) Le Nkundó observe scrupuleusement les stipulations d'un testament ([illegible] ou [illegible]), parce qu'il craint la vengeance du défunt, qui, d'ailleurs, au moment où il exprime ses dernières volontés, ajoute d'ordinaire la menace : « Si vous ne les exécutez point, vous me suivrez dans la mort ».

(²) Nous devons encore revenir sur ces points à l'art. IX et suiv.

aucune nouvelle convention dotale ne doit intervenir. Le contrat préexistant continue à valoir. La seule nouveauté introduite est qu'un autre individu de la famille du défunt contracte le lien matrimonial avec la veuve. Que ce soit l'héritier légitime ou un proche parent qui épouse la femme, la chose revient au même de par la communauté d'intérêts (les enfants sont aussi bien ceux de Bosúlú que de l'héritier, par exemple (7).

A cause de la similitude superficielle des cas, il est utile de mentionner ici que la demande en usage d'une femme n'est pas restreinte aux seules veuves. Elle peut aussi s'appliquer à une femme de polygame durant la vie de son mari; mais elle n'est pratiquée que par un proche parent, et encore n'est-elle pas vue d'un bon œil. Généralement, le cas se présente comme suit : un homme tombe amoureux d'une des femmes du harem de son parent, et elle partage ses sentiments. Il la prend chez lui. Palabre. Fureur du mari, qui cesse toute relation avec le séducteur et ne veut plus de ses invitations ni de ses cadeaux, ce qui est la preuve d'une brouille sérieuse. Alors les autres parents interviennent pour réconcilier les deux adversaires, et voyant qu'il n'y a pas moyen d'empêcher la cohabitation ou jugeant que la chose n'est pas opportune, ils tâchent d'amadouer le mari légitime. L'amant lui fait remettre, par l'entremise de son aîné, un cadeau à titre de supplication. Le mari, ne trouvant personne en sa faveur, s'incline devant le fait accompli, accepte le présent (*bompángá*) et cède la femme en usage. Au lieu de s'y prendre de cette façon cavalière, l'amant peut également faire la demande d'une manière normale. Lorsque pour l'une ou l'autre raison les deux amoureux veulent cesser la cohabitation, ils se séparent sans autre cérémonie. Si le mari est bienveillant, il rend à son parent les valeurs données, et l'incident est clos.

---

chap. VIII et IX.

(7) Nous reviendrons sur cette question plus loin (art. IX).

Tel le cas arrivé autrefois à Insílǫ de Bokenyola (Bǫnjǫku) (1) : Dans le harem de son oncle maternel, E̲fǫnja la'Ófuwa, originaire de Bǫnjǫku, mais intégré dans les Bongale, il avait remarqué une certaine Mbiléeyenga, originaire de Bosáá, et « son cœur s'était fendu », comme disent les Nkundó. Par l'intermédiaire de son cousin germain aîné Mpętsí éà Lingǫmǫ, il envoie un *bompángá* de 6 anneaux à E̲fǫnja, en le priant de bien vouloir lui permettre la cohabitation avec cette femme. Sa requête est bien accueillie. Mais après un certain nombre d'années, leur passion s'étant refroidie et Insílǫ désirant contracter un mariage régulier pour se donner une postérité, il se sépare de Mbilé, qui rentre chez son mari. Celui-ci rend à Insílǫ les 6 anneaux, parce qu'il ne veut point s'enrichir aux dépens de son parent.

ARTICLE III. — LA BOSÓLÓ.

Le mariage d'une *bosóló* constitue une forme spéciale d'héritage de femmes.

Le terme *bosóló* est en usage partout. Les Injǫ́lǫ́ emploient encore un synonyme : *njémó*, terme impropre dérivé du verbe *émola*=faire se lever. De cette façon on dit : *émoja bǫ̃na njémó* = donner une *bosóló* à l'enfant (fils, fille) (2). Chez les Beloko et leurs Elíngá on entend, à côté de *bosóló*, encore le mot *bombíjí*.

Au jour où les veuves sont « levées de terre » et peuvent « remonter sur le lit » (3), tous ceux qui ont titre et droits de père, c'est-à-dire ceux qui ont la préséance, hommes ou femmes, s'assemblent avec le fils de la sœur, pour procéder à la cérémonie. Comme dans toutes les affaires, on se passe la parole par respect mutuel. Elle revient à l'aîné :

---

(1) Actuellement chef des Bonkoso.

(2) Ainsi encore les tribus Elanga de la région de Losanganya.

(3) Cfr. *Les Coutumes funéraires des Nkundó*. Les Elingá font la cérémonie quelques jours seulement après l'enterrement; les Boangi même avant. Les Injǫló commencent à imiter les Elingá.

père, frère, tante paternelle (*isómoto*). Le préposé fait un petit discours de circonstance, puis donne une des veuves au premier-né des enfants (*nsǫ́mi*), en tenant compte de ses préférences, dont on s'est assuré préalablement. On la lui remet en disant : « Nous arrachons pour toi la *bosóló* que ton père t'a laissée = *tókokumela bosóló bôki isé okotsikéláká* ». La signification propre de *kuma* est : saisir en tirant vers soi, arracher, et inclut une idée de force. L'application primaire se trouve dans *kuma ballo* = arracher des herbes; *kuma nsálá* = arracher des plumes, etc. Mais on l'emploie également pour tout ce qu'on prend d'une façon vigoureuse vers soi, comme *kuma mbǫmbǫ* = arracher une chikwangue d'un tas, etc.

La *bosóló* est toujours donnée au premier-né, sans égard au sexe et à l'exclusion des autres enfants. Si l'aîné est une fille, elle passe la *bosóló* à son frère, premier-né des garçons. Il s'agit ici de l'exercice d'un véritable droit d'aînesse, droit qui doit être racheté ou plutôt payé par le frère, en faisant à sa sœur un cadeau qui consiste surtout en poules, argent, menus objets utiles, souvent une quantité de bière. La même règle vaut si l'aîné cède la femme à son puîné, parce que celui-ci l'aime ardemment, ou bien — à présent — parce que l'ayant droit ne veut pas prendre une seconde femme.

Subsidiairement, une *bosóló* est encore donnée au *bǫ́nankáná*. Seul l'aîné de la sœur dont le défunt a touché la dot peut revendiquer ce droit. Si la dot de la mère du neveu n'entre pour rien dans la constitution du harem à partager, il n'a droit à une *bosóló* que si celle-ci n'est pas la *nkita* d'autrui, c'est-à-dire si elle a été acquise au moyen de richesses que le défunt s'est procurées par son activité personnelle. Si le défunt s'est procuré des femmes avec les dots de deux sœurs qui toutes deux laissent des fils, ce n'est que l'aîné de la sœur aînée qui a ce droit (1).

---

(1) Il peut arriver qu'ainsi un des fils se trouve déshérité par les droits du *bǫ́nankáná*. Celui-ci devra alors — si du moins il a une épouse

La délivrance d'une *bosóló* à d'autres parents que le fils ou la fille du défunt semble une extension du droit primitivement réservé à cet enfant.

Dans la remise d'une *bosóló* il est tenu compte des désirs de l'ayant droit. Pourtant le fils aîné n'obtient jamais la favorite de son père : seul le frère aîné peut en hériter.

Le fils peut ainsi recevoir en *bosóló* sa propre mère, mais uniquement s'il n'y a point d'autres veuves et si par ailleurs il ne possède aucun autre moyen de se procurer une épouse. Évidemment, il ne peut l'épouser. Elle lui est donnée pour qu'il perçoive le montant de la dot, lorsqu'elle sera remboursée pour le remariage.

Si le défunt ne laisse pas de harem, mais bien d'autres richesses, la *bosóló* est constituée par l'un ou l'autre objet de grande valeur. Ceci semble indiquer que le mot *bosóló* ne s'applique à la femme que par une extension du sens, qui, au fond et primitivement, serait « héritage par droit d'aînesse ».

Dès que la *bosóló* a été assignée à qui de droit, elle sort du groupe des veuves et se rend chez son nouveau mari; elle peut désormais cohabiter avec lui, tous deux étant dès ce moment dispensés de l'observation des prescriptions et interdits du deuil. Il arrive que la femme, par affection pour son mari défunt et par chagrin, prie son nouvel époux de patienter encore quelque temps. Son désir est respecté; car le refus d'acquiescer serait une injure fort grave qui pourrait causer la rupture immédiate.

Malgré la rareté du cas, — inconnu même autrefois, à ce qu'il paraît, — il se peut que la femme choisie comme *bosóló* refuse le mari auquel on la destine. En voici un

---

ou les valeurs nécessaires dans son clan paternel — céder cette femme à son cousin malheureux. C'est pour lui un devoir d'amour familial (*lóóte*) auquel il ne peut pas se soustraire.

exemple remontant à 1932 : Mpia de Mbanja avait « acquis » pour son fils aîné Bọmpẹlí, la femme Bôngongo d'Ilángá. Mais le jeune homme n'en voulait point. Pour ne pas gaspiller son argent, le père incorpore la femme dans son harem. Après la mort du vieux Bôngongo est donnée en *bosóló* à ce même Bọmpẹlí. Cette fois c'est elle qui n'en veut pas, et pour comble de malheur toutes les veuves le refusent de même. Plus tard un petit-cousin de Bọmpẹlí, nommé Bosénjá, désire épouser Bôngongo. Mais par dépit, Bọmpẹlí ne veut la lui céder que contre une dot.

Même si, comme la chose se passe d'ordinaire, la femme ne fait aucune opposition et que, sans aimer le nouvel époux, elle l'accepte, soit par nonchalance, soit pour pouvoir sortir de sa réclusion, ou pour tout autre mobile, elle trouve toujours le moyen, si elle le veut, de quitter son mari pour un autre proche parent qu'elle préfère. Ceci indique que la stabilité de l'union de la *bosóló*, bien que théoriquement plus grande que dans un simple héritage, ne l'est point dans la pratique et n'atteint pas le degré de fixité du mariage par *nkumbó*. Probablement la raison doit en être cherchée dans l'identité foncière des deux unions, où les droits de la famille exercent une grande influence. Voici un cas récent : Ifungá, fille d'Esukúlu, de Bongangá (Boéndé), et veuve de Bọlékélá de Bongili, a été assignée comme *bosóló* au fils aîné de son mari, nommé Boongo. Plus tard elle a prétendu ne point l'aimer, mais désirer devenir l'épouse d'Ekamba, frère de Boongo. Ce dernier ne s'oppose pas. Seulement elle ne tarde pas à rompre la nouvelle union. Cette fois, le chef trouve qu'elle exagère, et pour faire plaisir à Boongo — qui s'est établi dans son clan maternel, clan auquel appartient aussi le chef — la condamne à quelques semaines de prison. Son attitude est approuvée par toutes les personnes raisonnables. Et malgré la répression des excès, — répression nécessaire, — la liberté de la femme se trouve sauvegardée.

Au point de vue moral, nous avons déjà indiqué qu'on peut mettre sur le même pied le mariage d'une *bosóló* et l'héritage d'une femme quelconque quand elle reste dans la proche parenté du défunt. Il n'en diffère que par une difficulté un peu plus grande de le rompre.

ARTICLE IV. — LE REMPLACEMENT OU SUBSTITUTION.

Lors de la rupture d'un mariage, au lieu de parfaire le divorce par la restitution de la dot, souvent on a recours à la pratique du remplacement de la divorcée par une parente (sœur, cousine, nièce, etc.). Cette femme substituée s'appelle *bankitsá* (¹), tout comme le remplacement. Ce nom est un substantif pluriel dérivé de *kita*=devenir, *kitana*=remplacer, succéder. Le singulier en serait *linkitsá*, mais il n'est jamais employé pour ce cas.

Généralement, la remplaçante ne fait pas d'objection contre l'obligation sociale qui lui incombe, à moins d'une répugnance exceptionnelle. On tâche alors de trouver dans la famille une autre personne. On va même jusqu'à enlever une parente à son mari pour la substituer, si, notamment, on ne trouve aucune autre remplaçante et qu'on tient davantage à l'alliance rompue qu'à l'autre.

Les Nkundó justifient la pratique de la substitution par les raisons suivantes :

1° La continuation d'une alliance heureuse vaut mieux qu'une nouvelle qui doit encore faire ses preuves;

2° Le désir d'éviter les palabres et tracas inhérents au procès de la restitution de la dot et de hâter l'acquisition d'une nouvelle épouse, ce qui vaut même lorsque le remboursement n'a pas été retardé outre mesure;

3° Le souci pour les enfants nés de l'union rompue.

(¹) Les Ekonda disent *nkitsá*.

Ce motif est très important, car les enfants ont tout intérêt à recevoir comme belle-mère une proche parente, qui les considère comme ses propres enfants et qui est donc préférable à une femme tout à fait étrangère.

Comme lors d'une substitution il n'y a aucune restitution dotale, ainsi il n'y a pas de nouvelle dot à payer. Mais les visites causées par les pourparlers ne se conçoivent pas sans cadeaux. Inévitablement, le remplacement entraîne donc une augmentation des valeurs dotales, car à l'ancienne dot viennent à chaque occasion s'ajouter de nouveaux paiements. Plus il y a eu de substitutions successives, plus le montant de la dot risque d'être élevé. Ainsi j'ai connu des cas où une dot qui au début était de 100 anneaux avait à la fin atteint la somme de près de 300.

Dans l'opinion des Nkundó la livraison d'une *bankitsá* est un mariage véritable et valide; mais elle n'est pas une nouvelle union, mais uniquement le transfert sur une autre personne d'obligations qui n'ont jamais cessé d'exister, et donc d'un contrat matrimonial qui n'a jamais été annulé. C'est ainsi qu'on dit de la femme pour laquelle le paiement dotal a été fait, qu'elle a débuté, fondé le mariage dans lequel l'autre lui a simplement succédé : *X. ámangáki liála*, *Y. aósuluŋgana* (*manga*= commencer, ou *bondola*= fonder, ou *múmola*= débuter [le tout premier début]; contre: *kitana*= remplacer, *sulungana*= succéder, *mumola*= continuer). Il s'agit pour eux d'une véritable succession dans un office, d'un remplacement, non pas matériel et extérieur, mais pleinement juridique, de la même façon qu'un prince héritier succède à son père dans la royauté; le pouvoir et la dignité royale sont uniques, et continuent d'exister dans la diversité des individus qui en sont investis; ou, comme en droit, lorsqu'il n'y a pas novation malgré le changement de débiteur (¹).

(¹) Nous reviendrons sur cette question à l'art. IX.

C'est à cause de cela que, dans le harem, la *bankitsá* occupe le même rang que la femme qu'elle remplace et que la livraison se fait par l'intermédiaire du même *ndonga* qui est intervenu dans l'élaboration du contrat initial.

Quelle est la valeur de cette union par remplacement devant la loi naturelle? Est-elle ou non entachée d'un vice radical? On discute le droit du pouvoir civil à rompre le mariage contracté légitimement (1). Supposons qu'il l'ait, et, d'autre part, que la femme consente réellement. Mais dans son idée, comme dans celle de tout son milieu, il s'agit de se soumettre à un devoir familial imposé par les lois qui régissent son peuple. On peut se demander si cette stipulation est défendable devant les principes fondamentaux du droit en général et devant la morale. En tout cas, l'opinion unanime des indigènes que ce remplacement est la continuation du mariage dans une autre personne est certainement fausse, car elle provient sans aucun doute de l'insuffisance de leur analyse, qui leur fait perdre de vue un point capital du problème, en concentrant l'attention spécialement sur la nature clanique de l'union matrimoniale (voir ci-après, art. IX).

Quoi qu'il en soit, on peut dire sans crainte que, dans la grande majorité des cas, si la femme indigène se soumet à cette loi, c'est parce qu'elle la considère comme une obligation à laquelle, pour le bien de la famille, il ne lui est pas permis de se soustraire.

Aussi la jeune génération commence-t-elle à faire de l'opposition. Ainsi il y a ici, chez les Sœurs, une jeune fille de Boímbo, Ngọngọ, qui depuis sa première enfance a été donnée à Bokungú, de Bongíli, en remplacement de sa sœur Ilumbé. N'étant pas encore nubile, elle vivait toujours chez ses parents. Ceux-ci devenant chrétiens, Ngọngọ a également été baptisée. D'autre part, un fils de

---

(1) A présent l'opinion affirmative est pratiquement délaissée par les philosophes, juristes et moralistes catholiques.

Bokungú, Longála, s'étant fait catéchumène, puis venu à l'école, et baptisé; son père lui laisse Ngọngọ comme future femme. Celle-ci (ayant maintenant vers les 17 ans) ne veut pas de ce mariage. Non pas qu'elle refuse Longála comme mari, mais elle ne veut pas être mariée en simple *bankitsá*; elle exige un mariage par versement de dot, et cela malgré les difficultés de la procédure, car c'est une opération doublement inutile et, pour les Nkundó, stupide.

Il existe une seconde forme de substitution : le *remplacement après décès*. Lorsqu'un homme a perdu sa femme et que tant lui-même que les parents de la défunte tiennent à leur alliance, il leur porte, par l'entremise du *ndonga*, 20 ou 25 anneaux, en vue de l'obtention d'une nouvelle épouse. Ce paiement s'appelle *ibóleóko*, dérivé de *-ból* = battre (par exemple l'argile du sol), et *eóko* = emplacement de maison. Les Injọ́lọ́ le désignent par un autre nom, qui a pourtant la même portée significative : *sangólékojí* = héritage de terrain à habiter.

Voici comment on procède : Le veuf ayant satisfait à toutes ses obligations funéraires, à la fin de la deuxième visite à ses beaux-parents, et au moment de prendre congé d'eux, ceux-ci lui demandent : « Eh bien, tu t'en vas; que comptes-tu faire maintenant? » Il répond : « J'ai beaucoup aimé votre fille. Elle est morte, et je l'ai enterrée. Voici que j'ai rempli tous mes devoirs. J'ai toujours vécu en bons termes avec vous et je désire continuer nos relations. Seulement, il faut que d'abord je consulte ma famille. Ensuite nous verrons. » De cette façon il exprime son désir de continuer d'être leur gendre. Après avoir pris l'avis de sa parenté, il retourne chez son beau-père avec l'*ibóleóko*. « Voici, je vous apporte l'*ibóleóko*; je viens pour battre l'emplacement de la maison; donnez-moi une épouse. » Le beau-père a déjà choisi la fille, sœur, etc., qui doit remplacer la défunte et en a déjà, en privé, référé à leur gendre. Il lui remet celle qui lui est destinée, en disant : « Voici ton épouse » [1].

Dans ce cas, comme dans celui de la substitution après divorce, les beaux-parents enlèvent parfois, à cet effet, une fille à son mari légitime, pour la constituer remplaçante.

Ces 20-25 anneaux de l'*ibóleóko* ne sont qu'un début de paiement. Tout comme pour le mariage par *nkumbó*, on exige le versement d'une dot complète. La dot à payer après est pourtant moins élevée que pour les mariages ordinaires. Malgré cela, l'idée de remplacement existe comme celle de la continuation de l'union préexistante, bien qu'elle soit moins apparente que dans la substitution pour cause de divorce. Et ainsi, dans le harem, la remplaçante occupe le même rang que la défunte.

Le remplacement après décès a les mêmes raisons d'être que la substitution pour cause de divorce.

Quoique les deux sortes de substitution se ressemblent par le fait que dans les deux cas il s'agit du remplacement d'une épouse par une autre, les différences sont pourtant considérables.

La substitution après divorce ne donne pas lieu au paiement d'une nouvelle dot, ni par conséquent à l'expression type du consentement de la femme. Le remplacement après décès, au contraire, requiert le versement d'une nouvelle dot et l'expression publique du consentement, qui a lieu au moment où le mari verse les valeurs de l'*ibóleóko* et qui se fait de la même façon que pour un mariage par *nkumbó* direct. Ces deux différences, mais la dernière tout particulièrement, font que le remplacement d'une décédée est, juridiquement, un mariage type.

---

[1] Chez les Ekonda, le versement de l'*ibóleóko* ne porte pas de nom spécial. En outre, avant de remettre au mari la remplaçante, les parents exigent 20 à 30 anneaux supplémentaires à titre de paiement pour le deuil de la mère, et pour cette raison nommés *basáki ba nyangó*.

ARTICLE V. — L'OFFRE D'UNE ÉPOUSE.

Cette sorte d'union « matrimoniale » sera plus aisément et plus clairement expliquée par un exemple que par une longue description. Un homme, Eale, a besoin de valeurs pour terminer une palabre quelconque (dette, amende, indemnité, dot à payer, etc.). Comme il n'en possède pas et que l'affaire est urgente, il emprunte à Ekamba, en lui offrant sa fille Wĕtsi. L'offre de la fille est le moyen de décider Ekamba à donner les valeurs demandées. De ce fait, Wĕtsi appartient à Ekamba, qui a sur elle tous les droits d'un mari. Elle n'est pas esclave. On pourrait la nommer gage, mais les Nkundó ne lui appliquent pas ce nom. Ils lui appliquent un terme spécifique : *boóngá*.

Le nom *boóngá* est en usage chez toutes les tribus envisagées (¹). Seuls les Injọ́lọ́ nomment une femme pareille, tout simplement *wăjí óâ njélá* = épouse amenée; donc non prise par dot et sans l'initiative du mari. La locution verbale employée pour « donner une femme en *boóngá* » est *kúndela Ekamba boóngá*. Elle nous donne l'origine du terme. *Boóngá*, en effet, signifie un morceau de bois, un stick. Dans le cas présent, il est fait allusion à une branche de grosseur moyenne qui est posée en travers d'un petit puits et qui, jointe à une deuxième de grosseur différente, peut faire fonction de *lokolé*. Le verbe *kúndela* est la forme objective (exprimant la relation avec un complément indirect) de *kúnda* : battre, frapper. La locution signifie donc primitivement : battre le *boóngá* pour appeler quelqu'un au secours. En ne parlant pas du *lokolé*, mais de son « ersatz », on veut exprimer l'impasse dans laquelle est engagé celui qui vient demander les moyens d'en sortir. Il s'agit d'une affaire grave et urgente; il n'a pas le temps de chercher l'instrument propre, mais dans

---

(¹) Comme chez les Ekonda; mais selon la règle générale de variation dialectale, ils disent *bowóngá*.

son empressement il se contente du premier moyen de fortune qui lui tombe sous les yeux, pour appeler quelqu'un qui pourrait le tirer de son embarras.

Une autre expression employée est *foma losáka, fomela N. losáka* = battre un *losáka*, c'est-à-dire un battement de mains. L'idée est la même : l'homme qui ne voit pas d'issue à sa difficulté est représenté comme battant des mains, afin d'attirer l'attention de quelqu'un qui puisse l'aider. C'est un appel au secours. De là le mot *losáka* est parfois transféré à la femme, comme on le fait pour *boóngá*.

Bien que le mari ait sur la *boóngá* et sur son activité tous les droits conjugaux, elle n'est pas à proprement parler son épouse. On peut simplement dire qu'elle lui appartient et que c'est cette appartenance qui engendre les droits du soi-disant mari. Ce dernier n'a pas de devoirs envers elle, comme dans un mariage ordinaire. Ainsi, si la femme meurt chez Ekamba, même sans qu'aucun versement dotal ait été effectué, le père n'a rien à réclamer, puisque, de sa propre initiative, il lui a offert sa fille. Si la *boóngá* s'enfuit de chez son possesseur, celui-ci a droit, en plus du remboursement normal des valeurs prêtées, à un supplément de 10-20 anneaux (ou davantage, proportionnellement au montant du prêt), en dédommagement de la perte qu'il vient de subir. Ce supplément est dû même lorsque le possesseur a payé une dot au père de la femme. en vue d'un mariage légitime.

Car s'il aime cette femme, rien ne s'oppose à ce qu'il l'épouse régulièrement. Il le fait d'autant plus volontiers que la femme, aussi longtemps qu'elle reste simple objet de gage, est en butte au mépris et aux railleries de ses congénères. On lui dit : « Tu n'es pas une épouse; tu n'es qu'une *boóngá*; tu ne diffères point d'une esclave, car ton mari n'a pas versé de dot pour toi ».

Une fois la dot versée, la *boóngá* devient véritable épouse, et toutes les règles du droit s'appliquent à cette union, qui désormais est un mariage régulier, conforme en tout à un mariage par *nkumbó*. Quant au prêt, il est englobé dans le montant total de la dot.

La mise en gage d'une femme se fait aussi par l'intermédiaire d'un *ndonga*, qui, pourtant, porte le nom spécial de *ndonga éâ ntsíkọọ́nda*, ce qui, littéralement, se traduit : « témoin de je ne t'ai pas prié ». On l'oppose ainsi à un *ndonga* au sens propre. En voici la raison : le véritable *ndonga* est désigné par le mari; or, dans le cas présent, c'est au contraire le père de la fille qui demande son intervention. Par conséquent, l'homme qui prend la *boóngá* contre le prêt n'est pas obligé de reconnaître sa qualité de témoin officiel et régulier. Ce témoin n'est pas *ndonga* du mariage, mais doit témoigner du contrat de gage.

Lorsqu'une femme donnée en *boóngá* s'enfuyait de chez son possesseur, celui-ci s'attaquait au *ndonga* et, trouvant l'occasion favorable, il le faisait prisonnier. Si l'affaire ne s'arrangeait pas il pouvait le réduire en esclavage. Mais dans ce cas il avait à compter avec la vengeance de la famille du *ndonga*, bien que celle-ci, selon la norme régulière et légitime, devait plutôt exercer sa vengeance contre l'homme qui avait demandé l'intervention de leur parent. Car c'est lui qui est responsable de tout et doit, en droit, en endosser toutes les conséquences. L'exception, arrivant parfois réellement, était due à la loi du plus fort, qui, ici comme dans les pays « civilisés », est souvent la meilleure (1).

Lorsque l'homme qui a reçu la *boóngá* désire l'épouser régulièrement, il désigne son *ndonga* à lui, qui remplit toutes les conditions requises. Ce n'est donc pas le *ndonga* de la mise en gage qui est *ndonga* du mariage. Pourtant, comme il est intervenu dans la livraison en *boóngá*, on lui laisse généralement l'honneur d'être associé comme témoin supplémentaire au *ndonga* principal.

---

(1) L'intervention d'un *ndonga éâ ntsíkọọ́nda* n'est pas exclusivement réservée à ce seul cas. Elle se rencontre encore dans d'autres circonstances. Par exemple, Esalé de Bonkoso a été fait prisonnier par Isia de Bongili. Mpetsí est parent d'Esalé et lié d'amitié avec Isia. Il prie celui-ci de rendre la liberté à Esalé, se constituant garant du paiement de la rançon, et devient donc *ndonga éâ ntsíkọọ́nda*. Si le paiement est trop retardé, Isia se venge sur Mpetsí et a même le droit de lui ravir sa femme à titre de compensation.

De tout ce qui précède il ressort clairement que l'offre d'une *boóngá*, bien que possédant certains caractères extérieurs de l'union matrimoniale, ne peut nullement être considérée comme un mariage.

Un cas fort semblable, mais qui appartient désormais au passé, est l'offre d'une femme pour implorer la paix (*bǫǫ́ndǫ*). Citons un exemple historique (1) : au temps où les populations habitant actuellement cette région se trouvaient encore vers les sources de l'Ikelemba, il y avait une guerre entre la famille de Mpumo, ancêtre des Boéndé, et celle de Lonyango, ancêtre des Bonkoso. Ces derniers, vaincus, appellent à leur secours la famille de Bokungú, leur *bǫ́nankáná*, un des ancêtres des Bongíli, qui inflige à Mpumo une défaite cuisante.

Effrayé, Mpumo implore la paix en lui offrant sa sœur Mbálaka. Bokungú accepte. Mais comme cette femme lui plaît, il veut contracter avec elle un mariage en règle. Il paie donc une dot élevée. Mais Mbálaka, étant de bonne famille, déclare ne pas vouloir aller chez son mari toute seule, et exige que son père lui adjoigne une *ebísa* (2). C'est sa parente Węla de Ngǫmbę (Boímbo) qui lui est assignée. Le vieux papa, désirant faire ostentation de richesse, va même plus loin et ajoute encore, comme deuxième *ebísa*, Eúmé, fille de Bokelé de Bokátola, son oncle maternel. Enfin, pour compléter sa contre-dot, déjà riche, Mpumo donne à sa fille quelques hommes «*Mpámá*» (clients) « pour manier les soufflets dans les fonderies de fer de Bokungú », et parmi lesquels l'histoire cite : Bokuka, Líkitá, Engota, Lofalanga, etc.

---

(1) Nous décrivons cette histoire en détail, parce qu'elle montre sur le vif certaines manifestations de la vie sociale nkundó.

(2) Cfr. chap. VII, art. IV.

De la même façon, ce Mpumo reçut à titre de *bǫǫ́ndǫ* la femme Lifomí, fille d'Ikólé. Le frère de celle-ci, Ndyę̂ntíkala, ancêtre des Mbúngá (Lióko, Ekonda), l'offrit pour implorer la paix. Mpumo l'épousa régulièrement. Dans sa lutte contre les Ekonda, ce même Mpumo obtint encore de la même manière la sœur de Bangǫ́ndǫ́, de Mpę́njwá (Wâyá), nommée Bǫǫ́ngǫ́.

Comme le vainqueur de la guerre tenait d'ordinaire à épouser la femme régulièrement par paiement de dot, nous pourrions comparer la livraison d'une parente en *bǫǫ́ndǫ* à ce qui se pratiquait en Europe au Moyen Age, lorsqu'un prince mariait sa fille ou sœur à un compétiteur ou à un adversaire, afin de sceller la paix entre eux. Il s'agit donc ici d'une sorte de mariage politique.

ARTICLE VI. — ÉCHANGE.

Par le terme d'échange de femmes (*yenjá*, du verbe *enja* = échanger, terme générique), les tribus envisagées dans cette étude n'entendent pas toutes la même chose. Selon les cas nous pouvons distinguer plusieurs espèces d'échanges.

1° Les Nkundó purs connaissent l'échange de filles, sœurs, parentes. Cet échange se fait toujours par versement de dot et par l'entremise du *ndonga*. Ce sont donc deux mariages réguliers par *nkumbó*, qui ne méritent le nom d'échange que tout à fait improprement. Les deux hommes qui se donnent mutuellement leurs sœurs en mariage contractent chacun un mariage ordinaire selon les normes typiques.

2° Parfois le nom d'échange est appliqué à la pratique de l'*ikâkelo*, qu'un exemple fera mieux comprendre qu'un long exposé : Eale a épousé la femme Âmbá. Lokio, sœur d'Eale, est mariée à Isia. Ámbá abandonne son mari pour un parent d'Isia. A la première occasion qui se présente, Eale retient chez lui sa sœur Lokio, la ravit donc à son mari et, ne voyant pas revenir chez lui sa femme Ámbá, livre sa sœur Lokio en mariage à un autre homme. Ou bien Eale a épousé une parente d'Isia, qui, lui, a épousé une parente d'Eale. L'une abandonnant son mari, celui-ci reprend sa parente à lui et la donne en mariage ailleurs, en usant de son droit d'*ikákelo* (1).

Comme il appert de ces explications, cette coutume n'est pas un échange volontaire et spontané, mais forcé. Pourtant on le nomme parfois échange, parce qu'il n'y a pas, à proprement parler, de divorce; de part et d'autre aucune restitution de dot n'a lieu.

Ces deux cas ne correspondent donc à l'idée d'échange de femme que tout à fait improprement. Dans le premier cas on ne peut même pas parler d'échange d'épouses.

3° Chez les Bombwanja on trouve quelque chose qui s'en rapproche davantage. En voici un exemple historique : Ikété aime Eanga, veuve du père d'Ekɔfɔ. Celui-ci, de son côté, aime Ilonga, veuve du père d'Ikété. Ils échangent ces deux femmes, qui sont leurs épouses par droit d'héritage. Il se peut même faire qu'Ikété, tenant fort à Eanga, donne à Ekɔfɔ une femme de son propre harem, qui aime cet homme. Ces échanges ont lieu sans versement de dot, mais par l'intermédiaire des *ndonga* qui sont intervenus antérieurement, au moment du *nkumbó* initial.

Nous nous trouvons ici devant un cas de véritable échange de femmes. Comme nous venons de voir, deux cas peuvent se présenter : échange de veuves et échange d'une veuve contre une épouse réelle. Au point de vue droit et justice les cas sont identiques; les femmes échangées appartiennent aux échangeurs, qui sont, en droit, leurs maris. Mais il n'y a que dans le second cas qu'intervient l'échange d'une femme qui n'est pas seulement épouse de droit, mais aussi de fait, c'est-à-dire qui a tous les devoirs et droits d'une épouse. Toutefois, une épouse pareille n'est donnée que d'une part. Au sens propre et strict, ce n'est pas encore l'échange d'épouse contre épouse.

---

(1) Substantif dérivé du verbe *kákela*, garantir; ici : se garantir la possession des valeurs dotales, de son capital.

La distinction que nous avons posée entre épouse de droit et épouse de fait a son importance. La vie conjugale effective introduit un nouvel élément juridique. Cela ressort manifestement de la répugnance de ces mêmes Bombwanja, qui pratiquent l'échange que nous venons de décrire, contre l'échange pur et simple, dont l'explication va suivre.

L'échange de veuves se rencontre aussi chez les Elíngá, qui, tout comme les Bombwanja, connaissent également les deux sortes d'échanges impropres que nous avons décrites au début.

4° Par contre, le véritable échange d'épouses existe chez les populations riveraines Boóyá et Longa (1), qui, dans leur dialecte, l'appellent *iengyá*. Deux hommes échangent leurs épouses mutuelles. Si la dot de l'une surpasse celle de l'autre, l'excédent est remboursé. Cet échange se fait avec le consentement des femmes.

Voici la génèse ordinaire d'un cas d'échange. Supposons deux hommes, Bokulú et Mpolí avec leurs femmes respectives Mbindo et Baúná. Bokulú s'éprend de Baúná, femme de Mpolí, et ils se lient de relations adultères. Refroidissement de l'amour de Baúná pour son mari Mpolí, services de moins en moins fréquents, etc. Même situation de Bokulú envers sa femme Mbindo. Celle-ci est jalouse : sa patience est bientôt à bout. Elle en traite avec Mpolí, le mari de sa concurrente : « Vois comme ta femme te trompe; elle ne t'aime plus. Mon mari à moi me délaisse pour elle, il ne m'aime plus. C'est un défi envers toi comme envers moi. Si tu es un homme (1), relève le défi ».

---

(1) Habitant vers l'embouchure de la Salonga (Bonsela, Bomputú, Nkóle, Bombomba, Isakó, etc.).

Dans la conception indigène, l'homme doit à son honneur de prendre chez lui cette femme. S'il ne le faisait point, il s'exposerait à la risée et deviendrait le point de mire des allusions malveillantes et des railleries de tous, hommes et femmes. Il serait considéré comme un lâche, tout comme dans la société « cultivée » européenne on traite de lâche l'homme qui ne relève pas le gant que lui jette son adversaire.

La haine que de ce fait la femme reniée conçoit envers son mari se change en amour pour l'homme auquel sa rivale a infligé une injure identique. Le malheur commun engendre l'affection mutuelle. La femme est acceptée comme épouse et ainsi sauvée du déshonneur. L'homme de son côté affectionne la femme qui lui offre son cœur et sauvegarde sa bonne renommée. Tous les quatre étant finalement d'accord, les deux hommes arrangent la question de la dot, comme il a été dit, puis vivent en paix sans aucune inimitié.

Cette façon d'agir, si étrange pour nous, parce que aussi indéfendable en saine philosophie que devant la morale catholique, paraît normale aux indigènes. La conscience païenne s'en accommode parfaitement. Car pour elle aucune loi positive ne l'interdit, et puisque tout le monde se met finalement d'accord, c'est tout ce qu'elle demande. En fin de compte, aucun droit individuel n'est lésé, et comme la mentalité indigène ne se soucie pas de la moralité comme nous la concevons, la chose est pour elle toute naturelle.

Toutefois, les groupes ethniques qui ne pratiquent pas cet échange proprement dit, ne l'approuvent nullement. Non qu'ils n'en comprennent pas la psychologie : au contraire, le cas échéant ils l'admettent. Mais ils condamnent la procédure juridique. Ils exigent que les deux mariages soient *rompus* régulièrement et que deux nouveaux mariages soient contractés; c'est-à-dire ils réclament la restitution et le versement de dots par l'intermédiaire des *ndonga* et en passant par les parents respectifs des femmes. Pour eux donc, cet échange n'est pas un vrai mariage, mais une espèce de vente et achat. Aussi, à leur point de vue, ces femmes échangées sont des esclaves, et non des épouses, parce qu'elles vivent avec leurs hommes, alors que le premier mariage n'a pas été rompu et qu'un nouveau contrat matrimonial n'a pas été conclu.

---

(1) Homme au sens de *vir* (*bonendé*). Sens : si tu as du courage, montre que tu n'es pas un lâche.

Il résulte de ce qui précède que nous ne trouvons chez les tribus nkundó étudiées ici aucune confirmation de l'affirmation d'Engels (étude citée, p. 35) que chez les Wangata « son mari peut l'échanger... elle n'a pas à protester » (¹).

ARTICLE VII. — L'ACHAT.

L'achat de femmes n'est pas pratiqué par les tribus nkundó dont nous traitons ici, ni même par les Bombwanja. On ne le trouve que chez les Elingá. Il ne s'agit pas d'un mariage par dot, mais d'un réel achat, c'est-à-dire qu'un homme achète une femme à son mari pour un montant *x*. Il ne passe pas par les parents de la femme, ce qui serait un mariage ordinaire par versement dotal, mais il s'adresse directement au mari.

Généralement, c'est la femme qui fait la proposition et demande à un homme de l'acheter ainsi. Parfois, l'homme, désirant prendre cette femme, s'arrange d'avance avec elle. Avant l'arrivée des Européens, cela provoquait généralement une guerre entre clans ou villages. Puis, à l'armistice, la palabre était tranchée et

---

(¹) De même, les Ekonda ne connaissent comme *lienjá* que l'échange de filles ou sœurs. Ils connaissent un terme spécifique : *mpéngé*. Notons, en passant, que certaines tribus Mbólé, où l'on pratique l'échange réel d'épouses, désignent celui-ci par le même mot : *émpéngé*.

l'acheteur payait au mari. Actuellement, comme on n'oserait plus se battre, à cause des sanctions judiciaires inévitables, la femme abandonnant son mari pour un autre, et celui-ci voulant l'acheter, ils portent la palabre devant les juges, et, comme la femme ne veut que le nouveau mari et que, d'autre part, guerre et punitions de femmes sont de fait abolies, le premier n'a qu'à s'incliner et s'arranger pour le prix à payer (1).

Le montant que l'acheteur doit payer au mari est le montant de la dot. Mais comme celle-ci ne passe pas par les mains de la famille de la femme, il n'y a pas rupture du premier mariage. On ne parle donc pas de *jèngi*, mais de *liaómbi* (du verbe *-sómba* : acheter), terme employé pour n'importe quel achat. On dit encore *bíaómbana endé la njéngi* : il fait un achat au mari (littéralement : au payeur de la dot). Ces valeurs payées à l'équivalence de la dot peuvent être remplacées par une femme vivante, que l'acheteur donne au mari, en remplacement de la femme achetée.

En règle très générale, le mari exige en outre une seconde femme, épouse ou parente de l'acheteur, en guise d'*ebísa* de la première. Ce ne doit pas être une véritable *ebísa*, parente de l'autre. Elle n'est *ebísa* que tout à fait improprement. Elle porte le nom spécial d'*inakambénga* = cueilleuse de poivre, pour indiquer cette qualité d'aide, au service de la femme qui a été livrée en paiement, ou acquise au moyen du prix d'achat.

Enfin, l'acheteur (*boaómbi*) doit nouer les relations d'alliance avec ses nouveaux beaux-parents. A cette intention il leur fait un versement de valeurs qu'ils touchent en plus de la dot primitive. Quoique pratiquement ce versement constitue une dot, il n'en porte pas le nom, parce qu'il n'en a pas le sens juridique. Son nom spécifique propre est *iɔngyambóka*, de *-ɔngya* = surajouter une nouvelle chose, et *mbóka* = chemin; le nouveau mari ajoute donc une nouvelle relation d'alliance. Le verbe *ɔnga* ou *ɔngya* est encore usité en d'autres circonstances : pour une nouvelle tuile ou feuille qu'on ajoute à un point endommagé d'un toit, pour une pièce de réparation sur un habit, ou pour une nouveauté introduite. Ce terme semble ainsi indiquer qu'il ne s'agit pas d'un nouveau mariage, mais d'une greffe modificatrice du mariage initial. En outre, il s'emploie souvent dans un sens péjoratif. Et ainsi on pourrait supposer que cette coutume n'est pas très ancienne. Mais ce n'est évidemment pas une preuve adéquate.

---

(1) Il est question ici de la situation qui a prévalu jusqu'à présent. Les tribunaux indigènes ont reçu pouvoir de punir les délinquants, et ils sont donc obligés de prononcer les peines prévues. A mon avis, si le mari légitime porte plainte, le tribunal devrait trancher en sa faveur, non seulement parce qu'il s'agit d'un achat de femme, mais encore parce qu'il y a polyandrie, vu que le mariage n'a pas été rompu.

Par ce qui précède il est clair que l'achat d'une femme est une opération difficile et coûteuse. Une sorte de seconde dot (*iɔngyambóka*) et une deuxième femme (*inakambénga*) constituent tout un capital. Autrefois, l'acheteur avait en outre à indemniser les familles des hommes tués au combat (ce qui pouvait monter jusqu'à près de 100 anneaux, le taux d'un « cadavre » étant de 15-20 bakonga, prix d'un homme (1). Aussi a-t-on l'impression que, tout en admettant, pour des raisons qui nous sont inconnues, l'achat des femmes dans leurs coutumes et lois, les tribus en question ne l'ont fait qu'à contre-cœur et que les tenants de l'autorité ont pour ainsi dire accumulé les difficultés, comme pour effrayer les amateurs et pour réduire les cas au minimum inévitable.

On pourrait se demander pourquoi des hommes n'hésitent pas devant ces graves difficultés financières. Il est tout à fait psychologique que si un homme s'est épris d'une femme d'autrui et qu'il possède les richesses voulues, sa passion le pousse à se jeter dans pareille aventure. Il en fut probablement ainsi à l'origine. Pourtant ceci n'explique pas l'existence de l'*achat*, car la rupture du premier mariage et l'engagement d'un nouveau pourraient tout aussi bien se faire par la voie ordinaire de versement et de restitution de dots.

---

(1) Si dans une « guerre » pareille il y avait cinq morts, c'était déjà énorme !

Actuellement, le cas devient de plus en plus rare. Ce changement est probablement dû à une plus grande division des richesses, qui produit un second changement, notamment que l'homme fait les propositions initiales, au lieu de la femme, comme dans la coutume ancienne.

L'invitation de la part de la femme est publique. L'homme doit à son honneur d'y répondre. Tout comme pour l'échange chez les Boóyá, ce n'est qu'en y donnant suite qu'il peut échapper aux railleries. S'il ne s'exécutait pas, il serait considéré comme un lâche; il serait traité comme un paria; sa (ses) femme(s) l'abandonneraient et il ne serait plus admis dans la compagnie et au repas de ses congénères.

Bien que, strictement parlant, la chose sorte du cadre de cette étude, il ne me semble pas dépourvu d'intérêt de noter ici, à titre de comparaison, que l'achat se pratique également chez les Ntómbá (Wángatá, Ikɛngo) et les Bolέngé (= Bofiji) d'entre Congo-Boloko. Ils le nomment du même nom : *isómba*, achat; et l'homme qui l'achète : *bosómbi* = acheteur. La femme invite toujours l'homme en lui envoyant un *bonengé* : morceau de nervure de feuille de bananier. Elle le fait publiquement; remettant le *bonengé* à un parent ou ami, elle lui dit tout haut et devant tout le monde : « Porte-moi ce *bonengé* à un tel, qu'il vienne m'acheter ».

La même coutume existe encore chez certains groupements Ekonda, dépendant du poste de Bikoro, tels les Lonyanyanga, Bosanga, Balingo, Babonje, etc., mais non chez les autres, qui dépendent du poste de Kiri (Buli). Elle y est appelée *ehómbaka* ou *esómbaka* (même radical et même sens que *lisómbí* et *isómba*). Comme ces populations sont voisines des Ntómbá précités et d'autres Ntómbá habitant près du lac qui porte leur nom (déformé) et que, d'autre part, le restant des Ekonda ne la connaissent point, on pourrait présumer qu'elle a été introduite de chez leurs voisins du Nord et de l'Ouest.

Comparant ces données sur la distribution géographique de cette coutume et la nature ethnique des tribus qui la pratiquent, nous pourrions supposer qu'elle n'est pas d'origine nkundó. Les autres groupes ne l'approuvent nullement chez leurs voisins; ils les en méprisent plutôt, car pour eux une femme achetée est une esclave. Aussi s'en moquent-ils : « Ils vendent leurs femmes comme des esclaves ou des chèvres ». Peut-on trouver ici un indice que les Ntómbá-Boléngé ne sont pas des Nkundó purs, ou bien qu'ils ont subi des influences étrangères? De même pour les tribus riveraines qui pratiquent l'achat de femmes?

ARTICLE VIII. — CONCLUSIONS GÉNÉRALES.

Après l'analyse détaillée des différentes formes de mariages et d'unions pseudo-matrimoniales, il est nécessaire d'en faire la synthèse.

Certaines espèces, considérées par les Nkundó comme étant des mariages légitimes, diffèrent pourtant plus ou moins du mariage type, parce qu'ils sont adaptés à des circonstances particulières. Tels sont le mariage de la veuve avec l'héritier et le mariage par remplacement après divorce. Quant à nous, nous pouvons nous ranger à l'opinion des indigènes; car ces unions, lorsqu'elles sont conclues d'une façon normale, ne comportent rien qui soit contraire à la nature d'un mariage valide tel que nous le concevons (¹).

Par contre, les Nkundó jugent les autres formes comme

(¹) Le remplacement après divorce uniquement quand la rupture est légitime et valide en tout droit.

ne répondant pas ou tout à fait imparfaitement à l'idée qu'ils se font d'un mariage régulier. L'union d'une veuve avec un parent éloigné du défunt n'est qu'une espèce de concubinage légitimé. L'offre d'une épouse comme *gage*, l'échange et l'achat sont considérés comme des *formes* absolument inférieures. Il est donc préférable que nous les désignions par le terme d'unions pseudo-matrimoniales. Car quoiqu'elles soient admises comme légitimes par les tribus qui les pratiquent, elles y semblent plutôt tolérées qu'approuvées.

Il y a donc place pour une action des tribunaux indigènes contre ces formes si inférieures, action d'ailleurs favorisée par le texte du *Recueil à l'usage des Fonctionnaires et des Agents du service territorial au Congo belge* (éd. 1930, p. 375).

Dans les lignes que nous allons consacrer à l'examen de la nature du mariage nkundó, nous pouvons donc nettement exclure ces unions pseudo-matrimoniales.

ARTICLE IX. — LA NATURE DU MARIAGE NKUNDÓ.

Arrivés à ce point de notre étude, il nous faut faire la synthèse des principales conclusions que notre analyse nous a fournies jusqu'ici et tâcher d'en déduire la notion de l'essence du mariage nkundó.

Le mariage, en ethnologie bantoue, se définit plus ou moins : le lien entre deux personnes de sexe différent, créant pour les conjoints un état social, une situation économique particulière et légitimant leur progéniture (1). Cette définition diffère assez bien de la définition philosophique, qui est plus restreinte, en exigeant un contrat stable entre homme et femme de livraison mutuelle des droits exclusifs sur les corps en vue des actes procréateurs.

En quoi le mariage nkundó se conforme-t-il ou s'oppose-t-il à ces définitions? Ou plutôt : quelle est la définition que nous devrions donner du mariage nkundó et en quoi sa nature juridique consiste-t-elle?

---

(1) Cfr. *Recommandations pour l'étude de la famille*, éditées par l'Institut international pour l'étude des langues et civilisations africaines.

Rappelons d'abord brièvement quelques données capitales pour le problème en ajoutant quelques constatations que les pages suivantes nous fourniront, mais qui sont indispensables pour obtenir une vue d'ensemble. Ensuite nous tâcherons d'en dégager la base juridique.

Pour la forme du mariage légitime, le droit nkundó requiert comme conditions indispensables :

1° Le versement d'une dot;

2° L'intermédiaire, pour ce versement, d'un ou plusieurs témoins qualifiés.

La stabilité est infirmée par l'admission du divorce. Dans une société comme celle-ci, la chose est inévitable. Mais tout est mis en œuvre pour en restreindre la fréquence : dot et contre-dot, opposition de la part des autorités familiales, etc. (1).

L'exclusivité des droits sur les corps sera examinée au chapitre VI. Disons seulement que l'adultère n'est pas reconnu légitime, quoique les Nkundó s'en fassent une idée toute différente de la nôtre, qu'ils admettent des dérogations au principe de la fidélité et qu'ils tolèrent certaines licences.

Une question de haute importance pour notre but est celle du consentement. Mais son examen est fort ardu, parce que cet élément est relégué par les indigènes à l'arrière-plan, tandis qu'ils font ressortir davantage le facteur dot; ce qui ne doit pas nous étonner, puisque de par sa nature matérielle et palpable celle-ci retient mieux leur attention (2).

Remarquons d'abord que, par les Nkundó, la validité d'un mariage n'est jamais mise en doute pour défaut de consentement. On rencontre bien des femmes qui refusent le mari auquel on les destine comme remplaçantes, en invoquant le fait que la dot n'a pas été versée pour elles, ce qui veut dire qu'elles ne se considèrent pas comme partie contractante. Mais, à ma connaissance, leur opposition n'est pas considérée comme rendant le mariage invalide. J'ajoute « à ma connaissance », parce que cette question étant fort embrouillée dans la mentalité indigène, j'admets la possibilité de découvertes ultérieures qui prouveraient que les Nkundó attachent au consentement plus d'importance que nous n'en apercevions pour le moment. D'ailleurs, le fait que tout mariage normal comporte une cérémonie d'expression du consentement est une indication dans ce sens.

---

(1) Cf. chap. VIII, art. I et II.

(2) Constatation qu'on peut faire également pour les profanes européens dans les questions d'ordre juridique et autres.

Examinons maintenant nos données sur la valeur du consentement et de son expression.

A moins d'un cas exceptionnel dont nous pouvons à bon droit omettre de tenir compte dans cette synthèse, puisqu'il n'influe en rien sur nos conclusions, il y a dans le mariage type toujours consentement des époux. Celui-ci est d'abord privé, puis porté à la connaissance des parents, qui y donnent leur approbation. Lors du premier versement dotal, la fiancée l'exprime par un acte public et officiel, tandis que le mari le manifeste en accompagnant son père dans toutes ses démarches et en prenant chez lui sa future. Aux yeux des Nkundó, cela est tout à fait suffisant.

Une seconde question se pose à ce propos. Le consentement est exprimé lors du versement de l'*ikulá*. Or, le véritable paiement dotal ne se fait que plus tard et sans renouvellement du consentement. L'expression du début, lors des fiançailles, peut-elle être considérée comme suffisante, parce que virtuellement persistante? A mon avis, rien ne s'y oppose.

Pour le mariage par héritage, les formalités ordinaires de l'expression du consentement sont omises, parce qu'aucune nouvelle dot n'y est versée. Toutefois, nous y constatons que l'héritier doit aller prendre la veuve dans sa famille en faisant un paiement spécial. Bien que les Nkundó expliquent celui-ci comme une marque de respect envers la famille de la veuve, nous pourrions interpréter ces actes comme l'expression, adaptée à ce cas, de la volonté du nouveau mari d'épouser la femme, tandis que pour celle-ci le fait d'accompagner l'héritier est en réalité la manifestation de son consentement à l'union. Cette interprétation est confirmée par la stipulation juridique que le paiement des *bekooli* doit être renouvelé par chaque membre de la parenté du défunt qui veut épouser la veuve, tandis que le contrat dotal demeure inchangé. Ce versement n'émane donc nullement, comme la convention dotale, de la famille, mais est bel et bien un acte personnel de celui qui veut prendre la veuve comme son épouse.

Pour le remplacement après divorce, l'extériorisation du consentement est plus vague, puisqu'elle se restreint aux démarches du mari auprès de son beau-père, d'une part, et, du côté de la femme, au fait d'accompagner l'époux. On doit en dire autant de l'héritage d'une *bosóló* (chap. III, art. III). Il serait toutefois contraire à la réalité de conclure de cette forme très réduite de son expression à l'absence du consentement de la femme : dans ces questions, leur mentalité diffère totalement de la nôtre. Etre remplaçante est considéré comme un devoir et accepté comme tel; psychologiquement, il y a souvent consentement, tout comme l'obligation de se soumettre aux commandements divins, aux lois religieuses ou civiles, n'exclut point du tout la volonté. Même la crainte révérentielle, la peur des châtiments, etc., n'enlèvent pas le libre exercice de la volonté, bien qu'elles le diminuent. Pourtant, il se peut trouver des cas où la peur ou la contrainte soient telles qu'elles enlèvent complètement la liberté.

Quant aux unions précoces (chap. IV), la question est encore plus ardue. Ce ne sont que les fiançailles qui s'engagent dans la prime jeunesse. De la part du mari le consentement est exprimé d'une manière absolument suffisante. Comme le stade provisoire ne passe à l'union définitive qu'à l'approche de la puberté, la jeune fille peut être considérée capable d'un consentement suffisant pour un mariage valide, consentement qu'elle exprime en se rendant chez son mari. Toutefois, si l'on compare l'expression du consentement dans ce cas avec celle que nous constatons dans les autres unions, on la trouve ici très atténuée et fort inférieure.

Nous pouvons donc admettre que, d'une façon générale et dans les circonstances ordinaires, la liberté est sauve et que le consentement est exprimé d'une manière suffisante.

Après avoir rappelé ces données générales, essayons de dégager la nature juridique du mariage nkundó. Dans le droit ecclésiastique et dans le droit civil européen, le mariage se fait par l'échange officiel des consentements mutuels. Pour le Nkundó, le mariage se fait par le versement officiel d'une dot, auquel versement s'ajoute le consentement des époux, manifesté d'une façon plus ou moins claire et explicite, d'après les cas, mais que nous avons reconnue comme étant suffisante.

Les versements dotaux sont un contrat passé entre les familles des époux. Cette convention est considérée par les Nkundó comme constituant le mariage. Pour eux le consentement n'en est qu'un accessoire, attitude bien naturelle, à cause de l'infériorité de leur analyse, comme nous l'avons vu ci-dessus. Dans le droit civil européen il existe, à côté de l'échange légitime des consentements, qui constitue l'union conjugale, le contrat de mariage ou convention, expresse ou tacite, réglant les questions pécuniaires, et qui n'est qu'un accessoire du mariage. C'est donc juste l'opposé de la pensée des Nkundó.

Toutefois, nonobstant l'idée que nos indigènes se font de la valeur du consentement comme tout à fait accessoire dans la constitution du mariage, nous pouvons approfondir cette question et en faire l'analyse juridique, en nous basant pourtant uniquement sur les faits observés.

La manifestation de la part des deux époux de leur consentement au mariage est, dans son essence juridique, un véritable contrat, que nous pourrions appeler pacte conjugal : ils expriment leur volonté de s'unir comme conjoints, et cela de la façon prescrite par la loi. Le fait que les Nkundó n'attachent qu'une importance inférieure à ce contrat ne détruit pas sa réalité.

Quelle que soit donc l'importance relative que les Nkundó attachent à ces deux éléments, nous pouvons admettre en toute sûreté que leur union matrimoniale comprend dans la réalité deux composantes : la convention dotale et le pacte conjugal ou expression des consentements.

En droit naturel éthique le mariage est un contrat passé entre les époux : c'est le consentement de ceux-ci qui constitue le mariage. Pour les Nkundó, au contraire, — c'est du moins ce qui ressort de leurs affirmations, explications, etc., — l'homme et la femme deviennent mari et épouse par le versement de telle partie de la dot. Si leur analyse épuisait la question, il y aurait une opposition catégorique entre leur système et la nature philosophico-juridique du mariage. Mais il existe de fait un pacte de consentement qui — bien que pour nos gens il soit accessoire — constitue un élément intégrant du complexe d'actes et de cérémonies dans lequel consiste leur contrat matrimonial, ce qui le rend conforme à la définition philosophique du mariage.

Comment devons-nous nous représenter la relation entre le pacte conjugal et la convention dotale ? Je pense qu'en allant au fond juridique de la question nous pouvons nous exprimer comme suit : les époux nkundó donnent leur consentement à l'union telle qu'ils la conçoivent; ils veulent devenir mari et femme d'après la pratique en vogue dans leur communauté et selon les règles prescrites par leur droit. Ils expriment leur volonté de s'y conformer. Dans le mariage par *nkumbó*, l'union est d'abord provisoire (fiançailles), définitive ensuite dès le versement du *walo*. C'est comme si les futurs se disaient : nous voulons être mari et femme, et nous le deviendrons effectivement du moment que nos familles respectives exécutent la partie essentielle de la convention dotale. Celle-ci est comme la condition indispensable du contrat matrimonial; mais, dans l'infériorité de leur analyse, les Nkundo l'expliquent comme en étant l'élément constituant unique. Juridiquement parlant, les fiancés font dépendre leur consentement définitif de la réalisation ultérieure de la convention dotale. Il en est foncièrement de même dans les unions précoces. Dans les autres formes de mariage, nous pouvons adopter — *mutatis mutandis* — une interprétation identique. Ainsi, dans l'héritage, l'héritier et la veuve ajoutent leur consentement à la convention dotale préexistante et persistante. Quant au cas de remplacement il ne diffère pas du précédent.

Contre tout cela on peut formuler l'objection que les Nkundó ne considèrent pas l'héritage et le remplacement comme de nouveaux mariages, mais bel et bien comme la continuation de l'union persistante malgré le changement de la personne des épouses. La réponse est incluse dans les principes que nous avons posés ci-dessus. En effet, à cause de l'insuffisance manifeste de leur analyse, ils ne s'aperçoivent pas de l'existence du contrat de consentement; ils ne distinguent pas ce pacte conjugal qui change, de la convention dotale qui seule persiste. Et par le fait que pour eux la convention dotale est l'essentiel, le pacte conjugal l'accessoire, il ne prêtent attention qu'à celle-là. Nous pouvons donc légitimement interpréter leurs affirmations sur la nature des unions par héritage et par remplacement comme se référant au contrat dotal. Ainsi, le fait que chaque parent du défunt qui désire épouser la veuve doit effectuer un paiement individuel (*bekooli*), tandis que le contrat clanique persiste inchangé, prouve la réalité effective de la distinction entre convention dotale familiale et pacte conjugal personnel.

Résumant toutes ces considérations, nous pensons être en droit de poser comme définition du mariage nkundo : un contrat conjugal entre un homme et une femme, contrat stable en soi et lié à une convention dotale, de nature et de formalités déterminées, entre leurs familles.

Nous pouvons donc conclure que dans sa nature intime le mariage nkundo est conforme à la définition que l'éthique donne de cette institution en général et qu'il en remplit toutes les conditions essentielles (¹).

(¹) Je suis très reconnaissant à M. le Procureur général A. Sohier pour avoir, d'une façon toute particulière, attiré mon attention sur le côté juridique de ce problème et m'avoir ainsi invité à l'approfondir.

CHAPITRE IV.

AGE DES MARIÉS.

Le Nkundó peut se marier à tout âge. Son droit ne contient aucune stipulation à ce sujet. Pourtant l'habitude courante voulait autrefois que la fille était mariée très jeune, tandis que les garçons ne pouvaient prendre femme qu'à un âge réellement avancé. Actuellement, l'époque du mariage a été retardée pour un nombre toujours croissant de filles, et pour les garçons elle a été fort avancée presque universellement. Examinons la situation en détail, en distinguant entre les sexes.

ARTICLE I. — LES FILLES.

La coutume nkundó admet le cas — autrefois très fréquent et encore bien en vogue à présent — de l'engagement d'une enfant attendue, non encore née, ou encore en très bas âge, mais déjà promise comme épouse à X... ou Y... C'est ce qu'on nomme *banda bǫna*, ou *bǒmoto* = littéralement : compter une enfant, ou une femme. L'*ikulá* est versé immédiatement. Plus tard l'affaire se poursuit de la façon ordinaire; les autres parties de la dot sont versées, soit pendant la jeunesse, soit, de préférence, au moment où la fiancée rejoint son mari.

Entre-temps, si une de ses parentes est déjà l'épouse du polygame, ou d'un parent de celui-ci, l'enfant est élevée, dès un âge plus ou moins jeune d'après les circonstances, dans la famille de son mari. Elle loge chez sa parente. Elle peut alors avoir, par exemple, 7 à 8 ans à peine. Si personne ne peut prendre soin d'elle dans le clan du mari, elle n'y passe qu'une ou deux semaines, pour faire peu à peu la connaissance des personnes et des lieux, visite qu'elle réitère de temps en temps. Sa mère l'y accompagne, car elle ne saurait s'y habituer toute jeune et seule, sans soutien, sans parents. Il faut donc attendre qu'elle atteigne l'âge d'une certaine indépendance où elle peut se tirer d'affaire elle-même. C'est en général vers les débuts de la puberté, donc entre 12 et 15 ans.

Tout comme les femmes adultes, elle est déjà nommée *bompáka* ou *wálí*, conformément avec la partie de la dot versée. Elle a tous les devoirs et tous les droits de l'épouse : relations sexuelles, préparation des aliments, soins du ménage, etc. Aucune date, aucun âge n'est fixé pour le commencement de la cohabitation. Cela s'arrange entre le mari et ses beaux parents. Ceux-ci n'ont pas le droit d'en retarder le moment, même si leur fille est encore trop jeune, mais ils peuvent user de leur grande influence sur le gendre. La génération moderne n'est pas choquée par les relations entre un adultère et une impubère. D'ailleurs, du point de vue juridique, tout est régulier; comme il a payé la dot, il est le mari légitime et a droit à sa femme. Tout dépend de sa mentalité individuelle, de sa passion ou de son respect pour le corps de sa jeune femme. S'il est raisonnable, il sera très prudent dans les relations ou s'abstiendra pour ne pas « abîmer » le corps de son épouse. Mais en droit, il lui est loisible d'agir à sa guise. Aussi trouve-t-on des adultes qui ont des relations suivies — de façon ou d'autre — avec leur femme, qui ne montre pas le moindre développement des seins. De sorte que là la fonction nuptiale s'exerce avant la nubilité (1). Les conséquences au point de vue natalité se laissent deviner sans peine. Il se peut aussi que le mari soit également impubère. Cela ne met pas obstacle à la cohabitation. Dès qu'il se sent devenir homme il construit sa case où ils habitent ensemble. Dans tous ces cas, la jeune fille rentre souvent chez ses parents, et parfois prolonge ses visites durant des semaines sans voir son mari.

---

(1) Remarquons ici que jeune fille non encore nubile ne se nomme pas *filingo* en lonkundo, comme dit ENGELS, *loc. cit.*, p. 36. Ce mot n'est que la transformation nkundo du latin *virgo*. Il n'existe aucun terme spécifique pour (in)nubile. Une jeune fille qui n'est pas encore femme, et qui n'est plus enfant, se nomme *ilembeleke*.

Autrefois la chose ne se passait pas de la même façon. Il arrivait fréquemment que la jeune épouse refusait l'acte sexuel, surtout si le mari était notablement plus âgé. Sa pudeur et sa timidité natives, jointes à son éducation, en étaient la cause. Généralement le mari polygame respectait ses sentiments, jusqu'à ce que peu à peu elle se fût laissé amadouer et que le développement physiologique normal s'étant accompli et l'amour parvenu à un degré suffisant, elle commençât à suivre la pente de l'instinct. A la lumière de ce qui a été dit au chapitre I, II^{e} partie, article IV, § 2, A, nous n'avons aucune peine à admettre cette affirmation de nos informateurs; la chose n'a rien que de naturel.

Dans les fiançailles d'une enfant attendue, il peut arriver que les faits déçoivent les espoirs et que l'enfant pour lequel l'*ikulá* a été payé soit un garçon. Le contretemps est arrangé comme suit : ou bien le prétendant attend la naissance d'une fille, ou bien entre lui et le nouveau-né s'établit une alliance d'amitié et d'entr'aide (*boseka*, cfr. chap. I, I^{re} partie, art. III), qu'on nomme alors *liála jă jwende* = mariage d'homme (*matrimonium viri*). D'aucune façon l'*ikulá* versé n'est restitué. Si leur amitié n'est pas rompue plus tard, elle mènera au mariage de la fille de l'homme pour lequel l'*ikulá* a été payé avant sa naissance avec celui qui l'a versé ou avec son fils ou petit-fils. Dans ce cas, il n'y a pas lieu de payer un nouvel *ikulá;* il ne reste qu'à compléter la dot de la façon normale.

L'acquisition d'une jeune enfant se fait soit pour soi-même, soit à l'intention d'un fils, d'un frère puîné, etc. Le premier cas était autrefois le plus fréquent, car les vieux gardaient pour eux-mêmes les femmes et voulaient en profiter avant de les laisser en héritage aux jeunes. Mais le dernier cas se présentait aussi.

Le but était d'éviter que, en cas de décès prématuré du père, les héritiers n'accaparent à leur profit exclusif le harem et les valeurs dotales — ce que, en principe, ils ont le droit de faire — et enlèvent ainsi les moyens d'obtenir une épouse aux jeunes encore inexpérimentés et incapables de se défendre. C'est donc un moyen de favoriser les fils, etc. et de leur fournir une épouse plus tôt que dans la pratique courante. A présent ce motif vaut encore plus qu'autrefois, en raison du mariage plus précoce des garçons.

D'autres causes interviennent, et cela pour les deux cas indiqués. C'est la plus grande certitude d'en avoir pour son argent, car, pour diverses raisons, les valeurs peuvent disparaître au cours des longues années d'improductivité.

En outre, la raison, à mon avis la plus profonde, et d'ailleurs très souvent invoquée par les Nkundó, est celle de pourvoir personnellement à l'éducation de la future épouse. Il va sans dire que le mari a tout intérêt à s'en occuper lui-même : il pourra l'accoutumer, dès sa jeunesse, aux circonstances spéciales, aux lois claniques, aux habitudes particulières (qualités, défauts, façon de vivre, etc.) de sa famille et de ses épouses, sans oublier les siens propres. Il peut la façonner à ses goûts et désirs. S'il y réussit, il y a là pour lui d'énormes avantages. Ceci ne doit pas s'entendre comme s'il s'en occupait personnellement. Car il sait qu'il n'est pas éducateur né. Aussi en charge-t-il de préférence sa mère (tante, sœur), qui aime cette obligation et est contente d'aider son fils et d'intervenir d'une façon immédiate et intime dans son ménage.

Enfin, l'alliance d'« amis » donne souvent lieu à des fiançailles précoces entre leurs enfants respectifs. Si plus tard les enfants ne veulent pas du mariage, l'affaire en reste là. On procède à la restitution, ou l'on arrange une substitution. Tel le cas qui s'est présenté pendant la composition de ce travail. Il y a bien vingt ans, Lokóta de Bolíngo et Insílọ de Bọnjọku se sont liés d'amitié (*boseka*). Le premier engendre un garçon (Ituwó), et le second une fille (Lọkọkú). Les parents font les fiançailles de leurs enfants par versement de l'*ikulá*. Arrivé à l'âge de prendre femme, Ituwó n'a pas envie d'épouser Lọkọkú : son cœur s'est épris d'une autre. Mais il a un frère plus jeune : Itọkọ́, qui ressent de l'affection pour Lọkọkú; il s'en ouvre à sa mère (son père étant mort entre-temps), qui renoue les relations avec Insílo. Tous se mettent d'accord sans difficulté. Itọkọ́ a donc épousé Lọkọkú au lieu de son aîné, après versement de la dot.

Si l'union engagée ne satisfait pas la fillette, elle est toujours libre de la faire rompre selon les règles du droit et non simplement pour défaut de consentement. Il est à noter que dans ce cas le mari n'a droit à aucune compensation pour avoir élevé cette enfant.

Malgré l'intérêt que présentent, d'un côté, les unions précoces, il serait, d'autre part, utile de les contrôler rigoureusement, parce que, à cause du jeune âge, l'affection fait souvent défaut; en tout cas, il serait utile de mieux sauvegarder la liberté et de ne pas faire semblant d'encourager ces unions précoces, comme cela se pratique parfois par l'exemption de l'impôt supplémentaire des épouses non adultes de polygames.

Aucune loi ne prescrit que la sœur aînée soit mariée avant la puînée, mais c'est la pratique commune, et l'on n'y fait exception qu'à cause des circonstances, dont la principale est que la puînée trouve un prétendant avant l'aînée, motif qui comprend et résume tous les autres (dispositions psychologiques ou physiques défavorables de l'aînée).

Le changement qui commence à se manifester dans cette pratique du mariage précoce des filles est dû à la liberté plus grande introduite par la colonisation. Pourtant, comme il n'y a pas d'avantages spéciaux attachés à ce changement, il est encore très faible. L'éducation chrétienne des parents doit nécessairement faire retarder l'époque du mariage pour les filles, et elle le fera *ipso facto* dès que l'influence chrétienne sera assez forte dans la région.

ARTICLE II. — LES GARÇONS.

Hormis les rares cas de fiançailles de deux enfants en bas âge, il était autrefois de pratique normale et courante que les hommes restent célibataires durant de longues années après leur nubilité. Les vieux se servaient d'abord eux-mêmes, et les jeunes n'avaient qu'à attendre, comme leurs aînés, leur tour. Cela était trouvé tout naturel. Plus tard ils pourraient fonder un foyer et « profiter » de la vie. Entre-temps ils trouvaient moyen de se dédommager un peu avec les femmes de certains parents, ou d'autres, si l'occasion s'en présentait.

Pour expliquer cet état de choses on peut invoquer l'organisation politique de la société nkundó, basée sur l'âge. De ce fait il est naturel que les tenants de l'autorité en aient les marques extérieures, dont une des principales est la richesse manifestée par la possession de femmes. Mais la situation présente, que nous indiquerons plus loin, infirme beaucoup cette explication.

Il est plus naturel de considérer ce retard dans le mariage des jeunes gens comme une conséquence logique du mariage en bas âge des filles. Supposons un garçon de 15 ans, tandis que sa sœur, dont la dot devrait lui revenir, n'a que 3 ans. Elle est mariée à cet âge. Leur père commun n'a rien de plus pressé que d'employer le capital reçu, si minime soit-il, au lieu de le laisser improductif avec le danger de le perdre un jour pour une raison quelconque. Il s'en sert donc pour obtenir une femme, en bas âge souvent, pour lui-même ou pour son frère. Voilà donc le garçon privé, à l'âge adulte, des moyens de se constituer un foyer. Il devra attendre l'acquisition de nouvelles richesses, soit par son travail personnel, soit grâce à l'aide de parents divers; soit par la mort de son père et de ses oncles, ou — souvent — grâce à la dot d'une fille à naître de la *nkita* de sa sœur. Dans cette dernière hypothèse, autrefois toute commune, il doit forcément patienter de longues années. Ainsi, dans l'exemple cité au chapitre II, art. X, Bakutu aurait, si la chose s'était passée quelques décades avant, dû attendre la dot de sa cousine Wängi, plus jeune que lui d'au moins 25 ans. Si alors on lui avait laissé le début de dot, il aurait encore été forcé d'attendre plus de 10 ans avant de devenir époux au sens plein, car cet *ikulá* aurait servi aux fiançailles d'une enfant en bas âge. Plus probablement, il aurait été jugé trop jeune; la dot aurait été employée en faveur d'un autre et il aurait dû attendre une nouvelle période de *x* années. Une fois admise la pratique du mariage en bas âge des filles, il n'y a pas d'autres issue; tout s'enchaîne et s'entraîne inévitablement, si l'on tient compte de la mentalité de cette société.

Le pouvoir qu'ont les vieux d'agir de cette façon à leur profit provient de l'organisation patrimoniale collective de la peuplade (ch. II, art. X et XI, 3°, B). La dot revient à la famille; le droit des membres n'est pas personnel et exclusif, mais découle de leur position hiérarchique dans le groupe.

Toutefois, le fait qu'un homme peut, dans l'attribution de la dot de sa sœur utérine, évincer son frère né de mère différente semble indiquer qu'il était primitivement le principal titulaire du droit à ces valeurs, droit dont l'exercice est différé avec les transferts concomitants.

Nous avons parlé d'improductivité de la dot. C'est là le raisonnement des Nkundó, qui n'est exact que parce [illegible] les vieux veulent se servir avant leurs fils. En réalité, ils pourraient très bien concilier la productivité de la dot avec les aspirations des jeunes, du moins dans beaucoup de cas: ils n'auraient qu'à employer les valeurs reçues en faveur de leurs fils, en acquérant à leur intention des filles d'âge égal. La productivité bien comprise n'en serait pas diminuée, puisque les biens resteraient dans la famille. Au contraire, elle en serait augmentée par la naissance probable d'une plus nombreuse postérité. Mais les connaissances physiologiques de nos indigènes ne semblent pas avoir été assez développées pour leur permettre la formation d'un tel jugement. Et, explication bien plus vraisemblable, l'égoïsme a tellement obnubilé leur intelligence et a fait taire la voix du bon sens et de l'amour paternel, pour multiplier leurs femmes, et ainsi augmenter la satisfaction facile de leur sensualité, accroître leurs richesses et renforcer leur position sociale; après leur mort ce sera le tour de leurs fils.

Cette situation est aggravée par le fait que l'héritage des veuves est dévolu au frère, et — à l'exception de la *bonóló* — nullement au fils; elles restaient donc au pouvoir des vieux.

A cause de cette attitude des vieux, la plupart des femmes étaient accaparées par eux; ils se constituaient des harems importants, de sorte qu'il était très difficile pour les jeunes de trouver une femme à épouser; ils devaient s'estimer heureux si leur père leur fournissait une enfant.

Aussi était-il inouï qu'un jeune homme de 20 à 30 ans se mariât, si l'on excepte quelques cas d'acquisition d'une enfant destinée à devenir après des années son épouse. Les hommes avaient ainsi régulièrement atteint la quarantaine, ou davantage, avant de se marier.

Actuellement, la situation est complètement modifiée : l'attitude des vieux est devenue bien plus favorable aux jeunes, et presque normale. La grande majorité des pères procurent, s'ils en ont les moyens, une femme à leurs fils dès que ceux-ci sont en âge et en expriment le désir. Cette amélioration est due à la plus grande facilité de se marier. Un grand nombre de jeunes gens ont maintenant leur femme, qui, s'ils avaient vécu sous l'ancien régime, seraient toujours célibataires. La jeunesse s'expatriant pour aller travailler chez les Blancs, les parents ont pitié de leurs fils et n'aiment pas les laisser partir sans femme qui puisse en prendre soin et leur préparer la nourriture. Cela a infligé un coup sérieux à l'ancienne coutume. Et même pour les jeunes gens qui restent chez eux, il n'est plus si difficile de se procurer une épouse. L'amour paternel a ici repris le dessus sur l'égoïsme.

D'autre part, les vieux ont été forcés à plus d'humanité, car les jeunes femmes, avec la liberté que leur procure l'occupation européenne, s'enfuyaient vers les centres, délaissant leurs maris, pour aller rejoindre, sous la protection des Blancs, leurs amants jeunes comme elles. Il était donc bien plus intelligent de procurer d'une façon honnête une épouse à leurs fils, que de s'exposer à de grosses palabres de la part du mari abandonné.

Il appert de tout ce qui précède que l'homme était considérablement plus âgé que son épouse. Mais de par le fait de l'héritage des veuves, il arrivait — et arrive — aussi qu'un homme obtînt des femmes plus vieilles que lui. Même dans les mariage des jeunes gens à l'époque actuelle, nombre d'épouses sont nettement inférieures en âge à leurs maris; bien des adolescents ont reçu comme épouses des fillettes impubères.

En règle très générale, la femme nkundó n'aime pas que son mari soit beaucoup plus âgé qu'elle, et moins encore qu'il soit plus jeune. Actuellement, les unions entre personnes d'âge égal augmentent de plus en plus. Ceci est dû aux remariages de divorcées qui préfèrent des époux de leur génération aux vieillards qui les ont « payées » d'abord, plutôt qu'à des unions originales entre égaux. L'influence de ménages chrétiens est appelée à jouer un grand rôle éducateur dans ce domaine, pour rendre normale la situation des filles.

Par contre, les garçons doivent se marier à tour de rôle, selon leur âge, à cause de la loi d'ancienneté qui régit les rapports sociaux. Voilà la règle. Mais elle peut recevoir des accrocs de par une autre règle : celle des droits sur la dot, directe ou médiate, d'une sœur. Les fils d'un polygame n'ont pas des droits absolument égaux sur

2: Hulstaert FO32 Mongo

les dots de leurs sœurs. L'un d'eux peut s'opposer à ce que son frère, né de mère différente et non apparentée à la sienne, profite de la dot payée pour sa sœur utérine. Son droit prévaut incontestablement. Mais s'il a d'autres sœurs, l'amour fraternel lui fait un devoir d'aider son frère moins fortuné. Si chacun d'eux a une sœur utérine, il peut y avoir interversion des droits dotaux, puisqu'elle ne cause de préjudice à personne. Enfin, si le puîné seul a une sœur, il y a un droit strict et personnel, et il peut ainsi arriver qu'il se marie avant son aîné. Mais, à moins d'une opposition irréductible de la mère, on tâche d'ordinaire d'arranger l'affaire à l'amiable, en assignant au puîné la dot future d'une nièce ou cousine. Telles que nous venons de les expliquer, ces règles ne valent absolument que pour les temps actuels. Autrefois elles existaient pareillement, mais de par le retard du mariage des fils, comme nous l'avons vu, il se produisait un transfert des droits qui pouvait bouleverser tout cet ordre. En pratique, comme beaucoup d'hommes commençaient la vie matrimoniale après la mort de leur père ou oncle, donc avec des femmes héritées, les aînés en bénificiaient avant les puînés (1).

Enfin, l'aîné peut être privé de son droit pour certaines raisons, comme un manquement grave aux devoirs de respect et de soumission à son père, qui, pour le punir, le maudit, le déclare publiquement déchu de sa position d'aîné et lui interdit l'acquisition d'une épouse. Cette pratique n'est plus en vogue à présent : elle n'aurait plus grand effet, car le jeune homme irait tenter la fortune ailleurs. Mais l'histoire nous en a laissé des exemples, comme celui d'Ikété yä Lonkinja, premier-né d'Ikété Elonɛɛma éá Longómbá, ancêtre de la famille Bombénga wä Bokenda (Bęsǫmbǫ).

---

(1) Cfr. aussi chap. II, art. 3.

CHAPITRE V.

EMPÊCHEMENTS AU MARIAGE.

Le lonkundo ne connait pas de terme spécifique pour « empêchement au mariage ». Comme dans nos langues européennes, on emploie des mots à sens général.

Nos gens ne font aucune distinction entre empêchements dirimants et empêchements prohibitifs. Nous parlerons donc simplement d'empêchements sans faire entre eux de distinction.

ARTICLE I. — LA « RACE ».

Au point de vue de la diversité de races, on ne peut faire entrer en ligne de compte que les Batswá. Avec eux, les mariages sont sévèrement défendus. Les règles du savoir-vivre nkundó sont très strictes pour les rapports entre Baotó et Batswá. Il est inouï que, même pour une simple conversation, les sexes des deux races se mêlent. *A fortiori* ne saurait-il être question de mariages.

Chez les Bilángi, tribu de Batswá des Injɔ́lɔ́ de la Salonga-Lofilaka (mais qui refusent absolument le nom de Batswá ou de Balómbę), on relève, à ma connaissance, deux cas d'union. Il s'agit de deux femmes Baotó et, coïncidence singulière, originaires toutes deux de Lotángonda (Injɔ́lɔ́, Engónjó). L'une, Njali, fille de Yɔlę et sœur de Lomálá; l'autre, Nsɔmbɔla, sœur de Limpęma.

Njali fut prise en mariage par Bakao d'Ikindatóló. Désirant ardemment des enfants et n'en ayant pas eu de ses deux maris nkundó successifs, elle s'enfuit chez les Bilángi, dans l'espoir d'une meilleure chance. Son attente

[p.241]

ne fut pas déçue : elle donna la vie à quatre fils : l'aîné, Bọnkọ́nọ, décédé depuis plusieurs années; Bakao (Georges), mort en 1933, et deux encore en vie : Bọnkọm (Louis) et Jọkẹ (Henri). En 1933, leur descendance à eux quatre se composait de treize fils, six filles, quatre petits-fils et une petite-fille. Mais entre Bakao et Njalí il n'a jamais existé de mariage légitime, aucun versement dotal n'ayant été effectué. Et la descendance forme un petit clan Bilángi, dépendant du clan de l'aïeule (Ilongó de Lotángonda).

Le second cas est un peu plus récent. Il est arrivé au début de la pénétration européenne. Dans le bouleversement général de cette époque, les indigènes du village Bosúka (Bilángi de Lingọnjú), profitant de l'absence de beaucoup d'hommes adultes entraînés par les soldats à l'expédition contre les Mbole, purent saisir la femme Nsọmbọla et l'amenèrent chez eux. Elle aima un des hommes de Bosúka, qui, après de longues années, l'« acheta » au prix de deux esclaves. Elle y vivait heureuse, jusqu'en ces dernières années, où le désir de rentrer dans sa propre race a repris le dessus. (Elle ne laisse pas de descendance.)

Ici nous avons donc un cas où les Ŋkundó se sont inclinés devant la volonté de la femme et se sont rendus à l'inévitable, en acceptant la dot pour Nsọmbọla. Ce qui prouve que, éventuellement, ils savent plier leurs exigences coutumières.

Toutefois, ces exemples exceptionnels n'ont pas trouvé d'admirateurs ni d'imitateurs, et l'opposition reste entière contre les unions entre les deux races. On ne veut pas de mélange. La position occupée par la famille hybride de Bakao dans le village de Lotángonda est très significative. Car il y est fait exception à la règle applicable à pareil cas : que l'enfant sans père légitime est incorporé dans le clan de sa mère. Les descendants de Bakao et Njalí dépendent de Lotángonda, en font partie politiquement, mais autrement s'ils vivaient dans le milieu purement indigène, où ils seraient certainement assimilés aux Batswa.

L'introduction et l'entraînement des Batswá dans la vie économique de l'Européen peuvent occasionner et favoriser le mélange des races. Les richesses qui sont ainsi mises à leur portée peuvent leur servir à séduire certaines femmes Baoto plus lascives ou cupides, surtout les habituées chez qui le vice a éteint tout sentiment de convenance et d'honnêteté et qui rôdent toujours aux environs des centres, camps, marchés. Le danger augmente quand des Batswá célibataires, engagés comme travailleurs à quelque titre que ce soit, sont envoyés exécuter leur besogne à une grande distance de chez eux, et surtout si parmi leurs compagnons le taux des hommes mariés n'est pas suffisamment élevé. Ceci n'est pas la description d'une situation, — la cloison entre les deux races étant toujours fort étanche, — mais une conjoncture qui n'est pas impossible, comme l'indique le cas arrivé en 1932 et qui me fut communiqué par le médecin alors en charge du dispensaire de Flandria, d'un Bọtswa, coupeur de fruits au service des H. C. B., atteint d'une syphilis d'origine indubitablement sexuelle.

Contrairement à la race, la différence de peuple ou de tribu ne constitue pas un empêchement. Les Nkundó proprement dits, comme les Elingá, se marient dans les groupes voisins, là où la situation géographiqu le permet, par exemple avec les Ngombẹ, les Mbole, les Ekonda.

ARTICLE II. — CONDITION SOCIALE.

Chez les Nkundó la condition sociale n'est pas un empêchement au mariage. A proprement parler, ils ne connaissent pas de classes sociales. Ils distinguent des autorités, des inférieurs, des personnes ou familles qui n'ont pas le droit de dire leur mot dans la politique; mais ces notions n'interviennent pas dans les relations sociales non familialement. Car ils ont hérité de leur père la nature bilángi; et contrairement à la logique ordinaire, ils ne sont pas devenus la parenté de la famille de leur aïeule. Le « principe des races » a, ici aussi, prévalu contre le droit commun.

On n'entend pas parler non plus de relations transitoires ou de concubinage. Un seul cas m'est connu qui n'a pas été heureux et qui n'invitera personne à l'imitation. Il arriva vers 1913. Un certain polygame, Lokóta de Bɔkɛkɛ (Bombwanja), s'éprit de la femme de Bonkíngó, actuellement capita de Bosáola (Batswá de Ntómbá, Bombwanja). Il devint la risée de toute la région, mais l'amour passa outre. Seulement, dans son ménage, la chose était plus grave. Une de ses femmes (Ámbánaɛlɛ) ne tarda pas à le quitter. Les autres lui refusaient leurs corps et se préparaient au divorce. De la sorte, Lokóta fut bien obligé de cesser ses amours déraisonnables, et tout finit par rentrer dans l'ordre (7).

Des cas de mélange se sont produits à la faveur de la colonisation, en dehors du milieu coutumier, entre Batswá et individus de tribus qui ne connaissent pas cette race. A la Mission de Bokúma réside une femme Bɔtswa des Ekonda qui, ayant été amenée par des soldats étrangers, a eu deux enfants avec un homme Mbole. Ces enfants sont méprisés par les Baoto comme par les Batswá des environs, et ils ne trouveront à se marier que s'ils vont se fixer dans leur clan maternel.

Au village de licenciés d'Ingende habite un Bɔtswa de Boálama (Bombwanja) qui, étant soldat pendant la guerre, épousa une femme de l'Urundi, qui probablement ne connaissait pas la race de son mari. Revenus dans cette région, c'est un excellent ménage, et la femme est toujours restée très attachée à son époux. Leurs cinq jeunes enfants ne sont nullement méprisés. Il en serait sans aucun doute ordinaires et particulièrement le mariage. Ainsi un membre d'un clan inférieur, soumis, client, étranger, descendant d'esclave, peut toujours se marier avec une personne appartenant au clan même aîné du groupement. Ces différences sont du domaine de la politique; l'union matrimoniale est une affaire juridique, d'affection et de bonnes relations, basée sur un versement dotal.

---

(7) Ces relations n'ont donné naissance à aucun enfant.

Quant aux esclaves proprement dits, il existe une exception. Mais il *faut* distinguer entre les sexes. L'union avec une femme esclave était beaucoup pratiquée, mais il n'y avait pas de mariage au sens propre. La conclusion d'un mariage *régulier* était précédée par l'affranchissement. Plus de détails seront donnés au chapitre VII, article V. Quant aux hommes, la situation était différente. L'esclavage était une condition non seulement inférieure, mais même déshonorante, quoique à un degré bien moindre que chez les Anciens. Un amour particulièrement ardent pouvait passer outre, et il existe quelques clans issus d'une femme « libre » et d'un homme esclave, unis en mariage régulier et légitime, le maître payant la dot.

L'opposition n'existe plus contre l'union d'une personne « libre » avec un descendant d'un mariage mixte. Ces enfants peuvent toujours se *réclamer* de leur ascendance maternelle, qui, dans ce domaine, importe plus pour les Nkundó que l'ascendance paternelle (1).

Pour la première *génération* issue de conjoints esclaves tous deux, l'opposition est moindre que pour les parents et elle s'atténue progressivement avec le nombre de *générations*. Envers les petits-fils *elle* n'existe pratiquement plus. Cela semble provenir de ce que le fait de recevoir de son maître une femme en mariage *régulier* constitue pour l'esclave, non pas un affranchissement (*naikò*, *naikola*), mais une certaine adoption (*udimya*, *-ímya*).

---

(1) Pour un Nkundó il n'y a pas de honte de ne pas connaître la famille de son père. Mais l'impossibilité de citer le clan de la mère est un grand déshonneur, car elle prouve sa condition d'esclave.

ARTICLE III. — LA PARENTÉ.

Le mariage est défendu entre les membres d'une même parenté (*isangeno*, *bosangema*, du verbe *-sangema* = être apparenté). Mais jusqu'où celle-ci s'étend-elle? Il est impossible de donner une règle générale. D'un côté, il est certain que lorsque deux groupements même vivant à côté l'un de l'autre, ne descendent pas d'un ancêtre commun, aucun lien de parenté n'existe entre eux. D'autre part, on ne peut pas dire que tous ceux qui descendent d'un même ancêtre soient parents et que le mariage soit interdit entre les diverses branches de ce groupement. La question revient donc à savoir quel ancêtre est reconnu comme limitant le groupement exogamique. Ce n'est que l'examen de chaque cas particulier qui peut en décider.

On ne peut pas arguer du terme *clan*, car ce mot se définit généralement : groupement de familles unies les unes aux autres par la parenté. Cela ne nous avance guère. Les caractéristiques citées d'ordinaire pour le clan : nom générique, lien totémique (¹), responsabilité collective, exogamie, non plus ne donnent la solution. Car ces éléments de la définition doivent se compléter mutuellement pour obtenir une compréhension suffisante. Impossible de déterminer aussi les degrés limites qui existeraient chez les Nkundó.

Il nous faudrait donc dresser la liste de tous les groupements de la peuplade pour examiner lesquels correspondent à l'idée de clan exogamique. Or, cela n'est pas faisable. Toutefois, voici, à titre d'exemple, la généalogie des Bongili :

L'ancêtre Tólenjo eut d'une femme deux fils : Iloko et Bokongó, et une fille : Ambá. De deux autres femmes il eut Eángé, père des Ikongya, et Efoloko, père des

---

(¹) Le totémisme ne semble pas exister chez les Nkundó. En tout cas il n'y est pas apparent comme ailleurs.

Boléngé. Iloko donna naissance aux villages Ifutó, Mbángé et Lofelí; Bokungú, à Boambá (plus Ifoku), Ndọngó, Bọlọngwankọi, Etóontálé, Bọntọlẹ, Lokónola (partie de Imọmọ) et Betoló l'Ibeba (habitant avec les Boambá). D'Ámbá naquirent Elángá, Imọmọ et Elẹkẹ (formant avec Bọlọngwankọi le village de Lokongo).

Tólenjọu
|
Bokungú
|
Bengóngó
|
Ekéké
|
Longwokó
(*décédé*, très vieux, en 1933).

Nous avons ainsi cinq groupements, qui sont exogamiques; dans le groupe, le mariage est défendu, mais il ne l'est point avec les membres des autres groupes. La petite généalogie ci-dessus donne une certaine idée de l'ancienneté de la lignée et de la distance qui sépare les membres actuels de l'ancêtre fondateur de la tribu. Il est à signaler que chaque groupe exogamique est subdivisé en plusieurs villages, clans et familles. Dans la ligne maternelle on trouve la même limite : le mariage est défendu avec les descendants des frères et sœurs de l'aïeule, femme de l'ancêtre du groupement exogamique (*).

Dans l'examen de cette matière il faut donc tenir compte aussi bien de la famille de l'aïeule que de la ligne paternelle.

Pour pouvoir délimiter exactement un groupe exogamique, il faut ainsi étudier non seulement plusieurs villages, mais diverses tribus. Car un même groupe peut se composer de plusieurs familles qui habitent loin les unes

---

(*) Notons que les relations de [illegible] se pratiquent dans chacun de ces cinq groupes exogamiques, mais pas entre descendants de la même aïeule, femme d'un des ancêtres et de ses enfants. *Cfr.* chap. I, art. VII, § 1.

des autres et qui parfois se sont jointes à des groupements apparentés seulement à un degré très éloigné, voire entièrement étrangers, de sorte que dans ce cas un même village comprend plusieurs groupes exogamiques.

Ainsi les Boéndé, issus de l'ancêtre Ilumbé yă Mpumo. De sa première femme, Eúmé, naquirent les groupes Etóo; des autres, les groupes Bongangá. Ils ne se marient pas entre eux, mais sont un bel exemple d'une composition complexe.

En effet, les Etóo sont répartis en quatre villages :

1° Etóo de Lotólá;

2° Etóo de Bakọ̀yọ́ ou Mbúlanẹ́nẹ, tous deux Basékâ Bombóngo;

3° Etóo de Mbómbé ou Basékâ Bofiíyolo;

4° Etóo de Bosánjo ou Basékâ Eóngo.

Les Bongangá habitent :

1° Bongangá, au sens strict (Basékâ Inanó, B. Bolaká, B. Bongéngé, B. Bandúwá, B. Lokókómyá);

2° Bongangá de Bakọyọ́, ou Bolíma;

3° Bongangá de Mbómbé ou Basékâ Botúna.

Donc Lotólá, Bakọyọ́ et Mbómbé ont chacun un groupe Etóo et un groupe Bongangá. Bongangá, au sens strict, a en outre un groupe « esclave », nommé Batsína, dont une autre fraction se trouve avec les Bosánjo. A Etóo de Lotólá est adjoint un clan étranger : Bofalambóka, descendant d'un homme Ekonda (Imbolo) et de sa sœur mariée à Mbete, esclave originaire de Bompángá (Wăngatá) et affranchi par son maître.

Nombreux sont les villages avec lesquels cohabitent des groupes étrangers, descendants d'esclaves (*ekwála*), ou autres (Ekonda, Bombwanja, alliés = *likiló*, *mpámá* ou *bowélé*, *mbúsolá* (1), etc.).

---

(1) *Mpámá* ou *bowélé* sont des étrangers quelconques invités, jadis, par le patriarche du groupe à rester chez lui pour l'exécution de certains travaux, surtout de forge. On nomme *mbúsolá* la descendance

Si l'on ajoute les descendants de parentes mariées dans d'autres groupements plus ou moins distants, les personnes avec lesquelles le mariage est interdit pour cause de parenté sont nombreuses. De par la loi de l'exogamie, une parenté pareille peut être très dispersée géographiquement, et l'on comprend qu'il n'est pas toujours aisé d'en démêler tous les fils. Aussi arrive-t-il que des jeunes gens nouent des relations en vue d'un mariage, ignorant leur parenté; ils ne sont avertis que par l'opposition et les explications consécutives des anciens.

Nous pouvons conclure qu'entre descendants d'un ancêtre commun le mariage est, de façon générale, interdit s'ils habitent le même village; fréquemment permis, au contraire, s'ils appartiennent à des villages différents, à condition qu'ils ne soient pas en outre parenté par l'une ou l'autre aïeule.

Comme on le voit, il est difficile de dire sur quel degré se base exactement la défense ou la permission du mariage entre descendants d'un ancêtre commun et où se trouve la limite du groupement exogamique.

Il appert encore de ce qui précède, — comme de l'examen de l'empêchement d'affinité, — que la descendance de mère commune est un élément plus important que la descendance de père. Ceci ne prouve pas une certaine forme de matriarcat, tout en pouvant en être un résidu ou un début, ou en fournir une explication partielle, mais dérive tout simplement des conceptions nkundó sur la génération, dont ils attribuent la part prépondérante à la mère, ainsi que de la honte plus grande qu'ils ressentent à s'unir à une personne issue d'une même femme, enfin de l'affection plus vive qu'ils portent à leur mère (senti-

---

d'un enfant apportée par une femme hors de son mariage (chap. 1, 2e partie, art. IV, § 3). On l'appelle aussi [illegible] volants des maris, parce qu'ils sont, non enfants propres, mais comme attachés au mari de leur mère, à l'instar de ces animaux qui pour dormir s'accolent aux arbres.

ment augmenté par la polygamie); trois causes qui sont intimement connexes.

Signalons enfin que, parmi les Nkundó dont nous traitons, il existe un groupe qui est moins sévère en la matière. La parenté exclusive du mariage est nettement plus restreinte, c'est-à-dire que leurs groupements exogamiques sont plus limités. Ce sont les Bongale (cfr. *Introduction*). Le même phénomène se constate chez les Elíngá (¹).

Contre l'infraction à la loi de l'exogamie, aucune sanction n'est prévue. Tout se limite à l'opposition des parents et patriarches et à l'habitude quasi innée.

Remarquons encore que les membres de certains clans se marient fréquemment avec ceux de certains autres clans, dans lesquels ils choisissent de préférence leurs épouses. Il se fait ainsi qu'une forte proportion des femmes mariées dans une famille donnée appartient à un clan déterminé. Ainsi les Wafé (Bakáala) prennent un très grand nombre de leurs épouses chez les Bongale w'ɔ̃tɔ́lɔ́.

Nous pouvons raisonnablement supposer que les ancêtres des groupes apparentés qui actuellement se marient entre eux pratiquaient autrefois l'exogamie. Si cette supposition est exacte, il faut admettre qu'avec l'extension progressive des familles, cette règle s'est relâchée dans un certain sens pour en venir à la situation présente. Par conséquent, il ne serait pas étonnant que dans l'avenir ces dispositions juridiques perdent encore de leur rigueur. De fait, on a vu des jeunes gens commencer à enfreindre les prescriptions exogamiques et, par leur exemple, délier de leur observation toute la famille (²). Ainsi les Bokátola prétendent que leurs deux groupements, Bompela et Ilɔ́ngɛ́, qui à présent se marient, formaient autrefois une

---

(¹) Les Batswá sont encore beaucoup plus larges et diffèrent très peu, sous ce rapport, des anciennes coutumes et lois européennes.

(²) Cfr. chap. I, art. VII, § 1.

seule entité exogamique. Des cas modernes se présentent par-ci par-là, mais sont toujours très rares, même entre personnes apparentées seulement à un degré fort éloigné, et à plus forte raison entre proches parents (¹). Car les Nkundó tiennent encore fort à cette loi. La masse de la population est tout opposée aux relâchements et infractions, et les patriarches et notables réagissent de tout leur pouvoir. Mais comme la vigueur de leur intervention est fort affaiblie par le transfert d'une grande partie de leur autorité aux chefs investis par l'Administration coloniale et par toutes les contingences de la vie moderne; comme, d'autre part, la jeunesse rompt graduellement les cadres anciens pour conquérir une plus grande liberté, ils devront bien s'incliner un jour.

ARTICLE IV. — L'AFFINITÉ.

L'affinité (*likiló*) nkundó ne doit pas être comprise au sens que lui donne le droit ecclésiastique ou civil européen. Le mariage est interdit avec toutes les personnes qui sont *bakiló* (sing. *bokiló*) (²). Il s'agit donc de savoir quelles personnes sont nommées *bakiló*, chose assez compliquée pour nous, Européens.

Avant de donner les règles générales, développons, pour rendre la compréhension plus facile, quelques considérations.

§ 1. Considérations générales.

1° L'empêchement d'affinité est moins rigoureux que l'empêchement de parenté. Il admet une espèce de « dispense »; dans beaucoup de degrés le divorce ou la mort annulent l'empêchement; enfin, on rencontre des trans-

---

(¹) Tel le cas récent d'Elimá et de sa femme [illegible], tous deux du groupe exogamique Bokonyola des Bonjoko, mais appartenant, l'un à la famille des Bosákà [illegible], l'autre aux Bosákà Nsoli.

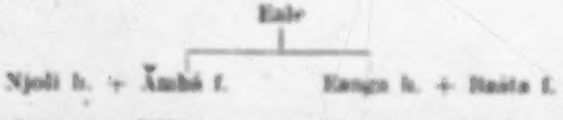
(²) Contrairement à l'affirmation du R. P. [illegible] (*Congo*, 1927, I, p. 542).

gressions, qui ne se constatent pas, dans les limites indiquées ci-dessus, pour la parenté.

Parmi les raisons légitimes de « dispense » on cite : le danger de voir le patrimoine se disperser par l'infidélité de l'épouse qui ne veut absolument pas rester chez son mari, jointe aux difficultés d'une palabre de divorce et des remboursements conséquents ; et — se rattachant étroitement à la précédente — un amour passionné entre les deux personnes alliées.

La dispense est accordée par le *ndonga* avec le conseil familial, qui, souvent, surtout lorsque la seconde raison est en cause, s'inclinent devant le fait accompli (¹).

2° A l'encontre du droit européen, qui ne connaît que l'affinité directe entre l'époux et la famille de son conjoint, le droit nkundó connaît aussi l'affinité indirecte, c'est-à-dire qu'une personne considère comme alliés même les conjoints des parents de son épouse; ou toute personne a comme alliés, non seulement les parents de son conjoint, mais aussi les alliés de celui-ci. Ainsi, dans l'exemple ci-joint, Njoli et Baáta sont alliés réels, quoique indirects (²):



Il existe une différence notable entre les deux sortes d'affinité : la directe constitue un empêchement bien plus sévère que l'indirecte, et l'on n'y fait exception que rarement, et cela encore seulement dans certains degrés.

3° Il faut distinguer entre parents « supérieurs » et parents « *inférieurs* », c'est-à-dire entre ceux qui ont la

---

(¹) Dispenser = [illegible]. Un mariage contracté avec dispense légitime ou accordée de par la force des choses après le fait accompli s'appelle [illegible], c'est-à-dire une affinité non observée.

(²) Le Nkundó ne distingue pas les deux sortes d'affinité par des termes spéciaux. Nous leur donnons ces noms pour la facilité et pour la clarté de l'exposé.

préséance et ceux qui leur doivent soumission et respect. Les parents « supérieurs » sont les ascendants, les oncles, tantes, etc., bref, ceux qui ont titre de père ou de mère, ainsi que les frères aînés (sœurs aînées, cousins aînés, etc.), qui sont des *batómóló* (sing. *botómóló*). Les inférieurs sont les descendants, ceux qui sont nommés « enfants » (*bána*) : fils et filles, petit-fils, neveux, nièces, frères ou sœurs cadets et ceux qui leur sont assimilés et qui sont *bakúné* (sing. *bokúné*).

4° La polygamie et l'héritage des veuves introduisent un autre élément. Ainsi nous verrons que dans certains degrés l'affinité constitue un empêchement qui est pourtant levé quand il s'agit de permettre l'héritage des veuves.

5° Les termes « alliés » et « *bakiló* » ne se couvrent nullement, même pas dans l'affinité directe. Lorsqu'ici nous parlons d'alliés, nous nous exprimons à la façon nkundó. Ce peuple ne considère pas comme alliés certaines personnes que nous jugerions telles. Elles font bien partie du groupe d'individus qu'en bloc on désigne par le mot *likiló*, *bakiló*, mais qui, quand on s'exprime au sens propre et exact, sont nommées *bóme* = mari ou *wáli* = épouse, parce que leur affinité n'en est pas une au sens strict, puisqu'elles peuvent se marier entre elles. Cela veut dire qu'à proprement parler, l'affinité est pour le Nkundó la relation entre une personne et les (seuls) parents de son conjoint avec lesquels il lui est défendu de se marier. Il est utile de bien avoir présente à la pensée cette double signification du terme.

§ 3. Règles.

1° AFFINITÉ DIRECTE.

A. — *En ligne directe* les mariages sont défendus. Toutefois, selon la considération n° 4, le fils ou le petit-fils peuvent hériter et épouser les veuves de leur père ou de leur grand-père, mais pas inversement.

Ex. 1.	Bakando f. Mbóyó h. + Esalé f.	Mbóyó ne peut jamais épouser Bakando.
Ex. 2.	Esle h. + Boóná f Mbélá f.	Esle ne peut jamais épouser Mbélá.
Ex. 3.	Bombembi h. Ikété h. + Basáé f.	Bombembi ne peut jamais épouser Basáé (¹).
Ex. 4.	Esalo h. + Longá f. Loféte h.	Lofété peut épouser Longá.

N. B. Les mêmes règles valent pour les grands-parents et les petits-fils.

B. — *En ligne collatérale mixte :* Le mariage est interdit avec les parents aînés, « supérieurs » du conjoint. Les Injóló y font parfois exception pour une tante de l'épouse après la mort de celle-ci; mais la chose est très mal jugée.

Avec les parents inférieurs, cadets, du conjoint le mariage est permis.

Ex. 5.	Insilo h. Eambela f. Wenga h. + Wetsi f.	Wenga ne peut pas épouser Eambela (sauf l'exception citée).
Ex. 6.	Elomi h. Bokánga f. Boóla h + Bekombe f.	Cas identique au précédent.
Ex. 7.	Eloko h. Bonjembo f. ou Eloko Bonjembo Esalo h. + Elili f. Benteke f. + Lokóná h	Mariages toujours interdits.

(¹) Si Bombembi voulait, après la mort de son fils Ikété, prendre sa veuve, la mère du défunt, excédée par la colère et la honte, l'abandonnerait irrémédiablement. Durant la vie du fils, une conduite pareille du père donnerait au lésé tous les droits de vengeance (assassinat, guerre avec l'aide de son clan maternel, etc.); car la conduite de Bombembi équivaudrait à un véritable désaveu de son fils. Mais le cas est purement hypothétique.

Ex. 8. Boáté h. Bolefó h. + Wanga f.
Lofeka h.

ou Boátó h. Bolefó
+ Wanga Lofeka.

Lofeka peut épouser Wanga.

Ex. 9. Bosenge f. Bonyeme h. + Eámé f.
Boaési h.

Boaési peut épouser Eámé.

Les mêmes règles valent également pour les grands-oncles, grand'tantes et entre cousins de degré inégal (relations de « père » à « fils »; cfr. tableau des relations et terminologies familiales) (en annexe).

C. — *En ligne collatérale égale :* Le degré n'a aucune importance : cousines et sœurs, par exemple, suivent les mêmes règles. Le mariage est défendu avec la sœur (cousine) aînée de l'épouse, mais il est permis avec la cadette. Pour les femmes, la même règle vaut; mais après la mort du mari on admet parfois une exception en faveur de l'aîné, afin de faciliter les arrangements de l'héritage. Seuls les Boángi — comme les Elángá de Losanganya — ne font pas la distinction entre aînés et cadets et permettent toujours le mariage. Ils commencent même à être imités par les Injóló.

Ex. 10. Bongoso h. + Mbola f. Bokófo f.

Bongoso peut épouser Bokófo.

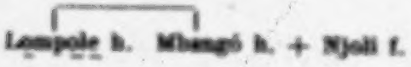
Ex. 11. Mpoku f. Boongi f. + Njamba h.

Njamba ne peut pas épouser Mpoku.

Ex. 12. Bakókó f. + Wanja h. Wai h.

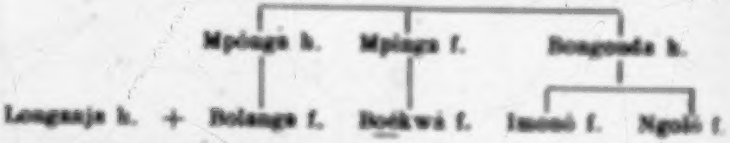
Wai peut toujours épouser Bakókó.

Ex. 13.


Lompole h.
Mbangó h. + Njoli f.

Lompole ne peut pas épouser Njoli. Une exception rarissime est parfois admise.

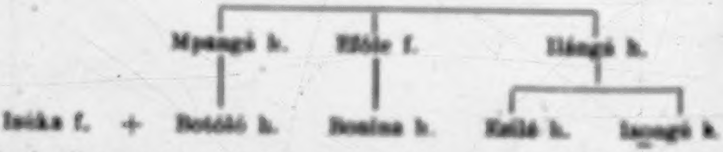
Ex. 14.


Mpiaga h.
Mpiaga f.
Bongonda h.
Longanja h. + Bolanga f.
Boákwá f.
Imonó f.
Ngolo f.

Longanja ne peut épouser les cousines aînées, mais seulement les cadettes, exceptée Boákwá qui est *bɔ́nankáná* et donc a rang de « père » (*Cfr. supra* sous B.)

De même :

Ex. 15.


Mpangá h.
Ekóle f.
Ilóngá h.
Isóka f. + Botóló h.
Bonina h.
Ealá h.
Isongó h.

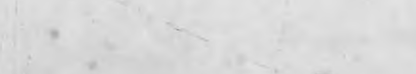
Seuls les cousins cadets de Botóló peuvent épouser Isóka. Bonina est *bɔ́nankáná*, donc « père » et par conséquent assimilé aux oncles (*Cfr. supra* sous B).

Notons, enfin, que la rigueur de l'empêchement s'atténue dans la mesure où les degrés sont plus éloignés; c'est-à-dire qu'on admet d'autant plus facilement les dispenses et les exceptions.

2° AFFINITÉ CHARNELLE.

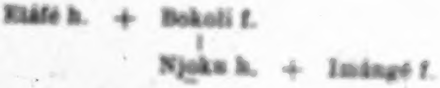
A. — *En ligne directe* le mariage est défendu, mais on admet certaines exceptions. Deux cas peuvent se présenter : avec la femme du père (exemple 16) et avec la femme du fils (exemple 17).

Ex. 16.


Mbembe h. + Ekila f.
Ilóna h. + Bokóna f.

Après la mort ou le divorce de Bokóna, Ilóna peut épouser Ekila mais l'exception est peu courante, parce que fort exposée aux critiques désobligeantes.

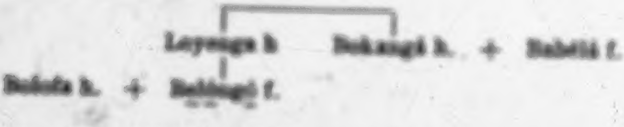
Ex. 17.



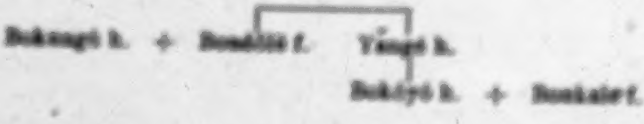
Etáfé peut épouser Imángé après la mort de Bokolí, mais le cas est toujours très mal interprété. On est plus indulgent si Etáfé a lui-même payé la dot pour Imángé, puisque, alors, il sauvegarde son capital. Cette considération a encore de la valeur pendant la vie de Bokolí, si Imángé ne veut pas rester chez Njoku. Pourtant la mère de ce dernier s'oppose de toutes ses forces. Si Etáfé n'entend pas raison, il peut s'attendre au divorce et même à une guerre de la part du clan de Bokolí. Car il leur est fait une grave injure par Etáfé du fait qu'il a ainsi enlevé la *femme* de son beau-fils. Après le divorce la nouvelle dot de Bokolí peut *être refusée* à Etáfé *et donnée* à Njoku directement, pour qu'il se procure une épouse en remplacement de celle qui lui a été ravie.

Pour les oncles et tantes, les mêmes *règles* sont applicables, mais elles sont moins *rigoureuses* :

Ex. 18. *(comparable à l'ex. 16)* :



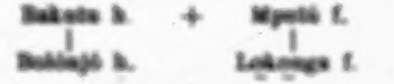
Ex. 19. *(comparable à l'ex. 17)* :



B. — *En ligne collatérale provenant d'un mariage entre leurs parents en ligne directe.*

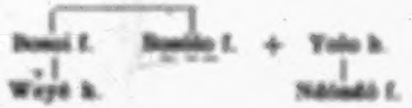
a) Entre descendants le mariage est strictement défendu. Ainsi les enfants de deux conjoints ne peuvent pas se marier ensemble; ils sont considérés comme frères et sœurs. La même règle vaut pour deux demi-cousins (exemple 21).

Ex. 20.


Bakuta h.
+
Mpela f.
Bolónjó h.
Lokonga f.

Mariage sévèrement interdit entre Bolónjó et Lokonga.

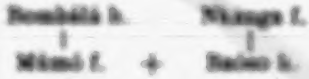
Ex. 21.


Bomai f.
Bosongo f.
+
Yolo h.
Weyé h.
Ndóndó f.

Entre Weyé et Ndóndó le mariage est interdit.

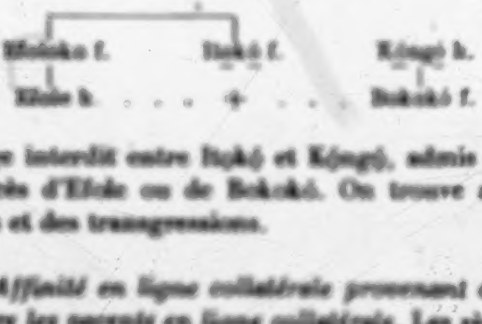
b) Entre ascendants le mariage est défendu, mais on admet des exceptions lorsque par la mort l'affinité est rompue :

Ex. 22.


Bombálá h.
Nkanga f.
Mbomó f.
+
Baóso h.

Mariage défendu entre Bombálá et Nkanga.

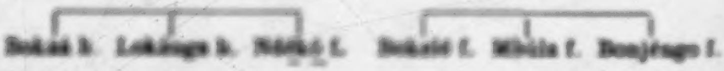
Ex. 23.


Efotóko f.
Ilokó f.
Kóngó h.
Elóko h.
+
Bokokó f.

Mariage interdit entre Ilokó et Kóngó, admis pourtant après décès d'Elóko ou de Bokokó. On trouve aussi des dispenses et des transgressions.

C. — *Affinité en ligne collatérale provenant d'un mariage entre les parents en ligne collatérale.* Les règles sont celles de l'affinité directe en ligne collatérale (cfr. ci-dessus, n° 1°, C).

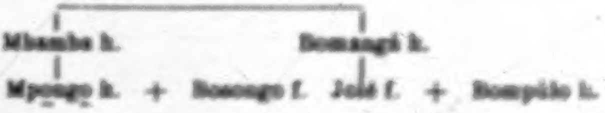
Ex. 24.


Bokaá h.
Lokánga h.
Nsókó f.
Bokálé f.
Mbála f.
Bonjéngo f.

Bokaá est marié avec Bonjéngo. Ni lui ni Lokánga ne peuvent épouser Bokálé. Et Nsókó ne peut épouser Mbála. S'il avait épousé Bokálé, Nsókó pourrait se marier avec Mbála. Si en outre Bonjéngo était l'aînée de Mbála, Lokánga pourrait l'épouser également.

La même règle vaut pour cousins et cousines :

Ex. 25.

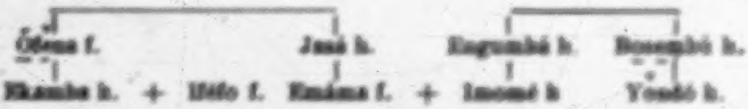

Mbambe h.
Bomangá h.
Mpongo h.
+
Bosongo f.
Jaá f.
+
Bompúlo h.

Mariage interdit entre Bompúlo et Bosongo.

Plus les degrés deviennent éloignés, plus l'empêchement perd de sa force, et par suite plus facilement les exceptions sont admises.

Il reste à noter que — nous l'avons déjà dit à plusieurs reprises — les cousins ou cousines qui sont *bɔ́nankána* sont, dans le droit nkundó, des « pères » par rapport à leurs cousins, et par conséquent ils sont traités comme oncles ou tantes. L'empêchement est très rigoureux pour eux, surtout lorsqu'ils sont *nyangökiló* = mère de l'allié. Ainsi l'

Ex. 26.


Ótema f.
Jaá h.
Engumbá h.
Bosembé h.
Ekamba h.
+
Iféfo f.
Emáma f.
+
Imomé h
Yondó h.

Ekamba est *bɔ́nankána* de Jaá, donc « père » d'Emáma. Iféfo, sa femme, est donc la « mère » d'Emáma. Celle-ci est « *bokiló* » d'Yondó. Par conséquent, Iféfo est la mère de la *bokiló*, ou *nyangökiló* de Yondó. Entre ces deux-là le mariage est strictement défendu, bien qu'il ne le soit pas entre Emáma et Yondó (cfr. exemple 18).

Quant aux relations adultères entre ces diverses personnes, il en sera question au chapitre VI, article VI, § 2.

CHAPITRE VI.

LA VIE CONJUGALE.

Dès que les fiancés vont cohabiter, comme il est décrit ci-dessus, ils ont tous les devoirs et droits des époux. Aucune cérémonie spéciale ne marque la consommation du mariage.

Pour traduire « vie conjugale », les Nkundó emploient le substantif *ibálelo*, du verbe *bálana*, forme réciproque du radical *-bál* = se marier. Comme le verbe, le substantif est usité tant au sens matériel qu'au sens moral, social. Notre terme « ménage, famille » n'a pas d'équivalent exact dans leur langue. Ils ne possèdent que le mot *ilɔngɔ*, qui signifie la famille au sens large, c'est-à-dire toutes les personnes apparentées, mais qu'on pourrait bien adopter pour rendre nos termes européens (*).

Dans ce chapitre nous examinerons la position des époux entre eux : Division du travail, Propriété, Devoirs et Droits divers; puis les relations des conjoints avec leurs familles ou alliés; enfin, les relations sexuelles extraconjugales.

ARTICLE I. — DIVISION DU TRAVAIL.

Les soins du ménage : conservation et préparation des aliments, nettoyage de la case et de la cour, plantation et entretien des champs, des cultures diverses, soins des

---

(*) De l'absence d'un nom spécifique, nous ne pouvons pas conclure à l'absence de la chose. Les Nkundó connaissent la famille au sens de ménage, quoiqu'ils s'en fassent une autre idée et lui aient donné une autre organisation que beaucoup de peuples. D'ailleurs, le mot *familia* avait chez les Romains un sens bien différent de celui du mot français, qui, lui aussi, a une double signification.

[p. 210]

enfants, incombent à la femme. Elle s'adonne à la pêche par écopement et fait des travaux de vannerie (nattes, paniers, ramassettes). Chez les Elinga, elle moule et cuit les pots. C'est la femme encore qui va chercher le menu bois de chauffage, besogne à laquelle le couteau et la machette suffisent, tandis que le gros bois, pour lequel on doit se servir de haches, est apporté par le mari. C'est elle encore qui procure les légumes, les champignons, les chenilles. Elle fait l'extraction de l'huile, fabrique le sel et va aux marchés. Elle donne encore ses soins à la basse-cour.

L'homme, de son *côté*, outre ses occupations politiques et sociales diverses, vaque aux travaux plus durs, plus dangereux, plus conformes à sa nature et à sa constitution, tels que la chasse, la pêche, la coupe des régimes de noix de palme, le travail du bois et du fer, la construction de la case et de ses annexes, le tressage des nasses et claies de pêche, l'abatage de la forêt pour l'installation des cultures (que la femme brûle, plante et entretient ensuite).

La division du travail est donc bien *réglée*. Chacun s'occupe de la besogne qui convient à sa nature. Ne nous étonnons pas trop de ce qu'un homme n'aide jamais sa femme, ni vice versa : tous deux se cantonnent dans leur propre domaine. Il serait honteux pour eux de se mêler des travaux de l'autre sexe. Ils ne s'en font mutuellement aucun *grief*. D'ailleurs, il est conforme à la nature des choses que la femme reçoive, dans le ménage, la majeure part des tracas, surtout si elle a quelques enfants. Par conséquent, nous jugerions mal en traitant la femme de bête de somme et le mari de profiteur paresseux (*).

(*) Comparez ce qu'écrit le R. P. [illegible], dans les *Missions catholiques*, LIV^e année, n° [illegible], août [illegible], p. [illegible] : « A part quelques rares privilégiées de la fortune, la femme, chez les Noirs que nous avons connus, vaque aux occupations de son ménage à peu près comme une bonne paysanne de chez nous. Elle nous a paru rarement la bête de somme qu'on se plaît à décrire ».

ARTICLE II. — PROPRIÉTÉ.

Par le mariage, la femme ne devient pas membre du clan de son mari. Si elle est née dans le clan de Bofékola, par exemple, elle reste toute sa vie *bonà Bofékola* = membre du clan Bofékola, et son cadavre doit être enterré dans sa terre natale. En cas de divorce et de remariage, le nouvel époux ne restitue pas la dot au premier, mais paie aux parents de la femme, qui, eux, remboursent le mari abandonné.

Pourtant, toute l'activité de l'épouse est dirigée vers le bien de son conjoint et de la famille de celui-ci, et cela dès le versement de l'ikulá. Les parents n'ont plus droit sur leur fille. Tous les fruits de son travail sont la propriété de son mari.

Si elle trouve des objets sans propriétaire, par exemple des défenses d'éléphants, des anneaux de cuivre enfouis dont personne ne réclame la possession, ils ne lui appartiennent pas, ni à sa famille, mais uniquement à son mari. Si celui-ci partage avec ses beaux-parents, c'est là un effet de son affection et de son respect envers eux. Il n'y a aucune obligation de justice, mais un certain devoir de bienséance et de bonne entente cordiale.

Les bénéfices de la vente des produits de son industrie (vivres pour le marché, nattes, sel, pots, paniers, etc.) ne lui appartiennent pas, mais au mari.

Même ce qu'elle acquiert lors d'une visite à ses parents, tout ce qu'elle trouve pendant un retour dans sa famille, les poissons qu'elle y pêche, les chenilles qu'elle y ramasse en forêt, tout cela appartient uniquement à son mari.

Il peut arriver que, dans ce domaine, une femme outrepasse ses droits. Généralement, le mari bienveillant la laisse faire. La sévérité serait attribuée à un manque d'affection envers son épouse, ou de délicatesse à l'égard de ses beaux-parents, et, ce qui est plus grave pour le Nkundó, serait même critiquée comme avarice (jamais comme injustice !). La conduite malhonnête de la femme peut cependant donner origine à des incidents, et même à des incidents sérieux. Tel le cas historique d'Efoloko d'Ikengya (Bongili), mariée à Mpokú d'Imomo. Etant allée à la pêche chez elle, elle donna tout son poisson à son frère Bolómadingá. Le mari n'insista pas. Mais à une réunion, aspergée de bière, ses compagnons le raillèrent à cause de son indulgence excessive, en l'expliquant comme une faiblesse. Là-dessus, Mpokú se mit en fureur, et la suite *fut* une guerre sanglante entre les deux clans.

Le mari doit entretenir sa *femme* et réserver une juste part des bénéfices réalisés à son habillement et pour lui procurer les ustensiles, *etc.*; ou bien lui remettre de quoi pourvoir à ses besoins et aux nécessités du ménage.

Bien donc que le mari soit seul légitime propriétaire des produits de l'activité de sa femme, de par une autre loi il lui doit la part raisonnablement requise pour son entretien. Si la femme s'approprie ces bénéfices sans en informer en préalable le mari, il y a infraction. Si le mari n'accorde pas à sa femme le nécessaire et l'utile qu'il peut lui donner, il y a également infraction.

Les poissons pêchés par la *femme* sont préparés et le reste est *fumé* pour la conservation à l'usage commun du ménage. Si le mari n'est pas trop mal disposé, il lui en cède une partie à l'intention de sa famille à *elle*. .

Les champs que les époux ont établis en commun (l'homme en abattant la forêt, la femme en brûlant, nettoyant, plantant et entretenant) sont la propriété du mari. Les *fruits* servent à leur entretien mutuel et à celui des enfants. Les bénéfices de la vente partielle sont destinés à leur usage commun. Ils s'arrangent entre eux comme dans les familles ordinaires d'Europe. Il est évident qu'ici encore des infractions se commettent et que l'un ou l'autre exagère quelquefois sa part en sa faveur, ou au bénéfice de ses parents, ou qu'il en dispose sans avoir communiqué à son conjoint ses intentions. Mais tous les honnêtes gens désapprouvent une telle conduite (1).

Si un jour le mariage est rompu, la femme n'a plus aucun droit à faire valoir sur les champs, ustensiles, habits, etc. Elle n'hérite pas de son mari. A sa mort à elle, sa famille n'a aucun droit sur ce qu'elle aurait laissé, excepté, évidemment, les valeurs qu'elle a reçues lors du mariage d'une de ses filles (2).

Cette situation de la femme au point de vue propriété a encore une autre conséquence : le mari est responsable du dommage causé par sa femme. C'est lui qui doit payer l'indemnité. Il en est de même des dettes qu'elle aurait contractées. Si elle a emprunté, le créancier réclame son dû, non à la femme, ni à la famille, mais au mari. C'est uniquement ce dernier qui est reconnu civilement responsable, puisque c'est lui seul qui possède et a droit à l'activité économique de son épouse, en bénéfice et en déficit. Après quoi il est en droit de gronder et même de battre sa femme qui lui a causé ce tort financier. Il faut pourtant excepter le cas où la famille de la femme reconnaît officiellement, c'est-à-dire par versement public, devant témoins, d'un *ndanga*, qu'elle-même est en faute, et enlève ainsi au mari la responsabilité.

Nous pouvons donc conclure :

1° La femme n'est pas propriétaire.

2° Elle a pourtant droit à une part raisonnable pour ses besoins divers. Ce droit n'est pas un droit de propriété strict (*jus in re*), mais un droit à ce qu'il faut pour sa sustentation (*jus ad rem*).

3° Il n'y a donc pas possibilité pour les parents de la femme d'hériter des biens que le mari a mis à sa dispotion.

---

(1) Une fable enseigne la bonne attitude à adopter dans ces cas.

(2) Cfr. chap. II, art. V. Pour de plus amples détails, cfr. chap. VIII, art. V, et chap. IX, art. IV et VII.

4° La femme n'agissant jamais en son nom propre, mais comme préposée du mari, la responsabilité « civile » incombe à celui-ci.

ARTICLE III. — RELATIONS DES ÉPOUX ENTRE EUX. DEVOIRS ET DROITS DIVERS.

Les conjoints ont l'obligation de s'acquitter des devoirs et d'exécuter les travaux qui leur incombent.

Il est difficile de dire jusqu'où va, chez les Nkundó, la conscience du devoir de rendre le *debitum conjugale*. D'ordinaire ils se le rendent très souvent. Mais après une bonne querelle ils s'en abstiennent, de consentement mutuel, ou par le refus de l'un. Si des manquements graves et continuellement réitérés sont commis par l'une ou l'autre partie, la question sera résolue par le divorce. Pour des manquements passagers, tout se borne à des réprimandes, disputes, coups et autres réactions communes. Ajoutons que la continence s'impose pendant la période de l'*ekelé* après la naissance d'un enfant et après l'établissement d'une nouvelle clôture de chasse (lokombo) ou d'un nouveau barrage de pêche (bosaka), avant la capture de la troisième pièce.

§ 1. Repas.

Les repas ne sont jamais pris en commun par les conjoints. Le mari mange seul ou avec ses grands fils, ses parents ou amis, les aliments que l'épouse lui a préparés et lui sert. Elle-même mange avec ses enfants en bas âge, ses filles, ses parentes. Les deux sexes ne se mêlent jamais dans la réfection.

La même règle vaut pour les causeries, mais elle est bien moins sévère : il n'est pas rare que pour une raison ou une autre des femmes participent à la conversation des hommes.

Par l'influence du christianisme, on ne tardera guère à admettre les femmes dans les conversations de l'autre sexe, d'une façon générale. La chose ira beaucoup plus difficilement pour les repas mixtes; pratiquement la brèche n'est pas même entamée.

Aussi trouve-t-on, à côté de la chambre à coucher, ou à part de la case, une cuisine, qui non seulement est destinée à la préparation des aliments, mais est encore le local où la femme se tient pendant la journée. Ici la cuisine forme une construction isolée de l'habitation proprement dite; là elle est une partie de la maison, séparée de la chambre à coucher par une paroi pourvue d'une porte. Les polygames, et certains monogames, possèdent une sorte de hangar où ils reçoivent leurs amis, traitent leurs affaires, prennent leur repas, etc. (*).

Un homme qui se trouve souvent à la cuisine ou aime à s'y reposer s'attire la risée des autres, hommes et femmes; on le traite d'*ikómbelinga* (dérivé de *bolinga* = fumée, et *kómba* = faire des mouvements pour éviter, détourner la tête pour protéger les yeux contre la *fumée*).

§ 3. Maladies.

L'épouse est obligée de soigner son mari malade, de concert avec les autres épouses, s'il est polygame, et aidée, dans les cas sérieux, par des parentes à lui (mère, soeurs). Même mariées ailleurs elles viennent soigner leur fils ou frère. Que leur mari soit raisonnable et ne cherche pas à leur interdire cette absence, ni à contrecarrer l'exercice de ce devoir, car il risque fort de voir sa femme le quitter définitivement, outrée par le manque d'affection dont il fait preuve envers sa famille à elle.

Solidairement elles cherchent les médicaments et préparent les potions.

A la maladie de la femme, comme les parentes du mari

(*) Ce local est surtout connu par les Bombwanja, imité par les autres tribus. Les [illegible], comme les [illegible] et Bolenge d'entre Congo-[illegible], disent [illegible]. Les Ekonda = [illegible].

sont, en règle générale, bien disposées envers l'épouse de leur fils, frère, etc., elles ne manquent pas de venir la voir, la consoler et lui administrer les soins qu'elles sont à même de donner. Le mari doit, de son côté, chercher les médicaments et aider la malade. J'ai connu une grosse palabre relativement à cette matière. Un certain Bokangá avait, pendant la maladie de sa femme Efętsi, eu des rapports dans sa case avec une autre femme. L'affaire devint publique. Le coupable dut rétablir la paix et la bonne entente par un *bojindo* considérable, pour avoir manqué de donner ses soins à son épouse et pour s'être montré d'une insouciance et d'une indifférence absolues.

Si l'affection se prolonge ou se montre grave, ni le mari ni ses parentes n'ont les loisirs de la soigner et de s'occuper d'elle. Pour remédier à ces inconvénients et en même temps pour donner aux parents de la femme la satisfaction de pouvoir assister eux-mêmes leur fille, le mari l'envoie chez eux. Il la conduit personnellement, ou il les appelle pour venir la prendre. Il leur fait parvenir la nouvelle en envoyant son *ndanga* muni d'un paiement *de témoignage* (*ndanga*, *loikalo*): couteau, anneau de cuivre, etc. Ce *ndanga* est un gage, une preuve pour la famille de l'épouse que leur fille était malade à son arrivée, et qu'elle n'a pas contracté l'infirmité chez eux. Sans ce gage, ils ne voudraient pas la prendre; ils préféreraient la traiter chez son mari. Ou, si le mari l'envoyait chez elle sans *ndanga*, ils appelleraient le *ndanga* comme témoin de l'infraction. Ou encore le fait serait considéré comme répudiation pure et simple. De toute façon le mari serait en tort, et la responsabilité juridique du décès de la femme, dans ces conditions, lui incomberait totalement (*cfr.* plus loin, chap. IX, art. X).

Après la guérison les parents envoient au gendre un message pour l'engager à venir reprendre son épouse.

Même non invités par le mari, les parents de la femme, ayant reçu avis de la maladie de leur fille, viennent la voir pour l'emmener avec eux, afin de la soigner. Généralement elle les suit. Mais elle n'en a pas l'obligation, car elle appartient à son mari. On cite même des noms de femmes qui, malgré toutes les instances de leur famille, n'ont point voulu se faire traiter chez elle, mais ont préféré mourir dans les bras de leur mari, pour ainsi dire. Ainsi, Bokámbá w'Ikɔfɔ de Bombóngo w'Ikonda (Bɔyɔndɛ), mariée à Iɔmbɛ y'Ilongo de Engónjó; Balɛkɔ de Nsɛkó, mariée à Eanga éá Jéfá de Nkóiengo; Iombe de Bosió, mariée à Bokálóambwá de Iélé; Balɔngɔla de Nkémbá (Bombwanja), mariée à Lompoko de Mbelé; Mpámbɛ de Bongeanda (Bonkoso), mariée à Imbeamba de Bɔnjɔkɔ; Efɔla de Longa, mariée Ilɔlí de Bokányola (Bɔnjɔkɔ); Bandɛ de Mbelé, mariée à Nkɔngɔ de Lɛlɛlí.

Si la femme s'est rendue en bonne santé dans sa famille et qu'elle y contracte une infirmité, la responsabilité en incombe à ses parents. Ils sont obligés de la soigner et de prendre sur eux tous les frais causés par le traitement. Après guérison, ils la renvoient en lui remettant une quantité de nkɔpɔnɔ à l'intention du mari. Généralement l'affaire en reste là. Si pourtant les relations ne sont pas très bonnes entre les deux familles, l'époux réclame une indemnité, qui varie selon les cas et à laquelle, de toute façon, il a droit, même s'il s'abstient de la réclamer.

Cette stipulation du droit vaut même lorsque la femme est allée voir sa mère, son père, etc., lors d'une maladie ou pour tout autre motif.

Au contraire, elle ne vaut pas si l'épouse s'est rendue chez ses parents sur l'ordre exprès du mari ou si elle a fui le toit conjugal pour mauvais traitements ou manquements graves du conjoint, comme nous expliquerons ci-dessous au § 8. La maladie est, dans ces cas, imputable civilement au mari.

Certains cas intermédiaires peuvent donner lieu à d'âpres discussions. Ainsi, par exemple, une visite de la propre initiative de l'épouse, mais pour le bien du mari. Théoriquement, celui-ci doit gagner le procès. Enfin, il reste à signaler qu'un séjour de vingt-quatre heures seulement n'est pas reconnu suffisant pour faire retomber sur la famille de la femme la responsabilité de la maladie.

La colonisation a donné origine à un cas tout nouveau. La législation octroie aux femmes supplémentaires des polygames la liberté de se rendre dans une Mission afin de s'y faire instruire dans la religion chrétienne et de contracter un mariage monogamique (moyennant l'observation des règles coutumières qui régissent la dissolution des mariages). Une telle femme peut tomber malade à la Mission. Si cette affection n'a pas de suites fâcheuses spéciales, elle ne donne pas lieu à contestations. Il en est autrement si elle devient chronique et nuisible de quelque façon au conjoint abandonné.

Les polygames se déclarent libres de toute responsabilité qu'ils font retomber sur la famille de la femme. Mais la famille n'y est pour rien : il est injuste de la mêler à cette question. Comme la législation veut combattre la polygamie, il est naturel que ce soit le mari polygame qui en pâtisse.

Tel le cas récent que voici : Mbóyó Julienne, sœur de Botúma Jean de Bekondó, mariée au polygame Inséŋ de Bokenyola (Bonjoku), s'était rendue à la Mission de Bokúma, où elle contracta une maladie inguérissable (*). De ce fait elle ne put trouver à se remarier. Quittant donc la Mission, elle ne fut plus admise par son mari coutumier et force lui fut d'habiter chez son frère. Inséŋ exige de celui-ci le remboursement de la dot, prétendant que la femme a divorcé en se rendant à la Mission, en réalité

(*) Il s'agit d'une sorte d'affection à symptômes nerveux. Scientifiquement parlant, il est plus que probable qu'elle était déjà auparavant atteinte de la maladie, qui ne fit que se manifester à la Mission. Mais les indigènes ne font pas cette distinction, qui n'importe donc pas pour notre sujet.

toutefois parce qu'elle est devenue inapte aux devoirs conjugaux. Puisque Mbóyó n'a pas contracté la maladie au foyer conjugal, il en rend la famille responsable.

§ 3. L'abandon du toit conjugal.

Dans les manquements graves de la part du mari, l'arme ordinaire de la femme est l'abandon du toit conjugal pour rentrer dans la maison paternelle. Si elle s'est enfuie dans un cas sérieux, c'est au mari d'aller la reprendre. Elle ne rentre pas de sa propre initiative. L'époux ne peut invoquer son tort à elle. S'il refuse de faire le premier pas, tant l'opinion publique que ses beaux-parents l'accusent de ne pas aimer son épouse, et la rupture deviendra inévitable. Il est donc de son devoir de se rendre chez les parents de sa femme. Ceux-ci l'invitent à exposer le cas. La femme aussi dit sa façon de penser. Les parents tranchent le différend. La présence ou l'absence du *ndonga* dépend de la gravité du cas. En règle très générale les parents de la femme jugent avec impartialité, parce qu'ils tiennent à la stabilité du mariage. Si le mari se croit lésé, il peut toujours faire appel au *ndonga*, ce qui, d'ordinaire, n'est pas nécessaire, de sorte que l'affaire s'arrange à l'amiable et en privé. Si la femme est reconnue avoir tort, ses parents la grondent et lui font la leçon. Ils la renvoient munie de quelque cadeau (deux, trois *bakonga*, par exemple) à son mari, en lui conseillant de se conduire à l'avenir d'une manière plus convenable. Si elle regimbe, les parents ne reculent pas devant les menaces et les malédictions, qui manquent rarement leur effet. Actuellement, la femme étant déjà plus émancipée, il arrive qu'elle en fasse fi, notamment lorsqu'elle a un amant quelque part en dehors de l'atteinte de la justice familiale. Si le tort est du côté du mari, l'épouse ne l'accompagne qu'après qu'il l'en ait suppliée, en payant, d'après la gravité du cas, quelques anneaux de cuivre ou autres valeurs. C'est ce qu'on exprime par le verbe *bifenda* et le substantif *bojindo*, qui ne sont pas propres et réservés à ces seuls cas, mais s'emploient dans toute circonstance où il s'agit de se faire pardonner une offense grave. Ce paiement n'a pas le sens d'une amende, ni d'une indemnité, mais est plutôt l'équivalent des excuses et des rétractations parmi les Européens.

A présent certaines femmes rentrent dans leur famille pour des motifs très peu sérieux. La liberté et la plus grande facilité des communications, jointes au désir d'émancipation, qui n'est plus retenu par le frein des sanctions ancestrales, sont la cause de cet état de choses. Ce qui les retient encore un peu c'est le danger de rupture, éventualité qu'en général on préfère ne pas voir se réaliser, surtout si le montant de la dot est assez élevé.

Autrefois, lorsque la femme était mariée à une faible distance, elle pouvait toujours s'enfuir chez ses parents à l'occasion de palabres conjugales. Même si le chemin passe par d'autres villages, il y a toujours moyen de prendre le sentier direct par la forêt. Car cette sorte de sentiers existe partout : ils contournent les villages intermédiaires, pour que, en cas de conflit, ou d'un danger d'assassinat, le voyageur puisse poursuivre sa route sans être aperçu. La situation était différente quand la femme était mariée dans un village éloigné. Non seulement elle courait en route de nombreux et graves dangers, mais son clan n'avait pas la facilité d'intervenir en sa faveur et d'appuyer par la force le respect de ses droits. On comprend aisément que si l'épouse se trouvait seule et isolée, sans soutien effectif de la part de sa famille, son mari et ses beaux-parents pouvaient se permettre beaucoup d'injustices à son égard, s'ils étaient mal disposés envers elle, à moins que le *ndonga* ne fût assez influent pour les maintenir dans de justes bornes. D'où le proverbe : *bol'ôsîkâ, enkîla ngâ lîkoolo* = si le village natal est éloigné, la paix (dans le ménage) est comme un esclavage.

Dans les querelles de ménage il arrive quelquefois que le mari exaspéré crie à sa femme : « Va-t-en, rentre chez toi. » Celle-ci se contente d'aller attendre chez une parente quelconque le retour du calme. Mais d'autres fois aussi elle prend ces paroles à la lettre et part chez elle. Ses parents, ayant pris connaissance du cas, donnent tort à leur fille. On ne peut prendre la chose au tragique. Le conjoint a agi dans un moment de mauvaise humeur, d'indignation exagérée. Ce n'est pas un renvoi ni une répudiation. Il n'y a pas question de haine ni d'indifférence. La chose n'est donc pas prise au sérieux, et, l'épouse s'étant calmée, ses parents la persuadent de rejoindre son mari. Si celui-ci l'aime bien, l'affaire en reste là; elle est pardonnée et oubliée. Même si la femme, étant ainsi partie dans sa famille, y tombe malade ou y meurt, la responsabilité lui en incombe à elle-même C'est donc que ce renvoi n'est nullement considéré comme sérieux et n'a rien à voir avec une répudiation ni même ne peut être comparé à la fuite de l'épouse pour cause de mauvais traitements.

En résumé, si la femme abandonne le toit conjugal pour une affaire sérieuse, qu'elle ait tort ou raison, n'importe, le mari est obligé d'aller la reprendre. Au contraire, dans la *fuite* pour futilités, les parents renvoient leur fille trop irascible. En général, sont reconnus motifs sérieux et justes de fuite : manquements graves aux devoirs conjugaux, châtiments ou répressions sans cause juste, excès dans les châtiments justes.

Ajoutons que dans certains ménages des difficultés surgissent assez facilement à l'occasion de visites des parents ou des beaux-parents : susceptibilités, incompatibilité des caractères, mécontentement d'une partie qui juge l'autre en défaut d'impolitesse, d'indélicatesse, d'irrespect, de chicheté envers les visiteurs ses parents. Il en est de même pour ce qui regarde l'éducation des enfants.

§ 4. Sanctions.

La loi nkundó permet au mari d'infliger à son épouse certaines corrections (bikánjoá, s. ekánjoá), qui varient de nature d'après la gravité des cas. Il est évident que ces sanctions, expressément permises par la loi, ne peuvent donner lieu à des réclamations de la part de la femme, ni entraîner l'obligation de verser un *bojóndo*. A moins, bien entendu, que le mari, outrepassant ses droits, n'exagère plus que ne le comporte la gravité de l'affaire. Car dans ces conditions, l'épouse, soutenue par sa famille, attaque le conjoint, qui sera obligé de reconnaître et de réparer ses torts au moyen d'un *bojóndo*. En cas de blessure, elle peut réclamer un paiement supplémentaire, nommé *lipombo* (verbe *bomba*), c'est-à-dire bandage (de la plaie) et qui consiste en cinq anneaux ou davantage selon les cas. Est assimilé à une blessure grave le fait d'enlever ou de casser une dent. Car c'est un tort réel fait à la femme et, pour les dents de devant, à sa beauté (*). Evidemment, comme il a été dit ci-dessus, l'épouse a commencé par s'enfuir chez elle, et c'est là que le différend est examiné.

Pour permettre une plus claire compréhension, entrons un peu dans les détails des stipulations pénales de la loi nkundó par rapport à la vie commune des époux.

D'ordinaire, dans une simple querelle de ménage, les conjoints se contentent de se dire mutuellement les vérités, généralement en assaisonnant de quelques gros mots leurs discours. Si la femme va plus loin, le mari lui administre une bonne gifle, mais il ne peut se permettre sur elle d'autres exercices de ses muscles.

Si la langue de la femme est trop déliée et qu'elle se permette des injures graves sans raison proportionnée, ce manque de respect est jugé punissable. Il n'est pourtant

---

(*) De par le limage, les incisives sont beaucoup moins résistantes que les dents normales. Le limage se pratique pour obtenir un effet de beauté.

pas de mise de redresser le tort au moyen de coups, quoique dans la pratique les jeunes hommes fougueux ne se retiennent pas toujours. La sanction prônée par la sagesse tribale est l'abstention des aliments préparés par la coupable et le refus de l'acte conjugal. La femme nkundó y est très sensible. Si elle est reconnue avoir réellement tort et si la paix ne se rétablit pas promptement, sa famille supplie le mari de se calmer en lui offrant un *bọ́ọ́ndọ*, qui peut monter à la valeur d'un chien.

Lors d'une dispute, la femme nkundó, au lieu d'insulter et de maudire son époux directement, a parfois recours à un détour : elle s'adresse à un animal domestique qui passe devant elle. L'homme ne s'y trompe évidemment pas, et l'effet est identique.

Nous parlons ici d'insultes ordinaires, comme de souhaiter la mort : *owé* = meurs; *nkọi ékokumbé* = le léopard te prenne; *njoá ékọkọ́ọ́* = qu'un serpent te morde; *ójówé é ?* = ne meurs-tu pas?; *ọ́kọna* = deviens malade; *bákokimbé ndá ngọ́lo* = qu'on te porte au cimetière; *bákokundé* = qu'on t'enterre. Il en est de même des invectives basées sur des défauts corporels, ou des humiliations, en le traitant de *bolólé* ou *etula* = homme de rien; *ímpọmọ́lọ* = idiot; *ímpumpuma* = bête, etc.

Au contraire, si la volubilité de la femme s'attaque aux parents du mari, l'affaire devient plus sérieuse. Car le Nkundó supporte très mal les débauches de la langue envers eux. Soit qu'il s'agisse de railleries sur leur compte ou d'injures comme : mange ta mère, ton père, ou d'obscénités à leur égard, ou qu'on « déterre » les parents défunts en évoquant leur souvenir (*), l'effet ne varie pas

---

(*) A titre de documentation psychologique et morale, voici le texte latin de quelques expressions à la mode : vulva matris tuae; comede excrementa in clitoride; [illegible] [illegible]. Le même genre, [illegible] [illegible], est employé pour le père, frère, sœur, etc. Pour « déterrer » : [illegible] ([illegible], [illegible], [illegible], etc.) = déterre ta famille, père, mère, etc. [illegible] [illegible] = tes cadavres, c'est-à-dire tes parents défunts (expression très [illegible]).

beaucoup. La seule différence dans l'intensité de la fureur et des réactions provient du tempérament individuel des intéressés.

Le Nkundó est gravement outragé par les obscénités que son épouse lui lance à la tête, particulièrement si cela se fait en public. La réaction est toujours violente. D'ordinaire on en vient aux coups, à la rossée, parfois au couteau. Seulement, si le mari veut se contenir dans les limites de la légalité, il ne peut blesser, ni, à plus forte raison, tuer sa femme de sa propre autorité. Au préalable il doit porter le cas devant le *ndonga*. Sa famille est invitée à la réunion, et si possible aussi le père de la femme. Le mari outragé expose sa palabre et avertit l'assemblée qu'un jour ou l'autre son exaspération le poussera à saisir le couteau. Par le fait d'avoir porté le cas devant les personnalités compétentes, l'époux peut aller de l'avant et désormais il lui est loisible de se venger des opprobres que lui infligera sa femme. Si la coupable recommence, nul ne pourra accuser le mari de lui faire tort, puisqu'elle-même est en faute et qu'il l'a avertie selon toutes les règles du droit.

La jeunesse moderne n'observe pas toujours cette procédure. Mais son esprit révolutionnaire lui attire des blâmes, et souvent le met dans de grands embarras. Ces vieux sont jaloux de leur autorité, — et personne ne peut leur en faire un reproche. Aussi abandonnent-ils souvent leur fils dans une pareille palabre. Puisque le jeune fougueux n'a pas voulu observer la coutume ancestrale et a jugé sa force supérieure au droit, sa façon d'agir est injustifiable. Il faut louer chez beaucoup de vieux indigènes ce sentiment inné de justice et d'impartialité, qui leur fait désapprouver et condamner leurs propres enfants. Aussi, si l'ardent vengeur de son honneur ne change pas de conduite et ne combat pas la violence irréfléchie de son tempérament en la remplaçant par un peu de pondération, son mariage ne tiendra point. Et c'est lui-même qui sera accusé d'avoir causé la rupture. La chose est claire : il est bien vrai que la femme a commencé. Le mari avait donc en main tous les atouts. Pourquoi ne s'en est-il pas servi? S'il avait suivi la procédure imposée par la loi, il aurait eu gain de cause sur toute la ligne.

L'avertissement préalable du *nkonga* et de l'autorité familiale ne prouve pas que le mari n'ait pas droit de punir sa femme d'une manière violente. L'observation de cette conduite est exigée pour éviter les excès et les abus. On ne laisse pas à l'époux la liberté d'agir à sa guise. Le recours aux représentants de l'autorité familiale peut être considéré comme une sorte de délégation de leur pouvoir.

Ces dispositions juridiques des Nkundó sont réellement sages. Tout en donnant au mari outragé le droit de châtier sa femme et, par retour, de retenir celle-ci, la loi impose un frein à l'impétuosité de la colère irréfléchie. En outre, en exigeant la publicité, elle évite des palabres et discussions interminables sur des indemnités, etc., à payer.

Autrefois, tel et tel pouvaient être exaspérés par l'opprobre au point de ne plus savoir maîtriser leur *fureur*. Des femmes ont été tuées pour cette raison. L'homme, disent les Nkundó, ne se laissait entraîner à cette extrémité que poussé par le grand amour qu'il portait à sa femme. Cette remarque a sa valeur psychologique. Pourtant, le fait n'était pas loué et pouvait même donner naissance à une guerre.

Il arrivait qu'un homme en *fureur*, voulant tuer sa femme dans ces conditions, en était empêché parce que la condition d'efficacité (*nsimbo*) d'une pratique (*boté*) en sa possession lui interdisait l'assassinat. Il avait alors recours à l'aide d'une tierce personne, qui — contre rémunération s'entend — se chargeait de l'exécution de son projet. Cette besogne était généralement confiée à des Batswa, qui ne dédaignaient point ce genre de travail, tout à fait adapté à leurs goûts.

Les châtiments que la loi donne au mari le droit d'infliger pour ce genre d'art oratoire imposaient à la femme une certaine mesure de prudence dans le choix de ses expressions. Par crainte des réactions violentes, elle prononçait souvent les injures plus graves à voix basse.

Depuis la pénétration européenne, les femmes osent davantage. Car les maris craignent la justice européenne, qui suit de tout autres principes que leur droit ancestral. Aussi se plaignent-ils amèrement de l'insolence de leurs épouses : « Nous sommes devenus des esclaves; les femmes sont maintenant toutes-puissantes; elles peuvent agir à leur guise, car nous ne pouvons plus rien leur faire. » Mais dès que les tribunaux indigènes seront suffisamment éduqués et se seront libérés de ce qu'un éminent juriste colonial a appelé « la juridiction des palabres » (1), ils apporteront indubitablement un changement salutaire dans cette situation.

Cette émancipation des femmes est une des causes qui ont augmenté la fréquence des divorces. Car l'homme qui ne peut se venger des outrages continuels reste sous l'empire de la honte; et la présence de celle qui en est la cause doit à la longue lui devenir insupportable, d'où indifférence, antipathie, haine et les suites inévitables de ce trouble permanent dans le ménage.

Des hommes chez qui le sentiment de la pudeur était particulièrement développé allaient de honte se pendre, au lieu de s'attaquer à la coupable. C'est ce que beaucoup d'indigènes m'ont prétendu. Je n'ai pourtant connaissance d'aucun exemple actuel. Dans cette éventualité, la famille de la femme n'intervenait plus contre sa fille. Elle n'était d'ailleurs pas obligée de payer une indemnité, quoique leur enfant eût occasionné ce décès. Elle devait simplement s'acquitter des obligations ordinaires et communes à la mort d'un gendre. Faut-il voir là une sorte de condamnation implicite du suicide ?

---

(1) Cfr. A. Sohier, *Bulletin des Séances de l'Institut Royal Colonial Belge*, VI, 1935, 1, p. 40 et passim.

La sagesse des vieux recommande à la jeunesse de ne point se laisser entraîner par la colère à des actes de brutalité, même là où, en droit, il est loisible de recourir à la manière forte. Ils n'agissent pas ainsi par politique d'adaptation au régime actuel. Même avant l'arrivée des Blancs ils donnaient des leçons de calme et de maîtrise de soi. Car les coups graves, les blessures et surtout l'homicide peuvent avoir des suites déplorables au point de vue juridique, voire politique (guerre). Ils préféraient le recours aux punitions, qui, tout en étant moins violentes, ne sont pas dépourvues d'efficacité, telles l'abstention des aliments et le refus du débitum *conjugale*. Cela leur évitait en même temps des ennuis de la part des beaux-parents, dont la pitié était excitée par les blessures et la souffrance corporelle de leur enfant ou sœur.

Une chose qui mérite des coups et une bonne rossée parce qu'elle est considérée comme un manquement grave aux devoirs de la vie conjugale est l'insouciance et la négligence dans les travaux du ménage. En toute sûreté, le mari peut y aller de la manière forte, quoiqu'il doive au préalable avertir l'autorité compétente. Voici quelques exemples des manquements de ce genre : la femme ne donne pas les soins voulus à la cuisine, à ses enfants, au nettoyage de la case et de la cour; elle néglige ses cultures, ne va pas à la pêche, ne fait pas d'efforts pour avoir du sel, etc.; *bref*, elle ne donne pas aux travaux qui lui incombent le temps et les soins qu'ils requièrent. Alors qu'elle-même, ses enfants, sa maison sont dégoûtants et sales, que les champs et bananeraies sont envahis par les ivraies et que son garde-manger est dépourvu d'ustensiles et de vivres, elle gaspille son temps à ne rien faire, ou plutôt à courir tout le village, entrant chez une telle, causant avec telle autre, passant une belle partie de sa journée à des commérages. Or cela le Nkundó ne le supporte pas, et nul ne pourrait lui en faire un reproche. Même d'autres hommes, voire des compagnons, condamsent pareille conduite. Souvent la femme est ridiculisée, et à l'une ou l'autre occasion elle peut entendre des propos peu flatteurs, comme : *bônsaf'ba'amôi, efafa ǹfóngaemaka* = (une) commère, (sa) pièce d'étoffe se trouve de côté, c'est-à-dire les causeries interminables auxquelles elle s'adonne, assise sur une couchette ou une bûche, absorbent tellement son attention, qu'elle ne s'aperçoit plus de ce que son étroite pièce d'habillement ne se trouve plus dans la position convenable et pudique, exposant ainsi la commère à la honte et à la risée.

En surplus d'une bonne raclée, le mari sort son vocabulaire d'invectives et de sarcasmes. La femme ne se hasarde pas à porter plainte, car elle sait d'avance qu'elle sera mise en tort. Toutefois, la prudence conseille à l'époux de ne pas exagérer. Les vieux recommandent à la jeunesse de mitiger la violence de ses expressions. Car, disent-ils, la femme y est plus sensible que l'homme; elle pourrait aller se pendre en forêt : *Ilikinya âyakâma lôi la nsônyi* = (la fourmi) Ilikinya se pendra un jour par excès de honte (allusion à la façon d'agir de cet insecte qui, mordant dans un brin d'herbe ou tel autre objet, y meurt plutôt que de lâcher). Et surtout n'étendez pas les injures aux parents de votre épouse, car ils pourraient inciter leur fille à vous abandonner.

Pour ce qui regarde l'adultère, les châtiments prévus par la loi nkundó seront examinés plus loin, à l'article VIII.

Il ressort de ce qui précède que les Nkundó n'attachent qu'une importance relative à ces flots d'éloquence loquace propre au sexe faible, aussi longtemps qu'ils ne franchissent pas les bornes et ne dégénèrent en injures outrageantes et ignominieuses. Les vieux enseignent à la jeunesse le calme devant ces démonstrations d'art déclamatoire dans lequel la plupart des négresses sont aussi versées que les poissardes de chez nous.

C'est que, disent-ils, la femme est comme un éléphant : *bômoto ala é njoku*. Il n'y a rien à y faire. On a beau lui parler avec douceur, elle n'écoute même pas. Lui imposer silence : impossible. Vouloir la ramener au calme, lui faire entendre raison : peine perdue. Tout comme l'éléphant : on a beau le chasser à force de cris et de tapage, il n'en détruit pas moins les plantations.

D'ailleurs, une femme qui ouvre facilement la bouche n'est pas considérée comme n'aimant pas son mari. Les Nkundó osent même prétendre que c'est un signe d'affection si elle use de sa langue à propos; tandis qu'une femme qui se lamente plutôt doucement et à basse voix : *ngoya ôkela lâi l'ômi'ọnẹ nâ ?* = maman, que vais-je faire de ce mari ?, ne restera pas longtemps avec lui. Elle se plaint plutôt par égoïsme, tandis que l'autre cherche le bien de son conjoint et du ménage.

Comme nous l'avons déjà indiqué, la punition idéale et beaucoup appliquée pour les cas ordinaires est le refus de manger la nourriture préparée par la femme, ou de se laver avec l'eau qu'elle a puisée ou bouillie. C'est une correction à laquelle elle est sensible. Pourtant le mari ne peut pas exagérer en prolongeant son aversion. Car cela pourrait provoquer la rupture, d'autant plus qu'à la fin la femme commencerait à soupçonner — comme cela arrive — des infidélités.

Que la loi nkundó ne laisse pas au mari une liberté absolue et circonscrive nettement ses droits n'exclut nullement les infractions. La masse des humains se montre toujours inférieure à l'idéal moral que la législation lui impose. Mais les dispositions du droit nkundó protègent la femme contre les excès du mari. En fait de réactions à sa disposition nous avons déjà cité : l'abandon du toit conjugal, les excuses juridiques (*bojindo*), l'indemnité pour blessure (*likambo*). En outre, l'épouse préjudiciée s'abstient des vivres (viande, noix de palme) que son conjoint lui présente, et surtout lui refuse son corps. Or, pour ces gens, c'est là un grand affront. Pour rétablir la situation normale et paisible, le mari doit souvent amadouer son épouse au moyen d'un *bọjịndọ*. Sans parler des injures, dont toute indigène possède une collection riche et variée.

Personne ne saurait condamner ni réprimander une femme qui invective son mari paresseux. S'il ne va pas à la chasse, n'apporte pas de gibier, s'il est négligent dans la construction ou la réparation de la maison, s'il traîne trop, s'il n'abat pas la forêt pour l'établissement de cultures vivrières, c'est lui-même qui est nettement en tort, et il ne trouvera personne pour approuver sa conduite et condamner son épouse. S'il se montre incorrigible, la rupture ne tardera pas de se produire, selon l'axiome : *elóng'éy'ómoto ńk'okáfo* = la victoire de la femme c'est le divorce.

Si pendant une querelle la femme blesse son conjoint, celui-ci ne peut aucunement lui rendre la pareille, car elle est reconnue inférieure et plus faible. L'arme du mari est l'abstention de la nourriture, boisson, bain, etc. présentés par l'épouse, qui pour rétablir la paix devra payer un *bọjịndọ*. Pourtant, à présent, certains hommes fougueux n'aiment plus à observer ces règles; de toute façon ils voudraient réagir violemment. Mais ils en sont fort réprimandés par les vieux, qui prétendent qu'il est indigne d'un homme de rendre la pareille à un être plus faible. Cette attitude ancestrale des Nkundó me semble dénoter une sorte de noblesse chevaleresque, basée sur deux sentiments : la justice et la fierté. Elle est plus compréhensible quand on sait qu'une conduite analogue est tenue à l'égard des Batswa, des inférieurs, des clans assujettis (*bauló*, sing. *jauló*), chacun dans sa sphère (*). Ainsi un Bonkó ne peut appliquer la loi du talion à un Botswa. Le clan *jauló* peut, dans certaines circonstances, prendre impunément ce qui lui plaît dans la bananeraie du clan maître, etc.

Signalons encore qu'il est très déplacé qu'un homme

(*) Cfr., plus loin, art. V, VI et VII, § 1-8.

frappe sa femme, ou la punisse d'une façon quelconque, en présence de ses parents, frères, etc., à elle. En effet, c'est une offense extrêmement grave. Et le frère (cousin, etc.) doit, selon la loi du point d'honneur, relever le gant et se battre contre son beau-frère pour venger l'injure. Dans beaucoup de cas, l'affaire se termine par le divorce. Car le sentiment de pudeur-gêne (*nsóni*) que les deux partis doivent normalement ressentir l'un à l'égard de l'autre s'est évanoui par cette conduite.

Il reste, enfin, à noter que les paiements divers à titre de *bojindu* sont comptés dans le montant global du *jéngi* et du *nkomí*, respectivement.

Afin de mieux illustrer la mentalité nkundó sur les relations entre époux, il ne me semble pas dépourvu d'intérêt de citer ici quelques proverbes qui ont trait à ce qui précède :

1. Basingá bakóndaka wǎj'ǎ mbaka ; Lombóimbé afókónda Ntéfá la ngango = Tous les autres donnent à leur femme des gifles (mais) Lombóimbé bat Ntéfá à coups de bâton. (Allusion à un fait historique.)

2. Ofókó'lóló, wǒ ok'onjemba = Tu ne supportes pas les excès de langage (de ta femme), tu (resteras) célibataire. (Parce que ce défaut est inné à toute femme, et il n'est pas capital.)

3. Ofókób'ónwa, afè mbóka = Ne réponds pas à la bouche, c'est une route (elle n'a pas de terme).

4. Bobé 'á wǎli, ófóka'ompólo = Méchante femme, tu ne refuses (pourtant) pas le bain chaud (qu'elle t'a préparé). (N'attache pas grande importance à ses propos désagréables. Que sont-ils en comparaison des services qu'elle te rend ?)

5. Ék'em'ólámbáká la wǎli w'ókóndyá, jomó ò wéfima ójóyo'amo ólangá ókónda bólákó botéá ? = Lorsque je préparais (la nourriture) au clair de lune, tu n'en étais pas content, à plus forte raison (maintenant qu'il fait) noir et

(que) tu ne vois personne, tu voudrais que je prépare six paniers ? (La femme est supposée interpeller son mari qui est mécontent de la nourriture, mais qui veut néanmoins qu'elle en prépare davantage).

6. Itéké lokɔnɔ ek'ɔm'afɔlanga — Un petit panier (à nourriture) est fort loué si seulement le mari l'aime. (L'amour apprécie même la moindre chose. Le mécontentement provient du manque d'affection.)

7. Ekoka lɔlɔŋɔ, wɔj'ɛky'ɔwɔ — Une veuve tapageuse, (mais c'est parce qu'elle est) la femme d'un (autre qui est) mort. (Tu la critiques; mais ne la traites-tu pas comme la femme d'autrui ? Alors, de quoi te plains-tu ?)

8. Ekɔkɔmbɔlɔ wɛ jɔmde, baiso ng'ɔnkɔmɔ; ekito nd'ilɔmbe, baiso ng'ɔnkɔlɔi — Quand un homme te prend en mariage, (ses) yeux (sont) comme (ceux d'un) *bɔmbɔjɔ* (chat sauvage); tu arrives dans sa maison, (ses) yeux (sont) comme (ceux d'un) *inkɔlɔi* (espèce de grenouille à yeux proéminents). (Au début du mariage le mari est d'une prévenance et gentillesse extrêmes; mais après quelque temps il te montre figure maussade et colère à la moindre occasion.)

9. Emangá liɔla, mpɔkɔ ekangola — Les débuts du mariage sont les lunes de miel. (Mais ensuite...)

10. Wali nd'ɛtɔ, wɔkɔnda wɔkɔka — Une épouse est une étoffe, frappe-la, couvre-la. (C'est un objet délicat; frappe-la quand elle le mérite; mais fais-le avec mesure et calme; d'une main tiens le bâton, de l'autre couvre son corps.)

ARTICLE IV.

RELATIONS ENTRE L'ÉPOUSE ET SA FAMILLE.

Par le mariage la femme n'entre pas dans la famille de son mari. Elle continue à appartenir à son propre clan d'origine et reste soumise aux prescriptions particulières de sa famille (*bokumo*) (1). Est pourtant excepté le *bokumo* qui regarde la parturition, car dans ce domaine elle doit, à cause de l'enfant, observer le *bokumo* du clan de son conjoint.

Bien que pour tout le reste, — industrie, propriété, etc., — l'épouse soit entièrement dépendante de son mari, elle demeure pourtant soumise aux devoirs de respect, d'amour et d'aide à ses propres parents. De temps en temps elle doit leur rendre visite. Mais il est très mal vu qu'elle les multiplie. Donner pour ceci une règle est impossible. C'est le bon sens qui doit être consulté. Les gens sérieux préfèrent que l'épouse n'exagère pas ces déplacements. Même ses propres parents le désirent ainsi. Car ces attentions répétées sont considérées comme un manque d'amour et d'attachement au mari.

Il arrive que des femmes qui, étant très fidèles à garder leur foyer, ne font des visites à leurs parents que très rarement, succombent devant les railleries de leurs compagnes. Car le Nkundó est extrêmement sensible à ces sortes d'allusions malveillantes. Parmi celles qui sont en vogue il en est une qui est devenue un dicton populaire et est parfois chantée dans les danses : ótswáká liála otswák' olá, bálíkolaka mbók'ěy'olá la ngom'a nkólé. = Si tu es mariée rentre chez tes parents, afin qu'on ne t'enseigne le chemin de chez toi avec des tambours et gongs; c'est-à-dire quand tu seras morte (2).

Dans les circonstances spéciales (accouchement, maladie, accidents graves, décès) la femme mariée ne peut pas se soustraire au devoir d'assister sa parenté. Cette obligation ne se restreint pas aux père et mère, mais s'étend à tous les parents; elle est d'autant plus stricte que le degré de parenté est plus proche.

---

(1) Les bekumo sont des prescriptions particulières et propres à un clan déterminé, spécialement des défenses permanentes ou occasionnelles de certains aliments (animaux ou végétaux). La transgression est punie par une espèce de gale qui couvre tout le corps. On pourrait penser au totémisme; mais l'idée de parenté avec l'être défendu est entièrement absente.

(2) La femme est enterrée dans son propre clan natal. On y transporte son cadavre avec accompagnement de tambours et de cors. Le gong *tokolé* annonce le décès.

D'ailleurs, l'amour familial est assez développé pour qu'il n'y ait pas danger de voir la femme s'oublier trop dans ce domaine. Et le mari qui voudrait l'empêcher de satisfaire à ces devoirs élémentaires serait fort critiqué par tous et devrait s'attendre à une rupture.

Plus haut il a été dit que le mari construit pour sa femme une case. Dans cette besogne il est souvent aidé par ses parents. Mais il arrivait aussi — jadis, car actuellement la possibilité en a été enlevée par la colonisation — que le père de la femme voulait lui-même construire la maison de sa fille ou du moins en faire le pavement au moyen d'argile apportée de sa terre natale. C'était une démonstration de richesse et d'influence politico-sociale, en même temps qu'une preuve d'affection paternelle. Le mari, de son côté, était glorifié d'avoir épousé la fille d'un homme si important et ne l'en aimait que davantage. On cite ainsi plusieurs femmes qui « ne faisaient la cuisine que sur la terre ancestrale ». Cette terre était apportée en paniers à des distances parfois de 50 km., par les Batswa et les hommes du clan ou du village de la femme. Le père pouvait le faire à cause de sa grande influence, et des gratifications royales (*bokóndo*, v. *kónda*) distribuées au cours d'une fête (*nlękę*) donnée aux travailleurs et à leurs parents après achèvement de la besogne. Il en a été fait ainsi pour Bompęli, fille de Bokombę de Litúli (Bombwanja), mariée à Bonyęmę w'enyuka des Basékà Mbangó (Bonkoso); pour Beluka, fille d'Iongo de Bokákyá (Boselo, Bombwanja), mariée à Bokaa is'Ifonda de Bowélé; pour Mbalaka, fille de Bolękęla wa Imangaiso des Basékà Lokuli (Bongili), mariée à Mbuli is'ea Wela de Bombóngo w'Etefa (Bongale) (¹).

(¹) Elle portait ce nom de Mbálaka (qui signifie indemnité), parce que son père avait solennellement proclamé (*-békye*) son intention et pris

ARTICLE V. — RELATIONS ENTRE LE MARI ET LA FAMILLE DE SA FEMME.

Comme il a déjà été dit, la parenté par alliance s'appelle *likiló*, et les alliés : *bokiló*, *bakiló*. Un terme respectueux est *mbótaolé*, qui est donné aux alliés tout proches (beau-père, belle-mère; parfois beau-frère, belle-sœur). Lorsqu'il existe une différence considérable d'âge entre deux alliés, l'aîné nomme parfois le plus jeune *bokilówalé*. Ceci a surtout lieu quand le gendre est si jeune qu'il peut être considéré comme enfant. Il s'applique même d'un frère aîné à l'égard de la jeune femme de son cadet (1).

Dans la pratique courante on exclut des *bakiló* les personnes alliées avec lesquelles le mariage est permis. On les nomme plutôt « mari » ou « épouse ».

L'opposé de *bokiló* est *bokanga*. Les *bakanga* sont les membres de la famille qui a reçu la dot, tandis que les *bakiló* sont ceux qui l'ont payée. Dans la pratique usuelle, on emploie souvent le mot *bokiló* pour *bokanga*, mais jamais inversement. L'expression collective est *bokiló l'okanga*.

§ 1. Beau-père et belle-mère.

Le mari doit respect, amour et assistance à ses beaux-parents. C'est un point capital pour la bonne entente dans le ménage. Dans ce domaine, la femme supporte très mal

---

l'engagement public de se mettre en cas, un jour, de devoir payer une indemnité à cause de sa fille, comme preuve de son amour. En effet, lors du mariage de Mbelaka, il tua une de ses femmes, la coupa en morceaux et envoya la « viande » à son gendre en guise de « première poule » que son épouse lui préparerait. Seulement il n'a pas dû payer d'indemnité, car le clan de la victime étant trop faible pour tenter une guerre, n'a pas osé réclamer et, afin d'éviter de plus grands malheurs, s'est résigné à cette révoltante ignominie.

(1) La deuxième componente du terme est employée par certains Elinga comme synonyme de *bokiló*. Qu'on la rapproche de *walé*, qui chez les Mbole et Bakutu signifie une fille *bolémbá* ou une femme qui vient d'accoucher (id. chez les Ekonda).

des oublis et encore moins la malveillance. Des allusions désobligeantes, des injures à leur adresse, même en leur absence, donnent naissance à de graves difficultés. Parfois le mari exprime sa mauvaise humeur ou sa colère envers son épouse de cette manière-là. Ces façons d'agir ne sont jamais approuvées, à moins que l'autre partie n'ait commencé. Car ici la loi du talion s'applique intégralement : *ôtswá mbóngó l'ôndamba ôkóngaka ôk'ôndamba* = celui qui répond à de méchantes allusions a raison contre celui qui a commencé. Pour le reste, voir ci-dessus (art. III).

Pour entretenir les bonnes relations avec ses beaux-parents, le mari doit de temps en temps leur rendre visite. De par la nature même des choses, ces visites sont moins fréquentes que celles de sa femme. Ce qui ajoute un certain obstacle à leur multiplication, c'est l'obligation de donner de cadeaux de visite (*belonga*). On ne se rend pas chez ses beaux-parents les mains vides. La richesse apportée varie avec les circonstances. Certaines personnes cupides aspirent à des gros cadeaux, si le mariage de leur fille se prouve stable. D'autres préfèrent ne pas recevoir trop, de peur de devoir rendre la pareille et — s'ils ne sont pas particulièrement riches — de se voir impliqués un jour dans d'énormes difficultés financières. Car les *belonga* sont ajoutés au montant total de la dot et, le cas échéant, doivent donc être restitués.

Les beaux-parents ne laissent pas repartir leur gendre sans lui avoir offert des contre-cadeaux en guise d'adieux (*belíngako*), sous forme de poules et de canards, dont la valeur est ajoutée au montant total du *nkomi*.

Gendre et beaux-parents n'aiment pas à se voir surpassés en générosité par l'autre partie, à part quelques cas exceptionnels. C'est d'ailleurs une politique très intelligente : on garde l'égalité des deux côtés; on n'aura pas à se faire des reproches mutuels pour convoitise ou chicheté;

enfin, lors d'une rupture éventuelle, l'équilibre sera facilement rétabli.

D'après les cas et selon ses moyens, le gendre doit assistance à son beau-père. Elle s'exerce en abattant pour lui la forêt où il puisse établir un champ, en construisant une maison, ou encore en lui faisant une clôture de chasse (lokombo), etc. Un bon gendre ne manque jamais à ces obligations, et le beau-père ne le congédie pas sans lui avoir remis quelque présent.

L'épouse tient énormément à ce que son mari s'acquitte consciencieusement de ces devoirs de visite et d'assistance. Les abstentions suscitent de graves palabres avec leurs suites ordinaires.

De son côté, le beau-père ne manque pas d'aider son gendre dans ses travaux divers. Après achèvement, ce dernier le congédie avec un *bolingako* de quelques anneaux de cuivre, qui sont assimilés aux *belonga*.

Les visites sont plus nombreuses des parents de la femme à leur gendre. C'est leur façon de prouver leur amour envers lui et leur *fille* et de manifester l'intérêt qu'ils portent à leur ménage. Ces visites peuvent durer des semaines et des mois, que les parents viennent ensemble, ou que ce soit seulement l'un d'eux. Si elles se prolongent trop, elles sont acceptées avec moins d'enthousiasme. Lors des adieux, il faut toujours sortir des cadeaux (bolingako).

Même si l'union des parents a été rompue et que la mère se soit remariée, elle ne laisse point de visiter sa fille et son gendre. Si son nouveau mari fait mine de ne pas être d'accord, il y aura des difficultés. Et s'il ne change pas, sa façon d'agir peut amener la femme à l'abandonner pour retourner chez son premier mari, père de sa fille.

Les visites sont donc accompagnées d'échange de présents, de la part du gendre : *belonga*; de la part du beau-père : valeurs de *nkọmi*. Les cadeaux d'adieu sont *belonga* et donc partie de la dot, s'ils sont donnés par le gendre; s'ils sont donnés par le beau-père, ils sont nkomi.

Ces mêmes règles valent, *mutatis mutandis*, pour les parents divers de part et d'autre, pour les visites et services qu'ils se rendent et pour les présents remis à ces occasions.

Dans les relations entre gendre et beaux-parents il reste à signaler une loi très sévère : il est interdit à un homme de voir la face de la mère de son épouse. Cette prescription est scrupuleusement observée par tous. Il ne peut la voir qu'au début du mariage, une fois, « pour apprendre à la connaître, afin qu'ils puissent s'éviter ». Si, par exemple, en voyage ils se rencontrent en forêt, ils doivent se tourner le dos. Généralement c'est la femme qui tourne la figure vers le bord du sentier, afin de laisser passer son gendre. Ils se saluent de bouche, se demandent des nouvelles, mais ne se donnent pas la main, ni ne se regardent. Il est comique, pour nous, de voir une femme venir visiter son gendre; chacun se poste d'un côté de la paroi ou d'un coin, ils se parlent ainsi, se demandent des nouvelles, discutent, etc., sans se voir. Il arrive que belle-mère et beau-fils se trouvent en présence l'un de l'autre, à l'improviste, sans qu'ils se soient vus approcher, ni que personne ne les ait avertis, par exemple en forêt ou dans les champs. Immédiatement ils se tournent le dos; l'homme s'excuse et s'esquive en toute vitesse, dût-il se jeter en forêt dense à lianes épineuses et enchevêtrées.

Cette loi est étendue aussi aux tout proches parents du mari, ses frères puînés, par exemple (qui sont « maris » eux aussi), et à toutes les femmes auxquelles on donne le nom de mère : sœurs de la mère, femmes du père. Il semble qu'elle ne s'applique pas proprement à elles, mais qu'il s'agisse d'une extension. Par contre, elle n'existe pas pour la femme envers son beau-père.

La transgression de cette prescription suscite une grosse palabre, car elle est considérée comme manque grave de respect. Elle peut produire une brouille sérieuse dans le ménage. L'épouse refuse l'acte conjugal à son mari qui a regardé sa belle-mère. C'est pourquoi les gens s'entr'aident en s'avertissant réciproquement du « danger » de l'arrivée de leur belle-mère.

La réparation de l'offense se fait au moyen d'un *bojondo* de quelques *bakonga* à la belle-mère. Tant qu'il n'a pas été remis, la femme ne remplit pas ses devoirs conjugaux. Après paiement, tout rentre dans l'ordre. S'il est avéré que le cas s'est produit involontairement, il n'y a pas palabre ni obligation de payer. Actuellement, on constate chez les meilleurs chrétiens une tendance à donner une fois pour toutes un *bojondo* pour arranger définitivement toute palabre future possible et pour éviter de devoir se soumettre aux prescriptions de cette coutume, dont ils commencent à entrevoir l'inutilité.

Il est même interdit à un homme de prononcer le nom de sa belle-mère en sa présence, fût-ce simplement pour apostropher ou appeler un homonyme. Il doit, dans ces cas, recourir à un surnom ou à une périphrase. Généralement, il l'interpelle du nom de *mbétaolé*. L'infraction entraîne la même punition que pour le regard.

Si l'on demande aux Nkundó la raison de cette coutume, à notre point de vue si étrange, ils répondent qu'ils ont honte ou qu'ils sont gênés de voir la femme qui a engendré leur épouse, et que c'est une grave offense envers elle. C'est une façon d'exprimer le respect qu'on lui doit, et l'on évite ainsi le sans-gêne, la familiarité trop grande. C'est là toute l'explication qu'ils donnent. Pour notre esprit philosophique elle n'épuise pas le sujet. On voudrait trouver une connexion entre les rapports intimes des époux et l'acte de la procréation de l'un d'eux. Peut-être cette idée est-elle latente dans la conscience indigène, ou du moins se trouve-t-elle à la base de cette règle. Le fait qu'elle est restreinte à la belle-mère de la femme n'infirme pas cette hypothèse; car aux yeux des indigènes, les autres cas sont d'une nature toute indifférente (¹).

Une seconde prescription dans cette matière exige que la belle-mère — et toutes les femmes auxquelles, dans le langage courant, on donne le même titre — ne se montre dans le village de son gendre que revêtue d'un *bǫlęlękę*, qui est une feuille de bananier, verte ou sèche, déchirée à plusieurs endroits, dans le sens perpendiculaire à la grosse nervure centrale, et qui constitue le signe premier et principal du deuil. D'autre part, les femmes Batswá doivent également s'habiller de cette façon primitive lorsqu'elles viennent dans une agglomération de Baotó. Voici la raison qu'on donne pour la dernière application de cet usage : le vêtement de la femme Bǫtswá est un *lolimba* : ceinture de petites cordes tressées, longues d'environ 10 centimètres. Quoique le *lolimba* protège assez bien, dans les attitudes ordinaires, il est pourtant jugé insuffisant pour arrêter d'une façon absolue tout regard indiscret. Or, la croyance populaire veut que si un Bootó voit les parties d'une *Bǫtswá*, celle-ci en mourra. Pourrait-on conclure de cette dernière explication à une connexion fondamentale entre les raisons imposant le port du *bǫlęlękę* dans ces trois cas? Ou est-ce que la belle-mère doit imiter la femme Bǫtswá et marquer ainsi une certaine dépendance à l'égard de son gendre?

§ 2. Parentes.

Aussi longtemps qu'elles sont libres, c'est-à-dire qu'aucun paiement dotal n'a été effectué pour elles, les sœurs ou cousines de sa femme sont considérées par le mari comme ses épouses, et il les nomme ainsi (*badili*). Ce terme ne s'applique qu'aux parentes qui sont d'une génération inférieure, ou, dans la même génération, moins âgées que l'épouse véritable et avec lesquelles le mariage

---

(¹) Voir, par exemple, chap. II, art. X, et chap. V, art. II et III.

est permis. Il ne s'étend donc jamais aux parentes à l'égard desquelles il existe empêchement, telles les nièces bána-bóki, qui sont les « mères » de l'épouse (1).

Lorsque ces parentes de la femme sont mariées, la situation change. Elles appartiennent à un autre homme, et nous nous trouvons alors devant des cas d'adultère, qui sont considérés comme très graves. Il existe pourtant des différences selon les degrés de l'affinité. Outre les sanctions générales contre l'adultère, d'autres mesures de réaction peuvent être prises, spécialement la rupture du mariage. Un cas particulièrement grave, mais plutôt hypothétique, serait l'adultère entre l'homme et l'épouse de son beau-père : un sentiment spécial de honte s'y attache; les deux personnes sont comme un *bó453* et son maître, disent nos Nkundó. Très grave aussi est la méconduite d'un homme avec l'épouse de son beau-frère (ou beau-cousin). Ce dernier peut ravir sa sœur (cousine) au mari coupable et ainsi rompre l'union. De même pour l'adultère avec une *nyangólólé* (2).

§ 3. Affaires de justice.

Il nous faut examiner ici la façon dont s'arrangent entre beaux-parents et gendre les manquements à la justice. Comme il est connu, chez ces populations, la justice, au sens strict du mot, est un des points culminants de la législation sociale. Le vol est un des principaux sujets de la honte et était autrefois sévèrement puni. Le voleur, surtout s'il récidivait, était exposé à être vendu comme esclave.

Si un(*e*) parent(*e*) de la femme était convaincu(*e*) de vol chez son allié, ou même chez un parent à celui-ci, on réunissait le tribunal familial. Par égard pour les liens de parenté entre le voleur et l'épouse, et pour ne pas attrister celle-ci et sa famille, le coupable n'était pas vendu comme esclave. On le remettait simplement à la femme et sa famille, en leur disant : « Voici, il a été trouvé coupable de vol. Il aurait dû être réduit en esclavage. Pourtant, par respect pour vous, nous ne le vendons pas; mais nous le renvoyons (-kilimola) vers vous. Prenez-le comme dot et ajoutez-le au montant du *bɔnjingɔ*. » L'affaire était arrangée ainsi à l'amiable. Dans le cas d'un divorce ultérieur, outre la dot payée précédemment, la famille de la femme devait restituer encore un esclave supplémentaire pour ce membre de leur groupe que le mari leur avait cédé de cette manière. Ce n'était donc nullement une opération fictive.

---

(1) Cfr. chap. V. art. IV et les exemples y cités (par ex. 25, 26, 27).

Inversement, la même façon de procéder était adoptée envers un(e) parent(e) du mari qui avait enfreint les règles de la justice au détriment d'un membre de la famille alliée. Mais, dans ce cas, l'extradition du coupable était considérée comme l'ajoute d'un esclave au montant du *nkomi*.

D'où le dicton : bokilô ntáwáká ndá ngond'ěy'ékanga = le beau-parent ne peut pas mourir dans la forêt de son allié.

Actuellement il n'en va pas autrement. La seule différence est que, au lieu de restituer un esclave lors d'une rupture éventuelle, on rembourse sa valeur équivalente en anneaux de cuivre, etc.

La même conduite était tenue à l'égard des prisonniers de guerre. Par exemple, dans une guerre, Eale se rend maître de Bombolo, dont la cousine est mariée à Iloko, proche parent d'Eale. Iloko intercède auprès d'Eale pour obtenir la libération de Bombolo, qui est renvoyé chez lui, mais à titre de *bɔnjingɔ*. Le prisonnier libéré fait alors fonction d'esclave donné en dot, tout comme dans le cas précédent, dont il suit toutes les règles.

§ 6. Félonies.

Entre alliés la perfidie et la trahison n'étaient pas rares. Bomóng'ôsulu nd'ôkilô, dit le proverbe, la trahison existe surtout de la part d'un allié. Non pas que cela se fît, à part peut-être quelque rare exception, par méchanceté foncière. Mais un parent par alliance n'hésitait pas, dans le cas d'une guerre et surtout d'une vendetta, à trahir son allié et, par là, le vouer à la mort.

Bornons-nous à citer deux cas historiques, que la génération présente a très bien connus (1).

Du temps où le poste d'Ingende était occupé par le Blanc « Bombambilo » et celui d'Ikóngó par « Bosónjá », des hommes de Boálá (Ikékoma y'Isolo, Bombwanja) avaient surpris un habitant de Bokuká (Wángatá) et l'avaient tué et mangé. Peu après, un homme de Boálá, Lokwa jw'Iyolé, va rendre visite à sa sœur Eámé, mariée à Imbólé la'éy'onda, d'Ikonji. Or, il se fait que celui-ci est un oncle maternel de la victime des Boálá. Lokwa ignorait-il cette parenté? Ou avait-il confiance en son beau-frère? Quoi qu'il en soit, il y est bien reçu. Imbólé n'a pourtant pas oublié l'assassinat de son neveu et va annoncer à ses proches cette bonne occasion de tirer vengeance du meurtre. Un soir ils font irruption dans la case mise à la disposition du visiteur, qui s'y trouve avec sa sœur Eámé et sa femme Lompoko. Les deux femmes parviennent à s'échapper. Mais Lokwa est pris, tué et mangé. Evidemment, sa sœur Eámé n'a plus rejoint son mari et il n'a pas été question de rembourser la dot.

Le second cas date de la même époque. Deux Batswa de Mbálanga (Elóontálé, Bongili) : Bɔkɔ́ngɔ et Boléyɔngɔ́, avaient surpris en forêt, tué et mangé Mbɔkɔ Ilombé de Boálá. Quelque temps après, un homme du village Ndɔngɔ́ des Bongili, le nommé Bengóngó, se rend à Boálá visiter sa sœur Bosáka, mariée à Eale éá Bofekó. Celui-ci lui dit que le village est en fureur à cause de l'assassinat d'un des leurs par les Batswa des Bongili. Il lui conseille d'aller se cacher dans une jachère de peur que les hommes excités ne le découvrent et ne se vengent sur lui. Lui-même y conduit son beau-frère. Connaissant donc exactement l'endroit de la cachette, il court le dénoncer aux autres. Ceux-ci encerclent la jachère et sans peine trouvent le pauvre Bongingi, qui est massacré impitoyablement et mangé. Sa sœur Bosika n'a jamais su la félonie de son époux : elle pensait que malgré toutes les précautions prises par lui les autres habitants avaient découvert la cachette de son frère (1).

---

(1) L'époque exacte à laquelle ces faits se sont produits m'est inconnue. En tout cas ils remontent aux temps de l'Etat Indépendant et aux débuts de l'occupation.

Cette hypocrisie du mari vis-à-vis de sa femme et de son beau-frère résulte de la présence en lui de deux sentiments opposés : d'une part, l'amour familial, la solidarité qui engendre la haine et le désir de vengeance, et, d'autre part l'amour conjugal. Comme ils sont en contradiction absolue, il ne saurait les concilier. Mais du moins il sauvera les apparences.

C'est à cette situation que se rapporte le proverbe : **bokiló ákwɔ́bɛká, wóngoyak'eyalo** = si ton bokiló t'a caché, change d'abri. Et cet autre, plus cru : **bokiló tótswɛ ok'ɛlɛ́; bafumba bálɛ́kɛ mbá, emi dikɔlɛ́kɛ wɛ** = allié, allons à la palmeraie; les fourmis bafumba (Dorylus wilverthii) mangent des noix de palme; moi je te mangerai, toi. Et celui-ci qu'on applique à quelqu'un qui, voulant toujours se disculper, s'accuse plutôt involontairement: **Mpɔ́jí'ókiló, ótóála é mpɔ́ngo; mpɔ́ngo y'ókiló nsako ngá mbwá** = je ne mange pas mon allié; au contraire, je sauce (des aliments) dans la graisse; la graisse de l'allié est savoureuse comme celle d'un chien.

---

(1) Il ne faut pas s'étonner trop de ce que, à cette époque-là, les Européens n'intervenaient pas dans ces guerres, vendettas, tueries, actes d'anthropophagie. Ils laissaient faire les indigènes entre eux; ils en exigeaient seulement qu'ils les laissent tranquilles eux-mêmes et qu'ils leur rendent service et tribut. Ils avaient d'autres choses à faire en ces temps-là. Ce ne sont que les Blancs Amisá et Baiakakoi, dont les indigènes parlent encore avec une crainte respectueuse, qui, les premiers, ont commencé dans cette région à punir les actes de barbarie.

Toutefois, un homme ne se laisse jamais aller à provoquer la mort du mari de sa sœur, de sa fille, d'une parente quelconque. Ou, comme disent les Nkundó, on ne tue point celui par lequel on a été enrichi. La raison de cette différence? Selon nos gens : l'affection qu'on porte à sa sœur, fille, etc.; on l'aime trop pour lui causer la douleur de lui ravir son époux.

Cette conduite félonne et barbare est donc tenue par le bokilo envers le bokanga, c'est-à-dire par ceux qui ont payé la dot envers ceux qui l'ont reçue; mais jamais inversement.

ANNEXE.

Cette annexe se rapporte à chacun des trois articles précédents. Elle peut donc raisonnablement se placer ici. Elle ne traite d'aucune loi spéciale, ni d'une coutume légale, universelle ou commune. Il s'agit de cas isolés. Mais comme ils montrent bien la psychologie qui peut se rencontrer chez ces populations, il me semble que les quelques lignes qui suivent ne sont pas dépourvues d'intérêt.

Il peut arriver qu'une femme ait à se plaindre ou estime avoir des motifs d'être mécontente d'un de ses parents, son frère, par exemple. Soit qu'à son avis il ne se montre pas assez charitable et généreux à son égard, soit qu'il la traite d'une façon qu'elle ne juge pas équitable. Dans un moment de colère elle s'en ouvre à son mari et l'incite à la venger, en blessant ou même en tuant celui qui l'a offensée.

Tel le cas arrivé, il y a plusieurs décades, à Bosela w'ǒmpwengé, de Boléngé (Bongili) (mort en 1922, à un âge très avancé). Sa femme Bumbé était extrêmement mécontente de ce que son frère ne lui faisait pas assez de cadeaux. Elle interpelle son mari : bejwó bękę, ǒnomělé nkâna, alekí ǒmpímaka tóma : les cadavres (parents défunts), tue-moi mon frère, il me refuse toujours des cadeaux (*). Là-dessus Bosela prend ses armes et s'en va. En bon psychologue il ne se trompe nullement sur les sentiments intimes de sa femme. Il sait qu'il est engagé dans une impasse dangereuse : s'il déçoit l'attente de son épouse, elle sera furieuse; si, au contraire, il ravit la vie à son beau-frère, elle le sera plus encore. Aussi s'agit-il d'user de ruse. Entré en forêt, il a la bonne fortune de rencontrer une antilope *bgende*, qu'il abat. Il enlève le foie et rentre chez lui tenant dans sa main l'organe encore frais et chaud. Il le présente à son épouse, en disant : « Voici le foie de ton frère que tu m'as prié de tuer. » Là-dessus, scène violente. La femme, hors d'elle, se met à pleurer son frère mort, et, dans sa colère, elle s'enfuit en criant à son mari : « Ah! tu ne m'aimes donc plus, puisque tu as assassiné mon frère; tu ne me reverras plus. » Arrivée dans sa famille, elle trouve tout le monde aux occupations ordinaires; aucun signe d'un décès, ni surtout d'un meurtre. Son étonnement croît encore quand elle trouve son frère bien portant et plein de vie. Elle n'en croit pas ses yeux. En un clin d'œil toute la famille est alertée et réunie. Elle explique ce qui lui est arrivé. On la calme et la console : on loue le mari d'avoir agi si intelligemment. On l'en félicite. Car il aurait pu exécuter l'intimation qu'elle lui avait faite, et elle doit donc se réjouir qu'il l'aime si bien et si sagement. Aussi, quelques jours après, elle réintègre tranquillement son foyer.

Un cas tout différent et fatal fut celui de Bok'Elea de

(*) Une des plus graves intimations. Mais celui à qui elle est adressée considère comme un devoir de donner suite à l'ordre ou l'invitation lui fait dans ces termes. C'est une sorte de serment imposé. On l'appelle : *ôma ndéi, ajepe (ôtela) Z. ndéi*. L'application de ces termes s'étend à beaucoup d'autres cas : appel au secours dans une guerre, aide pour l'application d'une ordalie; assistance dans l'ilpé (société des non-observants du jeûne funéraire), etc. Une personne peut se l'adresser à soi-même; dans ce cas, cette expression correspond à notre mot « serment », faire un serment.

Bompele (Bokátola), marié avec Elángé de Boálá (tous deux sont encore en vie). La femme rentrait continuellement dans sa famille. Le mari, exaspéré, la menaça un jour de lui tuer son frère Ekále; celui-ci disparu, elle resterait mieux chez elle. De fait, il exécuta sa menace. L'épouse s'est mise dans une colère terrible, mais néanmoins elle est restée fidèle à son conjoint. L'arc qui a servi à tirer la flèche meurtrière est toujours conservé, en souvenir, par le propriétaire.

ARTICLE VI. — RELATIONS ENTRE LA FEMME ET LA FAMILLE DE SON MARI

Evidemment, la femme doit entretenir les meilleurs rapports avec la famille de son mari, avec laquelle elle est en contact continuel. Elle doit le respect à ses parents et aînés. Si elle ne parvient pas à vivre en paix avec eux et avec les sœurs, etc., de son époux, l'union ne tiendra pas. Ce seront des malentendus, des disputes, des rixes, surtout des insultes et des allusions malveillantes qui la forceront à s'en aller. Aussi peut-on ranger ces éventualités parmi les motifs qui amènent la famille de l'homme à intervenir lors du mariage. Le souci d'éviter que l'union ne soit rompue par des incompatibilités trop grandes se retrouve constamment chez les Nkundó, car toute rupture suscite d'énormes difficultés, comme nous le verrons suo loco.

Pour les menus services que la femme doit rendre à la famille de son mari, il est fort malaisé de démêler si ce sont des obligations de justice ou simplement des convenances sociales. Un manquement passager provoquera de la part du mari et de ses parents des réprimandes qui évidemment dégénèrent aisément en querelles. Si les manquements sont de telle fréquence et nature qu'il n'est plus permis de les mettre sur le compte d'un simple oubli, d'un caprice, d'un accès de mauvaise humeur, mais qu'ils indiquent la malveillance ou la grossièreté, l'affaire sera portée devant le nkonga (aidé souvent par le tribunal familial) ou rapportée devant l'autorité des parents de la femme. Si, malgré tout, l'amélioration attendue ne se produit point, la rupture devient inévitable.

Le père et la mère du mari étendent à l'épouse de leur fils l'affection qu'ils lui portent à lui-même. Ils la considèrent comme leur propre enfant, et il n'est pas rare que leur amour envers la femme égale celui qu'ils ont pour leur propre fils. Elle est leur alliée, mais par affection ils l'appellent enfant. Elle, de son côté, ne leur donne pas le nom de bokango (ou bokilo), mais par respect filial les nomme père et mère. Des exceptions peuvent pourtant se rencontrer.

Si le père (et ceux qui lui sont assimilés : oncles, frères aînés, etc.) a tué du gros gibier, il doit donner à l'épouse de son fils (ou frère, etc.) un morceau de viande, plus ou moins grand d'après le nombre des brus, et qui consiste en une ou plusieurs côtelettes (bokálaka) (1) et la pièce sous la nuque (bokóndyá).

Des relations coupables entre le père du mari et sa bru seraient un méfait inouï. Il en serait de même de la part de tous les parents « supérieurs » (2). Les lois qui règlent les relations entre l'épouse et les parents de son mari se rattachent étroitement aux règles sur l'empêchement d'affinité et semblent découler de la même source. Il est donc utile d'avoir en vue ce que nous en avons dit au chapitre précédent, article IV.

Les frères aînés du mari traitent son épouse comme leur sœur. La femme nomme les sœurs de son mari :

---

(1) Lifio chez les Bolingo et les tribus de Losangenya.

(2) Seuls les Boângi — comme les Ekóngá de la région de Losangenya — permettent les relations du frère avec l'épouse de son puîné, et ils commencent déjà à trouver des imitateurs en leurs voisins du Sud-Est, les Injólo.

bokiló, mais par respect elle leur donne souvent le titre de mère (¹).

Après le décès du mari, son père ou son frère peut épouser la veuve, comme il a été dit suo loco. Mais ce n'est pas vu de bon œil et n'est permis que rarement, notamment lorsqu'on redoute la perte ou la dispersion du patrimoine familial, ou encore lorsque les deux intéressés se portent un amour exceptionnel.

La situation est toute différente quant aux enfants ou frères puînés et tous ceux qui leur sont assimilés. Les relations coupables avec les épouses de leur père, grand-père, oncle, frère aîné, cousin aîné sont jugées bien moins sévèrement. En général, les fautes ne donnent pas lieu à la réclamation d'un paiement, ou bien celui-ci est exigé « pour la forme » et consiste en une poule et un régime de bananes. Par ce paiement, le coupable reconnaît sa *faute* et rend hommage au droit de son aîné.

L'opinion publique, d'une façon générale, condamne ces relations, et cela souvent avec une grande sévérité. Le degré de parenté et d'autres considérations introduisent beaucoup de diversité dans les cas que nous allons donc étudier séparément, en distinguant chaque fois la réaction du mari et celle de l'opinion publique.

1. — *La méconduite de la femme avec le fils de son mari* ne donne pas lieu à une indemnité. Pourtant, le lésé réagit : il défend ses droits et sévit, s'il est tant soit peu sérieux et surtout s'il est monogame. S'il a plusieurs femmes, il laisse plus facilement passer l'affaire, à moins qu'il ne s'agisse de sa favorite. Parfois il se venge en frappant la mère du coupable, en lui ravissant ses poules, etc. Mais cela peut donner naissance à des complications : le

---

(¹) Chez les Ekonda, elle les appelle aussi bongóla (pl. bangóla); elles la nomment bómongóla, pl. bámongóla. L'épouse nomme souvent la mère de son mari : ngoyangóla. *Bámongóla* l'ómangóla signifie : les épouses du frère et leurs belles-sœurs.

frère de la femme ainsi traitée pourrait intervenir, et si la réaction du mari lésé est trop violente ou se répète trop souvent, elle peut mener au divorce. En tout cas, le père ne fait jamais de mal à l'épouse de son fils étourdi, parce qu'il l'aime comme sa propre fille.

Comme sanction directe contre le délinquant, le père peut lui retarder l'acquisition d'une épouse et — chose toujours grave encore dans les milieux purement indigènes — lui refuser sa bénédiction dans ses voyages et ses entreprises.

Par l'opinion publique ces relations sont toujours fort critiquées, et cela même lorsque les parents interviennent en faveur du coupable. Celui-ci en est *déconsidéré*; on se moque de lui en lui appliquant l'épithète d'*ekionjólá*, à laquelle on ajoute souvent la phrase explicative : *l'óála banyangó b'ánángá*. *Ekionjólá* est *dérivé de ekío*=vêtement masculin, au figuré : virilité au sens physique, et de *bólá*=force. Donc homme d'une virilité si forte qu'il va même jusqu'à s'unir aux mères de ses frères.

Après le décès, le mariage avec la veuve du père est justifié. Pourtant, si cette veuve a laissé des enfants, l'opinion publique, tout en atténuant la sévérité de son jugement, ne l'abandonne pas entièrement, et l'on peut encore entendre la critique précitée. Tel le cas — bien connu dans la région — de Yoká de Bokenyola (Bǫnjǫku), qui a épousé Lǫkǫkú, veuve de son père Inselǫ y'Ókátola et mère d'Inselǫ Antoine, chef actuel des Bonkoso (1).

Les relations coupables entre le fils et l'épouse du père sont jugées avec une sévérité particulièrement grande si la propre mère du jeune homme est encore en vie. On les lui reproche dans des termes clairs et crus : « Oóy'ôsanganya mbindo lkę la mbindo y'la'á nyangó=tu unis tes taches (tes impuretés) avec celles de ton père et de ta mère. Outé òk'ôkí wǫ wìmàmáká = tu retournes là d'où tu proviens. Ówa lóí é! cékí likpka, lui ajoutera-t-on souvent : tu mourras à cause de ta trop grande méchanceté. Cette dernière remarque est dans la mentalité nkundó une espèce d'imprécation, et si elle est répétée par plusieurs personnes elle ne manquera pas son effet, ou, pour parler comme nos gens, si tous se lamentent beaucoup sur et contre cet homme, il mourra effectivement (1).

---

(1) Ici il faut toujours faire exception pour l'héritage d'une veuve par droit d'aînesse, *boelió* (chap. III, art. III). De préférence, on évite de donner une veuve qui soit dans la situation signalée.

Si le fils en question n'est pas marié, surtout lorsqu'il a atteint déjà un âge relativement avancé, l'affaire est considérée comme plus bénigne, s'il approche des femmes de son père polygame. Ce dernier ne peut pas trop se courroucer, particulièrement quand il ne s'agit que de cas isolés; car d'autres parents laisseraient parler leur affection pour le jeune homme, dont ils connaissent la passion et dont ils comprennent donc les tentations et les incartades. Ils interviendraient pour calmer le père et l'inciter à éviter le retour de pareils faits, en procurant une épouse au fils. Exceptionnellement, le conseil familial peut même donner tort au père, à cause de sa rigueur envers son fils, et permettre à celui-ci de ravir au père la femme aimée — (jamais pourtant la première, la favorite ou la *bolámbá*); — tel le cas que nous avons relaté au chapitre II, article XI, 2°. Mais c'est là loin d'être une situation idéale aux yeux des Nkundó, et elle n'est admise que lorsque le fils porte un amour ardent à la femme et que, d'autre part, le père tarde trop à lui procurer une épouse.

Ici nous constatons donc un conflit entre deux sentiments : la jalousie du mari et l'affection du père et de divers parents. C'est ce qui rend difficile — comme dans beaucoup de cas — la délimitation entre ce qui est permis et ce qui est défendu. Nous pouvons pourtant conclure de ce qui précède et des explications générales des indigènes que : 1° les relations sont défendues et jugées avec sévérité, mais qu'on est bien plus indulgent ici que pour les parents « supérieurs »; 2° le père ne peut pas exagérer la répression des fautes, ni exiger de son propre fils le paiement d'une indemnité; car ce serait s'enrichir de par la méconduite de son enfant, qui, d'ailleurs, n'a de quoi payer que grâce à lui ou au clan de sa mère, à qui il serait injuste et très mal à propos de le faire recourir.

---

(1) Dans cette opinion des Nkundó on pourrait voir un des motifs qui, dans l'héritage, font assigner les veuves, non au fils, mais au frère du défunt.

B. — *Un frère puîné nomme la femme de son aîné* *wǎli*=épouse, et elle le traite de *bǒme*=mari, parce qu'ils peuvent se marier. On trouve donc aussi des relations adultères. Mais dans la pratique des distinctions sont à faire.

Si le puîné n'est pas marié et que l'aîné possède un harem, — cas assez fréquent autrefois, mais très rare à présent, — nous revenons au cas précité du père, avec seulement plus de bénignité envers le coupable.

Si l'aîné est monogame et le puîné célibataire, les relations avec la femme sont interdites en présence du mari. Si le puîné se laisse tout de même entraîner par la tentation, il est condamnable. Le mari ne peut pas réclamer d'amende. Mais, à titre de vengeance, il peut se procurer « une indemnité feinte » (*nyongo éá bolǎambo*) en abattant l'un ou l'autre bananier du coupable, en saisissant ses poules, en transportant sa case, et autres actes similaires. Le but en est, selon nos gens, d'inspirer au jeune homme un peu plus de respect envers son aîné. Ce dernier ne peut pourtant pas exagérer les répressions (par exemple en se battant contre son cadet), de peur de se voir condamner pour manque d'affection fraternelle (¹). D'ailleurs, les valeurs avec lesquelles il s'est acquis la femme appar-

---

(¹) Une petite correction fraternelle, surtout si le puîné est notablement plus jeune, n'implique aucune gravité et est permise, particulièrement pour des fautes réitérées.

tiennent en somme aux deux frères, sous un certain aspect. S'ils sont de mères différentes, l'aîné a beaucoup plus d'atouts dans sa main. Et si la dot en entier ou en majeure partie provient de son clan maternel, il obtient entièrement gain de cause pour ce qui regarde le point de vue indemnité, bien que le devoir d'affection fraternelle, donc d'indulgence, subsiste toujours. Pour des manquements isolés, cette indulgence doit toujours intervenir. Pour des cas répétés souvent, les excuses du coupable n'ont plus beaucoup de poids.

Si le puîné est marié, lui aussi, l'affaire prend un tout autre aspect. Puisqu'il a lui-même son épouse, il n'a plus aucune excuse pour la satisfaction adultère de sa passion. Le mari lésé garde, il est vrai, l'obligation de mitiger sa colère et ses manifestations; mais le côté financier reçoit plus de relief. L'indemnité qu'il peut réclamer doit toutefois être ajoutée à la dot de la femme coupable; car il serait inouï qu'il s'enrichît aux dépens de son propre frère. S'il a lui-même procuré à son puîné l'épouse, il peut la lui ravir pour la donner à un autre frère, un cousin, etc., voire la prendre pour lui-même, nonobstant l'empêchement d'affinité. Ce cas est pourtant exceptionnel et n'est appliqué qu'à cause de manquements graves et réitérés, joints à une attitude insolente du coupable.

En l'absence du mari, le puîné a entière liberté, que le conjoint soit parti ou que le frère rencontre sa belle-sœur dans sa famille ou ailleurs en voyage. Si la femme refuse les relations, son beau-frère rapporte souvent son mauvais vouloir au mari, qui la semonce, même la frappe parce qu'elle n'aime pas son frère à lui, et l'inculpe d'avoir des amants : ótóna bộn'ǒâ ngóya, ólangakě ńk'aend'ǎnkíná. L'affection étant plus vive entre frères de même mère, la colère du mari est d'autant plus grande. Le manque d'affection de la part de l'épouse engendre chez le mari des soupçons sur sa fidélité, parce que la femme nkundó se laisse entraîner à la tentation avec une extrême facilité;

si elle refuse son propre beau-frère-mari, c'est donc qu'elle se satisfait ailleurs. Ce raisonnement peut porter à faux; mais il se base sur la fréquence des cas. L'attitude du mari ne prouve pas l'absence de jalousie, mais, au contraire, en démontre l'existence.

Le puîné rencontre-t-il sa belle-sœur dans sa famille à elle, les parents interviennent. Ils adjoignent à leur fille de bien recevoir « son mari », de lui préparer à manger, de nettoyer la case lui destinée. Ils la forcent même de cohabiter avec lui tout le temps de son séjour dans leur village. Par là ils veulent éviter des palabres avec leur gendre. Si l'antipathie de la femme est si grande qu'elle ne veut d'aucune façon se soumettre, ils donnent parfois à leur visiteur une autre de leurs filles (cousines, etc.), plus jeunes, pour lui rendre les devoirs d'épouse.

Sont assimilés au frère puîné tous ceux que la terminologie nkundó désigne sous le nom de *bakúné* (donc aussi les cousins plus jeunes). La gravité plus ou moins grande du conflit et des conséquences est en proportion avec le degré de parenté.

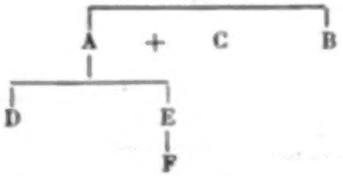
C. — *La situation du neveu (bǫ̌nankáná) vis-à-vis des épouses de son oncle maternel* est assez comparable à celle du fils à l'égard des femmes de son père. Le caractère dotal du mariage donne même au neveu une liberté plus grande; car l'oncle s'est enrichi par l'union de la mère de son neveu. Il n'y a pas question d'indemnité, excepté celle des « égards », pour marquer la soumission, et qui consiste en une poule et un régime de bananes. Si le neveu refuse cette preuve de déférence et de soumission, il est mis en tort, et toute la famille se ligue contre lui pour sauver la hiérarchie et l'autorité familiales : « Tu outrages ton oncle; sans doute désires-tu qu'il meure pour que tu puisses prendre sa place et profiter de son héritage. » Et l'oncle offensé peut, après quelques jours de patience, réclamer une véritable indemnité.

Mais alors interviennent d'autres considérations, et une nouvelle situation se crée :

En effet, souvent — pas toujours pourtant — la mère du jeune homme prend parti pour son fils et fait des scènes à son frère. Deux cas peuvent se présenter :

1° L'oncle et la mère du neveu ne sont pas nés de même mère. Dans ce cas la mère s'abstient rarement d'intervenir en faveur de son fils. Elle reproche à son frère sa dureté, son manque d'affection pour elle, et cela particulièrement si l'épouse adultère est sa *nkita* à elle, c'est-à-dire si elle a été acquise avec la dot payée pour elle. « A qui dois-tu cette femme? Et tu exiges encore de la richesse de la part de mon fils! Rends-moi ma dot, que je lui procure une épouse. » L'oncle se mettant en colère, lui aussi donne parfois suite à l'injonction de sa sœur courroucée en lui rendant la dot. De ce fait, toute relation entre frère et sœur est rompue. Mais cette éventualité n'est qu'exceptionnelle; presque toujours on arrange les affaires avant qu'elles n'en arrivent à cette extrémité.

2° Si frère et sœur sont de même mère, la paix est toujours rétablie avant cette exaspération, et tout se borne à quelques reproches, à un peu de colère transitoire. Car, dit le proverbe, bâsangí nyangó báfomb'ilángá = la haine que se portent les enfants d'une même mère n'est que mensongère, feinte; elle n'est pas véritable et réelle.



L'oncle (voir ci-dessus : D) n'a les mains absolument libres pour guérir la passion de son neveu (F) que lorsqu'il est le *nkóló* de sa sœur (E), c'est-à-dire lorsque la mère (C) de sa sœur (E) est la *nkita* de sa tante (B) = la sœur de son père (A). Dans ce cas, en effet, sa sœur n'a pas à réclamer; elle lui doit respect et soumission; sa dépendance vis-à-vis de son frère-maître est plus grande que la reconnaissance que celui-ci lui doit pour l'enrichissement dont elle est la cause ou l'occasion.

D. — *S'agit-il d'un petit-fils* (*bonkáná*) *vis-à-vis des épouses de son grand-père,* la liberté devient entière dans la pratique. En effet, chez les Nkundó, l'affection du grand-père (*nkǫ́kǫ*) pour son petit-fils dépasse souvent l'amour porté au propre fils et dégénère complètement en faiblesse (1). Il supporte tous ses agissements, tous ses caprices, toutes ses railleries, injures, etc.

Après des relations coupables, le petit-fils pousse parfois l'insolence jusqu'à envoyer spontanément à son grand-père une indemnité « de dérision » sous forme d'un panier rempli de pierres, au lieu d'anneaux de cuivre.

Malgré la débonnaireté du grand-père à l'égard de son petit-fils, l'opinion publique n'est pourtant pas favorable à cette conduite, quoiqu'elle soit plus indulgente que pour les cas antérieurs. Ce qui prouve — comme le fait d'envoyer l'amende « de dérision » — qu'en principe ces relations sont condamnables et condamnées. De par les circonstances actuelles, — mariages plus précoces, — la différence d'âge entre petit-fils et épouses du grand-père a passablement augmenté en des cas toujours plus nombreux; ce qui fait diminuer leurs rapports dans la même proportion (2).

---

(1) Comme d'ailleurs en Europe, très souvent. Cfr. chap. I, 1e partie, art. I, § 2.

(2) Plus haut nous avons vu que d'autres tribus nkundó sont encore moins sévères dans cette matière. Par contre, la moralité — à notre sens — est plus élevée chez les Ekonda, groupe nkundó du lac Léopold II, où la question des relations ne semble même pas se poser entre la femme et le fils, frère puîné, etc. de son mari. S'agit-il d'une influence de quelque population voisine ? Ou faut-il admettre la décadence chez les tribus dont la morale est, dans ce domaine, inférieure ?

De ce long exposé se dégagent les *conclusions* suivantes :

1° Les relations entre un homme et l'épouse de son fils, frère puîné, etc.; bref, de tous ceux qui lui sont inférieurs dans la hiérarchie familiale, sont toujours sévèrement interdites et ne se rencontrent jamais.

2° Au contraire, elles existent entre un inférieur et l'épouse de son aîné et supérieur. Le degré de parenté entre le mari et le coupable influe beaucoup sur la gravité ou légèreté de l'infraction, de la sanction, des suites diverses. Certaines relations sont admises, d'autres condamnées avec plus ou moins d'indulgence, d'autres encore impitoyablement critiquées.

3° Dans cette matière, deux aspects sont à distinguer nettement :

a) la réaction du mari et la répression;

b) le jugement porté par l'opinion publique;

ou :

a) l'aspect financier;

b) l'aspect moral, — pour employer ce qualificatif, — à défaut d'un meilleur.

Parfois un troisième élément s'y ajoute : l'intervention de la famille prenant parti pour le coupable contre le mari lésé, qui pour l'une ou l'autre raison s'est mis en tort lui-même.

a) La sanction ordinaire de l'adultère est, pour l'homme, l'indemnité à payer. Or, celle-ci ne peut avoir lieu, puisqu'aucune transaction financière — au sens strict, du moins — ne peut avoir lieu dans la proche parenté, vu que les biens appartiennent, sous un certain angle, à tous les membres, l'un devant tôt ou tard recevoir ou hériter de l'autre. Mais dans les cas où d'autres sanctions sont possibles, elles sont reconnues légitimes.

b) Si l'on excepte les relations entre frère et belle-sœur, — dans les limites décrites ci-dessus, — l'opinion publique est sévère dans son jugement, plus sévère même que pour les adultères ordinaires, qui, de par la nature plus palpable de leurs sanctions, paraissent plus graves superficiellement et font souvent cette impression même sur beaucoup d'indigènes. Ou, du moins, cette impression se dégage spontanément et de prime abord de leurs explications : dans la pratique courante ils mettent en vedette l'indemnité — et dans leurs relations sur les procédés anciens, les sanctions violentes — et ils oublient l'autre aspect. D'autres ne distinguent pas ou très mal les deux faces du problème. Ce n'est qu'en allant au fond des choses qu'eux — comme nous — se rendent compte de l'existence du double aspect et de l'importance qu'il y a à ne pas les confondre.

L'indulgence que, dans certains cas, nous constatons de la part des intéressés lésés, et parfois dans l'opinion publique, ne nous semble pas devoir être expliquée comme une indulgence de principe, ni comme une légitimation de ces rapports (excepté pour les frères, dans les limites indiquées). Elle provient plutôt de l'affection qu'ils portent au coupable, de la compassion pour son état de célibataire, d'une certaine communauté d'intérêts, enfin de l'estimation de certains autres éléments en cause (comme la jalousie foncière dans le cas des frères).

La grande différence que, en cette matière comme en d'autres, les Nkundó mettent entre parents inférieurs et parents supérieurs repose sur leur conception de l'autorité, qui, chez eux, est patriarcale, donc paternelle. Il est bien moins question de peur pour la force que de crainte révérentielle, — bien que la première ne doive nullement être exclue. L'inférieur n'est pas à leurs yeux pour le profit et l'intérêt du supérieur, mais inversement : la raison d'être de l'autorité est le bien de l'inférieur, qui lui, pour sauvegarder la hiérarchie et l'ordre, doit se soumettre au supérieur. C'est sur cette même idée que se base le devoir d'aide du supérieur envers l'inférieur (dans ses difficultés, ses palabres, son indigence), de libéralité et de générosité, donc de communication des biens, d'indulgence en matière de justice et de propriété et de complaisance en matière conjugale, — pourvu que le principe d'autorité reste sauf. L'exploitation de l'inférieur par le supérieur est tout à fait contraire à la nature fondamentale de l'autorité nkundó, tandis que l'inverse y est entièrement conforme (¹).

ARTICLE VII. — L'ADULTÈRE.

L'adultère est, pour les Nkundó, une union illicite entre un homme et une femme mariée. Dès le versement de l'*ikulá*, on parle d'adultère.

§ 1. Terminologie.

En lonkundo il n'existe pas de terme unique et spécifique pour traduire notre mot « adultère ». La langue en possède plusieurs qui ne s'en rapprochent que partiellement.

1° Tout d'abord on parle de *bǫngǫmbę*, qui exprime les relations constantes et continues avec une femme tout étrangère, c'est-à-dire à laquelle on n'est apparenté d'aucune façon. Le mot désigne tant la relation que les personnes. Cette sorte d'adultère est aussi nommée : *wisamaka* ou *linsámbá jă njisámá*, c'est-à-dire secret (verbe : *ísama*), par opposition au *linsámbá* proprement dit (dont il sera question à l'article suivant). Les Bombwanja, Ionda et Injǫ́lǫ́ l'appellent *lǫ́ngǫla*= acte (quelconque) fait en cachette (du verbe *ǫ́ngǫla*). Les Ionda emploient encore

---

(¹) Cet état d'esprit peut rendre compte — du moins dans une certaine mesure — de la liberté que les indigènes prennent facilement envers l'Européen, leur supérieur ou maître : larcins domestiques, demandes importunes, cette espèce de mendicité, le manque du respect que nous sommes habitués à voir observer à l'égard de l'autorité, etc.

le terme *ekundé*=chose enterrée ou cachée sous un amas (verbe : *kunda* enterrer).

Actuellement, on a tendance à appliquer à l'adultère ainsi conçu, du moins s'il ne se limite pas à un seul acte, le nom de *linsámbá*, sans aucune ajoute spécifiante. Tant la femme que l'amant portent le nom de *bonsámbá* (pl. : *bansámbá*).

2° S'il ne s'agit que d'un acte isolé, on parle de *yĕtsí* (du verbe *éta*=appeler). Mais ce mot peut s'appliquer également à des célibataires. A proprement parler, il désigne une conjonction unique et non des relations suivies. Certaines tribus (Injǫ́lǫ́, Elángá) ont encore le nom *efongo* (par exemple : nyong'ĕ'efongo=indemnité pour un seul cas).

3° Le *lonkâna* (chez les Bombwanja : *bombaká*) désigne l'adultère entre personnes d'une même entité exogamique et, par extension, entre personnes appartenant à des familles différentes, mais qui ne forment qu'une seule agglomération.

Comme le mot le dit, il s'agit de rapports entre « cousins », au sens le plus large du terme.

Les indigènes m'ont donné un essai d'étymologie des termes *bǫngǫmbę* et *lonkâna*, qu'il est peut-être utile de relater ici. Ils auraient été inventés par les épouses volages et leurs amants, afin de cacher leur amours illicites. Même anciennement, il y avait des relations entre Nkundó et Ngǫmbę. Un Ngǫmbę arrivant dans un village nkundó était l'objet de la curiosité de toute la jeunesse. Un homme se rendant chez son amante (ou vice versa) ou en revenant à des heures indues et motivant des soupçons pouvait répondre qu'il venait de voir le Ngǫmbę. Pour le *lonkâna*, même truc. Quoi qu'il soit de la valeur de cette explication, — (pour *lonkâna*, par exemple, l'étymologie que j'ai citée au début est bien plus naturelle), — je la donne pour ce qu'elle m'a coûté : il peut toujours être de quelque intérêt de l'avoir signalée et conservée par écrit.

4° Pour indiquer le penchant à l'adultère (spécialement chez les femmes) on emploie le verbe *fǎfoka*, qui, au sens matériel, se dit d'habits trop larges, voletant au vent; et le substantif *loyǒ* ou *boyǒ*.

Découvrir un cas d'adultère s'appelle *tẹ́mbọla*, substantif *ntẹ́mbọ́*.

L'adultère occasionnel ou permanent a toujours été très fréquent. Ceci est dû sans aucun doute à la facilité relative d'éviter la découverte et les sanctions. La femme allant voir sa famille ne peut décidément être suivie et surveillée par son mari : les distances rendent difficile ce contrôle, qui, en outre, aurait des conséquences désastreuses pour la stabilité du mariage, car ni la femme ni sa famille ne le supporteraient. D'autre part, nous pouvons donner comme causes partielles : la lascivité, la polygamie, etc., comme nous le verrons encore plus loin.

§ 2. Cadeaux.

L'homme et la femme adultères s'envoient des cadeaux; celui-là de la viande, des flèches, etc., celle-ci de la nourriture, divers menus objets. Les cadeaux de la femme à son amant sont nommés *botúmo* (substantif employé avec le verbe *tumba* = faire brûler (1). Les intermédiaires sont généralement des parents en bas âge. Notons que la femme n'envoie que rarement son fils. Car elle peut redouter avec raison que le cadeau n'arrive pas à destination : le garçon s'en régalera lui-même. Mieux peut-elle se fier à sa fille.

Le cadeau de la part de l'homme s'appelle du nom générique de *mpató* = cadeau envoyé, envoi.

---

(1) Notons que le substantif et le verbe n'ont entre eux aucune connexion étymologique. Peut-être *botúmo* se rapproche-t-il de *túma* = montrer, désigner ? Les Ekonda nomment ce cadeau *elika*. Cfr. encore le chap. II, art. 1.

Pour le cas isolé (*yëtsí*), l'homme donne une flèche, un petit objet, des perles, de la viande, etc. Actuellement tout cela est remplacé par de l'argent ou des étoffes. D'ordinaire la femme exige une rémunération. Il existe pourtant des exceptions, fréquentes ou rares, d'après la région et la nature des personnes. Elles sont dues à la passion extraordinaire ou à l'amour de la femme envers son amant (1).

§ 3. Les preuves de l'adultère.

Elles peuvent être plus ou moins fortes.

1° La plus importante est la flagrance du délit. Là-contre, aucune objection ne tient, et elle justifie l'application des plus sévères sanctions. La constatation doit en être faite par le mari. Le témoignage d'une tierce personne n'est jamais produit. Si elle découvre le fait, et qu'elle soit favorable à l'époux, elle l'avertit pour qu'il prenne ses précautions afin d'attraper personnellement les coupables. Si le fait est découvert par le père ou un proche parent de la femme qui est favorable au mari, il le lui signale et, si possible, l'appelle pour venir constater lui-même l'infraction. Dans cette dernière éventualité, l'indemnité doit être donnée par le mari au beau-père. Ce n'est pas une obligation de justice, mais de bonne entente, de convenance, puisque le beau-père fait preuve de bonne volonté et d'affection à l'égard de son gendre.

2° Presque d'égale importance et toujours péremptoire est l'aveu de l'épouse. Dans ce cas, le mari mitige sa colère contre elle et la dirige surtout contre le complice. Aussi la plupart des femmes n'hésitent-elles pas à dénoncer ce dernier, si elles se sentent tant soit peu acculées. (Par contre, entre elles, les femmes ne se dénoncent jamais.)

---

(1) Cfr. chap. I, 1e partie, art. IV.

3° Une troisième preuve est de surprendre les amants pendant qu'ils projettent une rencontre. Sur le fait, le mari les accuse, et tâche d'extraire à sa femme une confession complète sur le passé ou sur le futur. Si possible il s'assure le concours de témoins. Prévoit-il que la femme niera, il laisse passer le cas pour chercher une occasion favorable de surprendre les coupables sur le fait. Souvent, quelles que soient les dispositions de la femme, il n'intervient pas immédiatement; ne laissant rien percer, il cherche adroitement l'occasion de constater la flagrance du délit contre lequel il pourra réagir plus violemment. Cette attitude s'impose absolument lorsqu'il n'a que de simples soupçons, fussent-ils fondés. Agir autrement ne mènerait pas à grand résultat, et serait une marque de légèreté, — qui existe souvent chez des maris jeunes et inexpérimentés ou d'un tempérament trop irascible. Surprendre un message d'invitation ou d'acceptation a la même valeur pratique.

Cette preuve est moins forte que les deux précédentes et — à moins que celles-ci ne s'y ajoutent, — ne légitime que certaines sanctions.

4° La vue des amants se livrant des cadeaux, de main à main ou par intermédiaire (« avec les compliments d'Untel »), a aussi sa valeur comme preuve. Mais ici encore la meilleure méthode est d'en faire un moyen de faire avouer la femme. C'est la seule valeur pratique de la découverte de cadeaux quelconques entre les mains de l'épouse. Si celle-ci ne trouve aucune explication qui puisse tranquilliser le mari, elle se voit forcée d'avouer et de dénoncer.

§ 4. Sanctions.

Le droit nkundó connaît plusieurs sanctions contre l'adultère, applicables soit aux époux, soit à leurs complices, soit à un intermédiaire (*ekímá*). Il existe des différences dans l'application d'après la gravité du cas (par exemple : récidive, habitude), la disposition ou le tempérament des personnes, la valeur de la preuve. Bien que légitimées par la loi, la plupart sont appliquées de l'initiative du conjoint, mais dans certains cas l'autorité familiale comme celle du *ndonga* doivent intervenir. Nous distinguerons donc les divers cas :

A. — *Sanctions du mari contre la femme adultère.* — *a*) Dans le cas d'un délit flagrant, le mari peut battre la femme, la blesser, la tuer même. Ni elle, ni sa famille n'auront le droit de réclamer. S'il l'a tue, il n'a plus droit au remboursement de la dot, pas plus que dans le cas d'un décès naturel. Généralement, aux temps jadis, la mort dans ces circonstances donnait lieu à une guerre interclanique. D'ailleurs, cette extrémité était très rare et n'arrivait qu'à un homme excessivement jaloux, ayant d'autres femmes, ou possédant des richesses pour s'en procurer, ou encore aigri par une infidélité persistante et incorrigible. Le plus souvent, le mari, retenu par la prévision de la perte qu'il subirait en fin de compte, se borne à battre ou à blesser la coupable, ou à lui appliquer d'autres châtiments et punitions (infra sous b); cfr. supra, art. III, § 2.

Hors le cas de flagrance, si le mari possède des preuves suffisantes, comme nous l'avons vu ci-dessus, la coupable peut s'attendre à une bonne rossée, accompagnée de toute une litanie de gros mots et d'injures diverses (femina foetidissima, tempore menstruationis putor tuus venit in nares omnium hominum, etc.), plus un tas d'obscénités ayant trait au sexe féminin. L'époux agissant de cette façon n'est pas réprimandé; au contraire, il le fait par jalousie; c'est une colère d'amour, disent nos Nkundó.

Dans ces punitions, les Nkundó reconnaissent surtout l'exaspération d'une légitime jalousie. C'est pourquoi le mari agit de son initiative privée. D'ailleurs, se trouvant devant le fait, il lui serait psychologiquement difficile de se calmer pour d'abord aller avertir le *ndonga*.

Il était extrêmement rare qu'un homme tuât sa femme de propos délibéré et dans le calme. La chose arrivait seulement lorsque ses infidélités étaient continuelles et qu'un tas d'autres graves défauts s'y ajoutaient. Et encore ne trouvait-on cette conduite que dans certaines familles plus cruelles. Le fait est connu d'Iloko is'Okungú et de Bengóngó byǎ Kundú, tous deux de Bongilá (Bẹsọmbọ́), famille qui se glorifiait, dans les chants, de manger leurs propres épouses.

b) *Tortures*. Le mari peut encore avoir recours à plusieurs tortures dont voici les principales :

1° L'*etáka*, qui est, pour ainsi dire, la torture type. C'est une lourde fourche en bois attachée au cou. Elle empêche les déplacements. C'est la prison nkundó. Mais en outre, si l'application perdure, elle devient une réelle torture : la peau devient douloureuse et se détache, des inflammations se produisent facilement, et souvent des punaises s'y logent.

Dès que la famille de la femme apprend (par le *ndonga*) la nouvelle, elle vient souvent prier le mari de la libérer. Pour le calmer et le rendre propice, on lui offre un paiement *ad hoc*, c'est-à-dire un *bọọ́mbọ* de quelques anneaux de cuivre. D'ordinaire, il cède à leurs instances : la bonne alliance et le sentiment de respect envers eux exigent qu'il ne reste pas insensible à leurs supplications, d'autant plus qu'il a besoin d'eux pour la stabilité de l'union et la bonne marche du ménage.

2° Les *byẽngẹlanyi* ou menottes, qui sont des bâtons liés, soit aux poignets, soit aux chevilles (pour empêcher la marche), ou tant aux bras qu'aux pieds. On employait deux bâtons, — un dessus et un dessous, les membres étant posés entre les deux, — qui étaient liés par des cordes attachées et fixées dans une entaille faite dans chaque extrémité des bâtons. Les poignets étaient rarement croisés. Afin d'augmenter la douleur et l'immobilisation, les cordes étaient rétrécies et durcies en y versant de l'eau. D'ordinaire, ces menottes s'ajoutaient à l'*etáka*, et jamais n'étaient appliquées seules.

3° *L'exposition aux morsures des fourmis nkongôtó.* Dans la région dont nous traitons, je n'ai jamais entendu dire qu'on expose aux *bafumba* (Dorylus), ni même aux vénéneuses *benkŏnkómo*, en opposition avec la pratique d'autres tribus Mǫ́ngo, et avec les données de certaines fables (évolution ?).

4° *L'infusion d'eau poivrée* dans la voie génitale. Parfois les parties étaient frottées de poivre pilé.

5° *L'exposition des organes sexuels au feu :* une bûche brûlante étant tenue à proximité.

Ces deux dernières tortures étaient les plus atroces.

Nous pouvons ajouter une dernière punition, qui, bien que n'étant pas une torture, relève des mêmes règles juridiques :

6° La *nudité*, le mari arrachant à la coupable ses vêtements et l'exposant ainsi à la honte publique. Même si elle a recours à des feuilles, personne ne s'y méprend et la honte n'en est diminuée qu'en partie.

Pour rendre légitime l'application d'une de ces peines, n'importe laquelle des preuves indiquées ci-dessus est suffisante. Toutefois, le mari doit, au préalable, avertir ses anciens et le *ndonga*. Ceux-ci ne lui permettent d'agir qu'après des fautes réitérées. La facilité plus ou moins grande d'accorder la permission dépend du tempérament des intéressés et d'une quantité de circonstances, dont les influences sociales respectives des parties en cause sont les principales.

La nécessité de demander la permission des « pères » et du *ndonga*, dont nous avons déjà rencontré d'autres applications (*supra*, art. III, § 4), n'infirme pas le droit du mari, mais en limite l'exécution. Elle n'est pas une obligation de justice, mais est imposée pour des raisons familiales, qui sont :

1° Le respect dû aux « pères », ici comme en toute matière d'importance;

2° Le respect dû au *ndonga*, qui, dans le domaine matrimonial, est son supérieur, et dont l'intervention doit être invoquée en tout cas grave;

3° La répercussion sur toute la famille d'une action inconsidérée ou imprudente (inimitiés, guerres, etc.).

Si la longanimité et la patience restent infructueuses, personne ne pourra plus condamner le mari. Et la famille même de la femme, comparant la conduite condamnable, d'un côté, à la générosité de leur gendre, est naturellement inclinée à lui donner raison, et d'ordinaire n'intervient pas contre lui.

Signalons encore que pour justifier l'obligation d'avertir l'autorité, les Nkundó invoquent le besoin du maintien de leur honneur. Ils doivent pouvoir avertir le clan de la femme infidèle et sauvegarder leur bon renom de défenseurs de l'ordre et de la paix publique.

Une femme beaucoup aimée par son mari n'était soumise qu'à l'*etáka*. Il la semonçait et la battait, et tâchait de la corriger à force de douceur et de clémence.

Comme nous le verrons *suo loco*, le mari exaspéré par l'infidélité incorrigible de sa femme recourt parfois au divorce, si par ailleurs elle ne s'acquitte pas convenablement de ses autres devoirs conjugaux; ou encore à la vente en esclavage, rarement à l'immolation.

La colonisation a aboli les tortures, l'esclavage, l'immolation et la légitimité de l'assassinat. Il ne reste au mari d'autre sanction contre sa femme infidèle que de l'insulter et de la battre. Et encore la juridiction européenne l'oblige à se maîtriser, afin de ne pas commettre d'excès qui puissent l'impliquer dans un procès devant le tribunal du Blanc. Heureusement pour la fidélité conjugale, les derniers temps, suite à l'institution officielle des juridictions indigènes, la réaction a commencé en faveur de la répression de l'adultère et elle aboutira, dans un avenir plus ou moins prochain, par le retour à la loi ancestrale adaptée aux circonstances actuelles.

B. — *Contre le complice*, le mari lésé a droit à l'emploi de deux sanctions : la violence et le paiement d'une « indemnité ».

1° Si le mari surprend le complice sur le fait, il est toujours en droit de le blesser, voire de le tuer, ou de le réduire en esclavage. Les deux dernières vengeances ne se pratiquaient que lorsque les villages respectifs du mari et du coupable étaient assez éloignés l'un de l'autre et n'étaient pas unis par des liens particuliers (amitié, entr'aide, alliance). Ceci avait sa raison d'être dans la considération qu'on avait pour les parents du délinquant, ne voulant pas les attrister outre mesure. Un autre mobile de prudence et de calme est l'infériorité économique ou militaire du clan du mari, et la hardiesse, la valeur guerrière, la force, en un mot, de la famille du coupable. Un cas exceptionnel qui fait s'évanouir toutes les autres considérations est l'adultère avec une favorite, aimée par son mari d'un amour particulièrement passionné et jaloux.

Lorsque l'adultère ne se limitait plus à quelques actes isolés, mais devenait une véritable habitude, ou que le délinquant avait déjà séduit mainte femme et ainsi causé à sa famille force palabres, le mari, quelle que fût sa situation ou la position de son clan, pouvait être plus hardi. Car les proches du débauché étaient finalement exaspérés par sa méconduite incorrigible et désastreuse, et préféraient être débarrassés de lui (¹).

(¹) Cfr. aussi chap. VIII, art. II, § 2, A.

Le danger des blessures, de l'esclavage, de la mort refroidissait souvent le désir d'adultère. Aussi, plus le mari se montrait hardi, violent, fort de physique ou de position sociale, plus ses femmes et leurs amants se tenaient sur leur garde. Certains hommes étaient tellement jaloux d'une de leurs épouses et si bien décidés de se venger avec une extrême rigueur, que les tentateurs n'osaient même pas penser à s'approcher d'elles,

2° Le paiement d'une *indemnité* semble être la sanction type. A présent, c'est la seule qui est restée légale, et par conséquent elle se place de plus en plus sur l'avant-plan.

N'importe laquelle des preuves étudiées ci-dessus justifie la réclamation d'une indemnité.

L'indemnité peut être minime : 2-5 anneaux de cuivre; ou forte : 20-30 ou un esclave. Ce maximum est toujours exigé pour l'adultère avec une favorite. Le montant est plus ou moins élevé d'après les personnes en cause, les relations qui les unissent, la fréquence des fautes, la nature du fait constaté; par exemple, la surprise de l'arrangement d'une rencontre, la remise d'un cadeau donnent lieu à une petite indemnité; la flagrance du délit, au contraire, à un indemnité élevée.

Un homme qui exige une indemnité élevée doit s'attendre à se voir rendre la pareille le cas échéant. L'application, dans ce cas, de la loi du talion est pleinement approuvée par l'opinion nkundó.

Outre les cas étudiés à l'article précédent, il en existe un autre qui ne donne pas lieu à la réclamation d'une indemnité. C'est lorsque le coupable appartient à un clan esclave ou autrement dépendant et inférieur (*mpámá* ou *bowélé*) [1]. Même si le mari surprend le coupable sur le fait, il le prie poliment de s'esquiver et de lui laisser maison et femme : « óntsíkél'ílǫmbę, njôyá é! » C'est là la pratique de la véritable politesse nkundó. Il pouvait bien arriver qu'un mari par trop jaloux et impétueux blessât, tuât ou vendît son rival. Mais c'était une exception toujours blâmée, parce que manquant absolument de chevaleresque. En tout cas, il ne peut jamais être question d'exiger une indemnité, ce qui serait absolument indigne.

---

[1] Etrangers qui, sans être apparentés de quelque façon, sont fixés dans une tribu ou un groupe.

La réclamation de l'indemnité est portée à la connaissance du coupable par le *ndonga*, assisté, dans les cas difficiles, par divers notables. Si le mari prévoit une forte opposition de la part du débiteur, il fait au *ndonga* un cadeau spécial d'un régime de bananes plus deux poissons (ou une poule), « pour qu'il ne soit pas forcé de manger la nourriture du rival ».

Le refus catégorique et persistant de payer l'indemnité est rare. Car il peut avoir des suites graves : arrestation, puis réduction en esclavage du coupable pour cause de dettes, ou compensation sur la personne de sa femme, d'une parente, ou rétention d'une parente du créancier mariée dans le clan du débiteur (*ikákelo*). Ces pratiques d'otages et de contrainte par corps ayant été abolies, il reste encore l'intervention des tribunaux secondés par la police.

Quelle idée les Nkundó se font-ils de la nature de ce paiement que, pour la facilité de l'exposé, nous avons nommé indemnité? Question difficile à résoudre. Comme éléments de solution, voici les données linguistiques :

Le paiement pour adultère s'appelle *nyongo*, employé avec le verbe *ka*= donner. Il équivaut au verbe *lingala fúta* (d'où dérive le substantif *bofúto*). Il signifie paiement dans son sens le plus large et couvre donc aussi nos mots « paie, salaire, rémunération ». Outre son application à l'adultère, il s'emploie encore dans beaucoup d'autres circonstances : rémunération pour un travail ou pour la prestation d'un service, etc. *Nyongo* ne signifie pas compensation, qui se dit *lowáála*, ni paiement de réparation et d'excuses pour une offense ou *bọọ́ndọ*, ni indemnisation (*mbálaka*). Il a en commun avec ce dernier mot l'idée de paiement dû en justice, et, faute d'une expression adéquate pour le rendre, « indemnité » est encore la traduction la moins inexacte (1).

Reste à noter que les deux genres de punition : violences et indemnité, ne peuvent pas être cumulés, principe qui est d'une application universelle (2). Faut-il voir là-dedans une condamnation implicite des mesures violentes ? Ou bien y a-t-il ici exercice d'un système de composition ? La question est difficile à trancher, les deux explications se couvrant d'ailleurs au moins en partie.

Il n'est pas dépourvu d'intérêt de signaler encore que comme justification des sanctions contre le complice les Nkundó invoquent la part, souvent prépondérante, qu'il a dans l'adultère. En effet, raisonnent-ils, de sa nature la femme est faible : le sentiment prédomine, elle se laisse aisément entraîner et ne résiste que difficilement à la sollicitation. L'homme, au contraire, est plus raisonnable, sait mieux se maîtriser. Édicter des sanctions et les appliquer uniquement à l'épouse, non seulement exclurait de la punition un des deux coupables, mais encore serait insuffisant pour sauvegarder l'ordre social, puisque, malgré les peines, la femme est toujours exposée à succomber par faiblesse. La rigueur que malgré cela le droit nkundó met dans les châtiments corporels de l'épouse s'expliquent par sa nature sensible et par le pouvoir que le conjoint a sur elle et qui lui fait défaut vis-à-vis du complice.

C. — *Contre le mari et sa complice.* — Contre l'adultère du mari, le droit nkundó ne prévoit aucune sanction pénale propre. Mais l'épouse outragée peut se venger sur lui comme sur sa rivale. Ses armes contre le conjoint sont : les invectives, le refus de la nourriture, de la boisson, du bain, enfin du *debitum conjugale*. Ce sont là des punitions sensibles contre lesquelles le mari ne peut nullement réclamer, car il serait nettement mis en tort. La femme, en effet, agit par jalousie légitime. Parfois ce sentiment est si véhément, qu'elle s'arrache les habits et reste toute nue devant son mari, ce qui cause à celui-ci une grande honte et constitue un reproche cinglant. Les invectives sortent de la bouche par torrents : ilolé inę́, itutula inę́, inyanyama iné, owá lóí ô ndá nyongo, ndá ntę́mbǫ́=cet imbécile, ce vaurien, cette bête, tu mourras un jour par les amendes, par la surprise en flagrant délit; plus toute la série des insultes ordinaires. Plus les injures sont abondantes, plus grand est l'amour de la femme, disent nos Nkundó. Cela peut durer des jours, voire des semaines. Ses réactions contre son mari adultère sont donc du même genre que celles dont elle use dans d'autres circonstances.

---

(1) Pour récompense on emploie : *bọkóndọ* = récompense pour une prestation sortant du commun, comme la capture d'un léopard ou d'un autre animal « royal » (*nyam'ě ekofo*, tels le python, l'aigle, *etc.*), une belle danse ; et : *mbuteji* = récompense pour menus services.

(2) Cfr., par exemple, encore chap. VIII, art. III, § 1.

Si l'épouse jalouse met le feu à la case où son conjoint s'est livré à sa passion, personne ne peut lui en faire un reproche. Le dommage causé est pour le compte du mari.

Contre la femme complice, l'épouse outragée peut employer des moyens plus violents. Elle se bat contre elle, la frappe, la blesse même. Pour les blessures le mari de la rivale exige un paiement « pour coups et blessures » ou *liǫmbǫ*, qui ne doit pas être effectué par la famille de la femme, mais par le conjoint coupable. De sorte que, en fin de compte, c'est lui encore qui est puni. Si la délinquante est tuée, c'est toujours au mari infidèle qu'incombe l'obligation d'indemniser le veuf. (Cfr. art. II.)

Un châtiment auquel l'épouse aime à recourir pour se venger sur son mari adultère et sur sa complice qu'elle surprend sur le fait est de leur verser sur le corps un pot d'eau chaude ou bouillante.

D. — *Contre l'entremetteur* (¹). — Le droit nkundó permet toutes sortes d'invectives, des coups, une bonne rossée. L'appel direct de la femme était considéré comme le cas le plus grave. Autrefois, dans les circonstances favorables (pensez surtout à l'influence sociale des familles en cause), certains hommes plus jaloux ou plus crânes arrêtaient l'entremetteur et le vendaient comme esclave. Cette répression était parfaitement légitime, bien que le mandant soit le premier coupable et donc que la famille du prisonnier puisse l'attaquer de ce chef. On cite le cas historique pas trop ancien de Bonkéké is'Īloko, d'Ikẹngọ (Ntómbá, Wǎngatá), qui pour cette raison vendit comme esclave le Bọtswa Bompáte qui avait apporté à sa favorite Wǔfya le cadeau d'un amant.

E. — *Conclusion.* — Dans l'examen des diverses sanctions prévues par la loi nkundó contre les adultères et leurs complices, une différence notable entre les cas saute aux yeux. Bien que la femme possède certains moyens de répression, elle est incontestablement moins bien armée que le mari. La chose est une conséquence logique de la nature du mariage nkundó. Le mari défend sa « propriété », tandis que l'épouse n'est pas « propriétaire ». Ensuite, dans ce domaine on est plus exigeant envers la femme qu'envers l'homme. Même en Europe on juge très différemment la faute commise par un homme et la faiblesse d'une femme, celle-ci étant considérée comme plus grave et plus déshonorante, bien que — absolument parlant — les deux infractions se valent. Enfin, le régime polygamique y entre pour une part, car il tend à diminuer l'amour de l'épouse et par conséquent sa jalousie, et ainsi l'habitue aux relations de son mari avec d'autres femmes quelconques; de sorte que la réaction du sexe féminin en

---

(¹) Généralement, pour inviter les femmes, les Nkundó se servent d'entremetteurs, particulièrement d'enfants de 6 à 14 ans. On comprend sans peine la funeste influence que pareille pratique a sur l'éducation de la jeunesse. Dans certains milieux, c'est une véritable plaie morale.

général contre l'adultère est beaucoup moins forte que celle des hommes. En outre, de par ce même régime, la femme est plus exposée aux faiblesses et il faut donc des sanctions plus rigoureuses pour assurer la fidélité conjugale.

Enfin, il existe un dernier motif pour considérer la faute de la femme comme plus grave : c'est le risque d'une conception adultérine, avec toutes ses conséquences: dangers pour l'enceinte, continence forcée du mari, etc. (1).

Il appert de l'exposé des sanctions que la loi nkundó, nonobstant l'infériorité de la femme, ne laisse pas aux maris la pleine et entière liberté qui, d'après les auteurs, leur est accordée chez d'autres peuplades. Même si les moyens de répression que possède la femme ne prouvent pas de façon incontestable l'obligation du mari à la fidélité conjugale, — la situation juridique de l'épouse expliquant beaucoup, — il reste que le *ndonga* et l'opinion publique appprouvent ses réactions même violentes, preuve de son droit à elle contre le tort du mari.

§ 5. L'opinion publique.

Elle est assez indulgente pour les cas isolés (*yĕtsi*, *efongo*). Elle reconnaît bien la faute qu'il y a à léser le droit conjugal d'autrui, mais elle l'attribue à la faiblesse humaine. Pour l'habitude, la situation est différente. Elle est critiquée et souvent sévèrement. Les consuétudinaires sont traités d'*efáfóká* (du verbe *fâfoka*=voleter, et au figuré : « papillonner »), d'*ebóngá* ou *ebábóngá* (du verbe *bâbonga*) ou *ebábǫ́á* (de *bâbǫa*)=voleter, être léger et volage. Ces épithètes s'appliquent surtout aux femmes, plus sujettes à ce défaut que les hommes.

La honte qui, dans les bons milieux d'Europe, s'attache à la découverte de pareilles fautes, est inconnue chez les Nkundó. C'est naturel, puisque les cas isolés sont facilement excusés. Pour les consuétudinaires, ils sont sensibles aux épithètes mentionnées, mais ne se corrigent pas pour autant, — pas plus qu'ailleurs au monde.

---

(1) Cfr. ci-dessous, § 6; ainsi que le chap. I, 2e partie, art. IV, § 3, et le chap. X, art. II, § 3.

La critique s'attaque aussi bien au mari qu'à la femme, et cela malgré la différence que le droit pose entre leurs moyens de répression.

L'opinion publique corrobore donc la conclusion indiquée par l'examen de sanctions, que l'adultère est condamné par les Nkundó. Cette opinion n'est pas basée sur l'existence de la sanction, mais semble provenir de la mentalité innée pour laquelle l'adultère apparaît comme un désordre.

§ 4. Circonstances aggravantes.

L'adultère devient particulièrement grave lorsqu'il est suivi d'une conception, et cela tant pour le conjoint que pour le père naturel. Ce dernier, en effet, doit en supporter toutes les conséquences. Lorsque les circonstances le permettent, le mari oblige sa femme à dénoncer son complice, ce qu'elle ne refuse pas de faire. Il convoque une assemblée et se fait remettre un gage (*ndanga*) par le coupable, qui, de la sorte, reconnaît sa faute et manifeste sa volonté d'en assumer toute la responsabilité. Si l'enfant n'arrive pas à terme, ou meurt à l'accouchement, le père naturel doit indemniser le père juridique, en payant un « esclave » ou davantage (parfois 50 anneaux); l'indemnité est moindre pour un enfant seulement difforme ou débile. Si la mère y laisse la vie, l'indemnité monte à un esclave plus 50 anneaux, et peut même atteindre jusqu'à 100 anneaux.

Entre-temps, le mari n'approche plus de sa femme. Il la laisse à son amant, qui doit « conserver le foetus » et observer tous les rites et pratiques de la période de gestation et d'accouchement, puisque, physiquement, il est le père (1).

---

(1) Cfr. de plus amples détails au chap. X, art. II, § 3. Pratique analogue pour une jeune fille mère, chap. I, 1e partie, art. III, § 3.

L'adultère revêt encore un caractère spécial de gravité durant l'époque des interdits de l'enfantement, parce qu'il met en danger la vie de l'enfant et de la mère, comme nous l'expliquerons au chapitre X, article III.

§ 7. Remarques et conclusions générales.

1° Le délit d'adultère, même sous sa forme la plus bénigne, c'est-à-dire l'acte isolé, était autrefois une des causes principales des « guerres » entre villages. Parfois, l'un et l'autre faisant appel au secours de leurs alliés, on pouvait se trouver devant une conflagration générale.

2° Généralement, le mari tient à la fidélité de son épouse. Sans doute, il existe des exceptions. La plupart des cas, pour ne pas dire tous, se rencontraient autrefois chez les vieux polygames. Leur âge les avait dégoûtés des palabres continuelles, et leur expérience des hommes leur avait enseigné que souvent ils se mettaient en colère et compliquaient leur petite vie inutilement. Ils préféraient fermer les yeux. Comme ce bon Bọnọí w'Īkọlọngọ́, d'Itẹkọ (clan Bombwanja des Boóyá). Il vint me voir au village chrétien de Bombomba, où j'étais de passage, au début de mars 1933. Comme je lui demandais pourquoi il était orné d'une telle abondance de sonnettes, il me répondit naïvement : « Je les mets toujours. De cette façon, mes femmes s'aperçoivent de mon retour déjà au loin. Ainsi elles ont le temps de cesser leurs médisances sur mon compte et de congédier leurs amants. » Comme j'exprimais mon étonnement qu'il ne voulait pas les surprendre sur le fait pour les punir et mettre fin à leurs infidélités, il me répondit en souriant : « Non, Père, la jalousie..., passe pour les jeunes. Moi, j'en ai vu tellement que je n'ai plus envie de me mettre en colère et faire des palabres pour ces bagatelles. »

Depuis l'arrivée des Européens, certains hommes peu scrupuleux — des polygames surtout — s'adonnent à une espèce de proxénétisme. Ils envoient leurs femmes commettre l'adultère de façon à pouvoir les surprendre sur les faits et ainsi s'enrichir. Ou bien ils les louent pour une ou plusieurs nuits à des travailleurs ou soldats, célibataires de droit ou de fait.

Certains hommes, connaissant la nature fragile et sensuelle de leur femme, conservent — aujourd'hui comme autrefois — les anneaux provenant des indemnités. Lorsque le capital est suffisant, ils l'emploient à l'acquisition d'une nouvelle épouse. Celle-ci est en quelque sorte la *nkita* de l'autre et on la nomme assez crûment : *nkita é'efufa*, *efufa* étant la pièce d'étoffe (tablier) portée par les femmes. Cela ne signifie pas chez le mari un désir de spéculation sur l'immoralité. Tout simplement il profite du fait. Mais cette attitude peut aisément dégénérer; dans la situation actuelle, le danger n'est plus imaginaire, quoique, pour le moment, on n'en soit pas encore arrivé si loin. Pour éviter toute exploitation de l'infidélité conjugale, la surveillance des autorités administratives et judiciaires peut empêcher l'éclosion du mal ou l'enrayer là où il existerait déjà.

D'après les cas, on rencontre de très grandes divergences dans l'attitude adoptée à l'égard de l'adultère du conjoint. Elles proviennent non seulement du tempérament de la personne lésée, — la chose va de soi, — mais aussi de la façon dont l'adultère s'acquitte des autres obligations conjugales. Cela vaut surtout pour les « faiblesses » de la femme. Si par ailleurs elle se montre épouse dévouée, prévenante, respectueuse, laborieuse, prenant à cœur les intérêts de son conjoint et de ses enfants, en un mot bonne compagne et bonne ménagère, son mari est bien chagriné de ses infidélités, mais il prête une moindre attention à ces errements, compensés par beaucoup de bonnes qualités qui prouvent que la femme l'aime sérieusement et qu'elle se laisse entraîner uniquement par faiblesse. Si, au contraire, l'épouse devient négligente, maussade, irrespectueuse, ce changement prouve qu'il y a autre chose que la pure faiblesse et que son amour envers son mari s'est refroidi et s'est choisi un autre objet.

Voilà la saine philosophie de la vie conjugale chez les Nkundó, proclamée et enseignée par tous les vieux et sages du peuple.

3° Malgré les terribles sanctions contre l'adultère, ce délit semble avoir toujours été fréquent. Certains événements favorisent particulièrement le relâchement, comme les décès, les fêtes et danses se prolongeant tard dans la nuit. Mais, même dans les circonstances ordinaires, l'obscurité vespérale est une forte sollicitation. Un attroupement tumultueux de jeunes personnes des deux sexes est provoqué intentionnellement dans le but de protéger leurs ébats. Ce sont surtout les femmes qui déclanchent la scène (nommée *iole*). On commence par des « jeux », des pincements, etc. Parfois, certaines, plus hardies, lancent en guise de signal le cri d'*iole o* ! Ces irrégularités sont parfois concertées d'avance; d'autres fois elles sont provoquées sans accord préalable. Les maris interviennent, mais il leur est très malaisé de surprendre les coupables.

4° Dans l'idée des Nkundó, l'adultère ne paraît pas être une faute morale, même au sens le plus large du mot, punissable par une puissance extra-terrestre, religieuse ou superstitieuse, qui interviendrait pour rétablir l'ordre bouleversé. On a plutôt l'impression de se trouver devant une loi purement sociale. Non que je veuille affirmer que cette loi et ses sanctions ne proviennent en dernière analyse d'une idée morale; mais cette idée morale, si elle existe, est extrêmement vague et confuse et n'est pas exprimée par nos gens. Pratiquement, toute l'attention est portée sur les sanctions, à cause de la lésion du droit de propriété. Jamais on ne saisit la moindre allusion à une idée morale religieuse.

Et voilà, probablement, la raison principale de la fréquence des adultères, malgré les sanctions, qui freinent sans doute, mais qui sont impuissantes à enrayer le mal. Ceci d'ailleurs n'est pas propre à notre peuplade. Toute loi est un idéal. Les sanctions tâchent d'en assurer l'observation. Mais la masse n'atteint jamais le but proposé. Si des individus sont supérieurs à l'idéal imposé par la loi, c'est que la société est inférieure à sa tâche, comme on le constate dans l'Europe actuelle. Chez les Nkundó, la loi et la société sont supérieures à la moralité des individus. D'ailleurs, de tout temps, les sanctions, quoique nécessaires, se sont montrées insuffisantes pour assurer l'observation parfaite des lois : *nihil leges sine moribus*. Or, ces bonnes mœurs doivent provenir de considérations qui sont supérieures aux lois particulières et qui en sont le fondement.

Si, comme nous le voyons, les Nkundó ne mettent aucune relation entre leurs connaissances religieuses et les prescriptions concernant la présente matière, comment expliquer la conduite louable de maint individu ? A mon avis, si le Nkundó ne se rend pas compte de la relation entre la loi et son législateur ultime, il n'est pas dépourvu d'un certain sentiment vague, inné, de l'immoralité de l'adultère, corroboré par celui de l'injustice personnelle qu'il cause. Mais il ne raisonne pas ces sentiments : il les suit spontanément, aveuglément.

La conscience du mal social qu'est l'adultère est plus vivace. Mais elle est basée, non sur des considérations philosophiques de cette malice en soi, mais sur les conséquences qu'ont les cas individuels sur la bonne marche de la société : palabres, embarras financiers, inimitiés, rixes, guerres.

Voilà, me semble-t-il, l'état présent des idées. Cela n'empêche pas que la loi et les sanctions contre l'adultère ne puissent reposer sur la base ultime d'idées morales. Et de façon plus particulière, il est bien possible que l'idée morale n'ait agi que sous la forme du sentiment des grands principes de la loi naturelle fondamentale innée à toute raison humaine.

5° Nous n'étonnerons personne en affirmant que l'adultère, loin de diminuer avec la colonisation, en a, au contraire, reçu une extension considérable. L'abolition des peines et châtiments indigènes, jointe à la grande liberté de circulation, ont dû, naturellement, conduire à cet état. Tout colonial averti et en contact intime avec les indigènes s'en rend compte. « L'interdiction des châtiments corporels qui sanctionnaient, selon la coutume, l'adultère de la femme a entraîné une licence qui se mesure au degré de notre occupation; nulle part l'oubli, sinon le mépris, des engagements conjugaux n'est poussé aussi loin que dans les milieux complètement soustraits à la discipline coutumière. » (Maj. Engels, *Bulletin Soc. Belge Et. Col.*, cité dans *Congo*, III année, tome I, p. 77, avril 1922). C'est pourquoi, à maintes reprises et par diverses personnes, des sanctions ont été réclamées contre l'adultère, en remplacement des répressions ancestrales abolies.

Mais les décrets souhaités ne sont jamais sortis de l'état de purs projets. Heureusement, entre-temps, un autre pas, qui est un pas fondamental, a été posé par l'institution des juridictions indigènes (1926). Guidées et contrôlées de près par les autorités européennes, elles renverseront la barre en faisant demi-tour vers les anciennes sanctions, tout en les adaptant à la situation nouvelle créée par la colonisation et par l'introduction d'idées plus humanitaires. Toutefois, il faut une extrême prudence pour ne pas exagérer celles-ci au point de vouloir traiter à l'égal des communautés européennes une société qui ne commence à sortir du paganisme barbare que par la présence d'une civilisation à base chrétienne. La société indigène doit évoluer graduellement, harmonieusement. Brusquer est souvent synonyme de briser, et toujours c'est une grande faute. Or, dans la matière qui nous occupe, l'abolition des sanctions qui se sont montrées, malgré leur imperfection et leur insuffisance à tout obtenir, d'une réelle efficacité, enlève au droit nkundó toute valeur coercitive. Un humanitarisme sentimental et excessif doit céder devant le droit qu'a la société indigène au respect de ses institutions vitales — à moins qu'elles ne soient absolument condamnables — et donc devant la nécessité de répressions sévères dont, pour le moment, elle ne peut pas encore se passer. Car nos indigènes ne sont pas encore mûrs pour l'abolition intégrale de leurs sanctions coutumières, puisqu'ils manquent encore d'une nouvelle base qui remplace leur crainte des pénalités anciennes. Gardons-nous donc d'enlever aux conjoints toute faculté de répression, celle-ci fût-elle, à notre mentalité, un peu violente. Enfin, rien ne sert d'exagérer le respect pour le sexe faible, qui, de par sa nature même, a besoin parfois d'une correction sensible pour le plus grand bien de la communauté entière. D'ailleurs, à ce respect, nos Nkundó ne comprennent rien du tout; tel que nous le concevons, il est tout à fait opposé à leur mentalité et à leurs lois. Or, tout cela ira plus facilement s'il est laissé aux juridictions indigènes assez de latitude pour agir dans l'esprit de leur droit ancestral et si, d'autre part, leur activité est guidée par un contrôle constant, avisé et sympathique, n'ayant en vue que la saine évolution de la société indigène.

Appliqué dans ces limites et sous ces conditions, le droit nkundó peut redresser beaucoup de torts et aider à sauver la société indigène de l'abîme où elle menace de sombrer. Malgré ses défauts et ses imperfections, il est préférable, non seulement au système de liberté (ou de libertinage) qui a régné de longues années, mais aussi à une législation nouvelle qui émanerait du pouvoir européen, système très lent et complexe (la loi contre l'adultère réclamée depuis des décades est toujours restée dans le domaine des études et des projets), manquant de flexibilité et de puissance d'adaptation aux circonstances si diverses des peuplades congolaises. Une loi n'est nécessaire que pour les personnes qui ne tombent pas sous la compétence des juridictions indigènes, et cela pour sauvegarder l'harmonie et l'impartialité dans l'exercice de la justice, puisque la société indigène en subit nécessairement le contre-coup.

ARTICLE VIII. — RELATIONS PERMISES A L'ÉPOUSE.

Dans cet article, nous examinons les relations qu'une épouse peut se permettre — sous certaines conditions — avec diverses personnes. Notre droit les traiterait d'adultères. Mais la loi nkundó ne les considère pas comme telles. D'où la distinction entre cet article et le précédent. Ces relations peuvent être : 1° transitoires; 2° permanentes (concubinage).

§ 1. Relations transitoires.

Avec les compagnons d'âge (*baníngá*, sing. *boníngá*) du mari, les relations sexuelles sont permises (1). Si en voyage ils viennent l'un chez l'autre, l'hôte prête au visiteur ses épouses, en lui disant : « Voici ta maison, voici tes femmes ». S'il est monogame, il laisse le visiteur disposer de sa maison et de sa conjointe et s'en va seul coucher ailleurs. Si une femme en voyage arrive dans le village d'un compagnon d'âge de son mari, dès que celui-ci en prend connaissance, il l'invite à loger chez lui pendant tout le temps de son séjour. A l'adieu, il lui remet un cadeau pour son époux, « avec les compliments du *boníngá* ». Pendant le temps de la visite de l'un à l'autre il y a souvent échange de femmes.

Voilà la pratique d'une sérieuse et bonne entente entre compagnons d'âge. L'usage des femmes est libre et ne peut être l'objet de réclamation ni d'amendes. Si l'un d'eux est, à la façon indigène, plus « avare », l'autre ne peut non plus lui faire de palabres. Mais cela produira un refroidissement dans la cordialité de leurs relations et la réciprocité du refus.

---

(1) Cfr. chap. I, 1e partie, art. III.

Entre compagnons d'âge on n'exige pas d'indemnité, parce que il ne sied pas que l'un s'enrichisse aux dépens de l'autre. Cela vaut même pour des relations « privées », pour le simple « appel », sans qu'il y ait eu prêt, comme décrit. Mais si l'un d'eux exagère, c'est-à-dire s'il use de la femme deux ou trois fois sans que l'autre fasse de même, une palabre peut surgir. Le mari se croit lésé et exige l'indemnité réglementaire. Si son compagnon refuse en invoquant la nature des relations qui les unit, il peut recevoir une réponse comme celle-ci : « iningá átswẽngela ndé baálí é ? = est-ce que la relation de compagnons d'âge nous fait acquérir des épouses ? » Une bataille en règle peut s'ensuivre, et devant le tribunal c'est le mari qui obtient gain de cause.

Il n'existe pas de relations permises entre un homme et une femme compagnons d'âge. Ce serait un adultère caractérisé.

Les relations entre un homme et l'épouse de son compagnon d'âge ne sont donc pas permises en elles-mêmes, mais de par la volonté du mari. En outre, celui-ci n'est pas strictement obligé de céder sa femme. C'est une question de bonne amitié, d'entente, de prestation de service, de respect et d'affection mutuels. Au point de vue strictement matrimonial, c'est un terrain neutre, libre; puisque, disent-ils, il s'agit de relations purement privées entre eux, chacun fait comme bon lui semble.

A côté du *boningá*, le Nkundó connaît le *boseka* = amitié, ami (*bokandeko* chez les Bombwanja) (¹). Le pacte d'amitié n'a rien à voir avec les épouses, contrairement à ce qui se pratique entre compagnons d'âge. Si

---

(¹) Cfr. chap. I, 1ᵉ partie, art. III.

l'amitié entre les deux est très forte, il se peut bien que l'un prête sa femme dans l'une ou l'autre circonstance. Mais le cas est plutôt rare. Le *boseka,* disent les Nkundó, est uniquement pour l'entr'aide.

Si un cas d'adultère se présente, le mari exige, en tout droit, une indemnité que, pourtant, à cause de leur amitié et pourvu que le cas demeure isolé, il n'exagère jamais et souvent réduit à 2-3 anneaux. Si les cas se répètent sans réciprocité, le mari en fait souvent une grosse affaire : il exige une indemnité élevée et rompt le pacte d'amitié.

Au lieu d'exiger une indemnité, certains hommes donnent à l'ami un cadeau (*mpǫ́lí*), en le priant de cesser les relations coupables. Souvent, ce n'est qu'un détour pour endormir la vigilance de l'autre, qui, se croyant plus libre, se fera pincer d'autant mieux.

Quant aux homonymes (*ndoí*, pl. *bandoí*) (¹) il n'y a pas d'usage libre de la femme, ni ne sont jamais considérés comme *ndoí* des personnes de sexe différent. Ce serait le concubinage ou l'adultère pur et simple.

En résumé, une certaine liberté de l'usage des épouses existe entre les compagnons d'âge; mais elle est sujette au consentement exprimé ou tacite des maris respectifs. Ces relations ne sont pas qualifiées d'adultères. Cette liberté n'existe pas à l'égard des autres catégories de personnes, qu'il fallait pourtant mentionner ici, à cause de l'erreur éventuelle qu'une certaine analogie entre leurs rapports mutuels pourrait provoquer dans l'esprit du lecteur, et encore parce que, dans certaines régions du Congo, ces personnes se trouvent — pour ce qui concerne notre sujet — dans la situation des compagnons d'âge chez les Nkundó.

§ 2. Concubinage.

Le concubinage (*linsámbá* chez les Bokote, *isǫkę* chez les Bombwanja, comme chez les Ekonda) est une union

---

(¹) Cfr. chap. I, 1e partie, art. III.

légitime, réglementée, officiellement reconnue et admise entre un homme et la femme d'autrui. Ce n'est pas un mariage : il n'y a pas de dot, ni de témoins autres que la femme elle-même; l'épouse n'appartient pas au mari secondaire, et en cas de rupture il n'y a pas de restitution des valeurs payées, si nombreuses soient-elles. L'homme qui achète ainsi le droit de cohabiter avec l'épouse d'autrui le fait par pauvreté : il n'a pas de quoi verser une dot pour cette femme ou pour une autre. Aussi est-il en butte au dédain et aux railleries de ses congénères. Le mari et l'amant vivent d'une certaine vie commune; ils se remettent des cadeaux, de la nourriture, s'entr'aident, mangent ensemble, se nomment *bakalé*, du même nom que se donnent entre elles les femmes d'un polygame.

Ce concubinage peut durer plus ou moins longtemps. D'ordinaire il est difficile à rompre, car le mari légitime prend cette rupture de mauvaise part, la considère comme une injustice. S'il est très riche et influent, elle est dangereuse pour le partenaire : il aura à tenir compte du courroux du mari. Aussi, autrefois, cette sorte d'union pouvait persister pendant de longues années (on la nomme alors *ẹkọ́kọ́*), jusqu'à ce que le « concubinaire » (*bonsámbá*, pl. *bansámbá*) ait assez de fortune pour s'en libérer. Souvent elle durait toute la vie, le partenaire allant s'établir dans le *loánjá* (emplacement occupé par un homme avec ses femmes) du mari (*linsámbá jă njeléngwá, enjwáki*): ainsi il devenait comme son enfant. Actuellement, la liberté introduite par la colonisation ainsi que la possibilité plus grande d'acquérir des richesses font beaucoup diminuer cette coutume. Preuve que cette situation n'est pas idéale, même aux yeux de l'indigène, et qu'elle n'est qu'un pis-aller dû à l'état de la distribution des richesses.

Un homme qui désire vivre en concubinage avec l'épouse d'autrui, après quelques relations secrètes avec elle, rend la chose publique. A cet effet, il donne à la femme un couteau, ou quelques *bakonga* à remettre à son mari. Ou bien lui-même convoque l'assemblée des patriarches et devant eux paie à l'époux. Rendre ainsi le concubinage public s'appelle *ója linsámbá* = faire sortir le concubinage (intrans. : *óla*) ou *ieja* (*iela*) *linsámbá* = faire venir au clair, rendre public.

Le paiement pour obtenir droit au concubinage s'appelle *lọnyọ́ọ́ngu*, quoiqu'il soit aussi désigné simplement par le terme de *linsámbá* (*isọkẹ*). Pour marquer son accord, le mari fait remettre au partenaire un chien, ou quelques poules (2, 3, 5 et plus, d'après sa richesse ou sa satisfaction). L'intermédiaire est non la femme en question, mais une de ses coépouses. Jamais non plus un enfant du mari n'est chargé de cet office. Ensuite, les deux partenaires continuent à se remettre régulièrement des cadeaux. Ceux du mari portent tous le nom de *botúmo* (terme générique donné à tout présent fait par une femme à son amant), tandis que ceux de l'autre sont désignés par le terme, aussi générique, de *mpató* = envoi, cadeau envoyé.

Souvent la femme presse elle-même l'amant de rendre leur concubinage public, parce qu'elle désire régulariser la situation, dont elle redoute les conséquences possibles. Parfois elle menace de rompre toute relation; mais d'ordinaire elle succombe malgré cela à la tentation.

Dès que le concubinage est rendu public de la façon décrite, il est du fait même légitimé. L'expression employée pour contracter une union pareille est *kọta linsámbá*.

Si l'amant officiel prend la femme en flagrant délit d'adultère, il ne le dénonce pas au mari, mais exige personnellement une indemnité comme s'il était lui-même l'époux légitime. Si le coupable refuse le paiement, l'amant, rompant les relations avec la femme, le dénonce au mari. De sorte que dans n'importe quel cas l'adultère se trouve puni. Et de son point de vue il est préférable de payer au *bonsámbá*, qui se contente d'une indemnité moins élevée.

Comme la femme n'appartient pas à l'amant, celui-ci n'a aucun droit aux produits de son industrie ni aux enfants. Ces derniers sont considérés comme enfants du mari. Mais le partenaire a droit à ce que la femme lui prépare la nourriture. L'époux, de son côté, a droit à l'aide de la part de son partenaire. La situation sociale est donc tout en faveur du premier. L'amant y gagnait seulement de pouvoir jouir d'une femme qu'il n'aurait pu obtenir autrement. Pourtant, le respect dû au mari légitime défend d'user librement de la femme pendant sa présence au village. Certains hommes sont sévères sur ce point, tandis que d'autres sont plus tolérants. La tactique de ces derniers est évidemment la plus fine. Plus il laisse de liberté à l'amant de son épouse, plus grande est la chance que d'autres femmes, préférant à leur mari un jeune homme qu'elles affectionnent ardemment, demandent au polygame de les épouser. Un homme assez riche et influent peut ainsi se constituer un harem, dont il ne profite pas physiquement, mais qui lui assure une position sociale prépondérante.

Cette coutume n'existe pratiquement que dans la polygamie. Les cas peuvent toutefois se présenter également chez des monogames. Et dans les tribus plus « civilisées », comme les riverains du Bas, une tendance se dessine dans ce sens.

La demande en concubinage par un parent du mari n'est pas assimilable au cas que nous venons d'examiner. Il est plutôt apparenté à la demande d'une femme héritée. (Cfr. chap. III, art. II.) La différence saute aux yeux. La seule chose qu'ils ont de commun est la cohabitation légitime avec l'épouse d'autrui. On n'a qu'à les comparer entre eux pour s'en apercevoir immédiatement.

ARTICLE IX.

ROLE DE LA FAMILLE DANS LE MARIAGE.

Nous avons trouvé des cas où la femme est considérée et traitée, dans une certaine mesure, comme épouse non seulement du mari, mais encore de certains parents à lui (art. VI). D'autre part, au chapitre II, nous avons vu la grande part que les familles prennent dans l'engagement et la continuation du mariage de leurs enfants. La question de l'héritage des femmes nous a montré que la proche parenté du défunt a des droits sur la veuve : l'un d'eux peut l'épouser sans obligations envers l'héritier principal, la nouvelle union n'étant pas un nouveau mariage, mais la continuation du mariage préexistant et non rompu malgré le décès du premier mari. (chap. III, art. II). Une constatation analogue a été faite pour le remplacement (chap. III, art. IV).

Tout cela nous amène à poser la question : Dans quelle mesure peut-on dire que la famille a sur l'épouse des droits communs? Voici la réponse qui me semble conforme à la réalité :

La femme s'acquiert par versement de valeurs. Ces valeurs appartiennent en premier lieu et principalement à celui qui les a obtenues, soit par le mariage de sa fille ou sœur, soit par son activité individuelle. Dans cette dernière éventualité, le mari a sur l'épouse des droits plus stricts et plus personnels. Dans l'autre, plus la parenté est proche avec la femme qui, par son mariage, a fourni la dot, plus forts aussi sont les droits sur l'épouse. Pourtant, à raison des liens de parenté qui les unissent au mari comme descendant tous du même ancêtre et par là participant tous, dans une plus ou moins grande mesure, aux devoirs et droits de l'entité morale basée sur la communauté de sang, d'autres membres de la famille ont subsidiairement des droits proportionnels sur la femme.

La raison de cette participation aux droits du mari est située dans le caractère économique du contrat matrimonial, d'une part, et de l'autre, dans la solidarité clanique et familiale.

C'est pourquoi le mariage persiste nonobstant le décès. Au point de vue personnel, il est rompu, — la femme, par exemple, devenant ensuite épouse légitime d'un autre individu, ce qui ne pourrait se faire durant le premier mariage; — mais du point de vue financier et social il continue d'exister. De même pour ce qui est du remplacement. Quant aux relations permises au frère puîné avec la femme de son aîné, elles ne le sont que dans certaines conditions bien déterminées et limitées. Ce qui prouve qu'on ne peut le nommer mari que tout à fait improprement. Cette femme n'a pas deux maris; elle n'en a qu'un seul : le frère aîné. Les relations permises ne le sont pas au point de vue du lien personnel, mais uniquement à cause de la communauté d'intérêts financiers entre les frères et par pitié pour le cadet célibataire.

Somme toute, et malgré tout, la femme n'a qu'un seul mari. Compte tenu des explications données et de la description des formalités et des degrés de l'intervention que certains peuvent se permettre dans le ménage de leur parent, il appert qu'au fond les droits du mari sur son épouse sont personnels et exclusifs, et cela nonobstant la faculté qui lui est reconnue de les céder à d'autres.

CHAPITRE VII.

LA POLYGAMIE.

Sauf pour certains cas qui ont avec elle une vague ressemblance et que nous avons étudiés au chapitre précédent, les Nkundó ne connaissent pas la polyandrie. La polygamie dont nous traitons ici doit donc s'entendre de la polygynie. Elle est la règle courante. La monogamie existe de fait, mais — à quelque exception rarissime près — elle n'est pas volontaire. Dès que le monogame a les moyens de s'acquérir des femmes supplémentaires, il ne manque pas de profiter de l'occasion. Nonobstant tous les nombreux dictons critiquant la difficulté de vivre en paix avec plusieurs épouses, les Nkundó cherchent malgré tout à se constituer un harem (*sémbola ndǫngǫ́, umba ndǫngǫ́* = aligner un harem, abattre un harem).

La grande polygamie, « à lopango », est inconnue. Il serait intéressant de voir publier les statistiques gouvernementales sur le nombre proportionnel des polygames et des femmes composant leurs harems. Pour autant qu'on peut s'en rendre compte à la simple vue, les bigames sont nombreux. Une dizaine de femmes est déjà une grande quantité.

Des femmes constituant le harem seules ont un nom spécial : la première (*bomátsa*), la favorite (*nkóndé*) et la femme de rang (*bolúmbú*), auxquelles on peut ajouter la catégorie des *bibísa*. Les autres sont tout simplement appelées *baálí* = épouses.

ARTICLE I. — LA BOMATSA.

La *bomátsa* est la première femme que le polygame a épousée. Elle est la maîtresse de maison. Le soin et la surveillance du *loánjá* (emplacement avec cases et annexes) lui incombent. C'est chez elle que le mari dépose le gibier, les régimes de fruits de palme et qu'il les partage. En l'absence du mari, c'est à elle que revient le droit et le devoir de partager tout. Elle règle les différends qui surgissent entre les femmes pendant l'absence du mari. S'il est parti seul et tarde à rentrer, elle lui envoie l'une ou l'autre des femmes pour prendre soin de lui et lui servir de compagne. Enfin, elle doit chercher à augmenter le nombre et l'importance du harem.

La *bomátsa* prend sa besogne à cœur. Car la gloire du mari est sa gloire à elle. Malgré la présence d'une favorite, la *bomátsa* est consciente de son rôle, qui est moins celui de l'épouse, au sens sexuel du mot, que celui de l'épouse mère de famille; il est d'un ordre plus élevé que celui des autres femmes : il est plus sérieux, plus désintéressé, basé sur un amour plus profond et sur une volonté plus réfléchie; il l'autorise, d'après la mentalité indigène, à une légitime fierté; il est un honneur, tandis que la situation de favorite est plutôt un objet de vanité. Aussi aime-t-elle à faire montre de son importance.

Il peut nous paraître étrange que la *bomátsa* travaille avec cœur à augmenter le nombre des femmes du harem. Mais pour les Nkundó, cela est tout naturel. C'est un titre de gloire, et depuis sa jeunesse elle a été éduquée dans cet esprit. Après les premières ardeurs, son affection devient plus grave. Elle se fait parfaite matrone à la romaine. Tout en conservant des rapports avec son mari et s'occupant du soin de ses enfants, elle s'adonne surtout à ses devoirs de maîtresse de toute la famille. Son mari l'aime d'un sentiment plus profond et plus raisonné que celui qu'il témoigne à ses autres épouses. Il ne cesse de lui marquer son attachement et sa considération. Si elle est stérile, il lui donne souvent un enfant de sa famille ou d'une autre femme qui l'a quitté, pour qu'elle l'éduque comme si c'était le sien propre.

La maison de la *bomátsa* est située à l'extrémité droite de la rangée des cases des épouses. Elle mérite cet emplacement à raison de sa fonction de « *bomóngó loánjá* » = propriétaire, maîtresse de l'agglomération du polygame. Comme disent les Nkundó, « *ébéla loánjá* » = elle étire, elle étend le groupe des habitations du mari, pour l'agrandir.

Le mari polygame n'entreprend rien d'important (création d'une *bolámbú* ou *nkóndé*, acquisition de nouvelles épouses, etc.), sans consulter au préalable la *bomátsa*. Il la respecte et la traite avec déférence, comme si elle était sa mère, disent nos gens.

Parmi toutes les épouses du polygame, la *bomátsa* seule joue un rôle dans l'acceptation de la pratique de magie offensive et défensive des Nkundó, nommée *yoli*. Elle seule prend part aux cérémonies qui l'accompagnent : avec son mari elle mange la moitié de la poule tuée à cet effet; et cette nuit-là, elle seule peut partager sa couche. Enfin, ce n'est qu'avec elle seule, à l'exclusion des coépouses, que le mari peut manger le poisson *węngę́* et c'est encore elle qui doit et peut seule en brûler les restes. Sinon la pratique se retournerait contre son possesseur.

Au partage d'une pièce de gibier, la *bomátsa* a droit au *lintála* (partie inférieure de la poitrine), qui, si l'homme était célibataire reviendrait à sa mère (ou à la femme de son père ou de son frère aîné).

En son absence, la *bomátsa* est remplacée par son *ebísa* (cfr., plus loin, art. IV), sinon par la femme qui la suit en ancienneté. A sa mort, sa succession est réglée de la même façon.

Le nom de *bomátsa* dérive probablement du radical *mátsa* = débuter. C'est elle qui a fondé la famille. Parfois on la nomme aussi *ikókóyǒnjemba* = littéralement: amour de célibataire. Les Bombwanja disent *itókóyǒnjemba* (les Ekonda : *nkámukǫlǫ*).

A côté de la *bomatsa* on entend parfois parler de *bomátsa w'láli*=*bomátsa* de gauche, à laquelle, alors, la *bomátsa* au sens propre est opposée comme *bomátsa w'ilóme* (=de droite). La *bomátsa* de gauche est la deuxième femme du polygame. Elle est ainsi dénommée parce que sa maison se trouve à l'extrémité gauche du *loánjá*. Pourtant, elle n'a aucun devoir ni droit spécial, sinon celui de surveiller cette partie par délégation de la *bomátsa* proprement dite. Si le harem est nombreux, il arrive que le mari lui réserve sa part propre du gibier : l'*itómbantáta* ou nuque, qui, à son défaut, revient à la fille aînée.

ARTICLE II. — LA FAVORITE.

Tout polygame un peu important a son épouse favorite ou *nkóndé*. Mais il n'y a que les riches et les notables qui ont une *nkóndé* véritable. Les petits polygames imitent bien les autres (*nkóndé éá węǫ́lí* ou *éá itsió*=sans grande importance), mais le font sans grandes cérémonies, parce qu'ils ne possèdent pas la richesse nécessaire.

La *bomátsa* n'est jamais *nkóndé*. Mais avant de créer *nkóndé* une de ses femmes, le mari doit d'abord demander le conseil et l'approbation de la *bomátsa*. A cet effet, il lui offre un *bompángá* (chien, chèvre, anneaux), par lequel il reconnaît son droit et son autorité, et par là même se la rend propice. Si la *bomátsa* n'est pas d'accord, l'affaire ne se poursuit pas. Mais ce n'est qu'une hypothèse. En pratique, la *bomátsa* s'incline devant les préférences du mari, puisqu'il a reconnu ses droits en due forme.

Pour la création d'une *nkóndé*, le mari, ayant achevé tous les préparatifs, brassé la bière de canne à sucre et réuni les richesses destinées à être distribuées à l'assemblée, invite les villages environnants et convoque sa parenté. Au jour convenu, l'assemblée étant réunie, l'élue met ses plus beaux vêtements et s'orne de ses plus riches parures. Elle s'assied devant le public sur un somptueux *boánga* (couchette transportable) ([1]). Le mari annonce à l'assemblée que cette femme sera désormais sa préférée : malheur à l'homme qui aura la témérité de la séduire, voire de lui marquer de l'affection; il sera un homme mort (ou il devra payer une indemnité énorme : 25-50 *bakonga*). Autrefois il arrivait fréquemment que le séducteur était tué sans autre forme de procès, ou réduit en esclavage. Après paiement à la famille de la femme de 25 anneaux et davantage et la distribution de cadeaux aux patriarches réunis, l'assemblée ratifie ses paroles, et désormais le contrat est passé entre lui et eux. Suivent les danses, les chants et la boisson.

La favorite n'a pas d'accoutrement spécial. Elle porte les vêtements communs à toutes les femmes et ne met de fourrures qu'aux danses.

Elle ne fait pas de cultures, ni ne s'occupe de la cuisine. Elle a toujours une *ebisa* à son service. Si la famille n'a aucun membre à lui céder, elle emprunte une *ebisa* à un parent éloigné ou ami.

En voyage la *nkóndé* ne va pas à pied. Elle est portée dans un hamac (filet de chasse). Son mari, pourtant, l'accompagne à pied. Cela ne se faisait pourtant que pour la véritable *nkóndé* d'un homme riche. Actuellement, cette coutume disparaît.

La favorite ne peut pas se séparer de son mari, pas même pour aller voir ses parents. Certains hommes en étaient tellement jaloux autrefois, qu'ils ne lui permettaient même pas de satisfaire ses besoins les plus secrets sans qu'eux-mêmes ou une sentinelle (généralement un *Bọtswá*) ne montassent la garde. Un homme ne pouvait même pas s'aventurer dans la proximité de sa case, qui est construite juste derrière le hangar du mari; car celui-ci, complaisant parfois pour les passions de ses autres femmes, montre toujours une jalousie intransigeante lorsqu'il s'agit de sa préférée. Jamais il ne va en voyage sans être accompagné d'elle.

---

[1] Voir un excellent dessin dans ENGELS, *Les Wangata* (REVUE CONGOLAISE, vol. I, n° 4, p. 483, 1910).

A la favorite revient l'honneur de rendre à son mari les menus services de toilette : elle lui tond les cheveux, l'aide à l'épilation, lui gratte les pustules de teignes ou de bourbouille, l'enduit d'huile, le farde de *ngóla*, en un mot, lui administre tous les soins de beauté et d'hygiène.

Par amour pour sa préférée, le mari peut acheter son cadavre au prix d'un esclave (en nature ou en argent). De ce fait il a droit à ce que le cadavre soit enterré à côté du sien propre, contrairement à ce qui se passe pour les autres femmes, qui doivent être enterrées dans leur clan natal. C'est pourquoi, dans certaines régions, le mari l'appelle son *ikundaka* (de *kunda*=enterrer). Il peut pourtant arriver que, le mari étant mort avant elle, les héritiers ne se soucient plus beaucoup de son désir et n'exigent plus l'inhumation de la favorite sur leur cimetière. Tel le cas arrivé à Bongóla de Bongíli, pour laquelle ce droit avait été payé par son mari Ikilinganya de Bongangá (Boéndé) pour le prix de deux esclaves. Lorsque le mari a tué du gros gibier, la préférée a, comme la *bomátsa*, le privilège de recevoir une part personnelle et déterminée (*boando*); la sienne est le cou ou une côtelette, portion qui, à son défaut, reviendrait aux fils ou à leurs épouses. Les autres femmes n'ont pas le même droit, et n'obtiennent chacune qu'un morceau ordinaire (*liondo*).

La favorite est donc en tout l'objet des préférences du mari. Avec elle il partage tous les cadeaux qu'il reçoit, tandis que les autres femmes sont exclues de cette libéralité. Mais pour les rapports sexuels, en dehors des voyages, il se doit à toutes. Le plus qu'il puisse faire, est d'ajouter une nuit au nombre commun. (Cfr. *infra.*)

Les coépouses s'accommodent assez bien de ce régime préférentiel. Cela n'empêche que, entre elles, les médisances sont fréquentes sur son compte. Il se peut aussi que l'une ou l'autre soit jalouse au point de ne pouvoir la supporter. Les marques de son dépit se multipliant, le divorce finira par se produire.

La *nkóndé* n'est tenu au deuil que pour son mari. Encore, n'enlève-t-elle pas ses vêtements. Ni pour ses parents, ni pour ses propres enfants elle n'est tenue aux prescriptions du deuil.

Comme les autres femmes, la favorite est transmise par héritage. Seulement elle ne peut être prise en *bosóló* que par le frère aîné du défunt.

Nkóndé est le terme spécifique pour la favorite. Son étymologie m'est inconnue. Le mot est employé partout. Pourtant les Injọlọ disent beaucoup *lokílo* (étymologie également obscure). Un autre nom, moins commun (plus ancien ?), mais connu des Bonkoso, Bongíli, Wàngatá, Bakáala, est *bongilí* ou *bongijí* (¹). Outre le terme d'*ikundaka*, déjà cité, on parle aussi d'*ebéléké*, terme générique signifiant : préférence, prédilection, et appliqué à un enfant, un esclave, un objet dont on ne veut pas se défaire. Elle est encore nommée *áfókítámé*=intouchable, parce que les autres hommes ne peuvent pas avoir de rapports avec elle.

Au nom de *nkóndé* on ajoute parfois des déterminatifs, comme *éá boánga*=allusion au *boánga* sur lequel elle s'est assise pendant la cérémonie de création; et *éá kọnjọ* =véritable. Ces termes sont employés par opposition à une *nkóndé éá wẹólí*, établie sans cérémonie spéciale, par imitation de la véritable favorite reconnue officiellement.

L'expression pour « faire une *nkóndé* » est *ója nkóndé* = faire sortir, parce qu'on la proclame telle devant l'assemblée publique. Actuellement on entend beaucoup *téna nkóndé*, terme qui est très probablement transféré de la *botámbá*. (Cfr. art. suivant.)

(¹) Les Ekonda la nomment *bokólo*. Les Elángá de Losanganya disent *bofíí*, nom qui est porté par certaines femmes chez les Nkundó d'Entre-Jwalé-Boloko. Serait-ce là encore un nom ancien ?

ARTICLE III. — LA BOLUMBU.

Le polygame qui, par sa naissance ou par son influence, est reconnu le *primus inter pares* d'un groupe de clans, celui qui, pour employer le terme nkundó, est le *jọkọ j'èsé* (1), a le droit exclusif de constituer *bolúmbú* une de ses femmes. Ce n'est donc pas, comme pour la favorite, une question de richesse et de préférences, mais un signe d'influence et d'autorité.

A ce sujet, voici un épisode historique où une atteinte à cette loi a entraîné une punition mystérieuse, interprétée par les indigènes comme une intervention d'outre-tombe pour protéger l'ordre ancestral. La chose se passa à Bẹsọmbọ́ (Bombwanja), dans la famille Bongilá. Bọnkọsọ w'Ikumwa avait épousé la femme Eyeke de Bokúma et en avait eu son fils aîné Ikunjwèkulu (2). Mais avant son mariage avec Bọnkọsọ, Eyeke avant déjà donné la vie à un autre garçon, Mbéo, qu'elle apporta avec elle « dans la bandoulière » (3). Plus tard, Mbéo acquit beaucoup de richesses et se constitua un harem nombreux. Voulant faire ostentation de sa position importante, il décida de créer *bolúmbú* une de ses femmes. Là-dessus, colère de son frère utérin Ikunjwèkulu, qui convoqua les trois autres chefs de familles de Bẹsọmbọ́ : Elongama éà Longómbá, de Bokenda; Embọmbọ́, d'Ikolé, et Esola, de Befósola. Il leur dit : Venez voir la chose extraordinaire et étonnante qui se passe. Mbéo est venu avec ma mère dans la bandoulière. Dès lors, comment ose-t-il créer des *belúmbú* ? Ils examinèrent les faits et en furent très courroucés. Ils convoquèrent en assemblée les chefs de famille de tous les villages environnants, pour leur exposer le cas. Assis sous l'arbre des délibérations, tous les hommes attendirent longtemps l'arrivée de Mbéo. Comme il tarda par trop à paraître, on envoya une de ses femmes le prier de se hâter. Elle le trouva mort, tout raidi déjà.

---

(1) Actuellement on dirait le chef. Mais en réalité il n'était pas chef, mais simplement le plus respecté et le plus influent dans l'oligarchie des patriarches de clans, qui était le régime politique des Nkundó, avec de temps à autre une personnalité éminente qui s'imposait.

(2) Cfr. sa généalogie au chap. III, art. II. Un arrière-petit-fils de cet Ikunjwèkulu a, j'estime, environ 50 ans.

(3) Cfr. chap. I, 2e partie, art. IV, § 3.

La création d'une *bolúmbú* se fait longtemps après celle de la favorite, car ce n'est qu'à un âge déjà passablement avancé que le polygame peut conquérir la position sociale voulue.

Le choix de la *bolúmbú* n'est pas une question d'amour préférentiel. Il ne s'agit pas de relations à l'intérieur du harem, mais de l'affirmation de l'importance sociale du mari. Généralement, celui-ci choisit une femme appartenant à un clan influent et qui est un modèle de vie conjugale et de savoir-vivre. Elle est bien l'objet de sa part d'une affection particulière, mais non d'un amour de préférence. Notons encore que jamais la *bomátsa* ne peut devenir *bolúmbú*, mais elle doit être consultée et son avis est décisif. Aussi, est-ce fréquemment sa propre *ebísa* qui est choisie comme *bolúmbú*.

Au jour indiqué pour la constitution de la *bolúmbú*, il y a grande fête. Tous les clans et villages voisins invités se réunissent chez le polygame en question. Il leur présente la femme et harangue l'assemblée : « Voici la femme dont je veux faire ma *bolúmbú* comme je vous l'ai déjà annoncé. Aujourd'hui je rends publique la décision que j'ai prise depuis longtemps. Sachez tous qu'aucun homme ne peut la toucher, sinon il sera gravement puni ». Puis deux femmes (rarement deux hommes) la tiennent et le mari lui délie la ceinture et lui arrache tous les vêtements. Ensuite les assistantes lui lient une corde ou la ceignent d'une ceinture de peau de *mpangá* (antilope rayée), à laquelle elles attachent diverses fourrures de valeur. Désormais, jusqu'à sa mort, elle ne pourra plus mettre d'habits (*bitóo*) comme les autres femmes; elle ira toujours vêtue de fourrures. D'où son nom : *bolúmbú wă bikótó* = *bolúmbú* aux fourrures. Puis le mari lui présente des pots d'huile de palme avec laquelle elle devra s'enduire. Deux hommes s'approchent, choisis parmi les plus beaux du village (1) (mariés ou célibataires), richement ornés de fourrures, de ceintures de *mpangá*, de perles, d'étoffes en raphia aux bords dentelés, d'anneaux de cuivre aux chevilles, etc.; ils la conduisent, en cadençant le pas, dans la maison qui lui est destinée, et qui est entourée d'une enceinte de pieux de *bọfẹkọ* (*Ricinodendron africanum*), fermée au moyen de palmes. Cette case avec enclos s'appelle *ilẹkẹ*.

C'est là que la *bolúmbú* va résider pendant des mois et des années (jusqu'à trois et plus, dit-on). Elle y est pour ainsi dire recluse (*-ulama*) et ne peut en sortir. Si elle doit se rendre dans la bananeraie pour ses besoins intimes, elle se couvre et s'entoure d'une natte, pour n'être aperçue de personne. Dans cette maison, elle vit en compagnie de son *ebísa*, de ses filles, de quelques parentes, ou encore d'une autre femme de son mari, qui doivent la servir, lui préparer les aliments, etc., et qui, elles, sortent et entrent librement. Le mari, lui aussi, entre à son gré et passe avec elle les nuits réglementaires. Aucun autre homme n'est admis à franchir l'enceinte.

Pendant sa réclusion, la *bolúmbú* ne peut faire le moindre travail. Elle ne se lave pas à l'eau, mais uniquement à l'huile de palme. Elle ne marche que sur des nattes. Elle est encore dispensée du deuil pour ses parents. (Comparez au chap. I, Iᵉ partie, art. II.)

Le terme de la réclusion touchant à sa fin, le mari annonce la fête de sortie. Il y a des réjouissances, danses et boisson. Des nattes ont été étendues depuis la porte de la case de réclusion jusqu'en pleine rue. Les deux hommes qui l'y ont introduite viennent à nouveau la prendre par le bras à l'entrée de l'enceinte et la conduisent sur les nattes. La cérémonie se termine ainsi sans autres ajoutes.

---

(1) Donc parents du mari. La loi nkundó veut qu'aucun étranger n'exerce une fonction quelque peu importante, pas même celle d'imposer silence à une assemblée; selon le dicton : bofaya áfọtẹlẹ lokánga = un étranger ne dépièce pas une pintade.

Dorénavant, la *bolúmbú* est libre et fait comme toute autre femme, excepté pour le port des fourrures. Elle peut travailler, puiser l'eau, faire la cuisine, aller en voyage, visiter ses parents, etc. Mais le mari doit à son honneur et à sa réputation d'homme riche de donner à sa *bolúmbú* un ou plusieurs esclaves, ou Batswa, ou, plus souvent, une ou deux *bibísa*, qui devront s'occuper de ses travaux domestiques et ainsi en libérer la princesse.

L'adultère avec elle — après la réclusion — n'est pas plus sévèrement puni que la méconduite avec une femme ordinaire, pour ce qui regarde l'indemnité à payer. Mais l'outrage est considéré comme extrêmement grave, moins comme lésion du droit marital, que comme atteinte à l'honneur de tout le clan ou groupe de clans en cause. Aussi, alors que l'adultère d'une *nkóndé*, par exemple, est chose privée, excitant la jalousie et le courroux du mari, la méconduite avec une *bolúmbú* est une offense publique, qui met en fureur tout le clan — car il s'en estime attaqué dans son honneur — et pousse solidairement tous les membres à tirer vengeance de cet outrage (*nkęlę elekí éy' olúmbú*). C'était donc une sorte de déshonneur national. Entre autres, cette constatation caractérise nettement la grande différence qui existe entre la favorite et la *bolúmbú*.

Une coutume à mentionner à ce propos est la suivante : si un homme quelconque, même étranger, même venant de très loin, vient avec son *elefó* (¹) frapper, par-dessus l'enceinte, le toit de l'*ilękę* de réclusion d'une *bolúmbú*, en signe d'appel à la guerre, le village entier est obligé de prendre les armes pour le défendre. Tous les hommes

---

(¹) Sonnette en bois. (Cfr. *Congo*, 1935, t. II, p. 366, f. 4 et 5.)

l'accompagnent et s'unissent à sa famille contre le clan ennemi, quelle que soit la distance. Les Nkundó disent que le fait de toucher à la case de la *bolúmbú* met tout le clan en fureur : cet outrage leur fait prendre les armes sans hésitation (¹).

Une dernière preuve du caractère social de cette institution est que la *bolúmbú* a le droit de siéger à côté de son mari dans les assemblées publiques et aux fêtes, prérogative qu'elle possède à l'exclusion de toute autre femme. Elle a avec elle un garçon ou une fille qui lui sert de boy et porte pour elle le siège (*boánga*) sur lequel elle s'assied.

A la mort de la *bolúmbú*, le mari peut la remplacer par une autre. Il répète alors la cérémonie décrite. C'est ce qu'on nomme : *sangoja bolúmbú* = faire succéder au titre de *bolúmbú*.

Comme nous l'avons vu au chapitre I, 1re partie, article II, un homme peut constituer *bolúmbú* même sa fille.

Le nom de *bolúmbú* paraît provenir de la nudité dans laquelle la femme est mise un instant lors de la cérémonie de son installation. Ce mot, en effet, signifie nudité dans certains dialectes.

Ce même nom est maintenant très communément porté par des femmes nkundó (rarement des hommes), sans que pour cela elles soient *bolúmbú*. C'est en souvenir d'aïeules ou parentes qui l'ont été, et ainsi ce nom se transmet dans la famille comme tout autre nom.

Toutes les tribus dont il est question ici emploient le même nom *bolúmbú*. Seuls les Bombomba disent *boálé* (²).

Après tout ce que nous venons de dire, il est clair que *nkóndé* et *bolúmbú* n'ont rien de commun entre elles.

(¹) Comparez le résultat et l'effet d'un grave outrage tout en faveur de l'offensant, à des cas analogues déjà vus antérieurement, par exemple, chap. III, art. VII; chap. VI, art. V, § 4, annexe; et plus loin : chap. VIII, art. II, § 3, n° 2.

(²) Ailleurs on nomme la *bolúmbú* : *ekila* (= défense, tabou), comme dans les tribus de la région de Losanganya, chez les Bosaka, etc.

Les deux institutions sont nettement différentes. Actuellement, pourtant, on commence à les confondre. C'est que l'installation de la *bolúmbú* est devenue extrêmement rare, et dans certaines régions elle a déjà disparu. Le Gouvernement de la colonie a constitué des chefferies et y préposé des chefs. Ceux-ci, très souvent, ne sont pas ceux qui, dans l'ordre purement indigène, auraient été les plus influents, les maîtres, ceux qui auraient eu le grand mot à dire dans la société, qu'on dit avoir le *jọkọ*, la première place.

Les autres tribus de l'Équateur connaissent aussi, pour autant que j'ai pu le constater, les deux sortes d'épouses à situation spéciale portant des noms qui varient selon les dialectes.

Les Ntómbá et Boléngé d'entre Boloko-Congo ne connaissent-ils que la *bolúmbú?* C'est la conclusion qui se dégage de l'étude d'Engels, sur les Wangata (*Revue congolaise*, II, n° 1, p. 33). S'il en était ainsi, les communications fréquentes avec cette population pourraient avoir encore aggravé la confusion. Des indigènes, étrangers à la tribu des Boléngé, mais qui y ont résidé de longues années comme catéchistes, m'ont pourtant prétendu que cette population distingue très bien la *bolúmbú* et la favorite. Ils ont même ajouté que, pour ce qui est des *nkúḿ*, ils ne jouissent d'aucun privilège dans ce domaine (1).

Lors d'une visite personnelle aux Boléngé-Ouest (en septembre 1933), j'ai appris qu'un homme d'une position spéciale pouvait avoir deux *belúmbú* : la *bomátsa* posant la candidature de son *ebísa*, et la seconde femme en faisant autant pour la sienne. Ainsi on avait *bolúmbú w'Ilóme* et *bolúmbú w'láli* (cette dernière prenant plus particulièrement le nom d'*ekila*). Je constatai aussi la distinction très nette qu'ils faisaient entre *bolúmbú* et

---

(1) L'institution des *nkúḿ* n'est pas fort répandue dans les tribus dont traite notre étude. (Cfr. *Les Coutumes funéraires des Nkundó*, dans ANTHROPOS) (sous presse).

nkóndé, tout comme les populations dont traite cette étude.

Quant à la charge de messagère que lui attribue M. Engels (comme aussi le R. P. Kaptein, dans *Congo*, 1922, I, p. 532), elle n'appartient pas plus en propre à la *bolúmbú* qu'à n'importe quelle autre femme du harem : chacune d'elles peut être chargée d'une mission, sans distinction de rang ni de date du mariage. La seule coutume qui dans ce domaine existe chez les Boléngé-Ntómbá d'entre Congo-Boloko est la suivante : un homme influent envoyait parfois sa ou ses *belúmbú* arrêter une rixe, même une bataille entre deux villages. Elle représentait son mari dans sa qualité d'homme influent. Les deux partis antagonistes faisaient la trêve sur son intervention, en attendant l'arrivée et la décision du mari en personne.

ARTICLE IV. — L'EBÍSA.

L'*ebísa* est la femme prise comme épouse par le mari d'une de ses parentes : sœur, tante, cousine plus âgée. C'est celle-ci qui l'amène au mari. Elle est en même temps *ndonga* dans le versement de la dot, qui a lieu comme pour toute femme ordinaire. La locution est : X. aôlutela bokúné Y. ebísa = X. répète sa sœur Y. ebísa.

En cas d'absence ou après la mort de son aînée, l'*ebísa* la remplace ou lui succède dans tous ses droits dans le ménage.

L'aînée tient beaucoup à avoir son *ebísa*; cela la fait monter dans l'estime du mari, et elle-même se procure ainsi une aide dans ses travaux et une confidente sûre dans ses peines. L'*ebísa* elle-même a l'avantage de ne pas se trouver seule et délaissée au début de son mariage, mais de pouvoir compter sur une protectrice et une guide et, si son aînée occupe un rang privilégié dans le harem, d'avoir la certitude de participer à ses prérogatives et la perspective de lui succéder un jour.

Le terme d'*ebísa* est employé par les Nkundó d'Entre-Jwalé-Boloko et par les Ionda. Les Bombwanja la désignent sous le nom de *loambwá* ou *loambyá*. Les Boángí et les Injǫ́lǫ́ la nomment aussi *loambyá* (¹).

Ebísa peut être en connexion avec le radical *bís*, dont dérive le verbe *bísingana*=être uni. *Loambwá* ou *loambyá* dérive de *bamb* qui signifie : 1° être uni; 2° suivre (en ordre, en rang).

Ces noms indiquent la qualité de ce mariage qui ne procède pas de relations directes entre le mari et la femme, mais est constitué par l'intermédiaire d'un autre mariage précédent. Ou, pour l'exprimer en lonkundó : áfa liála j'ěndé móngó, áamana l'eóto mbamáná=ce n'est pas un mariage d'elle-même personnellement; elle s'attache à sa parente, la suit, dans son union matrimoniale.

Le nom d'*ebísa*, comme ses fonctions, peut être étendu improprement à une parente qu'une femme va chercher pour devenir l'épouse, non de son mari, mais d'un parent de celui-ci. Parfois elle est destinée même à un homme appartenant à un autre clan, allié, mais pour lequel l'interdit de mariage existe. Par exemple, Bolúmbú w'ŏfuwa de Elękę (Lokongo) qui chercha sa sœur Eengé pour Bompata w'ĭsęlęma, appartenant au clan de Befósola, qui fait partie, comme le clan de son mari (Bombénga), du même village Bẹsọmbọ́.

ARTICLE V. — FEMMES ESCLAVES.

Un polygame peut avoir dans son harem — du moins aux temps jadis — une ou plusieurs esclaves qu'il traite comme ses épouses. Ce sont des prisonnières de guerre, capturées par lui-même ou achetées à autrui ou reçues en

---

(¹) Les Bonyanga disent : *mbambwá* ou *loambwá*. Par respect ils la nomment parfois *bongili*, et la femme qui l'a cherchée : *nyangôngili*. (Cfr. aussi chap. II, art. X, et chap. VI, art. VI.) Les Ekonda la nomment *bombúha* ou *bombúsa* (*mbúsa* = dernier).

bǫsǫ́ngǫ. D'ordinaire, aucune dot n'était payée pour elles et, partant, elles gardaient leur condition d'esclaves. Ce qui n'empêchait pas le mari de les aimer comme ses épouses réelles. Seulement, leurs rivales les respectaient moins et surtout, à l'occasion de querelles ou de disputes, leur rappelaient leur infériorité.

Depuis que l'esclavage a été aboli par la colonisation, beaucoup d'anciennes esclaves sont rentrées dans leurs familles respectives. D'autres, par contre, n'ont pas voulu profiter de la liberté octroyée et ont préféré demeurer fidèles. Le mari a payé alors pour elles la dot usuelle selon toutes les formalités. Encore dernièrement (1932) un homme de Belondó (Bǫnjǫku), Ifolí, a ainsi payé la dot de 63 *bakonga* à la famille de sa femme Àmbá, originaire de Bokukú (Boángí), ravie au début de l'occupation européenne, et qu'il avait héritée de Bakónongo des Baséká Mbangó (Bonkoso), grâce à l'intervention de son grand-oncle Mpętsí, qui avait payé pour lui sept anneaux de *bompángá* de *nsăsangó*, comme de coutume.

Une femme esclave peut être choisie comme favorite. Comme c'est une affaire de prédilection, rien ne s'y oppose. Il en est autrement du rang de *bolúmbú* : une esclave ne peut jamais l'obtenir, comme le montre clairement l'exposé de cette situation éminente. Des esclaves qui ont été créées *nkóndé* par leur mari, on cite entre autres : Bǫlǫ́ngę chez Bakengó bă Lǫkǫlí de Nseké; Bǫkę́tu chez Ekányaka éy'ondókó d'Etóontálé; Ntsimbo chez Bǫmbęngę́lá d'Etóontálé.

Lorsqu'il portait à l'esclave un amour tout spécial et qu'il en avait les moyens, le polygame la faisait affranchir et ensuite payait la dot réglementaire. Pour cela, l'intervention de la famille de la femme était nécessaire, soit qu'elle agît de sa propre initiative, soit qu'elle y fût invitée par le mari. La rançon payée, la femme était libre; elle rentrait chez elle, le mari l'y suivait pour verser la dot, et ainsi elle devenait épouse régulière au même titre que toute autre. La procédure ne varie pas, qu'il s'agisse d'une esclave capturée personnellement par le mari, ou qu'il l'ait achetée ou acquise comme partie d'une dot ou à quelque autre titre.

Tel est le cas de Bolúmbú, fille de Bọékwá de Boéndé (Bombwanja), prise par Esalé d'Ekúkola et achetée par Efoloko de Lofelí. Elle fut affranchie à l'initiative de son père, qui ensuite la maria régulièrement. Une autre : Etáka, fille d'Elongama éâ Longómbá de Bẹsọmbọ́, mariée à Bonyongela de Bowélé. Dans une guerre, elle fut faite prisonnière par Betúkú d'Ekúkola, qui, voulant l'épouser en due forme, appela Elongama. Celui-ci arrangea l'affaire de la rançon et prit sa fille avec lui. Puis Betúkú se rendit à Bẹsọmbọ́ pour verser la dot (1).

A présent, à cause de l'abolition de l'esclavage, on ne peut plus payer de rançon. Le maître, voulant affranchir une femme esclave qui lui est restée fidèle, donne simplement la dot à sa famille, puis avec son épouse se rend chez elle pour y recevoir la contre-dot.

ARTICLE VI. — LA VIE DANS LE HAREM.

Entre elles, les femmes du même mari s'appellent *bakalé* (sing. *bokalé*). Le mari les nomme toutes *baálí*

---

(1) Presque toutes les femmes esclaves étaient réduites à cette condition — directement ou indirectement — par le fait d'une guerre. Si elles étaient mariées déjà, le mariage était du fait même considéré comme dissous. De par la force des circonstances, il ne pouvait en être autrement. Dans ces affaires, chaque groupe ne s'occupait que de ses propres intérêts; aucune procédure usuelle de rupture de mariage n'était observée. Le mari avait pourtant droit à une indemnisation, en personnes ou en valeurs, de la part du membre de son clan, fauteur de la guerre, qui était reconnu responsable de toutes les conséquences de l'aventure, de quelque façon qu'il l'eût provoquée. Le cas échéant, il pouvait y être forcé; et s'il n'avait de quoi payer les indemnités, il était lui-même réduit en esclavage, si les influences des familles en cause n'empêchaient pas cette opération. Après paiement d'une nouvelle dot à la famille de la femme affranchie, celle-ci devait rembourser au mari précédent.

= épouses. Toutes, à l'exception des véritables esclaves, sont mariées par dot. Les fils d'une femme appellent les *bakalé* de leur mère : *baálí* = épouses, mais par respect ils emploient, du moins envers les plus âgées, le nom de *banyangó* = mères. Les filles ne les désignent que par ce dernier nom. (Cfr. chap. VI, art. VI.)

Le polygame peut avoir une maison personnelle, mais souvent il se contente d'un hangar, où il se tient pendant le jour, quand ses occupations ne l'appellent pas ailleurs; il y prend ses repas, reçoit les visiteurs, etc. Ce hangar s'appelle *ingómba* (ou *esamba*) (¹), rarement *jǒjá*. Ce dernier terme fait allusion à l'emplacement de ce « salon », qui, en effet, se trouve en vedette devant la rangée des cases des femmes, parfois au milieu de la rue; rarement du côté opposé de la rue, en face des cases des femmes.

Chaque femme a sa case particulière, composée d'un espace assez vaste, ouvert par-devant, et servant de cuisine, et d'une chambre plus petite avec le lit; ou bien elle possède une cuisine en forme de hangar, et à une petite distance une maison séparée comme chambre à coucher.

Les cases sont disposées en rangée qui s'étend des deux côtés de la maison du mari, s'il en a une. La maison de la *nkóndé* se trouve juste à côté de celle du mari ou derrière son hangar. Celle de la *bomátsa* est à l'extrême droite, celle de la deuxième femme à l'extrême gauche, et ainsi de suite. La *bolúmbú* n'a pas d'emplacement spécial. L'*ebísa* a sa case à côté de celle de sa parente.

Certains polygames commencent à construire des maisons doubles : de chaque côté d'une cuisine commune se trouvent les chambres à coucher, sous un même toit, de deux femmes. Ainsi Bokwála, chef actuel des Boángí à Bokála (²). Dans chaque case double il a installé une femme déjà âgée et une plus jeune. Ainsi, m'expliqua-t-il un

---

(¹) Selon les dialectes. D'autres noms, voir chap. VI, art. III, § 3, note.

(²) Décédé depuis.

jour, les vieilles surveillent les jeunes, ce qui fait diminuer les occasions d'adultère.

Le mari se doit à toutes ses femmes. A chacune il lui faut apporter le bois de chauffage et prendre soin que chacune ait ses terrains de culture. Les vivres qu'il a pu se procurer (chasse, pêche, fruits de palme, etc.) doivent leur être distribués avec impartialité par la *bomátsa*. Il est obligé de manger de la nourriture préparée par toutes, soit le même jour, soit plutôt par chacune à tour de rôle.

Il en est de même pour les relations intimes. Il doit partager ses nuits avec chacune à égalité et à tour de rôle (*-kafa mpóngó*). Généralement, il passe trois ou quatre nuits de suite avec la même. Il ne lui est pas permis de favoriser l'une plus que l'autre. S'il ajoute une nuit supplémentaire au nombre commun, il ne peut le faire qu'en faveur de la *bomátsa* ou de la préférée. S'il désire avoir avec celle-ci des relations suivies, il va avec elle en voyage pour une raison vraie ou inventée.

La partialité est vivement critiquée et suscite de violentes querelles de ménage. Elle peut causer la dislocation et la dispersion de son harem. Surtout en matière sexuelle, elle est extrêmement mal supportée. Il doit donc bien se surveiller et respecter les droits de toutes et de chacune. Ne sont exceptées que les femmes qui dans le harem occupent un rang spécial, et cela uniquement pour ce qui concerne les privilèges ou devoirs de leur position.

Les femmes viennent cohabiter avec le mari, à leurs nuits fixes, dans sa maison à lui. Rarement il se rend lui-même chez elles, à moins qu'il n'ait de case personnelle. Toutes connaissent leur tour de rôle respectif, et elles n'ont aucune honte d'en donner communication aux autres. Au contraire, parfois elles ont de l'intérêt à le faire.

Entre coépouses, — si l'on excepte les cas de *bibísa*, — aucune communauté de biens n'existe. Chacune s'occupe de son propre ménage, fait sa propre cuisine, soigne ses propres enfants, s'adonne à ses propres cultures. Chacune a ses propres ustensiles et outils. Elles peuvent pourtant s'entr'aider si elles veulent. Pour la pêche, notamment, elles s'associent souvent, particulièrement pour l'écoppement d'étangs.

ARTICLE VII. — LA MONOGAMIE.

La monogamie n'est pas estimée des Nkundó. Leur désir va vers la polygamie. Si un homme n'a qu'une femme, c'est par pauvreté. Aussi se moque-t-on de lui et le traite-t-on d'*etula* ou *bololé*=homme de rien, de *bọsú*=homme faible. Fréquemment on peut entendre des chants sur ce thème dans les beuveries, surtout chez les Elinga. Tout cela constitue un énorme obstacle à la lutte contre la polygamie. Non seulement le Nkundó est tenté par les avantages matériels, mais il ne supporte pas la raillerie; il est extrêmement sensible à l'humiliation et est esclave du respect humain.

Malgré tout cela, et en dehors de l'influence de la religion chrétienne, les mariages monogamiques, non seulement imposés par la nécessité, mais voulus spontanément, existaient et existent encore, quoiqu'ils soient extrêmement rares. Voici les noms de quelques hommes qui, bien qu'ayant les moyens de se constituer un harem, ont voulu rester unis à une seule femme. Je les ai choisis au hasard dans deux villages : Bọnjọku-Bonkoso (27 contribuables en 1931) et Bongíli wǎ Ndọngọ́ plus clan allié Ilẹkọ́ (47 contribuables en 1931).

Bọnjọku-Bonkoso :

Esalé éâ Ekutu, de Bokenyola + lombe de Nkélengo;
Bokató, de Bokenyola + Wanga de Likolí;
Bofanga w'ǒfóngé, de Bokenyola + Baléngola;
Itéú yǎ Lokékola de Bofétola + Nkúḿ de Bongale.

Ils sont tous décédés avant 1895.

Bongili :

Nsẹngẹ (encore en vie) + Toyôngwa de Elángá. Même veuf, il n'a pas voulu se remarier, par attachement à sa femme morte.

Efoloko éâ Bọnkọ́ngyá + Bambúla de Boálá;

Bọngẹlé + Bakúkú de Bompángá;

Bolúmbẹ w'Embengá + Bokelé de Ekúkola;

Lofalanga d'Ilẹkọ́ + Imọtẹ de Bẹsọmbọ́; après le décès de sa femme, il est resté veuf jusqu'à sa propre mort.

D'autres se remarient après le décès de leur femme, mais restent toujours monogames de fait, comme Eanga éâ Jatá de Nkélengo, qui est maintenant marié pour la troisième fois.

Demandez aux indigènes pourquoi ils veulent rester monogames malgré leurs richesses et alors que tous se font polygames et se moquent d'eux. « Je ne veux qu'une femme », répondent-ils. « Mais, enfin, pourquoi n'en veux-tu qu'une seule? » « *Bosisé wâ Njakomba* » = « ordination de Dieu, c'est-à-dire : c'est que Dieu m'a fait ainsi. »

Il n'existe pas de terme pour indiquer la monogamie. Pourtant la femme qui est seule épouse de son mari est nommée *impómbonjemba*, mot dont la dernière constituante signifie célibataire. Le monogame est parfois appelé *ɏunama*, substantif dérivé du verve *unama* = être incliné, être courbé vers, parce que toujours il est courbé vers cette femme, qu'il est continuellement à ses côtés. C'est un terme employé comme raillerie, mais qui exprime très bien, au figuré, l'affection particulière que le mari porte à sa femme, et qui mériterait ainsi d'être conservé et remis en honneur.

ARTICLE VIII.

ATTITUDE DE LA FEMME ENVERS LA POLYGAMIE.

Avant l'arrivée des Européens la polygamie n'était pas sujette à une opposition ou contradiction quelconques. Elle était considérée comme une situation toute naturelle et normale. Je m'imagine que les Nkundó qui ont entendu les premières attaques contre cette coutume enracinée ont dû être plus qu'étonnés. Mais il est difficile de juger ce que les femmes pensaient dans ces vieux temps. Aussi examinons plutôt les faits courants et actuels pour en déduire ce qu'elles pensent à présent de leur situation dans le harem, et cela malgré la délicatesse de cette question d'ordre psychologique.

Remarquons d'abord qu'il est impossible de donner une règle générale : tous les hommes ne sont pas faits sur le même patron. Il y a des femmes qui aiment à faire partie d'un harem. D'autres préfèrent la monogamie, soit qu'elles s'opposent à être livrées à un homme déjà marié, soit qu'après coup elles s'arrangent avec un amant en vue d'un mariage en règle, soit qu'elles quittent le polygame, sous la protection des Blancs, pour se rendre dans un centre ou dans une Mission.

§ 1. Préférence pour la monogamie.

Nous ne nous occupons pas des filles de parents chrétiens, sinon nous fausserions le problème, que nous traitons du point de vue psychologique et non religieux.

1° Les femmes qui s'opposent à être livrées en mariage à un homme déjà marié sont rares. Le refus peut avoir pour cause : le désir d'être *bolúmbú* (ou *éfótswéla*) (¹), un désir naturel d'entière liberté, l'antipathie contre le prétendant, une constitution anormale. Ces cas doivent

---

(¹) Cfr. chap. I, 1e partie, art. II, et 2e partie, art. III.

être éliminés, comme ne prouvant rien pour ou contre la présente question.

Mais il y en a d'autres où l'ajournement du mariage est clairement voulu en vue d'un mariage monogamique. Seulement, dans les circonstances présentes, le désir d'embrasser la religion chrétienne n'en est pratiquement jamais absent. J'ai connu quelques cas de femmes adultes et célibataires venues à la Mission afin de s'y marier, tout en se préparant au baptême. La plupart n'ont pourtant pas eu le courage de persévérer.

D'autres, plus nombreuses, demeurent chez leurs parents, même si elles désirent l'admission dans l'Église. La vie de femmes célibataires à la Mission n'est pas précisément ce qu'il y a de plus aisé, ni du point de vue matériel, ni du point de vue liberté. Car le désir même sincère de s'engager dans une union monogamique n'exclut pas la faiblesse humaine et ne constitue pas un brevet de sainteté. Ces filles restent soumises à l'impulsivité des passions. Il est bien vrai que, même à la Mission, elles peuvent trouver les moyens de les satisfaire; car il est absolument impossible d'exercer une surveillance telle qu'elles ne sauraient y échapper. Mais, précisément, à cause de cette surveillance, étroite malgré tout, elles ne sauraient se laisser aller librement. Alors que chez elles on ne prête aucune attention à leurs écarts, la découverte d'une faute entraîne, à la Mission, au moins une semonce toujours désagréable et souvent un ajournement plus ou moins prolongé de l'admission au baptême ardemment désiré. Ces femmes préfèrent donc d'ordinaire contourner la difficulté en attendant qu'un jeune homme chrétien ou catéchumène les demande en mariage.

2° La majorité des jeunes filles ne s'opposent pas à la polygamie. L'habitude ancestrale et l'éducation ne perdent pas leur influence en quelques années. D'ailleurs, au moment de la demande en mariage elles ne se rendent pas bien compte, très souvent, de la situation exacte. Plus tard, lorsque la vie dans la polygamie ne les satisfait plus, elles tâchent d'arranger un mariage avec un célibataire.

Dans plusieurs cas, le motif déterminant est le désir de devenir catholique. Dans d'autres, la religion n'entre pas en considération. Ce sont seulement ces dernières que nous pouvons envisager ici; car la valeur démonstrative des premiers est beaucoup infirmée par l'ajoute du motif religieux.

Si la femme quitte son mari par antipathie personnelle contre lui ou contre certaines de ses coépouses, et non par opposition contre le régime polygamique, elle prend le chemin plus direct et plus facile de se rendre chez un autre polygame qui possède de quoi rembourser la dot. Ce cas arrive plus fréquemment que les précédents, et nous permet ainsi de faire la démarcation entre les deux éventualités et de conclure à une préférence pour la monogamie lorsque la femme quitte le polygame pour se marier à un célibataire.

3° Profitant de la liberté produite par la colonisation, d'autres femmes encore se rendent dans les centres chez un célibataire. Divers motifs peuvent les déterminer : le désir du luxe, le désir de s'unir à un homme qu'elles aiment, mais qui ne possède pas la richesse nécessaire pour se marier avec elle régulièrement, le véritable désir d'une union monogamique (1). Ce dernier motif est, actuellement, plutôt rare.

4° La femme qui, abandonnant son mari polygame, demande son admission dans une Mission peut être poussée, soit par l'aversion de la polygamie, soit par un motif religieux. Tout d'abord il faut distinguer ici entre Mission catholique et Mission protestante. Si la femme se rend dans cette dernière, seul le premier motif peut être en cause. Car la Mission protestante admet au baptême les femmes de polygames, sans exiger la rupture avec cette coutume. Seul le mari est exclu (¹). Elles ne le quittent donc pas, mais tout en devenant chrétiennes, continuent la vie du harem comme auparavant. Si donc d'aucunes se rendent quand même à la Mission protestante, nous pouvons conclure qu'elles le font uniquement par préférence pour la monogamie. Je ne sais pourtant pas si des cas se présentent en réalité, ni quelle est leur proportion. Il serait souhaitable qu'un missionnaire protestant examinât cette question hautement intéressante.

---

(1) A présent la fugue vers les centres est déjà devenue difficile, mais elle peut encore se pratiquer. Tout dépend de la surveillance plus ou moins sévère des autorités. Dans les grandes agglomérations la tâche de celles-ci n'est pas toujours facile.

Quant aux Missions catholiques, l'un et l'autre motif peuvent être en jeu. D'ordinaire ils sont unis dans la même personne, car la religion catholique n'admet pas la polygamie, ni de la part de l'homme, ni de la part de la femme, qui, de par la législation coloniale congolaise, possède le droit de rompre l'union polygamique en faveur de la monogamie. La femme de polygame qui demande la résidence à la Mission veut devenir catholique et en même temps contracter mariage monogamique. Elle vise conjointement les deux objets. Ces personnes doivent donc être exclues de notre thème. D'ailleurs, les femmes qui ne veulent pas devenir catholiques suivent la voie expliquée sous 2° ou 3°.

5° Il y a même des femmes qui empêchent leur mari de devenir polygame. Si celui-ci les aime beaucoup, il cédera à la fin, même si personnellement il a grande envie de se constituer un harem. Ainsi faisait Mputú (décédée récemment : 3 février 1933), femme du chef d'Ekúkola, Boféndа. Celui-ci, étant riche, a plus d'une fois essayé d'acquérir d'autres femmes; il en a même pris chez lui et payé la dot, comme pour Ilɔa de Bongíli. Mais alors Mputú leur rendait la vie insupportable et les forçait ainsi à s'en aller. Elle voulait absolument garder pour elle seule

---

(¹) Je parle uniquement de la région déterminée dont traite notre étude. Qu'on veuille donc bien ne pas généraliser.

son mari, à qui elle avait d'ailleurs donné deux garçons et trois filles.

Nous pouvons donc conclure que de réelles préférences pour la monogamie existent chez une minorité de femmes nkundó, même abstraction faite de tout motif religieux. Mais la plupart ne s'opposent nullement à la polygamie.

§ 2. Préférences pour la polygamie.

La plupart des femmes Nkundó aiment la polygamie et la préfèrent à la monogamie. Elles se moquent de l'*impómbonjemba* et se glorifient du nombre considérable des épouses qui composent le harem de leur mari.

Leur indifférence ou aversion pour la monogamie pourrait s'expliquer par l'habitude et l'atavisme. Mais sur quoi se base leur préférence marquée pour la polygamie, malgré tous les inconvénients ? J'ai posé la question à plusieurs femmes de polygames. Evidemment, elles commencent par invoquer la coutume (¹), excepté celles qui me connaissent depuis quelque temps. Mais la raison qu'elles donnent, au sérieux, est la vie plus commode dans le harem. Comme elles sont nombreuses, elles ont beaucoup moins de besogne pour préparer la nourriture du mari, soit que les coépouses se partagent les jours, soit qu'elles fassent chaque jour la cuisine pour lui. La chose est évidente. Donc des champs moins étendus à établir et à entretenir, moins de bois de chauffage à chercher, moins de manioc à rouir, moins de légumes à cultiver, etc. Si, par contre, le mari monogame reçoit des visiteurs, son épouse n'a jamais fini de peiner.

En dehors de cette raison, il y en a une autre, inavouée, mais que les indigènes qui sont hors de cause affirment catégoriquement : la liberté ou la licence. La femme d'un monogame est toujours liée à son mari, ne peut s'absenter

---

(¹) C'est d'ailleurs l'explication type que l'indigène sert à l'étranger, à celui qu'il ne connaît pas ou dont il pense être inconnu.

que difficilement. Son époux tient à l'avoir près de lui, tant pour la nourriture que pour les relations conjugales. La femme du polygame est bien plus libre. Son absence même prolongée ne gêne pas le mari, à moins qu'il ne soupçonne des infidélités ou qu'il ne soit par trop jaloux. Ensuite, comme les diverses épouses ont leurs nuits déterminées, elle a plus de liberté de se donner à ses amants. Aussi pour beaucoup de femmes est-ce là la raison principale de leur préférence — nous parlons toujours de la situation actuelle — pour la polygamie.

ARTICLE IX. — LES ENFANTS DE POLYGAME.

Les divers enfants du polygame demeurent chez leurs mères respectives, qui doivent prendre soin de leur subsistance et de leur éducation. Généralement les autres femmes sont pour eux des étrangères, avec lesquelles ils n'entretiennent pas beaucoup plus de relations qu'avec n'importe quelle femme du village. Si une affection particulière lie leur mère à ses coépouses, l'enfant y est associé, comme il l'est également aux antipathies, dissensions, rivalités. D'ordinaire, il respecte les femmes de son père, surtout si elles sont âgées. Mais plus tard il se laisse parfois emporter par la passion à des rapports coupables avec l'une ou l'autre des plus jeunes.

Comme chaque enfant reste chez sa propre mère, à laquelle le père ne fait que des visites intermittentes, il porte à ce dernier moins d'affection. Plus le harem est nombreux, plus grand est l'éloignement entre les enfants et leur père. Pourtant, ils le respectent et l'aiment, et l'un ou l'autre peut s'attacher très fort à lui. Mais l'autorité paternelle et l'affection pour lui peuvent se développer beaucoup moins facilement que dans un ménage monogamique.

Entre eux les enfants se traitent comme frères et sœurs. Mais ceux de même mère s'aiment beaucoup plus intimement que les autres. Les enfants de chaque femme forment un petit groupe à part, plus unis entre eux. Toute leur vie ils feront la distinction entre « frères et sœurs de père » et « frères et sœurs de mère ». Mais à part cela, ils s'aiment réellement et sincèrement. Les rivalités de leurs mères respectives se communiquent bien à eux, mais l'affaire arrangée, l'incident est clos et ils se sentent toujours du même sang par leur père.

Dans un avenir plus ou moins éloigné, leurs descendances formeront des familles séparées et distinctes, parce que, quoique du même père, ils sont issus de mères différentes. Dans les tribus envisagées, le rang que les aïeules ont occupé dans le harem ne produit aucune distinction particulière dans leurs descendances, comme cela se trouve dans d'autres groupes nkundó (par exemple Boyéla), où l'on distingue toujours les familles *ilóme* et *iáli* (c'est-à-dire de droite et de gauche). La distinction posée à ce sujet par le R. P. Schebesta (*Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge*, p. 234) est erronée. Les termes *elóo* et *nkásá* ont uniquement la signification qu'il donne en premier lieu, c'est-à-dire lignée masculine et lignée féminine.

Les enfants d'une femme et ceux de son *ebísa* se considèrent comme frères et sœurs utérins. Aussi, — même après le décès de leurs mères, — continuent-ils à recevoir — comme elles — une même part commune et unique dans le partage du gibier, etc.

Dans les menues querelles domestiques, les enfants de la *bomátsa* aiment à se prévaloir du rang primordial qu'occupe leur mère. Plus tard, ils passent de droit avant leurs frères pour les questions d'héritage et d'autorité familiale.

Les enfants de femmes esclaves sont aimés par leur père comme leurs frères et sœurs. Pourtant, de la part des autres, ils sont souvent l'objet de marques de mépris et d'humiliation, surtout en paroles, mais cela uniquement à l'occasion de disputes ou de contestations. Ils doivent particulièrement subir l'injure de s'entendre traiter comme dépourvus de *bonyangó* = clan maternel, un des plus graves outrages qu'on puisse infliger à un Nkundó. Toutefois, leur père les protège tant qu'il peut.

L'enfant d'une esclave n'a pas droit à l'héritage. Évidemment, rien ne lui manque. Mais il ne jouit d'aucun droit politique, fût-il le premier-né de son père.

La descendance d'une esclave n'est plus considérée comme telle au point de vue matrimonial, comme nous l'avons dit au chapitre V, article II. Après extinction des groupes issus des femmes libres, c'est la descendance de l'esclave qui hérite des droits dans le clan, et cela à l'exclusion des clans apparentés, entièrement libres dans leur origine.

Quelle est l'influence du régime polygamique sur la natalité ? La question a été beaucoup débattue, car elle est très difficile à résoudre. Il faudrait des statistiques complètes et bien faites, mais des listes détaillées et raisonnées. Car il est un fait que dans beaucoup de ménages monogamiques la femme est une ancienne femme de polygame qui, pour cette raison, ne peut plus être comptée comme femme de monogame. En outre, il faudrait exclure des ménages monogamiques les femmes qui n'ont été mariées qu'à un âge avancé, après avoir vécu un temps plus ou moins long dans la liberté, comme dans les centres.

A mon avis, le danger pour la natalité est situé avant tout dans le besoin d'amour individuel et dans la disproportion d'âge, inséparable du régime polygamique tel qu'il existe. La femme de polygame cherche instinctivement un autre homme qui correspond mieux aux désirs de son cœur. Autrefois, du moins dans la petite polygamie, la situation n'était pas la même qu'aujourd'hui : la contrainte des lois ancestrales, la liberté restreinte, le manque de communications sûres, le respect du mari pour le corps de sa jeune femme et l'absence de maladies vénériennes font que la situation devait être bien plus favorable pour la natalité.

ARTICLE X. — CAUSES DE LA POLYGAMIE.

Sous ce titre il est possible de traiter de deux choses bien distinctes et différentes : 1° les motifs qui poussent les Nkundó à la polygamie; 2° les causes qui ont donné origine à cette pratique.

La première question peut être résolue par l'observation raisonnée des faits. La seconde, au contraire, relève du domaine de l'histoire. Elles ne coïncident donc nullement, et il serait erroné de les confondre.

Seul le problème ethnographique tombe dans le cadre de cette étude. Mais ses conclusions peuvent aider à expliquer les documents historiques, s'il en existe, ou à éclaircir l'hypothèse de l'origine dans le passé.

Par quels motifs les Nkundó justifient-ils leur pratique de la polygamie ? Ce sont : 1° l'influence sociale; 2° la renommée; 3° le souci de conserver dans la famille les capitaux; 4° les précautions contre la maladie, la mort ou le divorce d'une épouse; 5° le désir d'augmenter le nombre d'enfants.

1° L'influence sociale croît en proportion du nombre de femmes; car celles-ci multiplient les alliances avec d'autres clans, tant par elles-mêmes que par le mariage de leurs enfants. D'où affermissement de la position militaire du mari. En outre, par le système du concubinage officiel, — impossible en régime monogamique, — il peut s'adjoindre des clients.

Un homme est d'autant plus estimé, écouté, craint qu'il a plus de femmes. La corrélation n'est pourtant pas nécessaire et infaillible, car un polygame à caractère faible peut avoir moins d'influence qu'un mono- ou bigame intelligent et hardi. Et dans les circonstances actuelles on peut rencontrer des monogames qui, soit par leur situation économique, soit par leur position sociale ou politique, jouissent d'une autorité beaucoup plus considérable que nombre de polygames. De leur côté, la supériorité intellectuelle et morale commence à faire sentir sa valeur.

2° La renommée et la vanité. De par la nature même du régime matrimonial, — intimement lié à, pour ne pas dire basé sur des tractations financières, — le nombre de femmes détermine le degré de richesse. Et, comme partout, la fortune exerce une fascination; elle est considérée comme une marque de supériorité. La vanité s'en empare. Et comme la possession de femmes est l'expression la plus manifeste de la fortune, le Nkundó y voit un moyen de premier ordre pour l'acquisition d'une grande renommée et d'un nom brillant.

3° Le souci de conserver les biens de la famille. La richesse mobilière réside presque entièrement dans les métaux (surtout le cuivre) et les animaux domestiques. Aussi sont-ce ces capitaux qui interviennent dans les tractations financières du mariage et qui, de cette façon, sont placés avec intérêt (enfants, travaux, influence).

Comme toute population païenne, le peuple nkundó est essentiellement intéressé et égoïste. Il n'aime pas à donner, mais veut tout pour lui-même. A l'exception des personnes auxquelles il est attaché par des liens naturels ou par une sincère affection, le Nkundó n'aide les autres que par interdépendance ou par espoir de réciprocité, sous une forme quelconque. Lors donc qu'il possède un excédent de richesse, fût-il considérable et entièrement superflu, il ne le cède pas. Jamais il ne lui viendra l'idée, par exemple, de donner gratuitement quelques anneaux de cuivre à un célibataire indigent, s'il n'y est obligé par l'interdépendance familiale. Si donc il a plus de filles que de garçons, l'excédent dotal sera employé par lui pour augmenter le nombre de ses propres épouses. Car afin de ne pas priver de sa *nkita* une fille, la dot reçue doit être réemployée comme dot. Ce raisonnement, notons-le, n'a qu'une valeur réduite. De fait, dans l'habitude ancienne, le père prenait pour lui toutes les dots de ses filles, comme nous l'avons vu au chapitre IV. Ce n'était pas à cause des excédents qu'il se faisait polygame; il l'était avant que ses fils se marient.

Même si la fortune a été acquise par des efforts personnels, le propriétaire s'en voudrait de laisser ses capitaux improductifs pour lui-même. Et dans les circonstances données, le placement le plus sûr est la possession d'un harem.

Enfin, comme la femme représente une valeur financière, le Nkundó aime à hériter de celles de ses parents décédés, pour les incorporer à son harem ou pour se procurer par elles les moyens de l'agrandir.

C'est ainsi que s'explique l'affirmation des Nkundó que les biens de la famille (*lokutu*) ne peuvent pas passer dans des mains étrangères. Non seulement le désir individuel les pousse à cette façon d'agir; ils sentent derrière eux la volonté collective de la famille. Et c'est dans celle-ci et dans les semonces et les railleries que susciterait inévitablement une attitude plus indépendante qu'il faut voir une des causes principales de tant de défaillances de la part d'hommes qui semblaient définitivement gagnés à la pratique de la monogamie.

4° LA PRÉCAUTION CONTRE LES ACCIDENTS : maladie, divorce ou décès. Ce motif est très souvent allégué : « Que ferai-je, dit-on, avec une seule femme, si un jour elle tombe malade, m'abandonne ou meurt? Je serai seul. Plus personne pour me soigner et me nourrir. Les Blancs ont leurs boys. Mais nous autres Noirs, nous n'avons que notre femme. » Ce raisonnement n'est pas dépourvu de valeur, mais il ne me semble pas exprimer toute la vérité, car, bien que pour les repas, rien ne surpasse son foyer, le célibataire peut toujours compter sur l'assistance bienveillante de ses parentes et de ses belles-sœurs. La prépondérance est plutôt dans le *côté* sexuel. Les femmes ne sont même pas rares qui dans cette éventualité conseillent à leur mari de prendre une seconde épouse. Dans le cas de divorce ou de décès, la difficulté peut être résolue par le remariage. Mais celui-ci impose un certain délai pour la réunion des valeurs dotales et surtout pour les pourparlers. Quant à la maladie, la difficulté est bien plus grande.

En tout cas, ces accidents ne peuvent pas justifier la véritable polygamie, car la bi- ou trigynie suffiraient amplement à éviter les inconvénients allégués. Et pourtant on ne voit personne qui se contente de deux ou trois femmes quand il possède les moyens d'en acquérir davantage.

5° Le désir d'augmenter le nombre d'enfants est une des raisons qu'on entend le plus fréquemment, et la principale, et parfois l'unique, citée par les ethnographes. Elle a sans contredit une grande valeur; car le Nkundó aime avoir beaucoup d'enfants; c'est un des motifs de sa gloire comme aussi un moyen puissant pour renforcer sa position sociale (et ceci nous ramène au motif cité en premier lieu).

La question de savoir si la polygamie favorise réellement la natalité n'a rien à voir ici, même si la comparaison était nettement en défaveur de ce régime et s'il était avéré que « plus il a de femmes moins le polygame a d'enfants ». Car le Nkundó ne fait jamais ce calcul statistique. Il ne voit que ce principe : plusieurs femmes donnent plus d'enfants qu'une. Et par là tout est dit. En outre, l'intérêt général de tout le peuple en bloc ne pénètre pas dans l'horizon de ses pensées et de ses sentiments : il n'a de soucis que pour lui-même; son égoïsme ne lui fait envisager que son propre intérêt.

6° A tous ces motifs allégués par les Nkundó pour justifier la pratique de la polygamie, nous devons en ajouter un sixième qu'ils ne citent jamais : La sensualité. Sans la colonisation, nous aurions eu difficile d'affirmer ceci.

Mais le nouvel état de choses manifeste plusieurs défauts dans l'argumentation de nos gens. Nous avons déjà attiré l'attention sur quelques-uns. En outre, tous les motifs mentionnés jusqu'ici ne rendent pas suffisamment compte de l'existence de la polygamie. Ils n'expliquent pas pourquoi, autrefois, les vieux voulaient se réserver toutes les femmes, ni pourquoi tel ou tel individu devient polygame. Il est un fait que pour plus d'un homme aucun des motifs allégués n'est intervenu. Il est connu aussi que plusieurs indigènes se sont acquis une fortune au moyen de travaux à l'européenne (clercs, commis, commerçants, etc.), afin de pouvoir se constituer un harem, sans que les motifs de vanité ou d'influence sociale aient pu agir. De par ma connaissance des circonstances de personnes et de lieux, je suis convaincu que même pour certains indigènes vivant dans leurs villages, l'intention primordiale était nettement sexuelle. Plus d'un cas pareil m'est connu.

Ceci se comprend d'ailleurs sans peine. La polygamie, en effet, constitue un moyen légitime et facile d'avoir la jouissance de plusieurs femmes sans être molesté par des palabres, embarras, etc. La psychologie de beaucoup d'hommes peu soucieux des lois morales et la tendance de l'instinct déréglé à multiplier ses objets ne font que confirmer cette constatation. Souvent on voit des hommes qui étaient d'abord monogames commencer par prendre une deuxième femme, par passion. Peu à peu leur passion, au lieu de s'apaiser, s'accentue et progressivement le harem se constitue.

Les changements que la colonisation a introduits dans la vie économique de cette population n'ont pas fait diminuer la polygamie. Dans certaines régions on a l'impression — à défaut de chiffres exacts nous devons nous contenter de simples constatations à vue — que les harems sont devenus moins peuplés, mais que, par contre, le nombre de polygames a augmenté et que, par conséquent, le désir de la polygamie, l'affectus, n'a pas diminué. L'impôt supplémentaire, non plus, n'effraie ni n'arrête les polygames. Le grand moyen pour changer la mentalité dans ce domaine restera toujours l'action des Missions et la pénétration de la morale du Christ, secondées par l'attitude du Gouvernement favorisant la monogamie (¹).

Un autre moyen, accessoire sans doute, mais cependant important, est l'exemple des ménages européens. Les Noirs ont l'esprit d'imitation; la femme indigène envie le sort de la femme blanche; si bien que les ménages européens sont une propagande pour la monogamie, quand ils se conduisent bien.

(¹) La faveur du Gouvernement colonial à l'égard de la monogamie s'exerce avant tout par la permission accordée aux femmes supplémentaires des polygames d'abandonner leur mari aux fins de s'engager dans une union monogamique, de préférence dans une Mission, sous le contrôle des missionnaires.

CHAPITRE VIII.

LE DIVORCE.

Le droit nkundó connaît deux manières de rompre le mariage : le divorce et la mort. Nous allons les étudier dans deux chapitres distincts.

Dans le divorce, le mariage est rompu, soit par le remboursement de la dot, soit par la substitution d'une autre épouse.

Dans le cas de décès, au contraire, il n'y a pas de remboursement dotal. Le décès de la femme rompt le mariage *ipso facto*. Par contre, le décès du mari ne le rompt pas; le mariage persiste dans la veuve jusqu'à sa propre mort ou jusqu'au divorce (¹).

ARTICLE I. — LES MOTIFS DU DIVORCE.

Le Nkundó considère le mariage comme dissoluble. Non pas au libre gré des contractants, mais à la suite d'une procédure qui comporte essentiellement l'intervention du *ndonga*. Non pour des futilités, mais uniquement pour des motifs graves, ou tout au moins des motifs qui ont ce caractère de gravité au jugement des indigènes.

Les raisons valables du divorce peuvent être ramenées à l'impossibilité pratique de continuer la vie commune. Telles sont : 1° manquements graves et réitérés aux devoirs conjugaux, surtout tendance incorrigible à l'adultère; 2° incompatibilité des tempéraments, source de disputes, de querelles et de rixes; 3° maladie grave et inguérissable.

(¹) Ceci est à comprendre dans le sens expliqué au chap. III, art. IX.

[p. 376]

Les deux premiers motifs amènent le divorce inévitablement. Quant au dernier, il faut distinguer :

Si c'est le mari qui est malade et qu'il est abandonné pour ce motif par sa femme, le divorce sera consommé dès qu'elle aura un nouveau mari.

Si c'est la femme qui est malade, il faut encore envisager deux cas : elle peut être devenue malade chez son mari ou ailleurs. Dans la première hypothèse, il n'y a pas cause de divorce, car la responsabilité de la maladie retombe entièrement sur le mari. Au contraire, si la femme contracte la maladie étant rentrée dans sa famille, c'est celle-ci qui endosse la responsabilité; et si la maladie est inguérissable, le mari peut recourir au divorce. Mais ceci ne vaut pas lorsque la femme s'est rendue chez ses parents sur l'ordre exprès du mari, ou encore si elle a fui le toit conjugal pour des motifs justes et raisonnables. Certains cas peuvent donner lieu à d'âpres discussions. Ainsi, par exemple, une visite à ses parents de la propre initiative de l'épouse, mais pour le bien du mari. Théoriquement, celui-ci doit gagner le procès. En outre, un séjour de vingt-quatre heures n'est pas reconnu suffisant pour faire retomber sur la famille de la femme la responsabilité de la maladie (¹).

La distinction entre maladie du mari et maladie de l'épouse est d'ordre pratique. Le mari souffrant d'une maladie incurable ou trop longue à guérir est généralement (pas toujours, pourtant) abandonné par sa femme. Si un autre homme ne verse pas de dot pour elle, le mariage persiste. Si la femme trouve un amant, celui-ci paie la dot, qui est remise au premier mari, et le divorce est ainsi consommé. Non pas qu'on puisse dire que la maladie de l'homme soit, en droit, une cause de divorce. Car l'épouse a l'obligation de soigner son mari malade.

(¹) Pour les détails, cfr. chap. VI, art. III, §§ 3 et 4. Voir aussi chap. IX, art. X.

Mais en pratique aucune des deux familles n'exige l'application de la loi. Tous cèdent à la volonté de la femme, qui refuse de continuer une union si peu attrayante pour sa sensibilité.

La maladie ne constitue donc pas un motif de divorce valable en droit. Mais elle est reconnue, dans la pratique, comme pouvant donner lieu à une rupture.

Quoique le Nkundó désire ardemment avoir des enfants, il n'invoque pas la stérilité comme motif de divorce. Pourtant les femmes stériles sont nombreuses. Pour obtenir la réalisation de ses désirs, l'homme a recours à la polygamie. Il tâchera de se procurer les valeurs nécessaires pour acquérir une autre femme. S'il n'en a pas les moyens financiers, il pourrait, par de petites tracasseries, des mesquineries, etc., qui ne lui fassent pas trop encourir le danger d'être mis en tort, rendre la vie difficile à sa femme et la pousser ainsi à le quitter pour rentrer dans ses frais de dot. Ceci n'est pourtant qu'une pure supposition; elle se réalise peut-être ici ou là, mais je n'en connais aucun cas. De toute façon, le mari n'invoque jamais la stérilité pour faire rompre son mariage. Contrairement donc à ce qui se passe ailleurs, il n'en est pas question dans le droit nkundó.

On peut ranger dans les motifs qui rendent impossible la continuation du mariage le fait d'exposer la femme au danger de mort par la transgression des interdits sexuels pendant la gestation ou après l'accouchement. Car, par sa méconduite, le mari se rend coupable d'une répudiation implicite et le père de l'épouse use de son droit à protéger la vie de son enfant (1).

Restent donc les motifs cités au début, qui peuvent être ramenés tous à l'impossibilité causée par l'incompatibilité des tempéraments, le refroidissement de l'amour, des offenses graves, surtout si elles sont réitérées, des manquements sérieux et continuels aux devoirs, des défauts qui jettent le déshonneur sur le coupable (1). Dans cette dernière catégorie, il faut mentionner spécialement l'habitude du vol. Des femmes sujettes au défaut de voler, fût-ce de menus objets (manioc, poisson, viande), arrivent, si elles ne se corrigent, à être antipathiques à la majorité des maris, puis se font détester. D'où palabres et querelles interminables, qui mènent infailliblement à la rupture. Car ce défaut est considéré comme très honteux. Notons encore la paresse ou l'insouciance d'un des conjoints.

---

(1) Cfr. chap. X, art. II, § 3.

⁂

Les divorces sont *fréquents* chez les Nkundó. Ces gens ne s'imposent guère de contrainte pour corriger leurs défauts. Peu à peu le premier amour devient moins passionné et le contact continuel et journalier manifeste plus clairement les côtés moins agréables du tempérament. S'ils ne sont pas supportés ou s'ils donnent naissance à des torts graves, la rupture devient inévitable. La quantité de divorces est plus grande dans les mariages par héritage et par substitution que dans les mariages par versement direct de dot.

Ce qui précède prouve que la loi nkundó, tout en admettant la légitimité du divorce, ne le fait, pour ainsi dire, que contrainte par la nécessité. D'ailleurs, avant qu'on en arrive là, des difficultés ont surgi depuis longtemps, et plus d'une fois déjà les parents et surtout le *ndonga* ont dû intervenir pour rétablir la paix troublée et renforcer l'union chancelante. Ils ne s'inclinent que devant l'impossibilité d'arranger la situation.

---

(1) Cfr., par exemple, l'adultère avec un parent par alliance : chap. VI, art. V, § 2, et chap. V, art. IV, n° 2, ex. 17.

ARTICLE II.

MANIÈRES DE ROMPRE LE MARIAGE.

La manière la plus simple et, pour ainsi dire, idéale de rompre le mariage est la séparation avec l'assentiment des familles et spécialement des *ndonga*. Actuellement — à part les fugues à distance — c'est l'unique façon de procéder admise. Seulement, depuis la réorganisation des chefferies, les chefs et les tribunaux se sont vu attribuer, ou accaparent de plus en plus les fonctions de témoins officiels (¹).

Avant la colonisation, les Nkundó y allaient souvent par d'autres voies.

Avant d'étudier la question du remboursement de la dot, nous examinerons ces diverses manières d'agir. Pour la plus grande clarté de l'exposé, distinguons entre la coutume du régime pré-européen et la pratique actuelle. Nous terminerons par deux procédés particuliers.

§ 1. Autrefois.

Distinguons encore :

A. — PREMIÈRE HYPOTHÈSE : *La femme quitte son mari.* Elle s'enfuit dans sa famille en passant par le *ndonga*. Si elle omet cette procédure et se rend chez elle directement, le *ndonga* s'en trouve méconnu. D'où conséquences graves. Le *ndonga* donne, en effet, inévitablement tort à la femme. C'est pourquoi le cas n'arrivait que très rare-

---

(¹) Il n'est pas dans mon intention de nier le droit du chef et des tribunaux à intervenir dans les litiges matrimoniaux. Car ce droit leur est reconnu par la législation écrite qui leur attribue les fonctions exercées autrefois par les « pères » des familles. Mais ils sont obligés d'agir en conformité avec la loi coutumière et donc d'entendre le *ndonga* et de lui en référer.

ment. La femme s'explique au *ndonga*. Celui-ci a le devoir de la réconcilier avec son mari. Le divorce n'a jamais lieu sans des interventions multiples du *ndonga*.

1° Si après tout la femme ne veut absolument pas rester chez son mari et qu'elle le quitte définitivement, c'est la *guerre* la plupart des fois. A moins, évidemment, que le mari, lui aussi, ne tienne plus à continuer l'union malheureuse. Car, dans ce cas, il se contente de réclamer le remboursement de la dot. La guerre se terminait, comme toutes les autres, par la paix et l'indemnisation; on ne parle plus d'autre chose. Cette guerre était faite au clan de la femme, s'il ne la renvoyait pas ou s'il tardait à restituer la dot. Pourtant, si la femme s'était rendue chez un autre homme sans passer par sa famille, le mari abandonné déclarait la guerre à son rival et laissait ses beaux-parents en paix.

2° Parfois le mari délaissé se vengeait de son rival en l'*assassinant*. Si la chose lui était possible, — ce qui était généralement le cas, — il le ne faisait pas personnellement, mais en chargeait quelqu'un d'autre. C'était son fils, son frère puîné, neveu, etc. Mais, de préférence, il engageait un Bǫtswá. Le prix de ce service était une vingtaine d'anneaux de cuivre, montant de la dot pour une femme Bǫtswá. Le droit nkundó impose au mandant l'entière responsabilité de l'assassinat et de toutes ses suites. Certains Batswa étaient spécialisés dans ce domaine, tels que (chez les Bombwanja) : Esenge de Bokengé; Mbólókó de Bombembe; Wai w'Ītúmola de Bakǫyǫ́; Lŭwá jw'Ītómbengándá (décédé en 1933), également de Bakǫyǫ́; Botómba wă Lokio et Mpótó éy'Ilókó (encore en vie), de Mbanja.

Le mari méprisé disposait encore d'autres moyens de se venger ou de s'indemniser. Il en usait quand l'occasion lui était favorable ou quand il n'était pas de taille à se jeter dans l'aventure coûteuse d'une guerre ou d'un assassinat. C'étaient :

3° *L'ikákelo* (1) : il empêchait le retour chez son mari d'une de ses parentes, mariée dans le clan de l'épouse infidèle.

4° *L'arrestation d'une épouse de son beau-père* récalcitrant ou d'un parent de celui-ci. Ceci se nomme du terme générique *lowáála*, qui signifie : compensation (2). Généralement la prisonnière était mise à l'*etáka* (fourche en bois, liée au cou) (3), afin de lui empêcher la fuite et de hâter le remboursement de la dot. Si l'affaire ne s'arrangeait pas, elle devenait esclave.

De façon comme d'autre, on était ainsi quitte des deux côtés.

Le terme universellement employé pour la rupture du mariage de la part de la femme est *bokófo*, du verbe *kófa*. Il n'est pas employé pour la répudiation par le mari. Il n'est donc pas l'équivalent de divorce, mais signifie : rompre l'union avec le mari. La forme transitive-causative (*kófya*) signifie : provoquer cette rupture. Il arrive, en effet, que la famille de la femme fasse rompre le mariage en vue d'une union plus avantageuse. Ceci doit s'entendre dans le sens de ce que nous avons expliqué sur les motifs du divorce. Il s'agit avant tout de manquements graves aux devoirs du mari envers ses beaux-parents. Pour le remariage d'une divorcée, on emploie le terme général : *kumbwa*=être mariée avec quelqu'un.

B. — DEUXIÈME HYPOTHÈSE : *le mari voulait se défaire de sa femme*. — Les indigènes âgés affirment très catégoriquement que cette façon d'agir du mari n'était pas due au refroidissement de son amour, mais causée par la conduite incorrigible de la femme. Il était réduit à cette extrémité par l'impossibilité de continuer la vie conjugale avec elle.

---

(1) Cfr. chap. III, art. VI.

(2) La femme qui en était l'objet était nommée *nginda*. Sa descendance, le cas échéant, s'appelle *bonginda*.

(3) Cfr. chap. VI, art. VII, § 4, A, *b*) 1°.

Il mettait tout en œuvre pour empêcher la fuite de l'épouse en prenant les devants. Après avoir vainement tâché de la ramener à de meilleurs sentiments par l'intervention de ses parents et surtout du *ndonga*, il avait recours à un des moyens suivants, qu'il pouvait, d'ailleurs, utiliser successivement. Mais au préalable, il était obligé d'avertir le témoin et d'obtenir son approbation, ainsi que celle des autorités familiales. Ces moyens étaient :

a) *La mise à l'etáka* = lourde fourche en bois liée au cou. Le *ndonga* communiquait la nouvelle aux parents de la femme. Ceux-ci pouvaient alors venir délivrer leur fille en restituant la dot. Si le mari appliquait l'*etáka* contre la volonté du témoin, celui-ci pouvait délier la prisonnière. Mais de ce fait il se portait garant du remboursement de la dot : il en devenait personnellement responsable.

Le mari était autorisé à garder la femme dans cette torture pendant des mois. Si ses beaux-parents ne voulaient ou ne pouvaient pas le faire rentrer dans ses droits, il avait recours au deuxième moyen :

b) *La réduction en esclavage* (*bonyamó*, verbe *nyamola*). Il avait le droit d'employer directement ce moyen, sans avoir préalablement essayé l'*étáka*. Mais la chose était mal vue et n'arrivait que lorsque la famille de la femme était elle-même exaspérée par les interminables procès et la honte continuelle que leur causait cette fille indigne.

Généralement, la réduction en esclavage était la cause d'une guerre, le clan de la femme ne supportant pas pareille injure. Il arrivait pourtant qu'il ne se vengeait pas, soit par crainte, ne se sentant pas de taille à résister, soit parce qu'il reconnaissait le bon droit du mari.

Après coup, les parents pouvaient la racheter (1). Parfois, ne voulant plus s'exposer à de nouvelles palabres ou à une nouvelle honte que leur fille leur causerait en continuant sa méconduite après son rachat, ils l'abandonnaient à son sort. L'amour de leur enfant et le désir de sauvegarder l'honneur et le bon renom de la famille étant en conflit, il dépendait des circonstances d'hommes et de choses, lequel des deux sentiments l'emportait. Comme dans les cas de vols ou d'autres habitudes déshonorantes, il n'était pas rare (et il ne l'est pas encore maintenant) de voir le désir de sauvegarder l'honneur l'emporter sur l'affection ou l'intérêt financier.

Dans l'emploi de ce moyen, plus encore que dans celui de l'*etáka*, le mari devait, au préalable, communiquer ses intentions au *ndonga*. Sinon, celui-ci, de sa propre autorité, lui déclarait la guerre, l'injure étant considérée comme très grave. On peut supposer que cette prescription avait pour raison d'être de laisser à la famille le temps d'intervenir, afin d'éviter à leur fille l'esclavage en remboursant la dot.

c) Exceptionnellement, le mari *exaspéré recourait* à l'*immolation* de la femme, à l'occasion d'un décès. On cite le cas de Bengóngó, de Bongilá (Bẹsọmbọ́, Bombwanja), qui, lors du décès de son père Bengóngó byâ Yese, fit *décapiter* à l'*ikwei* sa femme Litúli de Bọntọlẹ.

Le mari pouvait être *empêché d'exécuter* ses desseins violents par la présence d'enfants déjà en âge d'intervenir en faveur de leur mère. *Mbótai ntáwúkí* = une mère ne périt point, dit le proverbe. Si la femme avait une sœur ou très proche parente comme coépouse (ebisa), le mari s'abstenait également, soit par un sentiment de honte, soit par crainte de réactions peu souhaitables. Parfois, pris entre son désir d'employer l'*eláka* et la honte ou la crainte de l'*ebísa*, le mari cachait la femme enfourchée. De préférence il demandait pour elle l'hospitalité d'un beau-frère. De cette façon, la difficulté était en bonne partie tournée. En effet, de par la loi de l'exogamie, la femme était ainsi logée dans un autre village, se trouvant parfois à une distance appréciable. Cette pratique s'appelait : *isángyá; lómba wálí isángyá*.

---

(1) Lorsque les Nkundó vendaient comme esclave une femme Elinga, ceux-ci ne les inquiétaient jamais par une guerre. Ils ne savent pas attaquer, supportent mal les marches, sont étrangers en forêt et inférieurs en valeur militaire. Ils se contentaient donc de racheter leur parente.

Au lieu de recourir aux procédés cités, le mari pouvait aussi remettre sa femme entre les mains du *ndonga*. Ceci était pourtant un cas tout à fait exceptionnel. Il était dû — prétendent les indigènes — au manque d'affection pour l'épouse, joint à la certitude de rentrer facilement dans ses droits, parce qu'il était rassuré sur les sentiments bienveillants de son beau-père (remboursement ou substitution), ou bien sur la possibilité d'user de l'*ikákelo*.

La répudiation directe était, comme nous l'avons dit, extrêmement rare. Nous ne voulons pas parler ici de la répudiation causée par la méconduite incorrigible de la femme, — nous venons d'en traiter, — mais de la répudiation contre le gré de l'épouse. Si pourtant le cas se présentait, le mari devait la remettre au *ndonga*, qui, voyant qu'il n'y avait plus moyen d'arranger la situation, la rendait à ses parents. Aucune violence n'était exercée contre elle. Et il n'y avait pas lieu de réclamer le remboursement direct et immédiat de la dot. Au contraire, l'époux devait attendre que la femme répudiée ait trouvé un nouveau mari et que celui-ci ait payé la dot pour elle. Si pourtant il y avait mauvaise volonté de la part de ses beaux-parents, ils pouvaient s'attendre à une guerre.

La conclusion qu'on peut tirer de ce qui précède est que le droit nkundó, tout en étant très sévère pour la femme qui ne s'acquitte pas de ses obligations matrimoniales, ne laisse cependant pas au mari la liberté absolue d'agir à son gré. La loi ancestrale exigeait une raison grave, et son application était bien réglementée. La différence entre les divers cas le montre éloquemment.

Comme on l'a vu ci-dessus, le terme *bokófo* ne s'applique pas à la répudiation dans sa double possibilité. On dit que le mari *atóna*=ne veut plus d'elle; dont le substantif est *lotóno*. Ce terme n'est pas spécifique; il est employé pour n'importe quel objet ou personne dont on ne veut pas. La forme spéciale de remettre la femme au *ndonga* s'appelle également d'un nom générique : *émola*=faire se mettre en marche, faire s'en aller, dont le substantif est *njémó*.

§ 2. Actuellement.

La colonisation a introduit des changements considérables. Guerres, tortures, immolation, esclavage ont été abolis. Tout se réduit maintenant à la fuite de la femme, en passant ou non par le *ndonga*, ou à la répudiation pure et simple. L'omission de l'intervention du *ndonga* est assez rare. On y tient encore. D'ailleurs l'intérêt financier conseille de ne pas se le mettre à dos. La femme abandonnant son mari rentre chez elle, ou bien elle se rend directement chez un autre homme, ou encore va se donner à la licence dans quelque grand ou petit centre. Il ne reste qu'à procéder au remboursement de la dot. Tout est donc réduit à sa plus simple expression.

La femme nkundó n'est retenue que par la crainte des châtiments et autres suites de son acte, ou bien par l'amour qu'elle porte à son mari. Autrefois, cet amour commençant à se refroidir, ou devenant moins passionné, la crainte lui faisait faire des efforts et souvent tout rentrait dans l'ordre. La liberté moderne, au contraire, l'invite à briser toute entrave. De fait, un froissement passager, qui autrefois aurait été arrangé, ou une difficulté quelconque de ménage, qui, sous l'ancien régime, aurait été aplanie, suffit à présent pour causer une rupture définitive.

On comprend ainsi que le remplacement des coutumes anciennes par l'état actuel des choses a fait augmenter les divorces dans des proportions scandaleuses.

L'arrivée de soldats nègres (étrangers ou congolais) a donné à l'organisation familiale le premier coup, qui fut un coup presque mortel. Dès le début l'autorité indigène, qui était familiale, patriarcale, fut abolie. Les chefs investis ensuite par le pouvoir européen avaient d'autres soucis que celui de sauvegarder la moralité conjugale. Si même (comme cela en a été malheureusement trop souvent le cas) ils ne tendaient pas à favoriser la facilité des divorces, afin de pouvoir s'approprier eux-mêmes des femmes pour se constituer un harem. L'Administration coloniale se trouvait devant l'inconnu. Il lui fallait du temps pour apprendre à connaître la situation présente et passée. D'autre part, elle était absorbée par d'autres problèmes : pacification des tribus, stabilisation de l'occupation, aide à la colonisation naissante, au commerce, aux Missions; organisations diverses, chemins à ouvrir et à entretenir, etc. En outre, les travaux d'établissement et de développement des centres, la Force publique, les Transports divers, l'installation des Compagnies, les Missions religieuses, ont fait sortir de leur milieu un grand nombre de jeunes gens, auxquels il fallait des compagnes, épouses régulières ou dérivatoires pour la passion. Tout cela a causé d'énormes ravages dans la société indigène. La moralité en a gravement pâti, et en conséquence la natalité.

Cependant, au cours des dernières années la marche des choses étant devenue plus normale et stable, l'Administration coloniale a commencé à réparer les torts causés. On ne peut qu'applaudir de tout cœur à ce revirement. On ne saurait qu'approuver entièrement les efforts qu'elle fait pour freiner et remettre de l'ordre dans le chaos familial.

Malgré l'opposition de plusieurs chefs vieux modèle, les tribunaux indigènes reconnus ou institués par le décret de 1926 ont commencé à user des pouvoirs que le Gouvernement leur a attribués. Ils sont appelés à jouer un grand rôle dans le redressement, surtout si leurs travaux sont surveillés de près et contrôlés régulièrement. Pour cela, il faut que ces juridictions continuent à agir dans l'esprit de l'ancien droit, en tenant compte seulement de la modification des circonstances (1).

La mesure principale préconisée par les indigènes pour la restauration de l'ordre est l'emprisonnement de la « divorceuse ». Cette pratique serait la continuation de l'application de l'*etáka* et son adaptation aux circonstances présentes. Comme celle-ci, il aurait un double effet : d'une part il freinerait la légèreté et la licence et, de l'autre, il assurerait le remboursement de la dot dans les cas impossibles à arranger. Seulement, l'exécution en serait soustraite au mari, pour être dévolue au chef. Les Européens, en contact avec les indigènes et soucieux de l'ordre social, sont également favorables à cette évolution de la loi coutumière.

Un autre moyen de réaction serait la pression sur les parents de la femme coupable, et cela principalement par l'emprisonnement de sa mère. Ce moyen ne trouve aucun point d'appui dans l'ancien droit; hormis la guerre — qui ne touchait pas la mère et dont l'utilité n'était d'ailleurs que très relative — et le système de la compensation (*lowáála*) — qui était un moyen de fortune employé de par l'initiative privée du mari. On ne saurait donc approuver cette pratique comme telle; mais elle pourrait être admise dans les cas où les parents sont réellement en faute. Ceci arrive, par exemple, lorsque, de façon ou d'autre, ils ont incité leur fille à rompre son mariage sans raison admissible. Ou encore lorsque, le divorce ayant été légitimement prononcé, ils refusent de restituer la dot (1). Et ici il faut signaler que, au lieu de manifester ouvertement leur refus, certains y vont par un détour hypocrite. Voici comment ils s'y prennent : la femme ayant réellement abandonné son mari, et celui-ci, pour des raisons justes, comme celles que nous avons citées ci-dessus, ne tenant plus à l'épouse avec laquelle il ne saurait plus vivre (surtout s'il est monogame), la question du remboursement se pose. La femme, de connivence avec ses parents, qui ne veulent pas restituer la dot, déclare publiquement et officiellement qu'elle ne quitte pas son mari et qu'elle désire réintégrer le foyer conjugal, alors que son unique intention est d'éviter à ses parents le déboursement de valeurs dotales. Elle saura bien — à son heure — se tirer d'affaire de l'une ou l'autre façon.

---

(1) Cfr. chap. VI, art. VII, § 7.

§ 2. Cas particuliers.

Il nous reste à décrire les cas un peu spéciaux dans la rupture du mariage. Le premier a augmenté avec la colonisation, tandis que le dernier a pratiquement disparu.

1° NJANGÓ. — Ce mot est le substantif du verbe *angola*, qui signifie débaucher (la femme d'autrui, son travailleur, son esclave, etc.). Le terme est donc générique. Pourtant il s'applique particulièrement à la séduction d'une femme mariée, pour la faire quitter son mari, et indique donc l'action de l'homme. De la femme on dit simplement qu'elle a abandonné son mari (*aôkófa*) et qu'elle a *été* prise en mariage par X (*aôkámbwa éka Ɓóngóló*). Cet homme s'étant épris de la femme d'autrui, et voulant l'épouser, tâche de gagner ses bonnes grâces; si elle consent, il réunit les valeurs nécessaires pour la dot. Alors il invite la femme à venir chez lui et paie la dot comme pour n'importe quel mariage.

---

(1) L'application radicale et indiscrète de cette règle pourrait pourtant froisser les sentiments religieux des indigènes chrétiens et obtenir un effet à rebours. Le mariage religieux, en effet, est indissoluble. L'obligation de restituer équivaudrait, dans ces cas, à la reconnaissance de la dissolubilité de l'union religieuse. Or, non seulement cela serait considéré par l'indigène comme une opposition entre les pouvoirs publics et la morale chrétienne, mais en outre causerait un tort immense à la stabilité des mariages en général.

Au lieu de se rendre chez son séducteur directement, la femme peut également passer par chez ses parents, si, notamment, ceux-ci sont favorables à son projet. Dans le cas contraire, elle ne réussirait point, car ils en empêcheraient l'exécution.

Le cas de *njangó* était rare autrefois, parce que hasardé. En effet, il constituait un *casus belli*. Celui qui s'y aventurait devait être de taille à résister et à subir les conséquences de son acte, surtout en matière d'indemnisation à payer. Actuellement, au contraire, ces faits sont bien plus fréquents, même si le nouveau mari n'a pas de quoi payer la dot immédiatement. Pourtant le revirement dans la politique gouvernementale commence à produire ses bons effets. L'emprisonnement est souvent appliqué à la femme, ou à sa mère, rarement au séducteur. Cette peine suffit souvent à faire revenir l'ordre. Toutefois, afin de ne pas s'exposer à de nouvelles difficultés de la part de celle qui ne l'aime plus, le mari délaissé refuse parfois de reprendre l'épouse infidèle.

La rareté du cas dans l'ancien temps, ainsi que le fait qu'il constituait un motif légitime de guerre démontrent que le *njangó* n'était pas approuvé par la loi nkundó et qu'il était plutôt une infraction.

2° Refuge. — Le refuge — qui n'est plus en vogue actuellement, à cause du changement des circonstances — se pratiquait comme suit : une femme veut absolument quitter son mari, mais elle n'en trouve pas la possibilité : aucun homme ne l'a demandée et ses parents sont impuissants à l'aider dans ses projets. Elle se rend, en cachette, chez un homme influent et riche, qu'elle aimerait bien avoir pour époux. Elle arrive à l'improviste, se poste devant lui, ou même se jette sur lui, en lui criant : *Bejwó*

bèkę! ónjéngé, tonjójáké! (¹)=les parents défunts ! paie la dot pour moi, ne me chasse point ! Dans ces circonstances, cette insulte par les parents défunts est comme un ultimatum et impose une obligation à laquelle celui qui en est l'objet ne peut se dérober (²). L'homme en question ne peut donc pas chasser la femme et doit la prendre sous sa protection. Il convoque sa parenté et lui expose le cas. Ses proches étant d'accord, — c'est leur devoir et honneur, — ils lui enjoignent de payer la dot pour elle. Mais le mari délaissé intervient pour empêcher cette transaction. Ou bien il déclare la guerre, ou bien il prie son rival de lui rendre son épouse. Dans le premier cas, les hostilités étant terminées, les deux adversaires payaient, chacun de son côté, les indemnités pour les guerriers tombés au champ de bataille; puis, la paix ayant été conclue, les choses s'arrangeaient quand même, et la femme avait réussi dans son dessein. Dans l'autre cas, si l'homme qui avait accueilli la fugitive était disposé à donner suite à la requête, il exigeait du mari un paiement (*nyongo*) pour être délié de l'obligation lui imposée par le « serment » de la femme. Ce paiement était une sorte d'indemnisation pour l'insulte et pour l'accroc fait à son honneur. Aussi le montant en était assez élevé : 20 à 25 anneaux de cuivre, le prix d'un esclave.

La reddition de la femme avait lieu, soit parce que l'homme auquel elle s'était adressée ne l'aimait point, soit parce que lui et sa famille ne voulaient pas s'attirer des difficultés.

Pour le mari, la guerre était un mauvais moyen : il y perdait nécessairement. La façon correcte, idéale était de tâcher de se faire rendre sa femme. Ce qui indique que le recours aux armes était une contravention à la loi, plutôt qu'un moyen légitime.

(¹) Ou termes analogues.

(²) Cfr. chap. VI, art. V, § 4, annexe.

Il pouvait se faire aussi que l'homme, gardant chez lui la femme, ne payait pas la dot immédiatement. Ceci arrivait, ou bien lorsqu'une inimitié continuelle existait entre son clan et celui du mari, ou bien lorsque celui-ci lui devait une créance importante, sensiblement égale à la dot de la femme. Dans le premier cas, on allait presque inévitablement à une nouvelle guerre. Plus tard, la famille de la femme se mettait en rapport avec son nouveau gendre. Les cadeaux qu'elle lui apportait étaient considérés comme contre-dot, et lui-même commençait à verser la dot. Mais il n'était pas question de restituer la dot au premier mari; les relations entre celui-ci et le clan de la femme étaient totalement rompues. C'est précisément dans l'omission de la restitution qu'est située la différence entre ce cas et la procédure régulière décrite ci-dessus. Dans le cas de dette, il n'y avait non plus de restitution de la dot. La fuite de la femme constituait une compensation (*lowáála*), dans ce cas, qu'on désignait pour cela par ce même terme (N. *aǒkęnda ndá lowáála*). Si le mari réclamait, les juges lui envoyaient un morceau de *bofofó* (1), pour lui signifier qu'ils ne voulaient pas s'occuper de son cas, dont lui-même connaissait très bien le mal-fondé. Même les membres de son propre clan l'empêchaient de faire la guerre : ils savaient parfaitement que le tort était uniquement du côté de leur parent.

Le refuge, tel que nous venons de l'expliquer, s'appelait simplement *bejwó*, *bǒmoto áótswá bejwó*, parce que ce mot était le terme principal de l'ultimatum.

Comme nous l'avons dit ci-dessus, la coutume décrite a disparu avec la colonisation. Bien que cette étude ne s'étende pas aux Nkundó fixés au Nord de la Tshuapa, il peut être intéressant de noter que dans la région de Losanganya se dessine une évolution de cette coutume. Si une femme condamnée pour abandon du toit conjugal est emprisonnée, elle invite — si la possibilité lui en apparaît — quelqu'un à l'épouser. Si cet homme agrée, il produit devant le chef la dot qu'il a réunie. Avec l'assentiment de cette autorité, il la verse aux parents de la femme, qui la restituent au mari (¹).

---

(1) Le *bofofó* est une pièce de feuille de bananier sèche, qu'on enroule sur elle-même et dans laquelle on fait deux nœuds (ou plus, si le cas l'exige). Pour signifier la fin d'une palabre, le *bofofó* est coupé en deux morceaux (ou plus), chaque morceau ayant un nœud. On en remet un à chaque intéressé.

3° GUERRE. — Un dernier cas particulier de rupture d'un mariage est le suivant : Si une femme était capturée dans une guerre et non affranchie, et devenait donc esclave, son union était du fait même rompue. De par la force des circonstances il ne pouvait en être autrement, puisque chaque groupe ne s'occupait que de ses propres intérêts. Comme nous l'avons vu dans le chapitre précédent, l'esclave était incorporée dans le harem d'un des membres du clan qui l'avait faite prisonnière, ou elle était vendue à cet effet à un homme quelconque. Le véritable mari, n'ayant pas les moyens de l'affranchir, — nous parlons dans cette hypothèse, car dans le cas contraire il n'y avait pas rupture de l'union, — était dans l'impossibilité de s'y opposer. Toutefois, il avait droit à une indemnisation de la part du membre de son clan, fauteur de la guerre, droit qu'il pouvait appuyer par la force. Si le possesseur payait, après affranchissement de la femme par sa famille, à celle-ci une dot afin de contracter un mariage régulier, l'ancien époux avait droit au remboursement de la dot (cfr. chap. VII, art. V).

⁂

Pour clore cet exposé, il nous reste à signaler qu'une femme ayant abandonné son mari, pour se rendre chez un autre homme, peut retourner chez le premier après

---

(¹) Cfr. aussi le chap. III, art. VI.

un laps de temps plus ou moins long. La raison de ce retour peut être double :

Ou bien la femme ne trouve pas chez le nouveau mari ce qu'elle y cherchait. Elle se voit trompée dans ses espérances. Comparant sa situation actuelle avec la vie qu'elle menait précédemment, elle regrette son acte. Connaissant l'amour que son ancien époux lui a toujours porté, elle se hasarde à rentrer chez lui, et généralement elle n'est pas rebutée.

Ou bien le nouveau mari, après le versement d'une part de la dot, se trouve dans l'impossibilité de satisfaire à ses obligations. Comme la femme ne veut pas être épouse sans dot — hormis les exceptions modernes, — elle fait demi-tour.

Il est évident que ce retour n'est pas une conséquence nécessaire et fatale des causes précitées. La femme peut, en effet, aussi se rendre chez un troisième. Mais le retour au premier mari n'est pas extrêmement rare, sans que pour cela il faille le tenir pour fréquent (1). Il constitue, par l'accueil que la femme reçoit au retour, une preuve de ce que le divorce est causé, la plupart du temps, par la femme.

ARTICLE III. — RESTITUTION DE LA DOT.

§ 1. L'obligation de restituer.

Les deux principes primordiaux sont :

1° La rupture du mariage doit se faire par la restitution de la dot;

2° L'obligation de la restitution incombe à la famille de la femme.

Le second principe est clair et sans difficultés d'application. Il n'en est pas de même du premier.

---

(1) Chez les Européens aussi, le mariage de divorcées, sans être fréquent, se pratique cependant.

Tout d'abord, c'est par la restitution de la dot que le divorce est consommé. Aussi longtemps que le mari n'a pas été remboursé, la femme continue à lui appartenir. Seulement, comme il peut s'écouler un intervalle plus ou moins long entre le paiement de la nouvelle dot et la restitution au mari abandonné, il n'est plus loisible à celui-ci, dans la pratique actuelle, d'exercer ses droits sur la femme aussitôt que le second versement a eu lieu. Dès ce moment il a droit au remboursement et il ne dépend que de lui d'aller prendre son dû. Autrefois il lui restait la guerre. Mais, comme nous l'avons vu précédemment, le cas théorique tel que nous venons de le présenter était d'une extrême rareté, le mari disposant de moyens efficaces pour empêcher la nouvelle union avant le remboursement. Dans les cas où la femme avait la possibilité matérielle de se rendre chez un nouveau mari avant la restitution de la dot (répudiation directe, fuite à l'insu du mari, refuge), ce remariage était illégitime. Le nouvel époux était, devant la loi, un simple voleur, puisqu'il retenait auprès de lui une personne sur laquelle il n'avait aucun droit. Pour cette raison le mari pouvait lui déclarer la guerre, ce qui ne lui était pas permis dans les autres cas, la question de son mariage étant une affaire entre lui et la famille de sa femme.

Une autre conséquence de cette règle juridique est la suivante : Dans le cas où la « divorceuse » veut retourner chez son mari légitime, elle peut l'avertir de son dessein par un message secret. Elle l'invite à venir la prendre au moment où son amant versera la dot (*ndanga* ou *walo* d'après le cas). Elle presse ce dernier de satisfaire à ses obligations financières. Au jour fixé, le mari légitime, accompagné de son *ndonga*, va se cacher à proximité de l'endroit où se fait le paiement. Au moment opportun, il sort de sa cachette et s'empare des valeurs déposées, en disant à son rival : « Je t'ai surpris en adultère avec mon épouse; ces valeurs m'appartiennent à titre d'indemnité. »

La famille de la femme prend parti pour lui, et le mari débaucheur, se trouvant en infériorité, est renvoyé bredouille, sans autre forme de procès; car il est clairement en tort sur toute la ligne.

S'il en voyait la possibilité et s'il appartenait à une famille influente, le mari légitime se risquait parfois à assassiner son rival. Mais cela compliquait la situation par une guerre.

En outre, si la fugitive devient enceinte de par ses rapports avec son amant, avant la procédure régulière d'un nouveau paiement dotal-remboursement, l'enfant appartient, non au père naturel, mais au mari abandonné, qui en reste le père juridique.

Actuellement tout a changé. Légitimement, la femme quittant son mari ne peut pas cohabiter avec un autre homme. Seulement, pendant les années précédentes il n'existait plus aucune sanction. L'emprisonnement de la « divorceuse » (dont question ci-dessus) pourrait faire revivre l'ancienne loi, en l'adaptant aux circonstances. En outre, le mariage n'étant pas dissous, le prétendu second mari pourrait être condamné par les tribunaux indigènes pour cause d'adultère-complicité.

Malgré la rupture, le mari et ses beaux-parents tâchent de continuer l'alliance, dans la plupart des cas. Si, malgré la pression, les instances, les malédictions même de sa famille, la femme persiste à ne pas vouloir rejoindre son mari, ses parents la remplacent par une sœur ou parente (*bankitsó*). A moins, évidemment, qu'il ne se trouve aucune parente disponible. Car, dans ce cas, il faut bien qu'on se résigne à la restitution de la dot et à la rupture définitive. Aucun nouveau versement de dot n'a lieu pour la remplaçante, l'ancienne dot comptant pour la nouvelle union, comme nous l'avons expliqué au chapitre III, article IV.

Enfin, le principe général comporte une exception : la restitution de la dot n'a pas lieu, lorsqu'il y a une compensation équivalente, à titre ou de nature quelconques. De nos jours cette exception ne se rencontre plus que rarement, comme il appert des cas détaillés qui suivent : Ainsi, lorsqu'il y a eu exercice du droit de l'*ikákelo*, ou la mainmise sur la femme d'un des beaux-parents. Même si le montant d'une dot surpasse celui de l'autre, l'excédent n'est pas restitué. Il n'y a non plus aucune obligation de restituer la dot si la femme a été réduite en esclavage ou si elle a été tuée. Tels encore les cas de rupture cités au chapitre V, article IV, § 2, n° 2, ex. 17 et au chapitre VI, article V, § 4. Si la rupture a causé une guerre et que de part et d'autre le nombre de tués est assez considérable (trois, cinq, six cadavres), l'affaire en reste là; après l'indemnisation des familles des tués, on ne parle plus de remboursement. Exceptionnellement un homme influent et riche, en même temps que rancunier ou excessivement orgueilleux, reprenait les armes pour une seconde fois. Il prétendait ne pas cesser avant d'avoir en mains les valeurs dotales. Cette façon d'agir était universellement désapprouvée, et sa propre famille même tâchait de l'arrêter. Si le clan opposé était assez fort et opiniâtre dans la lutte, le mari n'obtenait rien du tout. Mais le désir de se venger ou d'être renommé comme guerrier faisait parfois faire fi des pertes financières. Enfin, dans la conception de nos indigènes, le cas de l'inimitié entre deux clans (que nous avons cité dans l'application du refuge) doit être rangé dans cette catégorie de compensations.

L'obligation de restituer la dot incombe au père de la femme ou à son remplaçant (père, oncle, fils, frère, etc., selon la hiérarchie familiale). Et cela, non seulement quant aux valeurs qu'il a touchées personnellement, mais encore quant à tout ce qui a été payé à n'importe quel membre de la famille. Tous ces versements, en effet, forment une seule et même dot, et toutes ces personnes sont solidairement représentées par lui. C'est à lui de les convoquer pour la discussion et l'examen des versements effectués. Et si des contestations surgissent, ils n'ont qu'à les aplanir entre eux. Pour cela point n'est besoin que le père ait personnellement vu et su ces paiements : le témoignage du *ndonga* suffit. Si l'un ou l'autre des parents a mal agi en omettant de porter les paiements à la connaissance de l'individu responsable, celui-ci n'a qu'à s'en prendre au délinquant. D'aucune façon il ne peut refuser de restituer ces valeurs. Le mari doit rester totalement hors de cause.

Quant à la part de la mère, elle et son clan doivent restituer ce qu'ils ont touché. Et cela même lorsqu'elle a rompu avec le père de sa fille. Celui-ci la convoque et l'invite à rendre les valeurs. Il est rare que cet arrangement suscite quelque difficulté. En aucune façon, la part de la mère ne peut être réclamée au père.

Enfin, les Nkundó exigent que le remboursement se fasse en une seule fois et globalement. Ici ils n'admettent pas de morcellement ni d'intervalles (comme pour le versement de la dot); probablement veulent-ils éviter de nouvelles discussions et des palabres interminables. Exceptionnellement on s'arrange à l'amiable pour accorder un délai nécessaire à la complétion de l'un ou l'autre détail ou d'une petite partie des valeurs à restituer.

Comme on l'a vu ci-dessus, la restitution doit avoir lieu entre le mari et la famille de la femme. Le nouveau mari n'a pas à y intervenir. A lui n'incombe que le devoir de payer une dot à ses beaux-parents. Il n'a aucune obligation envers l'ancien mari; celui-ci ne peut s'adresser à lui pour recouvrer ses valeurs; il n'a qu'à les réclamer à la famille de la femme. D'où l'axiome : *njéngi la njéngi ntákimánáká* = les deux maris ne peuvent se poursuivre (¹).

Restituer la dot s'appelle *úndoja* (*baúmbá*, *jèngí*, etc.),

---

(¹) Excepté, évidemment, lorsque le nouveau mari se met en tort en prenant chez lui la femme avant la consommation du divorce (cfr. *supra*).

dont la forme intransitive est *úndola* (rentrer dans les frais de dot), et le passif *únjwa*=être restitué. Le substantif est *njúndó* ou *wăndó* (restitution, remboursement).

§ 2. Modes de restitution.

Le père de la femme peut rembourser la dot :

1° Ou bien au moyen des valeurs reçues du nouveau mari. Plus donc celui-ci se hâte de s'exécuter, plus tôt la nouvelle union sera définitivement arrangée.

2° Ou bien, de ses propres moyens=*lontumú*, ou *bokakata* (*ekakata*), intensitif, dérivé de *likata*=main. De cette façon-ci, la situation est régularisée plus tôt et l'on évite les réclamations de l'ancien mari. Parfois on restitue ainsi pour faire montre de richesse et de générosité.

Dans ces cas, le père agit spontanément, de son propre gré. Mais peut-il être obligé de restituer ainsi de ses propres moyens?

Oui, dans tous les cas où la dot est encore en possession de la famille de la femme, elle doit être restituée immédiatement. La chose se conçoit sans peine; aucune difficulté d'exécution pratique n'entrave le remboursement dans ces circonstances.

Bien que, généralement, les valeurs dotales aient déjà été dépensées pour l'acquisition d'une autre femme (*nkita*), il n'en est pourtant pas toujours ainsi. Par exemple, lorsqu'il ne s'est écoulé entre l'élaboration du mariage et le divorce qu'un laps de temps très restreint. Ceci était et est peu fréquent. D'autres cas arrivaient plus rarement encore jadis : on ne voulait pas que la richesse dotale restât improductive. Actuellement, ils sont déjà plus fréquents : le développement du sentiment de générosité envers les fils ou frères puînés fait souvent que les valeurs sont réservées à leur intention.

Si la dot a déjà été aliénée, la solution est moins nette.

Sous l'ancien régime, la question était assez claire, ce qui n'est plus le cas à présent. Mais procédons par étapes.

Anciennement, la question se posait comme suit : Théoriquement, la famille de la femme n'était pas — par hypothèse — en mesure de restituer. Dans la pratique, toutefois, elle y parvenait, soit par la substitution d'une autre femme, soit par l'emprunt des valeurs nécessaires, soit en donnant au mari la dot touchée pour une parente de la divorcée. Le mari disposait de certains moyens pour forcer son beau-père (cfr. *supra*). D'autres fois, la menace d'une guerre émouvait les notabilités claniques. Celles-ci ne cessaient de pousser à la restitution, et à moins que le débiteur ne fût lui-même le plus influent et d'un caractère irréductible, il cédait à leurs instances. Si, au contraire, le mari n'avait pas recours aux moyens mentionnés, il était bien obligé d'attendre que son beau-père ait reçu une nouvelle dot.

Actuellement, ces anciennes coutumes ont été abolies. Toute la question en est donc bouleversée. Pourtant, malgré le changement des modalités extérieures, l'Administration coloniale désire agir dans l'esprit de l'ancienne législation indigène.

Le décret du 15 avril 1926, en instituant les juridictions indigènes régulières et en leur donnant la compétence de juger selon le propre droit des tribus adapté aux circonstances changées, a armé ces tribunaux pour travailler à cette adaptation. Mais en pratique celle-ci n'a pas encore été réalisée. La chose doit être attribuée à la difficulté de trouver une solution qui, d'un côté, continue l'esprit de l'ancien système et, de l'autre, satisfasse les aspirations légitimes vers un meilleur statut, aspirations favorisées d'ailleurs par le pouvoir colonisateur. Et ici il faut surtout songer à l'abandon progressif de la polygamie.

L'autorité européenne ne semble pas encore bien fixée au sujet du mode de restitution à adopter dans les circonstances présentes, question qui est d'ailleurs de la compétence des juridictions indigènes (1).

Dans les milieux indigènes les avis sont partagés. On y distingue deux projets de solution.

A. — Une forte tendance se dessine pour le maintien de la distinction, mentionnée plus haut, entre la rupture causée par la femme et sa répudiation par le mari. En soi, la chose est bonne, mais elle est sujette à un grave inconvénient : le danger, notamment, d'exagérer l'importance du dernier cas. Car, nous l'avons vu, si le mari répudie sa femme, c'est généralement sa faute à elle.

La différence de procédé que cette tendance met entre les deux cas est la suivante :

1° Est-ce la femme qui s'enfuit, la famille devra restituer de ses propres moyens. Si elle se récuse ou tarde trop, il faudrait emprisonner la « divorceuse » ou sa mère. Généralement, cette dernière peut plus aisément être atteinte que celle-là; et même s'il n'y a aucune difficulté spéciale de jeter le grappin sur la fille, l'emprisonnement de la mère est d'une plus grande efficacité.

Les critiques qu'il faut faire contre ce système sont :

a) On préconise des sanctions contre la mère, qui devrait rester hors de cause, à moins qu'il ne soit prouvé qu'elle est en faute (2). L'ancien droit admettait des sanctions contre la femme elle-même. Quant à la guerre, elle faisait pâtir les deux partis, mais avait peu d'effet sur la mère de la « divorceuse ». D'autre part, la compensation par la mainmise sur la mère de la divorcée ou sur une épouse du beau-père n'était qu'un moyen de fortune et applicable seulement dans les circonstances favorables, puisqu'elle n'était pas prononcée par les autorités, mais qu'elle était une arrestation par surprise, de par l'initiative purement privée du mari lésé. Par conséquent, à mon avis, elle ne doit pas être tolérée, excepté lorsque la responsabilité de la mère dans la rupture est prouvée.

---

(1) Quant à l'emprisonnement de la « divorceuse », — adaptation de l'*etáka*, — après avoir réprouvé cette pratique elle en a récemment reconnu la légitimité (avril 1935).

(2) Cfr. *supra*, art. II, § 2, dernier alinéa.

b) Bien que l'emprisonnement de la femme puisse avoir deux buts et que sa pratique obtienne un double effet : diminuer la fréquence des divorces, en punissant la coupable, et hâter la restitution de la dot, il importe pourtant de les bien distinguer dans la discussion théorique. L'emprisonnement comme punition a été déjà étudié. Ici nous en traitons uniquement comme moyen de faire restituer la dot ou de raccourcir le délai. Ainsi considéré, il est une contrainte par corps. Celle-ci ne peut porter sur la femme, qui n'a pas d'obligation, mais bien sur le père, s'il manque aux devoirs lui imposés par la loi, c'est-à-dire s'il refuse de procéder au remboursement auquel il est obligé par le droit ou s'il omet de prendre les mesures pour pouvoir le faire (ou encore s'il est convaincu de négligence dans le devoir qu'il a d'intervenir auprès de sa fille pour qu'elle respecte ses engagements). Dans la pratique il faudrait que le tort du père existât réellement et que son mauvais vouloir soit établi. L'emprisonnement de la « divorceuse » éviterait que le père fût poursuivi pour une situation contre laquelle il est lui-même incapable de réagir.

c) La tendance en cause pourrait empêcher des femmes de polygames de contracter un mariage monogamique, et, de ce fait, elle pourrait se mettre en opposition avec l'esprit de la loi. Cet inconvénient ne serait pourtant pas difficile à éviter.

En effet, la monogamie jouissant de la faveur du droit écrit, il suffirait d'un contrôle régulier et sérieux sur l'activité des juridictions indigènes.

2° S'agit-il d'une rupture causée par le mari, les partisans de ce système exigent la restitution de la dot seulement dès qu'une nouvelle dot aura été versée, ou plutôt, dès que la femme aura un nouvel époux. Certains vont même plus loin encore et prétendent imposer une restitution seulement partielle : une partie de la dot serait retenue par la famille de la femme en punition de la faute du mari.

Contre cette règle nous devons remarquer :

a) Loin de trouver un point d'appui dans la loi coutumière, elle est en flagrante opposition avec elle (cfr. ci-dessus et plus loin).

b) Elle présente également l'inconvénient de mettre une certaine entrave au développement du mariage monogamique stable. Non pas au mariage monogamique sans plus. Car pour un païen ou un protestant il n'y a aucune difficulté et la règle ne leur nuit pas. Si leur mariage ne tient pas, il leur est toujours loisible d'avoir recours au divorce, de façon que cette règle ne leur soit pas applicable : ils peuvent continuer la cohabitation jusqu'à ce que la femme les abandonne. Pour un catholique la situation est toute différente. Il sait que son mariage religieux est indissoluble. Mais avant de le contracter, la discipline ecclésiastique locale et actuelle l'oblige à payer la dot et, par conséquent, à s'engager dans une union coutumière et à se soumettre à ses règles juridiques, alors qu'en conscience cette dernière union ne saurait être pour lui un mariage. La même chose vaut — *mutatis mutandis* — pour un catéchumène lorsqu'il s'agit de recevoir le baptême et d'élever par là son mariage coutumier et légitime au rang de sacrement. Supposons que sa femme, tout en voulant rester chez lui, — sincèrement ou pour éviter à ses parents les frais d'un remboursement, — se montre d'un tempérament peu propre à la vie conjugale, ou que sa conduite soit loin d'être conforme à la morale catholique. Dans ces éventualités, le mari s'expose à des suites d'une gravité extrême. Car dans n'importe quel cas, la vie commune deviendra à la longue intenable et la femme abandonnera un jour son époux, qui, de ce fait, se trouvera devant un dilemme très douloureux : ou bien il devra rester célibataire, ou bien il se mettra en opposition flagrante avec sa conscience. Il est donc sage que cette femme le quitte pendant qu'il y a encore moyen d'arranger la situation. Or, la solution que nous discutons ici y oppose des difficultés telles que beaucoup d'hommes en sont rebutés. Et cela au détriment de l'évolution vers un niveau moral supérieur et un meilleur ordre social, bien que le fonctionnement normal des tribunaux indigènes puisse en partie éviter cet inconvénient, en obligeant le père de la femme à hâter le remboursement de la dot.

B. — Les graves inconvénients inhérents au système que nous venons de décrire ont déterminé une autre partie de la population à chercher une solution qui éviterait ces difficultés. Ce sont surtout des chrétiens qui la préconisent. Mais comme ils ont encore très peu d'influence dans le domaine politique, ils n'ont que peu de chances de faire triompher leur opinion. A leur avis il faudrait exiger le remboursement de la dot dans tous les cas, et l'on ne pourrait obliger à restituer immédiatement que lorsque la dot n'a pas encore été dépensée au moment de la rupture. Ils admettent également l'emprisonnement comme sanction contre la « divorceuse ».

Ce système prête également à critique : il est peu conforme à l'esprit de l'ancienne législation indigène, qui permettait au mari l'emploi de moyens propres à se faire rembourser immédiatement.

A mon avis, il faudrait que l'on fît la part des choses, ayant en vue uniquement la protection de l'ordre social par la stabilisation des mariages, d'une part, et, de l'autre, l'évolution vers un ordre meilleur, en favorisant les unions monogamiques, conformément à la législation coloniale et la pratique administrative (¹).

Il nous reste à signaler ici que dans divers endroits les indigènes prétendent que le premier système est prôné par les Européens. C'est leur réponse à l'objection, — que j'ai faite plus d'une fois, — que leur solution manque de conformité avec leur ancienne loi. D'un côté, il faut dire que, à présent, l'Administration ne semble pas patroner leur système. D'autre part, il m'est difficile d'admettre que ce soit une excuse cherchée pour le besoin de la cause. Car j'ai entendu l'affirmation dans la bouche de plus d'un indigène auquel le système faisait clairement et réellement tort. Il n'est pas impossible, pour ces raisons, que, avant l'organisation des juridictions indigènes, l'un ou l'autre agent du Gouvernement ait parlé et agi dans le sens d'une approbation du système en question.

Cette digression sur la pratique à adopter dans la question du remboursement de la dot est devenue longue. Mais son importance capitale pour le développement ultérieur de la société indigène demande cette insistance particulière.

§ 3. Formalités de la restitution.

L'unique formalité de la restitution de la dot est qu'elle doit se faire obligatoirement par l'entremise du (des) *ndonga*. C'est lui qui, étant le témoin officiel, a compétence pour dire ce qui a été payé. Nul versement, aucun cadeau qui n'a pas passé par ses mains, ou qu'il n'a pas vu, n'est reconnu devoir être restitué. Parfois, en effet, il arrive que certains paiements ont été effectués sans son intervention. On n'en peut exiger la restitution. Le témoin officiel n'en a pas eu connaissance, et par consé-

---

(¹) Cfr. aussi le chap. VI, art. VII, § 7, et l'article sur « La réaction indigène contre les divorces », dans *Congo*, 1935, t. I, p. 11.

quent il n'y a aucune obligation d'en tenir compte. Seulement, il reste toujours la possibilité des transactions à l'amiable.

Si les *ndonga* étaient tous morts entre-temps, la procédure n'en souffre pourtant pas, car l'hérédité de leur office est reconnue par le droit nkundó. Son frère, fils, etc. peut agir au nom du défunt, qui, parfois longtemps avant sa mort, lui a donné toutes les explications nécessaires et utiles. Le témoignage du successeur est reconnu légitime et valide.

D'autre part, le *ndonga* peut être assisté, et son témoignage corroboré, voire rectifié, par d'autres hommes intègres et influents qui ont été présents aux versements. Il est clair que ceci a été établi par la loi coutumière, afin d'obtenir le meilleur résultat possible dans l'exercice de la justice.

Ceci se conçoit d'autant plus facilement que les versements sont nombreux, différents, séparés par des intervalles et effectués pendant toute la durée de l'union conjugale. D'où longues discussions et contestations.

Il n'est pas sans intérêt d'attirer spécialement l'attention sur cette nécessité du témoignage du *ndonga* dans le remboursement de la dot, parce que cette règle n'est pas toujours bien observée. Ainsi j'ai connu le cas suivant : un capitaine de bateau, originaire de la Haute-Ikelemba, prend comme concubine une fille de cette région-ci. L'absence de *ndonga* et l'omission d'une véritable dot prouvaient leur volonté de ne pas s'engager dans un mariage légitime. Pourtant, l'homme versait des valeurs (surtout argent et étoffes) aux parents de la femme. A la fin de ce concubinage, qui avait duré d'assez longues années, l'ensemble des cadeaux s'élevait à une valeur de plus de 1.000 francs. Après la séparation, le mari réclame la possession de la fille née de l'union. Le tribunal, chargé d'examiner le cas, ordonne — avec l'approbation de l'administrateur — la restitution des paiements effectués et attribue l'enfant à son père naturel, moyennant l'observation des règles coutumières (Cfr. l'article suivant). Le père de la femme avait assez le sens de l'honnêteté pour restituer les cadeaux, — bien que, légalement, il n'y eût pour lui aucune obligation, — mais il réclamait l'enfant de sa fille. Toutefois le tribunal ne voulut rien entendre à ses réclamations, quoique, devant le droit nkundó il eût dû lui rendre justice.

En dehors de cette intervention des témoins, il n'y a aucune formalité spéciale dans la restitution de la dot. On y procède selon les règles prescrites par les coutumes et convenances nkundó, pour n'importe quelle discussion en assemblée familiale ou clanique. Le tout étant terminé, l'ayant droit ramasse et prend avec lui son dû.

§ 4. Matières de la restitution.

De part et d'autre, tous les versements effectués doivent être restitués : dot dans toutes ses constituantes, part de la mère, cadeaux, paiements à l'occasion d'un décès, etc., d'un côté et de l'autre, contre-dot (*nkɔmí*) et cadeaux divers. Tout cela est matière à restitution. La qualité des personnes qui ont payé ou touché n'importe pas, pourvu qu'elles soient réellement de la parenté et que le témoignage du *ndonga* reconnaisse le versement. Mais c'est le père seul qui doit au gendre.

Les discussions sur la quantité et la qualité des valeurs étant terminées, tout est additionné des deux côtés. Puis on fait la soustraction. Le restant est remis à qui de droit. Supposons que les valeurs dotales se chiffrent au total de 125 anneaux de cuivre (1), tandis que le *nkɔmí* (contre-dot payée par la famille de la femme) atteint la somme de 60 anneaux. Le mari a droit seulement à 125—60=65 anneaux. Si la dot et la contre-dot sont égales, aucun paiement de restitution n'est effectué. Si la contre-dot surpasse la dot, c'est le mari qui doit rembourser l'excédent. Toutefois, dans la pratique on ne pousse pas la rigueur à l'extrême et par politesse complaisante on laisse même au mari une dizaine d'anneaux. Mais cette éventualité ne se réalise que lorsque la femme ne lui a pas donné de progéniture. Car le fait d'accepter ces anneaux et d'omettre le paiement auquel en théorie il est obligé le priverait des droits sur ses enfants qui tous appartiendraient désormais à leur clan maternel. Faire ce calcul différentiel s'appelle *umanya*, et à l'intransitif = *umana* (*jěngi la nkɔmí bámana*).

---

(1) Comme il a été dit au chap. II, tout paiement peut être ramené à une valeur en anneaux de cuivre.

En principe, c'est entre la contre-dot et les cadeaux (*belonga*) que se fait le décompte. Pourtant, si les *belonga* ne suffisent pas, on retranche aux paiements dotaux proprement dits les valeurs manquantes.

Toutefois, le *bɔsɔ́ngɔ* (¹) n'entre jamais en ligne de compte. C'est que, disent les indigènes, il constitue un paiement à part auquel on ne touche pas. Supposons le montant des *belonga* et autres paiements inférieur à la contre-dot : même dans ce cas on ne retranche rien au *bɔsɔ́ngɔ*. Il doit toujours être restitué intégralement.

Quant aux esclaves ou aux animaux domestiques, non seulement tombent-ils sous la loi du remboursement, mais en outre toute leur progéniture doit être restituée, même si elle comprend plusieurs générations. Cette prescription s'entend dans la ligne féminine (comparez l'ancien adage romain : *partus sequitur ventrem*). On excepte pourtant poules et canards.

Pour indiquer que de part et d'autre on est obligé de restituer absolument tout ce qui a été versé, on emploie l'expression : *lá nsɔngi lá lɔkéé* = même l'aiguille et le menu rasoir.

(¹) Cfr. chap. II, art. IX.

Le remboursement de la dot dans le cas où la femme retourne à son premier mari n'est régi par aucune règle spéciale. On restitue tout simplement au second son dû. Souvent la famille de l'épouse fait appel à la *générosité* du premier mari, afin de hâter le remboursement.

Si la femme abandonne le second mari aussi bien que le premier, sans que celui-ci ait été préalablement remboursé, il y a restitution aux deux.

Nous avons vu que le premier mari peut s'emparer des valeurs dotales de son rival pour s'indemniser du dommage que celui-ci lui a causé. La famille de la femme ne doit pas restituer ces valeurs-là, car elle ne les a pas touchées. Cette affaire ne la regarde donc pas, mais uniquement les deux rivaux. Nonobstant tout le droit du premier mari, cette façon d'agir suscitait souvent une guerre. C'est par crainte de rixes et autres suites désagréables que cette pratique est actuellement abandonnée. Pourtant l'idée n'en est pas morte, comme le montre le cas suivant, arrivé en 1932 :

Engóndó de Lóngá (Nkóle) *fait* la connaissance de Bosénjá, fille de Bokelé wá Yelemeya, de Ntómbá (Wângatá). Celle-ci, mariée à un travailleur de Lóngá (Ekonda), nommé Iɔngú et originaire des Boángi, quitte celui-ci pour suivre son nouvel amant, qui paie l'*ikulá-ndanga* (9 anneaux et 35 francs). Après *x* mois, l'union ne tient plus. Bosénjá ne convient pas comme épouse. Entre autres défauts, on lui reproche de ne pas aimer la mère et les autres parents de son *fiancé*, de ne les aider ni respecter. Après la rupture, le père Bokelé *refuse* de restituer quoi que ce soit, en répondant à Engóndó : « Tu n'avais qu'à laisser la femme d'autrui tranquille ».

Tout cela est pourtant en opposition *flagrante* avec le droit nkundó. 1° Engóndó était en tort, en prenant chez lui l'épouse d'autrui. 2° Iɔngú aurait pu — au moment du versement — ravir à Engóndó ses valeurs ; c'était son droit. Mais, 3° Bokelé est également *en faute*. L'affaire de débauchement et l'adultère ne le regarde pas, lui, mais loongú. Si la façon d'agir d'Engóndó ne lui plaisait pas, il n'avait qu'à s'y prendre d'autre manière. A présent il a en mains des valeurs dotales auxquelles il n'a plus aucun droit : il n'a qu'à restituer.

CONCLUSION.

La nature et les diverses circonstances du remboursement dotal pourraient suggérer la conclusion que ces capitaux ne sont pas acquis définitivement, mais qu'ils constituent plutôt des gages. Les quelques exceptions où le remboursement n'a pas lieu ne sauraient infirmer cette manière de voir. En effet, ce sont des exceptions nettement motivées. Leur raison d'être consiste en ce que la non-restitution est compensée par ailleurs (1).

Pourtant cette conclusion ne tient plus lorsqu'on compare à tout cela ce qui a lieu lors de la rupture du mariage par le décès. Dans ce dernier cas, en effet, on ne restitue absolument rien : tout ce qui a été donné de part et d'autre reste définitivement acquis. On n'exige même aucun paiement pour les enfants. (Cfr. ci-après.)

Pourquoi cette différence fondamentale ? La raison qui s'impose est que — originairement et fondamentalement — les valeurs dotales deviennent la propriété de la partie réceptrice. La restitution lors du divorce est nécessitée par les circonstances : sans elle la femme ne pourrait plus se remarier. C'est une concession faite à sa faiblesse. Des deux règles diamétralement opposées : restitution et non-restitution, l'une doit être primitive et primordiale, l'autre accessoire et surajoutée. Cette dernière est la règle du divorce.

---

(1) Cette constatation — comme d'autres indiquées plus haut — pourraient nous faire penser que dans l'esprit des Nkundó la guerre et autres pratiques sanglantes ne sont que des moyens peu recommandables et que, au fond de leur mentalité, ces gens les désapprouvent.

Cette conclusion se trouve fortement confirmée par toutes les autres stipulations du droit nkundó relativement au divorce, ses motifs et la façon d'y procéder.

ARTICLE IV. — PAYEMENT POUR ENFANTS.

La règle qui exige la restitution de la totalité des valeurs versées comporte une restriction, que nous allons étudier. Cette restriction est le paiement pour enfants.

Si des enfants sont nés de l'union rompue, le père doit laisser à la famille de la femme 10 à 15 (à présent jusqu'à 20 et 25) anneaux de cuivre pour chaque enfant, garçon ou fille. Si après défalcation de la contre-dot il ne lui reste pas de valeurs en quantité suffisante, il doit combler le déficit par d'autres moyens. Celui qui ne cède pas ces valeurs ne peut plus faire valoir aucun droit sur ses enfants. Ils appartiennent désormais à la famille de leur mère.

Si le divorce intervient avant le versement du *bọsọ́ngọ*, le mari est en outre obligé d'effectuer ce dernier pour obtenir droit à ses enfants. S'il refuse de s'acquitter de cette obligation, la famille de l'épouse peut lui ravir un enfant à titre de compensation.

C'est lors de la discussion sur la restitution de la dot que le mari doit se désister des biens exigés pour régler la situation des enfants. La totalité des valeurs auxquelles il a droit lui ayant été transmise par le *ndonga*, il doit en prélever le montant du paiement pour les enfants et le rendre à la famille de la femme. L'abstention de cet acte équivaut à l'abandon de ses droits.

La famille de la femme ne fait aucun effort pour conserver les enfants issus du mariage rompu. Elle insiste, au contraire, auprès du mari pour qu'il leur cède les valeurs requises, afin qu'il conserve ses droits sur sa progéniture légitime. Toutefois, elle ne peut le forcer : le père est entièrement libre de prendre ses enfants ou de leur préférer la partie de la dot en question. Mais il est obligé de choisir entre les deux alternatives.

Tout indigène tient à ses enfants. Aussi l'insouciance à leur égard et le fait de préférer reprendre l'entièreté de la dot sont tout à fait exceptionnels. Pourtant on rencontre des cas, comme celui-ci :

Bumba, fille de Loótá, de Bokenyola (Losenge, Bombwanja), est mariée à Elímílęlę, de Lǫsǫ́fi. Après *x* années de mariage, celui-ci répudie sa femme enceinte, je ne sais pourquoi. On a beau lui représenter la stupidité de son acte, rien n'y fait. Bumba retourne donc chez son frère Ifásó et y accouche d'une fille. Ifásó invite le père à venir voir son enfant et en même temps à se réconcilier avec son épouse. Refus de la part d'Elímílęlę. Après un certain temps Bumba est mariée à un autre homme, mais cette union ne tient pas. On lui substitue une *bankilsá*, et Bumba est épousée par Bokángo, de Bokengé. Celui-ci paie pour elle une dot de 80 anneaux. Elímílęlę est invité à venir recevoir son dû. Cette fois il s'amène. Il prend tout, sans laisser la moindre chose comme paiement pour sa fille. On le prie de se désister de 25 anneaux, pour ne pas être privé de ses droits sur l'enfant. Il ne veut rien entendre : il préfère reprendre la dot en son entier. Cette fille, Bombúla, est sur le point de se marier à Bolongólokolo, de Bompela (Bokátola). La dot qui doit être versée sera touchée par son clan maternel, tandis que son père ne recevra rien du tout. Plus jamais il ne pourra réclamer le moindre paiement de la part de son gendre. Celui-ci n'est d'ailleurs que son gendre naturel : au point de vue juridique, Elímílęlę n'est pas son beau-père. Bombúla, de son côté, ne doit plus reconnaître son père, puisqu'il l'a reniée. Elle appartient uniquement à son clan maternel, et la famille de son père ne pourra plus jamais faire valoir aucun droit sur elle, ni sur sa descendance.

Notons, pour finir, que, dans le « bas » de la région étudiée on commence à effectuer un paiement pour un enfant naturel, soit qu'il y ait eu début de versement de dot, soit qu'il n'y en ait pas eu du tout. Autrefois, il n'était nullement question de pareille pratique : dans son clan paternel, en effet, et surtout dans les villages environnants, l'enfant aurait été considéré comme esclave. Et l'on peut dire qu'actuellement encore, dans les villages de l'intérieur et pratiquement dans toute la région dont nous traitons, cette mentalité n'a pas changé. Ce sont les centres européens qui permettent l'éclosion de cette coutume, sous l'influence des idées chrétiennes. Pratiquement, les cas ne se présentent que lorsque les personnes en question sont originaires de villages fort distants et sont établies définitivement (pour autant qu'on peut employer ce terme) dans leur résidence extracoutumière.

ARTICLE V.

SITUATION DES ANCIENS ÉPOUX ET DE LEURS ENFANTS.

Une fois la palabre du remboursement des valeurs arrangée, les anciens conjoints deviennent des étrangers l'un pour l'autre.

Leurs familles, cependant, continuent parfois les relations mutuelles. En effet, nous avons vu que la femme divorcée peut être remplacée dans ses fonctions conjugales par une parente. Dans ce cas, les relations d'alliance sont produites par la persistance du pacte dotal [1].

A part ces cas de substitution, tout lien est donc rompu tant entre les anciens époux qu'entre leurs clans respectifs.

La femme divorcée ne peut plus faire valoir le moindre droit sur les cultures qu'elle a établies sur le terrain défriché par son époux. En général, tous les fruits de ses activités diverses restent la propriété du mari; elle-même n'y a plus aucun droit. Il n'est pourtant pas rare, de nos jours, que des conjoints, lors de leur séparation définitive, partagent certains bénéfices de leur travail commun, comme argent, habits, étoffes, ustensiles de ménage (1).

---

[1] Cfr. chap. III, art. IX.

Quant aux enfants issus de ce mariage, ils résident soit chez leur père, soit chez leur mère, d'après les circonstances. Ils se rendent en visite de l'un à l'autre. Aussi longtemps qu'ils sont encore en bas âge, ils demeurent presque toujours chez leur mère. Dès qu'ils commencent à pouvoir s'en tirer eux-mêmes (entre 8 et 14 ans, d'après les cas), ils vont habiter chez leur père. Les filles séjournent souvent plus longtemps chez leur mère, parfois même jusqu'au mariage.

Les parents ne se montrent pas difficiles et ne se cherchent pas misère pour cette question. Ce n'est que lorsqu'un enfant demeure pour ainsi dire continuellement chez l'un des deux que l'attachement de l'autre à son enfant devient jaloux.

Lorsque arrive le moment de toucher la dot, les parents font valoir leurs droits respectifs. Pour les garçons, lorsqu'ils désirent prendre femme, le père leur procure la somme nécessaire pour servir de dot. Si le jeune homme n'obtient pas satisfaction il peut toujours s'adresser à ses oncles maternels, qui ne manqueront pas à leur devoir d'amour familial, — à moins qu'ils n'en trouvent pas les moyens, — et leur clan sera accru d'un nouveau foyer.

Bref, le divorce sépare les conjoints, rompt l'alliance spéciale entre les deux familles, mais les enfants continuent à traiter leurs parents comme s'ils étaient encore unis. Et cela d'une façon toute naturelle, sans contention aucune; pour les Nkundó cette chose est toute simple, et ils y sont parfaitement habitués, puisque les divorces ne sont pas si rares.

---

(1) Cfr. chap. VI, art. II.

ARTICLE VI.

PRATIQUES D'ENVOUTEMENT RELATIVES AU DIVORCE.

Il ne me semble pas dépourvu d'intérêt de consacrer quelques lignes aux pratiques d'envoûtement qui sont en vogue parmi nos populations et employées à l'occasion du divorce. Nous ne parlons pas des philtres d'amour; à proprement parler ils ne seraient pas à leur place ici (1). Nous nous bornons donc à donner une idée générale des pratiques en usage, soit pour empêcher la femme de quitter son mari, soit pour se venger d'un divorce, soit pour faire revenir la fugitive.

Comme on le comprendra, ces buts s'enchevêtrent souvent.

1° La trinité *ikę́táki-itǫ́kǫ-ntómbá* est considérée par les indigènes comme trois pratiques apparentées. Nous y voyons plutôt trois formes d'une même pratique.

Toutes trois sont originaires des Ntómbá du lac Tumba et de là ont été introduites chez les Nkundó, — directement, ou indirectement, par certaines tribus Ekonda intermédiaires, — et cela aux temps modernes. Avant la colonisation elles étaient inconnues ici. Actuellement même elles ne sont pas encore répandues partout : elles n'ont pas encore traversé la Momboyo. L'ordre chronologique d'introduction est *ikę́táki*, *itǫ́kǫ*, *ntómbá*.

Leur esprit animateur est le léopard. Leur but primordial est de rappeler une épouse infidèle et, devant son obstination, de la tuer, elle ou son séducteur. Subsidiairement, elles servent aussi à donner la mort à un ennemi quelconque, spécialement à titre de représailles.

Les trois pratiques diffèrent dans le procédé de fabrication et le mode d'emploi. Nous ne pouvons entrer dans le détail de tout cela; ce serait sortir du cadre de cette étude.

---

(1) Cfr. chap. I. Ire partie, art. VIII.

Qu'il nous suffise de dire que le propriétaire de la pratique à la compétence duquel on a recours commence par appeler la femme, au moyen d'une corne d'antilope, dans laquelle il souffle surtout le matin très tôt au chant du coq (1). Si l'appelée ne revient pas, la pratique se vengera, soit sur elle, soit sur son amant, selon le désir de l'opérateur. Il faut pourtant une nouvelle intervention, dont le procédé varie d'après la forme adoptée. Notons que dans la conception indigène l'épouse ne saurait pas ne pas entendre l'appel, à quelque distance qu'elle se trouve. Si elle ne revient pas, c'est qu'elle s'obstine et mérite la punition.

L'esprit de vengeance est seul en cause dans :

2° Le *ngǫndę́*. Celui-ci vient de la région de Coquilhatville ou de plus loin encore. Le nom *ngǫndę́* est la forme lolingá du mot lonkundó *nkǫndę́*, qui signifie gavial. De fait les dents de ce reptile entrent dans sa composition. Il est employé pour punir de la mort un voleur quelconque. De ce fait il est déclaré efficace contre quiconque veut débaucher la femme d'autrui. Il produira chez le coupable des gonflements des pieds, qui s'ouvriront en purulant. Jusqu'à présent cette pratique n'a, pas plus que les précédentes, traversé la Momboyo.

Ces usages, comme beaucoup d'autres, sont donc d'introduction récente. Avant l'arrivée des Européens dans ces parages-ci, on y connaissait seulement les philtres d'amour. On comprend pourtant aisément que les Nkundó ont accueilli avec joie et confiance ces nouvelles pratiques, si utiles, — à leur avis, — spécialement dans une matière d'une importance capitale et dans laquelle la colonisation leur a enlevé les moyens anciens de réaction et de sanctionnement.

---

(1) De cette façon les indigènes appellent aussi leurs enfants, etc., partis depuis longtemps dans « le Bas » et qu'ils désirent ardemment voir revenir chez eux.

CHAPITRE IX.

LA MORT.

Comme le sujet de notre étude est uniquement le mariage des Nkundó, c'est sous cet angle restreint que nous envisagerons ce qui se rapporte à leur mort. Quant aux aspects généraux de la question, le lecteur les trouvera dans notre article sur les coutumes funéraires des Nkundó, sous presse, dans *Anthropos*.

ARTICLE I. — CHAGRIN ET DEUIL.

Dans l'étude précitée un mot a été touché des divers degrés d'intensité que peut atteindre le chagrin causé par la mort d'un être chéri.

La douleur, certes, n'exclut pas toujours un mélange d'éléments égoïstes, tel qu'un regret de la perte financière qu'est le décès d'une épouse et l'obligation à la continence et aux divers interdits du veuvage. C'est une chose assez naturelle et qui ne mériterait pas d'être relevée. D'autre part, il serait injuste et contraire à la vérité d'attribuer toute la tristesse à l'influence de ces sentiments inférieurs. En général, il faut voir aussi dans ce chagrin la preuve d'un amour véritable qui souvent en est la cause prépondérante. On rencontre des exceptions cependant, par exemple lorsqu'il s'agit d'une femme âgée, héritée par un polygame.

En comparant les diverses manifestations de la douleur à la mort d'un conjoint avec celles observées à la mort d'un parent, nous remarquons quelques pratiques propres au premier cas. On dirait qu'en ces circonstances les marques de chagrin atteignent leur point culminant, comme si la loi indigène voulait souligner la prépondérance de la relation créée par le mariage sur les liens de la parenté et ainsi manifester son accord avec la loi divine.

Toutefois il est clair que la pratique ne correspond pas toujours à la théorie, pas plus ici qu'ailleurs. Nous ne devons pas nous étonner de ne pas trouver chez ces populations l'amour parfait et idéal, pur de tout égoïsme. Quand déjà chez les peuples universellement qualifiés de « supérieurs » il n'est ni rare ni répréhensible de rencontrer ces retours sur soi dans la douleur ressentie à la mort d'un être cher, peut-on se scandaliser de ce que nos indigènes éprouvent des regrets pareils? Condamne-t-on une jeune veuve qui, tout en regrettant vivement et sincèrement l'époux tendrement aimé que la mort vient de ravir à son affection, pense en même temps à la situation malheureuse qui en résulte pour elle et ses petits enfants? Et l'espoir fondé de trouver quelqu'un qui prendra soin d'elle et des orphelins n'est-il pas une consolation efficace et légitime qui l'aidera à supporter l'épreuve?

Rien d'étonnant donc qu'il en soit ainsi, toutes proportions gardées, de nos Noirs. Et il est assez naturel que, en pratique, ils ressentent une plus grande douleur de la mort d'un père et surtout d'une mère ou d'un enfant, que de la perte d'un mari ou d'une épouse. La situation est toute différente ici et en Europe. Et le régime polygamique avec ses conséquences n'est pas précisément de nature à décourager l'égoïsme et à favoriser l'ascension vers l'idéal d'un amour plus sublime.

Ne soyons donc pas surpris d'entendre une femme se lamenter à la mort du mari : ngóy'ôm'ôkám óye ! = maman, mon mari, ah! Mais pour un enfant ou pour un père ou une mère : ngóya njôlélengana óye ! = maman, je suis privée, ah!, exprimant ainsi un chagrin plus intense. Car un père ou une mère ne se remplacent pas, tandis qu'elle trouvera toujours quelqu'un qui voudra l'épouser. Quant à l'enfant il y a une communauté de vie plus étroite entre lui et ses parents qu'entre conjoints dans le régime polygamique. Il y a aussi plus de marques de tendresse de mère à enfant, et réciproquement, qu'entre époux indigènes.

Immédiatement après le décès de son épouse, le *mari* se voit entouré de toutes les femmes du village qui viennent le maltraiter. Elles l'enduisent à qui mieux mieux de noir de charbon de bois, de terre, de boue et le frottent avec la plante *linsânsă*, qui cause des urtications semblables à celles des orties d'Europe. Parmi les femmes qui commettent ces brutalités il n'y a aucune parente, mais uniquement des étrangères mariées dans le village (celles qu'on nomme *baájdála*). Ces mauvais traitements sont étendus souvent aux proches parents du veuf, c'est-à-dire à ceux que les femmes en question nomment *baóme* = maris et avec lesquels elles pourraient se marier, jamais aux pères et aux parents supérieurs (1). La raison de cette pratique semble être d'intensifier par des douleurs matérielles le chagrin causé par le décès. A cela s'ajoutent les paroles, gestes et mouvements obscènes de provocation, pour bien rappeler au veuf que désormais il devra vivre dans la continence, comme on peut lire *in extenso* dans l'étude citée.

Ensuite, des parents revêtent le veuf d'un *lisáki* = feuille de bananier déchirée partout transversalement. Pour les divers autres habits de deuil, cfr. l'étude détaillée, comme pour toutes les prescriptions et défenses communes.

Les mauvais traitements décrits ne sont pas infligés à la veuve. Ils sont appliqués exclusivement aux hommes.

Pendant la *réclusion*, les règles *générales* valent pour le veuf; elles sont même d'une sévérité particulière pour lui. Ce sont ses parentes qui lui préparent ses frustes repas. Toutefois, si les relations étaient excellentes avec son beau-père, celui-ci lui envoie une femme qui pourvoira à ses besoins. Souvent elle deviendra son épouse, lorsque, après la levée du deuil, il portera l'*ibóleóko* (chapitre III, art. IV).

---

(1) Cfr. chap. V, art. IV, § 1, n° 2, et chap. VI, art. VI.

Durant toute la première période de la réclusion, il ne peut se rendre nulle part, du moins ostensiblement. S'il est obligé de sortir, il doit le faire par derrière. S'il désire aller chez un parent ou ami, il doit passer derrière les cases, dans la bananeraie, même s'il sort le soir. En tout cas, il ne peut quitter le village. Telle était la loi ancienne, qui, maintenant, est de moins en moins observée.

Ensuite, à l'exception de ses parentes, il ne peut avoir le moindre rapport avec une femme. Il ne peut même pas lui donner la main, ni la saluer de vive voix, ni la regarder ne fût-ce qu'au passage.

L'incontinence est sévèrement punie par la morte : elle moleste le coupable, voire l'entraîne au tombeau, lui-même ou une autre personne endeuillée.

La rigueur de la réclusion s'atténue lors de la cérémonie par laquelle débute le retour du veuf à la couchette élevée du sol, une espèce de lit fait, à la manière des Batswá, de troncs d'arbre ou de branches. Après avoir été lavé par la sœur aînée de la défunte, il y est conduit par la femme de son frère aîné. Ayant reçu de son père un couteau, il peut désormais vaquer à ses travaux usuels.

Les dispenses progressives des *interdits alimentaires* doivent *être achetées* par le veuf (veuve), — contrairement aux parents, qui se font simplement *délier*. (*Coutumes funéraires*, II, n° 2, E.) Cette divergence prouve la différence foncière qui existe entre le deuil d'un conjoint et celui d'un parent; pour le premier, obligation sociale stricte dont il ne peut *être délié* que par un achat, sorte de compensation ou de commutation; pour le second, convenance dont on est libéré sans *cérémonie* ni compensation aucunes. Le fait que cette prescription est étendue aux proches parents du veuf (de la veuve) n'infirme pas la conclusion. Au contraire, il la corrobore. Car elle reste manifestement dans la ligne du mariage et jamais elle ne s'étend aux parents du défunt.

Au décès du mari, les veuves et les femmes de ses proches parents achètent les dispenses aux parentes du défunt. A la mort d'une épouse, le mari et ses proches parents les achètent à leurs propres femmes. Le produit global de l'achat fait par toutes les personnes en cause doit être partagé : une moitié revient aux femmes mariées dans le clan; l'autre moitié est réservée à la famille de la défunte.

Le deuil du veuf avec toutes les prescriptions et défenses inhérentes se termine, comme tout deuil, par une grande fête. Après s'être acquitté de ses devoirs, la famille de la défunte organise chez elle une seconde fête, à laquelle le veuf doit assister. C'est à cette occasion, généralement, qu'ont lieu les pourparlers au sujet du remplacement de la défunte. (Chap. III, art. IV.)

ARTICLE II. — RÉCLUSION DES VEUVES.

Comme je l'ai décrit dans l'article mentionné, les veuves (*bituka*, sing. *etuka*, ou, chez les Bombwanja, *besámanyi*, sing. *bosámanyi*) sont, pendant une longue période, astreintes à la réclusion. Avant la cérémonie de la levée de terre elles ne peuvent pas sortir ostensiblement. Plus tard, une plus grande liberté leur est permise; elles peuvent aller partout pour leurs travaux, voire se rendre aux marchés. Seulement, elles sont obligées de passer la nuit dans la case de réclusion commune.

Une veuve qui ne se conformerait pas à ces prescriptions et prohibitions, non seulement serait vivement critiquée comme n'ayant pas aimé son mari (et, conséquemment, soupçonnée d'avoir causé sa mort par des maléfices), mais s'exposerait en outre à la colère vengeresse du défunt, qui la molesterait dans son sommeil, la rosserait de coups lorsqu'elle se rend seule en forêt, ou encore viendrait la prendre pour l'emmener avec lui dans l'autre monde.

Autant que faire se peut, toutes les veuves sont réunies dans une seule et même case. Afin de compléter la séparation du monde, on ferme l'entrée au moyen d'un cercle de palmes, comme cela se fait pour la case de réclusion d'une femme qui allaite, d'une *bolúmbú* ou d'une femme possédée de l'esprit du *bongóli* (*yëbola*). C'est pour éviter que les veuves n'aient de relations avec les passants.

Le nom de la case de réclusion est *lokásá* (même mot que « feuille »). Les Bombwanja emploient le mot *lokombí* (de *komba*=fermer, clôturer), les Injóló et Boángi, *lonkindá* (7).

Pendant la dernière période de la réclusion, les veuves ne peuvent pas recevoir les visites d'amants qui désirent les courtiser en vue du mariage après le deuil, mais elles ont le droit d'en accepter des vivres divers et du bois de chauffage. Ces services rendus par des étrangers, c'est-à-dire non apparentés aux héritiers, sont plutôt mal vus. Car, en principe, les veuves appartiennent à ceux-ci; elles sont leurs épouses, puisque le contrat financier du mariage persiste (8). Pourtant, si ces hommes ne sont pas en inimitié avec les héritiers, on ne s'y oppose guère. Car, la réclusion terminée, les veuves sont libres de se disperser dans leurs familles respectives et d'y être prises en mariage par n'importe qui peut payer la dot. Il n'est pourtant pas permis aux prétendants d'entrer dans la case de réclusion, même pas dans cette période. Ils doivent donc faire passer les cadeaux par l'intermédiaire des *biúnanyí* (sing. *eúnanyí*), c'est-à-dire les parentes du défunt.

Cette dernière période débute par la cérémonie de la levée de terre. On fait monter les veuves sur les *beóngá*

---

(7) Les Ekonda : [illegible].

(8) Cfr. chap. III, art. IX.

=bákondeja bituka ndá beóngá. Les *beóngá* sont des branches fendues du parasolier, qui, posées sur des branches longitudinales, à leur tour fixées sur des pieux, constituent une couchette primitive, qui est le lit authentique des Batswá, mais est parfois employé aussi par les Baotó, s'ils n'ont rien de mieux. C'est là-dessus que, désormais, les veuves peuvent prendre leur repos; elles peuvent « se lever du sol ». Ces branches de parasolier sont nommées *beóngá*, sing. *boóngá*=bois mort, sec. On emploie aussi le même radical avec d'autres préfixes : *eóngá*, pl. *bióngá*; *loóngá*, pl. *mbóngá*. Le verbe est *áta*=fendre, ou *fanja*=tailler. A présent on commence à mitiger la sévérité de cette coutume en remplaçant les *beóngá* par des *beánga* ou lits transportables en claie.

Cette cérémonie est accompagnée de quelques danses et aspergée d'un peu de bière. Le chef de famille adresse la parole aux veuves en ces termes : « Nous avons fendu pour vous des *beóngá;* montez dessus ». Ensuite il leur présente quelques poules, données par la parenté du défunt. Elles les prépareront et les mangeront toutes.

A cette occasion le chef de famille remet au premier-né du défunt la *bosóló* à laquelle il a droit. Comme il est dit au chapitre III, article III, c'est une des veuves qui lui est ainsi donnée en épouse. Elle sort immédiatement du groupe des veuves; désormais elle n'est plus liée par aucune obligation du deuil et va cohabiter avec son nouveau mari. Toutefois, si elle aimait beaucoup le défunt, elle prie l'héritier de la laisser tranquille pendant quelque temps; ses désirs sont toujours respectés.

La réclusion se termine par une grande fête qui clôture le deuil. C'est lors de cette fête qu'on procède au partage de l'héritage, dont les veuves font également partie. Nous en traiterons à l'article V.

ARTICLE III. — L'ENTERREMENT.

L'enterrement du mari ne comporte aucune cérémonie ni règles spéciales qui ne soient communes à l'inhumation de toute autre personne. Seulement, des parentes doivent « acheter la tombe », c'est-à-dire payer aux femmes mariées dans la famille quelques anneaux pour obtenir la permission de l'inhumation. Ce paiement est à rapprocher de ceux faits pour obtenir les dispenses des interdits alimentaires.

Les personnes enterrées simultanément et dans la même fosse que le cadavre d'un homme influent ne sont jamais ses veuves, mais uniquement des esclaves [1].

Le Nkundó doit être enterré sur les terres de ses ancêtres, au cimetière clanique. Or, comme le régime de ce peuple est exogamique, il est évident que le cadavre d'une femme mariée est transporté dans son village d'origine pour y recevoir la sépulture.

Avant d'être transporté, le cadavre reçoit les soins usuels, avec les immolations concomitantes. Il doit passer au moins une nuit dans la maison du mari. Et cela s'observe encore présentement. Autrefois il y restait des jours entiers; car il fallait d'abord célébrer la fête d'adieu, et la famille du veuf devait se rassembler pour discuter l'affaire et pour réunir les valeurs nécessaires au paiement funéraire (art. suivant). Ce n'est qu'après tout cela que des jeunes gens appartenant à la famille du mari prennent sur leurs épaules la dépouille mortelle enveloppée dans une natte ou enfermée dans un cercueil, selon les cas.

Toute la parenté du mari prend part au cortège, si faire se peut. Les porteurs du cadavre marchent en tête. Les hommes sont armés d'arcs, de flèches, de couteaux et de bâtons, rarement de lances. Les femmes accompagnent en se lamentant. Le mari et, si nécessaire, quelques parents portent avec eux les divers objets dont ils auront besoin pour les paiements. Certains hommes ont un *lolótai* (ocarina) (6) ou une corne d'antilope, sur lesquels ils jouent par intermittence (7). Au moment de lever le cadavre et en passant par les villages intermédiaires on bat le *lokolé* à coups réguliers et égaux (*-kémya*), pour annoncer l'arrivée du cortège funèbre.

---

[1] Voir *Coutumes funéraires*, V, 2°.

Le principal personnage parmi ceux qui suivent le cadavre n'est pas le mari, mais le *ndonga*. Il ne peut jamais être absent dans cette circonstance. Même si le mari était mort et qu'il s'agit d'une veuve non remariée, le *ndonga* doit toujours être de la partie. C'est à lui avant tout autre qu'incombe le devoir de porter le cadavre d'une femme mariée.

Il se peut que le *ndonga* ait déjà devancé le cortège pour communiquer à la famille de la morte la nouvelle du décès et que, à cause de la grande distance entre le village de la femme et celui du mari, il n'ait pas, ou difficilement, pu revenir pour rejoindre le cortège.

L'action de porter le cadavre dans le clan natal n'est pas désignée par un terme spécifique. On dit simplement *Isika ilékí* = aller remettre le cadavre.

Près de l'entrée du village, à un ou plusieurs endroits, une barrière (*bokóko*, *lokombí* ou *loálaka*) a été dressée, faite de pieux et de palmes. Les parents de la défunte, armés, y attendent le cortège des parents du mari, également armés, et leur interdisent la continuation de leur marche. Avant de passer outre, ces derniers doivent faire un paiement. Les valeurs données sont nommées *byɛ́kɔ by'ôkóko* ou simplement *bokóko* (ou *loálaka*). La famille de la défunte crie au cortège : « Halte ! ici vous ne passez point ». Les autres répondent : « Nous venons vous apporter le cadavre de votre enfant; nous voulons abattre la barrière; laissez-nous passer; voici les cadeaux. » Le *ndonga* remet un couteau, un anneau de cuivre ou de laiton, ou quelque autre objet équivalent (par exemple de l'argent actuellement). Là-dessus, les membres du clan de la défunte s'écartent. Les *bánambólamá* (personnes apparentées aux deux clans) abattent la barrière, et le cortège passe, ouvert par le *ndonga* et les *bánambólamá*. Le mari suit le cercueil.

---

(6) Voir ma « Note sur les Instruments de Musique à l'Equateur », dans *Congo*, 1935, t. II, juillet, p. [illegible] fig. 1 et 2 (p. [illegible]).

(7) Parfois des tambours accompagnent aussi.

Autrefois le passage de la barrière devait presque toujours être forcé. La famille de la femme ne voulant pas ouvrir et celle du mari ne voulant pas payer, on en venait aux mains. Le groupe porteur du cadavre essayait d'abattre la barrière, tandis que leurs adversaires tâchaient de les en empêcher. Les armes employées dans cette rixe sont surtout des bâtons pointus que les deux camps se lancent, plus rarement des flèches. Cette bagarre porte le nom spécifique d'*ękɔkɛlá*. Certains clans sont spécialisés dans ce sport. Ainsi entre Boimbo et Lileko, c'est chaque fois une bataille en règle. Dans pareils cas sérieux, la barrière est très fortifiée : pieux gros et durs, entrelacés de lianes épineuses (*bokau*, *lǫngǫli*, *wanganjála*, etc.) et d'arbrisseaux épineux (*ndangé*, etc.). On y ajoute une quantité de fourmis mordantes ou venimeuses (*bafumba*, *nkínkiá*, *bojǫnkǫ*, etc.). Si la bagarre s'aggrave, le *ndonga* et les autres *bánambólamá* interviennent et imposent la paix, en obligeant le clan du mari à payer.

Il peut pourtant arriver que la famille du mari, ne parvenant pas à vaincre leurs adversaires et persistant malgré tout dans la volonté de ne pas payer, s'enfuient pour rentrer chez eux, abandonnant le cadavre entre les mains de la famille de la défunte. Mais cela est une injure fort grave. Aussi est-elle considérée comme rupture pure et simple de l'alliance entre les deux familles. Le mari peut s'abstenir de porter les paiements funéraires; ils seraient quand même refusés. Désormais il n'a plus le moyen de présenter une dot pour l'obtention d'une remplaçante de la morte. Au surplus, il perd ses droits sur ses enfants, dont il a désavoué le clan maternel, et si la chose ne s'arrange pas de façon ou d'autre, il n'a plus droit aux dots qui seront versées pour ses filles. Pour comble de malheur, il s'expose à être molesté par l'esprit de la défunte.

Lorsque le parti du mari est parvenu à se frayer un passage, le clan opposé se hâte de défendre la barrière suivante. En effet, si le cortège doit traverser plusieurs clans ou groupements apparentés à la femme (clan maternel, clan du grand-père, de la grand'mère, etc.), chaque groupement dresse sa barrière à lui.

S'il n'y a plus de barrières, la bagarre est terminée. Mais de toute façon le mari doit verser les valeurs requises pour le passage : étant donc arrivés au village, on arrange la question des paiements funéraires en y englobant ces « péages ».

La plupart du temps la rixe était inévitable. Et à présent encore les cas sont plus nombreux qu'on ne le soupçonnerait. Seulement, les violences se réduisent à quelques légères blessures. D'autres clans arrangent l'affaire à l'amiable, sans passer aux voies de fait. Mais il est tout à fait exceptionnel qu'on omette de dresser une barrière. Çà et là, cependant, le cas se présente sous la pression de chefs favorables à la pénétration des idées européennes de paix et de tranquillité publiques. On se contente, dans ces cas, de verser les indemnités réglementaires lors de l'arrangement de la palabre des paiements funéraires. Cette façon d'agir, plus humaine, est parfois favorisée par une grande amitié qui lie les deux clans en question.

Quelle est la raison d'être de cette coutume ? Voici l'explication qu'en donnent les Nkundó :

En barrant la route au cortège funèbre et se battant contre les participants, la famille de la défunte manifeste sa colère provoquée par le décès d'un de ses membres.

Car elle en ressent du courroux et du dépit. Et cela nonobstant la lance portée par le *ndonga* au-devant du cortège, en signe qu'on vient en amis, sans intentions malveillantes.

Cela ne veut pas dire que les indigènes attribuent au mari et à sa famille la cause du décès. Dans la majorité des cas ils sont convaincus qu'ils n'y peuvent rien. Quoiqu'ils s'expriment dans ces termes : *lóótoomela bǫ́na* (*nkána, eóto*) = vous avez tué notre enfant (sœur, parente), ils ne prétendent pas qu'ils l'ont réellement tuée, mais qu'elle est morte chez eux. Dans ces conditions, feignent-ils donc la colère, par exemple pour obtenir des valeurs ? Je ne le pense pas. Les Nkundó ne disent pas qu'ils simulent le courroux; ils affirment catégoriquement qu'ils ressentent réellement de la colère et qu'ils veulent la manifester de la façon décrite. La chose ne doit pas nous étonner, puisque — comme nous l'avons signalé dans l'étude sur les *Coutumes funéraires des Nkundó* — la colère et le chagrin semblent être chez ces populations deux sentiments intimement connexes.

Lorsque le cortège funèbre a franchi la dernière barrière, celle qui ferme l'entrée du village, le clan du mari dépose le corps, qui est ensuite relevé par la famille de la morte. Celle-ci le porte jusque dans la maison du père de famille. Elle est suivie par le *ndonga*, les *bánambóteuí*, le mari et ses parents. La morte est pleurée par sa famille. Les parentes (*biúnanyi*) manifestent leur chagrin-colère en maltraitant les épouses du clan (*baíjáále*), en leur enduisant le corps de boue, en les vêtant de *basáki*, en les frappant de plantes urticantes (*banaánaá*). C'est que la morte est le « mari » des *baíjáále*, c'est-à-dire la parente de leurs maris. Les *baíjáále* traitent de la même façon le veuf et ses parents, parce que « leur mari » est morte chez eux.

Le cadavre est donc déposé dans la case du chef de famille. Chaque fois que des parentes mariées ailleurs arrivent pour pleurer la morte, les *ɓaájáála* leur défendent l'entrée de la case mortuaire. Elle les obligent d'abord, pour manifester leur chagrin, à aller jusqu'à l'extrémité du village en pleurant la défunte.

Il arrive fréquemment, comme il est dit dans l'étude citée, I, qu'après un certain temps les lamentations diminuent et que les veilleuses se mettent à faire la causette. A ce sujet j'ai assisté un jour à une querelle entre les *biánanyí* et les *ɓaájáála*, les premières reprochant aux autres de ne plus pleurer : «C'est pourtant votre mari»; les dernières répliquant : «C'est votre parente; c'est donc à vous de pleurer; vos yeux sont-ils si secs qu'ils ne contiennent plus de larmes ?»

Quelquefois, le mari et les proches parents ne participent pas au transfert, parce qu'ils n'ont pas encore réussi à réunir les valeurs nécessaires. Dans ce cas, en effet, il leur est parfaitement loisible de rester chez eux, afin de ne pas s'exposer à des débats interminables et à la risée de toute la région. D'autres, n'appartenant qu'à un clan peu populeux, ne se hasardent pas dans le village de la défunte. Ils craignent de ne pouvoir se défendre convenablement des mauvais traitements que leur infligeraient les femmes mariées dans le clan où ils se rendent. Ces femmes, en effet, les maltraitent avec de la boue qu'elles leur jettent ou dont elles les enduisent, avec des plantes urticantes *banalnaá*, dont elles leur frappent le corps. Car elles considèrent le veuf et ses proches parents comme ayant tué la parente de leurs maris, que, par extension, elles nomment leur mari aussi.

Dans ces cas, le cadavre est porté par des parents éloignés du mari. Le *ndonga* excuse celui-ci auprès des beaux-parents, en leur disant qu'il viendra tout arranger plus tard. Le clan de la défunte reçoit le cadavre et continue de lui rendre les derniers devoirs. Si le mari est resté au village uniquement par crainte des mauvais traitements, il n'attend souvent que la tombée de la nuit pour suivre le cadavre de sa femme, à la faveur de l'obscurité.

Le cadavre doit passer dans la maison du chef de famille au moins un nuit.

Avant de procéder à l'enterrement, les deux familles règlent la question des paiements funéraires, que nous allons examiner sur-le-champ. Il y a encore une « *fête d'adieu* » de la part du clan de la morte. L'inhumation ne comporte, pour le reste, rien de particulier et il suffit donc de renvoyer à l'étude citée sur le sujet.

Comme nous avons fait remarquer au chapitre VII, article II, le mari peut acheter le cadavre de sa favorite. A moins d'accrocs à l'exécution de son dessein, le cadavre n'est pas transporté dans le clan natal, mais enterré à côté du tombeau du mari, au cimetière clanique de celui-ci. Tout ce qui accompagne le transport du cadavre tombe donc par le fait même, ainsi que le paiement funéraire, dont l'omission est compensée par l'achat du cadavre. Le mari ou sa famille n'envoie aux parents de la femme que le paiement usuel pour communiquer la nouvelle du décès.

ARTICLE IV. — PAIEMENTS FUNÉRAIRES.

Comme nous venons de le dire, avant de procéder au transport du cadavre de l'épouse défunte, le mari réunit les valeurs pour payer le *nkunji*. Par ce terme (dérivé du verbe *kunda* = enterrer) on désigne les divers versements que le veuf est obligé de faire au clan de la morte.

Tout d'abord, dès que la mort est constatée, le *ndonge* va porter aux parents de la défunte le *nsango* (= nouvelle), qui consiste en un anneau de cuivre ou un couteau. Il le leur présente en disant : « Sachez que votre fille une telle vient de mourir ».

A chaque barrière que le cortège doit franchir pour arriver au village de la morte, le mari doit payer un objet (généralement un couteau ou anneau), afin d'obtenir libre passage. C'est toujours le *ndonga* qui sert d'intermédiaire. Ces paiements sont nommés *byɛ̂kɔ by'ôkáko*, ou simplement *bokáko*, *lodiaka* (barrière), ou, chez les Bombanja, encore, *ijakâ yâ ekálaki* = couteau pour abattre (la barrière).

Le *ndonga* marche en tête du cortège funèbre, portant (lui-même ou remplacé par un autre *bɔ́nsambótswá*) une lance à laquelle est liée une pièce d'étoffe en raphia. Lorsque le cortège a passé la dernière barrière, le témoin officiel le devance et va fixer la lance dans le toit de la case du chef de famille. D'où le nom spécifique donné à cette lance : *ilóswansambá* (de *tóswa* = percer, et *nsambá* = toit). Cette lance signifie que la famille du veuf ne vient pas avec des intentions malveillantes, mais animé de sentiments de la meilleure amitié = wôâka te tóólɔ́yé l'etumba; tolyá ndé ótotsikela ilákâ y'ɔ̂na.

La pièce d'étoffe est une marque de respect envers la mère de la défunte, en souvenir des douleurs qu'elle a souffertes dans l'enfantement et des soins qu'elle a apportés à l'éducation de sa fille, et comme consolation pour le coup terrible qui vient de lui être porté par la mort de son enfant. Elle se vêtira cette étoffe lorsque le deuil sera terminé. À défaut de la mère, morte avant sa fille, cette étoffe revient à une de ses sœurs, tantes, etc., qui est en quelque sorte sa remplaçante. C'est donc un paiement propre au clan de la mère.

La lance et l'étoffe sont généralement désignées sous le nom commun de *likɔngɔ́ l'etóo* = lance et étoffe. L'étoffe peut être remplacée par un couteau, surtout un *ingóndó*, mais le nom d'*etóo* est conservé. À présent on ne donne plus d'étoffe, mais on lui substitue toujours un couteau qui porte le nom d'*etóo* (*). Toutefois, en souvenir de

---

(*) La raison d'être de cette substitution est, d'une part, la valeur supérieure du couteau et, d'autre part, la quasi-impossibilité de se procurer des tissus de raphia. (Cfr. Introduction.)

l'ancienne coutume, à la lance est souvent attaché un bout de tissu européen.

Le cadavre ayant été déposé dans la case, les deux clans se saluent de la façon habituelle. Les femmes continuent à pleurer durant quelque temps. Le clan du mari va s'asseoir à une petite distance. Ensuite les parents de la *défunte* enjoignent à leurs femmes de *réunir* les cadeaux à offrir au veuf. Ce sont des vivres variés : manioc, bananes, viande ou poisson *fumés*, chenilles, sel, poules, etc., un ou plusieurs chiens (*bompángá*) vivants (*mbwá éá nkonjo* = chien à poils) ou leur valeur en espèces (deux anneaux ou un anneau plus un couteau équivalent, nommé pour cela *mbwá éá baímbá* ou *éá bakonga*), plus encore un couteau pour tuer et dépecer les bêtes et qui porte le nom de *lokéla*. Les *bánanyi* et les *baíjálá* apportent chacune leur part. Notons que ce cadeau ne contient jamais de légumes (*bíanakélá*).

Quand tout est réuni et jugé suffisant, on appelle le *ndonga* et les propres fils de la *défunte*, pour qu'ils donnent leur opinion et puissent, plus tard, témoigner en connaissance de cause. Comme *rémunération* pour ses services, on fait au *ndonga* un paiement (*nyongo*) d'un poisson *bokéma* ou d'un rat *bokimba*, plus un régime de bananes (parfois remplacé par un anneau). A ce sujet il est intéressant de relater une partie des pourparlers auxquels j'assistai un jour. Le *ndonga* exprima son mécontentement de ce qu'on ne lui offrait qu'un seul *bokéma*. « C'est si peu, dit-il, en comparaison de toutes les peines que j'ai dû me donner. *J'ai dû arranger l'affaire de la dot*; j'ai dû réconcilier mari et femme quand ils avaient des palabres; j'ai dû intervenir à maintes reprises; tout le temps j'ai dû faire la navette entre les deux clans; *je me suis éreinté* durant de longues années, sans jamais avoir de repos. Et pour tous ces tracas *je ne reçois* qu'une si faible récompense. » On me demanda mon avis. *Je ne pus* qu'approuver les considérations du *ndonga*. Un des parents de la morte lui donna également raison : « Il a tout le temps été obligé d'aller et venir entre les deux familles; sa voix est devenue rauque à cause de ses interventions incessantes dans les palabres et querelles; il mérite bien qu'on lui ajoute encore un *bokóes.* ». Tout le monde se rangea à notre avis, et le *ndonga* se montra satisfait.

Ensuite le *ndonga* se sépare du groupe. Avec les autres *bàsambálémá* et, le cas échéant, des étrangers intelligents qui puissent donner quelque avis pour trancher une discussion incidente, il s'assied entre les deux clans opposés, à une petite distance de chacun d'eux.

Tous les paiements doivent passer par l'intermédiaire du *ndonga.* C'est lui qui transmet les desiderata d'un groupe à l'autre. Il intervient dans les discussions qui surgissent, pour les trancher et rétablir la paix. Il explique les différents points de vue, élucide une considération dont l'autre groupe ne semble pas saisir toute la portée, etc.

Comme il a été dit déjà à maintes reprises, il peut y avoir plusieurs *ndonga.* Tous peuvent légitimement intervenir, personnellement ou par leurs représentants officiellement reconnus. Ainsi, à Bɔnjɔku, il y a quelques mois (1933), Bafimbe, épouse d'Ikɔmɔ de Bɔsɔmbɔ́, était présente à une affaire de *nkunji.* Personne ne faisait cas d'elle. A un moment, elle se jeta dans l'assemblée en réprimandant le *ndonga* principal et les familles, leur demandant sur quoi ils se basaient pour l'exclure de cette affaire. Son mari n'avait-il pas droit d'intervention? N'était-il pas *ndonga* lui aussi? Comme il est à la pêche dans la Jwalé, il lui est impossible de venir. Elle peut donc légitimement le remplacer. Or, pourquoi la laissait-on de côté? On la calma vite, en lui donnant raison et en s'excusant de l'oubli et de la négligence.

Les épouses du clan de la morte déposent les cadeaux alimentaires aux pieds du *ndonga.* Le *bokáné* (le plus jeune) du clan va lui expliquer ce dont il s'agit et à qui ces dons sont destinés (*). Une part revient aux *bakalé* de la défunte, c'est-à-dire aux *baíjáéla* du clan du mari; une seconde part revient aux *baóme* (les maris), c'est-à-dire le veuf et sa famille; une troisième est réservée aux parentes de la morte qui sont venues des villages où elles sont mariées pour assister aux funérailles.

Le clan de la défunte commence par « demander des nouvelles » (*ώola nsango*) au clan opposé. Celui-ci répond que, ayant épousé leur fille, celle-ci a vécu heureusement chez son mari, lui a rendu les services conjugaux, lui a engendré des enfants. Qu'ensuite elle est tombée malade, comme la chose leur a été communiquée en son temps, que maintenant Dieu l'a emportée, et qu'ils sont venus leur remettre le cadavre. Le clan de la femme répond : « C'est entendu, mais avant de continuer à nous demander réciproquement des nouvelles, acceptez toujours le présent (*lionja*) que nous vous offrons. » Là-dessus le *ndonga* énumère tout ce qui a été réuni et le passe au veuf.

Ces vivres sont un cadeau de bienvenue amicale et ne sont donc nullement comptés comme paiement, ni, à fortiori, comme partie du *nkomí*. Seuls les animaux domestiques sont considérés comme tel. Ils peuvent être consommés sur place ou être conservés en vie. La nourriture préparée, étant un présent, doit être consommée sur place. En principe on ne peut rien en emporter chez soi. Si pourtant, pour l'une ou l'autre raison, on la prend avec soi, il reste toujours interdit d'en laisser manger à des personnes qui n'ont pas assisté à la réunion funéraire. Quant à la nourriture crue, on est libre de l'emporter, s'il y a excédent.

Il peut y avoir des discussions au sujet du chien, comme j'en fus témoin un jour. Les offrandes comprenaient, non

---

(*) Dans la hiérarchie nkundó c'est toujours le plus jeune qui, sur l'injonction du chef de famille, est chargé de l'exécution de toutes ces sortes de petites besognes.

un chien vivant, mais sa valeur en anneaux. Le chef de la famille du veuf réclama un chien en chair et os. Il donna comme raison que beaucoup de ses *biánanyi* étaient venues aux funérailles et que, à titre de remerciement pour leurs condoléances, il voulait leur offrir un chien. Comme il ne céda point, la famille de la femme fut bien obligée de remplacer les deux anneaux par l'animal exigé.

Ensuite le *ndonga* expose à la famille de la défunte que déjà il a apporté le *naango*, le *likongá* et l'*etóo*. Actuellement il arrive que la lance et l'étoffe ne sont données qu'à ce moment, lorsque, notamment, on s'abstient des barrières et de la bagarre. Les paiements de passage sont alors remis simultanément. Si les deux agglomérations sont très rapprochées, on commence même à omettre l'envoi du *naango;* un *bɔnambɔ́tswá* va confirmer la nouvelle du décès auquel on s'attendait déjà et que le *lokolé* vient d'annoncer.

Puis la famille de la femme exige, un à un, divers versements. Chaque appel provoque une discussion. Car il est de mode de tirer ces palabres en longueur. De part et d'autre on examine le pour et le contre. La famille du veuf se fait un peu presser, sinon la cérémonie n'aurait plus l'air d'une palabre (ce qu'elle est en réalité), mais d'un simple paiement sans importance.

La famille de la femme, ayant rappelé les cadeaux de vivres offerts et accepté les versements déjà effectués, commence à demander qu'on lui apporte les autres valeurs du *nkunji*. Le clan du veuf expose son point de vue et immédiatement un membre du clan de la femme se met à battre le gong (*lokolé*) qui se trouve à proximité. Il n'y a plus moyen de comprendre le moindre mot de ce que dit le porte-parole du mari. Plein de courage et de patience africaine il continue son discours. Mais finalement il se voit bien obligé de cesser. Il demande donc qu'on fasse taire le *lokolé*. Sans succès, évidemment. On lui répond sèchement : « Si vous voulez qu'on cesse, apportez-nous un anneau ». Le mari se voit donc forcé de payer; sur quoi le bruit du *lokolé* cesse immédiatement, et la discussion peut continuer. Ce premier versement s'appelle, pour cette raison, *lokolé* (1).

Ensuite un jeune parent vigoureux de la défunte sort du groupe. Il se montre courroucé, bat des mains et défie le clan du veuf : « Envoyez quelqu'un des vôtres pour se battre contre moi, car je suis furieux de ce que vous avez laissé mourir d'inanition ma parente ». On lui répond avec force protestations : « Nous sommes amis, aucun sentiment hostile ne nous anime; ce n'est pas notre faute que notre épouse est morte ». Le premier répète son affirmation et son défi et ne cesse de leur reprocher le décès que lorsqu'on lui a remis un anneau nommé *bonkáte* = inanition.

Un autre jeune membre du clan de la défunte s'assied au milieu entre les deux groupes. On lui met un *etáka* (fourche en bois) au cou et il dit : « C'est ainsi que vous m'auriez traité si ma sœur vous eût abandonnés. J'étais exposé à devoir souffrir à cause d'elle et de vous. Rémunérez-m'en ». Et il ne s'en va qu'après avoir reçu un anneau, nommé pour cette raison *etáka* (2).

Ensuite sont réclamés, avec force gestes imitateurs et représentatifs (de la façon décrite pour les précédents) divers paiements chacun d'un anneau ou d'un couteau :

ikɛmɔ (*bendánga l'ikɛmɔ*), à cause des potions que la défunte a préparées pour son mari;

bandingó = les paquets de vivres qu'elle lui a cuits dans les cendres;

---

(1) Le premier anneau pour l'éteindre s'appelle [illegible] pé lokolé. Comparez la pratique identique lors du paiement de la dot (chap. II, art. V, 3°).

(2) Ce n'est qu'une représentation d'une prétention approximative, car le jeune homme n'aurait pas été traité ainsi. La mise de l'etáka est réservée à l'épouse même. Mais il représente le clan entier solidairement.

baínda = les portions de noix de palme qu'elle lui a préparées (les portions étant représentées par quelques petites mottes de terre posées sur des feuilles);

nkóngi = les cils qu'elle lui a arrachés;

bokongo = parce qu'elle lui a coupé les cheveux (-konga);

naili = les poux qu'elle lui a enlevés de la tête (N. B. — Ce paiement peut être uni au précédent et être ainsi d'un seul *konga* pour les deux);

bompáło = les bains chauds qu'elle lui a fait bouillir;

mpoko = les paniers à poissons, parce qu'elle est allée à la pêche pour lui;

boingó = la civière sur laquelle le cadavre a été transporté;

bekomba = les lianes avec lesquelles le cadavre a été lié;

betóná (*itóná*) = les troncs de bananiers sur lesquels le cadavre a reposé (le cadavre en natte ou en cercueil est déposé sur deux troncs de bananiers mis transversalement);

bikofo = les fourches sur lesquelles se trouvait le lit où la femme est morte;

likongo = une houe (réelle ou remplacée par un anneau) pour creuser la tombe;

ifaká = un couteau (idem) pour creuser la tombe;

yòndó = une hache (idem) pour couper les racines qui se trouveraient à l'endroit de la tombe (1);

bombémbé wá nyang'éy'óna = ceinture pour la mère de la défunte, afin qu'elle puisse la porter pendant le deuil;

botsé w'ilóló = la tête du cadavre, en l'honneur de ceux qui pleurent le mort en s'asseyant près de sa tête, c'est-à-dire les tout proches parents. C'est le versement final et le plus important, consistant en trois à cinq anneaux.

---

(1) Un jour je vis la famille de la femme refuser la barre de fer donnée comme *yòndó*, parce que cette même barre avait été donnée par eux-mêmes afin d'aider le mari à payer le nkanga (médecin-sorcier) pour sa divination (bofingo) lors de la maladie de la femme.

Tous ces paiements réunis forment le *nkunji* et, hormis le *nsango*, le *likɔngá l'elóo* et les *byɛ̂kɔ by'ɔ̀káko*, ils sont une sorte de *beéngo* (1). Ces *beéngo* n'ont pas tous la même importance. Aussi ne sont-ils pas toujours réclamés en entier. Les moins importants sont souvent omis : *bakɛmɔ, bantsingá, baónda, nkɔ́ngi, bɔkɛngɔ, nsili, bompálo, mpuka*.

Même certains autres peuvent être omis. La chose dépend non seulement des dispositions plus ou moins amicales qui animent les deux partis, mais surtout du nombre d'enfants que la femme en question a engendrés. Pour une femme stérile la famille se montre moins exigeante. Mais si la défunte a eu plusieurs enfants, elle ne cède pas, en arguant du grand profit dont leur fille a été pour le clan du mari.

En tout cas on réclame toujours au moins quelques *beéngo* en surplus du *bombémbé* et du *bɔlaá w'ilaká*. Ces derniers ne peuvent jamais être omis. La ceinture est un paiement exclusivement réservé à la mère et qui revient de droit au clan maternel.

Plus le montant de ces paiements funéraires est élevé, plus le gendre est le bienvenu. L'alliance est parfaite. Aussi, non seulement la famille de la femme réciproque-t-elle les bons sentiments en ajoutant encore quelques chiens, mais en outre le gendre sera très bien accueilli et réussira dans ses démarches, lorsque, après le deuil, il portera le montant de l'*ibóleóko* en vue d'obtenir une remplaçante de la défunte (2). Au surplus, si les relations ont été excellentes, il l'obtient aisément par anticipation, pour qu'elle le soigne pendant toute la durée du deuil.

L'omission des paiements funéraires est sévèrement sanctionnée. Le fait de *négliger* l'envoi du cadeau de faire-part suffit à lui seul à déclancher les sanctions, qui sont : la rupture de l'alliance; la perte des enfants, la faute du père équivalant à un reniement; enfin la molestation du coupable par l'esprit de la morte. Ainsi, à Bokátola (Bompela), on peut voir deux garçons, Bọtẹ́tsí et Ikembá, enfants de Bonyongela d'Ilángá et d'Ɛtáka de Bokátola. Ils sont maintenant incorporés dans leur clan maternel, pour cause de l'omission de l'envoi du *nsango*. A plus forte raison en est-il ainsi pour le *nkunji* entier.

---

(1) Cfr. chap. II, art. V.
(2) Cfr. chap. III, art. IV.

ARTICLE V. — SITUATION SOCIALE DE LA VEUVE.

Au chapitre III, articles II et IV, nous avons *déjà* constaté qu'aux yeux du Nkundó la mort du mari ne dissout pas le mariage : l'union continue, et même après le deuil elle n'est pas rompue *ipso facto*. Pour qu'elle cesse il ne suffit même pas que la femme soit prise et traitée comme épouse par un autre homme. Aussi longtemps que la dot n'a pas été restituée, la veuve continue d'« appartenir » aux héritiers du défunt et d'*être* leur épouse au sens expliqué au chapitre cité, article IX. Les diverses modalités dont peut se faire cette continuation du mariage *post mortem* ont été décrites au chapitre III, article II.

Nous y avons également vu que *rien* n'empêche la veuve de se remarier en dehors de la famille héritière et donc d'engager une union vraiment nouvelle et différente. Rien non plus ne l'y oblige. Elle est entièrement libre. Il n'y a d'exception — si l'on peut parler d'exception dans ce cas — que pour la veuve objet d'un testament et pour la *boaliló* (chap. III, art. II, *in fine* et art. III). Pour cette dernière il est même difficile de considérer son remariage avec l'aîné du *défunt* comme restreignant sa liberté. Car bien que de droit il soit obligatoire, il est volontaire en pratique et pourvu de garanties suffisantes de liberté dans les cas ordinaires. En effet, on sait qu'elle est d'accord pour cette union; ou bien elle peut toujours avoir recours au divorce si plus tard l'héritier la déçoit dans ses espoirs ou si la continuation de l'union s'avère moralement impossible.

Il serait oiseux et fastidieux de répéter tout ce que nous avons dit à ce sujet au chapitre III. Retenons seulement que le partage des veuves ne doit pas se comprendre comme un partage de personnes qui leur enlèverait la libre disposition de leur volonté et de leur cœur, mais comme le partage des droits dotaux qu'elles représentent. La liberté juridique du remariage demeure entière comme au temps où elles étaient jeunes filles. Elle peut bien subir des influences et même des atteintes authentiques plus ou moins graves d'après les circonstances, mais ce sont là des situations de fait et non de droit.

Si la veuve se juge — ou est jugée — trop vieille pour un remariage ou même désire garder à son mari défunt la fidélité de la continence, elle peut, au lieu de rentrer dans sa famille, continuer de résider dans le clan du défunt. D'ordinaire les héritiers ne s'y opposent pas et respectent ses désirs. Si elle a des enfants ou petits-enfants, la chose va de soi : ils sont heureux de garder auprès d'eux leur vieille mère ou leur grand'mère.

ARTICLE VI. — SITUATION ÉCONOMIQUE DE LA VEUVE.

Tout le temps que dure la réclusion, la veuve continue à vivre dans la famille de son mari défunt. Elle se fournit de vivres dans les cultures qu'elle avait établies. Les outils que lui avait remis son mari restent à son usage et elle s'en sert dès qu'elle le peut. Quant aux divers ustensiles qui doivent être détruits, ils sont remplacés par d'autres spécimens que lui prête la famille du défunt. Car elle ne peut plus faire usage de ceux qui lui ont servi durant la vie de son mari.

Pour mieux marquer la grandeur du deuil on omet souvent de se servir des produits des plantations établies par le défunt. Au lieu donc de continuer l'exploitation des cultures existantes de manioc et de légumes, la veuve s'approvisionne de préférence dans les champs des proches parents du défunt. Ou bien un homme qui a déjà jeté son dévolu sur elle met ses cultures à sa disposition. Sinon, si elle est de l'observance rigoureuse, elle doit acheter ce dont elle a besoin dans ce domaine.

Comme nous l'avons vu au chapitre VI, article II, la veuve n'a aucun droit sur les fruits de son activité. Ni l'argent qu'elle a gagné et qui est destiné aux besoins communs du ménage, ni les cultures qu'elle a établies, ni le poisson qu'elle a pêché, ni les chenilles qu'elle a ramassées en forêt ne lui appartiennent. Tout passe aux héritiers. Sa propriété se restreint aux objets qu'elle aurait reçus comme sa part personnelle dans la dot de sa fille, ou comme autre paiement exclusivement propre à la mère.

Toutefois, si la veuve demeure dans la famille du défunt, on lui laisse ses champs, ses outils, etc.; car dans ces conditions il n'y a aucune raison pour les lui ravir. Mais si elle se remarie ailleurs, les héritiers sont impitoyables. Le Nkundó ne veut d'aucune façon que la richesse familiale se disperse et s'éparpille : lokutu lôkisó lôtâtew'inyamó = notre patrimoine ne peut pas être aliéné. Tel est le droit.

Les faits sont pourtant plus favorables à la veuve, du moins dans les meilleurs cas. Lorsque les relations étaient bonnes, la famille ne lui refuse pas quelque menu objet qu'elle désire garder. Dans les unions exemplaires on lui laisse les nattes qu'elle a tressées de ses propres mains et l'on partage à égalité les biens qu'elle a reçus de son mari : étoffes, perles, poules, chèvres et chiens même, voire parfois ce qu'elle a acquis avec le fruit de l'activité mixte des époux (plantations, élevage). Dans ce partage on se montre ordinairement généreux envers la veuve, et s'il n'y a qu'un unique objet on est bien disposé à le lui laisser.

Cette conduite est de pure générosité, car — comme il a été dit — la femme n'y a aucun droit. Elle était — autrefois — réservée aux unions particulièrement heureuses, eu égard surtout aux relations entre les deux familles et à l'affection qu'un des proches héritiers porte à la veuve.

A présent l'influence des Missions multiplie les cas de générosité envers la veuve et suscite la tendance à en faire une règle générale. Ainsi les bonnes familles chrétiennes, si elles ne sont pas contrecarrées par leurs parents païens, laissent à la veuve les objets qui ont été à son usage personnel : habits, ustensiles, malle, voire machine à coudre.

ARTICLE VII. — EFFETS ÉCONOMIQUES DE LA MORT.

§ 1. Dot et contre-dot.

La mort d'un des conjoints ne dissout le mariage qu'à un certain point de vue et sous l'aspect d'union entre telle et telle personne individuelle. Le mariage n'est rompu absolument que par le décès des deux conjoints (ou par le divorce).

La mort ne comporte aucun remboursement, ni de la dot, ni de la contre-dot (nkomi), comme le comporte le divorce. La femme étant décédée, tous ces paiements restent acquis aux parties respectives. A la mort du mari la veuve continue à appartenir aux héritiers; elle fait partie de la succession. Les enfants appartiennent au père et à sa famille; aucun nouveau versement n'est requis pour eux.

Il existe donc une très grande différence entre le divorce et la mort. Dans le divorce la dot doit être considérée plutôt comme un dépôt. Au contraire, dans le cas de mort, elle reste définitivement acquise. Cette différence infirme la théorie qui prétend que la dot n'est qu'une garantie et est plutôt favorable à la théorie d'une compensation pour la perte que subit le clan en donnant en mariage un de ses membres. En effet, en cas de divorce, la perte subie par le clan est annulée, puisque la femme rentre dans sa famille ou — l'éventualité commune — se remarie et est objet d'un nouveau versement dotal. Par contre, la mort de la femme, loin de faire cesser la perte, la perpétue. Cela ne veut pas dire que la dot ne constitue pas une garantie; effectivement elle en est une. Mais cette garantie est un effet de la dot et non sa raison d'être, ce qui est chose toute différente.

§ 5. Succession du mari.

Puisque nous n'étudions pas le droit de propriété des Nkundó, la question de l'héritage n'est pas, à strictement parler, du domaine de cette étude. Pourtant nous ne pouvons pas nous abstenir d'en dire un mot, puisque l'étude du mariage doit contenir naturellement un chapitre sur les enfants. Aussi, est-ce sous cet angle spécial que nous envisageons la question. Ce qui nous intéresse ici c'est de savoir quels droits les enfants ont sur la succession de leur père. Quant à la veuve nous en avons déjà traité dans l'article précédent.

La succession du défunt comprend trois parties :

1° Les valeurs dotales, c'est-à-dire tout ce qui sert principalement à se procurer une femme : anneaux de cuivre et de laiton, objets en fer, veuves et filles en tant qu'elles représentent des valeurs dotales;

2° Les animaux domestiques : chèvres, chiens, poules, canards;

3° Les biens immeubles : arbres fruitiers, champs et cultures, clôtures de chasse, endroits de pêche, et les biens meubles : nasses, filets de chasse, arcs et flèches, boucliers.

Les valeurs dotales deviennent le bien commun des proches parents : chacun reçoit sa part de l'héritage. Les veuves sont dévolues aux frères du défunt, à ses oncles, à ses neveux ([illegible]), et cela conformément à leur hiérarchie dans le groupe, à leurs droits respectifs provenant, soit d'une aide financière prêtée au défunt en vue de l'acquisition d'une des femmes, soit de l'application des effets du régime de la nkíla. Il en est de même des anneaux (*bakonga*) et des objets en fer (*bifeko*). De la même manière les filles non encore mariées sont assignées aux parents divers, c'est-à-dire que les « pères » présidant au partage de la succession discutent et précisent les personnes qui ont le droit de toucher les dots qui seront plus tard versées pour elles. Parmi les fils, seul l'aîné reçoit une femme ou un certain montant de valeurs dotales en bonáló (*).

Voilà la règle ancienne. Actuellement un profond changement est déjà intervenu. Les propres fils ne sont plus exclus du partage. On leur donne, soit une femme, soit des anneaux en quantité suffisante, soit le droit à la dot d'une sœur, ou d'une cousine, si ceci est possible. Pour le reste, qu'on se réfère au chapitre II, article IV, § 2 et article XI, § 2 B, et au chapitre IV, article II.

Les animaux domestiques sont dévolus aux *biánanyí*, qui les portent avec elles chez leurs maris et de ce fait les font entrer dans le montant de la contre-dot. Quelques chèvres peuvent pourtant être attribuées à un des hommes de la parenté, qui en a besoin pour compléter le paiement d'une dot.

Quant aux autres biens (meubles et immeubles), ils passent directement aux fils. Le premier-né reçoit la part du lion et les biens les plus précieux, mais les puînés ne sont pas exclus du partage.

Il est à noter qu'un testament peut intervenir, assignant un objet particulier à un fils déterminé, ou excluant un des héritiers avec lequel le défunt a eu de graves démêlés. Un testament pareil est toujours *exécuté*, parce qu'on craint la vengeance du testateur qui fait suivre dans la mort celui qui commettrait une infraction. Même si le

---

(*) Chap. III, art. III.

testament est manifestement injuste. On craint les représailles du défunt, ainsi qu'il en arriva à Iloko is'Efekele, de Lofeli. Il avait tué son propre frère Mpénda éá ŋkɔtɔnkale, parce que celui-ci, au lieu de lui laisser cet honneur, avait goûté de la bière fraîchement fabriquée, ce qui était une suprême offense. Mais comme la punition était tout à fait disproportionnée, toute la famille s'unit contre le meurtrier, qui fut obligé de fuir. A sa mort il déshérita tous ses frères en faveur de ses fils. Ce testament, jugé déraisonnable et injuste, ne fut pas respecté : l'unique frère d'Iloko, Bɔndɛ́lɛ́ wà Wilima, prit chez lui la favorite Bɔnyɛngé; mais il ne tarda pas à mourir, ce qui fut attribué à la vengeance d'Iloko. Il y a quelques années, la famille se réunit pour arranger définitivement l'affaire de la succession. La part prépondérante fut réservée aux fils d'Iloko, mais une autre part fut attribuée aux autres parents, ceux-ci n'ayant pas été nommés dans la clause exclusive, qui se limitait aux Basíká Banángá, c'est-à-dire aux propres frères d'Iloko.

Les fils ne sont jamais déshérités. Si l'un d'eux a très mal agi envers son père, celui-ci, en mourant, lui refuse sa bénédiction (bokako w'ɔ́kɔtsi) et lui donne une malédiction (bokako wà to yɔ́).

§ 3. Succession de l'épouse.

Ainsi que nous l'avons vu au chapitre VI, article II, la femme n'a aucun droit de propriété sur les fruits de son activité personnelle ou commune aux conjoints. Par conséquent, sa famille ne peut rien réclamer en fait d'héritage : il n'y a rien à hériter.

Bien que tous les fruits de l'activité de l'épouse soient la propriété du mari, la généralité des hommes n'exigent pas le respect de leur droit dans toute sa rigueur. Il sied qu'ils abandonnent une partie ou le tout à la famille de la défunte, comme cela se fait envers la veuve (*). Aussi, après la *fête* qui clôture le deuil, les deux clans font l'inventaire des biens en question. D'ordinaire ce que la femme a laissé comme produits de son activité est partagé également entre les deux clans. Certains hommes sont assez généreux pour renoncer à tout. Si la morte avait une *ebína* ou si les beaux-parents donnent à leur gendre une remplaçante, c'est à elle qu'échoient ces biens. Elle hérite même des cultures établies par sa parente, pour autant qu'elles n'ont pas été détruites; ce qui n'a pas lieu autrement, car les plantations ne sont jamais laissées à la famille de la défunte.

Les seules choses auxquelles la femme a un droit strict sont les paiements dotaux divers et analogues que la loi nkundó lui attribue : chèvres et spirales et cadeaux de la mère au versement dotal; étoffe et ceinture funéraires. A la mort de la femme, ces biens — si elle ne les a pas déjà donnés à ses parents — passent à son clan. D'aucune façon le mari ne peut se les approprier.

Enfin, à sa mort, une femme peut léguer à sa fille un outil (couteau, houe, etc.). Cette coutume est surtout observée par une femme très active, afin d'inculquer à sa fille l'amour du travail. Pareil objet devenait souvent une pièce de famille, transmise de mère en fille à travers plusieurs générations. On l'appelle *botsikéjwá* (de *tsikela* = laisser à; *cfr.* le latin *reliquiae*) ou, chez les Bombwanja, *elili*, termes qui s'appliquent aussi à d'autres objets compris dans la succession lorsqu'ils sont considérés séparément (globalement on les nomme *lokulo* = patrimoine, biens, ou *lisangó* = héritage). Or un *botsikéjwá* pareil ne peut jamais être accaparé par le mari.

(*) Voir article précédent.

ARTICLE VIII.

MORT DU FIANCÉ AVANT LE PAIEMENT DE LA DOT.

Nous traitons ici de la mort du mari durant les fiançailles, après le versement de l'*ikulá* ou du *ndanga*, mais avant le *walo*. La procédure de dissolution des fiançailles peut déjà nous faire supposer que la mort les rompt aussi sans difficultés spéciales. Et de fait, le fiancé étant mort, la femme devient libre. Elle peut donc rentrer chez elle, et l'on rembourse à la famille du défunt les paiements effectués.

Elle peut également demeurer dans la famille de son fiancé et y être prise en mariage par un des parents. Si tout est favorable à la continuation de l'union, le nouveau futur verse la dot; mais il ne doit pas réitérer les paiements de fiançailles, qui conservent leur validité. Si pourtant il appartient à une branche éloignée, la proche famille du défunt ne veut pas céder ses biens, et le nouveau fiancé doit s'acquitter lui-même de toutes les obligations dotales, à commencer par l'*ikulá*.

Il arrive que le mourant, dans ses dernières dispositions, enjoigne à sa famille de maintenir l'alliance. Dans ce cas, un des parents doit l'épouser. Si plus tard la rupture devient inévitable, les époux se séparent. D'ailleurs, si la femme n'est pas disposée à se remarier dans la parenté de son fiancé, celui-ci ne l'y force pas.

Cette pratique est basée sur la disposition du droit nkundó que les fiancés ont tous les devoirs et les droits d'époux.

Il n'existe donc rien chez les Nkundó qui ressemble à un lévirat. Même dans le cas cité d'un testament, l'obligation résulte uniquement de la nature sacrée de celui-ci.

ARTICLE IX.

MORT DE LA FEMME AVANT LE VERSEMENT DE LA DOT.

Deux cas sont à distinguer : 1° la femme meurt pendant les fiançailles; 2° elle meurt avant le *bọsíngọ*.

§ 1. Avant le « walo ».

Comme il a déjà été dit, les fiancés jouissent de tous les devoirs et droits des époux. A la mort de la fille, le fiancé est tenu à remplir toutes ses obligations envers la défunte et sa famille (transport du cadavre, immolations, *nkunji*). Mais ses obligations ne s'arrêtent pas là.

Par le versement du *ndanga* (et, en pratique, déjà par l'*ikúlé*) il s'est reconnu responsable de tout accident qui pourrait arriver, chez lui, à sa fiancée; et il a assumé l'obligation de parachever l'union par les versements ultérieurs.

La conséquence de ce fait est que la mort de la fiancée survenant avant qu'il ait satisfait à ses obligations, il est astreint à une forte indemnité (*mbólaka*) à ses beaux-parents, déçus dans leur espoir et frustrés de leurs droits. Le montant de cette indemnité varie avec les cas. D'ordinaire elle est à peu près égale à ce qu'il aurait dû payer normalement comme walo. D'où l'expression employée d'*énga ilóká* (*ikɔmbɛ* chez les Injɔ́lɔ́ et les Boángi) = payer la dot pour le cadavre.

Parfois la famille de la femme est moins exigeante, notamment quand elle tient beaucoup au gendre et le sait assez riche et généreux pour augmenter notablement le montant du *nkunji*, de l'*ibóléko* et de la dot pour une remplaçante. Le principe de l'indemnité est sauf; seulement l'aspect extérieur est changé et rendu moins humiliant.

D'autres fois elle hausse la somme à payer comme indemnité, soit par cupidité, soit parce qu'elle ne tient pas à cette union ou y est même opposée (cas qui était rare autrefois, mais qui est devenu plus fréquent à présent). Dans ces conditions on exige jusqu'à 100 et 150 anneaux. Tel le cas suivant, tout récent : Ilumbé de Mpámá (Boéndé) prend comme femme Lọkọkú de Bongíli wà Ndọngọ́. Il verse 10 anneaux comme *ikulá-ndanga*. Lorsque quelque temps après il apporte les 40 anneaux de *walo*, son beau-père les juge insuffisants (ce en quoi il avait pleinement raison). La pauvreté du gendre apparaissant par cette modicité de valeurs et présageant son insolvabilité, la famille de Lọkọkú ne tenait pas beaucoup à ce mariage. Par conséquent, elle refusa d'accepter ces anneaux, qui restèrent donc en dépôt chez le *ndonga*. Après deux ans de cohabitation, Lọkọkú mourut (16 juillet 1933). La famille de la morte réclama 100 anneaux. Ilumbé ne put invoquer aucune excuse, ni aucune circonstance atténuante. Car s'il avait voulu remplir ses obligations, il aurait pu le faire, le délai ayant été assez long, et s'il se savait sans moyens, il aurait dû abandonner la femme.

Au temps jadis, il arrivait que le veuf et sa famille refusaient de payer. On en venait alors aux armes. Le droit de la guerre entrait en jeu : après la cessation des hostilités, le coupable devait indemniser toutes les familles de son parti qui avaient un des leurs tué ou blessé. Il s'exposait ainsi à voir tous ses biens confisqués et, s'ils étaient insuffisants, à se voir vendu comme esclave. Au lieu de courir des risques aussi graves, il trouvait plus sage de se soumettre tout simplement aux sanctions normales.

Le cas que nous étudions dans cet article peut se compliquer du fait que la femme réside dans sa propre famille, ou qu'elle appartient à un autre homme auquel on n'a pas encore remboursé la dot. Mais il est préférable de traiter ces complications dans des articles distincts.

§ 2. Avant le « bọsọngọ ».

Dans ce cas le veuf ne doit pas payer d'indemnité. Il doit pourtant parfaire la dot en livrant « l'esclave ».

S'il ne le remet pas, 1° l'alliance est rompue par le fait même. Il s'ensuit qu'il ne peut porter l'*ibóleóko* et qu'il ne reçoit pas de remplaçante; 2° la famille de la défunte a droit à une des filles, s'il y en a, sinon à un des garçons. C'est une compensation qui lui est *réservée* pour la perte du *bọsọ́ngọ*.

Il est évident qu'en pratique la famille de la femme peut se désister de ses droits; ainsi, par égard pour son gendre influent, généreux, bien disposé, escomptant un bénéfice financier et social supérieur. Les remarques analogues que nous avons faites tout au long de cette étude nous ont déjà familiarisés avec la « largeur d'idées » de ces populations.

On pourrait faire remarquer que le cas présent ne diffère guère du précédent, la famille de la femme se trouvant de toute façon indemnisée. Mais d'abord, si la femme n'a pas laissé d'enfants, la chose n'est point du tout identique. Ensuite, le *côté* financier même étant égal, l'aspect juridique est tout différent. La prise de cet enfant et le refus d'accepter l'*ibóleóko* ne sont pas considérés comme compensation. Les Nkundó affirment catégoriquement que le cas qui nous occupe ne donne nullement lieu au paiement d'une indemnité.

Cette constatation fait ressortir à nouveau la différence essentielle entre *jéngi* et *bọsọ́ngọ*, dont nous avons déjà parlé au chapitre II, article IX, § 2 et article XII, § 5, et suggère l'idée que le *walo* est constitutif du contrat matrimonial, tandis que le *bọsọ́ngọ* est la substitution d'une personne à celle que le clan perd par le mariage d'un de ses membres.

ARTICLE X.

MORT DE LA FEMME DANS SA PROPRE FAMILLE.

Comme nous l'avons déjà fait remarquer à plus d'une reprise, le mari est responsable de sa femme, puisqu'elle lui « appartient » à cause de la convention clanique entre les familles. Cette stipulation du droit nkundó a pour conséquence que l'épouse est au risque du mari : il a à subir tous les préjudices qu'entraîne la mort de sa femme. Cependant ce principe général admet des exceptions dans les deux circonstances suivantes :

1° La femme meurt dans sa propre famille;
2° La femme meurt après avoir abandonné son mari pour un autre.

Dans cet article nous examinons le premier cas, réservant le second pour l'article suivant.

Si la femme meurt dans sa propre famille, l'exception est soumise à la réalisation de certaines conditions. Distinguons les divers cas possibles :

1° La femme rentre dans sa famille, parce qu'elle est exaspérée par les traitements injustes que lui inflige son mari. Celui-ci ne remplit pas ses devoirs envers elle, la maltraite injustement, etc., comme nous avons vu au chapitre VI, article III. La situation n'est plus tenable. Le mari est manifestement en tort, et la femme est libre de chercher un peu de tranquillité chez ses parents. Or, dans ces conditions, si elle y meurt avant que le mari ne soit venu l'y reprendre en arrangeant la palabre au moyen d'un *bọ́ndọ*, il n'a rien à réclamer. C'est lui-même qui par sa façon injuste d'agir s'est attiré cet embarras. Il est obligé d'exécuter les paiements funéraires. De par les relations tendues entre lui et son beau-père, l'alliance est rompue. C'est pourquoi, d'ordinaire, il refuse de payer le *nkunji* si, du moins, il n'a pas d'enfants de cette femme. Si nonobstant la présence de progéniture il ne paie pas, les enfants lui sont ravis par la famille de leur mère.

Ce cas était rare autrefois. Les maris jeunes et fougueux n'existaient pratiquement pas. C'étaient les vieux qui se réservaient les femmes. Devenus, par leur âge et leur expérience de la vie, plus rassis, plus calmes, plus raisonnables, ils ne se jetaient pas dans une aventure qui devait nécessairement tourner à leur désavantage. A présent les mariages étant devenus plus précoces, le cas peut se présenter plus facilement; quoique, d'autre part, la rupture définitive survienne le plus souvent avant l'éventualité décrite.

3° La femme abandonne son mari sans motif juste, et rentrée dans sa famille, y meurt. Autrefois, ce cas ne se présentait que tout à fait exceptionnellement (chap. VIII, art. II, § 1, A). Si avant la mort de la fugitive une guerre n'était pas intervenue (qui, d'office, clôturait l'affaire), le mari avait tous les droits au remboursement ou au remplacement de la morte par une autre épouse. Le cas est donc identique au suivant. Seulement, il n'y a plus question de faire renvoyer le cadavre, et s'il voulait rompre l'alliance définitivement, le mari ne devait même pas payer le *nkunji*.

Actuellement cette situation est devenue bien plus fréquente. Elle ne présente aucune difficulté spéciale; l'ancienne coutume continue d'être observée.

Il est presque oiseux de remarquer que des transactions à l'amiable peuvent intervenir entre le mari et ses beaux-parents quant au remboursement total ou partiel de la dot. Voici un cas typique : Bǫnjęlǫ de Iámbo (Bonkoso) hérite de Boélé, fille de Lokálámbá lo' Ibele de Bongunda. Après X années elle quitte son mari, rentre chez elle et y meurt. Son père transmet le cadeau de faire-part et y ajoute même des chiens, parce qu'il tient à cette alliance. Le cadavre n'est pas envoyé, parce que la femme étant morte d'une maladie infectieuse et se décomposant rapidement, on redoute la contagion. Lokálámbá présente sa fille cadette Mbangó à titre de remplaçante. Mais comme elle est toute jeune, Bǫnjęlǫ n'en veut pas. Il se contente d'une indemnité, parce que — au demeurant — il tient également à rester en bons termes avec son beau-père. Celui-ci lui envoie 22 anneaux à titre d'*ilęngę* (esclave) et l'affaire est ainsi close.

3° La femme est rentrée dans sa famille de sa propre initiative, afin de visiter ses parents, les soigner, ou pour participer à la pêche commune de la famille, pour chercher sa provision de chenilles comestibles, ou pour tout autre motif. Dans ce cas, la responsabilité passe du mari aux parents. La nouvelle du décès doit être portée au mari par la famille (toujours, s'entend, par l'entremise du *ndonga*). Ayant reçu la nouvelle, le mari accuse ses beaux-parents : « *lôbômbomela* *wâli* = vous m'avez tué ma femme ». Il exige qu'on lui envoie le cadavre pour qu'il le lave, le pare convenablement et pleure la défunte. Ensuite il renvoie le cadavre avec le *ndonga* en exigeant qu'on lui substitue une autre épouse, ou s'il n'y en a pas de disponible, qu'on lui rende la dot. Aussi longtemps que son beau-père n'a pas accompli ces obligations, le mari ne porte pas les paiements funéraires. Si, en outre, la famille de la défunte se montre récalcitrante ou trop lente, il pratique l'*ikákolo*, c'est-à-dire qu'il retient une parente à lui, mariée dans le clan de la défunte, pour en toucher la dot. De cette façon, il rentre dans ses droits financiers : les deux dots se compensent et ainsi l'affaire est arrangée définitivement. Il est évident que, dans ce cas, il conserve tous ses droits sur les enfants.

A plus forte raison cette solution s'applique-t-elle dans les cas où la famille a elle-même appelé leur fille ou parente.

Il peut arriver que, la femme tombant malade chez ses parents, le mari veut la soigner lui-même. Il exige de son beau-père un gage (*ndanga*) et témoignage de ce que la maladie a débuté chez lui. S'il omet cette précaution et que son épouse meurt, il ne possède aucun moyen juridique pour réclamer l'indemnisation.

4° Une solution identique à la précédente s'impose même lorsque la femme se rend chez ses parents à l'intention personnelle de son mari, afin de lui chercher certains objets dont il a besoin, comme de la bière pour une fête, des valeurs pour régler une palabre, etc. Cela vaut même si le mari l'a envoyée expressément dans ce but.

Pourtant ce cas donne aisément lieu à d'âpres discussions. La famille de la femme tâche de repousser les réclamations du mari en lui objectant que c'est lui-même qui a envoyé son épouse, ou, du moins qu'elle est venue chez eux uniquement pour ses intérêts à lui. Néanmoins, en fin de compte, c'est le mari qui a raison et qui gagne le procès (1).

5° La femme rentre chez elle malade. Comme nous l'avons vu au chapitre VI, art. III, § 2, les parents n'acceptent pas de soigner leur fille si le gendre ne leur donne pas — toujours par le *ndonga* — un *ndonga* en témoignage de ce qu'elle était malade au moment où elle le quittait. Ce faisant le mari se reconnait responsable de toute suite que pourrait avoir la maladie. Par conséquent, en cas de décès il ne peut rien réclamer.

Comme la responsabilité civile du décès est imputée au mari, celui-ci en est averti par le *ndonga*, mais la famille ne lui envoie pas l'anneau de faire-part. C'est le *ndonga* de la maladie qui remplace le paiement. Le veuf demande qu'on lui fasse parvenir le cadavre pour lui rendre les derniers offices, ce qui lui est toujours accordé. Pour le reste il n'y a rien de particulier; tout se fait comme si la femme était morte chez son mari.

6° La femme est répudiée par son mari. Ce cas arrivait jadis uniquement lorsque la femme se conduisait très mal et se montrait incorrigible. Comme nous l'avons vu au chapitre VIII, art. II, § 1, n° 2, le mari ne la renvoyait pas dans sa famille, mais l'attachait à la fourche (*eléka*) jusqu'à ce qu'il fût remboursé. Le *ndonga* intervenait parfois pour la libérer, mais de ce fait prenait sur lui la responsabilité de la restitution de la dot. Dans cette dernière éventualité, la femme mourant dans sa famille, le mari avait droit au remboursement comme lors d'un divorce. Nous revenons donc ici aux cas décrits sous 2° et 3°, avec les modalités différentes, selon que le veuf voulût ou non continuer l'alliance.

---

(1) Un séjour de vingt-quatre heures n'est pas reconnu suffisant pour faire retomber sur la famille de la femme la responsabilité civile de la maladie, ni donc du décès.

A présent la situation a complètement changé. L'*etáka* n'est plus permis par l'Administration coloniale. Par conséquent, l'homme qui veut se défaire de son épouse incorrigible fait en sorte qu'elle l'abandonne de sa propre initiative. Et l'on revient au cas 2°.

Si le mari a renvoyé lui-même son épouse en la remettant au *ndonga*, ses beaux-parents lui refusent l'indemnité et la restitution de la dot et souvent ne veulent même pas accepter le *nkanji*. En effet, ils lui répondent qu'il n'avait pas à répudier la femme qu'il s'est choisie librement. Aussi la généralité des hommes recourent-ils au procédé de l'alinéa suivant. Il existe pourtant des circonstances où cette façon de faire est plus difficile, notamment pour les monogames, car son exécution exige plusieurs semaines, parfois plusieurs mois. Entre-temps la femme fait comme bon lui semble, néglige son mari, de sorte que celui-ci se trouve pratiquement dans la condition d'un célibataire.

L'évangélisation a ajouté une seconde difficulté. Le mariage catholique est indissoluble. Pour les catéchumènes et les chrétiens qui veulent se marier il s'agit donc d'être prudents. Avant de les admettre au mariage religieux nous exigeons qu'au moins le *walo* soit terminé. Mais les jeunes gens ne connaissent le tempérament et la valeur de leurs fiancées que par l'expérience. Dans la presque totalité des cas ils font donc cette expérience chez eux avant le *walo*, selon la coutume ancestrale. Ensuite, si l'une des deux parties est païenne (ce qui arrive très fréquemment), les lois disciplinaires des Missions catholiques au Congo leur imposent une préparation de six mois minimum au poste de Mission ou dans un catéchuménat. Or, il arrive que pendant cette période expérimentale les fiancés se reconnaissent des défauts qui leur font prévoir une vie conjugale pleine de difficultés et suivie d'une rupture. Il est donc préférable qu'ils prennent les mesures voulues avant le mariage. Généralement ces difficultés proviennent de la femme. Le sexe féminin n'a été atteint par l'évangélisation que dans une mesure extrêmement minime, surtout parce que les parents païens, qui ne s'opposent pas à la christianisation et l'éducation de leurs garçons, prennent leur revanche sur les filles : ils redoutent notamment chez elles une opposition aux mariages précoces ou la fuite vers les centres. Pour ces gens donc il est pratiquement impossible de tourner la difficulté de la façon mentionnée. Comme le cas n'est pas prévu par la loi ancestrale et que, d'autre part, la majorité des détenteurs indigènes du pouvoir sont nettement indifférents, si pas hostiles, à l'évangélisation et à la stabilité du mariage chrétien, aucun compte n'est tenu de ces circonstances spéciales, au grand détriment des jeunes gens, qui se trouvent ainsi coincés entre leur conscience et leurs intérêts temporels (qui dans ces cas ont une forte répercussion sur leur vie morale). L'attitude de la presque totalité des *chefs* et juges n'est pas, dans cette matière, contraire à la lettre de la loi ancestrale, — puisqu'elle ne connaissait pas le cas, — mais elle est bel et bien en opposition avec son esprit.

7° Les époux se rendent ensemble dans la famille de la femme. La maladie et la mort survenant lors d'une visite pareille sont imputées uniquement au mari, qui en garde tous les risques, sauf, évidemment, si le mari, rentrant chez lui, la femme ne le suit pas, mais reste chez ses parents. Dans ce cas, en effet, nous retombons dans la solution du n° 2.

8° Ici nous reprenons l'éventualité indiquée à la fin de l'article IX, § 1, c'est-à-dire que la femme meurt dans sa famille avant le versement du walo. Si le mari est en tort (Cfr. sous 1, 3 et 7), la solution donnée à l'article en question garde toute sa valeur : la « responsabilité » du mari reste entière. Dans les autres cas, elle est diminuée, mais non enlevée. En effet, deux règles juridiques entrent en conflit. D'une part, la « responsabilité » du mari qui ne s'est pas pleinement acquitté de ses obligations, et, d'autre part, la « responsabilité » de la femme qui n'est pas restée chez son mari. Pour employer une comparaison du domaine de la comptabilité, il y a, des deux côtés, du débit et du crédit. Mais ce dernier est surtout du côté de la famille de la femme, car au moment de la mort la femme n'est pas encore épouse au sens plein du mot. Par conséquent, le mari doit payer une indemnité. Mais la mort de sa fiancée dans sa famille constitue pour lui une circonstance atténuante et de ce fait l'indemnité est diminuée et il suffira qu'il paie une petite moitié, c'est-à-dire environ 25 à 35 anneaux.

Conclusion.

Les explications données peuvent sembler un peu prolixes. Il était néanmoins utile d'indiquer toute la variété des cas possibles, afin d'en déduire la règle et de saisir sur le vif la base du système. Il appert ainsi de toutes ces considérations que la femme est entièrement au risque du mari, qui a à subir le préjudice qu'entraîne la perte de la femme. Elle lui appartient réellement et non à sa famille, et cela malgré l'impression contraire qu'on pourrait avoir comme si la femme appartenait plus à ses parents qu'à son mari. Car même dans les cas où elle meurt chez eux, après s'y être rendue pour un motif juste, son décès est considéré comme une injustice faite au mari, puisque la place de l'épouse est au foyer conjugal. C'est là la règle générale. Par exception, la femme redevient au risque des parents, c'est-à-dire que les parents redeviennent responsables, dans des cas spéciaux déterminés par le droit.

ARTICLE XI.

MORT DE LA FEMME CHEZ UN AUTRE HOMME.

Ici nous examinons ce qui arrive lorsqu'une femme ayant quitté son mari s'est rendue chez un autre homme et y meurt avant la restitution de la dot au premier. Deux cas peuvent se présenter :

1° Le walo a été versé par le second mari, mais n'a pas encore été restitué au premier. Celui-ci a droit à la restitution de la dot, tout comme si la femme n'était pas morte (chap. VIII, art. III), tandis que les règles données à l'article précédent sont applicables au nouveau mari.

2° Le walo n'a pas encore été versé; le second mari doit se conformer aux règles données à l'article IV, § 1, et article X, n° 9. Le premier mari doit rentrer dans ses droits, selon les règles indiquées au chapitre VIII, article III.

Voici deux exemples récents :

Homi yâ Lokombe, fille d'Ikotama de Bontole wâ Yôyokondo (Bongili), est mariée à Baleka de Nkilenjólô (Losenge, Bombwanja). Un *jour* elle se rend à Bempumbá pour se faire baptiser par le missionnaire protestant. Au retour, Humbé d'Iómbo (Bonkoso) la retient, désirant l'épouser. Il donne l'ikulá à Ikotama. Peu de temps après, Homi meurt. Humbé doit payer une forte indemnité, équivalente à la totalité de la dot, au père d'Homi, qui, lui, doit rembourser Baleka.

Ambá, fille de Nkálanga d'Ifutó (Bongili), était mariée à Yônjwa de Boimbo. Elle quitte celui-ci pour Bengóngó de Boambá, qui verse l'ikulá. Un *jour* Bengóngó, revenant de voyage, Ambá court à sa rencontre pour lui souhaiter la bienvenue, mais dans sa hâte elle heurte la souche d'un arbrisseau, trébuche et tombe. Sa chute a dû causer des lésions internes, car elle a été forcée de garder le lit, et peu de temps après elle mourut. Bengóngó a dû payer une indemnité de 30 anneaux plus 2 esclaves, soit au total 90 anneaux, à Nkálonga, qui, lui, a remboursé le premier mari.

A ce cas nous pouvons assimiler le décès d'une épouse survenu chez son mari, mais décès causé par un autre homme, soit que celui-ci ait eu avec elle des relations diverses, soit qu'il l'ait rendue enceinte, ce qui a entraîné sa mort. La responsabilité de cette double éventualité incombe à l'amant, qui doit indemniser le mari. L'indemnité est toujours très forte, équivalent au montant d'une dot et davantage (7).

La colonisation a donné naissance à un nouveau cas juridique, non prévu par la loi ancestrale des Nkundó : Si une femme, profitant de la liberté lui octroyée par la législation coloniale, se rend dans une Mission pour se faire instruire et s'y engager dans un mariage monogamique et qu'elle y contracte une maladie dont elle meurt (à la Mission, à l'hôpital, ou même dans sa famille, circonstances de lieu qui n'ont aucune importance juridique), nous nous trouvons devant un cas tout neuf. En effet, le mari ne considère plus la femme comme étant sienne, puisqu'elle l'a abandonné, bien que théoriquement elle continue d'être son épouse. D'autre part, elle n'est pas rentrée dans sa famille et ne s'est pas rendue chez un autre homme.

Les maris polygames veulent en rejeter la « responsabilité » sur les parents de la femme. Mais de fait ceux-ci n'y sont pour rien Il serait injuste de les mêler à cette question.

La Mission n'est pas mise en cause par eux. Elle rend d'ailleurs service à la femme et à toute la société en tâchant de l'élever moralement et culturellement.

Que faut-il penser de ce cas ? Nous avons vu à l'article précédent que l'épouse est aux risques du mari. A cette règle générale la loi nkundó formule quelques exceptions que nous avons exposées, en dehors desquelles toutefois la règle reprend son empire, puisque les exceptions sont de stricte interprétation. Ainsi dans le cas qui nous occupe, où par conséquent le préjudice doit rester pour le compte du mari.

---

(7) Cfr. chap. I, 1re partie, art. V, § 1, et chap. VI, art. VII, § 6.

Cette interprétation est en outre à encourager pour le motif suivant :

Le but de la législation en cause est de protéger la liberté dans cette matière d'une importance capitale et de favoriser la monogamie ou l'abandon progressif de la polygamie. Forcément les polygames — en bloc — doivent en pâtir de façon ou d'autre. La lutte contre un abus ne saurait se concevoir sans que les personnes qui s'y livrent soient atteintes.

Pareils cas sont encore très rares, mais leur fréquence peut augmenter avec les progrès de l'évangélisation.

Nous devons terminer par une remarque qui se rapporte à l'un et à l'autre des deux derniers articles. La cause du décès n'a aucune importance juridique. Les solutions données ne diffèrent pas, que la mort soit d'origine organique ou criminelle. Seulement, dans ce dernier cas, l'assassin doit payer une indemnité qui est remise à la personne préjudiciée, mari ou famille de la femme; de sorte que, de toute façon, il est satisfait à la justice.

Il peut arriver que la femme soit assassinée pendant une visite chez une parente de son mari, où elle s'est rendue sur le désir de ce dernier. Dans cette éventualité le mari de la belle-sœur est responsable. Il doit indemniser le mari de la victime, tandis que lui-même a droit à l'indemnisation de la part de l'assassin. Pour simplifier cette procédure, l'assassin peut payer directement au veuf : la justice est toujours sauve. Mais en aucun cas l'indemnité ne revient au père de la victime, car celle-ci appartient juridiquement et économiquement à son mari, et nullement au père, dont l'indemnisation consiste dans les paiements funéraires.

CONCLUSIONS.

1° La mort ne rompt l'union conjugale que dans la personne qui vient de mourir. De la part du conjoint qui reste en vie la rupture n'est consommée que par d'autres procédés. Si le mari est mort, la veuve reste épouse des héritiers et n'est libre que par la restitution de la dot. A la mort de l'épouse le mari peut épouser une remplaçante.

Le remariage de la veuve sans restitution dotale (et donc sans nouvelle dot) ou du veuf avec une remplaçante est considéré comme continuation de l'union préexistante et non dissoute. Cette continuation n'est pourtant pas absolue. En effet, elle n'est parfaite qu'au décès du mari, auquel cas sa parenté hérite de tous ses droits, donc aussi de ses droits sur les *femmes* qu'il a acquises au moyen de son capital. Au contraire, pour que le veuf continue l'alliance, un nouveau versement dotal doit intervenir.

Cette différence entre les deux cas provient de ce que la dot est liée à la « possession » de la femme qui y reste sujette et qui, de ce fait, devient, après la mort de son mari, l'épouse légale des héritiers. Ce n'est que sa propre mort qui enlève tout support à la dot, qui devient alors une valeur purement matérielle.

C'est pourquoi l'expression nkundó de « continuation du mariage » est équivoque. Pour le veuf le mariage persiste au point de vue familial. Mais du point de vue juridique il y a nouveau mariage, puisque pour la remplaçante il paie une nouvelle dot, ce qui fait un contrat absolument nouveau. Ce n'est que pour la veuve que le mariage persiste réellement aussi longtemps que le divorce n'est pas intervenu entre elle et les héritiers du mari *défunt*. Dans sa personne le contrat garde toute sa valeur, tandis que les obligations du mari sont *transférées* aux héritiers. De ce *côté-ci* il y a simplement changement de personnes, des sujets du contrat, qui n'est donc nullement *annulé*. Il s'agit ici d'un remplacement dans l'*office* de mari.

Ce qui précède doit s'entendre de la convention financière ou contrat dotal, comme nous l'avons expliqué au chapitre III, article IX. Car, pour ce qui est du pacte conjugal ou contrat de consentement, il est annulé par la mort, puisque tant l'héritier que la veuve doivent, pour devenir effectivement mari et femme, intervenir par de nouveaux actes. La continuation du mariage, comme s'expriment les Nkundó, n'est donc que la persistance de la convention dotale entre les familles, et nullement la continuation du pacte conjugal entre les deux individus.

Il serait souhaitable qu'un moraliste examinât à fond la valeur philosophico-théologique de ce mariage continuant après la mort d'une des parties. Personnellement, pour ce qui de la veuve et sous condition que par ailleurs rien ne s'y oppose, j'opine pour la validité. Le consentement, en effet, est exprimé de la part de l'homme par le versement des *bekuedi*, et de la part de la femme par le fait d'accompagner l'homme en qualité d'épouse.

2° Au point de vue économique le décès ne change pas la situation qui existait durant la vie. Les divers versements dotaux restent acquis aux parties respectives. La différence avec le divorce est donc considérable et très nettement marquée, comme il est indiqué au chapitre VIII, article III, Conclusion.

3° Les règles juridico-financières confirment la conclusion du chapitre VI, article II et suivants, que l'épouse appartient de droit comme de fait à son mari, quoiqu'elle ne sorte pas de son clan.

4° Elles corroborent aussi la conclusion du chapitre II, article IX, § 5 : que des divers paiements dotaux c'est le walo qui est l'élément essentiel pour le contrat matrimonial.

5° Enfin, elles démontrent la prépondérance juridique de l'union conjugale sur la société familiale ou clanique, nonobstant les faits apparemment contraires qu'on peut souvent observer.

CHAPITRE X.

ENFANTS.

Une étude sur le mariage serait incomplète sans un chapitre traitant des enfants. Leur procréation et leur éducation constituent le *finis operis*, l'effet naturel de l'état conjugal, état qui pour l'homme, être raisonnable, est la seule forme légitime de pourvoir à la propagation de son espèce, fin propre de la vie sexuelle.

Cette matière se prête à plus de développements que nous ne lui en donnons ici. Nous passons sous silence nombre de données intéressantes s'y rapportant, mais débordant les limites que nous avons tracées à cet ouvrage. Nous excluons, par exemple, la question de l'adoption, qui n'examine pas les enfants du point de vue matrimonial, mais ressort du domaine purement familial et social.

Même ramené dans ces bornes, ce chapitre, si nous traitions le sujet avec toute l'ampleur qu'il mérite, en viendrait à former à lui seul un volume entier. Nous devons donc en rester aux généralités, ne relevant que les cas particuliers les plus fréquents et les plus communs.

Pour ce qui concerne l'ordre suivi dans l'exposé de ce chapitre, nous étudierons successivement, après quelques notes préliminaires (art. I) :

Art. II, la conception et la gestation;
Art. III, l'enfantement;
Art. IV, l'allaitement;
Art. V, l'imposition du nom;
Art. VI, la question des jumeaux;
Art. VII, la circoncision;
Art. VIII, l'éducation;
Art. IX, les droits sur les enfants.

[p. 463]

ARTICLE I. — PRÉLIMINAIRES.

§ 1. Généralités.

Les Nkundó aiment avoir des enfants; non seulement, comme le prétendent parfois des coloniaux trop superficiels, des filles, mais tout autant des garçons. Il est vrai que la fille porte en elle l'espoir d'une dot et tout ce qu'elle représente pour les polygames avides de gloire païenne et de plaisirs charnels; mais en fait, il est rare de devoir constater cette préférence pour les enfants du sexe faible. Ce qui se rencontre, tout comme en Europe d'ailleurs, c'est le désir de voir naître un enfant de sexe déterminé, quand, par exemple, l'autre est déjà abondamment représenté dans le ménage. Ainsi l'indigène qui a déjà plusieurs garçons et aucune ou une seule fille fait des vœux pour leur voir s'ajouter une sœur. La chose est d'autant moins étonnante que la sœur est, ici, le moyen indiqué, et parfois unique, pour acquérir une épouse. D'autre part, le père dont la progéniture appartient exclusivement, ou presque, au sexe féminin, désire ardemment la naissance d'un fils, héritier des fruits de son travail et qui pourra lui donner aide et assistance dans sa vieillesse, en lui construisant une case, en défrichant la forêt, en lui apportant du gibier ou des produits de la pêche.

De fait, on entend rarement exprimer ces préférences. On reçoit plutôt l'impression que le Nkundó *aime* les enfants comme tels et aussi — les deux motifs étant inséparables dans la pratique — parce que, quel que soit le sexe, ils contribuent puissamment à renforcer son influence sociale.

On prétend parfois que les indigènes ne refusent pas les enfants parce que leur venue ne les *gêne* nullement, ni ne leur impose des charges financières écrasantes : ils ne leur coûtent rien à élever, tandis que chez les Blancs leur entretien, habillement, nourriture, instruction, placement entraînent des *frais* considérables. On ne peut contester que autant l'Européen moderne est exigeant à tous ces points de vue, enchaîné, bloqué par la multitude toujours croissante de ses besoins, autant la vie matérielle de l'indigène est simple et ses nécessités réduites au minimum indispensable. Toutefois, on n'en peut nullement conclure qu'il lui est tout aussi aisé d'élever une grande famille avec beaucoup d'enfants que de n'en avoir qu'un nombre plus restreint à sa charge. Sans parler d'habillement, — au temps présent surtout, — la nourriture des enfants grandissants l'oblige à défricher une plus vaste étendue de forêt, à se donner plus de peine pour les divers procédés de chasse ou de pêche; et lorsque le moment de chercher une épouse est venue pour ses fils, c'est encore lui qui devra se démener afin de leur procurer les valeurs nécessaires pour la dot.

De son côté, la femme nkundó autant que l'homme, sinon davantage, aime à transmettre la vie. La gestation peut bien la rendre maussade et grognarde et parfois lui susciter des peines, mais elle les supporte et ne pense pas, en règle très générale, à se priver pour ces raisons du bonheur de donner naissance à un petit être mignon, de l'allaiter, de le porter dans ses bras ou sur son épaule. Les embarras et les douleurs de la maternité ne la rebutent point. Quoique plus tard, lors du versement de la dot pour sa fille, sa cupidité la poussera à réclamer à hauts cris le paiement auquel elle a droit, voire parfois l'incitera à briser l'amour de son enfant à cause du retard dans cette opération financière, cette échéance n'apparaît pas à l'horizon de ses pensées avant que le moment n'en soit arrivé.

Elle porte à son enfant un amour parfaitement naturel, maternel, pour tout dire en un mot.

N'y a-t-il donc pas d'exceptions à cette règle générale? Oh! oui, et le contraire étonnerait de la part d'une population païenne dont toutes les passions ont libre jeu ou, tout au plus, ne sont refrénées que dans une mesure très limitée, et dont l'amour est loin d'atteindre la perfection qu'on peut rencontrer chez un peuple ennobli par quinze siècles de christianisme. D'ailleurs, — toutes les pages précédentes en témoignent, — nos Nkundó ne sont pas façonnés dans un moule uniforme, comme certains ouvrages coloniaux et ethnologiques en suggèrent l'impression. On trouve ici toutes les différences individuelles, bien que pour l'observateur européen elles ressortent moins, car d'ordinaire nous approchons les indigènes en bloc et notre contact avec eux est, souvent, trop peu personnel.

§ 5. Avortement.

Un terrible ennemi de l'amour maternel est la pratique de l'avortement, que les Nkundó ont toujours connue. Nous ne pouvons exposer ici toutes les recettes en usage à cette fin. Il nous suffira d'énumérer les motifs qui les incitent à y recourir. Ce sont :

1° La lascivité de la femme : la génération et ensuite les soins de l'enfant l'empêchent, dans une certaine mesure, de s'adonner au plaisir charnel. Cette cause d'avortements était inexistante autrefois, ou du moins très rare. Inutile de dire qu'elle est devenue plus fréquente, particulièrement dans les centres, où elle ne cesse d'augmenter et où, en outre, les « ménagères » attitrées ou occasionnelles apprennent l'emploi de nouveaux moyens stérilisateurs ou avortifs;

2° L'antipathie ou une colère persistante contre le mari peut pousser la femme à empêcher la conception ou à en détruire l'effet;

3° L'affaiblissement excessif de l'organisme maternel, causé par des conceptions et des accouchements multiples à des intervalles trop rapprochés;

4° L'encombrement, la difficulté de surveiller, de porter, de soigner beaucoup de petits enfants : bálota bokękęsano wă bàna nsátélá nsátélá. Cette raison a surtout une influence sur les danseuses renommées.

Il va sans dire que plusieurs de ces motifs peuvent être réunis dans la même personne. Ainsi j'ai connu le cas d'une femme qui avait pratiqué l'avortement de son huitième enfant. Ses accouchements réitérés, joints à une activité soutenue, avaient fortement diminué ses forces. Une palabre avec son mari fit déborder la mesure et elle résolut de se défaire du fruit qu'elle portait dans son sein.

Sauf ces exceptions, l'indigène de cette contrée désire ardemment voir sa personne se prolonger dans une nombreuse progéniture (1).

Il convient d'attirer l'attention sur le danger de voir augmenter les avortements pour un nouveau motif, la honte d'un accouchement extramatrimonial. Comme nous l'avons vu au chapitre I, IIe partie, article IV, § 3, de temps immémoriaux la grossesse prématrimoniale n'engendre ni remords ni palabres. L'enseignement de la morale chrétienne doit étendre tôt ou tard le sentiment de la honte à ce phénomène. En expliquant le mal de la fornication on devra donc avoir soin d'insister également sur le mal bien plus grand qu'il y a à transgresser le cinquième commandement par l'avortement.

L'avortement volontaire n'est pas considéré par le Nkundó comme une faute morale (2). A ses yeux, le fœtus imparfaitement formé, non viable, n'est pas encore un homme. Ce n'est qu'un être humain en formation, *in potentia*. D'où la coutume d'enterrer l'avorton dans la case, ou tout près. Ainsi le génie qui a procuré la grossesse se voit respecté et réitérera son action bienfaisante [1].

---

(1) Ailleurs il n'en est plus de même. On cite les exemples des régions déjà « plus civilisées » : environs de Coquilhatville, région de Losanganye.

(2) Mentalité qui existe également en Europe, actuellement, selon HAESCOUR, dans *Kultuurleven*, VI, n° 1, p. 21 (1935), et la brochure y citée du Prof. D. Schockaert.

Mais s'il est volontaire, l'avortement est toujours une faute familiale ou sociale, car il prive la famille d'un membre sur lequel elle pouvait compter. Toutefois, si la chose arrive à une jeune fille-mère, il n'en est fait que peu ou pas de cas, parce que personne ne peut se considérer comme lésé; tout au plus gronde-t-on la coupable. Au contraire, pour une femme mariée l'infraction est des plus graves. Son mari a un droit strict sur le fœtus qui aurait dû devenir son enfant. Comme punition, il ne peut pas battre ni maltraiter la criminelle, l'état de celle-ci ne permettant pas de violences, mais il peut l'abandonner à son sort et lui refuser toute assistance, spécialement en omettant de lui apporter le bois de chauffage dont elle a un si grand besoin dans cette situation. Car elle lui a causé un tort immense, elle a agi avec une réelle malice (aônjókel'i-nkúnyá, dit-il), puisqu'il l'a épousée principalement pour qu'elle lui donne une descendance. Si elle meurt c'est sa propre faute. Sa famille même ne la soutient pas, car elle serait accusée d'avoir trempé la main dans ce crime; inévitablement elle perdrait le procès et serait condamnée à indemniser le mari.

Un avortement avéré involontaire est traité comme un accident ou une maladie et en suit les stipulations juridiques. Si donc le fait arrive à la femme pendant qu'elle se trouve chez ses parents, la responsabilité leur en incombe. D'ordinaire, la palabre est arrangée à l'amiable : la famille fait quelques paiements de *nkọmí* et l'affaire est close. Si les relations entre le mari et son beau-père sont un peu tendues, le différend peut traîner et occasionner la rupture. Si la femme meurt des suites de l'accident, les règles données au chapitre précédent, article X, entrent en jeu.

---

[1] D'autres donnent comme explication de cette coutume que le fœtus ayant déjà une âme, celle-ci reste auprès du corps minuscule et profitera de la première occasion pour rentrer dans le sein maternel.

ARTICLE II. — CONCEPTION ET GESTATION.

Le Nkundó ne possède qu'une notion partielle des phénomènes de la conception. Il sait bien par quels actes la procréation des enfants a lieu. Il possède une parfaite connaissance anatomique et une terminologie riche de ce qui se rapporte à la vie sexuelle. Des processus physiologiques il ne connaît que ceux que l'expérience lui peut apprendre. En outre, d'après lui, l'acte procréateur doit être répété plusieurs fois pour qu'il produise son effet naturel. Notons enfin que les rapports sont strictement défendus pendant la menstruation (*-kọna* ou *ẹ́na nsóngé* = littéralement : être malade de, ou : voir la lune, et autres expressions similaires). On donne comme raison d'éviter à la femme dans cet état difficile toute molestation supplémentaire.

§ 1. Elima.

Les Nkundó attribuent la procréation des enfants tantôt à Dieu (*Njakomba*), tantôt aux génies (*elímá*, pl. *bilímá*). C'est Dieu qui les forme (*-ánga*) dans le sein maternel, et en même temps ce sont les *bilímá* qui pourvoient les hommes d'une progéniture (¹).

Il ne faut évidemment pas tâcher de faire résoudre par les indigènes cette antinomie apparente : ils n'y réussiraient pas; ils affirment tout simplement les deux faits. Je dis antinomie apparente, car, comme les Nkundó admettent que les *bilímá* dépendent de Njakomba, la contradiction n'est pas réelle, et les deux propositions se con-

---

(¹) Contrairement à ce que relate le R. P. LESTAEGHE, *Congo*, 1922, I, p. 363, sur les Ekonda, les tribus que j'ai connues, tout en attribuant à Dieu le don des enfants, ne Lui adressent jamais de prières à cet effet. Cela ne regarde pas directement Dieu (Njakomba ou Mbombiándá), mais l'*elímá* un tel ou un tel.

La stérilité, phénomène fréquent ici, n'est pas imputée aux maléfices, mais est considéré comme un défaut inné. D'ordinaire les indigènes prétendent que Dieu leur refuse des enfants.

cilient en expliquant l'intervention des génies comme une opération dépendante de l'action divine : ce sont des causes secondes, intermédiaires, quoique nos indigènes ne fassent pas ce raisonnement philosophique.

Ce serait sortir du cadre de cette étude que d'expliquer toutes les croyances se rapportant aux génies. Nous ne pouvons pourtant pas omettre les détails qui touchent de près à notre sujet.

Il existe une grande quantité de génies divers; presque tout village en possède plusieurs sur son territoire. Chacun a sa demeure propre dans des endroits ou objets singuliers et frappant l'imagination: arbres énormes, dépressions ovales qui forment des sortes de mares (*jěmbo*, pl. *baémbo*), pentes accentuées, blocs de limonite extraordinaires, tourbillons dans les ruisseaux et les rivières, etc.

Les Nkundó prient les *bilímá* afin d'obtenir des enfants. Ils leur font, à cette intention, des offrandes de vivres, de monnaie. Il arrive que l'*elímá*, pour éprouver les sentiments de quelqu'un à son égard, se présente à lui le soir ou la nuit, sous les apparences d'une personne connue, et lui demande quelque menu cadeau. Malheur à celui qui fait preuve de ladrerie; il sera frustré de l'objet de ses désirs, ou l'enfant n'arrivera pas à terme, ou encore naîtra débile ou difforme.

Outre l'attitude bienveillante générale envers le génie, la femme connaît encore un moyen d'assurer son intervention. Elle se procure du kaolin (*ẹongọ*) dans la demeure (*jěmbo*, de préférence) du génie. Le soir elle le mélange avec des plantes. De cette mixture, nommée *isaá*, elle s'enduit le ventre. Pendant toute la durée de la gestation elle continue ce traitement, qui a la propriété d'enlever tout ce qui, en elle, serait de nature à contrarier l'action du génie (*ákékola lokeko jwǎ bilímá lǒle ndá likundú*).

Certains génies aquatiques sont renommés pour leur générosité, tel Itúmbálombé ou Ekótalombé, de Mpakú, que l'on considère comme un être féminin. Elle va en voyage au loin chercher une provision d'enfants. Au retour, elle apparaît à quelqu'un et lui communique la nouvelle pour qu'il la répande. Seulement elle prescrit à toute femme qui désire ses faveurs d'observer telle ou telle abstinence. Parfois elle chante pour amuser ou amadouer les enfants. Ce jour-là les mères doivent omettre d'apaiser ou d'endormir leurs petits au moyen de chants, et ne peuvent y employer que de douces paroles. Sinon l'enfant mourra; car ce serait méconnaître la gentillesse de la vieille *elímá*.

Quelquefois les génies donnent des indices de leur bénédiction. Une femme qui, au moment de l'arrivée de la cargaison, est en train de prendre un bain à cette rive, verra bientôt réalisé son vœu le plus intime. De la part des génies forestiers, les femmes reçoivent d'autres signes : achoppement inopiné à une pierre, à une souche, à une racine, ou prise d'une grenouille arboricole qui lui vient sauter sur l'épaule, etc.

Le génie n'aime et ne protège que l'enfant qu'il a lui-même donné. Il abhorre et hait à mort les dons vivants de ses congénères. Pourtant, s'il se trouve plusieurs *bilímá* aux environs d'un même village, les Nkundó expliquent l'absence des rivalités usuelles en les considérant comme apparentés entre eux : l'un est le mari, l'autre l'épouse, les autres les enfants; c'est pourquoi ils ne se contrecarrent pas.

L'*elímá* est donc hostile aux fœtus autres que ceux dont il est l'auteur. Toutefois, son action malveillante ne se déclanche qu'après quelques semaines, et encore faut-il que la grossesse soit avancée au point d'être devenue manifeste (*jěmi jǒkela isómbá*). Lui faudrait-il du temps pour obtenir l'évidence que le fruit en question est indubitablement son don à lui?

En tout cas, la conséquence de cette croyance est qu'une femme enceinte depuis quelques mois ne peut résider longtemps à l'étranger et que telle autre, ayant après la conception accompagné son mari qui est allé travailler ailleurs, rentre dans son village pour y achever la dernière période de sa grossesse et y accoucher.

Il existe pourtant un antidote (*nsengó*) contre cette action meurtrière des génies. On peut se le procurer chez une personne qui en connaît la recette (cette personne n'est pas le *nkanga* ou « médecin »). Cette composition protectrice, enveloppée dans un bout d'étoffe, est liée au moyen d'une ficelle en fibres de la liane *lokósá*, au milieu d'une corde tressée avec les fibres de l'arbuste *ikuluyaéndé* que la femme menacée se noue autour des reins (¹).

§ 2. Débuts de la grossesse.

Les premiers mois qui suivent l'arrêt des règles s'appellent *bọfọswa*. L'expression verbale est *-fọswa jĕmi* (*jĕmi* signifiant fœtus).

La femme qui vient de concevoir n'a plus de succès à la recherche des chenilles ou à la pêche (par écoppement, à hameçons *balẹ́ngẹ́*, à stupéfiants = *lisola*, n'importe). Elle ne parvient à rien prendre, tandis que les efforts de ses compagnes sont fructueux. C'est que le *bọfọswa* est *wĕká*, c'est-à-dire une cause d'insuccès (*bŏmoto óâ wĕká áfóáte*). Notons que ce mot peut dériver du verbe *ẹ́ka* = mettre obstacle.

Le mari d'une femme qui se trouve dans cet état n'est pas logé à meilleure enseigne. Le *wĕká* de son épouse se communique à lui ainsi qu'à tout parent du mari qui

---

(¹) Ces données au sujet de l'*elímá* s'opposent diamétralement à la conception que s'en est faite le R. P. SCHEBESTA (*Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge*, p. 241, et dans W. SCHMIDT, *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee*, IV, p. 322), sur la foi de son interprète Bern. Bongonga, de Boúlama (Bombwanja) (actuellement décédé), qui, en ma présence, a été obligé un jour de retirer ses affirmations sous la pression des objections écrasantes d'un nombre considérable d'autres indigènes. Cfr. aussi R. P. BOELAERT, *Hooger Leven*, 1935, p. 60, et *Congo*, 1936, t. I, p. 42; HULSTAERT, *Congo*, 1936, t. II, p. 670.

habite le même village ou, comme l'expriment les indigènes, *ǫ̌lę́ mpoké ęmǫ̂nkǫlǫ́*=celui qui mange du même pot; *ŏkisí ilǫmbę ímǫ̂nkǫlǫ́*=celui qui demeure dans la même maison. En sont indemnes les amis, même s'ils résident dans l'agglomération de la femme enceinte, et les parents vivant ailleurs.

Le *wěká* porte malheur à celui qui en est entaché. Ainsi, s'il va à la chasse, il reviendra bredouille. S'il participe à une guerre, il sera blessé. Plus encore, un léopard se trouvant dans les environs attaquera de préférence cet homme. Un éléphant le flairera et tâchera de le tuer. Un serpent le mordra plutôt qu'un autre. Au marché tout lui sera compté plus cher.

Cette situation encombrante persiste pendant tout le temps que dure la grossesse, donc jusqu'à la naissance de l'enfant.

Toutefois, les Nkundó connaissent un antidote (*nsengó* ou *losenjó*), un moyen de défaire (*senjola*) ces interdits gênants. Des trois procédés connus c'est surtout le dernier qui est en vogue actuellement.

1° Le mari (ou celui auquel le *wěká* est attaché et qui veut s'en débarrasser) prend, au moyen d'une feuille, évidemment, un chilopode *nkǫ̂ngǫlí*, l'enferme dans une grande feuille et, en la liant avec une mince liane, en fait un petit paquet, tout comme on fait un paquet de viande, de poisson, etc. Il remet ce paquet à sa femme, qui, pensant qu'il contient de la nourriture, l'ouvre sans méfiance. Mais à la vue de l'arthropode abhorré, elle le jette loin d'elle en poussant des cris d'aversion, pendant que le mari lui dit : « C'est toi qui restes avec le *wěká* ». De ce fait, lui-même en est libéré.

2° Un second moyen est de prendre, lorsque l'occasion s'en présente, la femme enceinte au nez, en disant : « Que le *wěká* reste attaché à toi ».

3° La femme prépare de l'*imbóndó* (feuilles de manioc salées et saucées d'huile de palme). Les deux époux en mangent conjointement, contrairement à la pratique habituelle. Mais le mari s'arrange en sorte que la dernière bouchée reste à la femme et que celle-ci garde donc la feuille qui sert d'assiette et qui représente le *wĕká*, pendant que le mari lui dit : « Garde le *wĕká* pour toi ».

Le *wĕká* ne peut pas se détacher de la femme, qui est le *bomóngó wĕká*= la propriétaire du *wĕká*, celle qui en est le fondement. Pour elle il persiste jusqu'à ce que l'enfant soit sur le point de naître (*elaká ô jĕmi jŏtúnda* = littéralement : qu'il est arrivé au terme de sa croissance, ou *jŏkékama*= s'est mis de travers) ; donc pratiquement il ne cesse qu'avec la naissance de l'enfant.

Si la première femme meurt au début de sa première grossesse on doit pratiquer l'opération césarienne. On extrait le fœtus (qui n'est encore qu'un embryon = *iléngélá*, ou *bokelé*= littéralement : œuf, ou *ilóngó*= littéralement : sang), pour l'enterrer dans ou derrière la case. L'omission de cet usage entraînerait la mort en grossesse des autres épouses de son mari ou des femmes auxquelles il s'unirait plus tard.

§ 3. Période d'interdits.

Lorsque la grossesse est avancée, deux ou trois mois avant l'accouchement (période réduite à présent à une ou deux semaines), on procède à la « conservation du fœtus » = *báomba jĕmi*= ils conservant le fœtus, ou *bááka jĕmi* = ils fixent le fœtus. Dès ce moment commence la période du *bokeka* ou *bokeko*, qui ne cesse qu'après l'accouchement. L'expression verbale est *lémba bokeka*= lier la période d'interdits sexuels (¹). Cette dénomination s'étend aussi à toutes les défenses particulières (*bikilá*) qui découlent de cet état.

(¹) On dit aussi *lémba lúmbá*. Pareille période d'interdits sexuels appelée du même nom existe encore, entre autres, pour la circoncision, le dressement d'une clôture de chasse, la pose de pièges à éléphants.

Pour la première grossesse on prélude par la cérémonie suivante : la mère de la femme enduit de fard rouge, *ngóla*, la tête et tout le corps de sa fille. Le *ngóla*, objet de parure, est ici une marque d'affection, donnée pour honorer et féliciter de l'heureux événement la future mère. Lorsque le *ngóla* est plus ou moins durci elle arrange en boulettes la chevelure ainsi enduite, en se servant d'un *bosóngó* en fer, qui est l'instrument habituel pour le dressage des cheveux. Ensuite elle lui présente à manger une poule et des bananes. Désormais la femme enceinte ne peut plus se nourrir de poules, car la consommation de cet oiseau (auquel les Nkundó assimilent les canards) et de ses œufs arrêterait le développement normal du fœtus. Cette cérémonie s'appelle *íla bongata* (Bombwanja : *ẹlẹku*) = enduire de fard rouge en boulettes.

Le père de la femme et les parents du mari tiennent à y assister, car elle est considérée comme de grande importance. J'ai connu une forte palabre parce que la mère d'une femme avait procédé à la cérémonie en l'absence du mari et de sa famille. Ceux-ci étaient furieux. Ils divulguèrent l'affaire pour pouvoir obtenir gain de cause si, plus tard, il arrivait quelque chose à la mère ou à l'enfant. Le mari pourrait de la sorte se disculper et faire retomber la faute sur sa femme et la famille de celle-ci, qui devraient alors payer une indemnité.

La femme n'enlève le fard qu'après trois ou quatre semaines. Actuellement, l'usage du fard ayant disparu, excepté à certaines occasions et chez les vieilles personnes, on ne le laisse qu'une nuit. En outre, la surface à enduire est restreinte à une ligne au milieu de la tête ou même à un seul point.

A l'occasion de cette cérémonie, les Bombwanja procèdent à la confession publique (*etato*) des amants. Mais comme les Bokóté la réservent pour après l'accouchement, nous en traiterons plus loin.

La nuit qui suit la cérémonie décrite, les conjoints

« fixent le fœtus » par leur union charnelle. S'ils omettaient cet acte, l'enfant n'arriverait pas à terme.

Pour les grossesses suivantes, la fixation du fœtus n'est plus précédée des mêmes formalités.

Pendant tout le temps de la gestation les conjoints ne cessent pas leurs rapports, « afin de frayer à l'enfant un passage facile ». Par contre, ils doivent observer rigoureusement la fidélité conjugale. Néanmoins, un polygame peut avoir des rapports avec ses autres femmes.

A côté de cette partie essentielle, l'interdit comprend une partie accidentelle : les conjoints ne peuvent même pas se permettre des actes qui n'y ont qu'une relation fort éloignée. Ainsi ils ne peuvent :

1° toucher de n'importe quelle façon, fût-ce simplement en donnant la main, les personnes avec lesquelles ils ont eu des rapports adultères; ils doivent donc les éviter;

2° s'asseoir à côté de ces personnes;

3° les fixer du regard;

4° entrer dans un appartement ou une maison où elles se trouvent;

5° manger « dans le même pot »;

6° coucher sur le lit d'un autre ménage;

7° d'autres personnes ne peuvent plus dormir dans le lit des conjoints liés par le *bokeka*.

Cette loi d'une fidélité plus rigoureuse se prolonge, pour le mari, jusqu'à la fin du *bokeka*, pour la femme, au contraire, jusqu'au sevrage de l'enfant. Elle est particulièrement sévère pendant la réclusion. (Cfr., plus loin, art. III, § 3.)

La transgression de la stipulation essentielle de cette interdit (*-fénda bokeka*) entraîne, soit la mort de la femme pendant la grossesse et surtout durant la réclusion, soit, plus tard, la mort de l'enfant.

A. — Si la femme meurt pendant cette période, les soupçons pèsent à priori sur le mari. On dit *aǒfénda wǎlí* = il a transgressé sa femme. A moins qu'il ne puisse prouver son innocence, soit par des faits publics, soit par le jugement d'un magicien, soit par l'autopsie.

La femme a-t-elle été la victime d'un séducteur, celui-ci est rendu responsable et doit payer une forte indemnité, équivalente au montant de la dot versée pour la défunte. Si nul autre homme n'est en cause l'affaire n'a pas de suite.

L'autopsie-opération césarienne était toujours pratiquée autrefois. Son but était double : extraire l'enfant et examiner la mère. Si l'opération révèle l'existence d'un « estomac » (*likundú*), c'est que la défunte était d'une nature, ou plutôt d'une constitution malfaisante (*lilọka*) et qu'elle a ainsi causé la mort de son enfant. Si celui-ci vit encore, cela prouve qu'il est d'une nature magique supérieure; il a résisté aux maléfices naturels de sa mère et ceux-ci se sont retournés contre leur auteur inconscient (¹). L'enfant est donné à une nourrice (parente, étrangère, femme Bọtswa, selon les disponibilités).

Si le corps de la mère ne montre aucune caractéristique de malfaisance et de « haine des autres », sa mort est censée causée par les maléfices de l'enfant. Là-dessus d'aucuns le tuent pour l'empêcher de nuire durant toute sa vie; d'autres, au contraire, l'épargnent malgré tout.

Si par malheur le mari (car c'est lui surtout qui est en cause, parce que le plus exposé aux défaillances) s'est méconduit, il ne reste à sa femme qu'une faible chance de

---

(¹) Pour le Nkundó, seuls les animaux ont un « estomac » = *likundú*. Si une personne humaine en possède un, c'est-à-dire si ce viscère est grand, courbe, à compartiments, anormal en un mot, c'est un malfaiteur. Il porte en lui une force occulte pour nuire. Il fait ce mal volontairement, ou, le plus souvent, inconsciemment. On peut reconnaître certains hommes à *likundú* à ce qu'ils mangent leurs ongles, leurs cheveux, etc. Les Nkundó ont dû certainement constater des rapports entre cette habitude et la difformité de l'estomac.

salut. Il est pourtant toujours possible qu'elle en réchappe. Mais cela uniquement à condition que le mari s'abstienne désormais de tout acte sexuel et de tous les gestes et actions accidentels décrits ci-dessus. La moindre chose qu'il puisse faire dans ces conditions, s'il est sérieux, est d'avertir son épouse de la faiblesse qu'il a eue, pour qu'elle prenne ses précautions. S'il veut parer à toute éventualité de causer à sa femme une mort certaine, il l'envoie chez elle, en remettant à son beau-père un gage (*ndanga*) par lequel il reconnaît sa culpabilité et prouve son intention d'assumer l'entière responsabilité de son méfait. Un homme probe agit de préférence de cette façon. Car il ne sait jamais si, par inadvertance, il ne transgressera pas un jour une des prescriptions.

B. — La mort de l'enfant est provoquée par la corruption du lait de la mère, qui devient ainsi inapte à la nutrition. Comme pour le cas précédent, la faute est à priori imputée au mari : *isé aɓoma bǫ̂na la ndota* (¹). Puisqu'il ne cause de tort qu'à lui-même, il ne s'ensuit aucune palabre; la punition « naturelle » suffit. Cela n'empêche qu'il est en butte aux mauvaises langues; on le montre du doigt et à l'occasion on n'omet pas de lui rappeler son méfait. Pour se disculper, il peut recourir à une ordalie ou demander au jugement d'un magicien ou d'une pratique magique la révélation du coupable. Le coupable découvert n'encourt aucune sanction sociale : il est puni par l'effet même de l'ordalie ou de l'envoûtement exercé contre lui.

Si l'adultère de la mère est prouvé par le fait flagrant, son séducteur est reconnu coupable. Il doit payer l'indemnité de mort (20 à 30 anneaux de cuivre). La femme reste entièrement hors de cause, socialement : c'est une affaire entre elle et son mari.

Afin de prévenir tout effet préjudiciable à l'enfant, on a recours à la potion du *bondandota*, qui sera expliqué à

(¹) *Ndota* = maladie causée par la transgression de prescriptions en matière de sexualité. (Cfr. chap. 1^{er}, 2^{e} partie, art. IV, § 2, A.)

l'article suivant, § 3. On peut y ajouter une « médication » par scarifications. Cette thérapie est appliquée tant aux parents qu'à l'enfant. Si le père est riche, il invite la famille de sa femme à venir faire elle-même cette opération. L'invitation est, comme dans tous les cas analogues, accompagnée de la livraison d'un gage, et des cadeaux d'adieu (*belingako*) sont remis à la fin de la visite. En outre, très souvent, la femme va, après la réclusion, résider pour quelque temps chez ses parents, afin d'accroître l'efficacité du traitement.

La sanction encourue pour la transgression des stipulations accidentelles est moins grave. Ce sont, chez la parturiante, des migraines violentes, qui souvent provoquent la pamoison et parfois rendent l'accouchement fort laborieux et peuvent ainsi aller jusqu'à causer la mort. Le mari est rarement importuné par ces maux de tête. Mais il s'efforce d'observer fidèlement la loi, afin d'épargner à son épouse de si pénibles éventualités et d'éviter la mort de l'enfant naissant.

Les conjoints sont astreints, outre à l'abstention sexuelle avec ce qui s'y rattache, à divers interdits qui sont manifestement dus à des idées superstitieuses. Ainsi :

1° Ne pas descendre dans un puits ni creuser la terre : la femme mourrait, car c'est comme si vous creusiez sa tombe.

2° Ne rien porter conjointement avec une autre personne, car c'est de cette façon qu'on porte les cadavres, et le portage serait l'imitation-cause du cortège funéraire de la femme.

3° Ne pas monter sur le toit (grimper dans un palmier pour y couper des noix n'est pas défendu).

4° Ne pas manger des bêtes tuées par un carnassier (léopard, crocodile, etc.), sinon l'enfant mourrait d'une mort subite et innaturelle, à l'instar des victimes de ces fauves.

5° S'abstenir d'animaux qui ont l'habitude de vivre dans les creux des arbres ou dans des tanières, comme le porc-épic, les pangolins, certains oiseaux, les crocodiles et gavials [1]. L'accouchement serait très pénible, car l'enfant s'enroulerait sur lui-même et se blottirait dans le sein de sa mère. Les poissons qui se réfugient dans des galeries ne donnent pas matière à ces conséquences et sont donc consommés.

6° Ne pas manger de tortues [2]. On craint un enfantement difficile : la tortue, en effet, rentre dans sa carapace et en clôt les extrémités anales comme des tenailles, et l'enfant en ferait de même.

7° Ne pas manger la tête d'un singe; l'enfant naîtrait avec des yeux enfoncés semblables à ceux de cet animal.

8° Ne pas manger la grande antilope *mbuli*, parce qu'elle a le cou long et les chairs molles; l'enfant contracterait les mêmes défauts.

9° Ne pas manger le poisson *lioóló*, qui produirait des migraines; car il nage sauvagement sans direction ordonnée.

Les conséquences du *bokeka* et les obligations qui en découlent sont attachées à la paternité naturelle. Ainsi, si la femme se trouve en état de grossesse par suite de relations avec un amant attitré et reconnu, celui-ci doit en assumer toute la responsabilité. Il est obligé de fixer le fœtus et d'observer toutes les prescriptions du *bokeka*. Il en est de même quand la grossesse est adultérine: le père naturel porte toutes les suites de son acte. Le mari en est déchargé et n'a plus de rapports avec son épouse jusqu'à la fin de l'époque particulière de la parturition. Le coupable doit lui donner un gage par lequel il reconnaît publiquement sa responsabilité, et il est tenu de s'acquitter de tous les devoirs de mari et peut donc, pendant toute la durée de la grossesse, avoir des relations avec cette femme sans payer d'indemnités supplémentaires. Si un accident arrive à la mère ou à l'enfant, il est condamné à une forte indemnité.

---

[1] Dans cette région, les femmes ne mangent jamais de serpents, ni les chauves-souris (*loléma*, *bọnkọ́m*, *ifukyá*).

[2] Dans certaines tribus (Bongili, Bonkoso) les femmes s'abstiennent de ces reptiles en tout temps.

Notons, enfin, que depuis la visibilité de la grossesse jusqu'après la réclusion, aucun versement dotal ne peut avoir lieu, comme nous l'avons déjà fait observer au chapitre II, article XI.

L'enfantement est facilité par l'application, entretenue régulièrement sur l'abdomen de la femme, de la décoction de feuilles diverses mêlée à du kaolin (*isaá*), dont il a déjà été question. On fait également des scarifications médicales sur le ventre.

Enfin, à l'approche de la délivrance, on administre des lavements spécialement au moyen d'une décoction de l'écorce de l'arbre *boímbo* (¹). Tous ces traitements sont nommés *belé byă bosánjá*, c'est-à-dire médicaments (en vue) d'un enfantement facile.

ARTICLE III. — LA NAISSANCE.

§ 1. Accouchement.

Pour l'accouchement la femme reste chez son mari et ne se rend pas dans sa famille. Ce n'est que par exception qu'elle accouche ailleurs, par exemple lorsque pour l'une ou l'autre raison elle a été renvoyée chez elle, ou encore en voyage, pendant les travaux des champs, au ruisseau, à la source, etc. Ces accouchements subits et imprévus ne sont pas très rares (²).

Le mari prie sa belle-mère de venir assister sa fille. D'autres parentes du mari ou de la femme ne refusent

---

(¹) Certains de ces lavements, notamment celui du *boímbo*, sont également employés comme abortifs.

(²) La facilité d'accouchement s'appelle : *bosánjé*; la difficulté : *bonsombo*.

non plus leurs services. Il se trouve toujours parmi elles l'une ou l'autre plus experte en la matière, qui fait fonction d'accoucheuse (*mbótsi*).

L'accouchement a lieu dans la bananeraie, derrière la case : il y a de la lumière et de l'air. Dans la maison, il serait plus laborieux.

Le mari ne peut pas assister à cet événement. Sa présence le rendrait difficile et pénible. Plus il est éloigné, mieux cela vaut. Ceci n'est pourtant pas une défense stricte; s'il n'y se trouvait personne pour aider la parturiante (comme lors d'un accouchement imprévu en forêt, etc.), il n'hésite nullement à aider son épouse de tout son pouvoir et de toute son habileté.

L'accoucheuse facilite la venue de l'enfant en faisant boire à la mère une potion « pour rendre glissant » (*boté wă bosę́li*), ou en lui administrant un lavement à l'écorce de *boímbo*.

Si les douleurs persistent pendant plusieurs jours et que toute médication reste vaine, on suppose l'action de quelque maléfice (*lilǫka*). Pour la neutraliser, on « bénit » (*-saka*) la parturiante. A cet effet, tant sa famille que celle du mari apportent chacune une tige de la plante *bokaakó* (*bosáánga*). Deux parentes, chacune avec la tige de son clan, en extraient, par pétrissement, le suc, dont elles enduisent l'abdomen de la femme. Après quoi l'accouchement se passe normalement.

Le *nkanga* (médecin-magicien) n'intervient qu'au cas où la femme a déjà eu plusieurs fausses-couches ou que tous ses enfants meurent. Consulté il les attribue invariablement à l'action des esprits des défunts, qui peuvent être apaisés par des offrandes et par la promesse d'attendre la manifestation de leur volonté pour l'imposition d'un nom à l'enfant. Il y ajoute généralement l'observation, jusqu'au sevrage. de quelques interdits alimentaires.

Dès que l'enfant est né, les assistantes annoncent l'heureux événement par des cris, et l'on court en avertir le père. Celui-ci (ou un parent) communique la nouvelle au moyen du *lokolé*. Pour un garçon on téléphone : Batǫkǫ́ falafala, bokáta bókátáká likǫngá la nguwa, ayíme lǫkęndǫ ndá likundú, etc. (1) = les nattes étendues, celui qui tient lance et bouclier vient de voyage dans le sein. Pour une fille, « *bokáta....nguwa* » est remplacé par : isekaseka y' ólíato = douce amitié de la femme (2).

La nouvelle est acclamée par des cris d'allégresse dans tout le village et chacun accourt admirer l'enfant et féliciter la mère. Ils n'entrent pas dans la maison. Aucune fête ne rehausse la joie générale.

Ensuite, s'il s'agit d'un garçon, le père ou un homme de sa famille se poste, armé d'une lance, devant l'enfant qu'on lui présente à l'entrée de la case, ou sur la véranda, s'il y en a une. Il menace comme s'il allait attaquer l'enfant, lui crie : « Ha! ha! ha! », gesticule comme un guerrier, puis prend la petite main et lui fait tenir la lance, en lui disant : « Sois un homme fort, fais la guerre avec courage » (3).

La naissance d'un enfant comporte quelques interdits communs à tout le village, qui frappent aussi bien les Batswá que les Baotó. Ne sont pourtant pas liés les habitants d'une partie du village séparée par un marais du groupe où l'heureux événement a eu lieu. Ainsi on ne peut plus vaquer aux « travaux », c'est-à-dire aller aux plantations pour y travailler, chercher des vivres, du bois de chauffage, établir une clôture de chasse ou un barrage de pêche, travailler à la construction ou à la réparation d'une maison. L'infraction détruirait le fruit du travail entier : les champs ne produiraient plus et l'on ne prendrait plus aucune bête ou aucun poisson. Et l'influence funeste s'étend à toute culture, etc., appartenant à n'importe qui. Toutefois, il n'y a pas d'inconvénient à chercher du bois de chauffage en pleine forêt, ni à récolter le manioc d'un champ mûr, ni à couper des fruits de palme.

---

(1) Ailleurs : ásókúsola. Ou : bęsǫfǫ́ la mpíko básókitela bele folé-folé = boyaux et foies sont descendus, sont dehors.

(2) D'autres termes existent dans certaines tribus. [Cfr. *Anthropos*, XXX, p. 655 et suiv. (1935).]

(3) Si un garçon, plus tard, se laisse épouvanter, on lui demande : « N'a-t-on pas fait cette cérémonie quand tu étais à peine né ? »

A proprement parler, ces interdits ne frappent que les personnes qui ont vu le nouveau-né. Mais comme personne ne s'abstient d'aller l'admirer, tous y sont astreints. Cet interdit reste en vigueur jusqu'au détachement du cordon ombilical. Certaines tribus, pourtant, ont plus facile en limitant la défense au jour de la naissance.

§ 2. Hygiène de la mère et de l'enfant.

Le cordon ombilical (lọkọ́ki) est coupé vers le milieu. Près de l'ombilic on pratique une incision. Sur le morceau qui reste fixé on verse chaque jour une décoction d'herbes et l'on met du sable blanc, pour le faire se dessécher plus rapidement. Lorsque le bout se détache, on applique sur la plaie de la poudre de banane grillée.

Afin de prévenir l'affaissement du ventre, on ceint la femme d'une ceinture en bandes d'écorce sèche de bananier (*ekutú*).

Les assistantes lavent l'enfant et sa mère. A celle-ci on met des écorces ou des feuilles sèches de bananier qu'on a soigneusement frippées. On les attache en guise de culottes pour recevoir le sang et on les renouvelle tant que cela est nécessaire. A présent on emploie déjà beaucoup des pièces d'étoffes, mises à la mode masculine.

Afin de faciliter l'écoulement de tout le sang, on donne des bains chauds à la mère. On ne commence pourtant pas avant midi, car le matin et le soir il fait trop frais et le sang n'est pas suffisamment liquide, dit-on. Ceux qui ont été plus en rapport avec les Blancs font boire à la mère de la bière ou du vin. Les bains chauds sont administrés derrière la case, dans l'enclos *ad hoc*. Ils sont de deux sortes : le bain par aspersion (*bompúlo wă mbŏomba*) et le bain à vapeur (*bompúlo w'ĕlángé*). Pour le premier on prend de l'eau très chaude et, au moyen d'une touffe de palmes, on asperge la femme sur l'abdomen, les lombes et les côtés. Pour le second, on creuse un puits dans lequel on dépose de grandes feuilles (ou un bassin) contenant l'eau bouillante. On met au-dessus trois ou quatre forts et gros bâtons sur lesquels la femme s'assied. On l'enroule dans quelques nattes, auxquelles, actuellement, on ajoute une ou deux couvertures. On la laisse ainsi exposée à l'action de la vapeur pendant quelques minutes. D'après les indigènes, c'est le système idéal, parce qu'il fait sortir tout le sang, ou à peu près. Certaines personnes donnent d'abord un bain par aspersion, puis un bain à vapeur; d'autres se contentent de l'un ou de l'autre, d'après les circonstances. En tout cas, on n'administre jamais plus d'un bain par jour. Ces soins peuvent continuer pendant une ou deux semaines, ou bien cesser après deux ou trois jours. La tendance « civilisatrice » incline plutôt dans ce dernier sens. Mais aucun Nkundó ne voudrait les omettre, car il y va de la vie de la femme.

Après le bain, la femme est soigneusement essuyée et séchée, puis enduite avec de l'huile mélangée de fard rouge.

De temps en temps, généralement tous les deux jours, on lui met un lavement.

Aussi longtemps que la faiblesse de la mère dure, un grand feu est entretenu dans la case pour la bien chauffer, et les portes sont fermées par des palmes. Le bois est cherché par le mari et ses parents. Mais la première bûche doit être coupée et apportée par le mari, qui, pour l'exprimer comme les Nkundó, doit « enlever l'éclat » (*imola lofasó*). Au début la femme est couchée sur un *boánga* tout près du feu. Elle lui tourne le devant du corps. Après deux jours elle lui tourne le dos. Le feu joue un grand rôle pour son prompt rétablissement. Elle est très bien soignée et nourrie pour reprendre rapidement ses forces.

§ 2. Réclusion.

Après l'accouchement, la mère reste recluse (*-ulama*) dans sa case pendant plusieurs semaines, — deux, trois ou davantage, d'après les circonstances, et surtout selon la position sociale de son mari. Cette réclusion s'appelle *julé*. La case porte le même nom, ou encore celui de *jånga* = feuille de palme. Parfois on lui applique aussi le terme d'*ekelé*, qui signifie la période de réclusion, avec toutes les prescriptions spéciales qu'elle comporte :

1° *Repas*. — Dans quelques tribus la femme peut déjà manger le jour de l'accouchement. Mais chez d'autres on lui permet seulement de boire. La raison de ce jeûne est donnée sous forme d'une légende. Autrefois, un Bọtswa demanda, un jour, un peu de manioc à son maître, qui refusa. La femme de celui-ci venait d'accoucher. Froissé par ce refus, le Bọtswa le maudit en disant : « Désormais vos femmes à vous autres devront jeûner le jour où elles accouchent (1) ». Ou encore on explique qu'au temps jadis quelqu'un avait refusé à manger à un esclave qui était sur le point d'être immolé à la fête de levée du deuil. Les tribus ou villages qui n'allèguent pas une raison pareille mangent déjà le soir, si l'accouchement s'est produit dans la matinée.

Le *premier repas* de la mère est préparé par une femme qui a posé la nuit précédente l'acte charnel. Elle va puiser l'eau et au retour elle fixe ou attache au-dessus de la porte de la case de réclusion un bout de palme (*jånga*) ou, chez les Bombwanja, un morceau de feuille sèche de bananier, pour signifier à tous que c'est une maison d'*ekelé*. Puis elle apprête la nourriture, qui consiste en bananes avec du poisson ou une poule dans la sauce d'huile de palme. La mère et son mari ainsi que la cuisinière en mangent. Leurs tout jeunes enfants peuvent s'en délecter aussi, mais pas les plus âgés approchant de la puberté. Au nouveau-né on donne à goûter un tout petit peu de sauce.

---

(1) Les femmes Batswa ne jeûnent jamais dans cette circonstance.

Pour une jeune fille-mère, le repas est préparé par une fille impubère ou une femme toute vieille, donc par une personne qui ne s'adonne pas aux actes sexuels.

2° *Prescriptions diverses.* — Depuis la préparation de ce repas jusqu'à la fin du *bokeka*, c'est-à-dire jusqu'au jour où le cordon ombilical se détachera, le foyer de la case de réclusion est pour ainsi dire sacré. Hormis les époux et les assistantes, personne ne peut en jouir ni profiter, soit pour y prendre du feu, soit pour manger rien qui y ait été préparé. Certains hommes connaissent pourtant un moyen de lever la défense du feu. Ils font tomber sur le foyer et sur tous les foyers du village ou d'un groupe de maisons — selon les cas — quelques gouttes d'une décoction spéciale.

Il est encore interdit de balayer ou de ramasser les cendres du foyer. Tout doit rester en place jusqu'au détachement du cordon ombilical du nouveau-né.

Pendant toute la durée de la réclusion, la mère est assistée par une parente (ou une parente de son mari; chez les Bombwanja il y en a toujours deux), qui est la *wujisa* =celle qui fait la réclusion (verbe *uja*). La réclusion ne doit pas être comprise comme un ermitage : la mère peut sortir dès que son état le permet, et l'assistante vaque à ses occupations, mais elle ne le fait pas plus que nécessaire. La case est plutôt une maison d'interdits.

Durant cette période, la mère et son assistante ne s'adonnent pas aux travaux de culture. En outre elles doivent s'abstenir de relations charnelles et de tout rapport avec l'autre sexe, conformément aux explications données ci-dessus (art. II, § 3). L'*ekelé* s'étend au mari ainsi qu'à toute personne qui entre dans la case. La transgression entraîne la mort de la mère ou de l'enfant, de la même manière que pour le *bokeka* (voir *l. c.*).

3° *Fin du bokèka.* — Lorsque, après quatre à cinq jours, le cordon ombilical se détache, la nouvelle est annoncée à tout le village, pour qu'on reprenne les travaux suspendus. La nuit suivante le père et la mère posent l'acte conjugal, pour « détruire le *bokeka* et pouvoir allaiter ensemble l'enfant ». Cela ne veut pas dire que désormais ils peuvent avoir des relations régulières, celles-ci n'étant permises qu'à la fin de la réclusion; mais si, à ce moment, ils omettaient cet acte, ils devraient s'abstenir jusqu'au sevrage. Les Nkundó disent que cet acte n'est posé « qu'un peu ». Pour beaucoup cela devient de l'onanisme. D'autres se retirent avant l'obtention de l'effet. D'aucune façon l'acte ne peut atteindre son but naturel. Le pourquoi de cette manière d'agir m'est inconnu. Peut-être est-ce pour ne pas molester la femme dans la condition pénible où elle se trouve.

Le lendemain, les cendres du foyer de la case de réclusion sont balayées, et le feu devient « commun » : toute personne peut en prendre et manger de la nourriture qui y a été préparée.

4° *Le cordon ombilical* est séché sur le *bolíkó* (claie-étagère), puis enterré au pied d'un jeune bananier planté à cet effet, de préférence sous un arbre *bǫnkǫḿ*, si faire se peut. On y jette les cendres et les balayures provenant de la case de réclusion. Ce bananier est nommé *nkíndá* (¹). Ses fruits ne peuvent être mangés que par le grand-père ou la grand'mère de l'enfant. Si une autre personne les consommait elle serait punie d'un mal de tête de forme nerveuse.

Le cordon ombilical est toujours enterré dans la terre natale du père. Les gens qui se trouvent loin de chez eux (travailleurs de Blancs, etc.) conservent précieusement le cordon ombilical de leurs enfants, pour l'apporter avec

---

(¹) Ce nom est générique et s'applique à tout bananier planté à un effet spécial (pratique magique, jeu, etc.).

eux lorsqu'ils rentreront au village, ou pour l'envoyer à une occasion favorable. Les Nkundó tiennent très tenacement à cet usage, parce qu'on n'a pas d'autorité dans le clan paternel si le cordon ombilical n'y est pas enterré. Dans un cas pareil, on objecterait à l'intéressé : ntákokúndela lokolé, ntákokundela lọkọ́ki, óyakúmya ngámó? olě nk'eyǎya = on n'a pas battu le lokolé pour toi, on n'a pas enterré ton cordon ombilical; comment oses-tu te glorifier? Tu n'es qu'un étranger. Cette coutume constitue donc une sorte d'acte d'immatriculation à la famille. Si l'on veut connaître de façon indubitable le clan natal d'un Nkundó, on n'a qu'à rechercher l'endroit où son cordon ombilical a été enterré.

5° *La fin de la réclusion* est marquée par quelques cérémonies.

A. — *Repas.* — Au jour fixé, de bon matin, le mari va couper un régime de fruits de palme et l'assistante va cueillir des feuilles de manioc (à présent on se sert parfois de feuilles et de fruits cherchés la veille). Elle pile le tout pour en faire un mets, auquel elle peut ajouter du manioc. Pendant qu'il cuit sur le feu, elle rase quelques cheveux à la mère, lui arrache un sourcil et lui coupe un ongle. Puis elle en fait autant à l'enfant. Ensuite la mère agit de même envers l'assistante et l'enfant. L'assistante s'éloigne et le père entre. Sa femme lui fait subir le même traitement, qu'il lui réciproque, ainsi qu'à l'enfant. Les déchets sont simplement jetés sans cérémonie aucune. Cette pratique ne porte pas de nom spécifique; on dit : *báyaténa bẹkẹngọ, báyakẹnga* = ils se rasent mutuellement la tête.

Les légumes étant prêts, on rassemble toutes les femmes du village. Devant la case un petit puits est creusé. On y dépose, en guise de plat, une large feuille dans laquelle on verse les légumes. Mère, assistante et toute l'assemblée en mangent. A part quelques rares petits garçons, on n'y voit aucun représentant du sexe fort. Le repas achevé, on enterre dans le puits la feuille-assiette et les feuilles-cuillers. A présent, les éléments plus avancés de la population se servent d'une assiette et de cuillers européennes. Ce repas et les légumes s'appellent *losanganya*=réunion, parce que tout le village s'y unit, ou bien *lofanjola*=dispersion, parce qu'elle prélude à la fin du *bokeka*.

B. — Ensuite on procède à la *Cérémonie de séparation* (*-téna bofofó* ou, chez les Injọ́lọ́ : *bọkẹ́kẹ́lẹ́kẹ́* (¹). Le *bofofó* est la nervure médiane d'une feuille sèche de bananier. On y fait trois nœuds. L'assistante le tient d'une main et de l'autre coupe le premier nœud, qu'elle emporte. La mère garde en main son bout et présente l'autre à son mari. Ayant reçu le couteau des mains de l'assistante, elle coupe entre les deux nœuds et chacun des conjoints emporte le sien. A chaque fois les intéressés disent : « Nous avons coupé le *bofofó*; nous nous séparons; pars ». S'étant ainsi fait les adieux, chacun fixe son bout dans le toit de la case de réclusion.

Cette cérémonie termine la réclusion et met fin aux interdits de l'*ekelé*. Désormais les époux peuvent avoir des relations entre eux; l'assistante peut reprendre sa vie régulière et l'adultère du père ne cause plus de torts à l'enfant ni à la mère. Il faut remarquer cependant que l'immunité de l'enfant contre l'inconduite de son père suppose la condition que celui-ci ne le prenne pas sur ses genoux le jour d'un adultère. Le lendemain les effets de son acte sont annulés. Une femme peut connaître l'infidélité de son mari par le refus de celui-ci de prendre l'enfant. Souvent elle profite de ce moyen pour obtenir la confirmation de ses soupçons. Certains hommes s'abstiennent de toute méconduite uniquement pour parer à toute éventualité. Cette influence funeste de l'adultère peut encore s'exercer même après le sevrage si l'enfant est d'une constitution

---

(¹) L'expression et la cérémonie qu'elle désigne sont employées chaque fois qu'il s'agit de terminer une affaire importante, un procès, etc.

faible. Tout cela semble indiquer que la réaction est considérée comme physique et directe plutôt que comme sanction à base religieuse ou superstitieuse.

La thérapeutique nkundó connaît pourtant un antidote, nommé *bondandota* (de *ndota*=maladie causée par la transgression de prescriptions en matière sexuelle). Il consiste en une potion fabriquée avec le suc d'une aroïdée du même nom mélangé avec le suc de la plante *libúlúkakó*. Si les conjoints, pour une raison quelconque, ont été absents l'un de l'autre pendant un laps de temps un peu long, ils s'asseyent ou se postent l'un en face de l'autre; l'enfant est pris sur leurs genoux qui se touchent et chacun lui fait boire la potion, deux fois, une fois de chaque main, ayant soin de tourner vers soi la face de l'enfant. D'ordinaire, les époux prennent eux aussi le breuvage qui, primordialement, est destiné à l'enfant. Sans ces précautions, les relations des conjoints et la prise de l'enfant par le père causeraient la mort du premier. Cette même précaution est encore indiquée si le mari, étant parti en voyage avant la naissance de l'enfant, revient après l'accouchement.

Nous venons de voir que l'effet préjudiciable de l'inconduite du père sur la vie de son enfant s'exerce par l'acte de le prendre sur ses genoux. Aussi parle-t-on de *baǫ́ngǫ́ b'ǎbé*=mauvais genoux du père, pour signifier sa conduite répréhensible, et dit-on que la potion du *bondandota* est administrée à l'enfant pour qu'il ne meure pas à cause des mauvais genoux de son père (¹).

Une diarrhée douloureuse et persistante de l'enfant est souvent interprétée comme l'effet de l'infidélité du père. Dès qu'ils s'en aperçoivent, les époux se séparent pour quelque temps et le père ne touche plus à l'enfant.

(¹) Cette expression de *baǫ́ngǫ́ b'ǎbé* s'emploie aussi lors d'un insuccès dans les entreprises pour lesquelles la continence est requise. (Cfr. art. II, § 3.)

Contrairement à ce qu'on lit au sujet d'autres populations congolaises, les conjoints nkundó ne sont pas astreints à la continence en dehors de la période de réclusion. La cérémonie de séparation rend au mari sa liberté d'allures précédente. Pour la femme, le *bokeka* persiste dans toute sa rigueur jusqu'au sevrage quant aux relations coupables. Cependant, elle aussi peut retrouver sa liberté en ayant recours à un antidote dont elle achète la composition chez une personne qui en détient le secret. Ces ingrédients sont mis dans une petite corne d'antilope, bouchée ensuite au moyen de *bolaká* (résine du *Symphonia gabonensis*). L'intéressée la porte autour des reins, à une corde ou une ceinture de perles, ou, de préférence, à une liane spéciale. Cette amulette protège la vie de l'enfant contre l'influence nocive des actes adultères de la mère; à condition toutefois qu'elle ne se sépare pas de lui, comme nous expliquerons plus loin. Ce procédé n'est pourtant pas moralement recommandable, et celle qui y a recours n'échappe pas aux critiques. On la compare à une chèvre qui n'a pas de mari fixe et stable : *álǫ́mya bǫ̌na lontaa* = elle allaite son enfant à la façon d'une chèvre (¹).

La cérémonie de la séparation terminée, la mère est parée de tous ses ornements et sort pour faire la procession par le village. L'enfant est porté par une sœur plus âgée, une nièce, etc. On lui fait faire le tour du village = *bánangya bǫ̌na l'ȏlóló*. Partout on lui offre de menus présents : flèche, petit couteau, épingle à cheveux, etc. Il n'y a toutefois aucune fête : si on lui faisait cet honneur, il en mourrait (qu'on se souvienne que lors du décès il y a toujours une fête en l'honneur du défunt pour faire les adieux).

(¹) Le contraire de *lǫ́mya lontaa*, s'il est employé pour marquer le contraste, est *lǫ́mya lontómbá*.

ARTICLE IV. — L'ALLAITEMENT.

Les premiers jours après la naissance, l'enfant ne tette pas le lait de sa mère, « celui-ci étant trop chaud »; il est nourri par une tierce personne, de préférence apparentée. Le troisième jour on procède au :

1° *Massage des seins* de la mère (*-kulola baę́lę*). A cet effet on se sert des feuilles de la liane *bŭtę* et de la plante *lilongyá* (*Adenostemma viscosum Forst.*), d'une feuille verte du bananier *nsęlęngę*, de quelques morceaux de canne à sucre pelée, des bouts de feuilles sèches d'un bananier quelconque, auxquels on ajoute parfois d'autres plantes. Tout est pilé, puis bouilli, et l'on y mêle du sable blanc et un peu de fard rouge. Cette mixture s'appelle *ndengó*. Elle est préparée par les femmes qui sont préposées au massage des seins. Toutefois, les feuilles du *bŭtę* doivent être cueillies par le père de l'enfant. S'étant rendu en forêt de bon matin, il secoue d'abord la liane pour faire tomber toutes les feuilles insuffisamment attachées. Puis il y grimpe et cueille la quantité voulue de feuilles dans son petit panier *ilámbá*. Si une feuille venait à tomber au cours de cette opération, il doit la cesser et jeter tout ce qu'il a déjà cueilli. Le massage ne peut avoir lieu ce jour-là, car il ferait mourir l'enfant, qui tomberait et se fanerait comme une feuille. Le père n'a qu'à recommencer le lendemain.

Il y a toujours deux masseuses : une parente du mari et une de la femme (¹). Elles pilent les feuilles dans une seule et même auge (*eoka*). Entre-temps la mère doit faire la confession publique, dont nous reparlerons à l'instant. Lorsque la préparation des produits destinés à la friction est achevée, les deux masseuses commencent leur opération, qui doit être assez douloureuse. La parente du mari s'occupe du sein droit, celle de la femme du sein

---

(¹) Les Injǫ́lǫ́ permettent parfois le massage à un homme.

gauche (¹). Avec la mixture elles massent énergiquement les seins de haut en bas. Après quelques minutes elles essaient le lait, en en faisant couler quelques gouttes sur un tesson ardent. Si la réaction est normale, la mère commence l'allaitement. Si, au contraire, le lait se coagule et se solidifie (*baélę báonda*) comme du caoutchouc, c'est un signe qu'il est de mauvaise qualité, à cause de la présence d'un furoncle interne du sein, nommé *ìtsí*. On fait alors appel à la science et à l'habileté d'une femme experte. Celle-ci frotte entre les mains les feuilles d'une liane, pour en extraire les sucs qu'ensuite elle mélange avec de l'eau. De ce liquide huileux et écumant comme du savon elle met quelques gouttes sur un bout de feuille de bananier, dont elle fait un sachet. Pendant un certain laps de temps elle tient ce sachet sur le sein, jusqu'à ce que le furoncle, semblable à un caillot de sang ou un morceau de foie, soit sorti du sein et entré dans le sachet. Elle le montre à l'assistance : désormais la mère peut sans crainte allaiter son enfant; le lait est devenu sain et normal.

2° *La confession publique* doit comprendre les noms de tous les hommes avec lesquels la mère a eu des rapports charnels depuis la conception. D'autres, comme les Injǫ́lǫ́, étendent cette obligation même aux cas qui étaient arrivés avant ce moment et qui n'ont pas encore été déclarés à une occasion précédente. La confession est publique. La masseuse parente du mari commence à piler les feuilles destinées à la friction du sein; elle donne un coup de pilon et dit à la mère : « cite un homme ». Celle-ci répond en citant un nom. La masseuse reprend : *nyongo*= indemnité. Puis toute l'assistance : *yęngô yęngô yęngô*= absous. Ensuite c'est le tour de l'autre masseuse, qui interroge de même; et ainsi jusqu'à l'épuisement des noms. Si

---

(¹) Disposition naturelle pour nos gens; le terme employé pour signifier mari (*bóme*) à celui qui exprime la droite (*elóme*). est sans doute apparenté étymologiquement, et il y a quelque probabilité qu'il en soit de même pour *wǎlí* (épouse) et *tǎlí* (gauche).

la mère cite le nom d'un homme qui est proche parent de son mari et qui, de ce fait, ne doit pas payer d'indemnité, la masseuse ne répònd pas : *nyọngo*, mais un membre du clan du mari fait le geste de franchise : dans la main gauche il tient une amande de noix de palme (*loliká*) et la lance au moyen d'une planchette qu'il tient dans sa droite. Chez les Injọ́lọ́, cet homme prend deux amandes qu'il frappe l'une contre l'autre et qu'il jette ensuite. Si la femme taisait un nom, l'enfant mourrait. Si elle n'a aucun aveu à faire, elle répond : « Personne hormis mon mari ».

L'indemnité à payer par ceux qui y ont été jugés astreints consiste en une poule et un régime de bananes (ou leur valeur en argent) à donner aux masseuses, qui se les partageront ensuite. Si l'inculpé refusait, le mari lui réclamerait, après la réclusion, une indemnité en règle.

Les Bombwanja procèdent à cette confession lors de la cérémonie de la fixation du fœtus. Ce sont quelques vieilles femmes mariées dans le clan qui font l'interrogatoire. L'amande de fruit de palme est lancé au moyen d'un couteau.

Notons enfin que la confession est restreinte aux femmes mariées. Une jeune fille-mère n'y est jamais tenue. Ce semble donc être une pratique qui se rapporte au mariage (institution sociale) et non à l'enfantement (phénomène physiologique).

Cette confession s'appelle *etato* ou *lotato*, du verbe *-tata*=confesser (remplacé parfois par le mot générique *sanga*=dire).

Je n'ai pu trouver d'autre motif pour cet usage que celui d'éviter la mort de l'enfant. Il est pourtant évident que cette explication n'épuise pas la question, quoiqu'il soit très bien possible que le sens original et profond ait été perdu sans laisser de souvenir dans l'esprit de la génération présente.

3° Durant toute la période de l'allaitement, la mère ne peut pas se *séparer de son enfant*. Pour les circonstances ordinaires de la vie, ceci s'entend au sens large; mais pendant les relations sexuelles la prescription est rigoureuse et n'admet ni exceptions ni excuses. La négligence dans cette condition entraînerait inévitablement la mort de l'enfant par *ndota* dès que la mère le reprend. Cela vaut tant pour les relations légitimes que pour les rapports coupables. La mère doit donc toujours garder son enfant sur sa poitrine.

4° Si, à un moment de l'allaitement, le lait ne coule plus en quantité suffisante, on administre à la mère une potion d'extrait d'écorce bouillie de l'arbre *bǫlǫ́ngẹ́* (dont le fruit contient un suc laiteux très doux). Ensuite elle mange des légumes *lotélé* (¹).

5° *Un accident* auquel les Nkundó attachent une grande importance est le rejet ou le vomissement du lait dans la bouche d'une personne adulte, fût-ce la propre mère. Cette personne ne peut plus manger de viande, — si l'auteur est du sexe masculin, — ou de poisson, — si c'est une fille, — jusqu'à ce que l'enfant en question, devenu grand, ait tué, selon le cas, un animal (ou oiseau) ou un poisson et l'ait donné à la victime de l'accident. Si l'enfant meurt en bas âge, cette personne est accusée d'avoir transgressé la défense et obligée de payer une forte indemnité. La chose n'en arrive d'ailleurs pas à cette extrémité, car l'accidenté se garde scrupuleusement de tout ce qui pourrait causer un meurtre de ce genre. Et si la mort survenait sans qu'il ait rien à se reprocher, il peut recourir à l'ordalie ou au jugement d'une épreuve superstitieuse. En outre, dans les villages qui ont des Batswa, une femme de cette race doit allaiter un instant l'enfant avant que sa mère ne lui rende le sein.

(¹) Plante dont les feuilles sont consommées aussi comme légumes dans la vie ordinaire; mais particulièrement par ceux qui possèdent la pratique magique moderne du *boyaóli*.

6° *L'enfant est porté* sur l'épaule et, dès qu'il est capable de se tenir, sur la hanche. Il ne lui faut pas beaucoup de semaines pour s'habituer à cette position. Lorsque la mère est forcée de la garder pendant une durée assez longue (marche, voyage, etc.), elle le met dans une écharpe-baudrier (lǫmbę̌), fabriquée avec des lianes râpées et tressées à la manière d'une natte, ou avec un tissu en fibres de raphia, ou encore avec une peau (actuellement, souvent une pièce d'étoffe européenne). Cette écharpe doit être solide, car si elle se déchirait et que l'enfant tombât, les conséquences porteraient très loin : tous les enfants ultérieurs de cette femme sont condamnés à mourir dans le sein maternel ou pendant la période d'allaitement.

L'enfant grandissant est parfois porté chevauchant sur dos de la mère, qui n'aime pas beaucoup s'en séparer ou qui est obligée par la tyrannie du petit de le garder même pendant ses travaux, ses courses, voire ses danses. Elle remédie, si possible, à cette situation encombrante en ayant recours à l'aide d'une fille plus âgée, d'une jeune nièce ou cousine, ou d'un garçonnet de la proche parenté.

Durant le jour, l'enfant est pour le repos couché sur le lit ordinaire ou sur un lit mobile (*boánga*), sans autres accommodements. Il ne rencontre pas de difficultés à dormir ferme sur ces dures couchettes.

7° *Le sevrage*. Bien que l'enfant soit habitué peu à peu à la nourriture solide, il ne cesse de tetter. Les allaitements s'espacent d'autant plus qu'il avance en âge. Mais il ne s'abstient définitivement qu'à deux ans environ, et parfois deux ans et demi, s'il est d'une constitution faible.

Le sevrage n'est accompagné d'aucune cérémonie ni fête.

Afin de déshabituer l'enfant, la mère s'enduit les mamelons avec le suc du fruit *lifę́tę́* (espèce de petit piment doux ou aubergine) ou avec l'extrait du piment-poivre (*imbénga*). Parfois elle le confie pendant quelque temps à l'une ou l'autre parente (fille, sœur, etc.) habitant ailleurs.

Comme on l'a vu ci-dessus, c'est après le sevrage que se termine, pour la mère, la période de l'*ekelé-bokeka* et que ses infidélités n'ont plus de répercussions sur la vie de son enfant.

8° Si *la mère meurt pendant l'allaitement*, on charge de cet office une femme qui s'y montre disposée, fût-elle Bǫtswa, et qui ne fait jamais défaut. Après le sevrage elle est rémunérée convenablement. L'usage du lait de chèvre est inconnu.

9° Les enfants en bas âge souffrent fréquemment de *convulsions*. Cette maladie est attribuée à l'action de l'épervier et est, pour cette raison, appelée *mpulú* (oiseau). On tâche de l'éviter en pendant au cou des enfants une amulette, généralement le triangle claviculaire d'une carcasse de poule. En outre, les Nkundó connaissent un remède qui a pour but de fortifier les nerfs : l'enfant est couché sur une natte étendue à un endroit quelconque du toit de la case. Avec le suc des feuilles de l'arbrisseau *litóyănsombo*, mélangé avec de l'extrait de *mbǫ́lę́* (fruits du *bǫsǫ̆ǫmbǫ́*) on prépare un collyre (*bǫlǫ́i*) dont on laisse tomber, au moyen d'une feuille en forme de cornet, quelques gouttes dans les yeux de l'enfant. Ensuite, le père ou un parent retire la natte de dessous l'enfant et lève celui-ci plusieurs fois en criant : tá tá tá.

10° *A la dentition* on n'attache aucune importance spéciale. Seulement l'enfant dont les dents supérieures poussent avant les inférieures (défaut nommé *ingondo*) passe pour être anormal. Aussi lui est-il défendu de manger les prémices de la chasse ou de la pêche par clôture (*mpao*), sinon celles-ci seraient rendues infructueuses.

ARTICLE V. — IMPOSITION DU NOM.

L'imposition d'un nom n'a pas lieu à date fixe. On ne la retarde pas sans raison particulière. Aucune fête ni cérémonie ne l'accompagne. Le père se contente de poudrer de couleur le front de l'enfant, en signe d'allégresse.

C'est au père que revient le droit de choisir un nom pour son enfant. Parfois il demande l'avis de sa famille. De préférence, il impose les noms de ses parents décédés ou en vie, quelquefois le sien propre. Mais il convient de respecter également les sentiments de la mère. La négligence d'en tenir compte peut inciter la femme à provoquer un avortement pour le punir de son opiniâtreté à méconnaître sa famille à elle.

Un accouchement pénible, comme le décès réitéré d'enfants précédents, est attribué souvent à la rancune d'un défunt mécontent. Dans ces cas, on attend le verdict d'un songe, ou l'on recourt au jugement d'un *nkanga* (médecin-magicien), afin de pouvoir satisfaire ce mort irascible.

Si le cas se répète trop souvent, cette calamité provient d'une rivalité entre défunts qui se disputent la possession d'un homonyme, l'évincé envieux tuant l'enfant. Pour éviter ces vengeances mesquines et les contenter tous en ne satisfaisant personne, on donne à l'enfant un nom neutre ou un nom de Bǫtswa, comme : Bǫtswá, Sáka, Ĕfâlĭna = sans nom; Botsilá = insuccès, malchance; Litúli = morts sans cause connue, etc. Lorsque l'enfant a déjà reçu un nom et que l'on craint, pour l'une ou l'autre raison, la fureur néfaste d'un mâne, il y a toujours moyen de le remplacer par un autre.

D'ordinaire on réserve aux enfants les noms de parents du sexe égal. On y fait pourtant exception lorsqu'un des sexes est insuffisamment représenté dans la progéniture, auquel cas le porteur du nom peut encore le changer plus tard, permission dont il est rare qu'il n'use pas. Il n'existe cependant pas de noms spécifiquement masculins ou féminins, sauf ceux qui ne sont que la forme relative d'un verbe, comme Ósâsuka = la coquette; Óyệmẹngọ = celle qui vient avec l'abondance; Ófénji = celle qui surpasse, etc. Enfin, certains noms se rencontrent rarement dans l'un ou l'autre sexe.

Pour la majorité des noms, l'étymologie est impossible à tracer et ils n'ont aucune signification. Certains sont empruntés à la nomenclature des règnes de la nature ou d'objets; mais on ne prête aucune attention à leur sens original et les allusions dans cette matière — comme l'essaient parfois certains Européens — sont ou incomprises ou mal reçues. D'autres sont dictés par la constitution de l'enfant; comme Ókunjọlọ́ = qui sera enterré encore aujourd'hui; Báwáôlóí = on ne meurt que plus tard (1). On trouve aussi des noms qui commémorent un événement particulier, comme un grand deuil (Báwá = ils meurent; Bálela = on pleure), une rivalité (Báunela = ils se battent pour..., signifiant la rivalité de deux hommes pour la possession de la mère de l'enfant ainsi nommé). Quelques-uns, enfin, ont la portée d'un dicton : Báwake = tous les hommes doivent mourir, etc.

Répétons, pour terminer, que les homonymes se lient souvent d'une amitié particulière, se font des présents et s'entr'aident. Cela ne donne pourtant aux homonymes de sexes différents aucun droit à des rapports intimes, qui, s'ils existent, ne sont que le concubinage ou l'adultère pur et simple.

ARTICLE VI. — LES JUMEAUX.

Pour les Nkundó la naissance de jumeaux (*baása*, sing. *jása*), sans avoir l'importance qu'y attachent d'autre populations, comporte néanmoins quelques particularités, dont la principale est l'absence des interdits et prescriptions attachés aux naissances ordinaires : les jumeaux sont libres de tout interdit commun; ils sont *falúngú* (1). Examinons les détails :

---

(1) Par ces deux noms on veut prévenir des allusions à la débilité de l'enfant et exprimer l'équivalent du dicton : il n'est vie que de langoureux.

L'événement est annoncé par le signal ordinaire, mais doublé, ou, si les enfants sont de sexes différents, par le simple signal de chaque sexe. Suit le rythme de danse : 2 ou 3 longues et 2 courtes.

Le lendemain, les parents du père se rendent hors du village, de préférence à une bifurcation du chemin. De chaque côté, ils plantent un pied de *lokókólókó*. Tout autour ils disposent un petit amas de branchettes et de feuilles diverses, nommé *jũké*. C'est un signe et un lieu de bénédiction et de porte-bonheur. Chaque passant s'arrête, cueille deux feuilles, dont il en dépose une sur chaque tas, puis crache dessus en disant : *swá* (2). Ensuite, en battant des mains, il chante deux fois : *yelí yeye*. Cette manière de se comporter attire la bénédiction des jumeaux sur son voyage, ses entreprises, son mariage. Sous ce tas, on enterre le cordon ombilical, ainsi que le placenta et la membrane.

Tous les matins, père et mère se dessinent, avec du kaolin, deux raies sur le milieu du front et sur les bras, tant au-dessus que dessous le coude. Ils en font de même des jumeaux (3). Cette pratique ne cesse qu'au sevrage. Si après ce moment un des enfants tombe malade, on recommence sur lui jusqu'à la guérison, en ayant bien soin de ne pas l'omettre sur son frère, de peur que la maladie ne l'atteigne lui aussi. Car ces dessins, tout en étant un signe d'allégresse, sont avant tout un moyen prophylactique contre la fièvre des enfants (*ikútswáki*) qui, chez les jumeaux et l'enfant suivant, est appelée *wăsanyi* et se manifeste principalement par des tumeurs à la tête et dans la figure.

---

(1) Même pour les abstentions pendant le deuil.

(2) Onomatopée pour « cracher ».

(3) Parfois une double raie s'ajoute aux tempes. Le kaolin peut être employé pur ou mélangé avec du fard rouge *ngóla*.

Les jumeaux s'appellent invariablement, le premier-né : Mbóỵó, le second : Bǫkę́tu, quel que soit le sexe. Les Bombwanja (comme les Ekonda) emploient les noms Mbóó et Mpia respectivement. La mère prend celui d'Àmbá. Ces noms ne sont pourtant pas réservés exclusivement à ces personnes; d'autres peuvent également s'appeler ainsi. Le père, au contraire, ne reçoit pas de nouveau nom; il porte seulement le titre d'Is'éỵ'ăfé, littéralement : père de deux (¹). On dit encore des jumeaux qu'ils sont Àmbámba (pl. Byămbámba), du verbe -ámba = accepter, recevoir, parce qu'il leur est permis d'accepter et de prendre tout, aucune prohibition ordinaire ne valant pour eux.

La mère des jumeaux n'est pas astreinte à la réclusion (nyang'éy'aása áfóáte waékelé). On arrange pour elle le hangar du chef de clan, c'est-à-dire celui chez qui on dépièce les animaux d'autorité (léopard, etc.) (²). Ce hangar est fermé au moyen de palmes. Ni les parents, ni l'assistante, ni les personnes qui entrent dans ce lieu ne sont obligés d'observer la continence et les autres interdits de l'*ekelé*.

Tous les membres de la parenté viennent saluer les jumeaux et leur font à chacun un présent (poules, couteaux, flèches, nourriture) qui est reçu par le père ou la mère. Chaque fois qu'on donne quelque chose à l'un des jumeaux, fût-ce le plus menu objet, on doit en faire autant à l'autre; sinon ce serait causer sa mort. Si la mère prend l'un sur le bras, il faut que l'autre soit pris également, soit par elle-même, soit par le père. Si elle frappe l'un, elle ne peut omettre de frapper aussi son frère. Cette

---

(¹) Chez les Ekonda on le nomme Buka.

(²) Donc à l'endroit du *bǫnsęngę* ou lieu de dépiècement des animaux d'autorité (*nyama yá bikofo*, littéralement : animaux superbes).

dualité vaut donc pour tout et à plus forte raison pour l'allaitement.

Si un enfant jumeau pleure ou est malade, les parents doivent chanter et danser avec accompagnement d'un *lokolé* et d'un tambour *ngǫmǫ*. C'est ce qu'on nomme *-bénga baása*. Si quelqu'un invite à la danse un jumeau ou ses parents, ceux-ci ne peuvent omettre d'y donner suite. Passant à une bifurcation ou à un habitat de génie ou à un *efeno* (endroit où l'on se réunit pour des pratiques magiques, oracles, etc.), elle danse et chante encore en l'honneur du génie, pour qu'il soit propice à ses enfants. Divers chants sont en vogue, comme : Elím'é'Àmbá tongólela yelí yeye = génie d'Àmbá ne pleure pas (¹): Bǫkętu la Mbóy'é'Àmbá tofúkáké tonyongáké, tǫlękę bilingǫi yelí yeye = Bǫkętu et Mbóyó d'Àmbá ne te meus pas, ne remue point, ne mange pas de champignons *bilingǫi*; Bǫkętu 'a Mbóyó njóátela ngóy' ęmęngo yelí yeye = Bǫkętu et Mbóyó, je mets ma mère dans l'abondance; Bǫkętu'a Mbóyó lá'ǫkǫnǫ lá'ǫkęndǫ yelí yeye = je tomberai malade et néanmoins je marcherai (me porterai bien); Bǫkętu'a Mbóyó, lióta bǫkękęsano yelí yeye = accouchement encombrant, etc.

Les nourritures interdites aux jumeaux sont les champignons *bilingǫi* (ou *bilingǫndǫ* ou *bankǎnkíndá*), l'antilope *mpambí* et l'igname *ǒlí*, qu'il est également défendu aux parents de consommer avant le sevrage (²).

En voyage, les parents de jumeaux se ceignent de la plante rampante *boyayenga* ou la portent en bandoulière sur l'épaule. En outre, la mère y attache une sonnette. Leur chevelure est souvent ornée de deux plumes de la queue du perroquet gris (*nkoso*) et de deux plumes d'une poule blanche.

(¹) Tongólela = forme archaïque, encore en usage chez les Ekonda, etc.

(²) Cet interdit s'étend à toute nourriture cuite dans des pots où ces aliments défendus ont été préparés; extension qui d'ailleurs est commune à tout interdit alimentaire.

Le salut à donner à des parents de jumeaux et leur réponse doit toujours être double : w'ǫ̀nę́ w'ǫ̀nę́; rép. em'ǫ́nę́ em'ǫ́nę́; oôyá oôyá, rép. njôyá njôyá; losák'esáko, rép. bíka bíka. Pour cette dernière salutation, remarquons qu'ils ne répondent pas autrement; ils sont donc assimilés aux grands notables des anciens temps.

Lorsque les enfants sont devenus grands à pouvoir se suffire à eux-mêmes, toutes les prescriptions particulières perdent leur rigueur et ils sont désormais comme tout le monde. Pour le mariage, le décès, etc., rien ne les distingue du commun. Aucune préférence n'est montrée pour ou contre eux. Seulement, leur descendance produira encore des jumeaux.

Les Nkundó considèrent donc les jumeaux comme des enfants extraordinaires, sans pourtant pousser leur jugement aux extrêmes. Ils sont contents de recevoir deux enfants à la fois, tout en estimant que la gestation et l'accouchement dans cette circonstance sont plus dangereux pour la mère. C'est pour ce motif que celle-ci est appelée *bǫyę́ngwá*, la gravité du cas n'ayant pu la faire mourir. Cette épithète s'applique également au père et aux jumeaux, probablement pour la même raison et à cause de leur immunité à l'égard des interdits. Toutefois, si les jumeaux sont de sexes différents, la mère est moins appelée *bǫyę́ngwá*, car elle est *lilǫka*= malfaisante (¹).

Il résulte encore des lignes précédentes que les jumeaux sont, à un certain degré, entachés de magie. Ceci est confirmé par la défense de jeter quelque objet (pierre, amande de palme, etc.) sur la case où ils se trouvent, tout comme pour quelqu'un qui possède un charme, une pratique d'envoûtement ou de protection. En outre, ils jouissent d'une certaine propriété innée d'ensorceler les entreprises (chasse, pêche) d'autrui. C'est pourquoi ceux qui redoutent leur action nuisible s'enduisent de kaolin de la même façon que le font ces enfants et leurs parents.

(¹) Voir, plus haut, art. II, § 2.

Les Nkundó ont connu des cas de trijumeaux, mais ils sont extrêmement rares. Le dernier-né des trois s'appelle Yę̂ndęmbę ou Yę̂ndęndę ou Yę̂lęlę. La seule particularité qui lui soit propre est qu'on ne peut jamais lui commander un travail, ni l'envoyer porter un message ou faire une commission, etc. = *áfótswé ntómo*. Pour le reste, rien ne le différencie des deux autres. Les salutations ne sont pourtant pas triplées.

L'enfant qui naît immédiatement après les jumeaux est appelé Wuteji (de *utela* = répéter). Il ne diffère en rien du commun.

ARTICLE VII. — LA CIRCONCISION.

La circoncision est générale. Aucun âge n'est prescrit. D'ordinaire elle a lieu pendant la jeunesse, avant la dixième année. Les plus peureux diffèrent jusqu'à la puberté ou même après. Des coutumes claniques particulières peuvent fixer une date limite. Ainsi aucun homme du village de Bęsǫmbǫ́ n'y est admis avant d'avoir tué une bête à la chasse. Par contre, la saison de la circoncision est déterminée : elle doit avoir lieu pendant l'époque des eaux basses.

La circoncision est opérée par un homme quelconque qui y est expert. Elle se pratique derrière les cases. Hormis les « operandi » et leurs pères, personne n'y est présent. Les garçons se groupent un peu à l'écart, mais de façon à pouvoir suivre de leurs yeux le traitement que subit leur compagnon. Le patient s'accroupit. Un des assistants âgés lui met les mains sur les yeux pour l'empêcher de voir ce qui se passe. L'opérateur a creusé un petit puits pour recevoir le sang. Il tire le prépuce, le lie avec un fil, puis trace avec des cendres la ligne que doit suivre le couteau *empútę* qu'on emploie dans cette circonstance. Lorsque le sang cesse de couler, l'opérateur mâche du poivre *bondóngó* (Aframomum...) ou, de préférence, une nageoire caudale du poisson *ngǫlǫ*, qu'ensuite il crache sur la plaie. La réaction est fort douloureuse. Mais le patient se montre courageux ; s'il pleure, il est l'objet de la risée de ses compagnons.

Aussi longtemps que la plaie n'est pas cicatrisée, le garçon doit s'abstenir de feuilles de manioc (*bangánju*) et du pain de manioc dans la préparation de *bosombó* ou de *lǫǫ́lǫ*. En outre, il ne peut manger ni la peau, ni la tête ni la queue de poissons.

Pendant la cicatrisation l'opéré est soigné, lavé, etc., par sa mère, ou — s'il a atteint la puberté — par son père. Cet office impose à la personne qui en est chargée l'obligation à la continence (*bokeka*), même à l'égard de son conjoint. La transgression empêche la guérison de la plaie ou la rend pour le moins extrêmement difficile et de longue durée (1).

Le prépuce coupé est séché sur le *bolíkó* (claie-étagère). Puis on ne s'en occupe plus et généralement il demeure là poussiéreux et sale pour un temps indéfini, si les rats ne s'en mêlent pas.

Dans les centres, les jeunes gens commencent à négliger l'opérateur indigène, pour recourir à l'intervention du chirurgien européen.

La circoncision ne donne pas lieu à des cérémonies ni à des fêtes. Il arrive qu'un homme riche et vaniteux donne une fête, mais la chose n'est nullement de pratique courante.

Circoncire se traduit en lonkundo : *téna bǫnsǫ́ę́* = couper le prépuce. Le terme moins vulgaire et beaucoup usité est : *téna nsǫ́ngę́* = couper l'extrémité. Une circonlocution de décence excessive est : *téna batói* = couper les oreilles.

Quant à la raison d'être de cet usage, après ce qui en a été dit au chapitre I, IIe partie, article II, § 2, nous n'avons plus à y revenir.

---

(1) Un *bokeka* analogue existe pour celui qui soigne un grand ulcère phagédénique ([illegible]).

ARTICLE VIII. — L'ÉDUCATION.

Dès son jeune âge l'enfant nkundó doit rendre à ses parents divers menus services, surtout dans les travaux du ménage : puiser de l'eau, chercher du bois de chauffage, s'occuper d'un petit frère ou d'une petite sœur, etc. Les appels s'adressent principalement aux filles, mais les garçons n'en sont nullement exemptés. De par la nature même des choses, ceux-ci sont pourtant moins souvent mis à contribution.

Le fils peut assez tôt accompagner son père dans ses voyages, aux réunions, aux discussions judiciaires, etc. Celui-ci fabrique pour lui un arc et des flèches et lui enseigne cet art. Le grand passe-temps de la jeunesse masculine est la chasse et la pêche par toutes sortes de procédés qui conviennent à son âge. Peu à peu l'adolescent apprend les travaux communs et tout ce qu'il doit savoir pour subsister, se nourrir et se loger. Son instruction est complétée par ses compagnons et surtout par les circonstances de la vie.

La fille apprend les travaux du ménage et des cultures. Déjà très tôt sa mère lui tresse un petit panier, pour qu'elle s'habitue à porter des fardeaux. Puis elle participe aux pêches féminines.

On a généralement l'impression que les filles sont beaucoup plus actives que les garçons. Mais j'estime que la différence provient de ce que ceux-ci sont presque toujours en forêt, tandis que celles-là restent au village et sont par conséquent remarquées davantage. D'ailleurs, dans nos Missions on ne peut pas dire que les garçons travaillent moins bien que les filles, au contraire.

Les filles s'exercent à l'art culinaire, non seulement chez leur mère, mais encore — comme en Belgique — par le jeu (*ioto*).

Les enfants n'étudient pas l'histoire, les lois et traditions de leur clan ou tribu. Ils les apprennent par les circonstances, soit en les entendant raconter, soit en questionnant. Souvent les parents les expliquent de leur propre initiative, non en suivant un programme déterminé, mais plutôt en profitant des occasions. C'est surtout en accompagnant son père dans ses visites, ses voyages et aux réunions ou délibérations, et en assistant attentivement aux séances des troubadours à *longombé* (mandoline), que le jeune homme peut apprendre beaucoup de choses. La fidélité à suivre le papa plutôt que de jouir constamment de la liberté en forêt rend compte de cette connaissance surprenante des us et coutumes, des lois ancestrales, de l'histoire, de la sagesse des anciens, des proverbes, fables, etc. que possèdent certains jeunes au point de l'emporter sur nombre de vieux. J'ai rencontré plus d'un cas de ce genre qu'on expliquait avant tout par cet attachement.

A peine capable de marcher, l'enfant nkundó commence à fredonner les airs en vogue et à imiter les mouvements rythmiques des danseurs. Les fillettes surtout s'exercent par de petites danses à elles. Puis les enfants se mêlent peu à peu au groupe des danseurs adultes et peuvent s'associer au chœur, mais à l'arrière.

Les parents enseignent à leurs enfants les métiers qu'ils connaissent eux-mêmes : forge, sculpture du bois, tressage de nattes et de paniers, poterie, etc.

Au point de vue éthique, les enfants apprennent beaucoup par l'expérience, mais les parents n'omettent pas de leur inculquer les règles de politesse, de bienséance, de savoir-vivre et les grands principes des relations sociales. Il y a pourtant, ici comme en Europe, des degrés dans le soin ou l'insouciance dans ce domaine. La morale enseignée est celle qu'ils adoptent eux-mêmes; elle est avant tout familiale, sociale : déférence envers les membres de la famille, entr'aide, respect du bien d'autrui, crainte de l'autre sexe, etc. Mais tout cela repose sur une base naturaliste : le motif donné se limite aux conséquences fâcheuses. Les réprimandes, voire les châtiments pour infractions ne sont pas inconnus. Mais ils sont provoqués surtout par l'exaspération, par conséquent mêlés de mouvements de colère, et donc sans continuité ni idée de suite; une fois la colère calmée, les menaces restent stériles. En fait de punitions les parents recourent principalement aux coups. D'autres peines sont pourtant en usage. Ainsi, un de nos catéchistes, étant jeune (entre 1880 et 1895), avait enlevé un oiselet pris au piège à glu d'un de ses cousins. Dès que son père en eut connaissance, il fit à son gamin une verte semonce et le condamna à se coucher ce soir sans souper.

A l'approche de la nubilité, la mère enseigne à sa fille les droits et devoirs de la femme mariée. Elle lui apprend la façon de se conduire et de se comporter pour faire une bonne épouse et mère. Et cela pour qu'elle trouve un bon mari, pour que l'union demeure stable et ne provoque trop de palabres ou d'embarras.

Autrefois les enfants n'étaient pas admis à voir les danses des adultes. Ils en étaient chassés et n'avaient qu'à s'amuser entre eux. C'était une excellente mesure pour la sauvegarde de la moralité parmi la jeunesse et pour conserver le respect à l'égard des vieux. Aussi est-il très regrettable qu'elle soit actuellement tombée en désuétude.

Ayant atteint la puberté, les enfants n'aiment plus à rester coucher chez leurs parents. Ceux-ci ne les chassent point, mais, d'autre part, ne s'opposent pas à ce désir de la jeunesse, qui, dit-on, est inspiré par un sentiment de pudeur. Les garçons vont d'un côté, les filles d'un autre, par exemple dans une case inoccupée appartenant à leur père ou chez des propres parents; ou encore cherchent-ils à trouver place dans le logement d'un groupe de compagnons ou de compagnes. Si aucune maison n'est disponible, les garçons s'associent pour la construction d'une hutte commune. A présent, ils commencent déjà très tôt à se bâtir une case individuelle, ou à deux, pour jouir ainsi d'une liberté plus grande.

On trouve sur les arbres de la forêt une espèce de champignon dur, nommé *losikitela*. Lorsque l'enfant commence à parler on lui en met un spécimen entre les dents pour qu'il y morde et apprenne ainsi à ne pas s'exprimer inconsidérément, mais à retenir ses paroles (*-sikitela*) pour réfléchir avant de parler.

Maintes fois on peut constater que les parents et d'autres personnes aident activement les enfants à s'exprimer dans une langue correcte, particulièrement en redressant les fautes, en corrigeant la prononciation, en rectifiant les erreurs dans les noms propres, en leur citant le mot exact, voire en leur expliquant des formes grammaticales ou les nuances entre certains termes : « C'est comme ceci qu'il faut dire; cela signifie autre chose; cette plante s'appelle ainsi, etc. ».

Bien donc que l'enfant nkundó soit très libre de disposer de ses jours comme bon lui semble et que, forcément, il apprenne nombre de choses par l'expérience personnelle, il serait faux d'affirmer que les parents se désintéressent de son éducation ou n'y contribuent pas. Ils interviennent activement par leurs conseils, leurs explications, leurs démonstrations. Il va sans dire que leur part n'est pas aussi importante ni continue que dans beaucoup de milieux civilisés. Il est d'ailleurs très difficile, et souvent injuste, de comparer la situation de nos gens avec celle d'Europe : la différence des circonstances est trop considérable. Mais nous devons à l'équité de montrer que des efforts sont faits par les Nkundó dans ce domaine, tout en faisant remarquer que les effets sont peu palpables quant à l'éducation morale (1), parce qu'il y a quantité de fautes, de lacunes, d'erreurs et d'obstacles dont il n'est pas inutile d'examiner les plus importants.

---

(1) Nous ne parlons plus de l'éducation matérielle et économique, qui ne prête pas à critique.

1° D'abord, l'éducation commence trop tard. Les efforts, pour être couronnés de succès, devraient débuter le plus tôt possible. Or, tant que l'enfant n'a pas atteint un développement relatif (d'ordinaire vers sa sixième année) il est jugé trop jeune pour recevoir des leçons, des punitions, etc.

2° Dans leur pédagogie, les Nkundó ne tiennent aucun compte de la relation de cause à effet dans l'acquisition de mauvaises habitudes. Ils réagissent contre les actes condamnables, mais ne s'attaquent pas à la racine en s'opposant à l'éclosion des vices. Ainsi, ils ne comprennent pas que la satisfaction continuelle des désirs ou des caprices d'un enfant en bas âge, par exemple pour l'allaitement, la demande de nourriture, le désir d'être choyé et porté, etc., doit nécessairement en faire un insoumis, un petit tyran qui veut être contenté en tout.

3° Le manque d'idée de suite et l'inconstance dans la répression des défauts ou dans la punition des fautes, qui, nous l'avons déjà dit, sont de la part des parents nkundó le plus souvent des explosions brusques de colère et d'indignation. Pour l'enfant, le but de la punition disparaît : elle n'obtient d'autre effet que la crainte du châtiment. Il peut y avoir d'heureuses exceptions, mais elles sont sûrement rarissimes. En général, les parents se laissent entraîner par l'impulsion du moment, et les gamins d'en tirer profit. La gravité de pareille situation apparaît bien dans cet exemple historique : Isia (à présent un homme entre 30 et 40 ans) s'amuse à tirer des flèches. Une des femmes de son père, nommée Bọkẹli, arrive sur les lieux accompagnée de Bakutu, jeune sœur d'Isia. Le gamin reprend Bọkẹli : « Que viens-tu faire ici avec ma sœur ? Si une flèche l'atteint, ce sera ta palabre ». La femme l'insulte. Le garçon menace de tirer sur elle. Là-dessus, son père, Bọlẹ́kẹ̀lá, intervient en disant : « Si tu oses toucher à ma femme, je tue une de tes mères » (1). Isia riposte en tirant sur Bọkẹli et disant : « Eh bien mourez toutes deux » (2). Son père veut l'attraper, mais l'agile gamin s'enfuit en forêt. Ne le voyant pas rentrer, le soir, tous sont pris de peur. Finalement il répond à l'appel de sa tante Bongóla et revient. Morale de l'histoire : tout le monde est heureux de le revoir, et il n'est plus question de châtiment (3).

Autre exemple plus fort : Esalé (actuellement entre 40 et 50 ans) est insulté par sa mère Bosola, pour un méfait. Il tire sur elle et la blesse au front. Pour fuir la colère de son père, il se retire en forêt On l'appelle et il revient. La palabre est terminée (4).

4° Le manque de coopération dans les efforts des conjoints. Chacun agit de sa propre initiative et sous l'impulsion de sa propre indignation. Plus encore, ils se contrarient; l'un punissant l'enfant, l'autre tâchant de le protéger, directement, ou indirectement en réprimandant le conjoint. Ceci arrive surtout aux femmes qui ne supportent que très mal que leur enfant soit touché par quelqu'un fût-ce son propre père. La chose doit être attribuée en partie au défaut d'union de sentiments entre les époux et en partie à l'amour maternel purement naturel, psychophysiologique pour ainsi dire.

Les mesures prises contre un enfant qui s'est mal conduit suscitent souvent une grave querelle de ménage, parfois suivie de la fuite de la femme chez elle. Tel le cas historique de Bakutu b'Ŏfóngé (né vers 1880). Son père Bolónjó lui avait défendu de peler un bout de canne à sucre d'une façon maladroite et gaspillante. Le garçon ne voulait pas entendre raison. Puis le voilà qui se taille une profonde blessure au doigt. « Ne te l'ai-je pas dit, s'écrie le père; te voilà puni de ta désobéissance. » Làdessus fureur de la mère Mbélá. « Ah ! tu me tues mon enfant » et le reste... Elle roule ses nattes, endosse ses paniers et prend le chemin de son village.

---

(1) C'est-à-dire, soit ta mère (Botsinanya), soit sa sœur et *ebisa* Basimi.

(2) C'est-à-dire si ma mère doit mourir (riposte courante en pareil cas), que toi, Bọkẹli, meures aussi.

(3) D'après la jurisprudence nkundó, le tort était d'ailleurs du côté de Bọkẹli, parce qu'elle a commencé les insultes. Mais la réaction était quand même exagérée.

(4) Une fable enseigne, d'ailleurs, qu'il ne faut pas laisser quelqu'un sous l'empire de la fureur, surtout lorsqu'il s'est retiré en forêt, parce que cela peut le rendre misanthrope, ce qui aurait des suites plus déplorables encore (vagabondage, meurtres, etc.).

La casuistique nkundó cite le cas hypothétique, semble-t-il, ou du moins appartenant aux temps passés, — car je n'en ai jamais connu ni entendu un exemple réellement arrivé, — d'un homme se vengeant sur sa femme qui aurait insulté son enfant, en commandant à celui-ci d'aller tuer une chèvre dans le clan de sa mère, pour que ce dernier soit obligé de payer une indemnité au propriétaire et que la mère se trouve ainsi punie dans sa famille. La jurisprudence nkundó reconnaît au père ce droit. Mais il est évident qu'au point de vue éducatif cette solution est loin d'être idéale.

5° L'influence de la parenté joue encore un grand rôle. Les Nkundó sont très attachés à leur famille. Les enfants y sont partout chez eux. La femme est très liée à sa famille à elle. Les frères et sœurs du père sont les « pères » de l'enfant; les oncles et tantes maternelles ses « mères ». Le père réel ne défend pas beaucoup ses fils contre les semonces ou corrections de la part de ses proches parents à lui, mais n'admet pas aisément l'intervention de la famille de la femme, et vice versa. Et l'enfant de profiter de nouveau de ces dissensions. Le cas arrive assez fréquemment, quoique les exceptions, elles aussi, ne soient pas rares.

6° Aux blâmes d'étrangers, l'opposition des parents est encore plus grande, en règle générale. Ils tâchent de couvrir et de justifier contre eux les défauts de leur progéniture, qu'ils défendent avec acharnement et qui, évidemment, ont connaissance de tout cela et en tirent profit.

7° Le ménage polygamique avec ses rivalités entre coépouses ne fait qu'accentuer tous ces mauvais effets pour l'éducation. Les conflits, les allusions malveillantes, les palabres, etc. passent facilement aux enfants. Et chacune de défendre le sien.

8° La publicité : rien n'est secret, tout est connu, vu et entendu. Les gens ne se retiennent pas et la présence d'enfants n'arrête pas les flots d'insultes et d'obscénités provoquées par la colère. La jeunesse voit quantité de choses qu'elle ferait mieux d'ignorer. Elle assiste aux querelles de ménage et est témoin des dissensions. Tout cela est augmenté par la vie en plein air, dans la rue, et par la ténuité des parois.

9° A présent un autre facteur s'ajoute : la facilité des communications et la présence de postes européens. Les garçons peuvent toujours s'enfuir et trouver à se caser chez le Blanc ou ses employés indigènes. Les filles recherchent les parentes habitant dans ces postes, quitte à les aider un peu dans leur ménage, avec l'espoir de jouir plus tard d'une plus grande liberté et de vivre luxueusement. L'influence et l'autorité des parents en sont forcément affaiblies.

10° Finalement, l'absence dans l'éducation de toute base solide, de toute religion ou morale religieuse. Tout est fondé sur la crainte naturelle, matérielle : peur de châtiments (physiques ou superstitieux), des conséquences funestes de l'action mauvaise (palabres, difficultés, amendes, indemnités, parfois la honte d'être découvert (comme pour le vol). C'est surtout cette absence de motifs religieux qui rend l'éducation morale si peu fructueuse. Comme les Nkundó se sont habitués à cet état défectueux, ils ne sentent pas la nécessité de ce fondement. C'est pourquoi il est si ardu de leur inculquer cette conscience morale. Il faut l'action patiente et persévérante des grandes vérités chrétiennes avec ses institutions de formation morale (prédication ininterrompue, confession, prière) pour doter ce peuple du sentiment du devoir, de cette conscience personnelle dont il a un si impérieux besoin.

ARTICLE IX. — DROITS SUR LES ENFANTS.

Sans répéter tout ce que nous avons déjà rencontré à divers endroits de cet ouvrage, il convient pourtant de grouper ici en résumé les considérations et conclusions au sujet du droit sur les enfants.

Le grand principe qui domine toute cette question est l'adage romain : *Pater is est quem nuptiae demonstrant.* C'est le mari légitime qui est le père légal de l'enfant de son épouse. Sans mariage, le père naturel n'y a aucun droit.

Il s'ensuit que les enfants adultérins appartiennent exclusivement au mari. (Chap. VI, art. VIII.) Comme la relation avec une veuve qui n'est pas encore légitimement remariée est un adultère, l'enfant qui en naît est l'enfant légal de l'héritier. (Chap. III, art. II.) La même règle vaut, *mutatis mutandis*, pour une divorcée avant le remariage régulier. (Chap. VIII, art. III, § 1.)

L'enfant né d'une femme libre n'a pas de père légal. Par conséquent il appartient à la famille de sa mère; il reste enfant illégitime (*entombó : entombó ěkáḿ*, est-il appelé par son grand-père). (Chap. I, IIe partie, art. IV, § 3.) Pourtant le père naturel peut, s'il épouse la mère, obtenir l'enfant en payant pour lui un « esclave » supplémentaire. De toute façon il doit parachever le versement de la dot entière. S'il n'épouse pas la mère, il n'a aucun droit sur l'enfant; règle qui est pourtant en voie de changer dans la pointe Nord-Ouest de la région étudiée. (Chap. I, IIe partie, art. IV, § 3.)

Cette légitimation n'est pas requise lorsque la grossesse a commencé après le début du paiement dotal. Elle peut avoir lieu même après la mort de la mère, moyennant le versement prévu. Ce cas de légitimation posthume se présente quelquefois en faveur des enfants nés d'unions extracoutumières engagées pendant la première période de la colonisation.

Les droits du père sur son enfant ne sont pas intangibles : il peut les perdre, notamment s'il néglige de s'acquitter de certains devoirs, parce que cette conduite équivaut à un reniement. Parmi ces devoirs dont l'omission entraîne la perte des droits sur les enfants, citons :

1° le parachèvement de la dot;

2° l'exécution des devoirs funéraires (enterrement, paiements);

3° l'abandon d'une partie de la dot à restituer lors du divorce;

4° l'observation des devoirs envers l'enfant. Ici n'entrent en jeu que les négligences graves qui équivalent à un véritable reniement : spécialement le refus illégitime de procurer à un fils les moyens de se marier; tel encore le cas cité au chapitre II, article XI, § 3, et analogues.

CONCLUSIONS.

Nous ne pouvons omettre, à la fin de ce travail, de résumer les conclusions qu'il nous suggère :

1° Chez les Nkundó le mariage consiste dans une union entre un homme et une femme, constituée par le paiement de certaines valeurs que le mari fait, par l'intermédiaire d'un ou plusieurs témoins officiels, aux parents de l'épouse, paiement contre-balancé par le versement de valeurs de la part de la famille de la femme au mari et à sa famille.

2° Il existe diverses sortes d'unions conjugales qui s'écartent plus ou moins de cette forme typique : héritage d'une veuve par un parent éloigné du mari; substitution — pendant la vie ou après décès — d'une parente qui continue l'union commencée par la défunte ou la divorcée;

offre d'une femme contre prestation d'un service éminent, une certaine sorte d'échange, et, dans quelques tribus, l'achat, plus l'union avec une esclave.

3° Les empêchements au mariage, à part la question des Batswa, découlent de la parenté et de l'affinité.

4° La vie conjugale est régie par des règles bien déterminées et sages, contre lesquelles pourtant des infractions sont commises. L'adultère est condamné et réprimé, mais la conception que les Nkundó s'en font ne concorde pas avec la nôtre et ils y admettent certaines exceptions.

5° La polygamie est en honneur; sa pratique est soumise à des règles déterminées et la première femme occupe un rang de primauté familiale et sociale.

6° Le divorce est admis sous des conditions relativement sévères, et la rupture est réglementée par une législation adaptée.

7° Les stipulations juridiques à observer lors du décès démontrent la prééminence du mariage sur les liens du sang et prouvent que l'épouse appartient réellement au mari, bien qu'elle continue à faire partie de son propre clan. En outre, la mort du mari ne rompt pas le mariage de la part de la veuve.

8° Les enfants appartiennent au père légal.

En somme, nous pouvons conclure que ces institutions matrimoniales, si à notre point de vue elles ne sont pas sans défaut, se présentent cependant comme bien ordonnées et nullement « sauvages ». Il s'en dégage une impression de netteté et de sagesse, d'adaptation et de souplesse, d'unité et de logique, qualités merveilleuses que beaucoup de législations européennes peuvent leur envier et qui démontrent l'organisation remarquable qu'a su atteindre la peuplade intéressante des Nkundó.

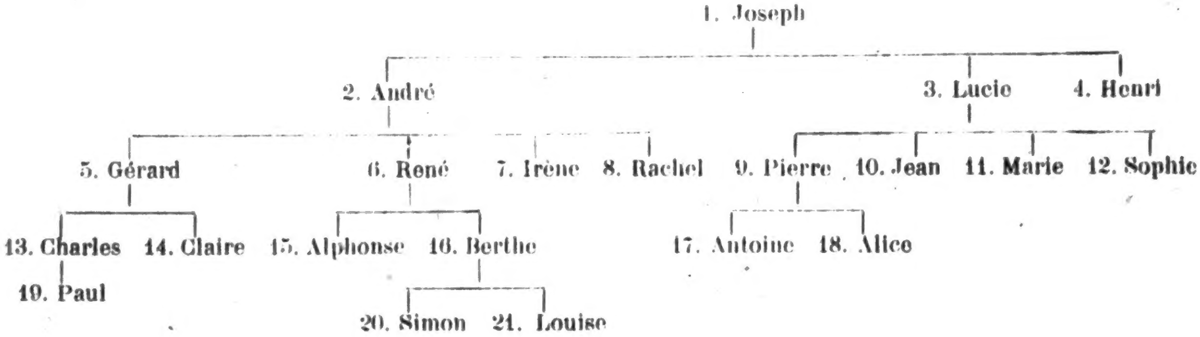
2: Hulstaert FO32 Mongo

ANNEXE

TERMINOLOGIE DES RELATIONS FAMILIALES

TABLEAU GÉNÉALOGIQUE

N. B. — Pour faciliter la claire indication des sexes, nous nous servons exclusivement des noms européens.

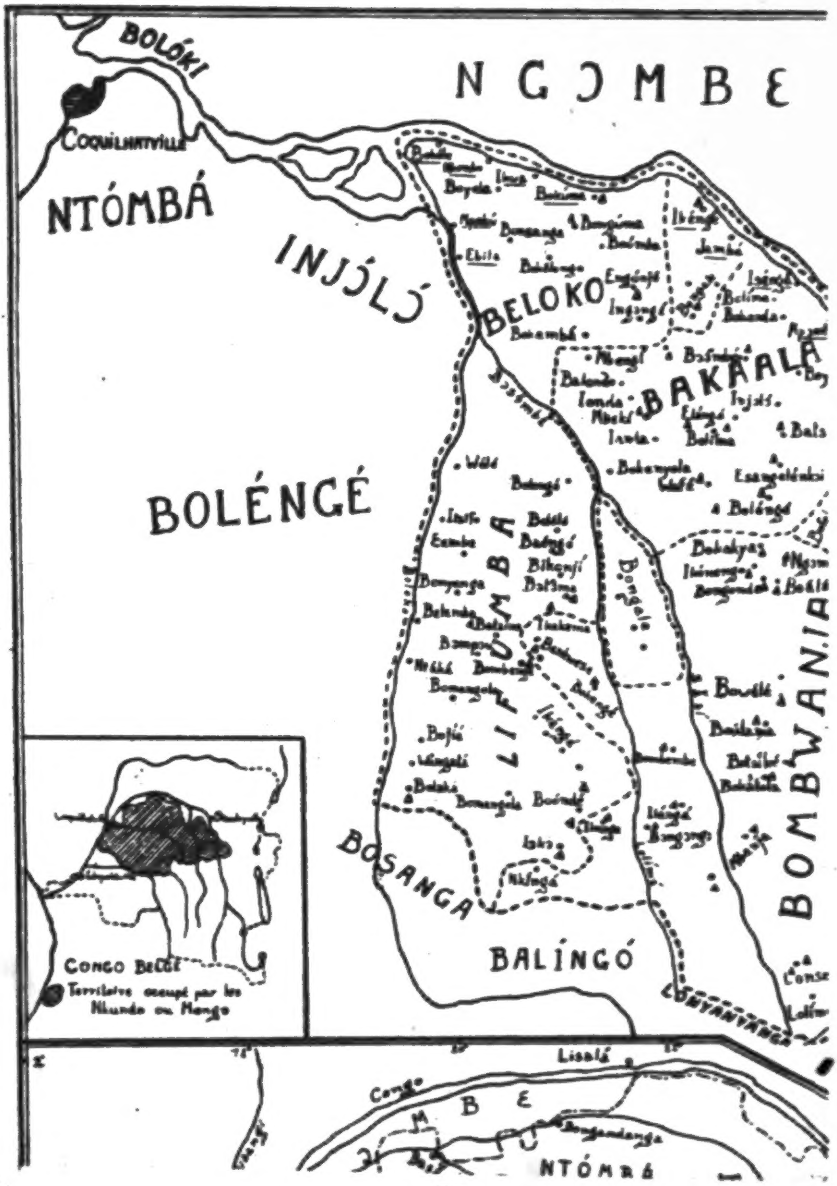

1. Joseph
2. André
3. Lucie
4. Henri
5. Gérard
6. René
7. Irène
8. Rachel
9. Pierre
10. Jean
11. Marie
12. Sophie
13. Charles
14. Claire
15. Alphonse
16. Berthe
17. Antoine
18. Alice
19. Paul
20. Simon
21. Louise

1. Pour 1 — 13 et 14 sont bonkánola, pl. bankánola.
   Pour 13 et 14 — 1 est nkǫ́kǫǫlǫ, pl. bankǫ́kǫǫlǫ.
2. Pour 2, 3 et 4 — 13 et 14 sont bonkána, pl. bankána.
   Pour 13 et 14 — 2, 3 et 4 sont nkǫ́kǫ (nyangó), pl. bankǫ́kǫ (nyangó).
3. Pour 1 — 2, 3 et 4 sont bǫna, pl. bâna.
   Pour 2, 3 et 4 — 1 est isé, pl. baisé (relativement à la première personne : fafá, pl. bafafá).
4. Pour 3 — 9 et 10 etc. sont bǫna, pl. bâna.
   Pour 9, 10 etc. — 3 est nyangó, pl. banyangó (relativement à la première personne : ngóya, bangóya).
5. Pour 5 — 6 est bokúné, pl. bakúné.
   Pour 7 — 8 est bokúné, pl. bakúne.
   Pour 6 — 5 est botómóló, pl. batómóló (relativement à la première personne : mâlé, bamâlé).
   Pour 8 — 7 est botómóló, pl. batómóló (relativement à la première personne : mâlé, bamâlé).
6. Pour 5 et 6 — 7 et 8 sont nkâna, pl. bankâna.
   Pour 7 et 8 — 5 et 6 sont nkâna, pl. bankâna.
7. Pour 5, 6, 7 et 8 — 3 est isómoto, pl. baisómoto (pour la première personne : faómoto, pl. bafaómoto).
   Pour 3 — 5, 6, 7 et 8 sont bónankáná, pl. banánkáná.
8. Pour 9, 10, 11 et 12 — 2 et 4 sont nyangômpámé, pl. banyangômpámé (ou nyangóbika) (pour la première personne : ngômpámé, bangômpámé).
   Pour 2 et 4 — 9, 10, 11 et 12 sont bǫnankáná, pl. bânankáná.
9. Pour 13 et 14 — 6 est isé (éy'ǫnǫlu).
   Pour 6 — 13 et 14 sont bâna.
10. Pour 15 et 16 — 5 est isé (éâ mpaka).
    Pour 5 — 15 et 16 sont bâna.
11. Pour 13, 14, 15 et 16 = 5, 6, 7 et 8.
12. Pour 14 — 20 et 21 sont bâna.
    Pour 20 et 21 — 14 est nyangó.
13. Pour 13 — 20 et 21 sont bânankáná.
    Pour 20 et 21 — 13 est nyangômpámé.
14. Pour 9, 10, 11 et 12 — 5, 6, 7 et 8 sont bâna.
    Pour 5, 6, 7 et 8 — 9, 10, 11 et 12 sont baisé.
15. Pour 9, 10, etc. — 13, 14, 15 et 16 sont bankána.
    Pour 13, 14, 15 et 16 — 9, 10, 11 et 12 sont bankǫ́kǫ.
16. Pour 5, 6, 7 et 8 — 17 et 18 sont frères et sœurs et vice versa.
17. Pour 13, 14, 15 et 16 — 17 et 18 sont baisé.
    Pour 17 et 18 — 13, 14, 15 et 16 sont bâna.
18. Pour 19, 20 et 21 — 4 est nkǫ́kǫǫlǫ.
    Pour 4 — 19, 20 et 21 sont bankánola.
19. Pour 19 — 15 est isé.
    Pour 15 — 19 est bǫna.
20. Pour 19 — 14 et 16 sont baisómoto.
    Pour 14 et 16 — 19 est bǫna.
21. Pour 19 — 20 et 21 sont baisómoto.
    Pour 20 et 21 — 19 est bǫna.

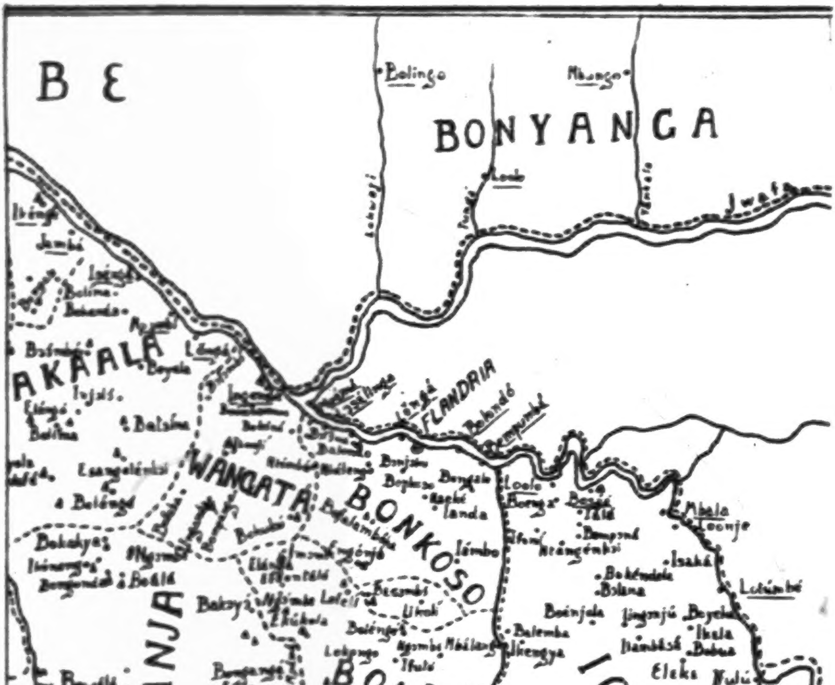
TABLE DES MATIÈRES

	Pages.
INTRODUCTION	3
CHAPITRE PREMIER. — Préliminaires et généralités	23
CHAPITRE II. — Élaboration du contrat matrimonial. — Dot	105
CHAPITRE III. — Des différentes formes de mariages et unions pseudo-matrimoniales	186
CHAPITRE IV. — Age des mariés	231
CHAPITRE V. — Empêchements au mariage	241
CHAPITRE VI. — La vie conjugale	260
CHAPITRE VII. — La polygamie	341
CHAPITRE VIII. — Le divorce	376
CHAPITRE IX. — La mort	417
CHAPITRE X. — Les enfants	463
ANNEXE : Terminologie des relations familiales	518

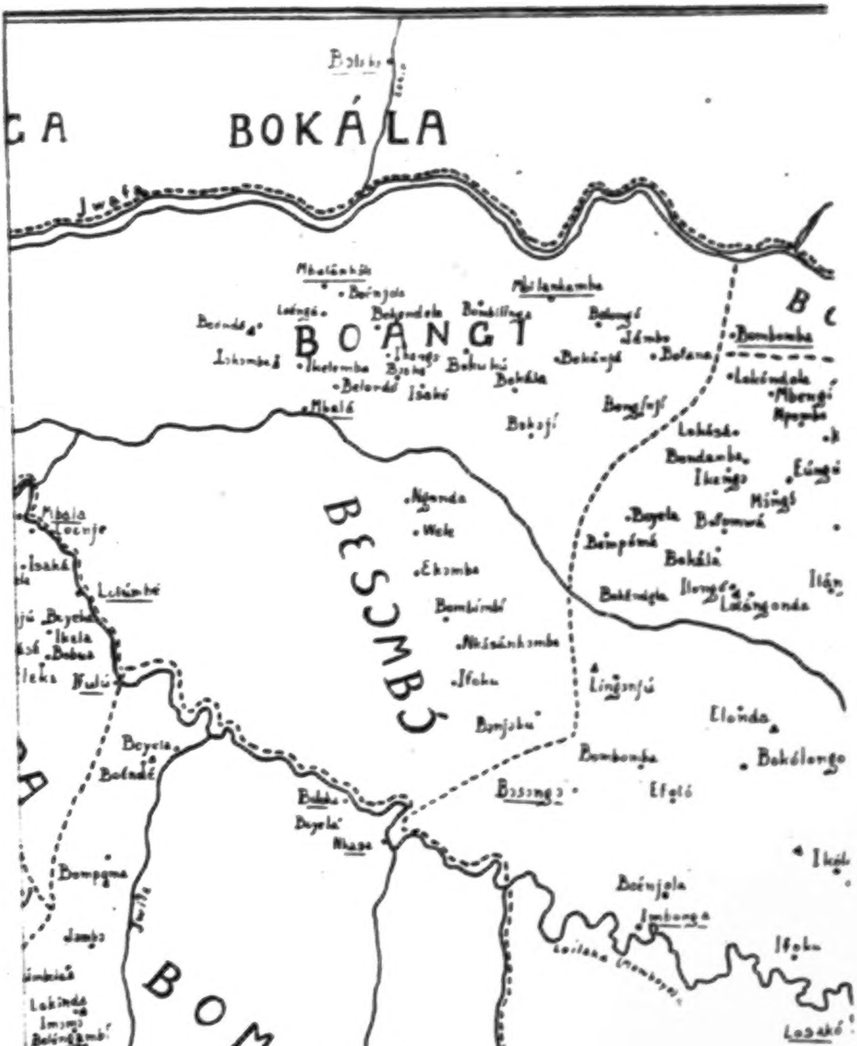
[p. 520]


BOLÓKI
NGƆMBƐ
COQUILHATVILLE
NTÓMBÁ
INJƆ́LƆ́
BELOKO
BAKAALA
BOLÉNGÉ
LIAMBA
BOSANGA
BALÍNGÓ
BOMBWANIA
Ebila
Bosombá
Bolondo
Ionda
Mbeki
Iwota
Bolóngó
Bovólá
CONGO BELGE
Territoire occupé par les Nkundo ou Mongo
Lisalá
Congo
MBƐ
Bongandanga
NTÓMBA

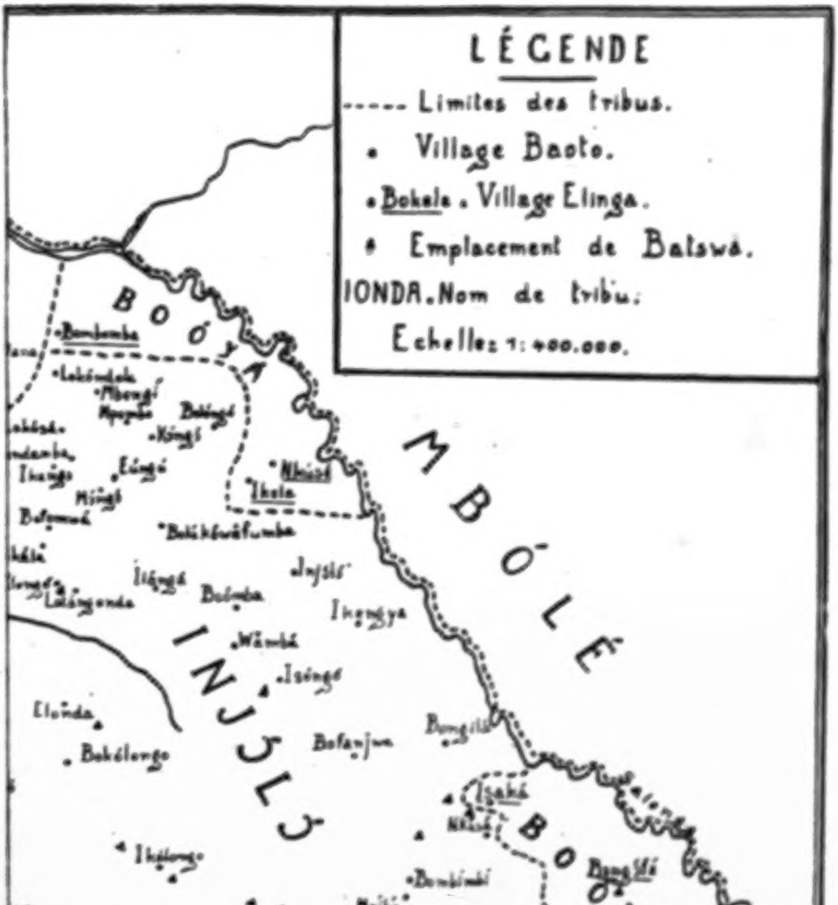
[End MAP (A)]


B Ɛ
BONYANGA
Bolingo
Mbongo
AKAALA
WANGATA
BONKOSO
FLANDRIA
BOMBWANJA
BONGILI
IONDA
NTOMBA(WANG
LIOKO
LIOMBO
B
Ingende
Bolenge
Bolondo
Loolo
Mbala
Loonje
Isaka
Lotumbe
Boyela
Bokala
Bolaka
Bilima
Bompona
Imanga
Lokinda
Bofili
Lonyanyanga

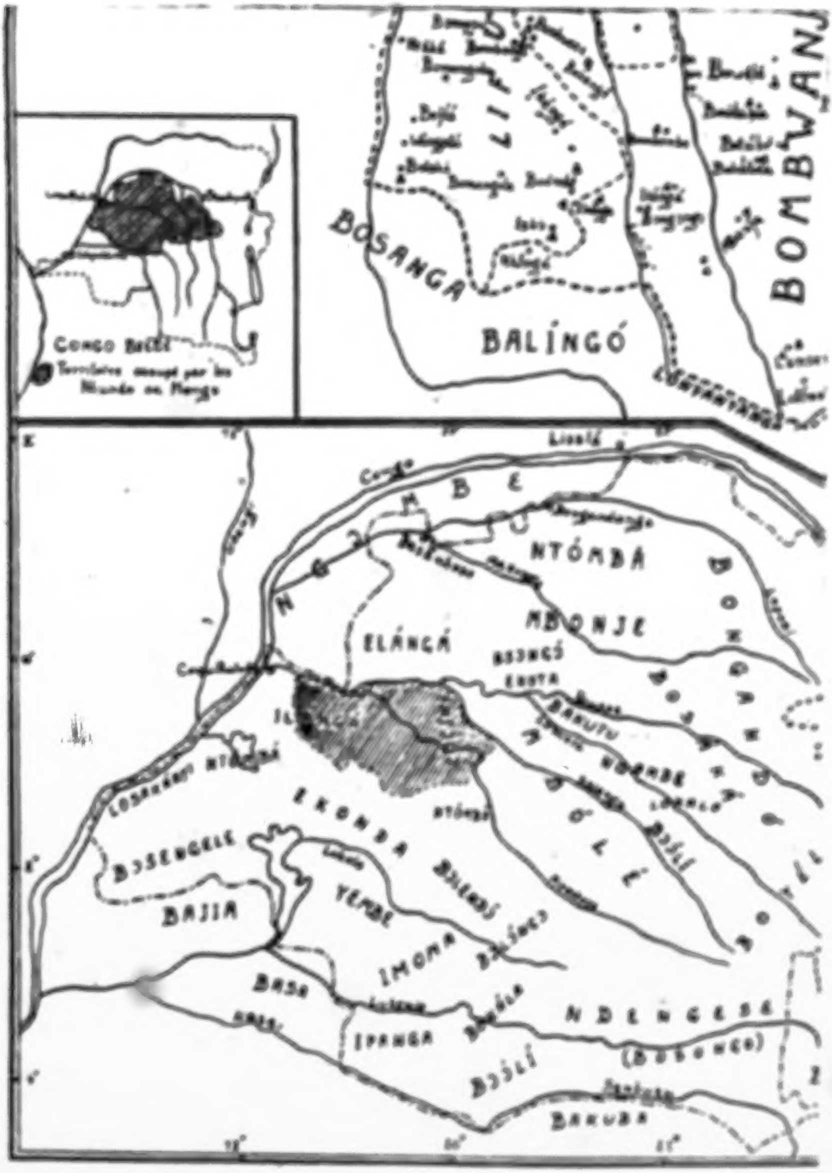
[End Map (B)]


BOKÁLA
BOANGI
BƐSƆMBƆ
BOMBOMBƆ
Jwafa
Mbalankombe
Bombomba
Lokóndola
Mbongi
Ngonda
Wale
Ekomba
Bombímbí
Nkásánkomba
Ifoku
Bonjoku
Lingonju
Elonda
Bombomba
Bokólongo
Efoló
Bosongo
Bokala
Lotángonda
Bokálá
Bolumwá
Bompómá
Boyela
Bondamba
Lokóndo
Bongéfé
Bokóji
Bokála
Bokuku
Bosho
Isako
Ikelomba
Isikombo
Belondé
Mbaló
Bokondola
Bombilinga
Boénjolo
Loóngó
Boende
Bolongé
Jombo
Bolana
Bokónjá
Mbala
Loonje
Isaká
Lotómbé
Boyela
Ikala
Bobua
Nulu
Boyela
Bolafé
Boyela
Bokuka
Mbaya
Bompona
Jambo
Lokindo
Imomo
Bolongambi
Boili
Boénjola
Imbonga
Ifoku
Losako
Bombilongo
Ikolo

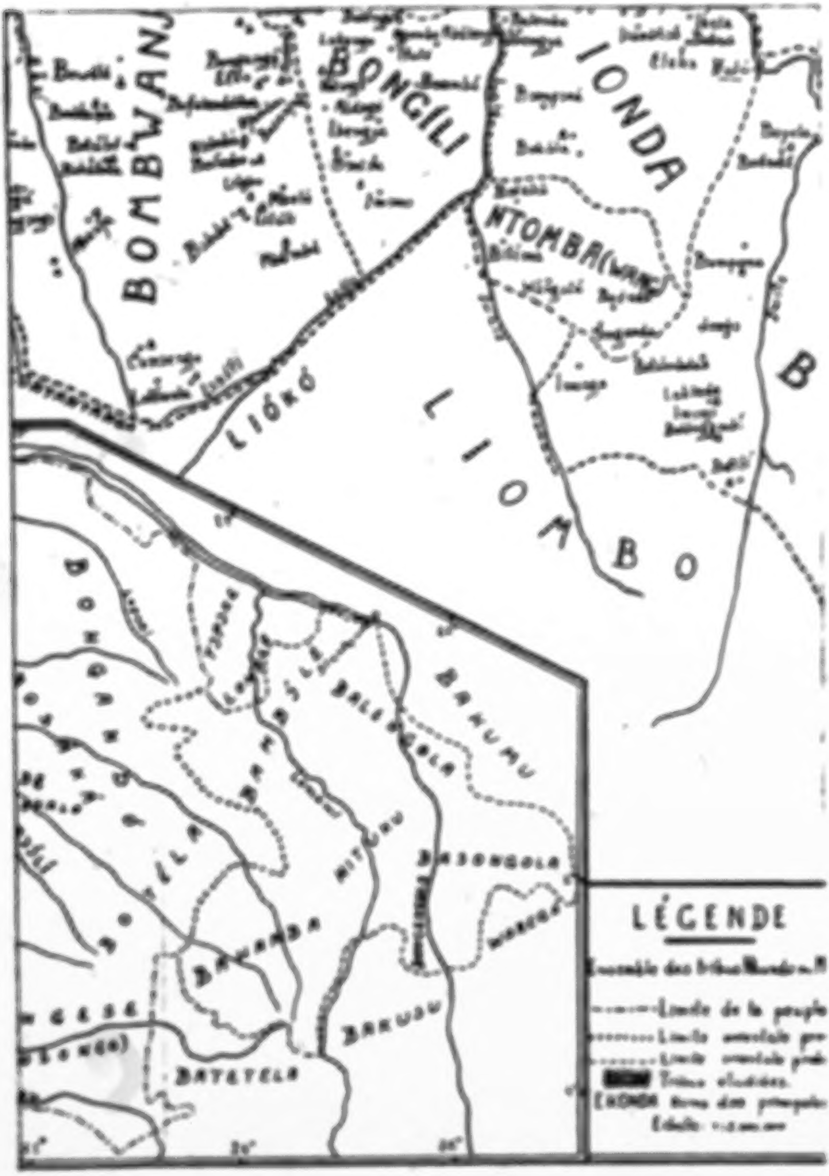
[End Map (C)]


LÉGENDE
----- Limites des tribus.
• Village Baoto.
• Bokele • Village Elinga.
• Emplacement de Batswá.
IONDA. Nom de tribu.
Echelle: 1: 400.000.
BOÓYA
MBÓLÉ
INJƆLƆ
BOÓYÁ
BÓLÉ
Bombomba
Lokóndola
Mbongé
Bóóngé
Ilanga
Elóngó
Bolikówáfumba
Injsis
Ilóngé
Lolongonda
Bolomba
Ingenya
Wamba
Isóngé
Elonda
Bokélongo
Bofanjua
Bongili
Isaká
Ikólongo
Bombimbi
Mpika
Bongili
Buya
Bombomba
Ilongólóbála
Bofana
Bolondó
Ifoku
Lotakó
Ifeku
Bombilongo
Bongiló
Bombe
Luilo

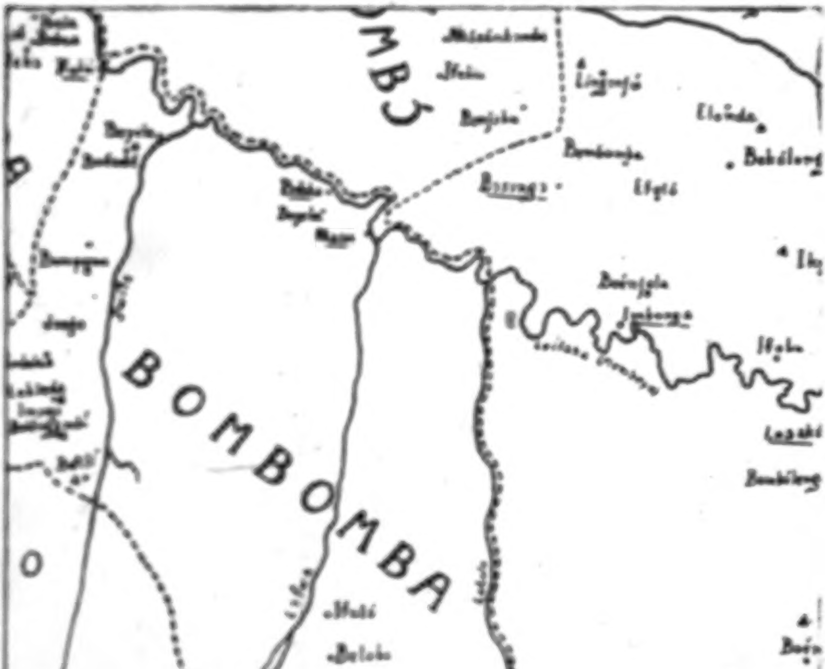
[End Map (D)]


CONGO BELGE
Territoire occupé par les Nkundo ou Mongo
BOSANGA
BALINGÓ
BOMBWANJ
Congo
NTÓMBA
MBONJE
ELÁNGÁ
EKONDA
BOSENGELE
BAJIA
YEMBE
IMOMA
BASO
IPANGA
NDENGESE
(BOSONGO)
BOOLI
BAKUBA

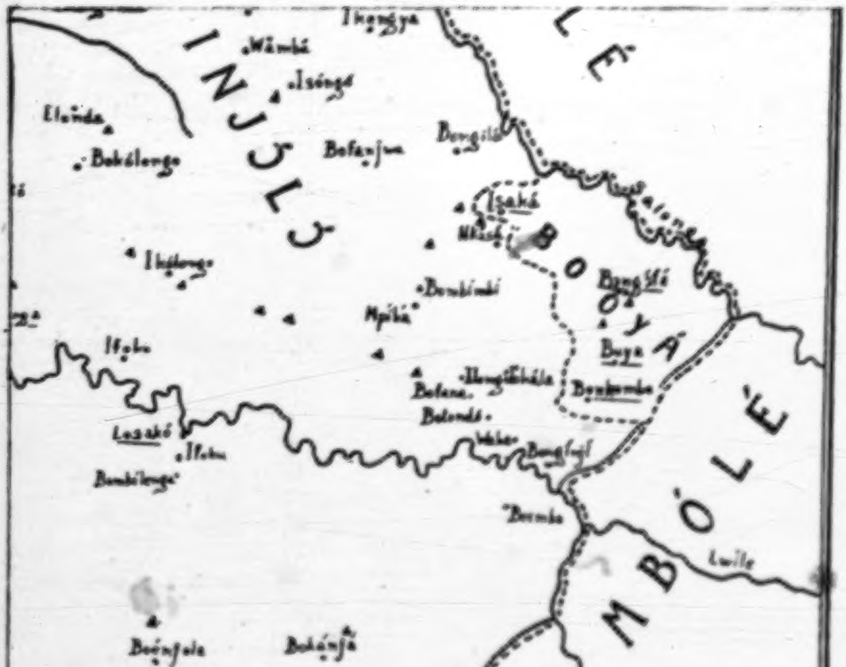
[End Map (E)]


BOMBWANJ
BONGILI
IONDA
NTOMBA (WANG
LIOKO
LIOMBO
B
BAKUMU
BALENGOLA
MITUKU
BASONGOLA
BAKUSU
BATETELA
LÉGENDE
Tribus étudiées.

[End Map (F)]


MBƆ
BOMBOMBA
NTÓMBA
BOMBWANJA
O
ÉGENDE

[End Map (G)]


Ikengya
Wámbá
Isóngó
INJƆLƆ
Elonda
Bokólongo
Bofanjwa
Bongilá
Izakó
Nkofi
BOOYÁ
Ikólongo
Bombímbá
Mpíká
Bongílé
Buya
Ilongálikála
Bolena
Bolondó
Bonkombo
Ikoko
Lozakó
Ifeka
Bombilongo
Wáka
Bongílé
Bomba
LÉ
MBÓLÉ
Luíle
Bonfola
Bokáŋja
Bompámá
Ilulé
Ilángá
Ekombe
Bosombo
WÁNGATÁ
ÓMBÁ

[End Map (H)]

Nkundo

CCO

Nkundo Society
[De Nkundo-Maatschappij]

E. Boelaert

Kongo-Overzee, Vol. VI, pp. 148-161, 1940

Translated from the Flemish by Helen N. Sprey

Human Relations Area Files

1959

[Title Page]

Nkundu

[148]

NKUNDO SOCIETY

By E. Boelaert, M. S. C.

(Coquilhatville)

Introduction

000 All of White civilization is in search of a "new order," a reorganization of society. The disrupting forces that broke through in the French Revolution have destroyed all of the intermediary parts and all of the subordinate organs of the social body, and all of their rights and duties have been concentrated in the impersonal State, which alone still has power and leadership over all free and equal individuals.

Having been brought up with such a conception, whose insufficiency and injustice we are learning to realize very slowly, it is only with great difficulty that we can form a correct idea of what an organized society ought to be. The attempts to create organizations of workers and of social status groups and to bring about a corporative arrangement have absorbed all of the social powers for almost a hundred years. The question of how we can make the family once more the nucleus of the community is still scarcely touched on, while the problem of nationality groups has turned Europe into a volcano. And still the question of the new order will only find its solution when justice is done to each of these forces: ethnic (family and nationality), economic (job, social and economic class), and political (form of government).

It is, therefore, not surprising that it is difficult for us to obtain true insight into a society that clashes completely with the ideas that prevail among us; that we too easily considered stupid, primitive, and barbaric that which we did not understand, because it went against our own faulty conceptions; that we thought [149] we were serving civilization by dismantling the naturally organized societies, with only the aim of making them like ours; that we confused natural law with our own positive law and civilization, with our own decadent customs. In the presence of the natives, we completely forgot the imperfection and "growing disorganization" of our own society and made it into an indisputable ideal for their "elevation."

|21| The question about the real structure of the native society begins to be asked only now that it has been brought completely to the tottering point. The question as to whether that society is, in its foundations or basic elements, really in conflict with natural law, the general welfare of mankind, and faith -- the question, thus, of the right of that society to exist -- is still shoved aside in favor of the supposed duty of the moment: to make that society like ours.

In this article, I have tried to outline the social order of the Nkundo [Nkundu]-Mongo as clearly as possible, in order to find an answer to the last question.

1. The Ethnic Clan

When we keep saying that the family is the nucleus of the community, we are ultimately merely clutching a legal fiction, or rather, we say what it ought to be. In fact, the family is, among us, only the producer of individuals who play their role in the community. The family, as such, is neither socially nor legally nor politically an intermediary, a mediator, between the individuals and the higher organs of the society.

b|3 Second, the nuclear family has, in our society, developed into a completely separate conception, compared to the extended family. The patriarchal household, the model of which Le Play portrayed, or the extended family, has completely disappeared. Among the Nkundo-Mongo, on the contrary, it is precisely the patriarchal family which, in the most absolute sense, is still the nucleus of the community and the foremost independent organ of that community.

Most often, this extended family is designated by the term "clan," to which vaguely different characteristics are attached: [150] blood relationship, totemism, exogamy, community of property, and others. One speaks of ethnic (patriarchal or matriarchal), legal, exogamic, and political clans, without further giving a clear description of these concepts.

The ethnic clan includes all of the persons who are descended in the male line from a particular ancestor. It is his descent in the male line from that particular ancestor which ties each Nkundo to that clan. Each ethnic clan has its own name, which is indicated in our society by the family name. When the Nkundo wish, however, to indicate that name,

613 they always refer to their descent from the ancestor-founder: "We are baseka Ngoi (descendants of Ngoi; we belong to the clan of Ngoi)."

Naturally the Nkundo-Mongo know very well that all the Mongo clans are descended from a common ancestor. They even believe in the common descent of all people. However, in clan unity they only go back to that ancestor who made their group legally autonomous, who made himself independent.

To that group belong, thus, all the children of that founder, all of the children of his sons, all of the children of his grandsons and great-grandsons; thus, all those who keep the same family name in our society.

The Nkundo-Mongo call the clan from the father's side their wise, from ise (father). The children of the lawfully married daughters belong to another wise, since they go back on their father's side to another ancestor. However, children of an unmarried daughter of the 848 clan continue to bear their mother's name, and thus belong to the wise of the mother, just as, in our society, they take on the family name of the mother.

Married women, however, continue ethnically to belong to their own paternal clan and do not form part of the wise of their husband.

2. Kinship Terms in the Paternal Clan

601 613 All of the living members of the paternal clan constitute one extended family. In the bosom of that one family, all members of the same /151/ generation also bear the same title. All of the members of the grandfather's generation are grandfathers. All the members of the father's generation are fathers, also including the female members. Thus, the sisters and female cousins of the father who belong to the wise are all called "female fathers": isomoto or faomoto (from ise or fafa, father, and bomoto, woman). All of the older brothers and male cousins of the wise are batomolo; all younger brothers or male cousins of the wise are bakune; all sisters or female cousins of the wise are nkana. All of the children of brothers and male cousins, and also all of the children of sisters and female cousins who remain in the wise, are bana (children).

601 561 613 Such terms are to us, of course, a never ending source of mistakes, complications, and ridicule. The native cannot possible understand this and underneath takes it very much amiss. Socially, legally, and

601 561 613 politically, his whole society is, in fact, based on those relationships which are incomprehensible to us. Indeed, the order of duty and responsibility, of authority and honor, are socially, legally, and politically determined by the order of birth. That order is determined by generation, and within the generation, by age: from the oldest father down the whole line of fathers to the oldest "child" in the whole row of children. The children of your older brother, even if they are younger in years, go before your own children. As we shall see later, the female members of the family, who practically fall outside this order, recover their place of honor through their sons.

613 From this short description of the paternal clan, it is immediately apparent that the clan is not a geographical concept among the Nkundo. Wherever the daughter may marry, wherever the son may wander in service to the Whites, that person always and everywhere continues by law to belong to his wise, and he remains bound to all the rights and duties of his place in that community.

602 613 It also appears that clan and blood relationship do not come anywhere near to blanketing each other. Each "blood relationship" of the Nkundo extends itself over various paternal clans, since the blood relations of the mother, as well as the descendants of all the other women of my wise who are lawfully married out of the clan, belong to another wise.

/152/ 3. Inheritance in the Clan

613 421 Each clan has possessions that constitute the inheritance or patrimony of the members, the domain of the family. These goods are of two kinds: economic and dotal. The former are subdivided into real property, or inalienable property, and personal property.

613 423 The real property of the clan consists of land and waters. The land is divided into: arable land, land for gardens, and hunting areas. These constitute common property, whose cultivation or usufruct is divided among the members of the clan: each one receives his garden land and hunting ground to clear; as soon as the user leaves it, that ground is free again for the community. Palm groves, of course, also remain common property of the members. A similar arrangement applies to water rights. Larger fishing areas remain common property and are, under the leadership of the clan head, communally exploited. Smaller fishing grounds, creeks, ponds, etc., are allotted to each

Nkundu

613 member. In the case of common use or of an exceptionally good
423 yield (large game, a rich haul of fish, large yield from a particular cultivation of common property, such as palm beer), these are divided by the clan leader and their respective shares allotted to all members.

613 Personal property consists of the hut and the tools of the man, the furniture of the woman, and the domestic animals. These are movable
422 and can also go out of the clan through inheritance. Should they leave their husbands, married women may taken with them whatever they have received or inherited personally from their wise.

In contrast to the economic property of the clan, there is the dotal
421 or capital property, the marriage settlements, which do not have
613 economic, but only legal value. They represent the rights over people.
583 In the first place we find those persons who themselves are the source of rights: the marriageable girls (bibunanyi) of the clan /A/ and the substitutes for women married into the clan /A/—that is, the women who are married into the allied clan /B/ with the acquired bride price (nkita). /Ed. Clan A pays bride price for a woman from clan B, the allied clan. Then clan B uses this acquired bride price to obtain another woman in marriage, a "substitute." This substitute is nkita to
[567] the original woman./ In addition, there are the slaves who can replace a caput. In the second place, there are the titles which represent
421 a caput: the /153/ so-called dotal securities (baumba). These dotal
613 securities or titles are kept by the clan leader and, with the knowledge of his immediate successor, hidden somewhere in the ground. With the approval of the clan council, he may also lend them out. These dotal possessions or rights are also common property of the clan and are used to procure a wife for the clan members, each in his turn.

The common ownership of the economic property makes possible the difficult sharing of woods and river, prevents the cutting up of the property, hinders the impoverishment and the proletarization of the poor, and insures the livelihood of all of the clan members. This common ownership has nothing more to do with communism than the common ownership of property in our nuclear families.

The dotal or capital property, the bride price titles, which have perhaps aroused the most indignant and lofty compassion of our civilized world, have less to do with buying and selling the wife then our own dowry and class system. They are permanent legal titles of the contract which is made between the clans of the couple on the occasion of the marriage. Our individualistic liberalism and mercantilism have regarded these legal securities only through economic spectacles and

421 613 have seen them as money transactions. We have obtruded our point of view and destroyed the whole legal system of the natives. It is through our materialization of those securities that we have lowered the native woman to a plaything of money and a piece of merchandise.

586 595 As for the two outgrowths of the native system, divorce and polygamy, neither is inherent in the legal system as such. They are only abuses which have taken root and which clash with the principles of the native law itself. By its nature, native marriage is also indissoluble, and polygamy has only been able to exist through a popular confusion between paternal and marital law.

4. Legal Power in the Clan

613 627 In Nkundo society all individuals do not have equal rights or powers, as in the Napoleonic law books, /154/ but the natural rights concerning people are still completely recognized. All value and power comes from God, through the ancestors. Those who are nearest to God are thus the highest in position, his first representatives. There is no question of absolutism or despotism. Just as the blood is divided among all clan members in a descending line, so also are authority and legal power. They are one as a legal entity in relation to the outside world; nevertheless, each member takes part and has a vote in the internal administration of justice, so that, when clan interests are discussed and dealt with, each member may sit in the place accorded to him and take part in decisions. In a legal sense there is, therefore, no question of a separate family council, which would assist the clan leader, but all decisions are made communally.

594 627 A single exception to this does exist, namely, that which gives the head of the nuclear family legal power over his wife and children, and then only with the acknowledgment and approval of the clan. Differences between autonomous clans are settled by the clans involved, a sort of international court of law where friendly clans may also be brought in as arbiters.

627 Such an arrangement made the court absolutely "paternal." The whole procedure was one of a reconciliatory character, which resorted to coercive measures only when necessary, and did its utmost to save the honor and the welfare of the involved clans, and to compensate for, to restore, and to prevent further offenses.

177 Although even St. Thomas teaches that the only natural authority
is that of the head of the family, European legislation has, through
ignorance, completely abolished the rights of the native family head;
the wife is freed from all ties and is thus abandoned to licentiousness.
Through a legal fiction, clan law has gone over into the hands of the
"recognized native courts of justice," which, however, have just as
much to do with the clan court as a policeman with a father. The
communization of trade, education, and the rearing of the young, as
is demonstrated to us by Russia, would revolutionize our society far
less than our installation of these so-called native courts of justice has
done in the Congo. Education and correction have been replaced by
punishment. Politics, which have begun to play such an all-important
602 role in our society, had /155/ almost no importance in Nkundo society.
613 The neighboring clans were all connected with each other through
blood relationship, intermarriage, or friendship ties. Only when there
was a struggle against a foreign and common enemy did politics have
a role to fulfill. And then the same order of rank was observed among
the clans as was already indicated for the members of a single clan.

177 Here also, biased or romantic products of our ideas about barbarism
have adapted these so-called intertribal wars to the need that we felt,
728 to civilize the natives at any cost. These wars were not to be com-
622 pared with our European wars, in which a mass of people are slaughtered.
In the Congo, no sooner had wounded or dead fallen on both sides than
the chiefs were already congregated to conclude a peace treaty.
Here again, we meant to respect the political organization of the
natives by the creation of chieftainships and native chiefs, who were
to form the political-administrative link between the native clans and
the European higher administration. Such chiefs were totally unknown
in native society. Together with the establishment of the native courts,
the establishment of chieftainships gave the death blow to the actual
social organization of the Nkundo-Mongo. The very fact that these
institutions are territorial demonstrates clearly that here no ordinary
sharing of power has taken place, but simply an elimination of the
traditional power in favor of a new colonial power.

177 Indeed, where formerly the "customary rightful chief" was sought
out, even though it was sometimes only a formality, the new formula
622 of the "sectors" has relieved the higher administration from this care
too. And it is only to be hoped that this new formula will at least do
away with the legal fiction that the "chiefs" are actually "something
native," so that they may be classified for once and for all in the

177 622 category of civil servants. In this manner they would fall under the written law and could be obliged to practice monogamy, whereas now nearly all of the "native chiefs" are precisely the maintainers and promoters of polygamy. If this had /156/ been enforced from the start, then polygamy, instead of spreading, would have virtually disappeared from the native society.

5. Splitting of the Clan

613 After all that has been said before, it must be rather apparent how an autonomous clan can split up and, thereby, form two autonomous clans.

When a clan has expanded too far, its leaders cross over the boundaries of blood relationship, and offenses against the law of exogamy occur. When such offenses are multiplied, further separation is gradually aimed at to make marriages possible. Such a situation between two parts of the same clan, who are striving for "legal autonomy," is called lonkana, a term that signifies that unlawful relations exist between the two. It generally occurs between member groups that have the same male ancestor, but not the same female ancestor—that is, they are issue from different wives of the same founder.

Another cause of splitting is the voluntary or obligatory withdrawal of one of the members. When he establishes himself outside, begets a sizeable progeny, and acquires a patrimony of his own, the relations with his own clan become less frequent; and the separated fraction gradually begins to settle smaller lawsuits, to maintain its own graveyard, to bury the umbilical cords of its children in its own territory, to take on its own name, and to refer to its own founder.

Often also at the source of this estrangement lies the refusal of a certain fraction of the clan to submit to the authority of the clan members.

6. Legal Dependents

613 614 608 Until now we have spoken only of the ethnic clan: of the members who belong to it through descent. They /157/ are the sole bearers of

613 authority (mpifo). Each clan can, however, also take in other persons 614 who fall outside the order of authority, but who legally belong to the 608 clan. Along with the real descendants, they make up the legal clan.

These are, in the first place, the wives who have married into the clan, the children brought with them (mbusola), and the lawful housekeepers. In addition, there are the clients who have been taken in; then the war prisoners and slaves; and finally the Pygmies. The women married into the clan are naturally separate, as are also the Pygmies who form a completely separate community. The others are gradually treated as children, receive their part in the general responsibility and protection, their place in the court session, etc. Depending on the degree to which they develop in the bosom of the clan which has taken them in, they can constitute a separate group in it, which becomes more and more independent.

7. The Maternal Clan

602 Each Nkundo has a double "fatherland": his wise and his bonyango. 613 The bonyango is the paternal clan of his mother. His mother gave birth to him there; her blood relations live there and receive him with motherly love and will protect him against all difficulties; he has often passed a large part of his happiest childhood years there; and there he can always find a safe shelter when, for one reason or another, he might lose the paternal clan.

The structure of the maternal clan naturally resembles that of the paternal clan in every way. If we treat it specially here, it is not in order to speak of the form, but only to point out the specific rights that each person has in his maternal clan.

601 Just as all of the brothers and sisters of my father are my "fathers," 602 so all of the brothers and sisters of my mother are my "mothers." 613 Mother's brother, that is, my maternal uncle, I call ngompame, nyangompame. All the nephews and nieces on the mother's side are my "children." A special tie binds me to the children of the nkita of my mother, that is, to the children of the women who was acquired by the maternal clan with the bride price /158/ that had been paid for my mother by my wise. Mother is, thus, the nkolo, the woman or mistress, of those children who call me their father.

602 As long as I continue to live in my own paternal clan, I have the 613 right to special care and love from the maternal clan. If I cannot find

602 sufficient dowry at home, then I can always go and appeal to my
613 maternal uncles who are obliged to help me insofar as they are able. I even have the right to the free dowry of one of the children of my mother's nkita. I may always lay out gardens and hunt in the territory of my bonyango, and take part in the court sessions of the maternal clan when they consider the allotment of the free dowries or the division of the inheritance. If, however, I wish to leave my father's clan and establish myself for good in the maternal clan, then I receive priority in everything over my male and female cousins and become heir and clan leader directly after my maternal uncles. This is, thus, a truly princely compensation for the so-called inferiority of the woman in native society: the child of the sister (bonankana) restores her gloriously to the honor and rank which are due her.

8. Related Clan: Likilo

602 Outside my paternal clan and outside my maternal clan, I still
601 have blood relations: namely, the children of my paternal aunt and of my sisters or female cousins, each of whom belongs to the clan of his own father. Just as the children of my mother's brothers are my children, so the children of my father's sister are also my fathers. I am, thus, in the same relationship to the children of my mother's brother as the children of my father's sister are to me.

As far as the children of my sister are concerned, they are also my real banankana and, therefore, the fathers of my own children.

The other members of the related clans (who are thus not blood relations) all share, according to generation, in the classification of immediate relatives: all the "fathers" of the husband are "fathers-in-law"; all the mothers, "mothers-in-law"; etc. There is this single big difference, that the "superiors" of the husband are also your "superiors." According to the opinions of the Nkundo, they are the only real relatives. Those on the husband's side are called bokilo; those on the wife's side, bokanga.

/159/ The "subordinates" of the husband are not real relatives and rightly call each other "husband" and "wife." In various legally
[582] defined circumstances, marriage relations and marriages are permitted between the latter.

It is unnecessary to repeat that all of the members of the reciprocal clans share in these relationships: the whole generation of a clan

602 member is, as it were, identified with that member, so that, for in-
601 stance, all younger sisters and female cousins of one spouse become "wives" of all the younger brothers and male cousins of the other spouse. One must really have the legal sense and the patience and the capacity for palaver and unravelling of an old Nkundo to make sense out all of these relationships. They themselves compare them, in fact, with the inextricable clew of the intestines of a sort of dwarf crocodile: besofo bya lokekele.

9. Exogamy

613 The term, "exogamic clan," often heard or encountered in writings,
582 is also, at least in the Nkundo-Mongo society, very misleading. The group of persons with whom marriage is forbidden does not constitute any common entity; it differs from person to person. Two half brothers can have the same paternal clan but differ in maternal clan; they can have the same maternal clan and different paternal clans. Marriages are forbidden for older brothers and sisters that are permitted for the younger ones. The rules differ from one blood relation to another, from blood relation with relative-by-marriage to blood relation with relative-by-marriage, from relative-by-marriage with relative-by-marriage to relative-by-marriage with relative-by-marriage.

If one still wishes to put the law of exogamy into European terms, then one might say: 1) blood relationship forbids marriage insofar as the blood relationship is recognized. This recognition varies from clan group to clan group. Sometimes in the same legal but extended clan, an exception is made to this recognition; mostly, however, the different autonomous clans which descend from the same distant ancestor are still bound by the law of exogamy. Generally, groups which have the same father but a different mother /160/ separate most quickly. 2) Relationship (other than blood) forbids marriage—insofar as the relationship is recognized between the parents of spouses; it sometimes permits marriage between children of spouses.

613 Here it should be observed once again, however, that the customs
582 differ from region to region as regards this recognition; that, for in-
184 stance, the stepson in many regions may marry his stepmother in a regular marriage; and that the violations are less severely judged and punished in proportion to the degree to which the forbidden relationships diverge.

Nkundu

10. Conclusion

182 Nkundo society was a fully alive, organic community. All of its organs functioned and were able to adjust continually to the changes in its life. Ethnically, socially-legally, and politically, they were open to every improvement. The organs with which it was built stood nearest to natural law and drew their rights and duties from it, and also the spirit which inspired them.

The facts prove that this society could survive. It arose at the source of the Lomako; in a short time it had extended itself peacefully over the whole central area of the Congo; it pressed eastward across the Lomami and Lualaba, and southward across the Kaisai /Kasai/-Sankuru, to occupy about a fifth of the present Congo at the time of the arrival of the Whites.

182 This society was open to all healthy influences and could adapt it-
177 self to all reasonable demands of civilization. It was, however, not reconcilable with what precisely is wrong in our European ideas about progress and civilization: elimination of all ethnic intermediary organs, equalization of all individuals, materialization of all life on the basis of economic competition, slave-like submission to the impersonal, unpaternal State, with that terrible pretense of freedom, of being able to do everything that is not forbidden by the State.

178 This suddenly attained freedom, which was accompanied by the
161 abolition of all the former joints of society, means the death of the Nkundo /161/ community, not only in its soul, its being, but also in its existence. The gradual depopulation, the dying out in the Middle Congo, has had repercussions now and then, even in government circles. "The Nkundo-Mongo population is melting away like snow before the sun," is the brief content of the last official report. The Waola, between the Ruki and the Ikelemba /rivers/, had in 1939 ninety deaths and three births. The official statistics of 1939 of the territory of Coquilhatville give one hundred adults for every twenty-four children. The official data of the same year for the Vicariate of Coquilhatville, with its 382, 736 inhabitants, give a ratio of 415 children to 1, 000 adults. According to these data, the whole population will be decreased by more than 50 percent by the following generation, thus dwindled to less than one-half.

Coquilhatville, 1939

3: Boelaert

FO32 Mongo

KONGO-OVERZEE

TIJDSCHRIFT VOOR EN OVER BELGISCH KONGO
RWANDA-BURUNDI EN AANPALENDE GEWESTEN

ONDER REDACTIE VAN PROF. Dr. A. BURSSENS, UNIVERSITEIT TE GENT

6. JAARGANG 1940

DE SIKKEL, KRUISHOFSTRAAT 223, ANTWERPEN

DE NKUNDO-MAATSCHAPPIJ

door E. Boelaert, M. S. C.
(*Coquilhatstad*)

Inleiding

Heel de blanke beschaving is op zoek naar een „nieuwe orde", naar een reorganisatie der maatschappij. De desorganiseerende krachten, die in de Fransche revolutie hun doorbraak vonden, hebben alle tusschengeledingen, alle ondergeschikte organen van het maatschappelijk lichaam gesloopt, al hun rechten en plichten geconcentreerd op den onpersoonlijken Staat, die alleen nog macht en leiding heeft over de gelijkgerechtigde individuen.

Opgevoed in een dergelijke opvatting, waarvan wij slechts heel langzaam de ongenoegzaamheid en onrechtvaardigheid leeren inzien, kunnen we ons maar zeer moeilijk een juist denkbeeld vormen van wat een georganiseerde maatschappij zou moeten zijn. De pogingen om werkorganisaties en standorganisaties in het leven te roepen en om een korporatieve ordening tot stand te brengen, hebben sinds haast honderd jaar alle sociale krachten opgeslorpt. Het vraagstuk, hoe wij het huisgezin weer tot kernorgaan der gemeenschap kunnen maken, is nog maar ternauwernood aangeraakt, terwijl het vraagstuk der ethnische volksgemeenschappen Europa tot een vulkaan heeft gemaakt. En toch zal de kwestie der nieuwe orde enkel haar oplossing gevonden hebben, wanneer aan elk dezer krachten : ethnische (huisgezin en volksgemeenschap), ekonomische (vak, klasse, stand) en politieke (staatsinrichting) recht is gedaan.

Het is dan ook niet te verwonderen dat het voor ons moeilijk is een juist inzicht te krijgen in een maatschappij, die volledig indruischt tegen de opvattingen welke ten onzent heerschen ; dat wij al te gemakkelijk als onverstandig, primitief en barbaarsch gingen beschouwen wat wij niet begrepen, omdat het inging tegen onze eigen foutieve opvattingen ; dat wij de beschaving meenden te dienen door natuurlijk-georganiseerde maatschappijen te ontmantelen, alleen met het doel ze aan de onze gelijk te maken; dat wij natuurrecht met eigen positief recht, beschaving met eigen dekadente gewoonten gingen verwarren. Ten overstaan van de inlanders vergaten wij volledig de onvolmaaktheid en „groeiende verwarring" onzer eigen maatschappij om ze tot onaantastbaar ideaal te maken voor hun „verheffing".

De vraag naar de werkelijke grondslagen der inlandsche maatschappij begint pas gesteld te worden nu deze volledig aan het wankelen gebracht zijn. De vraag of die maatschappij in haar grondslagen of principieele elementen werkelijk in tegenspraak is met het natuurrecht, het algemeen welzijn der menschheid en het geloof, de vraag dus naar het bestaansrecht dier maatschappij, is nog altijd opzij geschoven voor den vermeenden plicht van het oogenblik: die maatschappij aan de onze gelijk te maken.

In deze bijdrage heb ik getracht de maatschappelijke ordening der Nkundo-Mongo zoo duidelijk mogelijk te omlijnen, ten einde een antwoord op de laatste vraag te vinden.

1. De ethnische klan

Wanneer men te onzent blijft zeggen, dat het huisgezin de cel is der gemeenschap, dan houdt men ten slotte nog enkel aan een juridische fictie vast, of liever: men zegt, wat het rechtens zou moeten zijn. Feitelijk is het huisgezin te onzent nog enkel de voortbrenger der individuen, die hun rol zullen spelen in de gemeenschap. Het huisgezin als zoodanig is noch sociaal, noch juridisch, noch politiek een tusschengeleding, een bemiddelingsorgaan tusschen de enkelingen en de hoogere organen der maatschappij.

Ten tweede is het huisgezin, in onze gemeenschap, tot een gansch afzonderlijk begrip uitgegroeid tegenover de familie. Het patriarchaal gezin, waarvan Le Play het model uitteekende, of de groote familie is geheel verdwenen. Bij de Nkundo-Mongo daarentegen is het juist die patriarchale familie welke nog in den meest volstrekten zin de cel is der gemeenschap, het eerste zelfstandig orgaan dier gemeenschap.

Meestal duidt men die groote familie aan met den naam van klan, waaraan vagelijk verschillende kenmerken toegekend worden:

bloedverwantschap, totemisme, exogamie, gemeenschappelijkheid van bezit, en andere. Men spreekt van ethnische (patriarchale of matriarchale), juridische, exogamische en politieke klans, zonder verder duidelijk de omschrijving dier begrippen aan te geven.

De ethnische klan omvat alle personen, die in mannelijke linie van een bepaalden voorouder afstammen. Het is de afstamming in mannelijke linie van dien bepaalden voorouder, die elken Nkundo aan dien klan verbindt. Elke ethnische klan heeft zijn eigen naam, die te onzent door den familienaam wordt aangegeven. Wanneer de Nkundo dien naam echter willen bepalen, beroepen zij zich steeds op de afstamming van den voorouder-stichter : Wij zijn *baseka Ngoi* (afstammelingen van Ngoi, wij behooren tot den klan van Ngoi).

Natuurlijk weten de Nkundo-Mongo heel goed, dat alle Mongo-klans afstammen van eenzelfden voorouder. Zij nemen zelfs de eenheid van afstamming van alle menschen aan. Als klan-eenheid klimmen zij echter enkel op tot dien voorouder, die hun groep juridisch-autonoom heeft gemaakt, die zich zelfstandig gemaakt heeft.

Tot die groep behooren dus alle kinderen van dien stichter, alle kinderen zijner zonen, alle kinderen zijner kleinzonen en achterkleinzonen, dus al degenen die bij ons denzelfden familienaam blijven bewaren.

Dien klan langs vaderskant noemen de Nkundo-Mongo hun *wise*, van *ise* (vader). De kinderen der geldig getrouwde dochters behooren tot een anderen *wise*, omdat zij langs vaderskant opklimmen tot een anderen voorouder. Kinderen echter eener ongetrouwde dochter van den klan blijven moeders naam dragen, dus tot den *wise* der moeder behooren, juist zooals zij bij ons den familienaam der moeder aannemen.

Ingetrouwde vrouwen echter blijven ethnisch tot haar eigen vadersklan behooren, maken geen deel uit van den *wise* harer echtgenooten.

2. Benamingen in den vadersklan

Alle levende leden van vadersklan maken *één* groote familie uit. In den schoot dier *ééne* familie dragen alle leden eener zelfde generatie ook een gelijkwaardigen titel. Alle leden van grootvaders generatie zijn grootvaders. Alle leden van vaders generatie zijn vaders, ook de vrouwelijke leden. Aldus worden de zusters en nichten van vader, die tot den *wíse* behooren, alle „vrouwelijke vaders" genoemd : *ísomoto* of *fasomoto* (van *ise* of *fafa*, vader, en *bomoto*, vrouw). Alle oudere broers en neven van den *wíse* zijn *batomolo*, alle jongere broers of neven van den *wíse* zijn *bakune*, alle zusters of nichten van den *wíse* zijn *nkana*. Alle kinderen van broers en neven, ook alle kinderen van zusters en nichten die in den *wíse* blijven, zijn *bana* (kinderen).

Dergelijke benamingen zijn voor ons natuurlijk een nooit uitdrogende bron van vergissingen, verwikkelingen en bespottingen. Hetgeen de inlander onmogelijk begrijpen kan en ons in den grond ten zeerste euvel duidt. Sociaal, juridisch en politiek is immers heel zijn maatschappij op die voor ons onbegrijpelijke verhoudingen gegrondvest. Sociaal, juridisch en politiek immers wordt de rangorde van plicht en verantwoordelijkheid, van gezag en eer door de geboorteorde bepaald. Die rangorde wordt bepaald door de generatie, en binnen de generatie door den leeftijd : vanaf den oudsten vader langs heel de linie der vaders tot aan 't oudste „kind" in heel de rij der kinderen. De kinderen van uw ouderen broer, ook als zij in jaren jonger zijn, gaan vóór uw eigen kinderen. Zooals we verder zien zullen, komen de vrouwelijke leden van den klan, die praktisch buiten deze rangorde vallen, in haar zonen deze plaats met eer terug innemen.

Uit deze korte beschrijving van den vaderklan blijkt al dadelijk, dat de klan bij de Nkundo geen geografisch begrip is. Waar de dochter ook moge uittrouwen, waar de zoon ook moge wegzwerven in blankendienst, altijd en overal blijft die persoon in rechte tot zijn *wíse* behooren, blijft hij aan al de rechten en plichten van zijn plaats in die gemeenschap, gebonden.

Er blijkt ook uit, dat klan en bloedverwantschap elkaar op verre na niet dekken. Elke „bloedverwantschap" der Nkundo strekt zich over verschillende vaderklans uit, vermits zoowel de bloedverwanten van moeder als de afstammelingen van alle andere geldig uitgetrouwde vrouwen van mijn *wíse*, tot een anderen *wíse* behooren.

3. Erfgoederen van den klan

Elke klan heeft eigendommen, die het erfgoed of patrimonium der leden, het domein der familie uitmaken. Die goederen zijn tweeërlei : ekonomische en dotale. De ekonomische worden onderverdeeld in onroerende of onvervreemdbare en in roerende.

De onroerende goederen van den klan bestaan uit gronden en waters. De gronden zijn : bouwgronden, tuingronden en jachtgebieden. Zij maken een gemeenschappelijk bezit uit, waarvan de exploitatie of het vruchtgebruik onder de klanleden wordt verdeeld : ieder krijgt zijn tuingrond en jachtgrond ter ontginning ; zoodra de gebruiker hem verlaat, wordt die grond terug vrij voor de gemeenschap. Natuurlijke palmerijen blijven ook algemeen eigendom der leden. Een dergelijke regeling is getroffen voor de waters. Grootere visch-exploitaties blijven gemeengoed en worden, onder leiding van den klanleider, gemeenschappelijk uitgebaat. Kleinere visch-exploitaties : kreekjes, vijvertjes enz., worden aan elk der leden toegewezen. Bij gezamenlijke exploitatie of bijzonder goede opbrengst (edele jachtdieren, rijke vischvangst, groote opbrengst eener partikuliere exploitatie van gemeengoed : palmbier) wordt deze door den klanleider verdeeld en wordt aan alle leden hun overeenkomstig deel toegewezen.

De roerende goederen bestaan uit de hut, de werktuigen van den man, het huisraad der vrouw en de huisdieren. Deze zijn vervreemdbaar en kunnen bij erfenis ook uit den klan gaan. Wat de ingetrouwde vrouwen voor zich persoonlijk uit hun *wise* meekregen of overerfden, mogen zij meenemen als zij haar echtgenoot verlaten.

Tegenover de ekonomische goederen van den klan staan de dotale of kapitale goederen, de huwelijkswaarden, die geen ekonomische, maar juridische waarde hebben. Zij vertegenwoordigen de rechten op personen. Het zijn dus in de eerste plaats die personen zelf, waaruit rechten kunnen voortkomen of voortkomen : de huwbare meisjes (*bibunanyi*) van den klan, de plaatsvervangsters van ingetrouwde vrouwen, d. z. de vrouwen, die in den aangetrouwden klan ingetrouwd zijn met den verkregen bruidschat (nkita). Verder de slaven, die een caput kunnen vervangen. In de tweede plaats zijn het de titels, die een caput vertegenwoordigen : de zoogenaamde bruidschatwaarden (*baumba*). Deze bruidschatwaarden of titels worden door den klanleider bewaard en met medeweten van zijn onmiddellijken opvolger ergens in den grond verborgen. Met goedkeuring van den klanraad kan hij er ook van uitleenen. Die dotale goederen of rechten zijn weer gemeenschappelijk bezit van den klan en worden gebruikt om de klanleden om beurten een vrouw te verschaffen.

De gemeenschappelijkheid van het ekonomisch eigendom maakt de lastige uitbating van bosch en rivier mogelijk, voorkomt de versnippering der eigendommen, belet de verarming en de verproletariseering van de misdeelden, verzekert het bestaan van alle klanleden. Met het kommunisme heeft dit gemeenschappelijk bezit niet meer uitstaans dan de gemeenschap van goederen in onze huisgezinnen.

De dotale of kapitale waarden, de bruidschattitels, die misschien het meest het verontwaardigd en superieur medelijden van onze beschaafde wereld hebben gaande gemaakt, hebben met koop en verkoop der vrouw minder uitstaans dan ons eigen bruidschat- en standen-systeem. Zij zijn blijvende, juridische titels van de overeenkomst, die tusschen de klans der trouwers bij gelegenheid van het huwelijk wordt gesloten. Ons individualistisch liberalisme en merkantilisme heeft die juridische waarden enkel met een ekonomischen bril bekeken en er geldwaarden in gezien. Wij hebben onze zienswijze opgedrongen en het heele juridische stelsel der inlanders vernietigd. Enkel door onze vermaterialiseering dier waarden hebben wij de inlandsche vrouw tot een speelbal van het geld, tot een koopwaar vernederd.

Wat de twee uitwassen van het inlandsch systeem betreft, de echtscheiding en de veelwijverij, beide zijn niet inherent aan het juridische stelsel als zoodanig. Het zijn enkel ingewortelde misbruiken, die tegen de grondregels van het inlandsch recht zelf indruischen. Uit zijn aard is ook het inlandsch huwelijk onverbreekbaar, en de veelwijverij is enkel kunnen ontstaan door een gewilde verwarring tusschen het paternaal en het maritaal recht.

4. Rechtsmacht in den klan

In de Nkundo-maatschappij zijn niet alle enkelingen gelijkgerechtigd en evenmachtig, zooals in de Napoleontische wetboeken, maar worden de natuurlijke rechten op personen nog degelijk erkend. Alle waarde en macht komt van God, langs de voorvaderen. Zij die God het dichtst benaderen, zijn dus de hoogstgeplaatsten, zijn eerste vertegenwoordigers. Van absolutisme en despotisme is echter geen sprake. Zooals het bloed over alle klanleden in afdalende lijn verdeeld is, zoo ook het gezag, de rechtsmacht. Zij is één als juridische persoonlijkheid tegenover de buitenwereld ; elk lid ervan heeft nochtans deel en stem in de interne rechtspraak, zoodat, bij de bespreking en behandeling van alle klanbelangen, elk lid op de hem toekomende plaats mag zetelen en medebeslissen. In juridischen zin is er dus zelf geen sprake van een bijzonderen familieraad, die den klanleider zou ter zijde staan, maar worden alle beslissingen gemeenschappelijk genomen.

Een enkele uitzondering bestaat hierop, nl. degene, die aan het gezinshoofd rechtsmacht geeft over zijn vrouw en kinderen, en dan nog alleen mits erkenning en goedkeuring door den klan. Geschillen tusschen autonome klans werden door de betrokken klans beslecht, een soort internationaal gerechtshof, waarbij ook bevriende klans als scheidsrechters konden betrokken worden.

Dergelijke regeling maakte het gerecht absoluut „vaderlijk". Heel de proceduur ervan was een verzoeningsproceduur, die slechts uit noodzaak tot dwangmaatregelen overging, en alles in het werk stelde om de eer en het welzijn der betrokken klanleden te redden, de fouten te vergoeden, te herstellen en verder te voorkomen.

Ofschoon zelfs Sint Thomas leert, dat het eenige natuurlijk recht dit van het gezinshoofd is, heeft de Europeesche wetgeving het haar onbekende recht van dat gezinshoofd volledig afgeschaft : de vrouw is van alle banden verlost en dus aan alle losbandigheid overgeleverd. Door een juridische fictie is het klaniek recht overgegaan in de handen van de „erkende inlandsche rechtbanken", die echter met het klan-gerecht juist evenveel overeenkomen als een politieagent met een vader. De verkommuniseering van handel, onderwijs en opvoeding, zooals Rusland ons die voorhoudt, zou voor ons een veel minder groote revolutioneering der maatschappij tot stand brengen, dan wij in Kongo teweeggebracht hebben door die zoogenaamde inlandsche rechtbanken. Opvoeding en verbetering werden door straf vervangen. De politiek, die in onze maatschappij zoo 'n alles-overwegende rol is gaan spelen, had in de Nkundo-maatschappij haast geen beteekenis. De buurklans waren alle door bloedverwantschap, aanverwantschap of vriendschapsbetrekkingen met elkaar verbonden. Alleen wanneer er te vechten viel tegen een vreemden en gemeenschappelijken vijand, kreeg de politiek een rol te vervullen. En dan werd weer eenzelfde rangorde tusschen de klans in acht genomen als reeds voor de leden van eenzelfden klan werd aangeduid.

Hier ook hebben tendentieuse of romantische uitbroeisels van onze opvatting over barbaarschheid deze zoogezegde intertribale oorlogen aangepast aan de behoefte die wij voelden om de inlanders het koste wat het wil te beschaven. Deze oorlogen waren niet te vergelijken met onze Europeesche waarbij een massa menschen worden afgeslacht. Nauwelijks waren in Kongo van weerszijden gewonden of dooden gevallen, of reeds werden de hoofden bijeengestoken om een vredesverbond te sluiten. Ook hier weer hebben wij gemeend de politieke organisatie der inlanders te eerbiedigen door het scheppen van hoofdijen en inlandsche opperhoofden, die de politiek-administratieve schakel zouden vormen tusschen de inlandsche klans en het Europeesch hooger bestuur. Dergelijke opperhoofden waren in de inlandsche maatschappij totaal onbekend. Samen met de inrichting der inlandsche rechtbanken heeft de inrichting der hoofdijen den genadeslag gegeven aan de werkelijke maatschappij-organisatie der Nkundo-Mongo. Alleen het feit reeds, dat die instellingen territoriaal zijn, toont duidelijk aan, dat hier geen gewone machtsverschuiving heeft plaats gehad, maar een gewone uitschakeling der traditioneele macht ten bate van een nieuwe, koloniale macht.

Trouwens, waar vroeger nog gezocht werd, al was het soms voor den vorm, naar den „gewoontelijk rechthebbenden chef", heeft de nieuwe formule der „secteurs" het hooger bestuur ook van deze zorg ontheven. En het is alleen maar te hopen, dat deze nieuwe formule ten minste de juridische fictie zal doen wegvallen, alsof die „hoofden" werkelijk „iets inlandsch" zouden zijn, om ze voorgoed te rangschikken in de kategorie der staatsbedienden. Op die wijze zouden zij onder de geschreven wet kunnen vallen en tot monogamie kunnen verplicht worden, waar nu nog ongeveer alle „inlandsche hoofden" juist de groote instandhouders en bevorderaars zijn van de veelwijverij. Hadde men daar van in het begin de hand aan gehouden, dan zou de polygamie, in plaats van zich uit te breiden, zoo goed als verdwenen zijn uit de inlandsche samenleving.

5. Splitsing van den klan

Na al wat vooraf werd gezegd, moet het vrij duidelijk schijnen, hoe een autonome klan zich kan splitsen en aldus twee autonome klans vormen.

Wanneer een klan te uitgebreid geworden is, gebeurt het, dat de leden ervan de grenzen der bloedverwantschap overschrijden en dat er fouten voorkomen tegen de exogamie. Wanneer dergelijke fouten zich vermenigvuldigen, wordt er van lieverlede op verdere scheiding aangestuurd, die de huwelijken zal mogelijk maken. Zulke toestand tusschen twee deelen van eenzelfden klan, die naar „juridische autonomie" streven, noemt men *lonkosa*, naam die aanduidt, dat er nog-ongeoorloofde betrekkingen bestaan tusschen beide. Men vindt ze gewoonlijk tusschen ledengroepen, die wel denzelfden voorvader, maar niet dezelfde „voormoeder" hebben, die dus voortkomen van verschillende vrouwen van denzelfden stichter.

Een andere oorzaak van splitsing ligt in de vrijwillige of verplichte verwijdering van een der leden. Wanneer deze zich in den vreemde vestigt en daar een flinke nakomelingschap verwekt en eigen patrimonium verkrijgt, worden de betrekkingen met den eigen klan schaarscher, de afgescheiden fractie komt er langzamerhand toe kleinere rechtszaken zelf op te lossen, een eigen kerkhof te onderhouden, de navels harer kinderen op eigen woongrond te begraven, een eigen naam aan te nemen en zich op een eigen stichter te beroepen.

Vaak vindt men ook aan den oorsprong dezer verwijdering, de weigering van een zekere fractie van den klan om zich te onderwerpen aan het gezag van de klanleden.

6. Juridische onderhoorigen

Tot hier toe hebben wij enkel van den ethnischen klan gesproken : van de leden, die er door hun afstamming toe behooren. Zij alleen zijn dragers van het gezag (*mpifo*). Elke klan kan echter ook andere personen opnemen, die buiten de rangorde van het gezag vallen maar juridisch tot den klan behooren. Samen met de echte afstammelingen vormen zij den juridischen klan.

Het zijn in de eerste plaats de ingetrouwde vrouwen met de door haar meegebrachte kinderen (*mbusola*) en de wettige huishoudsters. Verder de opgenomen kliënten, dan de krijgsgevangenen en slaven, en ten slotte de Pygmoïden. De ingetrouwde vrouwen staan natuurlijk geheel apart ; ook de Pygmoïden, die een heel afzonderlijke huishouding vormen. De anderen worden van lieverlede als kinderen behandeld, krijgen hun deel in de algemeene verantwoordelijkheid en bescherming, hun plaats in de rechtszitting enz. Naarmate zij zich in den schoot van den opnemenden klan ontwikkelen, kunnen zij er een afzonderlijke groep in uitmaken, die meer en meer zelfstandig komt te staan.

7. De moedersklan

Elke Nkundo heeft een dubbel „vaderland" : zijn *wise* en zijn *bonyango*. De *bonyango* is de vadersklan zijner moeder. Daar heeft moeder hem gebaard, daar wonen haar bloedverwanten, die hem met moederlijke liefde ontvangen en zullen beschermen tegen alle moeilijkheden ; daar heeft hij dikwijls een groot deel zijner gelukkigste jeugdjaren doorgebracht ; daar kan hij steeds een veilig onderkomen vinden, wanneer vadersklan hem, om een of andere reden zal ontvallen.

De structuur van den moedersklan is natuurlijk in alles aan die van den vadersklan gelijk. Als wij er hier speciaal over handelen, dan is het dus niet om er den vorm van te bespreken, maar enkel om de specifieke rechten, die elk mensch in zijn moedersklan heeft, aan te duiden.

Zooals alle broers en zusters van vader mijn „vaders" zijn, zoo ook zijn alle broers en zusters van moeder mijn „moeders". Moeders broer, mijn moederlijke oom dus, heet ik *ngompame*, *nyangompame*. Alle neven en nichten van moederszijde zijn mijn „kinderen". Een bijzondere band bindt mij dan nog aan de kinderen van de abits mijner moeder, d. w. z. aan de kinderen der vrouw, die in moedersklan werd aangeschaft door middel van den bruidschat, die door mijn *wise* voor moeder werd gestort. Moeder is immers de *Nkolo*, de Vrouwe of Meesteres dier kinderen, die mij hun vader noemen.

Zoolang ik in mijn eigen vadersklan blijf wonen, heb ik recht op bijzondere zorg en liefde van moedersklan. Kan ik thuis geen voldoenden bruidschat vinden, dan mag ik altijd bij mijn moederlijke oomen gaan aankloppen, die verplicht zijn mij in de mate van het mogelijke te helpen. Zelfs heb ik recht op den vrijen bruidschat van een der kinderen van moeders *nkita*. Steeds mag ik tuinen aanleggen en jagen op het grondgebied van mijn *bonyango*, en zetelen in de rechtszittingen van moedersklan, waar het gaat over de bestemming der vrije bruidswaarden of over de erfenis-verdeeling. Wil ik echter mijn vadersklan verlaten en mij voorgoed in moedersklan vestigen, dan krijg ik in alles den voorrang op mijn neven en nichten en word erfgenaam en klanleider onmiddellijk na mijn moederlijke oomen. Een waarlijk prinselijke vergoeding dus voor de zoogenaamde achteruitstelling der vrouw in de inlandsche samenleving : het kind der zuster (*bonankana*) herstelt haar glansrijk in eer en rang, die haar toekomen.

8. Aanverwante klan : likilo

Ook buiten mijn vadersklan en buiten mijn moedersklan heb ik nog bloedverwanten : de kinderen nl. van mijn vaderlijke tante en van mijn zusters of nichten, die elk tot den klan van hun eigen vader behooren. Zooals de kinderen van moeders broers mijn kinderen zijn, zoo zijn de kinderen van vaders zuster mijn vaders : ik sta immers in dezelfde verhouding tot de kinderen van moeders broer, als de kinderen van vaders zuster tot mij.

Wat de kinderen mijner zuster betreft, die zijn dus ook mijn echte *banankana*, en dus de vaders mijner eigen kinderen.

De andere leden der aanverwante klans (die dus *géén* bloedverwanten zijn) deelen alle, volgens generatie, in den rang der onmiddellijk-aanverwanten : alle „vaders" van echtgenoot zijn „schoonvaders", alle moeders „schoonmoeders", *enz.* Met dit enkele groote onderscheid, dat de „hoogergeplaatsten" van echtgenoot ook uw „meerderen" zijn. In de opvatting der Nkundo zijn zij alleen de echte aanverwanten. Die van den manskant worden *bokilo* genoemd, die van den vrouwkant *bokanga*.

De „ondergeschikten" van echtgenoot zijn geen echte aanverwanten en heeten elkander terecht „man" en „vrouw". In verschillende, juridisch-bepaalde omstandigheden zijn huwelijksbetrekkingen en huwelijken tusschen deze laatsten geoorloofd.

Onnoodig te herhalen, dat alle leden van de wederzijdsche klans deelen in die verhoudingen : de gansche generatie van een klanlid wordt als het ware met dat lid vereenzelvigd, zoodat bijv. alle jongere zusters en nichten van den eenen echtgenoot „vrouwen" worden van alle jongere broers en neven van den anderen echtgenoot. Men moet werkelijk den juridischen zin, het geduld en het palabreerend ontwarringsbeleid hebben van een ouden Nkundo om uit al die verhoudingen wijs te worden. Zij zelf vergelijken die trouwens aan het onontwarbare kluwen der ingewanden van een soort dwergkroko : *besofo bya lokekele.*

9. Exogamie

De benaming „exogamische klan", die men dikwijls hoort of in geschriften aantreft, is dan ook, ten minste in de Nkundo-Mongo-maatschappij, zeer misleidend. De groep personen, met wie het huwelijk verboden is, maakt geen aaneengesloten geheel uit, het verschilt van persoon tot persoon. Twee halfbroers kunnen denzelfden vadersklan hebben, maar van moedersklan verschillen; zij kunnen één moedersklan hebben en verschillende vadersklans. Voor oudere broers of zusters zijn huwelijken verboden, die voor jongere geoorloofd zijn. De regels verschillen van bloedverwanten tot bloedverwanten, van bloedverwanten met aanverwanten tot bloedverwanten met aanverwanten, van aanverwanten met aanverwanten tot aanverwanten met aanverwanten.

Wil men toch die wet der exogamie in Europeesche termen gieten, dan zou men kunnen zeggen : 1. bloedverwantschap legt huwelijksverbod op zoover de bloedverwantschap erkend wordt. Die erkenning verschilt van klangroep tot klangroep. Soms wordt in éénzelfden juridischen maar uitgebreiden klan reeds inbreuk gemaakt op die erkenning; meestal echter zijn nog verschillende autonome klans, die van eenzelfden verwijderden voorouder afstammen, nog door de wet der exogamie gebonden. Veelal gaan groepen, die denzelfden vader hebben maar van moeder verschillen, het rapst uit elkaar. 2. Aanverwantschap verbiedt het huwelijk zoover de aanverwantschap erkend wordt met ouderen van echtgenooten; zij laat soms het huwelijk toe tusschen jongeren van echtgenooten.

Hierbij zij echter nogmaals aangemerkt, dat de gewoonten van streek tot streek verschillen wat die erkenning betreft, dat bijv. de stiefzoon in vele streken de stiefmoeder kan ten erfhuwelijk bekomen en dat de overtredingen minder streng beoordeeld en gestraft worden naarmate de verboden verhoudingen verder uiteengeloopen zijn.

10. Slotwoord

De Nkundo-maatschappij was een volop-levende organische gemeenschap. Alle organen ervan werkten en wisten zich voortdurend opnieuw aan het groeiende leven aan te passen. Ethnisch, sociaal-juridisch en politiek stond zij open voor elken vooruitgang. De organen, waaruit zij opgebouwd was, stonden het dichtst bij het natuurrecht en haalden daaruit hun rechten en plichten, ook den geest, die ze bezielde.

Dat die maatschappij leefbaar was, bewezen de feiten. Aan de bronnen van de Lomako is zij ontstaan; op korten tijd had zij zich vreedzaam uitgebreid over het heele centrale gebied van Kongo; zij drong oostwaarts over de Lomami en Lualaba, en ten Zuiden over de Kasayi-Sankuru, om bij de komst der Blanken ongeveer een vijfde van het huidige Kongo te bezetten.

Die maatschappij stond open voor alle gezonde invloeden en kon zich aanpassen aan alle redelijke eischen der beschaving. Zij was echter niet overeen te brengen met wat er in onze Europeesche opvattingen over vooruitgang en beschaving juist verkeerd is: uitschakeling van alle ethnische tusschenorganen, gelijkschakeling van alle individuen, vermaterialiseering van alle leven op een ekonomischen concurrentiestrijd, slafelijke onderwerping aan den onpersoonlijken, onvaderlijken Staat, met dien vreeselijken schijn van vrijheid alles te mogen doen wat niet door den Staat is verboden.

Die plotseling verkregen vrijheid, die de afschaffing meebracht van alle vroegere voegsels der maatschappij, is de dood der Nkundo-gemeenschap, niet alleen in haar ziel, haar wezenheid, maar ook in haar bestaan. De geleidelijke ontvolking, de uitsterving van Midden-Kongo heeft zelfs in regeeringskringen nu en dan weerklank gevonden, „De Nkundo-Mongo-bevolking sterft weg als sneeuw voor de zon" is de korte inhoud van het laatste officieel verslag. De Waola van tusschen Ruki en Ikelemba hadden in 1939 negentig overlijdens en drie geboorten. De officieele statistieken 1939 van het territorium van Coquilhatstad geven, tegen honderd volwassenen, 24 kinderen. De officieele gegevens van hetzelfde jaar voor het Vikariaat van Coquilhatstad met zijn 382.736 inwoners, geven een verhouding van 415 kinderen tegenover 1000 volwassenen. Blijkens die gegevens zal de heele bevolking bij de volgende generatie met meer dan 50 % verminderd zijn, dus op meer dan de helft geslonken.

Coquilhatstad 1939.

000

The Economic Life of the Mongo Negro
[Het Economisch Leven van den Mongo-neger]

Th. Gutersohn

Congo, vol. I, i, pp. 92-105

Brussels, 1920

Translated from the Flemish by Richard Neuse

Human Relations Area Files

1959

[title page]

[92] THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE MONGO NEGRO

INDUSTRY

241 One might say that nature throws into the lap of the Mongo
461 Negro everything he needs in order to exist so that he does not have
181 to exert himself in the slightest to get it. Generally speaking, he has only to look for his food in the forest, to pick it up from the ground as it were, with the exception of his bananas, manioc roots, and moma (a yam that, if it is prepared well, reminds one of potatoes) which are cultivated by his women. Hence, it is quite natural that one finds little industry among the Mongo, and that the Mongo Negro is not prepared to put the least effort into developing or perfecting in any way that centuries-old industry which already exists.

461 He can eat, and that is the main thing as far as he is concerned.

181 A lazy, inert people, effeminate to the core, each one merely living on the efforts of his many wives and female slaves, cannot have a highly developed industry.

In general, except for hunting which is undertaken primarily by the young men of the village, the Mongo Negro does not bother about anything. Eating, sleeping, looking for and listening to quarrels, carousing at gatherings with sugar-cane beer until they are picked up in a drunken state by their wives (a spectacle one also sees in civilized Europe), this is the dreary, monotonous, drowsy life of the Mongo Negro, one of the least culturally developed but at the same time one of the most highly interesting tribes of the Evenaar district if not of the whole Congo.

He loathes and despises work and is indolence personified.

461 Notwithstanding the extreme idleness of the Mongo [93] people,
462 they do have some of the industry that is necessary for their existence. However, it is on a low level and not widespread. In general, the existing industries are carried on by either the men or the women, and a man will never undertake a job belonging to the women, and vice versa. The work is not done in groups or in family units; where a branch of an industry exists, it is the concern of a single person unless more workers are necessary in order to carry out the work.

463 [177] Division of labor is unknown, and each person works entirely on his own, without the help of a middleman. There are no laborers and certainly no artisans unless there happens to be some artisan or other who learned his trade under the government or at one or other of the Mission posts and has returned to his village after having completed his contract.

As a rule, such people do not find sufficient work in their own villages, and, as they are usually in possession of a few boxes, clothes, and pots and pans which they have acquired with the savings of their monthly salary, they play the grand gentleman in their village until their goods and chattels have been used up and worn out.

"Njolemwa Bosala," he says, "I am tired of work." "Njowa l'ompele," "I am dying of the heavy, difficult work."

Several of ~~them~~ there return to one or the other of the centers of the White settlers and again offer themselves as craftsmen.

554 A good craftsman has a high reputation among the natives, and his social position is even a very good one for a Negro. He is able regularly to supply food for his wife and children and also to get himself clothes.

326 Although most Negroes work individually, this is not true of the smith who has to have helpers in order to do his job.

465 436 Since the Mongo Negro knows nothing of wages, his helpers get part of the income, consisting of mitako [a kind of metal currency] or some part of the work that has been done, either a knife or a lance, or a foot or arm ring.

I. THE SMITH'S TRADE.

326 554 Of the various industrial trades, that of the smith is certainly the first in rank. The smith is one of the leading people [94] in the village and one of the inevitable persons to have a decisive voice in village affairs whether in settling differences or in meetings.

In fact, the smith is the only one of the Mongo Negroes who works regularly and does not rest on his oars. From what he earns he is able to buy quite a number of wives, and he is regarded as one of the village heads whose wishes must be consulted.

326 521 571 Whereas with us the village inn is the place where the affairs of the week are noisily debated, it is at the smithy where the Mongo Negroes congregate. There the elders gather -- the younger men have no voice here; there the various differences about (or among) wives and the impending taxes are discussed; amidst the billows of smoke -- drawn with deep puffs out of their huge bamboo pipes -- the smith is the only one who works on and earns his living nobly.

326 428 The smith is the most judicious craftsman among the Mongo Negroes.

His trade is practically the only one which is a family affair and is passed on from father to son. If a smith does not have any children, the business is taken over by his younger brother.

This right of inheritance is by no means general in the other trades; the trade of the smith is inherited while the others are taken up by any Tom, Dick, or Harry who happens to have a liking for them.

325 348 The smithy where the smith plies his trade is a wide oblong dark hut (about five meters by ten meters) built alongside the public highway. In contrast with the other dwellings of the Negroes, the floors of which are generally built about 20 centimeters above the road, the floor of the smithy is dug out from 30 to 70 centimeters below the level of the road so that one goes down a step from the road into the smithy.

The reason why the floor of the smithy should be dug out in this way is not quite clear to me, but most probably it is to prevent the danger of fire when the storm winds that accompany the heavy tropical rains sweep through the huts. By digging out the floor in this way, an earthen enclosure about half a meter high is formed around the smithy, and this protects the smith from the wind and enables him to continue quietly at work.

325 In spite of the primitiveness of his tools [95] and the primitive manipulation of them, the smith knows how to get what he needs from his implements. The forge (lotulu) is constructed as follows: a block of wood is cut about 60 centimeters long, 40 centimeters wide, and 30 centimeters high, with a hollow pipe, half a meter long, connected to it. This is all formed of one piece. With the aid of a banana stalk, on which the clay is moulded, a smith's pipe is formed. The banana stalk is removed from the clay, and the hollow pipe (boongo) remains. Two, sometimes four, bellows (njasa) are placed on the

325 wooden block. These bellows have the openings covered with the dried hide of some wild animal to which piston rods (biongonga) have been attached. The "biongonga" are pushed up and down in quick tempo by two men to make the draft that fans the little charcoal fire.

In front of the "boongo" the smith (botuli) has dug a kind of trench in which the little charcoal fire is laid. In this fire the iron ore, European iron, and copper sticks (njele-mitakos) are smelted.

Botuli atula la lotulo: "The smith forges with the forge."

325 439 In former times when it was not possible for the Mongo to get European iron, iron ore (bikense bia bokili) was dug out of the forest and heated to melting point in the smithy. Impurities which came to the top were skimmed off, and in this manner the Mongo Negro got his iron. Today, now that the Negro can get his iron so easily from the various trading-posts, he prefers to work with European iron. The imported iron makes a better product, and the Negro no longer has to take the trouble of going to look for his ore. Indeed, the Mongo smith would no longer be able to dispose of lances made of native iron ore because the imported iron is so much better.

325 The implements the smith uses are as follows.

1. Boengwa: the small pounding iron.
2. Loaka: the large pounding iron.
3. Etulaka: the sledgehammer.
4. Eala: the anvil.
5. Lingwata: a hammer which is very much like a European hammer and serves the same purpose.
6. Kongwa: a split stick used to get the hot iron out of the fire and to hold it tightly during the forging.

An iron [96] ring or a piece of liana is placed around the split stick and pushed down to hold the hot object as tightly as possible while it is being forged.

7. Loseno: chisel.
8. Losio: small chisel fastened on a stick, with which the decorations on knives, lances, and rings are carved.
9. Jyoka: the implement chest, a nicely finished box with a lid and a European lock.

000 The objects of iron made by the Mongo smith are as follows.

326 The objects of iron made by the Mongo smith are as follows.
411

Bibui: all that is of iron

1. Likula: arrow.
2. Bosuki: arrow for hunting pigs; also used to cut copal and spear fish.
3. Bongelo: lance.
4. Ifombolo: lance.
5. Mpokwankoi: lance.
6. Liswa: axe.

Jokula: knives

326
412 1. Mombi; 2. Boli; 3. Bolengwa; 4. Lingonda; 5. Limenga;
6. Likodzi; 7. Efamba; 8. Momba; 9. More little knives;
10. Lizangi.

Basongo: needles

1. Ingwala.
2. Lokili: tattooing needle. [413]
3. Jyolo: small needle to get flea beetles out of the feet.
4. Efoli: small pin.

Ngonga: bells

326
534
306
[789]

1. Ngonga ea tosisi: bells worn on the hips by women and children so that as they walk the ringing will keep away the evil spirits.
2. Bongonga: a bell attached to the point of a war-lance which makes it like the head of a walking-stick but upside down.
3. Lingwete: little round bell worn on the wrist by men.
4. Elondza ea itumba: the war-bell. An oblong pipe [97] in the form of a long cup attached to a stick. It is struck with a piece of soft wood, and the sound travels surprisingly far.

These bells are all made of wrought iron.

326 The native smith works not only with iron but also with copper which he melts down in the same manner from copper sticks (longele: mitako) and old, worn copper rings.

[439, 435] The copper sticks, that nowadays sell at 30 for a franc, come from Europe; copper ore is unknown here.

The copper objects made by the smith are as follows.

326 301 Bakonga: all that is of copper

1. Bongombwa: necklace, often weighing ten kilograms or more; value, 1,000 mitako.
2. Lokolo: leg ring, weighing four to six kilograms and more; value, 200 to 500 mitako.
3. Bolongu: arm ring, not heavy.
4. Ingwete: arm ring, not heavy.
5. Bongenza: leg ring that rattles when the wearer walks.
6. Bosankere: leg ring.
7. Limpala: great leg rings in spiral form, twisted out of thick copper wire, which cover the whole of the lower leg. They

[435] bear much resemblance to the springs in a mattress. Among the Negroes these have a value of 500 mitako.

8. Bompulenge: resembling a small limpala, these were formerly worn on the arms by old people, but they are now out of fashion and no longer made.

326 554 In the whole district there is only one smith, a certain Elumbu in the village Lilangi (Basankusu), who knows how to make copper bells.

This Black is a celebrity to every Mongo Negro.

According to the Negroes, there is a smith, a certain Bokedzu from the vicinity of the Ikelemba River, who knew how to put a new rifle together from the parts of old broken ones and did so successfully. According to the Negroes, the government agent, however, took the rifle away from him, but in my opinion, and in that of others, this black [577] rifle manufacturer belongs in the realm of fable, the more so as a Negro is not at all afraid of a lie.

[98]

II CARPENTRY.

335 Carpentry plays an important part in the life of the Mongo Negro. The primitive utensils in his house as well as his canoe and his lokole (the Negro telephone with which he spreads his thoughts from village to village) are made of wood.

The making of the canoe and the lokole takes a great deal of work.

The Canoe.

313 396 The following three kinds of wood, namely, (1) Bokeswa, (2) Lifake, (3) Bomposo, make a good canoe, especially Bokeswa. This tree is much sought after because its wood makes a strong, light canoe.

The Negro who wants a canoe goes into the forest, picks out a nice slender tree, brings out his axe, and fells at his leisure the tree he has chosen. He hacks off the unnecessary branches and hollows the tree out in the rough form of the canoe. (Aulema watu: he shapes the canoe.)

[474] He calls some of his friends together, and they proceed, for payment, of course (nothing for nothing, says the Negro), to hollow out the tree.

396 When they have finished hollowing out the tree, the owner of the canoe calls the wongiwa biatu, the proper canoe maker, a heavy man and one of some account among his fellow villagers. This wongiwa biatu gives a nice, slender form to the canoe with his axe, planes it off nicely, and with the help of the esuwa, a small axe, marks off the edge of the canoe with sharp, short, regular grooves.

483 476 Often the Negroes make their canoes hours away from the nearest water. In order to transport it, they place sticks on the ground and draw the canoe over them. In addition to a number of strong men, all the spes patriae [hope of the fatherland] of the village help with this task. They get a mitako as a reward and feel themselves on top of the world.

396 476 The canoe maker is well paid, the price reckoned according to the size of the canoe. Several dogs are slaughtered at the expense of

376 the owner, and everyone who has helped gets his share according to
476 the amount of work he has done. [99] Frequently a big sugar-cane
[273] beer spree is started, where disgusting scenes often take place until finally the drunken men are taken home by their wives. In civilized Europe it is sometimes not much better.

501 Boats are made just large enough for two men, as well as others sufficient for a hundred or even a hundred and fifty men. The big war canoes of the great chief Evoloko of Waka and of the former chief of Bandaka, a certain Isempoko, are known throughout the region. The war canoe of the latter was said to hold a hundred and fifty men, and the edge of this canoe to reach up to the shoulders of a fairly tall Negro. The ordinary canoe in which Whites travel is, as a rule, sufficiently large for twenty to thirty oarsmen.

435 The prices of canoes vary, according to size and strength, from 200 to 10,000 *mitako*.

The *Lokole*

202 The *lokole* plays a very large part in the life of the Negro. Without the *lokole*, the life of the Negro would be inconceivable.

The *lokole* can be best described as the public telephone with which the Negro makes his thoughts known publicly from village to village.

The *lokole* is to the Negro what the trumpet signal is to the soldier.

The *lokole* calls the men to meetings, to war, and to the hunt; the *lokole* calls all the people, great and small, to the dance. During the dance it is the loyal accompanist until deep in the night; its monotonous sound brings the enthusiasm of the dancers almost to the point of frenzy.

The Negro telephones his friends at great distances and explains what he wants. If two Negroes from the same village or from different villages have a quarrel, they abuse each other over the *lokole*, and the whole world is kept fully up-to-date on the details of the dispute. Each one tries to blacken the reputation of the other in the eyes of the other villagers. If someone dies in the village, it is proclaimed everywhere the whole night through, by means of the *lokole*, that

202 so-and-so has died. Hours before his actual death, people everywhere know that a certain person is on his deathbed and that his death is imminent.

[100] If the witch doctor is up to his tricks of duping the silly Negro, people everywhere around know just what nonsense he is performing at what moment.

The White announces his morning and midday orders by means of the *lokole* and tells his workers when they may cease work for the day by the same means.

In the mornings and evenings and in the case of wet weather, the *lokole* carries especially far, but in the full sun it is not so effective.

242 534 The *lokole* is a large block of wood which is split down the middle for almost the whole of its length, and the inside part is carefully hollowed out. The *lokole* has the shape of an extra long, open mussel shell although, in general, the outside edges are flattened out.

322 The making of *lokole* is the trade of a certain person, and some Negroes are well-known for the *lokole* they have made.

Only four kinds of wood are suitable for the making of a *lokole*. [illegible] These are (1) *Bokungu*; (2) *Likoso*; (3) *Bolondo*; and (4) *Isi*. The last is the most excellent kind of wood and the one used by the Mongo [illegible] Negro to manufacture his "*ngula*" (red dye) with which he smears his body for even the least important event that occurs in his village. The *Isi* is probably a species of redwood. The Mongo Negro makes 322 534 five different *lokole*: (1) *Ingonga*, small in shape; (2) *lokole ja losali*, medium size; (3) *bongungu*, large *lokole*. These three are all like the one described above. They are struck with sticks (*bosolu*) from the "*momambo*" tree (umbrella tree). (4) *Bonkuka* is the large, high *lokole* that is struck with two sticks to the ends of which are attached several balls of caoutchouc. The sound of these *lokole* carries for the greatest distance. (5) *Ngomo* is the large, oblong, upright dance *lokole*. This *lokole* is simply a large, oblong piece of wood, completely hollowed out, decorated a little, about 1.25 meters high, and covered at the top with a piece of dried antelope or leopard skin. It is struck with the fingers and the palm of the hand. This *lokole* is the well-known tom-tom, still used by the Negroes on the steamboats to announce their arrival in the villages along the river.

202 178 And now something about *lokole* language.

The beat of the *lokole* varies, and it is by this means that the Negroes [101] understand the different words. The tempo varies also,

202 198 The White hears only the difference in tempo, nothing more. The Negro miles away understands what is being telephoned.

The lokole language consists chiefly of metaphors and is thus not intelligible to any White in the whole of the Congo. The Negroes are proud of their invention and also pleased that the White, who otherwise can do everything, is not able to understand their lokole.

Every man has his own name (nkombo) on the lokole with which he makes himself known. Because such a name often covers several lines of script, chiefly expressed in metaphors giving facts of the public life of the Negro concerned, it would be a physical impossibility for a White to master the lokole language in the way a Negro does. Actually, not even all Negroes understand the art of beating the lokole.

The women have a general name; beating the lokole is only for [462] the men, and no woman understands the art. The women understand what is being broadcast when the lokole is beaten, but they cannot beat it themselves. Moreover, they would be ashamed to attempt it; this is no task for a woman, and they would be laughed at. The lokole name, or nkombo, of the woman is as follows:

Bali la tolombo basalaki lisala, basalaki tomboloko, tond' al' isusu, befambe eka lisala.

"Women in numbers, worked the garden, prepared much to eat, consisting of bananas, to eat out of the garden."

A White, personally, has no nkombo of his own on the lokole, but to announce the arrival of a White in a village, the following is spread around far and wide:

Lolema ja lifeka feka, esongo etenaka nkola.

"The bat flies about everywhere, the pin wounds the nails of the feet."

With "the bat flies about everywhere" is to be understood the government agent who goes from village to village collecting the taxes. "The pin wounds the nails of the feet" means that, just as [726] the Negroes go on the warpath with sharp pointed sticks dipped in poison to wound the enemies' feet, the government agent is always on his rounds with his rifle, ready for the fray.

The nkombo of the Catholic missionary is as follows: [102]

(1) Bansele mele ba nkanga; (2) bofala boki ndaki lisako nda lokombo; (3) etafe bolo; (4) benanga bekendaka la mpera.

202 198 Bamsele msele ba [illegible]nga. "The one always screaming who is followed into the high gr[illegible], the strong branch, the districts go along with the priest (Father).

1. The missionary is seen here as a witch doctor (bamsele msele ba nkanga is a general lokole name for the Negro witch doctor), who, like the Negro doctor, is looked upon as a doctor and a priest.

2. Bofala boki ndaki lisako nda lokombe [sic]. The priest, because he is always seeking converts everywhere, is here compared with an antelope which, when it is followed, runs around and around in the high grass.

3. Etafe bolo. The missionary is here compared with a strong branch. He is strong because he is influential and highly regarded by the Negroes.

4. Benanga bekendaka la mpera. The districts all go along with the Father (priest). They all follow his instructions.

The nkombo of the Protestant Anglican missionary is as follows: Bofanga sembola bonanga boso nkenda l'Inglese.

"The fishing net is spread out; the country goes along with the Englishman."

In the same way as the fishing net cordons off a part of the river and everything is caught in it, so all the people go along with the Englishman. The Protestant Anglican missionary was in this district [147] before the arrival of the Catholic missionary, so this nkombo refers, of course, to this period. Since the arrival of the Catholic missionary, the situation has changed completely in this district.

These few examples give an indication of the difficulty in understanding the lokole language.

352 322 In addition, the Negro makes a few chairs, the most important of which is the lyeko la mpaka, the chair for the elder, a three-legged affair with two props under it, topped with a piece out of the umbrella tree; into this the elder can throw himself as lazily as he wishes.

Then there is the so-called ebonga, a little stool chopped out of a block of wood with the native axe. This is finished off attractively with an esumwa, a small paring chisel, and the seat is decorated around the edge with studs which have been bought in some factory or other.

352
322 [103] Occasionally one sees a native stool, made as described above, but with a kind of back rest chopped out of one piece.

342
177 The Negro who wishes to move with the times makes for his house a chair out of bamboo in the European style: some sticks stuck in the ground, a mat of split bamboo laid over them, and the gentleman can spend his days in dolce far niente [pleasant idleness].

352
322 A table made in the same way (otherwise unknown to the Negro) completes the furnishing of his hut.

One does not need to be an expert, either, in order to be able to make a Negro bed. Some straight sticks are chopped out of the mombambo (umbrella tree). These are placed lengthwise and then across, on top of each other, trimmed a bit at the edges so that the whole thing fits more or less, and it is then bound together with some split lianas. In this way the Negro has made a bed; this favorite piece of furniture is finished for a sale price of 5 to 10 mitako. [435]

[438] The making of beds could be classed among the Mongo trades. I once saw, in the interior, ten of these beds, large and small spread out along the side of the road for sale.

I was assured that the owner of the beds was the very best bedmaker of the village. Of course, I raised my hat to such an important personage.

The ekoba, the bed stool, is also indispensable. These ekoba take the place of our pillows and are made of one piece, formed to the shape of the head. It is a somewhat hard pillow, but the Negro head is hard and can put up with it; the fellow sleeps without having to be rocked.

322
252 To prepare his food he needs some mortars and pestles, and these are made of wood. He uses hardwood for these utensils so that the mortars do not wear away from the constant pounding.

322
534 In addition, the Negro makes his oars, his bow and arrows for the hunt, and the lokombi. The lokombi is a flat, oblong, hollowed block of wood over which some pegs are stretched [sic]. He plucks these with his fingers, thus producing a monotonous sound. This so-called musical instrument is the constant companion of the young man and accompanies him on his long treks through the Evenaar forest and on his visits to friends and acquaintances.

[104]

III. WEAVING

286 The craft of the Mongo weaver is an honorable one and one that calls for much labor and attentiveness.

[177] Weaving is no longer as much in vogue as it was in earlier times, because the younger people buy European materials. However, the weaver is still able to earn his daily bread comfortably, because [541] the old people are too pagan to give up their old ingrained habit of wearing a loin cloth.

[462] Weaving is a craft carried on by men only. Some are very skillful in the weaving of materials and command our admiration. Pieces of really beautiful workmanship were offered to us for sale; I had myself seen them being woven.

286 314 The weaver takes his knife, goes into the forest, and cuts the "mpekwa ia lifeke," the fibers of a certain kind of palm tree which he also sometimes plants on the open highway near his hut. As soon as he has sufficient fibers for the weaving he has in mind, he goes home and at his leisure scrapes the fibers with his knife until they are all of the same thickness.

286 After that he leaves them in the sun to dry. When they have dried sufficiently, he puts up in his hut or on the open highway the frame on which the fibers are to be hung.

After he has attached the fibers to the top cross-bar (they are bound between the top and bottom cross-bars), he holds down the bottom cross-bar with his foot and goes to work.

Often he uses fibers of different colors, and this gives a lovely effect to the piece of material.

Bofomi afom'eto, "the weaver is weaving material."

386 314 *The weaver has a very simple way of giving the fibers their* different colors.

From the forest he fetches a liana (longoli) which contains the red, white, or black coloring agent, cuts it in pieces, puts them in a banana leaf which has been quickly scorched in the fire, adds some water and hangs all this, with the fibers, in a bag of banana leaves above the fire. When the dye has soaked thoroughly into the fibers, he has his colored fibers all ready [105] for the material he is about to weave. This mixture is called "bosaka."

Rope-making

283 The Mongo rope-maker (one can hardly call him a professional rope-maker) goes to the forest, fetches fibers from a certain kind of palm-tree, scrapes them nicely with his knife, and puts them in the sun to dry.

Whole coils of rope are made in this way. Native rope, finished in this manner, is of a good, strong quality. Nets for the hunt and also for fishing are made of it. As in the case of weaving, it is something done by the men only.

IV. BASKET AND MAT WEAVING

285 The weaving of baskets and mats is chiefly the work of the women,
462 especially the fine braidwork.

The men make only the large, roughly finished baskets needed for the transport of their copal. The braiding of mats is done only by the women.

285 From the forest they fetch the twigs of the Bolongoto tree,
381 scrape them nicely or dry them in the sun, and, sitting down, braid their baskets and mats.

They make different kinds of baskets, but the raw materials necessary for braiding are the bokombe or likombe of the Bolongoto tree.

285 One or two women together braid the mats on the flat ground. The names of the mats are as follows.

[435] 1. Efonzolo, the roughly finished mat (value, five mitakos).

2. Nkongole, the finely braided mat (value, half a franc).

3. Irundo or lofole, the little mat with which the dirt from the road and the ashes from the fire are carried away.

4. Ilefa, the little mat used to fan the fire.

A. Th. Gutersohn,
Priest of St. Joseph's Congregation,
(Mill-Hill).

4: Gutersohn FO32 Mongo

CONGO

REVUE GÉNÉRALE DE LA COLONIE BELGE

ALGEMEEN TIJDSCHRIFT DER BELGISCHE KOLONIE

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

(1920. Tome I et II)

ARTICLES DE FOND

Wahis (Lt général baron). La participation belge à la conquête du Cameroun et de l'Afrique Orientale allemande. . . Tome I, page 1.
L. Philippart. L'organisation sociale dans le Bas-Congo. I, 45, 221, 503. II, 20.
Edm. Leplae. La situation de l'agriculture au Congo Belge . . . . I, 67, 201, 481. II, 14, 305.
Th. Gutersohn. Het Economisch leven van den Mongo-Neger. . I, 97.
A. Verbeken. Le tambour téléphone chez les indigènes de l'Afrique centrale . . . . I, 213.
Léo Bittremieux. Mayombsche Sprookkelingen . . . . I, 265.
Van Leeuw. Les Chemins de fer du Congo . . . . I, 296.
Ed. De Jonghe. A propos des « Primitifs ». . . . . I, 314.
J. Sin. Inlandsch huwelijk bij de Bakongo, rond Boma . . . . I, 320.
Th. Simar. A propos de politique coloniale. . . . . I, 327.
E. De Wildeman. Le « Niando » succédané du chanvre au Congo Belge . . . . I, 334.
J. Maes. Le Ngula au Congo Belge . . . . I, 339.
de Briey (Comte R.). Musinga . . . . II, 1.
Th. Heyse. Les concessions de terres rurales au Congo Belge . II, 18.
Al. Janssens. Negerpoëzie. . . . . II, 61.
J. Pieraerts. Une acanthacée oléagineuse du Congo Belge. . II, 98.
F. Delhaye et *M. Sluys*. Les calcaires du Bas-Congo. . . . . II, 109.
E. Henry. L'agriculture au Congo . . . . II, 223.
J. Van Wing. Nzo Longo ou les rites de la puberté chez les Bakongo . . . . II, 229.
L. Bittremieux. Mayombsch Reisboek . . . . II, 247.
Rutten. Notes de démographie congolaise. . . . . II, 260.
E. Boglemans. Onderlinge hulp. . . . . II, 270.
Ed. De Jonghe. L'ethnologie, son objet, sa méthode . . . . . . II, 279.

[title page]

Het Economisch Leven van den Mongo-neger.

NIJVERHEID.

Vermits de natuur den Mongo-neger zijn benoodigdheden om te bestaan als het ware in zijn schoot werpt, zonder dat hij de minste moeite er voor doet, daar hij in hoofdzaak zijn voedsel slechts behoeft te zoeken in 't bosch en als 't ware op te rapen van den grond, met uitzondering van zijn bananen, maniokwortels en *moma* (een igname, die, goed bereid, aan aardappelen doet denken) die zijn vrouwen aanplanten, is het geheel natuurlijk dat men in den Mongo zeer weinig nijverheid vindt en de Mongo-neger zich de minste moeite niet getroost de reeds van eeuwen herwaarts bestaande nijverheid eenigzins te bevorderen en te vervolmaken

Hij heeft toch te bikken en dit is hoofdzaak voor hem.

Bij een lui, vadsig volk, verwijfd in merg en been, en slechts levend van het werk zijner veelvuldige vrouwen en slavinnen kan de nijverheid niet op hoog peil staan.

Over 't algemeen genomen met uitzondering van de jacht, die nog hoofdzakelijk gedreven wordt door de jonge mannen van het *dorp*, bekommert de Mongo-neger zich om niets. Eten, slapen en geschillen zoeken en aanhooren, op suikerrietbiervergaderingen medefuiven, totdat ze door moeder de vrouw worden meegepakt in beschonken toestand (tooneelen, die men in beschaafd Europa ook wel ziet) ziehier het saaie, eentonige, verslappende leven van den Mongo-neger, één der laagst staande, doch tevens één der hoogst belanginboezemende stammen van het Evenaardistrict, zoo niet van gansch Kongo-land.

Van werken walgt hij, daar heeft hij minstens een dozijn broertjes aan dood; hij is de aartsluilak in persoon.

Niettegenstaande de verregaande vadsigheid van het Mongo-volk bestaat er toch nijverheid, noodig voor hun bestaan, ofschoon op laag peil en weinig verspreid. Over 't algemeen beperkt de bestaande nijverheid zich tot 't mannelijke of 't vrouwelijk geslacht en een man zal nooit 't ambt, eigen aan de vrouwen ter hand nemen en omgekeerd. Het werk wordt niet gedaan bij groepen of per familie, doch waar een tak van nijverheid bestaat, is dit het werk van een enkel persoon tenzij meer werkkrachten noodzakelijk verlangd worden om het werk te kunnen uitvoeren.

Verdeeling van het werk is onbekend en een ieder werkt geheel op zich zelven, zonder de hulp van een tusschenpersoon. Werklui zijn niet bekend, laat staan handwerklieden, tenzij een of andere ambachtsman, die een ambacht leerde bij den *Staat* of op een of anderen Missiepost en terugkeerde naar zijn *dorp* na zijn contract afgedaan te hebben.

Als regel vinden deze in hun eigen dorpen geen voldoende werk en meestal in bezit zijnde van eenige kisten, kleêren en wat potten en pannen, overgehouden van hun maandelijksch salaris, spelen zij den grooten Mijnheer in hun *dorp*, totdat al hun hebben en houden opgeteerd en versleten is.

Njolemwa Bosala zegt hij, ik ben het werken zat. *Njowa l'ompele*, ik sterf van 't zware, moeilijke werk.

Verscheidenen gaan dan weer naar een of ander middenpunt van de blanken en bieden zich weder als ambachtslieden aan.

Een goed ambachtsman staat nog al hoog aangeschreven onder de inboorlingen en zijn sociale positie is voor een neger zelfs zeer goed te noemen. Hij kan zich geregeld het voedsel voor vrouw en kinderen aanschaffen en steekt zich in de kleêren.

Ofschoon de meeste negers individueel werken, kan *dit niet* gezegd worden van den *smid*, die andere werkkrachten ter hulp moet roepen om zijn werk te kunnen verrichten.

Wijl de Mongo-neger geen gedacht heeft van salaris, krijgen zijn medehelpers een deel der verdiensten, bestaande in mitakos, of een of ander gedeelte van het geleverde werk, hetzij een mes, lans of voet- of armring.

I. — 'T SMIDSVAK.

Van de verschillende takken van nijverheid staat zeker het smidsvak bovenaan. De smid is een der voornaamste personen van het dorp en met dorpsaangelegenheden, hetzij geschillen, vergaderingen, is hij een der aangewezen personen om zijn stem in de weegschaal te leggen.

De smid is feitelijk de eenigste onder de Mongo-negers, die geregeld door blijft werken en niet op zijn lauweren gaat rusten. Door zijn verdiensten heeft hij zich nog al wat vrouwen aan weten te koopen en wordt hij beschouwd als één der dorpshoofden, die men naar de oogen moet zien.

Wat bij ons de dorpsherberg is waar men de dorpsaangelegenheden van de week luidvoerig bespreekt, is de smidse bij den Mongo-neger. In de smidse verzamelen zich de ouderlingen, — de jongeren hebben niks in de melk te brokkelen; daar worden de veelvuldige vrouwengeschillen en de aanstaande belastingen besproken; onder 't zwelgen van de rook, — uit hun reusachtige bamboepijpen met diepe trekken getrokken, — is de smid de eenige, die doorwerkt en zijn kost op nobele wijze verdient.

De smid is de meest tactvolle ambachtsman onder de Mongo.

't Ambacht van den smid is ongeveer 't eenige ambacht dat eigen is aan de familie en van vader tot zoon wordt voortgezet. Laat de smid geen kinderen na, dan zal zijn jongere broeder de zaak overnemen.

Van andere ambachten kan dit erfrecht geenszins gezegd worden; 't ambacht van den smid is erfelijk, terwijl de andere ambachten onwillekeurig door Jan en alleman, die er zijn genoegen in vindt, worden opgenomen.

De smidse waarin de smid zijn ambacht uitoefent, is een breede langwerpige donkere hut, (ongeveer 5 m. bij 10 m.) gebouwd langs den openbaren weg. Ongelijk aan de overige woonhutten der negers, waarvan de vloer in den regel een 20 c. m. hooger ligt dan de weg, is de vloer van de smidse een 30, 70 c. m. diep uitgegraven, zoodat men van den weg in de smidse stapt.

Met welk gedachte de vloer der smidse is uitgegraven kan ik niet zeker zeggen, doch hoogstwaarschijnlijk om bij 't opkomen van stormwinden, die bij 't opzetten van een zware tropischen regen de hutten doorvagen, brandgevaar te voorkomen. Door 't uitgraven van den vloer ontstaat een 1/2 m. hooge omheining van aarde rondom de smidse, waardoor de smid buiten den wind zit en zoodoende rustig kan doorwerken.

Niettegenstaande de primitieve inrichting der werktuigen en de primitieve behandeling daarvan, weet de smid van zijn werktuigen toch gedaan te krijgen, hetwelk hij er van vereischt. De smidse (*lotulu*) is als volgt opgesteld : Een blok hout, terlengte van ongeveer een 60 cm.; 40 cm. breed; 30 cm. hoog, wordt uitgehakt; een 1/2 m. lange, holle buis is daaraan verbonden; dit alles is gevormd uit één stuk. Door middel van een banaanstronk, waarlangs klei is opgehoogd vormt men een smidbuis. De banaanstronk wordt uit de klei getrokken en de holle klei-buis (*boongo*) ontstaat. Op 't blok hout worden de twee, ook vier windzakken (*njasa*) geplaatst. Deze windzakken zijn de gaten overdekt met de gedroogde huid van een of ander wild beest, waarin de bedrijfstokken (*biongonga*) vastgebonden zijn. Deze « *biongonga* » worden door twee mannen op en neer gehaald in een vlug tempo; deze handeling veroorzaakt de wind en het vuurtje gemaakt van houtskool aan te wakkeren.

Voor de « *boongo* » heeft de smid (*bo'uli*) een soort loopgraaf gegraven, waar het aan te vlammen houtskoolvuurtje ligt. In dit vuurtje worden het ijzererts, Europeesch ijzer en de koperstaafjes (*njele-mitakos*) gesmolten.

Botuli atula la lotulo : De smidt smeedt met de smidse.

In vroeger tijden, toen men in de Mongo het Europeesch ijzer niet machtig kon worden werd het ijzererts (*bikense bia bokili*) uit 't boschopgegraven en in de smidse tot vloeistof verhit. De onreinheden die boven dreven werden er afgeschept en zoodoende verkreeg de Mongo-neger zijn ijzer. In tegenwoordige tijden, nu de neger zijn ijzer zoo gemakkelijk bij de verschillende factorijen kan verkrijgen, verkiest hij 't Europeesch ijzer te bewerken. 't Ingevoerde ijzer geeft betere waar en de neger behoeft geen moeite meer te doen zijn ijzererts te gaan zoeken. Trouwens zou de Mongo-smid lansen gemaakt van ijzererts niet meer kwijt raken, wijl het ingevoerde ijzer veel beter is.

De werktuigen van den smid zijn als volgt :

1. *Boengwa* : 't kleine stampijzer.
2. *Loaka* : 't groote stampijzer.
3. *Etaleka* : 't smeedijzer.
4. *Eele* : aambeeld.
5. *Lingwata* : een op een Europeeschen hamer gelijkende hamer, die voor 't zelfde doel dienst doet.
6. *Kongwa* : een gespleten stok om 't heete ijzer uit het vuur te halen en vast tehouden onder 't smeden. Een ijzeren

ringetje of een stukje liaan wordt om den gespleten stok gelegd en wordt bij het vasthouden van 't heete voorwerp dichtgeschoven, zoodat het te smeden voorwerp beter bevestigd zit.

7. *Loseno* : beitel.

8. *Losio* : kleine beitel bevestigd in een stok waarmede men de versieringen op messen, lansen en ringen kerft.

9. *Jyoka* : de gereedschapskist bestaande uit een mooi afgewerkt kistje met deksel, waarop een Europeesch slot.

De ijzeren voorwerpen door den Mongo-smid vervaardigd zijn als volgt :

Bibui : alles wat ijzer is.

1. *Likula* : pijl.

2. *Bosuki* : pijl voor de varkensjacht en die ook gebruikt wordt om de kopal te steken en visch te spiehten.

3. *Bongelo* : lans.

4. *Ifombolo* : lans.

5. *Mpokwankoi* : lans.

6. *Litwa* : bijl.

Jokula : messen.

1. *Mombi*; 2. *Boli*; 3. *Bolengwa*; 4. *Lingonda*; 5. *Limenga*; 6. *Likodẓi*; 7. *Efamba*; 8. *Momba*; 9. Verders kleine mesjes; 10. *Liẓangi*.

Basongo : steeknaalden.

1. *Ingwala*.

2. *Lokili* : naald om te tatoueeren.

3. *Jyolo* : kleine steeknaald om de aardvlooien uit de voeten te halen.

4. *Efoli* : kleine steeknaald.

Ngonga : bellen.

1. *Ngonga ea tosisi* : bellen gedragen door vrouwen en kinderen om de lendenen opdat hun geklingel, veroorzaakt met loopen, de slechte geesten weghoudt.

2. *Bongonga* : bel verbonden aan de punt van den strijdlans, gelijk de kop van een wandelstok, doch ten onderste boven.

3. *Lingwete* : rond belletje gedragen door de mannen aan den pols.

4. *Elondẓa ea itumba* : de strijdklok. Een langwerpige bois

in den vorm van een langen kelk vastgehecht aan een stok. Men slaat er met een zacht stuk hout tegen en 't geluid verspreidt zich verbazend ver.

Deze bellen zijn allen gemaakt van gesmeed ijzer.

De inlandsche smid bewerkt niet alleen het ijzer, doch ook het koper dat hij op dezelfde manier uit koperen staafjes (*longele* : mitako) en oude, versleten, koperen ringen samensmelt. De koperen staafjes hier een geldswaarde vertegenwoordigend van 30 voor een frank zijn van Europa afkomstig en kopererts is hier onbekend.

De koperen voorwerpen door den smid vervaardigd zijn als volgt :

Bakonga : alles wat koper is.

1. *Bongombwa* : nekring, dikwijls ter zwaarte van 10 kilogram en daarboven. Waarde 1,000 mitakos.
2. *Lokolo* : beenring, zwaarte 4-6 kilogram, en daarboven; waarde 200-500 mitakos.
3. *Bolongu* : armring, niet zwaar.
4. *Ingwete* : armring, niet zwaar.
5. *Bongenza* : beenring, die bij 't loopen rammelt.
6. *Bozankere* : beenring.
7. *Limpala* : groote beenringen, spiraalvormig, gedraaid uit dik koperdraad en 't gansche onderbeen bedekkend; de veeren uit een matras lijken er veel op. Onder de negers een waarde van 500 mitakos vertegenwoordigend.
8. *Bompulenge* : gelijk een kleine limpala, die vroeger door de ouderen van dagen aan de armen werden gedragen, doch thans niet meer gemaakt worden en uit de mode zijn.

In de geheele streek is slechts één smid bekend, een zekere Elumbu van het dorp Lilangi (Basankusu), die koperen bellen weet te maken.

Door ieder Mongo-neger wordt deze zwarte als een grootheid geroemd.

Volgens zeggen der negers moet er een smid wezen, een zekere Bokedru uit de buurt van de Ikelembarivier, die van eenige stukkene geweren weder een nieuw in elkander wist te zetten hetwelk goed afging. Volgens de negers pakte de Staatsagent hem echter het geweer af, doch volgens mijn en anderen meening, temeer wijl een neger voor een leugen niet vervaard is, behoort deze zwarte geweerfabrikant tot den tijd der sagen thuis.

II. — DE HOUTBEWERKING.

De houtbewerking neemt een voorname plaats in het leven van den Mongo-neger in; zoowel zijn primitief huisraad als zijn kano en zijn *lokole* (de negertelefoon, waarmede hij zijn gedachten van dorp tot dorp bekend maakt) bewerkt hij uit hout.

Het vervaardigen van de kano en de *lokole* nemen nog al veel werk in beslag.

De kano.

De drie volgende houtsoorten namelijk : 1. *Bokeswa*; 2. *Lifake*; 3. *Bomposo* maken een goede kano; vooral verkiest men de *Bokeswa*. Deze boom wordt zeer gezocht, wijl uit dit hout de sterke, lichtvarende kano wordt vervaardi,d.

De neger, die een kano wil hebben trekt het bosch in, zoekt een mooien, slanken boom uit, haalt zijn bijl voor den dag en hakt op z'n gemak den uitgezochten boom om. Hij hakt de overvloedige takken er af en geeft den ruwen vorm aan de kano. (*Aulema watu* : hij vormt de kano.)

Hij roept eenigen zijner vrienden bij elkander, die, natuurlijk tegen betaling (niets voor niets, zegt de neger) den gevallen boom uithollen.

Zijn ze klaar met 't uithollen van den boom, dan roept de eigenaar van de kano, den *Wongi wa biatu*, den eigenlijken kanomaker, een man van gewicht en nog al *in tel* bij zijn dorpelingen. Deze *wongi wa biatu*, geeft met zijn bijl den mooien, slanken vorm aan de kano, hakt haar mooi gelijk bij en door middel van de *esuwa*, een kleine bijl, teekent hij den rand van de kano met scherpe, korte lijntjes gelijk af.

Dikwijls vervaardigen de negers hun kanos op uren afstand van het naastbijzijnde water; om nu de kano te vervoeren worden stokken op den grond gelegd, waarover de kano wordt voortgetrokken. Eenige flinke mannen helpen daarnaa mede en verders de geheele *spes patriae* van het dorp. Zij krijgen een mitako als geschenk en zijn den koning te rijk af.

De kanomaker laat zich goed betalen en de te betalen prijs hangt van de grootte van de kano af. Eenige honden worden geslacht op kosten van den eigenaar en iedereen, die medehielp, krijgt zijn deel naar het werk, hetwelk hij leverde. Dikwijls wordt er ook een groote suikerrietbierfuif op touw gezet; walgelijke tooneelen hebben dan dikwijls plaats en beschonken worden ze door hun vrouwen naar huis gebracht. In beschaafd Europa is het soms al niet veel beter.

Men maakt vaartuigen voldoende voor twee man tot zelfs honderd en honderd vijftig man toe; de groote oorlogskano's van den grooten chef Evoloko van Waka en den oud-chef van Bandaka een zekere Isaempoko zijn alombekend. De oorlogskano van dezen laatsten wordt gezegd honderd vijftig man te kunnen bevatten en de rand van deze kano reikt tot aan de schouders van een tamelijk grooten neger. De gewoone reiskano van de blanken is in den regel voldoende voor twintig tot dertig roeiers.

De prijzen der kanos verschillen naar gelang de grootte en sterkte van 200 tot 10,000 mitakos.

De Lokole.

De *lokole* speelt een zeer voorname rol in het leven van den neger; zonder de *lokole* is het leven van den neger niet denkbaar.

De *lokole* kan niet beter beschreven worden dan te zijn de openbare telefoon, waarmede de neger zijn gedachten van dorp tot dorp aan het publiek bekend maakt.

De *lokole* is voor den neger wat het signaal van de trompet voor den soldaat is.

De *lokole* roept de mannen ter vergadering, ten strijde en ter jacht; de *lokole* roept de gansche bevolking, klein en groot, ten dans. Gedurende den dans is zij tot diep in den nacht de getrouwe begeleidster; haar eentonig geluid voert de dansers tot een in halve razernij overslaand enthusiasme.

Op uren afstand telefoneert de vriend naar zijn vrienden en geeft weer wat hij verlangt; zijn twee negers van verschillende of van dezelfde dorpen met elkander in geschil, per *lokole* wordt hun de huid volgescholden en Jan en alleman wordt op de hoogte gebracht van het hangende geschil. Zij doen hun best elkander voor het volk zoo zwart mogelijk te maken. Is er een doode in het dorp, den ganschen nacht door wordt alom per *lokole* bekend gemaakt, dat die en die gestorven is. Reeds uren voor diens dood weet men overal dat die en die persoon op sterven ligt en zijn dood nabij is.

Indien de fetisch-dokter zijn bedrog aan het domme negervolk aan het opdisschen is, overal in het rond weet men precies het uur zijner handelingen en wat voor onzin hij op 't oogenblik uitzet.

De blanke kondigt het morgen-en middag-appel en het uur van uitscheiden zijner werklui per *lokole* aan.

Voooral s'morgens, s'avonds en met nat weer klinkt de *lokole* ver; met volle zon dringt de *lokole* niet ver door.

De *lokole* is een groote blok hout, waar in het midden een spleet over bijna de gansche lengte wordt gehakt, terwijl het binnenste zorgvuldig wordt uitgestoken. De *lokole*, ofschoon over het algemeen aan de buitenkanten afgeplat heeft de vorm van een overlangs openstaande, liggende mosselchelp.

Het *lokole* maken is een ambacht uitgevoerd door een bepaald persoon en sommige negers zijn wijdbekend voor het maken hunner *lokole's*.

Slechts vier houtsoorten zijn geschikt voor 't vervaardigen van de lokole namelijk :

1) *Bokungu*; 2) *Lik[illegible]*; 3) *Bolondo*; 4) *Isi*, het hout bij uitnemendheid, het hout waar de Mongo-neger zijn « *ngula* » (roodeverfstof) uit vervaardigt, waarmede hij zijn lichaam insmeert bij de minst gewichtige gebeurtenis, die in het dorp plaats heeft. Waarschijnlijk is de *Isi* een soort vermiljoenhout. De Mongo-neger vervaardigt vijf verschillende *lokole's* namelijk : 1) *Ingonga*, klein van vorm; 2) *lokole ja losali*- middelsoort; 3) *bongungu*- groote *lokole*. Deze drie zijn allen gelijk *de boven geteekende*. Deze worden geslagen met de stokken (*bosulu*) van de « *momambo* » boom (parasol-boom); 4) *bonkuka*, de groote hoog-opstaande *lokole*, die geslagen wordt met twee stokken, aan de punt waarvan eenige bollen caoutchouc worden bevestigd. Deze *lokole* dringt het verste door; 5) *Ngomo*, de groote langwerpige, recht opstaande dans-*lokole*. Deze *lokole* is slechts een groot langwerpig stuk hout, gansch uitgehold, een weinig versierd, ongeveer 1,25 m. hoog, van boven afgedekt met een stuk gedroogd antilopen of luipaardenvel, die geslagen wordt met de vingers en de palm van de hand. Deze *lokole* is de bekende tam-tam, nog al gebruikt door de negers der stoombooten om hun aankomst in de dorpen langs de rivier aantemelden.

Nu nog iets over de *Lokole*-taal.

De slag van de *lokole* is verschillend en zoodoende verstaan de negers de verschillende woorden; het tempo verschilt. De blanke hoort slechts het verschil van tempo, meer niet; de neger verstaat op uren afstand wat er getelefoneerd wordt.

De *lokole*-taal is hoofdzakelijk beeldspraak en zoodoende voor geen enkelen blanke in gansch Kongoland verstaanbaar. De negers zijn trotsch op hun uitvinding en wat in hun schik, dat de blanke, die anders alles kan, hun *lokole* toch niet slaan kan.

Iedere man heeft zijn eigen naam (*nkombo*) op de lokole, waarmede hij zich bekend maakt. Wijl zulke naam dikwijls eenige regels schrift beslaat hoofdzakelijk bestaande uit beeldspraak, feiten uit het publieke leven van den neger weergevend, is het als 't ware een physische onmogelijkheid voor een blanke de *lokole* taal volledig machtig te kunnen worden, gelijk een neger die kent. Zelfs alle negers verstaan de kunst van de *lokole* te slaan niet.

De vrouwen hebben een algemeenen naam; de *lokole* slaan is speciaal voor de mannen en geen enkele vrouw verstaat die kunst. Als de *lokole* geslagen wordt, verstaan de vrouwen het wel, doch zelf kunnen ze de *lokole* niet slaan. Trouwens ze zouden zich schamen een poging te wagen; dit is geen werk voor een vrouw en ze zouden uitgelachen worden. De *lokole* naam of *nkombo* der vrouw is als volgt :

Bali la tolombo basalaki lisala, basalaki tomboloko, tond' al' isusu, befambe eka lisala.

Vrouwen met velen, bewerkten den tuin, maakten veel eten gereed, bestaande uit bananen, eten uit den tuin.

Een blanke, persoonlijk, heeft geen eigen *nkombo* op de *lokole*, doch, om de komst van den blanke in een dorp wijd en zijd te verkondigen, wordt het volgende rondgetelefoneerd :

Lolema ja lifeka feka, esongo etenaka nkola.

De vleermuis overal heenvliegend, de pin verwondt de nagels der voeten.

Voornamelijk wordt hieronder, « de vleermuis overal heenvliegend », de Staatsagent verstaan, die van dorp tot dorp rondtrekt om de belastingen te innen, « de pin verwondt de nagels », beteekent dat, gelijk de negers in den strijd scherpgepunte, in 't vergift gedoopte pinnen op 't oorlogspad zetten, die den vijand z'n voeten verwonden, zoo is de Staatsagent immer op weg met zijn geweren gereed tot den strijd.

De *nkombo* van den katholieken missionaris is als volgt :

1) *Banseie nsele ba nkanga*; 2) *bofala boki ndaki lisako nda lokombo*; 3) *etafe bolo*; 4) *benanga bekendaka la mperu*

Banseie nsele ba nkanga, die altijd schreeuwend wordt vervolgd in 't hooge gras, de sterke tak, de streken gaan met den Priester (Père) mede.

1) De Missionaris wordt hier beschouwd als een fetischdokter (*banseie nsele ba nkanga* is een algemeene *lokole*-naam van den negerfetisch dokter) die gelijk den neger dokter wordt beschouwd als een dokter en een priester.

2) *Bofala boki ndaki lisako nda lokombe*; de Priester, omdat die *overal* catechumenen ziet aan te werven, wordt vergeleken met een antiloop, die achtervolgd, overal in 't hooge gras rondvlucht,

3) *Etafe bolo*. De Missionaris wordt vergeleken met een sterke tak. Hij is sterk door zijn invloed en hooggeacht door de negers.

4) *Benanga bekendaka la mperu*. De streken gaan alle met den Père (Priester) mede; zij allen volgen zijn instructies.

De *nkombo* van den Protestantschen Engelschen Zendeling is als volgt :

Bofanga sembola benanga boso nkenda l'Inglese.

't Vischnet wordt gespannen, het land gaat men den Engelschman mede.

Gelijk 't vischnet de rivier afzet en alles in zich opvangt, zoo gaat het land met den Engelschman mede. Wijl de Protestantsche Engelsche Zendeling den Katholieken Missionaris in deze streek vóór was, ging deze *nkombo* dien tijd op. Door de komst van den Katholieken Missionaris is de toestand gansch veranderd in deze streek.

Deze weinige voorbeelden geven een denbeeld van de moeilijkheid om de lokole-taal te verstaan.

Verders bewerkt de neger nog eenige stoeltjes, waaronder de voornaamste, de *lyeko ia mpaka*, de stoel van den onderling een driesprong met twee stutten er onder, uit een stuk uit de parasolboom gekapt, waar hij zich zoo lui mogelijk tusschen werpt.

Dan hakt hij met zijn inboorlingenbijl nog een klein zitbankje uit een blok hout, de zoogenaamde *ebonga*. Deze bewerkt hij netjes met zijn *esumawa*, kleine steekbeitel en versiert het zitvlak, rondomgezet met pinnekens (punaises) aan een of andere factorij gekocht.

Nu en dan ziet men een inboorlingenstoel vervaardigd gelijk hierboven vermeld, doch waaraan een soort leuning uit een stuk is gekapt.

De neger, die met den tijd mee wil, maakt voor zijn huis een stoel à l'Européenne uit bamboe; eenige stokken in den grond gestoken, een mat van gespleten bamboe er over gelegd en Mijnheer kan zijn tijd doorbrengen in *dolce far niente*.

Een gelijksoortige tafel (den neger onbekend) maakt het ameublement compleet.

Om een negerbed te vervaardigen behoeft men ook het buskruit niet ontdekt te hebben; eenige rechte stokken uit de *mombambo* (parasolboom) gekapt; in 't lange en in 't breed over elkander gelegd, aan de kanten een weinig afgeplat, dat 't zaakje eenigszins in elkander past; met wat lianen (gespleten) aan elkander gebonden en den neger heeft weer een bed in elkander gezet. Zijn lievelingsameublement is klaar, verkoopsprijs : 5-10 *mitakos*.

Het beddenmaken zou men onder een der Mongo-ambachten kunnen rangschikken; eens zag ik in het binnenland tien dezer bedden, klein en groot, ter verkoop op den weg uitgespreid liggen.

Men verzekerde mij dat de eigenaar de beddenmaker bij uitnemendheid van het dorp was. Ik nam natuurlijk mijn hoed voor zoo'n gewichtig personnage af.

De *ekoke*, het slaapstoeltje, is ook onmisbaar; uit een stuk gemaakt, gevormd naar de vorm van het hoofd neemt deze *ekoke* de plaats in van ons hoofdkussen, al is 't ook wat hard uitgevallen. Een negerkop is hard en kan er tegen; de kerel slaapt zonder wiegen.

Voor 't gereed maken van zijn eten, heeft hij eenige vijzels en stampers noodig, uit hout vervaardigd. Voor dit huisraad gebruikt hij hard hout, waardoor de vijzels bij 't voortdurend gestamp, niet gauw verslijten.

Verders bewerkt de Mongo-neger nog zijn roeispaan, zijn pijl en boog ter jacht en de *lokombi*, een plat, langwerpig uitgehold blokje hout, waarover eenige pinnen zijn gespannen, waarop hij met zijn vingers tokkelt, hetwelk een eentonig geluid veroorzaakt. Dit zoogenaamde muziekinstrument is voor den jongeling zijn trouwe medegezel op zijn lange tochten door het Evenaarswoud en op 't bezoek bij vrienden en kennissen.

III. — WEVERIJ.

Een eerzaam ambacht, hetwelk nog al veel werk en oplettendheid vereischt, is voorzeker het ambacht van den Mongo-wever.

Ofschoon het weven niet meer zoo in zwang is als in vroeger tijden, wijl het jongere volk zich Europeesche stoffen aanschaft, geeft het weven den wever toch ruimschoots zijn dagelijksch brood, wijl de ouden van dagen te heidensch zijn om van hun oude, ingewortelde gewoonte, een lendendoek te dragen, af te wijken.

Het weven is een ambacht dat alleen door de mannen wordt uitgeoefend. Sommigen zijn zeer bedreven in het weven van stoffen en dwingen onze bewondering af. Werkelijk mooi afgewerkte stukken kwam men ons te koop aanbieden en zag ik zienderoogen weven.

De wever pakt zijn mes, gaat het bosch in en snijdt de « *mpekwa ia lifeko* », de vezels van een zeker soort palmboom, die de wever somtijds in de nabijheid van z'n hut op den openbaren weg geplant heeft. Zoodra hij een bundel vezels, noodig voor het weven van het stuk stof, bij elkander gezameld heeft, gaat hij naar huis en op zijn gemakje schraapt hij met zijn mes de vezels gelijk bij.

Daarna legt hij ze in de zon te drogen; nadat ze voldoende gedroogd zijn, stelt hij in zijn hut of op den openbaren weg op waar hij de vezels aanhangt.

Na de vezels aan den bovensten dwarsstok bevestigd te hebben en den ondersten dwarsstok met zijn voet vasthoudend (de vezels zijn verbonden tusschen den bovensten en ondersten dwarsstok) gaat hij aan den slag.

Dikwijls gebruikt hij vezels verschillend van kleur, wat een werkelijk schoon effect maakt op het stuk stof.

Bofomi afom'ele : de wever weeft stof.

Om aan de vezels de verschillende kleuren te geven, gaat de wever heel eenvoudig te werk.

Uit 't bosch haalt hij een liaan (*longoli*), die de roode of witte of zwarte kleurstof inhoudt, snijdt die in stukjes, doet ze in een eventjes op 't vuur geschroeid bananenblad, voegt er water bij en hangt dit alles in een zakje van bananenblad boven het vuur met de vezels er in. Nadat de kleurstof goed in de vezels is getrokken, heeft de wever zijn gekleurde vezels, benoodigd voor zijn stuk *stof*. Dit mengsel noemt men « *bozaka* ».

TOUWVERVAARDIGING.

De Mongo-touwmaker (touwslager kan men hem slecht noemen) gaat naar het bosch, haalt de vezels van een zeker soort palmboom, schraapt ze netjes met zijn mes af en legt ze in de zon te drogen.

Heele klossen touw worden zoo vervaardigd. 't Inboorlingentouw, aldus vervaardigd, is van een goede, sterke hoedanigheid. Zijn netten bestemd voor de jacht en de vischvangst worden er mede vervaardigd. Gelijk 't weven is het touw maken een ambacht der mannen eigen.

IV. — MANDEN- EN MATTENVLECHTERIJ.

Manden en matten vlechten is hoofdzakelijk het werk der vrouwen, vooral het fijne vlechtwerk.

De mannen maken slechts hun groote, ruwafgewerkte manden, benoodigd voor het transporteeren hunner kopal. Het matten vlechten wordt alleen door de vrouwen uitgeoefend.

Uit het bosch halen zij de twijgen van de *Bolongote boom*, schrapen die netjes of drogen ze in de zon en vlechten al zittend hun manden en matten.

De soorten manden zijn velerlei, doch de grondstoffen noodig voor het vlechten zijn de *bokombe* of *likombe* van de *Bolongote* boom.

De matten worden op den vlakken grond gevlochten door één of twee vrouwen te gelijk. Hun namen zijn als volgt :

1) *Efomolo*, de ruw afgewerkte mat (waarde vijf mitakos).
2) *Nkongole*, de fijn gevlochte mat (waarde een halve frank).
3) *Itandé of Isfole*, 't kleine matje waar het drek van den weg en de asschen van het vuur mede worden weggedragen.
4) *Ilefa*, 't klein matje, gebruikt om het vuur aan te wakkeren.

A. Th. Gutersohn,
Priester der St Jozef's Congregatie.
(Mill-Hill).

THE FAMILY HEAD AMONG THE NKUNDO NEGROES
[HET FAMILIEHOOFD BIJ DE NKUNDO NEGERS]

H. BREPOELS

Congo, Vol. 2, pp. 332-340
Brussels, 1930

Translated from the Flemish by Helen H. Sprey

Human Relations Area Files

1959

[Title Page]

[332]

THE FAMILY HEAD AMONG THE NKUNDO NEGROES

[illegible] The family among the Negroes is organized in a patriarchal fashion. The father is lord and master, not only over his children, but also over all of his descendants. The power over his daughters and daughters' children, however, escapes him through his selling them.

All important things were dealt with and settled by him. Thus, for instance, to speak of only the most important, if one of his sons or grandsons had to be helped to get a wife, then it was for him to decide whether or not it was time for that. It was he who negotiated over that transaction and finally decided about the purchase of the wife. If one of his children or grandchildren shot an animal, then it was brought to him, and the distribution was made according to his decision and under his supervision. If one of his children had difficulties with his wife, the matter was judged by him. If one of the wives of his children stay away, he went to look for her if the matter was of a serious nature. If he was not able to settle the matter, then it was up to him to decide if the return of the money must be demanded or whether the matter must be decided by means of arms.

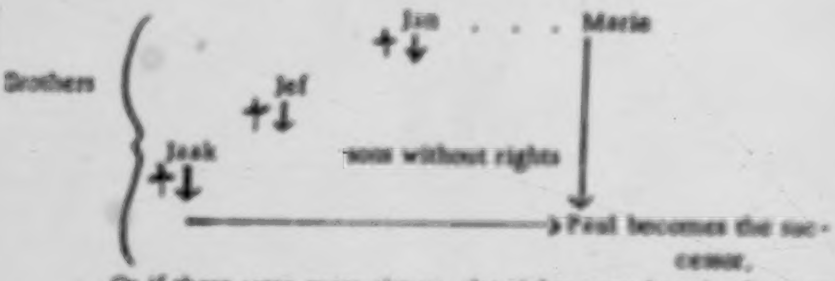
To the end of his days, sickness and insanity notwithstanding, he remained the only lord and master, and nothing was dealt with without his knowledge and approval. He was honored and respected up to his last breath.

Law of Succession

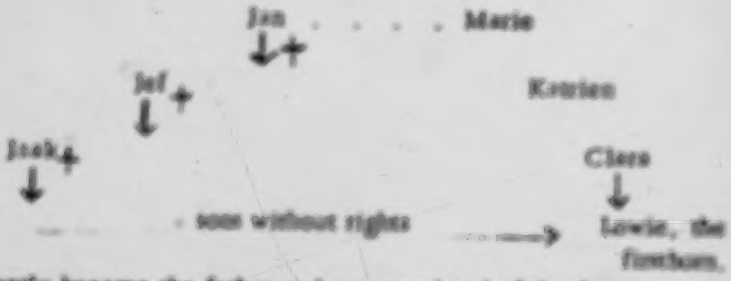
The law of succession is very much askew in relation to the patriarchal fatherhood mentioned in our history. Here it was not, it is still not today, the oldest son who was considered, even when he was of age. At the death of the father, these full powers passed to his brother. The children [333] female as well as male -- of the deceased brother, even though they were older in years, called him father and also showed him all the honor attached to the title of father. All their disputes and matters of importance were brought to him and settled by him. At his death the powers of family government passed again to his younger brother, and so on until all of the brothers had died. At the death of the last one, all rights passed, not to the oldest, second, or third brother [among his sons?], but to the oldest son of

596

their sister, bona wa nkano. As an example:


Brothers
Jan
Marie
Jef
Jaak
sons without rights
Paul becomes the successor.

Or if there were more sisters, the rights passed to the firstborn son of those sisters; for instance:


Jan
Marie
Jef
Katrien
Jaak
Clara
sons without rights
Louis, the firstborn.

He consequently became the father and supreme head of the family upon the death of the three brothers.

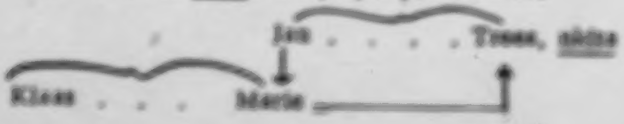
596 In order to understand this peculiar custom clearly, some ex-
583 planations should be given. The custom in this country is that the
582 woman is sold; not a single one escaped that general rule in former days. With that money the father or brother bought, or rather, had to buy himself another woman. This wife belonged, however, to the daughter or sister who had been sold; the daughter or sister called her nkita, "goods" or "property." The children born of this nkita called her [the woman sold]: is'a'omoto, "female father." Even if she brought male children into the world, the rights of their mother passed to them, and [394] their mother was called father by the children of the nkita. According to our ideas, they were only nephews. That held even if the woman was still not paid for; it was enough that a ndonge, a security as proof of further payment, had been given. It was also not

576 necessary for her father or brother to have brought her to the man and
583 to have received money for her; another member of the family was
586 sufficient. She was sold by her family and accordingly, wherever the money had remained or whoever had received it, she had her rights in the family. Since the family maintained itself through the sale of the children of the female sex, the male children born of them were considered as the owners, the rightful claimants, the fathers. There was no exception to this rule; it was not to be altered, and no one had ever thought of disputing the place of the claimant or of laying claim to his rights. I have only heard of one single case of that sort, namely, at the succession of the Baki, the younger brother was said to have killed his older brother in order to take over his place. He was said to have made a hole in his brother's prow, so that it sank when it reached the middle of the stream. The matter in itself seems an impossibility; also I consider it a legend, unless an accident might have happened that was interpreted in a mistaken or deliberately false manner.

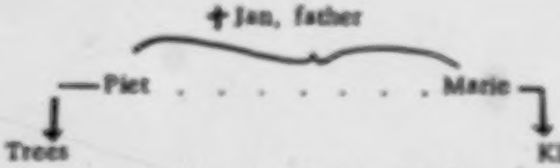
The rightful claimant, bona wa nkana, sister's son, might
596 still be a child; nevertheless he was called father and everyone vied
597 with one another in showing him the honor due a father. That was the unbreakable law, not only for the father common to the hamlet, bola, but also for the father of each individual family.

Nkita

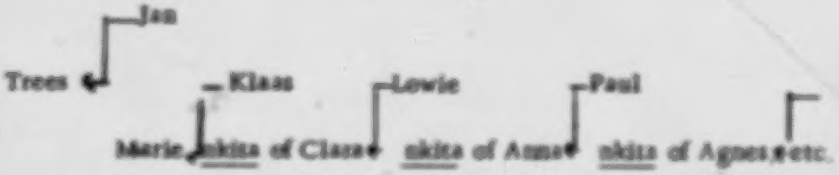
583 Nkita is what the woman is called who is bought with the money
602 that the father or brother has received for his daughter or sister on the occasion of her marriage. In reality, however, she is only the nkita, goods or property, of the sold woman. Nkita ekam, "my property," this woman calls her. For instance, Jan [338] sells his daughter, Marie, to Klaas and buys another wife, Trees, with the money received. The latter woman is now the nkita, the property, of Marie.



Or else, father Jan having died, Piet sold his sister, Marie, to Klaas and buys Trees with the money:



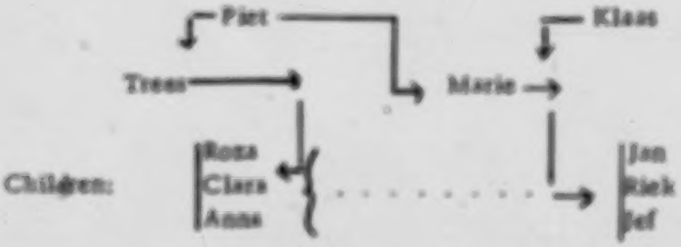
Practically speaking, Marie profited very little from her nkita. She had, it is true, certain rights over her nkita; thus, the latter considered her as her mistress, helped her in sickness and heavy work. Unfortunately for her, what she gained on the one side she lost again on the other side, in that she herself was also the nkita of another woman and consequently had the same obligations to fulfill towards the latter that her own nkita owed her. For example:



Jan, then, sold Marie to Klaas in order to buy Trees; Klaas, however, in order to be able to buy Marie, sold in turn his sister, Clara, to Lowie; Lowie acquired the necessary money to buy Clara by marrying off his sister, Anna. Thus, Trees then became the nkita of Marie, Marie the nkita of Clara, Clara of Anna, Anna of Agnes, etc. In short, every wife had her nkita and was, with few exceptions, the nkita of another wife. I say with few exceptions; for example, the wife was not the nkita of another woman if her husband had bought her with his own earned money. Practically speaking, this changed the matter very little. Also [336] there was no change if the nkita of a woman died; it was only a loss for the buyer or owner of that woman.

Rights of the Male Children in Relation to the Nkita of Their Mother

596 583 605 We have already seen that the right of succession and fatherhood passed to the male children of the sister, because she had been sold and had brought money into the family, or rather because she had a *nkita* there, a sort of guarantee for the money that had been received for her. *Nkita*-ship brought another right to them, namely, the female children born of the mother's *nkita* belonged to them; they could sell them and get themselves other women with the money. 582 They could not, however, marry them, since they were their cousins, and custom was opposed to any marriage between relatives. 602 The boys could, nevertheless, take the *nkita* of their mother as a wife, since the Negroes have no notion of affinity or relationship by marriage. The male children were, then, the owners of the female children that the *nkita* of their mother brought into the world:



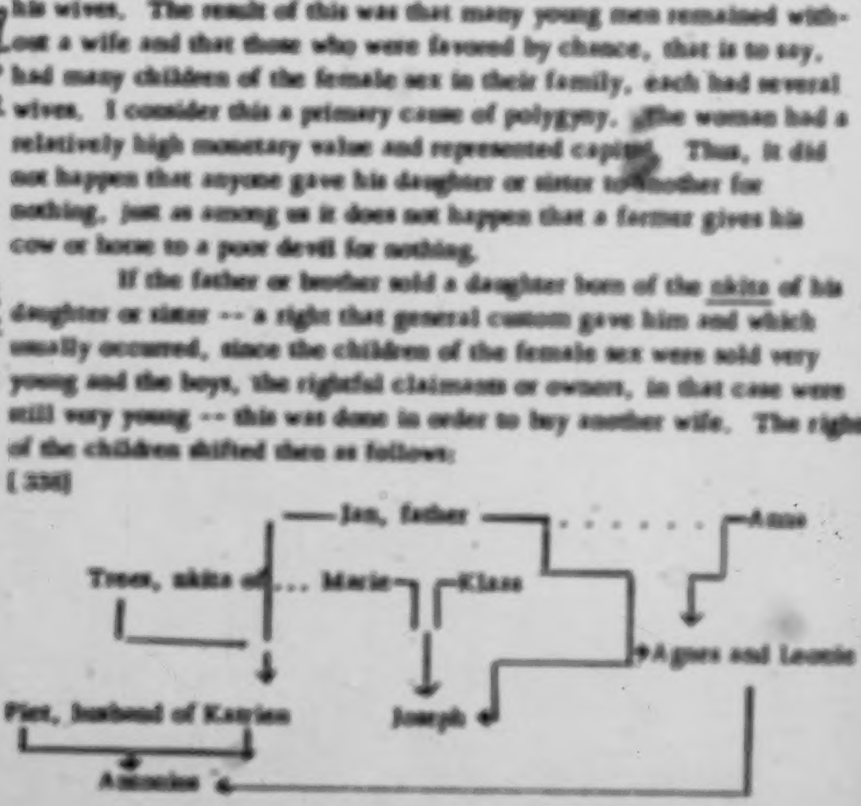
These three girls, children of *nkita* Trees, belong to the three sons of Marie. If Marie had only one son, then Piet would have the right to trade the two other girls for money and to buy other wives with this money, either for himself or for his younger brother; but if she [Marie?] brought female children into the world, half of them belong to Marie's son.

583 604 If the *nkita* gave birth to no children of the female sex, the boys of Marie could resort to the husband of the *nkita* of their mother, namely, their uncle, *nyangobika*. If, however, he had no fortune, no money, [237] no wives, no girls to sell ... or only wives to whom others could lay claim and had more right, then they were disinherited, poor devils in society, and it cost them long years of work and much

583 searching for old disputes and old arguments about wives to get a wife.
604 And then they were still not always successful; their youth itself was against them here and robbed them constantly of the little that they
464 had saved for that purpose. The means for getting money, such as lances, knives, arm and foot bands, were extremely scarce. The Blacks do not know of workers or servants, and if one of those poor souls presented himself at the home of one who was better endowed by fortune and offered to chop wood for him, to lay out a manioc field, or to build a house for him, to gather straw and bamboo in the forest for that purpose, then the inborn laziness of the Negro would require long months to complete that work. As salary, the worker received only a few bokonga (copper arm or leg bands); these he already owed to the owner for having shown too much inclination for one or another of
587 his wives. The result of this was that many young men remained without a wife and that those who were favored by chance, that is to say,
595 had many children of the female sex in their family, each had several
562 wives. I consider this a primary cause of polygyny. The woman had a relatively high monetary value and represented capital. Thus, it did not happen that anyone gave his daughter or sister to another for nothing, just as among us it does not happen that a farmer gives his cow or horse to a poor devil for nothing.

583 If the father or brother sold a daughter born of the nkita of his
604 daughter or sister -- a right that general custom gave him and which
603 usually occurred, since the children of the female sex were sold very young and the boys, the rightful claimants or owners, in that case were still very young -- this was done in order to buy another wife. The rights of the children shifted then as follows:

[338]



583 Jan, the father, by selling Katrien, the *nkita* of his daughter
604 Marie, becomes indebted to Joseph, the son of Marie and at the same
603 time his own grandson; and on the other side he becomes the debtor of Antonius, his other grandson, by selling his mother, Katrien.

Anna, whom he bought, was then the *nkita* of Katrien and the quasi-*nkita* of Marie. Both sons, Joseph and Antonius, were hard pressed because of Anna, the *nkita* of both of their mothers. If Anna bore two daughters, as I have indicated, the case was simple: the first daughter belonged to Joseph and the second to Antonius. If, however, she gave birth to only one daughter, then this child belonged to Joseph, and Antonius was left out in the cold. If father Jan had no children of the female sex by Anna, then the matter was extremely thorny for both of them, and if their grandfather or uncle possessed no money, had no more wives by whom he had daughters, there was nothing left for them to do but, at his death, to take the *nkita* of their mother as a wife. For this reason it happened many times that young men lived with old women, and even though there was then generally no more hope of children, these wives were then still good enough to cook the meals and do the little work that a Negro household requires.

606 I will not digress any further about the method of distribution of women, about the rights over the women which the *nkita* system brings with it. It would take us too far. Furthermore, not only the present, but also the past and the future are involved in it; so that one would have to be a Negro and raised in these matters to understand them clearly .... and even then they involve numerous palavers (disputes), which continually agitate the families and the villages.

[330]

The Origin of the Nkita?

576 The sale of the woman and the immediate loss of her freedom
583 must naturally have given her cause for revolt. It has perhaps cost the
562 man a severe struggle to make the woman content with her lot. A compensation or reimbursement had to be given to her, and most certainly the *nkita* system has its origin there. It was at least a partial compensation that the man gave to the woman. It gave her rights over her *nkita*

596 and over the children who were born to the latter; even more, it gave
583 her own children rights which exist nowhere else in the world and prob-
562 ably among no other people: they became the superiors, the fathers of the family of their mother. Unfortunately, practically considered, the woman enjoyed very little of the gift which was given her; she remained what she was, slave of money, slave of the man. Even her children, for whom the nkita-ship secured such great advantages in her family, brought them into a false situation, in that it robbed them in the home of their own father of all the advantages that it brought them in the home of their mother's father. It was only the old and well-favored who actually gained advantage from the nkita system and enjoyed them.

1) It relieved them in the first place of all care on behalf of their daughters whom they sold while still children; and if later, after they were grown up, these daughters complained about the injustice done to them, they could answer them, "But, my dear daughter, I have done you no wrong; here in my own house is the woman whom I bought with your money; she belongs to you always, and the children that I have by her are your children; you are both their father and their mother; they will call you is'womoto (female father), and in that capacity they will honor and serve you; the boys will at the same time be the children of your children, and the girls will be sold to give your sons the opportunity to buy a wife for themselves."

2) It discharged them for the most part from all care of providing a wife for their sons, and it denied the latter the right to make claims to the women whom the father possessed. [360] If the son begged his father for a woman, he could put him off and say to him, "But, my boy, you have the nkita of your mother; the children (girls) who will be born of her are for you. We shall sell them, and with the money we will buy you a wife." Most of these girls, however, were traded by the father for another wife, since his son was still, in that case, small. Almost all the women then ended up in the harem of the father before passing on to the son. Thus, after all, the nkita system only benefited the lust and the lasciviousness of the old Negro and made him the one and only master of the women. Sons, daughters, wives, and children were, in contrast, the dupes and victims of the nkita-ship.

S: Brepoels FO12 Mongo

Juin 1930 — Tome II, Nº 1.

CONGO

Revue générale
de la Colonie belge
Onzième année

Algemeen tijdschrift
van de Belgische Kolonie
XIde jaargang

ET

BULLETIN DE LA SOCIETE BELGE D'ÉTUDES COLONIALES (XXXVIIme année)

Directeur : Ed. De Jonghe

SOMMAIRE :

L. LOTAR . . . . *Souvenirs de l'Uélé*. 1

J. SCHWETZ . . . *Un voyage d'étude dans la région du Lac Kivu*. 9
Directeur de laboratoire au Congo belge.

MÉLANGES : [illegible] : La question de [illegible], p. [illegible]. — *Hygiène et médecine* : Le travail médical des [illegible] du Congo belge pendant cinq ans, p. [illegible]. — *Questions scientifiques* : [illegible], p. [illegible].

ASSOCIATION POUR LE PERFECTIONNEMENT DU MATERIEL COLONIAL

1. L'aviation marchande au Congo belge et la Sabena Belgique-Congo, par le Colonel de réserve J. [illegible], administrateur-délégué de la Sabena, p. [illegible]. — 2. Transports et communications. — Les tarifs des transports dans la Colonie, p. [illegible]. — 3. Conservation des bois exposés à l'air, par M. Paul [illegible], p. [illegible].

BULLETIN DE L'OFFICE COLONIAL

Commerce : Statistique commerciale de l'exercice [illegible], p. [illegible]. — Exportations. Statistique des produits exportés du Congo belge pendant l'année [illegible], p. [illegible]. — Importations. Statistique des marchandises importées au Congo belge pendant l'année [illegible], p. [illegible]. — Province Orientale. District de Stanleyville, p. [illegible]. — Territoire de Ponthierville, deuxième semestre [illegible], p. [illegible]. — District du Kasai. Territoire d'Idiofa, p. [illegible]. Arrondissement industriel de Lubudi: Territoire de [illegible]. Liste des établissements industriels et agricoles, p. [illegible]. — *Informations*, p. [illegible]. — *[illegible]*, p. [illegible].

Le numéro : 10 francs

[title page]

ÉDITEUR :
Goemaere, imprimeur du Roi
Rue de la Limite, 21, Bruxelles

[illegible]
MARTINUS NIJHOFF

HET FAMILIEHOOFD BIJ DE NKUNDO NEGERS.

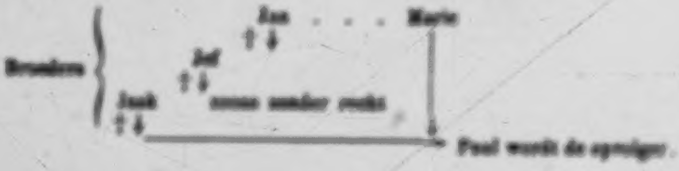
De familie is bij de negers in patriarchalen stijl opgebouwd. Zoodat de vader heer en meester is, niet alleen over zijne kinderen, maar ook over al zijn nazaten. Het recht evenwel over zijne dochters en dochters-kinderen ontsnapte hem, doordien hij ze verkocht.

Alle voorname dingen werden door hem behandeld en afgedaan. Zoo bijvoorbeeld om slecht van de voornaamste te spreken, als een zijner zonen, kleinzonen... aan een vrouw moest geholpen worden, dan was het aan hem te beslissen of de tijd daar was ja of neen. 't Was hij die over die zaak onderhandelde en ten slot over den aankoop dier vrouw besliste. Schoot een zijner kinderen of kindskinderen... één dier, dan werd het bij hem gebracht, de verdeeling werd volgens hem en onder zijn oogen gedaan. Had een zijner kinderen moeilijkheden met zijn vrouw, de zaak werd door hem geoordeeld. Liep er één der vrouwen van zijn kinderen weg, hij ging ze opzoeken, als de zaak van ernstigen aard was. Als hij niet vermocht de zaak bij te leggen, was het aan hem om te beslissen of het geld terug moest ge-eischt of de zaak door de wapens moest beslist worden.

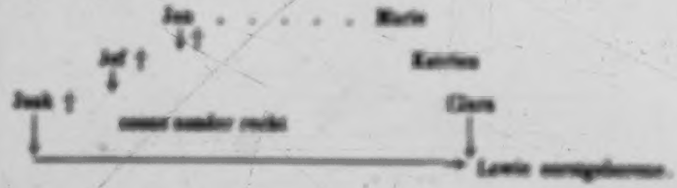
Tot zijn hoogsten ouderdom, niettegenstaande ziekten en krankheden, bleef hij de eenige heer en meester en er werd niets verhandeld zonder zijn voorkennis en goedkeuring. Men eerde en achtte hem tot zijn laatste ademhaling.

Opvolgingsrecht.

Het opvolgingsrecht, met betrekking tot het patriarchaal vaderschap in onze geschiedenis gekend, scheelt zeer veel. Hier was het niet — en heden nog niet de oudste zoon, zelfs meerderjarig, die in aanmerking genomen werd. Bij den dood des vaders gingen dezes volle rechten over op zijn broeder. De kinderen — zoo vrouwelijke als mannelijke — van den overleden broeder, al waren zij zelfs ouder in jaren, noemden hem vader en bewezen hem tevens alle eer aan den titel van vader verbonden. Al hun geschillen en zaken van aangelegenheid werden bij hem gebracht en door hem vereffend. Bij zijn dood gingen de rechten van familie-bestuur weer over op zijn jongeren broeder en zoo voort tot al de broeders overleden waren. Bij den dood van den laatsten gingen alle rechten over, niet op den oudsten, tweeden of derden broeder, maar op den oudsten zoon van hun zuster, « bona wa nkana ». Voorbeeld :



Of als er meerdere zusters waren, gingen de rechten over op den eerstgeboren zoon dier zusters, bijvoorbeeld :



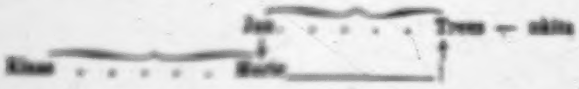
en werd gevolglijk de vader en 't opperhoofd der familie, bij den dood der drie broeders.

Om in die zonderlinge gewoonte klaar te zien, dienen er eenige verklaringen gegeven. Het gebruik hier ten lande is dat de vrouw verkocht wordt, geen enkele uitzondering in vroegere dagen aan dien algemeenen regel. Met dat geld kocht of liever moest de vader of broeder der vrouw zich een andere vrouw koopen. Deze vrouw behoorde evenwel aan de verkochte dochter of zuster toe, die ze hare « nkita », goed of eigendom noemde. De kinderen uit deze nkita geboren noemden haar : is'e'omoto — vrouwelijke vader. Zoo zij zelve mannelijke kinderen ter wereld bracht, gingen de rechten harer moeder op hen over en de kinderen van de nkita hunner moeder noemden hen vader. Volgens onze opvatting waren zij enkel neven. Dat gold zelfs al was de vrouw nog niet betaald geworden; 't was voldoende dat men een « ndanga » een pand ter bewijs van verdere betaling gegeven had. 't Was ook niet noodig dat haar vader of broeder haar aan den man gebracht had, en er geld voor getrokken had, een ander lid van de familie voldeed. Zij was door hare familie verkocht en als dusdanig, waar het geld dan ook gebleven was of wie dan ook het getrokken had — had zij hare rechten in de familie en daar deze zich in stand hield door den verkoop van de kinderen van het vrouwelijk geslacht, beschouwde men de mannelijke kinderen uit hen geboren als de meesters, de rechthebbenden, de vaders. Op dezen regel was geen uitzondering, daar viel niet aan te tornen en niemand had er ooit aan gedacht den rechthebbende zijn plaats te betwisten of aanspraak te maken op zijne rechten. Een enkel feit van dien aard is mij slechts ter oore gekomen, bij den overtocht namelijk van den Ruki, zou de jongere broeder zijn ouderen om 't leven gebracht hebben om zijn plaats in te kunnen nemen. Hij zou een gat in de prauw zijns broeders gemaakt hebben zoodat zij zonk toen zij in 't midden van den stroom gekomen was. De zaak op zich zelf beschouwd lijkt eene onmogelijkheid; ook beschouw ik ze als een legende, tenzij een ongeluk zoo gebeurd geweest zijn dat men verkeerd of opzettelijk slecht uitgelegd heeft.

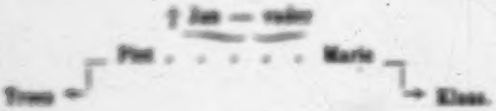
De rechthebbende, bona wa nkana — zusters zoon, kon nog een kind zijn, toch noemde men hem vader en niemand betwistte hem om strijd de eer van het vaderschap. Dat was zoo de onverbreekbare wet, niet alleen voor den algemeenen vader van het geslacht — bokoi —; maar ook voor den vader van elke familie afzonderlijk.

Nkita.

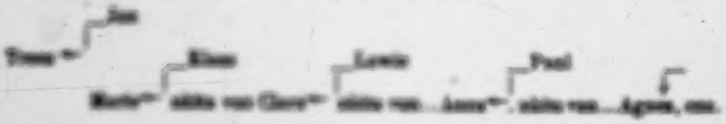
Nkita noemt men de vrouw, die gekocht wordt met het geld dat vader of broeder ontvangen heeft voor zijn dochter of zuster bij hare uithuwelijking. In werkelijkheid is zij echter slechts de nkita — goed of eigendom — van de verkochte vrouw. Nkita ekam, mijn eigendom, noemt deze haar. Bijvoorbeeld : Jan ver-koopt zijn dochter Marie aan Klaas en koopt met het ontvangen geld een andere vrouw, Trees. Deze laatste nu is de nkita, het eigendom van Marie :



Ofwel vader Jan dood zijnde, verkocht Piet zijn zuster Marie aan Klaas en koopt met het geld Trees :



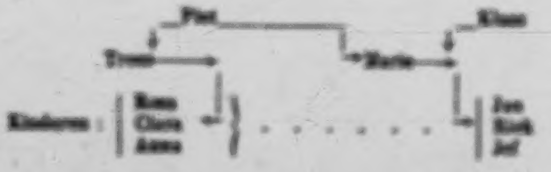
Praktisch gesproken profiteerde Marie bitter weinig van hare Nkita. Zij had wel zekere rechten op hare nkita : zoo, deze beschouwde haar als hare meesteres, hielp haar in ziekte en drukken arbeid... Ongelukkig voor haar wat zij van den eenen kant won verloor zij weer langs den anderen kant, doordien zij zelf ook de nkita was van een andere vrouw en gevolglijk dezelfde verplichtingen jegens deze te vervullen had, welke haar eigen nkita haar schuldig was. Bijvoorbeeld :



Jan dus verkocht Marie aan Klaas om Trees te koopen; Klaas eveneens om Marie te kunnen koopen verkocht weer zijn zuster Clara aan Lowie; Lowie verschafte zich het noodige geld om Clara te koopen, met zijn zuster Anna aan den man te brengen. Zoo werd dan Trees de Nkita van Marie, Marie de Nkita van Clara, Clara van Anna, Anna van Agnes... Kortom iedere vrouw had hare nkita en was op weinige uitzonderingen na de nkita van een andere vrouw. Ik zeg : op weinige uitzonderingen na, zoo bijvoorbeeld was de vrouw niet de nkita van een andere vrouw, als haar man haar gekocht had met zijn eigen gewonnen geld. Praktisch gesproken veranderde dit weinig de zaak; ook niet als de nkita eener vrouw stierf; 't was alleen een verlies van den aankooper of eigenaar dier vrouw.

Rechten der mannelijke kinderen wegens de nkita hunner moeder.

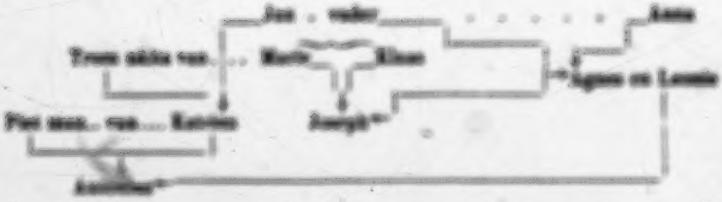
Wij hebben reeds gezien dat het opvolgingsrecht en het vaderschap op de mannelijke kinderen van de zuster overging omdat deze verkocht geworden was, geld in de familie gebracht had of liever omdat zij er een nkita had, een soort waarborg voor het geld dat men voor haar getrokken had. Een ander recht bracht het nkita-schap hen mee, namelijk de vrouwelijke kinderen uit moeders-nkita geboren behoorden hen toe; zij konden ze verkoopen en zich andere vrouwen aanschaffen met het geld. Zij konden ze evenwel niet huwen, daar het hun nichten waren en de gewoonte zich verzet tegen elk familie-huwelijk. De jongens konden nochtans de nkita hunner moeder tot vrouw nemen, daar de negers geen gedacht van affiniteit of aangetrouwd verwantschap hebben. De mannelijke kinderen dan waren de bezitters der vrouwelijke kinderen die de nkita hunner moeder ter wereld bracht :



Deze drie meisjes, kinderen van nkita Trees, hooren toe aan de drie zonen van Marie. Als Marie maar een jongen had, dan had Piet het recht de twee andere meisjes in geld om te zetten en met dit geld andere vrouwen te koopen 't zij voor zich zelf, 't zij voor zijn jongeren broeder; maar als zij vrouwelijke kinderen ter wereld brachten, hoorden de helft ervan toe aan Marie's zoon.

Als de nkita geen kinderen van 't vrouwelijk geslacht ter wereld bracht, konden de jongens van Marie wel hun toevlucht nemen tot den man der nkita van hunne moeder, namelijk hun oom, nyangolola. Had deze evenwel geen fortuin, geen geld, geen vrouwen, geen te verkoopen meisjes... of slechts vrouwen, waarop anderen konden aanspraak maken en zwaardere rechten hadden, dan waren zij onterfden, arme duivels in de maatschappij en kostte het hun lange jaren arbeid en een hoop opzoekerij van oude palabers, oude wijvenkwestiën, om aan eene vrouw te komen. En dan nog lukte het hun niet altijd : hun jeugd zelf was hen hier tot vijand en berooifde hen gestadig van het weinige dat zij te dien einde gespaard hadden. De middelen om geld : lansen, messen, arm- en voetbanden te vergaren, waren uiterst gering. Werklieden of dienstlieden kenden de zwarten niet en als één van die minderbedeelden zich aanbood bij één door het fortuin beter bedeelde om voor hem een bosch af te kappen om een maniokveld aan te leggen, of om hem een huis te bouwen : strooi en riet te dien einde in het bosch te halen, dan vroeg de aangeboren luiheid van den neger lange maanden om dien arbeid te voltooien en tot loon kreeg de werkman slechts eenige bakonga's (kopere arm- of beenbanden) die hij al lang in schuld was bij den eigenaar, om te veel genegenheid voor de één of andere zijner vrouwen betoond te hebben. Het gevolg hiervan was dat vele jongelingen zonder vrouw bleven en dat degenen die door het lot begunstigd werden, 't is te zeggen, vele kinderen van 't vrouwelijk geslacht in hun familie hadden, ieder verschillende vrouwen hadden. Ik stip dit aan als een eerste oorzaak van de veelwijverij. De vrouw had betrekkelijk een hooge geldelijke waarde en vertegenwoordigde een kapitaal. Bestond dus niet dat iemand zijn dochter of zuster aan een ander voor niet gaf, gelijk het ten onzent ook niet bestaat dat een boer zijn koe of paard voor niet zal geven aan een armen duivel.

Als de vader of broeder zijn dochter, uit de nkita van zijn dochter of zuster geboren, verkocht, — recht dat het algemeen gebruik hem gaf en hetgeen dan gewoonlijk ook gebeurde, daar de kinderen van 't vrouwelijk geslacht zeer jong verkocht werden en de jongens, de rechthebbende of eigenaars, alsdan nog zeer jong waren — gebeurde dit om een vrouw bij te koopen. De rechten der kinderen verplaatsten zich dan als volgt :



Jan, de vader, door Katrien de nkita van zijn dochter Marie te verkoopen, werd de schuldenaar van *Jozef*, de zoon van Marie en tevens zijn eigen kleinzoon; en van den anderen kant werd hij de schuldenaar van *Antoine*, zijn anderen kleinzoon, door dezes moeder Katrien te verkoopen.

De gekochte Anna was dan de nkita van Katrien en de quasi-nkita van Marie. Beider zonen, *Jozef* en *Antoine* kwamen dus in gedrang wegens Anna, nkita hunner beide moeders. Als Anna twee dochters baarde, gelijk ik opgegeven heb, was het geval eenvoudig : de eerste dochter hoorde *Jozef* toe en de tweede aan Antoine. Bracht zij evenwel maar een dochter ter wereld, dan hoorde deze toe aan *Jozef* en *Antoine* mocht toekijken. Indien vader *Jan* geen kinderen van 't vrouwelijk geslacht met Anna won, dan was de zaak voor beiden uiterst netelig en zoo grootvader of oom geen geld bezat, niet meerdere vrouwen had, waarmee hij dochters won, bleef hen niet over dan bij zijn dood de nkita van hun moeder tot vrouw te nemen. Vandaar dat het meermalen gebeurde dat jonge mannen met oude vrouwen leefden en al was er dan doorgaans geen hoop meer op kinderen, die vrouwen waren dan toch nog altijd goed om den pot te koken en 't weinige werk te verrichten dat een neger-huishouden vraagt.

Ik wil niet verder uitweiden over de verdeelings methode der vrouwen, over de rechten over de vrouwen, die het nkita-systeem meebrengt. 't Zou ons te ver leiden; overigens niet alleen het heden, maar ook het verleden en de toekomst zijn er mee gemoeid; zoodat men neger moet zijn en in die zaken opgegroeid om er klaar in te zien... en dan nog brengen zij tal van palabers (twistgeschillen) mee, die voortdurend de familiën en de dorpen beroeren.

Oorzaak der nkita ?

De verkoop der vrouw en met een het verlies van hare vrijheid, moest haar natuurlijk in geweldigen opstand brengen. Een hevigen strijd heeft het wellicht den man gekost de vrouw te doen berusten in haar lot. Een compensatie of vergoeding moest haar gegeven worden en heel zeker vindt het nkita-systeme daarin zijn oorsprong. 't Was ten minste een gedeeltelijke vergoeding dewelke men de vrouw gaf : het gaf haar rechten over hare nkita, over de kinderen die uit deze geboren worden; meer nog gaf het haar eigen kinderen rechten die nergens ter wereld en wellicht bij geen enkel volk bestaan : Zij werden de meerderen, de vaders der familie hunner moeder. Ongelukkig, praktisch beschouwd genoot de vrouw bitter weinig van de gift die men haar deed : zij bleef wat zij was, slaaf van het geld, slaaf van den man. Zelfs hare kinderen, die het nkitaschap van groote voordeelen bezorgden in hare familie, bracht hen in eene valsche situatie, dewijl het hen beroofde in het huis van hun eigen vader van al de voordeelen, die zij hen aanbracht in het vaderhuis hunner moeder. 't Was enkel de ouden, en goed bedeelden die in werkelijkheid uit het nkita-systeme hun voordeel trokken en ervan genoten :

1) Het ontlastte hen ten eersten van alle zorg wegens hunne dochters, die zij nog kind zijnde verkochten en als dezen later, groot geworden zijnde, zich beklaagden over het onrecht hen aangedaan, konden zij hen antwoorden : maar lieve dochter, ik heb u geen ongelijk aangedaan; hier in mijn eigen huis, is de vrouw die ik met uw geld gekocht heb; zij hoort u immers toe en de kinderen die ik met haar win, zijn uwe kinderen; gij zijt en hun vader en hunne moeder, zoo zullen zij u noemen : is'ommoto (vrouwelijk vader) en in die hoedanigheid zullen zij u eeren en dienen; de jongens zullen trouwens de kinderen zijn uwer kinderen en de meisjes zullen verkocht worden om uwe zonen de gelegenheid te geven om zich een vrouw aan te koopen.

2) Het ontsloeg hen voor een groot deel van alle zorg om een vrouw voor hunne zonen te zoeken en het ontzegde aan dezen het recht aanspraak te maken op de vrouwen die vader bezat.

Als de zoon vader plaagde om een vrouw, kon hij hem wandelen zenden en hem zeggen : maar jongen je hebt de nkita uwer moeder; de kinderen (meisjes) die uit haar geboren worden zijn voor u. Wij zullen ze verkoopen en met het geld zullen wij u een vrouw koopen... De meesten evenwel van die meisjes werden door den vader met een andere vrouw omgezet, daar zijn zoon alsdan nog klein was. Al de vrouwen dan kwamen bijna in den harem van vader te recht alvorens aan den zoon over te gaan... Zoodat bij slot van rekening het nkita-systême enkel de wulpsheid en de geilheid van den ouden neger ten goede kwam en hem geheel en gansch meester maakte van de vrouw. Zonen, dochters, vrouwen en kinderen waren daarentegen de gefopten en de slachtoffers van het nkita-schap.

H. BREPOELS, m. s. c.

Family Life and Customs among the Natives of Equatorial Africa

[Familieleven en zeden bij de inboorlingen van den Evenaar]

Gregorius Kaptein

Congo, Vol. 1, pp. 531-549
Brussels, 1922

Translated from the Flemish by Helen N. Sprey

Human Relations Area Files

1959

[Title Page]

[531]

FAMILY LIFE AND CUSTOMS AMONG THE NATIVES OF EQUATORIAL AFRICA

5B The so-called marriage, or rather, the acquisition of a wife takes place:

1. Through a bride price to the family of the woman who is given;
2. Through buying, or the payment of an amount for a woman who is no longer in the hands of the family;
3. Through inheritance;
4. Through abduction.

Acquisition by bride price is called *enga*, *njengenga*: "the binding or engagement of oneself."

Acquisition by purchase is called *sombo*, *masombo*: "buying."

When a woman is acquired through inheritance, the designation under which she was first acquired is retained. When the deceased father, uncle, or brother had acquired the woman by bride price or purchase, the heir will say: "*I* have taken this woman by bride price, purchase, etc."

Acquisition by abduction often occurred formerly in the tribal wars.

In disputes the natives often say: "He stole that woman." This is usually to announce the fact that the woman, according to them, was acquired in a dishonest manner.

The payment of bride price, purchase, etc., is usually made with a combination of money, objects, and male or female slaves.

This combined payment is called *songa*, *masonga*: "equalizing, settlement."

When a native is asked in what way he acquired his wife, he will usually say: *njoloengaki* (I have paid her bride price), because he [532] knows well that this is the most honest way. There are, however, many wives who have been acquired in the other way.

583
584 Acquisition by bride price sometimes begins before the birth of the expected daughter. The man, usually a polygynist, gives something of security to the father of the child. This security

583 584 [844] consists of a beautifully fashioned native knife, or a lance, or mitako (copper wire used as currency). In some areas, it was the polygynist who attended the mother at the birth of the daughter. He had the wood gathered, water brought, and food prepared. If, then, the expected child was a boy, the security was usually returned, and the contract declared null and void. If, however, the one who had given the security was a village chief or a man of importance, then the father of the child tried to give him another daughter. The father had, for instance, at an earlier time given a daughter to another man of much less importance. In the above-mentioned case, he would give back the bride price received, take his daughter back, and give her to the polygynist from whom he expected a larger bride price.

583 Sometimes too the boy was taken by the polygynist and remained in his family until the father could trade a daughter for him.

583 861 While very young and still a child, the little daughter was installed in the harem of the polygynist. She was brought up there, together with other children of her age and status; or rather, she grew up there in the midst of these heathen customs without any upbringing.

595 The composition of the harem of a polygamist:

The first wife was called the Bomatso; she preceded all the other wives in rank, and in the absence of the polygynist, she was the mistress of the harem.

The second wife was called Ekila; she was the most loved and preceded all the remaining wives. She was also called Nkonda.

The third wife was called Bolumbu. At the appointment of the Bolumbu, a certain ceremony took place, and the wife was clothed with an animal skin. The Nkumu, a sort of patriarch and magician, sometimes had three or four Bolumbu who served as [202] messengers to other villages. In this capacity they had special [721] privileges. For instance, to attack a Bolumbu was a reason for declaring war.

[533] The remaining women were simply women of the harem, without distinction.

595 In the area of Monjoku, among the Bolee [Bole?], the first wife was called Nkisa, with the same rank as Bomatso. The second

595 wife was called *Lonkoto*. This was, however, more a category, for there were sometimes four *Lonkoto* to a harem. The rest were ordinary wives. Among the Ekonda, the first wife was called *Nkumekolo*, just like the *Boimoma*. The second wife was called *Ekila* or *Nkombe*. The remaining wives were the ordinary wives of the harem.

595 684 The first wife, *Boimoma*, always remained at home and never left the harem. The second, *Ekila* or *Nkombe*, accompanied the polygynist everywhere; she was at his side on all his trips. The *Bokumbe* usually went completely alone to do errands in other villages.

595 These old customs of priority among the wives are now gradually beginning to disappear.

684 It was forbidden under severe penalty to have relations with the first, second, or third wife of the polygynist. The penalties were death, slavery, or a large fine.

This was their law concerning adultery, enforced with severe punishment.

595 837 The ordinary wives of the harem were less strictly guarded. This often depended on the jealousy or indifference of the polygynist. Anyone who had relations with these wives had to pay a fine, or rather, a price of prostitution. Since the wives were almost all in the possession of the polygynists, there were naturally many men without a wife. These, then, often had relations with the ordinary wives of the polygynists. Also, the sons of the polygynist had relations with them; the polygynist himself sometimes even had relations with the ordinary wives of his neighbor. This was the bad consequence and the immorality of polygyny.

595 586 It is easy to understand that the ordinary wives of the polygynist, having relations with others, often left their husband, or rather, their master in order to go to another. The ordinary wives constituted the largest number. It is because of this that one now finds many women who have had three or four, sometimes even seven, different husbands in succession. Among some tribes, [534] the Ekonda among them, they were stricter; a wife who had already left her husband or master two or more times was considered to have little worth.

567 595 The female slaves who were taken in war were given by the polygynist to his male slaves as wives. They could also be installed in the harem among the ordinary wives. Their children could have the same rights as the other children of the polygynist

600 the same rights as the other children of the polygynist.

595 The polygynist always sought to increase the number of his
556 wives, for his prestige rose and his fortune increased in that manner.
593 If anyone in civilized lands seeks to enlarge his fortune, this is
done, people say, in order to insure the future of his children. The
native thinks little about that; his primary idea is to enjoy himself
and to surpass others in prestige and esteem. As far as the future
of his children is concerned, there are polygynists who possess twenty
or thirty wives or even more, and sometimes they have only one or
two children. Also it is little in keeping with their notions to care
for the future; he who is still alive tomorrow must take care of
595 tomorrow then, so they reason. On the contrary, instead of caring
for his children, the polygynist often took great trouble to obtain a
593 wife for his son. The son, however, was not yet the owner of his
594 wife; it was, so to speak, only a loan. Not until after the death of
606 his father did he become owner. In some districts, when the father
had obtained a wife for his son, he first kept this wife for some time
for himself. Only after a few months did he give her to his son. In
595 other districts, when the wife was pregnant by the son, he was obliged
593 to send her for a few days to his father. He was not allowed to bear
606 the honor of fatherhood alone; his father must share that with him.
592 The father reserved for himself the honor of naming all of the chil-
591 dren of his children. In some areas of the Congo, morals were so
835 low and common that the father even kept his own daughters in his
harem. This did not occur in Equatorial Africa, but there was a
custom that was not much better. The magician was sometimes
593 consulted about the bride price which the father tried to get for his
791 daughter, or the brother for his sister.

The magician then gave them the advice that they themselves should first have relations with their own daughter or sister. This custom existed almost everywhere in Equatorial Africa.

593 [535] Bride Price. In general, the daughter was given in
marriage upon payment of a bride price. The father had little
choice of the future husband of his daughter. The one who guaranteed
the most goods in payment was certain to get her. Since, in most
cases, the little daughter had not yet arrived at the years of maturity,
there was naturally no question of her consent. The bride price was
not paid all at once, but gradually during the years while the
daughter grew up. Since the daughter was given without her consent

583 to an old, worn-out, grey-haired man, it naturally often occurred that when she arrived at maturity, she no longer wished to remain with him. She therefore left him and went to another, or back to her family. In the latter case, however, great difficulties arose concerning the return of the bride price. Indeed, with the bride price the father had received for his daughter, he bought himself another wife. This wife was then called the Nkita of the daughter. We could translate *Nkita* in this case as "substitute." The *Nkita* represented the value of the sold or married daughter. Meanwhile, the daughter herself was often the *Nkita* of the daughter or sister of her husband. Thus, many women were the *Nkita* of each other. According to their customs the children (boys) were in theory the heirs of the *Nkita* of their mother. The *Nkita* was, in fact, the value or the bride price of their mother.

One might ask whether the wife was then always content that she was, so to speak, an object of trade. In general, yes, she was satisfied with this. This is how the customs were, and nobody gave a thought to changing them. Usually the wife simply found herself in an arranged situation (*fait accompli*). Gradually a certain sense of honor is coming into being among the Christian wives against these heathen customs.

If the woman desired that a large bride price or purchase price be paid for her, was it also because she wished to care for the future of her children who would be heirs of her bride price? No, they say, not for that reason -- for, they add, what woman knew in advance that she would have children, and moreover boys? There
[163] are, in fact, many women who have no children. Also, [536] only
583 the boys are eligible for the inheritance; the girls are heirs only in
[illegible] name. When it came to the inheritance, the children inherited the
587 *Nkita* of their mother only if there were no more brothers of the mother or uncles on their father's side. The mightiest always had the greatest right.

Usually a youth had to acquire a wife with the bride price or supplement of the bride price of his sister. The inheritance of the *Nkita* of his mother was only secondary. Still we often see a heathen wife leave her husband in order to go to another, without bothering much about her children who remain with the deserted husband, their father.

583 If the wife was content and if she insisted that a large bride price be paid for her, it was out of vanity and also to procure money for her family (father or brothers), and not out of concern for her children.

586 583 Divorce. When the wife left her husband to go back to her family, they had to give back the bride price they had received. In general this was a very difficult business, because the bride price was used by the father or the brother to obtain another wife for himself, the Nkita. Thus, in order to be able to return the bride price, they would have to sell this Nkita or give her back to her family and ask for the return of her bride price. There were few other ways to give back the bride price; all their property consisted of wives. Since the family usually could not or would not return the bride price, the deserted husband then sought to become the master of the mother or a sister of his runaway wife, whom he then kept as a hostage. Among the heathens, this was a commonly used expedient to retrieve the wife or the bride price. When the runaway wife discovered that her mother or sister was a prisoner of her former husband, she often went back out of sympathy for her mother or sister. When the wife had gone not to her family but to another man, which was often the case, the family urged this second husband to give the bride price to the first husband. This was usually the only practical means by which the difficulty was resolved. This second husband then paid the bride price to the first. Since the [537] bride price often had been only paid in part by the first one, he then paid the remaining portion to the family.

Sometimes, if there were no way to return the bride price, the woman was forced to go back to her deserted husband. To avoid unpleasant treatment, she had to feign submissiveness.

586 587 As soon as an agreement was arrived at, either with the family or with the second husband, over the return of the bride price, the first bond was considered broken. If the woman was with her family, she was considered free to enter into a new agreement. If, however, she was with another husband, then after the argument she was considered bound to that second husband. The primary bond of their agreement thus appears to be the bride price.

586 If the wife had children, these remained with their father, and the bride price was only partially returned. The value of the children was, so to speak, subtracted from the bride price.

587 When a wife of a polygynist had illicit relations with another
576 man of the same village, this was called bonsomba. When she had such relations with a man of another village, this was called loeke. As we have observed, the ordinary wives of the harem often had such relations. When the woman eloped with her bonsomba or loeke, or with whomever it was, she was pursued by her husband or owner, who tried to get her back. If the wife refused, negotiations over the bride price began.

If an agreement was reached or if a pledge was given as guarantee for the payment, the first bond was considered broken, and the woman was considered bound to this second man, even though he had been her bonsomba or loeke.

It might also happen that the first husband was so jealous that he did not want to make any agreement; then he attempted to kill either the guilty wife or her second husband. If the woman became
593 ill at the home of her husband, he went to tell her family and had to
758 give a security to the family.

583 Often the family came to get the wife, in order to be able to care for her better. If, in such a case, the wife [538] died at the home of her family, there were no further difficulties about the bride price, according to their customs. If, however, the bride price had still not been completely paid, the family asked their son-in-law to pay the remainder.

583 In recent times, now that the heathen customs have been
171 undermined by the European occupation, we see that the husbands whose wives have gone to their family when sick and have died there, demand the return of the bride price from the family, but this is completely contrary to their old customs. In one case the husband could demand the return of the bride price, namely, if the wife had left while healthy to go to her family and had died there.

562 Buying or Trading of Women. The woman was also in many
439 cases an acknowledged object of trade. The great village chiefs, among others Ibaka and Yoma, of whom we shall speak further, carried on a sort of woman trade. With European articles and also native currency, they went to other districts of the Equator [Province] to buy women with them, just like someone who goes to market, even though no public markets where women were sold actually existed.

567
437
562 Everywhere there were also abducted women and female slaves; these were simply sold. Furthermore women were bought and sold with women [as payment]. Also women who were inherited and no longer in the hands of their family were sold by their second, third, or other subsequent husband. In all of these cases, the family no longer came into consideration for the bride price. One would have to stretch the point in order to consider the sums paid in these cases as a bride price, and consequently as a native custom which one must respect.

562
437 Or one should have to assume that such a native woman remains a "bride" for her whole lifetime. It will be said that the woman consented to her sale by one man to the other.

567] Often this was indeed the case, but not always by any means, for children and slaves were also sold. Even the consent of the woman did not prevent it from being a sale; her consent was rather an extra transaction that simplified the sale of a human article of trade. It still remains woman trade.

764
567 The Inheritance. Upon the death of a polygynist, the burial ceremony was conducted according to the class and rank of the deceased. One or two or several [538] slaves were killed and buried with the polygynist in the same grave. Sometimes the arms and legs of these male and female slaves were broken, and then they were buried alive in the same grave with the body.

When these slaves still had family, it might happen that the family members, having learned of the unfortunate lot of their relative, would hasten from faraway districts to buy him or her free if it was not yet too late. Several Negroes have told us of these heartbreaking scenes at which they were present as children. The mourning and the lamenting over the dead lasted from a week to a month. [765]

768
428 The eldest son immediately succeeded his father in position and immediately took one of the wives of his father.

587 The other sons divided among them the lances and knives of their father.

If the deceased had left no son, or if he was still too young, the oldest brother succeeded the deceased. All of the wives had to remain in their own home, except the wife who was immediately taken by the eldest son. They were obliged to await the day of the distribution. This day was put off for from one to four months.

Meanwhile, these wives were subjected to a certain discipline. They were called bituka, which we translate here as "widow." During this time they were allowed to speak with the relatives of the deceased, but they had to remain at home; it was not permitted for anyone to take these wives.

When the time came for the distribution, the one in charge, namely, the son or the brother of the deceased, called together the heirs and parties concerned. On the day of the distribution, in the morning before dawn, the bituka left their dwelling place and went to the man with whom they had already come to an agreement, so that by daybreak all the huts of the bituka stood empty. Each of the wives of the polygynist usually has her own hut. At the appointed hour, the meeting was announced by the usual beating of the tomtom. The wives, the heirs, and all parties concerned then came together.

If there were many wives to distribute, the order of distribution was as follows: in the first place the brothers of the deceased received their share; in the second [540] place came the sons; and in the third place, the grandsons, that is, the sons of the daughters who received their share from the Nkita of their mother. If at this time the wife did not want to go with the man for whom she was designated, she was sold to another. Sometimes the family of the wife was not satisfied with that, and if they could, they gave the bride price back in order thereby to free their daughter or sister. Such a wife then came back to her family, where, however, she was again married in return for another bride price. The family acted thus to prevent its daughter or sister from simply being sold. When the grandsons were still too young, their share of the Nkita of their mother went to their uncle, the son of the deceased. The latter had then to provide a wife for them later, which he usually never did without making a great deal of trouble. If the daughters had no sons who could inherit their Nkita, they received some of the father's personal property as inheritance: goats, dogs, lances, knives, pross, etc. If the deceased had left a daughter but no sons or brothers, the daughter had to supervise the distribution of the inheritance.

Our civilized idea that the wife, the mother of the family, is the first heir, is thus not taken into consideration there. Indeed, the wife, the mother herself, is inherited if she is not too old.

001 What is one to do if even in such cases it is taught, "One must respect" the native customs?

587 The inheriting of wives existed everywhere; it was, in fact,
428 the only wealth left behind by the native. The details of the dis-
[562] tribution differed according to district or tribe. Thus, for instance, in some districts it was the eldest son who alone inherited all of the wives of his father. This was in order to preserve the rank and the class of the family. Prestige and power actually depended only on the number of wives that one possessed. In this case, however, this eldest son had, in place of his father, to provide a wife for his younger brothers and the sons of his sisters. As far as impediments
[582] to marriage were concerned, generally they strictly observed the impediment of blood relationship; two blood relatives, even in a distant degree, should never enter into marriage, [541] with the exception of the irregularities mentioned above. As for relatives by marriage, these do not exist for them in any degree. There is, nevertheless, one case that somewhat resembles relationship by marriage, namely, the Nkita might never be in the home of a man together with the woman whose Nkita she was. Thus, the son-in-law or the brother-in-law might never take the Nkita of his wife into his home. If, however, the wife had left or died, there was no further impediment.

587 When, like the inheritance above, the family had returned
428 the bride price and had then married the woman to another man, this
431 second husband also had to give a gift to the one who, according to the law of inheritance, had the right to the wife. This gift was called a bampanga.

587 If the wife who was freed by the family had children, only a
428 part of the bride price had to be returned. Sometimes the wife was freed completely through her children. The children then remained with the family of the deceased husband, and they then represented the value of the bride price of their mother. If, however, such a woman was married again by her family, they demanded a second bride price for that.

587 Sometimes a single woman was the Nkita of several other
428 women. In the inheritance several people then had a right over
583 her, and everyone demanded his share. For instance, a young man

597 428 583 had to acquire a wife with the bride price or with a supplement of the bride price of his sisters. Three of his sisters, for instance, were married, and he needed 3,000 *mitako* to pay for his intended wife. Now he went with presents to his three brothers-in-law and asked for 1,000 *mitako* from each of them. The bride price was already paid to the father; the 1,000 *mitako* that he asks are a supplement of the bride price.

With these 3,000 *mitako*, our young man pays for his wife. This wife now becomes the *Nkita* of the three sisters. If this young man dies, his three sisters and his three brothers-in-law all demand their share back from the widow. If she is sold, the price must be divided among the three brothers-in-law. If she remains in the family of her husband, with the uncle or brother, she continues to be the *Nkita* of her three sisters-in-law.

431 583 [542] There also exists a general rule and custom that the family which has received the bride price regularly give gifts to their daughter and son-in-law or sister and brother-in-law. These gifts consisted of goats, dogs (which also have a rather large value among the natives), ducks, etc., but the gifts never consisted of money. These gifts were in turn given by the son-in-law or brother-in-law to the one who had helped him pay the bride price.

For instance, if the young man of whom we just spoke received gifts from the family of his wife, he would then have given these gifts to his three brothers-in-law. These gifts were often so much that the value of them was almost equal to the bride price that the man had paid for his wife. Custom demanded, in such a case, that the man then pay a supplement to the bride price.

In case the bride price had to be given back, the gifts that the family had already given might be subtracted from the bride price. When such disputes are brought before a European, it is difficult for him to settle them, for the value is tremendously exaggerated by the parties. The husband will demand the return of a much larger bride price than he actually gave, while the family on its side will estimate the gifts that they had given as much higher than the actual value or amount.

436 *Something about prices, the bride price for wives, and native money value.*

Their first original money was as follows.

436 1. *Bonkata*: this was thin iron or copper wire coiled into small rings; the thickness of the wire was about 3 millimeters, the length, 20 to 25 centimeters.

2. *Bingwele*: iron or copper bars about 6 millimeters thick and 15 centimeters long; these are still in use in Bikoro.

436 301 3. *Bokete*: copper wire; thickness about 7 or 8 millimeters, and 1 meter or 1.50 meters long; spiral shaped; the women wore these coiled around their legs as copper leggings.

[142] 4. *Bikonga*: copper rings which served as arm bands and foot bands and also as collars. The size differed for small or large persons; the weight is from one half kilo to 5 kilos.

436 5. *Mitako*: copper wire about 4 millimeters thick and 25 centimeters long, usually bent like a hairpin. The *mitako* served as a uniform currency, from which the other values and prices were reckoned, like the franc with us. The value of the *mitako* was formerly reckoned at five centimes.

583 436 Formerly the bride price, which was paid for a wife in almost all of Equatorial Africa, was from 5 to 20 *bikonga*. (The value of the *bikonga* differed greatly according to the weight. The average value, however, is estimated at 2.50 francs.) This payment was further supplemented with slaves or wives. This manner of payment and the bride price still exist in the districts where the natives have not yet, or practically not, come in contact with Europeans. Also, [567] it was sometimes paid with only slaves or women. The price for one female slave was relatively much less than for another woman.

178 583 Through the occupation of the Congo by Europeans, the family life of the natives has necessarily undergone great changes, and their customs and habits as well.

In the first place the natives have found themselves deprived of their wives by the sentinels of the Independent Congo State. [661] These black sentinels, appointed in the villages by the State to supervise the reaping of caoutchouc, assumed an unlimited power. They took as many wives of the natives as they chose and did not pay for a single one.

Next many black soldiers, servant boys, and workmen of the Europeans also took wives everywhere in the beginning, without bothering about the native customs, that is, without paying for those wives; and this often happened under the protective power of their Whites.

177 583 We can add to that also a large number of black women who become the famous "housekeepers" of the Europeans. Although payment for these women was usually given to their owners, they were still withdrawn from the family life and the native customs. Finally, the Christian women, who now live in Christian marriage, must also be mentioned.

In addition, the price of wives and the bride price have [544] undergone great changes, primarily in those districts where the natives come into more immediate contact with Europeans. Before the arrival of the Europeans, their main medium of payment was the woman herself; a woman was paid for with a woman. Now it is forbidden to use women as currency. Therefore the natives have raised the price in the payment of bokonga and mitako.

177 583 585 In some districts close to the European centers, the natives have brought the price for wives and the bride price to a height never before known. For one wife they ask several nkoni.

A nkoni is 10,000 mitako. Such a sum is much too high in relation to their means. In a village there are, for instance, 50 women; for one woman, 40,000 to 50,000 mitako are asked, while at present in the whole village together the sum of 50,000 mitako is no more to be found. Therefore to oblige someone to pay two or three nkoni is usually to make it impossible for him to pay, or rather to make it necessary for him to pay with women, which is nothing else than encouraging woman trade, which then occurs.

802 177 A remark should also be made here about the nomenclature of the numerals. Nkoni is not a word of the Equatorial peoples; it was brought in from elsewhere with the Europeans. Their amounts were as follows:

10 was jum or bonkama;

100 was nkoto; and with the arrival of the Whites and foreign population came

1,000 nkoni.

The present numerical value is: 10, jum; 100, bonkama; 1,000, nkoto; and 10,000, nkoni. Some very old Negroes, however, still say bonkama for 10.

[583] This is the probable origin of the great rise in price of wives, especially in the area of Coquilhatville.

178 437 583 When the first Europeans arrived at Leopoldville and Brazzaville, it was not long before European materials and other articles also came to Coquilhatville to the hands of the great village chiefs who carried on trade on the rivers, primarily in slaves and ivory. The village chiefs, Yoma from the village of Boyeka, Ilonko of Boyera, Yomba of [163] Eala, Nkake of Bokala, etc., carried these European articles up the Tshuapa and Ikelemba rivers, and they bought slaves and wives with them.

Returning home again, they bought wives from their own district and paid for them with the slaves and women whom they themselves had bought cheaply with the European articles. For one woman of their district they paid three or four women. The arrival 803 of the Whites and foreign Blacks acquainted them with the number *nkesi* which, however, in their definition was only 1,000 and which they formerly called 10 *nkoto* or 10 times 100.

178 583 It was not long before the Europeans had to concern themselves with having disputes over the wives. In the Black land such a thing is unavoidable. Whenever the Blacks came to the Whites with their disputes, they dared not or would not say, "I paid for this woman with three women, but they said, "I paid for this woman with three *nkesi*," that is, 3 times 1,000 *mitako*. Meanwhile, the *nkoto* and *nkesi* acquired their value of 1,000 and 10,000. The statement, however, that a woman was paid for with *nkesi* was retained, through the error of the Whites or through the greed of the polygynists or both. Indeed, later some women were paid for with *nkesi*, namely, when the prevalent currency in the Congo was the *mitako*. It was also no wonder, for the polygynists had a monopoly on the wives, and it was to their advantage to raise the price.

Therefore, if the native of Coquilhatville says now that his father or his uncle paid for that woman with three or four *nkesi*, this generally means that the wife was paid for with three or four women. The price of the women in Wangata, near Coquilhatville, was formerly no higher than in the other areas. Many women were paid for with only five *bakonga*, for instance, in Bokala, near Bamania, a village which belonged to the village chief Yoma of Boyeka.

178 583 435 It should also be noted that the *nkesi* which have been paid in recent years in Wangata have been paid not in *mitako* or in

178 currency, but in articles on which the natives fix a conventional
583 price, usually much higher than the actual value. Thus, for in-
435 stance, a petaki, or piston rifle, was always reckoned at 2,000 mitako; it did not matter that it was only worth 1,500. There are, [544] therefore, only very few women who are paid for with ebasi in real currency or mitako.

691 The tragic result of this exaggerated rise in prices is that the
583 mutual debts and difficulties among the natives have been increased,
178 so that they are almost impossible to solve. In the attempt to settle a dispute, five other disputes come into it, all equally complicated, for the simple reason that the money, the mitako, to be paid does not exist, and it is forbidden to pay with women. To settle a dispute, several months are sometimes necessary, or a whole year. Other disputes never end, but pass on from father to son and are brought by each one in turn before each new District Administrator. In the districts where the bride price has not been raised, the difficulties and disputes are not nearly as numerous and are easy to solve. In the districts where the purchase price and the bride price of the women have become excessively high, the natives themselves admit that their disputes could formerly be solved easily, but that this is at present almost impossible.

It is unnecessary to say that this situation is harmful to the task of civilizing [the country] and to the mutual good relations of the natives. The natives are constantly coming to the District Administrator of the area to lay before him their disputes over women who have not been paid for. These disputes take up a great deal of the costly time of the administrator. He must hear and settle these usually very complicated disputes, for often the general peace of a village or district depends on it.

Also the natives themselves spend whole days and weeks doing nothing besides holding meetings to discuss the unpayable debts of bride price and the purchase price of wives, simply because the prices are excessive. For lack of currency, they pay each other with each other's debts, which usually complicates the business even more.

To improve this condition, the price of women and the bride price should be lowered, greatly lowered. We have seen that this was possible and practical when once a District Administrator who knew the native customs very well in the area of Coquilhatville really began to do it.

208 [547] Unfortunately the system was not continued. Also, it must not be said that it would be unjust to lower the price of the women. Rather, injustice would then be redressed, a degenerate custom be improved. Through the present system, ever more injustice is committed and suffered.

583 A few polygynists would suffer some material loss through
595 the lowering of the price of the women, namely, by receiving less
for one woman than they (sometimes) paid for them, for they inherited most of the women. But they are also the ones who are responsible for the irregular situation. In a large part of the district, the polygynists are by far the minority of the population. They are the ones who are hostile to the Colonial Administration. They are in possession of the women and have a monopoly on them. They fix prices which a young man can almost never pay, namely, two [illegible] at least.

583 The difficulties for Christian marriages become daily still more difficult. This is true for the marriages already entered into and for the future marriages.

583 The bride price to be paid for the wife ought to be such that
428 every young man can pay that sum with his own money, with the
426 money that he has earned himself by his work. This sum cannot
(465) be high, for the ordinary working man in the Congo, who makes up
511] the large part of the population, does not earn much more than what
he needs for board and clothing. Therefore to pay an excessively large sum as a bride price forces him to borrow and to run up debts among his relatives and friends. The result of this is that the system of the *Nkita* goes over unnoticed into the Christian marriages, and the woman remains an object for inheritance. Indeed, when the man dies the creditors will come, namely, those who have loaned him money -- and demand the wife. The disputes over the bride price then begin anew, and they will again give the wife in marriage in return for a new bride price. Thus, there is no end to it. The wife, the mother, will never achieve any rights but will always remain an object of inheritance. There has been talk about declaring the widow free at the death of her husband in order to prevent the inheriting of wives, but how will it be possible to [548] achieve that if the bride price is not lessened, considerably lessened? When a

583 young man can pay for his wife, or rather pay her bride price with
428 his own earned money, then that wife becomes his property. At
426 his death, no creditors or mortgage holders can come to demand the wife since she will then actually be free. There will also be no difficulty in making her heir to the property of her husband, for herself and her children. The bride price or payment for wives among the civilized Blacks could be very much simplified. To abolish it would not be so easy. Indeed, it seems to be in the customs and the habits of the whole Black race. Then too, with respect to bride price, usually still in entanglements with their heathen relatives.

The bride price, as it exists among the heathens, will always remain a source of difficulties for civilization and a support for polygyny.

000 When the price is lowered, the large number of wives of polygynists will be seen to disperse and go to the men who have no wife. Thus, single marriages will be increased, and the district, whose population is greatly decreased, will become populated again. Lowering the price will also prevent women being paid for with women; and thus the trading of women will be hindered, since then the whole bride price can be paid in currency. It is also anticipated that the woman will become less a material object; and by changing the wife from an object of inheritance to an heiress, her moral value will be raised in her own eyes and in the eyes of the men.

In order to civilize the land, Christian marriages must be established. In order to establish Christian marriages, the impediments that stand in the way must be removed, and everything be put to work to benefit what the good outcome of that can assure.

[549] Family Nomenclature

601

The name of:	is given to:
Ise, father	one's own father brothers of the father sons and grandsons of father's sisters

601

The name of:	is given to:	
Ngoya Nyango mother	one's own mother sisters of the mother	
Bana, children	one's own children children of brothers or sisters children of mother's brothers grandchildren of mother's brothers	
Nkoko-nyango, grand-parent	grandfather and grandmother brothers and sisters of grandfather and grandmother children and grandchildren of grandfather's sisters	
Nkan'ea jenda, brother Nkan'ey'omoto, sister	by natural brothers and sisters to: the children of two brothers the children of two sisters	
Nkana l'ontamba	an expression for "one's own brother and sister	
Botomolo	older brother or sister	also used for older or younger contemporaries
Bokune	younger brother or sister	
Nyang-obika (1), uncle Ngompame	the brothers of mother	

1. We could translate Nyangobika as male mother.

The name of:	is given to:
Ise-omoto (2), aunt	the sisters of father the daughters of father's sisters the granddaughters of father's sisters
Bokilo	son-in-law, brother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law
Nkita, substitute	by the daughter to: the extra wife of her father, bought with her bride price her sister-in-law or extra wife of her brother, bought with her bride price

2. We could translate Iseomoto as female father.

CONGO

REVUE GENERALE DE LA COLONIE BELGE

ALGEMEEN TIJDSCHRIFT DER BELGISCHE KOLONIE

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

1922. Tomes I et II

ARTICLES DE FOND.

Engels. A propos de chefferies indigènes . . . . . . Tome I, page 1.
E. Michel. La soie indigène . . . . I, 11.
L. Bittremieux et *J. Bruynseels*. De legende der halve menschen I. 35.
P. Gallmin. Quelques coutumes matrimoniales des peuplades entre Congo-Ubangi . . . . I. 44.
J. Pieraerts. A propos de l'Heritiera Littoralis Ait. . . . . . I. 49.
B. Tanghe. L'exploration de l'Ubangi (18-4 1891). . . . I, 161 et 366.
Dr J. Maes. Armes de jet des populations du Congo Belge. . I, 181.
L. Bittremieux et *J. Lestaeghe*. Godsdienstbegrippen bij de Nkundu's van 't Leopoldmeer . . . . I. 194 et 356.
J. P. et *F. D.* Le copal (suite et fin) . . . . I, 208.
Engels. Administration directe ou administration indirecte au Congo . . . . I. 325.
P. Colle. Les clans au pays des Bashi. . . . . I. 337.
H. Vanderyst. La polyandrie existe-elle au Congo ? . . . . . I. 353.
E. De Jonghe. L'instruction publique au Congo belge . . . I. 501.
G. Kaptein. Familieleven en zeden bij de inboorlingen van den Evenaar . . . . I, 531.
J. Pieraerts. Une matière grasse nouvelle du Congo Belge. « L'huile de copalier » . . . . I. 550.
J. Van Wing. Routes carrossables dans la Mission du Kwango. I, 556.
Mgr. Classe. Le Ruanda et ses habitants. . . . . I. 677
G. Moulaert. La mobilisation industrielle belge au Tanganika en 1916 . . . . I, 691.
Ch. du Bus de Warnaffe. Le mouvement pan-nègre aux États-Unis et ailleurs . . . . I. 713.
L. Achten. Klankleer en spelling der Bantutalen . . . . . . I. 728.
L. Le Grand. De la légalité des villages chrétiens . . . . . II. 1.
R. Anthoine. La mise en valeur des champs aurifères de Kilo-Moto, par la « Régie industrielle des mines » . . . . . . II 8.
F. Mortier. De la réclame indigène pour l'intensification de notre commerce colonial . . . . II, 43.

[title page]

Familieleven en zeden bij de inboorlingen van den Evenaar.

Het zoogenaamde huwelijk, of liever de aanwerving der vrouw geschiedt :

1° Door een bruidschat aan de familie der vrouw gegeven;

2° Door het koopen, of het betalen eener som voor een vrouw die niet meer in de handen der familie is;

3° Door erfenis;

4° Door roof.

De aanwerving door bruidschat wordt genoemd : enga, njengenga : zich verbinden, verloven.

De aanwerving door een koop wordt genoemd : somba, nsasomba : koopen.

De aanwerving door erfenis behoudt gewoonlijk denzelfden titel waaronder de vrouw was aangeworven. Wanneer de overledene vader, oom of broeder de vrouw door bruidschat of koop hebben aangeworven, zal de erfgenaam zeggen : *ik* heb die vrouw aangenomen door bruidschat, koop, enz.

De aanwerving door roof gebeurde vroeger dikwijls in de onderlinge oorlogen.

In geschilllen zullen de inboorlingen dikwijls zeggen : hij heeft die vrouw gestolen. Dit is gewoonlijk om te kennen te geven dat de vrouw volgens hen op oneerlijke wijze is aangeworven.

De betaling voor bruidschat, koop, enz. geschiedde gewoonlijk met geld, voorwerpen en slaven of slavinnen te zamen.

Deze saamgestelde betaling werd genoemd : songa, nsasonga : gelijkmaken, vereffenen.

Wanneer een inboorling ondervraagd wordt op welke wijze hij zijn vrouw heeft aangeworven, zal hij gewoonlijk zeggen : njoloengaki (ik heb haar bruidschat betaald), omdat hij wel weet dat dit de eerlijkste wijze is. Er zijn echter zeer vele vrouwen die op de andere wijze aangeworven geweest zijn.

De aanwerving door bruidschat begint soms al vóór de geboorte van het vermoede dochtertje. De man, meestal een veelwijver, geeft dan een pand aan den vader van het kind. Dit pand bestaat uit een schoon bewerkt inlandsch mes, of lans, of mitakos. Bij de geboorte van het dochtertje was het in sommige streken de veelwijver die dan de moeder deed verzorgen. Hij liet dan hout sprokkelen, water halen en voedsel bereiden. Als nu het verwachte kind een jongen was, werd gewoonlijk het pand teruggegeven en het contrakt nietig verklaard. Als nochtans degene die het pand gegeven had een dorpshoofd was of een man van groot aanzien, dan trachtte de vader van het kind hem een andere dochter te geven. De vader had bijvoorbeeld reeds vroeger een dochter aan een anderen man gegeven van veel minder aanzien. In bovengenoemd geval gaf hij dan den ontvangen bruidschat terug, nam zijn dochter terug en gaf ze aan den veelwijver van wien hij grooteren bruidschat te wachten had.

Soms werd ook de jongen door den veelwijver aangenomen en bleef in diens familie totdat de vader hem kon inruilen voor een dochter.

Zeer jong en nog kind zijnde, werd het dochtertje in den harem van den veelwijver ingelijfd. Zij werd daar opgevoed tezamen met andere kinderen van haren ouderdom en staat; of liever zij groeide daar op tusschen die heidensche gebruiken zonder eenige opvoeding.

De samenstelling van den harem van een veelwijver :

De eerste vrouw werd genoemd de « Bomatsa »; deze ging alle andere vrouwen in waardigheid voor, en in afwezigheid van den veelwijver was zij de meesteres van den harem.

De tweede vrouw werd genoemd « Ekila »; deze was de meest beminde en ging al de overige vrouwen vóór. Zij werd ook genoemd « Nkonda ».

De derde vrouw werd genoemd « Bolumbu ». Bij de benoeming der Bolumbu hadden er zekere plechtigheden plaats; de vrouw werd bekleed met een dierenvel. De Nku's, een soort van oudvaders en tooveraars, hadden soms drie of vier Bolumbus; deze deden dienst als boodschappers naar andere dorpen. In deze hoedanigheid hadden zij bijzondere voorrechten. Bijvoorbeeld een Bolumbu lastig vallen was een reden tot oorlogverklaring.

De overige vrouwen, waren eenvoudig vrouwen van den harem, zonder onderscheid,

In de streek van Monjoku bij de Bolees werd de eerste vrouw genoemd « Nkisa » met dezelfde waardigheid als Bomatsa. De tweede vrouw werd genoemd « Lonkata ». Dit was echter meer een categorie, want er waren soms 4 Lonkata's in een harem. De overige waren gewone vrouwen. Bij de Ekonda's werd de eerste vrouw genoemd « Nkumokolo » evenals de Bomatsa. De tweede vrouw werd genoemd « Ekila » of « Nkonde ». De overige vrouwen waren de gewone vrouwen van den harem.

De eerste vrouw Bomatsa bleef altijd tehuis en verliet nooit den harem. De tweede Ekila of Nkonde vergezelde overal den veelwijver; op al zijn reizen bleef zij bij hem. De Bolumbu's gingen meestal geheel alleen uit om boodschappen te doen in andere dorpen.

Deze oude zeden van voorrang bij de vrouwen beginnen nu langzamerhand te verdwijnen.

Het was op zware straffen verboden betrekkingen te hebben met de eerste, tweede of derde vrouw van den veelwijver. De straffen waren : de doodstraf, de slavernij, of groote geldboete.

Dit was hun wet op het overspel met zware straf bekrachtigd.

De gewone vrouwen van den harem waren minder streng bewaakt. Dit hing al veeltijds af van de jaloersheid of onverschilligheid van den veelwijver. Degene die betrekking had gehad met deze vrouwen moest een geldboete betalen of liever een prijs van prostitutie. Daar de vrouwen bijna allen in het bezit waren van de veelwijvers, waren er natuurlijk veel mannen zonder vrouw. Dezen nu hadden dikwijls betrekkingen met de gewone vrouwen van de veelwijvers. Ook de zoons van den veelwijver hadden daar betrekkingen mee ; de veelwijver zelf had soms nog betrekkingen met de gewone vrouwen van zijn gebuur. En dit was het slecht gevolg en de onzedelijkheid van de veelwijverij.

Het is gemakkelijk te verstaan dat de gewone vrouwen van den veelwijver met anderen in betrekking zijnde, dikwijls hun man, of liever hun meester verlieten om bij een anderte gaan. De gewone vrouwen maakten het grootste getal uit. Vandaar dat men nu vele vrouwen vindt die opvolgelijk 3 of 4, ja soms 7 verschillende mannen gehad hebben. Bij sommige stammen, onder anderen bij de Ekondas, was men strenger : een vrouw die reeds tweemaal of meer haar man of meester verlaten had werd beschouwd als weinig waarde hebbende.

De slavinnen welke in den oorlog genomen waren, werden door den veelwijver aan zijn slaven als vrouw gegeven. Het gebeurde ook dat zij in den harem werden ingelijfd bij de gewone vrouwen. Hunne kinderen konden dezelfde rechten bekomen als de overige kinderen van den veelwijver.

De veelwijver zocht altijd het getal zijner vrouwen te vermeerderen, want daardoor steeg zijn aanzien en vermeerderde zijn fortuin. Als men in de beschaafde landen zijn fortuin zoekt te vergrooten, geschiedt dit, zegt men, om de toekomst zijner kinderen te verzekeren. De inboorling denkt daar weinig op ; zijn voornaamste inzicht is zelf te genieten en anderen in aanzien en achting te overtreffen. En wat de toekomst zijner kinderen betreft, er zijn veelwijvers die 20 of 30 vrouwen bezitten of nog meer en soms maar één of twee kinderen hebben. Ook is het weinig volgens hun begrip om voor de toekomst te zorgen : wie morgen nog leeft moet morgen maar zorgen, zoo redeneeren zij. Integendeel, in plaats van voor zijn kinderen te zorgen, maakte de veelwijver dikwijls veel moeilijkheid om een vrouw aan te werven voor zijn zoon. En dan werd de zoon nog geen eigenaar van zijn vrouw, het was als 't ware nog maar een leening. Slechts na den dood van zijn vader werd hij eigenaar. In sommige streken wanneer de vader een vrouw aangeworven had voor zijn zoon, hield hij deze vrouw eerst eenigen tijd voor hemzelf. Slechts na eenige maanden gaf hij ze aan zijn zoon. In andere streken, wanneer de vrouw van den zoon bevrucht was, moest hij ze eenige dagen naar zijn vader sturen : hij mocht alleen de eer van het vaderschap niet dragen, zijn vader moest dat met hem deelen. De vader behield zich de eer om alle kinderen zijn kinderen te noemen. In sommige streken van den Congo waren de zeden zoo laag en gemeen, dat de vader zelfs zijn eigen dochters in zijn harem behield. Dit gebeurde niet in den Evenaar, maar daar bestond een gebruik dat al niet veel beter was. De toovenaar werd namelijk soms geraadpleegd over den bruidschat welke de vader voor zijn dochter of de broer voor zijn zuster zocht te krijgen.

De toovenaar gaf hun dan den raad dat zij zelf eerst betrekkingen zouden hebben met hun eigen dochter of zuster. En dit gebruik bestond bijna overal in den Evenaar.

Bruidschat. — In 't algemeen werd de dochter ten huwelijk gegeven tegen betaling van een bruidschat. De vader had weinig voorkeur voor den toekomstigen man van zijn dochtertje. Degene die de meeste waarborg leverde van goed te betalen was zeker haar te krijgen? En daar in de meeste gevallen het dochtertje nog niet tot de jaren van verstand was gekomen, was er natuurlijk geen spraak van hare toestemming. De bruidschat werd niet in eens betaald maar langzamerhand met de jaren dat het dochtertje opgroeide. Daar het dochtertje zonder hare toestemming aan een ouden versleten grijsaard gegeven was, gebeurde het natuurlijk dikwijls dat, eenmaal tot volwassen ouderdom gekomen zijnde, zij niet langer bij hem wilde blijven. Zij verliet hem dus, en ging bij een ander ofwel naar haar familie terug. In dit laatste geval ontstonden er echter groote moeilijkheden, aangaande het teruggeven van den bruidschat. Immers met den bruidschat welken de vader voor zijn dochter ontvangen had kocht hij zich eene andere vrouw. Deze vrouw werd dan genoemd de « Nkita » van de dochter. Nkita zouden we in dit geval kunnen vertalen door « plaatsvervanger ». De Nkita vertegenwoordigde de waarde van de verkochte of uitgehuwde dochter. Ondertusschen was de dochter zelf ook dikwijls de Nkita van de dochter of zuster van haar man. Zoo waren vele vrouwen de Nkita van elkander. Volgens hun gebruiken waren in theorie de kinderen (de jongens) de erfgenamen van de Nkita hunner moeder. De Nkita was immers de waarde of de bruidschat hunner moeder.

Men zou kunnen vragen of de vrouw dan steeds tevreden was dat zij als 't ware een voorwerp van den handel was. In 't algemeen ja, zij was daarmee tevreden. Zoo immers waren de zeden, en niemand dacht er aan daar iets aan te veranderen. Meestal bevond de vrouw zich in een afgedane zaak, (fait accompli). Langzamerhand begint er een zeker eergevoel te ontstaan bij de christene vrouwen tegen die heidensche gebruiken.

En als de vrouw verlangde dat men voor haar een grooten bruidschat of prijs betaalde, was het dan ook omdat zij voor de toekomst harer kinderen wilde zorgen die de erfgenamen van haar bruidschat zouden zijn? Neen, zeggen ze, daarom niet — want, voegen zij er bij, welke vrouw wist vooraf dat zij kinderen zou hebben, en nog wel jongens. Er zijn namelijk zeer vele vrouwen welke geen kinderen hebben. — En voor de erfenis komen enkel de jongens in aanmerking, de meisjes zijn enkel erfgename bij name. En wanneer het op de erfenis aankwam, erfden de kinderen de Nkita van hunne moeder alleen dan, als er geen broers meer waren van de moeder of ooms van den kant haars vaders. De sterksten hadden altijd het meeste recht.

Meestal moest een jongeling zich een vrouw aanwerven met den bruidschat of supplement van den bruidschat van zijne zuster. — De erfenis van de Nkita zijner moeder kwam slechts op de tweede plaats. En nog dikwijls zien wij een heidensche vrouw haren man verlaten om bij eenen andere te gaan, zonder zich veel te bekommeren met hare kinderen die bij den verlaten man, hun vader blijven.

Als de vrouw tevreden was en er aan hield dat men een grooten bruidschat voor haar betaalde, was het uit ijdelheid en ook om geld te bezorgen aan haar familie (vader of broers) en niet uit voorzorg voor haar kinderen.

Echtscheiding. — Wanneer de vrouw haren man verliet om naar hare familie terug te gaan, moest deze den ontvangen bruidschat teruggeven. In 't algemeen was dit een zeer moeilijke zaak, omdat de bruidschat gebruikt was door den vader of den broer om zich een andere vrouw aan te werven, de « Nkita ». Dus om den bruidschat terug te kunnen geven, zouden zij deze Nkita moeten verkoopen of deze ook aan hare familie teruggeven en den bruidschat terugvragen. Andere middelen om den bruidschat terug te geven bestonden er weinig : al hun vermogen bestond in de vrouwen. — Daar de familie meestal den bruidschat niet kon of wilde teruggeven, zocht de verlaten man dan zich meester te maken van de moeder of van een zuster zijner weggeloopene vrouw, welke hij dan vasthield als gijzelaar. Dit was een gewoonlijk gebruikt middel bij de heidenen om de vrouw of den bruidschat terug te krijgen. Wanneer de weggeloopene vrouw vernam dat haar moeder of zuster gevangene was bij haar vroegeren man, ging zij dikwijls terug uit medelijden voor hare moeder of zuster. Wanneer de vrouw niet naar hare familie maar naar een anderen man was gegaan, wat dikwijls het geval was, zette de familie dezen tweeden man aan om den bruidschat te geven aan den eersten man. Dit was gewoonlijk het eenigste pratieke middel waardoor de moeilijkheid werd opgelost. Deze tweede man betaalde dan den bruidschat aan den eerste terug ; en, daar de bruidschat door den eerste dikwijls nog maar gedeeltelijk betaald was, betaalde hij het overige deel aan de familie.

Somtijds, als er geen middel was om den bruidschat terug te geven, werd de vrouw gedwongen naar haren verlaten man terug te gaan. Om onaangename behandeling te voorkomen, moest zij dan onderdanigheid huichelen.

Zoodra er een overeenkomst gesloten was 't zij met de familie, 't zij met den tweeden man over de teruggave van den bruidschat, werd de eerste verbintenis beschouwd als verbroken zijnde. Indien de vrouw in de familie was, werd zij beschouwd als vrij om een nieuwe verbintenis aan te gaan. Was zij echter bij een anderen man, dan werd zij na de overeenkomst beschouwd als verbonden te zijn met dien tweeden man. De voornaamste band van hun vereeniging schijnt dus te zijn de bruidschat.

Indien de vrouw kinderen had, bleven dezen bij hun vader, en de bruidschat werd maar gedeeltelijk teruggegeven. De waarde der kinderen werd om zoo te zeggen van de bruidschat afgetrokken.

Wanneer een vrouw van eenen veelwijver ongeoorloofde betrekkingen had met eenen anderen man van het zelfde dorp, noemde men dit « Bonsamba ». Wanneer zij zulke betrekkingen had met eenen man van een ander dorp heette men dit « Isoke ». Gelijk wij aangemerkt hebben, de gewone vrouwen van den harem hadden dikwijls zulke betrekkingen. Wanneer de vrouw er van door ging met haren bonsamba of isoke, of met gelijk wien, werd zij vervolgd door haren man of eigenaar welke trachtte haar terug te krijgen. Indien de vrouw weigerde, begonnen de onderhandelingen over den bruidschat.

Als men tot een overeenkomst kwam of als er een pand gegeven werd als waarborg voor de betaling, werd de eerste verbintenis beschouwd als verbroken zijnde, en de vrouw werd beschouwd als verbonden zijnde met dezen tweeden man, al was dit zelfs hare bonsamba of isoke geweest.

Het gebeurde ook wel dat de eerste man zoodanig jaloersch was, dat hij geen overeenkomst wilde maken; dan zocht hij of de schuldige vrouw of haren tweeden man te dooden. Indien de vrouw ziek werd bij haren man, ging deze hare familie verwittigen, en moest een pand geven aan de familie.

Dikwijls kwam de familie de vrouw halen om haar beter te kunnen verzorgen. Indien in zoo'n geval de vrouw kwam te sterven bij hare familie waren er geen verdere moeilijkheden meer over den bruidschat, volgens hun gebruiken. Indien echter de bruidschat nog niet geheel betaald was geweest, vroeg de familie aan hun schoonzoon om de rest te betalen.

In de laatste tijden, nu de heidensche gebruiken geschokt zijn door de Europeesche bezetting, zien wij dat de mannen wier vrouwen ziek naar de familie gegaan zijn en daar gestorven zijn, den bruidschat terugeischen van de familie — maar dit is geheel tegen hunne oude gebruiken. In één geval kon de man de bruidschat terug eischen, namelijk als de vrouw gezond naar hare familie vertrokken was en daar gestorven was.

Het koopen of de vrouwenhandel. De vrouw was in vele gevallen ook een recht voorwerp van den handel. De groote dorpshoofden o. a. Ibuka en Yoma, waarvan we verder nog zullen spreken, dreven een soort vrouwenhandel. Met Europeesche artikelen en ook inlandsche munt begaven zij zich naar andere streken van den Evenaar om daarvoor vrouwen te koopen, evenals iemand die naar de markt gaat, ofschoon er wel geen openbare vrouwenmarkten bestonden.

Overal bestonden ook geroofde vrouwen en slavinnen : deze werden eenvoudiglijk verkocht. Verder werden de vrouwen met vrouwen gekocht en betaald. Ook de vrouwen welke geërfd waren en niet meer in handen hunner familie waren, werden door hun tweeden, derden of zooveelsten man verkocht. In al deze gevallen komt de familie niet meer te pas voor bruidschat. Men zou in al deze gevallen al veel goeden wil moeten gebruiken om de betaalde sommen als bruidschat te beschouwen, en bijgevolg als een inlandsch gebruik « qu'il faut respecter ».

Of men zou moeten aannemen dat zoo'n inlandsche vrouw geheel haar leven lang « bruid » blijft. Men zal zeggen dat de vrouw in haren verkoop door den eenen man aan den andere toestemde.

Dikwijls was dit wel het geval, maar lang niet altijd want ook kinderen en slavinnen werden verkocht. En zelfs de toestemming der vrouw sluit toch den verkoop niet uit ; hare toestemming was eerder een bijkomende zaak die den verkoop van een met rede begaafd handelsartikel vergemakkelijkte. Het blijft altijd vrouwenhandel.

De Erfenis. — Bij den dood van een veelwijver, deed men de begrafenisplechtigheden volgens den stand en de waardigheid van den overledene. Met doodde een of twee of verschillende slaven welke met den veelwijver in hetzelfde graf begraven werden. Somwijlen brak men aan die slaven en slavinnen armen en beenen, en dan werden zij levend in het zelfde graf met het lijk begraven.

Wanneer deze slaven of slavinnen nog familie hadden, gebeurde het dat deze familieleden, het ongelukkig lot van hun familielid vernomen hebbende, van verre streken kwamen toegesneld, om hem of haar vrij te koopen als het nog niet te laat was. Verschillende negers hebben ons van die hartverscheurende tooneelen verhaald welke zij als kind hadden bijgewoond. De rouw en het weegeklag over den doode duurde van een week tot een maand.

De oudste zoon volgde terstond zijn vader in de waardigheid op, en nam terstond een van de vrouwen zijns vaders.

De andere zonen deelden onder hen de lansen en messen huns vaders.

Indien de overledene geen zoon had nagelaten, of dat deze nog te jong was, volgde de oudste broer des overledenen hem op. Alle vrouwen moesten in hun eigen woning blijven, behalve de vrouw die terstond door den oudsten zoon werd genomen. Zij moesten den dag voor de verdeeling afwachten. Deze dag werd uitgesteld van één tot vier maanden. Ondertusschen waren deze vrouwen aan een zekeren levensregel onderworpen. Zij werden « Bituka » genoemd, hetgeen wij nu door « weduwe » vertalen. Gedurende dezen tijd mochten zij spreken met de familieleden des overledenen, maar zij moesten te huis blijven; aan niemand was het toegelaten deze vrouwen aan te nemen.

Als de tijd voor de verdeeling gekomen was, riep de voorzitter, namelijk de zoon of de broeder des overledenen, de erfgenamen en belanghebbenden bijeen. Op den dag der verdeeling, 's morgens voor dag en dauw, verlieten de bitukas hunne woning en gingen naar den man met denwelke zij reeds overeengekomen waren, zoodat met het krieken van den dag alle hutten van de bitukas ledig stonden. De vrouwen van de veelwijvers hebben gewoonlijk ieder hun eigen hut. Op het aangewezen uur werd de vergadering aangekondigd door het gebruikelijk getrommel op den tamtam. De vrouwen, de erfgenamen en alle belanghebbenden kwamen dan te zamen.

Indien er vele vrouwen te verdeelen waren, was de orde der verdeeling als volgt : Op de eerste plaats kwamen de broers van den overledene om hun aandeel, op de tweede plaats kwamen de zoons, en op de derde plaats de kleinzoons, 't is te zeggen de zonen van de dochters die kwamen om hun aandeel van de « Nkita » hunner moeder. Indien nu de vrouw niet wilde meegaan met dengene aan wien zij toekwam, werd zij aan een ander verkocht. Somwijlen was de familie der vrouw daarmede niet tevreden en, indien zij konden, gaven zij den bruidschat terug om zoodoende hunne dochter of zuster vrij te maken. Zulke vrouw kwam dan aan hare familie terug, waar zij echter weer uitgehuwelijkt werd tegen een anderen bruidschat. De familie deed aldus om te beletten dat hun dochter of zuster eenvoudig verkocht werd. Wanneer de kleinzonen nog te jong waren ging hun aandeel « de Nkita hunner moeder » naar hun oom, de zoon des overledene. Deze moest hun dan later eene vrouw bezorgen, hetgeen hij gewoonlijk nooit deed zonder groote moeilijkheden te maken. Indien de dochters geen zonen hadden die hunne « Nkita » konden erven, ontvingen zij als erfenis het een en ander van 's vaders roerende goederen, geiten, honden, lansen, messen, prauwen, enz. Indien de overledene wel een dochter maar geen zonen of broers had nagelaten moest de dochter de verdeeling der erfenis voorzitten.

Ons beschaafd idée, dat de vrouw, de moeder des huisgezins, erfgename is op de eerste plaats, komt daar dus niet in aanmerking, immers de vrouw, de moeder zelf, wordt geërfd als ze niet te oud is.

Wat zal men er aan doen, indien zelfs in zulke gevallen wordt geleerd « il faut *respecter* » de inlandsche gebruiken.

Het erven der vrouwen bestond overal, 't was immers de eenige nagelaten rijkdom van den inlander. De bijzonderheden voor de verdeeling verschilde volgens sommige streken of rassen. Zoo b. v. in sommige streken was het de oudste zoon die alleen alle vrouwen zijns vaders erfde. Dit was om den rang en den stand der familie te bewaren. Aanzien en gezag immers hing ook enkel af van het getal der vrouwen welke men bezat. In dit geval echter moest deze oudste zoon zorgen in de plaats zijns vaders om een vrouw te bezorgen aan zijn jongere broers, en de zonen zijner zusters. Wat de beletsels voor het huwelijk betreft, zij onderhielden over 't algemeen streng de beletsels van bloedverwantschap, nooit zouden twee bloedverwanten zelfs in verren graad een huwelijksverbintenis aangaan, uitgenomen bovengenoemde ongeregeldheden. Wat aanverwantschap betreft, deze bestaat voor hen niet in geen enkelen graad. Er is nochthans één geval dat iets gelijkt op aanverwantschap : namelijk de « Nkita » mocht nooit bij een man zijn te zamen met de vrouw waarvan zij de Nkita was. De schoonzoon dus of de schoonbroer mocht nooit de Nkita zijner vrouw bij zich nemen. Als echter de vrouw vertrokken was of gestorven, was er geen beletsel meer.

Wanneer, bij de erfenis gelijk boven, de familie den bruidschat teruggegeven had en daarna de vrouw aan een anderen man uitgehuwelijkt had, moest deze tweede man ook nog een geschenk geven aan dengene welke, volgens erfrecht, recht op de vrouw gehad had. Men noemde dit geschenk een « bampanga ».

Indien de vrouw welke door de familie vrij gemaakt werd, kinderen had, moest er slechts een gedeelte van den bruidschat teruggegeven worden. Somwijlen was de vrouw zelfs geheel vrij door hare kinderen, immers de kinderen bleven aan de familie van den overleden man, en vertegenwoordigden dan de waarde van den bruidschat hunner moeder. Werd echter zulk een vrouw later door hare familie wederom uitgehuwelijkt, eischte zij daarvoor een tweeden bruidschat.

Somtijds was eene enkele vrouw de Nkita van verscheidene andere vrouwen. In de erfenis hadden dan verschillende personen recht op haar en iedereen eischte zijn aandeel. Bijvoorbeeld, een jong mensch moest zich een vrouw aanschaffen met den bruidschat of met een supplement van den bruidschat zijner zusters. Er waren, bijvoorbeeld, drie zijner zusters getrouwd, en hij had 3,000 mitako's noodig om zijn aanstaande vrouw te betalen. Nu ging hij met geschenken naar zijn drie schoonbroers en vroeg van hen elk 1,000 mitako's; de bruidschat was reeds vroeger betaald aan den vader, de 1,000 mitako's die hij vraagt zijn een supplement van den bruidschat.

Met deze 3,000 mitako's betaalt onze jonge man zijne vrouw. Deze vrouw nu wordt de « Nkita » van de drie zusters. En indien deze jonge man komt te sterven, zullen zijne drie zusters en zijne drie schoonbroers alle hun aandeel terug eischen van de weduwe. Indien zij verkocht wordt, moet de prijs verdeeld worden onder de drie schoonbroers. Indien zij in de familie van haar man blijft bij oom of broer, zoo blijft zij de « Nkita » van hare drie schoonzusters.

Er bestaat ook een algemeene regel en gewoonte dat de familie welke den bruidschat ontvangen heeft, geregeld geschenken geeft aan hunne dochter en schoonzoon of zuster en schoonbroer. Deze geschenken bestonden in geiten, honden (welke gewoonlijk ook een tamelijk groote waarde hebben bij de inlanders), eenden, enz.; maar nooit bestonden de geschenken in geld. Deze geschenken werden door den schoonzoon of schoonbroer opnieuw gegeven aan degenen welke hem zijne bruidschat hadden helpen betalen.

Bijvoorbeeld indien de jonge man waarvan we zoo even gesproken hebben, geschenken ontving van de familie zijner vrouw, zou hij dan deze geschenken gegeven hebben aan zijne drie schoonbroers. Deze geschenken waren dikwijls zooveel, dat de waarde ervan bijna gelijk was aan den bruidschat welken de man voor zijn vrouw betaald had. De gewoonte eischte in zoo'n geval dat de man dan een supplement van den bruidschat betaalde.

In geval dat de bruidschat moest terug gegeven worden, mochten de geschenken welke de familie reeds gedaan had van den bruidschat afgerekend worden. Wanneer zulke geschillen voor een Europeaan gebracht worden, is het voor dezen moeilijk daarin te beslissen, want door partijen wordt de waarde verschrikkelijk overdreven. De man zal veel grooteren bruidschat terug eischen dan hij in werkelijkheid gegeven heeft, terwijl de familie van haren kant de geschenken welke zij gegeven had veel hooger zal rekenen dan de werkelijke waarde of hoeveelheid was.

Iets over den prijs, den bruidschat der vrouwen en inlandsche geldwaarde.

Hun eerste oorspronkelijk geld was:

1° De Beukata, dit was dun ijzer- of koperdraad opgerold als kleine ringen, de dikte van den draad ongeveer 3 millimeters, de lengte 20 tot 25 centimeters;

2° Bingetele waren ijzeren of koperen staafjes ongeveer 8 millimeters dik en 15 centimeters lang, deze zijn nog in gebruik in Bikoro;

3° Bekata, koperdraad, dikte ongeveer 7 of 8 millimeters en 1 meter of 1^{m}50 lang, spiraalvormig: opgerold de vrouwen droegen deze rond haar beenen, als koperen laarzen;

4° Bakongas, koperen ringen die tot armbanden en voetbanden en ook als halsbanden dienden. De grootte verschilde voor kleine of groote personen, het gewicht is van een halven kilo tot 5 kilo;

5° De mitako, koperdraad ongeveer 4 millimeters dik en 25 centimeters lang gewoonlijk geplooid gelijk een haarspeld. De mitako diende als eenheidsmunt waar de andere waarden en prijzen op berekend werden, gelijk bij ons de frank. De waarde van de mitako was vroeger berekend op 5 centiemen.

Vroeger was de bruidschat op den prijs welken men voor een vrouw betaalde bijna in geheel den Evenaar van 5 tot 20 bakongas. (De waarde van de bakongas verschilde veel volgens het gewicht. Men schat echter de gemiddelde waarde aan fr. 2.50.) Deze betaling werd vervolgens aangevuld met slaven of vrouwen. Deze wijze van betaling en bruidschat bestaat nog in de streken waar de inlanders nog niet of bijna niet in aanraking gekomen zijn met de Europeanen. Men betaalde soms ook wel met enkel slaven of enkel vrouwen. De prijs voor eene slavin was betrekkelijk veel minder dan voor een andere vrouw.

Door de bezetting van Congo door de Europeanen heeft het familieleven der inlanders noodzakelijkerwijze groote veranderingen ondergaan, ook hunne zeden en gewoonten.

Vooreerst hebben de inlanders zich hunne vrouwen zien ontnemen door de sentinelles van den Onafhankelijken Congo Staat. Deze zwarte sentinelles in de dorpen aangesteld door den Staat om over het inoogsten der caoutchouc te waken, matigden zich, een onbeperkte macht toe. Zij namen zooveel vrouwen van de inlanders als zij verkozen en betaalden geen enkele.

Vervolgens hebben vele zwarte soldaten, de boys en de werklieden der Europeanen ook overal vrouwen genomen in het begin, zonder zich nog aan de inlandsche gebruiken te storen, 't is te zeggen zonder die vrouwen te betalen, en dit gebeurde dikwijls onder de beschermende macht van hunnen Blanke. Voegen we daarbij nog een groot getal zwarte vrouwen die « de fameuses ménagères » geworden zijn van de Europeanen. Ofschoon deze vrouwen meestal wel betaald werden aan hun eigenaars, werden zij toch ook aan het familieleven en de inlandsche gebruiken onttrokken. Eindelijk moet men ook noemen de christenvrouwen die nu in een christelijk huwelijk leven.

Ook heeft de prijs der vrouwen en de bruidschat groote veranderingen ondergaan, voornamelijk in die streken waar de inlanders meer dadelijk in betrekking kwamen met de Europeanen. Vóór de aanwezigheid der Europeanen was hun voornaamste betaalmiddel de vrouw zelf; men betaalde eene vrouw met eene vrouw. Nu is de vrouw een verboden betaalmiddel geworden. Daarom hebben de inlanders den prijs verhoogd in de betaling van bakongas en mitakos'.

In sommige streken, dicht bij de Europeesche centrums, hebben de inlanders den prijs voor de vrouwen en den bruidschat tot een vroeger nooit gekende hoogte gebracht. Voor eene vrouw vragen zij verscheidene « nkesi's ».

Een « nkesi » is 10,000 mitako's. Zulk eene som is veel te hoog in betrekking tot hunne middelen. Want in een dorp bijv. zijn 50 vrouwen; voor ééne vrouw vraagt men 40,000 tot 50,000 mitako's, terwijl men tegenwoordig in het geheele dorp tezamen de som van 50,000 mitako's niet meer zal vinden. Daarom iemand verplichten van 2 of 3 nkesi's te betalen, is hem gewoonlijk in de onmogelijkheid stellen te betalen, ofwel hem in de noodzakelijkheid zetten met vrouwen te betalen, hetgeen niet anders is dan den vrouwenhandel bevoordeelen, wat dan ook gebeurt.

Er valt hier ook een bemerking te maken over de benaming van de getallen. « Nkesi » is geen woord van de Evenaars bevolking, het is ingebracht van elders met de Europeanen. Hun getallen waren als volgt :

10 = was *jum* of *bonkama*.
100 = was *nkoto*; en met de aankomst der Blanken en vreemde bevolking kwam
1.000 = *nkesi*.

De tegenwoordige getallenwaarde is : 10 = jum, 100 = bonkama, 1,000 = nkoto en 10,000 is nkesi. Sommige zeer oude negers zeggen evenwel nog bonkama voor 10.

Ziehier de waarschijnlijke oorzaak van de groote prijsverhooging der vrouwen voornamelijk in de streek van Coquilhatville.

Wanneer de eerste Europeanen te Leopoldville en te Brazzaville waren aangekomen, duurde het niet lang of de Europeesche stoffen en andere artikelen kwamen ook tot Coquilhatville in de handen van de groote dorpshoofden, die handel dreven op de rivieren voornamelijk in slaven en ivoor. De dorpshoofden Yoma van het dorp Boyeka, Ibuka van Boyere, Yamba van

Eala, Nkake van Bokele enz. voeren met deze Europeesche artikelen de rivieren de Tshuapa en de Ikelemba op, en zij kochten daarmede slaven en vrouwen.

Terug te huis gekomen kochten zij vrouwen van hun eigen streek et betaalden deze met de slaven en vrouwen, welke zij zelf goedkoop hadden gekocht met de Europeesche artikelen. Voor eene vrouw van hun streek betaalden zij dan drie of vier vrouwen. De aankomst van de Blanken en vreemde zwarten bracht hun in kennis met het getal « nkesi » dat in hun meening echter maar 1,000 was en dat zij vroeger 10 nkotos noemden of 10 × 100.

Het duurde niet lang of de Europeanen moesten zich inlaten met hun geschillen over de vrouwen te aanhooren. In het Zwarte land is zulks onvermijdelijk. Wanneer de Zwarten zich met hun geschillen bij de Blanken aanboden, durfden zij of wilden zij niet zeggen : ik heb die vrouw met drie vrouwen betaald; maar zij zegden dan, ik heb die vrouw met drie nkesis betaald, dat is te zeggen 3 × 1,000 mitako's. — Ondertusschen bekwamen de *nkoto* en de *nkesi* hunne waarde van 1,000 en 10,000. De benaming echter dat een vrouw met nkesis betaald werd, bleef bestaan door de vergissing der Blanken of door de hebzucht der veelwijvers of door allebei. En later zijn inderdaad verschillende vrouwen met nkesis betaald geworden, namelijk toen de gangbare munt in Congo de mitako was. Het was ook geen wonder, want de veelwijvers hadden de monopole van de vrouwen en hadden alle belang om den prijs te verhoogen.

Daarom, als nu de inlander van Coquilhatville zegt dat zijn vader of zijn oom die vrouw drie of vier nkesis betaald heeft, wil dit algemeen zeggen dat die vrouw met drie of vier vrouwen betaald is geworden. De prijs van de vrouwen in Wangata, bij Coquilhatville, was vroeger niet hooger dan in de andere streken. Vele vrouwen zijn betaald geworden met slechts vijf bakonga's, zoo o. a. in Bokala, bij Bamania, welk dorp behoorde aan het dorpshoofd Yoma van Boyeka.

Het is ook nog op te merken dat de nkesis die de laatste jaren in Wangata zijn betaald geworden niet in mitako's of in munt zijn betaald geworden, maar in artikelen aan welke de inlanders een conventionelen prijs vaststellen, gewoonlijk veel hooger dan de werkelijke waarde is. Zoo, b. v. een « pataki » of pistongeweer werd altijd gerekend voor 3,000 mitako's — het deed er niets toe dat het maar 1,500 waarde had. Er zijn daarom maar zeer weinig vrouwen die met nkesis betaald zijn in echte munt of mitako's.

Het noodlottig gevolg van deze overdreven prijsverhooging is dat de onderlinge schulden en moeilijkheden bij de inlanders verhoogd zijn, dat er bijna niet meer aan uit te komen is. Om een geschil op te lossen komen er vijf andere geschillen bij te pas, allen even erg ingewikkeld, om de eenvoudige reden, dat het geld « de mitako's » om te betalen niet bestaat, en met vrouwen betalen is verboden. Om een geschil op te lossen heeft men somwijlen verschillende maanden noodig, of een geheel jaar; andere geschillen eindigen nooit, maar gaan van vader op zoon over, die ze elk op hunne beurt aan elken nieuwen Staatsbestuurder komen voorleggen. In de streken waar de bruidschat niet verhoogd is geworden, zijn de moeilijkheden en geschillen lang zoo menigvuldig niet en gemakkelijk om op te lossen. In de streken waar de prijs en de bruidschat der vrouwen overdreven hoog geworden is, bekennen de inlanders zelf, dat hun geschillen vroeger gemakkelijk opgelost konden worden, maar dit tegenwoordig bijna niet meer mogelijk is.

Onnoodig te zeggen dat deze stand van zaken schadelijk is aan het beschavingswerk, en aan de onderlinge goede verstandhouding der inlanders. Gedurig komen de inlanders bij den Staatsbestuurder der streek om hem hunne geschillen van niet betaalde vrouwen voor te leggen. Deze geschillen nemen een groot deel in van den kostelijken tijd van den bestuurder. En hij moet deze meestal zeer ingewikkelde geschillen aanhooren en beslissen, want dikwijls hangt de algemeene rust van een dorp of streek daarvan af.

Ook de inlanders zelf brengen gansche dagen en weken door niets anders doende dan vergadering houden om te redeneeren over de onbetaalbare schulden van bruidschat en prijs der vrouwen, enkel omdat de prijs overdreven is. Bij gebrek aan munt, betalen ze elkander met elkanders schulden, hetgeen meestal de zaak nog meer inwikkelt.

Om dezen toestand te verbeteren zou men den prijs der vrouwen, den bruidschat moeten verminderen, veel verminderen. Dat dit middel mogelijk en pratiek was, hebben we gezien toen, in den tijd, een Staatshoofd die zeer wel de inlandsche gebruiken kende in de streek van Coquilhatville daarmede werkelijk begonnen was.

Ongelukkiglijk is men niet doorgegaan met dat systeem. Men moet ook niet zeggen dat men onrechtvaardigheid zou doen met den prijs der vrouwen te verminderen. Men zou hiermede veeleer eene onrechtvaardigheid herstellen, een ontaarde gewoonte verbeteren. Door het tegenwoordig systeem immers wordt er meer onrechtvaardigheid begaan en geleden.

Eenige veelwijvers zouden door de vermindering van den prijs der vrouwen eenige stoffelijke schade lijden, namelijk door minder voor eene vrouw te ontvangen dan zij er (somwijlen) voor betaald hebben, want de meeste vrouwen hebben zij geërfd. Maar 't zijn ook zij die de schuld zijn van den ongeregelden toestand. In een groot gedeelte van de streek zijn de veelwijvers ver de minderheid der bevolking. 't Zijn zij die vijandig zijn aan het Staatsbestuur. Zij zijn in het bezit der vrouwen en hebben er het monopool van. Zij stellen de prijzen vast welke een jongmensch bijna nooit kan betalen, namelijk twee nkesis op zijn minst.

De moeilijkheden voor de christelijke huwelijken zijn steeds met den dag moeilijker geworden. Dit geldt voor de reeds aangegane huwelijken, en voor de toekomende huwelijken.

De bruidschat, voor de vrouw te betalen, zou zoodanig moeten zijn dat elk jongmensch die som kan betalen met zijn eigen geld, met het geld dat hij zelf verdiend heeft met zijn werk. Die som kan niet hoog zijn, want de gewone werkman in Congo, die het grootste deel der bevolking vormt, verdient niet veel meer dan hetgeen hij voor kost en kleeren noodig heeft. Daarom een overdreven groote som als bruidschat te betalen, verplicht hem om leeningen te gaan doen en schulden te maken bij zijn bloedverwanten en vrienden. Het gevolg hiervan is dat het systeem van de « Nkita » ongemerkt in de christelijke huwelijken overgaat, en de vrouw een erfgoed blijft. Immers, wanneer de man komt te sterven, zullen de schuldeischers komen, namelijk die hem het geld geleend hebben, en de vrouw opeischen. De geschillen van den bruidschat herbeginnen dan en zij zullen de vrouw weer uithuwelijken tegen een nieuwen bruidschat, en zoo komt men tot geen einde. De vrouw, de moeder, zal nooit eenig recht bekomen, maar steeds een erfstuk blijven. Men spreekt wel van de weduwe vrij te verklaren bij den dood van haren man, om het erven der vrouwen te beletten, maar hoe zal men daartoe geraken als men den bruidschat niet vermindert, veel vermindert? Wanneer een jongmensch zijne vrouw of liever haren bruidschat kan betalen met zijn eigen gewonnen geld, dan wordt die vrouw zijn eigendom. Bij zijn dood, kunnen er dan geen schuldeischers of hypotheekhouders komen om de vrouw op te eischen, want zij zal dan waarlijk vrij zijn. Er zal dan ook geen moeilijkheid bestaan om haar erfgename te maken van de goederen van haren man voor haar en hare kinderen. Men zou den bruidschat of de betaling der vrouwen bij de beschaafde zwarten veel kunnen vereenvoudigen. Afschaffen zou zoo gemakkelijk niet gaan; immers het schijnt in de zeden te zijn en in de gebruiken van geheel het zwarte ras. Dan ook de christenen zijn in zake van bruidschat gewoonlijk nog in verwikkelingen met hun heidensche bloedverwanten.

De bruidschat, gelijk hij bestaat bij de heidenen, zal altijd een bron van moeilijkheden blijven voor de beschaving en een steun voor de polygamie.

Wanneer men den prijs vermindert, zal men langzamerhand de troepen van vrouwen van de veelwijvers zien uiteengaan naar de mannen die geen vrouw hebben. Zoo zullen de enkelvoudige huwelijken vermeerderd worden, en de streek, welker bevolking zeer verminderd is, weer bevolkt worden. Men zal met den prijs te verminderen ook voorkomen dat vrouwen niet meer met vrouwen betaald worden, en zoo den vrouwenhandel beletten, want de geheele bruidschat zal dan in munt kunnen betaald worden. Men zal ook voorkomen dat de vrouw minder als een voorwerp van materiale waarde beschouwd wordt, en door de vrouw van erfgoed in erfgename te veranderen, zal men hare morale waarde verheffen in haar eigen oogen en in de oogen der mannen.

Om het land te beschaven moet men christelijke huwelijken stichten. Om christelijke huwelijken te kunnen stichten moet men de beletselen wegnemen die in den weg staan en alles in het werk stellen om te bevoordeelen wat den goeden uitslag daarvan kan verzekeren.

Familiebenamingen.

De naam van :	*wordt gegeven aan :*
Ise = vader	eigen vader broers van vader zoons en kleinzoons van vaders zusters
Ngoya **Nyango** } **moeder**	eigen moeder zusters van moeder
Bana = kinderen	eigen kinderen kinderen van broers of zusters kinderen van moeders broers kleinkinderen van moeders broers
Nkoko-nyango = grootouder	grootvader en grootmoeder broers en zusters van grootvader en grootmoeder kinderen en kleinkinderen van grootvaders zusters
Nkan'ea jenda = broer **Nkan'ey'omoto = zuster**	door : eigen broers en zusters aan de kinderen van twee gebroers de kinderen van twee gezusters
Nkana l'ontamba	= een uitdrukking voor « eigen broer en zuster ».
Botomolo	= oudere broer of zuster
Bokune	= jongere broer of zuster
	} wordt ook gebruikt voor oudere of jongere evennaaste
Nyang-obika (1) **Ngompame** } **oom**	= de broers van moeder
Ise-omoto (2) = tante	de zusters van vader de dochters van vaders zusters de kleindochters van vaders zusters
Bokilo	schoonzoon, schoonbroer, schoonvader schoondochter, schoonzuster
Nkita = plaatsvervanger	door de dochter aan : de bijvrouw van haar vader, met haar bruidschat gekocht haar schoonzuster of bijvrouw van haar broer, met haar bruidschat gekocht

(1) **Nyangobika, zouden we kunnen vertalen door mannelijke moeder.**

(2) **Iseomoto, zouden we kunnen vertalen door vrouwelijke vader.**

Fr. Gregorius Kaptein
Missionaris.

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

000

AFRICA

JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

JOURNAL DE L'INSTITUT INTERNATIONAL DES
LANGUES ET CIVILISATIONS AFRICAINES

ZEITSCHRIFT DES INTERNATIONALEN INSTITUTS
FÜR AFRIKANISCHE SPRACHEN UND KULTUREN

VOLUME XIV

1943–4

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON : HUMPHREY MILFORD

[Title page]

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

THE *NKUMU* OF THE TUMBA

RITUAL CHIEFTAINSHIP ON THE MIDDLE CONGO

H. D. BROWN

101 THE tribes living round Lake Tumba, a lake some thirty-five miles long by twelve wide lying north of Lake Leopold II (approximately 0° 30′ south latitude,
[133] and 18° east longitude) and draining into the Congo River at the confluence of the Ubangi, lack cohesion and show a considerable variety of custom and language. But they are known collectively as Tumba, the Government adaptation of the Native term *Ntomba*. Most of them are found to the east of the lake, the whole group numbering perhaps little more than forty to fifty thousand at the present time, though
[797] there is evidence that the last twenty years have seen a great decrease in population. European occupation of this area goes back barely fifty years, Protestant missions having been established for about the same length of time. The first mission post
[177] was established at Ikoko on the north-east shore of the lake, one of the villages of a group known as Bonginda. In pursuing this investigation particular attention has been given to the practices of this group, but mention is occasionally made where considerable differences have been found elsewhere.

105 The Tumba are agricultural, hunting, and fishing people. Their country is flat
13 and swampy with dense forests, and there are many watercourses flowing into Lake Tumba. There are occasional small, less swampy plains, and one such area, more open, with quite wide stretches of prairie, is a haunt of buffalo. The forests are fairly wel supplied with game, and the swamps, streams, and lakes with fish. A heavy rainfall and no distinct dry season make agriculture reasonably easy and famine unknown. Every family has its plantation of manioc, the staple diet, which is supplemented by plantains and bananas. The people make their own tools, formerly smelting their own iron for this purpose, are fairly skilful at making dug-out canoes, engage in weaving raffia and making mats out of split cane, and are efficient at pottery production.

624 The role of the *nkumu* in the socio-religious activities of the community is one of the most interesting features of Tumba life. As a result of European contact the
101 ceremonies connected with the *nkumu* are rapidly disappearing, but it has been
178 possible to collect considerable information from the older men and women among whom the details are still vividly remembered.[1] The following report refers to the period previous to European occupation and control, a time within the memory of a large number of people, but already sufficiently remote to become a matter of hearsay before the lapse of many more years.

596 An understanding of the place of the *nkumu* among the Tumba requires a glance
[173] at the tribal organization. According to the people themselves, they migrated westward, and coming into these parts chose land for themselves. Among the several

---

[1] In *My Children of the Forest*, New York, 1924, pp. 48–51, Andrew F. Hensey has briefly outlined some of the items of interest observed among the *nkumu* of the district adjacent to that of the present study. These more detailed notes are, however, timely if a record is to be preserved that approximates to accuracy.

596 invading groups of kinsfolk there was always one who was considered as the family head, and this man could claim the title of *momene mokonda*, the owner of the land. Round this man the rest of the members of the family group clustered, and he had the general direction of their affairs. He could scarcely be termed a chief, having a paternal oversight rather than exercising any wide authority demanding organizing ability and political astuteness. The succession of *momene mokonda* runs collaterally through younger brothers in the first place; hence if a first-born male happens to hold that position, the succession among his younger brothers is in the order of their birth. When these have all died the succession passes to the next generation. If all the males of a group die, it is possible for a daughter's son to leave his father's side in order to assume the position of *momene mokonda* on his mother's side.

A *momene mokonda* can delegate his duties as head to another member of the family, who is then termed *molomi o ehe*, the husband of the settlement. For such a privilege payment is generally made to the *momene mokonda*. Round these *momene mokonda* and their immediate kinsmen others gathered, forming, it may be, another section of the same settlement, known then as an *etuka*, or, if numerous, another settlement.[1]

624 The *momene mokonda* (or *molomi o ehe*) hears and judges cases that come to him, aided
always by a group of elders, and directs the activities of the settlement. However,
693 this does not entirely satisfy the Tumba; they want an *nkumu* also. The *nkumu* is
chosen, not by the whole settlement, but by a single village, or it may be even one
etuka of a village. If the villages of a settlement were without an *nkumu* it would
generally, but not necessarily, be the *etuka* of the *momene mokonda* which would lead
off by seeking one out. The group desiring an *nkumu* are known as the *molembe*,
and they look about for a man of the same tribe but not of the same settlement or
village, an outsider. He must be a man of some wealth, for actually he will buy his
right of authority and pay heavily for it. If the man who is approached accepts, he
is known from then on until his accession as *Nkema Akuke*, the term *nkumu* not being
used until he is finally invested with the insignia of office, the *montolo*, or hat of
special design. *Nkema Akuke*'s family is known as the *ekopo*, or *mango*. This man,
556 once having accepted the invitation to become *nkumu*, sets about amassing wealth
in the form of wives and brass rods. He may be years about it, but he does not thereby
forfeit his right to the office, nor apparently weary those who extended the invitation.
Should *Nkema Akuke* die before he is installed as *nkumu*, or should he wish to with-
draw from the honour bestowed upon him, the succession passes to another member
of his *ekopo*. The succession would normally pass to the eldest male of the *ekopo*,
787 but many circumstances may interfere to give it to another member of the family.
A dream dreamed by a male of the *ekopo* to the effect that he should be the *nkumu*
is sufficient to give him the right of succession over the eldest male. When asked
689 whether it was common to lie about such a dream having occurred, in order to gain
the right of succession, those questioned received the suggestion with emphatic
negatives, for this is no time to lie; any man so doing would be sure to die, and the
fear of death would deter him from such baseness.

---

[1] Where practical, the invested chiefs set up by the Belgian Colonial Government are men chosen because of their right to be known as *momene mokonda* or *molomi o ehe*. Often, however, the settlements are so small and lacking in cohesion that it has been necessary to set up chiefs arbitrarily over chieftaincies very much larger then were their own hereditary spheres of influence.

fear of death would deter him from such baseness. Another sign of the chosen 624 successor is some untoward experience, such, for example, as finding cowrie shells (worn by *nkumu*) in a trap in the forest or a net that had been put out to catch fish.

Nkema Akuke, whether the first of his line or a man succeeding in the office, bears [293] the emblems of his rank. He wears an *ilelembe* (a branch of a special bush) stuck into his belt on the right side and hanging downwards. The special hat, *montolo*, worn [292] by *nkumu* is not yet his to wear, but he wears an ordinary skin hat known as *lopope*, which is the mark of any elder. This hat may be ornamented with feathers if so desired.

When *Nkema Akuke* decides that he has acquired sufficient wealth to enable him [302] properly to claim the right of being made an *nkumu*, he begins his preparatory arrangements. *Mbili*, a mixture of charcoal with some sticky substance, is smeared over his body with plantain leaves. All ornamented clothing is discarded and a single cloth [292] woven from raffia, and known as *molele*, is worn. He refuses to sit on the benches usually used and instead sits on the bare earth. All this is explained as an attempt on the [516] part of the man about to be raised to the office of *nkumu* to be different from others, a man apart, separate, peculiar, not partaking in the ordinary interests and affairs of his fellow men.

Nkema Akuke now leaves his own village accompanied by all his wives and [533] children, and also by a singer, *nyemba*, who is paid to sing his praises, and by several male Batwa (pygmies), up to half a dozen in number, known as *ntotii* because of their [563] duty of blowing gourds and producing sounds which indicate praise of the great [534] man. This party makes the round of villages wherever relatives are found, and the announcement is made that *Nkema Akuke* is about to become an *nkumu*. This 624 pilgrimage accomplished, a 'doctor' (*nkanga*) is visited by the aspirant to office, 791 who seeks by magic to discover whether it is the propitious time for the ceremony of installation. The whole company retires to the private enclosure at the rear of the 787 house belonging to the *nkanga* chosen, this being the place where he performs his wonders. The *nkanga* resorts to *nningo*, that particular branch of magic which has to do with reasons for strange and unaccountable phenomena.[1] *Nkema Akuke* now seeks some sign as confirmation of his determination to claim his office at this time. Some native pepper may be wrapped in a leaf or merely covered by it, and left within sight of all, and upon being opened it may be found to have turned into salt, or perhaps it may be some earth that is thus turned to salt. Or a cock may be placed upon *Nkema Akuke*'s head and covered with a basket and thus left for some time. Upon removing the basket it may be discovered that an egg has been laid. All such tests, 624 if successful, will be regarded as indications that it really is time for *Nkema Akuke* to assume the office of *nkumu*, but if the test fails he will usually go ahead with his plans anyhow, fearing the shame that would come to him should he go back to his home after having made the triumphant round of his relatives' homes. However, should he act thus, and he most certainly will, he knows that his days are numbered,

---

[1] If a man's fields do not produce and he cannot understand why, he will resort to *nningo*. If it is suspected, for example, that the trouble is caused by someone making 'medicine', an arrow shaft is put into a small hole in the ground, and at each name mentioned, the arrow can be pulled out if the person is innocent, but remains stuck fast in the hole at the mention of the guilty name.

624 and that he may have no more than a month or perhaps a year in which to live and
will surely die speedily.

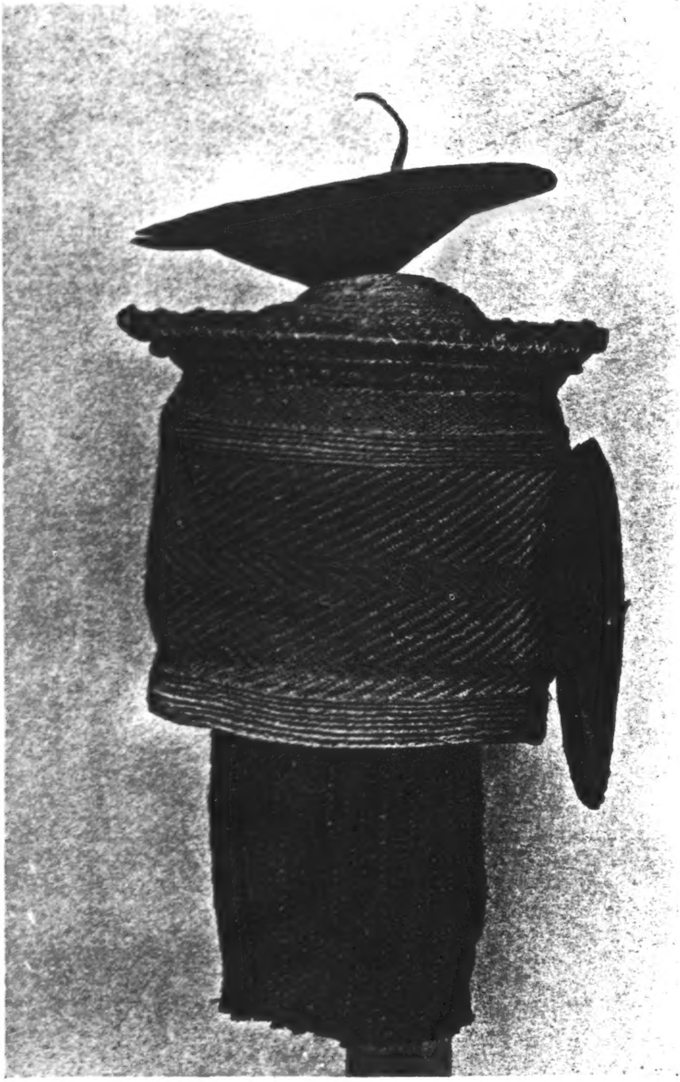
The special objects attaching to the office of *nkumu*, among these the hat, *montolo*,
and stool, *mbata*, are at the same time subject to similar magical arts to determine
whether they may be produced for the new *nkumu*'s use. They are not present,
being in the possession of the *molembe* which will appoint him, but are mentioned
by name. Apart from the *montolo*, no further ceremony is required to identify these
[302] objects with their future owner.

The *nningo* ended, the *Nkema Akuke* smears black *mbili* all over his body again,
624 before the rites begin to determine which of his wives is to be known as *Nsono*,
787 the one who will be closest to her husband throughout his days. For this, magic
formulae (*bienzako*, sing. *eenzako*) are used. All the wives sit round in a circle and the
nkanga places some irritant such as ground pepper in the eyes of all the women. The
wife whose eyes stream most and whose discomfort is also accompanied by a violent
[827] shaking of the body is known to be *Nsono*. Here again, lying is believed to be out
of the question, for the shaking of the body is something that is supposed to be impossible of simulation, the real being easily distinguished by all from the false. *Nsono*
is now stripped of all clothing and her body smeared by the *nkanga* with yellow clay
on one side, and with white on the other. A belt of leaves is put round her waist
624 and a small bit of cloth between the legs with each end attached to the belt. Near by
789 a gourd with 'medicine' in it has been standing ready for the next step in the
ceremonies, and this is now smeared with white clay, a parrot's feather stuck in
the neck, and handed to *Nsono*, who receives it in one hand. Into the other hand
is put a section of plantain stalk, into one end of which has been stuck a parrot's
feather. A third feather is placed in her mouth so that she cannot speak, greet anyone, or eat. She is now tied with a cord which is held by one of the young men
attending *Nkema Akuke*. At this point of the procedure the *nkanga* states his price
[791] for his work, which will be in the neighbourhood of one hundred brass rods, worth
435 to-day about fifty francs, but formerly double that amount. The future *nkumu*,
accompanied as before, leaves for the village of the *molembe*. *Nsono* starts off at a
tremendous pace, for she is now imbued with a sort of frenzied strength, and for
this reason has been tied up and put in charge of a strong young man, otherwise she
would be off so fast that no one could catch her, and would go into the forest, where
she would live for days unseen.

624 In the village of the *molembe* the party all sit in an *ebanga* belonging to one of the
elders. This is the place where the Tumba men really live—their houses are just
[343 sleeping and cooking establishments, but the *ebanga*, having a roof for shade and no
walls, is the place where the men congregate and spend their leisure time. It is also
342 the site of the village smithy, which takes up one end. Here, then, *Nkema Akuke* and
his party sit for a day and a night, and neither he nor *Nsono* may eat food or drink
[262] wine during this period. Games are played by the *molembe*—mock battles, dances, and
[517] songs chiefly of battle, and before the first streaks of dawn appear the group in the
ebanga begins to march up and down the village singing.

At dawn the whole party, accompanied by a large crowd, make their way to a place
in the bush where there is an elevation of some sort. Here *Nkema Akuke* climbs up
and takes his stand, accompanied by *Nsono*. Now the *molembe* choose the *Bilepo*

624
292
285



Mentole, the hat worn by the *nkumu* as the symbol of his office

[facing page 434]

Now the Molembe choose the Bilepo.

624 *Okoke*, a young woman of their own number, who will thereafter be known by this [533] name. She is an official cymbalist and must always begin beating before others may join in. In reality the members of the *molembe* have decided beforehand who shall be chosen for this position, and the woman of their choice now takes her stand on the elevation together with *Nkema Akuke* and his wife, *Nsono*.

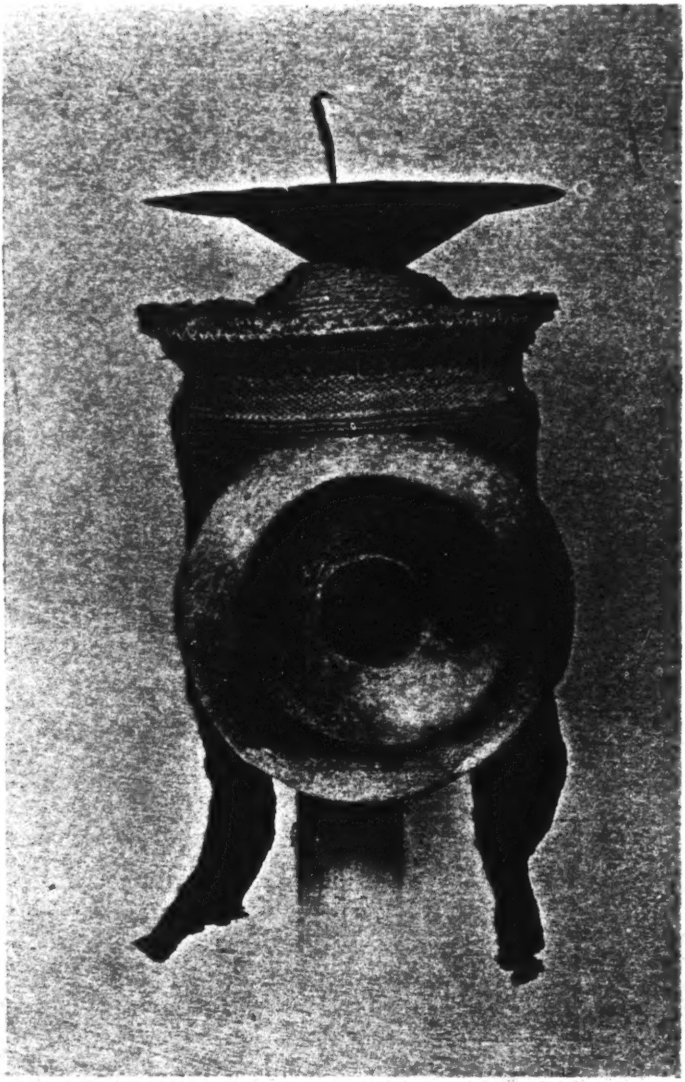
624 The member of the *molembe* whose right it is by inheritance to place the *montolo* (see Plates) upon the head of the *nkumu* now comes forward with it. This hat, about 292 twelve inches in height, is woven of raffia and cylindrical in shape, but the brim, instead of being at the base, encircles the top of the crown. It is usually decorated with a burnished brass plate attached to the front, and perhaps a second one behind, and in these modern days it is quite in style to hang a row of safety pins from the 'brim' or 'halo' encircling the crown. When the *nkumu* is the first of his line, the *montolo* is purchased by him, but in the case of succession it is that used by the deceased predecessor, and has been kept by the *molembe* until this time. It is his badge of office and sign of authority. The bringing out of the *montolo* is an occasion for 624 merriment. *Nkema Akuke* calls for his *montolo*, but the *molembe* tease and tantalize him and ask for money. The amount is a fixed sum, but *Nkema Akuke* pays out at first but a few rods, is teased for more, and so on until he has provided the total amount, usually about one hundred. The member of the *molembe* whose duty it is to place the *montolo* on the head of the *nkumu* begins to tease the crowd. He chooses various names by which the *nkumu* might be called, everybody knowing all the time what his name must be. He asks the people, 'Shall we call him so-and-so?' 'We refuse', reply the people. 'Or so-and-so?' 'We refuse.' And each time names whereby *nkumu* are known are repeated. Finally the correct name is given, as, 'Shall we call him *Nkumu Lobondola*?' and the crowd roars its approval, 'Ooooo!' The *montolo* then being placed on *Nkema Akuke*'s head he now becomes *Nkumu* and leaps down among the crowd, who bear him off to their village with rejoicing. In the choice of names, the first *nkumu* in a village is known as *Nkumu Lobondola*. If there is another section of the village with an *nkumu* of its own, he must take another name, such as *Nkumu Iyeli Bokonga*. Successors must always take the names of their predecessors whatever their own personal names may be. An *nkumu* chosen by a *molembe* [554] which is also the *momene mokonda*, the hereditary owner of the land, is known as *Nkumu e Bitindi* (*Nkumu* of the heels), for he occupies a more important position than his fellows, and is thus the support which holds up the whole group of *nkumu* chosen by other *melembe*.

624 The *nkumu* is borne off to his *nongo*, his residence, which in this case is temporary, to be replaced later by a permanent one. The *nongo* comprises the whole unit of 342 buildings for the *nkumu*, including his own sleeping quarters, the houses for his wives, the *ebanga* where he spends the daylight hours, and a row of houses for his children. His *ebanga* and his own sleeping quarters are screened from the public gaze, making [351] a place known as *ipana*. In the case of a new *nkumu* the screen is temporary, but when the permanent *nongo* is built, a permanent *ipana* is made by planting umbrella trees (*melembe*, sing. *molembe*) in a rectangular or circular fashion. Here, sheltered 624 from intrusion, the *nkumu* remains in retirement (*auli*) for a month.[1] While he remains

---

[1] *Auli* refers to the sitting of a hen on eggs, the seclusion of a woman after childbirth, or of the *nkumu* at this juncture of the ceremonies.

624
292
285



Montolo, the hat worn by the *nkumu* as the symbol of his office

[facing page 435]

624 thus, *Nsono* is a very prominent figure. Still arrayed as previously described, she sits outside the *nongo* near the road on the special stool of the *nkumu*. Nobody may pass her with food, a humane law, considering that she must spend the day fasting. If anyone attempts to do so she catches the unlucky individual, helps herself to as much of his food as she wants, the victim meanwhile begging her to be merciful and leave him a small portion, and the booty is taken into the *ipana*. During this sentinel duty *Nsono* must still keep the parrot's feather in her mouth and maintain silence, so, in case she catches an unsuspecting bearer of food, the remonstrance and argument are all one-sided.[1] After the first day *Nsono* no longer sits outside the *nongo* but goes from place to place in the village, choosing spots where people may least expect her, hoping thus to reap a bigger harvest for her pains. This is kept up for eight days, which comprise two Tumba ' weeks ' of three days' work and one of rest. The rest-day is appropriately named *boina bo nsono* after the duty of *Nsono* of sitting doing nothing day by day. The eight days of this ceremony over, *Nsono* lays aside her gourd and plantain stalk, which are placed at the foot of the first central supporting post
[302] of the *ebanga* on entering. She is given a fresh coating of chalk and three coloured stripes are drawn the length of her back and down her arms. She still remains close to the *nkumu*.

[567] Various personalities are connected with the *nongo* of an *nkumu*. The *Basele* is a male slave, clothed in a skin breech cloth, whose duty it is to receive callers at the *ipana* before admitting them to the presence of the *nkumu*.

624 *Mpenge* is the name taken by the wife first married by the *nkumu*. From henceforth
595 she no longer accompanies her husband, and their cohabitation ceases unless the *nkumu* is willing to pay her each time the sum of one hundred rods. But the *nkumu* is obliged to eat all food she cooks for him even though they have a quarrel. *Mpenge* does not honour her husband with the special greeting accorded to *nkumu*, but greets her husband and all other *nkumu* as she would ordinary people.[2] The second wife of an *nkumu* must assume the name of *Iyombo Anganda*, but no importance attaches to her position.

624 Among the Tumba generally, apart from the Bonginda, a woman is chosen from
516 the *molembe* to bear the title *Bolumbu Itina i Ekopo* (*Bolumbu*, the ' raison d'être ' of the *ekopo*). She is, it would seem, a symbolical figure, a reminder that the *ekopo* owes its existence to the *molembe* of which this woman becomes the titular head. While the *nkumu* is still in seclusion the chosen woman is taken to the open space between the *ipana* and the row of sons' houses, known as the *nanda*. Here, in the presence of the assembled crowd she is praised by being addressed, '*Bolumbu Itina, bototo!*' and the crowd exclaims, '*Bwoo!*'[3] Strips of leopard skin, about eighteen

---

[845] [1] It is interesting to note that there are some exceptions to those who may be caught and robbed by *Nsono* during her eight days of watching. No member of the *molembe* may be thus treated, twins and their parents are exempt, and also all children born to the *nkumu* before he attains office, these being termed *maomi*.

[554
595] [2] Besides *Mpenge*, a mother of twins is also exempt from according *nkumu* special salutations, and among some groups the father of twins is also exempt.

[3] This ceremony gives husbands of any village, whether they are members of the *molembe* or not, the opportunity to single out a favourite wife for special honour, for at this time any woman may be given the name of *Bolumbu*, though not with the significant complement of *Itina i Ekopo*. The ceremony is similar, is performed at the *nanda*, but besides receiving the strips of leopard skin, she must be divested of all her clothing, a new *lomboo* and *mpongo* are then placed round her, and the strips of skin then attached to the new belt.

624

inches long and two inches in width, numbering up to seven are brought and attached [546]
to the back of her *lomboo* by folding them over it.[1]

The first male child which was born to the *nkumu* before he acceded to the office is 852
known as *Iyomi Nkoi*. If he has none, then the right to this name passes to the first
male child to be born to his younger brothers. Any child born on the day that the 624
nkumu is given his *montole* is also called *Iyomi*; if a male he will be *Mala Iyomi*; if a [551]
female, *Mpembe Iyomi*.[2] These children must not see the *nkumu* until they are old enough to know his name and greet him properly, and so they are taken to some village other than the one in which he has his residence. When such children are considered old enough to take up residence in the village of the *nkumu* it is an occasion for revelry, a big dance, *nteko*, is held, and there is a feast. The child, *Iyomi*, is brought to the village of the *nkumu* with rejoicing, and this is a signal for everybody desiring to do so to help himself to anything belonging to the *nkumu*. Goats and fowls may be killed and eaten, sugar-cane rooted up, bananas, plantains, and other crops growing near by seized for food. Because of this custom the *nkumu* will take precautions and send his livestock, at least, off to some other village in order not to lose more than he can help.[3]

The *nyemba*, the singer or singers, and the *ntotii*, the praisers already mentioned, 624
remain with the *nkumu* during his period of seclusion. Added to these is *ntombe* 533
lokombi, the bearer of the *lokombi*, a stringed instrument played with the fingers, 534
similar to a bass viol in its general appearance.

Inside the *ipana* during the seclusion of the *nkumu*, few people have the right of 624
entrance, but as one enters the *ehanga* where the daylight hours are spent, one finds
the couch of the *nkumu* on the left and towards the rear. On the same side and towards 342
the front are seated the *ntombe lokombi* and the *nyemba*. *Nsono*'s couch is to the right 352
of, and parallel to, that of the *nkumu*, but still to the left of the centre posts. To the right of her couch is the fire in the centre, and beyond the fire on the right side is a couch for the *maomi*, likewise somewhat to the rear, with a space in front for the *ntotii*.

The month's seclusion being completed, the *nkumu* prepares to buy the homage of 624
the village. *Nsono* gets rid of her decorative colours, and assumes ordinary attire,
becoming like any other of the wives, and is ready to take up all the usual duties of 576
a wife, whether in the garden or at the house. The people are called to come and render to the *nkumu* their homage and praise. The men come to the *ipana*, are admitted to the presence of their *nkumu* and seat themselves on the bare earth with their legs wide apart and facing him. They then, without uttering a word, greet him in the

---

[1] The *lomboo* is a belt which used to be worn by Tumba women encircling the buttocks, and this was used to attach their only garment, the *ekoto* among the Bonginda, this being a short loin cloth, or an *nkongo* among other groups, this being a woven cloth strip worn between the legs.

[2] When a new *nkumu* assumes office, one already in office will take this opportunity of getting more of his sons named *Iyomi*. He takes them to the *molembe* of the new *nkumu*, and having placed a bracelet of cowrie shells on the right wrist, and sometimes one on the right ankle, asks the member of the *molembe* whose right it is to give away the *montole* to name these sons *Mayomi* (pl. of '*Iyomi*'). This man will then take such a son, and presenting him to the people introduce him by giving him a name, and following with praise as, '*Owe Iyomi Linime, botato!*' and the crowd replies with the customary '*Bowo!*' [291]

[3] It is well to remember that not every individual bearing names associated with the institution of the *nkumu* is directly concerned with it. With the practice of 'resurrecting' dead relatives by naming new-born children after them, such names as these become widespread. [551]

624 customary manner, with a double clap. They are told by the *nkumu* to repeat the
salutation, and having done so may be asked to do it a third time. They are then
576 given a few rods in payment. If the *nkumu* sees some member of his own *ekopo*
coming to greet him, he gives him special honour by ordering him to lie flat on his
back instead of merely sitting, and at the end he gives him a larger gift of rods than
the others receive. In this way the *nkumu* may pay out a great many rods to those
who thus render him homage. Ordinarily a man will receive five or six, but one
624 specially honoured may be given as many as twenty. From the beginning the *nkumu*
has to pay heavily for his honours, and only a wealthy man can hope to attain them.
[556] For this reason a lawful successor, if not wealthy, may be glad to give up his rights
to another more fortunate member of the *ekopo*. Homage having been paid, word is
sent out that the *nkumu* is about to come forth, and crowds begin to gather. A coat
[302] of red camwood powder mixed with oil is smeared over the *nkumu*, the brass plates
are attached to his *montolo*, and he is attired in all his finery. The crowd outside
dances, and when tired sits on the ground to await the rest of the ceremony. Inside,
[533] the *lokombi* begins to play, the *nyemba* to sing, and the Batwa *ntotii* to praise the
nkumu by uttering an ululating sound. Accompanied by *Nsono*, *Bilepo*, and the
maomi, the *nkumu* himself begins to dance. The temporary protecting screen round
the *ipana* is pulled down, and he is seen by all. After his dance he retires again and
the crowd disperses.

When *Nkema Akuke* becomes *nkumu* he changes everything possible so as to
[481] become different from other men. Thus he assumes a different gait, a sort of bow-legged waddle, a different tone of voice, and it seems that under this influence even
his facial features undergo a change. Accompanied by his retinue, he visits the
various villages where he has friends and relatives in order to greet them. This over,
the musicians wish to take their departure and are paid for their services by
the *nkumu*.

624 At the conclusion of these ceremonies the *nkumu* with his *ekopo* and the *molembe*
negotiate concerning their obligations to one another. If the *nkumu* is the first of his
596 line, he and his *ekopo* are given land to cultivate, while succeeding *nkumu* simply take
over the land originally accorded. The *molembe* call their *nkumu* their wife, and they
621 designate themselves husband. They thus reckon the relationship between *molembe*
and *ekopo* to be that of husband and wife, and, as in an actual marriage, there must
be an interchange of obligations performed in a spirit of harmony. Also, as in
marriage a wife may be divorced, so an *nkumu* with his *ekopo* could be sent off to their
home and the arrangement terminated. It not infrequently happened that as strangers
the *ekopo* fell out with their hosts and if such a disagreement could not be righted
they might be refunded the payments with which they had purchased their rights,
and sent off home.

Among the reciprocal obligations of *molembe* and *ekopo* are included the sharing
224 of certain animals and birds killed in the hunt, among which are the leopard and
624 elephant. All killed, whether male or female, must be divided. Of certain other
animals, including the wild pig, antelope, and buffalo, if a female, no portion is given,
621 if a male, the required portion is presented. These reciprocal obligations are limited
596 strictly to the *ekopo* and *molembe*; if others outside of these groups wish to present the
nkumu with meat to honour him or to curry favour, they may do so, but they are under

no compulsion./ If one of the contracting parties fails to fulfil its pledges in this matter 224
of giving part of the kill, or in anything else, the aggrieved party may call the council 624
together. This consists not only of members of the *molembe* and *ekopo*, but of all 596
elders of the village or villages connected with this particular one. The party judged
in the wrong, whether *ekopo* or *molembe*, will be fined, the injured party receiving its 621
share, and both parties will be charged to live together harmoniously and observe
their contracts.

The power of the *nkumu* was apparently limited, and did not supersede that of 624
the *momene mokonda*. When trials came up, the aggrieved party might go either to the 695
momene mokonda or to the *nkumu*. If it was necessary to call the village elders together
about it, both these authorities were present at the hearing. First the young men of the group were allowed to give their verdict, then the old men, after that *momene mokonda* (or the *molomi o ehe*), and finally the *nkumu* was given the privilege of the last word. He would comment on the opinions of each of the judges, criticizing one young man, commending another, and then giving his own verdict, at which the group would assent by saying, ' Even so, grandfather '. The whole group of judges would then fix the fines, a double portion of which went to the *nkumu*.

The actual manual labour which an *nkumu* may do excludes anything endangering 624
life or limb, or requiring agility and speed. He may clear the bush for his gardens:
this is a man's work. He may take part in the building of his houses, but may do
no high work, and, among the inland groups, it is the work of the Batwa to put the [563]
roof on for him. The *nkumu* may also prepare pitfalls for catching game, but cannot
engage in any other type of hunting or do any fishing. Digging a grave is prohibited,
for, as we shall see, everything pertaining to death must be ignored by the *nkumu*.

Other rules affecting the daily life of the *nkumu* may be roughly divided into three: those affecting his person, those having to do with his food, and social regulations.

One of the great points of observance in the first class of regulations is the impor- 624
tance of the *montolo*. The *nkumu* must on no account be seen during daylight hours 292
with an uncovered head. If he wishes relief from the cumbersome *montolo* he may
take it off in the darkness of his house and put on an ordinary hat made of skins,
and when night falls he may walk where he will bareheaded if he so desires. The
skin hat, known as *louku*, may be made from two animals only, in the case of an [824]
nkumu, one being the *nkulupa*, a species of antelope with light-coloured hair, and the
other the *iyoko*, an animal resembling a beaver. The skin of the *nkulupa* may be used
by anyone, but the *iyoko* is reserved for the *nkumu* only with one exception. The skin
of the *iyoko* may also be used for the carrying strap for infants known as *nyambo*, [854]
which is worn over one shoulder in bandoleer fashion. For the *nkumu* the skin of the *iyoko* is limited to the informal hat, *louku*, and for making into the *lokoto*, a pouch used for carrying small objects and worn like a sporran. As a corollary to the importance of the *montolo* may be noted the importance attached to the head of the *nkumu*, which must never be seen uncovered in daylight.

The Bonginda *nkumu* never wash in the daytime, but may wash at night with hot 624
water. The inland *nkumu* never wash. Even the Bonginda *nkumu* never wash their 515
heads, and no *nkumu* ever cuts his hair. If the *nkumu* becomes too greatly incon-
venienced, one of his wives may delouse his head, but only within the privacy of the [184]
house, by the light that enters the rear opening.

624 An *nkumu* can never walk alone, but must always be accompanied by others, and on no occasion whatsoever may he run. Even though he never washes, if he is out [481] in the rain and sees everybody else hurrying for shelter, he will not quicken his pace. [513] His movements must be slow and deliberate. The *nkumu* never sleeps alone; waking and sleeping he is attended by someone. But apart from this he is free to go where he wishes. The *nkumu* is not indiscriminate, as others may be, in his private habits, but [514] must use his own latrine at all times, and if travelling must have his own latrine in each place where he stays. The inland *nkumu* frequently take advantage of this custom [556] by hiding their accumulated brass rods at the bottom of a freshly dug latrine. Such hidden wealth will be acquired by an inheritor at the decease of the *nkumu*.

In speaking of himself the *nkumu* never refers to himself by his title but always by his own name.

624 The couch upon which the *nkumu* sits or reclines during the daytime may not be shared indiscriminately with others, but those permitted to sit upon it at the same 352 time as the *nkumu* are *maomi*, women, and Batwa. The reservation of this couch for [562 the use of the *nkumu* is not surprising, but the exceptions are. One explanation given was that women and Batwa are not *bato ba zse*, persons in particular; they do not 563] count for anything in the social life of the community; they are not really 'people'. Another explanation was that they do not pay fines, this being tantamount to saying [672] that they are exempt from laws and therefore cannot break laws even by doing what would be for others an illegal act. The stool of the *nkumu*, however, has closer restrictions in the manner of its use. Besides the *nkumu* only two others may sit upon it, *Nsomo* and *Mpenge*. It is always carried by one of his wives, though not necessarily by any special one.

624 The restrictions concerning the food of the *nkumu* are many. He may eat food only in his own house, or, if on a journey, in one given over for his use. He may not 262 enter another house to partake of food even if invited to do so. Likewise the *nkumu* may not eat in the forest, or eat or drink anywhere along the road when on a journey, but must wait until he arrives at a village and has a house at his disposal in order to partake of food and drink. He never 'sleeps with hunger'; even if a wife or child should die causing him great sorrow he must partake of food before going to sleep. [765] The Bonginda *nkumu* must never go into mourning, and death must be ignored by them, but the inland *nkumu* are permitted to mourn. All food carried to an *nkumu* must be covered, this rule even applying to water. Food must not be placed in a basket with high sides (*eboko*), but in a shallow one (*moyala*), and no food that has been kept overnight in a pot may be eaten by him: swelling of the abdomen will result. Various foods are taboo, among these all fast-moving snakes, though slow- [824] moving ones may be eaten; light-coloured palm-nuts may not be eaten, and a variety of yam known as *monkiki* is shunned, for it is with the tough stems of the *monkiki* that the dying body of the *nkumu* will be bound to ensure the sitting posture necessary for burial.

624 Among regulations roughly classed as social, we have already covered several in references above, and have referred to the *nkumu* in council. It may be added here that [623] he is expected to agree with the majority of the councillors and not fall out with them. The rules affecting the *mongo* of the *nkumu* are accompanied by severe penalties. There [689] must not be any fighting; if anger is aroused to the point of blows the antagonists

must go to the *mankeke* for their fight, this being the location of the houses belonging to the sons of the *nkumu*. 624
The penalty for breaking this law is a fine, and if no 689
fine were forthcoming hanging used to be the alternative. If a quarrel arises elsewhere and one party wishes to avoid fighting, he may retire to the *nongo* and thus be safe. No trees in the *nongo* may be climbed. There are, however, privileged classes exempt from all such rules, and these embrace a good many people. Thus, the mother [845]
of twins, twins, Batwa, *maomi*, and all members of the *molembe* and *ekopo* are exempt from the laws of the *nongo*. If any of these commit acts which are illegal for those [672]
coming under the law, they are not held guilty, but their actions will not be condoned; they will be considered breaches of good conduct, and will be dealt with informally; [626]
the parties will be quietly reprimanded, and adjured to observe the proprieties of conduct. For outsiders breaking the laws of the *nongo*, what corresponds to a warrant is necessary. It is necessary to catch the culprit in the act and hale him before the [696]
nkumu. The *nkumu* himself cannot do this, nor can any of the *ekopo*; it must be done by one of the *molembe*, and so if the *nkumu* sees someone infringing the law he will try to get one of the *molembe* on the spot in a hurry in order to catch the offender.

In war,[1] it is the *moleni o eke* who is most active in preparations, but the *nkumu* 624
will accompany his party to battle, keeping well in the rear, and surrounded by good fighters. 726
He does not wear his *montolo* but puts on the informal hat. If an *nkumu* were captured, he would never be tortured or killed as were other prisoners, unless he specifically sought such a fate. He could be ransomed, and his captors would [727]
beseech him to let his people ransom him, but in many cases an *nkumu* would invite death rather than endure the shame of being yielded up as a prisoner of war.

An *nkumu* is always addressed by a double clap of the hands, and will not reply to 624
anyone rude enough to speak to him first. In answer to the clap he replies with a word of wisdom expressed in an aphorism or proverb. 576
Such a reply, however, is common to all elders, who have their favourite aphorisms ready for any who pay them special honour. Anything the *nkumu* says must be answered not by the customary *ako boiko* (even so) which ordinary people use, but with the special word, *biongo*, which is reserved exclusively for replying to an *nkumu*, and means the same thing.

When the hour of death approaches, an *nkumu* is attended by his Batwa. It is a 624
rule that he must not die a natural death, and near the end, while he is still conscious 763
and can still speak, all 'free men' clear out and leave the Batwa pygmies to their task of tying the *nkumu* very tightly with the fibrous yam vines known as *monkiki*. [563]
Often this secure lashing in the sitting posture, known as *ilimo*, is sufficient to finish the *nkumu* off, but sometimes the work is expedited by twisting his neck.[2] Then it is announced that he is dead, *ankiloa*, this being in contradistinction to the customary phrase *ankama molako* used of the death of ordinary people. While the latter means

---

[1] Owing to the lack of tribal cohesion, warfare was not on any considerable scale. The method of warfare consisted in sending groups of young men to fight first, the elders only joining in when one side began to get the worst of the fray. Victors and vanquished in such fights were designated 'husband' and 'wife' respectively, and members of the one group were free to come and go in the villages of the other, and even to help themselves to food. In future wars 'husband' and 'wife' were supposed to combine against their common foes.

[2] Besides *nkumu*, elderly and rich men, fathers and mothers of twins, and twins are buried in the *ilimo* or sitting posture, in contradistinction to the *nsonje* position which is the recumbent one used for ordinary people and slaves. [764]

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

624

763 literally that the deceased has hanged the heart, the former is used of a tree which leans over and falls from a great cut at its base.

624 On the announcement of the death, an expert drummer drums out the news.
There will be at least four drums of the type known as *lokole*, and a *nsaga*.[1] The four
766 drums are called by the names, *Epanda*, having the 'biggest voice', that is a deep
594 bass note, *Mongoye*, having a higher note, *Mongonda*, a high pitched note, and *Mankate*,
202 having a very high penetrating note. To these four drums others are added; if the *nkumu* himself did not possess sufficient, they would be borrowed from the surrounding villages, and their notes matched with those of the first three drums, being beaten with them in their turn. *Mankate* is beaten simultaneously with *Epanda*, giving a rhythmic tattoo. When the news of the death has been sent out on *Epanda*, the funeral drumming commences, as follows:

539
Mongonda. Botianganu w'Amba lokolo,
Mongoye. Ntsala ikita, otongonoko,
Epanda. Tokund' ibenge molom' o nyama,
Ombolekeke mmenge,
Lobanga lolenda ntondo,
Biheku bilenda lobola.
Nsaga. Tobilake nkoi nkonge,
Tobilake nkoi nkonge, &c.

The English and the interpretation are as follows:

Mongonda. A scattering of Amba, the snail. (The mother of twins, always called Amba, here gives her name to the snail because of her prolific progeny, which, upon being introduced to the world, scatter, while the mother dies. So the death of the *nkumu* will cause a scattering of his many wives and children.)

Mongoye. Feathers fall; pick them up. (That is to say, for your arrow shafts, for if you don't, and come back later, the wind will have scattered them and you won't find them. So while the *nkumu* was alive it was the time for his children to learn his teachings so that when palavers came after his death they would be well acquainted with his wisdom and know how to settle them.)

Epanda. We are burying the *ibenge*, husband of animals, You have just eaten *mmenge*, The chin looks up at the ridge pole, The jaw bones look up at the sky.
825 (The *ibenge* is an animal much prized for its fat meat; the *nkumu* always gets his share when it is killed, and the skin is made into carrying straps for infants, and into belts.
563 Batwa are prohibited the use of it for any purpose. It is therefore fitting to liken the *nkumu* to the *ibenge*. *Mmenge* (sing. *lobenge*) is the equivalent of a snack. When a woman brings her cassava from the swamp where it has been soaking for several
261 days, her husband may be too hungry to wait the long hours required to cook it,
252 so to appease his hunger his wife takes a piece or two of the unprepared root, splits it in two, places salt between, wraps it in a *lokamba* leaf and roasts it in the hot ashes, where it is quickly cooked. So the *nkumu* just had time to eat a few *mmenge*; he didn't wait for the big cooking; his life was suddenly cut off.)

Nsaga. Don't pull out the leopard's eyelashes. (That is, while he is alive; now he is dead one can disregard his power.)

---

[1] A *lokole* is a slit gong made from a hollowed log. The two notes are produced by striking the two lips of the slit. A *nsaga* is a hollowed log, open at one end, across which is stretched a [illegible] hide.

This funeral drumming is kept up for a long time, off and on for days, and is very stirring in its rhythm. While it is going on, the elders congregate in an *elonga*. They fast and have nothing to do with their wives during this time. The *elojo* is mourning, and the *molombe* may be likewise mourning, but for the others it is a time of rejoicing, and also of the relaxing of moral restraints. It is an occasion for dancing by both Batwa and 'freemen', the former regarding this as a time for special rejoicing, for the *nkumu* was their master and now he is dead they are no longer under restraint. They are free to take any of their master's goods and even to snatch blankets off the corpse. Men and women do not dance together; the women, taking some of their husbands' weapons, go off in one direction, and the men, arrayed in finery, dance at the other end of the village. 624 766 [533] [535] [563]

While the *nkumu* is still unburied and the drumming is going on, the *molombe* look for a successor among the *elojo*. Often this man will, as we have seen, have already been designated. The *molombe*, Batwa, and others in the village make up a party, and attired in war finery go off with their weapons as though after a man they wished to kill. As they go they sing: [539]

Nkombe w'apiliu olombe
Wo olale we ako?
Hawk, thou hast destroyed the nest,
Where art thou going to sleep?

Before catching the real successor they catch one or another in fun, singing this song. The man of course refuses to be *nkumu*, and the point of the song is that because of his refusal the *elojo* no longer fulfils its function of supplying the *molombe* with *nkumu* and therefore ceases to be of any use to them. If this man by refusing thus destroys the family nest, where will they sleep?

Finally, after this fun, the real successor is caught, his face daubed with black, and the group sing: [302] [539]

Bolo lomo-o, konde ekola.
The cunning animal is hiding, reveal the tortoise.

Thus the new *nkumu*, like a cunning animal, is hiding, but when discovered, like the tortoise, he will not try to run away. The whole group conducts the new *nkumu* to the *ipame* and sits all night guarding him. Earlier on the day of the actual interment of the dead *nkumu*, the new one is installed with ceremonies as already described.

On the day the *nkumu* dies his people scatter to other villages to look for slaves for the executions on the day of the burial. Slave-owners or husbands of unwanted wives ask quietly how much money there is for the man or woman, accept the agreed amount, and tell the buyers to go quietly and catch the slave or wife before anything is suspected and an escape is made. In this connexion we may note two classes of wives, *bopika* and *iboto*. A third class, *bosomba*, acquired by the payment of a very small bride price, was not nearly as common formerly as at present and may be passed by. A *bopika* was a slave wife acquired by capture in war or stolen. If loved by her husband she will take her place practically on an equality with the members of the village, but she may be killed, for she is her husband's possession, 'his money' is the native expression. An *iboto* is a wife for whom a very high bride price has been paid, obliging her family to give wives to the other family in perpetuity, supplying 766 567 762 562

766 a successor to replace a deceased woman, and thus maintaining the balance between
587 the two families. Such wives were seldom killed, for they had relatives who cared
for them and would object, and who had the power to do so by refusing to
782 fulfil their obligations and by retaining the bride price already received. The group
562 of men and women gathered together for execution thus comprised males and
bepika women from the 'free' group (*baoto*, as applied to all men and women
not Batwa), and Batwa men and women whose owners had consented to their
death. It sometimes happened that a man, seeing a woman among this group who
took his fancy, might obtain her by paying for her in money or substituting one of
his own slaves.

766 In some cases the executioner, *bomembe*, was chosen from among the family of the
dead *nkumu*, in others he was selected from among the whole group of people over
782 which the *nkumu* held sway. The man having been chosen, the knife is brought out
of the house where it has been kept by some elder. This, a blade some sixteen
[912] inches in length, two-edged, decorated by alternating longitudinal lines of polished
and blackened steel and inserted in a wooden handle, is sharpened on one edge,
carefully wrapped in a plantain leaf, and laid away for use on the following day.

At dawn the prisoners are taken to the water and washed to clean them, inland towns accomplishing this purpose by dragging them up and down the village in the dew-drenched grass tied by a liana. The prisoners then are arranged in a V shape, the apex nearest the spot where the *nkumu*'s body is sitting in state. Low seats are made by resting a stick in the forks of two perpendicular ones, and this cross bar is straddled by the victim. His hands are tied behind his back and his head tied to a sapling securely fixed at one end in the ground, the other bent down sufficiently to allow for tying the head with considerable tension on the rope. When all is thus arranged an expert drummer begins to pound out a rhythmic beat, and the ceremony of handing over the knife takes place.

The executioner of the day is dressed in finery but no camwood powder is evident, for it is a time of mourning and not of rejoicing. He wears a hat with many feathers, a vine encircles his waist, and bracelets of the same his arms. Then the man who last occupied the position of executioner comes forward. An elder has already brought the knife wrapped in its leaf and also a heap of ash on a leaf, both of which are placed on the ground. The old executioner picks up the knife while the new one faces him. The former demonstrates with gestures how he used to go about his work, the motions, the attitudes, the fine arts of the task. Even though the executioner of the day may have had previous experience, this part of the ceremony must be gone
[516] through. Then, holding the knife aloft, the instructor raises his right leg at right
angles to his body, bends it at the knee so that the shin hangs perpendicularly, and
the new executioner passes underneath it, returning the same way. He now faces the old executioner, who lays the knife in his own hands, arms outstretched and palms open, the handle resting in his right palm, the blade in his left. The new man, facing his instructor, places his outstretched and open palms on the shoulders of the other, draws his hands down his arms, finally coming to the knife, which, because of its position is thus received, handle in the left hand, blade in the right. Releasing his right-hand grasp of the blade, he stoops, sprinkles the blade with some of the ash, then rubs his right hand in the dirt to remove all slippery sweat. Then still

grasping the knife with his left hand, with his free right hand he drains a gourd of palm wine to gain courage, hits the nearest victim on the head with the empty gourd, then transfers the knife to his right hand. He is now ready for his work which he proceeds to do methodically, sustained by the heady wine and the rhythm of the drum. When he had finished one of the lines, a pause would be made to bring out the body for burial. Just before this is done an armed band rushes down the path, returns, goes up in the other direction, then returns; this is said by some to ward off any spirits which might be about. The *nkumu* is now brought out by the Batwa slaves.[1] His grave, a circular hole with a crypt in one side of it, its entrance facing west, had been previously prepared. Few people in the Bonginda villages knew or had seen the actual burying place of an *nkumu*. While the corpse was carried to the grave followed by a crowd, the executioner finished his work. Those who stayed behind took the bodies of the decapitated men and women and divided them among all the participants of the funeral who would subsequently devour everything. 782 766 [26]

Accompanying the funeral procession to the grave were the *ndeli*, one or more men or women who were destined to accompany the *nkumu* to his grave and to the other world beyond. At the burial of an *nkumu* witnessed in 1930 at which the semblances of some of the old rites were carried out, a party of armed men contested the right of the procession to approach the grave, there was a mock battle for a few minutes between two bands of the funeral party, and then the procession gained right of way. At the grave-side the legs and sometimes the arms of one *ndeli* were broken by heavy clubs to prevent him from escaping. Then seated on the ground the body of the *nkumu* would be placed on the knees of this one, whose arms would be placed round the *nkumu* and securely fastened by driving a peg right through both wrists. Sometimes two *ndeli* were thus used. If the number of victims was sufficient, [514] others would be buried alive too, being placed in the grave in the recumbent *monsepa* position, with the corpse on top of them, its weight being sufficient, with the earth filling in the grave, to prevent escape. The *nkumu* was now ready for burial and was placed in the crypt, facing west.[2] The relatives of the *nkumu* approach, they pluck [824] the leaves and stem of a juicy bush known as *mokako* and chewing it, expectorate ceremonially on the body while they address it in language somewhat as follows: 'You are going to leave us now, we are mourning, for you were a good and wise man, your discernment in matters of justice was without parallel, &c. . . . we wish that you may be happy where you go, have many wives, beget many children, lack not for meat. But don't take with you our power to beget children, leave us also some of this wisdom of yours, for what you were, we would be.' This prayer over, the *montolo* would be slipped off the head of the corpse and replaced by the informal hat, all done so dexterously that the bare head was not seen. The entrance to the [184]

---

[1] The body was supposed to have remained in state for seven to nine days, but actually it was buried privately soon after death, a dummy being set up with the *montolo* on its head, and the succeeding ceremonies being conducted with only the dummy in the place of the actual body. The inland villages however did allow the body to remain unburied for the long period, the wives being forced to keep watch in the same house. The Bonginda buried their *nkumu* generally in their houses at the spot where they had been accustomed to pray, burying the dummy at some other spot farther off.

[2] All burials have particular regard to this east-west position, those buried in the recumbent position having the feet to the west. The native explanation is that this allows the spirit of the departed to follow the path of the sinking sun. [823]

766 crypt would then be barred by mats in order to leave it as a hollow chamber, and
782 the hole leading down to it filled in with earth.

For a month or two after the burial the festivities and orgies continued. Women
766 would be hanged to create some diversion, but those hanged were not eaten. Decapi-
782 tations would continue. According to the informants only slaves brought in from
a distance would have to be tied to prevent their escape. The slave members of the
587 household of the dead *nkumu* would await their turn stoically, content to die that
[152] they might accompany their master in his journey to the land of spirits. This may
be true but scarcely seems possible. Still another diversion in the funeral orgies was killing in the manner known as *etumba*. If some man who had a slave did not wish him to be hanged or beheaded, he might give him for this other method. As the weeks slipped by, such a one, his life having apparently been spared, would suppose that all was safe and that there was little chance of his being taken, and, thus emboldened, would, instead of keeping at a safe distance, join the crowd to watch a beheading. His death would be prearranged. At the moment of beheading a victim, someone would drive a spear into the unsuspecting man, the whole crowd then using spears and knives to stab and slash until he fell. Some might be tortured to death by being buried up to the neck and left thus exposed to the hot sun without food or water until death intervened, but this was not a common practice at such funerals.

768 The termination of the dead *nkumu*'s affairs took place when the division of the inheritance was made, a long and complicated process.

178 Such were the old days before European penetration. The advent of the white
624 man half a century ago was the beginning of the end. The ceremonies had to be
given up, though reluctantly. Occasionally now goats are beheaded in place of human victims, and many of the younger generation find that, even so, the sight is more than they can endure, and they seek refuge elsewhere. *Nkumu* are not anxious for the honours. They find little or no respect paid to them by the government officials and this is a distinct obstacle to their obtaining honour from their own people. When the *nkumu* resident in the village adjacent to the mission station died, one of the Natives was asked who would be next. The reply was that probably no one would appear as a successor. Asked why, he answered, 'There are too many trousers.' He meant that too many were adopting the ways of the white man to
[693] make the inauguration of another *nkumu* a success. In his one useful function, that
of judge, the paramount chief now takes his place, cases tried must be recorded by a clerk of the court, and fines paid into the treasury of the chieftaincy. With such a state of affairs the old ways drop into desuetude, and the younger generation grow up knowing less of the ways of their fathers as the years pass.

8: Müller E-5 (1951-1954) 1956 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ekonda

600

Sociological Terminology and Social Organization of the Ekonda
[Soziologische Terminologie und soziale Organisation der Ekonda]

by Ernst W. Müller

Zeitschrift für Ethnologie
Vol. 81, pp. 188-202
Brunswick, 1956

Translated from the German by Helmut Handzik

Human Relations Area Files

1960

[Title page]

[188]

Introduction

114 This study is based on the preliminary work connected with the publication of the results of the "Mainz Congo Expedition 1951-54" in which I participated as an assistant to Dr. Sulzmann.

121 In order to describe and characterize the kinship and local groups of the Ekonda, they should first be regarded as ethno-sociological ideal types (1). For this purpose it was necessary to obtain a clear understanding of the meaning of the terms used to describe the types. Studies by Thurnwald (2), Kirchhoff (3), Murdock (4) (4a), Radcliffe-Brown (5), Lowie (6),

---

1. For the concept of type, see Thurnwald, Menschliche Gesellschaft [Human Society], Vol. 1, p. 7 ff.; Mühlmann, Methodik [Methodology], p. 114 ff.; and Wörterbuch der Soziologie [Dictionary of Sociology], p. 224 f.

2. Menschliche Gesellschaft [Human Society], Vols. 2, 4.

3. "Verwandtschaftsorganisation [Kinship Organization], Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, Vol. 63, pp. 85-193; "Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen [Kinship Terminology], "Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, Vol. 64, pp. 41-71.

4. Social Structure.

4a. "Changing Emphasis."

5. "Study of Kinship Systems."

6. Primitive Society.

[121] and Lévi-Strauss (7) were consulted (8).

7. Structures élémentaires.

8. I am particularly indebted to Prof. Mühlmann for his advice and references to source material.

By their very nature, all attempts to recognize ethno-sociological ideal types must remain incomplete and are in constant need of revision on the basis of ethnographic reality (9).

9. Mühlmann, Methodik, p. 120.

Such revision can only be carried out if each field worker, while studying his material, compares the existing terminology with "his" realities and if he then submits the result of this comparison to the scrutiny of others. Unfortunately the use of ethno-sociological terms is often dictated primarily by the convictions and preferences of the individual author who may neither refer to the existing terminology nor otherwise inform the reader of what he means exactly by the various terms. Many authors in this respect follow such unreliable standards as their "feeling for the language" or they act under the delusion that their private terminology corresponds to what is generally accepted. Too often, however, the actual usage differs considerably from what has been suggested in terminological studies. As a result terms like "clan," "kinship group [Sippe]," and "large family [Grossfamilie]" create different impressions among different readers.

In the present study the terminology of the authors mentioned above will be discussed in relation to the kinship and local groups of the Ekonda. We are concerned here with the [101] northwestern subdivision of the Ekonda who live in the Bikoro territory. The Ekonda belong to the large group, the Mónga.

121 It was said before that kinship and local groups are to be discussed. This statement needs clarification. When speaking of local groups in the present study, we do not intend to refer to groups which consist of non-related subgroups. It is to be clearly understood that the residence pattern will be used as the decisive criterion for subdividing the groups. Thus, closely related groups may be excluded, more distantly related groups may be included. Occasionally such local units also include groups which are not related to each other. [189]

Also, among those groups which I have called kinship groups in this study, a biological or genealogical connection which can be proved and expressed in juridical terms is quite doubtful. We shall not concern ourselves, however, with this lack of precision; rather, we shall regard as related those persons or groups of persons whom the Ekonda themselves consider as related. In my opinion there is no justification for disregarding the attitude of the natives since it is their attitude which determines the character and function of the groups. Murdock (10) uses this approach to the kinship group, while using the term "lineage" for persons who can prove their relationship. We hasten to point out that also the local groups have a tendency toward "paternalization" (11), to construe a closer relationship.

10. Social Structure, p. 47.

11. Boelaert, "Clan équivoque," p. 17.

The Kinship Structure of the Ekonda

61
602 Among the Ekonda we find a system of groups which are ordered according to degrees of real or assumed kinship. This system is subdivided into a hierarchical structure of many ranks. Larger groups consist of between one to four groups of the next order. The relationships between the groups correspond to the relationships between their founding ancestors. In this fashion certain groups are described as the older or younger brother of

61 602 another group. According to their relationship to others, groups may be designated as:

- brother, younger or older;
- brother or half brother (descended from various wives of the polygynous ancestor);
- [848] Illegitimate child of the sister which, legally, as the child of the oldest brother or of the father of his mother, belongs to the group of the mother's relatives;
- child of a boy who together with his sister has moved to the unit of his brothers-in-law and has settled there permanently;
- son of a sister, who for some reason has separated from his paternal relatives and has moved in with the group of his mother or of one of his grandmothers.

601 Present-day social relationships are influenced by this variety of kinship relations. The kinship terms which refer to the relationships of the genuine or assumed ancestors to each other are occasionally transferred to the groups.

614 602 621 In this paper we shall describe the Isangi group (12) as an [101] example of hierarchical kinship structure. Isangi is a local group of the type described above (p. 1). Following the custom of the region, I shall refer to it as a "village." Until we have decided which terms are applicable to the various groups, I shall use the letters A to E for the individual ranks of the hierarchical structure. Within this system A shall stand for the smallest and E for the largest units (see Diagram 2).[1]

In addition to the three ranks of Group D in Isangi, there are others in the daughter villages (see Diagram 1). These may also include foreign groups, as, for example, the "Nkundó" group, Liimbu, in Wengá.

---

12. Müller, Fürstentum [Kingdom], pp. 68 ff., 125, 128 ff.

[1] [See page 6, category 116.—Analyst]

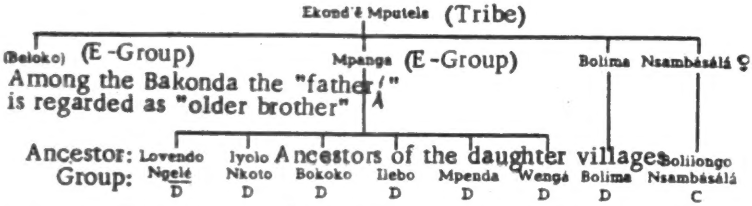
602
614
621
[552]
All the groups represented on the diagram (Diagram 2) are known by their names to the adults of Isangi. In addition to their regular name, all these groups also have a "drum" name and an "honorary" name. Only the three Boyeke groups of rank B have different drum names but no individual group names. The arrangement of groups as found on the diagram does not represent a genealogy. It is based simply on the characteristics and functions of the individual groups [190] which in each case are equal to each other on one rank. Thus, we have here an organizational diagram, not a genealogical table. [Diagrams 1 and 2 appear here.]

The people of Isangi are also well aware of the relationships between the individual groups, but they are not as clearly conscious of the system as it appears in our diagram. They are able to describe the kinship relations between the groups and they can point out which functions are assigned to the individual groups without, however, regarding the groups as equal to one another because they have like functions and without seeing them as part of a system as we do. Thus, our diagram represents a systematization which, by its very nature, does not wholly do justice to reality. Correspondingly, therefore, there is no satisfactory Ekonda social terminology.

[191] [Diagram 3 appears here.] Just as in nonscientific European usage, the terms lack sufficient precision. Furthermore, in principle the nature of the groups between rank A to E and of the still larger units is similar, and as a result all the terms are used almost indiscriminately for large and small units alike.

601
621
614
Usually, the word *ikundɛ* (literally, "lap") refers to small units, approximately those of ranks A and B, but it is also used for larger and larger units if their relatively close degree of kinship is to be stressed. Thus it approximately corresponds to the meaning of the word "family" as used in nonscientific language. The word *ilongo* refers both to what in European usage is described as the small family [*Kleinfamilie*] and also to groups of ranks A and B.

614
621


Ekond'é Mputela (Tribe)
(Beloko) (E-Group)
Mpanga (E-Group)
Bolima
Nsambásálá ♀
Ancestor: Lovendo Iyolo
Ancestors of the daughter villages
Boliiongo
Group: Ngelé Nkoto Bokoko Ilebo Mpenda Wengá Bolima Nsambásálá
D D D D D D D C

Among the Bakonda the "father/"
is regarded as "older brother" Λ

Diagram 1. Genealogy of the Bakonda. Letters below the group names refer to the rank of the respective groups (see Diagram 2).

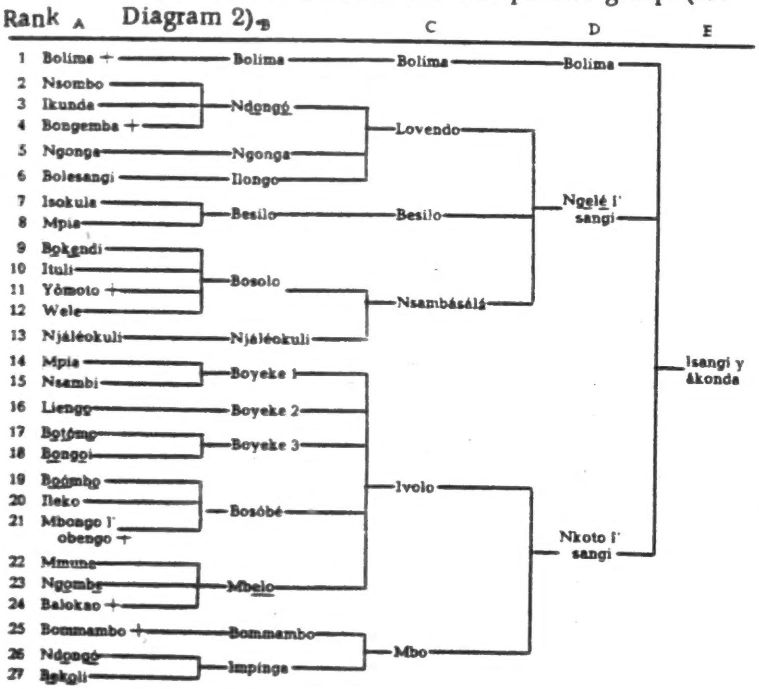

Rank A
B
C
D
E
1 Bolima +
2 Nsombo
3 Ikunda
4 Bongemba +
5 Ngonga
6 Bolesangi
7 Isokula
8 Mpia
9 Bokendi
10 Ituli
11 Yòmoto +
12 Wele
13 Njáléokuli
14 Mpia
15 Nsambi
16 Liengo
17 Botómo
18 Bongoi
19 Boómbo
20 Ileko
21 Mbongo l' obengo +
22 Mmune
23 Ngombe
24 Balokao +
25 Bommambo +
26 Ndongó
27 Bokoli
Bolima
Ndongó
Ngonga
Ilongo
Besilo
Bosolo
Njáléokuli
Boyeke 1
Boyeke 2
Boyeke 3
Bosóbé
Mbelo
Bommambo
Impinga
Bolima
Lovendo
Besilo
Nsambásálá
Ivolo
Mbo
Bolima
Ngelé l' sangi
Nkoto l' sangi
Isangi y ákonda

Diagram 2. Kinship Structure of Isangi.

1-27 = Numbering of the A-Groups shown in Diagram 3.

+ = extinct group.

Λ [tr. of LONYANYALUGA, L.]

621
361
614

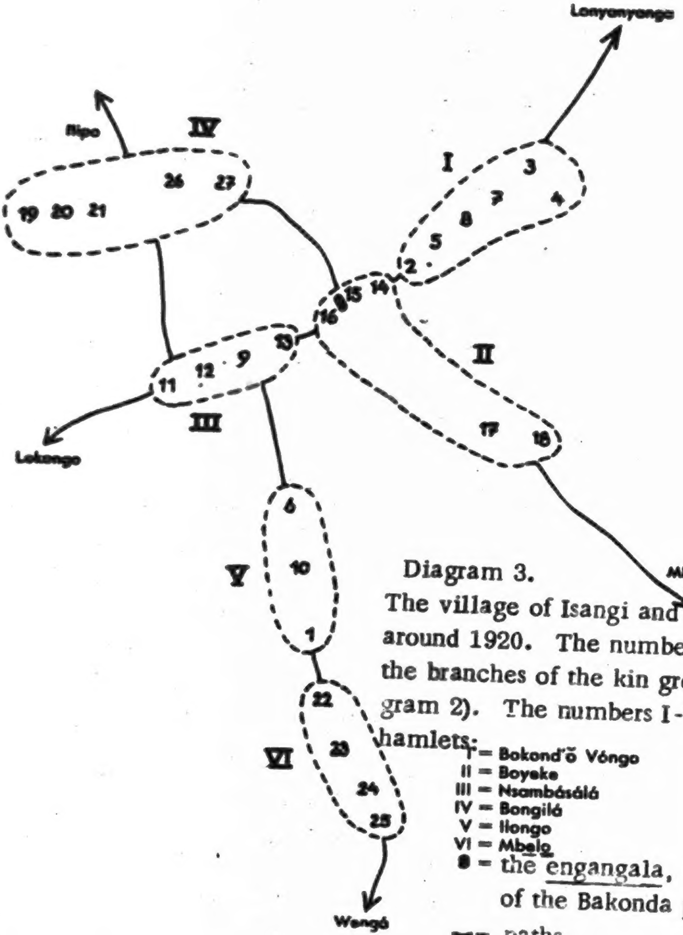

Lonyanyanga
Ilipo
IV
I
II
III
V
VI
Lokongo
Mbongo
Wangó
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27

Diagram 3.
The village of Isangi and its territory around 1920. The numbers 1-27 denote the branches of the kin groups (see Diagram 2). The numbers I-VI refer to the hamlets:

I = Bokond'ŏ Vóngo
II = Boyeke
III = Nsambásálá
IV = Bongiló
V = Ilongo
VI = Mbelo
● = the engangala, the meeting place of the Bakonda province
—– paths

601 621 614 *Bonsonga* and *etúká* are terms used for kinship groups of ranks B, C, and D, but occasionally they may also refer to [192] the groups listed under A and, in addition, to the local groups which in size approximately correspond to the kinship units mentioned above. *Etúká* is the term used for the oil palm grove and for a certain kind of termite hill; apparently it is used for local groups more frequently than the term *bonsonga*.

[571] [535] Another term whose meaning varies is *ekíndá*. This word designates, first of all, a dance group, a *corps de ballet*, and also the social unit which sends such a joint dance troupe to dance festivals.

Esé also has strong local connotations. It is usually identical with what we call a village, but frequently units which are larger or smaller than a village are designated as *esé*. Very large groups, tribes and even larger units, are called *bonanga*.

614 As a criterion for placing the individual groups within a certain rank, one or several functions have been chosen in each case. The groups of the individual ranks are described below relative to their functions. On the subject of groups it should be added that in general they do not differ from each other in certain traits. All groups of all ranks are kinship units of patrilineal descent. They consider themselves descendants of one ancestor. No continuous and complete genealogy which can be traced back to the original ancestor is known. The genealogy of the entire group of the Bakonda is shown in Diagram 1.

In Isangi two of the ancestors of the groups of rank D are brothers, the third is the brother of their father. A D-group (Ngelé) includes, in addition, the descendants of an illegitimate child of the paternal sister of the ancestor. These offspring form the C-group, Nsambásálá.

There is a gap between this ancient genealogy and the
known ancestors from the recent past. In contrast with that
of the neighboring Bokóté [Bokete] (see, for example, Boelaert,
[173] "Les Bongili"), the genealogical memory of the Ekonda is weak.
It does not reach back to the ancestor of the group of rank A. In
this connection we must take into account the fact that a group

614 splits up only after the death of the ancestor to whom the new groups can be traced back. The descendants of a patriarch split up into the groups of his sons only when these groups have reached the necessary size. Considering the size of even the smallest Ekonda groups this can occur only after several generations. By this time, however, the common patriarch and his sons, the ancestors of the new subgroups, are dead. Thus, at the present time we find a tendency to split in the Ndong'i-mpinga group; the ancestors of the two groups which are now in the process of forming died about 1920. Most probably these two groups, so far as their age relationship to one another is concerned, will not grade themselves according to the relationship of these "tribal ancestors," but according to the relationship of the "patriarchs" under whom the separation takes place. The exact process of such a split of A-groups cannot be established afterwards through questions; it can only be observed on the spot while it is taking place.

In the following chapters we shall describe the groups of the various ranks and their characteristics.

Groups of Rank A

These groups consist of as many as forty persons. In most 563 cases, a group of Batwá-Pygmoids is part of such a group. Having the function of helots, they belong to the A-group of their masters, and this membership is passed on through the male line in the same manner as among their masters. Excepting Pygmoids, the oldest member of the A group is the *bomélé bokonda*, the "owner of the land"; he is the personification of all authority within the group and its representative in the group's dealings with outsiders. He is the only person who is completely in charge. All members of the group are in a father-son relationship to him [193] even if the younger members -- as counted by generations -- have the rank of father in relation to him. He administers and issues the group's treasury of objects used for buying a bride. He also disposes of the landed property of the group.

614 He represents the A-group in the council of elders of the village and of the other large units. Since no members of the group [672] are considered capable of conducting affairs, all the legal transactions which they undertake are treated as though they had been sanctioned by the patriarch. To a large extent the members of the group may represent one another. In the absence of the elder, a younger member may act as the representative of the [623] group at council meetings. When the senior member dies, his function will be taken over by the next oldest member of the group.

An A-group will split up only through internal conflicts 614 602 which cannot be bridged or through a large population increase. The newly-formed A-groups continue to maintain a close relationship which, at first, is much closer than among the B-groups whose A-groups have split much earlier. In the higher ranks cohesion after the split diminishes only gradually; thus many gradations develop in the feeling of cohesion. These gradations could not be even approximately reproduced in a diagram with any degree of exactitude. There is no formula by which the split takes place, as there is, for example, among the Tallensi (13) where it is determined by a certain number of generations. 614 Theoretically the A-groups are "eternal." The A-groups are 596 subdivided into small families. Within the polygynous families 592 nuclear families [*Familienkerne*] (14) have a ~~semi~~-independent position economically. Each wife has her own house. A husband's wives and the wives of his sons have their houses within the same homestead. As the master of the homestead, the father has an open shelter where the men spend their time and [768] hold their meetings. Upon the death of the master of the

13. Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 34 f.

14. Thurnwald, *Menschliche Gesellschaft*, Vol. 4, p. 12.

614 596 592 [768] homestead, it is deserted by the inhabitants. On the new dwelling site the sons each build their own shelter. In contrast to the groups of the type A-E, the group living within a homestead is finite: its existence ends with the father's death. Only a man whose father (in the European meaning of the term) has died may have a shelter. Thus the homestead community is interposed between the A-group and the small family.

To sum up the characteristic features of the A-groups:

614 Membership determined by male descent; unity of legal power, especially insofar as landed property and inheritance law is concerned the senior has full power; succession by simple seniority; theoretically unlimited existence of the group. The A-groups consist of small families who live together in homesteads under one father in each case.

Groups of Rank B

614 793 There is usually a friendly, neighborly relationship between the A-groups which form part of a B-group. People assist each other to a large extent, and there is joint consultation on most matters. Group B has only one *Nkûmú iloki*, "master of the hidden power," the priest of the kinship group, who is consulted by all the members of the group. He functions during the magical preparations for the hunt; he is consulted before any important undertaking. During the leave-taking ceremony after a burial, he converses with the deceased, and people turn to him when the ancestors have appeared to them in their dreams to transmit their desires, orders, or other information to the living. He protects the people of his group from the ill will, *ndoki*, of the dead and the living. The priest of the kinship group is used as the criterion [194] to determine which group of homogeneous A-groups represents a B-group. The priest of the kinship group is descended from a certain one of the related A-groups.

614 554 There is a difference in rank among the A-groups of a B-group -- one group will be regarded as older -- but this is

614 554 only of lesser importance (see below, under local groups). The headman of the B-group is the oldest of the seniors of the related A-groups, that is, the senior of the B-group. He is not, however, fully in charge of affairs like the elder of the A-group; he should rather be seen as *princeps inter pares*. This, of course, does not affect his position as senior of his own A-group.

614 423 Within a B-group landed property is often still regarded as belonging together, even though fixed boundaries between the territories of the constituent groups may already exist. In general, however, it may be assumed that the other elders will not object if a hunting expedition is extended to their territory, if, under certain circumstances, the soil of their district is used for planting, or if certain wild plants are taken from there for building a house or as raw material for a craftsman. Membership in a B-group is determined by membership in an A-group.

614 835 At this point we shall not enter into a discussion of the genealogical peculiarities which result from the significance of the bride price. We learned of one case of incest which occurred between members of two A-groups which formed a B-group, but we have not heard of anything like that occurring within an A-group. In this connection, however, we do not refer to those acts of incest which are required to make a particularly powerful charm become effective.

Summing up all that is characteristic of B-groups:

614 There is only one priest of the kinship group; cohesion within a B-group is very close, people cooperate extensively, all important matters are decided by the group, even those which, strictly speaking, concern only the constituent A-groups; in this connection, the oldest of the seniors has a somewhat privileged position.

Groups of Rank C

The cohesion within a group of this category is considerably looser, although on this level particularly one can find great differences among the individual groups. For example, the groups Lovendo and Besilo consider themselves much closer

614 to each other than either of these groups with Nsambɛ́sɛ́lɛ́ (see Diagram 2). It was for this reason that in my dissertation I divided this rank into two different ranks (kinship subgroups I° and II°). (15) Since there are no obvious criteria for the two ranks and since such a division is not possible in the other villages, I no longer make such distinctions.

[582] [835] The groups of rank C are the exogamous units of the future. Although marriage is not permitted between the members of different C-groups, sexual relations between them are permitted. This permission corresponds to the *lonkana* of the Bokótɛ́ (16).

Groups of Rank D

614 582 The groups of this category constitute the truly exogamous units. It is true that marriages between "advanced persons" [*"evolués"*] take place even within rank D, but this practice is still frowned upon by the old people. In Isangi we also find the special stipulation that members of two D-groups, Ngelé and Nkoto, may intermarry, [195] but they may not enter into marriage with members of the D-group, Bolíma. Since in present-day Isangi, Bolíma is extinct, this stipulation only works to the disadvantage of the emigrants in Bolíma w'ɛ́si and of the children of sisters in other villages. The Bolíma group is regarded as the father group of Isangi (see Diagram 1); Ngelé is the group of the older brother, Nkoto that of the younger brother. This serves as an explanation for the special position of Bolíma in the exogamous system. It is said that it would not be right for a "father" to marry one of his "children" even if these children are the offspring of such distant generations that they intermarry.

---

15. Müller, *Fürstentum*, p. 125.

16. Hulstaert, "Mariage," p. 97.f.

614
582 The exogamy rules of the Ekonda do not only refer to their own, agnatic group, but also to all cognate groups to whom kinship relations can still be traced back, i.e., a span of about five generations.

Groups of Rank E

614
621 It may be assumed that these groups always extend beyond the confines of a village. Those parts of a group who have settled next to each other have their communal meeting place, but even the dispersed fractions of the group may come there to consult. In former times probably only one such group had a *nkúmú*, a sacred prince who lived in the main village (e.g., Isangi), while the other villages were ruled by the senior. Once the title of *nkúmú* was also bestowed on persons from other villages, the importance of the E-groups almost completely disappeared. Also, in this category the local group plays a much greater role. Occasionally it even includes dependent [609] villages which have not yet been "paternalized," i.e., which are still regarded as alien. In this connection it should be mentioned that probably all larger local groups tend to reconstitute themselves into kinship groups by reinterpreting the genealogy to suit their purposes. It is certain that the "kinship relation" of many "kinship groups" has been created in this manner. We may dismiss the possibility that groups which are divided from one another by the rule of exogamy will invent a kinship relation so close that a previously possible marriage would be outlawed. Also, the combination of other important functions of the lower ranks resulting from the invention of a closer relationship would run counter to the tendency of progressive differentiation (17).

17. We know through statements of the natives that about one hundred years ago the exogamy limit was lowered to the present level. Before that time only the Lonkâna was permitted among the Ngele, Nkoto, and Bolfma.

614 621 In general one may assume that local groups will postulate only that kind of kinship relationship which does not necessitate a substantial functional reintegration. For this reason, units above the exogamy limit will easily tend to construe a genealogy which "proves" a kinship relationship. Groups of that type are functionally weak. One can observe processes of this kind both among the group of the Bakonda and among the neighboring E-group, Lonyanyanga. The institution of the *nkúmú* (see above, p. 14) also appears to have a leveling influence. The privileges of the oldest (and free) group diminish in importance and fall behind the office of *nkúmú*. The new office is also open to younger and dependent groups.

Sociological Terminology for Kinship Groups

128 Before dealing with the units which are to be regarded as settlement groups, we shall compare the kinship groups of the Ekonda with the sociological ideal types. Keeping in mind the authors mentioned at the beginning, I shall now discuss the various terms used for groups which are applicable to conditions found among the Ekonda. [196]

Family

121 596 The small family is of no importance in the organizational system of the Ekonda. Nevertheless it is very important as the smallest unit of economic life. Each small family is potentially polygynous, but monogynous marriages are more numerous at the present time, especially among the younger generation. In view of this difference between potential and practiced polygyny, it seems advisable to follow Thurnwald in classing the polygamous forms together with the small family and to differentiate its nuclear families (18). In my opinion this approach

18. Vol. 4, p. 12 f.

seems to correspond more closely to its functional importance than Murdock's view, according to which the polygamous family

121 596 together with the large family [Grossfamilie] is put into the category of "composite forms of family" (19). In Thurnwald's "Technical Terms" there are two passages dealing with the large family, one under the heading "Family," p. 12 f., the other under "Large Family," p. 14. Under "Family" Thurnwald writes:

"...The 'large family' differs from the family in that in the former several generations with a common grandfather live together in the same homestead or even under the same roof. The nuclear families, and the men forming part of them, remain relatively independent. Naturally, even in this unit relatives lacking any protection may be taken into the group. The large family differs from the kinship group (q. v.) in that in the former all its members live in the same dwelling site, and the degree of kinship between the members is mainly seen in a line descending from the head; in addition, it forms an economic unit. A further characteristic feature of the large family lies in the fact that it resembles any family in being tied to the life of the persons who constitute it and that it becomes extinct with them, while a kinship group renews itself automatically. It is, in a manner of speaking, 'eternal'."

Under the heading "Large Family," he writes only: "... The phenomenon of at least three generations descended from one another living together under a common head (grandfather with children and children's children) is defined as 'large family' (see Family, Kinship Group)." There is a discrepancy between these two definitions. If, according to the first definition, a group dissolves upon the death of the persons constituting it, i.e., the oldest generation, the phrase "at least" may be valid for the norm, but not for the specific case. Thurnwald defines the family in the same manner in Lehrbuch der Völkerkunde [Textbook of Ethnology] (20). If we accept Thurnwald's definition --

---

19. Murdock, Social Structure, p. 23.

20. Thurnwald in: Preuss (Ed.), Lehrbuch, p. 289.

121 596 the material collected by Kirchhoff (21) and the ancient Roman *familia* would serve as good examples -- a patrilineal large family could be described as a kinship group, living, working, and maintaining a household together, consisting of a husband, his wives, and all his offspring, and splitting into the large families of his sons upon the death of the father.

21. Kirchhoff, *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Vol. 63, p. 88 ff., p. 96 ff.

Kirchhoff defines the large family in the same fashion, yet he takes care to point out that here, in contrast to a kinship group, persons who have married into the group are part of it (22).

22. Kirchhoff, *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Vol. 63, p. 90.

Murdock's conception of the "extended family" is identical with this interpretation (23).

23. Murdock, *Social Structure*, p. 24.

On the other hand, in Vol. 2 (p. 22) Thurnwald regards the large family as a unilateral kinship group with persons who have married into it. This group lives in the same place and is governed by a common chief from whom all the members are supposedly descended. The kinship group, in contrast to the large family, may be scattered. [197] Thus, Thurnwald at this point puts other characteristics in the foreground, but the text allows the conclusion that for Thurnwald the dependence on the life of the head of the families and its temporary nature are the essential characteristics of a large family.

596 614 In this sense none of the units described under A-E[1] is a large family. The wives who have married into the group belong to the group of the husband, but they always remain part of their father's group; in case of divorce they return to the

[1] [pages 9-15, category 116.-Analyst]

596 latter group. Another factor which reminds us of the wife's con-
614 tinuing membership in her original group is the connection, never
completely severed, between the groups related by marriage,
illustrated by the practice of gifts and counter-gifts which are
all part of the bride price and the dowry. When she dies, the
[764] wife is buried in the soil of her group. In addition, the group
membership of the wife is transferred to the children, although
this does not have the same effects in economic and political
[611] terms. Matrilineal descent is important in relation to marriage
restrictions, certain avoidance practices which are passed on
through the wives, and also certain privileges. Quite a large
number of persons has settled permanently in the group of their
mother or that of their grandmothers.

The decisive factor that makes the term "large family" unsuitable is the "eternal" character of the A-E groups of the Ekonda. However, the subdivisions of the A-groups which live together in a common homestead (see p. 10) may be regarded as large families in the sense used by Thurnwald, Kirchhoff, and Murdock.

Kinship Group

614 In the definitions of the term "family" quoted above,
we already learned something about Thurnwald's concept of a
121 kinship group, but there is an additional reference to the tech-
nical term "kinship group" ["Sippe"]" (p. 17 f.) (24):

24. Menschliche Gesellschaft, Vol. 4.

"...A kinship group is defined as a clan (q.v.) which is not politically independent. Usually the loss of independence is caused by the distribution of the people of the clan among the various settlements. A kinship group is held together by the consciousness of being descended from the same ancestors and by their common cult of the ancestors. The kinship group is of special importance for the regulation of marriage (q.v.). -- A kinship group may be divided into kinship subgroups (large

121 614 kinship group [Grosssippe], small kinship group [Kleinsippe]), or it may have a tendency to split in half. A kinship group or a kinship subgroup may at times have a chief, at times not."

On the term "clan" Thurnwald writes (p. 16) (24):

24. Menschliche Gesellschaft, Vol. 4.

"The word is of Old Irish origin, where it refers to children of common descent, approximately in the sense of a 'large family' (q.v.). We now use it for family agglomerations (see Horde) who have become stabilized, who have a religious substructure through their belief in common ancestors, and who support each other economically and politically. It is advisable to make a distinction between the 'clan' which settles exclusively within one region and which claims this region for itself, thus forming a politically sovereign community, and the splinters of a clan scattered among communities which are independent in their own right, which we designate as 'kinship groups' (q.v.) and which usually are not tied to each other by any organizational framework; their cohesion is simply the result of the ceremonial-religious cult of the ancestors and a certain degree of solidarity. The origin of the clan and kinship group is closely related to the cult of the ancestors which symbolizes descent lines. Membership in a clan or in a kinship group may be reckoned in the male or female lines. Frequently one of the living family heads represents this family agglomeration which is, so to speak, [198] 'crystallized.' In this respect it differs from familial structures which become extinct upon the death of the persons by whom they were founded. In a clan or a kinship group the families succeeding each other are permanently represented (see Family, Caste, State)."

We may state that a common feature of both forms is that we are dealing here with purely unilateral units which are tied to each other by ancestor worship (this ancestor worship may be -- in many cases, it will be -- absent in the large family as described above). If we disregard the attempt inherent in both

121 definitions to present a theory of development, the differentiation
114 between the two terms appears to me to be very useful, and this seems particularly true if we accept the first definition of clan given by Thurnwald and regard the second as completely irrelevant for our present purposes.

It is true that our A-group lives in a certain district
614 which it claims for itself as its own "province," but it is never-
621 theless difficult to describe this district as a politically sovereign community. A political nature could rather be attributed to those groups which, up to now, we have not described at all, i.e., the settlement communities. Proceeding further, the A-group is integrated into the B-group, the B-group into the C-group, thus forming an endless chain; among those tribes who have a greater degree of genealogical consciousness than the Ekonda -- for example, the neighboring Bongili (25) -- the hierarchy of groups

25. Boelaert, "Les Bongili."

ends with mankind, the hierarchy of ancestors with God.

Thurnwald emphasizes this ranked structure, especially
121 in discussing the kinship group. Kirchhoff, however, fails to
614 deal with the problem of the kinship group in a manner which would be of value to us in differentiating between kinship group and clan. Dealing with the organizational structure of the peoples he discussed, he naturally was more interested in defining the border between large family and kinship group. Lowie (26)

26. Primitive Society.

only discusses the kinship group, "sib," calling it the "'clan' of British anthropologists", (p. 105) or "clans," if patrilineal, and "gentes," if matrilineal, "of most American anthropologists." The "ad infinitum" (p. 106) is also stressed by him in relation to the kinship group. Lowie also admits the possibility of subdivision with respect to his "sib," and consequently he even includes in the kinship group such forms as the "moieties," which according to Thurnwald's definition are still part of it, but which in his view

614 and in general ethnological usage are units of a special type.
121 Thus Lowie's and Thurnwald's views correspond to a large extent.

Murdock (27) clearly differentiates between a kinship group and a "lineage." In his view a lineage consists of a group of individuals who are able to trace their descent to a common ancestor, which for him in the majority of cases is only the unilateral "stem" [Stamm] of a large family, excluding those who have married into the group, but including the members who have married out.

27. Social Structure, p. 45 ff.

Murdock's and Thurnwald's concepts of the kinship group are identical. On the other hand, Murdock differs in his definition of the clan (28).

28. Social Structure, p. 65 ff., especially p. 69 f.

Clan

618
614
121
Murdock regards the patrilineal clan as a local group which consists of the stem of a kinship group and which incorporates the wives of its members but excludes daughters who marry. As an example he mentioned the "groups" which in our society are connected by the same family name. If the group of persons bearing the birth-name "Wolf" in common functioned as a group of relatives, it would [199] be a Wolf kinship group, but those persons who actually call themselves "Wolf," i.e., the Messrs. Wolf with their wives, sons, unmarried sisters, and daughters, would constitute a Wolf clan (assuming, of course, that this group really functions). This concept of a clan is new. Even Murdock does not consider this definition very satisfactory and invites better suggestions. According to Murdock, the clan is a unit of eminent importance; terminologically it has not been possible so far to differentiate it from the kinship group. It is irrelevant in this connection whether the term clan is applicable to this

614 social group. It is true that the "Murdock clan" also exists
618 among the Ekonda on all the lower ranks, but only as a func-
121 tional unit which, like the large family and small family, is not really regarded as a group by the Ekonda. Among the Ekonda the feeling of cohesion between the indigenous group and those who have married into it has its basis not so much in the groups of relatives as described above, but rather in the local group of the type discussed further below.

614 The units which we described in the first part of this study correspond neither to the definition of Thurnwald nor to that of Murdock as regards the term clan. Our groups differ from the clan as described by Thurnwald by their hierarchical structure over which functions of authority are distributed. An added factor is that Thurnwald in the Lehrbuch (29) wants to define the difference between clan and kinship group by size and by ascribing to the former the element of political power. The only kinship group of the Ekonda which possesses strong authority, however, is the smallest, the one of rank A. If we let ourselves be guided by the criterion of authority, we would have to regard the smallest group (rank A) as a clan. Using the criterion of size, however, we would have to regard one of the groups of ranks D or E as a clan. Hence this term is unsuitable.

For the above reasons I have used the term "kinship group" [Sippe] for the groups of all ranks. With respect to the E-groups one might even speak of a subtribe [Unterstamm], but it should be pointed out that as far as the Ekonda are concerned all the groups mentioned above, including the tribes [Stämme] are groups or relatives of the same type, i.e., are "kinship groups."

For the purpose of differentiating between the kinship groups of the various ranks I have used the terms:

nuclear kinship group [Kernsippe] for groups of rank A;
small kinship group [Kleinsippe] for groups of rank B;

---

29. Thurnwald: in Preuss, Lehrbuch, p. 259 f.

614 kinship subgroup [Untersippe] for groups of rank C;
kinship group [Sippe] for groups of rank D (the exogamous units);
large kinship group [Grosssippe] for groups of rank E.

Local Organization

361 621 178 The second diagram[1] shows the settlement pattern of the Isangi group in its old settlement area up to 1949. At this time Isangi was relocated near the highway. Only two of the nuclear kinship groups of Isangi can lay claim to territory reaching far enough toward the east as to extend beyond the new highway. Thus, the resettlement process has led to a complete change of the settlement pattern. However, the functions of the settlement communities have not yet been adapted to the new settlement. At present the inhabitants are still so engaged in speculation about the possibility of a return to their own old territory that they have not yet reformed their village organization.

621 614 We observe that the village is divided into six settlement communities (30), each of which consists only of the members of one of the two kinship groups of Isangi. [200] We find that only the group of the father, which formerly was a kinship group in its own right, is attached to one settlement community of the kinship group Ngelé. Incidentally, we might point out that the names of the two kinship groups, Ngelé and Nkoto, mean "down the river" and "up the river." The older group is called "down the river" since in ngelé the river is large and wide. We come across this honorary term for the older group in some other villages although there is not always an "up-river" group. No corresponding settlement pattern can be found.

614 621 202 624 The degree of cohesion among the constituent kinship groups in settlement community I is so strong that the entire community has a communal bokendi, a communal messenger.

---

30. See Diagram 3.

[1] [page 7, category 116.—Analyst]

614 It is the task of the messengers to transmit all important mes-
621 sages to the other groups in accordance with a precise plan;
202 this is particularly true regarding the invitations to the meetings
624 of the village council with the nkúmú. At the same time they
inform the other groups as to the program of the meeting. The
first messenger calls on the messenger of the other community;
the old men are gathered at the latter's house in order to re-
ceive and to discuss the message. The messenger of this com-
munity, in turn, departs for the next in line. As a result of
this practice the messenger and his home became one of the
centers of social life.

621 The same uniformity is found in community II. Here
614 we can also see the engangala, the meeting place of the village
361 Isangi and of its branch villages. The meeting place is an open
623 space in which stands a short tree with a broad crown. The rep-
resentatives of the several villages gather in the shade of this
tree since one of the open men's houses could not accommodate
all of them. The senior of the nuclear kinship groups Mpia
(No. 14), Nsambi (No. 15), and Liengo (No. 16) has his house
on this spot which is situated on the border of the territory be-
longing to these three groups. The elder of Mpia, however, is
the messenger for the hamlet of Boyeke; he may of course be
identical with the "elder on the engangala."

614 Cohesion within the third settlement community was also
621 so strong that it employs only one messenger. The kinship sub-
group Nsambósálá which is concentrated in this hamlet is said to
consist of the descendants of an illegitimate child of the daughter
of the village founder (see Diagram 1). As is the case in many
[782] other villages, it is therefore entrusted with the office of the
[624] boténi, who carries out the sacrifice of human beings and ani-
mals on the proper occasions.

614 The three communities just described are relatively
621 homogeneous groups; the three following ones are quite hetero-
624 geneous. The two groups of hamlet IV belong to the kinship sub-
202 groups Iyolo and Mbo. In contrast to the kinship subgroups Lovendo
and Besilo, they regard themselves as sufficiently different from

614 each other to employ their own messengers. When the messenger
621 of settlement II arrives here, he first calls on the messenger of
624 the nuclear kinship group Bosóbé (No. 19) and then to Impínga
202 (No. 26). The messenger from Bosóbé calls on his relatives in
settlement VI, who are the nuclear kinship group Mbelo-Mmuna
(No. 22), while the messenger from Impínga-Ndongó formerly
had to call on the group Bommambo which is now extinct.

Settlement V consisted of three different groups. Bolíma, the group of the father, had its own messenger; however, he only received the messages without having to pass them on, which is also the case with all these last groups of the village. Both neighbors had their own messenger. The messenger from settlement I called on the nuclear kinship group Bolesangi, his relatives; the messenger from settlement III went to his relatives of the nuclear kinship group Ituli.

There were also two messengers in the last hamlet, but reports on this subject are insufficient since the nuclear kinship group Bommambo has been extinct for a long time.

178 All the settlements just mentioned have a common
614 characteristic: formerly, at important dance festivals, their
621 young men performed together in one joint corps de ballet. The
595 population was decimated as a result of the rigors of [201] the
[161] occupation period and also as a result of the population movement into the cities. Consequently, there are not enough young
people any more, and I with II, III with IV, and V with VI act
together. Thus, in each case we find Ngelé and Nkoto united
in one ballet. Although these groups have also been scattered
[361] as a result of the new settlement pattern (next to the highway),
the old organizational structure has been preserved, and the
young people do not hesitate to walk the long distance to the
practice field every day so they can dance in the old groupings.

621 All of Isangi, all three kinship groups, have one common
624 village chief, the Nkúmú, with an iyolo nsáka who gets the meet-
622 ings started, and a village court with its judges. There are other
groups which correspond to Isangi (31), but have more than one

---

31. See Müller, Fürstentum, pp. 73 ff., 76 ff., 133 f.

621 nkúmú. They, too, however, have only one man who opens a
624 meeting and one investigating judge. Only one of the nkúmú
622 has the function of judge. Consequently, we may say that even
if the office is divided, the group still forms a unit as far as
jurisdiction and political organization are concerned.

Among these groups we usually can observe a balanced
614 system of distribution as far as titles and offices are concerned.
621 It may either be predominantly democratic, as in Isangi, so
622 that all groups may lay claim to titles and offices, or it may be
624 oligarchic, as in Mbanga, where all power is vested in the oldest group of sons. In most cases, oligarchical groups tend to disintegrate; the younger groups attempt to free themselves from the rule. Democratic villages usually have a greater degree of cohesion.

In Isangi the small kinship groups of Ndongó (Nos. 2-4), Ngonga (No. 5), and Boyeke (Nos. 14-18) formerly had the privilege of furnishing the nkúmú. This practice has been discarded, and the honor is now rotated among the six local groups of the village. Only the small kinship groups of the Bolíma, Besilo, and Njáléokuli are excluded.

The six settlement communities of Isangi and similar
621 groupings found in other villages are parts of a village which
614 in my opinion are best described by the term hamlet [Weiler].

These are units which are predominantly intentional in nature. In spite of their functional weakness, they have survived even in the new settlement although they may not dwell together in a block. As a result of reintegration, they have lost their function as conscription district for the dancing groups in Isangi (see p. 28), but even at the present time they still represent the most important grouping in Isangi; we were aware of it before identifying any of the kinship groups. It is expected that they will lose their importance if Isangi does not return to its original site. By nature less closely connected with the or-
[562] ganization of the village of their husbands, the women have become the point of departure for the new order of things (e.g., for dance groups) which fulfills the requirements of the new settlement conditions.

614 621 624 [202] Each hamlet includes one or several message districts. Even at the time of the old settlement pattern the messenger system was determined by the hierarchical structure and not at all by considerations of what was most practical (for example, the shortest route). Consequently this conservative institution of the conservative old men has not been affected at all by the relocation.

The villages are the communities of jurisdiction and of political life. Usually a nkúmú, presides over the meetings. If a village has several nkúmú, one of whom may be the judge or all may preside together, I have used the term "part of a village" [Dorfteil] for the district from which each nkúmú originates.

361 621 178 Those areas which have a special meeting place are here referred to as a "province" [Gau]. The meeting place lies within the territory of the oldest or second-oldest kinship group. The practical importance of this institution for the entire province is minimal, but the two meeting places [202] which we discovered still constituted, until a short time ago, important social centers for the duplicate villages forming the administrative centers of the respective provinces. As a result of the relocation, the meeting places have now lost their function completely.

000 I hope that this paper has added new material to the discussion on the subject of ethno-sociological terminology, and that it will stimulate criticism and a new discussion of this important subject.

Bibliography

113 **Boelaert**, Edmond: Les Bongili, Aequatoria 10, S. 17—34. Coquilhatville 1947.

— Le Clan équivoque, Aequatoria 11, S. 13—19. Coquilhatville 1948.

Fortes, Meyer: The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi. London 1945.

Hulstaert, Gustav: Le mariage des Nkundó, Mémoires des IRCB, Sect. des Sciences Morales et Politiques, 8 (8°) 1938. Bruxelles 1938.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude: Les structures élémentaires de la parenté. Paris 1949.

Kirchhoff, Paul: Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen und Verwandtenheirat, Zeitschrift für Ethnologie 64, S. 41—47. Berlin 1932.

— Die Verwandtschaftsorganisation der Urwaldstämme Südamerikas, Zeitschrift für Ethnologie 63, S. 85—193. Berlin 1931.

Lowie, Robert Heinrich: Primitive Society. New York 1949^{3}.

Mühlmann, Wilhelm Emil: Methodik der Völkerkunde. Stuttgart 1938.

Müller, Ernst Wilhelm: Das Fürstentum bei den Südwestmóngo. Philosophische Dissertation. Mainz 1955.

Murdock, Georg Peter: Changing Emphasis in Social Structure, Southwestern Journ. of Anthropology 11, S. 361—370. Albuquerque 1955.

— Social structure. New York 1949.

Preuss, Konrad Theodor (Herausgeber): Lehrbuch der Völkerkunde in 2., teilweise veränderter Auflage, herausgegeben von Richard Thurnwald. Stuttgart 1939.

Radcliffe-Brown: The study of Kinship systems, Journal of the Royal Anthr. Institute 71, S. 1—18. London 1941.

Thurnwald, Richard: Die menschliche Gesellschaft in ihren ethno-soziologischen Grundlagen, 5 Bände. Berlin 1932—35.

Wörterbuch der Soziologie, herausgegeben von W. Bernsdorf und Fr. Bülow, Stuttgart 1955.

8: Müller FO32 Mongo

ZEITSCHRIFT
FÜR
ETHNOLOGIE

Organ der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Völkerkunde

Band 81

[title page]

BRAUNSCHWEIG
VERLAG ALBERT LIMBACH
1956

[p. 188]

Soziologische Terminologie und soziale Organisation der Ekonda

Von

Ernst W. Müller

Mit 3 Abbildungen

Einleitung

Diese Arbeit ist entstanden aus Vorarbeiten zur Publikation der Ergebnisse der „Mainzer Kongo-Expedition 1951/54", an der ich als Assistent von Fräulein Dr. Sulzmann teilnahm.

Um die Verwandtschafts- und Lokalgruppen der Ekonda beschreiben und bezeichnen zu können, mußte versucht werden, sie als ethnosoziologischen Idealtypen [1]) zugehörig zu erkennen. Dazu war es notwendig, Klarheit über den Inhalt der die Typen bezeichnenden Termini zu gewinnen. Es wurden Arbeiten von Thurnwald [2]), Kirchhoff [3]), Murdock [4]), Radcliff-Brown [5]), Lowie [6]) und Levi-Strauß [7]) herangezogen [8]).

Alle Versuche, ethnosoziologische Idealtypen zu erkennen, müssen ihrer Natur nach unvollkommen sein und bedürfen der ständigen Revision an Hand der ethnographischen Realität [9]). Eine Revision kann nur erfolgen, wenn jeder Feldforscher die vorhandene Terminologie bei der Bearbeitung seines Materials mit „seinen" Realitäten vergleicht und das Ergebnis dieses Vergleichs zur Diskussion stellt. Leider werden aber die ethnosoziologischen Termini oft in einer individuellen Weise verwandt, ohne daß der Autor sich auf die vorhandenen Terminologien bezieht, oder ohne daß er anderweitig die Leser darüber informiert, was er unter den verschiedenen Termini versteht. Man richtet sich dabei nach so unzuverlässigen Maßstäben wie dem „Sprachgefühl" oder glaubt, daß die eigene Terminologie einer allgemeinen Konvention entspräche. Oft weicht aber der Gebrauch stark von dem ab, was in den terminologischen Arbeiten vorgeschlagen wird. Das Ergebnis ist, daß Ausdrücke wie „Klan", „Sippe" und „Großfamilie" bei verschiedenen Lesern verschiedene Vorstellungen erwecken.

Bei der vorliegenden Arbeit soll die Terminologie der obengenannten Autoren mit den Verwandtschafts- und Lokalgruppen der Ekonda verglichen werden. Es handelt sich um die nordwestliche Abteilung der Ekonda, die im Territorium Bikoro wohnen. Die Ekonda gehören zu der großen Gruppe der Mongo.

Es wurde gesagt, daß es sich um Verwandtschafts- und Lokalgruppen handelt, eine Feststellung, die der Erläuterung bedarf. Wenn hier von Lokalgruppen die Rede ist, so soll damit nicht gesagt werden, daß es sich um Verbände handelt, die aus nicht verwandten Untergruppen bestehen. Es soll nur ausgedrückt werden, daß die Wohnweise das entscheidende Kriterium für ihre Abgrenzung ist. Es können nahverwandte Gruppen ausgeschlossen, fernerstehende eingeschlossen sein. Gelegentlich umfassen solche Lokalverbände auch Gruppen, die untereinander nicht verwandt sind.

---

[1]) Zum Typusbegriff siehe Thurnwald, Menschl. Gesellschaft, Bd. 1, S. VII ff., Mühlmann, Methodik, S. 114 ff. und Wörterbuch der Soziologie, S. 224 f.

[2]) Menschl. Gesellschaft, Bd. 2, 4.

[3]) Verwandtschaftsorganisation, ZE 63, S. 85—193; Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen, ZE 64, S. 41—71.

[4]) Social Structure.

[4a]) Changing Emphasis.

[5]) Study of Kinship Systems.

[6]) Primitive Society.

[7]) Structures élémentaires.

[8]) Für Beratung und Literaturhinweise bin ich Herrn Prof. Mühlmann zu besonderem Dank verpflichtet.

[9]) Mühlmann, Methodik, S. 120.

Auch bei den Gruppen, die ich hier Verwandtschaftsgruppen nenne, ist ein biologischer oder ein genealogisch nachweisbarer juristischer Zusammenhang oft sehr zweifelhaft. Doch wird diese Ungenauigkeit hier nicht beachtet, verwandt ist, was die Ekonda selbst als verwandt betrachten. Es scheint mir nicht gerechtfertigt, über die Auffassung der Eingeborenen hinwegzusehen, da sie Charakter und Funktion der Gruppen bestimmen. Diese Auffassung vertritt Murdock[10]) für die Sippe, während die lineage für ihn aus Menschen besteht, die ihre Verwandtschaft nachweisen können. Es sei hier gleich darauf hingewiesen, daß auch die Lokalgruppen die Tendenz haben, sich zu „paternisieren"[11]), eine engere Verwandtschaft zu konstruieren.

Die Verwandtschaftsgliederung der Ekonda

Wir finden bei den Ekonda ein System von Gruppen vor, die nach wahrer oder angenommener Verwandtschaft einander zugeordnet sind. Das System ist vielstufig hierarchisch gegliedert, indem größere Gruppen eine bis vier Gruppen der nächsten Ordnung umfassen. Die Beziehungen zwischen den Gruppen entsprechen den Beziehungen zwischen ihren Gründerahnen. So werden Gruppen als älterer und jüngerer Bruder usw. einer anderen Gruppe bezeichnet. Gruppen können im Verhältnis zu anderen bezeichnet werden als:

Bruder, jüngerer oder älterer,

Bruder oder Halbbruder (von verschiedenen Frauen des polygynen Stammvaters),

uneheliches Kind der Schwester, das juristisch als Kind des ältesten Bruders bzw. des Vaters seiner Mutter zu der Gruppe der Verwandten der Mutter gehört,

Kind eines Jungen, der mit seiner Schwester in den Verband seiner Schwäger gezogen ist und sich dort für dauernd niedergelassen hat,

Schwestersohn, der sich aus irgendeinem Grunde von seiner väterlichen Verwandtschaft getrennt hat und zu der Gruppe seiner Mutter oder einer seiner Großmütter gezogen ist.

Die Verschiedenartigkeit der verwandtschaftlichen Beziehungen wirkt sich auf die sozialen Verhältnisse von heute aus. Die Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen, die das Verhältnis der wahren oder angenommenen Ahnen zueinander bezeichneten, werden gelegentlich auf die Gruppen übertragen.

Als Beispiel einer hierarchischen Verwandtschaftsgliederung wird hier die Gruppe Isangi[12]) beschrieben. Isangi ist eine Lokalgruppe der oben (S. 188) erwähnten Art, die ich, entsprechend dem allgemeinen Brauch im Lande selbst, als „Dorf" bezeichne. Bis zu einer Entscheidung über die Bezeichnung der Gruppen verwende ich für die einzelnen Stufen der hierarchischen Ordnung die Buchstaben A bis E. Dabei bezeichnet A die Stufe der kleinsten und E die der größten Verbände (s. Abb. 2).

Außer den drei Stufen der Gruppe D in Isangi gibt es weitere in den Tochterdörfern (s. Abb. 1), die aber auch fremde Gruppen umfassen können, wie z. B. in Wengá die „Nkundó"-Gruppe Liimbu.

Alle Gruppen, die in dem Schema (Abb. 2) dargestellt sind, sind den Erwachsenen in Isangi mit ihren Namen bekannt. Die Gruppen haben alle neben ihrem normalen Namen noch einen Trommelnamen und einen Ehrennamen. Nur die drei Gruppen Boyeke der Stufe B haben zwar verschiedene Trommelnamen, aber keine eigentlichen Gruppennamen. Die Zuordnung der Gruppen, wie wir sie in dem Schema finden, entspricht keiner Genealogie, sie basiert nur auf den Charakteristika und Funktionen der einzelnen Gruppen,

---

[10]) Social Structure p. 47.
[11]) Boelaert: Clan équivoque p. 17.
[12]) Müller, Fürstentum, S. 68 ff., 125, 128 ff.

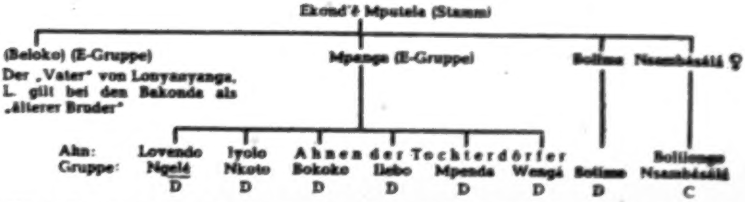

Ekond'ě Mputela (Stamm)
(Beloko) (E-Gruppe)
Der „Vater" von Lonyasyanga.
L. gilt bei den Bakonda als
„älterer Bruder"
Mpanga (E-Gruppe)
Bolima
Nsambásálá ♀
Ahn:
Gruppe:
Lovendo
Ngelé
D
Iyolo
Nkoto
D
Ahnen der Tochterdörfer
Bokoko
D
Ilebo
D
Mpenda
D
Wengá
D
Bolima
D
Boliionga
Nsambásálá
C

Abb. 1. Genealogie der Bakonda. Die Buchstaben unter den Gruppennamen beziehen sich auf die Stufe der betreffenden Gruppen (s. Abb. 2)

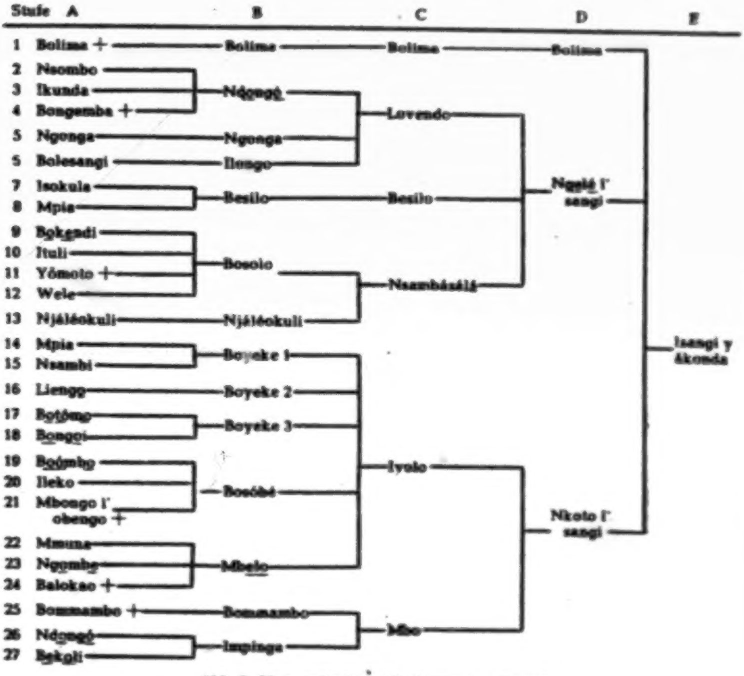

Stufe A
B
C
D
E
1 Bolima +
2 Nsombo
3 Ikunda
4 Bongemba +
5 Ngonga
5 Bolesangi
7 Isokula
8 Mpia
9 Bokendi
10 Ituli
11 Yőmoto +
12 Wele
13 Njáléokuli
14 Mpia
15 Nsambi
16 Lienge
17 Botóme
18 Bongoi
19 Boómbo
20 Ileko
21 Mbongo l' obengo +
22 Mmuna
23 Ngombe
24 Balokao +
25 Bommambo +
26 Ndongó
27 Bekoli
Bolima
Ndongó
Ngonga
Ilongo
Besilo
Bosolo
Njáléokuli
Boyeke 1
Boyeke 2
Boyeke 3
Bosóbé
Mbelo
Bommambo
Impinga
Bolima
Lovendo
Besilo
Nsambásálá
Iyolo
Mbo
Bolima
Ngelé l' sangi
Nkoto l' sangi
Isangi y ákonda

Abb. 2. Verwandtschaftsgliederung von Isangi
1—27 = Numerierung der A-Gruppen im Lageplan Abb. 3
+ = ausgestorbene Gruppe

die jeweils auf einer Stufe gleich sind. Es handelt sich also um ein Organisationsschema, nicht um eine Stammtafel.

Die Beziehungen zwischen den einzelnen Gruppen sind den Leuten von Isangi ebenfalls bekannt, doch ist ihnen das System nicht in der Weise transparent, wie es hier im Schema erscheint. Sie stellen die Verwandtschaft unter den Gruppen fest, sind auch in der Lage anzugeben, welche Funktionen den einzelnen Gruppen zukommen, ohne deswegen Gruppen gleicher Funktion als gleichartig zu betrachten und ohne sie in ein solches Schema einzuordnen. Das Schema stellt somit eine Systematisierung dar, die, da sie eine Systematisierung ist, nicht ganz der Wirklichkeit gerecht wird. Dementsprechend gibt es auch

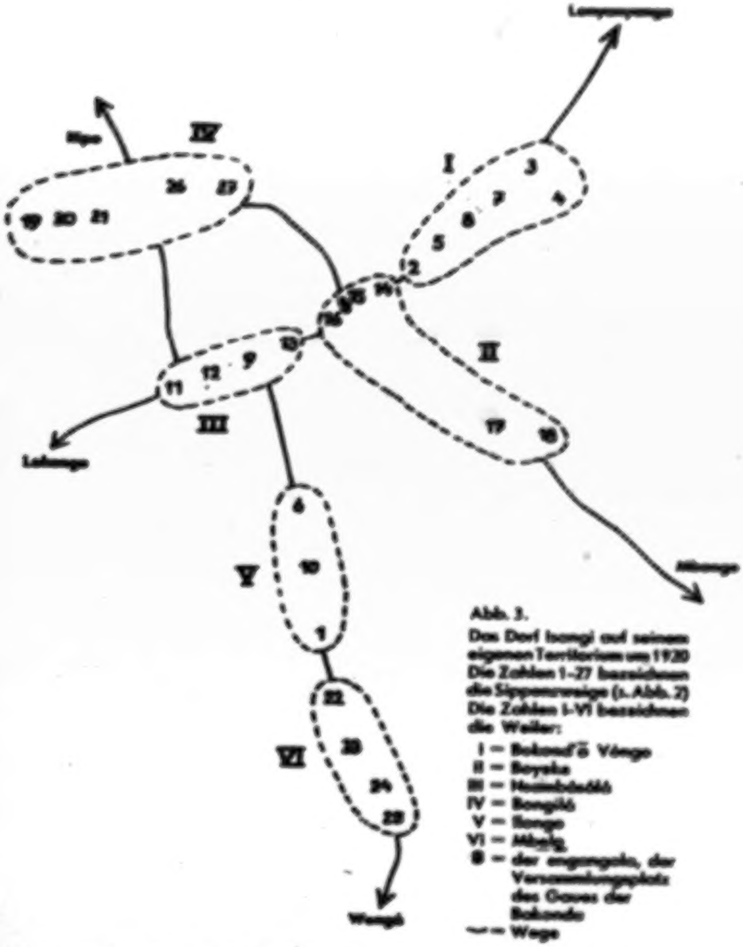


Abb. 3.
Das Dorf Isongi auf seinem eigenen Territorium um 1920
Die Zahlen 1–27 bezeichnen die Sippenzweige (s. Abb. 2)
Die Zahlen I–VI bezeichnen die Weiler:
I = Bokond'ó Vóngo
II = Boyaka
III = [illegible]
IV = Bongiló
V = [illegible]
VI = [illegible]
● = der engangelo, der Versammlungsplatz des Gaues der Bokonda
— = Wege

keine zureichende Ekonda-Sozialterminologie. Die Ausdrücke sind — wie im nichtwissenschaftlichen europäischen Sprachgebrauch — nicht genau genug festgelegt. Im übrigen führt der prinzipiell gleichartige Charakter der Gruppen der Stufen A bis E und der noch größeren Verbände dazu, daß alle Ausdrücke fast wahllos für große und kleine Einheiten verwendet werden.

Das Wort ikundi (eigentlich = Schoß) bezeichnet normalerweise kleine Einheiten, etwa der Stufen A und B. Doch gebraucht man es auch für größere und große Verbände, wenn man ihre relativ enge Verwandtschaft betonen will. Es entspricht damit ungefähr der Bedeutung, die das Wort „Familie" im nichtwissenschaftlichen Sprachgebrauch hat. ilongo bezeichnet sowohl die Kleinfamilie im europäischen Sinne als auch Gruppen der Stufe A und B.

Bonsonga und etúká sind Bezeichnungen, die für Verwandtschaftsgruppen der Stufen B, C und D verwendet werden. Doch können sie gelegentlich auch die Gruppen A bezeichnen, außerdem die Lokalgruppen, die in der Größe den genannten Verwandtschaftsverbänden etwa entsprechen. Etíkâ ist die Bezeichnung für den Ölfruchtstand und eine bestimmte Art von Termitenhaufen und wird anscheinend häufiger als bonsonge für Lokalgruppen verwendet.

Ebenfalls schwankend im Gebrauch ist ekindâ. Dieses Wort bezeichnet in erster Linie eine Tanzgruppe, ein corps de ballet und die soziale Einheit, die eine solche gemeinsame Tanzgruppe zu Tanzfesten entsendet.

Esé ist ebenfalls stark lokal bestimmt, es deckt sich meist mit dem, was wir Dorf nennen, doch werden häufig Einheiten als „esé" bezeichnet, die größer oder kleiner als ein Dorf sind. Sehr große Gruppen, Stämme und noch größere Verbände, heißen bonanga.

Für die Einteilung der einzelnen Gruppen in eine der Stufen wurden jeweils ein oder mehrere Funktionen als Kriterium gewählt. Weiter unten werden die Gruppen der einzelnen Stufen in diesen Funktionen geschildert. Allgemein wäre noch zu allen Gruppen zu sagen, daß sie sich in einigen Zügen nicht voneinander unterscheiden. Alle Gruppen aller Stufen sind Verwandtschaftsverbände patrilinearer Abstammung, die sich als Nachkommen eines Ahnherren betrachten. Eine durchlaufende und vollständige Genealogie bis zum Ahn ist nie bekannt. Die Genealogie der Gesamtgruppe Bekonda ist in Zeichnung 1 dargestellt.

Von den Ahnherren der Gruppen der Stufe D in Isangi sind also zwei Brüder, der dritte ist deren Vaterbruder. Eine D-Gruppe (Ngelé) umfaßt außerdem noch die Nachkommen eines unehelichen Kindes der Vaterschwester des Gründers, die die C-Gruppe Nsambásálá bilden.

Zwischen dieser alten Genealogie und den bekannten Vorfahren aus naher Vergangenheit klafft eine Lücke. Im Gegensatz zu den benachbarten Bokóté (s. z. B. Boelaert, Bongili) ist das genealogische Gedächtnis der Ekonda sehr schwach. Es reicht nicht bis zum Begründer der Gruppe der Stufe A zurück. Dabei ist zu berücksichtigen, daß sich eine Gruppe erst dann spaltet, wenn der Ahn, auf den die neuen Gruppen zurückgehen, längst tot ist. Die Nachkommenschaft eines Patriarchen wird sich ja erst in die Gruppen seiner Söhne teilen, wenn sie so groß geworden ist, daß das notwendig erscheint. Bei der Größe auch der kleinsten Ekonda-Gruppen kann das erst nach mehreren Generationen der Fall sein. Dann sind aber der gemeinsame Patriarch und seine Söhne, die Stammväter der neuen Untergruppen, tot. So finden wir zur Zeit eine Tendenz zur Spaltung in der Gruppe Ndong'Tmpinga; die Ahnen der beiden in Entstehung befindlichen Gruppen sind um 1920 gestorben. Wahrscheinlich werden sich die beiden Gruppen in ihrem Altersverhältnis zueinander nicht nach dem Verhältnis dieser „Stammväter", sondern nach dem Verhältnis der „Patriarchen", unter denen sie sich trennen, einstufen. Der genaue Vorgang der Spaltung von A-Gruppen kann nur an Ort und Stelle beobachtet, nicht durch Befragung nachträglich ermittelt werden.

Im Folgenden sollen jetzt die Gruppen der verschiedenen Stufen in ihrer Charakteristik beschrieben werden.

Gruppen der Stufe A:

Diese Gruppen bestehen aus bis zu 40 Personen. Zu einer solchen Gruppe gehört in den meisten Fällen eine Gruppe Batwá-Pygmoide, die als Heloten zu der A-Gruppe ihrer Herren gehören und diese Zugehörigkeit in der männlichen Linie weitervererben, ebenso wie ihre Herren. Das älteste Mitglied der A-Gruppe — Pygmoide ausgeschlossen — ist der „bomóté bokonda", der „Eigentümer des Bodens", die Verkörperung aller Autorität im Innern und der Vertreter der Gruppe nach außen. Er ist die einzige Person mit voller Geschäftsfähigkeit. Alle Mitglieder der Gruppe stehen zu ihm im Vater-Sohn-Verhältsein, selbst wenn die jüngeren Mitglieder nach Generationen gerechnet ihm gegenüber Vaterrang haben. Er hat den Schatz der Gruppe an Brautpfandgütern, den er verwaltet und ausgibt. Er hat das Verfügungsrecht über das Grundeigentum der Gruppe. Im Ältestenrat des Dorfes und der anderen größeren Verbände vertritt er die A-Gruppe. Gelten auch alle Mitglieder der Gruppe als nicht geschäftsfähig, so werden doch alle Rechtshandlungen, die sie vornehmen, als im Einverständnis des Patriarchen eingegangen angesehen. Die Mitglieder der Gruppe können sich weitgehend untereinander vertreten. In Abwesenheit des Ältesten kann auch ein jüngeres Mitglied als Vertreter der Gruppe bei Ratsversammlungen fungieren. Beim Tode des Seniors folgt ihm das nächstälteste Gruppenmitglied in seiner Funktion.

Nur innere Zwistigkeiten, die nicht zu überbrücken sind, und große Zunahme der Bevölkerung führen zu einer Teilung der A-Gruppe. Die neu entstandenen A-Gruppen behalten weiterhin einen engen Zusammenhang, der zu Beginn größer ist als in den B-Gruppen, deren A-Einheiten sich schon früher geteilt haben. Da auch auf höheren Stufen der Zusammenhalt nach der Trennung nur allmählich abnimmt, entsteht eine Vielstufigkeit im Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl, die durch kein Schema auch nur annähernd richtig wiedergegeben werden kann. Eine Regel zur Teilung, etwa nach einer bestimmten Generationszahl wie bei den Tallensi[illegible], existiert nicht. Die A-Gruppen sind also theoretisch „ewig". Die A-Gruppen unterteilen sich in Kleinfamilien. Innerhalb der polygynen Familien haben die Familienkerne[illegible] eine ökonomisch halbwegs unabhängige Stellung. Jede Frau hat ein eigenes Haus. Die Frauen eines Mannes und die Frauen seiner Söhne haben ihre Häuser in einem Gehöft. Der Vater als Gehöftsherr hat einen offenen Hangar als Aufenthalt der Männer und als Versammlungshaus. Stirbt der Gehöftsherr, so wird das Gehöft verlassen. Die Söhne errichten auf ihren neuen Wohnplätzen je einen eigenen Hangar. Im Gegensatz zu den Gruppen vom Typ A—E ist die Gruppe, die ein Gehöft bewohnt, endlich: sie endet mit dem Tode des Vaters. Nur ein Mann, dessen Vater (im europäischen Sinne des Wortes) gestorben ist, kann einen Hangar haben. Zwischen A-Gruppe und Kleinfamilie steht somit noch die Gehöftsgemeinschaft.

Fassen wir alles, was für die A-Gruppen charakteristisch ist, noch einmal zusammen:

Zugehörigkeit nach männlicher Folge geregelt, Einheit des rechtlichen Lebens, insbesondere im Grund- und Erbrecht, der Senior hat die volle potestas. Nachfolge nach reinem Seniorat, theoretisch unbegrenzte Dauer der Gruppe. Die A-Gruppen bestehen aus Kleinfamilien, die in Gehöften unter jeweils einem Vater zusammenwohnen.

Gruppen der Stufe B:

Zwischen den A-Gruppen, die zu einer B-Gruppe gehören, besteht normalerweise ein freund-nachbarliches Verhältnis. Man unterstützt sich gegenseitig weitgehend, berät auch die sozialen Angelegenheiten gemeinsam. Die Gruppe B hat nur einen Nkúmú [illegible], den „Herrn der verborgenen Kraft", den Sippenpriester. Er wird von allen zugehörigen Leuten konsultiert. Bei der magischen Jagdvorbereitung tritt er in Funktion, bei allen Unternehmungen von Bedeutung wird er gefragt. Er spricht zu dem Verstorbenen bei dessen Verabschiedung nach der Beerdigung, an ihn wendet man sich, wenn die Ahnen im Traum erscheinen und Wünsche, Befehle oder Mitteilungen an die Lebenden übermitteln wollen. Er schützt die Leute seiner Gruppe vor dem bösen Willen — *ndoki* — der Toten und der Lebenden. Dieser Sippenpriester wird als das

---

[illegible] Fortes, Dynamics of Clanship, S. [illegible].

[illegible] Thurnwald, Menschl. Gesellschaft, Bd. 4, S. [illegible].

Kriterium dafür betrachtet, welche Gruppe zusammengehöriger A-Gruppen eine B-Gruppe darstellt. Der Sippenpriester stammt aus einer bestimmten der zugehörigen A-Gruppen.

Zwischen den A-Gruppen einer B-Gruppe gibt es zwar ein Rangverhältnis — eine Gruppe gilt als die ältere —, doch ist dies von untergeordneter Bedeutung (s. unten, unter Lokalgruppen). Der führende Mann der B-Gruppe ist der älteste der Seniores der zugehörigen A-Gruppen, d. h. der Senior der B-Gruppe. Jedoch ist er nicht ein Inhaber voller potestas wie der Senior der A-Gruppe, er ist mehr ein princeps inter pares. Das berührt natürlich nicht seine Stellung als Senior in seiner eigenen A-Gruppe.

Innerhalb einer B-Gruppe wird oft das Grundeigentum noch als zusammengehörig betrachtet, obwohl schon festgelegte Grenzen zwischen den Territorien der konstituierenden A-Gruppen bestehen. Im allgemeinen kann man das Einverständnis der anderen Seniores voraussetzen, die Jagd auf ihr Gebiet auszudehnen, unter gewissen Umständen Pflanzungen auf ihrem Gebiet anzulegen oder bestimmte Wildpflanzen als Rohmaterial für Hausbau und Handwerk zu suchen. Die Zugehörigkeit zur Gruppe B bestimmt sich durch die Zugehörigkeit zur Gruppe A.

Auf eine Reihe Besonderheiten in der Abstammungsfolge, die sich aus der Bedeutung des Brautpfandes ergeben, soll hier nicht eingegangen werden. Wir hörten von einem Fall von Inzest zwischen Mitgliedern zweier A-Gruppen, die eine B-Gruppe bilden, nicht aber innerhalb einer Gruppe A. Dabei sind allerdings die Inzeste nicht berücksichtigt, die nötig sind, ein besonders kräftiges Zaubermittel wirksam zu machen.

Fassen wir alles, was für die B-Gruppen charakteristisch ist, noch einmal zusammen:

Es gibt nur einen Sippenpriester. Der Zusammenhang in einer B-Gruppe ist sehr eng, es besteht starke Zusammenarbeit, man berät in allen Dingen gemeinsam, auch in solchen, die sich eigentlich nur auf eine der zugehörigen A-Gruppen beziehen, dabei hat der älteste der Seniores einen gewissen Vorrang.

Gruppen der Stufe C:

Der Zusammenhang in einer Gruppe dieser Stufe ist wesentlich loser, obwohl gerade auf diesem Niveau sehr starke Unterschiede zwischen den einzelnen Gruppen bestehen. So betrachten sich z. B. die Gruppen Lovando und Bosilo als viel enger zusammengehörig, als eine dieser beiden mit Nsambéndá (s. Zeichnung 2). Das hatte mich veranlaßt, in meiner Dissertation diese Stufe in zwei verschiedene Stufen (Untergruppen I° und II°) aufzuteilen [illegible]. Da keine markanten Kriterien für zwei Stufen existieren, in anderen Dörfern überhaupt eine Scheidungsmöglichkeit fehlt, mache ich keine Zwischenunterscheidung mehr.

Die Gruppen der Stufe C sind die exogamen Einheiten von morgen. Zwischen den Angehörigen verschiedener C-Gruppen ist zwar die Ehe verboten, doch sind sexuelle Beziehungen zwischen ihnen gestattet. Diese Erlaubnis entspricht dem [illegible] der Bokilé [illegible].

Gruppen der Stufe D:

Die Gruppen dieser Stufe sind die wahren exogamen Einheiten. Zwar kommen bei „ovdudu" auch innerhalb der Stufe D Heiraten vor, doch wird diese Praxis noch nicht von den Alten als richtig anerkannt. In Isangi besteht außerdem noch die besondere Bestimmung, daß die Angehörigen der beiden D-Gruppen Ngelú und Nkoto zwar untereinander heiraten dürfen, ihnen aber

---

[illegible] Müller, Dissertation, S. [illegible]

[illegible] Hulstaert, Mariage, S. [illegible] nicht die Ehe mit Angehörigen der D-Gruppe Bolima gestattet ist. Da Bolima in Isangi heute ausgestorben ist, wirkt sich diese Bestimmung heute nur gegen die Ausgewanderten in Bolima w'äsi und gegen die Schwesterkinder in anderen Dörfern aus. Die Gruppe Bolima gilt als die Vatergruppe von Isangi (s. Abb. 1). Ngelé ist die Gruppe des älteren Bruders, Nkoto die des jüngeren. Daraus erklärt man die besondere Stellung von Bolima in der Exogamieordnung. Man sagt, es ginge nicht, daß der „Vater" eines seiner „Kinder" heiratet, selbst wenn diese „Kinder" Urenkel so entfernter Generation sind, daß sie untereinander heiraten.

Die Exogamiebestimmungen der Ekonda beziehen sich nicht nur auf die eigene, agnatische Gruppe, sondern auch auf alle cognatischen Gruppen, zu der die Verwandtschaftsbeziehungen noch bekannt sind, d. h. zirka fünf Generationen zurück.

Gruppen der Stufe E:

Diese Gruppen gehen wohl immer über den Umfang eines Dorfes hinaus. Ihre zusammen siedelnden Teile haben einen gemeinsamen Versammlungsplatz, zu dem aber auch die abgesprengten Teile zur Beratung kommen können. Früher hatte wohl nur eine solche Gruppe einen Nkúmú, einen sakralen Fürsten, der aus dem Vorort stammte (z. B. Isangi), während die anderen Dörfer durch den Senior geleitet wurden. Mit der Austeilung der Nkúmúwürde an die anderen Dörfer ist die Bedeutung der E-Gruppen nahezu vollkommen verschwunden. Auch spielt in dieser Größenordnung die Lokalgruppe eine viel größere Rolle. Sie umfaßt gelegentlich auch abhängige Dörfer, die noch nicht paternisiert worden sind, d. h. die noch als fremd aufgefaßt werden. Hierbei ist zu sagen, daß wahrscheinlich alle größeren Lokalgruppen dazu tendieren, sich in Verwandtschaftsgruppen umzukonstituieren, indem die Genealogie dementsprechend umgedeutet wird. Sicherlich ist die „Verwandtschaft" zahlreicher „Verwandtschaftsgruppen" auf diese Weise entstanden. Es ist dabei ziemlich ausgeschlossen, daß Gruppen, die durch die Exogamieregel voneinander getrennt sind, eine Verwandtschaft erfinden, die so eng ist, daß die vorher mögliche Heirat später verboten wird. Auch die Zusammenlegung anderer wichtiger Funktionen der unteren Stufen infolge Erfindung einer engeren Verwandtschaft liefe der Tendenz einer fortlaufenden Differenzierung entgegen [77]. Allgemein kann man annehmen, daß Lokalgruppen nur solch eine Verwandtschaft postulieren, die keine wesentliche funktionelle Reintegration notwendig macht. Einheiten oberhalb der Exogamiegrenze werden daher leicht eine Genealogie konstruieren, die eine Verwandtschaft „nachweist". Gruppen dieser Art sind funktionsschwach. Vorgänge dieser Art lassen sich sowohl in der Gruppe der Bakonda wie in der benachbarten E-Gruppe Lonyanyanga feststellen. Die Institution des Nkúmú (s. o. S. 195) scheint ebenfalls einen nivellierenden Einfluß auszuüben. Das Recht der ältesten (und freien) Gruppe verliert an Bedeutung und tritt hinter die Nkúmúwürde zurück. Die neue Würde steht auch jüngeren und abhängigen Gruppen zu.

Soziologische Terminologie für Verwandtschaftsgruppen

Bevor wir die Einheiten behandeln, die als Siedlungsgruppen verstanden werden müssen, sollen die Verwandtschaftsgruppen der Ekonda mit den soziologischen Idealtypen verglichen werden. Ich behandele nach den zu Beginn genannten Autoren nun die verschiedenen Gruppentermini, die für unsere Ekondaverhältnisse in Frage kommen.

---

[77] Aus Angaben der Eingeborenen wissen wir, daß die Exogamiegrenze vor etwa 100 Jahren auf die gegenwärtige Stufe herabgesetzt wurde. Vorher war zwischen Ngele, Nkoto und Bolima nur der [illegible] gestattet.

Familie

Die Kleinfamilie hat für das organisatorische System der Ekonda keine Bedeutung. Doch ist sie als kleinste Einheit des Wirtschaftslebens sehr wichtig. Potentiell ist jede Kleinfamilie polygyn, doch sind die monogynen Ehen — vor allem in der jüngeren Generation — heute zahlreicher. Es erscheint wegen dieses Unterschiedes zwischen potentieller und praktischer Polygynie empfehlenswerter, im Sinne Thurnwalds die polygamen Formen mit unter die Kleinfamilie zu rechnen und in ihr Familienkerne zu unterscheiden[illegible]. Dies erscheint mir auch mehr der funktionellen Bedeutung zu entsprechen als die Auffassung von Murdock, der die polygame Familie zusammen mit der Großfamilie zu den „composite forms of family" rechnet[illegible].

Über die Großfamilie schreibt Thurnwald in seinen „Fachausdrücken" an zwei Stellen, unter „Familie" S. XIII f. und unter „Großfamilie" S. XIV. Unter Familie sagt Thurnwald:

> „. . . . Die ‚Großfamilie' unterscheidet sich von ihr dadurch, daß in ihr mehrere Generationen unter einem gemeinsamen Großvater entweder auf dem gleichen Hof oder sogar unter demselben Dach zusammen leben. Die Familienkerne mit den dazugehörigen Männern bleiben relativ selbständig. Natürlich können auch hier schutzlose Verwandte angegliedert werden. Von der Sippe (s. d.) unterscheidet sich die Großfamilie dadurch, daß bei ihr alle Mitglieder auf demselben Wohnplatz ansässig sind und die Verwandtschaft der Mitglieder vorwiegend in absteigender Linie vom Haupt besteht; außerdem bildet sie eine Wirtschaftseinheit. Die Eigenart der Großfamilie liegt ferner darin, daß sie, wie jede Familie, an das Leben der sie konstituierenden Persönlichkeiten geknüpft ist und mit ihnen stirbt, während sich die Sippe automatisch erneuert, gewissermaßen ‚ewig' ist."

Dagegen schreibt er bei Großfamilie nur: „. . . . Das Zusammenleben von wenigstens drei voneinander abstammenden Generationen unter einem gemeinsamen Haupt (Großvater mit Kindern und Kindeskindern) wird als ‚Großfamilie' bezeichnet (s. Familie, Sippe)." Dazwischen besteht eine Diskrepanz. Wenn eine Gruppe sich, entsprechend der ersten Charakterisierung, beim Tode der konstituierenden Persönlichkeiten, d. h. der ältesten Generation, auflöst, kann das „wenigstens" zwar für die Norm, aber nicht für den Einzelfall gelten. Ebenso versteht Thurnwald die Familie im Lehrbuch der Völkerkunde[illegible]. Wollen wir die Auffassung von Thurnwald beibehalten — das Material von Kirchhoff[illegible] und die altrömische familia wären dann gute Beispiele —, dann wäre eine patrilineare Großfamilie eine zusammenwohnende und -wirtschaftende Verwandtschaftsgruppe, die aus einem Mann, seinen Frauen und allen seinen Nachkommen besteht und die sich beim Tode des Alten in die Großfamilien seiner Söhne auflöst.

Kirchhoff versteht die Großfamilie ebenso, legt aber Wert darauf, daß im Gegensatz zur Sippe hier die Angeheirateten zur Gruppe gehören[illegible].

Die Vorstellungen von Murdock über die extended family decken sich mit dieser Auffassung[illegible].

Demgegenüber sieht Thurnwald in Band 2 (S. 22) in der Großfamilie eine unilaterale Verwandtschaftsgruppe mit Angeheirateten, die gemeinsam siedelt und unter gemeinsamem Oberhaupt steht, von ihm sollen die Mitglieder abstammen. Im Gegensatz zur Großfamilie kann die Sippe verstreut wohnen.

[illegible] Bd. 1, S. XIII.
[illegible] Murdock, Social Structure, S. [illegible]
[illegible] Thurnwald in Preuß (Hg.) Lehrbuch, S. [illegible]
[illegible] Kirchhoff, ZE [illegible], S. [illegible]
[illegible] Kirchhoff, ZE [illegible], S. [illegible]
[illegible] Murdock, Social Structure, S. [illegible]

Damit stellt Thurnwald hier andere Charakteristika in den Vordergrund. Der Text läßt aber den Schluß zu, daß das Abhängigsein vom Leben des Familienhauptes und die Endlichkeit für Thurnwald immer ein wesentliches Charakteristikum der Großfamilie war.

In diesem Sinne ist keine der unter A—E beschriebenen Einheiten eine Großfamilie. Die angeheirateten Frauen gehören ökonomisch zur Gruppe des Mannes, bleiben aber immer der Gruppe ihres Vaters zugehörig; im Falle einer Scheidung kehren sie dorthin zurück. Die nie abreißende Verbindung zwischen den verschwägerten Gruppen durch Geschenke und Gegengeschenke, die alle zum Brautpfand und der Mitgift gehören, läßt die Zugehörigkeit der Frau zu ihrer Herkunftsgruppe nicht vergessen. Nach dem Tode wird die Frau in der Erde ihrer Gruppe bestattet. Die Gruppenzugehörigkeit der Frau wird zusätzlich auf die Kinder übertragen, nur wirkt sie sich nicht so sehr im ökonomisch-politischen Bereich aus. Wichtig ist die Mutterlinie bei den Heiratsbeschränkungen, bestimmten Meidungen, die über die Frauen vererbt werden, und auch in bestimmten Rechten. Es gibt nicht wenige Leute, die sich in der Gruppe ihrer Mutter oder einer ihrer Großmütter definitiv angesiedelt haben.

Entscheidend für die Unbrauchbarkeit des Terminus Großfamilie ist der „ewige" Charakter der Gruppen A—E der Ekonda. Doch sind die Unterabteilungen der A-Gruppen, die in einem gemeinsamen Gehöft beieinanderwohnen (s. S. 183), eine Großfamilie im Sinne von Thurnwald, Kirchhoff und Murdock.

Sippe

Schon bei den zitierten Erläuterungen zu „Familie" finden wir etwas über die Vorstellung Thurnwalds über die Sippe. Darüber hinaus sagt er zu dem Fachausdruck „Sippe" (S. XVII f.)[illegible]:

> „. . . . Als Sippe wird ein politisch nicht selbständiger Klan (s. d.) bezeichnet. Der Verlust der Selbständigkeit ist gewöhnlich durch Verteilung des Klanvolkes auf verschiedene Siedlungsgemeinden verursacht. Eine Sippe wird durch das Bewußtsein der Abstammung von denselben Ahnen und dem gemeinsamen Ahnenkult zusammengehalten. Die Sippe hat ihre besondere Bedeutung für die Heiratsordnung (s. d.). — Eine Sippe kann in Untersippen aufgeteilt sein (Großsippe, Kleinsippe), oder sie kann zu einer ‚Halbierung' führen. Sippe oder Untersippe besitzen manchmal ein Oberhaupt, manchmal nicht."

Beim Stichwort Klan sagt Thurnwald (S. XVI)[illegible]:

> „Das Wort bezeichnet im Altirischen, dem es entnommen ist, Kinder gemeinsamer Abstammung, etwa im Sinne einer ‚Großfamilie' (s. d.). Es wird heute für Familienagglomerationen (s. Horde) gebraucht, die stabil geworden und durch den Glauben an gemeinsame Ahnen religiös unterbaut sind und oft auch wirtschaftlich und politisch einander stützen. Es ist ratsam, einen Unterschied zwischen dem innerhalb eines Gebietes ausschließlich siedelnden und auf diesen Gau Anspruch erhebenden ‚Klan' zu machen, der eine politisch souveräne Gemeinde darstellt, und den auf verschiedene, ihrerseits selbständige Gemeinden verteilten Klansplittern, die wir als ‚Sippen' (s. d.) bezeichnen, die untereinander gewöhnlich nicht organisiert sind und nur durch zeremoniell-religiösen Ahnenkult und durch eine gewisse Solidarität zusammengehalten werden. Die Entstehung von Klan und Sippe ist eng mit dem Ahnenkult verwachsen, der die Stammeslinie symbolisiert. Die Klan- oder Sippen-Zugehörigkeit kann in männlicher oder weiblicher Linie gerechnet werden. Diese gewissermaßen

---

[illegible] Menschliche Gesellschaft, Bd. 4

kristallisierte Familienagglomeration wird häufig durch eines der lebenden Familienhäupter vertreten. Dadurch unterscheidet sie sich von familialen Gebilden, die mit dem Leben der sie tragenden Personen erlöschen. In Klan oder Sippe sind die sich ablösenden persönlichen Familien dauernd vertreten (s. Familie, Kaste, Staat)."

Als gemeinsam können wir für beide Formen festhalten, daß es sich um rein unilaterale Verbände handelt, die durch Ahnenkult verbunden sind (der der Großfamilie im obigen Sinne fehlen kann, in den meisten Fällen sogar fehlen wird). Lassen wir den Versuch, in beiden Beschreibungen eine Theorie der Entstehung zu geben, fort, so erscheinen mir im übrigen die Unterscheidungen zwischen den beiden Termini sehr brauchbar, vor allem, wenn man nur den ersten Fall von Klan bei Thurnwald annimmt, den zweiten als für uns hier irrelevant vollkommen außer acht läßt.

Unsere Gruppe A wohnt zwar in einem bestimmten Gebiet und erhebt Anspruch auf diesen „Gau", doch ist es schwierig, ihn als eine politisch souveräne Gemeinde zu bezeichnen. Die Politik hat viel mehr mit jenen Gruppen zu tun, die wir bisher noch gar nicht beschrieben haben, den Siedlungsgemeinschaften. Darüber hinaus ist die Gruppe A integriert in die Gruppe B, diese in eine Gruppe C, eine Kette fast ohne Ende, denn bei Stämmen mit stärkerem genealogischen Bewußtsein als die Ekonda es haben, etwa bei den benachbarten Bongili[68]), endet die Hierarchie der Gruppen mit der Menschheit, die Hierarchie der Ahnen mit Gott.

Diesen Stufencharakter hebt Thurnwald besonders bei der Sippe hervor. Für Kirchhoff ist die Sippe nicht in einer Weise behandelt, die für eine Differentialdiagnose zwischen Sippe und Klan von Wert für uns wäre. Ihm war es, entsprechend der Organisationsform der von ihm behandelten Populationen, mehr um die Abgrenzung von Großfamilie und Sippe zu tun. Lowie[69]) spricht nur von Sippe, „sib" und nennt sie „'clan' of British anthropologists" (S. 105) oder „clans", wenn patrilinear, und „gentes", wenn matrilinear „of most American anthropologists". Das „ad infinitum" (S. 106) ist für ihn ebenfalls wichtig für die Sippe. Auch die Möglichkeit der Untergliederung ist bei Lowie für seine sib vorhanden, und so schließt er auch solche Formen in die Sippe ein, die zwar nach der Erläuterung von Thurnwald eigentlich noch dazu gehören, die für ihn und den sonstigen ethnologischen Sprachgebrauch aber doch schon Einheiten eines besonderen Typs sind: die moieties. Lowie hat damit eine weitgehend gleiche Auffassung wie Thurnwald.

Murdock[70]) unterscheidet streng zwischen Sippe und lineage. Für ihn ist die lineage eine Gruppe von Individuen, die ihre Abstammung von einem gemeinsamen Ahnen nachweisen können, das heißt für ihn in der Mehrzahl der Fälle nur der unilaterale „Stamm" einer Großfamilie, ohne die zugeheirateten und einschließlich der fortgeheirateten Mitglieder.

Die Sippe ist für Murdock dasselbe wie für Thurnwald. Dagegen unterscheidet er sich in seiner Auffassung vom Klan[71]).

Klan

Für Murdock ist der patrilineare Klan eine Lokalgruppe, die aus dem Stamm einer Sippe besteht, die aber die Ehefrauen ihrer Mitglieder in sich aufnimmt, die sich verheiratenden Töchter dafür entläßt. Als Beispiel führte er die „Gruppen" an, die in unserer Gesellschaft durch gemeinsamen Familiennamen verbunden sind. Würde der Personenkreis, der sich durch den gemeinsamen

---

[68] Boelaert, Les Bongili.
[69] Primitive Society.
[70] Murdock, Social Structure, S. 46 ff.
[71] Murdock, Social Structure, S. 65 ff., insbesondere 66.

Geburtsnamen „Wolf" auszeichnet, als Verwandtschaftsgruppe funktionieren, so wäre es eine Wolf-Sippe. Die Personen aber, die den Namen wirklich führen, also die Herren Wolf mit ihren Frauen, ihren Söhnen und ihren unverheirateten Schwestern und Töchtern, wäre ein Wolf-Klan (wiederum vorausgesetzt, daß diese Gruppe wirklich funktioniert). Diese Auffassung von Klan ist neu. Auch Murdock findet die Bezeichnung nicht glücklich und lädt zu besseren Vorschlägen ein. Der Klan nach Murdock ist eine Einheit von eminent wichtiger Bedeutung, den von der Sippe terminologisch zu unterscheiden bisher nicht möglich war. Ob der Terminus Klan angebracht ist für diese Sozialgruppe, ist hier nicht von Bedeutung. Zwar existiert der „Murdock-Klan" bei den Ekonda auf allen unteren Stufen auch, aber nur als funktionale Einheit, die wie Großfamilie und Kleinfamilie den Ekonda weniger als Gruppe bewußt ist. Ein Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl der Einheimischen mit den Zugeheirateten hat bei den Ekonda zur Grundlage nicht so sehr eine der Verwandtschaftsgruppen, wie sie oben beschrieben wurden, sondern vielmehr eine Lokalgruppe der weiter unten dargestellten Art.

Weder der Auffassung von Thurnwald noch der von Murdock über Klan entsprechen die Einheiten, die wir im ersten Teil beschrieben haben. Von dem Klan Thurnwalds unterscheiden sich unsere Gruppen durch ihre hierarchische Gliederung, in der die Autoritätsfunktionen aufgeteilt sind. Dazu kommt, daß Thurnwald im Lehrbuch[29]) den Klan nicht nur durch die Ausstattung mit politischer Gewalt, sondern auch durch die Größe von der Sippe unterscheiden will. Die einzige Verwandtschaftsgruppe der Ekonda mit starker Autorität ist aber die kleinste, die der Stufe A. Würden wir uns nach dem Kriterium der Autorität richten, so wäre die kleinste Gruppe (Stufe A) ein Klan. Nach dem Kriterium der Größe aber wäre es etwa eine Gruppe der Stufe D oder E, die wir als Klan ansprechen müßten. Das macht die Verwendung dieses Terminus unzweckmäßig.

Deswegen verwende ich für die Gruppen aller Stufen den Ausdruck „Sippe". Bei den Gruppen E könnte man schon von einem Unterstamm sprechen, wobei darauf hinzuweisen ist, daß für den Ekonda alle genannten Gruppen einschließlich der Stämme Verwandtschaftsgruppen gleicher Art, d. h. also „Sippen" sind.

Zur Unterscheidung der Sippen verschiedener Stufen verwende ich für die Gruppen der

Stufe A den Terminus Kernsippe
Stufe B den Terminus Kleinsippe
Stufe C den Terminus Untersippe
Stufe D (den exogamen Einheiten) den Terminus Sippe
Stufe E den Terminus Großsippe.

Die Lokalgliederung

Die zweite Zeichnung stellt die Siedlungsweise der Gruppe Isangi im alten Wohngebiet bis 1949 dar. Zu dieser Zeit wurde Isangi an die Straße umgesiedelt. Von den Kernsippen Isangis haben nur zwei ein Territorium, das so weit nach Osten reicht, daß es die neue Straße überschneidet. So hat die Umsiedlung zu einer völligen Veränderung der Siedlungsform geführt. Doch sind die Funktionen der Siedlungsgemeinschaften noch nicht an die neue Siedlung angepaßt. Die Einwohner rechnen noch zu stark mit einer Rücksiedlung auf ihr eigenes Territorium, als daß sie die Dorforganisation umgestalten würden.

Wir sehen das Dorf in sechs Siedlungsgemeinschaften aufgegliedert[30]), die jeweils nur aus den Angehörigen einer der beiden Sippen von Isangi bestehen.

---

[29]) Thurnwald in Preuß, Lehrbuch S. 280.
[30]) S. Zeichnung 2.

Nur die Gruppe des Vaters, die ja eine eigene Sippe war, finden wir bei einer Siedlungsgemeinschaft der Sippe Ngelé angeschlossen. Hier sei noch nebenher vermerkt, daß die beiden Sippen Ngelé und Nkoto, flußab und flußauf heißen. Die ältere Gruppe heißt flußab, da in ngelé der Fluß groß und breit ist. Diese Ehrenbezeichnung finden wir für die ältere Gruppe in manchen Dörfern wieder, ohne daß immer eine Flußaufgruppe vorhanden sein muß. Eine Entsprechung in der Wohnweise findet sich nicht.

In der Siedlungsgemeinschaft I ist der Zusammenhang zwischen den konstituierenden Sippen so groß, daß die ganze Gemeinschaft einen gemeinsamen bokendi hat, einen gemeinsamen Boten. Die Boten haben die Aufgabe, alle wichtigen Nachrichten nach einem genau festgelegten Plan zu den anderen Gruppen zu bringen, vor allem die Einladungen zu den Versammlungen des Dorfrates beim Nkúmú. Dabei informieren sie die anderen Gruppen über das Programm der Sitzung. Der Bote kommt dabei in der anderen Gemeinschaft wiederum zum Boten; hier versammeln sich die alten Männer, um die Nachricht zu erhalten und zu besprechen. Der Bote dieser Gemeinschaft macht sich dann auf den Weg zur nächsten. Dadurch wird der Bote und sein Gehöft zu einem Mittelpunkt des gesellschaftlichen Lebens.

In der Gemeinschaft II findet sich dieselbe Einheitlichkeit. Hier finden wir auch den engangala, den Versammlungsplatz des Dorfes Isangi und seiner Tochterdörfer. Er besteht aus einem freien Platz mit einem niedrigen breitkronigen Baum; unter der schattenspendenden Krone versammeln sich die Vertreter der zahlreichen Dörfer, die in einem offenen Männerhaus keinen Platz Liengo (16) wohnt auf diesem Platz, der an der Grenze der Territorien dieser finden würden. Der Senior der Kernsippen Mpia (14), Nsambi (15) und drei Gruppen liegt. Der Bote des Weilers Boyeke dagegen ist der Älteste von Mpia, der natürlich mit dem „Ältesten auf den engangala" identisch sein kann.

In der dritten Siedlungsgemeinschaft war die Einheit ebenfalls so stark, daß es nur einen Boten gab. Die Untersippe Nsambésálá, die sich in diesem Weiler konzentriert, gilt als die Nachkommenschaft eines unehelichen Kindes der Tochter des Dorfgründers (s. Zeichn. 1). Wie auch in vielen anderen Dörfern hat sie daher das Amt des „boténi", der bei entsprechenden Gelegenheiten das Menschen- oder Ziegenopfer vollzieht.

Hatten wir es bei diesen drei Gemeinschaften mit verhältnismäßig einheitlichen Gruppen zu tun, so sind die drei folgenden sehr heterogen. Die beiden Gruppen des Weilers IV gehören zu den Untersippen Iyolo und Mbo. Sie betrachten sich, im Gegensatz zu den Untersippen Lovendo und Besilo, als so stark voneinander getrennt, daß sie zwei Boten haben. Der Bote der Siedlung II kommt hierher, geht erst zum Boten in der Kernsippe Bosóbé (19), dann zu Impinga (26). Der Bote von Bosóbé geht zu seinen Verwandten in der Siedlung VI zur Kernsippe Mbelo-Mmuna (22), während der Bote von Impinga-Ndongó früher zur jetzt ausgestorbenen Gruppe Bommambo gehen mußte.

Die Siedlung V bestand aus drei verschiedenen Gruppen. Bolima, die Gruppe des Vaters, hatte ihren eigenen Boten, der aber die Nachricht nur empfing, nicht mehr weitergab, wie alle diese letzten Gruppen des Dorfes. Beide Nachbarn hatten ihren eigenen Boten. Der Bote der Siedlung I kam zur Kernsippe Bolesangi, seinen Verwandten, der Bote der Siedlung III kam zu seinen Verwandten der Kernsippe Ituli.

Wiederum zwei Boten gab es auch im letzten Weiler, doch sind die Nachrichten darüber unzureichend, da die Kernsippe Bommambo schon lange ausgestorben ist.

Alle genannten Siedlungen zeichnen sich dadurch aus, daß früher ihre junge Mannschaft bei großen Tanzfesten geschlossen als ein corps de ballet auftrat. Nachdem wegen der starken Dezimierung der Volkszahl in den Wirren der Okkupationszeit und wegen der Abwanderung in die Städte die Zahl der jungen Leute nicht mehr ausreicht, treten I mit II, III mit IV und V mit VI zusammen auf. Wir finden also jeweils Ngelé und Nkoto in einem Ballett vereinigt. Obwohl diese Gruppen in der heutigen Siedlungsweise (an der Straße) ebenfalls versprengt sind, ist die alte Organisation erhalten geblieben, und die jungen Männer scheuen nicht den täglichen weiten Weg zum Übungsplatz, um in der alten Gruppierung tanzen zu können.

Ganz Isangi, alle drei Sippen, haben zusammen einen Dorffürsten, den Nkúmú, mit einem Iyolo nsáka, der die Versammlungen einleitet, ein Dorfgericht mit den zugehörigen Richtern. Es gibt andere Gruppen, die Isangi entsprechen[81]), aber mehr als einen Nkúmú haben. Aber auch sie haben nur einen Mann, der die Versammlung eröffnet, und einen Untersuchungsrichter. Nur einer der Nkúmú funktioniert als Richter. So können wir auch dann, wenn die Würde geteilt ist, sagen, daß die Gruppe in bezug auf Rechtsprechung und politische Organisation weiterhin zusammengehört.

In diesen Gruppen finden wir meist ein ausgewogenes System der Verteilung der Ämter und Würden. Entweder ist es, wie in Isangi, überwiegend demokratisch, indem allen Gruppen Rechte auf Würden und Ämter zustehen, oder aber, wie in Mbanga, oligarchisch, wo alle Macht auf die älteste Sohnesgruppe beschränkt ist. Oligarchisch bestimmte Gruppen tendieren meist zur Desintegration, die jüngeren Gruppen versuchen, sich von der Vorherrschaft zu lösen. Demokratische Dörfer halten meist besser zusammen.

In Isangi ist das frühere Vorrecht der Kleinsippen Ndongó (2-4), Ngonga (5) und Boyeke (14-18), den Nkúmú zu stellen, aufgegeben zugunsten eines Wechsels zwischen den sechs Lokalgruppen des Dorfes. Nur die Kleinsippen Bolima, Besilo und Njáléokuli sind ausgeschlossen.

Die sechs Siedlungsgemeinschaften von Isangi und ähnliche Gruppierungen in anderen Dörfern sind Teile eines Dorfes, für die mir der Ausdruck Weiler am geeignetsten erscheint.

Sie sind Einheiten vornehmlich intentionaler Art. Sie haben sich trotz ihrer Funktionsschwäche auch in der neuen Siedlung erhalten, wenn sie auch nicht mehr geschlossen wohnen. Durch Reintegration haben sie ihre Funktion als Aufgebotsbezirk für die Tanzgruppen in Isangi eingebüßt (s. S. 200 f.). Doch sind sie auch heute noch die wichtigste Gruppierung in Isangi, von der wir Kenntnis hatten, bevor wir irgendeine der Verwandtschaftsgruppen kannten. Es ist zu erwarten, daß sie ihre Bedeutung verlieren werden, wenn Isangi nicht wieder auf sein eigenes Gebiet zurückkehrt. Die Frauen, von Natur aus weniger mit der Organisation des Dorfes ihrer Männer verbunden, sind (z. B. für Tanzgruppen) Ausgangspunkt einer neuen Ordnung, die den neuen Siedlungsverhältnissen gerecht wird.

Jeder Weiler umfaßt einen oder mehrere Botschaftsbezirke. Auch in der alten Wohnsituation richtete sich das Botschaftersystem nach der hierarchischen Ordnung und in keiner Weise nach Zweckmäßigkeitsgesichtspunkten (etwa der Kürze der Wege). So ist diese konservative Institution der konservativen Alten auch von der Änderung bisher völlig unberührt geblieben.

Die Dörfer sind die Gemeinschaften der Rechtsprechung und der Politik. Den Versammlungen präsidiert normalerweise ein Nkúmú. Hat ein Dorf mehrere Nkúmú, von denen einer die Rechtsprechung wahrnimmt, oder die gemeinsam präsidieren, so nenne ich den Herkunftsbereich eines jeden Nkúmú Dorfteil.

Gau nennen wir jene Bereiche, die sich durch einen besonderen Versammlungsplatz auszeichnen. Der Platz liegt im Territorium der Primogenitur- oder Sekundogenitursippe. Die praktische Bedeutung dieser Einrichtung für den ganzen Gau ist gering, doch stellten die beiden Versammlungsplätze, die wir kennenlernten, bis vor kurzem noch wichtige soziale Zentren für die Doppeldörfer dar, die die Vororte der betreffenden Gaue bilden. Durch die Umsiedlung sind die Versammlungsplätze jetzt ganz ihrer Funktion beraubt.

---

[81]) E. Müller, Fürstentum, S. 72 ff., [illegible], 1951.

Ich hoffe, mit diesem Aufsatz neues Material zur Diskussion um die ethnosoziologische Terminologie beigetragen zu haben und Anregung zur Kritik und zu einer neuen Auseinandersetzung mit diesem wichtigen Thema zu geben.

Literaturverzeichnis

Boelaert, Edmond: Les Bongili, Aequatoria 10, S. 17—34. Coquilhatville 1947.

— Le Clan équivoque, Aequatoria 11, S. 13—19. Coquilhatville 1948.

Fortes, Meyer: The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi. London 1945.

Hulstaert, Gustav: Le mariage des Nkundó, Mémoires des IRCB, Sect. des Sciences Morales et Politiques, 8 (8°) 1938. Bruxelles 1938.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude: Les structures élémentaires de la parenté. Paris 1949.

Kirchhoff, Paul: Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen und Verwandtenheirat, Zeitschrift für Ethnologie 64, S. 41—47. Berlin 1932.

— Die Verwandtschaftsorganisation der Urwaldstämme Südamerikas, Zeitschrift für Ethnologie 63, S. 85—193. Berlin 1931.

Lowie, Robert Heinrich: Primitive Society. New York 1949^2.

Mühlmann, Wilhelm Emil: Methodik der Völkerkunde. Stuttgart 1938.

Müller, Ernst Wilhelm: Das Fürstentum bei den Südwestmóngo. Philosophische Dissertation. Mainz 1955.

Murdock, Georg Peter: Changing Emphasis in Social Structure, Southwestern Journ. of Anthropology 11, S. 361—370. Albuquerque 1955.

— Social structure. New York 1949.

Preuss, Konrad Theodor (Herausgeber): Lehrbuch der Völkerkunde in 2., teilweise veränderter Auflage, herausgegeben von Richard Thurnwald. Stuttgart 1939.

Radcliffe-Brown: The study of Kinship systems, Journal of the Royal Anthr. Institute 71, S. 1—18. London 1941.

Thurnwald, Richard: Die menschliche Gesellschaft in ihren ethno-soziologischen Grundlagen, 5 Bände. Berlin 1932—35.

Wörterbuch der Soziologie, herausgegeben von W. Bernsdorf und Fr. Bülow, Stuttgart 1955.

9: Boelaert E,M-5 (ca.1945) 1951 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

080

Classificatory Terminology of the Nkundu
[Terminologie classificatoire des Nkundo]

by E. Boelaert

Africa
Vol. 21, pp. 218-222
London, 1951

Translated from the French by Anne R. Coleman

Human Relations Area Files

1960

[Title page]

101 114 [218] The Nkundo [Nkundu], or Mongo, are an important ethnic group of the central basin of the Belgian Congo. They are patriarchal (1). I lived among their west-central tribes for 20 years.

614 We call a clan, in the ethnic sense, the group of paternal blood relatives who have an autonomous territory in common. This resembles closely what Anglo-Saxon researchers like to call a "lineage" (2).

I. *Wise*

601 614 A Nkundo calls his own clan his *wise,* from the word *ise* which means "father." My *wise* thus includes:

1. My paternal grandfather and his brothers and sisters who are called *nkoko* (pl., *bankoko*), "grandfather, grandmother."
2. The sons of my male *bankoko*, including my own father, all of whom are my "fathers" (*ise*; pl., *baise*).

The sisters of my "fathers" are my "female fathers" (*isomoto,* composed of *isé* and *bomoto*, "woman").

3. The sons of my "fathers" are my older brothers (*botomolo*; pl., *batomolo*) and younger brothers (*bokune*; pl., *bakune*). The daughters of my "fathers" are my sisters (*nkâna*; pl., *bankâna*).

---

1. The rules and many details of the classificatory system of the Nkundo have already been set forth in *Le Mariage des Nkundo* by Father G. Hulstaert (Belgian Royal Colonial Institute, 1938).

2. The quotations in this article are from *The Pattern of Hera Kinship*, by J. F. Holleman (Capetown University Press, for Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1949).

601 614 The children of my "female fathers" do not belong to my clan.

4. Like my children, the children of my older and younger brothers are my "children" (*bona*; pl., *bana*). The Nkundo does not have any special terms for "son" and "daughter." He simply says "male child" and "female child."

5. The children of my "sons" are my grandchildren (*bonkana*; pl., *bankana*).

6. The children of these male grandchildren are my great grandchildren (*bonkanola*; pl., *bankanola*).

II. *Bonyango*

The mother's clan is called *bonyango*, from the word *nyango*, "mother," and includes:

1. The mother's father and his brothers, who are also *nkoko*.

2. Their daughters, including my own mother, who are "mothers" (*nyango*; pl., *banyango*). The brothers of my "mothers" are my "male mothers" (*nyangompame*; pl., *ba-*).

3. The sons and daughters of my "male mothers," who are thus of my generation in our sense but who, to the Nkundo, are my "children," since to them I am legally identified with my mother and therefore I am their "male mother." This explains
[602] the unusual and privileged position which I hold in my mother's clan.

4. The children of my "children" are my "grandchildren." [219] [Table 1 appears here.] [220]

III. *Bokanga* and *Banankana*

601 602 A Nkundo has other blood relatives scattered among the clans who have married a woman of his own clan, be it a "female father," a sister, or a daughter. A Nkundo calls all the unrelated members of these clans *bokanga*. The related members, including children born to the women of his clan, he calls impersonally sisters' children, "children of a sister of the clan" (*bonankana*; pl.,

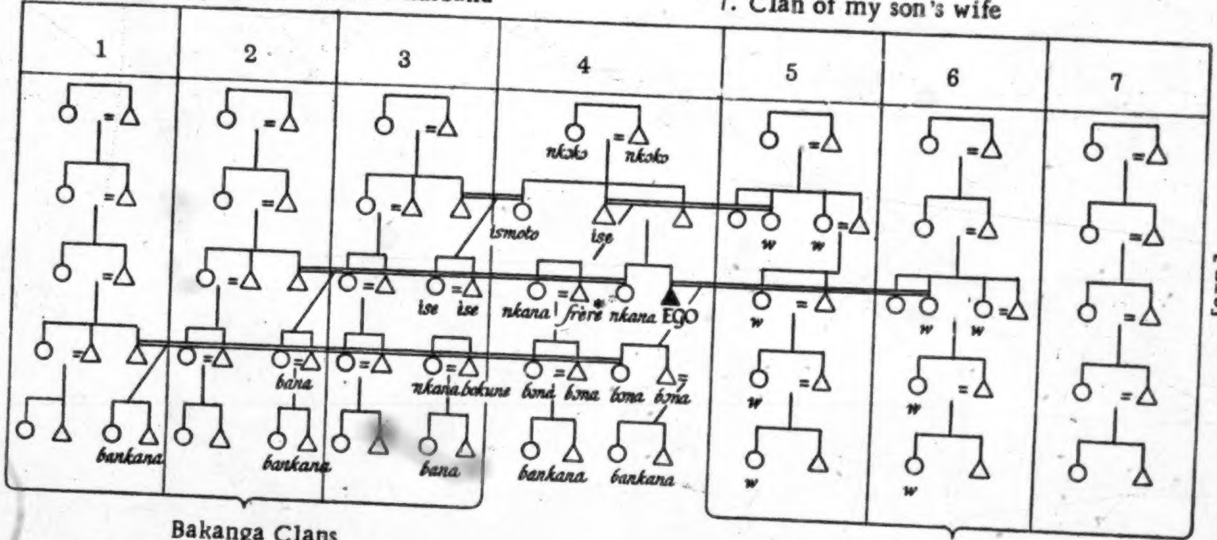
[text continues on page 4]

601
602
614

Table 1

Relatives and Affinals through the Paternal Clan

1. Clan of my daughter's husband
2. Clan of my sister's husband
3. Clan of my father's sister's husband
4. My own clan
5. Clan of my father's brother's wife
6. Clan of my wife
7. Clan of my son's wife


1
2
3
4
5
6
7
nkɔkɔ
nkɔkɔ
ismoto
ise
ise
ise
nkana
frère*
nkana
EGO
w
w
w
w
w
bana
nkanabokune
bɔna
bɔna
bɔna
bɔna
bankana
bankana
bana
bankana
bankana
w
w
w
w
w

Bakanga Clans
All those undesignated = bakanga

Bakiló Clans
All those undesignated = bakiló

[*frère = brother IN FRENCH]

w = wali (wife)

601 602 bananankana). As a result, the children are legally identified with their mothers. Thus, my sister's child is a child (bona) to me, or a sister's child (bonankana), but to my own child he would be father (ise).

In addition, he has maternal blood relatives, children of my mother's sisters, who are thus his "brothers and sisters," or children of the daughters of his "male mothers." Since these last daughters are his "children," their children would be his "grandchildren." Again, all the members of these clans who are unrelated by blood are his bokanga.

IV. Likilo

601 602 582 There are affinal clans which have given wives (wali; pl., baali) to my clan. This does not, of course, concern my mother's clan, which is a clan related by blood, but rather clans which have given wives, be it to a classificatory "father," to one of their sons, or to one of the sons of the latter. The Nkundo calls all the members of these clans -- with the exception of the woman -- bokilo (pl., bakilo). The Nkundo, merely by marrying a woman, at the same time marries all her legal younger sisters, that is to say, all the bakune [Ed., bankana?] and bana of this woman. Similarly, the woman marries not only a man, but at the same time all his legal younger brothers, that is, all the bakune and bana of this man (except the children of their own union).

601 602 Just as the clans which have received a wife from my clan thus include bokanga and sisters' sons, so also clans that have given us a wife include bakilo and "wives." Clans which have given a wife to my bonyango follow the same rules.

Comments

121 In several recent studies, especially in South Africa, four rules have been defined which govern classificatory terminology.

614 602 The first rule is that of the "unity of the lineage": The lineage as a whole is classified as belonging to a particular 'generation'

121 in its relations to another lineage *as a whole*" (Holleman, *op.
614 cit.*, p. 9). The author adds, "the unity of the lineage may be
602 broken by a division into affines and cognatic, each with their
distinctive terminology, in which the cognatic section is one 'generation' lower than the affinal section" (p. 5.).

121 Just as we speak of a mother society or a sister society, so
614 the Nkundo can also consider an affinal clan as a moral person
602 and speak of his mother's clan as of his mother, of a *bokanga*
601 clan, of a *bokilo* clan. I do not think that the term *bokanga*
or *bokilo* implies an idea of generation when it is applied to an individual, any more than does the French term "parent-in-law," or member of my family-in-law. The Nkundo would certainly not admit what the author cited here writes [221] [Table 2 appears here.] [222] about the Hera: "in inter-lineage relations, ... once the relationship between Ego and any cognatic relative is determined, all the cognates of the same lineage as that relative will bear the same degree of kinship as himself to Ego, regardless of the differences in generation . . . between themselves or as compared with Ego" (p. 5.).

The second rule would be that the clan which provides us a wife (*bokilo* clan of the Nkundo) is considered our "father," and thus the clan which receives a wife from our clan would be considered a "son." Moreover, among the Nkundo is understood: "We have given you our daughter as a wife, so you are our son." But also implied is: "We have enriched you by our marriage payment, and our children are your "fathers." These ideas, however, are not reflected in the terminology between affinals. Moreover, the fact that the Nkundo readily uses the term *bokilo* for his *bokanga* is significant.

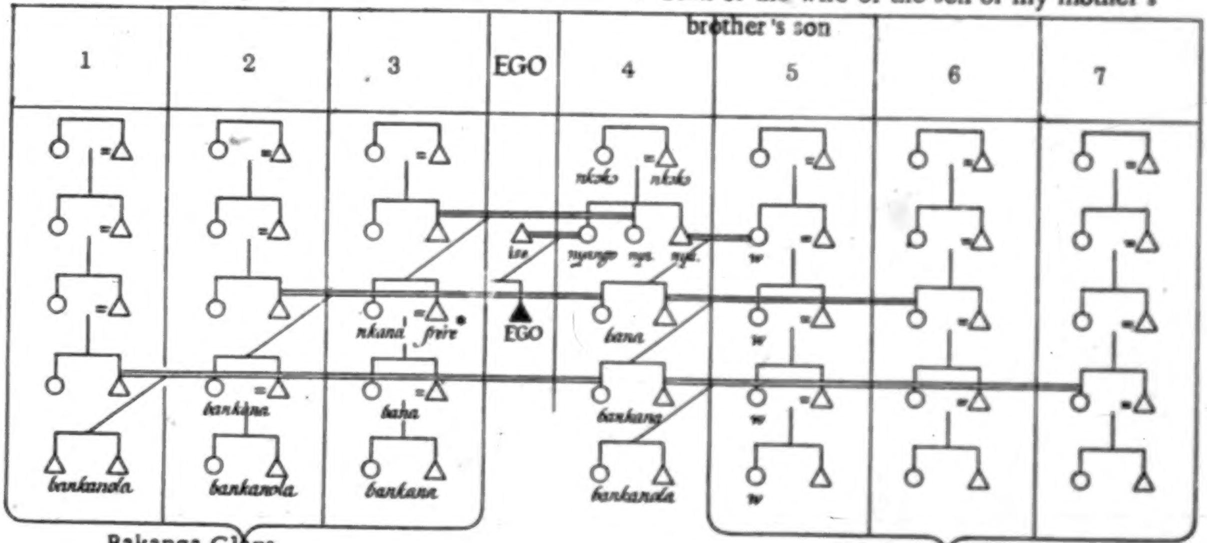
Third rule: In lineages directly related to Ego's lineage, "the female line seems to be potentially one 'generation' lower than the agnatic male line" (p. 11). The author tells us that: "This duality is even revealed in agnatic relations . . . Ego calls his . . . father's sister either *vatete* (father's sister) or *hanzwadzi* (sister)." Thus, the women of directly related clans would be considered to belong to a lower generation than the men.

[Text continues on page 7]

601
602
614

Table 2
Relatives and Affinals through the Paternal Clan

1. Clan of the husband of the daughter of my mother's brother's son
2. Clan of the husband of my mother's brother's daughter
3. Clan of my mother's sister's husband
4. My mother's clan
5. Clan of my mother's brother's wife
6. Clan of the wife of my mother's brother's son
7. Clan of the wife of the son of my mother's brother's son



1
2
3
EGO
4
5
6
7
nkɔkɔ
nkɔkɔ
ise
nyango
nya.
nya.
w
nkana
frère*
EGO
bana
w
bankana
bana
bankana
w
bankanda
bankanda
bankana
bankanda
w

Bakanga Clans
All those undesignated = bakanga
[*frère = brother in French]

Bakilo Clans
All those undesignated = bakilő
w = wali (wife)

9: Boelaert--6 E.M-5 (ca.1945) 1951 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

121
602
614
601

It must be stated that the tables of the *bakanga* clans presented by the author do not reflect this rule, since all members of these clans not related by blood, males as well as females, are designated as *vakwasha*= children-in-law. In the *bakilo* clans the rule seems to be founded on the Hera idea (according to the interpretation of the author) that all the women of my wife's clan are my "wives," no matter what their generation or age. This rule is not applicable to the Nkundo either in ideas or terminology.

There is still the fourth rule which the author quoted here uses often but does not interpret in his tables where it is completely opposed to the second rule: the child is legally identified with its mother. According to the second rule, the child of my father's sister would be my grandchild, and at the same time, according to the fourth rule, it would be my "father."

For the Nkundo, the fourth rule explains how this child is my "father," while the child of my mother's brother is my "child."

One may thus conclude that two rules explain the details of the classificatory system of the Nkundo:

1. In clans which have given a wife to our clan, all the women who are legally younger sisters of this wife, exclusively, are "wives" of all the men, exclusively, who are legally younger brothers of the husband.

2. In clans which have received a wife from our clan, the children born of this wife are identified with their mother by the children of this wife's brothers.

AFRICA

JOURNAL OF THE
INTERNATIONAL AFRICAN INSTITUTE

JOURNAL DE
L'INSTITUT INTERNATIONAL AFRICAIN

ZEITSCHRIFT DES
INTERNATIONALEN AFRIKANISCHEN INSTITUTS

Editor
DARYLL FORDE

Assistant Editor
B. E. WYATT

VOLUME XXI
1951

LONDON
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
GEOFFREY CUMBERLEGE

[title page]

TERMINOLOGIE CLASSIFICATOIRE DES NKUNDO

E. BOELAERT

LES Nkundo ou Mongo forment une ethnie importante de la cuvette centrale du Congo belge. Ce sont des patriarcaux.[1] Pendant vingt ans j'ai habité parmi leurs tribus du centre-ouest.

Nous appelons clan, au sens ethnique, le groupement des consanguins patrilinéaires qui possèdent en commun un territoire autonome. Ce qui correspond beaucoup à ce que les chercheurs anglo-saxons aiment à désigner par 'lineage'.[2]

I. *Wise*

Un Nkundo appelle son propre clan son *wise*, du mot *ise* qui signifie 'père'. Mon *wise* comprend donc:

1. Mon grand-père paternel, ses frères et sœurs qui sont appelés *nkɔkɔ* (pl. *bankɔkɔ*), grand-père, grand'mère.

2. Les fils de mes *bankɔkɔ* masculins, dont mon propre père, et qui sont tous mes 'pères' (*ise*, pl. *baise*);

Les sœurs de mes 'pères' sont mes 'pères féminins' (*iseamoto* composé de *isé* et de *bomoto* = femme).

3. Les fils de mes 'pères' sont mes frères aînés (*botomolo*, pl. *batomolo*) et puînés (*bokune*, pl. *bakune*). Les filles de mes 'pères' sont mes sœurs (*nkána*, pl. *bankána*).

Les enfants de mes 'pères féminins' n'appartiennent pas à mon clan.

4. Comme mes enfants, les enfants de mes frères aînés et puînés sont mes 'enfants' (*bona*, pl. *bana*). Le Nkundo n'a pas de mot spécifique pour 'fils' et 'fille'. Il dit simplement 'enfant masculin' et 'enfant féminin'.

5. Les enfants de mes 'fils' sont mes petits-enfants (*bonkana*, pl. *bankana*).

6. Les enfants de ces petits-fils masculins sont mes arrière-petits-enfants (*bonkanale*, pl. *bankanale*).

II. *Bonyangɔ*

Le clan de la mère s'appelle *bonyangɔ*, du mot *nyangɔ* = mère, et comprend:

1. Le père de la mère et ses frères, qui sont aussi *nkɔkɔ*.

2. Leurs filles, dont ma propre mère, et qui sont 'mères' (*nyangɔ*, pl. *banyangɔ*). Les frères de mes 'mères' sont mes 'mères masculines' (*nyangompame*, pl. *ba-*).

3. Les fils et les filles de mes 'mères masculines', qui sont donc de ma génération, dans notre sens, mais qui, pour les Nkundo, sont mes 'enfants', puisque pour eux je suis juridiquement identifié à ma mère, et ainsi leur 'mère masculine'. Ceci explique le rôle exceptionnel et privilégié que j'ai dans le clan de ma mère.

4. Les enfants de mes 'enfants' sont mes 'petits-enfants'.

---

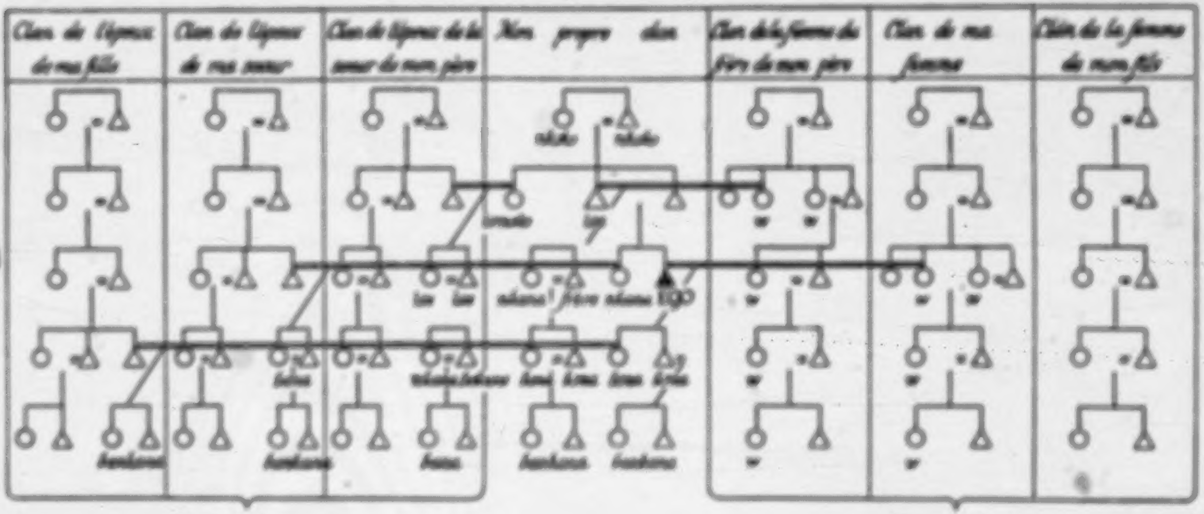
[1] Les règles et beaucoup de détails du système classificatoire des Nkundo se retrouvent déjà dans *Le Mariage des Nkundo* du R.P. G. Hulstaert (Institut Royal Colonial Belge, 1938).

[2] Les citations dans cet article renvoient à *The Pattern of Hera Kinship*, de J. F. Holleman (Capetown: Oxford University Press, for Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1949).

[p.218]

TABLEAU 1

Parents et Alliés par Clan paternel


Clan de l'époux de ma fille
Clan de l'époux de ma soeur
Clan de l'époux de la soeur de mon père
Mon propre clan
Clan de la femme du frère de mon père
Clan de ma femme
Clan de la femme de mon fils
EGO
w
bankana
bana

Clans bakonga
Tous les membres appelés « bakonga

Clans bakilo
Tous les membres appelés « bakilo

w = wali (épouse)

III. *Bokango et Bonankana*

Un Nkundo a d'autres consanguins, qui sont dispersés dans les clans qui ont marié une femme de son propre clan: soit un 'père féminin', soit une sœur, soit une fille. Tous les membres non-consanguins de ces clans, un Nkundo les appelle *bokango*. Les membres consanguins, donc les enfants issus de ces femmes de son clan, il les appelle d'une manière impersonnelle: enfants de sœur = enfants d'une sœur du clan (*bonankana*, pl. *banankana*). Là où cela porte à conséquence, ces enfants sont juridiquement identifiés à leur mère. Ainsi l'enfant de ma sœur reste pour moi un enfant (*bona*) ou enfant de sœur (*bonankana*), mais pour mon propre enfant il sera père (*ise*).

En outre, il a des consanguins matrilinéaires, issus des sœurs de sa mère et qui sont donc ses 'frères et sœurs', ou issus des filles de ses 'mères masculines'. Puisque ces dernières filles sont ses 'enfants', leurs enfants seront ses 'petits-enfants'. De nouveau tous les membres non-consanguins de ces clans sont ses *bokango*.

IV. *Bokilo*

Il y a des clans affins, qui ont donné une épouse (*wali*, pl. *baali*) à mon clan. Naturellement, il ne s'agit pas ici du clan de ma mère, qui est clan consanguin, mais bien des clans qui ont donné une épouse soit à un 'père' classificatoire, soit à l'un de leurs fils, soit à l'un des fils de ceux-ci. Tous les membres de ces clans — à l'exception de la femme — le Nkundo les appelle *bokilo* (pl. *bakilo*). Seulement le Nkundo, en mariant une femme, marie en même temps toutes les puînées juridiques, c'est-à-dire, toutes les *bakane* et toutes les *bana* de cette femme. Tout comme cette femme marie non seulement un homme, mais en même temps tous les puînés juridiques, c'est-à-dire, tous les *bakane* et tous les *bana* de cet homme (à l'exception des enfants issus de leur propre union).

Comme les clans qui ont reçu une épouse de mon clan contiennent donc des *bokango* et des fils-de-sœur, ainsi les clans qui nous ont donné une épouse contiennent des *bokilo* et des 'femmes'. Les clans qui ont donné une épouse à mon *bonyango* suivent les mêmes règles.

OBSERVATIONS

Dans plusieurs études récentes, surtout en Afrique du Sud, on a dégagé quatre règles qui régissent la terminologie classificatoire.

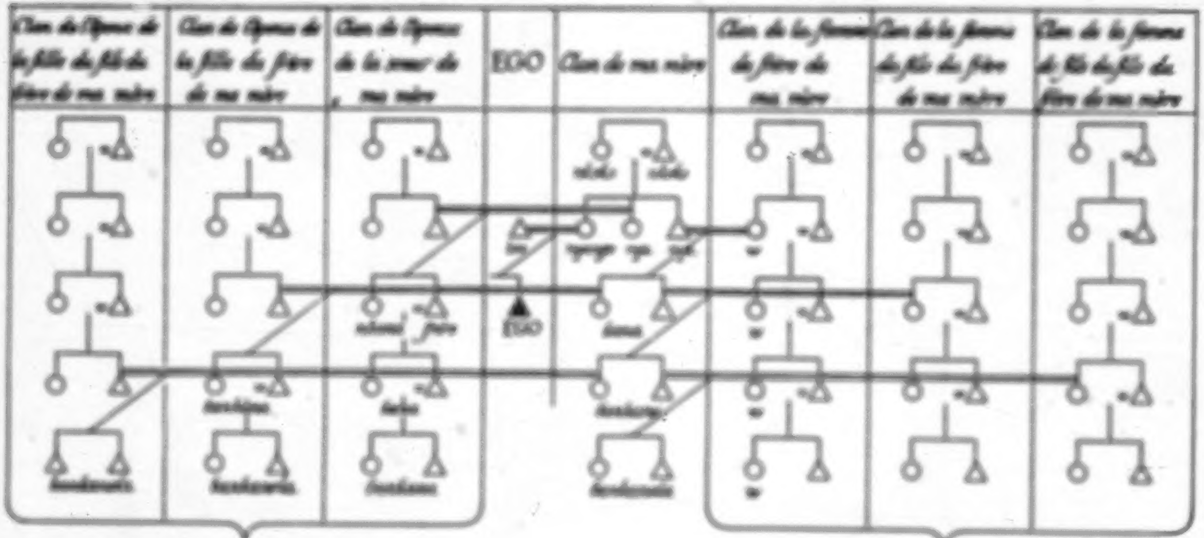
La première règle est celle de l'' unity of the lineage ': 'The lineage *as a whole* classified as belonging to a particular " generation " in its relations to another lineage *as a whole*' (Holleman, op. cit., p. 9). L'auteur ajoute, 'the unity of the lineage may be broken by a division into affines and cognatic, each with their distinctive terminology, in which the cognatic section is one " generation " lower than the affinal section' (p. 9).

Tout comme on parle chez nous d'une société-mère, ou d'une société-sœur, le Nkundo aussi peut considérer un clan allié comme une personne morale et parler du clan de sa mère comme de sa mère, d'un clan *bokango*, d'un clan *bokilo*. Mais je ne pense pas que le terme *bokango* ou *bokilo* implique, quand il est appliqué à un individu, une idée de génération, pas plus que le terme français de 'beau-parent', ou membre de ma belle-famille. Et le Nkundo n'admettra certainement pas ce qu'écrit l'auteur

[p. 221]

TABLEAU 11

Parents et Alliés par Clan maternel


Clan de l'époux de la fille du fils du frère de ma mère
Clan de l'époux de la fille du frère de ma mère
Clan de l'époux de la sœur de ma mère
EGO
Clan de ma mère
Clan de la femme du frère de ma mère
Clan de la femme du fils du frère de ma mère
Clan de la femme du fils du fils du frère de ma mère
EGO

Clans bokango
Tous les non-désignés = bokango

Clans bokilo
Tous les non-désignés = bokilo
w = wali (épouse)

cité pour les Hera: ' in inter-lineage relations, . . . once the relationship between Ego and any cognatic relative is determined, all the cognates of the same lineage as that relative will bear the same degree of kinship as himself to Ego, regardless of the differences in generation . . . between themselves or as compared with Ego ' (p. 5).

La seconde règle serait que le clan qui nous procure une épouse (clan *bokilo* des Nkundo) est considéré comme notre ' père ', et donc que le clan qui reçoit une épouse de notre clan serait considéré comme notre ' fils '. Chez les Nkundo aussi on peut entendre dire: ' nous vous avons donné notre fille comme épouse, donc vous êtes nos fils .' Mais on entend aussi: ' nous vous avons enrichis par notre dot, et nos enfants sont vos " pères ".' Mais ces conceptions ne se reflètent pas dans la terminologie entre affins. D'ailleurs le fait que le Nkundo emploie couramment le terme *bokilo* pour son *bokango* est significatif.

Troisième règle: In lineages directly related to Ego's lineage ' the female line seems to be potentially one " generation " lower than the agnatic male line ' (p. 11). L'auteur nous dit que: ' This duality is even revealed in agnatic relations . . . Ego calls his . . . father's sister either *satete* [father's sister] or *hanamwalai* [sœur].' Donc les femmes des clans directement apparentés seraient considérées comme appartenant à une génération inférieure aux hommes.

Il faut dire que les tableaux des clans *bokango*, données par l'auteur, ne traduisent pas cette règle, puisque tous les membres non-consanguins de ces clans, tant mâles que femelles, y sont renseignés comme *nokwaeko* = beaux-enfants. Dans les clans *bokilo* la règle semble se baser sur la conception Hera (dans l'interprétation de l'auteur), que toutes les femmes du clan de ma femme sont mes ' femmes ', n'importe leur génération ou leur âge. Pour le Nkundo cette règle ne s'applique ni dans les conceptions ni dans la terminologie.

Reste la quatrième règle, que l'auteur cité emploie souvent mais n'interprète pas dans ses tableaux où elle s'opposerait complètement à la seconde règle: que l'enfant est juridiquement identifié à sa mère. Selon cette deuxième règle, l'enfant de la sœur de mon père serait mon petit-enfant, et en même temps, selon la quatrième règle, il serait mon ' père '.

Pour le Nkundo cette quatrième règle explique comment cet enfant est mon ' père ' tandis que l'enfant du frère de ma mère est mon ' enfant '.

On peut donc conclure que deux règles expliquent les particularités du système classificatoire des Nkundo:

1. Dans les clans qui ont donné une épouse à notre clan toutes et seules les femmes juridiquement puînées de cette épouse sont ' épouses ' de tous et des seuls hommes qui sont juridiquement puînés de l'époux.

2. Dans les clans qui ont reçu une épouse de notre clan, les enfants issus de cette épouse sont identifiés à leur mère par les enfants des frères de cette épouse.

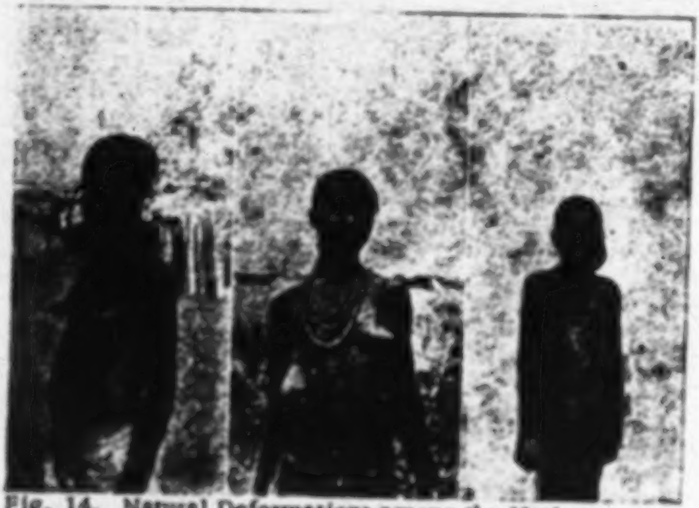
Take F133

M
764
761

young man! [Ed., the text is not translated from mid-page 17 to the second paragraph, page 19.]

M
121

[19] Since the chief goal of our expedition was to study the practices and customs connected with the material and everyday life of the native, as well as to gather objects for our collection, our stay among the various tribes was too short to permit a thorough study of their religious life and its attendant customs.



M
[732].

Fig. 14. Natural Deformations among the Natives.
(1) Bankutu woman; (2) Barakata woman; (3) Bankutu child.

M
I
776

We ascertained that the native, as a rule, acknowledges the existence of a higher spirit. During my stay in the village of Kapanda, Banfumungu tribe, I had the opportunity to question a chief on the subject.

"Who causes the sun and the moon to rise? Who gave you the fish of the river and the animals of the plain, Matali?"

The chief looked at me for an instant, dumbfounded, and then replied, "Nzambi ve Mundele?" "Was it not Nzambi, White man?"

"Why, then, do you not call upon Nzambi to protect your crops, favor your fishing, and grant you success in hunting, Matali?" [20]

771 In matters of religion the Nkundó recognize the existence of a Supreme Being: Njakomba or Mbombiɛndɛ, creator and ruler of all that exists. They do not worship him in any way, however; all their religious practices are addressed to guardian and ancestral spirits. (2)

197 The language of the Nkundó is beautiful, harmonious, flexible, and rich. It has all the qualities needed to become a literary language and is admirably suited to the requirements of teaching. Furthermore, its various dialects are spoken over a considerably large territory, in fact over one of the largest language areas [13] of the Congo. 797 214 In addition to the religious and devotional books of the Catholic missions, a fairly large collection of various academic textbooks is available in this language, thanks primarily to the zeal of the Protestant missionaries. The latter have also published a complete translation of the Bible. Several vocabularies and small grammars have been compiled, and in recent years a large dictionary and an expanded grammar have been added to these, both compiled by A. and L. Ruskin of the Bongandanga Mission. For several years the Protestant mission at Bolenge has been publishing a native magazine, and the Catholic mission is pushing ahead with preparations to publish one also.

114 Father Shebesta's book, Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge, includes a chapter on the Nkundó in which the author gives a good general description of this people. Nevertheless, some of the details given must be accepted with reservations.

● 121 The general information given above is enough to give the reader a superficial knowledge of the Nkundó.

The purpose of this work is to give a more extensive account of their institutions pertaining to marriage.

As we have previously stated, we are considering only a portion of this people. All our statements cover only the fraction we have delimited. The family institutions of other Nkundó groups are not accounted for, as they are less known to us and we do not want

---

2. On the subject of the religious conceptions of the Nkundó, see a detailed study by Father Boelaert, M.S.C., in Hooger Leven, 1934, pp. 1612 and 1636, and 1935, pp. 12 and 60.

121 to present anything we have not thoroughly investigated. We have not stepped outside the geographic limits set forth except for a few incidental remarks. Although the cultural uniformity of the Nkundó-Móngo is remarkable it is not, of course, absolute. And if we have used the title *Mariage des Nkundó* (Marriage among the Nkundu), we have done so because it was difficult to find one which would be more appropriate for the geographic and ethnic limits of [14] this study. It is very likely that in most cases our data are valid beyond the limits we have laid out, but to generalize upon it before making a thorough study of each group would be contrary to all scientific method. The reader is therefore earnestly requested to take these remarks into account and to abstain from giving our conclusions too broad a scope.

Familial institutions in themselves and in their totality are outside the scope of this book. But since they are based on marriage, they have an important place within our framework. We must necessarily touch upon them, but we will limit our excursions into that realm to what is required to make the general description intelligible. On the other hand, the study of marriage throws a good deal of light on familial institutions.

The words "family," "clan," "group," etc. recur frequently. 128 596 614 The family is an entity smaller than the clan, and the latter is subordinate to the group. Since it is very difficult to give a precise definition, however, we have taken the trouble to make a clear distinction only when necessary. (1) [Editor's Note: Elsewhere we use them more as generic terms or even as synonyms. In order to make family relationships and the expressions used by the Nkundó to designate them more comprehensible, we are attaching an example of a genealogical table.]

113 I know of the following previous studies on the same subject:

Engels, "Les Wangata," *Revue Congolaise*, 1910, which also deals with marriage.

G. Kaptein, "Familieleven en -zeden bij de Inboorlingen van den Evenaar," *Congo*, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 531. [15] This study covers

---

1. See Chapter V, Article III.

113 more ground than ours, since it even includes a discussion of the Mbole.

H. Brepoels, "Het Familiehoofd bij de Nkundó-Negers," Congo, 1930, Vol. 2, p. 332.

124 We have tried to make our data as complete as possible. We have given here not only the major trends and basic principles, but also the particulars, even those that seem most insignificant. They are always interesting, and sometimes more so than one may have suspected at first. All the material has been discussed over and over again, in private and in public, with very varied people at different times and places, and the points that presented the greatest difficulty were gone over countless times.

● 121 In general we have preferred to use the descriptive and analytic method. We have drawn conclusions and principles from the data. Although case histories naturally lengthened the text of this work, we have not hesitated to insert them at various points. They are the best means of bringing out certain rules or customs and bringing to life the psychology of our people.

121 69 In this respect a remark should be made whose importance deserves our attention for a moment. The examination of judicial cases of which we have been direct or indirect witnesses does not provide a scientific certainty about the laws -- or "the customs," to use the term so frequently applied (1). For not all [16] that is done

---

1. It is unfortunate that this term has become so fashionable, for it lacks precision. Indeed, it may mean simply "practice, usage," or it may be used in the legal sense of "a practice having the force of a law." Often a confusion between the two meanings is created, and all customs are considered to be legally obligatory, when actually, some practices are outside common law, and others are in opposition to it. For the sake of precision in ethnographic and ethnological works, it would be well to use this ambiguous term as little as possible and to distinguish clearly among legal procedures, the laws and custom or usage.

121 is in accordance with justice. The observation that the natives be-
69 have in one fashion or another, and that this or that palaver is often
settled in a particular way, is not a sufficient basis for concluding
that such is the law.

Infractions of the rules of social justice are more frequent than one would suspect. The principles are good, but often passions prevent their application, and frequently there are neither sanctions to support a weakness of will nor rewards to stimulate loyal adherence.

Furthermore, one should not invoke the variability and con-
121 tinuous transformation of native law (as does Dr. T. Seitz, for ex-
114 ample, in Africa, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 89) without first establishing
69 whether the judgments rendered have been in conformity with the
law. The remark made by this eminent author further on in his article, "Welche Rolle dabei das Machtmoment," etc. . . . weakens his first statement and shows precisely that an accurate knowledge of legal prescriptions cannot be attained solely on the basis of the verdicts of tribunals, and that partiality often plays a considerable part. The observation made by the former governor of the Cameroons may be applied to the Belgian Congo and often to "civilized" countries as well -- partially and the abuse of power are nowhere unknown.

We must also take into account the possibility of the judges'
121 ignorance, as well as our own difficulty in understanding their sentences,
69 since important points of fact and law are sometimes left unmentioned,
and yet are implied.

It is not surprising that there are complicated cases where it is very difficult for the natives, however intelligent and impartial, to settle the dispute and provide a fair and legitimate solution. The law cannot foresee for every case the infinite variety of personal, local, and modal circumstances that may occur.

Only the analysis and comparison of diverse cases, [17] their solutions, sanctions, and consequences, together with discussions with discreet and impartial natives who are knowing and skillful and who have learned to know us and to understand what we want to learn from them, and who are sincerely disposed to help us at the same time, can produce a rational and reasoned certainty which conforms to reality. These conditions are numerous, and it is difficult to find them

121 all fulfilled in one person. But such individuals do exist, if in the
69 person of the investigator they find sympathy, broad ideas, a lack of
all European racism, understanding, a knowledge of their language,
and a benevolent devotion to their interests, individually and as a
group.

Even if one has the good fortune to find a native who, after
121 much experience, reaches the point where he will say spontaneously:
124 "This is done often, but it is against the law; the law says thus and
so; this decision of the tribunal was partial for such or such reason," --
an infinitely valuable situation, but one which arises very rarely --
one is not thereby absolved of the need to check his statements. But
the further one goes, the more it is possible to be aware of the reality
and to appraise the informant's value in this sphere and the usefulness
of his statements.

These considerations are particularly valuable in making the
121 distinction between obligations and social decorum or good manners,
183 between legal obligations and obligations of kinship and mutual
671 assistance. In current practice the Nkundó make no clear lines of
demarcation between these categories, since they have never codified
their law or attempted to set up a clear and precise classification.
They feel no more need for this than, for instance, they or even we
"civilized" people bother about setting up a grammar for our native
tongue, which we speak correctly and without the slightest difficulty,
purely out of habit.

An investigation in the legal domain is made [18] very difficult
[124] by the patriarchal and feudal character of these peoples, added
to the lack of writing. Not only is there an adaptation to circumstances --
the felicitous flexibility of native laws -- in which jurisprudence plays
a great rôle, but the Nkundó, while knowing well what is lawful and
what is not, generally does not clearly understand the nature of an
obligation, and above all he does not know its source.

One's chances of obtaining good results in the inquiry are
121 greatly increased by the use of hypothetical cases, presented to the
124 individuals one knows best and whom one knows to be in no way
involved. It is always worthwhile to use this method as a means of
completing and perhaps correcting conclusions based on the examination

121 of actual legal cases. It is almost impossible to gain access to the
124 latter unless one is armed with an official order. A thorough knowledge of the language of the tribe in question is required, however, for the use of imaginary cases.

In describing various laws and practices, we have tried to reproduce the explanations given by the Nkundó and to add our own views when it has seemed appropriate to do so. The careful reader will have no trouble distinguishing between these two very different sources.

I am very well aware that many ethnologists do not like
121 chercheurs de brousse [bush explorers] to become involved in these questions, and that they prefer to receive from the latter only raw data on which they can build their theories. All ethnographers of the bush and forest will readily recognize their inadequacy in matters of theory. But this very real disadvantage due to a lack of training is offset by a definite advantage. They know the natives much more intimately, not only with respect to the immediate subject of their study, but also as regards other aspects of their lives, particularly their psychological make-up and general mentality, with which they may have had direct and daily contact for many years. [19] They are therefore more likely to come to conclusions which are in accordance with reality. The "armchair" ethnologists sometimes seem to assume that the men in the bush are capable of being no more than collectors of data. *Yet the majority of them have had an intermediate* education, especially in the humanities, and many of them have attended institutions of higher learning (universities and others). There are professional jurists among them, for example. Therefore, these observers are capable of reliable judgments, and many of them, through their studies in philosophy, are equipped with the rules of logic and highly developed critical powers.

It is true that it is not up to us to build theories; the range of our investigations is always limited. A knowledge of theories is very interesting and useful, but it is by no means necessary. In fact such knowledge may sometimes be dangerous, since it is easy for it to unduly influence our judgment in a way that is against the best interests of science. Thus we do not care whether our facts are in

● 121 conformity or in opposition to this or that ethnological theory. We are presenting the facts in their entirety, the material portion of the culture as well as its intellectual, psychological, and moral basis. Theory should be based on these facts, not the facts adapted to suit the theories.

In the text of this work the reader will find repetitions, foot-
121 notes, and references. We would have preferred to omit these,
114 since they are always tedious, but their presence was dictated by the nature of the material and by the strictly scientific nature of this work, which we wanted to retain at all costs. We hope in fact that those who wish to study it thoroughly will find these repetitions not an obstacle, but a valuable aid which will help them to obtain a total and precise picture of the material.

Although I have taken the greatest care and all possible precautions to present to the reader only facts and evidence which correspond to reality, and to document [20] everything as completely as possible, this work will inevitably contain gaps, imperfections, even one mistake or another. (1)

This material is not exempt from such faults, and it would be pure presumption to pretend otherwise. But science could not advance, nor could the practical purpose of our knowledge ever be accomplished, should we try to achieve the perfection that can be the result only of successive studies by different people, before presenting the results of our research to the public. I would be gratified if others would check my data, criticize it, and supplement and correct it wherever necessary. I hope that this work will also stimulate them to make a similar study of the other segments of the Nkundó-Mongo so that at last we may have a total picture of the matrimonial institutions of this very important people.

---

1. This is especially true with regard to the legal significance of certain practices, a most delicate point of inquiry, which has yet to be thoroughly investigated -- particularly, certain questions concerning the origin of marriage in its various forms.

Nkundu

121 The question about the real structure of the native society begins to be asked only now that it has been brought completely to the tottering point. The question as to whether that society is, in its foundations or basic elements, really in conflict with natural law, the general welfare of mankind, and faith -- the question, thus, of the right of that society to exist -- is still shoved aside in favor of the supposed duty of the moment: to make that society like ours.

In this article, I have tried to outline the social order of the Nkundo [Nkundu] -Mongo as clearly as possible, in order to find an answer to the last question.

1. The Ethnic Clan

When we keep saying that the family is the nucleus of the community, we are ultimately merely clutching a legal fiction, or rather, we say what it ought to be. In fact, the family is, among us, only the producer of individuals who play their role in the community. The family, as such, is neither socially nor legally nor politically an intermediary, a mediator, between the individuals and the higher organs of the society.

613 Second, the nuclear family has, in our society, developed into a completely separate conception, compared to the extended family. The patriarchal household, the model of which Le Play portrayed, or the extended family, has completely disappeared. Among the Nkundo-Mongo, on the contrary, it is precisely the patriarchal family which, in the most absolute sense, is still the nucleus of the community and the foremost independent organ of that community.

Most often, this extended family is designated by the term "clan," to which vaguely different characteristics are attached: [150] blood relationship, totemism, exogamy, community of property, and others. One speaks of ethnic (patriarchal or matriarchal), legal, exogamic, and political clans, without further giving a clear description of these concepts.

The ethnic clan includes all of the persons who are descended in the male line from a particular ancestor. It is his descent in the male line from that particular ancestor which ties each Nkundo to that clan. Each ethnic clan has its own name, which is indicated in our society by the family name. When the Nkundo wish, however, to indicate that name,

[188]

Introduction

114 This study is based on the preliminary work connected with the publication of the results of the "Mainz Congo Expedition 1951-54" in which I participated as an assistant to Dr. Sulzmann.

●121 In order to describe and characterize the kinship and local groups of the Ekonda, they should first be regarded as ethno-sociological ideal types (1). For this purpose it was necessary to obtain a clear understanding of the meaning of the terms used to describe the types. Studies by Thurnwald (2), Kirchhoff (3), Murdock (4) (4a), Radcliffe-Brown (5), Lowie (6),

---

1. For the concept of type, see Thurnwald, *Menschliche Gesellschaft* [Human Society], Vol. 1, p. 7 ff.; Mühlmann, *Methodik* [Methodology], p. 114 ff.; and *Wörterbuch der Soziologie* [Dictionary of Sociology], p. 224 f.

2. *Menschliche Gesellschaft* [Human Society], Vols. 2, 4.

3. "*Verwandtschaftsorganisation* [Kinship Organization], *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Vol. 63, pp. 85-193; "Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen [Kinship Terminology], "*Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Vol. 64, pp. 41-71.

4. *Social Structure*.

4a. "Changing Emphasis."

5. "Study of Kinship Systems."

6. Primitive Society.

● [2] and Lévi-Strauss (7) were consulted (8).

7. Structures élémentaires.

8. I am particularly indebted to Prof. Mühlmann for his advice and references to source material.

By their very nature, all attempts to recognize ethno-sociological ideal types must remain incomplete and are in constant need of revision on the basis of ethnographic reality (9).

9. Mühlmann, Methodik, p. 120.

Such revision can only be carried out if each field worker, while studying his material, compares the existing terminology with "his" realities and if he then submits the result of this comparison to the scrutiny of others. Unfortunately the use of ethno-sociological terms is often dictated primarily by the convictions and preferences of the individual author who may neither refer to the existing terminology nor otherwise inform the reader of what he means exactly by the various terms. Many authors in this respect follow such unreliable standards as their "feeling for the language" or they act under the delusion that their private terminology corresponds to what is generally accepted. Too often, however, the actual usage differs considerably from what has been suggested in terminological studies. As a result terms like "clan," "kinship group [Sippe]," and "large family [Grossfamilie]" create different impressions among different readers.

In the present study the terminology of the authors mentioned above will be discussed in relation to the kinship and local groups of the Ekonda. We are concerned here with the
[101] northwestern subdivision of the Ekonda who live in the Bikoro territory. The Ekonda belong to the large group, the Mongo,

62 It was said before that kinship and local groups are to be discussed. This statement needs clarification. When speaking of local groups in the present study, we do not intend to refer to groups which consist of non-related subgroups. It is to be clearly understood that the residence pattern will be used as the decisive criterion for subdividing the groups. Thus, closely related groups may be excluded, more distantly related groups may be included. Occasionally such local units also include groups which are not related to each other. [183]

Also, among those groups which I have called kinship groups in this study, a biological or genealogical connection which can be proved and expressed in juridical terms is quite doubtful. We shall not concern ourselves, however, with this lack of precision; rather, we shall regard as related those persons or groups of persons whom the Ekonda themselves consider as related. In my opinion there is no justification for disregarding the attitude of the natives since it is their attitude which determines the character and function of the groups. Murdock (10)

10. Social Structure, p. 47.

uses this approach to the kinship group, while using the term "lineage" for persons who can prove their relationship. We hasten to point out that also the local groups have a tendency toward "paternalization" (11), to construe a closer relationship.

11. Boelaert, "Clan équivoque," p. 17.

The Kinship Structure of the Ekonda

61
602 Among the Ekonda we find a system of groups which are ordered according to degrees of real or assumed kinship. This system is subdivided into a hierarchical structure of many ranks. Larger groups consist of between one to four groups of the next order. The relationships between the groups correspond to the relationships between their founding ancestors. In this fashion certain groups are described as the older or younger brother of

614
621 In general one may assume that local groups will postulate only that kind of kinship relationship which does not necessitate a substantial functional reintegration. For this reason, units above the exogamy limit will easily tend to construe a genealogy which "proves" a kinship relationship. Groups of that type are functionally weak. One can observe processes of this kind both among the group of the Bakonda and among the neighboring E-group, Lonyanyanga. The institution of the nkúmú (see above, p. 14) also appears to have a leveling influence. The privileges of the oldest (and free) group diminish in importance and fall behind the office of nkúmú. The new office is also open to younger and dependent groups.

Sociological Terminology for Kinship Groups

128 Before dealing with the units which are to be regarded as settlement groups, we shall compare the kinship groups of the Ekonda with the sociological ideal types. Keeping in mind the authors mentioned at the beginning, I shall now discuss the various terms used for groups which are applicable to conditions found among the Ekonda. [196]

Family

121
596 The small family is of no importance in the organizational system of the Ekonda. Nevertheless it is very important as the smallest unit of economic life. Each small family is potentially polygynous, but monogynous marriages are more numerous at the present time, especially among the younger generation. In view of this difference between potential and practiced polygyny, it seems advisable to follow Thurnwald in classing the polygamous forms together with the small family and to differentiate its nuclear families (18). In my opinion this approach seems to correspond more closely to its functional importance than Murdock's view, according to which the polygamous family

---

18. Vol. 4, p. 12 f.

● 121 596 together with the large family [Grossfamilie] is put into the category of "composite forms of family" (19). In Thurnwald's "Technical Terms" there are two passages dealing with the large family, one under the heading "Family," p. 12 f., the other under "Large Family," p. 14. Under "Family" Thurnwald writes:

> "...The 'large family' differs from the family in that in the former several generations with a common grandfather live together in the same homestead or even under the same roof. The nuclear families, and the men forming part of them, remain relatively independent. Naturally, even in this unit relatives lacking any protection may be taken into the group. The large family differs from the kinship group (q. v.) in that in the former all its members live in the same dwelling site, and the degree of kinship between the members is mainly seen in a line descending from the head; in addition, it forms an economic unit. A further characteristic feature of the large family lies in the fact that it resembles any family in being tied to the life of the persons who constitute it and that it becomes extinct with them, while a kinship group renews itself automatically. It is, in a manner of speaking, 'eternal'."

Under the heading "Large Family," he writes only: "... The phenomenon of at least three generations descended from one another living together under a common head (grandfather with children and children's children) is defined as 'large family' (see Family, Kinship Group)." There is a discrepancy between these two definitions. If, according to the first definition, a group dissolves upon the death of the persons constituting it, i.e., the oldest generation, the phrase "at least" may be valid for the norm, but not for the specific case. Thurnwald defines the family in the same manner in Lehrbuch der Völkerkunde [Textbook of Ethnology] (20). If we accept Thurnwald's definition --

---

19. Murdock, Social Structure, p. 23.

20. Thurnwald in: Preuss (Ed.), Lehrbuch, p. 289.

[2] 596 the material collected by Kirchhoff (21) and the ancient Roman

21. Kirchhoff, Zeitschrift für Ethnologie,
Vol. 63, p. 88 ff., p. 96 ff.

familia would serve as good examples -- a patrilineal large family could be described as a kinship group, living, working, and maintaining a household together, consisting of a husband, his wives, and all his offspring, and splitting into the large families of his sons upon the death of the father.

Kirchhoff defines the large family in the same fashion, yet he takes care to point out that here, in contrast to a kinship group, persons who have married into the group are part of it (22).

22. Kirchhoff, Zeitschrift für Ethnologie,
Vol. 63, p. 90.

Murdock's conception of the "extended family" is identical with this interpretation (23).

23. Murdock, Social Structure, p. 24.

On the other hand, in Vol. 2 (p. 22) Thurnwald regards the large family as a unilateral kinship group with persons who have married into it. This group lives in the same place and is governed by a common chief from whom all the members are supposedly descended. The kinship group, in contrast to the large family, may be scattered. [197] Thus, Thurnwald at this point puts other characteristics in the foreground, but the text allows the conclusion that for Thurnwald the dependence on the life of the head of the families and its temporary nature are the essential characteristics of a large family.

596 614 In this sense none of the units described under A-E$^{1}_{A}$ is a large family. The wives who have married into the group belong to the group of the husband, but they always remain part of their father's group: in case of divorce they return to the

$^{1}_{A}$ [pages 9-15, category 116.--Analyst]

596 latter group. Another factor which reminds us of the wife's con-
614 tinuing membership in her original group is the connection, never
completely severed, between the groups related by marriage,
illustrated by the practice of gifts and counter-gifts which are
all part of the bride price and the dowry. When she dies, the
[764] wife is buried in the soil of her group. In addition, the group
membership of the wife is transferred to the children, although
this does not have the same effects in economic and political
terms. Matrilineal descent is important in relation to marriage
[68] restrictions, certain avoidance practices which are passed on
through the wives, and also certain privileges. Quite a large
number of persons has settled permanently in the group of their
mother or that of their grandmothers.

The decisive factor that makes the term "large family" unsuitable is the "eternal" character of the A-E groups of the Ekonda. However, the subdivisions of the A-groups which live together in a common homestead (see p. 10) may be regarded as large families in the sense used by Thurnwald, Kirchhoff, and Murdock.

Kinship Group

614 In the definitions of the term "family" quoted above,
we already learned something about Thurnwald's concept of a
[12] kinship group, but there is an additional reference to the tech-
nical term "kinship group' ["Sippe"]" (p. 17 f.) (34):

34. Menschliche Gesellschaft, Vol. 4.

"...A kinship group is defined as a clan (q.v.) which is not politically independent. Usually the loss of independence is caused by the distribution of the people of the clan among the various settlements. A kinship group is held together by the consciousness of being descended from the same ancestors and by their common cult of the ancestors. The kinship group is of special importance for the regulation of marriage (q.v.). -- A kinship group may be divided into kinship subgroups (large

[197] kinship group (*Grosssippe*), small kinship group (*Kleinsippe*)), or it may have a tendency to split in half. A kinship group or a kinship subgroup may at times have a chief, at times not."

On the term "clan" Thurnwald writes (p. 16) (34):

34. *Menschliche Gesellschaft*, Vol. 4.

"The word is of Old Irish origin, where it refers to children of common descent, approximately in the sense of a 'large family' (*q.v.*). We now use it for family agglomerations (see Horde) who have become stabilized, who have a religious substructure through their belief in common ancestors, and who support each other economically and politically. It is advisable to make a distinction between the 'clan' which settles exclusively within one region and which claims this region for itself, thus forming a politically sovereign community, and the splinters of a clan scattered among communities which are independent in their own right, which we designate as 'kinship groups' (*q.v.*) and which usually are not tied to each other by any organizational framework; their cohesion is simply the result of the ceremonial-religious cult of the ancestors and a certain degree of solidarity. The origin of the clan and kinship group is closely related to the cult of the ancestors which symbolizes descent lines. Membership in a clan or in a kinship group may be reckoned in the male or female lines. Frequently one of the living family heads represents this family agglomeration which is, so to speak, [198] 'crystallized.' In this respect it differs from familial structures which become extinct upon the death of the persons by whom they were founded. In a clan or a kinship group the families succeeding each other are permanently represented (see Family, Caste, State)."

We may state that a common feature of both forms is that we are dealing here with purely unilateral units which are tied to each other by ancestor worship (this ancestor worship may be -- in many cases, it *will be* -- absent in the large family as described above). If we disregard the attempt inherent in both

[2] 614 definitions to present a theory of development, the differentiation between the two terms appears to me to be very useful, and this seems particularly true if we accept the first definition of clan given by Thurnwald and regard the second as completely irrelevant for our present purposes.

It is true that our A-group lives in a certain district 614 which it claims for itself as its own "province," but it is never-621 theless difficult to describe this district as a politically sovereign community. A political nature could rather be attributed to those groups which, up to now, we have not described at all, i.e., the settlement communities. Proceeding further, the A-group is integrated into the B-group, the B-group into the C-group, thus forming an endless chain; among those tribes who have a greater degree of genealogical consciousness than the Ekonda -- for example, the neighboring Bongili (25) -- the hierarchy of groups

25. Boelaert, "Les Bongili."

ends with mankind, the hierarchy of ancestors with God.

Thurnwald emphasizes this ranked structure, especially [1] in discussing the kinship group. Kirchhoff, however, fails to 614 deal with the problem of the kinship group in a manner which would be of value to us in differentiating between kinship group and clan. Dealing with the organizational structure of the peoples he discussed, he naturally was more interested in defining the border between large family and kinship group. Lowie (26)

26. Primitive Society.

only discusses the kinship group, "sib," calling it the "'clan' of British anthropologists", (p. 105) or "clans," if patrilineal, and "gentes," if matrilineal, "of most American anthropologists." The "ad infinitum" (p. 106) is also stressed by him in relation to the kinship group. Lowie also admits the possibility of subdivisions with respect to his "sib," and consequently he even includes in the kinship group such forms as the "moieties," which according to Thurnwald's definition are still part of it, but which in his view

61| and in general ethnological usage are units of a special type.
12| Thus Lowie's and Thurnwald's views correspond to a large extent.
Murdock (27) clearly differentiates between a kinship

27. Social Structure, p. 45 ff.

group and a "lineage." In his view a lineage consists of a group of individuals who are able to trace their descent to a common ancestor, which for him in the majority of cases is only the unilateral "stem" [Stamm] of a large family, excluding those who have married into the group, but including the members who have married out.

Murdock's and Thurnwald's concepts of the kinship group are identical. On the other hand, Murdock differs in his definition of the clan (28).

28. Social Structure, p. 65 ff., especially p. 69 f.

Clan

61| Murdock regards the patrilineal clan as a local group
64| which consists of the stem of a kinship group and which incorporates
12| the wives of its members but excludes daughters who marry. As an example he mentioned the "groups" which in our society are connected by the same family name. If the group of persons bearing the birth-name "Wolf" in common functioned as a group of relatives, it would [199] be a Wolf kinship group, but those persons who actually call themselves "Wolf," i.e., the Messrs. Wolf with their wives, sons, unmarried sisters, and daughters, would constitute a Wolf clan (assuming, of course, that this group really functions). This concept of a clan is new. Even Murdock does not consider this definition very satisfactory and invites better suggestions. According to Murdock, the clan is a unit of eminent importance; terminologically it has not been possible so far to differentiate it from the kinship group. It is irrelevant in this connection whether the term clan is applicable to this

614 social group. It is true that the "Murdock clan" also exists
611 among the Ekonda on all the lower ranks, but only as a functional
● [2] unit which, like the large family and small family, is not really regarded as a group by the Ekonda. Among the Ekonda the feeling of cohesion between the indigenous group and those who have married into it has its basis not so much in the groups of relatives as described above, but rather in the local group of the type discussed further below.

614 The units which we described in the first part of this study correspond neither to the definition of Thurnwald nor to that of Murdock as regards the term clan. Our groups differ from the clan as described by Thurnwald by their hierarchical structure over which functions of authority are distributed. An added factor is that Thurnwald in the Lehrbuch (29) wants to define the difference between clan and kinship group by size and by ascribing to the former the element of political power. The only kinship group of the Ekonda which possesses strong authority, however, is the smallest, the one of rank A. If we let ourselves be guided by the criterion of authority, we would have to regard the smallest group (rank A) as a clan. Using the criterion of size, however, we would have to regard one of the groups of ranks D or E as a clan. Hence this term is unsuitable.

For the above reasons I have used the term "kinship group" [Sippe] for the groups of all ranks. With respect to the E-groups one might even speak of a subtribe [Unterstamm], but it should be pointed out that as far as the Ekonda are concerned all the groups mentioned above, including the tribes [Stämme] are groups or relatives of the same type, i.e., are "kinship groups."

For the purpose of differentiating between the kinship groups of the various ranks I have used the terms:

nuclear kinship group [Kernsippe] for groups of rank A;
small kinship group [Kleinsippe] for groups of rank B;

---

29. Thurnwald: in Preuss, Lehrbuch, p. 220 f.

601 banankana). As a result, the children are legally identified
602 with their mothers. Thus, my sister's child is a child (bona) to me, or a sister's child (banankana), but to my own child he would be father (ise).

In addition, he has maternal blood relatives, children of my mother's sisters, who are thus his "brothers and sisters," or children of the daughters of his "male mothers." Since these last daughters are his "children," their children would be his "grandchildren." Again, all the members of these clans who are unrelated by blood are his bokanga.

IV. Likilo

601 These are affinal clans which have given wives (wali; pl.,
602 baali) to my clan. This does not, of course, concern my mother's
592 clan, which is a clan related by blood, but rather clans which have given wives, be it to a classificatory "father," to one of their sons, or to one of the sons of the latter. The Nkundo calls all the members of these clans -- with the exception of the woman -- bokilo (pl., bakilo). The Nkundo, merely by marrying a woman, at the same time marries all her legal younger sisters, that is to say, all the bakune [Ed., bankana?] and bana of this woman. Similarly, the woman marries not only a man, but at the same time all his legal younger brothers, that is, all the bakune and bana of this man (except the children of their own union).

601 Just as the clans which have received a wife from my clan thus
602 include bokanga and sisters' sons, so also clans that have given us a wife include bakilo and "wives." Clans which have given a wife to my bonyango follow the same rules.

Comments

121 In several recent studies, especially in South Africa, four rules have been defined which govern classificatory terminology.

614 The first rule is that of the "unity of the lineage": The lineage
602 as a whole is classified as belonging to a particular 'generation'

121 614 602 in its relations to another lineage *as a whole*" (Holleman, *op. cit.*, p. 9). The author adds, "the unity of the lineage may be broken by a division into affines and cognatic, each with their distinctive terminology, in which the cognatic section is one 'generation' lower than the affinal section" (p. 5.).

121 614 602 601 Just as we speak of a mother society or a sister society, so the Nkundo can also consider an affinal clan as a moral person and speak of his mother's clan as of his mother, of a *bokango* clan, of a *bokilo* clan. I do not think that the term *bokango* or *bokilo* implies an idea of generation when it is applied to an individual, any more than does the French term "parent-in-law," or member of my family-in-law. The Nkundo would certainly not admit what the author cited here writes [221] [Table 2 appears here.] [222] about the Hera: "In inter-lineage relations, . . . once the relationship between Ego and any cognatic relative is determined, all the cognates of the same lineage as that relative will bear the same degree of kinship as himself to Ego, regardless of the differences in generation . . . between themselves or as compared with Ego" (p. 5.).

The second rule would be that the clan which provides us a wife (*bokilo* clan of the Nkundo) is considered our "father," and thus the clan which receives a wife from our clan would be considered a "son." Moreover, among the Nkundo is understood: "We have given you our daughter as a wife, so you are our son." But also implied is: "We have enriched you by our marriage payment, and our children are your "fathers." These ideas, however, are not reflected in the terminology between affinals. Moreover, the fact that the Nkundo readily uses the term *bokilo* for his *bokango* is significant.

Third rule: In lineages directly related to Ego's lineage, "the female line seems to be potentially one 'generation' lower than the agnatic male line" (p. 11). The author tells us that: "This duality is even revealed in agnatic relations . . . Ego calls his . . . father's sister either *vatete* (father's sister) or *hanzvadzi* (sister)." Thus, the women of directly related clans would be considered to belong to a lower generation than the men.

[Text continues on page 7]

121
602
644
601

It must be stated that the tables of the *batanga* clans presented by the author do not reflect this rule, since all members of these clans not related by blood, males as well as females, are designated as *bokwasho* = children-in-law. In the *bakilo* clans the rule seems to be founded on the Hera idea (according to the interpretation of the author) that all the women of my wife's clan are my "wives," no matter what their generation or age. This rule is not applicable to the Nkundo either in ideas or terminology.

There is still the fourth rule which the author quoted here and often but does not interpret in his tables where it is completely opposed to the second rule: the child is legally identified with its mother. According to the second rule, the child of my father's sister would be my grandchild, and at the same time, according to the fourth rule, it would be my "father."

For the Nkundo, the fourth rule explains how this child is my "father," while the child of my mother's brother is my "child."

One may thus conclude that two rules explain the details of the classificatory system of the Nkundo:

1. In clans which have given a wife to our clan, all the women who are legally younger sisters of this wife, exclusively, are "wives" of all the men, exclusively, who are legally younger brothers of the husband.

2. In clans which have received a wife from our clan, the children born of this wife are identified with their mother by the children of this wife's brothers.

113 more ground than ours, since it even includes a discussion of the Mbole.

H. Brepoels, "Het Familiehoofd bij de Nkundó-Negers," Congo, 1930, Vol. 2, p. 332.

124 We have tried to make our data as complete as possible. We have given here not only the major trends and basic principles, but also the particulars, even those that seem most insignificant. They are always interesting, and sometimes more so than one may have suspected at first. All the material has been discussed over and over again, in private and in public, with very varied people at different times and places, and the points that presented the greatest difficulty were gone over countless times.

121 In general we have preferred to use the descriptive and analytic method. We have drawn conclusions and principles from the data. Although case histories naturally lengthened the text of this work, we have not hesitated to insert them at various points. They are the best means of bringing out certain rules or customs and bringing to life the psychology of our people.

121 69 In this respect a remark should be made whose importance deserves our attention for a moment. The examination of judicial cases of which we have been direct or indirect witnesses does not provide a scientific certainty about the laws -- or "the customs," to use the term so frequently applied (1). For not all [16] that is done

---

(1) It is unfortunate that this term has become so fashionable, for it lacks precision. Indeed, it may mean simply "practice, usage," or it may be used in the legal sense of "a practice having the force of a law." Often a confusion between the two meanings is created, and all customs are considered to be legally obligatory, when actually, some practices are outside common law, and others are in opposition to it. For the sake of precision in ethnographic and ethnological works, it would be well to use this ambiguous term as little as possible and to distinguish clearly among legal procedures, the laws and custom or usage.

121 all fulfilled in one person. But such individuals do exist, if in the
69 person of the investigator they find sympathy, broad ideas, a lack of all European racism, understanding, a knowledge of their language, and a benevolent devotion to their interests, individually and as a group.

Even if one has the good fortune to find a native who, after
121 much experience, reaches the point where he will say spontaneously:
124 "This is done often, but it is against the law; the law says thus and so; this decision of the tribunal was partial for such or such reason," -- an infinitely valuable situation, but one which arises very rarely -- one is not thereby absolved of the need to check his statements. But the further one goes, the more it is possible to be aware of the reality and to appraise the informant's value in this sphere and the usefulness of his statements.

These considerations are particularly valuable in making the
121 distinction between obligations and social decorum or good manners,
183 between legal obligations and obligations of kinship and mutual
671 assistance. In current practice the Nkundó make no clear lines of demarcation between these categories, since they have never codified their law or attempted to set up a clear and precise classification. They feel no more need for this than, for instance, they or even we "civilized" people bother about setting up a grammar for our native tongue, which we speak correctly and without the slightest difficulty, purely out of habit.

An investigation in the legal domain is made [18] very diffi-
[illegible] cult by the patriarchal and feudal character of these peoples, added to the lack of writing. Not only is there an adaptation to circumstances -- the felicitous flexibility of native laws -- in which jurisprudence plays a great role, but the Nkundó, while knowing well what is lawful and what is not, generally does not clearly understand the nature of an obligation, and above all he does not know its source.

One's chances of obtaining good results in the inquiry are
121 greatly increased by the use of hypothetical cases, presented to the
124 individuals one knows best and whom one knows to be in no way involved. It is always worthwhile to use this method as a means of completing and perhaps correcting conclusions based on the examination

121 of actual legal cases. It is almost impossible to gain access to the
124 latter unless one is armed with an official order. A thorough knowledge of the language of the tribe in question is required, however, for the use of imaginary cases.

In describing various laws and practices, we have tried to reproduce the explanations given by the Nkundô and to add our own views when it has seemed appropriate to do so. The careful reader will have no trouble distinguishing between these two very different sources.

I am very well aware that many ethnologists do not like
121 *chercheurs de brousse* [bush explorers] to become involved in these questions, and that they prefer to receive from the latter only raw data on which they can build their theories. All ethnographers of the bush and forest will readily recognize their inadequacy in matters of theory. But this very real disadvantage due to a lack of training is offset by a definite advantage. They know the natives much more intimately, not only with respect to the immediate subject of their study, but also as regards other aspects of their lives, particularly their psychological make-up and general mentality, with which they may have had direct and daily contact for many years. [12] They are therefore more likely to come to conclusions which are in accordance with reality. The "armchair" ethnologists sometimes seem to assume that the men in the bush are capable of being no more than collectors of data. Yet the majority of them have had an intermediate education, especially in the humanities, and many of them have attended institutions of higher learning (universities and others). There are professional jurists among them, for example. Therefore, these observers are capable of reliable judgments, and many of them, through their studies in philosophy, are equipped with the rules of logic and highly developed critical powers.

It is true that it is not up to us to build theories; the range of our investigations is always limited. A knowledge of theories is very interesting and useful, but it is by no means necessary. In fact such knowledge may sometimes be dangerous, since it is easy for it to unduly influence our judgment in a way that is against the best interests of science. Thus we do not care whether our facts are in

124 I should like to express one more wish relevant to this subject. A number of studies by civil servants and government agents, containing a good deal of ethnographic data on various subjects, lie in bales in the bureaus of the Congo, waiting for the day when they will serve as fodder for ever-hungry termites. Would it not be possible to make these documents -- at least the better ones -- available to the public? Even if they contain gaps and errors, they will be gratefully received. They will lead other researchers to explore these questions thoroughly, and through emulation, criticism, and discussion, we will develop an increasing and more accurate knowledge of the natives, [21] their history, their way of life, their laws, their customs, and their mentality, which will be of great benefit for all colonial work.

Some of the terms used in one or another part of this study may appear too coarse. I would rather have avoided them, but I would have had to use veiled expressions and circumlocutions which would have adversely affected the clarity of this work and therefore its value, for it is intended for a purely scientific purpose. I trust the indulgent reader will therefore excuse their presence.

121 Here and there case histories are given in full. I believe that the details are not without interest, since they give a living picture of the mentality of our people. Most of the incidents were [vi] collected in the vicinity of Flandria, the area with which I am most familiar. Here and there I have taken the liberty of passing judgment and of recommending solutions to certain problems. I should like to say that in these cases I am expressing opinions which are purely personal.

000 The map appended to this work makes it possible for the reader to find a tribe or village which is under discussion and shows its geographic position amidst the groups that comprise the Mongo-Nkundo people.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all those who have in some way contributed to this work: His Excellency Monsignor Ed. Van Goethem, our venerable vicar apostolic, who gave me permission to carry it out and always encouraged me in my research, understanding fully its practical value for a sensible adaptation which will enable us to establish the Church on a firm foundation; my colleagues, Father Trigalet and Father Wauters, as well as Brother Braam, who took upon

177/176 C. An attempt to explain the modern changes. The facts themselves as much as a knowledge of human nature, together with the lenient attitude of parents and the lack of sanctions (the last two points are relevant only to relations between adults), are in direct contradiction to the statements of the natives. Should these not therefore be explained as exaggerations, stemming from a desire for national glory and a resentment of the situation created by colonization? The [illegible] natives whose strange assertions I have cited are elderly and serious; they demonstrate all the qualities of truthful witnesses. But are they not -- perhaps unconsciously -- *laudatores temporis acti*? I thought so for a long time and never allowed their statements to carry any weight. I have discussed this question over and over again, not with one or two natives, but with dozens of the most serious and sincere people, under various circumstances and in regions far removed from one another. Yet all supported the same argument, and I could never make my point of view prevail. I always received the same reply: "You Whites are not willing to believe us when we tell you what we know better than you, what is the pure truth. You are so involved in your own point of view!" Finally, before so much formal testimony -- uniform, unchanging, repeated *ad nauseam* in such varied circumstances as to individuals, times, and places -- my attachment to my own idea began, with some regret, to falter.

But how is it possible to resolve the contradiction between a rather broad liberty and the practice of chastity? And above all how can less than fifty years have sufficed to transform any attachment to virginity into licentiousness? The difficulty presents itself for relations between adults, but it is especially great with respect to reprehensible contacts between nonadults, because of the terrible sanction that we have described above.

The first objection may be partially met if we take into account the habit of "the fear of men," which is acquired and maintained through the severe prohibition against sexual relations before physical maturity and the terrible punishment with which the transgressor is threatened. ([illegible])

The second objection on the other hand is much more serious. It is the one which above all has always kept me from accepting the

[2] to present anything we have not thoroughly investigated. We have not stepped outside the geographic limits set forth except for a few incidental remarks. Although the cultural uniformity of the Nkundó-Móngo is remarkable it is not, of course, absolute. And if we have used the title Mariage des Nkundó (Marriage among the Nkundo), we have done so because it was difficult to find one which would be more appropriate for the geographic and ethnic limits of [14] this study. It is very likely that in most cases our data are valid beyond the limits we have laid out, but to generalize upon it before making a thorough study of each group would be contrary to all scientific method. The reader is therefore earnestly requested to take these remarks into account and to abstain from giving our conclusions too broad a scope.

Familial institutions in themselves and in their totality are outside the scope of this book. But since they are based on marriage, they have an important place within our framework. We must necessarily touch upon them, but we will limit our excursions into that realm to what is required to make the general description intelligible. On the other hand, the study of marriage throws a good deal of light on familial institutions.

● [illegible] 596 [illegible] The words "family," "clan," "group," etc., occur frequently. The family is an entity smaller than the clan, and the latter is subordinate to the group. Since it is very difficult to give a precise definition, however, we have taken the trouble to make a clear distinction only when necessary. (1) [Editor's Note: Elsewhere we use them more as generic terms or even as synonyms. In order to make family relationships and the expressions used by the Nkundó to designate them more comprehensible, we are attaching an example of a genealogical table.]

113 I know of the following previous studies on the same subject:

Engels, "Les Wangata," Revue Congolaise, 1910, which also deals with marriage.

G. Kaptein, "Familieleven en -zeden bij de Inboorlingen van den Evenaar," Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 521. [15] This study covers

---

1. See Chapter V, Article III.

614
621 In general one may assume that local groups will postulate only that kind of kinship relationship which does not necessitate a substantial functional reintegration. For this reason, units above the exogamy limit will easily tend to construct a genealogy which "proves" a kinship relationship. Groups of that type are functionally weak. One can observe processes of this kind both among the group of the Bokonda and among the neighboring E-group, Looyenyanga. The institution of the nkumu (see above, p. 14) also appears to have a levelling influence. The privileges of the oldest (and first) group diminish in importance and fall behind the office of nkumu. The new office is also open to younger and dependent groups.

Sociological Terminology for Kinship Groups

● 128 Before dealing with the units which are to be regarded as settlement groups, we shall compare the kinship groups of the Ekonda with the sociological ideal types. Keeping in mind the authors mentioned at the beginning, I shall now discuss the various terms used for groups which are applicable to conditions found among the Ekonda. [196]

Family

121
596 The small family is of no importance in the organizational system of the Ekonda. Nevertheless it is very important as the smallest unit of economic life. Each small family is potentially polygynous, but monogynous marriages are more numerous at the present time, especially among the younger generation. In view of this difference between potential and practiced polygyny, it seems advisable to follow Thurnwald in classing the polygynous forms together with the small family and to differentiate its nuclear families (18). In my opinion this approach

18. Vol. 4, p. 11 f.

seems to correspond more closely to its functional importance than Murdock's view, according to which the polygynous family

THE *NKUMU* OF THE TUMBA

RITUAL CHIEFTAINSHIP ON THE MIDDLE CONGO

H. D. BROWN

[illegible] [illegible] THE tribes living round Lake Tumba, a lake some thirty-five miles long by twelve wide lying north of Lake Leopold II (approximately 0° 50′ south latitude, and 18° east longitude) and draining into the Congo River at the confluence of the Ubangi, lack cohesion and show a considerable variety of custom and language. But they are known collectively as Tumba, the Government adaptation of the Native term *Ntomba*. Most of them are found to the east of the lake, the whole group numbering perhaps little more than forty to fifty thousand at the present time, though [illegible] there is evidence that the last twenty years have seen a great decrease in population. European occupation of this area goes back barely fifty years, Protestant missions having been established for about the same length of time. The first mission post [illegible] was established at Ikoko on the north-east shore of the lake, one of the villages of a group known as Bonginda. In pursuing this investigation particular attention has been given to the practices of this group, but mention is occasionally made where considerable differences have been found elsewhere.

[illegible] 13 The Tumba are agricultural, hunting, and fishing people. Their country is flat and swampy with dense forests, and there are many watercourses flowing into Lake Tumba. There are occasional small, less swampy plains, and one such area, more open, with quite wide stretches of prairie, is a haunt of buffalo. The forests are fairly well supplied with game, and the swamps, streams, and lakes with fish. A heavy rainfall and no distinct dry season make agriculture reasonably easy and famine unknown. Every family has its plantation of manioc, the staple diet, which is supplemented by plantains and bananas. The people make their own tools, formerly smelting their own iron for this purpose, are fairly skilful at making dug-out canoes, engage in weaving raffia and making mats out of split cane, and are efficient at pottery production.

[illegible] 101 [illegible] The role of the *nkumu* in the socio-religious activities of the community is one of the most interesting features of Tumba life. As a result of European contact the ceremonies connected with the *nkumu* are rapidly disappearing, but it has been possible to collect considerable information from the older men and women among whom the details are still vividly remembered.[1] The following report refers to the period previous to European occupation and control, a time within the memory of a large number of people, but already sufficiently remote to become a matter of history before the lapse of many more years.

[illegible] [illegible] An understanding of the place of the *nkumu* among the Tumba requires a glance at the tribal organization. According to the people themselves, they migrated westward, and coming into these parts chose land for themselves. Among the several

---

[1] In *My Children of the Forest*, New York, 1924, pp. [illegible], Andrew F. Hanney has briefly outlined some of the forms of *nkumu* observed among the tribes of the district adjacent to that of the present study. These more detailed notes are, however, timely if a record is to be preserved that approximates to accuracy.

Teke FI 33
Sakata FO33

M 137 361

The few groups of natives who inhabit this region have built their villages along the river on raised ground, safe from the periodic floods.

In the forest region the villages seem to be scattered purely at random.

The huts are built in the center of a large clearing, surrounded by manioc plots and banana groves which are encircled in the distance by uncleared forest.

Such is the region that we crossed from Stanley Pool to Kasai-Kwango, from the Fimi to Lake Leopold II, and over the entire basin of the Lukenie.

5 M 101 13

The first peoples we encountered there belong to the Bateke [Teke] group. Their territory lies around Stanley Pool and extends to the north as far as the Lefimi. Beyond that live the Banfumungu [Fumu], also called Banfugunu, Banfumuka, Beumbu, or simply Banfumu.

North of the Kasai and along the banks of the Congo live the Bayanzi [Yanzi] or Babangi. Their neighbors to the east, the Baboma [Boma] or Babuma, occupy the whole of the confluence of the Fimi and the Kasai, up to the left bank of the lower Kwango.

The Wadia [Dia] live to the north of the Baboma between Nioki and Kutu and extend along the Boriempa and the western shore of Lake Leopold II up to the territory of the Mosengere [Sengele].

The region occupied by the Basakata [Sakata] stretches along the left bank of the Lukenie-Fimi between Bokoro and Moleka.

The Mosengere or Monsengere are settled along the Olonga-Uele in the region of Bongo. Northwest of this group we encountered the Bakutu [Kutu], whose territory extends beyond the boundaries of the Lake Leopold II district. [8]

Fig. 3

Bateke Woman and Child.

T [154 291]

The Bolia occupy the country northeast of Bongo as far as the Bolia-Kiri region.

The Tumba [Ntomba] are settled all along the eastern shore

Bokala FO43
Yaelima

5
M
101
131

of Lake Leopold II.

The Bokala [Baye] are the northern neighbors of the Basakata in the Inoko-Tolo region.

The Balesa [Lesa] -- Basese -- occupy the left bank of the Lukenie between Bokoro and Pokombo.

The Ipanga and the Batitu or Ashitu, inhabit the Oshwe sector both north and south of the Lukenie. The region occupied by the Bokala lies farther east, between the Lodimo and Bumbuli.

The Yaelima are found from east of Bumbuli to the Dekese sector and up to Dengese country.

A few Bashilele [Lele] groups are settled at the confluence of the Kasai and Sankuru. Their territory extends far to the south between the Kasai and the Loange.

The Bankutshu [Wankutshu], also called Basongo-Meno [Songomeno], live on the left bank of the Sankuru up to the sector of Bena-Dibele and Kole. [Ed. the text from here to mid-page 14 is not translated.]

M
[142]
591
5
764
152

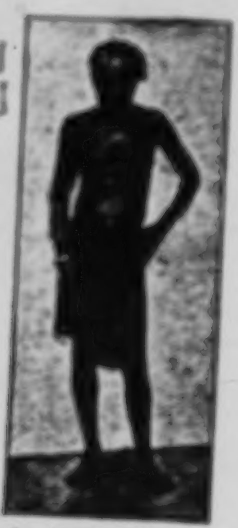


Fig. 4. Bankutshu.

[14] During our stay in the village of Chief Pokei, Baboma tribe, one of the dignitaries died. This death gave rise to an important mourning ceremony, as required by custom. The whole gunpowder supply of the deceased had been used to announce his death to the neighboring villages. Sorrow was expressed in the noisiest and most unexpected ways. The sobs of the women, the cries of despair of the relatives, and the plaintive chanting of the official female mourners mingled with the roll of the drums and the guttural and incoherent cries of the men, who kept drinking in order to express their sorrow more convincingly. All this display is an act. The screams and cries of grief are duties and are all feigned. [15] The Banfumungu cry over the death of a neighbor in the same way as they go hunting: the women mourn and cry just as they prepare food. All this is done as another job, because it is customary, because it is obligatory.

Introduction

|O| This study deals with the marriage laws and customs of a large group of the Nkundó [Nkundu] people. Therefore, it would be useful at the beginning to give some general information about this people, who are very interesting from the ethnological standpoint. Then we can define the specific purpose of our investigation.

|O| The Nkundó or Mongo occupy almost the entire length of the central basin of the Belgian Congo, from the Lulonga-Lopori [rivers] in the north all the way to Lake Leopold II, and beyond the Lukenie [River] as far as the Kasai [River]. In the west they touch the Congo River only south of the "Ruki" (1); the western part of the old Lulonga District is occupied by the Ngombe, whose territory extends as far as the Maringa [River] (known to the natives as Lŏwo) upstream from Basankusu (Basǎnkoso according to the natives). (2) In the east they may be found as far as, and even beyond, the Lomami. In the southeast they have penetrated into the northwestern part of Sankuru District. At the present time it is still impossible to delineate precisely their eastern and southeastern boundaries; the Bambole, the Bahamba, the Mĩtuku, the Bangelengele, [4] the Balengola, the Basongola, and even the Batetela and the "Bakusu," are either Mongo or very closely related. (1)

---

1. Ruki is probably a corruption of Bolóki, a tribe of fishermen living downstream on the banks of this river, which the natives prefer to call Loilaka.

2. According to Bittremieux and Lestaeghe, a few Nkundó remain on Nsumba Island near Nouvelle-Anvers (Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 194).

|O| 1. See Donckerwolcke, in Kongo-Overzee, Vol. 1, p. 235, and my article in Congo, Vol. 1, p. 13. The fact that Donckerwolcke

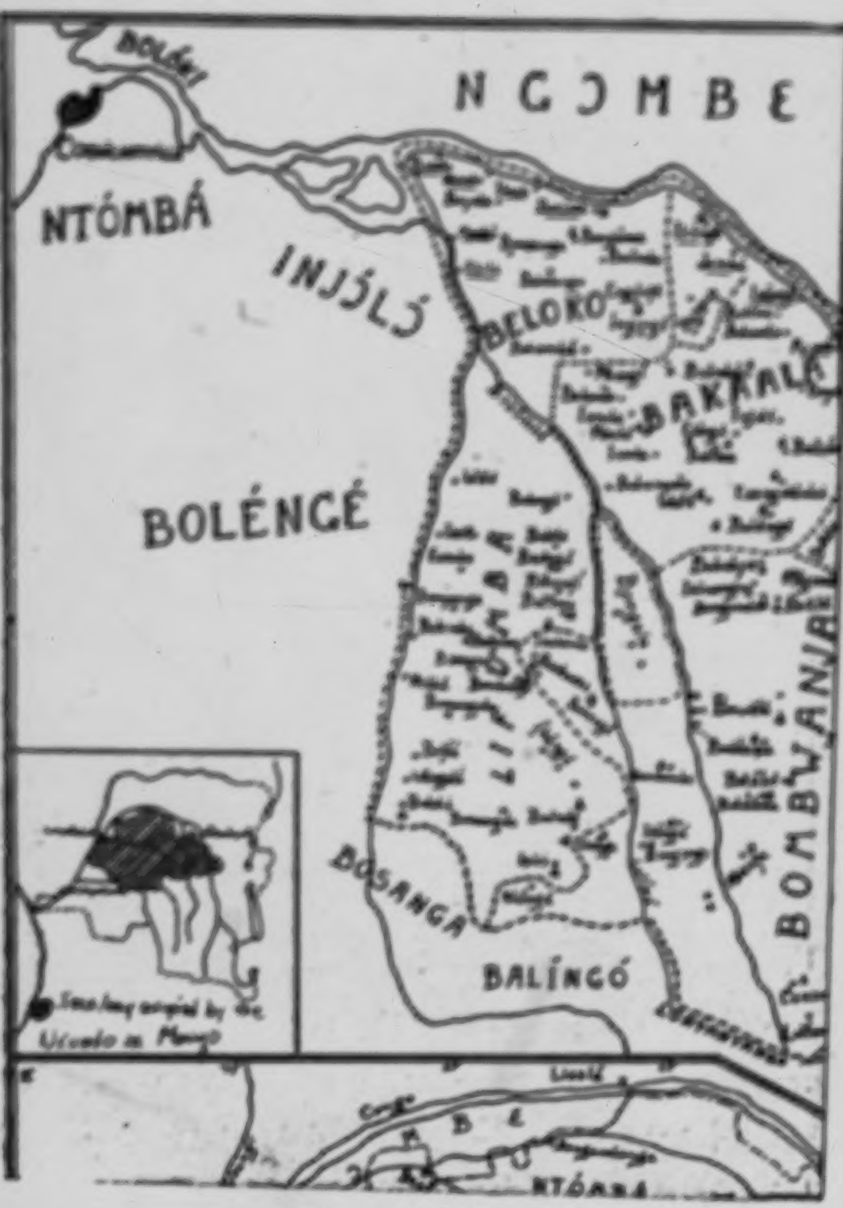
2: Hulstaert
101, 131, 563, 619

Mongo FO32

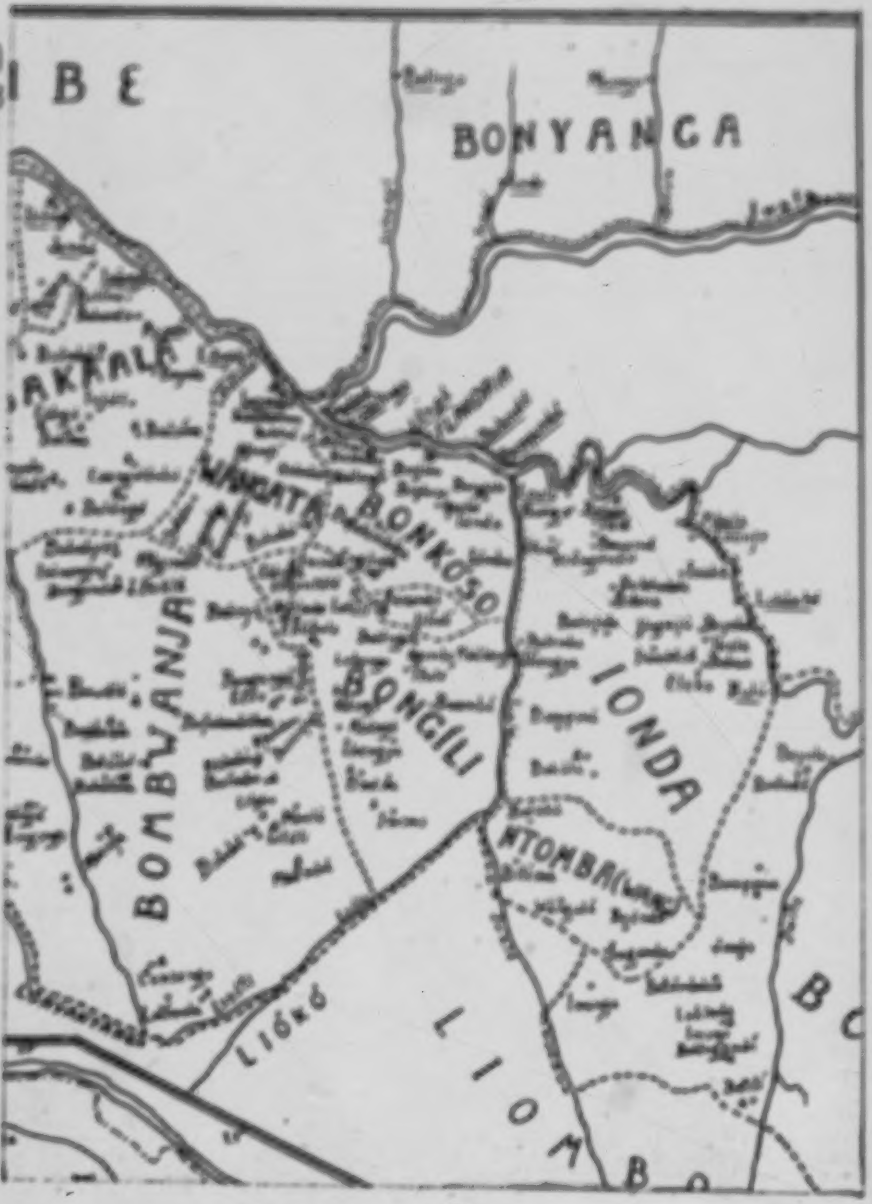
/The division of sections in the end map is as follows:/

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H

101
131
983
619

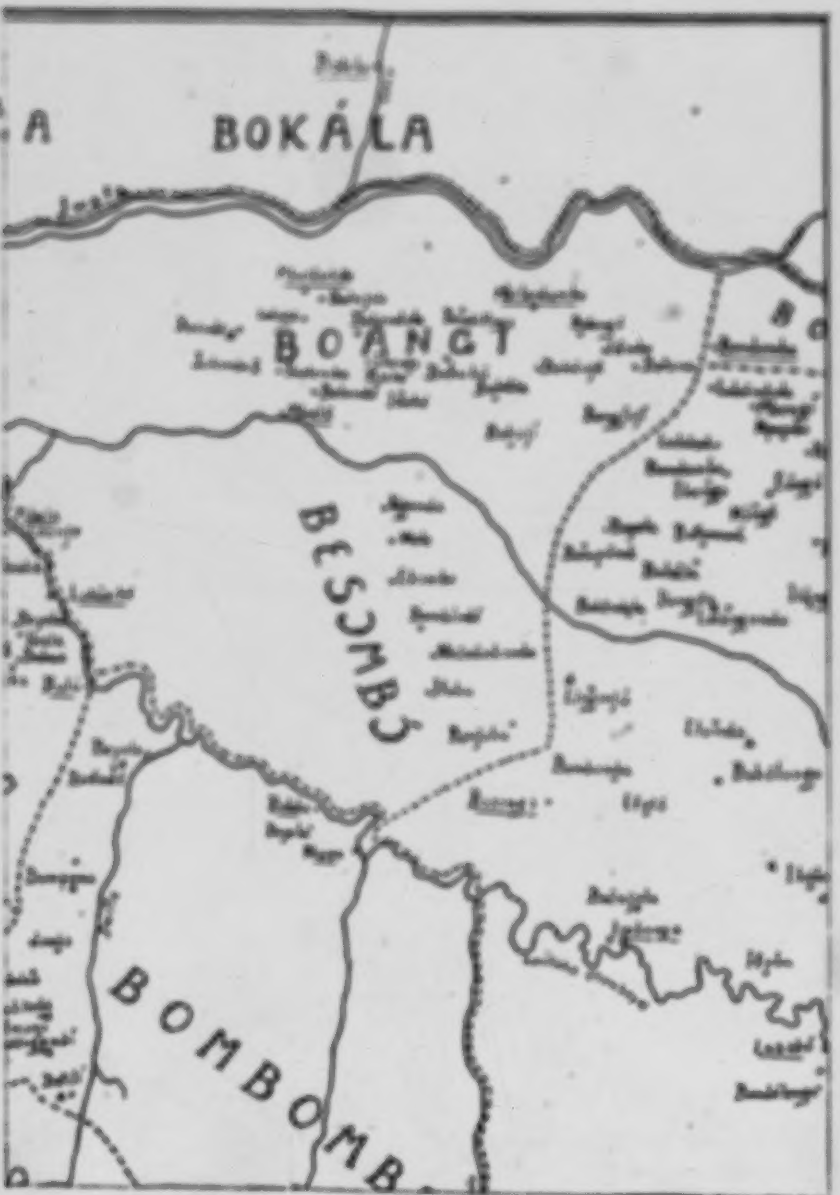

BOLÓKI
NGƆMBE
NTÓMBÁ
INJƆ́LƆ́
BELOKO
BAKALI
BOLÉNGÉ
BOMBWANJA
BOSANGA
BALÍNGÓ
Territory occupied by the Nkundo or Mongo
NTÓMBA

[End Map (A)]


IBE
BONYANGA
AKALE
WANGATA
BONKOSO
BOMBWANJA
BONGILI
IONDA
NTOMBA (Lac)
LIOKO
LIOMBO
BO
B
BO

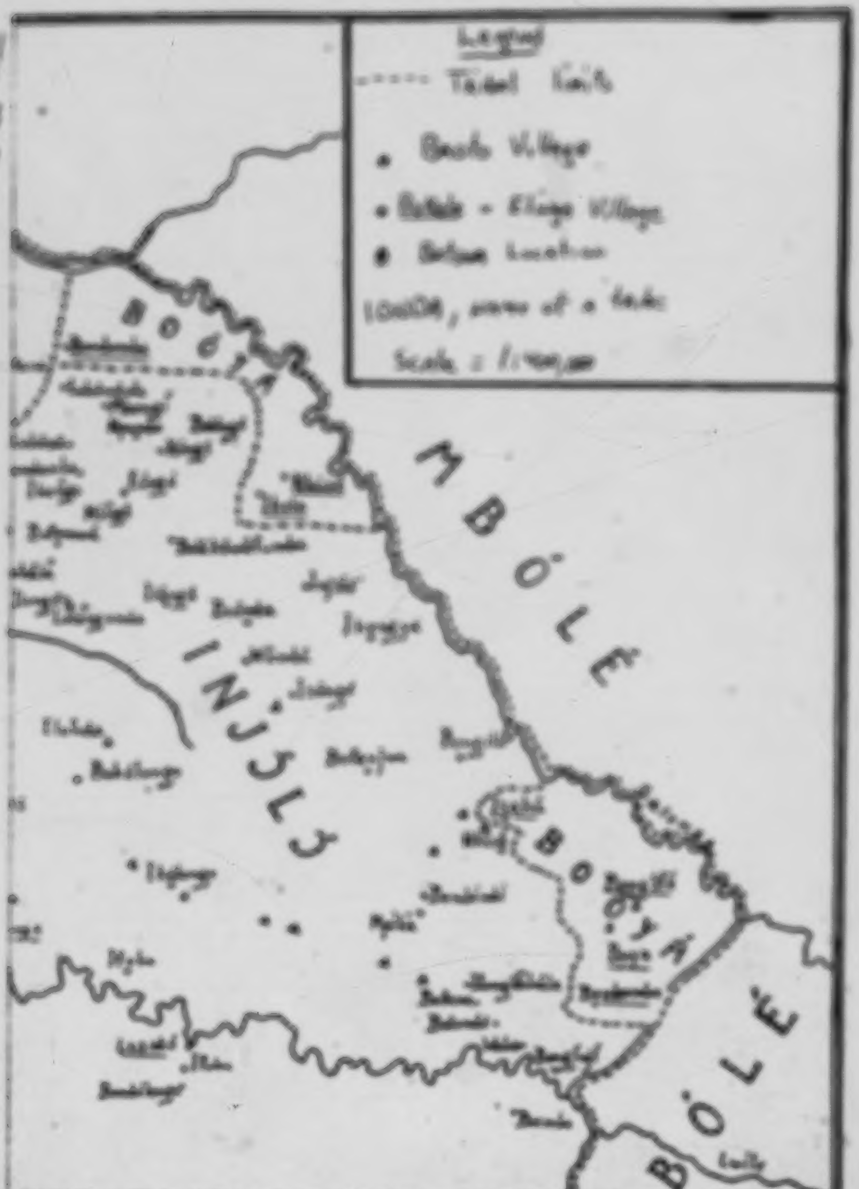
[End Map (B)]

101
● 171
56.8
617


A
BOKÁLA
BOANGI
BESƆMBƆ
BOMBOMB
B O

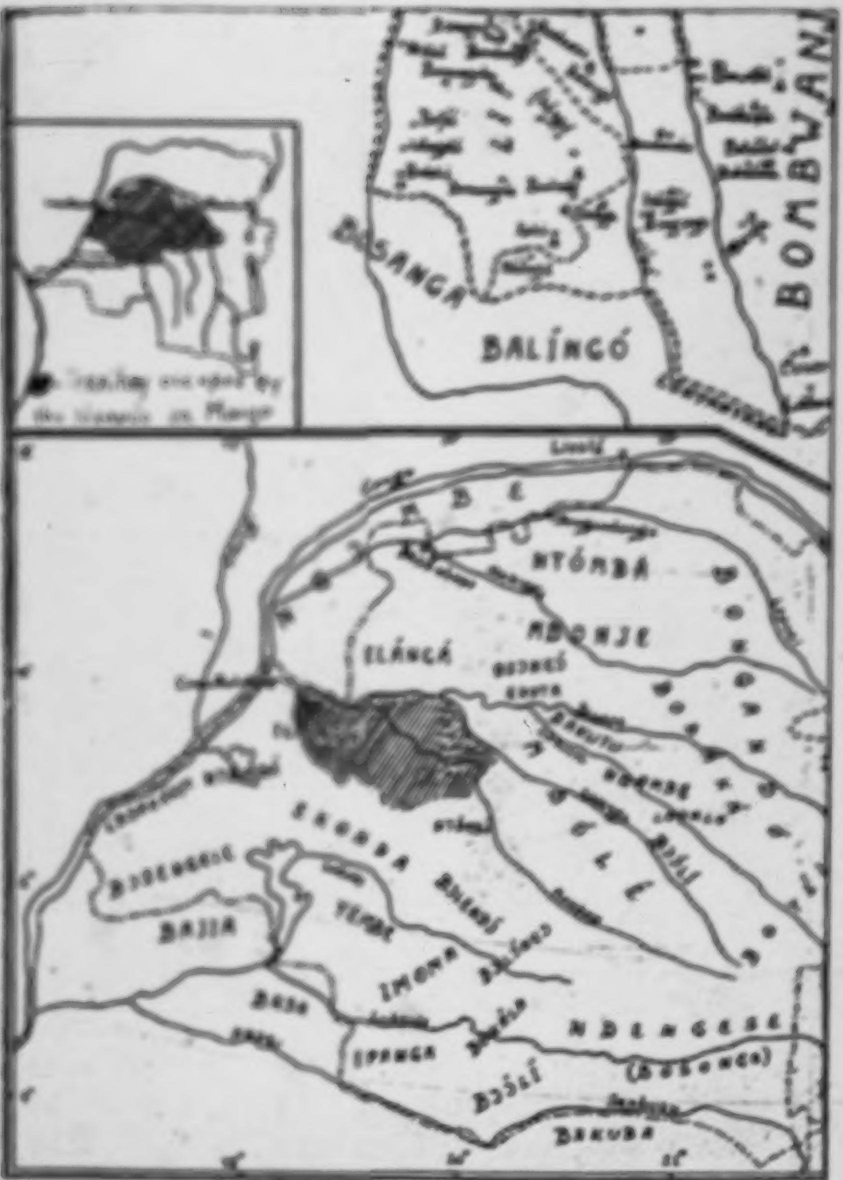
[End Map (c)]

101
13
563
69

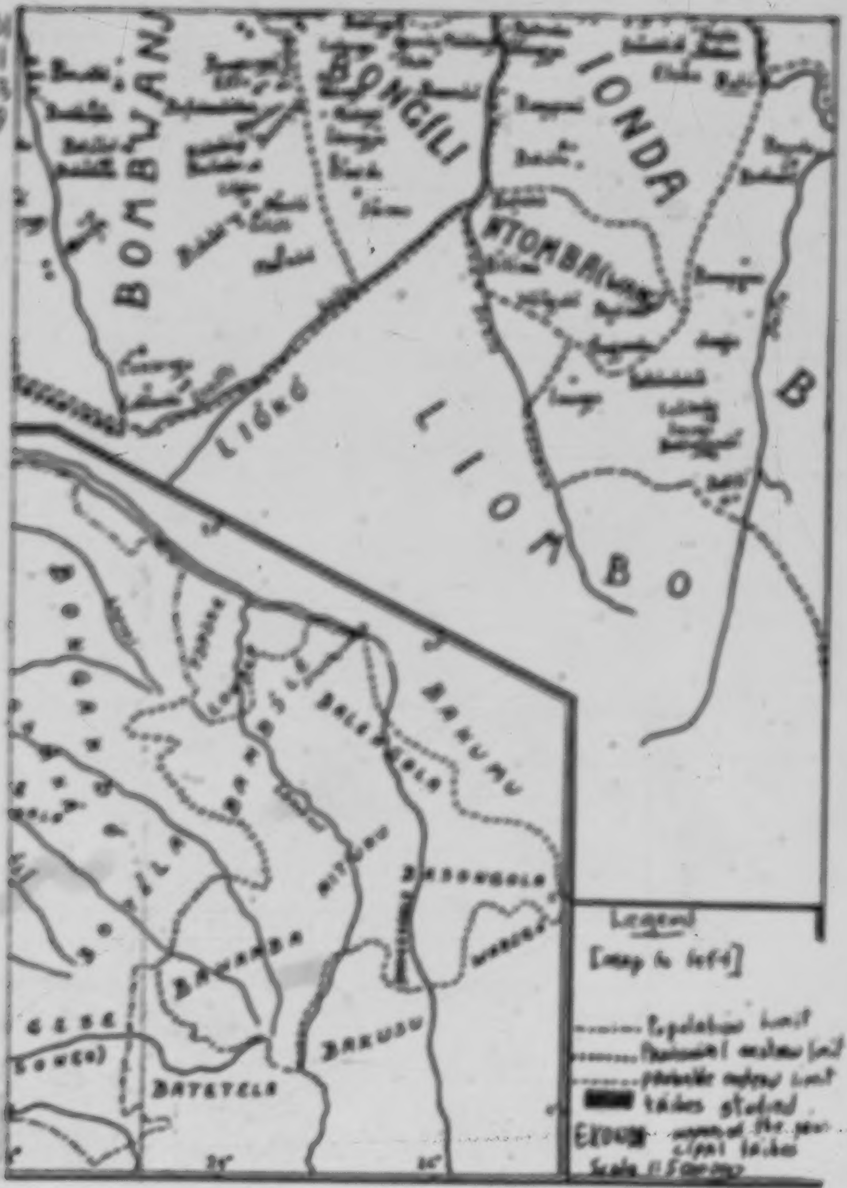

Legend
Tribal limits
Village
Scale
BOÔJA
MBÖLE
INJÔLÔ
BOÔJA
BÖLE

[End Map (D)]

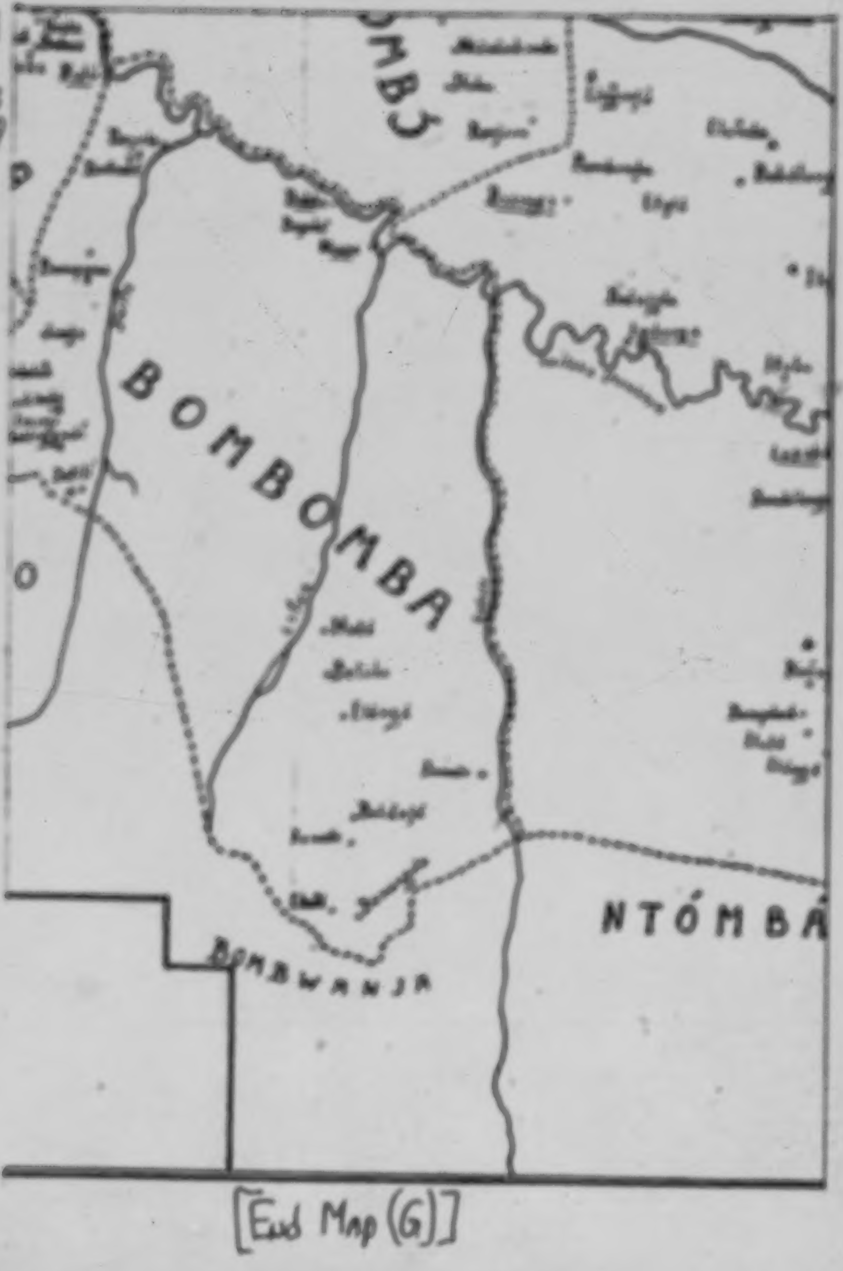
81
131
363
619


BOMBWANJ
BOSANGA
BALÍNGÓ
NTÓMBÁ
NDONJE
ELÁNGÁ
EKONDA
BOŁENGE
BAJIA
IMOMA
NDENGESE
(BOSONGA)
BƆƆLÍ
BEKUBA
EPANGA
BASO
TEMBE
the localities occupied by the Nkundo, or Mongo

[End Map (E)]


BOMBWANJ
NGILI
IONDA
NTOMBA
B
BO
BATETELA
BAKUSU
Legend
[map to left]
tribes studied

[End Map (F)]


OMBƆ
BOMBOMBA
NTÓMBA
BOMBWANJA

[End Map (G)]

INJOLO
LE
BO
MBÖLÉ
WÄNGATÄ
ÓMBÄ

[End Map(H)]

THE NKUMU OF THE TUMBA

RITUAL CHIEFTAINSHIP ON THE MIDDLE CONGO

H. D. BROWN

[1] THE tribes living around Lake Tumba, a lake some thirty-five miles long by twelve wide lying north of Lake Leopold II (approximately 0° 50' south latitude, [illegible] and 18° east longitude) and draining into the Congo River at the confluence of the Ubangi, lack cohesion and show a considerable variety of custom and language. But they are known collectively as Tumba, the Government adaptation of the Native term *Ntomba*. Most of them are found to the east of the lake, the whole group numbering perhaps little more than forty to fifty thousand at the present time, though [illegible] there is evidence that the last twenty years have seen a great decrease in population. European occupation of this area goes back nearly fifty years, Protestant missions having been established for about the same length of time. The first mission post [illegible] was established at Ikoko on the north-east shore of the lake, one of the villages of a group known as Bonginda. In pursuing this investigation particular attention has been given to the practices of this group, but mention is occasionally made where considerable differences have been found elsewhere.

[illegible] 13 The Tumba are agricultural, hunting, and fishing people. Their country is flat and swampy with dense forests, and there are many watercourses flowing into Lake Tumba. There are occasional small, low swampy plains, and one such area, more open, with quite wide stretches of prairie, is a haunt of buffalo. The forests are fairly well supplied with game, and the swamps, streams, and lakes with fish. A heavy rainfall and no distinct dry season make agriculture reasonably easy and famine unknown. Every family has its plantation of manioc, the staple diet, which is supplemented by plantains and bananas. The people make their own tools, formerly smelting their own iron for this purpose, are fairly skilled at making dug-out canoes, engage in weaving raffia and making mats out of split cane, and are efficient at pottery production.

[illegible] 101 [illegible] The role of the *nkumu* in the socio-religious activities of the community is one of the most interesting features of Tumba life. As a result of European contact the ceremonies connected with the *nkumu* are rapidly disappearing, but it has been possible to collect considerable information from the older men and women among whom the details are still vividly remembered.[1] The following report refers to the period previous to European occupation and control, a time within the memory of a large number of people, but already sufficiently remote to become a matter of history before the lapse of many more years.

[illegible] [illegible] An understanding of the place of the *nkumu* among the Tumba requires a glance at the tribal organization. According to the people themselves, they migrated westward, and coming into these parts cleared land for themselves. Among the several

---

[1] In *My Children of the Forest*, New York, 1924, pp. 48-71, Andrew F. Hensey has briefly outlined some of the items of interest observed among the *nkumu* of the district adjacent to that of the present study. These more detailed notes are, however, timely if a record is to be preserved that approaches to accuracy.

[2]

Chapter 1

The Land and Its Inhabitants

The appearance of the land. -- Location of the tribes. -- General characteristics of the natives. -- Maternal feelings. -- The fetishes. -- Religious beliefs. -- Cult of the dead. -- The Mfumu. -- Medicine.

● [3] The area between the Congo, the Kasai, and the Kwango is covered with tall grass interspersed with stunted trees and a few small forests whose verdant canopy rises majestically over a boundless plain. A curtain of trees stretches along the rivers and gradually thins out as one penetrates into the interior. The path [97] beaten by the regular passage of endless columns of natives, walking Indian file, winds sadly and monotonously across these lightly rolling plains. During the rainy season the grass, whose stems grow as high as two or two and a half meters, obstructs the view. During the dry season, destroyed by brush fires, it has given way to a blackish-yellow plain from which all life seems to have been [56] banished. From time to [6] time, at distances of 30 and sometimes 40 kilometers apart, we find groupings of huts, surrounded by a few manioc fields, [Fig. 1 appears here] banana groves, and sometimes small plots of maize and peanuts. Upon our arrival, [68] the men look at us without concern, the mistrustful women hide [Fig. 2 appears here] in their huts or take refuge in the forest and fields, and the less timid children stare at us with the insouciance characteristic of their age. [7]

Beyond the Kasai, in the region of the Fimi, around Lake Leopold II, and along the Lukenie, the bush gives way to the forest, damp, swampy, dark, and mysterious.

[3] 36 At the confluence of the Fimi and the Kasai, a vast swampy area stretches as far as the eye can see, bare of all arborescent vegetation, crossed by innumerable channels which are narrow and shallow during the dry season and wide to the point of covering practically the whole region during the rainy season.

[text continues on p. 3]

Teke FO 33
Sakata FO45

M
137
764

The few groups of natives who inhabit this region have built their villages along the river on raised ground, safe from the periodic floods.

In the forest region the villages seem to be scattered purely at random.

The huts are built in the center of a large clearing, surrounded by manioc plots and banana groves which are encircled in the distance by uncleared forest.

Such is the region that we crossed from Stanley Pool to Kasai-Kwango, from the Fimi to Lake Leopold II, and over the entire basin of the Lukenie.

S
A
101
131

The first peoples we encountered there belong to the Bateke [Teke] group. Their territory lies around Stanley Pool and extends to the north as far as the Lefini. Beyond that live the Basfumungu [Fumu], also called Basfuguma, Basfumuko, Baumbu, or simply Bamfumu.

North of the Kasai and along the banks of the Congo live the Bayanzi [Yansi] or Bahangi. Their neighbors to the east, the Baboma [Boma] or Baburna, occupy the whole of the confluence of the Fimi and the Kasai, up to the left bank of the lower Kwango.

Fig. 3
Bateke Woman and Child.

T
[109
191]

The Wadia [Dia] live to the north of the Baboma between Nioki and Kutu and extend along the Bolempa and the western shore of Lake Leopold II up to the territory of the Mosengere [Sengele].

The region occupied by the Basakata [Sakata] stretches along the left bank of the Lukenie-Fimi between Bokoro and Molake.

The Mosengere or Monsengere are settled along the Olonga-Uele in the region of Bongo. Northwest of this group we encountered the Bakutu [Kutu], whose territory extends beyond the boundaries of the Lake Leopold II district. [8]

The Bolia occupy the country northeast of Bongo as far as the Bolia-Kiri region.

The Tumba [Ntomba] are settled all along the eastern shore

Sakata FO43
Yaelima

S
M
101
131

of Lake Leopold II.

The Bobaie [Baye] are the northern neighbors of the Basakata in the Isoko-Tolo region.

The Balesa [Lesa] -- Batete -- occupy the left bank of the Lukenie between Bokoro and Pobombo.

The Ipanga and the Batitu or Atshitu, inhabit the Oshwe sector both north and south of the Lukenie. The region occupied by the Bokala lies farther east, between the Lodima and Bumbuli.

The Yaelima are found from east of Bumbuli to the Dekese sector and up to Dengese country.

A few Bashilele [Lele] groups are settled at the confluence of the Kasai and Sankuru. Their territory extends far to the south between the Kasai and the Loanga.

The Bankutshu [Wankutshu], also called Basongo-Meno [Songomeno], live on the left bank of the Sankuru up to the sector of Bena-Dibele and Kole. [Ed. the text from here to mid-page 14 is not translated.]

M
●[142]
[291]
S
764
152

Fig. 4. Bankutshu.

[14] During our stay in the village of Chief Pokei, Baboma tribe, one of the dignitaries died. This death gave rise to an important mourning ceremony, as required by custom. The whole gunpowder supply of the deceased had been used to announce his death to the neighboring villages. Sorrow was expressed in the noisiest and most unexpected ways. The sobs of the women, the cries of despair of the relatives, and the plaintive chanting of the official female mourners mingled with the roll of the drums and the guttural and incoherent cries of the men, who kept drinking in order to express their sorrow more convincingly. All this display is an act. The screams and cries of grief are duties and are all feigned. [15] The Banfumungu cry over the death of a neighbor in the same way as they go hunting; the women mourn and cry just as they prepare food. All this is done as another job, because it is customary, because it is obligatory.

Yaelima

764 At the village of Tik-ke-Tik in Yaelima territory, we witnessed a similar scene following the death of a young man.

At nightfall his body was wrapped in mats or rattan splints, solidly plaited, tied up, and completely sealed. At dawn the 482 mortuary bundle, attached to a strong branch, was lifted by two men. Instead of taking the village lane, they carried the corpse behind the hut and then through the bush. A few men walking Indian file made up the procession, at the end of which was the mother of the deceased in mourning costume. The path they followed was quite irregular. Largely avoiding the trodden paths, the bearers often retraced their steps and took almost two hours to reach the cemetery, four kilometers from the village.

742
291
301
516

Fig. 12. Mother and Child, Bankutshu Tribe.

764
761 On the way back, the natives explained to me that the numerous turns and the walk through untrodden bush were meant to lead astray the evil spirit who had entered the village and killed the

302 fashioning most of the statuettes, figurines and bowls that we
532 possess from this region, which are so remarkably decorated. Moreover, we find these same forms among the Babuba and Bashilele, up to the region of the Bankutshu of Bena Dibele-Kole. These various tribes have also reproduced in their sculpture the designs of the shaved parts of the head, which are so uniform and so characteristic. In this respect these various tribes are related, and their ethnic affinity seems very clear. Despite their present remoteness from each other and the absence of all tribal intercourse, their ethnic kinship is clearly shown in the mementos they have preserved of the ancestral culture.

•[142
304]

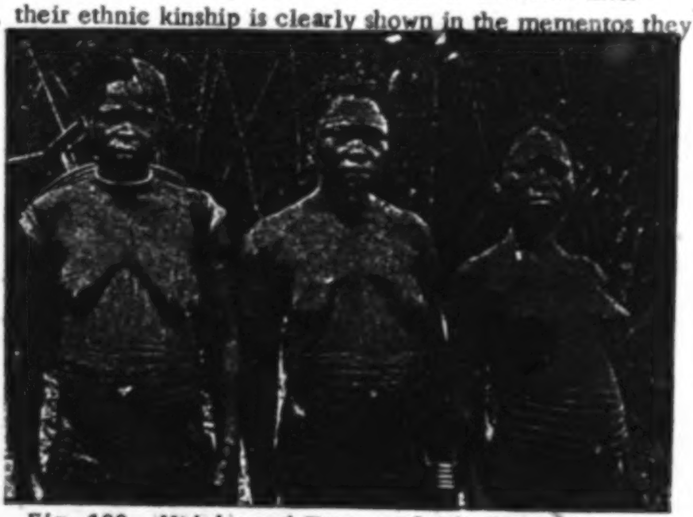


Fig. 100. Hairdos and Tattoos of Lake Leopold II.

302 These various observations permit us to divide the peoples
161 into three very distinct groups.

1) The Bateke-Banfumu group, with its chignon hairdo over the nape of the neck and the rest of the head shaved or with the hair cut short.

2) The group including the Ipanga and the eastern peoples, with their hairdo of two braids passing behind the ears and under the chin and the upright roll on top of the head. [179]

3) The group including the tribes of Lake Leopold II and the lower Lukenie up to the Ipanga region, where having the hair arranged in tiny braids predominates.

The love of finery is more or less developed among all the
301 peoples of the Kasai-Lake Leopold II-Lukenie region. Ornaments

The first one includes the Bateke-Banfumu-Baboma, among whom ornaments are relatively rare for the women as well as for the men. 301 171

The second one encompasses all the peoples in the region of Lake Leopold II and the lower Lukenie and is characterized by the solid brass necklace worn by the women and the ornaments trimmed with cowries and the brass plaques worn by the dignitaries and chiefs.

The third one includes the Ipanga and the Batitu, with the belt ornamented with brass beads, rings on the fingers and toes, and solid brass rings worn above the ankles, all of which are peculiar to the women.

Fig. 107. A Group of Batitu Children.

142 516 855

The fourth group is characterized by the sheath of brass rings covering the arm from wrist to elbow and worn as much by the men as by the women of the Bokala-Yaelima.

The fifth group includes the Bena Dibele-Kole region, where imported ornaments have replaced the primitive ones. [186]

In addition to all these adornments used regularly in common, everyday life, the native also has ornaments reserved for show and ceremony. 301

304
832
[TT
291]

personal vanity, and to excite the male. At the present time only the latter reason accounts for the practice in the region where our influence has been effective. The introduction of European fabrics, the expansion of the economy and the progress of civilization have led the women to clothe themselves and to hide and screen a large part of the body from indiscreet glances. [189] The small primitive loincloth has given way to a toga of variable length, which hides from the public eye that part [Fig. 112 appears here] of the body which is covered with tattoos. In such cases, the woman can no longer display her tattoos for the sake of vanity. [Figs. 113 and 114 appear here] If, despite this, some of them continue to have themselves tattooed just like the old matrons, it is because they hope to attract a man, to please him, and to be able to participate sooner in the pleasures of intimate life. When questioned on this subject, the natives are very definite. The men maintain that the raised tattoos [190] on

[291
301
304
142]

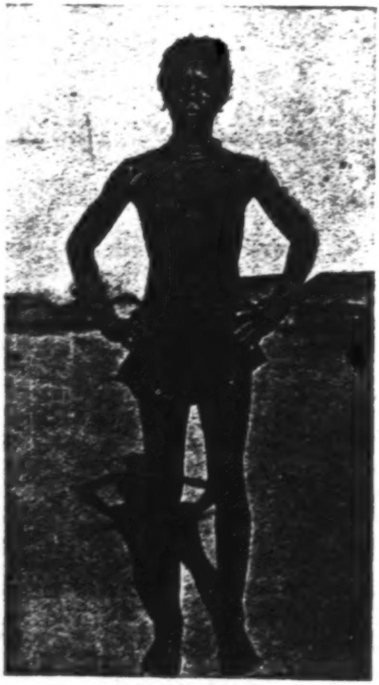


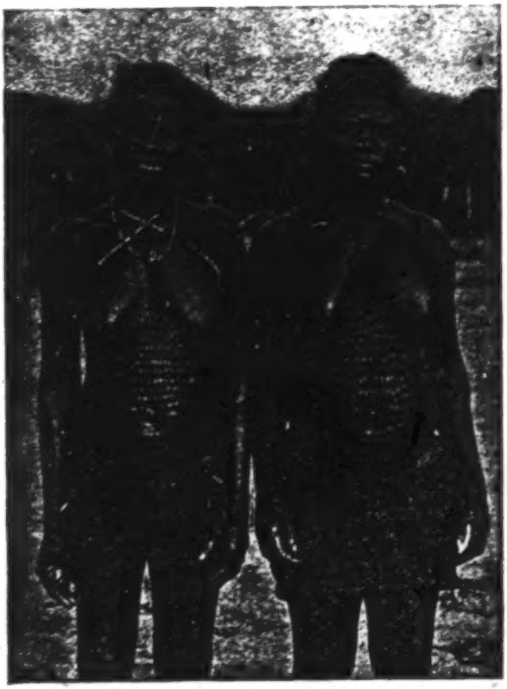
Fig. 115. Elegant Lady of the Bokala-Yaelima Region. Tattoos, Bracelets, and Necklaces.

304
833

SAkAtA FO43
TeKe F133

M
5
304
171

We have seen earlier that among the Bateke, Banfumungu, and Baboma, the man's characteristic tattoo consists of lines scratched on the face, while that of the woman consists of small dots in relief, juxtaposed in parallel lines, more or less horizontal, covering the body from the pit of the stomach to the lower abdomen. This same design [192] is found among the women of all the riparian peoples of Lake Leopold II and among the tribes of the Lukenie up to the Bumbuli sector. It must be noted, however, that in this last region the relief is less clear and less pronounced.



M
304
171
[142]

Fig. 116. Tattooing among the Women of Lake Leopold II and the Lower Lukenie.

Moreover, as a general rule, the relief gradually decreases as one goes farther from the lake. In this respect, then, all these peoples seem to belong to the same ethnic group, and it is probable that this characteristic tattooing is one of the traits of the ancestral civilization, retained until the present time by all

Yaelima

bent, running from the top of the breastbone to the navel. To the left and right of this main line, we see a double row of small oblique lines separated from each other by a space from one to three centimeters wide. The facial tatto consists of a double or triple row of oblique lines, arranged in such a way that they look like palm leaves, and a small crest formed by short, curved incisions at the root of the nose. According to a photograph sent by Mr. Timmermans, this same type of tattoo is also found among

304

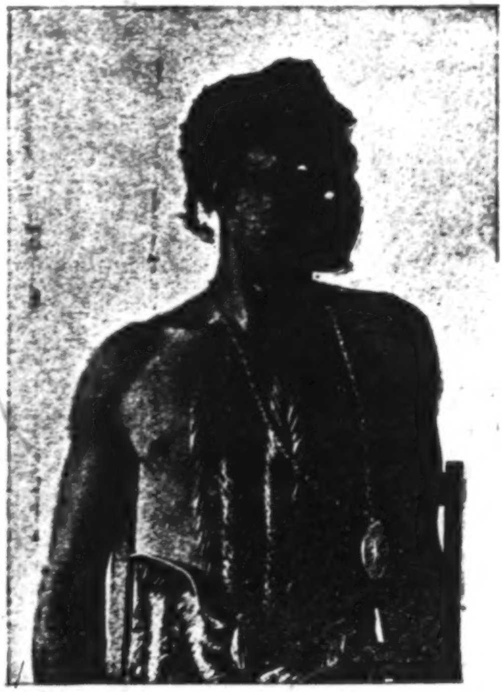


Fig. 118. Inunu, the Young and Excellently Endowed Batitu Chief of the Oshwe Region.

[622
142]

the Yaelima. We ought to note in this connection that in the course of our journey [194] through this region we did not observe this anywhere, despite numerous investigations. We therefore believe that an error was made in transmitting the information. The persons involved were probably Ipanga-Batitu who happened to be in the Yaelima region.

Yaelima

304
171

we made of the many figures we saw in this region showed us that the variations are so numerous, so diverse, and so closely intertwined that it is totally impossible to use this as a basis for determining ethnic sectors with clearly-defined characteristics.

304
171
833

Finally, if we consider only those tattoo figures to which

[307
142]

Fig. 124. Yaelima Headdress and Tattooing. Typical Longomo or Dignitary.

we attributed, if not a familial origin, at least a familial nature [200] (incitement to sexual relations), we see that throughout the region this type of tattoo is peculiar to women.

From Leopoldville to the confines of Batitu territory and even among some Bokala women, this tattoo consists (where it still exists) of a number of small, aligned dots, just like the ornamental tattoos.

Among the Ipanga-Batitu, these figures sometimes embellish the arms and part of the back, while among the other tribes they are less elaborate.

304
171
833 In the region of the Yaelima, Dengese, and some of the Bokala, this tattoo consists of a series of broken, concentric lines with the pubic region as the main center.

We do not know if this tattoo is also worn by the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu women, but this seems probable to us. We can, however, assert that among those peoples this tattoo does not extend to the upper thighs, except for one or two lines of small incised dots running parallel to the fold of the groin.

[142]
[302]

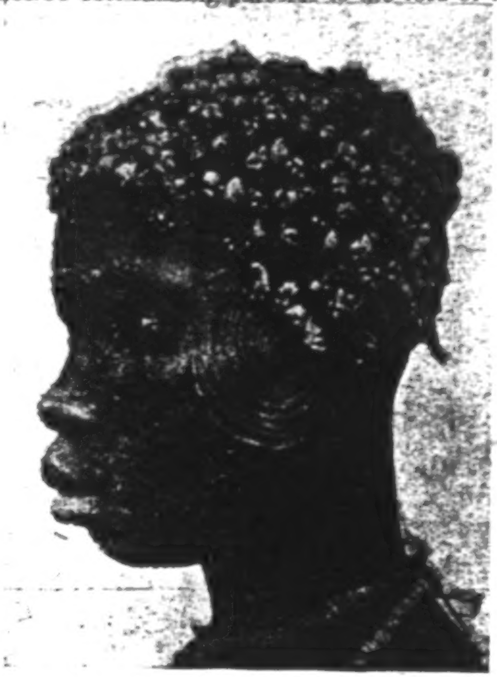


Fig. 125. Yaelima Tattoing and Headdress Adorned with Peanuts Smeared with Ngula.

The incisions for ornamental and sexual tattoos are usually made by women, although a man sometimes takes over this task.

304 The operation is carried out at very irregular intervals and at practically any [201] time of life. Moreover, it requires several sittings, usually spaced from 10 to 15 days apart.

The tattooing knife, which is also used for depilation, consists of a small, broad iron blade with a curved, very sharp cutting edge.

M 101 563 does not exclude the possibility of a distant kinship, but the present state of our knowledge makes the solution to this question impossible; for very close resemblances may be explained by a common origin as well as by a period of living in close contact, and differences may be due to diverse origins [5] or to a temporary separation at a certain point in history.

P M 101 563 144 A considerable number of Pygmoids or Pygmiforms (1) (Batswá, Jǒfe, Balúmbe, Bilángi, Boné) are to be found scattered among the Nkundó. They share a community of social and economic interests with their "masters." The Botswá belongs to his master and depends on him, but he is not, strictly speaking, his slave. His master not only has rights over him; he also has obligations to fulfill. Most of the Pygmoids are to be found in the western part of Nkundó territory; in the east they are very rare.

M 101 173 The Nkundó-Móngo came from the north or northeast, while the Mbólé claim to have come from the northwest, and the Bakutu from the west. (2)

M 101 A word should be said about the name of these people. Ordinarily, we call them the Nkundó-Móngo. The first of these names is used in the west and in the south, the second especially in the north and in the east. The Elángá of the Losanganya region are called the Mongo éâ Lolo, or the Upstream Móngo, by the peoples to the west of them. Foreigners call all these peoples, including the Nkundó, the Mbólé, the Bakutu, etc., by the name of Móngo. In literature one sometimes encounters the name of Lolo or Balolo. (3) But, as we have seen, *lolo* is not a proper noun but simply the word meaning "upstream"

---

1. This name was proposed by Father Schebesta, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

2. See my study, previously cited, *passim*.

3. For example, the name of the Protestant mission of the Lulonga is "Congo Balolo Mission."

Article I. Girls

584 According to Nkundó custom it is acceptable for an expected child, not yet born or still very young, to be promised in marriage to X or Y. This practice was formerly very common and is still quite prevalent today. It is called banda bǒna or bǒmoto, literally, "to count a child" or "to count a woman." The ikulá is paid at the time of the promise. Later the matter is carried out in the usual fashion; the other parts of the bride price are paid either while the fiancée is young or, preferably, at the time when she goes to her husband.

584
855 Until that time, if one of the girl's relatives is already a wife of a polygamist husband-to-be or of one of his relatives, the child is brought up in her husband's family from a fairly early age, depending on the circumstances. She lives with her relative. She may be barely seven or eight years old, for example. If no one in her husband's clan can take care of her, [232] she spends only one or two weeks there to become acquainted, little by little, with people and places; she repeats the visit from time to time. Her mother accompanies her, for being so young she could not get used to being there alone, without support, without her parents. Therefore it is necessary to wait till she is old enough to be somewhat independent and able to manage by herself. That time usually comes around the
[145] beginning of puberty, thus sometime between the ages of twelve and fifteen.

584
833 Like an adult woman, she is already called bompáka or wǎlí, depending on the portion of the bride price that has been paid. She has all the duties and privileges of a wife: sexual relations, food preparation, care of the household, etc. There is no set date or age for the beginning of cohabitation. This matter is settled between the husband and his parents-in-law. The latter do not have the right to
[606] delay the time, even if their daughter is still too young, but they can make use of their great influence over their son-in-law. The modern
[178]
[577] generation is not shocked by sexual relations between an adulterer [sic] and a girl who has not reached puberty. Besides, all is in order from the legal standpoint; since the man has paid the bride price, he is the

304
174
These facts prove that when the elders of the present generation were young, tattooing, if it was customary, was practiced with some regularity only by the women and originally had an essentially familial character in this region.

304
152
A woman bears the pain of the incisions without showing the least sign of suffering, without a complaint or a sigh. She even submits to this custom with some joy, mixed with a bit of pride, knowing that she will be held in higher esteem by the man.

This point, in our opinion, is much more important to the women among primitive peoples than one would generally suppose. It appears to us to be the leitmotiv of the major part of the variations that we observed in the grooming of the native woman.

The anxiety to please, the wishes of the man, these lead the woman to seek constantly the means that would enable her to be tattooed as soon and as often as possible. This natural desire and inner necessity are the reasons why the woman stoically bears all the torture, all the suffering. In primitive life the sexual side naturally is dominant. In this way we can explain, and in a way understand, why tattooing in the beginning was the exclusive appanage of the woman in this region and how she came to decorate the sexual organ and its immediate vicinity in order subsequently to display it; covering nearly all the body with decorations came about, perhaps, simply through coquetry.

581 Moral qualities are often involved in the choice of a wife. But strictly speaking, the marriage is not one of reason; the cause of it is more likely to be affection.

The affective and sexual aspects of the question require longer discussion.

Therefore this chapter is divided into two parts:

I. The emotional life
II. The sexual life of the Nkundó [24]

Part 1

The Emotional Life of the Nkundó

000

[Editor's Note: The Nkundó are capable of real affection. That affection takes varying forms and attains different degrees according to the nature of the persons in question. In successive articles, we will treat:

I. Affection among relatives
II. A special form of the latter: the creation of a Bolũmbó
III. Friendship
IV. Love between husband and wife]

Article I. Affection among Relatives

152
602 The Nkundó feel a deep affection toward members of their kin group. I am of the opinion that they love them as much, if not more, than most Europeans, but are not capable of as great a devotion. To understand this condition, one need only consider that affection is instinctive. Our people say: botéma nd'iko̱ma, "the heart is like a package," that is to say, it does not choose the object of its love, but rather the object presents itself spontaneously. (1) Devotion on the

1. Or lolango ale nse̱mbe̱ éy'otéma, "love is an innate, spontaneous product of the heart."

152 602 other hand almost always involves reasoning and is founded on a high morality based on religion. Furthermore, the questions (of property, inheritance, etc.) which so often divide relatives from each other do not exist among the Nkundő, whose patrimony is held in common. [25] Among them the members of a family need each other absolutely and constantly; they cannot sustain the struggle for existence unless they remain well united. A man isolated from his kin is a pariah, for in all matters of importance he must count on them for help, protection, and defense. Therefore he is, so to speak, forced to make common cause with the rest of the family and to keep his proper place within it.

This may help us to understand that among these people there are fewer reasons for a cooling of family affections and more reasons for maintaining good relations. But it would be wrong to attribute their love to some kind of egoistic calculation. Their affection is sincere and spontaneous. But the above facts explain why the dis-
[578] unity and quarrels which are so frequent in Europe are unknown among the Nkundő; they are settled at once and do not have time to become bitter or deeply rooted. A very rare exception does not invalidate this generalization.

1. Parents and children

593x Parents sincerely love their children. Their affection is not lessened with age; there is only a somewhat greater tenderness toward the very young, whom they readily carry and fondle. The indulgence which they show for the faults of their offspring is tempered by anger when they are exasperated by misbehaviour, more often than by a rational concern for the child's training. The spouse who has not suffered from the child's error does not react against him but on the contrary is led by his affection to protect him. Parents insistently try to excuse and defend their children when they have misbehaved. (1)

(1). It should be noted that the same thing may also frequently be done among many Europeans.

Nevertheless, the general good of the clan wins out over affection.

593 receive more attention, will get his way more readily -- as among ourselves. These preferences do not give rise to jealousy among brothers as long as they remain within the limits of fairness, which they almost always do.

[556] Some rich men who have a dominant social rank have a means of expressing their preference for one of their daughters, a means which is a demonstration of their wealth and at the same time an assertion of their position. This practice will be described in the article that follows.

The children for their part sincerely love their parents. This love is composed more of respect for the father and of more tenderness for the mother, as is the case among Europeans. The same variants of sentiment, depending on whether the child is a boy or girl, are to be found among the Nkundô. The children may be remiss in their dutiful affection and respect, but these are exceptions due to thoughtlessness, stubbornness, or sudden anger. (1) Here one does [152] not encounter the deep discord that among Europeans divides parents and children, nor the coarseness and brutality of which one reads quite often in our newspapers. Among the Nkundô these family dramas are unknown.

[155] Nevertheless, what we have said above does not exclude disobedience. The Nkundô child, too, prefers play to work and freedom to discipline. He tries to shun the commands of his parents which tie him down and keep him from frolicking with his companions. (2)

Love for the mother is especially deep. No matter how old a Nkundô may be, his feelings of tenderness for her do not decrease; he always remains her child. Whenever he feels pain, disappointment, or sorrow, one word is on his lips: ngôya, "mother." Among these

---

1. For an example see Chapter X, Article VIII.

2. One of the first words learned by a Nkundô child is mbôi, "I don't want to."

593x people the innate feeling which links mother and children retains all its original spontaneity. [28]

593x Nkundó parents and children do not give each other any special external signs of affection, however, as do some other peoples.

152 At death the sincerity of affection between parents and children is plainly visible. Their moving anguish comes to the surface noisily and often pathetically. Even older men are not ashamed to weep like children. What we have said is in no way altered by the fact that the light-heartedness of their character makes it easy for them to shift from one emotion to another. (Actually, the same thing may be noted in Europe.) (1)

1. See my article on the funeral customs of the Nkundó which is to appear in Anthropos.

2. Brothers and sisters

From the love that Nkundó children feel for their parents naturally springs their affection for their brothers and sisters, which is strong and sincere. Our remarks concerning the nature and qualities of the children's feeling toward their parents are applicable here. Such quarrels as occur seldom become bitter. On the one hand, the affection between brothers and sisters is deep and sincere, and on the other, their social and economic interdependence naturally reinforces the ties between them.

Mutual assistance is an outgrowth of their love; brothers and sisters often help each other.

After the death of his father and uncles, the eldest brother is the natural defender and protector of his younger brothers and his sisters, even though they may be married.

593x 595 152 A definite difference can be observed between the intensity of affection present among uterine brothers and sisters and the sentiments shared with others. The bonds between children of the same mother are much more intimate and their affection much greater than it is toward brothers and sisters who have different mothers. This too is entirely [29] in accordance with the universal qualities of human nature and shows that monogamy is superior to polygamy in bringing about the unity, harmony, and happiness of families.

593x 152 With reference to signs of affection, grief at the time of death, etc., the observations made for parent-child relationships hold true here -- mutatis mutandis.

3. Various relatives

602 The Nkundo's affection extends toward all members of his family, that is, all those with whom he feels linked by blood and common origin. These relatives are much greater in number than in Europe, because Nkundó kinship includes many more generations. The intensity of affection decreases with the distance of the degree of kinship. But the Nkundó knows and feels that he belongs to a large family, and he remains attached to all its members. He can find a home with any of them. This accounts for the fact that in the centers, men from the same village will look for each other and consider [621] each other "brothers." Actually, that is what they are, since in general each village consists of only a single kin group.

Although here, as in the case of brothers and sisters, common interests play a part in maintaining bonds between family members, the feelings of affection are not based on selfish considerations. The latter only reinforce these feelings, which are truly innate among the Nkundó. Among the various relatives the strongest attachments are developed between grandparents and grandchildren, uncles and aunts and nephews and nieces, male cousins and female cousins, etc.

603 Among the Nkundó as among Europeans there is a very strong affection between grandparents and grandsons, even greater, one might say, than between parents and children (the expression is: bǒna [30] l'onkɛ́nɛ́, ndekɛ́ nd'ǒnkɛ́nɛ́). But the relationship degenerates into compliance and weakness on one side, and into disrespectful carelessness on the other.

604 A Nkundó loves his paternal uncles and aunts and treats them like "fathers," and his maternal uncles and aunts like "mothers." Naturally, his feelings toward them are not as affectionate as for his parents, but they are an extension of these in an attenuated form.

605 The same situation holds true for the bonds which link him to his cousins, whom he calls "brothers" and "sisters." The children of his paternal aunt are his "fathers," however.

593x against the presence of love are based chiefly on the instability of
581 unions, the high frequency of divorce, infidelity, and polygamy --
objections which we shall examine in somewhat greater detail.

To judge the situation properly, we must first distinguish
593x between the sexes, which are not at all alike in this respect. Fur-
562 thermore, among women [42] we must distinguish between those
who are wives of polygamous men and those who are not.

Let us speak first of all of the men. They seem superior to the opposite sex in the matter of conjugal love, at least if we base our conclusions on their greater fidelity. Divorce is almost always
[586] caused by the wife. As a matter of fact, this is quite natural. The man marries at a fairly mature age and therefore becomes involved when he is well aware of what he is doing, while the girl most often becomes engaged before the age of discretion and is thus unable to choose according to her own heart.

On the other hand, the polygamous man's heart must be divided.
595x As we will see suo loco, he has a special love for one of his wives. His love for the first one deepens, becomes more rational, more deliberate, whereas his love for his favorite would seem to be more a matter of emotion in the strict sense of the word. As to the others, he has usually chosen them of his own will and perhaps has even seduced them to the point of making them leave a previous husband. It would therefore seem unfair to deny the presence of some affection toward them.

But is the term "love" still applicable? According to the
562
593x European point of view, conjugal love is exclusive. Among the
152 Nkundó this does not seem to be the case. It has often been said
595x that the polygamist considers his wives, with one or two exceptions, as human capital, so many production machines. I would not deny that the harem constitutes human capital and a source of wealth, but in my opinion such a statement is much too extreme and absolute. In most cases a real affection for his wives must be attributed to the polygamist. I understand this affection to be a kind of love in reduced proportions. And I compare this situation -- mutatis mutandis -- to that of someone who loves several friends at the same time. It is

593x possible to speak of love toward several individuals in spite of differ-
562 ences in its intensity, depending on the various persons who [43] are
595x its objects, although we may consider such a divided love as very
152 imperfect. But whatever name one calls it and however weak in intensity one finds it, it is impossible to deny its existence.

Among women, it is necessary to distinguish between wives
595x of monogamous men and those of polygamists, especially in the case
152 of "supplementary" wives. It is not hard to understand that among the latter, love is more likely to cool. Since the husband must divide his attentions and signs of affection, if only to preserve harmony, the situation could hardly be otherwise, even without the fact of very early marriages. In addition to the above-mentioned case of the cooling of affection among wives in polygamous marriages, there is no question that in these marriages, a community of souls, feelings, and interests is not established between wives and husbands to the same extent as in monogamous marriages. However, one could not state as a general rule that the wife of a polygamist does not love him, at least to some extent, depending on the individual. To maintain *a priori* that a man cannot be loved simultaneously by several women is logically inadmissible and contrary to the facts. Here it happens quite often that a wife leaves her polygamous husband for another because she has transferred her love to the latter. It is for the exceptions that proof should be required. Even if there are many of them, they do not invalidate the cases of real affection.

When a polygamist returns home after a long absence, he is often the object of affectionate demonstrations by his wives which are surprising to Europeans. The women fall at his feet, embrace his legs, roll on the ground, and perform contortions out of joy and emotion. It is true that the freedom resulting from colonization has done much to cool these fine sentiments.

Is it beside the point to quote the saying of [44] polygamists'
[539] wives: *bokungɔ́ ákafola bitáfɛ́, lolango ákafola botɛ́ma*, "the *bokungɔ́* tree divides its branches, love divides the heart"? And then there is the following fable which teaches true love: a polygamist who has three wives, is accidentally wounded and lies dying on the opposite side of the river. His wives run to the shore but find no canoe. The river is infested with crocodiles. The chief wives refuse to risk their

595^ 152 lives by swimming across; it is the least important one who throws herself in the midst of the dangers to go and help her husband.

In most cases a woman no longer feels affection for her husband when she has given her heart to a lover. She stays with him because it would be hard to do otherwise. Her husband continues to have the use of her body and her arms, but she no longer gives him a place in her heart. As this proverb so subtly expresses it:
[539] bɔ̌m'akwɛ̌ta, m̂bw'â nkánge; bonsámb'ákwɛ̌ta, omeka é ńtegume,
"the husband calls you, 'I am sick and may die'; the lover calls you, 'I will try to come.' "

595 X 586 X The objection concerning the frequency of divorce is difficult to handle because the question is very complicated. First of all, the fact that a couple remains together, that they remain faithful to one another, is no proof of love in a society where the idea of duty is very strong. A Christian woman may come to feel a real aversion for an unfaithful husband, yet she may remain with him out of a sense of duty, out of love for the children, etc. Conversely, in a society where the idea of duty is relaxed or does not exist spouses may readily be unfaithful to one another, although basically they love each other; if it is easy to divorce they will do so rashly, for trivial reasons, without realizing that there is still love between them. (1)

1. The Honorary Attorney General A. Sohier has informed me that the experiences of his long judiciary carreer entirely confirms my statements. Their truth is reflected in the fact that for some years now in European countries, it has been necessary to permit divorced couples to remarry each other. Thus we see that they find each other again after several years of separation.

The first of my two assertions is not to be found among the Nkundó, [45] since they have no moral concept of duty in our sense. But it sometimes happens that a couple who no longer love each other remain together because it is not possible for them to separate.

595x 837 548 Finally, let us not forget the spirit of gain and greed. Except in a few instances, a woman expects remuneration from a man to whom she has surrendered her body. Many infidelities may be explained by this practice, at least at the present time. But on the other hand, it should be noted that the woman's demand for a "wage" from her lover may be explained by an amorous concern; by giving the woman a gift or an amount of money the man shows [49] his regard for her; it is a demonstration of his affection for her, and the woman wants to be paid in order to be sure of her lover's love. That is not to say that such instances are common or frequent, but such a feeling is natural and actually exists in more than one case. (1)

1. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 2.

It is not surprising that the woman who lives in circumstances which are always unfavorable to chastity and marital fidelity is easily led to adultery and often falls. That is the basis of the proverb: [589] *bǒmoto ndé lofolókó, nkó ngonda ěfá'nd'ósengámé*, "the woman is a chrysalis; there is no forest where she does not hang" -- a clear condemnation of the frivolity of the daughters of Eve in the land of the Nkundó. Nevertheless, these moral criticisms in the form of proverbs can be accepted only in a general way and must be understood *cum grano salis*; they leave the door wide open for exceptions.

595x 152 In his *Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge* [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], (p. 38), Jadot has written: "The Bantu is capable of love . . . and that is all, and his wife -- no matter what has been said -- of a certain amount of marital fidelity. In general, neither the one nor the other go too far. Platonism, Petrarchism, and Romanticism are foreign to the love of the natives . . . I know . . . of cases of fierce jealousy and of beautiful faithfulness." (2)

2. See also *ibid.*, p. 208 ff.

152 We conclude that love exists among the Nkundó. This feeling is subjected to harsh attacks and is affected by many unfavorable circumstances, which may account for its imperfection and for certain

152 anomalies in its manifestations. The objections raised against the idea of its existence among the Nkundó do not prove its absence; rather they indicate the adverse conditions under which it is found, conditions which prevent its development and bring about its shortcomings or destruction. [50]

Part 2

000

The Sexual Life of the Nkundó

In this section we will examine successively:

I. The feeling of sexual modesty.
II. Preparation for sexual life.
III. Prostitution.
IV. Premarital sexuality.
V. Sexual practice.
VI. Unnatural vices.
VII. Incest
VIII. Love philtres.

Article I. Sexual Modesty

Sexual modesty is defined, at least by modern psychologists, more or less as a "a sensitive dynamism (or principle of action) of fear which is quasi-instinctive and directly related to sexual processes." (1)

(1) J. De La Vaissière, S.J., La Pudeur instinctive [Instinctive Modesty], p. 13.

It is a good instinct rather than a virtue, and facilitates the practice of chastity. Understood in this sense, modesty tends to hide the sex act and anything that is closely or remotely connected with it.

Sensual excesses do not exclude the existence of modesty and, conversely, a modest person may allow himself to be led into a violation of morals. Nevertheless, the greater the development and

515 834 are reassured by the fact that they are in a group, so that no one feels singled out by the gaze of the passer-by. Washing away from major streams is always surrounded by more propriety. For this purpose a [343] small enclosure (ikomba) is built behind the hut or among the banana trees, or a small thicket is allowed to grow there. By this means the native is sheltered from indiscreet glances if he wants to take a [757] bath or give himself an enema. As a matter of fact these things are done preferably after dark.

834 152 5) Violent anger or sorrow drown out modesty, just as they momentarily destroy the use of reason and suppress all feelings which are contradictory of simply different. In this situation, too, the man shows himself superior to the woman. He is less impulsive, calmer, less prone to lose control of his actions, to be carried away by his anger. Thus he almost never strips himself bare. The woman, on the other hand, readily strips off all her clothing. This behavior is extremely common; a woman undresses completely whenever she experiences great sorrow or intense anger. Luckily for propriety's sake some friend or relative always hastens to cover at least the essential parts. For a woman who throws off her clothing exposes herself to the mockery and jeers of spectators. (1)

[593]x [578]

1. An angry woman may also undress to shame her husband; it is a way of insulting and mocking him.

833 6) The Nkundó practice sexual intercourse only at night. I believe that this custom is due to their sense of propriety, [57] supplemented by a superstitious explanation which will be described in detail in Article V.

593x 834 7) The sense of modesty has its fullest expression in relation to parents, brothers, sisters, etc. Thus it is unheard of that a son should see his mother naked: bɔ̌na átɛ́náká ɛ̌sunví nvangɔ́. If an adult daughter is ill and requires personal care (such as an enema, for example), the father has to take care of her himself if no other female relative is near by. But their sense of modesty is such that they both shed tears over the event. As a matter of fact this situation

291
301
832 According to what I have been told, this type of ornament may also have a sexual significance. Normally -- and this statement is applicable only to the present time -- the beads are entirely covered by clothing and are visible only on a few occasions. If a large number of strings (as many as six, eight, or ten) or very many beads are worn, attention may be attracted to them because there will be a bulge in the clothing worn over them. Their sound will reveal their presence during a race or a dance. And according to my informants, that is enough to awaken passion. Making an allusion to the beads and especially touching them deliberately is considered as an invitation. For her part, a woman sometimes rubs them together in her fingers so that they will make their characteristic noise and thus attract a man's attention and arouse his interest.

The preceding does not mean that simply the wearing of the beads is necessarily intended for a bad purpose. Not only must such an intention be excluded in the case of serious persons, especially if they are elderly and content themselves with wearing a single string, seldom a second one to support the first. But there is also the possibility that a young Black beauty may adorn herself with ten or more ● [152] strands out of sheer vanity, so that the whole world may see that she has so many. [70]

Furthermore, it has been shown that attention to appearance is not necessarily directed to another person. Though that may be generally true, many people like to dress for the pleasure of being well dressed, and girls who never dream of an adventure may still enjoy wearing pretty undergarments. This desire for adornment for its own sake can, no doubt, explain the belts, as well as other embellishments on more than one Nkundó woman.

We should add that those who adhere to the theory that the tattoos have an immediate sexual influence could apply such a theory here as well.

302
831

5. Depilation

All Nkundó of both sexes practice depilation of the genital organs and even the armpits. The natives believe that the hair growing

583x 184 a new element from the legal standpoint. This is clearly apparent in the repugnance with which these same Bombwanja who practice the form of exchange just described regard an exchange pure and simple, which will be described below.

The exchange of widows is also practiced by the Elíngɔ. Like the Bombwanja, they also have the two forms of quasi-exchange described at the beginning of this article.

4) On the other hand, a true exchange of wives exists among the riverain peoples known as the Boɔyɔ and the Longa (1); in their dialect it is called *iengyɔ*. Two men exchange wives. If the bride price of one is greater than that of the other, the difference is refunded. Such an exchange is carried out with the consent of the women involved.

583x 184 ● 152 [837] Let us see how such an exchange usually comes about. Imagine two men, Bokulɔ and Mpolɛ, with their respective wives, Mbindo and Baɔnɔ. Suppose that Bokulɔ falls in love with Baɔnɔ, the wife of Mpolɛ, and the pair become involved in an adulterous relationship. There is a cooling of Baɔnɔ's love for her husband Mpolɛ; she performs fewer and fewer services for him, etc. The same thing happens to Bokulɔ's relationship with his wife Mbindo. The latter is jealous; her patience is soon at an end. She discusses the matter with Mpolɛ, her rival's husband. "See how your wife deceives you; she no longer loves you. My husband is forsaking me [217] for her; he no longer loves me. This is a challenge to you as well as to me. If you are a man (1), pick up the challenge."

---

1. They live near the mouth of the Salonga (in the villages of Bonsela, Pomputɔ, Nkɔse, Bombomba, Isakɔ, etc.)

1. "Man" in the sense of *vir* (*jwende*); the meaning is: "If you have any courage, show that you are not a coward."

583x According to the native view, a man must take this woman
184 home for the sake of his honor. If he did not do so, he would be-
152 come the butt of malicious comments and scorn on the part of all,
● both men and women. He would be considered a coward, just as in European "cultured" society a man is considered a coward if he does not pick up the glove thrown down by his adversary.

The rejected woman's hatred for her husband is transformed into a love for the man who has been similarly hurt by her rival. The joint misfortune of the pair creates a mutual feeling of affection. The woman is accepted as wife and is thus saved from dishonor. The man, on his part, feels affection for the woman who offers him her heart and preserves his good name. Harmony is at last established among all four of them, the two men arrange the matter of bride price in the way we have described, and then they live in peace without any enmity toward one another.

589x This way of handling the situation is very strange to us, be-
581 cause it is indefensible from the point of view of a sound philosophy
184 and of Catholic morality. But it seems normal to the natives. The pagan conscience has no trouble coming to terms with it, since no pagan law explicitly prohibits such behavior. Everyone comes to an agreement in the end, and that is all their conscience requires. Everything considered, there is no infraction of the rights of any individual, and since the native mentality is not concerned with morality as we conceive of it, this solution seems altogether natural to them.

Nevertheless, the ethnic groups who do not practice this true exchange in no way approve of it. Not that they fail to understand the psychology underlying this practice; on the contrary, if the situation arises they accept it. But they condemn [218] the legal procedure. They require that the two marriages be broken in the regular fashion and that two new marriages be contracted. That is, they demand the restitution and payment of the bride prices through the ndonga and through the respective parents of the women. For them therefore an exchange is not a true marriage, but a sort of sale and purchase. Also, from their point of view, the women who have been exchanged are slaves and not wives, because they live with their

Pygmies FO4
Batswa

M
593x
578 Since the impetuous youth did not want to observe the ancestral custom and considered his strength superior to the law, his action is not justifiable. We must admire among many of the old natives the innate feeling of justice and impartiality that makes them disapprove of and condemn their own children. Furthermore, if the passionate avenger of his honor does not change his ways and endeavor to combat the thoughtless violence of his temperament by replacing it with a sense of measure, his marriage will not last. And he will be the one [276] accused of having caused the break. The matter is clear; it is quite true that the woman started it. The husband therefore had all the trumps in his hand. Why, then, did he not use them? If he had followed the procedure required by law he would have gained his case all the way down the line.

The fact that a husband must first inform the ndonga and the family authorities does not mean that he has not the right to punish his wife in a violent fashion. This practice is observed to avoid excesses and abuses. The husband is not given the freedom to do as he pleases. Recourse to the representatives of family authority may be considered as a kind of delegation of their power.

These legal provisions of the Nkundó are truly wise. While they give an outraged husband the right to punish his wife and, therefore, to hold her in check, the law imposes a rein on the impetuousness of unthinking anger. Furthermore, by requiring that these matters be made public, they avoid interminable discussions and palavers on the subjects of fines to be paid, etc.

M
● [152] In the past certain men were capable of becoming exasperated by the disgrace to the point where they were no longer able to master their rage. Women were killed for this reason. The Nkundó say that a man would not let himself be carried to this extreme unless driven to it by the great love he bore his wife. This comment has a psychological validity. Nevertheless, such an action was not praised and could even produce a war.

M
593x
578
P
674 It sometimes happened that an enraged man who wanted to kill his wife under such circumstances was prevented from doing so because he had to abstain from assassination to maintain the efficacy (nsimbo) of a practice (bote) in his possession. He therefore had

C. *Against a husband and his accomplice*. There is no 684 specific sanction in Nkundɔ́ law against a husband's adultery, [323] but an outraged wife may take revenge on him, as on her rival. Her weapons against her husband include invective, the refusal of food, drink, baths, and finally of *debitum conjugale*. These are appreciable punishments about which the husband can in no way complain, for he would be found entirely in the wrong. The woman's actions stem from a legitimate jealousy. Sometimes her feeling [834] becomes so intense that she tears off her clothing and stands before her husband completely naked; this shames him greatly and constitutes a stinging reproach. Invectives flow out of the wife's mouth in torrents: *ilolɛ́ ingɛ, itutula ingɛ, inyanyama inɛ́, owá lɔ́í ɔ̂ ndá* [578] *nyongo, ndá ntɛ́mbɔ́*, "that imbecile, that good for nothing, that beast, one day you'll die of penalties, of being caught *in flagrante delicto* . . . ." Then there is a whole string of the usual in- [152] sults. Our Nkundɔ́ say that the more abundant the insults, the greater is the woman's love. She may carry on like this for days, even for weeks. Her responses to her husband's adultery are thus of the same sort as those she makes use of under other circumstances.

If a jealous wife sets fire to the hut in which her husband yielded to his passion, no one can reproach her. The damage was caused on her husband's account.

Against the woman accomplice, the wife may use more violent means. She may fight her, strike her, even injure her. The rival's husband will demand a *liombo*, or payment "for blows and wounds," which has to be paid not by the wife's family, but by the guilty husband. Thus in the final analysis it is again he who is punished. If the offending woman is killed, it is again the unfaithful husband who is obliged to pay an indemnity to the widower. (See Article II.)

One form of punishment to which a wife likes to have recourse to take revenge on her adulterous husband and his accomplice if she catches them in the act is to pour a pot of hot or boiling water on their bodies. [324]

626 The shame attached to the discovery of this sort of miscon-
837 duct in the better circles in Europe is unknown among the Nkundó.
This is natural since isolated instances are readily excused. As to
● [152] the habitual offenders, they are sensitive [326] to the above-men-
tioned epithets but will not correct their ways on this account any
more than people in other parts of the world.

837 An adulterous husband is criticized as much as an adulterous
626 wife in spite of the difference in the means of repression which
684 Nkundó law provides for their respective misconduct.

Public opinion therefore corroborates the conclusion toward which our examination of sanctions has pointed, namely that adultery is condemned by the Nkundó. Opinion is not based on the existence of the sanction but seems to spring from their innate mentality, which makes them perceive adultery as a disorder.

6. Aggravating circumstances

837 If a case of adultery is followed by conception, it becomes
842 especially serious, and for the husband as much as for the natural
672 father. Indeed the latter must assume all the consequences. When
circumstances permit the husband makes his wife denounce her accomplice, and she does not refuse to do so. The husband then calls a meeting and demands a pledge (ndanga) from the culprit, who in that way acknowledges that he is at fault and shows his willingness to assume all responsibility. If there is a miscarriage or the child dies during delivery, the natural father must pay the legal father an indemnity of "a slave" or more (sometimes 50 rings); a smaller indemnity is required for a child who is only deformed or sickly. If the mother dies the indemnity consists of a slave and 50 rings, and it may go as high as 100 rings.

In the interim the husband no longer goes near his wife. He leaves her to her lover, who must "preserve the foetus" and observe all the rites and practices associated with pregnancy and childbirth, since, physically, he is the father. (1) [327]

1. For fuller details see Chapter X, Article II, 3. For analogous practices

595ˣ She does no work in the farm or kitchen. She always has an
ebísa to wait on her. If her family has no member they can let her
have, she will borrow an ebísa from a distant relative or a friend.

A nkóndé does not travel on foot; she is carried in a hammock
[482] (hunting net). Her husband accompanies her on foot, however. But
[556] this was done only for a true nkóndé of a rich man, and the custom
is disappearing today.

A favorite may not leave her husband, even to go and see
her parents. In the past some men were so jealous of their favorites
[514] that they would not allow them to satisfy even their most private
needs unless they themselves or some sentinel (usually a Botswá) stood
watch. A man could not even go into the vicinity of her hut, which
is built just behind the husband's shed. For although the husband is
sometimes tolerant of the passions of his other wives, he always shows
[152] an intransigeant jealousy [346] in relation to his favorite. He never
travels without having her accompany him.

The favorite has the honor of performing small personal serv-
[515] ices for her husband; she cuts his hair, helps him in the removal of
body hair, scratches his pustules from ringworm or prickly heat, anoints
him with oil, paints him with ngóla, and, in a word, performs all
the tasks connected with his appearance and hygiene.

595ˣ Out of love for his favorite, her husband can buy her corpse
766 for the price of a slave (in kind or in money). By doing so he obtains
the right to have it buried beside his own while those of the other
wives must be buried with their native clans. That is why in some
regions a husband calls his favorite his ikundaka (from kunda "to bury").
Nevertheless, if her husband dies before she does, his heirs may not
trouble themselves about his wishes and no longer require that the
favorite be buried in their cemetery. That is what happened to
Bongóla of Bongíli, whose husband Ikilinganya of Bongangá (Boéndé)
had paid the price of two slaves for this right. When the husband has
[224] killed large game, the favorite, like the bomátsa, has the right to
receive her personal predetermined portion (boando). Her part is the
neck or a chop, which in her absence, goes to the sons or their wives.
The other wives do not have the same right; each one obtains only
an ordinary piece (liondo).

Article VII. Monogamy

595x 522 The Nkundó do not esteem monogamy. It is polygamy that they desire. If a man has only one wife, that is because he is poor. Thus he is made fun of and called etula or bololé, "a nobody," or bosú, "a weak man." Songs dealing with this theme [533] can often be heard during drinking parties, especially among the Elinga. All this is a great obstacle in the struggle against polygamy. Not only is the Nkundó tempted by the material advantages of polygamy, but he is unable to bear teasing. He is ● [152] extremely sensitive to humiliation and is the slave to other men's respect.

595x In spite of all this, and apart from the influence of the Christian religion, monogamous marriages that were not simply imposed by necessity but were spontaneously desired, have existed in the past and still exist, although they are extremely rare. Here are the names of a few men who wished to remain united to one woman, although they had the means to establish a harem for themselves. I have chosen them at random from two villages: Bonjoku-Bonkoso (27 taxpayers in 1931) and Bongíli wǎ Ndongó together with the affinally related clan Ilekó (47 taxpayers in 1931).

Bonjoku-Bonkoso:

Esalé éâ Ekutu of Bokenyola married to Iombe of Nkélengo;
Bokató of Bokenyola married to Wanga of Likolí;
Bofanga w'ôfónge of Bokenyola married to Baléngola;
Itéú yǎ Lokékola of Bofétola married to Nkúmí of Bongale.

All died before 1895.

Bongílí:

Nsenge (still alive) married to Toyôngwa of Elángá. Even when he was widowed, he did not want to remarry, because of his attachment to his deceased wife.
Efoloko éâ Bonkóngyá married to Bambúla of Boálá;
Bongelé married to Bakúkú of Bompángá;
Bolúmbe w'embengá married to Bokelé of Ekúla;
Lofalanga of Ilekó married to Imote of Besombó. After his wife's death, he remained a widower until he himself died.

Chapter IX

Death

Since the subject of our study is only Nkundő marriage, we
152 will examine matters relating to death only from this limited stand-
593 point. As to the general aspects of the question, the reader will
761 find them in our article on the funeral customs of the Nkundő,
about to be published in Anthropos.

Article I. Sorrow and Mourning

In the study cited above, a word was said concerning the varying degrees of intensity that may be reached in the sorrow caused by the death of a cherished being.

Of course the suffering does not always exclude a mixture of egoistic elements, such as regret of the financial loss involved in the death of a wife and the obligation of continence and various other prohibitions of widowhood. This is rather natural and does not merit discussion. On the other hand, it would be unjust and contrary to the truth to attribute all the sadness to those base feelings. In general, this sorrow must also be taken as evidence of a true love which is often its primary cause. Exceptions do occur, however, for instance in the case of an old woman who has been inherited by a polygamist.

When we compare the various manifestations of sorrow at the death of a spouse with those observed at the death of a relative, we note certain practices specific to the former case. One might say that at the death of a spouse, the signs of sorrow reach a culminating point [418], as if native law wished to underline the predominance of the relationship created by marriage over the bonds of kinship and thus manifest its agreement with divine law.

Nevertheless it is clear that practice does not always correspond to theory, here any more than elsewhere. We should not be astonished in not finding among the natives a perfect and ideal love

152
761
593x someone

free of all egoism. When even among peoples universally recognized as superior, self-pity during the pain felt on the death of someone beloved is neither rare nor reprehensible, can we be shocked that our natives experience similar regrets? Do we condemn a young widow who, although sincerely and intensely regretting the husband she loved tenderly and whom death has just removed from her affection, thinks at the same time of the unhappy situation in which she and her small children find themselves as a result? And is not the reasonable hope of finding someone who will take care of her and the orphans an effective and legitimate consolation that will help her to endure the trial?

All things considered, it is therefore not at all surprising that our Blacks react that way. And it is quite natural that, in practice, they should suffer more from the death of a father and especially a mother or a child than from the loss of a husband or wife. The situation here is entirely different from that in Europe. And the system of polygamy, with all its consequences, is not exactly discouraging to egoism and favorable to an ascension toward the ideal of a more sublime love.

Therefore we should not be surprised that a wife at the death of her husband laments: ngóy 'ɔ́m 'ɔ́kám óye! ("Mother, my husband, ah!"); but at the death of a child or a mother or father she wails: ngóya njɔ̂lélengana óye! ("Mother, I am bereft, ah!"), thus expressing a more intense sorrow. For a father or a mother cannot be replaced, but she will always find someone who will want to marry her. As to a child, between it and its parents there is more of a life in common [419] than between spouses under the system of polygamy. More marks of tenderness are also exchanged between mother and child than between native couples.

764
152
593x

Immediately after his wife's death, a husband is surrounded by all the women of the village who come and mistreat him. They vie with each other in smearing him with charcoal smut, soil, and mud, and in rubbing him with the plant called linsánsǎ, which causes a stinging rash comparable to that caused by nettles in Europe. There are no relatives among the women who engage in this

152 rough behavior, only strangers married to village men (those known
593x as báajâála). This ill treatment is often extended to close rela-
764 tives of the widower, that is, to those whom the women in question call bóome, "potential husbands," never to fathers and higher relatives. (1) The purpose of this practice seems to be to intensify, by physical pain, the sorrow caused by death. In addition, provocatively obscene words, gestures, and movements remind the widower that from then on he must be continent, as described in extenso in the study cited above.

765 Afterwards, relatives dress the widower in a lisáki, a banana leaf which is torn all over horizontally. For all other mourning garments, as well as for all regulations and prohibitions that apply to all cases, see the detailed study.

The ill treatment described is not inflicted on the widow. It is meted out exclusively to men.

The general rules pertaining to seclusion apply to a widower; in fact they are especially severe for a man. His kinswomen prepare his simple meals. However, if his relations with his father-
[587] in-law were excellent, the latter sends a woman [420] to him who will attend to his needs. She often becomes his wife when, after the lifting of mourning, he brings the ibóleóko (Chapter III, Article IV).

During the entire first period of seclusion, he cannot go anywhere, at least ostensibly. If he needs to go out, he must go through the back. If he wants to visit a relative or friend, he must go behind the huts, in the banana grove, even if it is evening. In any case, he may not leave the village. Such was the ancient law, though nowadays it is observed less and less.

Furthermore, he cannot have the slightest contact with any woman who is not a relative. He cannot even shake her hand, greet her out loud, or look at her even in passing.

---

1. See Chapter V, Article IV, 1, no. 3, and Chapter VI, Article VI.

764 When the family of the deceased bars the route to the
578 funeral procession, they are manifesting the anger provoked by the
● 152 death of one of their members. [428] For they feel anger and
[584] resentment, in spite of the fact that the ndonga carries a spear at
the head of the procession as a sign that they come as friends, without evil intentions.

This does not mean that the natives attribute the cause of death to the husband and his family. In most cases they are convinced that the latter could not prevent it. Although they express themselves in those terms: lóótoomela bǒna (nkâna, eóto), "you have killed our child (sister, relative)," they do not maintain that the husband's clan has really killed her, but only that she died among them. Under the circumstances do they feign anger to obtain valuables, for example? I do not think so. The Nkundó do not say that they simulate anger; they categorically state that they feel it and that they want to show it in the manner described. We should not be astonished at this since -- as we have noted in the study on the funeral customs of the Nkundó (Les Coutumes funéraires des Nkundó), the emotions of anger and sorrow seem to be intimately related among these peoples.

When the funeral procession passes through the last barrier,
764 that which bars the entrance to the village, the husband's clan puts down the body, and it is subsequently lifted up by the family of the deceased, who carry it into the house of the head of the family. They are followed by the ndonga, the bǎnambóuswâ, the husband, and his relatives. The family of the deceased wail over her. Her kinswomen (biúnanyi) show their sorrow-anger by mistreating the clan wives (baájâála), by smearing their bodies with mud, dressing them in basáki, and hitting them with stinging plants (bansǎnsǎ). For the deceased is the baájâála's "husband," that is, a kinswoman of their husbands. The baájâála treat the widower and his relatives in the same way, because "their husband" has died among them.

The corpse is thus deposited in the hut of the head of the family. Each time that kinswomen who are married elsewhere arrive [429] to mourn over the deceased, the baájâála forbid them

892 upon them; their upbringing costs them nothing, whereas among
855 Whites the maintenance, dress, food, instruction, and occupational placement involve considerable expenses. It cannot be [465] denied that while the modern European is exacting from all these viewpoints, enchained and blocked by an ever growing multitude of needs, the material life of the native is simple and his necessities are reduced to an indispensable minimum. Nevertheless, it can hardly be said that it is as easy for him to raise a large family with many children as it is to have the responsibility of a smaller number. Without speaking of clothing -- especially at the present time -- there is the food for growing children, which forces him to clear a greater expanse of forest and to work harder at the various ways of fishing and hunting; and when the time comes for the sons to find wives, he is the one who must arrange to procure the valuables needed for a bride price.

For their part, Nkundó women like to transmit life as much as the men, if not more so. Pregnancy may make them disagreeable and grumpy and sometimes cause them pain, but they put up with it and, as a very general rule, do not think of depriving themselves on that account of the happiness of giving birth to a cute little creature, of nursing it, of carrying it in their arms or on their shoulders. The difficulties and pains of maternity do not repel them. Although later, during the payment of her daughter's bride price, a Nkundó woman's greed will lead her to loudly claim the payment due her and even sometimes destroy her child's love because of delaying this financial operation, the delay does not come to their minds until the time comes.

In short, the Nkundó woman feels a perfectly natural, maternal love for her child.

There are of course exceptions to this general rule. And
842 the contrary would be astonishing for a pagan population who give
855 free rein to all their passions or, at least, restrain them only very
● 152 [466] slightly, and whose love is far from the perfection one may find among a people ennobled by fifteen centuries of Christianity. Moreover -- as all the preceding pages testify -- our Nkundó are not fashioned from a uniform mold notwithstanding the impression given by certain colonial and ethnological works. All the individual

842 differences can be found here, although they are less apparent to
855 a European observer since we usually approach the natives as a
/152 group and our contact with them is often too impersonal.

2. Abortion

847 A great enemy of maternal love is the practice of abortion, which has always been known to the Nkundó. Here we cannot describe all the prescriptions used for that purpose. It will be sufficient to enumerate the reasons for which they have recourse to this practice. They are as follows:

1) A woman's lasciviousness: the procreation and subsequent care of a child to some extent prevent the indulging in carnal pleasures. Formerly this cause of abortion was nonexistent or very [178] rare. Needless to say, it has become more common, especially in the centers where it is constantly on the increase and where, in addition, occasional or regular "housekeepers" learn new means of sterilization and abortion.

2) A woman's antipathy or persistent anger toward her husband may encourage her to prevent conception or destroy its effect.

3) An excessive weakening of the mother's organism caused by a large number of conceptions and childbirths at too short intervals.

4) The encumberance and the difficulty of watching, carrying, and taking care of many small children -- bɔ́lota bɔkɔkɔsano [467] [535] wǎ bána nsɔ́tɛ́lá nsɔ́tɛ́lá. This reason is especially important for well-known dancers.

It goes without saying that several of these motives may be combined in the same person. For instance, I knew of a woman who aborted at the time of her eighth child. Her recurrent pregnancies, together with continuous work, had greatly reduced her strength. A palaver with her husband was the last straw; she decided to get rid of the fruit she carried in her body.

Outside of these exceptions the natives of this country ardently desire their own continuation through a large number of progeny. (1)

[184]

1. The same is not true elsewhere. Examples to that effect are cited from regions that are

764 crypt would then be barred by mats in order to leave it as a hollow chamber, and
762 the hole leading down to it filled in with earth.

For a month or two after the burial the festivities and orgies continued. Women
764 would be hanged to create some diversion, but those hanged were not eaten. Decapi-
762 tations would continue. According to the informants only slaves brought in from
a distance would have to be tied to prevent their escape. The slave members of the
567 household of the dead *nkumu* would await their turn stoically, content to die that
[152] they might accompany their master in his journey to the land of spirits. This may
be true but scarcely seems possible. Still another diversion in the funeral orgies was killing in the manner known as *esombo*. If some man who had a slave did not wish him to be hanged or beheaded, he might give him for this other method. As the weeks slipped by, such a one, his life having apparently been spared, would suppose that all was safe and that there was little chance of his being taken, and, thus emboldened, would, instead of keeping at a safe distance, join the crowd to watch a beheading. His death would be prearranged. At the moment of beheading a victim, someone would drive a spear into the unsuspecting man, the whole crowd then using spears and knives to stab and slash until he fell. Some might be tortured to death by being buried up to the neck and left thus exposed to the hot sun without food or water until death intervened, but this was not a common practice at such funerals.

768 The termination of the dead *nkumu*'s affairs took place when the division of the inheritance was made, a long and complicated process.

178 Such were the old days before European penetration. The advent of the white
624 man half a century ago was the beginning of the end. The ceremonies had to be
given up, though reluctantly. Occasionally now goats are beheaded in place of human victims, and many of the younger generation find that, even so, the sight is more than they can endure, and they seek refuge elsewhere. *Nkumu* are not anxious for the honours. They find little or no respect paid to them by the government officials and this is a distinct obstacle to their obtaining honour from their own people. When the *nkumu* resident in the village adjacent to the mission station died, one of the Natives was asked who would be next. The reply was that probably no one would appear as a successor. Asked why, he answered, 'There are too many trousers.' He meant that too many were adopting the ways of the white man to
[613] make the inauguration of another *nkumu* a success. In his one useful function, that
of judge, the paramount chief now takes his place, cases tried must be recorded by a clerk of the court, and fines paid into the treasury of the chieftaincy. With such a state of affairs the old ways drop into desuetude, and the younger generation grow up knowing less of the ways of their fathers as the years pass.

595 receive more attention, will get his way more readily -- as among ourselves. These preferences do not give rise to jealousy among brothers as long as they remain within the limits of fairness, which they almost always do.

[556] Some rich men who have a dominant social rank have a means of expressing their preference for one of their daughters, a means which is a demonstration of their wealth and at the same time an assertion of their position. This practice will be described in the article that follows.

The children for their part sincerely love their parents. This love is composed more of respect for the father and of more tenderness for the mother, as is the case among Europeans. The same variants of sentiment, depending on whether the child is a boy or girl, are to be found among the Nkundó. The children may be remiss in their dutiful affection and respect, but these are exceptions due to thoughtlessness, stubbornness, or sudden anger. (1) Here one does [152] not encounter the deep discord that among Europeans divides parents and children, nor the coarseness and brutality of which one reads quite often in our newspapers. Among the Nkundó these family dramas are unknown.

[155] Nevertheless, what we have said above does not exclude disobedience. The Nkundó child, too, prefers play to work and freedom to discipline. He tries to shun the commands of his parents which tie him down and keep him from frolicking with his companions. (2)

Love for the mother is especially deep. No matter how old a Nkundó may be, his feelings of tenderness for her do not decrease; he always remains her child. Whenever he feels pain, disappointment, or sorrow, one word is on his lips: ngóya, "mother." Among these

1. For an example see Chapter X, Article VIII.

2. One of the first words learned by a Nkundó child is mbói, "I don't want to."

584 When the presents have been accepted, the *ndonga* plants the
585 arrow in the ground in front of the wife's parents. Hence the expression *-sumya ikulɛ́* or *-lubya likulɛ́*, "to plant the arrow," which remains very much the fashion even though nowadays the *ndonga* deposits rings in its place.

2. Consent

584 Asked by her parents or the *ndonga*, or on her own initiative, --
depending on her own inclinations, -- the girl pulls up the arrow or picks up the rings and gives them to her father. That is how she expresses her consent to the proposed engagement.

Her promptness, her nonchalance, or even the recalcitrant manner in which she performs this gesture show her [113] feelings. Usually her movements are lively. As we have explained, the union will have been anticipated for some time, and a Nkundó girl glories
584 in being the object of a man's love and in having a husband. Never-
156 theless there are cases where the girl has to be persuaded to make the decision, especially if she is still young. Within herself she is not enthusiastic about the marriage. But in the end she bows to her father's wish, preferring a union which is contrary to her desires to fairly serious trouble with her family.

Naturally we find the whole range of variations which depend on individual temperament and on circumstances. A categorical refusal must certainly be very rare. It would be the act of a very strong-willed woman. But the union would have been called off much earlier, so that such an extreme situation would not be allowed to occur.

The case of a woman who submits to the ceremonies with resistance and against her wishes is more frequent. Not only does she have to be urged and persuaded, but her frowning face expresses her discontent. She picks up the objects with an apathetic gesture, turns her back to her father, and drops the valuables behind her without even
584 looking at him. None of the people present misunderstand the meaning of such gestures. Consequently members of the family and the notables who are present never fail to attract the father's attention to

584 the gravity of this situation. They try to make him change his mind and to dissuade him from accepting the bride price. To that end they try to make him see the consequences of his obstinacy: at the first favorable opportunity the woman will take flight, leading to palavers (and in the past often war), imprisonment, all sorts of [578] troubles, and finally the bride price will have to be returned for the divorce. Sometimes they succeed; other times all their wisdom and eloquence are in vain. Cupidity, the need to obtain the means of a ●[156] [114] bride price for a wife (for oneself, a son, a brother, etc.) and the profit he reaps from the union silence all other feelings. Here again, everything depends on the character of the individual. Nowadays the greater freedom resulting from colonization has reduced the frequency of such cases. Nevertheless, because of the reasons given, they still occur. But more frequently the ceremony takes place in a normal fashion. As long as it has not taken place, no further bride-price payments are made. This fact is sufficient to show the importance of the ceremony in Nkundô law, and thus the importance of the woman's public and official consent to the marriage proposed, though this consent is not expressed in words but only implied in a special, meaningful act. Cases which seem in contradiction to this statement are clearly breaches of that law.

In normal cases the father accepts the arrow or the rings from his daughter's hands and thus establishes his consent to the engagement and consequently to the marriage.

In other forms of marriage, which we will discuss later on (Chapters III and IV), consent is expressed in an entirely different fashion.

3. Abduction

583[x] Even before the coming of the Europeans there were instances where lovers persisted in their desire to marry in spite of the opposition of the woman's parents. When the parents refused to accept the *ijulɛ*, the engaged pair arranged an opportunity to flee. The woman tried to win her brother over to her cause, and out of brotherly love he usually

595x 556 less influence than a monogamist or bigamist who is intelligent and fearless. And in the present circumstances one meets monogamists who, because of either their economic situation or their social or political position, enjoy a much greater authority [371] than many polygamists. Intellectual and moral superiority on their part is beginning to make its value felt.

2) Fame and vanity. Because of the very nature of the marriage system, which is intimately bound to -- not to say based on -- financial transactions, the number of wives determines the extent of a man's wealth. And here as everywhere wealth has a fascination; it is considered a mark of superiority. Vanity seizes upon it. And since the possession of wives is the most obvious expression of wealth, the Nkundó see it as a superior means by which to acquire great renown and an illustrious name.

3) A concern over keeping the capital in the family. Personal wealth consists almost entirely of metals (especially copper) and domestic animals. Thus this is the capital involved in the financial transactions accompanying marriage, and in that way it is invested with interest (children, work, influence).

595x 556 ●157 Like all pagan people the Nkundó are essentially covetous and egoistic. They do not like to give but want everything for themselves. Except for persons to whom he is bound by natural ties or sincere affection, a Nkundó does not help others except through interdependence or in the hope of reciprocity in some form or other. Thus when he possesses an excess of wealth, even [431] if it is considerable and entirely superfluous, he does not yield it. The idea would never occur to him to give a few copper rings to an indigent bachelor, for example, if he is not forced to do so because of interdependence in the family. Thus, if there are more girls than boys, the excess bride price will be used by him to augment the number of his own wives. For in order that his daughter not be deprived of her nkita, the bride price received must be used again as a bride price. Note that this reasoning has but a limited validity. It is a fact that the ancient custom [372] was for the father to take all his daughters' bride prices for himself, as we have seen in Chapter IV. He did not become polygamous because of excess [bride price]; he was polygamous before his sons married.

595* 842 5) The desire to increase the number of children is one of the reasons most frequently given; it is the chief, and sometimes the only, one cited by ethnographers. There is no question that it has a great deal of validity, for the Nkundó like to have many children. It is one of the things on which they pride themselves as well as a powerful means for reinforcing a social position (and we are thus led back to the first reason cited).

The question of knowing whether polygamy actually does favor the birth rate is irrelevant here, even if the results of a comparison were clearly against this system and were it proved that "the more wives a polygamist has, the fewer children he has." For the Nkundó never make this statistical computation. He sees only the principle: several women give more children than one. And for them, that is the gist of the matter. Furthermore, the interest of the people as a whole does not appear on the
● [157] horizon of the Nkundó's thoughts and feelings: they think only of themselves, and in their egoism, they consider only their own interests.

595* 831 6) To all these reasons given by the Nkundó to justify the practice of polygamy, we must add a sixth, which they never mention, sensuality. Without colonization it would have been difficult for us to make this statement. [374] But the new state of affairs shows several flaws in our people's arguments. We have already pointed out some of them. Furthermore, all the reasons mentioned up to now do not suffice to account for the existence of polygamy. They do not explain why in the past the old men wanted to keep all the women to themselves, or why a given individual becomes a polygamist. It is a fact that for more than one man none of these alleged reasons have been involved. It is also known that several natives have acquired fortunes by European work (as clerks, salesmen, traders, etc.) in order to be able to establish a harem, though there could have been no motive of vanity or gain in social influence. On the basis of my knowledge of circumstances, persons, and places, I am convinced that even for some natives living in their villages, the primary purpose was clearly sexual. I am acquainted with more than one such case.

768
584 In the past the widower and his family sometimes refused to pay, with the result that the parties took up arms. The right of war was involved. For when the hostilities ended, the culprit was required to indemnify all the families on his side for any member who was killed or wounded. Therefore he ran the risk of seeing all his property confiscated and being sold as a slave if they did not suffice. He found it was wiser simply to submit to normal sanctions rather than run such serious risks.

The situation with which we are dealing in this article may involve further complications if the woman has been living with her own family, or if she belongs to another man whose bride price has not yet been refunded. But it is preferable to deal with these complications in separate articles.

768 2. Before the bosóngo

If the woman dies before the bosóngo is paid, the widower is not required to pay an indemnity. However, he must complete the bride price by handing over "the slave." [450]

If he does not do so: (1) the alliance is broken ipso facto, and therefore he cannot bring the ibóleóko and does not receive a substitute; 2) the family of the deceased is entitled to one of the daughters if there are any, or to one of the boys if there are none. This is a compensation for the loss of the bosóngo.

Naturally, the woman's family can in practice refrain from claiming their rights. Thus, they may do so out of regard for their son-in-law who is influential, generous, and well disposed toward them, in anticipation of greater financial and social benefits. The similar remarks made throughout this study have already ● [157] familiarized us with the "broad-mindedness" of these peoples.

It might be observed that this situation is in no way different from the preceding one, since the woman's family is indemnified in either case. But, first of all, if the woman has left no children, the situation is not at all identical. Secondly, even if the financial aspect of the two situations is the same, the legal aspect is entirely different. The taking of a child and the refusal to accept the ibóleóko are not considered as compensation. The

593x everything. But they only succeed if they have no sons old enough
586x to defend their mother. Differences in behavior are due to the character of the persons involved. (1)

1. See Chapter VIII, Article I.

797
593x
159 Only religion can bring about a radical change in this domain. We are still far from our goal, but a few serious Christians have already begun to adapt to the requirements of a higher morality and to deal with their wives in conformity with the sanctity of marriage though he or she may be ill. Yet it is more difficult for them to do this than for the others, since this same morality forbids [39] polygamy and all other means of satisfying passion.

An admirable case is that of Bekau Marie, daughter of Esalé D'Iámbo (Bonkoso). Her husband, Bo̲ko̲mbeembe Pierre of Mbalá, suffered from leprosy for many years. He could no more perform the sexual act than do any real work. His wife therefore had to support herself with the help of her son. In spite of her freedom, her separation from her native village, and the ill feelings borne her by her husband's family, she did not want to leave him but decided that she would continue to devote herself to him. (1)

1. Her action is due only in part to Christian influence. That is why this case belongs here to the exclusion of some others I could describe, which are due solely to the influence of Christian morality upon the souls of the individuals.

593x
578 If there is a dispute between her family and her husband, it is hard to know in advance which side the wife will take. Similarly, if difficulties arise between the husband's family and his wife, he can take either his wife's side or that of his relatives. It is all a matter of individual temperament. Some people spontaneously lend support to their families; others on the contrary take sides with their wives. A woman or a man who without good reason habitually takes

593x sides with his family against his wife does not have the approval of
578 those who judge the conflict simply as neutral spectators. In such a case it is usually felt that the couple do not love each other very much. And often the marriage soon breaks up. But if the union is maintained nevertheless, its continuation is generally attributed to a fear of the consequences of dissolving the marriage, which would be even worse. The same sort of variation among individuals is to be found in the matter of a wife's devotion to the interests of her husband's family.

593x It is not possible to compare a native household to the
593 households of good simple people at home, where [40] the family
596 is composed solely of parents and their children. Here it extends further; the husband's interests are also those of his parents, brothers, uncles, etc. As we will see in connection with marriage by inheritance it is not unusual for a woman to remain attached to her deceased husband's family. Others are more interested in enriching their own families.

593x The following is a historical instance of a wife who was very
● 159 devoted to her husband's interests, though there seemed to be room
579 in her make-up for pride and personal glory. (1): Bolɔ́mbɔ́ wǎ nsánjí, daughter of Bokombe of Litɔ́li (Bombwanja), was married to Bonyeme w'ɛ̌nyuká of Bonganda (Bonkoso). One day (her father having died in the meantime) she went back to visit her brother, Bompelí w'ělombo, who had left Litɔ́li to settle in his maternal village, Etɔ́o of the Boɛ́ndɛ́. They began to quarrel. Bompelí maintained that Bonyeme wasn't worth much, that his wealth was exaggerated, that it was a mistake to honor him, etc. Bolɔ́mbɔ́

1. According to my estimates, this episode is about a hundred years old. I knew two men who had recollections of it: the eldest (Longwokɔ́ of the Basɛ́ká Bengɔ́ngɔ́, Bongîli) was about twenty years old when it occurred. A greatgranddaughter of Bonyeme (Mputɔ́ Sofie) is now in her forties.

593x defended her husband. Finally, since they could not agree, Bompelí
● 159 ordered his sister not to return to her husband, so that she could be
579 married to another man. For he had decided to test the valor of Bonyeme by making war on him, and she could not see her husband taken prisoner by her own brother. Nevertheless, Bolámbá remained determined and departed in haste. When she reached her husband she told him everything. In the meantime all the Boéndé and other Bombwanja clans were taking up arms. Enyuká, for his part, passed the news on to all Bonkoso villages, as well as their relatives by marriage, dependents, and Batswá. The various groups of combatants stationed themselves near the village of Bonganda in what is today the forest of [41] Boóngónjou, between the Lomeké and the present location of Besombó, Lofelí, and Engónjó. The Boéndé army was taken unawares by the Bonkoso, who attacked and after furious combat routed them, leaving a number of dead on the field. Bonyeme proposed a peace. He took pride in not being surpassed in generosity. With a truly princely munificence he was not satisfied with only paying all the clans who had lost members but in addition sent Bompelí all that the latter needed in order to compensate Bombwanja groups for the loss of their members and, on top of this, brought him a whole fortune to complete Bolámbá's bride price.

589
587 The Nkundó are well acquainted with cases of widows who, having reached middle age, take a solemn oath not to remarry or ever go near a man again. Among the stronger sex such cases are almost nonexistent. Cases of women who, when sick and dying wanted to remain near their husbands, cited later (Chap. VI, Art. II, 4) should be noted here, as well as preferences for monogamy (Chap. VII, Art. VI, VII).

581
593x Bearing in mind the explanation given at the outset, I think I can state that most marriages contracted by the Nkundó are love matches. Marriage for political reasons or for certain material advantages have certainly existed. And especially at the present time, there are parents who push their children into marriage for the sake of financial or social gains.

Our conclusions may not be accepted by a number of colonials. Yet I feel they are valid in the limited sense indicated here. Arguments

101 classifies the Bakela (or Boyéla), who are unquestionably pure Móngo, among the Wakutshu [Wakusu] or Batetela is highly significant.

●161 It is impossible to give an exact figure for the size of the population we have just defined. In any case one can estimate that it is more than a million.

184 Throughout the huge territory occupied by this people, only insignificant differences in institutions or language can be observed. Greater divergences appear in the material manifestations of culture.

101
563 In my opinion it is likely that certain groups which belong among the Nkundo-Móngo as far as culture and speech are concerned, may be distinguished from them in genealogy and history. Among these are the true Elima or riverain people (the Bolóki, the Eleku, the Elingá of the upper Lomela and the upper Tshuapa), (2) the Ngombe tribes of the Lomela, the Mbólé, the Bakutu of the Lomela-Tshuapa (with whom one should probably include the Ntómbá and the Nkóle), (3) and perhaps also the Mpámá and the Losakanyi. (4). This likelihood

---

2. We exclude a few Libinja and Basokó clans living near Coquilhatville, since they are clearly of alien origin. The native name for the Tshuapa [River] is Jwafa or Jafa and, higher up, Lwafa. Among the Bongandó and the Bahamba it is called the Laha.

3. See my article in Congo, 1931, Vol.1, pp. 21 ff.

4. The latter are erroneously called Losakanja by Father Schebesta in Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge, p. 199. They seem to have lived formerly on the lower Momboyo River (Luilaka); the land on which Flandria Mission has been established still bears their name.

Nkundu

10. Conclusion

182 Nkundo society was a fully alive, organic community. All of its organs functioned and were able to adjust continually to the changes in its life. Ethnically, socially-legally, and politically, they were open to every improvement. The organs with which it was built stood nearest to natural law and drew their rights and duties from it, and also the spirit which inspired them.

The facts prove that this society could survive. It arose at the source of the Lomako; in a short time it had extended itself peacefully over the whole central area of the Congo; it pressed eastward across the Lomami and Lualaba, and southward across the Kaisai /Kasai/-Sankuru, to occupy about a fifth of the present Congo at the time of the arrival of the Whites.

182 This society was open to all healthy influences and could adapt it-
171 self to all reasonable demands of civilization. It was, however, not reconcilable with what precisely is wrong in our European ideas about progress and civilization: elimination of all ethnic intermediary organs, equalization of all individuals, materialization of all life on the basis of economic competition, slave-like submission to the impersonal, unpaternal State, with that terrible pretense of freedom, of being able to do everything that is not forbidden by the State.

178 This suddenly attained freedom, which was accompanied by the
161 abolition of all the former joints of society, means the death of the Nkundo /161/ community, not only in its soul, its being, but also in its existence. The gradual depopulation, the dying out in the Middle Congo, has had repercussions now and then, even in government circles. "The Nkundo-Mongo population is melting away like snow before the sun," is the brief content of the last official report. The Waola, between the Ruki and the Ikelemba /rivers/, had in 1939 ninety deaths and three births. The official statistics of 1939 of the territory of Coquilhatville give one hundred adults for every twenty-four children. The official data of the same year for the Vicariate of Coquilhatville, with its 382, 736 inhabitants, give a ratio of 415 children to 1, 000 adults. According to these data, the whole population will be decreased by more than 50 percent by the following generation, thus dwindled to less than one-half.

Coquilhatville, 1939

614 each other to employ their own messengers. When the messenger
621 of settlement II arrives here, he first calls on the messenger of
624 the nuclear kinship group Bosɔ́bɛ́ (No. 19) and then to Impɛ́nga
202 (No. 26). The messenger from Bosɔ́bɛ́ calls on his relatives in
settlement VI, who are the nuclear kinship group Mbelo-Mmuna
(No. 22), while the messenger from Impɛ́nga-Ndongɔ́ formerly
had to call on the group Bommambo which is now extinct.

Settlement V consisted of three different groups. Bolíma, the group of the father, had its own messenger; however, he only received the messages without having to pass them on, which is also the case with all these last groups of the village. Both neighbors had their own messenger. The messenger from settlement I called on the nuclear kinship group Bolesangi, his relatives; the messenger from settlement III went to his relatives of the nuclear kinship group Ituli.

There were also two messengers in the last hamlet, but reports on this subject are insufficient since the nuclear kinship group Bommambo has been extinct for a long time.

178 All the settlements just mentioned have a common
614 characteristic: formerly, at important dance festivals, their
621 young men performed together in one joint *corps de ballet*. The
535 population was decimated as a result of the rigors of [201] the
[661] occupation period and also as a result of the population movement into the cities. Consequently, there are not enough young
people any more, and I with II, III with IV, and V with VI act
together. Thus, in each case we find Ngelɛ́ and Nkoto united
in one ballet. Although these groups have also been scattered
[361] as a result of the new settlement pattern (next to the highway),
the old organizational structure has been preserved, and the young people do not hesitate to walk the long distance to the practice field every day so they can dance in the old groupings.

All of Isangi, all three kinship groups, have one common
621 village chief, the Nkúmú, with an *iyolo nsáka* who gets the meet-
624 ings started, and a village court with its judges. There are other
622 groups which correspond to Isangi (31), but have more than one

---

31. See Müller, *Fürstentum*, pp. 73 ff., 76 ff., 133 f.

583 to an old, worn-out, gray-haired man, it naturally often occurred that when she arrived at maturity, she no longer wished to remain with him. She therefore left him and went to another, or back to her family. In the latter case, however, great difficulties arose concerning the return of the bride price. Indeed, with the bride price the father had received for his daughter, he bought himself another wife. This wife was then called the Nkita of the daughter. We could translate Nkita in this case as "substitute." The Nkita represented the value of the sold or married daughter. Meanwhile, the daughter herself was often the Nkita of the daughter or sister of her husband. Thus, many women were the Nkita of each other. According to their customs, the children (boys) were in theory the heirs of the Nkita of their mother. The Nkita was, in fact, the value or the bride price of their mother.

One might ask whether the wife was then always content that she was, so to speak, an object of trade. In general, yes, she was satisfied with this. This is how the customs were, and nobody gave a thought to changing them. Usually the wife simply found herself in an arranged situation (fait accompli). Gradually a certain sense of honor is coming into being among the Christian wives against these heathen customs.

If the woman desired that a large bride price or purchase price be paid for her, was it also because she wished to care for the future of her children who would be heirs of her bride price? No, they say, not for that reason -- for, they add, what woman knew in advance that she would have children, and moreover boys? There
●[163] are, in fact, many women who have no children. Also, [536] only
583 the boys are eligible for the inheritance; the girls are heirs only in
428 name. When it came to the inheritance, the children inherited the
587 Nkita of their mother only if there were no more brothers of the
mother or uncles on their father's side. The mightiest always had the greatest right.

Usually a youth had to acquire a wife with the bride price or supplement of the bride price of his sister. The inheritance of the Nkita of his mother was only secondary. Still we often see a heathen wife leave her husband in order to go to another, without bothering much about her children who remain with the deserted husband, their father.

582 593 864 conquered only by repeated assaults of passion. Thus it is generally known among the natives that young women used to seek refuge in their mother's house when the husband wanted to begin making use of his rights as a husband. The mother would try to persuade her daughter to submit to the law of life. But sometimes, if her child seemed too resistant, the mother made excuses for her and asked the husband to consider her daughter's youth. The man usually wanted to remain on good terms with his mother-in-law so he did not insist and resigned himself to waiting till nature influenced the spirit and heart of his wife.

Since young people were brought up in deep fear of dangerous relations, it should not surprise us that this feeling became a real habit and did not disappear spontaneously the moment a certain degree of liberty was permitted. As a matter of fact, could we not make similar observations in Europe?

This is the natural explanation for the praiseworthy degree of morality among adolescents in the past.

171 836 864 Nowadays all that has changed. The young people follow where their passions lead them. Not the slightest check is placed on their impulses. Parents pay only slight attention to the conduct of their children. [82] It is better not to inquire into the morality of modern youth. Husbands no longer respect the bodies of their adolescent brides, who are themselves quite used to a sexual life and eagerly look forward to it, and no longer know the feeling of "the fear of men." Should we then be astonished at the frightening de- ● [161] crease in the birth rate (1) and the ever increasing spread of venereal diseases, which seem to have been unknown in the past?

The reasons for this change will be investigated further on, under the letter C.

836 B. Between adults. Here the Nkundó are very lenient. There is a difference, however, between the socio-legal and moral viewpoints, although as we shall see the latter is influenced by the former.

[582] A woman is entirely free, legally speaking, as long as the first payment on her bride price has not been made. No man has

---

1. The natives say that in the past young wives quickly became pregnant. And now ...

Teke FI33
Sakata FO43

M 224 weapon. As he passes, the pachyderm strikes and dislodges the crossbar, springs the trigger, disrupts the suspension, and the spear falls heavily upon him. The trap is arranged in such a way as to hit the animal on the nape of the neck.

M 224 411 The native hunts with bow and arrow as well as with spear. The bow and arrow, however, is more a weapon than a hunting instrument.

The peoples in the territory between the Congo and the Kasai, as well as the Baboma of the Fimi have now given up these weapons. A few privileged persons own percussion guns which are usually more dangerous to the hunter than to the hunted. When the native fires a shot, he extends his arms, directs the barrel towards the prey, and turns his head aside. If, through cunning and patience, he gets to within a few meters of the game without arousing its attention, the shot has a chance [66] of success. Ordinarily the animal is more or less gravely wounded, unless the overloaded gun explodes in the hands of the imprudent hunter.

S T 411 322 The Bateke, Banfumu, and Baboma store powder in small receptacles made of a simple calabash or cut out of a block of hard wood. The calabashes are sometimes covered with a sheath of serpent or lizard skin to protect the powder more effectively from dampness. The wooden powder flasks are usually pear-shaped, probably to imitate the shape of the calabash. They have a wooden cover that fits very tightly into the body of the object, and the leather strap for hanging it up is attached to two holes cut in the body of the receptacle and drawn through two side openings in the cover. S T [53] Very often these carved powder flasks are decorated with designs engraved in bas relief, linear motifs arranged in bands. The lines are sometimes curved, sometimes straight, and sometimes also oblique. The bottom of the powder flask is flat so that it may be placed upright [67] on a horizontal surface. The body of the powder flask extends into the straight cylindrical neck onto which the cover is fitted.

M 411 [71] The bow with rattan thong is relatively rare. We found it only among the Tumba, Balesa, Bobaie, Batete [Tete], Ipanga, Batitu, and the Pygmies. This bow is made with a rattan stem, its convex section facing out and its flat section facing in. The rattan thong is attached to the two ends after having been drawn through

FO32
Sakata FO43

S
224
346
778

"Did not the bananas belong to the nkisi? This bunch was taboo! No one had the right to take a banana from it!" Several natives rushed into the banana groves and brought back quantities of bananas. They had their hands full of them. They offered all of them to me in exchange for the one banana taken from the tree of the nkisi, and when I finally gave it to them, they fastened it under the roof inside the nkisi shelter.

S
224
778

In the Bobaie village of Madjulu, the nkisi hut is replaced by a large basket, surrounded by large blocks of wood and covered with grass. A large, broken pot for cooking chikwangue [Ed., [illegible] manioc cakes] was placed on top of it. Several sticks were placed around it, and at the top of two of them the natives had hung large calabashes. Here again I found it impossible to get precise information about the use or [80] significance of each of these objects. The few skulls of small antelopes inside the basket were again vaguely reminiscent of the Bateke-Bamfumu custom of huts for the nkisi of the hunt.

M
[171]●

Among the Tumba, the Wadia on the right shore of Lake Leopold II, and the Mosengere, all traces of such huts disappear. In the Wadia village of Ibeli, a large pot was placed on top of a branch which ended in a trident with diverging spikes. This pot was three-fourths full of a reddish, very thick mud. A few splints

Fig. 50. Bobaie Hunting Fetish, Village of Madjulu.

Take F133

M 276 Aside from this characteristic form, we found another which is no less interesting. The bowl and tube are always made from the hollowed branch of a special species of tree. The shape is slightly curved, and the top end slightly flared to form the bowl. At the other end of the tube, the native attaches a small spheroidal calabash with two holes, one of which serves as the mouthpiece. This calabash is lightly stuffed with raffia fibers and dry grass to filter the tobacco smoke.

M 276 531 Other than this primitive form, we collected a few pipes belonging to the same category, but with the calabash mouthpiece replaced by a wooden one, sometimes decorated with carved linear designs and with small copper strips inlaid in the wood.

M 276 ● 171 We found, then, two very characteristic pipe shapes in the Yaelima-Bankutsu region which seem to indicate a certain ethnic relationship among these different peoples. We do not know if these same shapes are found among the peoples of the Dekese region, but it seems quite probable to us. We found this same type along the north bank of the Sankuru between Lodi and Isaka, so the ethnic zone characterized by these two special forms of the native pipe, at least in the region south of Dekese, includes the whole area from Bumbuli to Bena Dibele-Kole. These types are also found outside this territory, notably to the north among the Bakuba and Bashilele. It must be noted, however, [159] that the pipe with a femur for the mouthpiece is extremely rare in the north, while that with a calabash mouthpiece is very seldom seen in the south. This seems to indicate that we have here a zone of contact where we once more find evidence of ethnic relationships between the peoples of this region and the tribes to the north and south. It may be inferred from this that the Bakuba and Bashilele tribes of the Kasai-Sankuru region are connected with the peoples between the Sankuru and the Lukenie and that they even have ethnic affinities with the peoples whose territory extends much farther north.

T 276 171 In the region of the Banfumu and Bateke, we find two types of tobacco pipes, one with a large bowl for communal smoking, the other smaller, with an earthenware bowl and a wooden tube and mouthpiece, used individually by both the women and the men. Along with these pipes, we also found several specimens

T 276 171 with the bowl and tube made of iron. These pipes are usually very long and cruder than the small clay pipes with wooden tubes. Moreover, it is probable that the latter were copied from imported models. We found them chiefly in villages near the large centers and the government posts. Their shape is strikingly similar to that of imported pipes.

● M T 276 ● 171 We found this same type among the Bayanzi of the right bank of the Kasai and north of Kwamouth. These natives are thus connected with the Bateke-Banfumungu group. Thus a new ethnic zone appears, and the territory we visited may be subdivided in this respect into three ethnic regions.

The first one includes all the territory occupied by the Bateke-Banfumungu, the Bayanzi, and part of the Baboma, and it is characterized:

1) by the use of a calabash pipe, a nkisi fetish, for smoking hemp;

2) by the use of pipes with large clay bowls, for smoking tobacco communally, and the small tobacco pipe, the property of the individual, used by both men and women. [160]

The second one extends from the mouth of the Fimi to the confines of Batitu territory.

The hemp pipe is not nkisi. The tobacco pipe, very primitive, is made from the rib of a banana leaf and very often has a wooden or clay bowl. The woman smokes neither tobacco nor hemp, and the custom of smoking the pipe communally is not much in favor.

The third zone is the one where we found the wooden tobacco pipe with a calabash mouthpiece or a neck of monkey bone. It includes the whole Yaelima-Bankutshu region, taking in the Bashilele and Bakuba and, very probably, the Dengese region.

M 276 As a rule, the natives like to smoke tobacco very much. They prefer doing it when the weather is cold, maintaining that it heightens the body heat.

M 241 Tobacco is not cultivated on a large scale. The crop is always strictly limited to the needs of the person who plants it. When the native wants to smoke tobacco, he plucks a leaf from the plant, dries it at the hearth, crushes it, and reduces it to powder. A pinch of this crudely ground tobacco is placed in the

Take F1 33

M 301
M [779]

on all the fingers of the hand. Those who can afford it even put them on their toes. Around the neck they wear fiber necklaces, from which they hang nkisi bags and horns. These amulet necklaces are associated with a religious idea, with magic power, rather than with ornamentation.

M 301 857

Children are usually overloaded with gaudy ornaments: white feathers stuck in the hair, necklaces and belts of glass beads, and small bells attached to the belt. In our opinion, however, these objects are not primarily intended to adorn the child, but to protect it. There is no doubt that the mother sticks the feathers in her child's hair and attaches small bells to his belt in order to find him more easily if he gets lost in the fields or in the bush. As soon as the child is old enough to find his own way and return to the village alone, bells and feathers are given up permanently. [185]

T [292 301 302]

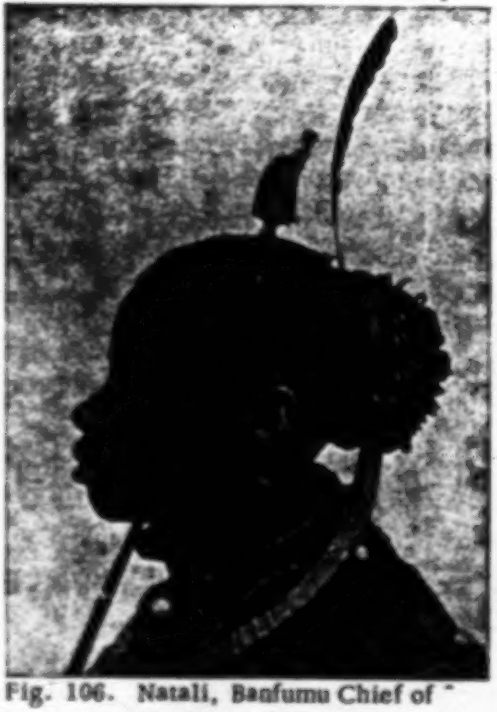


Fig. 106. Natali, Banfumu Chief of Kapanda.

M 301 171

According to their ornaments, the peoples of the Stanley Pool-Kole region are divided into five groups.

The first one includes the Bateke-Banfumu-Baboma, among whom ornaments are relatively rare for the women as well as for the men. 301 171

The second one encompasses all the peoples in the region of Lake Leopold II and the lower Lukenie and is characterized by the solid brass necklace worn by the women and the ornaments trimmed with cowries and the brass plaques worn by the dignitaries and chiefs.

The third one includes the Ipanga and the Batitu, with the belt ornamented with brass beads, rings on the fingers and toes, and solid brass rings worn above the ankles, all of which are peculiar to the women.

Fig. 107. A Group of Batitu Children.

142
516
855

The fourth group is characterized by the sheath of brass rings covering the arm from wrist to elbow and worn as much by the men as by the women of the Bokala-Yaelima.

The fifth group includes the Bena Dibele-Kole region, where imported ornaments have replaced the primitive ones. [186]

In addition to all these adornments used regularly in common, everyday life, the native also has ornaments reserved for show and ceremony. 301

Sakata FO43
Teke F133

M
5
304
171

We have seen earlier that among the Bateke, Banfumungu, and Baboma, the man's characteristic tattoo consists of lines scratched on the face, while that of the woman consists of small dots in relief, juxtaposed in parallel lines, more or less horizontal, covering the body from the pit of the stomach to the lower abdomen. This same design [192] is found among the women of all the riparian peoples of Lake Leopold II and among the tribes of the Lukenie up to the Bumbuli sector. It must be noted, however, that in this last region the relief is less clear and less pronounced.

M
304
171
[142]

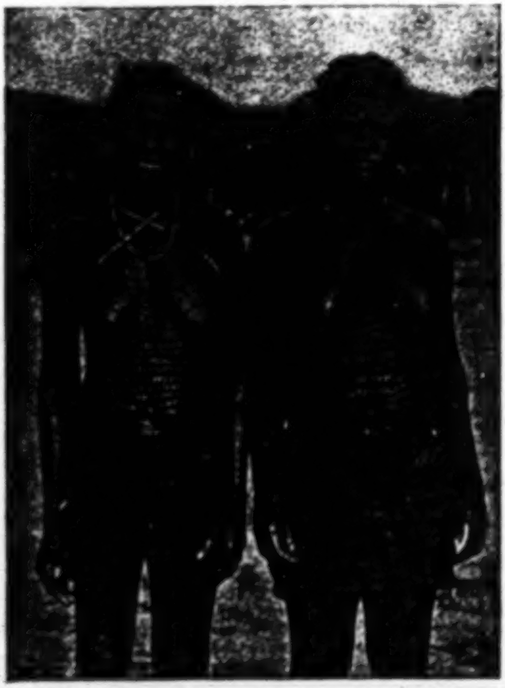


Fig. 116. Tattooing among the Women of Lake Leopold II and the Lower Lukenie.

Moreover, as a general rule, the relief gradually decreases as one goes farther from the lake. In this respect, then, all these peoples seem to belong to the same ethnic group, and it is probable that this characteristic tattooing is one of the traits of the ancestral civilization, retained until the present time by all

Sakata FO43

M 304 171 the branches of the original group despite migrations and displacements. In the same region, the tattoo of the man is a small rosette, consisting of a large central dot and two or three concentric circles in relief, decorating the temples. In the region north of Lake Leopold II, the native usually adds to this a line of small dots all across the forehead.

M S 304 Among the Tumba, Mosengere, Wadia, and Basakata-Bobaie-Balesa, on the other hand, this line is replaced by a series of small incisions in relief which form a little cock's crest in the hollow at the root of the nose.

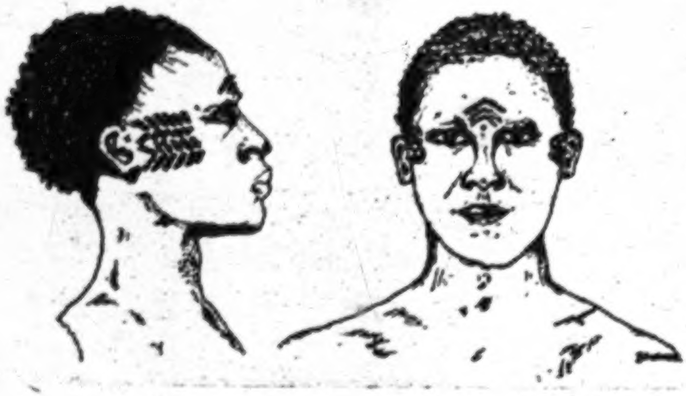


Fig. 117. Batitu-Ipanga Tattoos.

Among all these tribes the woman has also adopted the racial tattoo, although it must be noted that we quite often met women with no tattooing on their faces, while others had the rosette alone, the rosette [193] and the cock's crest, or the line crossing the forehead, and sometimes the three tattoos were combined.

This irregularity in the application of facial tattoos leads us to suppose that this tattooing is more a matter of vanity for the women of these various tribes than a practice imposed by the usages and customs, while for the men this artificial deformation is a true distinguishing mark imposed by local tradition.

M 304 Among the Ipanga and Batitu, tattoos include designs on the face and on the breastbone. The chest tattoo consists of a vertical line of small linear scars, obliquely parallel and slightly

D
M
304 Tattoos on the chest and the upper and lower abdomen are less uniformly worn by the women of this region, but where they do exist the design is always outstandingly symmetrical. It is formed by small juxtaposed dots in strong relief.

M
304 To sum up, we believe that we may divide the racial tattoos of the various populations we visited into four groups.

●171 The first consists of the tattoo of the Bateke-Banfumungu-Baboma, made with a comb.

The second is characterized by the rosette on the temples and the semi-concentric crest at the root of the nose, and this includes all the riparian peoples of Lake Leopold II and the Lukenie, with the exception of the Ipanga-Batitu.

The third group is distinguished by the semi-concentric crest at the root of the nose and the palm-leaf designs at the temples, which we observed among the Ipanga-Batitu and up to the Bokala region.

Lastly, the fourth group is marked by the small, raised dots with which the woman of the Bena Dibele-Kole region adorns her neck and forehead, as well as by the characteristic figure on the upper arm.

We have noted earlier that, thanks to photographs by Mr. Van den Broech, we were able to verify the fact that the peoples of the Dekese sector are related particularly to their western neighbors as far as tattooing is concerned, although they [199] show strong resemblances to the eastern tribes. Their territory, therefore, should be regarded as a mixed zone or an area of transition between the two ethnic groups.

The study of the different figures of ornamental tattooing permits us to subdivide the region we visited into two large provinves.

The first one includes all the peoples who have few ornamental tattoos, and these few are not very elaborate. In this case, there are no true figures involved, for the tattoos invariably consist of small dots aligned horizontally.

This region extends from Leopoldville to Oshwe.

The second one includes the tribes with highly elaborate ornamental tattoos. This province covers the rest of the region we visited, and its major center is the Yaelima region. The study

YAelimA

304 we made of the many figures we saw in this region showed us that
● 171 the variations are so numerous, so diverse, and so closely intertwined that it is totally impossible to use this as a basis for determining ethnic sectors with clearly-defined characteristics.

304 171 833 Finally, if we consider only those tattoo figures to which we attributed, if not a familial origin, at least a familial nature [200] (incitement to sexual relations), we see that throughout the region this type of tattoo is peculiar to women.

[302 142]

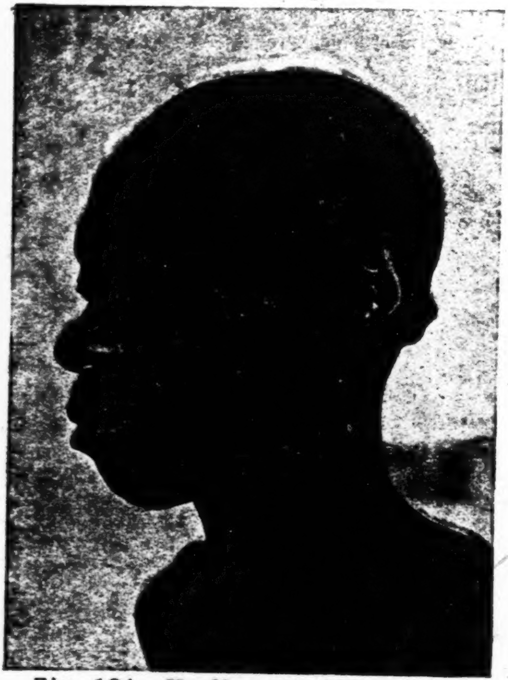


Fig. 124. Yaelima Headdress and Tattooing. Typical Longomo or Dignitary.

From Leopoldville to the confines of Batitu territory and even among some Bokala women, this tattoo consists (where it still exists) of a number of small, aligned dots, just like the ornamental tattoos.

Among the Ipanga-Batitu, these figures sometimes embellish the arms and part of the back, while among the other tribes they are less elaborate.

304
171
833
In the region of the Yaelima, Dengese, and some of the Bokala, this tattoo consists of a series of broken, concentric lines with the pubic region as the main center.

We do not know if this tattoo is also worn by the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu women, but this seems probable to us. We can, however, assert that among those peoples this tattoo does not extend to the upper thighs, except for one or two lines of small incised dots running parallel to the fold of the groin.

[142]
[302]

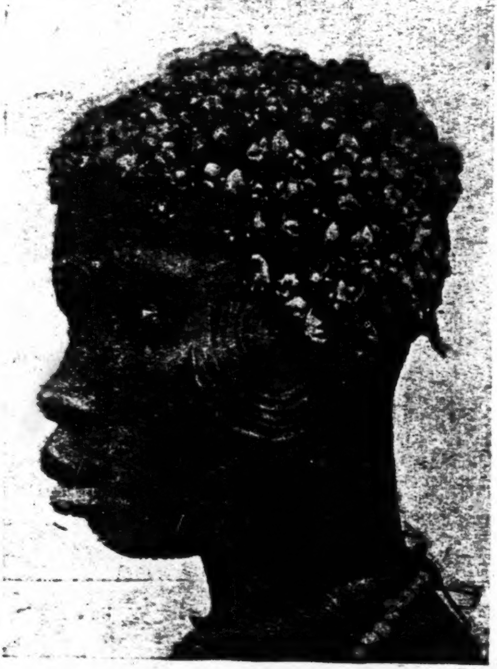


Fig. 125. Yaelima Tattoing and Headdress Adorned with Peanuts Smeared with Ngula.

The incisions for ornamental and sexual tattoos are usually made by women, although a man sometimes takes over this task.

304
The operation is carried out at very irregular intervals and at practically any [201] time of life. Moreover, it requires several sittings, usually spaced from 10 to 15 days apart.

The tattooing knife, which is also used for depilation, consists of a small, broad iron blade with a curved, very sharp cutting edge.

585 836 To say that it makes absolutely no difference to him might be too extreme a statement. But it is certainly not very important to him, since the primary purpose of his marriage is to obtain progeny and to follow his natural instinct in an honest fashion. This does not mean that he likes to marry a woman of loose morals; quite the contrary.

171 585 836 What is the linguistic data on the subject of virginity? In an interesting paper entitled "The Principles of Bantu Marriage" (Africa Vol. 2, No. 3 (1929), p. 255), E. Torday says, "Some of the most competent philologists assure us that in most Bantu languages there is no word for 'virgin'; . . . . The Wachagga, who may be an exception, use the word 'unimpaired,' and it is perhaps in the use of similar expressions, not exclusively applied to physical virginity, that we shall find the explanation of the absence of a specific term."

585 836 192 Thus the Lonkundó have a noun: ekáté. It is derived from the root kát (the verb is -kátema), which means "to be firmly attached, to be tenacious" (e.g., lokátó, "tenacity"). Ekáté designates something which is difficult to open, to separate, to break up, especially fruit with a tough, hard, thick rind. It is applied to the litófé, lisénjá, and the lindongó when it is impossible to break the shell which contains the edible portion even though the fruit is ripe. [79] This term is used in a figurative sense for a woman who resists seduction, who "does not allow herself to be opened." It is not at all specific and in no way the equivalent of our word "virginity," rather it seems to signify "chastity."

Other Nkundó tribes seem to have a specific word, bokotó. I learned this term from natives living between the Ikelemba and the Tshuapa, both east and west of the Julé, as well as from some Baséká Bǒngwalanga from the old Lulonga District. The missionaries of the Apostolic Prefecture of Basankusu use it in their publications to mean "virginity, virgin." I was not able to get an exact idea of its precise meaning, but as far as I was able to make out it is much closer to "virgin chastity" than ekáté. In any case it includes no reference to physical virginity. (1)

000

1. We should not be astonished that "primitive" tribes have no word in their language

595x
554 The name bolɔ́mbɔ́ seems to come from the fact that for an instant during the installation ceremony the woman is naked. In fact in certain dialects the word means "nudity."

[557] Nowadays this name is common among Nkundó women (rarely men), but it does not indicate that they are bolɔ́mbɔ́. The name is borne in memory of ancestresses or relatives who had that position and is transmitted in the family like any other name.

[184] All the tribes under discussion here use the same term, bolɔ́mbɔ́. The Bombomba alone say boálɛ́. (2)

2. Elsewhere, as in the Losanganya region, among the Bosaka, etc., the bolɔ́mbɔ́ is called ekila (interdiction, taboo).

It is clear from everything that has been said that the nkóndé and the bolɔ́mbɔ́ have nothing in common with each other. [353] The two institutions are decidedly different. Nowadays they are beginning to be confused with each other, however. [178] For the installation of a bolɔ́mbɔ́ has become extremely rare, and in some regions it has already disappeared. The colonial government has established districts and appointed chiefs in charge of them. Very frequently, they are not those who in the purely indigenous order would have been the most influential men, the masters, those who would have the biggest say in their society, who would be said to have the joko, the first place.

As far as I have been able to observe, the other tribes on the equator also have the two types of wives with special positions, who bear names which vary with the dialects.

● 171
595x
554 Do the Ntómbá and the Bolénge between the Boloko and the Congo have only the bolɔ́mbɔ́? That is the conclusion one draws from Engels' study of the Wangata (Revue congolaise, Vol. 2, no. 1, p. 33). If that were so, the frequent contacts with this people may have increased the confusion even more. Natives who are strangers to the Bolénge tribe but who have lived many years among them as catechists, have maintained, however, that

● 171 595 534 they distinguish very clearly between the bolɔ́mbɔ́ and the favorite. They even added that the nkɔ́rɔ́ enjoy no privileges in this realm. (1)

> 1. The institution of the nkɔ́rɔ́ is not very widespread among the tribes treated in our study. (See "Les Coutumes funéraires des Nkundó [Funeral customs of the Nkundo]," in Anthropos) (in press).

In the course of a visit I myself made to the western Bolɛ́ngɛ́ (in September, 1933), I learned that a man who had a special position could have two belɔ́mbɔ́; the bomátsa proposed her ebísa as candidate, and the second wife did the same for hers. Thus there was a bolɔ́mbɔ́ w'ǐlóme and a bolɔ́mbɔ́ w'ǐáli (the latter more especially called ekila. I also observed that they made a very clear distinction between bolɔ́mbɔ́ and [354] nkóndɛ́, just like the peoples treated in this study.

As to the function of messenger, which is attributed to the bolɔ́mbɔ́ by Engels (as well as by Father Kaptein, in Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 532), it is not performed more by her than by any other woman in the harem. Any of them, without distinction based on rank or date of marriage, may be charged with a mission. The only custom of this sort which involves such a distinction is found among the Bolɛ́ngɛ́-Ntɔ́mbá living between the Congo and the Boloko. It is as follows: an influential [728] man sometimes sent his belɔ́mbɔ́ (one or two) to stop a quarrel, or even a battle between two villages. When she intervened, the opposing parties made a truce, pending the arrival and the decision of her husband in person.

Article IV. The Ebísa

595 583 An ebísa is a woman taken as wife by the husband of one of her relatives -- a sister, aunt, or older cousin. The relative

765 Incontinence is severely punished by the deceased; she molests the culprit and even drags him or another person who is in mourning to the grave.

[352] The severity of the seclusion is lessened at the time of the ceremony which marks the widower's return to a small bed raised ● [171] above the ground. It is made from tree trunks or branches in the manner of the Batswá. The widower is washed by the deceased's elder sister and then is led to the bed by his elder brother's wife. He receives a knife from his father, and from then on is permitted to perform his usual tasks.

A widower (or widow) must purchase gradual dispensations from prohibitions of foods, in contrast to relatives, who are simply released (Coutumes funéraires [Funeral Customs], Vol. 2, no. 2, E). This distinction shows the fundamental difference that exists between mourning for a spouse and for a relative. In the first instance, it is a strict social obligation from which he can be absolved only by a purchase, a compensation, or commutation of sorts; in the second instance, it is a convention from which a person is freed without any ceremony or compensation. The fact that this regulation is extended to the close relatives of the widower (or widow) does not lessen the validity of this conclusion. On the contrary, it corroborates it. For [421] the persons to whom the rule applies remain clearly in the affinal line; the regulation is never extended to relatives of the deceased.

After the death of a husband, his widows and the wives of his close relatives buy dispensations from the deceased's kinswomen. After a wife's death, the husband and his close relatives buy them from their own wives. The total amount of the purchase made by all the persons involved must be divided. Half goes to the women who have married into the clan; the other half is kept for the family of the deceased.

Like all periods of mourning, that of the widower -- with all the regulations and prohibitions involved -- ends in a great feast. When the family of the deceased have performed their duties, they organize a second feast at their own home, and the widower is

M 101 does not exclude the possibility of a distant kinship, but the present
569 state of our knowledge makes the solution to this question impossible; for very close resemblances may be explained by a common origin as well as by a period of living in close contact, and differences may be due to diverse origins [5] or to a temporary separation at a certain point in history.

P M 101 563 144 A considerable number of Pygmoids or Pygmiforms (1) (Batswá, Jöfe, Balómbe, Bilángi, Boné) are to be found scattered among the Nkundó. They share a community of social and economic interests with their "masters." The Botswá belongs to his master and depends on him, but he is not, strictly speaking, his slave. His master not only has rights over him; he also has obligations to fulfill. Most of the Pygmoids are to be found in the western part of Nkundó territory; in the east they are very rare.

M 101 173 The Nkundó-Móngo came from the north or northeast, while the Mbólé claim to have come from the northwest, and the Bakutu from the west. (2)

M 101 A word should be said about the name of these people. Ordinarily, we call them the Nkundó-Móngo. The first of these names is used in the west and in the south, the second especially in the north and in the east. The Elángá of the Losanganya region are called the Mongo éâ Lolo, or the Upstream Móngo, by the peoples to the west of them. Foreigners call all these peoples, including the Nkundó, the Mbólé, the Bakutu, etc., by the name of Móngo. In literature one sometimes encounters the name of Lolo or Balolo. (3) But, as we have seen, lolo is not a proper noun but simply the word meaning "upstream"

1. This name was proposed by Father Schebesta, op. cit., p. 170.

2. See my study, previously cited, passim.

3. For example, the name of the Protestant mission of the Lulonga is "Congo Balolo Mission."

101
619
[825] recollection of an animal of the leopard family which they call bokonga. Their description of it corresponds to the lion. Some soldiers and other expatriates, who were also young people, shown representations of a lion immediately identified it with their bokonga.

The groups under discussion here lived for a time on the banks of the Luwo (Maringa) and the [11] upper Ikelemba, (1) then under pressure from other Mɔ́ngɔ tribes, they crossed the Tshuapa-Ruki. They evicted the Ekonda and settled in their present location. This exodus must have taken place a fairly long time ago; it is impossible to determine the date and difficult to make any estimates. In any case it must have occurred 150 to 200 years ago.

● [173] 1. It appears that between the Ikelemba and its tributary the Loɛlifa, there is still a bonkom tree called w'ãmɛnga (of bald heads) under which, according to tradition, the ancestors held their councils. Nearby there is a bosɛɛ whose fruits never ripen.

241 These peoples are primarily farmers; they grow chiefly bananas, manioc, yams, colocasia [taro], sweet potatoes, sugar cane, and various vegetables and condiments. The food crops they grow, together with what they gather and the Elaeis palm trees provide them with a continuous and abundant food supply, as long as elephants do
[231] not interfere. Their domestic animals include chickens, goats, and
224 dogs. (2) Hunting is a pleasant change of activity rather than an

[177] 2. Ducks have been introduced fairly recently, but they were known long before colonial times. They came from the south. Sheep have been introduced only in the last few decades, and they are found only in a few villages on the river banks in the lowlands.

7:Brow[illegible]4-5 (ca. 1940) 1944

FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

THE *NKUMU* OF THE TUMBA

RITUAL CHIEFTAINSHIP ON THE MIDDLE CONGO

H. D. BROWN

101 [133] THE tribes living round Lake Tumba, a lake some thirty-five miles long by twelve wide lying north of Lake Leopold II (approximately 0° 50′ south latitude, and 18° east longitude) and draining into the Congo River at the confluence of the Ubangi, lack cohesion and show a considerable variety of custom and language. But they are known collectively as Tumba, the Government adaptation of the Native term *Ntomba*. Most of them are found to the east of the lake, the whole group numbering perhaps little more than forty to fifty thousand at the present time, though [147] there is evidence that the last twenty years have seen a great decrease in population. European occupation of this area goes back barely fifty years, Protestant missions having been established for about the same length of time. The first mission post [171] was established at Ikoko on the north-east shore of the lake, one of the villages of a group known as Bonginda. In pursuing this investigation particular attention has been given to the practices of this group, but mention is occasionally made where considerable differences have been found elsewhere.

105 13 The Tumba are agricultural, hunting, and fishing people. Their country is flat and swampy with dense forests, and there are many watercourses flowing into Lake Tumba. There are occasional small, less swampy plains, and one such area, more open, with quite wide stretches of prairie, is a haunt of buffalo. The forests are fairly well supplied with game, and the swamps, streams, and lakes with fish. A heavy rainfall and no distinct dry season make agriculture reasonably easy and famine unknown. Every family has its plantation of manioc, the staple diet, which is supplemented by plantains and bananas. The people make their own tools, formerly smelting their own iron for this purpose, are fairly skilful at making dug-out canoes, engage in weaving raffia and making mats out of split cane, and are efficient at pottery production.

624 101 178 The role of the *nkumu* in the socio-religious activities of the community is one of the most interesting features of Tumba life. As a result of European contact the ceremonies connected with the *nkumu* are rapidly disappearing, but it has been possible to collect considerable information from the older men and women among whom the details are still vividly remembered.[1] The following report refers to the period previous to European occupation and control, a time within the memory of a large number of people, but already sufficiently remote to become a matter of hearsay before the lapse of many more years.

585 [173] An understanding of the place of the *nkumu* among the Tumba requires a glance at the tribal organization. According to the people themselves, they migrated westward, and coming into these parts chose land for themselves. Among the several

---

[1] In *My Children of the Forest*, New York, 1924, pp. 48-75, Andrew F. Hensey has briefly outlined some of the forms of interest observed among the *nkumu* of the district adjacent to that of the present study. These more detailed notes are, however, timely if a record is to be preserved that approaches to accuracy.

601 621 614 Bonsonga and etúká are terms used for kinship groups of ranks B, C, and D, but occasionally they may also refer to [192] the groups listed under A and, in addition, to the local groups which in size approximately correspond to the kinship units mentioned above. Etúká is the term used for the oil palm grove and for a certain kind of termite hill; apparently it is used for local groups more frequently than the term bonsonga.

[571] [535] Another term whose meaning varies is ekindá. This word designates, first of all, a dance group, a corps de ballet, and also the social unit which sends such a joint dance troupe to dance festivals.

Esé also has strong local connotations. It is usually identical with what we call a village, but frequently units which are larger or smaller than a village are designated as esé. Very large groups, tribes and even larger units, are called bonanga.

614 As a criterion for placing the individual groups within a certain rank, one or several functions have been chosen in each case. The groups of the individual ranks are described below relative to their functions. On the subject of groups it should be added that in general they do not differ from each other in certain traits. All groups of all ranks are kinship units of patrilineal descent. They consider themselves descendants of one ancestor. No continuous and complete genealogy which can be traced back to the original ancestor is known. The genealogy of the entire group of the Bakonda is shown in Diagram 1.

In Iwangi two of the ancestors of the groups of rank D are brothers, the third is the brother of their father. A D-group (Nsgolé) includes, in addition, the descendants of an illegitimate child of the paternal sister of the ancestor. These offspring form the C-group, Nsambédafé.

There is a gap between this ancient genealogy and the known ancestors from the recent past. In contrast with that of the neighboring Bokóté (Bokote) (see, for example, Boelaert, "Les Bongili"), the genealogical memory of the Ekonda is weak. [171] It does not reach back to the ancestor of the group of rank A. In this connection we must take into account the fact that a group

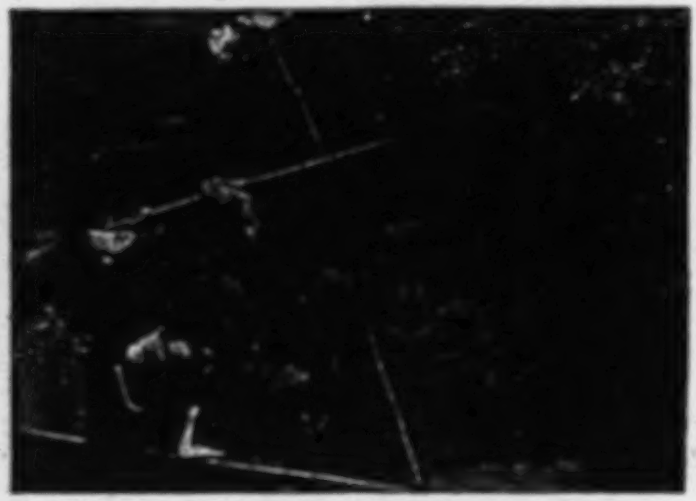
Ntomba

paragraph beginning on page 97 and continued on page 98 is not 080
translated.]

[98] On the whole, we note the following special ethnic characteristics. 241

1) Uniformity in the cultivation of manioc, the staple food of all of these peoples.

2) Undertaking the cultivation of maize under the influence 241/177 of the ephemeral encouragement of Bula Matari [Ed., the European administration] among the peoples of the Congo-Kasai, and rice cultivation under Arab influence in the region of Bena Dibele-Kole. Contrary to what we noted concerning maize, the innovation introduced by the Arabs has become firmly implanted in the life of these natives, and the cultivation of rice will probably eliminate manioc eventually.



[226]

Fig. 58. Weir Fishing at a Dam among the Mosengere.
Closing the Screens and Capturing the Trapped Fish.

3) Formation of a zone of sugar-cane cultivation, the development of which is in inverse proportion to the extent of the palm groves.

4) Complete absence of animal husbandry of any importance. 231

5) Uniformity in the methods of communal hunting and the 224/178 gradual development of attendant religious customs and practices from east to west, corresponding to a decline in hunting by individuals with traditional weapons. This fact leads us to suppose

Ntomba

224 174 that hunting was practiced as a rule in the ancestral society without special recourse to any protective force or spirit and that primitive man relied wholly on his strength, skill, courage, and necessity. The small yield and the accidents involved in this dangerous sport probably impelled the primitives to go in groups, the first step to communal hunting. In the course of these forays, accidents must have occurred, some men being hurt and others spared. For no apparent cause, one hunt was successful and another failed. Not being able to understand the reason for these occurrence, the natives naturally ascribed their origin to spirits, from which arose the desire to gain the favor of these spirits. One can thus explain the magico-religious beliefs and practices, whose intensity, [99] elaboration, and spread are in direct proportion to the disappearance of individual hunting.

228 174 6) The existence among all the peoples of a few common fishing customs, so little developed unquestionably fish could have played only a minor role in the diet of the ancestral community. This community, therefore, must have lived in an environment ill-suited to the development of a fishing industry or too poor in resources of this kind to invite man's efforts in this direction in his struggle for existence.

7) In their migrations and displacement, certain groups settled in more favorable regions, and the families among them who settled in the immediate vicinity of well-stocked rivers and marshes adopted new fishing customs while partially giving up the hunting customs. [Ed., the remainder of the chapter, through page 100, is not translated.]

060 [101] Chapter 4

Food

Making fire. -- Extraction of salt. -- Preparation of food. -- Manioc. -- Maize. -- Bananas. -- Meat. -- Fish. -- Peppers. -- Extraction of palm oil. -- Beverages. -- Water. -- Malafu. -- Masanga. -- Pombe. -- Stimulants. -- Hemp. -- Kola nuts. -- Tobacco.

304 178 tattoos are very much in vogue at the present time. We concede that the custom of tattooing is now at its height in the region we visited.

It is probable that this custom will not long survive our penetration.

304 174 It would be very difficult to determine the approximate time of its introduction into the life of these natives. We believe, however, that we may regard racial tattoos as one of the ethnic characteristics peculiar to the contemporary culture and not as a specific custom of the ancestral civilization, transmitted from generation to generation and preserved or even elaborated by each one. The clearest proof of this fact comes from our observations of the present generation of old men. As a rule they have no racial tattoos. The old women who have no [203] trace of ornamental or ethnic tattooing are rarer. Ornamental incisions are more often lacking than tribal scars, and we encountered only rare cases where the sexual tattoos were lacking.

Fig. 126. Return from the Fields.

304 174 These facts prove that when the elders of the present generation were young, tattooing, if it was customary, was practiced with some regularity only by the women and originally had an essentially familial character in this region.

304 152 A woman bears the pain of the incisions without showing the least sign of suffering, without a complaint or a sigh. She even submits to this custom with some joy, mixed with a bit of pride, knowing that she will be held in higher esteem by the man.

This point, in our opinion, is much more important to the women among primitive peoples than one would generally suppose. It appears to us to be the leitmotiv of the major part of the variations that we observed in the grooming of the native women.

The anxiety to please, the wishes of the man, these lead the woman to seek constantly the means that would enable her to be tattooed as soon and as often as possible. This natural desire and inner necessity are the reasons why the woman stoically bears all the torture, all the suffering. In primitive life the sexual side naturally is dominant. In this way we can explain, and in a way understand, why tattooing in the beginning was the exclusive appanage of the woman in this region and how she came to decorate the sexual organ and its immediate vicinity in order subsequently to display it; covering nearly all the body with decorations came about, perhaps, simply through coquetry.

174
176 C. An attempt to explain the modern changes. The facts themselves as much as a knowledge of human nature, together with the lenient attitude of parents and the lack of sanctions (the last two points are relevant only to relations between adults), are in direct contradiction to the statements of the natives. Should these not therefore be explained as exaggerations, stemming from a desire for national glory and a resentment of the situation created by colonization? The [84] natives whose strange assertions I have cited are elderly and serious; they demonstrate all the qualities of truthful witnesses. But are they not -- perhaps unconsciously -- laudatores temporis acti? I thought so for a long time and never allowed their statements to carry any weight. I have discussed this question over and over again, not with one or two natives, but with dozens of the most serious and sincere people, under various circumstances and in regions far removed from one another. Yet all supported the same argument, and I could never make my point of view prevail. I always received the same reply: "You Whites are not willing to believe us when we tell you what we know better than you, what is the pure truth. You are so involved in your own point of view!" Finally, before so much formal testimony -- uniform, unchanging, repeated ad nauseum in such varied circumstances as to individuals, times, and places -- my attachment to my own idea began, with some regret, to falter.

But how is it possible to resolve the contradiction between a rather broad liberty and the practice of chastity? And above all how can less than fifty years have sufficed to transform any attachment to virginity into licentiousness? The difficulty presents itself for relations between adults, but it is especially great with respect to reprehensible contacts between nonadults, because of the terrible sanction that we have described above.

The first objection may be partially met if we take into account the habit of "the fear of men," which is acquired and maintained through the severe prohibition against sexual relations before physical maturity and the terrible punishment with which the transgressor is threatened. [86]

The second objection on the other hand is much more serious. It is the one which above all has always kept me from accepting the

174 896 [175] thesis of the natives. This is how it is refuted by those who contradict me: "When the first black soldiers and their assistants, archers, and spear carriers were sent by the Whites to conquer us, they committed all sorts of atrocities and permitted themselves all the licentious acts that occurred to them. Among other things they took advantage of young girls, even those who were not nubile. They required immature girls to engage in sexual intercourse. They even went so far as to force people to commit incest, uniting mother and son, father and daughter, pointing a gun at their breasts. (1)

1. The fact that the soldiers required that immature girls be delivered over to them, because they were afraid of venereal diseases, is still notorious.

These accusations are so shocking and repugnant that one refuses to admit their veracity. Yet it is possible that they correspond to reality. For one thing, the informants are entirely reliable. For another, the account is internally consistent. As a matter of fact, scenes of the sort described seemed to have occurred at the beginning of almost all colonizations. Their authors were usually the natives of other regions rather than Whites (in our area Europeans were almost entirely absent from the first contacts between the inhabitants and the new power). By the nature of things anything can be expected at such a time. For occupations are carried out under martial law. And everyone is aware that war unleashes the human beast which -- as even contemporary history abundantly shows -- is capable of worse and more repugnant excesses.

It is possible to object to all this for, if the assertions of the natives are true, the events they describe did not give rise to a practice of incest and, consequently, need not have given rise to the far-reaching changes which we have observed. [87] But the two situations are entirely different. For licentious behavior between single people is more or less consistent with the passionate tendencies of human nature, which were mostly checked by the fear of a sanction -- a terrible sanction, it is true, but it was shown in fact to be nonexistent. Incest,

177
836
on the other hand, is extremely repugnant by nature, especially for the Nkundó. It is a vice which comes about only as a result of special beliefs or through a fundamental degeneration of sexuality.

The breaking up of the framework of traditional organization may furnish a partial explanation in this realm as in many others. In the case of sexual relations between single adults, it might even be deemed sufficient. As much may be said about greed, vanity, the desire for ostentation and display. These are very natural sentiments in a woman, and they were greatly stimulated by the dazzling riches imported from Europe. But these facts are not sufficient in themselves to account for everything. They are especially and entirely inadequate in explaining the considerable changes in the relations between immature children, and we are thus forced to accept the explanation given by serious natives.

3. Children born out of wedlock

848
Among the Nkundó, giving birth to a child outside of wedlock has never from time immemorial been considered a grave misdemeanor. It is not considered criminal, as ethnographers say it is among many other African peoples.

Furthermore, this attitude logically follows from the liberty permitted to adolescents, as described above. Neither the woman nor her lover are harassed or punished as a result. On the contrary, the grandparents joyfully receive the child, who adds to the size, power, and wealth of the clan. [88] For an illegitimate child (*entombó*) (1) does not belong to its natural father. It is incorporated into the mother's family. It is said that he is born without a father. His

593
617

---

1. Such a child is also known as *bona óa wané*, "child of the sunlight," or *bona óa bombamboka*, "child of the highway" or "of a girl of the streets." Among the Bombomba the term *bokelankólo* is also heard.

835 allied district of the Bombomba). The same is true of the Bontole.
614 Elángá and Imomo, together with Eleke (Lokongo), comprise the posterity of the son of Ambá, who was the sister of Iloko, Eángá, and Bokungú, the latter being the ancestor of the Bontole. The three groups do not intermarry. Between the Elángá and the Imomo, lonkâna relations are also not permitted, but they are practiced with the Bontole. Note that the term lonkâna is never applied to relations between truly separate clans, that is, between exogamous entities.

To define the precise limits of this practice we would have to examine each kin group separately, and this would lead us too far afield.

It should also be noted that lonkâna may be limited to an isolated act, or it can become an intermittent concubinage. The name of the practice does not change when it involves a married woman who is visiting her family. Sanctions against adultery are applicable to such a case, however, as to all others. (1) Although the relatives of the woman are more lenient than if the adulterous relations had occurred with a different lover, the husband whose rights have been infringed on makes no such distinction.

835 The custom of lonkâna seems rather strange. After all, if
614 sexual relations between these clans are not reprehensible, why is
174 marriage between them forbidden? This is an apparent contradiction which merits attention. Should not this practice be viewed as a relaxation of the law of exogamy? In past times all sexual relations between members of the clans under discussion would have been forbidden, a very natural phenomenon when the families originated. [99] Later the young people would have succumbed to the temptation, and little by little infractions would even have multiplied. For as the clans became increasingly extended, the temptations became more and more numerous and the rule, now detached from its natural significance because very distant kinship was involved, came to seem more or less arbitrary to the interested parties. It was supported by no sanction or

---

1. See Chapter VI, Article VIII.

835 614 174 fear. (1) Thus the very number of violations would have gradually

> 1. Actually, no sanction is provided against marriages within an exogamous entity; everything lies in the opposition of parents and elders and in a habit which is almost innate.

made the practice customary. Powerless to stop it, the persons in authority, guardians of traditional morality, would have contented themselves with channeling the development and restricting it to a minimum by being lenient on the subject of extramarital relations in order to save the principle of exogamy. This explanatory hypothesis can find a little confirmation in the fact that at the very beginning of colonization when European influence was not felt as yet, there were isolated and very rare cases of marriage in opposition to the law of exogamy between members of groups which were only very distantly related but already practiced lonkâna. The exception then became the rule; and from then on the two groupings in question intermarried regularly and without hindrance, while other families remained under the ancient law. Thus there is the known case of Boyela village (Bakɛala), which includes the Bokambɛ, Bembakɔ, Besɔlɔ, and Bekɔlama (extinct), all descendants of Ngonde and one wife; his union with another spouse gave rise to the Lilekɛ and the Likongo, to whom Bongilɛ, a group related through marriage (likilo), is attached. These two groups of families could not intermarry, but they did engage in lonkâna. Around the time of the first arrival of the Whites, a member of the Bembakɔ [100] family a certain Bonjɔmbɔ was impelled by an excessive love to violate the law of exogamy by taking Bolondɔ of Lilekɛ for his wife. As his love did not cool and the marriage proved stable, it was recognized and accepted as legitimate. Since then the two groups in question have each become exogamous.

835 754 2. Between close relatives

Incest between close relatives has no special name of its own. As a matter of fact, it never occurs as an outgrowth of passion. We

584 But if the indicated difference between them were fundamental, this
583 fact would by no means provide a sufficient explanation. On the
178 other hand, if it were only a slight nuance without practical consequences, it would not, it seems to me, adequately explain the existence of the two payments, especially since in the past quite a long time could elapse between them.

● Therefore we can wonder whether the basis of a greater differ-
174 ence might not be found in the hypothesis of its being a primitive
583 custom.

584 For instance, the ikulá could have been the payment accompanying a proposal of marriage comparable to our European engagement. Then, when unresolvable palavers developed out of this situation, a system may have been devised which would not prevent disputes from arising but would make possible their resolution according to proper and just legal regulations. This system would have been the payment of a ndanga.

While this is a possible explanation, it is not a very plausible one. Native law appears in all domains so reasonable, cautious, and wise, and so well adapted to circumstances, that it would hardly have left a way open to so great a source of difficulties in so important a matter. Such a possibility can hardly be admitted by any one who is even slightly familiar with the mentality of the Nkundó. Then, too, the modern blending of the ikulá and the ndanga suggests that one of two is duplicating the function of the other. And the consequence of this development would have been the uniting of the two payments into one, with a single purpose, or more probably, in conformity with the general practice, the transferring of the significance of a pledge, theoretically assigned to the ndanga, to the ikulá. [123] The existence of a single engagement payment would have been much more in accordance with the present hypothesis than the practice of making two distinct payments, which are independent and separated in time. We should add here that the acceptance of a responsibility is always and under all circumstances accompanied by the handing over of a ndanga.

We could conceive of a second hypothesis, which seems more in accordance with reality. The ikulá may originally have been an engagement payment, as in the first hypothesis, only the girl may

174 not have accompanied her husband to his home. She would have re-
584 mained with her parents, and her fiancé would probably have had per-
583 mission to visit her and to have sexual relations with her; as we have seen in the preceding chapter, native law does not oppose such relations. Since the mutual desire for cohabitation could not be put off for the period of time -- often long -- required before the bride-price payment itself could be arranged, the girl's parents would have given their child permission to follow her heart's inclinations which -- let us repeat -- could provoke only difficulties of a legal, "civil" nature. And before the fiancé could take his future wife home with him, he had first to reassure the parents and free them from their responsibility by taking it upon himself in an official manner, that is, by giving proof of his willingness to accept all the consequences of his action. In Lonkundo such a pledge is called *ndanga*. Later on, the time of cohabitation may have been begun earlier, by permitting it from the time of the *ikulá*. Thus in practice the reason for the existence of the *ndanga* would have been transferred to the *ikulá*, and the *ndanga* would have been retained simply as a payment imposed by custom, until the day when the overthrow of ancient customs made the Nkundó perceive the logical consequences of the facts, resulting in the merging of the two payments into one. This hypothesis is also confirmed by the fact that the very name *ikulá* is tending to disappear, [124] yielding to the use of the single term *ndanga*. Finally, to align this hypothesis with the facts pertaining to the term *bompáka* presented in number 4, we must assume that in the past the fiancée moved to the home of her husband only after the *ndanga* and consequently became *bompáka* only at that time.

8. The breaking of an engagement

584

The breaking of an engagement does not involve great legal difficulties. Both the man and the woman are free to break it if they find that they are basically incompatible, or that the prospects for happiness are not good, or for any other reason. There are certain practical stipulations, however.

584 is based solely on the nature of this state, which is a direct prepara-
583x tion for married life. Therefore, if the union is not completed, the
177 fiancé is enriched at the expense of the parents-in-law.

2) When an engagement is broken, the parents lose the legitimate and normal expectation of a full bride price; they consider this loss lucrum cessans.

The natives' justification is not sufficient to explain the origin
584 of the change, however, for:
583x 1) It seems likely that the Nkundó have simply imitated the
●174 practice of other peoples of the Congo with whom they have become
177 acquainted since colonization, and that their explanation is but an
explanation of convenience.

2) The reasons invoked in favor of the change are not new; they were equally valid in the past, and such as they are and in themselves they are therefore insufficient.

3) If we examine the reason concerning the benefit that the fiancé derives from the [126] woman's work, we find that it is based on a fallacious argument. For Nkundó law recognizes, on the one hand, the legitimacy of this gain and, on the other, the right of each party to break the engagement. Simply the breaking of the engagement cannot, therefore, result in the payment of an indemnity, since one cannot possibly be punished for having made use of a right.

4) The above objection is also applicable to the second reason given by the Nkundó: the possibility of the bride price not being paid is inherent in the essence of the engagement, since both parties are free not to go through with the union.

Thus the reasons given as such must be rejected.

Nevertheless, it is possible that modern circumstances have to some extent modified the nature of the problem. Thus:

1) The introduction of European wage labor and trade has given the Blacks a new idea of wealth. Consequently, the benefits reaped from the engagement have become much greater (through the development of trade and the availability of more varied goods and greater riches), and therefore the economic value of a woman has increased in considerable proportions.

Theoretically, these changes might justify some indemnification. In practice, however, economic development has increased the

583* amount of the engagement payment and thus counterbalances the in-
584 crease of the profit brought by a woman.

● 174 Indemnification for economic reasons would also have one
177 good result, namely that it would prevent a possible skewing of the system into a form of exploitation which would consist of taking fiancées for a time when they are needed for some special work and sending them back when the work is finished. [127]

But it must be noted that though the precaution may be good in itself, it is not called for under present circumstances, for the Nkundó do not even think of such a corruption of engagement customs.

2. Colonization has considerably reinforced -- or perhaps even introduced -- in native thinking the idea that the favors of a woman deserve a salary. I think that these circumstances have contributed much more to the origin of the new practice than economic changes -- or rather, that the justification for it is primarily based on this idea of venal love. And in that case we have before us a pretium stupri of a sort that could foster prostitution, and which is therefore in opposition to morality and public order.

Just as we must applaud the normal developments of the custom and its adaptation to the possibilities of social and moral elevation that colonization has created, so we must react against its corruption, aberrations, deviations, and a drift toward the exploitation of faults and vices.

Another objection against the innovation may be made on the grounds of its inconsistency within Nkundó law. Since there is no indemnification in the case of divorce, how is it possible to accept it in the case of the breaking of an engagement, which is a much weaker commitment than marriage itself? It is true that a Nkundó engagement is almost a marriage, since it includes cohabitation, etc.; nevertheless, it is not as tight a bond as a permanent union, from which it is clearly distinguished. The new custom leads logically to the conclusion that it is preferable to complete the union and make it definitive by paying the entire bride price and then to break it by means of a real divorce, which does not involve this financial loss.

Finally, although an indemnity based on the increase in the fiancé's profit from the engagement cannot be [128] condemned as

583x unjust in itself, it certainly becomes so if it is considered a penalty
584 inflicted for the rupture. For the indemnity is restricted to the man,
174 whether or not he is in the wrong. Furthermore, to accept an indemnity
177 even when the engagement is broken because of the woman tends to
favor frauds and real swindles on the part of the woman and her parents,
in short a kind of traffic in women.

It is also evident that the rich (polygamists) suffer much less
[585] from the innovation than do monogamous men, especially those who
[794] adopt monogamy as a principle and more especially the Christians,
who do not condone divorce. Thus I am of the opinion that the desire to defend polygamy against the doctrine of the missionaries is not entirely unrelated to the transformation of this custom.

000 All these considerations show that the question is highly complex and that it would be better if the ancient custom were restored.

If the breaking of the engagement is due to wrongs, the new custom could perhaps be tolerated, though it is not without serious dangers, but the indemnity should be imposed exclusively on the party at fault. Furthermore, the wrongs would have to be serious, and on the other hand, the indemnity would have to be, not in the nature of a forfeit, but of a payment of damages commensurate with the extent of the damage suffered and the seriousness of the wrong. And here those cases should especially be considered where the breaking of the engagement is accompanied by proceedings of a vexatious and insulting nature. And though it is a very delicate task to evaluate all these elements, we must not forget to take them into account.

It seems to me that the ancient law must still be maintained when the engagement is broken simply because of a change of feelings for which neither party is to blame, if such a case occurs. For it is better not to innovate than to innovate too fast. [129]

Article IV. Walo -- Bombuluku

583x The walo or bombuluku is the bulk of the bride price paid for a marriage. Between the payment of the ndanga and that of the walo, 583ˣ 607 The mutuality of the rights of *nkɔ́lɔ́* and *nkita* is well expressed in the saying, *ɔ́mbátɛ́ ńkoátɛ́ wɛ̌*, "possess me so that I may possess you." It is like *do ut des*.

583ˣ 607 182 [611] It is possible to judge from the preceding descriptions that the bride price has a considerable influence on family relations. Although the Nkundɔ́ system is clearly and manifestly patriarchal, the custom of the bride price and its logical consequences give it certain features which make one think of a matriarchy. This situation comes about quite naturally. Since the bride price is wealth it represents power in society. Through marriage this power is transferred from the husband's clan to the wife's, which is enriched in goods and persons by the bride price that has been received. In a sense, the husband is the provider of his wife's clan. And the child can truthfully maintain that his clan was enriched thanks to his father. As a matter of fact, for the Nkundɔ́, this consideration above all others is the basis for their demands of whatever rights they possess in the mother's clan. [170] The relationship between a woman and her *nkita* and between their respective children is founded solely on the bride-price system of marriage and has nothing to do with matriarchy. (1)

> 1. But the above considerations may furnish one source of explanation for the origin of that family system.

Consequently, it is unnecessary to erect complicated theories or engage in tortuous speculations in order to explain the creation of this system or to justify it. It is quite simply the outcome of the payment of a bride price in valuables that are of no use except in connection with a similar purpose.

Nevertheless, although the system of the *nkita* is a natural and logical consequence of marriage by means of a bride price, it is not a necessary consequence. The bride price exists in all the tribes of the Congo, but it does not seem to have resulted everywhere in the institution of the *nkita*.

583ˣ • 174 114 607 What has given rise to this institution among the Nkundɔ́? Father Brepoels (*loc. cit.*, p. 339) gives the following explanation:

174 "The sale (sic) of the woman and her loss of liberty must naturally
583x have aroused her indignation. The man probably had a great deal
114 of difficulty in persuading her to resign herself to it. It was neces-
607 sary to arrange for some compensation and that is how the system of the nkita originated. That is how the woman acquired rights over her nkita and how nonexistent prerogatives were attributed to her children: they became the superiors, the "fathers" of the mothers' family . . . . The elders, the wealthy, profited from this system, which released them from any concern for their daughters: the girls could be sold while they were still very young and then if, later, they complained of the injustice that had been done them, the elders consoled them by reminding them of their rights and those of their sons over the nkita and her offspring . . . moreover, this system released the elders from their duty of obtaining wives for their sons and removed any reason for the latter to claim their father's wives."

This explanation for the origin of the nkita system is unthinkable, for it is entirely contrary to everything [171] we know about the nature of Nkundó marriage. But it seems plausible that the fact that the old father benefited from this institution helped it to flower and spread. Native greed also may have played a role.

583x Nevertheless, we must seek beyond the operation of causes
174 which have contributed to the spread and retention of the system in
607 Nkundó society for those that led to its origin.

Need we invent complicated hypotheses for this purpose? It seems to me that we need not; we can be satisfied with the native explanation: the nkóló's rights over the nkita spring naturally from her dominance over the latter, for the nkita's marriage was made possible by the valuables paid for the nkóló; whereas the rights of the nkóló's sons over the nkita's children are derived from the fact that in the Nkundó hierarchy the relationship of the latter to the former is that of "son" to "father."

The secondary causes mentioned above, together with the necessity of reconciling the interests of the various members of the family, subsequently amplified the system.

583x Exceptionally it may happen that a mother becomes her
607 daughter's nkita. Such was the historic case of Bekombe of Belondó (Bonjoku) and her daughter, Mbélá. The daughter's bride price was

[

583x 177 It would be good to counteract that much increase in bride prices. For there is a danger that it will condemn to bachelorhood many young men who could otherwise build a home out of the fruits of their own labor. [182]

589x 586x The second meaning of the term "traffic in bride prices" has a more precise application. After a divorce all the valuables must be returned to the husband. Consequently, the new husband must pay at least as much as the first, and in general he even has to add a supplement for the family who, after all, have incurred expenses for the palaver. And so it continues. Thus the more husbands a woman has in succession, the more her bride price increases. It seems to me that this practice is in no way to be condemned. The increase is reasonable. For it not only constitutes some compensation to the woman's family for their troubles but, in addition it may exercise a good influence on the social condition of the people. If it is to have such an influence, divorce must not become a means of satisfying greed (in general, at the present time, it has not yet become such a means), and the increase must not be excessive.

000 In such cases the increase in the bride price can thus have a wholesome effect on the morality and stability of marriages by making men afraid of marrying a divorcée and, as a result, making women more cautious and less flighty. Here everything depends on caution, restraint, and supervision on the part of responsible authorities. [183]

4. The reason for the existence of the bride price

583x 174 This is a question which should not be asked of the natives; they do not know how to answer it. Nor do the facts provide any certainty. All that can be attempted is the construction of a hypothesis which fits the reality.

The following explanatory theories have been put forward: that it is a compensation to the woman's family for the loss of a member (see, for example, Seitz in Africa, Vol. 3, p. 85, and also Torday in Africa, Vol. 2, p. 275, under "Exchange"); that it is a payment for fecundity; and finally, that it is a guarantee of the

583 stability of the marriage and harmony in the household (see, for
174 example, Torday, *loc. cit.*, pp. 274 ff.).

It is apparent from the description of the payment of the bride price that the Nkundo data tends primarily to support the last of these three theses, though the first is not excluded and perhaps both can be combined in a single explanation.

The bride price includes one portion which is somewhat special, namely the *bosongo*. Now what is the reason for the existence of this special payment? Although later in the text (Chapter VIII) we will note some relevant facts concerning the refunding of the bride price, which may provide a clearer understanding, we can already indicate here a few explanations that have been put forward. Various colonials have often suggested that the slave is demanded as a replacement for the woman, that the loss sustained by her family with respect to her activities (childbearing, work) (1) had to be

1. See Chapter VI, Article II.

compensated for by handing over a human being who could work for the family and give them children (the children of a slave always remained dependents of their father's master). This explanation is clearly an application of the compensation theory to the case of the *bosongo*. And with reference to this special portion of the bride price, the rules of Nkundó law favor the hypothesis in question. [184] A man who has not made this last payment loses his rights over one of his daughters, whose bride price enriches the mother's clan by providing the means for procuring another wife. The explanations given by the natives, however, give the impression that this rule is a sort of sanction, though in reality it is not, as we have seen.

5. The essential component of the bride price

583x As we have seen, the bride price consists of several payments: the *ikulé* and the *nlanga*, both promissory payments; the *walo*, which is the first part of the actual bride price, and the *bosongo*, which completes the bride price. The *belonge*, etc. need not be considered.

432
575
174 If we examine the data on the geographical distribution of this custom in relation to the ethnic nature of the practicing tribes, we are led to assume that it is not of Nkundó origin. The tribes that do not practice it do not approve of it among their neighbors; rather they hold them in contempt because of it, since for them a purchased woman is a slave. Thus they make fun of them saying, "They sell their women like slaves or goats." Could this be evidence that the [illegible]-Bolóngó are not pure Nkundó, or that they have been subjected to foreign influences? Would the same be true of the riverain tribes who practice the purchase of women?

Article VIII. General Conclusions

581 Having analyzed in detail the various forms of marriage and pseudo-marital unions among the Nkundó, we must now make a synthesis.

Certain kinds of unions are considered legitimate marriages by the Nkundó although they differ to some degree from the standard marriage because they are adapted to special circumstances. Among these are a widow's marriage with the heir of the deceased and a marriage by replacement after a divorce. As for ourselves, we can go along with native opinion, for when these unions are concluded in the normal fashion they involve nothing which is contrary to our conception of a valid marriage. (1)

1. This is true of a replacement after divorce only when the dissolution of the previous marriage is legitimate and valid in every respect.

Other types of union, on the other hand, are not considered by the Nkundó [223] to correspond, or only very imperfectly, to their idea of a regular marriage. The union of a widow with a distant relative of the deceased is only a sort of legitimate concubinage. The offer of a wife as security, the exchange or purchase of women, are considered as absolutely inferior forms of union. Therefore it is better to designate these by the term "pseudo-marital unions." For although they are accepted as legitimate by the tribes among

684 592 There is no sanction against the infraction of the law of exogamy. There is only the opposition of the parents and patriarchs, and a quasi-innate habit.

592 614 Note also that members of certain clans frequently marry members of certain others, among whom they prefer to choose their wives. Therefore a good proportion of the women married into any given family will belong to one particular clan. The Wafé (Bokfala), for instance take a great many of their wives from among the Bongale w'Iteme.

178 592 614 We may reasonably assume that the ancestors of related groups, who now marry among themselves, formerly practiced exogamy. If this assumption is correct, it must be admitted that with the progressive growth of families, this rule has been relaxed in certain respects so that the present situation has resulted. Consequently, it would not be surprising if these legal provisions became even less rigorous in the future. Actually, some young people have begun to [178] violate the rules of exogamy and their example has freed the whole family. (2) Thus the Bokfola maintain that their two groupings,

2. See Chapter I, Article VII, 1.

Bompolo and Ilóngó, who now intermarry, formerly comprised a [251] single exogamous entity. Contemporary instances appear here and there, but they remain very rare, even between persons who are very distantly related, and much rarer between close kin. (1) For the

1. A recent case was that of Elímá and Bokfíla, who both belonged to the exogamous group of Bokenyola of the Bonjoku, but one belonged to the Bosfkí Bokóyó family and the other to the Bosfkí Njoli.

Nkundó still feel very strongly about this law. The bulk of the people are entirely opposed to any laxity or violations and the patriarchs and notables act against them with all their power. But the strength of

[74] thesis of the natives. This is how it is refuted by those who contradict
[86] me: "When the first black soldiers and their assistants, archers, and
● [75] spear carriers were sent by the Whites to conquer us, they committed
all sorts of atrocities and permitted themselves all the licentious acts
that occurred to them. Among other things they took advantage of
young girls, even those who were not nubile. They required immature
girls to engage in sexual intercourse. They even went so far as to
force people to commit incest, uniting mother and son, father and
daughter, pointing a gun at their breasts. (1)

1. The fact that the soldiers required that immature girls be delivered over to them, because they were afraid of venereal diseases, is still notorious.

These accusations are so shocking and repugnant that one refuses to admit their veracity. Yet it is possible that they correspond to reality. For one thing, the informants are entirely reliable. For another, the account is internally consistent. As a matter of fact, scenes of the sort described seemed to have occurred at the beginning of almost all colonizations. Their authors were usually the natives of other regions rather than Whites (in our area Europeans were almost entirely absent from the first contacts between the inhabitants and the new power). By the nature of things anything can be expected at such a time. For occupations are carried out under martial law. And *everyone is aware that war unleashes the human beast* which -- as even contemporary history abundantly shows -- is capable of worse and more repugnant excesses.

It is possible to object to all this for, if the assertions of the natives are true, the events they describe did not give rise to a practice of incest and, consequently, need not have given rise to the far-reaching changes which we have observed. [87] But the two situations are entirely different. For licentious behavior between single people is more or less consistent with the passionate tendencies of human nature, which were mostly checked by the fear of a sanction -- a terrible sanction, it is true, but it was shown in fact to be nonexistent. Incest,

M 342 with rattan thongs. These walls are very strong and durable. The roof is usually covered with thatch, but it frequently happens that the native also uses panels of [illegible] to cover his hut. [43]

M 361 Among the peoples who live west of the lake, the huts are grouped in clusters of two or three and placed in two parallel lines. The free space between the clusters is very limited, so much so that at first sight all the huts seem to be continuous. The doors always open on the large street.

M 342 ●177 656 We also visited a number of villages where earthen dwellings, built by administrative order, stretched out the whole length of the village. As a rule, however, these huts, which we regard as an improvement from the standpoint of hygiene and comfort, were not favored by the natives. The Negro had carried out the task imposed upon him, but he refused to enjoy it. His primitive hut, which was better adapted to the necessities of his life, retained its appeal and its occupants.

M 361 342 Among the Tumba of the east shore of the lake, we observed that the hut tends to present certain characteristics relating it to the type of hut with an arched roof found among the Boli [(3)] and farther north. The ridge, instead of being straight, extends beyond the ends of the hut and dips down, giving the whole structure the appearance of a bow bent [44] chiefly at the two ends. In certain dwellings the doors are placed in the side wall facing the main thoroughfare, and the huts are built in groups standing more or less close together. In other huts, on the other hand, the door is located in the gable wall and opens on a small veranda formed by the projecting roof front. The huts built this way are placed in a line, but are separated, and although the space between the two lines forms the chief thoroughfare of the village, each hut nevertheless boasts a small individual courtyard in front of the veranda. As to the method of construction, it is identical to those we noted in the region west of the lake.

M S 361 342 Among the peoples of the lower Lukenie, the huts are also built by the same method and with identical materials. The door, however, is nearly always in the gable wall, at the end where the roof projects, slightly curved, to form the veranda. When the huts are separated, one notices again a tendency toward an arc in the

the main axis [31] of the village. This door is always placed rather high and closes on an inner slide. Since *nse-nse* and *ndele* are lacking in this region, the framework of the huts is made of stakes and pieces of raffia, and the walls and roof are covered with raffia leaves plaited flat in the form of a mat. 342

The huts are built singly, a method which again reminds one of the customs of the Oshwe-Bambuli region. The native does sometimes cover his hut with grass, but this is very rare.

In this region we also observed that in certain villages the huts were arranged in family groupings and that each group had a special area clearly set apart from the rest of the village. The various huts of a single group are inside a fairly solid stake fence from one and three-quarters to two meters high and sometimes covered with mats of raffia leaves. The doors of all the huts within an enclosure open toward the interior of the courtyard. 361 592 591

Fig. 33. Interior of a Lupango and Drying Peanuts, Bena Dibele-Kole Region.

The whole forms the *lupango*. By counting the number of huts in a *lupango* one may determine how many wives the chief or head of the place has, since each one has her own home. [32] The *lupango* are of recent introduction and are derived from Arab influence. One cannot take them into account in establishing relationships of kinship or ethnic affinity between the different peoples. There is no connection whatever between the *lupango* of the Bena Dibele-Kole region and the familial grouping of huts 592 [177]

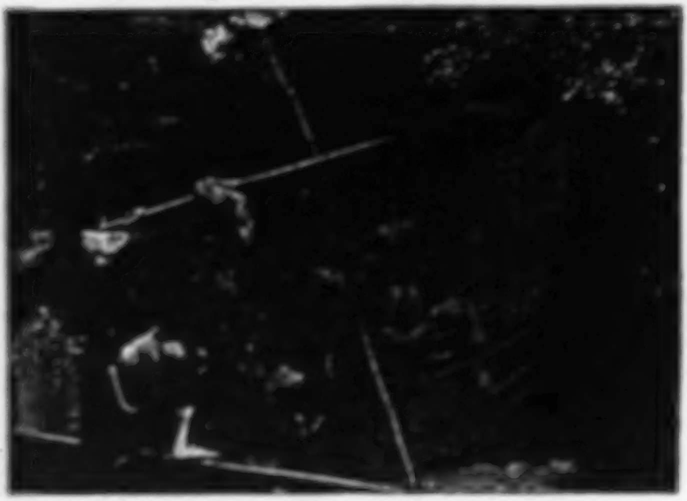
Nkundo

paragraph beginning on page 97 and continued on page 98 is not translated.] 088

[98] On the whole, we note the following special ethnic characteristics. 241

1) Uniformity in the cultivation of manioc, the staple food of all of these peoples.

2) Undertaking the cultivation of maize under the influence of the ephemeral encouragement of Bula Matari [Ed., the European administration] among the peoples of the Congo-Kasai, and rice cultivation under Arab influence in the region of Bena Dibele-Kole. Contrary to what we noted concerning maize, the innovation introduced by the Arabs has become firmly implanted in the life of these natives, and the cultivation of rice will probably eliminate manioc eventually. 241/177



[226]

Fig. 58. Weir Fishing at a Dam among the Mosengere.
Closing the Screens and Capturing the Trapped Fish.

3) Formation of a zone of sugar-cane cultivation, the development of which is in inverse proportion to the extent of the palm groves.

4) Complete absence of animal husbandry of any importance. 231

5) Uniformity in the methods of communal hunting and the gradual development of attendant religious customs and practices from east to west, corresponding to a decline in hunting by individuals with traditional weapons. This fact leads us to suppose 224/776

Making Fire

M
372 The natives of the Kasai-Fimi-Lukenie region make fire in three different ways.

The Bateke and Banfumungu of the river use flint and steel; the Banfumungu of the interior, the Boboma, Mosengere, Tumba,

M
[516]

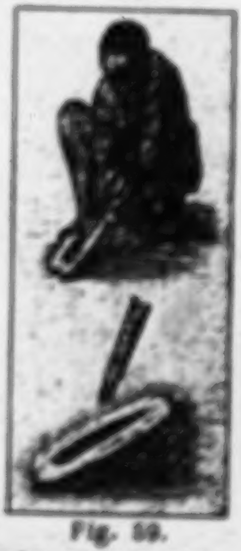


Fig. 59.
Making Fire by Friction.

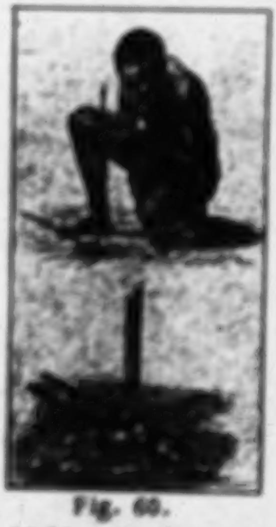


Fig. 60.
Making Fire by Rotation.

Wadia, Basakata, Bobaie, Balesa, Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and some of the Yaelima use the friction method [102] or longitudinal rubbing; and the Yaelima of the east, the Basongo-Meno, and the Bankutshu of the Bena-Dibele-Kole region obtain fire by gyration or rotary rubbing.

M
[177] The native method tends to disappear rapidly everywhere with the introduction of matches, although most of the natives have kept their primitive strike-a-light and always carry it with them on journeys. If there are no matches or if through some circumstance -- the humidity, the crossing of a river or marsh -- the matches will not work, the native takes out his strike-a-light and makes fire by the native method.

T
372 The strike-a-light of the Bateke and Banfumungu of the river consists of an iron or steel blade from three to eight centimeters long and two to three centimeters wide, a flint (a mere

372 Yaelima, the apparatus consists of two small cylindrical rods. [104] One of the rods, cut from relatively soft wood, has one or more notches. The other, rounded at one end, is of hard wood. The notched rod is placed over the tinder; the other one is held perpendicularly, with the round end inserted in the notch. The native gives the latter rod a rapid rotary motion by spinning it between his hands. At the same time he slides his hands from top to bottom in order to increase the pressure as much as possible.

Fig. 61
Rod and Small Board with Notches.

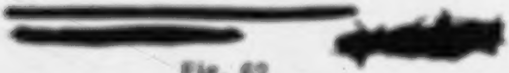


Fig. 62
Two rods, One with Notches.

The special skill consists in producing this motion with as few pauses as possible. This is why several natives usually participate. One holds the notched rod in place, a second one spins the other rod, while a third stands by ready to maintain the gyrating motion as soon as his companion reaches the bottom of the rod. The first spinner will relieve the other in turn. After several rotations, a small incandescent spot appears in the charred wood dust in the notch, and a spark falls on the tinder, which catches fire.

The areas in which these three methods of making fire are found form three distinct ethnic zones in the region visited.

The first one includes only the Batake and part of the Banfumungu and is characterized by use of the iron blade and flint.

The second one with the system of friction or longitudinal rubbing extends from the interior of Banfumungu territory to the center of the region occupied by the Yaelima. [105]

The third, with the system of gyration or rotary rubbing, includes the easternmost part of Yaelima territory and the whole Bena Dibele-Kole region.

372
177

372 This last method has also been noted among the Balesa,
177 and we were able to verify that some of the natives in the region were familiar with it and used it. It is not indigenous to this tribe, however, and must have been introduced into the region by soldiers or laborers from the old Tolo post, who came from regions where this method was known.

It is also possible that the eastern Yaelima borrowed this method from the peoples of the south, although we were unable to obtain any precise information on this point. This hypothesis, however, is justified by the fact that we found the friction and gyration methods in certain Yaelima villages, and the natives preferred to use the latter method in every such instance. It must be noted that the gyration method is not only less tiring but also faster and permits the natives to take turns. It provides a *maximum* of yield for a *minimum* of work. There is, therefore, nothing astonishing in the fact that wherever the natives have had an opportunity to observe the advantages of this method, they have made a point of adopting it.

372 In our opinion, the friction or longitudinal rubbing method should be regarded as having been used exclusively in former times by all the tribes, from the Basfamungu to the Yaelima. This method may still be found among the tribes of the Dekese region, but, unfortunately, we were unable to substantiate this.

All these peoples in this respect would belong to the same ethnic group, which is clearly differentiated from the group of tribes in the Bena Dibele-Kole region.

Salt

258 The preparation of salt occupies an important place in the life of certain tribes of the Kasai-Lukenie region. Lacking both salt mines and salt water in their territory, the natives proceeded to obtain this precious condiment, indispensable to the diet, by extracting it from plants. [106]

Wherever the introduction of imported products has not eliminated the native method, the extraction of salt is a veritable national industry. The whole community participates in it.

[177] Among the Bateke, Basfamungu, Baboma, and part of the Wadia, the introduction of salt has completely eliminated the use and preparation of native salt.

M
301

Bracelets and anklets are relatively rare as ornaments among the Mosengere and other riparian tribes of the lake. We found them from time to time among the Bobaie and Balesa.

The elegantly dressed women of the Ipanga-Batitu and Bokala wear heavy brass rings over the ankles, brass rings on the fingers and toes, and leather belts adorned with brass beads, while the necklaces of solid brass gradually disappear as one goes eastward. Among the Yaelima and Bokala they are practically nonexistent, but the men and women like bracelets of brass wire. They wear them like a sheath from the wrist to the elbow. Except for rare exceptions, these people do not wear rings around the ankles. Some dignitaries deck themselves out with imported bead necklaces. The belt decorated with brass beads is rather commonly used. In the Bena-Dibele-Kole region, ornaments of copper and brass seem to be disappearing little by little as imported beads come in. Necklaces of glass beads, incidentally have been introduced throughout the region [184] we visited. They are particularly in vogue among the Ipanga and Batitu women. The men prefer necklaces made of hair from elephants' tails, or a simple brass ring.

Fig. 105. Two Wadia Women and a Child, Wearing Solid Brass Necklaces.

S
[301,
854]

M
[177]

Bracelets and rings of brass are worn by men from Stanley Pool to Kole. The Bokala and Yaelima dignitaries wear rings

304 832 [177 291] personal vanity, and to excite the male. At the present time only the latter reason accounts for the practice in the region where our influence has been effective. The introduction of European fabrics, the expansion of the economy and the progress of civilization have led the women to clothe themselves and to hide and screen a large part of the body from indiscreet glances. [189] The small primitive loincloth has given way to a toga of variable length, which hides from the public eye that part [Fig. 112 appears here] of the body which is covered with tattoos. In

[291 301 304 142]

Fig. 115. Elegant Lady of the Bokala-Yaelima Region. Tattoos, Bracelets, and Necklaces.

such cases, the woman can no longer display her tattoos for the sake of vanity. [Figs. 113 and 114 appear here] If, despite this, 304 833 some of them continue to have themselves tattooed just like the old matrons, it is because they hope to attract a man, to please him, and to be able to participate sooner in the pleasures of intimate life. When questioned on this subject, the natives are very definite. The men maintain that the raised tattoos [190] on

101
619
[825]

> recollection of an animal of the leopard family which they call bokonga. Their description of it corresponds to the lion. Some soldiers and other expatriates, who were also young people, shown representations of a lion immediately identified it with their bokonga.

The groups under discussion here lived for a time on the banks of the Luwo (Maringa) and the [11] upper Ikelemba, (1) then under

[173] 1. It appears that between the Ikelemba and its tributary the Losálifa, there is still a bonkom tree called w'āmenga (of bald heads) under which, according to tradition, the ancestors held their councils. Nearby there is a bosáá whose fruits never ripen.

pressure from other Móngo tribes, they crossed the Tshuapa-Ruki. They evicted the Ekonda and settled in their present location. This exodus must have taken place a fairly long time ago; it is impossible to determine the date and difficult to make any estimates. In any case it must have occurred 150 to 200 years ago.

244 These peoples are primarily farmers; they grow chiefly bananas, manioc, yams, colocasia [taro], sweet potatoes, sugar cane, and various vegetables and condiments. The food crops they grow, together with what they gather and the Elaeis palm trees provide them with a continuous and abundant food supply, as long as elephants do [231] not interfere. Their domestic animals include chickens, goats, and 224 dogs. (2) Hunting is a pleasant change of activity rather than an

[171] 2. Ducks have been introduced fairly recently, but they were known long before colonial times. They came from the south. Sheep have been introduced only in the last few decades, and they are found only in a few villages on the river banks in the lowlands.

291 184 The nkɔ́sɔ́ is unknown beyond the Jwalɛ́ and the Luilaka. In that region the women tie a string (or a belt of beads) around themselves and attach a second piece of cloth to it.

291 Thus the male garment is a rudimentary sort of shorts, open on the sides, while female dress is much more open. In general the efufa is an appropriate protection of one's modesty, but it is inadequate in certain positions. (2)

[611] [196] 2. It may be interesting to note that etɔ́o nsamɔ́nyɔ́, or just plain etɔ́o, which is the term for a man's garment, also indicates the male line of descent, while the female line is often designated by the term nkɔ́sɔ́ (sometimes by the word jwɔ̌moto derived from bɔ̌moto, "woman"). Let us add that lonkundɔ́ jwɔ̂ nkɔ́sɔ́ means "pure, flawless Lonkundo, not corrupted by foreign influences." This expression should be compared with the following phrases: langue maternel, moedertaal, "mother tongue," etc.

291 177 At present the nkɔ́sɔ́ is no longer worn except by a few elderly inhabitants of villages far from the main communication lines. Everywhere else the ancient mode of dress has been replaced by materials imported from Europe. The women wear at least a sangatɛ́mbo, a kind of short skirt which falls from their loins at least to the middle of their thighs if not further. Middle-aged men in the interior have simply changed the material of their garment but not its form. The younger ones, on the contrary, have frankly adopted the European mode of dress.

291 591 [834] [831] A married woman is not allowed to enter the village of her relatives by marriage (bakilɔ́) or appear before them [54] without supplementing her usual attire with one or more beleleke (banana leaves cut into fringes). The term bakilɔ́ must be understood as it is meant by the Nkundɔ́; it excludes those with whom the wife may sometimes perform the sexual act and who are called "husbands" broadly speaking.

535 far the most inventive tribe. All the dances have two distinguishable parts: the dance strictly speaking and the finale or ikɔ́eyo. The latter consists of acrobatic exhibitions or a theatrical performance. It varies with each performance and sometimes goes beyond the limits of decency, especially in certain scenes of the women's dances. Here everything depends on the attitude of the actors and spectators.

535 786 [553] The words sung are usually proper. Passages that may be less so occur only exceptionally. The exclamations of some of the male or female dancers, but mostly those of the audience when the intensity of the performance reaches a climax, are somewhat less innocent. Thus this climax [62] is the weak spot morally speaking. This is true especially of the dances performed by the women who, led on by their passion and encouraged by the cheering and applause of the spectators, make provocative movements (bitɛ́kɔ́, bembɔ́njo). A European will see nothing wrong, but the native knows the gestures and their meaning. The spectators then applaud with even greater enthusiasm, either because of sexual feelings or out of aesthetic enjoyment, for to them these movements are beautiful. All the artistic dances for women which are the fashion at the present time contain a similar phase of exaggerated excitement. It is therefore understandable that in the past the elders strictly forbade children and adolescents to attend these dances.

[586] After what has just been said, no one will be astonished to hear that these great dances are often the cause of adultery and divorce. And to a limited extent the same can be said for the men's dances, for masculine beauty is exhibited in an enticing manner.

533 535 The rhythmic motions which sometimes accompany singing during drinking parties cannot really be called dances; nothing shocking is implied by them and the words of the songs are seldom improper. Salacious songs are rarely sung in the course of daily living, but they are never omitted from funeral ceremonies.

535 [illegible] Up to now we have spoken of artistic dances, which are always very popular. They were -- and are -- reserved for certain special occasions. For ordinary circumstances the Nkundɔ́ have a few little entertaining dances which have nothing at all in common with the dance as such. They are more like games. The lyrics of the songs

535 may be ribald, but this occurs rather rarely. However, at the present
177 time, they are often actually obscene -- especially since "European-
851 style" dancing has been introduced, and more particularly in the centers, small and large, and among those who have come under [63] its influence. This kind of dancing for amusement is chiefly practiced by young people.

To the credit of morality it should be noted that mixed dancing is unknown to strictly native ways. It occurs in the centers (in the form of the mixed bofenya or the balinga, grotesque imitations of European dances) but is spreading -- and rapidly -- to the villages of the interior. The second variety especially raises havoc, for it has a deleterious influence on morality. It has been the cause of a number of cases of adultery, divorce, palavers, and quarrels, and has been forbidden by certain chiefs and headmen, who would like to be able to severely punish anyone who dances it.

Conclusion

834 The data presented in the foregoing section forces us to conclude that sexual modesty does exist among the Nkundó. The wearing of clothing, the various prohibitions, the attitude of the older and wiser members of the community show that they experience this feeling. It is the same here as elsewhere. In certain areas it is even *carried to an extreme. The exceptions should be attributed to* individual deviations; and because of the reactions they provoke, they even provide conclusive evidence. The general laxity which may be observed on some special occasions does not provide material for a serious objection against the existence of modesty. Yet it is difficult to determine the reason for such an attitude which seems to contradict the rest of our data. Should it be interpreted as a yielding to human weakness, or seen as a weakening of public morality? Or is it not rather because these special circumstances make an unfavorable interpretation of such actions impossible? An allusion made in public, in a group, [64] does not have the same significance as that same allusion may have between two people, where it implies a suspicious intimacy.

842 684 soon as her family becomes aware of her condition. The accomplice is made officially responsible and is required to accept this responsible and is required to accept this responsibility by publicly pledging his willingness to take all consequences upon himself. This pledge like all pledges is called ndanga. It consists of a knife, a ring of copper or brass, a spear, or similar objects. (2)

2. The same custom is practiced in the case of pregnancy resulting from adultery.

Article V. Sexual Intercourse

833 Although this subject is extremely delicate and therefore difficult to investigate and describe, it does not seem pointless to note here a few details with which I have become acquainted. We will discuss in succession a few circumstances relative to the act, then rape, and finally what are called incomplete acts. [92]

1. Circumstances relative to the act

● [77] The *Nkundó* have intercourse lying on their sides. Nowadays, natives who have had frequent contacts with Whites are beginning to abandon the old manner for that of the Europeans. The spirit of imitation probably plays some part in the transformation which is beginning, but the gradual spread of the knowledge that the European system makes conception more likely is also a factor.

Even for illicit relations our natives seldom choose the forest or near-by palm or banana groves. Usually they prefer an isolated hut, or they take advantage of the absence of witnesses who might intrude on them. At night they are generally afraid of anything that stirs in the forest.

833 95 68 The *Nkundó* have sexual relations only during the night. To do so in the daytime would be to risk being striken by a mortal illness called bombiló (derived from mbiló "noon," by extension, "day").

584 A young man who renounces his fiancée places her in the hands of the ndonga, who sends her back to her family.

The woman who does not want to continue their life together leaves her fiancé, perhaps telling him and perhaps not, first goes to the ndonga and then returns to her parents (nowadays she sometimes does not see the ndonga, although not doing so must be considered an infraction of the rule).

In practice she may also go directly to another man. Formerly it was dangerous to do so, since a war could result, and such an action was considered against the law. At the present time the greater freedom resulting from colonization has eliminated the dangers involved. Thus this lack of proper procedure has become more frequent and is even coming to be recognized as normal.

584 585 In any case, even if the woman has neglected to go to the ndonga, the latter is sent by the fiancé to examine the situation and to claim restitution of the payments that have already been made.

Strictly speaking, the breaking of the engagement consists in the restitution of the ikulá-ndanga through the mediation of the ndonga. But, as we will explain more fully in the chapter on divorce, gifts given by the woman's family are deducted. [125] Complete restitution of everything must be made. The woman's family cannot even invoke the work done by their daughter for the husband's benefit.

583 ●177 584 Nowadays, however, the custom of dividing the amount of the bride price in excess of the nkomé (1) is taking hold. The woman's

1. See below, Article VII.

parents demand a certain indemnity because they consider that the husband has lost the right to his valuables; if they do not withhold them altogether, it is because of the respect and embarrassment they feel toward the ndonga, who is related to the fiancé as he is to them.

The natives try to explain this change in the ancestral law as follows:

1) An engagement is meant to develop into a regular marriage, and that is its only validity. The fiancé's right to the woman's work

584 is based solely on the nature of this state, which is a direct prepara-
583 tion for married life. Therefore, if the union is not completed, the
● 177 fiancé is enriched at the expense of the parents-in-law.

2) When an engagement is broken, the parents lose the legitimate and normal expectation of a full bride price; they consider this loss lucrum cessans.

The natives' justification is not sufficient to explain the origin
584 of the change, however, for:
583
1) It seems likely that the Nkundó have simply imitated the
174 practice of other peoples of the Congo with whom they have become
177 acquainted since colonization, and that their explanation is but an
explanation of convenience.

2) The reasons invoked in favor of the change are not new; they were equally valid in the past, and such as they are and in themselves they are therefore insufficient.

3) If we examine the reason concerning the benefit that the fiancé derives from the [126] woman's work, we find that it is based on a fallacious argument. For Nkundó law recognizes, on the one hand, the legitimacy of this gain and, on the other, the right of each party to break the engagement. Simply the breaking of the engagement cannot, therefore, result in the payment of an indemnity, since one cannot possibly be punished for having made use of a right.

4) The above objection is also applicable to the second reason given by the Nkundó: the possibility of the bride price not being paid is inherent in the essence of the engagement, since both parties are free not to go through with the union.

Thus the reasons given as such must be rejected.

Nevertheless, it is possible that modern circumstances have to some extent modified the nature of the problem. Thus:

1) The introduction of European wage labor and trade has given the Blacks a new idea of wealth. Consequently, the benefits reaped from the engagement have become much greater (through the development of trade and the availability of more varied goods and greater riches), and therefore the economic value of a woman has increased in considerable proportions.

Theoretically, these changes might justify some indemnification. In practice, however, economic development has increased the

585 amount of the engagement payment and thus counterbalances the in-
589 crease of the profit brought by a woman.

174 Indemnification for economic reasons would also have one
177 good result, namely that it would prevent a possible skewing of the system into a form of exploitation which would consist of taking fiancées for a time when they are needed for some special work and sending them back when the work is finished. [127]

But it must be noted that though the precaution may be good in itself, it is not called for under present circumstances, for the Nkundó do not even think of such a corruption of engagement customs.

2. Colonization has considerably reinforced -- or perhaps even introduced -- in native thinking the idea that the favors of a woman deserve a salary. I think that these circumstances have contributed much more to the origin of the new practice than economic changes -- or rather, that the justification for it is primarily based on this idea of venal love. And in that case we have before us a *pretium stupri* of a sort that could foster prostitution, and which is therefore in opposition to morality and public order.

Just as we must applaud the normal developments of the custom and its adaptation to the possibilities of social and moral elevation that colonization has created, so we must react against its corruption, aberrations, deviations, and a drift toward the exploitation of faults and vices.

Another objection against the innovation may be made on the grounds of its inconsistency within Nkundó law. Since there is no indemnification in the case of divorce, how is it possible to accept it in the case of the breaking of an engagement, which is a much weaker commitment than marriage itself? It is true that a Nkundó engagement is almost a marriage, since it includes cohabitation, etc.; nevertheless, it is not as tight a bond as a permanent union, from which it is clearly distinguished. The new custom leads logically to the conclusion that it is preferable to complete the union and make it definitive by paying the entire bride price and then to break it by means of a real divorce, which does not involve this financial loss.

Finally, although an indemnity based on the increase in the fiancé's profit from the engagement cannot be [128] condemned as

585 unjust in itself, it certainly becomes so if it is considered a penalty
584 inflicted for the rupture. For the indemnity is restricted to the man,
178 whether or not he is in the wrong. Furthermore, to accept an indemnity
177 even when the engagement is broken because of the woman tends to favor frauds and real swindles on the part of the woman and her parents, in short a kind of traffic in women.

[595] It is also evident that the rich (polygamists) suffer much less from the innovation than do monogamous men, especially those who
[794] adopt monogamy as a principle and more especially the Christians, who do not condone divorce. Thus I am of the opinion that the desire to defend polygamy against the doctrine of the missionaries is not entirely unrelated to the transformation of this custom.

800 All these considerations show that the question is highly complex and that it would be better if the ancient custom were restored.

If the breaking of the engagement is due to wrongs, the new custom could perhaps be tolerated, though it is not without serious dangers, but the indemnity should be imposed exclusively on the party at fault. Furthermore, the wrongs would have to be serious, and on the other hand, the indemnity would have to be, not in the nature of a forfeit, but of a payment of damages commensurate with the extent of the damage suffered and the seriousness of the wrong. And here those cases should especially be considered where the breaking of the engagement is accompanied by proceedings of a vexatious and insulting nature. And though it is a very delicate task to evaluate all these elements, we must not forget to take them into account.

It seems to me that the ancient law must still be maintained when the engagement is broken simply because of a change of feelings for which neither party is to blame, if such a case occurs. For it is better not to innovate than to innovate too fast. (153)

Article IV. *Walo* -- *bonkulaka*

583 The *walo* or *bonkulaka* is the bulk of the bride price paid for a marriage. Between the payment of the *nkonga* and that of the *walo*,

2. The nature of walo valuables

583 * The walo primarily consists of copper and brass rings. Wrought metal objects (bifeko), such as spears, knives, or axes are also added. Nowadays a part may be made up of simple brass or iron (steel) bars. Goats may be given in addition; a she-goat is worth 5 to 6 rings (nowadays 10), and a he-goat, 3 to 4 bakonga (nowadays 6 to 7). One or more eifeŋé bells are greatly prized as gifts.

583 * Payment in iron or copper chains (bengé-nyola), in various kinds of bead necklaces, and in leopard's teeth has almost entirely disappeared. Formerly, certain kinds of beads had great value; the big, round bluish-white ones (lonyóngo, pl. nnyóngo) were worth 1 konga each, the big, oblong blackish ones, cylindrical or rectangular in shape, 2 to 3 centimeters in diameter and 5 to 10 centimeters long (called nkóngé) were worth one slave or, nowadays, 20 to 25 bakonga each.

583 * Copper (konga) and brass (liŋgo) are the most important of all. Thus paying the bride price is often referred to as éŋga la liŋgo la konga.

The statement by R.P. Kaptein (in Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, pp. 432-343) that original valuables were the benkata, the bingetele, and the mitako is based on an error. [132] The first two types of valuables, also called bendéngo by some tribes, were used exclusively by the Ntómbá of Lake Tumba and the adjacent Ekonda (Bosanga, Baliŋgó, Lonyanyanga, etc.). The mitako, known in Lonkundo as ngele, singular lingele, are not native; this monetary unit was introduced by the Independent State.

● [177] The practice of making the payment at least partially in money or in objects of European origin (such as fabrics, blankets, sewing machines, trunks, household utensils, etc.) is gradually being introduced. Before the crisis it was already very popular among "white people."

3. The source of the valuables

A young man obtains the valuables for the bride price in various ways. The most usual way and the one which also conforms best to the Nkundó's familial and social regulations in the use of valuables

583* 431 One must be careful not to confuse this boéngo with byiko byă nyang'éy'ôna, an expression frequently heard. The latter includes any payment to the mother and includes the goat and the nkando as well as the boéngo discussed above and others. The word used in this case is not byikó, singular ikó, "porcupine," but rather byiko, singular wiko, "price, value" and derived from the verb -ika, "to set a price."

3) Lokolé: a brother or a cousin of the wife asks for a konga. He beats the gong (lokolé) in order to make noise and thus force the husband to satisfy him. That is how this boéngo seems to have originated. In practice people simply demand a [147] present. The racket can sometimes last for quite a while. But the elders do not allow the gathering to be disrupted if the husband does not have precisely the gift that would give satisfaction.

4) Bakulé, or botéwé: the woman's brothers stick a piece of the trunk of a banana tree (botéwé) into the ground, so that young relatives of the husband may shoot arrows (bakulé) at it. These are then removed by young members of the wife's family who, at the present time, are sometimes given money -- 5 francs, for instance.

[289] [721] 5) Wambá: prisoner's rope, that is, a rope to which war prisoners were formerly tied, two by two (a system now imitated for prisoners of the colonial law enforcement agencies and administration). In the past the patriarch, or head of the family, demanded a konga or a knife as indemnity against the possibility that he or members of his family might be imprisoned as a result of a war caused by the woman being married. Nowadays the chiefs set up by the administration and given the rights of family heads by the European authority have also claimed rights to this boéngo whose significance, purpose, and even name have completely changed as a result. It is now called bonyoólo w'ònkonji, "the chief's chain." It is clear that this payment has become something which it was not meant to be.

[171] [621]

6) Etéka: a heavy wooden fork, fastened to the neck. This is a present claimed by the mother, by one of the father's other wives, or by a wife of the woman's brother, against the possibility that they may have to undergo torture by means of the fork because of the women whose bride price is being paid. This could happen if she were

583 end in his hand and offers the other to the husband, saying, "Take-it."
594 The husband naturally refuses and extricates himself by means of a knife or a piece of copper. [149]

11) Bofngo w'Eyen, or "weeds." These are demanded by some clans because the husband's clan scoffs at them on account of the number of weeds and chaff they allow to grow in their village instead of keeping it clean. One or two rings are given.

12) Engumbé: known in some groups, such as the Ekafala, where it is the last one demanded. It is a bofngo of authority. (1)

[62] 1. An engumbé is a temporary hut in a newly settled village. The family patriarchs are the first who must go and live there in order to urge the others to follow and to exercise all the evil of possible magic spells.

claimed by the patriarchs of the families belonging to the grouping from which the woman has come. Formerly, the amount went as high as 3 to 5 bakonga, depending on the number of families, groups of families, or clans related through marriage that were living in the [17] same village. Now the payment is made primarily in European currency, and the amount may be 50 francs, for example. This bofngo is later divided among the various kin groupings related to the wife's family.

Various male and female relatives of the woman ask for assorted small objects, such as a small knife (ilfeka), a native razor (lotóó), a pin for braiding hair (bosfngé), a needle (tsongé), a necklace of blue beads (bingngéla), etc.

Nowadays many other objects are also demanded: clothing, dishes, etc., Thus, one day on the occasion of a single bride-price payment, I heard demands for the following objects:

For the father, a pair of trousers and a jacket, because when the woman was a young child she soiled his clothing without troubling herself about the matter.

For the mother, a bed, because worries about her daughter often kept her from resting.

589* For an aunt, a basin, because she had washed the child.
431 For a brother, a pair of shoes or slippers, because the girl had worn his shoes during the courtship, etc., etc. [150]

All these *befogo* are included in the sum total of the bride price. Should the occasion arise, they must be returned with the rest.

In addition to the *befogo* asked for and received by the woman's relatives, others are demanded by members of the husband's family. As in the case of the former each person voices his claims according to his desires and without any predetermined order but must always do so through the *ndonga*. The gifts chiefly consist of furs of the [590] *enfiɛ* otter, the *lifika* monkey, *bonkɔ́ng* and *ngoi* felines; a joint of game (monkey, antelope, etc.), a mat, a pot, a hunting net, a carrying bag (*bokómbɛ*), a bead necklace, etc. Nowadays there may [591] also be various items introduced by the Europeans: items of clothing, fabrics, saucepans, dishes, etc. This category of *befogo* is included in the sum total of the *nkomɛ* (see the following article). If the *nkomɛ* is given immediately, the parties proceed with this payment. Then the *ndonga(s)* are remunerated as stated above: each party gives him at least 2 rings.

Finally, the woman's father says to the husband: "In any case, be on your way; we will collect the *nkomɛ* and bring it to you." Whereupon the husband leaves; if he prefers to wait for his wife he remains, and returns home when the items of the *nkomɛ* have been collected.

Article VII. *Nkomi*

Nkomɛ is the name for the objects which the wife's family gives to the husband. The term *likomo* is also sometimes used. The [592] Injolo say *likoma*, the Wangata, Bakela, Ioanda, and Bokoté say *likomi*. All these words are derived from the same verb *-koma*, "to wrap up, to make a package," (1) for the *nkomɛ* valuables are

1. The Bolia say *likonga* from the verb *-konga*, which has the same meaning as *-koma*.

[illegible] generally packed in baskets or [151] in [illegible] (or [illegible]), which
[illegible] are baskets woven of palm leaves.

Some ethnologists have introduced the expression douaire, "dowry," (1) to designate the goods given by the woman's family to

the man's family. Actually, the word dot would be a much better translation, because it corresponds more closely to the nature of these payments. But this would require changing the terminology adopted, and the introduction of another term (such as marriage payment) for what is generally understood by the word dot, whose use is in any case unfortunate. [Translator's note: Hulstaert uses dot, which would literally be translated into English as "dowry," to designate the payments made by the husband and his family to the wife's family. However, I have employed the term "bride price" in accordance with the usage of English-speaking anthropologists.]

Furthermore, the word douaire already has a precise and accepted meaning, so that its use in this context would lead to confusion. That is why I prefer provisionally to use an entirely new term, and to translate [illegible] as contre-dot [literally, counter-dowry]. (2)

[Translator's note: The term "dowry" has been used to designate this payment in the translation.]

The [illegible] consists of hens, ducks (3), salt, mats, pots, goods

---

1. See for example Torday, in Africa, Vol. 2, no. 3, p. 279.

2. This term was suggested to me by Attorney General A. Sohier.

3. Ducks have been introduced fairly recently; the Nkundô maintain that their ancestors did not have any, and that they got them from the Ekonda. In their classification they place them under the category of chickens.

[29]
[77]

583 of our peoples. Its pure and simple abolition would upset their estab-
577 lished order completely. First their mentality has to change, and that end can be accomplished only gradually, since a moral change is involved. And the present state of these peoples is not sufficiently evolved for the abolition of the bride price to be beneficial. Here, if ever, the axiom: *nihil leges sine moribus* is valid.

(60) But what might perhaps be done in that direction now is to place a limitation on the amount of the bride price. This measure should be strictly enforced to make sure that it is carried out -- although in practice its enforcement would be very difficult, for at the beginning [100], many interested parties would try to circumvent it. If good results are to be obtained, an efficacious repression of adultery and the frequency of divorce should accompany the limitation on the bride price. It would be a first step towards the ideal. Others could follow according to the extent of the natives' evolution toward a higher level of morality.

Apropos of these considerations we should like to say a few words concerning:

585 3. Traffic in bride prices
577

This term may be taken to mean two different things. It may be used to refer to a general increase in the amount of the bride price, which has reached enormous proportions since the European penetration of the area. Or it may refer to the increase in the bride price of a single woman for successive marriages, from which her family profits.

The first meaning of the term refers to a fact, namely that the amount of the bride price has increased considerably. The reason for this development is the increase in material wealth resulting from colonization. Riches are more easily acquired. But we should not exclude the role of the greed of many parents, which has also increased. It is the most important and can reach scandalous proportions in areas where the bride price is paid in European goods (money, fabrics, appliances, utensils). In such regions, as for
77, example among the *riverain* people of the Lower Congo, it goes up
781 to and easily exceeds 3,000 francs. Think of what this amount
[illegible] represents, especially in times of economic depression. (1)
935

---

1. For the sake of comparison, here are some average figures for 1936.

[illegible]

Wages	fr. 20,00 to 25,00
Copal, per kilogram . . .	0,30 to 0,70
Palmettos	0,10 to 0,20
Palm nuts	0,05 to 0,10

Inevitably the action of one man leads another to follow suit for -- need I repeat? -- everything is interdependent.

Another reason may be, and sometimes is, involved. It is the desire [101] of a husband to bind a woman more securely to him by paying a lot for her. This is certainly a praiseworthy feeling, especially considering the women's readiness to resort to divorce. Its practice, however, is full of dangers. If it is limited to an isolated case, that is, to a single monogamist who gives his entire fortune for his only wife, the danger is minimal. Such is the case of one of our catechists who paid an enormous amount, without its having the slightest repercussion on his region. But the danger is very great if a man does this to establish a harem, especially if for that purpose he entices the wives of others. Thus, for instance, a man to whom the administration gave great political powers caused a fantastic increase in the general bride price among the Ekonda of the north. (1)

1. One factor which helped increase the bride price among the Wangata and other tribes in the vicinity of Coquilhatville has been described by Father Kaptein in Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 544. Since his study is written in Dutch, I think it would be useful if I translated the whole text here:

"When the first Europeans arrived at Leopoldville and Brazzaville, fabrics and other European articles soon made their appearance in Coquilhatville. The chiefs Yoma of Boyeka, Iboka of Boyere (Boyela), Yamba of Eala; Nkake of Bokele, etc., went up the Tshuapa and Ikelemba rivers and, by means of these goods, bought slaves, women, and ivory.

583 b
177 "When they returned home, they acquired wives in their region and paid for them with the slaves and women they had purchased cheaply by means of European products. They paid three or four slave women for a wife in their region. The arrival of the Whites and of foreign Blacks taught them the number nkoi (10,000), a word which they thought meant 1,000 and which in the past they had called 10 nkoto or 10 x 100.

"The Europeans soon became involved in native palavers concerning women. This was inevitable in the Black Country. When the [182] Blacks brought their palavers before the Whites they either did not want or did not dare to say:

'I paid for this woman with 3 other women'; they would say, 'I paid for this woman with 3 nkoi of mitako,' that is, 3 x 1,000 mitako. In the meantime, the words nkoto and nkoi acquired their significance of 1,000 and 10,000 respectively. But people continued to say that a woman had been paid for with nkoi through either an error of the Whites, or the greed of polygamists, or both. Later, several women actually were paid for with nkoi, especially when the mitako became the official currency of the Congo. Actually, this development was not surprising, since the polygamists had a monopoly on women, and it was very much in their interest to increase the price.

"Formerly the price of wives was no higher in Wangata than elsewhere. Only 5 bakonga were paid for many wives, for instance, at Bokala near Bamanya, a village under the jurisdiction of Chief Tome of Boyeka."

583* 177 It would be good to counteract that much increase in bride prices. For there is a danger that it will condemn to bachelorhood many young men who could otherwise build a home out of the fruits of their own labor. [182]

589* 586* The second meaning of the term "traffic in bride prices" has a more precise application. After a divorce all the valuables must be returned to the husband. Consequently, the new husband must pay at least as much as the first, and in general he even has to add a supplement for the family who, after all, have incurred expenses for the palaver. And so it continues. Thus the more husbands a woman has in succession, the more her bride price increases. It seems to me that this practice is in no way to be condemned. The increase is reasonable. For it not only constitutes some compensation to the woman's family for their troubles but, in addition it may exercise a good influence on the social condition of the people. If it is to have such an influence, divorce must not become a means of satisfying greed (in general, at the present time, it has not yet become such a means), and the increase must not be excessive.

000 In such cases the increase in the bride price can thus have a wholesome effect on the morality and stability of marriages by making men afraid of marrying a divorcée and, as a result, making women more cautious and less flighty. Here everything depends on caution, restraint, and supervision on the part of responsible authorities. [183]

4. The reason for the existence of the bride price

583* 177 This is a question which should not be asked of the natives; they do not know how to answer it. Nor do the facts provide any certainty. All that can be attempted is the construction of a hypothesis which fits the reality.

The following explanatory theories have been put forward: that it is a compensation to the woman's family for the loss of a member (see, for example, Seitz in *Africa*, Vol. 3, p. 65, and also Torday in *Africa*, Vol. 2, p. 275, under "Exchange"); that it is a payment for fecundity; and finally, that it is a guarantee of the

593 men although their first marriage has not been broken and no new
571 marriage agreement has been concluded.
164 The data given above provides no confirmation in the
[114] Nkundó tribes under study of the statement made by Engels "Les Wangata [The Wangata]," Revue congolaise, 1910, p. 35) that among the Wangata "her husband can exchange her . . . she can make no protest." (1)

1. The Ekonda apply the term liengé only to an exchange of daughters or sisters. They have a specific term: mpángá. Note, by the way, that certain Mbólé tribes who practice a true wife exchange designate it by the same name: impángá.

Article VII. Purchase

592 The purchase of women is not practiced by the Nkundó tribes
582 under discussion here nor even by the Bombwanja. The practice is to
590 be found only among the Elíngá. What is involved is not a marriage by means of a bride price but a real purchase; that is, a man buys a woman from her husband for a certain sum. He does not go through the woman's parents, as in an ordinary marriage by bride-price payment, but addresses himself directly to the husband.

In general it is the woman who makes the proposal that a man buy her in this manner. Sometimes a man wants to take a woman and
[721] first comes to an agreement with her. Before the Europeans arrived such a situation generally led to a war between clans or villages. After an armistice the palaver was settled, and the [213] purchaser paid the husband. Nowadays, since the Nkundó no longer dare to
[577] fight because of the legal sanctions that inevitably follow, when a woman abandons her husband for another man who wants to buy her, the parties involved bring the palaver before the judges. As the woman wants only her new husband, and as, on the other hand, war and the punishment of women have been abolished, the first husband has no

837 their sense of the personal injustice involved. But they do not reason
577 out these feelings; they follow them spontaneously, blindly.

There is a greater awareness of the social evil in adultery. But it is based not on the philosophical considerations of this harm in itself, but on the consequences of individual cases for the proper functioning of society -- palavers, financial difficulties, enmities, quarrels, wars.

This it seems to me is the present state of their ideas. It does not preclude the possibility that the law and sanctions against adultery may rest on an ultimate basis of moral ideas. And more particularly it is quite possible that the moral idea [321] operates only in the form of a feeling of the great principles of fundamental natural law which is innate to all human reason.

837
177
5) No one will be astonished if we say that colonization, far from reducing the frequency of adultery, actually contributed to its considerable increase. The abolition of native penalties and punishments together with a great freedom of movement could not help but lead, naturally, to this state of affairs. Every informed colonial who is in close contact with the natives is aware of the situation. "The prohibition of corporal punishments which, according to custom, were the sanctions imposed against a woman's adultery have brought about a license whose extent can be measured by the degree to which a group is subject to our occupation. The forgetfulness if not the contempt for the promises of marriage is nowhere carried so far as in places where the customary disciplines have been completely removed." (Maj. Engels, Bulletin Soc. Belge. Et. Col., cited in Congo, 3rd year, Vol. 1, p. 77, April, 1922). [111] That is why various persons have repeatedly called for sanctions against adultery to replace the ancestral means of repression that have been abolished.

692
177
837
But the decrees hoped for have never passed beyond the stage of mere projects. Fortunately, another step, and a fundamental one, has been taken in the meantime through the establishment of native jurisdiction (1926). Under the guidance and control of European authorities, native courts will turn the helm halfway back to the ancient sanctions, adapting these all the while to the new conditions created by colonization and by the introduction of more humanitarian

177 ideas. Nevertheless, great care must be exercised not to go to ex-
681 tremes in introducing these ideas to the point where a society only
671 just beginning to emerge from a pagan barbarism because of the presence of a civilization based on Christianity, is treated as an equal of European communities. Native society must evolve gradually and harmoniously. Rushing is often synonymous with breaking, and it is always a [332] great mistake. And in the matters under discussion, the abolition of sanctions which, in spite of their imperfection and their inadequacy for fulfilling the whole task, have been shown to have a real efficacy, has removed all the coercive power of Nkundo law. A sentimental and excessive humanitarianism must yield before the native society's right to respect for its vital institutions -- unless these are entirely to be condemned -- and therefore before the necessity for severe punishments which it cannot do without for the moment. For our natives are not yet ready for a complete abolition of their customary sanctions, since they still lack a new foundation that would replace their fear of the ancient penalties. Let us therefore take care not to take all means of punishment away from husbands and wives, even if they seem somewhat violent from our viewpoint. Finally, there is no sense in overstressing a respect for members of the weaker sex, who by their very nature sometimes need punishment for the greater good of the whole community. Moreover, as for this respect, our Nkundo do not understand it at all; the way we conceive of it is entirely opposed to their mentality and their laws. Therefore, everything will work out more easily if the native courts are given sufficient latitude to act in the spirit of their ancestral law and if their activity is guided by a constant, informed, and sympathetic control whose sole aim is the healthy evolution of native society.

[illegible] If it is applied within these limits and under these conditions, Nkundo law can redress many wrongs and help to save native society from the abyss into which it is in danger of falling. In spite of its faults and imperfections, it is preferable not only to the system of freedom (or license) which has reigned for many years, but also to

595 from her personally; she attaches herself to her relative and follows her in her marital union."

The name *ebísa*, as well as the functions involved, may be improperly extended to a relative who is fetched by a woman so that she may become the wife not of her husband, but of one of his relatives. Sometimes she is even intended for a man who belongs to another clan, which is related by marriage, but for whom there is prohibition on marriage with the first clan. For instance, Bolómbó w'Ěfowa of Eleke (Lokongo) came to fetch her sister Engé for Bompata w'Isolema, who belonged to the Befánola clan which, like her husband's clan (Bombóngo), was part of the village of Bosombó.

Article V. Slave Women

595 567 In times past a polygamist could have one or several slaves in his harem whom he treated as wives. They were war prisoners whom he himself had captured, or had bought from others, or received as [316] *bonkonga*. As a rule no bride price was paid for them, and in leaving, they retained their status of slaves. This fact did not prevent a husband from loving them like real wives. But their rivals respected them less and, especially on the occasion of quarrels and disputes, reminded them of their inferiority.

[567] Since slavery has been abolished by colonization, many former slaves have returned to their respective families. Others, on the contrary, have not wanted to take advantage of the freedom granted them and have preferred to remain faithful. In such cases the husband paid the usual bride price for them with all the appropriate formalities. Only recently (1932) Ilofé, a

[583] Bolombé man (Bonjoku) thus paid a bride price of 43 *bekonga* to his wife Ámbá's family. Ámbá was originally from Bokoké (Bolongo?) but had been abducted at the beginning of the European occupation. Ilofé had inherited her from Bakáfonga of the Bosefólá bólango (Bonkoso) thanks to the intervention of his great-uncle Isenó who had paid 7 rings on his behalf as the customary *bompáfogé* called *ndóngo*.

595* (53) And it is not difficult to understand this fact. For indeed polygamy constitutes a legitimate and easy means by which a man may enjoy several women without being bothered by palavers, difficulties, etc. The mentality of many men who care little about moral laws as well as the tendency of a disordered instinct to multiply its objects only confirm this observation. Often one sees men who were monogamists at first begin by taking a second wife out of passion. Then gradually their passion becomes greater rather than appeased, and so a harem is built up progressively.

595* (178) The changes introduced by colonization in the economic life of this people have not resulted in a decrease of polygamy. In the absence of exact figures we must be satisfied with simple visual observations, but in certain regions one has the impression that the harems have become smaller but, on the other hand, that the number of polygamists has increased, and therefore [275] the desire for polygamy, that is, its affective cause, has
[651] not diminished. Nor does the extra tax frighten or stop the polygamists. The great means for changing the Nkundǝ attitude in this realm will always be the action of the missions and the penetration of Christian ethics, seconded by a government attitude favoring monogamy. (1)

[illegible] 1. The favorable attitude of the colonial government toward monogamy is expressed chiefly in the permission given to a polygamist's extra wives to abandon their husband in order to contract a monogamous union, preferably in a mission, under the supervision of missionaries.

[177] Another means, undoubtedly secondary but still important, is the example of European couples. The Blacks are imitative, and native women envy the lot of the white woman, so that European households are propaganda for monogamy when they behave well.

Article VI

Magic Practices Pertaining to Divorce

It seems to me not without interest to devote a few lines to the magic practices prevalent among our peoples and used on the occasion of divorce. We are not speaking of love philters; strictly speaking they would not be appropriate here. (1) We will therefore limit ourselves to giving a general idea of the practices used to prevent a wife from leaving her husband, to avenge a divorce, or to make a fugitive return.

As we shall see, these objectives often become intertwined.

1) The trinity [illegible]-[illegible]-[illegible] is considered by the natives as three related practices. We see it more as three forms of a single practice.

All three originated with the Ntómbá of Lake Tumba and [417] were introduced to the Nkundó -- directly or indirectly -- by certain Ekonda tribes living between the two peoples. This introduction took place in modern times. The practices were unknown here before colonization. Even at the present time they have not spread everywhere; they have not yet crossed the Momboyo. The chronological order of their introduction is first [illegible], second [illegible], third [illegible].

The animating spirit of these practices is the leopard. Their primary purpose is to call back an unfaithful wife and, if she obstinately refuses, to kill her or her seducer. Secondarily, they also serve to cause the death of any enemy whatever, especially in reprisal.

The three practices differ with respect to their manufacture and method of use. We cannot go into all the relevant details, for they are outside the framework of this study. [418] It is sufficient to say that the owner of the charm to whose powers he resorts first calls the woman by blowing into an antelope horn,

---

1. See Chapter I, Part 2, Article VIII.

789 787 especially very early in the morning at the crowing of the cock.(1)

1. The natives also use this means to call their children who long ago left for the "lowlands" and whose return they ardently desire.

If the one who is called does not return, the charm will take revenge either on her or on her lover, depending on the desire of the person operating it. Another intervention on his part is then required, however, and it varies according to the form used. Note that according to the native view it is impossible for the wife not to hear the call, no matter how far away she may be. If she does not return, it is because she is being obstinate and deserves to be punished.

The spirit of vengeance alone is involved in:

789 754 671 2) The ngando. This charm comes from the Coquilhatville region or even farther away. The word ngando is the Lolinga form of the Lonkundo word ngondo, which means "gavial." The teeth of this reptile actually play a part in its composition. It is used to punish any thief by death. Therefore it has been declared effective against anyone who tries to seduce the wife of another. It will cause the culprit's feet to swell and to open with pus. Like the above practices, this one has not yet crossed Momboyo.

178 177 Such usages like many others have therefore been recently introduced. Before the arrival of Europeans in these parts, only love philters were known. However, it is easily understandable that the Nkundo gladly and confidently received these new practices which are so useful -- in their opinion -- and operate in a domain of capital importance for which colonization has deprived them of their ancient sanctions and means of prevention. [417]

846 In order to facilitate the flowing out of all the blood, the
755 mother is given hot baths. However, they are not begun before noon, for the Nkundó say that in the morning and evening it is too cold and the blood is not sufficiently fluid. Those who have been
[177] in greater contact with the Whites give the mother beer or wine to drink. The hot baths are administered behind the hut in an en-
[illegible] closure set up for the occasion. They are of two kinds: baths by sprinkling (bompélo wà ntémbe) and steam baths (bompélo w'Ekingo). For the first method [488] very hot water is used, and by using a bunch of palms, the woman's abdomen, loins, and ribs are sprinkled. In the second method a pit is dug and large leaves (or a basin) containing boiling water are placed in it. Three or four strong, wide sticks are placed on top, and the woman is seated on them. She is wrapped in several mats to which, today, one or two blankets are added. She is left thus exposed to the action of the steam for several minutes. According to the natives, it is the ideal system because it makes all the blood come out, or almost all. Some people first give a sprinkle bath, and then follow it with a steam bath; others are satisfied with one or the other, depending on the circumstances. In any case more than one bath is never given in one day. This care may be given for one or two weeks, or it may stop after two or three days. The effect of "civilizing" is more inclined to the latter. But no Nkundó would want to omit the baths, for the woman's life is at stake.

After the bath the woman is carefully rubbed and dried,
[302] and then anointed with oil mixed with red paint.

From time to time, usually every second day, she is given a douche.

846 As long as the mother remains weak, a large fire is maintained in her hut to keep her warm, and the doors are closed by means of palms. The husband and his relatives fetch the firewood. But the first log must be cut and brought by the husband who, to use the Nkundó expression, must "remove the violence" (ĩnula lofoso). In the beginning the woman lies down on a bokoge right near the fire. She turns the front of her body toward it. The fire plays a great role in her quick recovery. She is very well cared

845 puberty, by his father. The performance of this rule entails continence (bekila) for the person who undertakes it, even with respect to the spouse. A violation of this rule prevents healing of the wound or at least makes the process very long and difficult. (1)

[755] 1. A similar bekila applies to anyone nursing a large gangrenous ulcer (wãlá).

The foreskin that has been cut off is dried on the bolíkó (tray or shelf). Then no one bothers with it any longer, and it usually remains there, dusty and dirty, for an indefinite period of time if the rats leave it alone.

In the centers the young people are beginning to neglect [177] the native skilled in circumcising and resort instead to European surgeons.

Circumcision is not an occasion for feasts or ceremonies. [554] Sometimes a man who is rich and vain will give a feast, but this is not at all a common practice.

The term "to circumcise" is translated in Lonkundo as otúa lopepé, "to cut off the foreskin." The less vulgar term and one used much more frequently is otúa nsóngé, "to cut off the tip." A much too decent circumlocution is otúa batói, "to cut off the ears."

The reason for this custom has already been given in Chapter I, Part II, Article II, 2.

Article VIII. Education

From an early age a Nkundó child must perform various 866 small services for his parents, especially in the household; he is 867 asked to draw water, fetch firewood, take care of a little brother or sister, etc. The demands for such services are addressed chiefly to girls, but boys are not at all exempt. By the very nature of things, however, the latter are less frequently asked to help.

Quite early a boy may accompany his father on trips, at meetings, legal debates, etc. The father makes a bow and arrows for him and teaches him the art of using them. The great pastime

6) The parent's opposition to reprimands by strangers is even greater as a general rule. They try to cover up and justify the faults of their progeny, whom they will fiercely defend. The children naturally know all this and take advantage of it.

7) The polygamous household, with all its rivalries among co-wives, cannot but accentuate all such [114] adverse effects on the children's education. The conflicts, spiteful comments, palavers, etc., are easily extended to the children. And each wife defends her own.

8) Everything is public; there are no secrets; everything is known, seen, and heard. People do not restrain themselves and the presence of children does not stop the flow of insults and obscenities which anger provokes. The young people see many things it would be better for them not to know. They are present at domestic quarrels and are witnesses to dissensions. All this is increased by life outdoors, in the street, and by the thinness of partitions.

9) Another factor is added nowadays: the facility of communications and the presence of European stations. Boys can always run away and find shelter with the Whites or their native employees. The girls seek out kinswomen who live at such stations, even though they must help a little with the housework, in the hope of later enjoying a greater freedom and living in luxury. Parental influence and authority are naturally weakened as a result.

10) Finally, Nkundo education lacks any solid basis, any religion or religious morality. Everything is based on natural, physical fear: the fear of punishments (physical or based on experience), harmful consequences of bad actions (palavers, difficulties, fines, indemnities, sometimes the shame of being caught -- as in theft). It is especially this lack of religious motivation that makes their moral education bear so little fruit. As the Nkundo are accustomed to this imperfect state, they do not feel the need for such a foundation. That is why it is so difficult to instill any moral conscience into them. The patient and persevering action of the great Christian truths with their institutions for moral formation (uninterrupted preaching, confession, prayer) are needed to endow

591 Although even St. Thomas teaches that the only natural authority is that of the head of the family, European legislation has, through ignorance, completely abolished the rights of the native family head; the wife is freed from all ties and is thus abandoned to licentiousness. Through a legal fiction, clan law has gone over into the hands of the "recognized native courts of justice," which, however, have just as much to do with the clan court as a policeman with a father. The communization of trade, education, and the rearing of the young, as is demonstrated to us by Russia, would revolutionize our society far less than our installation of these so-called native courts of justice has done in the Congo. Education and correction have been replaced by punishment. Politics, which have begun to play such an all-important
602 role in our society, had /155/ almost no importance in Nkundo society.
613 The neighboring clans were all connected with each other through blood relationship, intermarriage, or friendship ties. Only when there was a struggle against a foreign and common enemy did politics have a role to fulfill. And then the same order of rank was observed among the clans as was already indicated for the members of a single clan.

177 Here also, biased or romantic products of our ideas about barbarism
726 have adapted these so-called intertribal wars to the need that we felt, to civilize the natives at any cost. These wars were not to be com-
628 pared with our European wars, in which a mass of people are slaughtered. In the Congo, no sooner had wounded or dead fallen on both sides than the chiefs were already congregated to conclude a peace treaty. Here again, we meant to respect the political organization of the natives by the creation of chieftainships and native chiefs, who were to form the political-administrative link between the native clans and the European higher administration. Such chiefs were totally unknown in native society. Together with the establishment of the native courts, the establishment of chieftainships gave the death blow to the actual social organization of the Nkundo-Mongo. The very fact that these institutions are territorial demonstrates clearly that here no ordinary shifting of power has taken place, but simply an elimination of the traditional power in favor of a new colonial power.

177 Indeed, where formerly the "customary rightful chief" was sought
622 out, even though it was sometimes only a formality, the new formula of the "sector" has relieved the higher administration from this care too. And it is only to be hoped that this new formula will at least do away with the legal fiction that the "chiefs" are actually "something native," so that they may be classified for once and for all in the

577 category of civil servants. In this manner they would fall under the
623 written law and could be obliged to practice monogamy, whereas now nearly all of the "native chiefs" are precisely the maintainers and promoters of polygamy. If this had /138/ been enforced from the start, then polygamy, instead of spreading, would have virtually disappeared from the native society.

5. Splitting of the Clan

613 After all that has been said before, it must be rather apparent how an autonomous clan can split up and, thereby, form two autonomous clans.

When a clan has expanded too far, its borders cross over the boundaries of blood relationship, and offenses against the law of exogamy occur. When such offenses are multiplied, further separation is gradually aimed at to make marriages possible. Such a situation between two parts of the same clan, who are striving for "legal autonomy," is called *bokana*, a term that signifies that unlawful relations exist between the two. It generally occurs between member groups that have the same male ancestor, but not the same female ancestor—that is, they are issue from different wives of the same founder.

Another cause of splitting is the voluntary or obligatory withdrawal of one of the members. When he establishes himself outside, begets a sizeable progeny, and acquires a patrimony of his own, the relations with his own clan become less frequent; and the separated fraction gradually begins to settle smaller lawsuits, to maintain its own graveyard, to bury the umbilical cords of its children in its own territory, to take on its own name, and to refer to its own founder.

Often also at the source of this estrangement lies the refusal of a certain fraction of the clan to submit to the authority of the clan members.

6. Legal Dependents

613
614 Until now we have spoken only of the ethnic clan, of the members
618 who belong to it through descent. They /139/ are the sole bearers of

10. Conclusion

182 Nkundo society was a fully alive, organic community. All of its organs functioned and were able to adjust continually to the changes in its life. Ethnically, socially-legally, and politically, they were open to every improvement. The organs with which it was built stood nearest to natural law and drew their rights and duties from it, and also the spirit which inspired them.

The facts prove that this society could survive. It arose at the source of the Lomako; in a short time it had extended itself peacefully over the whole central area of the Congo; it pressed eastward across the Lomami and Lualaba, and southward across the Kaisai /Kasai/-Sankuru, to occupy about a fifth of the present Congo at the time of the arrival of the Whites.

183 177 This society was open to all healthy influences and could adapt itself to all reasonable demands of civilization. It was, however, not reconcilable with what precisely is wrong in our European ideas about progress and civilization: elimination of all ethnic intermediary organs, equalization of all individuals, materialization of all life on the basis of economic competition, slave-like submission to the impersonal, unpersonal State, with that terrible pretense of freedom, of being able to do everything that is not forbidden by the State.

177 161 This suddenly attained freedom, which was accompanied by the abolition of all the former joints of society, means the death of the Nkundo /161/ community, not only in its soul, its being, but also in its existence. The gradual depopulation, the dying out in the Middle Congo, has had repercussions now and then, even in government circles. "The Nkundo-Mongo population is melting away like snow before the sun," is the brief comment of the last official report. The Waola, between the Ruki and the Bolombo /rivers/, had in 1939 ninety deaths and three births. The official statistics of 1939 of the territory of Coquilhatville give one hundred adults for every twenty-four children. The official data of the same year for the Vicariate of Coquilhatville, with its 882,726 inhabitants, give a ratio of 415 children to 1,000 adults. According to these data, the whole population will be decreased by more than 50 percent by the following generation, thus dwindled to less than one-half.

Coquilhatville, 1939

463 Division of labor is unknown, and each person works entirely on his own, without the help of a middleman. There are no laborers
● [17] and certainly no artisans unless there happens to be some artisan or other who learned his trade under the government or at one or other of the Mission posts and has returned to his village after having completed his contract.

As a rule, such people do not find sufficient work in their own villages, and, as they are usually in possession of a few boxes, clothes, and pots and pans which they have acquired with the savings of their monthly salary, they play the grand gentleman in their village until their goods and chattels have been used up and worn out.

"Njolemwa Bosala," he says, "I am tired of work." "Njowa l'ompele," "I am dying of the heavy, difficult work."

Several of them there return to one or the other of the centers of the White settlers and again offer themselves as craftsmen.

554 A good craftsman has a high reputation among the natives, and his social position is even a very good one for a Negro. He is able regularly to supply food for his wife and children and also to get himself clothes.

326 Although most Negroes work individually, this is not true of the smith who has to have helpers in order to do his job.

465 Since the Mongo Negro knows nothing of wages, his helpers get part of the income, consisting of mitako [a kind of metal currency]
436 or some part of the work that has been done, either a knife or a lance, or a foot or arm ring.

I. THE SMITH'S TRADE.

326
554 Of the various industrial trades, that of the smith is certainly the first in rank. The smith is one of the leading people [94] in the village and one of the inevitable persons to have a decisive voice in village affairs whether in settling differences or in meetings.

In fact, the smith is the only one of the Mongo Negroes who works regularly and does not rest on his oars. From what he earns he is able to buy quite a number of wives, and he is regarded as one of the village heads whose wishes must be consulted.

352
322 [102] Occasionally one sees a native stool, made as described above, but with a kind of back rest chopped out of one piece.

342 The Negro who wishes to move with the times makes for his
● 177 house a chair out of bamboo in the European style: some sticks stuck in the ground, a mat of split bamboo laid over them, and the gentleman can spend his days in dolce far niente [pleasant idleness].

352 A table made in the same way (otherwise unknown to the Negro)
323 completes the furnishing of his hut.

One does not need to be an expert, either, in order to be able to make a Negro bed. Some straight sticks are chopped out of the mombembo (umbrella tree). These are placed lengthwise and then across, on top of each other, trimmed a bit at the edges so that the whole thing fits more or less, and it is then bound together with some
[835] split lianas. In this way the Negro has made a bed; this favorite piece of furniture is finished for a sale price of 5 to 10 mitako.

[837] The making of beds could be classed among the Mongo trades. I once saw, in the interior, ten of these beds, large and small spread out along the side of the road for sale.

I was assured that the owner of the beds was the very best bedmaker of the village. Of course, I raised my hat to such an important personage.

The ekoba, the bed stool, is also indispensable. These ekoba take the place of our pillows and are made of one piece, formed to the shape of the head. It is a somewhat hard pillow, but the Negro head is hard and can put up with it; the fellow sleeps without having to be rocked.

322 To prepare his food he needs some mortars and pestles, and these
252 are made of wood. He uses hardwood for these utensils so that the mortars do not wear away from the constant pounding.

In addition, the Negro makes his oars, his bow and arrows for
322 the hunt, and the lokombi. The lokombi is a flat, oblong, hollowed
534 block of wood over which some pegs are stretched [sic]. He plucks these with his fingers, thus producing a monotonous sound. This so-called musical instrument is the constant companion of the young man and accompanies him on his long treks through the Evenaar forest and on his visits to friends and acquaintances.

[104]

III. WEAVING

286 The craft of the Mongo weaver is an honorable one and one that calls for much labor and attentiveness.

[177] Weaving is no longer as much in vogue as it was in earlier times, because the younger people buy European materials. However, the weaver is still able to earn his daily bread comfortably, because [291] the old people are too pagan to give up their old ingrained habit of wearing a loin cloth.

[462] Weaving is a craft carried on by men only. Some are very skillful in the weaving of materials and command our admiration. Pieces of really beautiful workmanship were offered to us for sale; I had myself seen them being woven.

286 314 The weaver takes his knife, goes into the forest, and cuts the "mpekwa ia lifeke," the fibers of a certain kind of palm tree which he also sometimes plants on the open highway near his hut. As soon as he has sufficient fibers for the weaving he has in mind, he goes home and at his leisure scrapes the fibers with his knife until they are all of the same thickness.

286 After that he leaves them in the sun to dry. When they have dried sufficiently, he puts up in his hut or on the open highway the frame on which the fibers are to be hung.

After he has attached the fibers to the top cross-bar (they are bound between the top and bottom cross-bars), he holds down the bottom cross-bar with his foot and goes to work.

Often he uses fibers of different colors, and this gives a lovely effect to the piece of material.

Bofomi afom'uto, "the weaver is weaving material."

386 314 The weaver has a very simple way of giving the fibers their different colors.

From the forest he fetches a liana (longoli) which contains the red, white, or black coloring agent, cuts it in pieces, puts them in a banana leaf which has been quickly scorched in the fire, adds some water and hangs all this, with the fibers, in a bag of banana leaves above the fire. When the dye has soaked thoroughly into the fibers, he has his colored fibers all ready [105] for the material he is about to weave. This mixture is called "bosaka."

177 We can add to that also a large number of black women who become
583 the famous "housekeepers" of the Europeans. Although payment for these women was usually given to their owners, they were still withdrawn from the family life and the native customs. Finally, the Christian women, who now live in Christian marriage, must also be mentioned.

In addition, the price of wives and the bride price have [544] undergone great changes, primarily in those districts where the natives came into more immediate contact with Europeans. Before the arrival of the Europeans, their main medium of payment was the woman herself; a woman was paid for with a woman. Now it is forbidden to use women as currency. Therefore the natives have raised the price in the payment of bokongo and mitako.

177
583 In some districts close to the European centers, the natives have brought the price for wives and the bride price to a height
436 never before known. For one wife they ask several nkesi.

A nkesi is 10,000 mitako. Such a sum is much too high in relation to their means. In a village there are, for instance, 30 women; for one woman, 40,000 to 50,000 mitako are asked, while at present in the whole village together the sum of 50,000 mitako is no more to be found. Therefore to oblige someone to pay two or three nkesi is usually to make it impossible for him to pay, or rather to make it necessary for him to pay with women, which is nothing else than encouraging women trade, which then occurs.

802 A remark should also be made here about the nomenclature
177 of the numerals. Nkesi is not a word of the Equatorial peoples; it was brought in from elsewhere with the Europeans. Their amounts were as follows:

10 was jum or bonkama;

100 was nkoto; and with the arrival of the Whites and foreign population came

1,000 nkesi.

The present numerical value is: 10, jum; 100, bonkama; 1,000, nkoto; and 10,000, nkesi. Some very old Negroes, however, still say bonkama for 10.

[583] This is the probable origin of the great rise in price of wives, especially in the area of Coquilhatville.

7:Brown M-3 (ca. 1940) 1944

FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

THE *NKUMU* OF THE TUMBA

RITUAL CHIEFTAINSHIP ON THE MIDDLE CONGO

H. D. BROWN

[1] THE tribes living round Lake Tumba, a lake some thirty-five miles long by twelve wide lying north of Lake Leopold II (approximately 0° 50′ south latitude, [13] and 18° east longitude) and draining into the Congo River at the confluence of the Ubangi, lack cohesion and show a considerable variety of custom and language. But they are known collectively as Tumba, the Government adaptation of the Native term *Ntomba*. Most of them are found to the east of the lake, the whole group numbering perhaps little more than forty to fifty thousand at the present time, though [14] there is evidence that the last twenty years have seen a great decrease in population. European occupation of this area goes back barely fifty years, Protestant missions having been established for about the same length of time. The first mission post [17] was established at Ikoko on the north-east shore of the lake, one of the villages of a group known as Bongindu. In pursuing this investigation particular attention has been given to the practices of this group, but mention is occasionally made where considerable differences have been found elsewhere.

105 13 The Tumba are agricultural, hunting, and fishing people. Their country is flat and swampy with dense forests, and there are many watercourses flowing into Lake Tumba. There are occasional small, but swampy plains, and one such area, more open, with quite wide stretches of prairie, is a haunt of buffalo. The forests are fairly well supplied with game, and the swamps, streams, and lakes with fish. A heavy rainfall and no distinct dry season make agriculture reasonably easy and famine unknown. Every family has its plantation of manioc, the staple diet, which is supplemented by plantains and bananas. The people make their own tools, formerly smelting their own iron for this purpose, are fairly skilled at making dug-out canoes, engage in weaving raffia and making mats out of split cane, and are efficient at pottery production.

624 101 178 The role of the *nkumu* in the socio-religious activities of the community is one of the most interesting features of Tumba life. As a result of European contact the ceremonies connected with the *nkumu* are rapidly disappearing, but it has been possible to collect considerable information from the older men and women among whom the details are still vividly remembered.[1] The following report refers to the period previous to European occupation and control, a time within the memory of a large number of people, but already sufficiently remote to become a matter of hearsay before the lapse of many more years.

[173] An understanding of the place of the *nkumu* among the Tumba requires a glance at the tribal organization. According to the people themselves, they migrated westward, and coming into these parts chose land for themselves. Among the several

---

[1] In *My Children of the Forest*, New York, 1924, pp. 48–71, Andrew F. Hensey has briefly outlined some of the forms of honour observed among the *nkumu* of the district adjacent to that of the present study. These more detailed notes are, however, timely if a record is to be preserved that approximates to accuracy.

Sakata F043
Teke F133

M 304 The patient is seated. The operator draws the designs or motifs on the body with *mpemba*. He pinches the skin between his left thumb and forefinger and makes the line with a sharp blow of the lancet. The wound is sprinkled with powdered charcoal, *mpemba*, and a powder made of dried and crushed tree bark. This mixture slows the healing process. The operation is repeated three or four times until the relief of the raised scars is deemed sufficiently pronounced.

T 5 304 Among the Bateke, Banfumungu, and Baboma, facial tattoos are obtained by scratching or scraping the skin with a sort of iron comb with relatively broad, dull teeth. The operation requires only one sitting among these peoples, and the wounds are not powdered. These two procedures are explained by the difference in these tribes between racial tattoos and the scarified ornamental figures worn by the women. The former are ordinary cicatrized wounds; the latter are raised scars.

M 304 The racial tattoos are always made prior to the other figures. In 1913-14 boys and girls were compelled to have them inscribed before they reached marriageable age.

The familial tattoos are usually begun some time before the girl's marriage, and they are quickly elaborated during the last few weeks preceding the union.

As for the coquettish tattoos or ornamental figures, there seems to be no rule regarding the age at which they are applied. Sometimes even an old woman will not hesitate to acquire new incisions.

M 304 ● 178 It is probable that the custom of tattooing will soon disappear among these peoples. The spread of the principles of European civilization will invariably suppress this primitive custom. [202]

We were able, moreover, to observe this trend during our visit to the villages of the houseboys, laborers, and soldiers of Leopoldville, Kinshasa, and other large centers. In these villages, the children and even the young men are no longer tattooed. The young girls are tattooed only slightly, and in general they have incisions only on the lower abdomen. Racial tattoos are totally lacking. On the other hand, in the villages of the interior, less influenced by the principles of civilization,

304
178 tattoos are very much in vogue at the present time. We concede that the custom of tattooing is now at its height in the region we visited.

It is probable that this custom will not long survive our penetration.

304
174 It would be very difficult to determine the approximate time of its introduction into the life of these natives. We believe, however, that we may regard racial tattoos as one of the ethnic characteristics peculiar to the contemporary culture and not as a specific custom of the ancestral civilization, transmitted from generation to generation and preserved or even elaborated by each one. The clearest proof of this fact comes from our observations of the present generation of old men. As a rule they have no racial tattoos. The old women who have no [203] trace of ornamental or ethnic tattooing are rarer. Ornamental incisions are more often lacking than tribal scars, and we encountered only rare cases where the sexual tattoos were lacking.

Fig. 126. Return from the Fields.

Article II. The Bolímbó

562
578
178
In the old days, if an extremely rich man wanted to show his affection for one of his daughters and show off his wealth, he made that daughter bolímbó. Today this custom has almost completely disappeared. (1) It has been almost impossible to maintain the

> 1. On the left bank of the Luilaka it disappeared a good many years ago. The Injóló still followed it until quite recently.

practice because of a greater distribution of wealth and the reduction of leisure due to the work imposed by the white man. This work has been imposed directly in the form of forced labor, labor on roads, economic projects, etc., or indirectly because a sum had to be raised for the payment of taxes. All this has made it more difficult to bring large numbers of people together for ceremonies lasting days and weeks. (2) Nevertheless, the custom must be described here.

> 2. One might suppose that the new men of wealth made possible by economic development would have contributed to the disappearance of this custom. Theoretically such might have been the case, but in fact these developments were not involved in the change that has been noted.

562
556
[602]
When a native wanted his favorite daughter to become bolímbó, he had first to obtain the consent and financial support of all his kin. Then enormous preparations were made, for everything had to be special -- beverages, various foods, dances. On the date which had been set and made known through messengers to the entire region, an enormous crowd gathered at his house. Public festivities went on day after day. In an address suited to the occasion, he announced to those assembled his intention to set his daughter up as a bolímbó. Two relatives or two of the father's wives then stripped off the girl's

556
564 According to the natives it was a public assertion of the father's high social position and at the same time the greatest token of affection he could bestow on his daughter; the two things were inseparable. Not every native had the right to make his daughter a [illegible]. On the contrary, he had to hold an especially prominent rank, that is to say, he had to be a wealthy, influential, and powerful head of a family. All the ceremonies, practices, and rules involved in this institution point in that direction. A comparison with the [illegible] wife (1)

1. See Chapter VII, Article III. Unless she is his first wife. See *ibid*, and Article I.

lends additional plausibility to this explanation.

556
562
178 As we have said, this custom is in the process of disappearing completely. In certain tribes such as the Bolobo, subtribe of the Lifumba, a substitute has actually been introduced. The favored daughter is dressed and adorned as before, except that European materials have replaced the fan. But the public character of the older institution has disappeared. The occasion is not surrounded with so many ceremonies. Finally, the girl is not called [illegible], for a new name has been invented; it is [illegible], "the white man raises (educates) her." [20]

Article III. Friendship

572 Friendship is not unknown to the Nkundó. It is founded on the same basis as in Europe. I have seen more than one instance of true mutual affection between persons who were in no way related. Among the Blacks with whom I have associated there are some whom I personally consider sincere friends and who have shown me real affection, helped me to the full extent of their powers, and shown me complete confidence. There have even been some who have not been afraid to place themselves in serious difficulties and who have gone so far as to incriminate themselves in order to clear me, thereby exposing themselves to troubles and sanctions.

[illegible] [illegible] It goes without saying that the feeling of sexual modesty and its various manifestations among these people are being transformed by two different currents. On the one hand, their moral laxity is increased by their contact with all sorts of other peoples, by a greater freedom, by the partial emancipation of women, and by the attraction of the large centers and their luxury. On the other hand, there is the preaching of Christian morality, although its effects are still very slight and certainly do not counterbalance the influences mentioned above.

Article II. Preparation for Sexual Life

1. The Woman's preparation

831

When a girl wishes to indulge in pleasures of the flesh, she prepares her sexual organs in advance. The preparation itself consists of "opening the way" (lifola mboka). This operation, which is repeated several times, is performed in hiding, preferably in the forest. The girl may or may not have companions with her who share her intentions. Each girl operates on herself. In order to gradually enlarge the organ, a girl uses progressively thicker shoots of the [illegible] bokango or bokaoló plant (Costus afer), making sure first to remove the tip. Later these shoots are replaced by the lombóló fruit of the bosomba plant (Aframomum) or, more infrequently, by a young manioc tuber.

This is the general practice; exceptions are few or nonexistent. It is followed because the girls want the event to which they aspire to occur without difficulty (bálota bálóv'ōkeels).

837 515 In addition to this basic preparation, girls [65] also wash the private parts of their bodies. This is a cleanliness measure which they continue to practice save in exceptional cases for the rest of their lives. According to my informants, the native woman -- as a very general rule -- stresses this cleanliness as much for herself as for the sake of not repelling her husband or lover. When a girl begins to practice this personal hygiene, it is a sign that she wants to begin her sexual life.

304/ 832 and "modern" fashions, as well as some ancient ones, take this into account. In the next paragraph, moreover, we will note analogous phenomenon.

Both of the explanations given can be defended, since each has its value. But it seems to me preferable not to oppose them but rather to bring them together, as they probably are in the thinking of the native.

It should also be noted that a man never performs the operation of making a sexual tattoo on a woman, although a woman may indeed operate on a man. And finally it should be mentioned that the [174] specific terms designating these tattoos are considered as obscenities.

The practice of tattooing is decreasing at the present time. [175] Many boys are already without tattoos. But very few girls lack them; among them the fad has not disappeared. Some even have themselves tattooed without the knowledge of their parents and in spite of their opposition. Among the Blacks, as everywhere in the world, fashion is deeply rooted because it is natural. But the designs of the tattoos are now becoming smaller. It seems to me that this change is due, not to a reaction against tattooing as such, but rather to a modification of the style. For tattooing is a real fashion, and like all fashions it is subject to change and development. Nowadays there is a tendency to imitate the designs of other peoples of the Congo. Elsewhere, as among the Injölö, for example, an internal evolution may be observed, although it is occurring under foreign influence. The evolution is taking place chiefly in the face motifs, while those of the body are beginning to be omitted. But the sexual tattoos do not seem to be disappearing. [49]

6. Bead Belts

291/ 301/ 832 From an early age the Nkundó child is adorned with a belt of trading beads. Before the coming of the Europeans this decoration made its appearance only towards puberty and was restricted to girls. Nowadays, many men also adorn themselves in this manner. And since it is now easier to obtain the beads, women are no longer with a single string but wear several in assorted colors. They add smaller ones below the knee.

548
582
583 The term [illegible] does not mean that the girl will stay single all her life. Her marriage is not permanently excluded; it is only postponed.

As for her behavior, the [illegible] conducts herself like any Nkundó girl. Nothing distinguishes her from her companions. If a good match is proposed to her, she marries like everyone else.

This custom -- if one can use the term -- therefore has no real connection with prostitution. All that can be said is that the girl who stays single longer and until adulthood, is exposed to more libertinism and a life of debauchery.

586 It also happens that parents who are angry because their daughter has dissolved a marriage to a man they consider a good son-in-law prevent her from remarrying in an effort to make her return to her legitimate husband. If the parents and their child each hold to their viewpoint without yielding, such a situation can go on for many months until the wife is -- practically speaking -- no longer under the authority of her husband. And since the opposition of her parents prevents her from being married by another man, she easily comes to give herself to all. It should be added that at present this case is chiefly hypothetical. Parents no longer have the authority [75] to thwart the desires of an adult daughter in this way; if she is stubborn they have to yield out of fear that she will run far away. And that would be to go from the frying pan into the fire. But in the past the kind of situation I have described was not unusual.

548
369 The most fertile places for the breeding and development of prostitution are to be sought in the centers. The following principal causes can be given:

1) Female vanity is overexcited by the sight [76] of all the dazzling riches which have been imported by white men and which are such a temptation to Negro women. It requires a considerable income to satisfy this desire to enhance one's native beauty. Ordinary laborers and artisans do not earn enough money to satisfy their wives or daughters in this respect. Mistresses of Europeans or of foreign black men, the wives of "clerks" and other representatives of Negro high society display a degree of luxury startling and striking to the rest.

837
178 The fact of colonization has greatly changed the situation. The freedom of communication across great distances, the introduction of new and varied goods and especially of money, have had a great influence on the development of prostitution. The economic system of the people remains the same; but when the women are away from their families or their husbands, they spend their money at their own discretion. And, since the objects of adornment available to them have greatly increased, they have a personal incentive to engage in immoral conduct.

The vice has not therefore taken on European forms; modern changes have simply increased -- but in enormous proportions -- the number of occasional streetwalkers. The development of this state of affairs is encouraged by the procuring activities of certain polygamous and even monogamous men living near European centers, which give rise to the attitude of their wives. For though the husband may reap the primary financial benefit, the wife is not deprived of her little gain, and her native cupidity easily pushes her to engage without scruple in commercializing her body.

837
598 The women under discussion are usually married. Often they have a recognized lover among the laborers in the camps, and he usually pays for their faithfulness. Thus we arrive at the married woman with a regular paying lover. [78]

This form of prostitution has developed even outside laborers' camps. It is to be found among the people on the river banks, who are more in contact with the Whites and their people and in the neighboring villages. It is especially prevalent among the Boloko, fairly near Coquilhatville, where it is spreading even among wives of monogamists. This perversion takes root all the more rapidly because it has a certain resemblance to the ancestral custom of a recognized concubinage (see Chapter VI, Article VIII, 2) and like the latter, it often does not take the form of prostitution. That is to say, the illicit relationship is not engaged in for the sake of gain. Furthermore, an arrangement is often made with the husband.

[839] As to the other forms of prostitution listed, they are still unknown in the native villages and in the small centers located in the territory studied. Some of them, however, may develop in the fairly near future.

156
864

prohibition under any circumstances. I have heard these same terms used also by the natives in the vicinity of Coquilhatville.

The body becomes flabby and without strength, and this weakness ends in a fatal paralysis ([illegible] [illegible] or [illegible]). In addition, the girls feared that their sexual organs, not yet fully formed, would be torn. They were also imbued with a very intense fear: [illegible] [illegible], "the fear of males," [illegible] [illegible], "the fear of females." They also feared death -- [illegible] [illegible]. The parents added that sexual acts were free from danger only between persons of the requisite age.

[illegible] This does not mean that children did not commit indecent acts. The game of [illegible], in which little girls try to cook (and which is always one of their favorite games (3) as it probably is throughout the world), often gave rise to it. Small boys joined in the game in order to taste the meal. And quite naturally they began to play at "husband and wife," more or less. Often this game involved only innocent imitations, but other times touching and exhibitions occurred between children of the same sex or of opposite sexes. This game is far more dangerous nowadays, [61] because of a change in the attitude of young people toward sexual matters.

3. Some boys imitate this game in order to acquire the habit of preparing their own meals. Later they benefit from it on more than one occasion.

The game of [illegible], in which boys, imitating monkeys, chase each other through the trees and creepers can -- and does - result in reprehensible scenes.

[illegible] In former times most girls were married before puberty. But their husbands did not touch them until they had completed their normal development.

[illegible] Among some individuals the fear of sexual relations was so deeply rooted that it persisted even beyond the age limit and was [illegible] conquered only by repeated assaults of passion. Thus it is generally known among the natives that young women used to seek refuge in their mother's house when the husband wanted to begin making use of his rights as a husband. The mother would try to persuade her daughter to submit to the law of life. But sometimes, if her child seemed too resistant, the mother made excuses for her and asked the husband to consider her daughter's youth. The man usually wanted to remain on good terms with his mother-in-law so he did not insist and resigned himself to waiting till nature influenced the spirit and heart of his wife.

Since young people were brought up in deep fear of dangerous relations, it should not surprise us that this feeling became a real habit and did not disappear spontaneously the moment a certain degree of liberty was permitted. As a matter of fact, could we not make similar observations in Europe?

This is the natural explanation for the praiseworthy degree of morality among adolescents in the past.

[illegible] Nowadays all that has changed. The young people follow where their passions lead them. Not the slightest check is placed on their impulses. Parents pay only slight attention to the conduct of their children. (82) It is better not to inquire into the morality of modern youth. Husbands no longer respect the bodies of their adolescent brides, who are themselves quite used to a sexual life and eagerly look forward to it, and no longer know the feeling of "the fear of man." Should we then be astonished at the frightening decrease in the birth rate (1) and the ever increasing spread of venereal diseases, which seem to have been unknown in the past?

The reasons for this change will be investigated further on, under the letter C.

[illegible] B. Between adults. Here the Nkundó are very lenient. There is a difference, however, between the socio-legal and moral viewpoints, although as we shall see the latter is influenced by the former.

[illegible] A woman is entirely free, legally speaking, as long as the first payment on her bride price has not been made. No man has

---

1. The natives say that in the past young wives quickly became pregnant. And now ...

836 they succumb to any favorable opportunity. The validity of this generalization is not affected by extremely rare exceptions which may be encountered and which are due either to a constitutional abnormality or to an extraordinarily firm Christian conviction. How should
576 these observations be reconciled with the statement so often heard
178 from natives that the situation was entirely different before the coming of the white men? It was not unusual to see young women not only abstaining from sexual relations but having such a "fear of men" that they drove away seducers and defended their chastity by hitting them with a stick.

When the woman did not accept the young man's proposition, she considered it a grave insult. The initiator was entitled to no indemnity "for blows and wounds." The woman replied only in violent terms, in word or act. [84] Often she went and insulted the mother of the guilty party. When the latter was told the reason for this behavior, she could only turn on her misbehaving son and usually gave him a good talking to; if he was young enough she gave him a good beating. Thus the girl had every right to defend herself.

If the provocation gave rise to no complications in family or society, the parents paid a lot less attention. But they tried to teach
[864] their children discretion in these dangerous matters, though their instruction primarily took the form of a lesson after an error was committed, or sometimes apropos of an incident that had befallen someone else. Some parents were very severe. These attitudes were based on a vague sense of morality which was not deduced from philosophical reasoning or religious or superstitious ideas but which was innate and instinctive so to speak. In addition, the fear of excesses and eventual social consequences no doubt also played a considerable
[577] role. Excesses were feared above all, and an isolated occurrence was regarded more or less as a momentary weakness.

To form an accurate picture of the situation that existed in the past, we must not lose sight of the fact that, because of very early marriages, the number of young single women was necessarily limited.

562 The attitude toward single men was more lenient than toward
836 girls, unless their behavior had any consequences and apart from the danger of their actions becoming habitual, leading inevitably to palavers.

594 has precedence over them and can become head of the family after his grandfather and uncles. In his natural father's clan, on the other hand, he has nothing to say.

568 596 If a man pays the bride price for a girl who has had a child by him, he asks his father-in-law to let him have his illegitimate child. This wish is almost always granted. The father-in-law well understands his son-in-law's fatherly sentiment of love and considers it quite legitimate and proper that a father should himself possess the 595 fruit of his own flesh. The only condition laid down is that because of the child the son-in-law must increase the amount of the bride price valuables by an extra slave or his equivalent. (1)

1. This transaction may even take place after the mother's death.

The father is not in a position to invoke any rights strictly speaking. The child is not considered as his because of his physical paternity, but only because of his father-in-law's kindness. If the latter were to refuse the father's request, he would not be acting in violation of justice. But his behavior would be considered as inhumane toward his daughter's husband and his grandson, and it would be criticized.

When a child is adopted by his natural father in this fashion, no one despises him for his illegitimate birth (90). This procedure may therefore be considered to establish his legitimacy.

591 171 Nowadays, among the Boloko and their Elinga, the practice of "buying" the child has sprung up. That is, if a man does not marry a woman who has had a child by him, he pays her parents a certain amount in order to obtain the child. There does not seem to be much opposition to the introduction of this custom, which springs from an honorable feeling for paternity and its duties. Its only disadvantage is that in such a case the child may never claim any rights in his mother's clan. (1)

1. See Chapter VIII, Article IV.

598 614 583 If a stranger marries an unwed mother, he is never given the child, which remains in the mother's family. This situation is clearly distinguished from those mentioned above.

Article II. The Ndonga

584 The ndonga is the guardian-keeper of the marriage; he is chosen by the parties involved and his participation as intermediary, witness, conciliator, or arbiter is required at every stage of the union. He is an official in the sense that his authority is derived from the very law which governs marriage in Nkundɔ́ society.

First of all, the ndonga is the indispensible intermediary for the payment of the bride price. Without him there is no legitimate marriage: Nkɔ́ ndonga ɔ́bɔ́ka baámba ɔ̂ lontubá, bɔ̌na ale ɔ̂ bonto, "Without a ndonga you are throwing your valuables away at a total loss, and your daughter is but a slave," that is, she is not a wife. Legally, only the ndonga is qualified to act as witness.

The importance attached by the natives to the ndonga's participation is apparent in every moment of daily life. Thus if a woman has been beaten by her husband, her family can be heard to say: "Our daughter (sister) is no slave; she was paid for through the agency of a ndonga," bɔ̌n'ɔ̌kisɔ́ áfa bokwála, bowɛ́ngákɛ ɛ́ la ndonga. Or she herself will retort in this manner, *mutatis mutandis*, to her husband or his family when in her opinion she is not being treated properly.

The absolute necessity for the participation of a qualified ndonga is very rarely mentioned by Europeans in the colonial administration. One would say that they are unaware of its importance though it is crucial.

584
178
602 In order to serve as ndonga for a particular marriage, a person must be related at the same time to both the future husband and wife or, as they say in Lonkundo, to be mbɔ́tswá. Nowadays, because of the migrations of the natives, the ndonga who meet this qualification are rare in the centers and often cannot be found at all. Therefore, it has been necessary to adapt the traditional law to the situation. Hence a practice has developed [108] under such critical circumstances which consists in taking as one's ndonga a man whose integrity is generally recognized and who has every reason to be impartial and interested in the stability of the marriage. Thus it often happens that chief catechists assume the functions and responsibilities of this role.

584 Formerly, and even today in the interior, when two young people love each other but cannot find anyone qualified to perform the

584 power to settle disputes. They claim their share of the remuneration from the ndonga. According to the saying -- in archaic language -- botɛ́ wǎ ndonga nd'â dombɛ́, "the power (literally, "the medicine") of the ndonga resides in the judges." Not that the judges themselves have the right or the power to intervene in matrimonial palavers. But they are that many additional witnesses. If the day comes when there is a dispute on the subject of the bride price, especially at the time of a divorce, the ndonga can call on them to help him refresh his memory and thus avoid difficulties. For it can easily happen that after several years the official witness has only a vague and approximate recollection of what was paid. If the judges do not receive anything at the time of payment, they will refuse to give their assistance at the critical moment. It is therefore an intelligent policy to acquiesce to their desires even though strictly speaking they can invoke no real prerogatives.

● 178 584 622 At the present time the colonial government, having established districts and named chiefs, the latter have had attributed to them the right to officially act as ndonga in matrimonial matters, or at least they have taken advantage of the powers given them and done so. In general [111] they summon the judges of the district at the same time, and the matter is entered after a fashion in the register of settlements. The chief's presence as a witness may have some value, since he can provide additional testimony and writes down the amount of the bride price. But his presence, on the other hand, has the disadvantage of involving him in matters which all in all are none of his business. We are not speaking here of cases in which he or some relatives of his are interested parties in the palaver. If he would be content to be a passive witness and enter the transactions that take place, the situation would be perfect.

192 184 It is probable that etymologically the word ndonga is derived from the verb root long, intransitive longam, "to be in order, arranged," transitive longy, "to arrange, make as it should be." In addition to the word ndonga, which is used west of the Luilaka, we find the word bokɔ́lo used among the Boɔ́ngɛ and the Boɔ́yɛ́ (as well as the Elɔ́ngɛ́), and ntombi among the Injɔ́lɔ́. The latter term could be the same word as its homonym which means "spy" and is derived from the verb

584 cares too much for his wife, so he acquiesces to their desires without
583x a murmur.

What is the purpose and the significance of the *ndanga*? The natives reply: the *ndanga* is given so that the daughter would not burn herself at the fire, *bɔ̃n'ɔ̌kɛ̃ɔ́ ɛ́fɔ́y' ɔ́longola tsɛ̌*. This is a sign that the man takes responsibility for any accident (represented by the general term "burn") which might befall his fiancée. In the hands of the woman and her family, it constitutes public and official evidence against the husband. (1) Consequently, it is also a guarantee to the parents that the husband will take care of their child and treat her properly.

But what then is the *ikulɛ*'s reason for being? The Nkundɔ́ reply: "The *ikulɛ* is evidence, a sign that the woman belongs to a particular man."

In practice, then, there is hardly any difference between the purposes of the two payments. Actually they have identical consequences, both with respect to the duties and rights of the engaged couple and to the indemnity to be paid under certain circumstances.

Thus if a woman runs away with her lover and he has not given the *ikulɛ*, and some accident befalls her, her family can make no claim as they have no evidence against him. In former times this would have been a purely hypothetical situation; nowadays it does occur, but it is quite unusual in the native areas.

Nevertheless, a slight difference may be noted between the explanations for the two payments given by the natives. [122] The *ikulɛ* is simply proof of the engagement; the *ndanga*, on the other hand, is the recognition of responsibilities and their acceptance. The fiancé beats his breast, as they say (*ɛyakɛ́ndela ntɔ́lɔ́*).

178 We have said that the *ikulɛ* and the *ndanga* are in the process
583 of merging. This development is probably due to the fact that both
584 payments are made nowadays in the form of brass or copper rings.

---

1. Hence, probably, the origin of the word *ndanga*. The root is *langa*, "to love," "to desire," therefore "to accept." In Lokonda, see *lolanga*.

584 But if the indicated difference between them were fundamental, this
583 fact would by no means provide a sufficient explanation. On the
178 other hand, if it were only a slight nuance without practical consequences, it would not, it seems to me, adequately explain the existence of the two payments, especially since in the past quite a long time could elapse between them.

Therefore we can wonder whether the basis of a greater differ-
174 ence might not be found in the hypothesis of its being a primitive
583 custom.

584 For instance, the *ikulɛ* could have been the payment accompanying a proposal of marriage comparable to our European engagement. Then, when unresolvable palavers developed out of this situation, a system may have been devised which would not prevent disputes from arising but would make possible their resolution according to proper and just legal regulations. This system would have been the payment of a *ndanga*.

While this is a possible explanation, it is not a very plausible one. Native law appears in all domains so reasonable, cautious, and wise, and so well adapted to circumstances, that it would hardly have left a way open to so great a source of difficulties in so important a matter. Such a possibility can hardly be admitted by any one who is even slightly familiar with the mentality of the Nkundó. Then, too, the modern blending of the *ikulɛ* and the *ndanga* suggests that one of two is duplicating the function of the other. And the consequence of this development would have been the uniting of the two payments into one, with a single purpose, or more probably, in conformity with the general practice, the transferring of the significance of a pledge, theoretically assigned to the *ndanga*, to the *ikulɛ*. [123] The existence of a single engagement payment would have been much more in accordance with the present hypothesis than the practice of making two distinct payments, which are independent and separated in time. We should add here that the acceptance of a responsibility is always and under all circumstances accompanied by the handing over of a *ndanga*.

We could conceive of a second hypothesis, which seems more in accordance with reality. The *ikulɛ* may originally have been an engagement payment, as in the first hypothesis, only the girl may

583ˣ months, even years, may elapse. In the past there was no hurry at all. Only if the father of the woman needed the bride price to obtain a wife for himself, for a son, or a cousin, etc., was the period [178] shortened. Nowadays, however, those who are entitled to the bride price urge the shortening of the interval before the walo payment because of the overexcitation of their desire for riches, on the one hand, and also because it gives the young people a possibility of leaving their tribes and regions and going into the centers to find the means of earning more money, dressing more luxuriously, satisfying their vanity and their desire for freedom, not to mention libertinism or even worse. Nor has the one reason present in the past disappeared -- on the contrary. And as a result of all that, as soon as the interval becomes a little long to the girl's father's taste, he readily brings the situation to the attention of the chiefs established by the administration, who are always ready to deal with matrimonial cases as much for the financial gain involved as for the increase in their prestige resulting from their involvement in this most important realm, in which according to ancestral law they have no right whatsoever to intervene, for the simple reason that this law knows no chiefs or headmen in the European sense.

1. Terminology

589ˣ
192 The term walo is used by the Bonkoso, the Bongáli, the Bombwanja, and the Ionda; bombuluku, on the other hand, is used by the Wǎngatá, the Bakáala, the Lifumba, the Injóló, and the Boángi (as well as the Elángá and the Losanganya). The Bombomba use the term elámbela in imitation of their neighbors, the Ekonda.

This last term may be related to -lámba, [130] "to prepare food." This derivation should be compared with what we have said in Article II about the remuneration of the ndonga. I have been unable to discover the etymology of bombuluku. Let us try our luck with walo.

In accordance with the rules of Nkundó etymology, this word could be related to the root -al, or to -alol, which is an intensifier derived from the former. No example of the simple root exists at present, as far as I know. But there are derivative forms: alej and alol, or -aol which results from the elimination of the first "l."

583x Although given by the father-in-law to his son-in-law and therefore
431 part of the nkomɛ, yet these valuables have neither their significance
556 nor their purpose. They are disbursed at the time of the payment of the ikulɛ́. This practice was customary only among men who were unusually wealthy and influential, that is, family heads who occupied prominent positions in native society. It was never omitted for a bolɔ́mbɔ́ (see Chapter I, Part 2, Article II). The woman's father gave these valuables to his son-in-law, saying: "I am giving you my daughter in marriage. She has always occupied a high position; she is of a very good family. I want her to retain her prominent rank. Therefore here is a bride price; go and get yourself a second wife with these rings, so that my daughter will have her nkita [154] from the very first day. Then come back and pay me the bride price for her."

The woman who was honored by such preferential treatment was called yɛ̌ngaende. This word is composed of the roots ɛ́ng, "to acquire by means of a bride price," and ende, "a man (vir)." The name comes from the fact that she herself paid the price for her husband, so to speak, and did so even before he paid the bride price for her.

The Nkundɔ́ have given up this manner of ostentatiously dis-
●[178] playing their wealth, so that the custom we have just described now
belongs to the past. Nevertheless there are still women who bear the
[551] name Yɛ̌ngaende, in memory of some ancestor who had been the object of this honor which put her in a privileged position, a royal position, so to speak.

583x From all the foregoing it will be apparent that marriage payments are not unilateral in Nkundɔ́ law and practice. Rather, there is a mutual handing over of goods. Although the goods given by each party differ clearly from one another, they all have an economic and financial value. Therefore we can speak of a real reciprocity in these payments. And although the husband has to furnish the largest and highest amount, it would be wrong to say that he alone must "pay for his spouse," for though he does actually "pay for his wife," she must to a certain extent "pay for her husband." That is what the

583x 563 obtaining wives for the boys. Therefore he can turn a Botswá girl belonging to him over to his father-in-law. The father-in-law never takes this woman as his wife or as a wife for one of his relatives; but he gives her in marriage to one of his own Batswá or to a stranger of that race who pays him a bride price for her. Socially and financially the result is exactly the same as if the son-in-law had made his payment in the form of a slave.

Thus the bride price paid by Lokonda jw'ĭsano y'ănkanja of Ngombe (Bongíli) for Bakutu of the Basɛ́ká Elongama (Besombó, Bombwanja) and used by the latter's cousin, Bofɛ́nda of Ekúkola (Bongíli) to obtain for wife, Iloa of Ndongó (Bongíli), consisted of 60 rings and the woman Ómâmenga (Antonia) of the Mbálanga clan of Botswá. Ómâmenga was later married to Wanja (Pius), a Botswá belonging to her new masters.

[567] There may be two or more slaves, for the same reasons that determine the size of the walo. The Bombwanja are only exceptionally satisfied with a single one. But all the slaves always comprise a single bosóngo.

583x The bosóngo is not part of the jěngí. The natives say bosóngo ěmí ník'omóngó, "the bosóngo is entirely separate." Their statements on this subject are markedly categorical.

A characteristic expression which designates the entire bride price is baúmbá la bonto, "rings and a man" (slave). The rings are the jěngí; they are valuables of a purely material nature. The bosóngo is, on the contrary, a human being.

There is no term in Lonkundo which covers both kinds of payments. The whole cannot be expressed precisely in a single word.

583x 178 In the vicinity of Flandria, however, the young people [160] are beginning to confuse the two words jěngi and bosóngo and to use one in place of the other. (1) [Editor's note: The confusion today is

---

1. The young people from Injóló who are about twenty years of age and whom I have known at Flandria Mission and in their own settlements, do not confuse these terms but distinguish clearly between them.

583x 178 probably due to the penetration of the Lombwanja dialect and its rather strong influence, even in relation to other words, on the dialect of the Bongili and Bonkoso, as well as in central Flandria.] Among the Bombwanja, -sɔ́ng and bosɔ́ngo are synonyms of the Lokɔ́tɛ́ -ɛ́ng, jɛ́ngi. For the payment of a slave they use only the word ilengɛ́ and the expression -lekya ilengɛ́, "to give a slave." But the old people loudly protest against this confusion and consider it an error, a mix-up, a corruption of the language.

583x The bosɔ́ngo used to be paid at the same time as the walo or shortly thereafter. Nowadays years may pass between the two payments. If the husband is too slow in meeting his obligation, the wife's family complains. Often when their daughter visits her parents, they prevent her from returning to her husband as a means of coercing him into making the payment. As in the case of the jɛ̌ngí, it is up to the husband to bring the payment; the wife's family is not expected to fetch it.

We have said that copper rings may be substituted for the slave. No other objects -- such as knives, for example -- come under consideration. If the rings are to be counted as bosɔ́ngo, they must be explicitly designated as such by the husband or by the ndonga. If the intention is not verbally expressed they will be considered jɛ̌ngí, since they are the kind of valuables used for the latter payments.

589x 431 The bosɔ́ngo is the final and definitive bride-price payment. This does not mean that the husband does not thereafter have to pay in certain circumstances. On the contrary, financial transactions are terminated only by death. But [161] subsequent payments spring from other obligations which follow the final completion of the marriage agreement though they result from it. Such are, for instance, the belonga (gifts brought when visiting), valuables given at the time of a death, the nkunjí (funeral payment), and assistance to members of the wife's damily (for example, in the settlement of a bride price). Or perhaps the wife's mother comes to help her daughter at childbirth; when she goes back home her son-in-law gives her a farewell present (bolingako), such as 4 bakonga. The statement of natives that the jɛ̌ngi never ends -- jɛ̌ngi lifosíle elakɛ́ ńk'iwɛ́ -- should be interpreted in the light of these practices.

583 The bosőngo must be handed over under any circumstances, even if divorce or death precede it. If a husband refuses to pay he loses his rights over one of the daughters in his wife's family, whose bride price would compensate with interest for the economic and social loss suffered by the woman's clan. (1)

1. See Chapter VIII, Article IV, and Chapter IX, Article IX, 2.

2. The value and consequences of the bosőngo

How important is the bosőngo today? In answering this question a distinction must be made between two aspects of the problem: the financial aspect and the legal aspect.

1) Financially, the bosőngo, first of all, completes the payment of the bride price and thus produces the highest degree of theoretical stability possible in a Nkundő marriage. That is the meaning of the following expressions: bǒlő wǎ liǎla ńk'onto, "the strength of the marriage (its stability) is to be found in the slave,"; l'osőngo bǒmo to ǎkőlongwa wǎlí, "by means of the bosőngo the woman completely becomes the wife"; or wǎlí ǎkőlongwa ǒkě, "the wife becomes completely yours." Since, as I have explained, the bosőngo terminates the payment of the bride price [162], the woman's parents no longer have any excuse for taking her away from her husband, and they become even more desirous of maintaining this union in which such great interests are at stake.

589
178
567 Apart from the value of wealth per se, there is also its social influence. In this respect we must make a distinction between the past and the present:

a) At the time when the bosőngo was necessarily a flesh and blood slave rather than a slave in rings, it was naturally valued more than the walo. Twenty-five bakonga (for the walo) and two slaves were preferable to 50 bakonga and one slave even though, if the payments were reduced to the monetary unit in copper, the latter was greater. This fact is easily explained. "In the past," say the old people, "we had very little copper, and the smelting of iron was a

583x 567 178 hard and lengthy task. The walo paid for our mothers was greatly inferior to what we see nowadays. In the majority of cases our fathers paid no more than 15 or 20 rings and iron objects. But they gave a greater number of slaves. It was not unusual to hand over five or even ten slaves for a wife. Consequently, the bosóngo was a good deal more important than the walo. At the present time the white men have introduced a great deal of copper and brass; and the abundance of these metals is the cause of the increase in the price of the walo. On the other hand, it has become more difficult, and finally altogether impossible, to obtain slaves; that is why the bosóngo has been lowered. Finally, we have had to substitute rings for persons."

583x 178 b) Nowadays, though the idea of the importance of the bosóngo to the family is still alive, because it is the last payment and therefore a permanent settlement of the financial question, its monetary importance and therefore, in a certain perspective, its social importance for the receiving clan, has greatly diminished. This has happened because [163], like the payments that precede it, it has become a payment of copper rings. In places where the bride price is paid in money and in valuables introduced by the Europeans, the importance of the bosóngo quite naturally decreases even more rapidly.

583x 2) From the legal standpoint the question is entirely different. The bosóngo results in no new relationship between the spouses. The woman's name does not change; she is called wǎlí, as before. The idea that she becomes a wife completely at this time is based, as we have said, only on the fact that the marriage theoretically becomes completely stable. This supposed stability is derived from the handing over of the last payment, which leaves the parents no excuse for taking their daughter away from her husband. It does not come from any new legal act.

That this is so is clearly demonstrated in the following fact: if the woman dies before the bosóngo, there is no palaver, as there is if she dies before the walo is paid. Her husband is not required to pay an indemnity (mbǎlaka). But he is required to complete the

Article I. Girls

According to Nkundó custom it is acceptable for an expected
584 child, not yet born or still very young, to be promised in marriage
to X or Y. This practice was formerly very common and is still quite
prevalent today. It is called banda bǒna or bǒmoto, literally, "to
count a child" or "to count a woman." The ikulá is paid at the time
of the promise. Later the matter is carried out in the usual fashion;
the other parts of the bride price are paid either while the fiancée
is young or, preferably, at the time when she goes to her husband.

584 Until that time, if one of the girl's relatives is already a
855 wife of a polygamist husband-to-be or of one of his relatives, the
child is brought up in her husband's family from a fairly early age,
depending on the circumstances. She lives with her relative. She
may be barely seven or eight years old, for example. If no one in
her husband's clan can take care of her, [232] she spends only one or
two weeks there to become acquainted, little by little, with people
and places; she repeats the visit from time to time. Her mother
accompanies her, for being so young she could not get used to being
there alone, without support, without her parents. Therefore it is
necessary to wait till she is old enough to be somewhat independent
and able to manage by herself. That time usually comes around the
[145] beginning of puberty, thus sometime between the ages of twelve and
fifteen.

Like an adult woman, she is already called bompáka or wǎlí,
584 depending on the portion of the bride price that has been paid. She
833 has all the duties and privileges of a wife: sexual relations, food
preparation, care of the household, etc. There is no set date or age
for the beginning of cohabitation. This matter is settled between the
husband and his parents-in-law. The latter do not have the right to
[606] delay the time, even if their daughter is still too young, but they can
make use of their great influence over their son-in-law. The modern
[178] generation is not shocked by sexual relations between an adulterer [sic]
[571] and a girl who has not reached puberty. Besides, all is in order from
the legal standpoint; since the man has paid the bride price, he is the

584
572 When an engagement is arranged for an expected child, the events may betray the hopes of the parents; and the child for whom the *ikulá* has been paid may turn out to be a boy. This mischance is dealt with in the following manner: either the suitor waits for the birth of a girl, or an alliance of friendship and mutual assistance (*boseka*, see Chapter I, Part 1, Article III) is established between him and the newborn child. Such an alliance is called *liála jǎ jwende*, "the marriage of men," (*matrimonium viri*). In no case is restitution made for the *ikulá* that has been paid. If the friendship between the two men remains unbroken later, it results in the marriage of the daughter of the man for whom the *ikulá* was paid before his birth, to the man who paid it or to his son or grandson. No new *ikulá* is paid for such a marriage; the payment of the bride price simply has to be completed in the usual fashion.

584 A man may acquire a young child for himself, or for a son, a younger brother, etc. In the past the former was more frequently the case, for the old men kept the women for themselves and wanted [234] to benefit from having them before leaving them to the youths as inheritance. But the latter situation also arose.

The purpose [of obtaining a young child as wife for a relative] was to prevent inexperienced youths who were not able to defend themselves from being deprived of the means of obtaining a wife should the father die prematurely and the heirs monopolize the harem and bride-price valuables to their own profit, which theoretically they have a right to do. This practice is thus a means of favoring a son or other relative by furnishing him with a wife earlier than is customary. Nowadays this is even a stronger reason
[178] than in the past, because boys marry earlier than formerly.

Other reasons for obtaining a child as a wife are involved in the two above-mentioned instances. There is a greater certainty of getting one's money's worth; valuables can disappear for various reasons during long unproductive years.

584
855 But the most fundamental reason, in my opinion, is the one very often invoked by the Nkundó, namely the opportunity of personally attending to the future wife's education. There is no

584 safeguard freedom, and the impression should not be given that childhood unions are encouraged -- as it sometimes is -- by the exemption of immature wives of polygamists from a supplementary tax.

There is no law requiring an elder sister to be married before a younger one, but such is the common practice. Exceptions are made only under certain circumstances, and particularly if the younger girl finds a suitor earlier than the older one, a reason which includes and sums up all the others (such as disadvantageous physical and psychological tendencies of the older sister).

● 178 This practice of marrying daughters off before maturity is
584 beginning to change because of the increase in freedom which has
been introduced by colonization. Nevertheless, as this change is not especially advantageous [236] its manifestations are still very slight. The Christian education of parents must of necessity delay the time of the daughter's marriage and will do so ipso facto as soon as Christian influence becomes sufficiently strong in the region.

Article II. Boys

Except in the rare instances of an engagement of two young
582 children, it was formerly the common and normal practice for men to remain bachelors for many years after puberty. The old men tended first to their own wants, and the youths had to wait their turn, like their elders. This was considered entirely natural. Later on they could establish a home and "profit" from life. Meanwhile they found a little compensation with the wives of certain relatives or of others, if the opportunity arose.

582 To explain this state of affairs we can invoke the political
561 organization of Nkundɔ́ society, which is based on age. It is there-
fore natural that those possessing authority should have its external
[556] signs, and one of the foremost of these is the wealth manifested in
the possession of wives. But, as we will point out later, the present situation greatly weakens this explanation.

It is more natural to consider the delay in the marriage of
582 young men a logical consequence of the marriage of girls at an
583x early age. Suppose that a boy is fifteen years old while his sister,

582 We have spoken of the unproductivity of the bride price.
583x This is a Nkundô notion, and it is accurate only because the old
men want to satisfy themselves before their sons. Actually, they
could very easily reconcile their desire that the bride price should
be productive with the aspirations of the youths, at least in many
instances. All they would need to do would be to use the valuables
they have received for their sons' benefit by acquiring girls of the
same age for them. The productivity of the valuables would not
diminish [238] in the least, of course, since the goods would remain
in the family. On the contrary, it would be increased because a
greater number of progeny would probably be born. But our natives
[842] knowledge of physiology does not seem to be sufficiently developed
[181] for them to come to this conclusion. And even more probably their
egoism has greatly clouded their intelligence and silenced the voice
of good sense and fatherly love to make it possible for them to
multiply the number of their wives and thus increase the easy satis-
faction of their sensuality, augment their wealth, and reinforce their
social position. It will be their sons' turn after their death.

561 This situation is aggravated by the fact that, except for the
428 bosôlo, the brothers, not the sons, of the deceased inherited the
595x widows, who thus remained in the hands of the old men.

582 Because of their attitudes the old men monopolized most of
the women. They established large harems for themselves, so that
it was very difficult for the young men to find a woman to marry;
they had to consider themselves lucky if their father provided them
with a child.

582 Thus it was unheard of that a young man between twenty and
● 178 thirty years old should marry, except for a few instances where a
man acquired a child who was to become his wife after a number of
years. Men were usually forty years old or older before they married.

Nowadays the situation has changed entirely; the attitude of the
old men favors the young much more and has become almost normal.
The great majority of fathers, if they have the means, procure a wife
for their sons as soon as the latter are old enough to express a desire
for one. This improvement is due to the fact that it has become

582 much easier to get married. A great number of young men who
178 would still be bachelors had they lived under the old regime now have wives. The young people leave home to go and work for the Whites, and the parents feel sorry for their sons and do not want to see them leave without a wife [239] to take care of them and prepare their food. This feeling has dealt the old custom a severe blow. And even for the young men who stay at home, it is no longer so difficult to obtain a wife. Paternal love has here triumphed over egoism.

Furthermore, the elders have been forced to take a more humanitarian attitude because, since the European occupation has given the young women a new freedom, they have abandoned their husbands and fled to the centers where, under the protection of the Whites, they have joined lovers who are as young as they. Therefore, it was much more intelligent to obtain a wife for their sons in an honest fashion rather than to expose themselves to loud palavers by the abandoned husband.

From all the preceding description it is clear that the man was considerably older than his wife. But because of the inheritance of widows it also happened -- and still happens -- that a man acquired wives who were older than he. When young men marry at the present time, many wives are definitely younger than their husbands; many adolescents have received prepubescent little girls for wives.

As a general rule a Nkundó woman does not like her husband to be much older than she, and she likes it even less if he is younger. Nowadays unions between persons of the same age increase continually. This increase is due more to the remarriage of divorcées, who prefer husbands of their own generation to the old men who first paid for them, than to first marriages between equals. The influence of Christian couples is called upon to play a great educational role in normalizing the situation of the girls.

581/
582 The boys must marry in turn, according to age, because of the seniority rule which regulates social relations. That is the rule, but it may be mitigated by the application of another rule, namely the one pertaining to the direct or indirect rights to a sister's bride

684 582 There is no sanction against the infraction of the law of exogamy. There is only the opposition of the parents and patriarchs, and a quasi-innate habit.

582 614 Note also that members of certain clans frequently marry members of certain others, among whom they prefer to choose their wives. Therefore a good proportion of the women married into any given family will belong to one particular clan. The Wafé (Bakáala), for instance take a great many of their wives from among the Bongale w'ôtóló.

[174] 582 614 We may reasonably assume that the ancestors of related groups, who now marry among themselves, formerly practiced exogamy. If this assumption is correct, it must be admitted that with the progressive growth of families, this rule has been relaxed in certain respects so that the present situation has resulted. Consequently, it would not be surprising if these legal provisions became even less rigorous in the future. Actually, some young people have begun to ●[178] violate the rules of exogamy and their example has freed the whole family. (2) Thus the Bokátola maintain that their two groupings, Bompela and Ilóngé, who now intermarry, formerly comprised a [251] single exogamous entity. Contemporary instances appear here and there, but they remain very rare, even between persons who are very distantly related, and much rarer between close kin. (1) For the Nkundó still feel very strongly about this law. The bulk of the people are entirely opposed to any laxity or violations and the patriarchs and notables act against them with all their power. But the strength of

2. See Chapter I, Article VII, 1.

1. A recent case was that of Elímá and Bolúfe, who both belonged to the exogamous group of Bokenyola of the Bonjoku, but one belonged to the Baséká Bokóyó family and the other to the Baséká Njoli.

593x 758 Efala of Longa married to Ìfolí of Bokɛnyola (Bonjoku); Basɔsɛ of Mbelɛ married to Nkengo of Litɔli.

If the woman went to her family in good health and contracted an infirmity there, her parents are responsible for it. They are obliged to nurse her and to assume all the expenses due to her treatment. After she is cured they send her back with a quantity of nkomɛ for her husband. Usually the matter ends there. If relations between the two families are not very good, however, the husband will claim an indemnity, which varies with the situation and to which he is entitled even if he does not claim it.

This stipulation of the law holds even if the woman has gone to see her mother, father, etc., at the time of an illness or for any other reason.

It does not hold, on the other hand, if the wife has been ordered to go to her parents by her husband, or if she has fled the home shared with her husband because of ill treatment or of serious failings on his part; this point will be explained below in number 3. In such cases the husband is legally responsible for the illness.

Certain situations may arise which are intermediate to the ones discussed. Thus, for example, a wife may make a visit on her own initiative [269] but for her husband's good. Theoretically, he should win the case. Note, finally, that a stay of only twenty-four hours is not considered sufficient to make responsibility for an illness fall on the wife's family.

178 595x 758 672 797 Colonization has produced an entirely new situation. Colonial law has given the extra wives of polygamists the freedom to go to a mission in order to be instructed in the Christian religion and to contract a monogamous marriage (provided the customary rules governing the dissolution of marriages are observed). Such a woman may fall ill at the mission. If her illness has no troublesome consequences, it does not result in a dispute. But if the illness becomes chronic and in some way detrimental to the abandoned spouse, it may do so.

The polygamists declare that they are free of any responsibility, which they place on the woman's family. But the family has

178 595x 758 672 797 nothing to do with it; it is unjust to bring them into the matter. Since this legislation is intended to combat polygamy, it is natural that the polygamous husband be the one who suffers from it.

The following is a recent example of this situation: Mbɔ̃yɔ̃ Julienne, sister of Botúna Jean of Balondɔ̃, married to a polygamist by the name of Insílo of Bokenyola (Bonjoku), went to Bokuma Mission, where she contracted an incurable illness. (1) Because of her illness she found it impossible to remarry. She therefore left the mission but was no longer accepted by the husband she had lived with so that she had to live in her brother's home. Insílo insisted that her brother reimburse him for the bride price, maintaining that in going to the mission, the woman had divorced him; his real reason, however, [270] was that she had become unfit to fulfill the duties of a wife. Since Mbɔ̃yɔ̃ did not fall ill in his home, he held her family responsible.

593x 586x 3. Abandonment of the home shared by the couple

In the case of serious failings on the part of a husband, a woman's usual weapon is to leave their common home and return to her father's house. If the reason for her flight is serious, it is up to the husband to go and bring her back. She will not return on her own initiative. If he refuses to make the first step, he will be accused as much by public opinion as by his parents-in-law of not loving his wife, and a rupture will become inevitable. It is therefore his duty to go to his wife's parents. They will ask him to explain the situation. The wife, too, will say what she thinks. The parents will settle their difference. Whether or not the ndonga is present will depend on the

1. It was a sort of illness with nervous symptoms. From a scientific viewpoint, it is more than likely that she had this illness before her arrival at the mission, although it was only manifested there. But the natives do not make this distinction, so it is not relevant to our topic.

> 593^x of a few fashionable expressions: *vulva
> 578 matris tuae, comede matrem in clitoride,
> 195 coi cum matre*. The same expressions, *mutatis mutandis*, are used with reference to a person's father, brother, or sister. The expressions used for "disinterring" are *okundola ilongo, isé, nyangô*, etc., that is, "exhume your family, father, mother, etc., or *bejwô běkě*, "your corpses," that is, your deceased parents (this last expression especially excites a strong reaction).

578 the effect does not vary greatly. [275] The only difference is in
593^x the intensity of rage and of the reactions, which depends on the individual temperaments of the interested parties.

578 A Nkundô is greatly outraged by obscenities hurled at him by
593^x his wife, especially if she attacks him in public. His reaction is al-
627 ways violent. Usually it comes to blows, a thrashing, and sometimes the knife. But if the husband wants to remain within the limits of the law, he cannot injure or, more especially, kill his wife on his own authority. Before going any further, he must bring his case before the *ndonga*. His family is invited to the meeting and, if possible, so is the wife's father. The outraged husband presents his case and warns the persons assembled that one day his exasperation will lead him to take up the knife. Having taken his case before qualified persons, the husband can from then on go ahead and avenge himself for the disgraces his wife may inflict on him; it is lawful for him to do so. If the guilty woman starts again, no one can accuse her husband of wronging her, for she herself is at fault and he has warned her in accordance with all the rules of the law.

593^x Modern young people do not always follow this procedure.
578 But their revolutionary spirit often brings them reprimands and often gets them into great difficulties. The elders jealously guard their
● [178] authority, and no one may reproach them for doing so. Therefore in a palaver of this sort, a father will sometimes foresake his son.

M
593x recourse to the assistance of a third party who -- for remuneration,
578 of course -- undertook to carry out his project. This task was usually
P
[679] confided to Batswa, who did not disdain this type of work, which
was quite suited to their taste.

The fact that the law gives the husband the right to punish his wife [277] for the type of oratory under discussion meant that a wife had to exercise some discretion in her choice of expressions. Fearing violent reactions, she often spoke the more serious insults softly.

M
Since the European penetration women are more daring. For
776 their husbands fear European justice, which follows principles entirely
578 different from their ancestral law. Thus they complain bitterly of
593' the insolence of their wives: "We have become slaves; the women
562 are now all-powerful. They may do as they please, for we can no
longer do anything to them." But as soon as native courts are sufficiently educated and are freed from what an eminent colonial jurist has called "the jurisdiction of palavers" (1), they will no doubt effect a salutary change in this situation.

M
The emancipation of women is one of the factors that have
562 increased the frequency of divorce. For a man who cannot avenge
586 continuous outrages remains dominated by shame, and the presence of the one who is the cause of it must become unbearable in the long run; whence the indifference, antipathy, hate, and the inevitable results of that permanent confusion in the household.

M
Men among whom the feeling of modesty was highly developed
593x hanged themselves out of shame instead of attacking the guilty wife.
762 That is what many natives have maintained in talking with me.
577 Nevertheless, I have no knowledge of a present-day example. When
[683] this happened, the wife's family no longer took action against their
daughter. Nor were they obliged to pay an indemnity, although their child had brought about the death. They simply had to acquit

---

1. See A. Sohier, Bulletin des Séances de l'Institut Royal Colonial Belge, Vol. 6, 1935, 1, p. 60 and *passim*.

602 brings forth reprimands on the part of the husband and his parents which obviously can easily degenerate into quarrels. If the omissions are so frequent and of such a nature that they can no longer be explained as simply forgetting, a whim, or a fit of peevishness, but [299] are taken to indicate spitefulness or vulgarity, the matter is [627] brought before the ndonga (who is often assisted by the family tribunal) or brought before the authority constituted by the woman's kin. If in spite of everything the expected improvement does not take place, the break-up is inevitable.

606 The husband's father and mother extend the same affection to their son's wife as they feel toward him. They consider her their own child, and it is not unusual to find that their love for the wife equals their feeling for their own son. She is only a relative by marriage, but out of affection for her they call her their child. She, for [601] her part, does not use toward them the term bakanga (or bakiló) but out of filial respect calls them "father" and "mother." Exceptions to this practice may be found, however.

606 224 If the father (and those who fall in the same category such as uncles, elder brothers, etc.) kills a large game animal, he is expected to give his son's (or brother's, etc.) wife a piece of meat, whose size depends on the number of daughters-in-law he has and which consists of one or several chops (bokalako) (1) and the piece at the nape of the neck (botómbyá).

606 835 Illicit relations between the husband's father and his daughter-in-law would be an unheard of crime. The same would be true with respect to any of the "superior" relatives. (2) The laws regulating

---

1. Called lièto among the Bolèngé and the tribes of the Losanganya.

● [178] [184] 2. Only the Boangi -- like the Elángá of the Losanganya - allow relations between a brother and the wife of his junior; and they are already beginning to find imitators among their neighbors to the southeast, the Injóló.

604 An uncle (see D above) is not entirely free to cure his nephew's
837 (F) passion unless he is the nkóló of his sister (E), that is, unless the
578 mother (C) of his sister (E) is the nkita of his aunt (B), [307] who is the
575 sister of his father (A). Indeed in that case his sister may not complain, for she owes him respect and submission; her subordination to her brother and master is greater than the gratitude he owes her for any riches he may have obtained through her or on her account.

D. In the case of the relationship of a grandson (bonkáná) to
603 his grandfather's wives, his freedom is, in practice, complete.
837 Actually, among the Nkundó the affection of a grandfather (nkóko) for his own grandson often exceeds his love for his own son and completely degenerates into weakness. (1) The grandfather puts up with all his grandson's carryings-on, his whims, all his teasing, his insults, etc.

After illicit relations the grandson sometimes carries his insolence so far as to spontaneously send his grandfather a "mock" indemnity in the form of a basket filled with stones in the place of copper rings.

626 Although the grandfather treats his grandson with good humor,
603 public opinion does not favor the latter's conduct, though it is more
837 lenient than in the cases described above. The public reaction, as well as the sending of the "mock" fine, shows that in principle these relations are censurable and condemned. Because of present circum-
● [178] stances, particularly marriage at an earlier age than in the past, the age difference between a grandson and his grandfather's wives has increased considerably in the constantly growing number of cases, and their relations have proportionately decreased. (2) [308]

---

1. As happens very often also in Europe.
See Chapter I, Part 1, Article I, 3.

[184] 2. We have seen above that other Nkundó tribes are even less strict in these matters. On the other hand, the Ekonda, a Nkundó group living on Lake Leopold II, have a

684 duties is also unsatisfactory, may sometimes resort to divorce or to
593* selling her into slavery, but rarely to killing.

Colonization has abolished torture, slavery, killing, and the
684 legitimacy of assassination. A husband has no other sanction against
578 an unfaithful wife than to insult and beat her. And even there European law forces him to restrain himself lest he commit excesses which [319] involve him in a trial before the white man's court. Fortunately for marital fidelity, a reaction in favor of the repression of adultery has recently begun, following the official establishment of native jurisdiction. In the not too distant future, this reaction will culminate in a return to ancestral law in a form adapted to present circumstances.

B. Against the accomplice, the injured husband has the right
684 to make use of two sanctions: violence and the payment of an
596 "indemnity."

1) If the husband catches the accomplice in the act, he always has the right to wound him, or even to kill him, or reduce him to slavery. The last two forms of vengeance were not practiced unless the respective villages of the husband and the culprit were fairly distant from each other and not bound to each other by any special ties (friendship, mutual assistance, or affinity). This reservation existed because of consideration for the offender's relatives, the desire not to bring them excessive sorrow. Another cause for caution and calm is the economic or military inferiority of the husband's clan, or the fearlessness, the valor in battle, in a word, the strength of the culprit's family. A special case which makes all other considerations disappear is adultery with a favorite, whose husband's love for her is especially passionate and jealous.

If the offender's adultery was not limited to a few isolated acts but was becoming a real habit, or if he had already seduced many women, resulting in many palavers for his family, the husband could be bolder. For the rake's close kin would finally be exasperated with his incorrigible and disastrous misconduct and would rather be rid of him. (1) [320]

1. See also Chapter VIII, Article II, 2, A.

595ˣ 554 The name bolɔ́mbɔ́ seems to come from the fact that for an instant during the installation ceremony the woman is naked. In fact in certain dialects the word means "nudity."

[551] Nowadays this name is common among Nkundó women (rarely men), but it does not indicate that they are bolɔ́mbɔ́. The name is borne in memory of ancestresses or relatives who had that position and is transmitted in the family like any other name.

[184] All the tribes under discussion here use the same term, bolɔ́mbɔ́. The Bombomba alone say bosálɛ́. (2)

> 2. Elsewhere, as in the Losanganya region, among the Bosaka, etc., the bolɔ́mbɔ́ is called ekila (interdiction, taboo).

It is clear from everything that has been said that the nkɔ́ndɛ́ and the bolɔ́mbɔ́ have nothing in common with each other. [353] The two institutions are decidedly different. Nowadays they are beginning to be confused with each other, however. ● [178] For the installation of a bolɔ́mbɔ́ has become extremely rare, and in some regions it has already disappeared. The colonial government has established districts and appointed chiefs in charge of them. Very frequently, they are not those who in the purely indigenous order would have been the most influential men, the masters, those who would have the biggest say in their society, who would be said to have the joko, the first place.

As far as I have been able to observe, the other tribes on the equator also have the two types of wives with special positions, who bear names which vary with the dialects.

171 595ˣ 554 Do the Ntɔ́mbá and the Bolɛ́ngɛ́ between the Boloko and the Congo have only the bolɔ́mbɔ́? That is the conclusion one draws from Engels' study of the Wangata (Revue congolaise, Vol. 2, no. 1, p. 33). If that were so, the frequent contacts with this people may have increased the confusion even more. Natives who are strangers to the Bolɛ́ngɛ́ tribe but who have lived many years among them as catechists, have maintained, however, that

595ˣ 831) And it is not difficult to understand this fact. For indeed polygamy constitutes a legitimate and easy means by which a man may enjoy several women without being bothered by palavers, difficulties, etc. The mentality of many men who care little about moral laws as well as the tendency of a disordered instinct to multiply its objects only confirm this observation. Often one sees men who were monogamists at first begin by taking a second wife out of passion. Then gradually their passion becomes greater rather than appeased, and so a harem is built up progressively.

595ˣ 178 The changes introduced by colonization in the economic life of this people have not resulted in a decrease of polygamy. In the absence of exact figures we must be satisfied with simple visual observations, but in certain regions one has the impression that the harems have become smaller but, on the other hand, that the number of polygamists has increased, and therefore [375] the desire for polygamy, that is, its affective cause, has [651] not diminished. Nor does the extra tax frighten or stop the polygamists. The great means for changing the Nkundő attitude in this realm will always be the action of the missions and the penetration of Christian ethics, seconded by a government attitude favoring monogamy. (1)

[648] 1. The favorable attitude of the colonial government toward monogamy is expressed chiefly in the permission given to a polygamist's extra wives to abandon their husband in order to contract a monogamous union, preferably in a mission, under the supervision of missionaries.

[177] Another means, undoubtedly secondary but still important, is the example of European couples. The Blacks are imitative, and native women envy the lot of the white woman, so that European households are propaganda for monogamy when they behave well.

586ˣ if they do not break themselves of this fault and, then, are detested. The result is endless palavers and quarrels, which inevitably lead to divorce. For this failing is considered very shameful. Note that laziness or heedlessness in a spouse may also lead to divorce.

Divorce is frequent among the Nkundő. These people do not try to correct their failings by the imposition of any restraints. As initial love gradually becomes less passionate, continual daily contact makes the less agreeable sides of a person's temperament more apparent. And when it is not tolerated or gives rise to serious wrongs, the marriage inevitably breaks up. There are more divorces in marriages by inheritance and substitution than in marriages through a direct payment of the bride price.

The preceding data show that although the legitimacy of divorce is accepted in Nkundő law, its acceptance exists only because it is necessary, so to speak. As a matter of fact, before a situation reaches that point, the difficulties have been obvious for a long time, and the parents and especially the ndonga will have had to intervene more than once in order to re-establish the troubled peace and strengthen the tottering union. They only give in when there is no possibility of settlement. [380]

Article II

Ways of Dissolving a Marriage

586ˣ
178 The simplest and ideal manner of dissolving a marriage, so to speak, is a separation with the consent of the families involved and especially of the ndonga. At the present time it is the only procedure -- except for running far away -- that is permitted. Since the reorganization of districts, however, the chiefs and the courts have more and more monopolized, or had assigned to them, the function of official witnesses. (1)

---

1. It is not my intention to deny the right of the chief and the courts to intervene in matrimonial litigation,

586x
178

> for this right was recognized by the written laws which have assigned the functions formerly exercised by the "fathers" of families to them. But they are required to act in conformity with the common law, and therefore to listen to the *ndonga* and report to him.

Before colonization the Nkundő often used other means.

586x Before exploring the question of bride-price reimbursement, we will examine these various actions. For greater clarity we will distinguish between the customs of the pre-European regime and actual practice. Two specific cases will be described at the end.

1. In the past

Let us again make a distinction between two situations:

A. *First hypothesis: a wife left her husband.* She ran away to her family, first informing the *ndonga*. If she did not go to him but went straight home instead, the *ndonga* felt that he had been disregarded, and serious consequences followed, for he inevitably found her in the wrong. That is why this situation very seldom arose. [381] The woman explained her conduct to the *ndonga*. It was his duty to reconcile her and her husband. A divorce never took place without many interventions on the part of the *ndonga*.

[721] 1) If in spite of all attempts the woman was absolutely unwilling to stay with her husband and definitely left him, the result in most cases was war, unless, of course, the husband also did not care to continue the unhappy union. In such a case he was satisfied with claiming a reimbursement of the bride price. The war, like all others, ended in peace and indemnification; nothing further was discussed. The war was fought against the woman's clan if restitution of the bride price was delayed or not made. However, if the woman went to another man without first going to her family, the abandoned husband declared war on his rival and left his parents-in-law in peace.

586x
682 2) Sometimes the abandoned husband took revenge on his rival by assassinating him. If the possibility was open to him --

586ˣ that there were no further means for a reconciliation, returned her
584 to her parents. No violence was used against her, nor could the husband demand an immediate and direct reimbursement of the bride price. The husband had to wait until the wife he had repudiated found a new husband and the latter had paid a bride price for her. If the parents-in-law showed ill will toward him, however,
[721] they could expect a war.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the preceding data
586ˣ is that although Nkundő law is very severe against the wife who does not acquit herself of her marital obligations, it does not leave the husband entirely free to do as he pleases. Ancestral law demanded grave reasons as the basis for any measures he took against her, [386] and the application of this law was well regulated. The differences between the various situations are an eloquent demonstration of this fact.

As we have seen above, the term bokőfo is not applied to repudiation by either party. In the case of the husband the Nkundő say that he atóna, "no longer wants her"; the noun is lotóno. This term does not apply specifically to this situation; it refers to any person or thing one does not want. The special manner in which the wife is sent back by being handed over to the ndonga is also called by a generic term émola, "to cause to start moving, to make go away"; the noun is njémő.

2. At the present time

586ˣ Considerable changes have been introduced as a result of
● 178 colonization. Wars, torture, human sacrifice, and slavery have been abolished. The possibilities are now reduced to the woman's flight, with or without notification of the ndonga, or a repudiation pure and simple. The intervention of the ndonga is only rarely omitted; it is still considered important. As a matter of fact, it would be against his financial interests to make an enemy of him. A woman who leaves her husband returns home, goes directly to another man, or lives a debauched life in some center, large or small. There is nothing left but to proceed with the refunding of the bride price. Thus everything is reduced to its simplest form.

A Nkundő woman is held back only by the fear of punishment and other consequences of her action, or by her love for her husband.

586 178 In the past, when that love began to cool or became less passionate, fear caused her to make an effort and frequently everything was put in order again. Modern freedom, on the contrary, invites her to break all fetters. As a result, a temporary annoyance which in the past would have been taken care of, or some domestic difficulty that would have been smoothed out under the old regime, nowadays is enough to break up the marriage permanently. [387]

Thus it is understandable that the substitution of the present state of affairs for the ancient customs has caused divorces to increase in scandalous proportions.

The arrival of Negro soldiers (strangers or men from the Congo) dealt the first blow to Nkundó family organization, and the blow was almost fatal. Native authority, which was familial and patriarchal, was abolished from the outset. The chiefs who were subsequently set up by the European power had more to worry about than the preservation of marital morality, even when they did not tend (as was unfortunately too often the case) to favor easy divorces in order to appropriate the women themselves and thus build a harem. The colonial administration found itself faced with the unknown. It took them time to learn about the past and present situations. Furthermore, the administration was occupied with other problems: the pacification of tribes, the stabilization of the occupation, assistance to the colonization that was just beginning, to trade, and to missions, as well as the various organizations, roads to be opened and maintained, etc. In addition the work involved in the establishment and development of centers, the police, the various forms of transportation, the establishment of industry, and the religious missions drew away from their usual surroundings a large number of young people who needed companions, real or substitute wives to satisfy their passion. All this caused great ravages in native society. Morality suffered greatly, and consequently so did the birth rate.

In the course of recent years, however, things have become more normal and stabilized, and the colonial administration has begun to repair the wrongs it caused. This complete change must be whole-heartedly applauded. The efforts that have been made to check the chaos of family affairs and put it in order can have nothing less than full approval.

586ˣ 692 ● 178 In spite of the opposition of several old-fashioned chiefs, [388] the native courts that were recognized or established by the decree of 1926 have begun to make use of the powers the government has assigned to them. They are called upon to play a great role in setting matters right, especially if their work is closely supervised and regularly checked. To accomplish this end, these courts must continue to act in the spirit of the ancient laws, taking into account only the change in circumstances (1).

1. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 7.

586ˣ 178 The chief measure for the restoration of order advocated by the natives is the imprisonment of the wife who attempts a divorce. This practice would be a continuation of the custom of applying the etáka and an adaptation of it to present circumstances. Like the former practice, it would have a double effect: it would restrain flightiness and license, on the one hand, and, on the other, it would ensure the reimbursement of the bride price in cases where no reconciliation is possible. But its execution would be taken out of the husband's hands and handed over to the chief. Europeans who are in contact with the natives and concerned about the social order also favor this evolution of the common law.

Another way of combating such a situation would be the use of pressure against the guilty woman's parents, chiefly through the imprisonment of her mother. This measure has no basis in ancient law, except for war -- which did not touch the mother and actually was only moderately useful -- and the system of compensation (lowáála) -- which depended on the availability of opportunities and was used through the husband's own initiative. This practice therefore cannot be approved as such, but it might be acceptable in cases where the parents are really at fault. For instance, they may have in one way or another incited their daughter to break her marriage although she had no acceptable reason for doing so, or, although a legitimate declaration [389] of divorce has been made, they might refuse to make restitution of the bride price. (1) And

1. A drastic and indiscreet application

586x
● 178

> of this rule, however, could trouble the religious feelings of native Christians and thus produce an effect that is the reverse of the one desired. A religious marriage is in fact indissoluble, and in such cases the obligation to make restitution would be equivalent to a recognition that a religious union could be dissolved. And not only would the native consider this an opposition between the public authorities and Christian morality, but in addition the stability of marriages in general would greatly suffer.

here it must be noted that certain parents use hypocritical circumventions rather than openly showing their refusal. This is how they go about it: if the woman has really abandoned her husband and he, for good reasons such as those given above, no longer cares for his wife with whom he can no longer live (especially if he is monogamous), the question of reimbursement arises. The woman, in connivance with her parents, who do not want to make restitution of the bride price, publicly and officially declares that she is not leaving her husband and wishes to return to the conjugal household, whereas her only intention is to help her parents avoid paying the bride-price valuables. In time she will manage to get out of it one way or another.

3. Special cases

586x There are some rather special cases in the dissolution of marriage. The first has occurred more frequently since colonization, while the last has practically disappeared.

586x
837
587
1) Njangő. This word is the noun form of the verb angola, "to seduce or lead astray" (another's wife, his laborer, his slave, etc.). Therefore, it is a generic term, but it is primarily applied to the seduction of a married woman in order to make her leave her husband. It therefore denotes a man's act. Of the woman it is

586 simply said that she has left her husband (aôkófa) and has been taken
837 in marriage by X (aôkúmbwa éka Sóngólò). Having fallen in love
587 with another man's wife [390] and desiring to marry her, a man
tries to win her favor. If she consents he collects the valuables necessary for the bride price. He then asks the woman to come to him and pays the bride price as for any marriage.

Instead of going directly to her seducer, the woman may also first go to her parents, especially if they are in favor of her plan. If they are not she would not succeed, because they would prevent her from carrying it out.

Cases of njangó were formerly rare because they were risky.
[721] As a matter of fact, they constituted a casus belli. Anyone who
undertook such a venture had to be in a position to take the consequences of his act, especially with respect to the payment of an in-
● [178] demnity. Nowadays, on the other hand, these occurrences are much
more frequent, even when the new husband does not have the means to pay the bride price at once. Nevertheless, the reversal in government policy is beginning to produce good results. The woman, or her mother, is often imprisoned; rarely the seducer. This penalty is often sufficient to restore order. But to keep from being exposed to further difficulties caused by the woman who no longer loves him, the abandoned husband sometimes refuses to take back his unfaithful wife.

The rarity of cases in former times as well as the fact that
[671] they constituted a legitimate reason for war shows that the njangó
did not have the approval of Nkundó law but that it was more or less considered an infraction.

2) Taking refuge. Because of the change in circumstances,
586 the practice of taking refuge is no longer common today. It used
577 to be done as follows: A woman who absolutely wanted to leave
her husband and had no means of doing so, since no man had asked for her in marriage and her parents were powerless to help her, went secretly to a rich and influential man whom she would have liked as a husband. She arrived unexpectedly, stood before him, or even threw herself at him, crying, [391] Bejwó běkě! ónjéngé,

586* continuous state of enmity existed between his clan and the husband's,
577 or if the husband owed him a substantial debt, one that clearly equaled the woman's bride price. In the first case a new war followed almost inevitably. Later on the woman's family contacted the new son-in-law. The gifts they brought were considered the dowry, and he began to pay the bride price. But there was no question of reimbursing the bride price to the first husband; relations between him and the woman's clan were completely broken. The difference between this situation and the standard procedure described above lies precisely in the fact that there is no restitution. In the case of a debt there was no restitution either. The woman's flight constituted a compensation (lowáála) and was therefore so designated (N. aôkenda ndá lowáála). If the husband lodged a complaint, the judges sent him a piece of bofofó (1) to let him know that they did not want to concern themselves with his case, which he himself knew to have very poor grounds. Even the members of his own clan prevented him from making war; they knew perfectly well that the wrong was entirely on their relative's side.

The practice of taking refuge that we have just described was simply known as bejwó, bǒmoto áótswá bejwó, because that word was the principal one in the ultimatum.

178 As we have said above, the custom here described disappeared
586* with colonization. Even though the scope of this study does not extend to the Nkundó who are settled north of the Tshuapa, it [393]
577 may be of interest to note that an evolution of this custom is taking shape in the Losanganya region. If a woman is condemned for leaving the conjugal household and imprisoned, she asks someone to marry her -- if the opportunity presents itself. If the man accepts

[202]
[628]
1. The bofofó is a piece of dried banana leaf which has been rolled up and tied with two knots (or more, as the case required). To indicate the end of a palaver, the bofofó is cut in two (or more) pieces, with a knot in each piece. One piece is sent to each interested party.

178 her proposal, he collects the bride price and produces it before the
586x chief. With the consent of this authority, he pays it to the woman's
577 parents, who make restitution to the husband. (1)

1. See also Chapter III, Article VI.

x 3) War. The last of the special ways in which a marriage
586 may be broken is the following: If a woman were captured in a war
727 and not freed, thus becoming a slave, by that very fact her marriage was broken. Under the circumstances it could not have been otherwise, since each group was concerned only with its own interests. As we have seen in the preceding chapter, the slave was incorporated into the harem of one of the members of the clan who took her prisoner, or she was sold to some man for this purpose. If her real husband did not have the means to free her -- and we are speaking under that assumption, for if he did the union would not be dissolved -- he was unable to oppose what was done. Nevertheless, he was entitled to indemnification by the member of the clan who was responsible for the war, and he could use force to support his claim. If the woman were freed by her family, and her owner then paid them a bride price in order to contract a regular marriage, the former husband had a right to a return of the bride price paid by him. (See Chapter VII, Article V).

x In concluding this account, we should note that a woman who
586 has left her husband to go to another man may return to the first one [394] after a fairly long time has elapsed. There may be two reasons for such a return:

Either the woman does not find what she was looking for with her new husband and finds her hopes deceived, or in comparing her present situation with the life she had previously led she regrets her action. Knowing the love her former husband always bore her, she risks returning to him, and usually she is not rejected.

Or the new husband finds that after having paid part of the bride price he is unable to fulfill the rest of his obligation. Since a woman does not wish to be a wife without bride price -- outside [illegible] modern exceptions -- she turns back.

586x husband's knowledge, or taking refuge) and did so, her remarriage was illegal. Before the law the new husband was simply a thief, since he held a person near him over whom he had no rights. For this reason the husband could declare war on him, which he was not permitted to do in the other case, the question of his marriage being a matter between him and his wife's family.

Another consequence of that legal ruling is the following: If the woman who has left her legitimate husband wishes to return to him, she can advise him of her intention by a secret message. She asks him to come and get her at the moment when her lover is to pay the bride price (ndanga or walo, depending on the instance). She urges the latter to meet his financial obligations. On the day set the legitimate husband, accompanied by his ndonga, goes and hides near the place where the payment is to be made. At an opportune moment he comes out of his hiding place [684] and seizes the valuables that have been set out, saying to his rival: "I have caught you in adultery with my wife; these valuables belong to me as indemnity." [396] The woman's family takes his side, and the husband who has seduced her finds himself at a disadvantage and is sent away empty handed, for he is clearly entirely in the wrong.

If the legitimate husband belonged to an influential family he might risk the assassination of his rival if he saw a possibility. But then the situation was complicated by a war.

Furthermore, if the fugitive becomes pregnant as a result of her relations with her lover before the procedure of bride-price payment and reimbursement has been carried out, the child belongs, not to the natural father, but to the abandoned husband, who remains its legal father.

● 178 586x Nowadays everything has changed. A woman who leaves her husband cannot legitimately cohabit with another man. But during the past years no sanction remained. The imprisonment of the divorcing woman (mentioned above) could revive the ancient law while adapting it to circumstances. Furthermore, since the marriage is not dissolved, the alleged second husband could be condemned by the native courts for complicity in adultery.

586x unproductive. Nowadays, they occur somewhat more frequently.
[592] A feeling of generosity has developed toward sons and younger
brothers, and the valuables are often set aside for their use.

If the bride price has already been transferred, the solution [400] is less clear cut. Under the old regime the matter was fairly clear, which is no longer true at present. But let us proceed by stages.

In the past the question was as follows: Theoretically it was assumed that the woman's family was not in a position to make restitution. In practice, however, they managed to do so, either by substituting another woman, or by borrowing the needed valuables, or by giving the husband a bride price received by one of the divorcée's relatives. The husband had certain means of forcing his father-in-law to pay (see above). Other times the notables of the clan were moved by a threat of war. They unceasingly urged restitution, and unless the debtor himself was the most influential member of the group and of an unyielding nature, he gave in to their entreaties. If, on the other hand, the husband did not have recourse to the means mentioned, he simply had to wait until his father-in-law received a new bride price.

● 178 Nowadays the ancient customs have been abolished, and
x the whole question has changed as a result. Nevertheless, in
586 spite of the external changes, the colonial administration wishes
to act in the spirit of ancient native laws.

By establishing regular native courts and giving them the right to judge in accordance with the laws of the tribes themselves, adapted to changed circumstances, the decree of April 15, 1926 has armed these courts with the means of working for this adaptation. But in practice it has not yet been accomplished. This fact must be attributed to the difficulties of finding a solution which would, on the one hand, perpetuate the spirit of the ancient system and, on the other, satisfy legitimate aspirations toward better regulations, aspirations which as a matter of fact are favored by the colonizing power. In this connection one must think especially of the gradual abandonment of polygamy.

The European authorities do not seem to have come to a clear decision as yet with respect to what method of restitution

178 should be adopted under present circumstances [401], and this
586x question is actually within the jurisdiction of the native courts. (1)

1. As to the imprisonment of the woman seeking a divorce -- an adaptation of the etáka, this practice was first condemned but its legality has been recognized recently (in April, 1935).

Among the natives, opinion is divided. Two plans for a solution are discernible.

A. A strong tendency is developing to maintain the distinction mentioned above between the breakup of a marriage caused by the wife and the husband's repudiation of her. In itself this distinction is good, but it is subject to a serious drawback, namely, the danger of exaggerating the importance of the latter situation. For, as we have seen, if a husband repudiates his wife, it is usually her own fault.

This tendency results in the following difference in the procedure recommended for the respective situations:

1) If it is the wife who runs away, her family should make restitution by means of its own wealth. If they try to avoid doing so or delay too long, the woman seeking divorce or her mother should be imprisoned. The latter can usually be gotten hold of more easily than the former, and even if catching the daughter presents no special difficulties, the fact remains that the imprisonment of the mother is usually more efficacious.

The criticisms that must be made against this system are as follows:

a) It advocates sanctions against the mother, who should not be implicated unless it is proved that she is at fault. (2)

2. See above, Article II, 2, last paragraph.

178 The traditional laws permitted sanctions against the wife herself.
586x As to war, it caused both sides to suffer but had little effect on the divorcing woman's mother. Furthermore, compensation through seizure of the divorcée's mother or of one of the father-in-law's wives was only a haphazard method and could be applied only under favorable circumstances. It was not decided upon by the authorities [402] but was a capture by surprise, on the purely personal initiative of the abandoned husband. Consequently, in my opinion, it should not be tolerated, unless the mother's responsibility in the breakup is proved.

b) Although the imprisonment of the wife can have two purposes and its practice have two effects -- the reduction of the frequency of divorce through punishment of the culprit, and a hastening of the restitution of the bride price -- it is important to distinguish between them in theoretical discussion. Imprisonment as a punishment has already been considered. Here we will deal with it solely as a means of obtaining restitution of the bride price or shortening the delay. Considered in this light, it is bodily constraint. It cannot be applied to the wife, who has no obligation, but to the father if he fails in the fulfillment of duties imposed on him by law -- that is, if he refuses to proceed with the reimbursement which the law requires him to make, or if he fails to take steps which will enable him to make it (or even if he is convicted of negligence in his duty to intervene in order to make his daughter respect her promises). In practice the father would really have to be in the wrong and his ill will be established. The imprisonment of the divorcing woman would avoid the prosecution of her father for a situation which he himself is powerless to prevent.

c) The tendency cited could prevent polygamists' wives from contracting monogamous marriages and, as a result, could oppose the spirit of the law. It would not be difficult to eliminate this drawback, however.

Since the written law favors monogamy, a regular and serious control of the activity of native courts would actually be sufficient.

2) If the breaking up of the marriage is caused by the

178 586 husband, the proponents of this system require a restitution of the bride price [403] only when a new bride price has been paid, or rather as soon as the woman has a new husband. Some go even further and claim to impose only a partial restitution; a portion of the bride price would be kept by the wife's family as a punishment for the husband's offense.

We must raise the following points against this rule:

a) Far from having a basis in common law, it is in flagrant opposition to it (see above and further on).

b) It also has the disadvantage of setting up a certain impediment to the development of stable monogamous marriages. Not for monogamous marriages per se, for in the case of a pagan or a Protestant there is no difficulty, and the rule does not harm them. If their marriage is not successful, they can always resort to divorce so that this rule does not apply to them. They can continue to cohabit with their wives until the latter leave them. For a Catholic the situation is entirely different. He knows that his religious marriage is indissoluble. But before contracting a marriage, the local ecclesiastic discipline at the present time requires him to pay a bride price and, consequently, to become involved in a common-law union and submit to its laws even though in his conscience he cannot consider such a union as marriage. The same thing applies -- mutatis mutandis -- to a catechumen who is to be baptized and thus to elevate his common-law and legal marriage to the level of a sacrament. Suppose that his wife wants to remain with him -- sincerely or in order to save her parents from the expense of reimbursement -- but that her temperament turns out to be unsuitable to married life or that her conduct is not at all in accordance with Catholic morality. Should this situation arise, the husband would be exposed to extremely grave consequences. For whatever the case, [404] their life together will be unbearable in the long run, and one day the wife will leave her husband, who will find himself in a very painful dilemma as a result: either he will have to remain a bachelor or find himself in flagrant opposition to his conscience. It is therefore wise for this woman to leave him while there is still a way to straighten out the situation. The solution described here presents difficulties that would dishearten many men. And this would be to the detriment of an evolution toward a higher moral level

177, 586 and a better social order, although the normal functioning of native courts could in part prevent this difficulty by requiring the woman's father to hasten the repayment of the bride price

B. The serious disadvantages inherent in the system we have just described have caused another part of the population to seek a solution that would avoid them. The Christians in particular are the ones who advocate it. But since they have as yet very little influence in the political domain, the chances are slim that their point of view will carry. In their opinion the reimbursement of the bride price should be required in all cases, and immediate restitution would be required only if, at the time of the breakup, the bride price had not yet been spent. They also accept imprisonment as a sanction against the divorcing woman.

This system, too, is open to criticism: it is hardly in accordance with the spirit of traditional native law, which allowed the husband to use means of his own to obtain immediate reimbursement.

It is my opinion that we must take the present state of affairs into consideration, with the sole idea of protecting the social order through the stabilization of marriages on the one hand, and on the other, the evolution toward a better order by favoring [405] monogamous unions in accordance with colonial legislation and administrative practice. (1)

1. See also Chapter VI, Article VII, 7, and the article on "The Native Reaction Against Divorce," Congo, 1936, Vol. 1, p. 11.

It should be noted that natives in various localities maintain that the first system described is favored by the Europeans. That is their answer to the objection -- which I have made more than once -- that their solution does not conform to their traditional law. Actually at the present time, the administration does not seem to support their system. But it is difficult for me to believe that it is simply an explanation to their advantages, for I have heard it

178 from more than one native who was clearly and truly wronged
586 by the system. For these reasons, it would not seem impossible that before the native courts were organized, some government agent had spoken and acted in approval of the system in question

This digression on the subject of the practice to be adopted with reference to the reimbursement of the bride price has become long. But special emphasis is necessary because of the crucial importance of this question in the future development of native society.

3. The formalities of restitution

586 The only formality involved in the restitution of the bride
584 price is the obligation to carry it out through the intervention of the ndonga(s). Since he is the official witness, he is the one who is qualified to say what has been paid. There is no recognized obligation to make restitution of any payment or gift that has not passed through his hands or that he has not seen. Sometimes certain payments actually have been made without his participation, and restitution for them cannot be demanded. The official witness has had no knowledge of them, and he is consequently [406] under no obligation to take them into account. But the possibility of friendly transactions always remains.

Should the ndonga all have died in the interim, the procedure would not be adversely affected, for Nkundó law recognizing the inheritance of that office. The brother, son, or other relative of the deceased can act in his name, and sometimes long before his death he will have given the latter all the necessary and useful explanations. The testimony of the successor is recognized as legal and valid.

Moreover, the ndonga may be assisted by other upright and influential men who were present when the payments were made and who can corroborate or even correct his testimony. It is clear that this practice was established by common law for the sake of obtaining the best possible results in the exercise of justice.

586x 848 178 Finally, note that in the "lowlands" of the region [413] under discussion, payment for a natural child is beginning to be made regardless of whether the beginning of the bride price has been paid, or whether no payment at all has been made. In the past there was no question of such a practice, for the child would have been considered a slave in his father's clan and in the neighboring villages. And actually in the villages of the interior and in practically all of the region under consideration, that attitude has not changed. It is in the European centers, under the influence of Christian ideas, that these new ideas develop. In practice, cases do not occur except when the individuals in question are natives of very distant villages and are established permanently (to the extent that this term can be used) in their extra-customary residence.

Article V

The Position of Former Spouses and Their Children

586x Once the palaver concerning the reimbursement of valuables is settled, the former spouses become strangers to each other.

Their families sometimes continue relations with each other, however. In fact we have seen that a divorced woman may be replaced by a relative in her conjugal role. In such a case relations by marriage result from the continuation of the marriage agreement. (1)

1. See Chapter III, Article IX.

Except in cases where a substitution occurs, all ties between the former spouses and their clans are thus broken.

The divorced wife can no longer claim the slightest right to the fields she has established on the land cleared by her husband. In general, all the fruits of her various activities remain the property of the husband; she herself [414] has no further right to them. In our time, however, it is not unusual for a man and wife who are

768 Therefore there is a very great difference between the
583x consequences of divorce and of death. In divorce the bride price must be considered more or less like a deposit. In case of death, on the contrary, it remains permanently in the hands of those who have acquired it. This difference weakens the theory that maintains that the bride price is only a guarantee; rather, it tends to favor the theory that it is a compensation for the loss experienced by a clan when it gives one of its members in marriage. In case of divorce the clan's loss [443] is nullified, since the woman returns to her family or -- as is the usual outcome -- remarries and becomes the object of a new bride-price payment. The death of a woman, on the other hand, makes the clan's loss permanent rather than bringing an end to it. This does not mean that the bride price does not constitute a guarantee; in reality it is one. But this guarantee is an effect of the bride price, not the reason for its existence -- which is something altogether different.

2. Inheritance from the husband

768 Since we are not dealing with Nkundó property laws, the
428 question of inheritance is not, strictly speaking, within the realm
● 178 of our study. Nevertheless, we cannot refrain from saying a word about it, since the study of marriage must naturally contain a chapter on children. Thus we shall examine the question from that particular angle. What interests us here is knowing what rights children have over their father's inheritance. We have already dealt with the position of the widow in the preceding article.

The inheritance from the deceased includes three parts:

1) The bride-price valuables, that is, everything that is used chiefly to obtain a wife: copper and brass rings, iron objects, widows and daughters insofar as they represent bride-price valuables.

2) Domestic animals: goats, dogs, hens, ducks.

3) Real property: fruit trees, fields and crops, hunting enclosures, fishing places; and personal property: nets, hunting snares, bows and arrows, shields.

The bride-price valuables become the common property of the close relatives. Each one receives his share of the inheritance.

768 The widows are awarded to the brothers, uncles, and nephews
428 (*bǎnankáná*) of the deceased, in accordance with their position in
•178 the group hierarchy and their respective rights, [444] which may
derive from financial assistance lent to the deceased so that he could obtain one of his wives, or from the application of the *nkita* system. Rings (*bakonga*) and iron objects (*bifeko*) are distributed in the same manner. Similarly, unmarried daughters are assigned to various relatives -- that is, the "fathers" who preside at the division of the inheritance discuss and specify which persons have the right to receive the bride prices that will later be paid for them. Of the sons only the eldest receives a wife or a certain amount of bride-price valuables as *bosólo*. (1)

1. Chapter III, Article III.

That is the traditional rule. Nowadays a far-reaching change has already taken place. The sons of the deceased are no longer excluded from the distribution. They are given either a wife, or a sufficient quantity of rings, or the right to the bride price of a sister or a cousin, if it is possible. For the rest see Chapter II, Article IV, 3 and Article XI, 3, 13, and Chapter IV, Article II.

The domestic animals go to the *biúnanyí*, who take them home to their husbands and they are thus included in the amount of the dowry. A few goats, however, might be given to one of the men in the kin group who needs them to complete the payment of a bride price.

As to the other property (real or personal), they pass directly to the sons. The first born receives the lion's share and the most precious items, but the younger sons are not excluded in the distribution.

It should be noted that a will may affect this distribution by assigning a specific object to a given son, or by excluding one of the heirs with whom the deceased has had a serious quarrel. Such a will is always executed, because the Nkundó fear the vengeance of the deceased, who causes anyone guilty of an

768 infraction to follow him in death. It is obeyed even if [445] it is
429 manifestly unfair. They fear reprisal by the deceased, such as that
178 which is thought to have happened after the death of Iloko is Ɛfekele
of Lofelɛ. He had killed his own brother, Mpɛ́nda ɛ́â nkotonkale,
[682] because the latter had tasted freshly brewed beer instead of leaving
that honor to him -- an action which constituted an extremely
serious offense. But since the punishment was out of all proportion
to the act, the whole family united against the murderer, who was
obliged to flee. At his death he disinherited all his brothers in
favor of his sons. This will, considered unreasonable and unfair,
was not respected; Iloko's only brother, Bondɛ́lɛ́ wǎ Wǐlima, took
Bonyengú, the favorite, for himself. But he soon died, and his
death was attributed to Iloko's vengeance. Several years ago the
family met to finally settle the matter of the inheritance. The
largest portion was set aside for Iloko's sons, but one part was
awarded to other relatives who were not named in the excluding
clause, which referred only to the Basɛ́ká Banângâ, that is, to
Iloko's own brothers.

Sons are never disinherited. If one of them behaves very badly toward his father, when the latter dies he refuses him his benediction (bokako w'ɔ̂lɔ́tsi) and curses him bokako wǎ tu yo).

3. Inheritance from the wife

78 As we have seen in Chapter VI, Article II, a wife has no
428 rights of ownership over the fruits of her own labors or of the
couple's joint efforts. Consequently, her family can make no claims
as regards inheritance; there is nothing to inherit.

Although all the fruits of the wife's activities belong to the husband, most men do not require that their rights be rigidly respected. They leave a part, or the whole, to the family of the [446] deceased, as is done in the case of a widow. (1) After the feast at the end of mourning, the two clans make an inventory of the property in question. Usually whatever products of her work the woman has left are divided equally between the two clans. Some

---

1. See the previous article.

768 fastened her to a fork (etɔ́ka) until he was reimbursed. Sometimes
672 the ndonga intervened to free her, but by doing so he took upon
593x himself the responsibility of making restitution of the bride price. In this last [465] instance, if the wife died in the home of her family, the husband was entitled to reimbursement just as he would be in case of a divorce. Thus we come back to the situation described under 2) and 3), the forms varying according to whether or not the widower wanted to continue the affinal relationship.

● [178] Nowadays the situation has changed entirely. The colonial administration no longer permits the use of the etɔ́ka. Consequently, a man who wants to get rid of his incorrigible wife acts in such a way that she will leave him of her own free will. And the situation is again that described in 2).

If the husband has sent his wife away himself by placing her in the hands of the ndonga, his parents-in-law will refuse him an indemnity or any restitution of the bride price and often will not even accept the nkunjí. They answer his demands by telling him that he should not have repudiated the wife whom he freely chose for himself. Thus most men resort to the procedure described in the next paragraph. There are circumstances, however, under which this mode of action is more difficult; this is so especially in the case of monogamists, since its execution requires several weeks, sometimes several months. In the interim the wife does as she pleases and neglects her husband, so that the latter practically finds himself a bachelor.

797 Evangelization has added a second difficulty. Catholic
768 marriage is indissoluble. Catechumens and Christians who wish to
672 marry must therefore be careful. Before admitting them to re-
593x ligious marriage, we require that at least the walo be paid. But the young men know the temperament and value of their fiancées only through experience. In almost every case therefore they have this experience at home before the walo, in accordance with their ancestral custom. Then, if one of the two parties is pagan (which happens very often), the disciplinary rules of the Catholic missions in the Congo require that they spend a minimum of six months

768
672
178 Colonization has given rise to a new legal situation which is not provided for in Nkundó traditional law. If a woman takes advantage of the freedom permitted her by colonial legislation and goes to a mission to obtain instruction and make a monogamous marriage, and then contracts an illness from which she dies (at the mission, in the hospital, or even in the home of her family -- a question of place which has no legal importance), we find ourselves confronted by an entirely new situation. The husband no longer considers the woman his wife since she has left him, even though theoretically she continues to retain that status. On the other hand, she has not gone back to her family or gone to live with another man.

Polygamous husbands want to throw the "responsibility" back upon the woman's parents. But actually they have no part in the events, and it is unfair to involve them in the situation.

[797] They do not bring the mission into the matter. As a matter of fact, the mission performs a service to the woman and to society as a whole in trying to elevate it morally and culturally.

What should one think of this situation? In the preceding article we have seen that the husband assumes all risks in relation to the wife. Certain exceptions to this rule [460], which we have explained, have been formulated in Nkundó law; but outside of them, the law retains its dominion, since the exceptions are narrowly defined. Thus it applies to the situation with which we are dealing, and consequently the damages must remain on the husband's account.

Moreover, this interpretation is to be encouraged for the following reason:

The purpose of the legislation involved is to protect freedom in this matter of capital importance and to favor monogamy and the gradual abandonment of polygamy. Polygamists -- as a group -- must perforce suffer from it in one way or another. It is inconceivable that a struggle against an abuse would not affect the persons guilty of it.

Such cases are still very rare, but their frequency may increase with the progress of evangelization.

768
672
692 In terminating this duscussion we must make one point that is related to both of the last two articles. The cause of death has no

842 differences can be found here, although they are less apparent to
855 a European observer since we usually approach the natives as a
152 group and our contact with them is often too impersonal.

2. Abortion

847 A great enemy of maternal love is the practice of abortion, which has always been known to the Nkundó. Here we cannot describe all the prescriptions used for that purpose. It will be sufficient to enumerate the reasons for which they have recourse to this practice. They are as follows:

1) A woman's lasciviousness: the procreation and subsequent care of a child to some extent prevent the indulging in carnal pleasures. Formerly this cause of abortion was nonexistent or very [178] rare. Needless to say, it has become more common, especially in the centers where it is constantly on the increase and where, in addition, occasional or regular "housekeepers" learn new means of sterilization and abortion.

2) A woman's antipathy or persistent anger toward her husband may encourage her to prevent conception or destroy its effect.

3) An excessive weakening of the mother's organism caused by a large number of conceptions and childbirths at too short intervals.

4) The encumberance and the difficulty of watching, carrying, and taking care of many small children -- bálota bọkẹkẹsano [467] [535] wǎ bǎna nsátélá nsátélá. This reason is especially important for well-known dancers.

It goes without saying that several of these motives may be combined in the same person. For instance, I knew of a woman who aborted at the time of her eighth child. Her recurrent pregnancies, together with continuous work, had greatly reduced her strength. A palaver with her husband was the last straw; she decided to get rid of the fruit she carried in her body.

Outside of these exceptions the natives of this country ardently desire their own continuation through a large number of progeny. (1)

[184]

1. The same is not true elsewhere. Examples to that effect are cited from regions that are

843 a woman's mother proceeded with the ceremony in the absence of the husband and his family. The latter were furious. They revealed the matter so that if anything should happen later to the mother or the child the law would be on their side. In that way the husband could evade responsibility and place the blame on his wife and her family so that they would have to pay an indemnity.

The pregnant woman does not remove the paint for three or
[302] four weeks after the ceremony. Nowadays the use of paint having
● [178] disappeared except for certain occasions and among older persons,
it is left on for only one night. In addition the surface smeared has been reduced to a line in the middle of the head or even one single spot.

[783] During this ceremony the Bombwanja have a public confession
[837] (etato) of the lovers. But since the Bokótɛ́ wait until after delivery,
we will deal with it later on.

On the night following the ceremony described, the couple
[833] [476] "fasten the fetus" through their carnal union. Were they to
omit this act, the child would die before birth.

For subsequent pregnancies the fastening of the fetus is no longer preceded by the same formalities.

The couple continue to have relations during the entire
[833] period of pregnancy "in order to open an easy passage for the child."
843 On the other hand, they must strictly observe marital fidelity.
837 Nevertheless, a polygamist may have relations with his other wives.

In addition to this essential art, the interdict also includes a secondary part; the couple may not even commit acts even very remotely related to procreation. Thus they may not:

1) Touch in any way whatsoever -- even to shaking their hands -- persons with whom they have had adulterous relations; such persons must therefore be avoided.

2) Sit next to such persons.

3) Look at them.

4) Enter a house or apartment where they are.

5) Eat "from the same pot."

6) Lie in another couple's bed.

7) Other persons may no longer sleep in the bed of the couple bound by the bokeka.

10. Conclusion

182 Nkundo society was a fully alive, organic community. All of its organs functioned and were able to adjust continually to the changes in its life. Ethnically, socially-legally, and politically, they were open to every improvement. The organs with which it was built stood nearest to natural law and drew their rights and duties from it, and also the spirit which inspired them.

The facts prove that this society could survive. It arose at the source of the Lomako; in a short time it had extended itself peacefully over the whole central area of the Congo; it pressed eastward across the Lomami and Lualaba, and southward across the Kaisai /Kasai/-Sankuru, to occupy about a fifth of the present Congo at the time of the arrival of the Whites.

182 This society was open to all healthy influences and could adapt itself
177 to all reasonable demands of civilization. It was, however, not reconcilable with what precisely is wrong in our European ideas about progress and civilization: elimination of all ethnic intermediary organs, equalization of all individuals, materialization of all life on the basis of economic competition, slave-like submission to the impersonal, unpaternal State, with that terrible pretense of freedom, of being able to do everything that is not forbidden by the State.

● 178 This suddenly attained freedom, which was accompanied by the
161 abolition of all the former joints of society, means the death of the Nkundo /161/ community, not only in its soul, its being, but also in its existence. The gradual depopulation, the dying out in the Middle Congo, has had repercussions now and then, even in government circles. "The Nkundo-Mongo population is melting away like snow before the sun," is the brief content of the last official report. The Waola, between the Ruki and the Ikelemba /rivers/, had in 1939 ninety deaths and three births. The official statistics of 1939 of the territory of Coquilhatville give one hundred adults for every twenty-four children. The official data of the same year for the Vicariate of Coquilhatville, with its 382, 736 inhabitants, give a ratio of 415 children to 1, 000 adults. According to these data, the whole population will be decreased by more than 50 percent by the following generation, thus dwindled to less than one-half.

Coquilhatville, 1939

837 When a wife of a polygynist had illicit relations with another 586 man of the same village, this was called *Bonsamba*. When she had such relations with a man of another village, this was called *Isoke*. As we have observed, the ordinary wives of the harem often had such relations. When the woman eloped with her *bonsamba* or *isoke*, or with whomever it was, she was pursued by her husband or owner, who tried to get her back. If the wife refused, negotiations over the bride price began.

If an agreement was reached or if a pledge was given as guarantee for the payment, the first bond was considered broken, and the woman was considered bound to this second man, even though he had been her *bonsamba* or *isoke*.

It might also happen that the first husband was so jealous that he did not want to make any agreement; then he attempted to kill either the guilty wife or her second husband. If the woman became 593 ill at the home of her husband, he went to tell her family and had to 758 give a security to the family.

583 Often the family came to get the wife, in order to be able to care for her better. If, in such a case, the wife [538] died at the home of her family, there were no further difficulties about the bride price, according to their customs. If, however, the bride price had still not been completely paid, the family asked their son-in-law to pay the remainder.

583 178 In recent times, now that the heathen customs have been undermined by the European occupation, we see that the husbands whose wives have gone to their family when sick and have died there, demand the return of the bride price from the family, but this is completely contrary to their old customs. In one case the husband could demand the return of the bride price, namely, if the wife had left while healthy to go to her family and had died there.

562 439 *Buying or Trading of Women.* The woman was also in many cases an acknowledged object of trade. The great village chiefs, among others Ibuka and Yoma, of whom we shall speak further, carried on a sort of woman trade. With European articles and also native currency, they went to other districts of the Equator [Province] to buy women with them, just like someone who goes to market, even though no public markets where women were sold actually existed.

436 1. Benkata: this was thin iron or copper wire rolled into small rings; the thickness of the wire was about 3 millimeters; the length, 20 to 25 centimeters.

2. Bingetele: iron or copper bars about 8 millimeters thick and 15 centimeters long; these are still in use in Bikoro.

436 301 3. Bekata: copper wire; thickness about 7 or 8 millimeters, and 1 meter or 1.50 meters long; spiral shaped; the women wore these rolled around their legs as copper leggings.

[543] 4. Bakonga: copper rings which served as arm bands and foot bands and also as collars. The size differed for small or large persons; the weight is from one half kilo to 5 kilos.

436 5. Mitako: copper wire about 4 millimeters thick and 25 centimeters long, usually bent like a hairpin. The mitako served as a uniform currency, from which the other values and prices were reckoned, like the franc with us. The value of the mitako was formerly reckoned at five centimes.

583 435 Formerly the bride price, which was paid for a wife in almost all of Equatorial Africa, was from 5 to 20 bakonga. (The value of the bakonga differed greatly according to the weight. The average value, however, is estimated at 2.50 francs.) This payment was further supplemented with slaves or wives. This manner of payment and the bride price still exist in the districts where the natives have not yet, or practically not, come in contact with Europeans. Also, [567] it was sometimes paid with only slaves or women. The price for one female slave was relatively much less than for another woman.

178 583 Through the occupation of the Congo by Europeans, the family life of the natives has necessarily undergone great changes, and their customs and habits as well.

In the first place the natives have found themselves deprived of their wives by the sentinels of the Independent Congo State. [661] These black sentinels, appointed in the villages by the State to supervise the reaping of caoutchouc, assumed an unlimited power. They took as many wives of the natives as they chose and did not pay for a single one.

Next many black soldiers, servant boys, and workmen of the Europeans also took wives everywhere in the beginning, without bothering about the native customs, that is, without paying for those wives; and this often happened under the protective power of their Whites.

178 583 We can add to that also a large number of black women who became the famous "housekeepers" of the Europeans. Although payment for these women was usually given to their owners, they were still withdrawn from the family life and the native customs. Finally, the Christian women, who now live in Christian marriage, must also be mentioned.

In addition, the price of wives and the bride price have [544] undergone great changes, primarily in those districts where the natives came into more immediate contact with Europeans. Before the arrival of the Europeans, their main medium of payment was the woman herself; a woman was paid for with a woman. Now it is forbidden to use women as currency. Therefore the natives have raised the price in the payment of *bakonga* and *mitako.*

178 583 435 In some districts close to the European centers, the natives have brought the price for wives and the bride price to a height never before known. For one wife they ask several *nkesi*.

A *nkesi* is 10,000 *mitako*. Such a sum is much too high in relation to their means. In a village there are, for instance, 50 women; for one woman, 40,000 to 50,000 *mitako* are asked, while at present in the whole village together the sum of 50,000 *mitako* is no more to be found. Therefore to oblige someone to pay two or three *nkesi* is usually to make it impossible for him to pay, or rather to make it necessary for him to pay with women, which is nothing else than encouraging woman trade, which then occurs.

802 177 A remark should also be made here about the nomenclature of the numerals. *Nkesi* is not a word of the Equatorial peoples; it was brought in from elsewhere with the Europeans. Their amounts were as follows:

10 was *jum* or *bonkama*;

100 was *nkoto*; and with the arrival of the Whites and foreign population came

1,000 *nkesi*.

The present numerical value is: 10, *jum*; 100, *bonkama*; 1,000, *nkoto*; and 10,000, *nkesi*. Some very old Negroes, however, still say *bonkama* for 10.

[583] This is the probable origin of the great rise in price of wives, especially in the area of Coquilhatville.

178 When the first Europeans arrived at Leopoldville and
439 Brazzaville, it was not long before European materials and other
articles also came to Coquilhatville to the hands of the great vil-
583 lage chiefs who carried on trade on the rivers, primarily in slaves
and ivory. The village chiefs, Yoma from the village of Boyeka,
Ibuka of Boyere, Yamba of [545] Eala, Nkake of Bokele, etc.,
carried these European articles up the Tshuapa and Ikelemba rivers,
and they bought slaves and wives with them.

Returning home again, they bought wives from their own
district and paid for them with the slaves and women whom they
themselves had bought cheaply with the European articles. For one
woman of their district they paid three or four women. The arrival
[802] of the Whites and foreign Blacks acquainted them with the number
nkesi which, however, in their definition was only 1,000 and which
they formerly called 10 nkoto or 10 times 100.

178 It was not long before the Europeans had to concern themselves
with hearing disputes over the wives. In the Black land such a thing
583 is unavoidable. Whenever the Blacks came to the Whites with their
disputes, they dared not or would not say, "I paid for this woman
with three women, but they said, "I paid for this woman with three
nkesi," that is, 3 times 1,000 mitako. Meanwhile, the nkoto and
nkesi acquired their value of 1,000 and 10,000. The statement,
however, that a woman was paid for with nkesi was retained, through
the error of the Whites or through the greed of the polygynists or both.
Indeed, later some women were paid for with nkesi, namely, when
the prevalent currency in the Congo was the mitako. It was also no
wonder, for the polygynists had a monopoly on the wives, and it
was to their advantage to raise the price.

Therefore, if the native of Coquilhatville says now that his
father or his uncle paid for that woman with three or four nkesi, this
generally means that the wife was paid for with three or four women.
The price of the women in Wangata, near Coquilhatville, was
formerly no higher than in the other areas. Many women were paid
for with only five bakonga, for instance, in Bokala, near Bamania,
a village which belonged to the village chief Yoma of Boyeka.

178 It should also be noted that the nkesi which have been paid
583 in recent years in Wangata have been paid not in mitako or in
435

178 currency, but in articles on which the natives fix a conventional
583 price, usually much higher than the actual value. Thus, for in-
435 stance, a pataki, or piston rifle, was always reckoned at 3,000
mitako; it did not matter that it was only worth 1,500. There are,
[546] therefore, only very few women who are paid for with nkesi
in real currency or mitako.

691 The tragic result of this exaggerated rise in prices is that the
583 mutual debts and difficulties among the natives have been increased,
178 so that they are almost impossible to solve. In the attempt to settle
a dispute, five other disputes come into it, all equally complicated, for the simple reason that the money, the mitako, to be paid does not exist, and it is forbidden to pay with women. To settle a dispute, several months are sometimes necessary, or a whole year. Other disputes never end, but pass on from father to son and are brought by each one in turn before each new District Administrator. In the districts where the bride price has not been raised, the difficulties and disputes are not nearly as numerous and are easy to solve. In the districts where the purchase price and the bride price of the women have become excessively high, the natives themselves admit that their disputes could formerly be solved easily, but that this is at present almost impossible.

It is unnecessary to say that this situation is harmful to the task of civilizing [the country] and to the mutual good relations of the natives. The natives are constantly coming to the District Administrator of the area to lay before him their disputes over women who have not been paid for. These disputes take up a great deal of the costly time of the administrator. He must hear and settle these usually very complicated disputes, for often the general peace of a village or district depends on it.

Also the natives themselves spend whole days and weeks doing nothing besides holding meetings to discuss the unpayable debts of bride price and the purchase price of wives, simply because the prices are excessive. For lack of currency, they pay each other with each other's debts, which usually complicates the business even more.

To improve this condition, the price of women and the bride price should be lowered, greatly lowered. We have seen that this was possible and practical when once a District Administrator who knew the native customs very well in the area of Coquilhatville really began to do it.

THE *NKUMU* OF THE TUMBA

RITUAL CHIEFTAINSHIP ON THE MIDDLE CONGO

H. D. BROWN

101 THE tribes living round Lake Tumba, a lake some thirty-five miles long by
[133] twelve wide lying north of Lake Leopold II (approximately 0° 30′ south latitude,
and 18° east longitude) and draining into the Congo River at the confluence of
the Ubangi, lack cohesion and show a considerable variety of custom and language.
But they are known collectively as Tumba, the Government adaptation of the Native
term *Ntomba.* Most of them are found to the east of the lake, the whole group
numbering perhaps little more than forty to fifty thousand at the present time, though
[797] there is evidence that the last twenty years have seen a great decrease in population.
European occupation of this area goes back barely fifty years, Protestant missions
having been established for about the same length of time. The first mission post
[177] was established at Ikoko on the north-east shore of the lake, one of the villages of a
group known as Bonginda. In pursuing this investigation particular attention has
been given to the practices of this group, but mention is occasionally made where
considerable differences have been found elsewhere.

105 The Tumba are agricultural, hunting, and fishing people. Their country is flat
and swampy with dense forests, and there are many watercourses flowing into Lake
13 Tumba. There are occasional small, less swampy plains, and one such area, more
open, with quite wide stretches of prairie, is a haunt of buffalo. The forests are fairly
well supplied with game, and the swamps, streams, and lakes with fish. A heavy
rainfall and no distinct dry season make agriculture reasonably easy and famine
unknown. Every family has its plantation of manioc, the staple diet, which is supplemented by plantains and bananas. The people make their own tools, formerly
smelting their own iron for this purpose, are fairly skilful at making dug-out canoes,
engage in weaving raffia and making mats out of split cane, and are efficient at pottery
production.

624 The role of the *nkumu* in the socio-religious activities of the community is one of
the most interesting features of Tumba life. As a result of European contact the
101 ceremonies connected with the *nkumu* are rapidly disappearing, but it has been
● 178 possible to collect considerable information from the older men and women among
whom the details are still vividly remembered.[1] The following report refers to the
period previous to European occupation and control, a time within the memory of
a large number of people, but already sufficiently remote to become a matter of
hearsay before the lapse of many more years.

596 An understanding of the place of the *nkumu* among the Tumba requires a glance
[173] at the tribal organization. According to the people themselves, they migrated westward, and coming into these parts chose land for themselves. Among the several

---

[1] In *My Children of the Forest*, New York, 1924, pp. 48–51, Andrew F. Hensey has briefly outlined some of the items of interest observed among the *nkumu* of the district adjacent to that of the present study. These more detailed notes are, however, timely if a record is to be preserved that approximates to accuracy.

766 crypt would then be barred by mats in order to leave it as a hollow chamber, and
782 the hole leading down to it filled in with earth.

For a month or two after the burial the festivities and orgies continued. Women
766 would be hanged to create some diversion, but those hanged were not eaten. Decapi-
782 tations would continue. According to the informants only slaves brought in from
a distance would have to be tied to prevent their escape. The slave members of the
567 household of the dead *nkumu* would await their turn stoically, content to die that
[152] they might accompany their master in his journey to the land of spirits. This may
be true but scarcely seems possible. Still another diversion in the funeral orgies was killing in the manner known as *esumbu*. If some man who had a slave did not wish him to be hanged or beheaded, he might give him for this other method. As the weeks slipped by, such a one, his life having apparently been spared, would suppose that all was safe and that there was little chance of his being taken, and, thus emboldened, would, instead of keeping at a safe distance, join the crowd to watch a beheading. His death would be prearranged. At the moment of beheading a victim, someone would drive a spear into the unsuspecting man, the whole crowd then using spears and knives to stab and slash until he fell. Some might be tortured to death by being buried up to the neck and left thus exposed to the hot sun without food or water until death intervened, but this was not a common practice at such funerals.

768 The termination of the dead *nkumu*'s affairs took place when the division of the inheritance was made, a long and complicated process.

● 178 Such were the old days before European penetration. The advent of the white
man half a century ago was the beginning of the end. The ceremonies had to be
624 given up, though reluctantly. Occasionally now goats are beheaded in place of human victims, and many of the younger generation find that, even so, the sight is more than they can endure, and they seek refuge elsewhere. *Nkumu* are not anxious for the honours. They find little or no respect paid to them by the government officials and this is a distinct obstacle to their obtaining honour from their own people. When the *nkumu* resident in the village adjacent to the mission station died, one of the Natives was asked who would be next. The reply was that probably no one would appear as a successor. Asked why, he answered, 'There are too many trousers.' He meant that too many were adopting the ways of the white man to
[693] make the inauguration of another *nkumu* a success. In his one useful function, that
of judge, the paramount chief now takes his place, cases tried must be recorded by a clerk of the court, and fines paid into the treasury of the chieftaincy. With such a state of affairs the old ways drop into desuetude, and the younger generation grow up knowing less of the ways of their fathers as the years pass.

614 kinship subgroup [Untersippe] for groups of rank C;
kinship group [Sippe] for groups of rank D (the exogamous units);
large kinship group [Grosssippe] for groups of rank E.

Local Organization

361 The second diagram[1] shows the settlement pattern of the
621 Isangi group in its old settlement area up to 1949. At this time
178 Isangi was relocated near the highway. Only two of the nuclear
kinship groups of Isangi can lay claim to territory reaching far enough toward the east as to extend beyond the new highway. Thus, the resettlement process has led to a complete change of the settlement pattern. However, the functions of the settlement communities have not yet been adapted to the new settlement. At present the inhabitants are still so engaged in speculation about the possibility of a return to their own old territory that they have not yet reformed their village organization.

621 We observe that the village is divided into six settlement
614 communities (30), each of which consists only of the members

30. See Diagram 3.

of one of the two kinship groups of Isangi. [200] We find that only the group of the father, which formerly was a kinship group in its own right, is attached to one settlement community of the kinship group Ngelé. Incidentally, we might point out that the names of the two kinship groups, Ngelé and Nkoto, mean "down the river" and "up the river." The older group is called "down the river" since in ngelé the river is large and wide. We come across this honorary term for the older group in some other villages although there is not always an "up-river" group. No corresponding settlement pattern can be found.

614 The degree of cohesion among the constituent kinship
621 groups in settlement community I is so strong that the entire
202 community has a communal bokendi, a communal messenger.
624

[1] [page 7, category 116.—Analyst]

614 each other to employ their own messengers. When the messenger
621 of settlement II arrives here, he first calls on the messenger of
624 the nuclear kinship group Bosóbɛ́ (No. 19) and then to Impínga
202 (No. 26). The messenger from Bosóbɛ́ calls on his relatives in
settlement VI, who are the nuclear kinship group Mbelo-Mmuna (No. 22), while the messenger from Impínga-Ndongó formerly had to call on the group Bommambo which is now extinct.

Settlement V consisted of three different groups. Bolíma, the group of the father, had its own messenger; however, he only received the messages without having to pass them on, which is also the case with all these last groups of the village. Both neighbors had their own messenger. The messenger from settlement I called on the nuclear kinship group Bolesangi, his relatives; the messenger from settlement III went to his relatives of the nuclear kinship group Ituli.

There were also two messengers in the last hamlet, but reports on this subject are insufficient since the nuclear kinship group Bommambo has been extinct for a long time.

178 All the settlements just mentioned have a common
614 characteristic: formerly, at important dance festivals, their
621 young men performed together in one joint *corps de ballet*. The
595 population was decimated as a result of the rigors of [201] the
occupation period and also as a result of the population move-
[161] ment into the cities. Consequently, there are not enough young
people any more, and I with II, III with IV, and V with VI act together. Thus, in each case we find Ngelɛ́ and Nkoto united in one ballet. Although these groups have also been scattered
[361] as a result of the new settlement pattern (next to the highway), the old organizational structure has been preserved, and the young people do not hesitate to walk the long distance to the practice field every day so they can dance in the old groupings.

621 All of Isangi, all three kinship groups, have one common
624 village chief, the Nkúmú, with an *iyolo nsáka* who gets the meet-
622 ings started, and a village court with its judges. There are other
groups which correspond to Isangi (31), but have more than one

---

31. See Müller, *Fürstentum*, pp. 73 ff., 76 ff., 133 f.

614 Each hamlet includes one or several message districts.
621 Even at the time of the old settlement pattern the messenger
624 system was determined by the hierarchical structure and not
[202] at all by considerations of what was most practical (for example,
the shortest route). Consequently this conservative institution
of the conservative old men has not been affected at all by the
relocation.

The villages are the communities of jurisdiction and of political life. Usually a nkúmú, presides over the meetings. If a village has several nkúmú, one of whom may be the judge or all may preside together, I have used the term "part of a village" [Dorfteil] for the district from which each nkúmú originates.

Those areas which have a special meeting place are here
361 referred to as a "province" [Gau]. The meeting place lies
621 within the territory of the oldest or second-oldest kinship group.
178 The practical importance of this institution for the entire province is minimal, but the two meeting places [202] which we discovered still constituted, until a short time ago, important social centers for the duplicate villages forming the administrative centers of the respective provinces. As a result of the relocation, the meeting places have now lost their function completely.

000 I hope that this paper has added new material to the discussion on the subject of ethno-sociological terminology, and that it will stimulate criticism and a new discussion of this important subject.

593 necessity be derived from a logical conclusion based on a great many particular instances. Yet these might have explanations other than those we give them. Thus we could attribute the presence of true love or its absence to the effects of causes of which we are unaware. Nevertheless, we cannot keep from presenting below a few facts which will enable us to draw a conclusion that is adequately in accordance with reality.

There is no question that the love found here lacks the purity which it has among certain groups of Europeans or certain other peoples, ● [181] especially good Christians. No one is astonished that pagan peoples, practicing their atavistic and degrading customs, have not achieved the general delicacy of sentiment or more especially the moral height of so noble a virtue as has been nourished and developed by centuries of Christian influence.

In addition, the instability of marriage, the possibility of its dissolution, and the presence of polygamy by no means tend to develop the purity of love; on the contrary, they tend to debase it. Finally, [38] the liveliness and sincerity of family affections, which we have described in Article I, naturally result in a reduction of conjugal love -- all the more so since, because of the patriarchal structure of native society, the Nkundó needs his kin more than he needs his wife.

Thus there is much selfishness, which is one of the characteristic signs of moral decadence and little devotion. A wife will seldom remain with a husband who suffers from an incurable illness, is impotent, or has become too poor for her taste. The Nkundó consider this the natural state of affairs and are not at all ashamed to admit it, even in front of a missionary.

593 586 The same is true of a husband's relationship to his wife. If she has become incapable of fulfilling at least one of the purposes for which he married her, why should he keep her? If she has given him sons, they will want to keep their mother, and their entreaties combined, perhaps, with a feeling of compassion for one he has loved, might persuade him to keep her. Her sons will provide for her subsistence to which their father will make a contribution from time to time, and her daughters will take care of her and prepare her food. But some men will insist on getting rid of this burden in spite of

2: Hulstaert--220 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

582 We have spoken of the unproductivity of the bride price.
583x This is a Nkumdɔ́ notion, and it is accurate only because the old
men want to satisfy themselves before their sons. Actually, they
could very easily reconcile their desire that the bride price should
be productive with the aspirations of the youths, at least in many
instances. All they would need to do would be to use the valuables
they have received for their sons' benefit by acquiring girls of the
same age for them. The productivity of the valuables would not
diminish [238] in the least, of course, since the goods would remain
in the family. On the contrary, it would be increased because a
[842] greater number of progeny would probably be born. But our natives
knowledge of physiology does not seem to be sufficiently developed
● [181] for them to come to this conclusion. And even more probably their
egoism has greatly clouded their intelligence and silenced the voice
of good sense and fatherly love to make it possible for them to
multiply the number of their wives and thus increase the easy satisfaction
of their sensuality, augment their wealth, and reinforce their
social position. It will be their sons' turn after their death.

561 This situation is aggravated by the fact that, except for the
428 *bosɔ́lo*, the brothers, not the sons, of the deceased inherited the
595x widows, who thus remained in the hands of the old men.

582• Because of their attitudes the old men monopolized most of
the women. They established large harems for themselves, so that
it was very difficult for the young men to find a woman to marry;
they had to consider themselves lucky if their father provided them
with a child.

Thus it was unheard of that a young man between twenty and
582 thirty years old should marry, except for a few instances where a
178 man acquired a child who was to become his wife after a number of
years. Men were usually forty years old or older before they married.

Nowadays the situation has changed entirely; the attitude of the old men favors the young much more and has become almost normal. The great majority of fathers, if they have the means, procure a wife for their sons as soon as the latter are old enough to express a desire for one. This improvement is due to the fact that it has become

602 within a group of close kin, seeing that, from a certain standpoint,
837 property belongs to all the members, each sooner or later receiving
684 or inheriting from the other. But in cases where other sanctions can
be imposed, they are considered legitimate. [309]

b) Except in the case of relations between brother and sister-
626 in-law -- within the limits described above -- public opinion is
837 severe in its judgment, even more severe than for ordinary cases of
602 adultery, although because of the more tangible nature of the sanctions imposed against the latter, these seem on the surface to be considered more serious; many natives even have that impression. Or at least that is the first impression that spontaneously comes from their explanations; currently, they stress the indemnity, and in their accounts of ancient proceedings and violent sanctions, they forget the other aspect. Others do not distinguish between the two sides of the problem, or distinguish between them only very poorly. Only in going to the bottom of things do they -- like ourselves -- become aware of the two aspects and the importance of not confusing them.

The leniency we observe in certain cases on the part of the interested parties who have been wronged, and sometimes on the part of public opinion, does not seem to us to have been explained as a leniency based on principle nor as a legitimation of these relations (except in the case of brothers within the limits indicated). They seem rather to spring from the affection they have for the culprit, their sympathy for his condition as a bachelor, a certain community of interests, and finally from an evaluation of certain other elements that may be involved (such as a fundamental jealousy in the case of brothers).

602 The great distinction made by the Nkundó in this realm as
181 in others between inferior and superior relatives is based on their
● conception of authority, which is patriarchal, therefore paternal. What is involved is not so much a fear of power as a reverent awe -- although the first should not be excluded. In their eyes an inferior does not exist for the benefit and advantage of the superior, but the reverse; authority exists for the good of the inferior, who to preserve hierarchy and order must submit to the [310] superior. The superior's duty to help his inferior (in his difficulties, his palavers, his poverty),

602 ● 141 to be liberal and generous toward him and therefore to make goods available to him, to be lenient in matters concerning justice and property and obliging in conjugal matters -- as long as the principle of authority remains secure is based on the same idea. The exploitation of an inferior by his superior is entirely contrary to the basic nature of Nkundɔ́ authority, while the reverse is entirely in conformity with it. (1)

> 1. This attitude may account -- at least to some extent -- for the liberties that the natives readily take with the European, their superior or master, such as domestic thefts, inappropriate requests, the kind of begging and lack of respect for authority that we are accustomed to seeing, etc.

Article VII. Adultery

837 For the Nkundɔ́, adultery is an illicit union between a man and a married woman. From the moment the ikulɛ́ is paid for a woman, any relations with her by a man other than the husband-to-be are considered adulterous.

1. Terminology

There is no exclusive or specific term in Lonkundo by which our word "adultery" may be translated. There are a number of words in the language which are only partially equivalent to it.

1) First of all, the Nkundɔ́ speak of bongombe, a term denoting steady and continuous relations with a woman who is a complete stranger, that is, who is not related in any way. The word designates the relationship as well as the persons involved. This type of adultery is also called a wɛ̌samaka or linɛ́mba jɛ́ njɛ́sɛ́mɛ́ (from the verb ɛ́sama) -- that is, a secret, as against a true linɛ́mbɛ́ (which will be

586* make it possible for him to recover his claim, he had recourse to the second means:

586* b) Reducing his wife to slavery (bonvamó, from the verb
587 nyamola). The husband had the right to use this means immediately, without having first tried the étaka. But such action was not approved of and was undertaken only if the woman's family were themselves exasperated by the endless suits and the continual shame that their unworthy daughter caused them.

[721] The reduction of a woman to slavery usually caused a war, for her clan would not put up with such an insult. In some instances they did not seek revenge, however, either out of fear, because they did not feel in a position to resist, or because they recognized that the husband had good reasons for what he did. [384]

The woman's relatives could subsequently buy her back. (1)

●[181] 1. If the Nkundó sold an Elinga woman into slavery, her people never troubled them with a war. For they did not know how to attack, were not good at marching, were strangers to the forest, and were inferior in military valor. Therefore they were satisfied with buying back their kinswoman.

In some instances, not wanting to be exposed to further palavers or further shame caused by their daughter's continued misconduct after having bought her back, they left her to her fate. Their love for their child and their desire to preserve their honor and good reputation were in conflict, and which of the two sentiments triumphed depended on circumstances of men and things. In such a situation, as with respect to theft and other habits that brought dishonor, it was not rare (nor is it even today) to find that the desire to preserve honor triumphed over affection or financial interests.

[584] Before reducing a wife to slavery, even more than before confining her to the etáka, a man was required to communicate his intentions to the ndonga. Otherwise, the latter would declare war

[92] THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE MONGO NEGRO

INDUSTRY

241 One might say that nature throws into the lap of the Mongo
461 Negro everything he needs in order to exist so that he does not have
181 to exert himself in the slightest to get it. Generally speaking, he has only to look for his food in the forest, to pick it up from the ground as it were, with the exception of his bananas, manioc roots, and moma (a yam that, if it is prepared well, reminds one of potatoes) which are cultivated by his women. Hence, it is quite natural that one finds little industry among the Mongo, and that the Mongo Negro is not prepared to put the least effort into developing or perfecting in any way that centuries-old industry which already exists.

461 He can eat, and that is the main thing as far as he is concerned.

181 A lazy, inert people, effeminate to the core, each one merely living on the efforts of his many wives and female slaves, cannot have a highly developed industry.

In general, except for hunting which is undertaken primarily by the young men of the village, the Mongo Negro does not bother about anything. Eating, sleeping, looking for and listening to quarrels, carousing at gatherings with sugar-cane beer until they are picked up in a drunken state by their wives (a spectacle one also sees in civilized Europe), this is the dreary, monotonous, drowsy life of the Mongo Negro, one of the least culturally developed but at the same time one of the most highly interesting tribes of the Evenaar district if not of the whole Congo.

He loathes and despises work and is indolence personified.

461 Notwithstanding the extreme idleness of the Mongo [93] people,
462 they do have some of the industry that is necessary for their existence. However, it is on a low level and not widespread. In general, the existing industries are carried on by either the men or the women, and a man will never undertake a job belonging to the women, and vice versa. The work is got done in groups or in family units; where a branch of an industry exists, it is the concern of a single person unless more workers are necessary in order to carry out the work.

583x The mutuality of the rights of *nkóló* and *nkita* is well ex-
607 pressed in the saying, *ómbâtɛ́ ñkoâtɛ́ wɛ̂*, "possess me so that I may possess you." It is like *do ut des*.

583x
607
182 It is possible to judge from the preceding descriptions that the bride price has a considerable influence on family relations. Al-
[611] though the Nkundó system is clearly and manifestly patriarchal, the custom of the bride price and its logical consequences give it certain features which make one think of a matriarchy. This situation comes about quite naturally. Since the bride price is wealth it represents power in society. Through marriage this power is transferred from the husband's clan to the wife's, which is enriched in goods and persons by the bride price that has been received. In a sense, the husband is the provider of his wife's clan. And the child can truthfully maintain that his clan was enriched thanks to his father. As a matter of fact, for the Nkundó, this consideration above all others is the basis for their demands of whatever rights they possess in the mother's clan. [170] The relationship between a woman and her *nkita* and between their respective children is founded solely on the bride-price system of marriage and has nothing to do with matriarchy. (1)

1. But the above considerations may furnish one source of explanation for the origin of that family system.

Consequently, it is unnecessary to erect complicated theories or engage in tortuous speculations in order to explain the creation of this system or to justify it. It is quite simply the outcome of the payment of a bride price in valuables that are of no use except in connection with a similar purpose.

Nevertheless, although the system of the *nkita* is a natural and logical consequence of marriage by means of a bride price, it is not a necessary consequence. The bride price exists in all the tribes of the Congo, but it does not seem to have resulted everywhere
583x in the institution of the *nkita*.

174
114
607 What has given rise to this institution among the Nkundó? Father Brepoels (*loc. cit.*, p. 339) gives the following explanation:

589 of a bride price was not at all a purchase. (2) [179]
648

> 2. One reason why Europeans were so slow in getting a realistic picture of the nature of the bride price was undoubtedly their lack of linguistic knowledge. The natives did not know the Lobangi language spoken to them first nor the Lingala used later, and so perforce in these languages they used (and still use) terms whose meaning is vague and broad. Thus they said -- and still often say -- the word *sɔ́mba*, "to buy," for "marriage," although their own language contains terms which are very precise.

Having gradually become informed as to the true nature of the bride price, a number of Europeans began to favor a return to the old system. Some took a radical and intransigent stand on the matters; others approached the question in a more reasonable manner, taking into account the changes that had resulted from colonization. It was perceived that the natives were not yet ready for the abolition of their ancestral laws and that marriages without a bride price rarely lasted, in part because the old sanctions had not been replaced with new measures adapted to the circumstances. Finally the government as well as the missions more or less strictly required that the matter of the bride price be settled before a "civil" or a "religious" marriage ceremony.

589x Many Europeans wish for the abolition of the bride-price sys-
●182 tem because it seems inferior to them. And actually in the present circumstances of time and place, it does constitute an obstacle to the evolution of the natives toward a better social and moral condition. (1)

> 1. This is especially true of the consequences of the *nkita* system.

But such an abolition is neither practicable nor expedient. This system penetrates and molds, so to speak, the whole familial and social life

583x 182 of our peoples. Its pure and simple abolition would upset their established order completely. First their mentality has to change, and that end can be accomplished only gradually, since a moral change is involved. And the present state of these peoples is not sufficiently evolved for the abolition of the bride price to be beneficial. Here, if ever, the axiom: nihil leges sine moribus is valid.

000 But what might perhaps be done in that direction now is to place a limitation on the amount of the bride price. This measure should be strictly enforced to make sure that it is carried out -- although in practice its enforcement would be very difficult, for at the beginning [180], many interested parties would try to circumvent it. If good results are to be obtained, an efficacious repression of adultery and the frequency of divorce should accompany the limitation on the bride price. It would be a first step towards the ideal. Others could follow according to the extent of the natives' evolution toward a higher level of morality.

Apropos of these considerations we should like to say a few words concerning:

583x 177 3. Traffic in bride prices

This term may be taken to mean two different things. It may be used to refer to a general increase in the amount of the bride price, which has reached enormous proportions since the European penetration of the area. Or it may refer to the increase in the bride price of a single woman for successive marriages, from which her family profits.

The first meaning of the term refers to a fact, namely that the amount of the bride price has increased considerably. The reason for this development is the increase in material wealth resulting from colonization. Riches are more easily acquired. But we should not exclude the role of the greed of many parents, which has also increased. It is the most important and can reach scandalous proportions in areas where the bride price is paid in European goods (money, fabrics, appliances, utensils); in such regions, as for
177, example among the riverain people of the Lower Congo, it goes up
583 to and easily exceeds 2,000 francs. Think of what this amount
465 represents, especially in times of economic depression. (1)
435

1. For the sake of comparison, here are some average figures for 1934:

Nkundu

10. Conclusion

182 Nkundo society was a fully alive, organic community. All of its organs functioned and were able to adjust continually to the changes in its life. Ethnically, socially-legally, and politically, they were open to every improvement. The organs with which it was built stood nearest to natural law and drew their rights and duties from it, and also the spirit which inspired them.

The facts prove that this society could survive. It arose at the source of the Lomako; in a short time it had extended itself peacefully over the whole central area of the Congo; it pressed eastward across the Lomami and Lualaba, and southward across the Kaisai /Kasai/-Sankuru, to occupy about a fifth of the present Congo at the time of the arrival of the Whites.

182 171 This society was open to all healthy influences and could adapt itself to all reasonable demands of civilization. It was, however, not reconcilable with what precisely is wrong in our European ideas about progress and civilization: elimination of all ethnic intermediary organs, equalization of all individuals, materialization of all life on the basis of economic competition, slave-like submission to the impersonal, unpaternal State, with that terrible pretense of freedom, of being able to do everything that is not forbidden by the State.

178 161 This suddenly attained freedom, which was accompanied by the abolition of all the former joints of society, means the death of the Nkundo /161/ community, not only in its soul, its being, but also in its existence. The gradual depopulation, the dying out in the Middle Congo, has had repercussions now and then, even in government circles. "The Nkundo-Mongo population is melting away like snow before the sun," is the brief content of the last official report. The Waola, between the Ruki and the Ikelemba /rivers/, had in 1939 ninety deaths and three births. The official statistics of 1939 of the territory of Coquilhatville give one hundred adults for every twenty-four children. The official data of the same year for the Vicariate of Coquilhatville, with its 382, 736 inhabitants, give a ratio of 415 children to 1,000 adults. According to these data, the whole population will be decreased by more than 50 pecent by the following generation, thus dwindled to less than one-half.

Coquilhatville, 1939

121 all fulfilled in one person. But such individuals do exist, if in the
69 person of the investigator they find sympathy, broad ideas, a lack of
all European racism, understanding, a knowledge of their language,
and a benevolent devotion to their interests, individually and as a
group.

Even if one has the good fortune to find a native who, after
121 much experience, reaches the point where he will say spontaneously:
124 "This is done often, but it is against the law; the law says thus and
so; this decision of the tribunal was partial for such or such reason," --
an infinitely valuable situation, but one which arises very rarely --
one is not thereby absolved of the need to check his statements. But
the further one goes, the more it is possible to be aware of the reality
and to appraise the informant's value in this sphere and the usefulness
of his statements.

These considerations are particularly valuable in making the
121 distinction between obligations and social decorum or good manners,
● 183 between legal obligations and obligations of kinship and mutual
671 assistance. In current practice the Nkundó make no clear lines of
demarcation between these categories, since they have never codified
their law or attempted to set up a clear and precise classification.
They feel no more need for this than, for instance, they or even we
"civilized" people bother about setting up a grammar for our native
tongue, which we speak correctly and without the slightest difficulty,
purely out of habit.

An investigation in the legal domain is made [18] very
[124] difficult by the patriarchal and feudal character of these peoples, added
to the lack of writing. Not only is there an adaptation to circumstances --
the felicitous flexibility of native laws -- in which jurisprudence plays
a great role, but the Nkundó, while knowing well what is lawful and
what is not, generally does not clearly understand the nature of an
obligation, and above all he does not know its source.

One's chances of obtaining good results in the inquiry are
121 greatly increased by the use of hypothetical cases, presented to the
124 individuals one knows best and whom one knows to be in no way
involved. It is always worthwhile to use this method as a means of
completing and perhaps correcting conclusions based on the examination

M
593x recourse to the assistance of a third party who -- for remuneration,
578 of course -- undertook to carry out his project. This task was usually
P
[674] confided to Batswa, who did not disdain this type of work, which
was quite suited to their taste.

The fact that the law gives the husband the right to punish his wife [277] for the type of oratory under discussion meant that a wife had to exercise some discretion in her choice of expressions. Fearing violent reactions, she often spoke the more serious insults softly.

M
Since the European penetration women are more daring. For
178 their husbands fear European justice, which follows principles entirely
578 different from their ancestral law. Thus they complain bitterly of
593x the insolence of their wives: "We have become slaves; the women
562 are now all-powerful. They may do as they please, for we can no
longer do anything to them." But as soon as native courts are sufficiently educated and are freed from what an eminent colonial jurist has called "the jurisdiction of palavers" (1), they will no doubt effect a salutary change in this situation.

M
The emancipation of women is one of the factors that have
562 increased the frequency of divorce. For a man who cannot avenge
586x continuous outrages remains dominated by shame, and the presence of the one who is the cause of it must become unbearable in the long run; whence the indifference, antipathy, hate, and the inevitable results of that permanent confusion in the household.

M
Men among whom the feeling of modesty was highly developed
593x hanged themselves out of shame instead of attacking the guilty wife.
762 That is what many natives have maintained in talking with me.
577 Nevertheless, I have no knowledge of a present-day example. When
●[183] this happened, the wife's family no longer took action against their
daughter. Nor were they obliged to pay an indemnity, although their child had brought about the death. They simply had to acquit

---

1. See A. Sohier, Bulletin des Séances de l'Institut Royal Colonial Belge, Vol. 6, 1935, 1, p. 60 and passim.

Yaelima

226 [87] After the drive through the dammed-off area, there are usually several fish remaining that succeeded in slipping through the chain. The women then take baskets and bail the pool dry, throwing the water over the dam.

Very often the women dam up part of a marsh or stream and bail out the water with baskets without setting traps or waiting for the water level to go down.

In all three cases we find: 1) setting the trap in front of the drain channel; 2) the drive in the dammed-up area; and 3) bailing out this section. The catch is divided equally among the women who participated in the work. [88]

These three methods of fishing prevail among all the riparian peoples of the Congo, Kasai, Fimi, Lake Leopold II, and the lower Lukenie.

On the upper Lukenie, starting with the Oshwe sector, no traps are made. At most the women occasionally dam up a section of the rivers and streams of the interior and bail them out with baskets to catch the fish.

226 The Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima do not fish at all.
●184 They are people of the forest and not of the water. Hunting is their chief occupation, and fishing is unknown to them.

In this connection, these tribes are wholly distinct from their neighbors to the west. It must be noted, however, that even among the latter all the clans do not engage in fishing. The groups of the interior do not fish any more than their brothers of the sector of Oshwe and Bumbuli. The traps and other contrivances which we shall discuss below are unknown to both groups. In this respect, all these peoples have a common characteristic, recalling their common origin. In the lower Lukenie and farther west, however, part of the population, the Bandzali, "people of the water," have adapted themselves to the new conditions of their environment. The river became for them a source of wealth and well-being, and a part of their social activity was oriented toward the exploitation of this precious resource.

226 At the present time fishing and the preparation of salt are
258 practically the only means of subsistence and unquestionably the principal occupations of all the riparian groups in the region of Leopoldville, Kwamouth, Lake Leopold II, and the lower Lukenie.

304 184 The tattoos of Ipanga and Batitu women differ considerably from those of the men, except for the facial designs. The lines of small dots that we observed and described for the women among the western peoples are quite widespread throughout the region. On certain women these scars are not only found on the abdomen and upper thighs, but they decorate the whole body and sometimes even the arms.

In the region of the Oshwe sector, especially near the eastern limits of the territory occupied by the Batitu, we encountered, moreover, several women whose tattoos were notably different from those of their sisters to the west. The palm-leaf designs on the temples are replaced by a series of concentric circles around a small dot in strong relief. This dot is placed half-way between the eye and the ear. These women were probably not natives of the region. In our opinion, they had come in through trade or even through abduction. They probably belonged to the Bokala or Yaelima tribe, although we were unable to get confirmation of this from the natives. Among these [195] latter tribes, tattooing is very much in fashion. The women in particular seem to be very fond of this type of ornamentation.

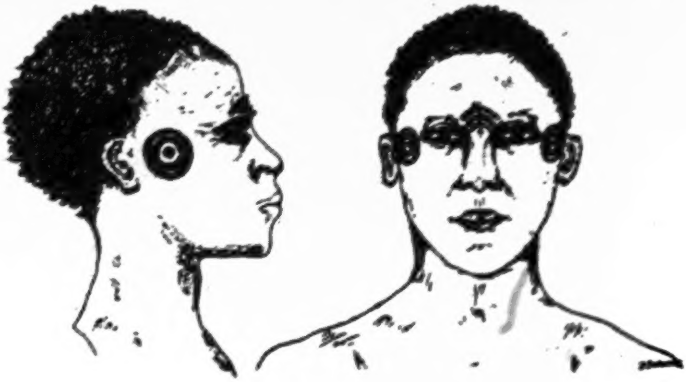


Fig. 119. Tattoos of the Lake Leopold II Tribes.

304 The designs are so many and varied that we could not attempt to provide a detailed description of them. We believe that we may divide them, on the whole, into three main classes or categories.

1) The racial or tribal tattoo.

101 classifies the Bakela (or Boyéla), who are unquestionably pure Móngo, among the Wakutshu [Wakusu] or Batetela is highly significant.

161 It is impossible to give an exact figure for the size of the population we have just defined. In any case one can estimate that it is more than a million.

● 184 Throughout the huge territory occupied by this people, only insignificant differences in institutions or language can be observed. Greater divergences appear in the material manifestations of culture.

101 563 In my opinion it is likely that certain groups which belong among the Nkundo-Móngo as far as culture and speech are concerned, may be distinguished from them in genealogy and history. Among these are the true Elína or riverain people (the Bolóki, the Eleku, the Elíngá of the upper Lomela and the upper Tshuapa), (2) the Ngombe tribes of the Lomela, the Mbólé, the Bakutu of the Lomela-Tshuapa (with whom one should probably include the Ntómbá and the Nkóle), (3) and perhaps also the Mpámá and the Losakanyi. (4). This likelihood

---

2. We exclude a few Libinja and Basokó clans living near Coquilhatville, since they are clearly of alien origin. The native name for the Tshuapa [River] is Jwafa or Jafa and, higher up, Lwafa. Among the Bongandó and the Bahamba it is called the Laha.

3. See my article in Congo, 1931, Vol.1, pp. 21 ff.

4. The latter are erroneously called Losakanja by Father Schebesta in Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge, p. 199. They seem to have lived formerly on the lower Momboyo River (Luilaka); the land on which Flandria Mission has been established still bears their name.

562 clothing and dressed her in valuable furs, especially in part of the
556 pelt of a striped antelope called mpangɛ́. In some villages she was
permitted to wear leopardskin in front as well as in back.

Then the father would decree (-bɛ́kya) that since his daughter
[582] had become bolímbó she would always wear furs and would stop working, and that she would be given in marriage only to a very rich and influential man, not to the first comer. Therefore, a synonym for bolímbó is bɔ̃na óâ boɛ́ko, "child of the decree, a child set apart, forbidden."

This ceremony may be held regardless of the child's age, at any time between three years and adolescence.

When the ceremony is ended the girl withdraws (-ulama, transitive -uja) into a hut specially prepared for this occasion, which is called ileke. Her seclusion lasts only a few months. When certain natural needs oblige her to leave the house, she goes out the back way through the banana grove and hides as much of herself as possible under a mat. She does not walk on the bare ground; her feet must not
[285] touch the earth. That is why mats are spread everywhere she steps. She does no work; her food is prepared by her mother, sister, aunt, etc., or by a slave. When it comes to her toilette, she washes her hands not in water, but in palm oil. [32] All these practices are marks of respect and honor.

When the period of seclusion is ended, the girl's father gives a second feast, with dances, drinks, etc., and the bolímbó comes out walking on mats. But there is no further ceremony. From then on the girl is no different from other girls. But she retains the sign of her distinction, the wearing of furs, and she does no housework.

The marriage of a bolímbó always occurred very late, since a
[582] man who wanted to take her for his wife had to collect a good deal of
[558] wealth before he could take the risk of asking for her hand. Should his attempt prove fruitless, he was exposed to ridicule in the whole region.

184 Among the tribes living on the left bank of the Luilaka any
556 man who was rich and of good family could ask for the hand of a
562 bolímbó in marriage. Among the Injóló, on the other hand, the re-
582 quirements were more complicated. The suitor had to belong to
another tribe or group. For instance, a girl who belonged to the

184 Engónjó group would be given only to a man from the West, the
556 Ngombe, or a neighboring tribe, but never to an Engónjó. All the
562 Engónjó considered the boldmbd their sister. Thus when the future hus-
582 band went to the family of the boldmbd to ask for her hand, every village barred his way by means of a fence. All the bride price valuables which he carried with him were taken from him, and an equivalent amount in various kinds of goods, such as hens, ducks, dogs, mats, etc., was substituted for it. That is, he exchanged bride price valuables for nkomi valuables [dowry]. (1) The suitor could pass only when the

1. See Chapter II, Article VII.

village that barred his way had nothing left with which to continue the exchange. If he found his riches exhausted, he had to go back home to replenish the supply. Everything he gave in this [sic] fashion was counted as bride price, bengé (1) and everything he re-

1. See Chapter II, Article VIII.

ceived was part of the nkomi [dowry]. (2)

2. See Chapter II, Article VII.

556 It is understandable that under these conditions asking to
562 marry a bolómbd was a luxury that the common man could not afford.
582 The suitor had to belong to a rich and influential family all of whose members would assist him.

When the suitor finally succeeded in clearing a passage to the father of the chosen one with sufficient treasures, the latter put no further obstacles in his way. As for the girl, she felt exceedingly honored and delighted that a man loved her so much that he would go to so much trouble and spend such a vast amount out of affection for her.

As for the rest of the proceedings, the bride price payment was made in the same way as for any other marriage. But when the

1. Clothing. Nudity.

291
855 Until he has reached the age of discretion and even a little later, the Nkundó child wears nothing more around his loins than a belt of beads or a plain string usually adorned with some amulet. Nobody is shocked by this rudimentary attire. Parents take great interest in the adornment of their children; from a very early age [301] they are seen wearing belts of trading beads, bracelets, rings around the ankles made of iron, copper, or brass, and in addition, at the present time, glass beads above the knees.

291 As the child grows older the clothing increases. From the outset there are differences on the basis of sex.

The boy acquires a thin strip of cloth which is attached to his string or belt simply by folding back the two ends. The cloth falls between his legs without being tight, allowing for great freedom of movement and the circulation of air; this is an excellent precaution against perspiration due to extreme heat, but it is not very effective protection against indiscreet looks, at least in certain positions. The fabric made of raffia may be decorated to a greater or a lesser extent. In former times there existed different kinds, which we need not describe here. The length of the hanging borders is dictated by vanity. The string was often replaced by a raffia belt or -- among prominent men -- by a leather thong.

The woman's garment consists of a broad raffia belt whose two ends are gradually narrowed, ending in cords which are tied on the [53] stomach. In the center of this belt (nkɛ́sɛ́ (1) a ball of raffia fibers is attached (bonkoko). A piece of cloth (efufa or lofufa) whose width may vary from 3 centimeters to 20 centimeters or more, depending on the age and the wearer's intensity of the feeling of modesty, is attached to the cords and falls more or less low on the body. For a [292] feast or display the efufa is replaced with a more valuable and longer [illegible] piece of cloth (lotɔ́lɔ́ or, among the Elingɛ of Losanganya, ifika).

---

1. Or bokangɛ, bokangɛ wǎ nkɛ́sɛ́.
Among the Bombwanja it is called
likóngɛ̂.

29/ 184 The nkásá is unknown beyond the Jwalé and the Lulaka. In that region the women tie a string (or a belt of beads) around themselves and attach a second piece of cloth to it.

291 Thus the male garment is a rudimentary sort of shorts, open on the sides, while female dress is much more open. In general the efufa is an appropriate protection of one's modesty, but it is inadequate in certain positions. (2)

[611] [196] 2. It may be interesting to note that etóo mamónyé, or just plain etóo, which is the term for a man's garment, also indicates the male line of descent, while the female line is often designated by the term nkásá (sometimes by the word jwómoto derived from bómoto, "women"). Let us add that lonkundó jwâ nkásá means "pure, flawless Lonkundo, not corrupted by foreign influences." This expression should be compared with the following phrases: langue maternel, moedertaal, "mother tongue," etc.

291 [17] At present the nkásá is no longer worn except by a few elderly inhabitants of villages far from the main communication lines. Everywhere else the ancient mode of dress has been replaced by materials imported from Europe. The women wear at least a sangatómbo, a kind of short skirt which falls from their loins at least to the middle of their thighs if not further. Middle-aged men in the interior have simply changed the material of their garment but not its form. The younger ones, on the contrary, have frankly adopted the European mode of dress.

291 581 [126] [131] A married woman is not allowed to enter the village of her relatives by marriage (bakiló) or appear before them [54] without supplementing her usual attire with one or more belelele (banana leaves cut into fringes). The term bakiló must be understood as it is meant by the Nkundó; it excludes those with whom the wife may sometimes perform the sexual act and who are called "husbands" broadly speaking.

599ˣ
834 arises but rarely. Furthermore, if a daughter is required to perform similar duties for her father, she will undertake this obligation only [539] with the lament: njôy'ɔ́ɛna ěkɔ́ 'm wímɛ́kɛ, "I have come to see where I had my origin." Any woman who has been in that position will later know no oath more sacred than this one: la botakɛ wǐ fafɛ bǒkɔ́ 'm wɛ̌nákɛ la mpaka, "by my father's nakedness which I saw when he was old."

834
291 Thus we can draw the conclusion that the Nkundó are offended by nakedness and as a rule do not tolerate it. The exceptions do not invalidate this generalization; on the contrary, they tend to support it.

2. Speech. Obscenities and propriety.

521
831 In general the Nkundó see nothing wrong with using obscene expressions. They only describe them as "bad" if they become indecent.

195 If a conversation touches on matters of sex, they may wonder whether a particular topic is necessary, interesting, or entertaining; they will not ask themselves whether it is moral. For it will be apparent throughout this study they have no concept of morality strictly speaking.

The Nkundó possesses a varied and extensive list of obscene words -- nor is he alone in this respect. [58] We are not compiling a dictionary, and therefore we will not list them. What interests us are the circumstances that make these words indecent and under which a proper use of them impossible. The circumstances provide us with a criterion of the degree of obscenity of a word or expression. Let us say at once that we include in this category not only terms applied to organs and phenomena which are of a sexual nature strictly speaking, but also words pertaining to certain anatomical parts or physiological functions such as, for example, excretion, hair and tattooing found on private parts, and the female garment called efufa. We [184] should also point out that some tribes will consider expressions obscene which do not shock others at all.

835 754 encounter it only in connection with magical practices and sorcery (*botɛ́*, plural *betɛ́*), for which it is the *nsimbo*, that is, the condition without which the *betɛ́* would lack efficacy. If the *nsimbo* is not observed, the *botɛ́* turns against its owner and, by a reversal of its effect (*bosesengano*), brings death to the latter. Therefore the interested parties submit to these degrading requirements despite their natural repugnance. Depending on the case, incest with the mother, the daughter, or the sister is required. The first of these eventualities is the most repugnant to our natives. Though it goes altogether against the grain to do so, the mother submits to this ignominy to save the life of her foolhardy and greedy son.

● [184] The *nsimbo* of incest does not exist in all *botɛ́*. It even seems to have been absent from the *betɛ́* which are ancient and purely Nkundó. It is found primarily in the big modern *betɛ́*, which have been imported from other peoples or invented on the spot since colonization. (1)

---

1. See Kaptein, in *Congo*, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 534.

Article VIII. Love Philters

832 The Nkundó are familiar with two love philters, the *efóndé* and the *bontálá*. Other modern *betɛ́* may produce the same effect in part or secondarily. Here [101] we will only deal with the first two, which are "pure" and ancient love philters.

The love philters (*botɛ́ w'ělangyɛ́*) serve to gain the heart of a young girl as much as to entice a married woman away from her husband.

1. *Efóndé*

Efónde (1) is a common charm. Anyone can procure it from the maker in consideration of the appropriate payment, of course. Various kinds of *efóndé* exist, differing as to the ingredients used, the manner

---

1. *Efónde* is often used as a synonym of *elangyɛ́* in its sexual meaning.

584 power to settle disputes. They claim their share of the remuneration from the ndonga. According to the saying -- in archaic language -- bonɛ wǎ ndonga nd'â dombɛ, "the power (literally, "the medicine") of the ndonga resides in the judges." Not that the judges themselves have the right or the power to intervene in matrimonial palavers. But they are that many additional witnesses. If the day comes when there is a dispute on the subject of the bride price, especially at the time of a divorce, the ndonga can call on them to help him refresh his memory and thus avoid difficulties. For it can easily happen that after several years the official witness has only a vague and approximate recollection of what was paid. If the judges do not receive anything at the time of payment, they will refuse to give their assistance at the critical moment. It is therefore an intelligent policy to acquiesce to their desires even though strictly speaking they can invoke no real prerogatives.

178
584
622 At the present time the colonial government, having established districts and named chiefs, the latter have had attributed to them the right to officially act as ndonga in matrimonial matters, or at least they have taken advantage of the powers given them and done so. In general [111] they summon the judges of the district at the same time, and the matter is entered after a fashion in the register of settlements. The chief's presence as a witness may have some value, since he can provide additional testimony and writes down the amount of the bride price. But his presence, on the other hand, has the disadvantage of involving him in matters which all in all are none of his business. We are not speaking here of cases in which he or some relatives of his are interested parties in the palaver. If he would be content to be a passive witness and enter the transactions that take place, the situation would be perfect.

192
194 It is probable that etymologically the word ndonga is derived from the verb root long, intransitive longam, "to be in order, arranged," transitive longy, "to arrange, make as it should be." In addition to the word ndonga, which is used west of the Luilaka, we find the word bokɔ́lo used among the Boɔ́ngɛ and the Boɔ́yɛ (as well as the Elɔ́ngɛ), and ntɔmbi among the Injɔ́lɔ. The latter term could be the same word as its homonym which means "spy" and is derived from the verb

192 tomba, "to spy"; the former may be an extension of the meaning of
● 184 the word bokɛ́lo, "promise." (1)

[572] 1. Note in passing that a ndonga is also necessary for the boseka, or contract of friendship and mutual assistance. (See Chapter I, Part 1, Article III.)

Article III. The Engagement

584 585 1. The payment of the ilulɛ

The engagement begins with the first bride-price payment, which in former times was an arrow and for that reason is called likulɛ [556] or ilulɛ. If the suitor was very rich, he sometimes gave an ingɔndɛ knife or even an empɔ́ng. A poorer one would merely give the shaft of an arrow. Nowadays 1 or 2 copper rings are given. But the original name of this payment has been retained.

Arriving at the home of the father of his intended, [112] the suitor, his father (or a substitute for him), the ndonga(s) and often other relatives as well, sit down on one side of the loɔ́njɛ (the court in front of a dwelling), after an exchange of the usual courtesies. The girl and the representatives of her family sit down on the opposite side. As in all matters that a Nkundó has to settle, the host begins by inquiring into the reason for the visit. The young man's father answers: "We have come to ask for your daughter for our son." "How do you ask for her?" "We ask for her in marriage." These preliminary negotiations are called simply ɛ́wana nsango, "to ask each other for news."

Then the girl's father asks: "Who will bring the linkɔ (banana) or the bonyɛ́ku (partially ripe banana), that is, the gifts?" Through this figurative expression he asks who has been proposed as ndonga. The young man's father replies: so-and-so, and so-and-so. When they have been accepted, the fiancée's father has bananas, smoked fish, and sometimes hens brought in, and the witness passes them over to the future husband's group.

4. The amount of the walo

583* Formerly the amount of the walo averaged 20 to 30 bakonga, or their equivalent. The value of any object included in the bride [416] price could be calculated in copper, so that the konga was, so to speak, the monetary unit of the Nkundó.

At the present time in the districts near Flandria, the minimum is from 55 to 60 rings. Among the Boángɛ and the Injɔlɔ́ the rings [434] are noticeably bigger and their weight in copper or brass is greater; there the minimum can be 30 rings. Elsewhere the figure is a good deal higher.

The price of the walo generally exceeds the minimum, which is found rather rarely. The average is about 60 to 80 rings. The number of 200 is reached only in extremely rare cases and it is exceeded even less frequently (see cases given below).

Differences in the amount of the walo are due primarily to the relative wealth of the contracting parties, the husband's valuation of his wife, the greed of the latter's parents, and the size of the bride price demanded for the woman they want to obtain with their daughter's (sister's) bride price. The cases of women who have left their previous husbands also must not be forgotten, for the new bride price must serve to reimburse him.

The amount of the walo may also be increased to satisfy the [556] vanity of the woman, who wants to appear superior to her companions, or of the husband, who wants to be recognized as very wealthy. (1)

1. The man who pays a great deal for his wife is given the honorific epithet etókobwo, "wells and mushrooms." All can find as much water as they want at wells, and there the mushrooms multiply. Thus many can benefit from the riches brought by the son-in-law.

[578] It is not unusual to hear of a woman boasting in the course of a dispute: "I am not a slave; my husband paid so-and-so much for me. [130] But you -- your husband doesn't love you, or else he is poor, for he paid only so much."

585 431 to leave her husband and he, in revenge, were to lay hands on her mother or on one of the other wives of the clan. (1) [148]

1. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 4, (1), and Chapter VIII, Article II, 1.

7) Lombɛ: a wide shoulder strap made of fur or braided
[824] bokombe reeds (Calamus sp.), though valuables of equal worth (one knife or a konga) may be given. Nowadays this boɛ́ngo consists of 2 or 3 rings; it goes to the mother in compensation for the wearying burden of carrying and nursing her daughter. (1)

1. Note that when a mother-in-law brings a child into the world, her son-in-law sends her a shoulder strap of liengɛ́ otterskin or a konga of equivalent value. He does not repeat this gift at each birth, however.

[854] 8) Betɔ́towɛ byɔ̂ nkwɛ: leaves of the bonkongɛ́ bush used to remove, wipe off, and carry away (tɔ́ta) a child's excrement. This boɛ́ngo consists of a ring and goes to the mother as compensation for her performance of these tasks. In the absence of the mother, it is claimed by another of the father's wives or by a female relative of the mother.

[224] 9) The bojɛ́ngɛ, "hunting net," is demanded in many villages for no special reason. Certain clans, however, scoffed at by others because they have few members, officially ask a man belonging to one of the latter and wishing to marry one of their daughters to bring a net, saying: "You make fun of us because we have no people; bring us a hunting net to surround and enclose us, since we are not many." Thus the village of Boyela of the Bakɛala, never gives one of its members in marriage without this boɛ́ngo.

● [illegible] 10) Wɛ̌ngɛ w'ɛ́kɛ́: a boɛ́ngo which is not known everywhere but which is customary in certain groups, for example among the Bakɛala. One of the woman's relatives takes a piece of a young thorny trunk of the wɛ̌ngɛ tree. Having scraped one end of it, he holds this

583x payment of the bride price with the bosóngo as he was committed to do through the payment of the ikulɛ and the ndanga. If he does not, the bond between him and his father-in-law is automatically broken, and consequently he is unable to obtain another wife to replace the deceased, and he loses the rights over one of his own daughters. Actually, we will have to come back to this question in Chapter IX, Article IX, 2.

These rules show how great a difference exists between the walo and the bosóngo: in the one case, upon the death of the woman prior to the payment, an indemnity is imposed for a transgression in the eyes of the law; in the other, there is a transaction to stabilize the financial rights of the clans involved.

From all the above considerations we may conclude that because of the special nature of the payment, the bosóngo is very important for the stability of the marriage and the social position of the woman's clan. But from a legal point of view it is far less important than the walo, through which a woman becomes truly [164] a wife; for the payment creates no new social relationship either between the spouses or between the husband and his in-laws.

Article X. Purpose of the Bride Price

583x
607 Theoretically, the bride price is meant to procure a wife for one of the members of the family that has received it.

The woman who is married thanks to the bride price paid for another is called the latter's nkita. It seems to me that this word is etymologically related to nkitó, "profit, benefit" (the verb is -kitola). In the final analysis, both words may be derived from the root -kit, "to become."

[184] A synonym of nkita is bongíli (bongíji); it is used primarily by the Injóló but it is also known, though seldom employed, by the other tribes.

[595] The woman whose bride price has served to procure the nkita is the latter's nkóló (literally, "mistress"). The Injóló as well as the Bofongɛ also call her by the more tactful name, nyangóngíji, "mother

426
585'
675 Similarly, Mpumo received Lifomɛ, daughter of Ikɔ́lɛ as a boɔ́ndo. Her brother, Ndyɔntíkala, ancestor of the Mbɛ́ngɛ (Liɔ́ko, Ekonda), offered her to Mpumo in asking for peace. Mpumo married her in the regular manner. In his fight against the Ekonda this same Mpumo in the same manner obtained Boɔ́ngɔ́, the sister of Bangɔ́ndɔ́ of Mpɔ́njwɛ (Wɛ̃yɛ).

Since the victor in war usually wanted to marry the woman in the proper fashion by paying a bride price, the handing over of a relative as boɔ́ndo may be compared to the practice common in Europe in the Middle Ages, when a prince would marry his daughter or sister off to a competitor or an adversary to seal the peace between them. In both cases, therefore, a kind of political marriage is involved.

Article VI. Exchange.

583x
●181 When they speak of the exchange of women (yenjɛ, from the verb enja, "to exchange" in general), the tribes under discussion do not all refer to the same thing. According to the situation, several types of exchange may be distinguished.

1) The pure Nkundó have a practice of exchanging daughters, sisters, relatives. This exchange is always carried out through the payment of bride price and the agency of a ndonga. Thus two regular marriages by nkumbó are involved, and the term "exchange" is only very inappropriately applied to them. The two men who give each other their sisters in marriage are each contracting an ordinary marriage according to the usual norms.

2) Sometimes the term "exchange" is applied to the practice of ikɛkelo, which is better explained through an example than by a long discussion. Suppose that Eale marries the woman Åmbɛ. Lokio, Eale's sister, [215] is married to Isia. Åmbɛ leaves her husband for one of Isia's relatives. At the first opportunity Eale detains his sister Lokio at his home, thus taking her from her husband, and since his wife Åmbɛ does not return to him, he hands his sister Lokio over to another man in marriage. Or suppose that Eale has married one of Isia's relatives, and Isia has married a relative of Eale. If one of the wives leaves her

575 /176 husband, he takes his own relative back and gives her away in marriage elsewhere, using his right of ikɛtɛlo. (1)

> 1. This noun is derived from the verb kɛtɛla, "to guarantee," meaning in this case "to guarantee possession of one's bride-price valuables, one's capital."

As these descriptions show, the custom involves an exchange which is forced rather than voluntary and spontaneous. Nevertheless, it is sometimes called an exchange because it does not involve a divorce strictly speaking; there is no restitution of bride price by either party.

The two situations above therefore correspond only very inaccurately to the idea of an exchange of women. In the first instance, one cannot even speak of an exchange of wives.

3) Among the Bombwanja there is a practice which comes closer to the idea. The following is a historical example: Ikɛtɛ loves Eanga, a widow of Ekofo's father. Ekofo in turn loves Ilonga, widow of Ikɛtɛ's father. They exchange these two women, who are their wives by right of inheritance. It may even happen that Ikɛtɛ, who is very fond of Eanga, gives Ekofo a woman from his own harem who loves this man. These exchanges are made without the payment of a bride price, but through the agency of the ndonga who previously participated at the first nkumbɔ.

This is a real exchange of women. As we have seen, it may be made in two ways -- an exchange of widows or the exchange of a widow for a real wife. From the standpoint of law and justice the two situations are identical; the women exchanged belong to the men exchanging them, who are legally [216] their husbands. But only in the second instance is there an exchange of a woman who is a wife not only legally but actually, with all the rights and duties of a wife. But such a wife is given only by one of the parties. This is still not the exchange of wife for wife strictly and properly speaking.

The distinction we have made between a wife by law and a wife by fact is of some importance. Actual conjugal life introduces

585x 184 a new element from the legal standpoint. This is clearly apparent in the repugnance with which these same Bombwanja who practice the form of exchange just described regard an exchange pure and simple, which will be described below.

The exchange of widows is also practiced by the Elíngɛ. Like the Bombwanja, they also have the two forms of quasi-exchange described at the beginning of this article.

4) On the other hand, a true exchange of wives exists among the riverain peoples known as the Bodyɛ and the Longa (1): in their dialect it is called *iengyɛ*. Two men exchange wives. If the bride price of one is greater than that of the other, the difference is refunded. Such an exchange is carried out with the consent of the women involved.

583x 194 152 [837] Let us see how such an exchange usually comes about. Imagine two men, Bokulɔ and Mpolɛ, with their respective wives, Mbindo and Bafaɛ. Suppose that Bokulɔ falls in love with Bafaɛ, the wife of Mpolɛ, and the pair become involved in an adulterous relationship. There is a cooling of Bafaɛ's love for her husband Mpolɛ; she performs fewer and fewer services for him, etc. The same thing happens to Bokulɔ's relationship with his wife Mbindo. The latter is jealous; her patience is soon at an end. She discusses the matter with Mpolɛ, her rival's husband. "See how your wife deceives you; she no longer loves you. My husband is forsaking me [217] for her; he no longer loves me. This is a challenge to you as well as to me. If you are a man (1), pick up the challenge."

1. They live near the mouth of the Salonga (in the villages of Bonsela, Pompatɔ, Nkɔɔe, Bombomba, Isakɛ, etc.)

1. "Man" in the sense of *vir* (*jwende*): the meaning is: "If you have any courage, show that you are not a coward."

583x According to the native view, a man must take this woman
●164 home for the sake of his honor. If he did not do so, he would be-
152 come the butt of malicious comments and scorn on the part of all, both men and women. He would be considered a coward, just as in European "cultured" society a man is considered a coward if he does not pick up the glove thrown down by his adversary.

The rejected woman's hatred for her husband is transformed into a love for the man who has been similarly hurt by her rival. The joint misfortune of the pair creates a mutual feeling of affection. The woman is accepted as wife and is thus saved from dishonor. The man, on his part, feels affection for the woman who offers him her heart and preserves his good name. Harmony is at last established among all four of them, the two men arrange the matter of bride price in the way we have described, and then they live in peace without any enmity toward one another.

589x This way of handling the situation is very strange to us, be-
581 cause it is indefensible from the point of view of a sound philosophy
184 and of Catholic morality. But it seems normal to the natives. The pagan conscience has no trouble coming to terms with it, since no pagan law explicitly prohibits such behavior. Everyone comes to an agreement in the end, and that is all their conscience requires. Everything considered, there is no infraction of the rights of any individual, and since the native mentality is not concerned with morality as we conceive of it, this solution seems altogether natural to them.

Nevertheless, the ethnic groups who do not practice this true exchange in no way approve of it. Not that they fail to understand the psychology underlying this practice; on the contrary, if the situation arises they accept it. But they condemn [218] the legal procedure. They require that the two marriages be broken in the regular fashion and that two new marriages be contracted. That is, they demand the restitution and payment of the bride prices through the _ndonga_ and through the respective parents of the women. For them therefore an exchange is not a true marriage, but a sort of sale and purchase. Also, from their point of view, the women who have been exchanged are slaves and not wives, because they live with their

583x men although their first marriage has not been broken and no new
581 marriage agreement has been concluded.

●184 [114] The data given above provides no confirmation in the Nkundó tribes under study of the statement made by Engels "Les Wangata [The Wangata]," Revue congolaise, 1910, p. 35) that among the Wangata "her husband can exchange her . . . she can make no protest." (1)

1. The Ekonda apply the term lienjá only to an exchange of daughters or sisters. They have a specific term: mpéngó. Note, by the way, that certain Mbólé tribes who practice a true wife exchange designate it by the same name: impéngó.

Article VII. Purchase

432
562 The purchase of women is not practiced by the Nkundó tribes under discussion here nor even by the Bombwanja. The practice is to
588 be found only among the Elingá. What is involved is not a marriage by means of a bride price but a real purchase; that is, a man buys a woman from her husband for a certain sum. He does not go through the woman's parents, as in an ordinary marriage by bride-price payment, but addresses himself directly to the husband.

[121] In general it is the woman who makes the proposal that a man buy her in this manner. Sometimes a man wants to take a woman and first comes to an agreement with her. Before the Europeans arrived such a situation generally led to a war between clans or villages. After an armistice the palaver was settled, and the [219] purchaser paid the husband. [177] Nowadays, since the Nkundó no longer dare to fight because of the legal sanctions that inevitably follow, when a woman abandons her husband for another man who wants to buy her, the parties involved bring the palaver before the judges. As the woman wants only her new husband, and as, on the other hand, war and the punishment of women have been abolished, the first husband has no

432 583x carried out by the ordinary means of the payment and restitution of a bride price.

At the present time cases of purchase are becoming increasingly
432 rare. This change is probably due to a wider distribution of wealth
589x which has produced a second change, namely that the man makes the
626 initial proposal rather than the woman, who did so according to the ancient custom.

The woman's invitation is public. The man must reply for the sake of his honor. As in the case of an exchange among the Boóyá, he can only escape mockery by following through. If he did not, he would be considered a coward. He would be treated as a pariah; his wife (wives) would leave him, and he would no longer be included in the company of his fellows or at their meals.

Although strictly speaking the matter is outside the limits of this study, it seems to me that it is not irrelevant to mention, for the sake of comparison, that wife purchase is also practiced among the Ntómbá (Waňgatá, Ikengo) and the Boléngé (or Bofíji) between the Congo and the Boloko. They call it by the same name -- isómba, "purchase," and the man who buys in bosómbi, "purchaser." The woman always invites the man by sending him a piece of the ribs of a banana leaf, called a bonengé. She does this publicly; she hands the bonengé to a relative or friend and says to him out loud and in front of everyone, "Take this bonengé to so-and-so for me, so that he will come and buy me."

The same custom still exists in certain Ekonda settlements
● [184] under the jurisdiction of the Bikoro station, such as the Lonyanyanga, Bosango, Balíngo, Babonja, etc., but not in the others, which are within the territory of the Kiri (Buli) station. It is called ehómbaka or esómbaka (the root and [222] the meaning are the same as those of lisómbí and isómba). Since these peoples are neighbors of the above-mentioned Ntómbá and of other Ntómbá living near the lake which bears their name (in a distorted form) and since, on the other hand, the rest of the Ekonda do not know this custom, we may assume that it was introduced to them by their neighbors to the north and to the west.

M 614 582 untangle all the threads. Thus it happens that young people form relationships with the intention of marrying without knowing that they are related; they are warned only by the opposition and ensuing explanations of the elders.

We may conclude that marriage among descendants of a common ancestor is generally prohibited if they live in the same village. It is frequently permitted on the other hand, if they belong to different villages, provided that they are not, at the same time, related to one of the ancestresses.

M 582 835 Clearly, it is difficult to say what precise degree of kinship formed the basis for the prohibition of or permission for a marriage between descendants of a common ancestor, or what are the boundaries of an exogamous grouping.

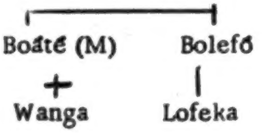
It is also apparent from the preceding observations -- as M [611] from the examination of affinity as an obstacle to marriage -- that the descent from a common mother is a more important factor than descent from the father. This does not give proof of a form of matriarchy, though it could be the remains or the beginning of one, or could provide a partial explanation for one. It stems quite simply M [842] from the Nkundó notions concerning procreation, in which they attribute the major role to the mother. There is also the fact that M [602] greater shame is attached to being united with a person descended from the same woman, and finally the fact that they feel a stronger M [593] affection for the mother than for the father (a sentiment [250] which is accentuated by polygamy). The three causes are closely related.

Finally, it should be noted that there is a group among the ● M 184 582 Nkundó we are discussing which is less strict than the others in this matter. The relatives among whom marriage is prohibited is definitely more limited; that is, their exogamous groupings are more limited. The people in question are the Bongale (see Introduction), and the same phenomenon may be observed among the Elíngá. (1)

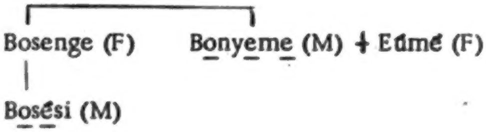
P [582]

1. The Batswá are still more liberal, and in this respect their practices differ very little from ancient European laws and customs.

582
604
Example 8 (continued)


or
Boáté (M)
Bolefó
Wanga
Lofeka

Example 9

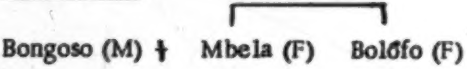

Bosenge (F)
Bonyeme (M)
Eúmé (F)
Bosési (M)

Bosési may marry Eúmé.

The same rules apply equally to great-uncles and great-aunts, and to cousins who are not equals (related as "father" and "son"; see the table of kinship relations and terminology in the appendix).

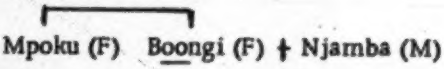
582
607
C. Equals in the collateral line: The degree of relationship is of no importance, for example, marriage with an older sister (or cousin) of the spouse is forbidden; marriage with a younger sister is permitted. The same rule applies to women, but after the husband's death an exception is sometimes made in the elder brother's favor in order to facilitate inheritance arrangements. Only the Boángé -- like ●[184] the Elángá of Losanganya -- make no distinction between elder and younger siblings and always permit the marriage. They are even beginning to be imitated by the Injóló.

Example 10


Bongoso (M)
Mbela (F)
Bolófo (F)

Bongoso may marry Bolófo.

Example 11


Mpoku (F)
Boongi (F)
Njamba (M)

Njamba may not marry Mpoku.

602 brings forth reprimands on the part of the husband and his parents
which obviously can easily degenerate into quarrels. If the omissions
are so frequent and of such a nature that they can no longer be explained as simply forgetting, a whim, or a fit of peevishness, but
[299] are taken to indicate spitefulness or vulgarity, the matter is
[627] brought before the ndonga (who is often assisted by the family tribunal)
or brought before the authority constituted by the woman's kin. If
in spite of everything the expected improvement does not take place,
the break-up is inevitable.

The husband's father and mother extend the same affection to
606 their son's wife as they feel toward him. They consider her their
own child, and it is not unusual to find that their love for the wife
equals their feeling for their own son. She is only a relative by marriage, but out of affection for her they call her their child. She, for
[601] her part, does not use toward them the term bakanga (or bakiló) but
out of filial respect calls them "father" and "mother." Exceptions
to this practice may be found, however.

606 If the father (and those who fall in the same category such as
224 uncles, elder brothers, etc.) kills a large game animal, he is expected to give his son's (or brother's, etc.) wife a piece of meat,
whose size depends on the number of daughters-in-law he has and
which consists of one or several chops (bokálako) (1) and the piece at
the nape of the neck (botómbyá).

606 Illicit relations between the husband's father and h[illegible] daughter-
835 in-law would be an unheard of crime. The same would be true with
respect to any of the "superior" relatives. (2) The laws regulating

---

1. Called lièto among the Bolengé and
the tribes of the Losanganya.

[178]
[184] 2. Only the Boangi -- like the Elángá
of the Losanganya - allow relations between a brother and the wife of his junior;
and they are already beginning to find
imitators among their neighbors to the
southeast, the Injóló.

604 An uncle (see D above) is not entirely free to cure his nephew's
837 (F) passion unless he is the nkólő of his sister (E), that is, unless the
578 mother (C) of his sister (E) is the nkita of his aunt (B), [307] who is the
579 sister of his father (A). Indeed in that case his sister may not complain, for she owes him respect and submission; her subordination to her brother and master is greater than the gratitude he owes her for any riches he may have obtained through her or on her account.

D. In the case of the relationship of a grandson (bonkána) to
603 his grandfather's wives, his freedom is, in practice, complete. Actu-
837 ally, among the Nkundó the affection of a grandfather (nkóko) for his own grandson often exceeds his love for his own son and completely degenerates into weakness. (1) The grandfather puts up with all his grandson's carryings-on, his whims, all his teasing, his insults, etc.

After illicit relations the grandson sometimes carries his insolence so far as to spontaneously send his grandfather a "mock" indemnity in the form of a basket filled with stones in the place of copper rings.

626 Although the grandfather treats his grandson with good humor,
603 public opinion does not favor the latter's conduct, though it is more
837 lenient than in the cases described above. The public reaction, as well as the sending of the "mock" fine, shows that in principle these relations are censurable and condemned. Because of present circum-
[178] stances, particularly marriage at an earlier age than in the past, the age difference between a grandson and his grandfather's wives has increased considerably in the constantly growing number of cases, and their relations have proportionately decreased. (2) [308]

---

1. As happens very often also in Europe.
See Chapter I, Part 1, Article I, 3.

[184] 2. We have seen above that other Nkundó tribes are even less strict in these matters. On the other hand, the Ekonda, a Nkundó group living on Lake Leopold II, have a

603 837 626 184

> higher morality -- in our terms. Among them the question of relations between a woman and her husband's son, younger brother, etc., does not even arise. Have they been influenced by some neighboring tribe? Or must we attribute the inferior morality of some of the tribes in this respect to decadence.

837 602 The following conclusions emerge from this long description:

1) Relations between a man and the wife of his son, younger brother, etc., in short of anyone inferior to him in the family hierarchy, are always strictly prohibited and never occur.

2) They do occur on the other hand between an inferior and the wife of his senior and superior. The degree of kinship between the husband and the culprit plays a considerable role in determining the seriousness or triviality of an infraction, the sanctions applied, and the various consequences. Some relations are accepted, others are censured with varying degrees of leniency, still others are pitilessly criticized.

3) In these matters a distinction may be made between two aspects:

a) the husband's reaction and the repression of the illicit relations;

b) the judgment of public opinion;

or:

a) the financial aspect;

b) the moral aspect -- to use that term for want of a better one.

Sometimes a third element comes into play, namely the intervention of the family on the side of the culprit against the injured husband who, for one reason or another, is in the wrong himself.

602 837 684 a) The usual sanction for adultery is, for the man, an indemnity to pay. But such a payment cannot be made since no financial transaction -- strictly speaking at least -- may be made

684 movement and therefore serves as the Nkundó prison. But in addition, if it is applied for a long time, it becomes a real torture; the skin becomes painful and comes off, inflammations readily appear, and bugs sometimes lodge there.

As soon as the woman's family hears (through the *ndonga*) that she is being so tortured, they often come and beg her husband to [516] free her. To pacify and propitiate him, they offer him an *ad hoc* payment, that is, a *bóndo* of a few copper rings. Generally, he yields to their entreaties. A good relationship and his respect toward them require that he not remain indifferent to their supplications, especially as he needs them for the stability of the marriage and the good functioning of the household.

2) *Byéngetanyi*, or handcuffs, which consist of sticks attached either to the wrists or to the ankles (to prevent walking), or to both arms and feet. Two sticks were used, one above and one below, with the limb placed in between, and they were tied with ropes that were attached and fastened in notches made at [317] each end of the sticks. In rare instances the wrists were bound. To increase the pain and immobility, the ropes were shrunk and hardened by pouring water on them. These handcuffs were generally added to the *etóka* and were never applied alone.

3) *Exposure to the bites of nkongótó ants*. In the region under [194] discussion, I have never heard the people speak of exposure to *bafumba* (*Dorylus*), or even to the venomous *benkónkóme*. This fact contrasts with the practice of other Móngo tribes and with the content of certain legends (evolution?).

4) *The pouring of water containing pepper* into the vagina. Sometimes the genital organs were rubbed with crushed pepper.

5) *Exposure of the sex organs to fire*. A burning log was held near them.

The last two types of torture were the most dreadful.

We can add one last form of punishment which is derived from the same legal rules, although it is not a torture:

[634] 6) *Nudity*. The husband tears off the guilty woman's garments and thus exposes her to public shame. Even if she resorts to using leaves, no one mistakes the situation, and her shame is only partly reduced.

2: Hulstaert--331 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundo

595 554 The name *bolémbé* seems to come from the fact that for an instant during the installation ceremony the woman is naked. In fact in certain dialects the word means "nudity."

[591] Nowadays this name is common among Nkundó women (rarely men), but it does not indicate that they are *bolémbé*. The name is borne in memory of ancestresses or relatives who had that position and is transmitted in the family like any other name.

● [554] All the tribes under discussion here use the same term, *bolémbé*. The Bombomba alone say *bofié*. (2)

2. Elsewhere, as in the Losanganya region, among the Bosaka, etc., the *bolémbé* is called *ekila* (interdiction, taboo).

It is clear from everything that has been said that the *nkóndé* and the *bolémbé* have nothing in common with each other. [353] The two institutions are decidedly different. Nowadays they are beginning to be confused with each other, however. [171] For the installation of a *bolémbé* has become extremely rare, and in some regions it has already disappeared. The colonial government has established districts and appointed chiefs in charge of them. Very frequently, they are not those who in the purely indigenous order would have been the most influential men, the masters, those who would have the biggest say in their society, who would be said to have the *loko*, the first place.

As far as I have been able to observe, the other tribes on the equator also have the two types of wives with special positions, who bear names which vary with the dialects.

171 595 554 Do the Ntómbá and the Bolóngé between the Boloko and the Congo have only the *bolémbé*? That is the conclusion one draws from Engels' study of the Wangata (*Revue congolaise*, Vol. 2, no. 1, p. 33). If that were so, the frequent contacts with this people may have increased the confusion even more. Natives who are strangers to the Bolóngé tribe but who have lived many years among them as catechists, have maintained, however, that

595 [58] is the one who brings her to her husband and is, at the same time, ndonga for the payment of the bride price, which is made as for any woman. The expression is: X abúmela bakɛ́nɛ Y ebísa, "X repeats her sister Y ebísa."

In case of the elder's absence or upon her death, the ebísa replaces her or inherits all her rights in the household.

The elder relative cares a great deal about having her ebísa, because as a result she rises in her husband's estimation and she herself has an assistant in her work and a confidante in her troubles. The ebísa herself has the advantage of not being alone or abandoned at the beginning of her marriage, but of being able to count on a protector and guide, and if her elder occupies a privileged rank in the harem, she has the certainty of sharing her prerogatives and the likelihood of one day succeeding her. [358]

The term ebísa is used by the Nkundɔ between the Jwalɛ and the Boloko, and by the londa. The Bombwanja designate such a woman by the name loambwɛ or loambyɛ. The Bosíngɛ and the Injɔlɔ also call her loambyɛ. (1)

[illegible] 1. The Bonyanga say mbambwɛ or loambwɛ. Out of respect they sometimes call her bongíli and the woman who has brought her nyangongíli. (See also Chapter II, Article X, and Chapter VI, Article VI.) The Ekonda call her bombɛ́ha or bomɛ́ha (mbɛ́ha, "last").

[illegible] Ebísa may be related to the root bís, from which is derived the verb bísingana, "to be united." Loambwɛ or loambyɛ are derived from bamb, which means: 1) "to be united" and 2) "to follow" (in order, in rank).

These names indicate the nature of this marriage that does not arise from direct relations between husband and wife but is established through the medium of another,preceding marriage. Or to express the situation in Lonkundɔ: Ɛla lifála j'ɛ́ndɛ mɔ́ngɔ́, ɛ́tamana l'ɛdɔ mbambɔ́nɛ, "this is not a marriage which comes

842 855 152 differences can be found here, although they are less apparent to a European observer since we usually approach the natives as a group and our contact with them is often too impersonal.

2. Abortion

847 A great enemy of maternal love is the practice of abortion, which has always been known to the Nkundó. Here we cannot describe all the prescriptions used for that purpose; It will be sufficient to enumerate the reasons for which they have recourse to this practice. They are as follows:

1) A woman's lasciviousness; the procreation and subsequent care of a child to some extent prevent the indulging in carnal pleasures. Formerly this cause of abortion was nonexistent or very [178] rare. Needless to say, it has become more common, especially in the centers where it is constantly on the increase and where, in addition, occasional or regular "housekeepers" learn new means of sterilization and abortion.

2) A woman's antipathy or persistent anger toward her husband may encourage her to prevent conception or destroy its effect.

3) An excessive weakening of the mother's organism caused by a large number of conceptions and childbirths at too short intervals.

4) The encumberance and the difficulty of watching, carrying, and taking care of many small children -- bálota bokekesano [467] [535] wǎ bána ndátélá ndátélá. This reason is especially important for well-known dancers.

It goes without saying that several of these motives may be combined in the same person. For instance, I knew of a woman who aborted at the time of her eighth child. Her recurrent pregnancies, together with continuous work, had greatly reduced her strength. A palaver with her husband was the last straw; she decided to get rid of the fruit she carried in her body.

Outside of these exceptions the natives of this country ardently desire their own continuation through a large number of progeny. (1)

● [184]

1. The same is not true elsewhere. Examples to that effect are cited from regions that are

847
[84] already more "civilized," such as the neighborhood of Coquilhatville and the Losanganya region.

847
848 Attention should be drawn to the danger of an increase in abortions for a new reason, namely the shame of giving birth outside of wedlock. As we have seen in Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 3, premarital pregnancies have existed since time immemorial without resulting either in remorse or in palavers. Through the teaching of Christian morality, the feeling of shame must sooner or later be extended to this phenomenon. In explaining the evil of fornication, care should therefore be taken to insist on the fact that transgressing the Fifth Commandment by abortion is a far greater evil.

847
845 Voluntary abortion is not considered a moral error by the Nkundó. (2) In their eyes an imperfectly formed fetus, not viable,

2. An attitude which also exists in Europe at the present time, according to Haenecour in Kultuurleven, Vol. 6, no. 1, p. 21 (1935), and the brochure by Prof. D. Schockaert quoted there.

847
[764]
[776] is not yet a man. It is only a human being in the process of formation, in potentia. Hence the custom of burying the aborted child in the [468] hut or quite near it. Thus the spirit responsible for the pregnancy will see that it is respected and repeat its benevolent action. (1)

1. Others explain this custom by saying that the fetus already has a soul which remains near the tiny body and will take the first opportunity to re-enter the mother's body.

But if it is voluntary an abortion is always a wrong against family and society, for it deprives the family of a member on whom

851 birth of a child involves a few prohibitions which affect the whole village and apply to the Batswá as well as the Baotó. They do not affect inhabitants of a portion of the village which is separated by a swamp from the group where the happy event has occurred. Those bound by the prohibitions may no longer go to "work" -- that is, to work in the fields, fetch food or firewood, build a hunting enclosure or a fishing weir, or work at the building or repair of a house. An infraction of this rule would result in the destruction of the fruit of all their labor: the fields would no longer produce, and no beast or fish would be caught. This deadly influence would [494] extend to all crops, etc. no matter whom they belong to. Nevertheless, there is nothing wrong in fetching firewood from the forest, harvesting manioc from a ripe field, or cutting the fruit of the palm.

Strictly speaking, these prohibitions touch only persons who have seen the newborn child. But since no one fails to go and admire it, all are subject to them. The prohibitions remain in effect until the umbilical cord is detached. [844] Some tribes, however, have the more convenient custom of limiting its duration to the day of the child's birth.

2. The hygiene of mother and child

[844] The umbilical cord (lokóki) is cut near the middle. An incision is made near the infant's navel. 846 Each day a concoction of herbs is poured on the part of the cord that is still attached and white sand is put on it to make it dry more rapidly. When the end falls off, a powder made of scorched banana is applied to the wound.

In order to prevent the weakening of a woman's abdomen, it is bound with a belt made of bands of the dried bark of the banana tree (ekutá).

The assistants wash the mother and child. On the mother they place dried leaves or bark of the banana tree which have been carefully crumpled. They are put on like panties to catch the blood and are replaced by new ones whenever necessary. Nowadays pieces of cloth are often used; they are put on like a man's garment.

M 846 for and fed so that she may regain her strength rapidly. [486]

3. Seclusion

After childbirth the mother remains secluded (-ulama) in her hut for several weeks -- two, three, or more, depending on circumstances and especially on her husband's social position. Her seclusion is called julé. The hut bears the same name, or else it is called jànga, "palm leaf." Sometimes the term ekelé is also applied to it, denoting the period of seclusion with all the special regulations it involves. These are as follows:

M [846] 1) Meals. In some tribes the woman may already eat on the day of the delivery. But among others she is only permitted to drink. The reason for this fast is given in the form of a legend. One day P [186] long ago a Bɔtwa asked his master for a little manioc, but the master refused to give it to him. The master's wife had just given birth. Annoyed by the refusal, the Bɔtwa cursed his master, saying: "From now on your women will have to fast the day they give birth." (1) Another explanation is that at sometime in the past someone refused food to a slave who was about to be sacrificed at a feast of the lifting of mourning. Tribes and villages that do not give any reason of this sort permit a woman to eat in the evening, if the delivery takes place in the morning.

M [879] *A mother's first meal is prepared by a woman who has performed the carnal act the preceding night. She goes to draw water, and on her return she fastens or attaches over the door of the seclusion hut a piece of palm (jànga) or, among the Bombwanja, a piece of dried banana leaf; in this way she informs everyone that it is a house of ekelé.* M [264] Then she prepares the food, which consists of bananas with fish or a hen in palm-oil sauce. It is eaten by the mother and her husband as well as the cook. Their very young children may also delight in it, but [487] the older ones, approaching puberty, may not. The newborn child is given a tiny bit of the sauce to taste.

1. Batwa women never fast under such circumstances.

853 757 the sap, which she then mixes with water. The resulting liquid is oily and foams like soap. She places a few drops on a piece of banana leaf and makes a sachet of it. She holds this against the breast for a certain time until the boil, similar to a blood clot or a piece of liver, leaves the breast and enters the sachet. She then shows it to those present. From then on the mother can nurse her child without fear; her milk has become healthy and normal.

2) The mother's public confession must include the names
837 of all the men with whom she has had carnal relations since the
853 child's conception. Other groups, such as the Injôlô, extend this
684 obligation even to instances preceding that moment but which
783 have not been declared at a previous occasion. The confession is public. The masseuse related to the husband begins to crush the leaves to be used in rubbing the breast; as she moves the pestle and says to the mother, "Name a man." The mother replies by giving a name. The masseuse says nyongo, "indemnity." Then all those present say yengô, yengô, yengô, "absolved." Then it is the other masseuse's turn, and she interrogates the mother in the same way. The process continues till all the names have been cited. If [486] the mother cites the name of a man who is a close relative of her husband and who therefore does not need to pay an indemnity, the masseuse does not reply nyongo. Instead a member of the husband's clan makes the gesture signifying
[20] exemption: he holds the kernel of a palm nut (bolikô) in his left hand and throws it by means of a small board which he holds in his right. Among the Injôlô the man takes two kernels and strikes them against each other and then throws them away. Were the woman to suppress a name the child would die. If she has no admission to make, she replies, "No one besides my husband."

The indemnity that must be paid by those who are obligated to do so consists of a hen and a bunch of bananas (or their cash value) which are to be given to the masseuses, who will then divide them. Were the accused to refuse, the husband would demand a regular indemnity from him after the end of the seclusion.

The Bombwanja have this confession at the time of the
● [21] fattening of the fetus. A few old women married into the clan carry out the interrogation. The kernel of the fruit of the palm is thrown by means of a knife.

602 member is, as it were, identified with that member, so that, for in-
601 stance, all younger sisters and female cousins of one spouse become "wives" of all the younger brothers and male cousins of the other spouse. One must really have the legal sense and the patience and the capacity for palaver and unravelling of an old Nkundo to make sense out all of these relationships. They themselves compare them, in fact, with the inextricable clew of the intestines of a sort of dwarf crocodile: beanlo bya lokekele.

9. Exogamy

613
582 The term, "exogamic clan," often heard or encountered in writings, is also, at least in the Nkundo-Mongo society, very misleading. The group of persons with whom marriage is forbidden does not constitute any common entity; it differs from person to person. Two half brothers can have the same paternal clan but differ in maternal clan; they can have the same maternal clan and different paternal clans. Marriages are forbidden for older brothers and sisters that are permitted for the younger ones. The rules differ from one blood relation to another, from blood relation with relative-by-marriage to blood relation with relative-by-marriage, from relative-by-marriage with relative-by-marriage to relative-by-marriage with relative-by-marriage.

If one still wishes to put the law of exogamy into European terms, then one might say: 1) blood relationship forbids marriage insofar as the blood relationship is recognized. This recognition varies from clan group to clan group. Sometimes in the same legal but extended clan, an exception is made to this recognition; mostly, however, the different autonomous clans which descend from the same distant ancestor are still bound by the law of exogamy. Generally, groups which have the same father but a different mother /160/ separate most quickly. 2) Relationship (other than blood) forbids marriage—insofar as the relationship is recognized between the parents of spouses; it sometimes permits marriage between children of spouses.

613
582
114 Here it should be observed once again, however, that the customs differ from region to region as regards this recognition; that, for instance, the stepson in many regions may marry his stepmother in a regular marriage; and that the violations are less severely judged and punished in proportion to the degree to which the forbidden relationships diverge.

000 What is one to do if even in such cases it is taught, "One
must respect" the native customs?

587 The inheriting of wives existed everywhere; it was, in fact,
428 the only wealth left behind by the native. The details of the distribution
● [184] differed according to district or tribe. Thus, for instance,
in some districts it was the eldest son who alone inherited all of the
wives of his father. This was in order to preserve the rank and the
class of the family. Prestige and power actually depended only on
the number of wives that one possessed. In this case, however,
this eldest son had, in place of his father, to provide a wife for his
younger brothers and the sons of his sisters. As far as impediments
[582] to marriage were concerned, generally they strictly observed the
impediment of blood relationship; two blood relatives, even in a
distant degree, should never enter into marriage, [541] with the
exception of the irregularities mentioned above. As for relatives
by marriage, these do not exist for them in any degree. There is,
nevertheless, one case that somewhat resembles relationship by
marriage, namely, the Nkita might never be in the home of a man
together with the woman whose Nkita she was. Thus, the son-in-law
or the brother-in-law might never take the Nkita of his wife into
his home. If, however, the wife had left or died, there was no further
impediment.

587 When, like the inheritance above, the family had returned
428 the bride price and had then married the woman to another man, this
second husband also had to give a gift to the one who, according to
431 the law of inheritance, had the right to the wife. This gift was
called a bempanga.

587 If the wife who was freed by the family had children, only a
part of the bride price had to be returned. Sometimes the wife was
428 freed completely through her children. The children then remained
with the family of the deceased husband, and they then represented
the value of the bride price of their mother. If, however, such a
woman was married again by her family, they demanded a second
bride price for that.

587 Sometimes a single woman was the Nkita of several other
428 women. In the inheritance several people then had a right over
583 her, and everyone demanded his share. For instance, a young man

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

no compulsion. If one of the contracting parties fails to fulfil its pledges in this matter 224
of giving part of the kill, or in anything else, the aggrieved party may call the council 624
together. This consists not only of members of the [illegible] and [illegible], but of all 596
elders of the village or villages connected with this particular one. The party judged
in the wrong, whether [illegible] or [illegible], will be fined, the injured party receiving its 621
share, and both parties will be charged to live together harmoniously and observe their contracts.

The power of the *nkumu* was apparently limited, and did not supersede that of 624
the [illegible]. When trials came up, the aggrieved party might go either to the 695
[illegible] or to the *nkumu*. If it was necessary to call the village elders together about it, both these authorities were present at the hearing. First the young men of the group were allowed to give their verdict, then the old men, after that [illegible] (or the [illegible]), and finally the *nkumu* was given the privilege of the last word. He would comment on the opinions of each of the judges, criticizing one young man, commending another, and then giving his own verdict, at which the group would assent by saying, 'Even so, grandfather'. The whole group of judges would then fix the fines, a double portion of which went to the *nkumu*.

The actual manual labour which an *nkumu* may do excludes anything endangering 624
life or limb, or requiring agility and speed. He may clear the bush for his gardens: this is a man's work. He may take part in the building of his houses, but may do
no high work, and, among the inland groups, it is the work of the Batwa to put the [563]
roof on for him. The *nkumu* may also prepare pitfalls for catching game, but cannot engage in any other type of hunting or do any fishing. Digging a grave is prohibited, for, as we shall see, everything pertaining to death must be ignored by the *nkumu*.

Other rules affecting the daily life of the *nkumu* may be roughly divided into three: those affecting his person, those having to do with his food, and social regulations.

One of the great points of observance in the first class of regulations is the impor- 624
tance of the [illegible]. The *nkumu* must on no account be seen during daylight hours 292
with an uncovered head. If he wishes relief from the cumbersome [illegible] he may take it off in the darkness of his house and put on an ordinary hat made of skins, and when night falls he may walk where he will bareheaded if he so desires. The
skin hat, known as [illegible], may be made from two animals only, in the case of an [824]
nkumu, one being the [illegible], a species of antelope with light-coloured hair, and the other the [illegible], an animal resembling a beaver. The skin of the [illegible] may be used by anyone, but the [illegible] is reserved for the *nkumu* only with one exception. The skin
of the [illegible] may also be used for the carrying strap for infants known as [illegible], [959]
which is worn over one shoulder in bandolier fashion. For the *nkumu* the skin of the [illegible] is limited to the informal hat, [illegible], and for making into the [illegible], a pouch used for carrying small objects and worn like a sporran. As a corollary to the importance of the [illegible] may be noted the importance attached to the head of the *nkumu*, which must never be seen uncovered in daylight.

The Bonginda *nkumu* never wash in the daytime, but may wash at night with hot 624
water. The inland *nkumu* never wash. Even the Bonginda *nkumu* never wash their 515
hands, and no *nkumu* ever cuts his hair. If the *nkumu* becomes too greatly incum-
bered, one of his wives may delouse his head, but only within the privacy of the [191]
house, by the light that enters the rear opening.

grasping the knife with his left hand, with his free right hand he drains a gourd of palm wine to gain courage, hits the nearest victim on the head with the empty gourd, then transfers the knife to his right hand. He is now ready for his work which he proceeds to do methodically, sustained by the heady wine and the rhythm of the drum. When he had finished one of the lines, a pause would be made to bring out the body for burial. Just before this is done an armed band rushes down the path, returns, goes up in the other direction, then returns; this is said by some to ward off any spirits which might be about. The *nkumu* is now brought out by the Batwa slaves.[1] His grave, a circular hole with a crypt in one side of it, its entrance facing west, had been previously prepared. Few people in the Bongindo villages knew or had seen the actual burying place of an *nkumu*. While the corpse was carried to the grave followed by a crowd, the executioner finished his work. Those who stayed behind took the bodies of the decapitated men and women and divided them among all the participants of the funeral who would subsequently devour everything. 762 766 [266]

Accompanying the funeral procession to the grave were the *edil*, one or more men or women who were destined to accompany the *nkumu* to his grave and to the other world beyond. At the burial of an *nkumu* witnessed in 1930 at which the semblances of some of the old rites were carried out, a party of armed men contested the right of the procession to approach the grave, there was a mock battle for a few minutes between two bands of the funeral party, and then the procession gained right of way. At the grave-side the legs and sometimes the arms of one *edil* were broken by heavy clubs to prevent him from escaping. Then seated on the ground the body of the *nkumu* would be placed on the knees of this one, whose arms would be placed round the *nkumu* and securely fastened by driving a peg right through both wrists. Sometimes two *edil* were thus used. If the number of victims was sufficient, others would be buried alive too, being placed in the grave in the recumbent supine position, with the corpse on top of them, its weight being sufficient, with the earth filling in the grave, to prevent escape. [314] The *nkumu* was now ready for burial and was placed in the crypt, facing west.[2] The relatives of the *nkumu* approach, they pluck the leaves and stem of a juicy bush known as *ntolale* and chewing it, expectorate ceremonially on the body while they address it in language somewhat as follows: [829] 'You are going to leave us now, we are mourning, for you were a good and wise man, your discernment in matters of justice was without parallel, &c. . . . we wish that you may be happy where you go, have many wives, beget many children, lack not for meat. But don't take with you our power to beget children, leave us also some of this wisdom of yours, for what you were, we would be.' This prayer over, the *nsambi* would be slipped off the head of the corpse and replaced by the informal hat, all done so dexterously that the bare head was not seen. The entrance to the [164]

---

[1] The body was supposed to have remained in state for seven to nine days, but actually it was buried privately soon after death, a dummy being set up with the *nsambi* on its head, and the succeeding ceremonies being conducted with only the dummy in the place of the actual body. The inland villages however did allow the body to remain unburied for the long period, the wives being forced to keep watch in the same house. The Bongindo buried their *nkumu* generally in their houses or the spot where they had been accustomed to sit, burying the dummy at some other spot farther off.

[2] All burials have particular regard to this west position, those buried in the recumbent position having the feet to the west. The native explanation is that this allows the spirit of the departed to follow the path of the sinking sun. [773]

585 586 To say that it makes absolutely no difference to him might be too extreme a statement. But it is certainly not very important to him, since the primary purpose of his marriage is to obtain progeny and to follow his natural instinct in an honest fashion. This does not mean that he likes to marry a woman of loose morals; quite the contrary.

171 585 586 What is the linguistic data on the subject of virginity? In an interesting paper entitled "The Principles of Bantu Marriage" (Africa Vol. 2, No. 3 (1929), p. 256), E. Torday says, "Some of the most competent philologists assure us that in most Bantu languages there is no word for 'virgin'; .... The Wachagga, who may be an exception, use the word 'unimpaired,' and it is perhaps in the use of similar expressions, not exclusively applied to physical virginity, that we shall find the explanation of the absence of a specific term."

585 586 172 Thus the Lonkundɔ have a noun: ekɔtɛ. It is derived from the root kɔt (the verb is -kɔtama), which means "to be firmly attached, to be tenacious" (e.g., lokɔtɔ, "tenacity"). Ekɔtɛ designates something which is difficult to open, to separate, to break up, especially fruit with a tough, hard, thick rind. It is applied to the litófé, lisánjá, and the lingongo when it is impossible to break the shell which contains the edible portion even though the fruit is ripe. [79] This term is used in a figurative sense for a woman who resists seduction, who "does not allow herself to be opened." It is not at all specific and in no way the equivalent of our word "virginity," rather it seems to signify "chastity."

Other Nkundɔ tribes seem to have a specific word, bokotɔ. I learned this term from natives living between the Ikelemba and the Tshuapa, both east and west of the Juɔ, as well as from some Basɛkɛ Bongwalanga from the old Lulonga District. The missionaries of the Apostolic Prefecture of Basankusu use it in their publications to mean "virginity, virgin." I was not able to get an exact idea of its precise meaning, but as far as I was able to make out it is much closer to "virgin chastity" than ekɔtɛ. In any case it includes no reference to physical virginity. (1)

800

1. We should not be astonished that "primitive" tribes have no word in their language

584 power to settle disputes. They claim their share of the remuneration from the ndonga. According to the saying -- in archaic language -- botɛ wǎ ndonga nd'â dombɛ, "the power (literally, "the medicine") of the ndonga resides in the judges." Not that the judges themselves have the right or the power to intervene in matrimonial palavers. But they are that many additional witnesses. If the day comes when there is a dispute on the subject of the bride price, especially at the time of a divorce, the ndonga can call on them to help him refresh his memory and thus avoid difficulties. For it can easily happen that after several years the official witness has only a vague and approximate recollection of what was paid. If the judges do not receive anything at the time of payment, they will refuse to give their assistance at the critical moment. It is therefore an intelligent policy to acquiesce to their desires even though strictly speaking they can invoke no real prerogatives.

At the present time the colonial government, having estab-
178 lished districts and named chiefs, the latter have had attributed to
584 them the right to officially act as ndonga in matrimonial matters,
622 or at least they have taken advantage of the powers given them and done so. In general [111] they summon the judges of the district at the same time, and the matter is entered after a fashion in the register of settlements. The chief's presence as a witness may have some value, since he can provide additional testimony and writes down the amount of the bride price. But his presence, on the other hand, has the disadvantage of involving him in matters which all in all are none of his business. We are not speaking here of cases in which he or some relatives of his are interested parties in the palaver. If he would be content to be a passive witness and enter the transactions that take place, the situation would be perfect.

It is probable that etymologically the word ndonga is derived
192 from the verb root long, intransitive longam, "to be in order, arranged,"
184 transitive longy, "to arrange, make as it should be." In addition to the word ndonga, which is used west of the Luilaka, we find the word bokɔ́lo used among the Boɔ́ngɛ and the Boɔ́yɛ (as well as the Elɔ́ngɔ), and ntɔmbi among the Injɔ́lɔ́. The latter term could be the same word as its homonym which means "spy" and is derived from the verb

192 tomba, "to spy"; the former may be an extension of the meaning of
184 the word bokɔlo, "promise." (1)

[572] 1. Note in passing that a ndonga is also necessary for the boseka, or contract of friendship and mutual assistance. (See Chapter I, Part 1, Article III.).

Article III. The Engagement

584 589 1. The payment of the ikulɛ

The engagement begins with the first bride-price payment, which in former times was an arrow and for that reason is called likulɛ or ilulɛ. [556] If the suitor was very rich, he sometimes gave an ingɔndɛ knife or even an empɔte. A poorer one would merely give the shaft of an arrow. Nowadays 1 or 2 copper rings are given. But the original name of this payment has been retained.

Arriving at the home of the father of his intended, [112] the suitor, his father (or a substitute for him), the ndonga(s) and often other relatives as well, sit down on one side of the loɛnjɛ (the court in front of a dwelling), after an exchange of the usual courtesies. The girl and the representatives of her family sit down on the opposite side. As in all matters that a Nkundɔ has to settle, the host begins by inquiring into the reason for the visit. The young man's father answers: "We have come to ask for your daughter for our son." "How do you ask for her?" "We ask for her in marriage." These preliminary negotiations are called simply ɛwana nsango, "to ask each other for news."

Then the girl's father asks: "Who will bring the linko (banana) or the bonyɛku (partially ripe banana), that is, the gifts?" Through this figurative expression he asks who has been proposed as ndonga. The young man's father replies: so-and-so, and so-and-so. When they have been accepted, the fiancée's father has bananas, smoked fish, and sometimes hens brought in, and the witness passes them over to the future husband's group.

583x months, even years, may elapse. In the past there was no hurry at all. Only if the father of the woman needed the bride price to obtain a wife for himself, for a son, or a cousin, etc., was the period [178] shortened. Nowadays, however, those who are entitled to the bride price urge the shortening of the interval before the walo payment because of the overexcitation of their desire for riches, on the one hand, and also because it gives the young people a possibility of leaving their tribes and regions and going into the centers to find the means of earning more money, dressing more luxuriously, satisfying their vanity and their desire for freedom, not to mention libertinism or even worse. Nor has the one reason present in the past disappeared -- on the contrary. And as a result of all that, as soon as the interval becomes a little long to the girl's father's taste, he readily brings the situation to the attention of the chiefs established by the administration, who are always ready to deal with matrimonial cases as much for the financial gain involved as for the increase in their prestige resulting from their involvement in this most important realm, in which according to ancestral law they have no right whatsoever to intervene, for the simple reason that this law knows no chiefs or headmen in the European sense.

1. Terminology

589x The term walo is used by the Bonkoso, the Bongñi, the Bombwanja,
● 192 and the Ionda; bombuluku, on the other hand, is used by the Wǎngatá, the Bakáala, the Lifumba, the Injóló, and the Boángi (as well as the Elángá and the Losanganya). The Bombomba use the term elámbela in imitation of their neighbors, the Ekonda.

This last term may be related to -lámba, [130] "to prepare food." This derivation should be compared with what we have said in Article II about the remuneration of the ndonga. I have been unable to discover the etymology of bombuluku. Let us try our luck with walo.

In accordance with the rules of Nkundó etymology, this word could be related to the root -al, or to -alol, which is an intensifier derived from the former. No example of the simple root exists at present, as far as I know. But there are derivative forms: alej and alol, or -aol which results from the elimination of the first "l."

583x
● 192 -Alej means "to place in layers," as for example one would place eggs in a basket, bricks in an oven. The noun derived from this word is jwalo, "layer" and, by analogy, "shelf." By extension it is used to signify whatever is placed between layers to protect them, and also the lining of a garment. It is difficult to find a relationship with the word walo here.

-Aol may be used as an intensifier and also to reverse the meaning or a word. The latter use results in a noun ending in a final "o" as in jwaló of aola bangánju, "to pour out the vegetables." Thus it must be excluded.

In its other meanings this verb occurs in combination with several nouns. It occurs first of all with walo when this word is used to signify the beating for small game. (1) In addition it is used to mean "to collect and gather weeds, chaff, sweepings, ashes." The action is called jwalo.

The most natural conclusion is certainly that the noun under discussion should be placed together with -aol in the meaning given last. The word would then refer to the relatively large amount of valuables deposited. As a matter of fact, the act of gathering chaff, etc., is practically and physically identical with the act of picking *up rings, etc. A difficulty stands in the way of this explanation,* however; [131] the expression is not -aola walo, but eola walo, or eola baǔmbɛ not only for this particular payment but also, mutatis mutandis, for the various payments and presents connected with marriage, such as funeral payments and gifts given at the time of death. (1)

In any case the term walo has not the slightest etymological connection with the word walí, "spouse," nor with the root -bal, "to marry."

1. The expression tumba walo is also used.

1. The verb -eola indicates rather the quantity of objects picked up and is used in many other combinations. A noun njeló means "a large number of objects" (especially fish).

583x a palaver concerning the bride price without giving at least this
431 pledge. He will then fulfill this obligation as quickly as possible, because most mothers-in-law are so eager for this payment that if the son-in-law is too slow in giving them satisfaction, they do everything to break up the marriage. And often they succeed. They will win their case before the tribunal, unless they have been too short of patience.

Article VI. Presents, or Beɛ́ngo

After the bulk of the bride price has been paid to the wife's mother and father, her parents as well as various other members of the family demand various small payments and presents called beɛ́ngo (sing. boɛ́ngo) from the husband. The noun is derived from the verb -bɛ́nga which is only used with it. An analogous reciprocal form,
●[192] -bɛ́ngana means "to touch one another, to collide." Was the original meaning of -bɛ́nga "to attract to oneself?" Or are the two verbs totally unconnected etymologically? Whatever the case, these terms are also used to denote the remuneration received by judges for settling a dispute. [145]

There are many varieties of beɛ́ngo; some are used by particular groups and unknown elsewhere. The various relatives claim them without following any predetermined order. But in any case it is necessary to go through the ndonga. Each relative therefore tells him what he wishes in a voice loud enough for everyone present to hear; and it is the ndonga who passes the request on to the husband. "Give this or that boɛ́ngo to so-and-so," he will say. Note also that the payment of these beɛ́ngo is not absolutely essential. Often requests are only partially fulfilled; others may be refused with some excuse, "In-law, I cannot satisfy you; I do not possess such an object." Thus the marriage arrangement is neither hindered nor delayed because everybody cannot be satisfied. The principal boɛ́ngo for the father (1) and sometimes that of the mother (2) are exceptions.

Let us go into some of the particulars concerning the various beɛ́ngo thus requested:

1) Ifakɛ́ l'akongɛ́ b'is'eyɔ́na, "knife and spears for the girl's father." This consists of a knife and five spears (or more, depending

583* For an aunt, a basin, because she had washed the child.

431 For a brother, a pair of shoes or slippers, because the girl had worn his shoes during the courtship, etc., etc. [150]

All these beɛ́ngo are included in the sum total of the bride price. Should the occasion arise, they must be returned with the rest.

In addition to the beɛ́ngo asked for and received by the woman's relatives, others are demanded by members of the husband's family. As in the case of the former each person voices his claims according to his desires and without any predetermined order but must always do so through the ndonga. The gifts chiefly consist of furs of the [281] esɔ́fe otter, the liɔ́ka monkey, bonkɔ́ngo and yenvi felines; a joint of game (money, antelope, etc.), a mat, a pot, a hunting net, a carrying bag (bokúmbɛ́), a bead necklace, etc. Nowadays there may [117] also be various items introduced by the Europeans: items of clothing, fabrics, saucepans, dishes, etc. This category of beɛ́ngo is included in the sum total of the nkomɛ (see the following article). If the nkomɛ is given immediately, the parties proceed with this payment. Then the ndonga(s) are remunerated as stated above: each party gives him at least 2 rings.

Finally, the woman's father says to the husband: "In any case, be on your way; we will collect the nkomɛ and bring it to you." Whereupon the husband leaves; if he prefers to wait for his wife he remains, and returns home when the items of the nkomɛ have been collected.

Article VII. Nkomi

Nkomɛ is the name for the objects which the wife's family gives to the husband. The term likomo is also sometimes used. The [192] Injɔ́lɔ́ say likoma, the Wángatɛ, Bakɛ́ala, Ioanda, and Boɛ́ngɛ say likomi. All these words are derived from the same verb -koma, "to wrap up, to make a package," (1) for the nkomɛ valuables are

1. The Bɔ́ɔ́vɛ say lilonga from the verb -longa, which has the same meaning as -koma.

583x female relative thanks to whom he was able to obtain this wife (see
431 below, Article X). He keeps a small part for himself and, in agree-
425 ment with his wife, uses it according to his needs. When husband and wife are on good terms, he consults her before giving away or selling any of it. And if she wishes to dispose of any of it, she asks his permission. Thus they work the matter out aimiably. But legally it all belongs to the husband. Should he want to use it for gifts or for any payment of his own, his wife can make no claim; she will not win her case before the law. But from a practical point of view, it is much wiser to come to an agreement in advance and thus avoid any annoyance
583x or quarrel.

431 The size of the nkɔmɛ depends on the wealth of the woman's
[596] parents. Not only is a large one a point [152] of honor and esteem;
[595] it is also a means of increasing the stability of the marriage and securing harmony. The bigger the nkɔmɛ the more obliged the husband is to treat his wife well and see that she is content with him, out of fear of having to return the entire fortune if the marriage should ever be broken.

The nkɔmɛ may be very large, even as great or greater than the bride price; in these extreme cases the girl is spoken of as
● [192] lifaya-njoku, for like an elephant (njoku) she goes to live elsewhere (lifaya) because of all the riches she carries with her. The term njokwobwo is also used; literally, it refers to a kind of mushroom which grows in abundance all over the bondɛlɛ tree. (1)

---

1. The use of these terms is not specifically confined to the situation described above. They are also applied to any stranger who settles in, or simply passes through, the village, bringing many riches -- to the white men, for example.

596 With reference to this subject an old custom should be men-
583x tioned. Because of his love for his daughter and a desire for renown,
431 a father might give his son-in-law a quantity of bakonga, in varying amounts but enough to pay for the acquisition of a wife, hence bride-price valuables, so to speak.

583x The expression for being the object of a bride-price payment is kwɛ bafɛmbɛ, literally, "to make valuables fall." Hence the name Ókwáfɛmbɛ, "one who is the object of a payment of valuables."

As we have said, it is possible to make all the payments described at the same time. This is done only in the case of remarriage. All the valuables are handed over at the same time, and there is no longer any distinction between the three payments.

Article IX. The Bosongo

1. The nature of the bosongo and the relevant terminology

The bosongo is the last portion of the bride price. It consists of the payment of a slave or the equivalent value in currency. Hence the very common term bonto, which strictly speaking means "man" but is used to mean "slave" ("He is only a man," they say; that is to say, a slave; nɔ́ɔ́ta la bonto, la limo, "I possess him as a slave"). The word which actually means "slave," bokwɛla, or bontambe among the Elingɛ and the Bodyɛ, (1) is never used in relation to the bride price.

1. Elsewhere the terms bofombo or bɔ́mbo are also used.

The Ekonda, however, do use the term ilongɛ, which is a synonym of bokwɛla and means "slave" in the strict sense of the word. The neighboring Nkundó tribes also use it, probably as a result of their influence. The Bombwanja, the Bongili, the Bokuno, and the Bombomba likewise do so. (2)

[564]

2. The Batswɛ never make this payment.

[153] The noun bosongo (ilongɛ among the various Elingɛ groups) is derived from sóng, "to pay this part of the bride price." Thus a man will say to his son-in-law, ośɔ́ lóngaa bɔ́ɔ' ɛ̂nánɛ, yɛ́kánɛ yósongɛ, "You have already paid the jéngi for my daughter; now come [154] and pay the bosongo." The definition given by Ruskin (Dictionary of the Lomongo Language, p. 67: "bosongo: the passing over of a

589* daughter or ward in marriage without reference to her wishes, money paid for a slave wife," and p. 314, [illegible]: the same) therefore does not correspond to the sense in which these terms are used by the Nkundó tribes under discussion.

Another term for this payment is tsinola bonto ([illegible]). I know of no other use of the verb tsinola.

An expression which brings out the idea of its being a last payment is kumbola bonto ([illegible]). The verb kumbola means to strike the last blow in felling a tree. (1) [172]

1. Note that kumbola also means "to take in marriage."

[567] [435] Formerly, the payment of a real slave, that is, of a human being, was absolutely obligatory. Nowadays, since slavery has been abolished, the worth of a slave in bokonga has been substituted; it consists of 25 rings, or of 15 to 20 if they are especially beautiful. (2)

2. In the past, the price of a slave was from 10 to 15 rings.

To distinguish between these forms of the [illegible], the Nkundó say [illegible] ([illegible]), "a slave with hair," therefore a human being, or [illegible] ([illegible]), "slave in copper rings."

587* 565 Batswá, instead of slaves, could be given as [illegible]. They were not reduced to slavery, however, but remained in the same position as before, except that they changed masters.

Sometimes a master who wanted to be rid of an incorrigible Batswá gave him away as a real slave in a [illegible]. In that case it was as if a slave in the strict sense of the word had been given.

In other instances the master acted with the more or less explicit consent of the Batswá. Those who were thus handed over as a bride-price payment were usually women. [158] Since in matrimonial matters of the Batswá, the Baotó master fulfills the role of "Father," he is entitled to the girls' bride price and has the duty of

837 discussed in the next article). The Bombwanja, the Ionda, and the Injɔlɔ call it lóngɔla, "(any) act performed in hiding" (from the verb ŋgola). The Ionda also use [311] the term ekundé (from the verb kunda, "to bury), which refers to "something that is buried or hidden under a heap."

Nowadays there is a tendency to apply the term lisɛ́mbɔ́, without any qualification, to adultery of this sort, at least if it is not limited to a single act. The woman and her lover are both called bosɛ́mbɔ́ (pl. basɛ́mbɔ́).

2) If only an isolated act takes place, it is called yɛ́tsí (from the verb ɛ́ta, "to call"). But this term may also be applied to unmarried persons. Strictly speaking, it denotes a single union and not continuous relations. Certain tribes (the Injɔlɔ, the Elíngá) also have the word efongo (for instance in the expression nyong'ɛ́'efongo, "indemnity for a single instance").

3) The term lonkɛ̂na (bonkaká among the Bombwanja) designates adultery between persons belonging to a single exogamous entity and, by extension, between persons belonging to different families but comprising a single settlement.

As the word itself indicates, the relations involved take place between "cousins" in the broadest sense of the term.

837
192 The natives gave me an account of the etymology of the terms bongomba and lonkɛ̂na, which it may be useful to repeat here. They are believed to have been invented by fickle wives and their lovers in order to hide their illicit love affairs. Even of old there were relations between the Nkundó and the Ngombe. A Ngombe who appeared in a Nkundó village was the object of the curiosity of all the young people. A man going to his paramour (or vice versa) or coming back at a very late hour could reply, if suspicions were aroused, that he had been to see the Ngombe. The same trick could be used in a case of lonkɛ̂na. I am passing on this explanation for whatever it's worth -- (for lonkɛ̂na, for instance, the etymology I cited at the beginning seems a good deal more natural). [312] it may be of interest at some time to have it noted and preserved in writing.

684 certainly happen that a husband who was too jealous or impetuous
585 would wound, kill, or sell his rival. But this was an exception and was always condemned since it was absolutely lacking in chivalry. In any case there can never be any question of demanding an indemnity; such an act would be absolutely shameful.

The culprit is notified of the demand for an indemnity by
684 the ndonga, who in difficult cases is accompanied by various
584 notables. If the husband foresees strong opposition on the debtor's part, he gives the ndonga a special present of a bunch of bananas and two fish (or a hen) "so that he would not be forced to eat the rival's food."

A persistent and categorical refusal to pay the indemnity is
684 unusual. For it can have serious consequences: the taking in custody followed by enslavement because of debts, or [the taking of] compensation in the person of his wife or of a relative, or the retention [by her relatives] of a relative of the creditor who is married into the debtor's clan (ikɛkelo). Since these practices of taking hostages and of bodily constraint have been abolished, there remains the intervention of the courts, seconded by the police.

What is the Nkundɔ idea of this payment which we have called an indemnity in order to facilitate its description? The question is difficult to answer. Here are the linguistic facts which may provide elements of the solution:

The payment for adultery is called nyongo, and the word is
684 used together with the verb ka, "to give." The expression is equiva-
172 lent to the verb lingala fɔta (from which the noun bofɔto is derived). It signifies "payment" in the broadest sense and thus also covers our words "pay," "salary," "remuneration." In addition to its application in the case of adultery, it is also used in many other situations, such as remuneration for work, payment for a service, etc. Nyongo does not mean "compensation," which is called lowɛɛla, nor "a payment making amends [322] and apologizing for an offense," which is bosodo, nor "indemnification" (mbɛlaka). What the expression has in common with the last term is the concept of a

684 [682] a payment rightly owed, and in the absence of an adequate translation, "indemnity" is still the least inaccurate. (1)

[525] 1. The words used for "reward" are bolúndo, which is a reward for an unusual service, like the capture of a leopard or another "royal" animal (nyam'ĕ'ekulo, such as a python, an eagle, etc.) or a beautiful dance, and mbutaji, which is a reward for small services.

One point remains to be noted. The two forms of punishment, violence and indemnity, may not be combined, and this principle is applied in all situations (2). Should this prohibition be

2. For example, see also Chapter VIII, Article III, 1.

construed as an implicit condemnation of violent measures? Or have we here the use of a system of settlement? It is difficult to settle this question, and actually the two explanations overlap at least in part.

684 582 It is not without interest to note that, in order to justify sanctions against the accomplice, the Nkundó invoke his frequently dominant role in adultery. Actually they reason that a woman is weak by nature; her emotions predominate, she is easily led and resists enticement only with difficulty. A man on the other hand is more reasonable, better able to control himself. Sanctions enacted and applied against the wife alone would not only leave out the punishment of one of the two culprits,but they would also be inadequate for the preservation of social order, since the woman remains exposed to succumbing out of weakness in spite of the penalties. The severity of Nkundó law with regard to the corporal punishment of the wife, which exists in spite of these considerations, are explained in terms of the woman's sensitive nature and of the power her husband has over her which he lacks in relation to her accomplice.

684 591 562 that she becomes accustomed to her husband's relations with various other women. Consequently, the reaction of the women in general [323] against adultery is much weaker than that of the men. Moreover, because of this same system, a woman is much more exposed to weakness, and stronger sanctions are therefore necessary to insure her fidelity.

Finally, there is one last reason for considering a woman's misconduct as more serious. It is the danger of conception through adultery, with all the attendant consequences: risks for the pregnant woman, forced continence for the husband, etc. (1)

1. See no. 6 below as well as Chapter I, Part 2, Article IV, 3, and Chapter X, Article II, 3.

From the description of sanctions it is apparent that in spite 562 684 of the woman's inferior position, Nkundó law does not leave husbands the full and complete freedom which, according to certain writers, they are accorded among other peoples. Even if the means of repression available to the wife do not incontestably prove that the husband has an obligation of conjugal fidelity -- and the wife's legal status explains a great deal -- the fact remains that the nkonga as well as public opinion approve of even her violent reaction, proving that she is right and the husband wrong.

5. Public opinion

626 627 Public opinion is fairly lenient in relation to isolated instances (yěsi, elonga). It clearly recognizes the error involved in infringing on the conjugal rights of another, but the error is attributed to human weakness. In the case of habit the situation is different; it is criticized frequently and severely. Habitual sinners [592] are called efêfêlê (from the verb felaka, literally "to flutter" and figuratively "to flirt"), ehêngê or ehêhêngê (from the verb hêngo) or ehêhêlê (from hêlea) "to flutter, to be flighty and fickle." These epithets are applied primarily to women, who are more subject to this failing than men.

575A Thus a favorite is in every way the object of her husband's preference. He divides with her all presents he receives, while the other wives are not included in this expression of generosity. But in the matter of sexual relations, apart from his trips, he has obligations to all of them. The most he can do is to add one night to the usual number (see below).

The co-wives adapt fairly well to this preferential system. Nevertheless, there is a good deal of backbiting on account of it. It may also happen that one or another of the wives is jealous to the point of being unable to bear it. [347] The signs of her rancor multiply, and a divorce results in the end.

The nkɛ́ndɛ́ does not have to go into mourning for anyone other than her husband. Even then she does not remove her clothing. But she does not have to abide by mourning regulations either for her parents or her own children.

Like the other wives, the favorite is passed on through inheritance. But she cannot be taken as a bosílá by anyone except an elder brother of the deceased.

575A Nkɛ́ndɛ́ is the specific term by which a favorite is designated. Its etymology is unknown to me. The word is used everywhere, although the Injɔ́lɔ́ often say lokílo (whose etymology is equally obscure). Another less common (older?) term known to the Boolomo, Bongili, Wángata, and Bakáala is bongílí or bongílɛ́ (1). In addition

to the term ilonjaka, already cited, there is also the word elɛ́mbɛ́, a generic term meaning "preference, predilection" or, when applied to a child or a slave, "an object one does not want to dispose of." The favorite is also called ekílakílá, "untouchable," because other men may not have relations with her.

1. The Ekonda call the favorite lokéfo. The Elanga of Losanganya say bafíɛ, a name borne by certain women among the Nkundó between Juale and Bolobo. Might this also be an old name?

595* 592 Qualifying expressions are sometimes added to the name nkónde: ea bokonga, referring to the bokonga on which the favorite is seated during the ceremony in which her position is established, and ea bonjo, "true." The two terms are used as opposed to a nkónde ea wɔji, whose position is established without any special ceremony, in imitation of a true, officially recognized favorite.

The expression for "making a nkónde" is ëja nkónde, "to make a nkónde come out," because she is proclaimed as such before the public gathering. Nowadays one often hears the expression tôna nkónde, a term which is very probably transferred from the bolfumbé. (See the next article.) [348]

Article III. The bolfumbé

595* 593 The polygamist who by birth or influence is recognized as the primus inter pares of a group of clans and who, to use the Nkundo term, is jabo l'ôsé (1) has the exclusive right to make one of his wives a bolfumbé. Therefore, doing so was not, as with a favorite, a matter of wealth and preference, but rather a mark of influence and authority.

In relation to this subject, here is a historical incident showing how an attack on this law resulted in a mysterious punishment, interpreted by the natives as an intervention from beyond the grave for the protection of the ancestral order. The events occurred at Bosumbé (Bombwanja), in the Bongili family. Bonkoma w'Ikenza had married Eyoko of Bokâma and by her had his eldest son

[349] 1. Nowadays one would call him the chief. But actually he was not a chief; he was simply the most respected and influential member of the oligarchy of clan patriarchs. This oligarchy constituted the political administration of the Nkundo, and from time to time an eminent personality gained recognition within it.

[illegible] is the one who brings her to her husband and is, at the same [illegible] time, *ndonga* for the payment of the bride price, which is made as for any woman. The expression is: *X afikanela bokilɔ́ Y ebísa*, "X repeats her sister Y *ebísa*."

In case of the elder's absence or upon her death, the *ebísa* replaces her or inherits all her rights in the household.

The elder relative cares a great deal about having her *ebísa*, because as a result she rises in her husband's estimation and she herself has an assistant in her work and a confidante in her troubles. The *ebísa* herself has the advantage of not being alone or abandoned at the beginning of her marriage, but of being able to count on a protector and guide, and if her elder occupies a privileged rank in the harem, she has the certainty of sharing her prerogatives and the likelihood of one day succeeding her. [253]

The term *ebísa* is used by the Nkundó between the Jwafɛ and the Bolobo, and by the Ionda. The Bombwanja designate such a woman by the name *loambwɛ* or *loambyɛ*. The Bofiŋgɛ and the *Injɔlɔ* also call her *loambyɛ*. (1)

[illegible] 1. The Bonyanga say *mbambwɛ* or *loambwɛ*. Out of respect they sometimes call her *bongíli* and the woman who has brought her *nyangɔngíli*. (See also Chapter II, Article X, and Chapter VI, Article VI.) The Ekonda call her *bomáfɛa* or *bomáfɛa* (*mbɛ́fɛa*, "last").

Ebísa may be related to the root *bís*, from which is de- [illegible] rived the verb *bisingana*, "to be united." *Loambwɛ* or *loambyɛ* are derived from *lamb*, which means: 1) "to be united" and 2) "to follow" (in order, in rank).

These names indicate the nature of this marriage that does not arise from direct relations between husband and wife but is established through the medium of another, preceding marriage. Or to express the situation in Lonkundó: *ɛ́fa bála j'ɔ́ndɛ ndɔngɛ, ɛ́amana l'ɔ́ma mbambɛ́ɛ*, "this is not a marriage which comes

~~Th~~ k other." (1)
[672]

1. Except, of course, if the new husband puts himself in the wrong by taking the woman home with him before the divorce is completed (see above).

● [97] The term for making restitution of the bride price is ändoja (baäimbá, ángí, etc.); [300] its intransitive form is ändola ("to recover the cost of the bride price," and the passive is änjwa, "to be restituted." The noun is njändó or wändó ("restitution," "reimbursement").

2. Methods of making restitution

The woman's father can pay back the bride price in two ways:

1) By means of valuables received from the new husband. In this case the more the latter hastens his payment, the sooner the new union will be made final.

2) By means of his own wealth, lontomé or bokakata (nkakata), an intensitive derived from likata, "hand." This method of payment settles the matter more quickly and avoids complaints lodged by the former husband. Sometimes restitution is made in this manner to show wealth and generosity.

In such a case the father acts spontaneously of his own free will. But can he be required to thus make restitution with his own wealth?

Yes. If the bride price is still in the hands of the woman's family, it must be returned immediately. This rule is easily understood, for under these circumstances no practical difficulty stands in the way of reimbursement.

Although as a rule the bride-price valuables will already have been spent for the acquisition of another wife (the nkita), this is not always the case. For example, only a very short time may have elapsed between the conclusion of the marriage and the divorce. But such a case was and is rare. Instances where the bride price was still in the family's possession were even rarer in the past, for people did not want bride-price wealth to remain

857 783 853 Note, finally, that the confession is restricted to married women. It is never expected of a young unmarried mother. Therefore it would seem to be a practice connected with marriage (a social institution) and not with childbirth (a physiological phenomenon).

This confession is called esato or lotato, from the verb ● [192] -tata, "to confess," (for which the generic term, sanga, "to say," is sometimes substituted).

I was unable to find any reason for this practice other than that of avoiding the death of the child. It is evident, however, that this explanation does not exhaust the question, although it is entirely possible that the original and deeper meaning has been lost without leaving any trace in the minds of the present generation. [496]

3) During the entire duration of nursing, the mother must 853 not be separated from her child. For the usual circumstances of 833 daily life, this rule is broadly interpreted; but during sexual relations it is strict, and no exceptions or excuses are permitted. Negligence under these circumstances would inevitably bring about the death of the child by edima as soon as the mother took it back. This rule holds for legitimate relations as much as for illicit ones. Therefore the mother must always keep her child at her breast.

4) If at some point during nursing, the milk no longer flows 853 in sufficient quantity, the mother is given a potion consisting of [757] the extract of the bark of the bolóngé tree (which has a fruit con- [278] taining a very sweet milky sap). Then she eats vegetables called lonfid. (1)

1. The leaves of this plant are also ordinarily eaten as vegetables, but they are consumed especially by those who possess the modern magical practice known as boyaliti.

5) An accident to which the Nkundó attach great importance [762] is the rejection or vomiting of milk into the mouth of an adult, even if the person affected is the infant's mother. Such a person

101 (In other dialects translated as *ntoma*).

The people are called Nkundó or *Mɔ́ngo*, never Bankundó or
101 *Bamɔ́ngo*. The prefix *ba* is often heard, as it may be used in front
113 of all proper nouns, similarly to the French usage in *les Molière*, *les Rubens*, etc. [or the English usage: the Browns, the French, the Nkundó]. The singular prefix *bo* is also used, but only rarely. [4] I have heard it only in the expression: *ale ô bonkundó mongo*, "He is a real Nkundo." This statement was made only in speaking of a foreigner who had successfully assimilated the Nkundó language and culture. It is possible, however, that it has a broader meaning.

Is it possible to discover an etymology for these names?
101 *Mɔ́ngo* is a common noun signifying something excellent, especially a person. People say *mɔ́ng'ɔ́y'ɔ́na*, "a fine child," *mɔ́ng'ɔ́y'ómoto*, a superb woman." (The name should be compared also with the term *bɔmɔ́ngo*, which denotes the state of being of a person who is well thought of, prosperous, rich, etc.) The form of the word does not change in the plural. The name Nkundó is more difficult to explain, if an explanation is at all possible. (1) If the name is to be related to some other word, the only possibility is the verb *kundola*, "to unearth what has been buried." But to unearth what? The corpses of one's enemies, in order to prove one's daring by eating them? Or copper rings, which would mean their wealth? The possibility is there, but we have no direct evidence. According to Fathers Bittremieux and Lemaeghe (on p. 195 of the article mentioned), some maintain that Nkundó means nkolo, "master." But what is the basis for this explanation? (2)

1. The word is Nkundó not Nkundo or Kundo. The assertion that the initial *n* is not part of the word, but is simply a nasal sound which must precede a consonant in the native sound system, shows a real lack of linguistic knowledge.

2. In contrast to the Batswá, the Nkundó and other groups are Baotó (sing. Bootó), meaning non-Batswá.

593^h
834 arises but rarely. Furthermore, if a daughter is required to perform similar duties for her father, she will undertake this obligation only
[578] with the lament: njôy'ôôna ěkɛ́ 'm wimɛ́kɛ́, "I have come to see where I had my origin." Any woman who has been in that position will later know no oath more sacred than this one: la botákɛ́ wǎ fafɛ́ bôkɛ́ 'm wǎnɛ́kɛ́ la mpaka, "by my father's nakedness which I saw when he was old."

834
291 Thus we can draw the conclusion that the Nkundô are offended by nakedness and as a rule do not tolerate it. The exceptions do not invalidate this generalization; on the contrary, they tend to support it.

2. Speech. Obscenities and propriety.

521
831 In general the Nkundô see nothing wrong with using obscene expressions. They only describe them as "bad" if they become indecent.
195 If a conversation touches on matters of sex, they may wonder whether a particular topic is necessary, interesting, or entertaining; they will not ask themselves whether it is moral. For it will be apparent throughout this study they have no concept of morality strictly speaking.

The Nkundô possesses a varied and extensive list of obscene words -- nor is he alone in this respect. [34] We are not compiling a dictionary, and therefore we will not list them. What interests us are the circumstances that make these words indecent and under which a proper use of them impossible. The circumstances provide us with a criterion of the degree of obscenity of a word or expression. Let us say at once that we include in this category not only terms applied to organs and phenomena which are of a sexual nature strictly speaking, but also words pertaining to certain anatomical parts or physiological functions such as, for example, excretion, hair and tattooing found on private parts, and the female garment called efofa. We
[184] should also point out that some tribes will consider expressions obscene which do not shock others at all.

521 831 195 which do not shock others at all. (1)

1. These comments are applicable also to peoples in other parts of the world.

[554] The general rule of decorum among the Nkundó permits the use of such terms only among equals. Their use when speaking to inferiors is tolerated but not approved of. The use of obscenities when speaking to any strangers meets with definite disapproval. Among persons of different sexes the prohibition is particularly strict.

Nevertheless, the use of these expressions is judged less severely if they are uttered in a moment of anger or as a reprimand, even in the presence of a member of the opposite sex.

Exclamations of anger, vexation, and sorrow are often nothing but obscenities (2). No one is shocked by them in such situations.

2. See "Les Coutumes Funéraires" [Funeral Customs], No. 1, to be published in Anthropos.

Some elderly or more modest persons do not make use of them, however; if the habit of using a particular expression is thoroughly ingrained, they may make a slight change in its pronounciation (as is common for some of our "swear words").

195 83 51 52 51 To circumvent the difficulties caused by the need to use certain words frequently, [50] euphemisms are coined to take their place. Thus the Nkundó say: ńtswɛ́ lokako w'ǎkuna, "I am going behind the house," to indicate that they are going to urinate, and ńtswɛ́ ḭsaŋgá, "I am going for small pieces of firewood," or njôtswɛ́ ôsɛa lokásá, "I am going to pick a leaf," meaning that they are going to the toilet. On the way they say: ńgasa bólé, "I am leaving the path" or "I am going to the forest." A husband is permitted to use accurate terminology when speaking to his wife, but it is considered very improper for her to do so in speaking to him.

524 516 When someone is satisfying a natural need, others keep a distance away from him; they will not even speak to him. Moreover, the person would not reply even if he were called. A woman will not

578 shame of obscenities. They say: biekɛ nsɔ́nvi ɛ̂à bitɔ́li ñ'bómoto,
684 Bómoto ndɛ́ ndota (irɛ́lɛ́) "A woman is a ndota snake. Just as that
834 reptile twists through the grass and rolls up as soon as it sees a man approaching, so a woman finds it difficult to endure any obscenity."

The ideal way to be sure whether an expression is actually considered indecent is to check whether it may be used in the presence of a close relative, for a Nkundɔ never utters an obscenity in front of such a person.

● 195 578 696 Among the Nkundɔ, as in Europe, certain indelicate exclamations are so deeply rooted that they seem to have lost their original meaning, that is, most of the population no longer thinks of it at all. That a few more serious and modest individuals are still aware of it is apparent from the way they change the pronunciation of the terms in question.

Licentious expressions are never considered indecent and shock no one when they are uttered in a group or during group activities.
[571] Such activities include communal fishing and hunting expeditions, [61] drinking parties, dances, funerals, and -- at the present time -- communal work on a road, a resthouse, etc.

Thus we see that in these matters there is a remarkable discretion side by side with a certain degree of tolerance, which may be carried quite far. Licentious remarks are not condemned in themselves, but only because of fortuitous circumstances, so we see that the Nkundɔ do not consider them from a moral point of view, as we do, but from a social one. But the fact that these are precisely the words which can become indecent and socially bad shows that the native sees in their content something shocking, shameful, some quality likely to give offense. The freedom exercised in certain cases does not alter this general conclusion but simply gives evidence of he inclinations of a passionate nature.

3. Dances

535 Nkundɔ dances change periodically, as is the fashion in Europe. Old dances are given up after a time and are replaced by others which are newly invented or recently introduced. The dances fashionable at the present time came from the Bosangi, who are by

592 husband will change to revulsion, and she will leave him to be with her charmer.

Part 3

The Search for a Wife

584 When a young man old enough to marry believes he has the means to do so, he goes out to seek a wife. Naturally, he knows a number of girls, and as a rule he has no trouble finding one who suits him. The courtship is quite simple. As everywhere there are meet- [931] ings, visits, chats, and jokes; but there is no romanticism or sentimentality, for they are absolutely unknown to these peoples. Since they are in a hurry [102] to reach the objective of their relationship, namely conjugal life, -- and their progress toward this goal is facilitated by usages and customs -- there remains little time for poetry.

There is no specific term for courtship itself. The Nkundó simply speak of "talking with a woman," sanja bómoto, "looking for a woman," asa bómoto. The girl who is its object is referred to as bosimbóyɔ (or bosambó among the Injɔlɔ).

First, the young man addresses his proposals to the girl: "[illegible] (ŏkotumbɛla) la wăli", "I want to take you for wife." She shows her agreement by saying, "ŏkolanga wɛ̌ ng'ɔ́ndɔ́", "I love you also," or more frequently, "olakɔ ŏ wɛ̌, "as you wish," jfá ŏ ilɔ́, "It's up to you," or something of this sort. (1)

[95]
[576]

1. Note that for the Nkundó these expressions have quite a different significance than would appear from the words. They express a real agreement and an explicit and personal consent. In fact it is considered improper for a woman to use a more direct expression.

584
93/ The lovers exchange gifts. The girl gives food which her mother has provided, or which she has been able to procure herself.

571 with a few vulgarities. If the woman goes beyond that, her husband
593* gives her a good slap, but he cannot allow himself to exercise his
684 muscles further upon her.

If a woman's tongue is too voluble and she permits herself to deliver gross insults without a suitable reason, her lack of respect is considered punishable. It is not considered proper to right this wrong by means of blows, however, although in practice impetuous young men do not always restrain themselves. The sanction preached by tribal wisdom is the man's abstention from food prepared by the guilty wife, and his refusal to perform the conjugal act. A Nkundó woman is very sensitive to such measures. If she is really recognized to be in the wrong and peace is not promptly re-established, the wife's [576] family will beg the husband to calm down and offer him a *[illegible]*, which may be as great as the value of a dog.

593* 578 In the course of a quarrel a Nkundó woman may resort to a roundabout way of expressing her feelings; instead of cursing her husband directly she will address herself to a domestic animal which passes in front of her. The man is naturally not deceived, and the effect is identical.

What we have said applies to ordinary insults such as to wish a person's death, which may be expressed in the following ways: *owá* "drop dead," *nkoi ékokomólé*, "may a leopard get you"; *[illegible]*, "may a snake bite you"; *ótówé ó?* "aren't you dying?"; *ókono*, "why don't you get sick"; *[illegible]*, "may you be carried to the cemetery"; *bákokundé*, "may you be buried." Invectives based on physical defects or designed to humiliate a man fall in the same category. For instance a woman may call her husband *[illegible]* or *[illegible]*, "a nobody," or *[illegible]*, "idiot," or *boyanyama*, "brute," etc.

If, on the other hand, the woman in her volubility attacks her husband's parents, the matter becomes more serious. The Nkundó react very badly to verbal excesses directed toward them. Whether he is subject to teasing on their account or to insults such as "eat your mother (or father)," or to obscenities in relation to them, or whether the speaker "dishonors" deceased parents in evoking their memory. (1)

[illegible] 1. For the sake of documentation on Nkundó psychology and morals, here is the Latin text

> 573 578 195 of a few fashionable expressions: *vulva matris tuae, comede matrem in clitoride, coi cum matre*. The same expressions, *mutatis mutandis*, are used with reference to a person's father, brother, or sister. The expressions used for "disinterring" are *oiondola ilongo, isé, nyangó*, etc., that is, "exhume your family, father, mother, etc., or *bejwó báné*, "your corpses," that is, your deceased parents (this last expression especially excites a strong reaction).

578 573 the effect does not vary greatly. [275] The only difference is in the intensity of rage and of the reactions, which depends on the individual temperaments of the interested parties.

578 593 622 A Nkundó is greatly outraged by obscenities hurled at him by his wife, especially if she attacks him in public. His reaction is always violent. Usually it comes to blows, a thrashing, and sometimes the knife. But if the husband wants to remain within the limits of the law, he cannot injure or, more especially, kill his wife on his own authority. Before going any further, he must bring his case before the *ndonga*. His family is invited to the meeting and, if possible, so is the wife's father. The outraged husband presents his case and warns the persons assembled that one day his exasperation will lead him to take up the knife. Having taken his case before qualified persons, the husband can from then on go ahead and avenge himself for the disgraces his wife may inflict on him; it is lawful for him to do so. If the guilty woman starts again, no one can accuse her husband of wronging her, for she herself is at fault and he has warned her in accordance with all the rules of the law.

573 578 [178] Modern young people do not always follow this procedure. But their revolutionary spirit often brings them reprimands and often gets them into great difficulties. The elders jealously guard their authority, and no one may reproach them for doing so. Therefore in a palaver of this sort, a father will sometimes forsake his son.

29/ The nkɔ́tɔ́ is unknown beyond the Jwafé and the Lalíaka. In that re-
18? gion the women tie a string (or a belt of beads) around themselves and attach a second piece of cloth to it.

291 Thus the male garment is a rudimentary sort of shorts, open on the sides, while female dress is much more open. In general the efefe is an appropriate protection of one's modesty, but it is inadequate in certain positions. (2)

[611]
[594]

2. It may be interesting to note that efe nsombáyá, or just plain efe, which is the term for a man's garment, also indicates the male line of descent, while the female line is often designated by the term nkɔ́tɔ́ (sometimes by the word jefómoto derived from bómoto, "woman"). Let us add that lonkundó jwá nkɔ́tɔ́ means "pure, flawless Lonkundo, not corrupted by foreign influences." This expression should be compared with the following phrases: langue maternel, moedertaal, "mother tongue," etc.

291
[7] At present the nkɔ́tɔ́ is no longer worn except by a few elderly inhabitants of villages far from the main communication lines. Everywhere else the ancient mode of dress has been replaced by materials imported from Europe. The women wear at least a sengetófimbo, a kind of short skirt which falls from their loins at least to the middle of their thighs if not farther. Middle-aged men in the interior have simply changed the material of their garment but not its form. The younger ones, on the contrary, have frankly adopted the European mode of dress.

291
591
[584]
[571] A married woman is not allowed to enter the village of her relatives by marriage (bokílo) or appear before them [34] without supplementing her usual attire with one or more bekɔlɔkɔ (banana leaves cut into fringes). The term bokílo must be understood as it is meant by the Nkundó; it excludes those with whom the wife may sometimes perform the sexual act and who are called "husbands" loosely speaking.

[837] [196] 4) To indicate a tendency toward adultery (especially on the part of women) the Nkundó use the verb [illegible] which literally denotes clothing that is too big and that flies in the wind. The noun [illegible] or [illegible] is also used.

The verb used for discovering a case of adultery is [illegible], the noun is [illegible].

Occasional or permanent adultery has always been very common. This fact is undoubtedly due to the relative ease with which it is possible to escape discovery and consequent sanctions. A woman [578] going to visit her family cannot possibly be followed or watched by her husband; the distances make such surveillance difficult and, furthermore, it would have disastrous consequences for the stability of the marriage, since neither the woman nor her family would put up with it. Other partial causes are lasciviousness, polygamy, etc., as we will see later in the text.

2. Gifts

[837] [431] An adulterous man and woman send each other presents. His consist of meat, arrows, etc., hers of food and various small objects. A woman's gifts to her lover are called [illegible] (the noun [562] used with the verb [illegible], "to make bars" (1). Very young relatives generally serve as intermediaries. Note that a woman rarely sends her son, for she has reason to fear that the gift would not reach its destination; the boy would give himself a treat with it. She can have more confidence in a daughter.

A man's gift is called by the generic term [illegible], "a gift that is sent, a dispatch." [313]

In isolated cases ([illegible]) a man sends an arrow, some small object, beads, meat, etc. Nowadays money or cloth have been

---

1. Note that the noun and the verb are not etymologically related. Perhaps [illegible] might be related to [illegible], "to show, to designate." The Ekonda call this gift [illegible]. See Chapter II, Article I.

771 In matters of religion the Nkundó recognize the existence of a Supreme Being: Njakomba or Mbombiándá, creator and ruler of all that exists. They do not worship him in any way, however; all their religious practices are addressed to guardian and ancestral spirits. (2)

2. On the subject of the religious conceptions of the Nkundó, see a detailed study by Father Boelaert, M.S.C., in Hooger Leven, 1934, pp. 1612 and 1636, and 1935, pp. 12 and 60.

197 The language of the Nkundó is beautiful, harmonious, flexible, and rich. It has all the qualities needed to become a literary language and is admirably suited to the requirements of teaching. Furthermore, its various dialects are spoken over a considerably large territory, in fact over one of the largest language areas [13] of the Congo. 797 214 In addition to the religious and devotional books of the Catholic missions, a fairly large collection of various academic textbooks is available in this language, thanks primarily to the zeal of the Protestant missionaries. The latter have also published a complete translation of the Bible. Several vocabularies and small grammars have been compiled, and in recent years a large dictionary and an expanded grammar have been added to these, both compiled by A. and L. Ruskin of the Bongandanga Mission. For several years the Protestant mission at Bolenge has been publishing a native magazine, and the Catholic mission is pushing ahead with preparations to publish one also.

114 Father Shebesta's book, Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge, includes a chapter on the Nkundó in which the author gives a good general description of this people. Nevertheless, some of the details given must be accepted with reservations.

121 The general information given above is enough to give the reader a superficial knowledge of the Nkundó.

The purpose of this work is to give a more extensive account of their institutions pertaining to marriage.

As we have previously stated, we are considering only a portion of this people. All our statements cover only the fraction we have delimited. The family institutions of other Nkundó groups are not accounted for, as they are less known to us and we do not want

382 so-and-so has died. Hours before his actual death, people everywhere know that a certain person is on his deathbed and that his death is imminent.

[100] If the witch doctor is up to his tricks of duping the silly Negro, people everywhere around know just what nonsense he is performing at what moment.

The White announces his morning and midday orders by means of the *lokole* and tells his workers when they may cease work for the day by the same means.

In the mornings and evenings and in the case of wet weather, the *lokole* carries especially far, but in the full sun it is not so effective.

282
534 The *lokole* is a large block of wood which is split down the middle for almost the whole of its length, and the inside part is carefully hollowed out. The *lokole* has the shape of an extra long, open mussel shell although, in general, the outside edges are flattened out.

322 The making of *lokole* is the trade of a certain person, and some Negroes are well-known for the *lokole* they have made.

Only four kinds of wood are suitable for the making of a *lokole*.
[illegible] These are (1) *Bokungu*; (2) *Likomo*; (3) *Bolondo*; and (4) *Isi*. The last is the most excellent kind of wood and the one used by the Mongo
[illegible] Negro to manufacture his "*ngula*" (red dye) with which he smears his body for even the least important event that occurs in his village. The *Isi* is probably a species of redwood. The Mongo Negro makes
322 five different *lokole*: (1) *logonga*, small in shape; (2) *lokole ja losali*,
534 medium size; (3) *bongungu*, large *lokole*. These three are all like the one described above. They are struck with sticks (*bosolo*) from the "*momambo*" tree (umbrella tree). (4) *Bonkuka* is the large, high *lokole* that is struck with two sticks to the ends of which are attached several balls of caoutchouc. The sound of these *lokole* carries for the greatest distance. (5) *Ngomo* is the large, oblong, upright dance *lokole*. This *lokole* is simply a large, oblong piece of wood, completely hollowed out, decorated a little, about 1.25 meters high, and covered at the top with a piece of dried antelope or leopard skin. It is struck with the fingers and the palm of the hand. This *lokole* is the well-known tom-tom, still used by the Negroes on the steamboats to announce their arrival in the villages along the river.

202 And now something about *lokole* language.

198 The beat of the *lokole* varies, and it is by this means that the Negroes [101] understand the different words. The tempo varies also,

203
178
The White hears only the difference in tempo, nothing more. The Negro miles away understands what is being telephoned.

The lokole language consists chiefly of metaphors and is thus not intelligible to any White in the whole of the Congo. The Negroes are proud of their invention and also pleased that the White, who otherwise can do everything, is not able to understand their lokole.

Every man has his own name (nkombo) on the lokole with which he makes himself known. Because such a name often covers several lines of script, chiefly expressed in metaphors giving facts of the public life of the Negro concerned, it would be a physical impossibility for a White to master the lokole language in the way a Negro does. Actually, not even all Negroes understand the art of beating the lokole.

[562] The women have a general name; beating the lokole is only for the men; and no woman understands the art. The women understand what is being broadcast when the lokole is beaten, but they cannot beat it themselves. Moreover, they would be ashamed to attempt it; this is no task for a woman, and they would be laughed at. The lokole name, or nkombo, of the woman is as follows:

Bali la tolombo bosalaki lisala, bosalaki tombolako, tond' ol' nana, bofamba oka lisala.

"Women in numbers, worked the garden, prepared much to eat, consisting of bananas, to eat out of the garden."

A White, personally, has no nkombo of his own on the lokole, but to announce the arrival of a White in a village, the following is spread around far and wide:

Lolema jo lifeka feka, esongo etenaka nhola.

"The bat flies about everywhere, the pin wounds the nails of the feet."

With "the bat flies about everywhere" is to be understood the government agent who goes from village to village collecting the taxes. "The pin wounds the nails of the feet" means that, just as [724] the Negroes go on the warpath with sharp pointed sticks dipped in poison to wound the enemies' feet, the government agent is always on his rounds with his rifle, ready for the fray.

The nkombo of the Catholic missionary is as follows: [102]

(1) Bamele mele ba nkanga; (2) bofala boki ndaki lisako nde lokombo; (3) etafe bolo; (4) benanga belendaka la mpera.

197
797 Bosecio osele lo elonga. "The one always screaming who is followed into the high grass, the strong branch, the districts go along with the priest (Father).

1. The missionary is seen here as a witch doctor (bosecio osele lo elonga is a general lokole name for the Negro witch doctor), who, like the Negro doctor, is looked upon as a doctor and a priest.

2. Bofala boki ofeki lisako ole lokombe [sic]. The priest, because he is always seeking converts everywhere, is here compared with an antelope which, when it is followed, runs around and around in the high grass.

3. Etafe bolo. The missionary is here compared with a strong branch. He is strong because he is influential and highly regarded by the Negroes.

4. Besanga bekendaka la mpere. The districts all go along with the Father (priest). They all follow his instructions.

The nkombo of the Protestant Anglican missionary is as follows: Bofonge wonkola besanga bene nkenda l'Inglese.

"The fishing net is spread out; the country goes along with the Englishman."

In the same way as the fishing net cordons off a part of the river and everything is caught in it, so all the people go along with the Englishman. The Protestant Anglican missionary was in this district [797] before the arrival of the Catholic missionary, so this nkombo refers, of course, to this period. Since the arrival of the Catholic missionary, the situation has changed completely in this district.

These few examples give an indication of the difficulty in understanding the lokole language.

352
323 In addition, the Negro makes a few chairs, the most important of which is the lyelo la mpaka, the chair for the elder, a three-legged affair with two props under it, topped with a piece out of the umbrella tree; into this the elder can throw himself as lazily as he wishes.

Then there is the so-called ebonga, a little stool chopped out of a block of wood with the native axe. This is finished off attractively with an enumwa, a small paring chisel, and the seat is decorated around the edge with studs which have been bought in some factory or other.

572 [201] Friends seldom or never give signs of their affection, apart from gifts and mutual assistance. Men are seldom seen embracing, although women do so frequently.

The Nkundó are familiar with friendship pacts (called boseka or, among the Bombwanja, likandeko) (1). Two persons of the same sex are bound to one another in friendship (bota boseka or likandeko) [573] in the presence of a witness (ndonga), whose duty it is to deliver the gifts that are exchanged.

The conclusion of a friendship agreement is actually a custom of the women; men -- usually the husbands -- create friendship bonds only secondarily, in imitation of their wives. This pact is not automatically hereditary; the children may continue it -- through the same ndonga as their fathers -- but they are free to let it lapse. (2)

Two elements may be distinguished in the friendship pact: congeniality or affection and mutual assistance. The latter is in itself a sign of friendship, but it is not infrequently the sole reason for the pact among men who seek reciprocal support by this means. [36] As for the women, it may be said, on the contrary, that gifts are considered purely as tokens of affection and their bonds are based exclusively on affection. Often women who are very fond of each other do not bind themselves in a friendship pact but are content to show their affection in all simplicity. Men also may be very good friends without having recourse to a pact. But the conclusion of an agreement makes their relationship public and thus protects it against deleterious influences such as misunderstandings, disagreements, outbursts of anger, etc. One might say that the pact represents the addition of the element of reason to the element of emotion.

---

1. Bofili among the Ekonda, mbale among the Batswa.

2. See also a special reason for friendship pacts in Chapter IV, Article I.

764 for it was necessary first to celebrate the farewell feast, and the widower's family had to gather to discuss the matter and collect the valuables needed for the funeral payment (see the article which follows). Only after all that did the young men belonging to the [482] husband's family take the mortal remains upon their shoulders -- wrapped in a mat or enclosed in a coffin, depending on the case.

If possible all the husband's relatives take part in the procession. The pallbearers walk at the head. The men are armed with bows and arrows, knives and sticks, seldom with spears. The women accompany them [423], wailing. The husband and, if necessary, a few relatives carry with them the various objects they will need for the payments. Some men have a *londósi* (an [534] ocarina) (1) or an antelope horn on which they play intermittently. (2)

1. See my "*Note sur les Instruments de Musique à l'Equateur* (Note on Musical Instruments at the Equator)" in *Congo*, 1935, Vol. 2, July, p. 187, figs. 1 and 2 (p. 189).

2. Sometimes there is also an accompaniment of drums.

● [201] At the time the corpse is lifted and while passing through villages between their own and their destination, the *lokolé* is struck with regular and equal blows (*-kómya*) to announce the arrival of the funeral procession.

584 764 The chief personage among those who follow the corpse is not the husband, but the *ndonga*. He may never be absent at that time. Even if the husband is deceased and the procession is that of a widow who has not remarried, the *ndonga* must always be in the party. The duty of bringing the corpse of a married woman is above all his.

The *ndonga* may go ahead of the procession to inform the family of the deceased of her death, and if there is a great distance between the wife's village and the husband's, he may not be able [illegible] the sap, which she then mixes with water. The resulting liquid is oily and foams like soap. She places a few drops on a piece of banana leaf and makes a sachet of it. She holds this against the breast for a certain time until the boil, similar to a blood clot or a piece of liver, leaves the breast and enters the sachet. She then shows it to those present. From then on the mother can nurse her child without fear; her milk has become healthy and normal.

2) The mother's public confession must include the names of all the men with whom she has had carnal relations since the child's conception. Other groups, such as the Injɔlɔ, extend this obligation even to instances preceding that moment but which have not been declared at a previous occasion. The confession is public. The mamamas related to the husband begins to crush the leaves to be used in rubbing the breast; as she moves the pestle and says to the mother, "Name a man." The mother replies by giving a name. The mamamas says nyango, "indemnity." Then all those present say yangé, yangé, yangé, "Absolved." Then it is the other mamamas's turn, and she interrogates the mother in the same way. The process continues till all the names have been cited. If [486] the mother cites the name of a man who is a close relative of her husband and who therefore does not need to pay an indemnity, the mamamas does not reply nyango. Instead a member of the husband's clan makes the gesture signifying exemption: he holds the kernel of a palm nut (loliko) in his left hand and throws it by means of a small board which he holds in his right. Among the Injɔlɔ the man takes two kernels and strikes them against each other and then throws them away. Were the woman to suppress a name the child would die. If she has no admission to make, she replies, "No one besides my husband."

The indemnity that must be paid by those who are obligated to do so consists of a hen and a bunch of bananas (or their cash value) which are to be given to the mamamas, who will then divide them. Were the accused to refuse, the husband would demand a regular indemnity from him after the end of the seclusion.

The Bombwanja have this confession at the time of the [84] fastening of the fetus. A few old women married into the clan carry out the interrogation. The kernel of the fruit of the palm is thrown by means of a knife.

586 577 continuous state of enmity existed between his clan and the husband's, or if the husband owed him a substantial debt, one that clearly equaled the woman's bride price. In the first case a new war followed almost inevitably. Later on the woman's family contacted the new son-in-law. The gifts they brought were considered the dowry, and he began to pay the bride price. But there was no question of reimbursing the bride price to the first husband; relations between him and the woman's clan were completely broken. The difference between this situation and the standard procedure described above lies precisely in the fact that there is no restitution. In the case of a debt there was no restitution either. The woman's flight constituted a compensation (lowáfa) and was therefore so designated (N. ekongola ndá lowáfa). If the husband lodged a complaint, the judges sent him a piece of bofoló (1) to let him know that they did not want to concern themselves with his case, which he himself knew to have very poor grounds. Even the members of his own clan prevented him from making war; they knew perfectly well that the wrong was entirely on their relative's side.

The practice of taking refuge that we have just described was simply known as bejwó, bómoto ákowá bejwó, because that word was the principal one in the ultimatum.

178 586 577 As we have said above, the custom here described disappeared with colonization. Even though the scope of this study does not extend to the Nkundó who are settled north of the Tshuapa, it [303] may be of interest to note that an evolution of this custom is taking shape in the Losanganya region. If a woman is condemned for leaving the conjugal household and imprisoned, she asks someone to marry her -- if the opportunity presents itself. If the man accepts

---

[203] [628] 1. The bofoló is a piece of dried banana leaf which has been rolled up and tied with two knots (or more, as the case required). To indicate the end of a palaver, the bofoló is cut in two (or more) pieces, with a knot in each piece. One piece is sent to each interested party.

845 The event is announced by the usual signal, but the signal
[203] is doubled or, if the children are of different sexes, the signal for each sex is given once. It is followed by the dance beat: two
[538] or three long and two short.

The next day the father's relatives go outside the village,
845 preferably to a crossroads. On each side they plant a stalk of
778 [illegible]. All around the stalk they spread a little heap of small branches and various leaves called [illegible]. It is a sign and a place of benediction and good fortune. Each passer-by stops, picks two leaves, places one on each pile, spits on it, and says [illegible].(2) Then

2. Onomatopoeia for "spit."

they clap hands and twice sing out, yelí yéyé. Such behavior brings the benediction of the twins upon a person's journey, his undertakings, his marriage. The umbilical cord as well as the placenta and membrane are buried under the heap.

845 Every morning the mother and father draw two stripes with
362 kaolin on the middle of their foreheads and on their arms, above
[784] and below the elbow. They do the same to the twins. (3) They

3. Sometimes a double stripe is added at the temples The kaolin may be used pure or mixed with the red paint called ngóla.

continue doing so until the child is weaned. If after that time one of the children falls ill, they begin again treating him in this manner until he is cured, taking care not to omit his brother, lest he too fall ill. For while these designs are signs of joy, they are
[751] above all a prophylactic measure against children's fever ([illegible]),
[802] called wásanyi when it occurs in twins or in a child following them, and manifests itself chiefly by tumors of the head and face.

845 Twins are invariably called Mbóyó and Bokétu, names
551 given to the first born and the second respectively, whatever their sex. The Bombwanja (like the Ekonda) use the names Mbóó and Mpia, respectively. The mother takes the name of Ǎmbá.

396 the owner, and everyone who has helped gets his share according to
476 the amount of work he has done. [93] Frequently a big sugar-cane
[273] beer spree is started, where disgusting scenes often take place until finally the drunken men are taken home by their wives. In civilized Europe it is sometimes not much better.

502 Boats are made just large enough for two men, as well as others sufficient for a hundred or even a hundred and fifty men. The big war canoes of the great chief Evolisko of Waka and of the former chief of Bandaka, a certain Iseompoko, are known throughout the region. The war canoe of the latter was said to hold a hundred and fifty men, and the edge of this canoe to reach up to the shoulders of a fairly tall Negro. The ordinary canoe in which Whites travel is, as a rule, sufficiently large for twenty to thirty oarsmen.

435 The prices of canoes vary, according to size and strength, from 200 to 10,000 mitako.

The Lokole

203 The lokole plays a very large part in the life of the Negro. Without the lokole, the life of the Negro would be inconceivable.

The lokole can be best described as the public telephone with which the Negro makes his thoughts known publicly from village to village.

The lokole is to the Negro what the trumpet signal is to the soldier.

The lokole calls the men to meetings, to war, and to the hunt; the lokole calls all the people, great and small, to the dance. During the dance it is the loyal accompanist until deep in the night; its monotonous sound brings the enthusiasm of the dancers almost to the point of frenzy.

The Negro telephones his friends at great distances and explains what he wants. If two Negroes from the same village or from different villages have a quarrel, they abuse each other over the lokole, and the whole world is kept fully up-to-date on the details of the dispute. Each one tries to blacken the reputation of the other in the eyes of the other villagers. If someone dies in the village, it is proclaimed everywhere the whole night through, by means of the lokole, that

382 so-and-so has died. Hours before his actual death, people everywhere know that a certain person is on his deathbed and that his death is imminent.

[100] If the witch doctor is up to his tricks of duping the silly Negro, people everywhere around know just what nonsense he is performing at what moment.

The White announces his morning and midday orders by means of the lokole and tells his workers when they may cease work for the day by the same means.

In the mornings and evenings and in the case of wet weather, the lokole carries especially far, but in the full sun it is not so effective.

382
534 The lokole is a large block of wood which is split down the middle for almost the whole of its length, and the inside part is carefully hollowed out. The lokole has the shape of an extra long, open mussel shell although, in general, the outside edges are flattened out.

323 The making of lokole is the trade of a certain person, and some Negroes are well-known for the lokole they have made.

Only four kinds of wood are suitable for the making of a lokole. These are (1) Bokungu; (2) Likome; (3) Bolondo; and (4) Bol. The last is the most excellent kind of wood and the one used by the Mongo Negro to manufacture his "ngola" (red dye) with which he smears his body for even the least important event that occurs in his village. The bol is probably a species of redwood. The Mongo Negro makes
332
534 five different lokole: (1) Ingongo, small in shape; (2) lokole jo losali, medium size; (3) bongungu, large lokole. These three are all like the one described above. They are struck with sticks (bosolo) from the "momambo" tree (umbrella tree). (4) Bonkoko is the large, high lokole that is struck with two sticks to the ends of which are attached several balls of caoutchouc. The sound of these lokole carries for the greatest distance. (5) Ngomo is the large, oblong, upright dance lokole. This lokole is simply a large, oblong piece of wood, completely hollowed out, decorated a little, about 1.25 meters high, and covered at the top with a piece of dried antelope or leopard skin. It is struck with the fingers and the palm of the hand. This lokole is the well-known tom-tom, still used by the Negroes on the steamboats to announce their arrival in the villages along the river.

202 And now something about lokole language.

198 The beat of the lokole varies, and it is by this means that the Negroes [101] understand the different words. The tempo varies also,

[illegible] The White hears only the difference in tempo, nothing more. The Negro miles away understands what is being telephoned.

The lokole language consists chiefly of metaphors and is thus not intelligible to any White in the whole of the Congo. The Negroes are proud of their invention and also pleased that the White, who otherwise can do everything, is not able to understand their lokole.

Every man has his own name (nkombo) on the lokole with which he makes himself known. Because such a name often covers several lines of script, chiefly expressed in metaphors giving facts of the public life of the Negro concerned, it would be a physical impossibility for a White to master the lokole language in the way a Negro does. Actually, not even all Negroes understand the art of beating the lokole.

[illegible] The women have a general name; beating the lokole is only for the men, and no woman understands the art. The women understand what is being broadcast when the lokole is beaten, but they cannot beat it themselves. Moreover, they would be ashamed to attempt it; this is no task for a woman, and they would be laughed at. The lokole name, or nkombo, of the women is as follows:

Bali la nkombo basaleki lisala, basaleki tombolaloko, nand' el' mma, bafombe aka lisala.

"Women in numbers, worked the garden, prepared much to eat, consisting of bananas, to eat out of the garden."

A White, personally, has no nkombo of his own on the lokole, but to announce the arrival of a White in a village, the following is spread around far and wide:

Lolema je lileko faka, esongo esenaka nkola.

"The bat flies about everywhere, the pin wounds the nails of the feet."

With "the bat flies about everywhere" is to be understood the government agent who goes from village to village collecting the taxes. "The pin wounds the nails of the feet" means that, just as [illegible] the Negroes go on the warpath with sharp pointed sticks dipped in poison to wound the enemies' feet, the government agent is always on his rounds with his rifle, ready for the fray.

The nkombo of the Catholic missionary is as follows: [102]

(1) Bosasele nsele ba nkanga; (2) bofala boki ndaki lisako nda lokombo; (3) etafe bolo; (4) benanga bolendaka la mpeta.

[illegible] *Bansola nsola ba ebanga*. "The one always screaming who is followed into the high grass, the strong branch, the districts go along with the priest (Father).

1. The missionary is seen here as a witch doctor (*bansola nsola ba ebanga* is a general *lokole* name for the Negro witch doctor), who, like the Negro doctor, is looked upon as a doctor and a priest.

2. *Bofala bobi ndeko lisako nda lokundu* [sic]. The priest, because he is always seeking converts everywhere, is here compared with an antelope which, when it is followed, runs around and around in the high grass.

3. *Etafe bola*. The missionary is here compared with a strong branch. He is strong because he is influential and highly regarded by the Negroes.

4. *Bosongo bokondako la nsanu*. The districts all go along with the Father (priest). They all follow his instructions.

The *okombo* of the Protestant Anglican missionary is as follows: *Bolango wonfala bosongo bomo okondo l'Ingliza*.

"The fishing net is spread out, the country goes along with the Englishman."

In the same way as the fishing net cordons off a part of the river and everything is caught in it, so all the people go along with the Englishman. The Protestant Anglican missionary was in this district before the arrival of the Catholic missionary, so this *okombo* refers, of course, to this period. Since the arrival of the Catholic missionary, the situation has changed completely in this district.

[M]

These few examples give an indication of the difficulty in understanding the *lokole* language.

352
322 In addition, the Negro makes a few chairs, the most important of which is the *lyeko la mpaka*, the chair for the elder, a three-legged affair with two props under it, topped with a piece out of the umbrella tree; into this the elder can throw himself as lazily as he wishes.

Then there is the so-called *ebonga*, a little stool chopped out of a block of wood with the native axe. This is finished off attractively with an *esumwa*, a small paring chisel, and the seat is decorated around the edge with studs which have been bought in some factory or other.

575 594 896 consists of a beautifully fashioned native knife, or a lance, or mitako [copper wire used as currency]. In some areas, it was the polygynist who attended the mother at the birth of the daughter. He had the wood gathered, water brought, and food prepared. If, then, the expected child was a boy, the security was usually returned, and the contract declared null and void. If, however, the one who had given the security was a village chief or a man of importance, then the father of the child tried to give him another daughter. The father had, for instance, at an earlier time given a daughter to another man of much less importance. In the above-mentioned case, he would give back the bride price received, take his daughter back, and give her to the polygynist from whom he expected a larger bride price.

675 Sometimes too the boy was taken by the polygynist and remained in his family until the father could trade a daughter for him.

575 941 While very young and still a child, the little daughter was installed in the harem of the polygynist. She was brought up there, together with other children of her age and status; or rather, she grew up there in the midst of these heathen customs without any upbringing.

595 The composition of the harem of a polygamist:

The first wife was called the Bomatsa; she preceded all the other wives in rank, and in the absence of the polygynist, she was the mistress of the harem.

The second wife was called Ekila; she was the most loved and preceded all the remaining wives. She was also called Nkonda.

The third wife was called Bolumbu. At the appointment of the Bolumbu, a certain ceremony took place, and the wife was clothed with an animal skin. The Nku, a sort of patriarch and magician, sometimes had three or four Bolumbu who served as messengers to other villages. In this capacity they had special privileges. For instance, to attack a Bolumbu was a reason for declaring war. [302] [121]

[823] The remaining women were simply women of the harem, without distinction.

595 In the area of Monjoku, among the Bolee [Bole], the first wife was called Nkisa, with the same rank as Bomatsa. The second

764

765 literally that the deceased has hanged the heart, the former is used of a tree which leans over and falls from a great cut at its base.

764 On the announcement of the death, an expert drummer drums out the news. 766 There will be at least four drums of the type known as *lokole*, and a *ngoma*.* The four 534 drums are called by the names, *Epanda*, having the "biggest voice", that is a deep 202 bass note, *Mongo*, having a higher note, *Mongonda*, a high pitched note, and *Nsekoa*, having a very high penetrating note. To these four drums others are added; if the *nkumu* himself did not possess sufficient, they would be borrowed from the surrounding villages, and their notes matched with those of the first three drums, being beaten with them in their turn. *Nsekoa* is beaten simultaneously with *Epanda*, giving a rhythmic tattoo. When the news of the death has been sent out on *Epanda*, the funeral drumming commences, as follows:

539

Mongonda.	Botsangano w'Amba bekolo,
Mongo.	Nsala ilota, otongomoko,
Epanda.	Tokundi' ilenge nakumi' a nyama,
	Ondoloklaka nsenge,
	Lokenge lelondo nkomba,
	Bikoko lelondo lokolo.
Nsego.	Tokilako nkoi okonge,
	Tokilako nkoi okonge, &c.

The English and the interpretation are as follows:

Mongonda. A scattering of Amba, the snail. (The mother of twins, always called Amba, here gives her name to the snail because of her prolific progeny, which, upon being introduced to the world, scatter, while the mother dies. So the death of the *nkumu* will cause a scattering of his many wives and children.)

Mongo. Feathers fall; pick them up. (That is to say, for your arrow shafts, for if you don't, and come back later, the wind will have scattered them and you won't find them. So while the *nkumu* was alive it was the time for his children to learn his teachings so that when palavers came after his death they would be well acquainted with his wisdom and know how to settle them.)

Epanda. We are burying the *ilenge*, husband of animals, You have just eaten *nsenge*, The chin looks up at the ridge pole, The jaw bones look up at the sky. [225] (The *ilenge* is an animal much prized for its fat meat; the *nkumu* always gets his share when it is killed, and the skin is made into carrying straps for infants, and into belts. [563] Batwa are prohibited the use of it for any purpose. It is therefore fitting to liken the *nkumu* to the *ilenge*. *Nsenge* (sing. *lolenge*) is the equivalent of a snack. When a woman brings her cassava from the swamp where it has been soaking for several [264] days, her husband may be too hungry to wait the long hours required to cook it, [252] so to appease his hunger his wife takes a piece or two of the unprepared root, splits it in two, places salt between, wraps it in a *lokasa* leaf and roasts it in the hot ashes, where it is quickly cooked. So the *nkumu* just had time to eat a few *nsenge*; he didn't wait for the big cooking; his life was suddenly cut off.)

Nsego. Don't pull out the leopard's eyelashes. (That is, while he is alive; now he is dead one can disregard his power.)

---

* A *lokole* is a slit gong made from a hollowed log. The two notes are produced by striking the two lips of the slit. A *ngoma* is a hollowed log, open at one end, across which is stretched a rawhide.

614 kinship subgroup [*Untersippe*] for groups of rank C;
kinship group [*Sippe*] for groups of rank D (the exogamous units);
large kinship group [*Grosssippe*] for groups of rank E.

Local Organization

361 621 178 The second diagram[1] shows the settlement pattern of the Isangi group in its old settlement area up to 1949. At this time Isangi was relocated near the highway. Only two of the nuclear kinship groups of Isangi can lay claim to territory reaching far enough toward the east as to extend beyond the new highway. Thus, the resettlement process has led to a complete change of the settlement pattern. However, the functions of the settlement communities have not yet been adapted to the new settlement. At present the inhabitants are still so engaged in speculation about the possibility of a return to their own old territory that they have not yet reformed their village organization.

621 614 We observe that the village is divided into six settlement communities (30), each of which consists only of the members of one of the two kinship groups of Isangi. [200] We find that only the group of the father, which formerly was a kinship group in its own right, is attached to one settlement community of the kinship group Ngelé. Incidentally, we might point out that the names of the two kinship groups, Ngelé and Nkoto, mean "down the river" and "up the river." The older group is called "down the river" since in *ngelé* the river is large and wide. We come across this honorary term for the older group in some other villages although there is not always an "up-river" group. No corresponding settlement pattern can be found.

614 621 202 624 The degree of cohesion among the constituent kinship groups in settlement community I is so strong that the entire community has a communal *bokendi*, a communal messenger.

---

30. See Diagram 3.

[1] [page 7, category 116.—Analyst]

614 It is the task of the messengers to transmit all important mes-
621 sages to the other groups in accordance with a precise plan;
●202 this is particularly true regarding the invitations to the meetings
624 of the village council with the nkúmú. At the same time they
inform the other groups as to the program of the meeting. The first messenger calls on the messenger of the other community; the old men are gathered at the latter's house in order to receive and to discuss the message. The messenger of this community, in turn, departs for the next in line. As a result of this practice the messenger and his home became one of the centers of social life.

621 The same uniformity is found in community II. Here
614 we can also see the engangala, the meeting place of the village
361 Isangi and of its branch villages. The meeting place is an open
623 space in which stands a short tree with a broad crown. The rep-
resentatives of the several villages gather in the shade of this tree since one of the open men's houses could not accommodate all of them. The senior of the nuclear kinship groups Mpia (No. 14), Nsambi (No. 15), and Liengo (No. 16) has his house on this spot which is situated on the border of the territory belonging to these three groups. The elder of Mpia, however, is the messenger for the hamlet of Boyeke; he may of course be identical with the "elder on the engangala."

614 Cohesion within the third settlement community was also
621 so strong that it employs only one messenger. The kinship subgroup Nsambásálá which is concentrated in this hamlet is said to consist of the descendants of an illegitimate child of the daughter of the village founder (see Diagram 1). As is the case in many
[782] other villages, it is therefore entrusted with the office of the
[624] botóni, who carries out the sacrifice of human beings and ani-
mals on the proper occasions.

614 The three communities just described are relatively
621 homogeneous groups; the three following ones are quite hetero-
624 geneous. The two groups of hamlet IV belong to the kinship sub-
202 groups Iyolo and Mbo. In contrast to the kinship subgroups Lovendo
and Besilo, they regard themselves as sufficiently different from

614 each other to employ their own messengers. When the messenger
621 of settlement II arrives here, he first calls on the messenger of
624 the nuclear kinship group Bosɔ́bɛ́ (No. 19) and then to Impɛnga
202 (No. 26). The messenger from Bosɔ́bɛ́ calls on his relatives in
● settlement VI, who are the nuclear kinship group Mbelo-Mmuna
(No. 22), while the messenger from Impɛnga-Ndongɔ́ formerly
had to call on the group Bommambo which is now extinct.

Settlement V consisted of three different groups. Bolíma, the group of the father, had its own messenger; however, he only received the messages without having to pass them on, which is also the case with all these last groups of the village. Both neighbors had their own messenger. The messenger from settlement I called on the nuclear kinship group Bolesangi, his relatives; the messenger from settlement III went to his relatives of the nuclear kinship group Ituli.

There were also two messengers in the last hamlet, but reports on this subject are insufficient since the nuclear kinship group Bommambo has been extinct for a long time.

178 All the settlements just mentioned have a common
614 characteristic: formerly, at important dance festivals, their
621 young men performed together in one joint *corps de ballet*. The
595 population was decimated as a result of the rigors of [201] the
occupation period and also as a result of the population move-
[161] ment into the cities. Consequently, there are not enough young
people any more, and I with II, III with IV, and V with VI act
together. Thus, in each case we find Ngelɛ́ and Nkoto united
in one ballet. Although these groups have also been scattered
[361] as a result of the new settlement pattern (next to the highway),
the old organizational structure has been preserved, and the
young people do not hesitate to walk the long distance to the
practice field every day so they can dance in the old groupings.

621 All of Isangi, all three kinship groups, have one common
624 village chief, the Nkúmú, with an *iyolo nsɛ́ka* who gets the meet-
622 ings started, and a village court with its judges. There are other
groups which correspond to Isangi (31), but have more than one

---

31. See Müller, *Fürstentum*, pp. 73 ff., 76 ff., 133 f.

614 Each hamlet includes one or several message districts.
621 Even at the time of the old settlement pattern the messenger
624 system was determined by the hierarchical structure and not
● [202] at all by considerations of what was most practical (for example, the shortest route). Consequently this conservative institution of the conservative old men has not been affected at all by the relocation.

The villages are the communities of jurisdiction and of political life. Usually a nkúmú, presides over the meetings. If a village has several nkúmú, one of whom may be the judge or all may preside together, I have used the term "part of a village" [Dorfteil] for the district from which each nkúmú originates.

Those areas which have a special meeting place are here
361 referred to as a "province" [Gau]. The meeting place lies
621 within the territory of the oldest or second-oldest kinship group.
178 The practical importance of this institution for the entire province is minimal, but the two meeting places [202] which we discovered still constituted, until a short time ago, important social centers for the duplicate villages forming the administrative centers of the respective provinces. As a result of the relocation, the meeting places have now lost their function completely.

000 I hope that this paper has added new material to the discussion on the subject of ethno-sociological terminology, and that it will stimulate criticism and a new discussion of this important subject.

771 In matters of religion the Nkundó recognize the existence of a Supreme Being: Njakomba or Mbombiɛ́ndɛ́, creator and ruler of all that exists. They do not worship him in any way, however; all their religious practices are addressed to guardian and ancestral spirits. (2)

> 2. On the subject of the religious conceptions of the Nkundó, see a detailed study by Father Boelaert, M.S.C., in Hooger Leven, 1934, pp. 1612 and 1636, and 1935, pp. 12 and 60.

197 The language of the Nkundó is beautiful, harmonious, flexible, and rich. It has all the qualities needed to become a literary language and is admirably suited to the requirements of teaching. Furthermore, its various dialects are spoken over a considerably large territory, in fact over one of the largest language areas [13] of the Congo. 797 214 In addition to the religious and devotional books of the Catholic missions, a fairly large collection of various academic textbooks is available in this language, thanks primarily to the zeal of the Protestant missionaries. The latter have also published a complete translation of the Bible. Several vocabularies and small grammars have been compiled, and in recent years a large dictionary and an expanded grammar have been added to these, both compiled by A. and L. Ruskin of the Bongandanga Mission. For several years the Protestant mission at Bolenge has been publishing a native magazine, and the Catholic mission is pushing ahead with preparations to publish one also.

114 Father Shebesta's book, Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge, includes a chapter on the Nkundó in which the author gives a good general description of this people. Nevertheless, some of the details given must be accepted with reservations.

121 The general information given above is enough to give the reader a superficial knowledge of the Nkundó.

The purpose of this work is to give a more extensive account of their institutions pertaining to marriage.

As we have previously stated, we are considering only a portion of this people. All our statements cover only the fraction we have delimited. The family institutions of other Nkundó groups are not accounted for, as they are less known to us and we do not want

263 wild [140] throughout the region we visited. All the tribes are
acquainted with it and use it regularly.

222 Collecting and preparing pili-pili are tasks especially re-
462 served to women. Upon returning from the fields, a woman
252 spreads the fruits on a mat before her hut and lets them dry for
263 five or six days. Sometimes she uses them fresh, mixing them with
palm oil enhanced with salt. The native uses this sauce to season
his dishes according to taste.

252 When the pili-pili is quite dry, the woman pulverizes it in
263 a small wooden mortar with a cylindrical pestle or with a small
412 piece of elephant's tusk. The shape of the mortars used for this
purpose by the different peoples of the Lukenie varies a great deal. From the Bateke to the Batete, we found only very crude mortars hollowed out from the trunk of a tree. Among the Yaelima and Ipanga this utensil is more carefully worked and finished. The shape is rather like that of a small rectangular box without a lid, but provided with a lug. Among the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, we collected very crudely shaped and primitive mortars, while others were well made and carefully carved. All of them, however, have the common characteristic of an elongated vertical form, and most of them have a leg. The pestles are always quite long.

We thus again find three ethnic zones characterized by the special shape of these utensils. Of course, this fact alone could not serve as the basis of any ethnic classification, but it might have a relative value and importance in drawing general conclusions based on the whole assemblage of the ethnic characteristics of these various peoples.

263 Once reduced to a fine powder, pili-pili pepper is mixed
with salt to season food after cooking. All sauces are spiced with a generous pinch of this pepper. Meat is sprinkled with it, or even stuffed with whole peppers.

When the natives are traveling, they merely pick a few pili-pili and squeeze the juice into the food while it is cooking. [141]

276 The kola nut also is very well known as a stimulant and is
widely used. The kola tree is found nearly everywhere. The natives gather the fruit and chew it. Women do not indulge.

224 absolute and inescapable necessity for those tribes who have Batswá,
since the latter provide them with a certain amount of the necessary
meat, though in insufficient quantity. The people hunt in groups
and individually -- in the latter case primarily by means of traps.
Fishing with nets is also very widespread, although various other
methods are also known. The picking of fruit, caterpillars, mush-
222 rooms, vegetables, etc. continues to be popular.

Among trades, that of the smith is foremost. However, iron
463 casting has been abandoned at the present time. Copper is brought
in from other peoples by tribes serving as intermediaries. Wood
sculpture is rapidly disappearing. Basketry [12] remains popular.
[286] Weaving no longer exists at the present time; in fact, looms can no
longer be found in the region.

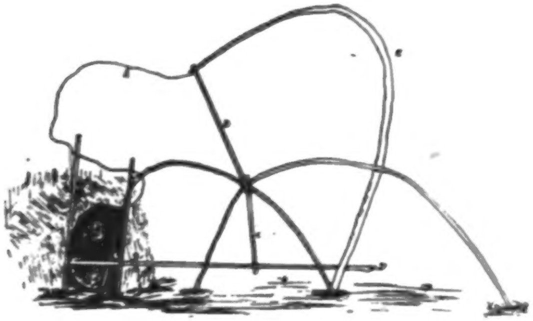
The family is patriarchal and the political organization cor-
593ˣ responds to it; there are only heads of families. Indeed, among the
Nkundó the family is the complete nucleus and foundation of the so-
ciety. The result is a democratic and oligarchic government, but
one very different from any we would call by that name in Europe.
554 Certain men become prominent because of their intelligence, their
eloquence, their bravery, or their wealth, having great influence and
often giving the appearance of chiefs whose authority extends beyond
their own clan, but none of them has ever founded an empire. In
the past the Bongíli were the most courageous tribe, and the one most
feared. Besides, their geographic location was in their favor, as they
had the Lifumba and the Bombomba, two sister tribes, on each side
of them.

[517] The artistic tastes of the Nkundó are directed chiefly toward
538 music and the dance. Their oral literature is also very rich; it in-
cludes, for example, the epic of Nsongó and Lianja (1) and that of the tortoise.

---

(1) The most important portions of this epic have been translated and published by Father Boelaert, M.S.C., in Congo, 1934, Vol. 1, pp. 49 and 197.

224 857 toward the small clearing. Badgered and frightened, the rats, mice, etc., run madly. Not daring to break through the line of beaters, they are pushed toward the clearing, hesitate an instant before entering it, then bound in. Without moving from their places, the little hunters wait for them and catch them in passing.



A sharp, quick blow and their ribs are smashed in, their skulls broken. Not one escapes; neither their size (some rodents are as big as hares) nor bites nor scratches frighten these tots of three, four, or five years of age.

224 ●223 857 The children also occupy themselves by capturing birds and small rodents with nets and snares. The latter are made with a flexible stalk for a spring and a cord with a noose. A system of small sticks which automatically trigger the release compels the bird to stick its head into the noose to reach the bait. At this moment, the mechanism is released, and the victim is pulled up by the cord attached to the stalk spring.

224 The natives also set snares of the same sort in front of holes of rodents and other animals or at a place where they habitually pass.

At the village of Madjuku, I had occasion to see the mechanism of a rat snare in action. In front of a hole, two arched sticks [62] intersect. A strong rattan stalk (E) has been stuck into the ground, and two piassava cords (A and B) are tied to its tip. One of the cords ends in a noose, which is placed in front of the entrance to the hole. A small stick (C) is attached to the end of the second cord. One of the ends of this stick passes behind the intersection

M 243 The cultivation of rice serves less to nourish the native than for trade. He usually sells his harvest immediately after the husking.

T M 244 Peanuts thrive in the region of the Banfumu and among the Bankutshu. They grow best in light soil and are not suitable for land cleared from the great forest. The crop demands a great deal of care and regular upkeep. Fields invaded by weeds yield nothing.
T M [462] The harvest takes place when the crop is mature and is the task of the women with the help of the children. The peanuts are placed in baskets carried on the back and taken to the village. The native spreads them out in the sun to dry. He turns them again and again, two or three times a day, and brings them into the hut at night.

M 249 Sugar-cane plantations are set up in marshy lowlands.

[462] [273] All the work on this crop falls to the men. These plantations are found only in regions where the natives make masanga, sugar-cane beer. Sugar-cane fields are especially numerous in the villages on the lower Lukenie and the Fimi.

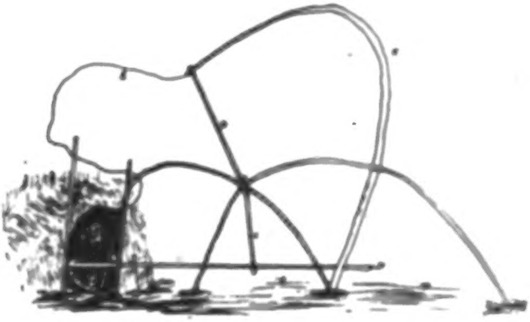
M 244 As a rule the natives also cultivate a few legumes, sweet potatoes, and yams, but on a small scale and without giving them any particular care. [61]

Hunting

● M 224 462 Hunting is practiced only by men. They engage in it, not for sport, diversion, or relaxation, but for the sole purpose of procuring meat and fat.

M 224 857 From their earliest childhood, the boys get together to beat the grass and catch mice, rats, and other rodents which swarm in the bush. Nothing is more interesting than to see them at work. Ten, fifteen, or sometimes twenty of them form a large circle. Armed with sticks, they beat the grass and make an unbelievable din. Little by little the circle narrows, moving in on a small well-cleared space. The oldest, most daring and most agile of the boys keep watch over this space, their eyes alert and riveted on the edge of the grass, ready to pounce. The beaters redouble their zeal, strike, shout, gesture, and gradually drive all the rodents

224 857 toward the small clearing. Badgered and frightened, the rats, mice, etc., run madly. Not daring to break through the line of beaters, they are pushed toward the clearing, hesitate an instant before entering it, then bound in. Without moving from their places, the little hunters wait for them and catch them in passing.



A sharp, quick blow and their ribs are smashed in, their skulls broken. Not one escapes; neither their size (some rodents are as big as hares) nor bites nor scratches frighten these tots of three, four, or five years of age.

224 223 857 The children also occupy themselves by capturing birds and small rodents with nets and snares. The latter are made with a flexible stalk for a spring and a cord with a noose. A system of small sticks which automatically trigger the release compels the bird to stick its head into the noose to reach the bait. At this moment, the mechanism is released, and the victim is pulled up by the cord attached to the stalk spring.

224 The natives also set snares of the same sort in front of holes of rodents and other animals or at a place where they habitually pass.

At the village of Madjuku, I had occasion to see the mechanism of a rat snare in action. In front of a hole, two arched sticks [62] intersect. A strong rattan stalk (E) has been stuck into the ground, and two piassava cords (A and B) are tied to its tip. One of the cords ends in a noose, which is placed in front of the entrance to the hole. A small stick (C) is attached to the end of the second cord. One of the ends of this stick passes behind the intersection

Ntomba

224 of the two arches, and the other one is held in place by a mobile stick (D) placed transversally between the tips of the arches in such a fashion as to bar the mouth of the hole. In leaving or returning, the rodent sticks its head through the noose, and being impeded by the transverse stick (D), it pushes the stick aside with its paws, releasing the trigger stick (C) and the bent branch (E) which snaps up. The rodent is automatically caught in the noose, pulled up, and strangled. This snare is remarkably sensitive, and the rodent who tackles it is invariably caught.

The natives also set up snares for antelope. Being very observant, they quickly discover the place where an antelope passes regularly, as well as the size of the animal. They place a rattan noose at this spot and carefully hide it in the grass and leaves. The animal sticks its head through the noose in passing and is trapped. The more the animal struggles, the tighter the noose is drawn.

The native sets traps for the large flesh-eaters, hyenas, leopards, and large wild cats. [Ed., the text is not translated from the third paragraph, page 62, to the second paragraph, page 64.]

[64] Hunting the elephant and the hippopotamus involves traps, pitfalls, the spear, and the harpoon.

The pitfalls consist of large holes dug along the paths frequented by the pachyderms. These holes are three to four meters long, two meters wide, and four to five meters deep. At the bottom, the native plants wooden stakes whose ends, carved to a point, are hardened by fire. The opening is hidden by a mat of tree branches and roughly plaited creepers, covered with leaves and grass. These traps are a real danger to travelers in the country, and therefore the native is required to indicate their presence by a conventional sign prominently displayed. I first noticed these signposts between the Mosengere villages of Lokila and Gomo Erenge: a strong stake perpendicular to the ground, on top of which the native fastens a hoop and a stick. The latter is fixed obliquely to the ground in the direction of a straight line from the post to the trap. If a native neglects to place the signpost, he [672] loses his right to the game caught in the trap, and he is held responsible for any accidents that might result from his negligence.

●224 Another trap, very often used for the hippopotamus, is made of a heavy iron point suspended above the path frequented by the pachyderms. During the day, they prefer to stay in the water or to sleep on a sand bank. At night, they leave their refuge to graze on the grass of the plain. More often than not the animal leaves quite visible traces of his passage on the bank as he leaves or enters the water. The native places his trap near these places, but avoids putting it at the exact spot where the animal comes out. Experience has shown him that the hippopotamus, being extremely cautious, is alerted by the least [65] alteration of this place and changes to another one immediately.

[411]

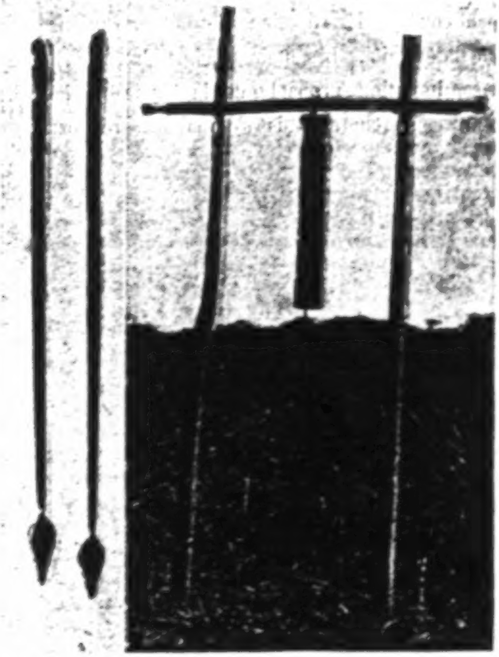


Fig. 40. Hunting Spears and Trap for Large Game, Lake Leopold II.

The iron point is embedded in a large block of wood. The whole apparatus is suspended four or five meters above the ground. A crossbar, one meter above the ground across the track, is held in place by the trigger device which controls the suspension of the

Teke FI33
Sakata FO43

M 224 ●

weapon. As he passes, the pachyderm strikes and dislodges the crossbar, springs the trigger, disrupts the suspension, and the spear falls heavily upon him. The trap is arranged in such a way as to hit the animal on the nape of the neck.

M 224 411

The native hunts with bow and arrow as well as with spear. The bow and arrow, however, is more a weapon than a hunting instrument.

The peoples in the territory between the Congo and the Kasai, as well as the Baboma of the Fimi have now given up these weapons. A few privileged persons own percussion guns which are usually more dangerous to the hunter than to the hunted. When the native fires a shot, he extends his arms, directs the barrel towards the prey, and turns his head aside. If, through cunning and patience, he gets to within a few meters of the game without arousing its attention, the shot has a chance [66] of success. Ordinarily the animal is more or less gravely wounded, unless the overloaded gun explodes in the hands of the imprudent hunter.

S T 411 322

The Bateke, Banfumu, and Baboma store powder in small receptacles made of a simple calabash or cut out of a block of hard wood. The calabashes are sometimes covered with a sheath of serpent or lizard skin to protect the powder more effectively from dampness. The wooden powder flasks are usually pear-shaped, probably to imitate the shape of the calabash. They have a wooden cover that fits very tightly into the body of the object, and the leather strap for hanging it up is attached to two holes cut in the body of the receptacle and drawn through two side openings in the cover. Very often these carved powder flasks are decorated with designs engraved in bas relief, linear motifs arranged in bands. The lines are sometimes curved, sometimes straight, and sometimes also oblique. The bottom of the powder flask is flat so that it may be placed upright [67] on a horizontal surface. The body of the powder flask extends into the straight cylindrical neck onto which the cover is fitted.

S T [53]

M 411 [77]

The bow with rattan thong is relatively rare. We found it only among the Tumba, Balesa, Bobaie, Batete [Tete], Ipanga, Batitu, and the Pygmies. This bow is made with a rattan stem, its convex section facing out and its flat section facing in. The rattan thong is attached to the two ends after having been drawn through

Yaelima

411 Yaelima it is sometimes as deep as five centimeters. The bow and arrow of the type we have just described serves both as an offensive and a defensive weapon. Its importance as a weapon must have formerly been greater. In our time wars between [721] tribes have become almost impossible. Attacks and reprisals by [578] individuals, on the other hand, are still rather frequent. This is especially true of the region east of Opombo. Every free Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima owns a bow and arrows and does not hesitate to use them either to defend himself or to attack.

● 224 Hunting with bow and arrow is done on an individual basis. The game taken in this way belongs wholly to the hunter. [69]

[411] Among the Yaelima we found an arrow with a removable head that is notably larger, wider, and stronger, and that is attached to the shaft by thin cords. The natives use these arrows for hunting antelope and buffalo. When the animal is hit, the arrowhead penetrates its body, and the surprised victim flees into the bush or forest. The shaft of the arrow, buffeted by the tall grass or lianas, gradually works itself loose. The head, attached to the shaft by a cord, remains in the wound. With each motion, the animal enlarges its wound. The shaft, sooner or later, is caught in the lianas or grass, with the result that the head is violently jerked from the wound, making it a mortal one. This very dangerous weapon is not widespread, and for good cause. The native can use it effectively only for a point-blank shot. The range of the bow is limited; the arrow with the removable point is heavy; the iron point is very wide and has small barbs. To succeed in planting this arrow in the body of the animal, it is necessary to creep to within several meters of the game, to string the bow without attracting the animal's attention, and to hit it in the belly. The wounded beast may seek its salvation in wild and fatal running, but it sometimes turns against its attacker. In any case, the hunter who uses these arrows cannot do so without risking great [70] danger. Although the native likes to hunt, he also fears the dangers associated with this occupation. The only ones who use these arrows are the intrepid true hunters who have inherited some of the instinct and audacity of the Batua [Twa]. Inunu, chief of the Batitu of the Oshwe region, who was audacious to the highest possible degree and feared no animal, obstacle, or danger, asserted to me that he and a few other hunters did not hesitate to attack elephants with this weapon.

Yaelima

The native most often uses his spear for hunting big game, 224 or he contents himself with setting traps.

The peoples west of the Ipanga have given up elephant hunting. During our sojourn in the region of the Bobale, Basakata, and Balesa, the natives came to complain several times about the invasion of their manioc fields by elephants and the damage done by these inopportune visitors each time they came. They never thought of attacking the animals. To chase them away, they built fires and made an infernal din, while keeping their distance.

Fig. 44. Great Yaelima Hunter Showing his Harpoon Arrow.

[291
411
301]

In the region of the Ipanga-Batitu and among the Bokala-Yaelima, elephant hunting is rather frequent. The most daring hunters attack them with spears. This hunting is done on an individual basis. The hunter covers or smears himself with elephant dung. As he draws near, he takes a thousand precautions not to attract the attention of the animal, who is always on the alert. Once within range, he plants his spear into the under belly of the animal and gets away as fast as he can. The wounded beast

224 lunges forward at random until, exhausted by the wild run and loss of blood, it falls for good. The hunter follows the track for two or three days without ever tiring or losing heart. He infers the probabilities of success from the loss of blood, the footprints, the length of the paces, and many other signs, and as long as any hope remains he keeps up

[441
291]

Fig. 45. Leaving for the Hunt in Yaelima Territory with Spears, Bows, Arrows, and Nets.

the chase. The animal sometimes manages to get rid of the spear. In this case, the hunter returns to the village and recounts his exploit to all who will listen. He does this not to establish a reputation, but to build up a claim against anyone who might find the animal if, by some wild chance, it should succumb to the wounds.

Communal hunting is more common. The natives use large [71] nets, spears, knives, and dogs. The group is divided into beaters, directed by a leader, and those who own nets and act as lookouts.

The first native hunt I had the pleasure to attend took place at Tua among the Banfumu.

Sakata FO43
Yaelima

S 224 778

of false bamboo, two or three arrowheads, and a small bow had been stuck in this paste. At the foot of the stake the natives had piled a whole series of antelope and buffalo skulls. These remains alone were vaguely reminiscent of the hunting fetish of the Kasai region.

M S 224 778

It is possible that this very simple form of the nkisi of the hunt is also the earliest and that it is closest to ancestral custom, since the primitive shelters of the neighboring peoples and the huts characteristic of the Bateke-Banfumu tribes are actually a mere elaboration of the custom followed by the parental branch of these peoples, a custom which called for the skull of the largest animal killed during the hunt to be dedicated to the guardian spirits of the hunt and to be placed at the foot of the physical representation of these spirits.

M 224 778

In the region of Oshwe and Bumbuli we found no trace of this custom. Each village, however, possessed its hunting fetish. The one in the Yaelima village of Yanga is among the most interesting. A tall shrub stands near a group of four huts located slightly apart from the principal area of the settlement. Two forked stakes, 1.20 meters apart, stand close by, and a straight stick lies on the ground, which may be placed on the forks. A small piece of a calabash hangs by two lianas, one of which is tied to the tree, the other to one of the forked stakes. The calabash contains substances with magic power: a mixture of mpembe and black earth, forming a muddy paste. Before leaving on a communal hunt, each hunter who owns a net must walk by this fetish. The head of one of his arrows or of his spear is dipped in the small calabash, and part of the mud that sticks to it [81] is spread on the nets. Upon returning from the hunt, a piece of flesh from one of the animals killed is hung on the crossbar lying on the two forked stakes. The custom of depositing skulls does not seem to be known in the region.

The hunting fetish of the Bokala in the village of Yoshomo Monene stands in the center of the native settlement. It consists of two forked stakes which may be joined by a crossbar, exactly like the framework of the Yaelima hunting fetish. The tall shrub is replaced by an herbaceous plant with thick leaves. The calabash containing the magic substances lies on the ground between the

Yaelima

224 778 plant and one of the stakes. The customs and ceremonies observed before leaving for the communal hunt are identical to those we have just described.

224 As to the relations between the fetisher, the hunting fetish, and the individual hunter, we will ignore them, having been unable to obtain any information on this subject in these regions.

Throughout the region we visited, large-scale hunting is done communally. As a rule, all the men participate, including young men from the age of 15. [Ed., the text is not translated from the last paragraph, page 81, to the second paragraph, page 83.]

[83] The catch of the communal hunt is shared among all the families in the village, with the chief and the dignitaries having special rights.

224 622 Individual hunting does not entail any distribution, except when a buffalo, leopard, or elephant is involved. [293] The tail of the buffalo goes to the native chief, who uses it as a fly-chaser and a badge of rank. [281] The skin of the leopard is reserved for the chief, who makes it into a skirt which he displays ostentatiously at important festivities and public dances. The trunk and tusks of the elephant go to the chief, while the bristles go in [778] [361] part to the hunters and [84] in part to the local dignitaries, who use them to make necklaces.

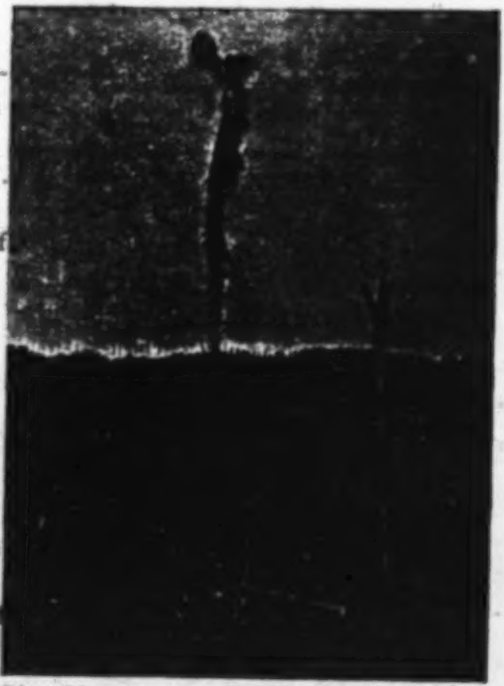


Fig. 51. Yaelima Fetish, Nkisi of the Hunt.

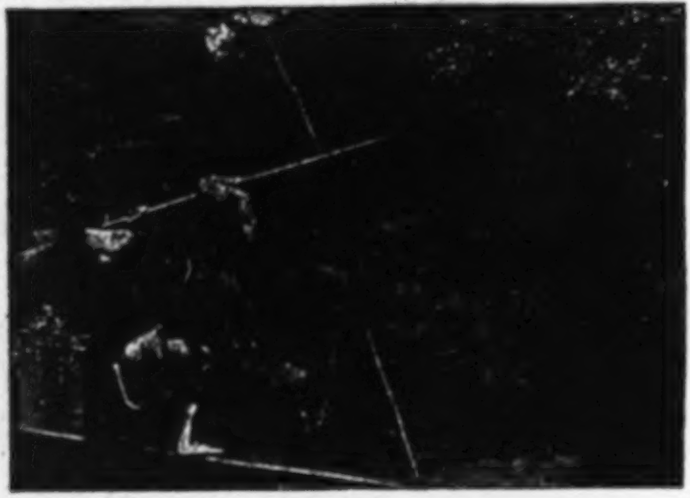
Ntomba

paragraph beginning on page 97 and continued on page 98 is not translated.] 000

[98] On the whole, we note the following special ethnic characteristics. 241

1) Uniformity in the cultivation of manioc, the staple food of all of these peoples. 241

2) Undertaking the cultivation of maize under the influence 177 of the ephemeral encouragement of Bula Matari [Ed., the European administration] among the peoples of the Congo-Kasai, and rice cultivation under Arab influence in the region of Bena Dibele-Kole. Contrary to what we noted concerning maize, the innovation introduced by the Arabs has become firmly implanted in the life of these natives, and the cultivation of rice will probably eliminate manioc eventually.



[226]

Fig. 58. Weir Fishing at a Dam among the Mosengere. Closing the Screens and Capturing the Trapped Fish.

3) Formation of a zone of sugar-cane cultivation, the development of which is in inverse proportion to the extent of the palm groves.

4) Complete absence of animal husbandry of any importance. 231

5) Uniformity in the methods of communal hunting and the 224 ● gradual development of attendant religious customs and practices 174 from east to west, corresponding to a decline in hunting by individuals with traditional weapons. This fact leads us to suppose

Ntomba

224 174 that hunting was practiced as a rule in the ancestral society without special recourse to any protective force or spirit and that primitive man relied wholly on his strength, skill, courage, and necessity. The small yield and the accidents involved in this dangerous sport probably impelled the primitives to go in groups, the first step to communal hunting. In the course of these forays, accidents must have occurred, some men being hurt and others spared. For no apparent cause, one hunt was successful and another failed. Not being able to understand the reason for these occurrence, the natives naturally ascribed their origin to spirits, from which arose the desire to gain the favor of these spirits. One can thus explain the magico-religious beliefs and practices, whose intensity, [99] elaboration, and spread are in direct proportion to the disappearance of individual hunting.

224 174 6) The existence among all the peoples of a few common fishing customs, so little developed unquestionably fish could have played only a minor role in the diet of the ancestral community. This community, therefore, must have lived in an environment ill-suited to the development of a fishing industry or too poor in resources of this kind to invite man's efforts in this direction in his struggle for existence.

7) In their migrations and displacement, certain groups settled in more favorable regions, and the families among them who settled in the immediate vicinity of well-stocked rivers and marshes adopted new fishing customs while partially giving up the hunting customs. [Ed., the remainder of the chapter, through page 100, is not translated.]

060 [101]

Chapter 4

Food

Making fire. -- Extraction of salt. -- Preparation of food. -- Manioc. -- Maize. -- Bananas. -- Meat. -- Fish. -- Peppers. -- Extraction of palm oil. -- Beverages. -- Water. -- Malafu. -- Masanga. -- Pombe. -- Stimulants. -- Hemp. -- Kola nuts. -- Tobacco.

101
619
[825] recollection of an animal of the leopard family which they call *bokonga*. Their description of it corresponds to the lion. Some soldiers and other expatriates, who were also young people, shown representations of a lion immediately identified it with their *bokonga*.

The groups under discussion here lived for a time on the banks of the Luwo (Maringa) and the [11] upper Ikelemba, (1) then under pressure from other *Mɔ̃ngo* tribes, they crossed the Tshuapa-Ruki. They evicted the Ekonda and settled in their present location. This exodus must have taken place a fairly long time ago; it is impossible to determine the date and difficult to make any estimates. In any case it must have occurred 150 to 200 years ago.

[173] 1. It appears that between the Ikelemba and its tributary the Losflifa, there is still a *bonkom* tree called w'āmenga (of bald heads) under which, according to tradition, the ancestors held their councils. Nearby there is a *bosdd* whose fruits never ripen.

241 These peoples are primarily farmers; they grow chiefly bananas, manioc, yams, *colocasia* [taro], sweet potatoes, sugar cane, and various vegetables and condiments. The food crops they grow, together with what they gather and the Elaeis palm trees provide them with a continuous and abundant food supply, as long as elephants do
[231] not interfere. Their domestic animals include chickens, goats, and
224 dogs. (2) Hunting is a pleasant change of activity rather than an

[177] 2. Ducks have been introduced fairly recently, but they were known long before colonial times. They came from the south. Sheep have been introduced only in the last few decades, and they are found only in a few villages on the river banks in the lowlands.

224 absolute and inescapable necessity for those tribes who have Batswá,
since the latter provide them with a certain amount of the necessary
meat, though in insufficient quantity. The people hunt in groups
and individually -- in the latter case primarily by means of traps.
Fishing with nets is also very widespread, although various other
methods are also known. The picking of fruit, caterpillars, mush-
222 rooms, vegetables, etc. continues to be popular.

Among trades, that of the smith is foremost. However, iron
463 casting has been abandoned at the present time. Copper is brought
in from other peoples by tribes serving as intermediaries. Wood
sculpture is rapidly disappearing. Basketry [12] remains popular.
[286] Weaving no longer exists at the present time; in fact, looms can no
longer be found in the region.

593x The family is patriarchal and the political organization cor-
responds to it; there are only heads of families. Indeed, among the
Nkundó the family is the complete nucleus and foundation of the so-
ciety. The result is a democratic and oligarchic government, but
one very different from any we would call by that name in Europe.
554 Certain men become prominent because of their intelligence, their
eloquence, their bravery, or their wealth, having great influence and
often giving the appearance of chiefs whose authority extends beyond
their own clan, but none of them has ever founded an empire. In
the past the Bongīli were the most courageous tribe, and the one most
feared. Besides, their geographic location was in their favor, as they
had the Lifumba and the Bombomba, two sister tribes, on each side
of them.

[517] The artistic tastes of the Nkundó are directed chiefly toward
538 music and the dance. Their oral literature is also very rich; it in-
cludes, for example, the epic of Nsongó and Lianja (1) and that
of the tortoise.

---

1. The most important portions of this epic have been translated and published by Father Boelaert, M.S.C., in Congo, 1934, Vol. 1, pp. 49 and 197.

583 431 to leave her husband and he, in revenge, were to lay hands on her mother or on one of the other wives of the clan. (1) [148]

1. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 4, (1), and Chapter VIII, Article II, 1.

7) Lombɛ: a wide shoulder strap made of fur or braided [824] bɛkombɛ reeds (Calamus sp.), though valuables of equal worth (one knife or a konga) may be given. Nowadays this boɛ́ngo consists of 2 or 3 rings; it goes to the mother in compensation for the wearying burden of carrying and nursing her daughter. (1)

1. Note that when a mother-in-law brings a child into the world, her son-in-law sends her a shoulder strap of liengɛ́ otterskin or a konga of equivalent value. He does not repeat this gift at each birth, however.

[854] 8) Betɔ́tswá byá nkwá: leaves of the bonkongɛ́ bush used to remove, wipe off, and carry away (tɔ́ta) a child's excrement. This boɛ́ngo consists of a ring and goes to the mother as compensation for her performance of these tasks. In the absence of the mother, it is claimed by another of the father's wives or by a female relative of the mother.

● [224] 9) The bojángá, "hunting net," is demanded in many villages for no special reason. Certain clans, however, scoffed at by others because they have few members, officially ask a man belonging to one of the latter and wishing to marry one of their daughters to bring a net, saying: "You make fun of us because we have no people; bring us a hunting net to surround and enclose us, since we are not many." Thus the village of Boyela of the Bakáala, never gives one of its members in marriage without this boɛ́ngo.

[184] 10) Wɛ́ngɛ́ w'ákɛkɛ: a boɛ́ngo which is not known everywhere but which is customary in certain groups, for example among the Bakáala. One of the woman's relatives takes a piece of a young thorny trunk of the wɛ́ngɛ́ tree. Having scraped one end of it, he holds this

602 brings forth reprimands on the part of the husband and his parents which obviously can easily degenerate into quarrels. If the omissions are so frequent and of such a nature that they can no longer be explained as simply forgetting, a whim, or a fit of peevishness, but [299] are taken to indicate spitefulness or vulgarity, the matter is [621] brought before the ndonga (who is often assisted by the family tribunal) or brought before the authority constituted by the woman's kin. If in spite of everything the expected improvement does not take place, the break-up is inevitable.

606 The husband's father and mother extend the same affection to their son's wife as they feel toward him. They consider her their own child, and it is not unusual to find that their love for the wife equals their feeling for their own son. She is only a relative by marriage, but out of affection for her they call her their child. She, for [601] her part, does not use toward them the term bakanga (or bakilő) but out of filial respect calls them "father" and "mother." Exceptions to this practice may be found, however.

606 224 If the father (and those who fall in the same category such as uncles, elder brothers, etc.) kills a large game animal, he is expected to give his son's (or brother's, etc.) wife a piece of meat, whose size depends on the number of daughters-in-law he has and which consists of one or several chops (bokálako) (1) and the piece at the nape of the neck (botómbyá).

606 835 Illicit relations between the husband's father and his daughter-in-law would be an unheard of crime. The same would be true with respect to any of the "superior" relatives. (2) The laws regulating

---

1. Called lieto among the Bolengé and the tribes of the Losanganya.

[178] [184] 2. Only the Boangi -- like the Elángá of the Losanganya - allow relations between a brother and the wife of his junior; and they are already beginning to find imitators among their neighbors to the southeast, the Injóló.

595x 789 magic known as yoli. She alone participates in the ceremonies that accompany it; with her husband she eats half of the hen that has been killed for that purpose, and on that night she alone may share his bed. Finally, only with her, to the exclusion of the co-wives, may the husband eat the fish called wengɛ́, and only she may and must burn the leavings. Otherwise the magical practice would turn against its owner.

When a piece of game is divided, the bomátsa is entitled 595x to the lintála (the lower portion of the breast), which would go to ●[224] the man's mother (or his father's or his elder brother's wife) were he a bachelor.

In the bomátsa's absence, her place is taken by her ebísa (see below, Article IV) or by the wife who follows her in seniority. At her death, the same rules govern her succession.

The name bomátsa is probably derived from the root mátsa, "to begin." She is the one who founds the family. Sometimes she is also called ikɔ́kɔ́yɔ̂njemba, literally "bachelor's love." The Bombwanja say itɔ́kɔ́yɔ̂njemba (the Ekondà, nkámukolo).

In addition to the bomátsa, reference is sometimes made to [344] bomátsa w'îáli, or "bomátsa of the left." The bomátsa in the strict sense of the term is contrasted to the latter as bomátsa w'îlɔ́me ("of the right"). The bomátsa of the left is a polygamist's second wife. She is given this name because her house is at the left end of [592] the loánjá. She has no special rights or duties, however, unless the actual bomátsa delegates to her the task of looking after her end of the compound. If the harem is large, the husband may set aside [224] for her a special portion of the game, called itɔ́mbantáta, or nape of the neck. In her absence it goes to the eldest daughter.

Article II. The Favorite

595λ 556 All polygamists of any importance have a favorite wife, or nkɔ́ndɛ́. But only the rich and the notables have a true nkɔ́ndɛ́. The minor polygamists, of course, imitate the others (nkɔ́ndɛ́ ɛ́â weɔ́lɛ́ or ɛ́â itsiɔ́, "without great importance"), but they do so without

She does no work in the farm or kitchen. She always has an
595x ebísa to wait on her. If her family has no member they can let her
have, she will borrow an ebísa from a distant relative or a friend.
A nkóndé does not travel on foot; she is carried in a hammock
[482] (hunting net). Her husband accompanies her on foot, however. But
[556] this was done only for a true nkóndé of a rich man, and the custom
is disappearing today.

A favorite may not leave her husband, even to go and see
her parents. In the past some men were so jealous of their favorites
[514] that they would not allow them to satisfy even their most private
needs unless they themselves or some sentinel (usually a Botswá) stood
watch. A man could not even go into the vicinity of her hut, which
is built just behind the husband's shed. For although the husband is
sometimes tolerant of the passions of his other wives, he always shows
[152] an intransigeant jealousy [346] in relation to his favorite. He never
travels without having her accompany him.

The favorite has the honor of performing small personal serv-
[515] ices for her husband; she cuts his hair, helps him in the removal of
body hair, scratches his pustules from ringworm or prickly heat, anoints
him with oil, paints him with ngóla, and, in a word, performs all
the tasks connected with his appearance and hygiene.

Out of love for his favorite, her husband can buy her corpse
595x for the price of a slave (in kind or in money). By doing so he obtains
766 the right to have it buried beside his own while those of the other
wives must be buried with their native clans. That is why in some
regions a husband calls his favorite his ikundaka (from kunda "to bury").
Nevertheless, if her husband dies before she does, his heirs may not
trouble themselves about his wishes and no longer require that the
favorite be buried in their cemetery. That is what happened to
Bongóla of Bongíli, whose husband Ikilinganya of Bongangá (Boéndé)
had paid the price of two slaves for this right. When the husband has
●[224] killed large game, the favorite, like the bomátsa, has the right to
receive her personal predetermined portion (boando). Her part is the
neck or a chop, which in her absence, goes to the sons or their wives.
The other wives do not have the same right; each one obtains only
an ordinary piece (liondo).

624 customary manner, with a double clap. They are told by the *nkumu* to repeat the
salutation, and having done so may be asked to do it a third time. They are then
576 given a few rods in payment. If the *nkumu* sees some member of his own *ekopo*
coming to greet him, he gives him special honour by ordering him to lie flat on his
back instead of merely sitting, and at the end he gives him a larger gift of rods than
the others receive. In this way the *nkumu* may pay out a great many rods to those
who thus render him homage. Ordinarily a man will receive five or six, but one
624 specially honoured may be given as many as twenty. From the beginning the *nkumu*
has to pay heavily for his honours, and only a wealthy man can hope to attain them.
[556] For this reason a lawful successor, if not wealthy, may be glad to give up his rights
to another more fortunate member of the *ekopo*. Homage having been paid, word is
sent out that the *nkumu* is about to come forth, and crowds begin to gather. A coat
[302] of red camwood powder mixed with oil is smeared over the *nkumu*, the brass plates
are attached to his *montolo*, and he is attired in all his finery. The crowd outside
dances, and when tired sits on the ground to await the rest of the ceremony. Inside,
[533] the *lokombi* begins to play, the *nyemba* to sing, and the Batwa *ntotii* to praise the
nkumu by uttering an ululating sound. Accompanied by *Nsono*, *Bilepo*, and the
maomi, the *nkumu* himself begins to dance. The temporary protecting screen round
the *ipana* is pulled down, and he is seen by all. After his dance he retires again and
the crowd disperses.

When *Nkema Akuke* becomes *nkumu* he changes everything possible so as to
[481] become different from other men. Thus he assumes a different gait, a sort of bow-
legged waddle, a different tone of voice, and it seems that under this influence even
his facial features undergo a change. Accompanied by his retinue, he visits the
various villages where he has friends and relatives in order to greet them. This over,
the musicians wish to take their departure and are paid for their services by
the *nkumu*.

624 At the conclusion of these ceremonies the *nkumu* with his *ekopo* and the *molembe*
negotiate concerning their obligations to one another. If the *nkumu* is the first of his
596 line, he and his *ekopo* are given land to cultivate, while succeeding *nkumu* simply take
over the land originally accorded. The *molembe* call their *nkumu* their wife, and they
621 designate themselves husband. They thus reckon the relationship between *molembe*
and *ekopo* to be that of husband and wife, and, as in an actual marriage, there must
be an interchange of obligations performed in a spirit of harmony. Also, as in
marriage a wife may be divorced, so an *nkumu* with his *ekopo* could be sent off to their
home and the arrangement terminated. It not infrequently happened that as strangers
the *ekopo* fell out with their hosts and if such a disagreement could not be righted
they might be refunded the payments with which they had purchased their rights,
and sent off home.

224 Among the reciprocal obligations of *molembe* and *ekopo* are included the sharing
of certain animals and birds killed in the hunt, among which are the leopard and
624 elephant. All killed, whether male or female, must be divided. Of certain other
animals, including the wild pig, antelope, and buffalo, if a female, no portion is given,
621 if a male, the required portion is presented. These reciprocal obligations are limited
596 strictly to the *ekopa* and *molembe*; if others outside of these groups wish to present the
nkumu with meat to honour him or to curry favour, they may do so, but they are under

no compulsion. If one of the contracting parties fails to fulfil its pledges in this matter 224
of giving part of the kill, or in anything else, the aggrieved party may call the council
together. This consists not only of members of the *molembe* and *ekopo*, but of all 624
elders of the village or villages connected with this particular one. The party judged 596
in the wrong, whether *ekopo* or *molembe*, will be fined, the injured party receiving its 621
share, and both parties will be charged to live together harmoniously and observe
their contracts.

The power of the *nkumu* was apparently limited, and did not supersede that of 624
the *momene mokonda*. When trials came up, the aggrieved party might go either to the
momene mokonda or to the *nkumu*. If it was necessary to call the village elders together 695
about it, both these authorities were present at the hearing. First the young men of the group were allowed to give their verdict, then the old men, after that *momene mokonda* (or the *molomi o ehe*), and finally the *nkumu* was given the privilege of the last word. He would comment on the opinions of each of the judges, criticizing one young man, commending another, and then giving his own verdict, at which the group would assent by saying, 'Even so, grandfather'. The whole group of judges would then fix the fines, a double portion of which went to the *nkumu*.

The actual manual labour which an *nkumu* may do excludes anything endangering 624
life or limb, or requiring agility and speed. He may clear the bush for his gardens:
this is a man's work. He may take part in the building of his houses, but may do
no high work, and, among the inland groups, it is the work of the Batwa to put the [563]
roof on for him. The *nkumu* may also prepare pitfalls for catching game, but cannot engage in any other type of hunting or do any fishing. Digging a grave is prohibited, for, as we shall see, everything pertaining to death must be ignored by the *nkumu*.

Other rules affecting the daily life of the *nkumu* may be roughly divided into three: those affecting his person, those having to do with his food, and social regulations.

One of the great points of observance in the first class of regulations is the impor- 624
tance of the *montolo*. The *nkumu* must on no account be seen during daylight hours 292
with an uncovered head. If he wishes relief from the cumbersome *montolo* he may
take it off in the darkness of his house and put on an ordinary hat made of skins,
and when night falls he may walk where he will bareheaded if he so desires. The
skin hat, known as *louku*, may be made from two animals only, in the case of an [824]
nkumu, one being the *nkulupa*, a species of antelope with light-coloured hair, and the
other the *iyoko*, an animal resembling a beaver. The skin of the *nkulupa* may be used
by anyone, but the *iyoko* is reserved for the *nkumu* only with one exception. The skin
of the *iyoko* may also be used for the carrying strap for infants known as *nyamba*, [854]
which is worn over one shoulder in bandoleer fashion. For the *nkumu* the skin of the *iyoko* is limited to the informal hat, *louku*, and for making into the *lokoto*, a pouch used for carrying small objects and worn like a sporran. As a corollary to the importance of the *montolo* may be noted the importance attached to the head of the *nkumu*, which must never be seen uncovered in daylight.

The Bonginda *nkumu* never wash in the daytime, but may wash at night with hot 624
water. The inland *nkumu* never wash. Even the Bonginda *nkumu* never wash their
heads, and no *nkumu* ever cuts his hair. If the *nkumu* becomes too greatly incon- 515
venienced, one of his wives may delouse his head, but only within the privacy of the [184]
house, by the light that enters the rear opening.

Fishing

● M 226 Near rivers, swamps, and lakes, fishing is one of the principal occupations of the native.

M [462] Unlike hunting which is practiced only by men, fishing is done by both men and women. The latter, however, practice it only occasionally and fish only by damming up part of a river bed or marsh. The dam is usually built during the rainy season, but as long as the water is rising, the women leave all the sluices wide open. Toward the end of the rainy season, they narrow the drain channels and set large traps before the openings. These traps M 226 285 are attached to strong wooden stakes on the shore near the dam. The traps are made of splints from the ribs of raffia leaves and are plaited in openwork with the open spaces varying in size. The exterior form is always the same. Cylindrical at one end [85] and the other end closed along the diameter, the trap resembles a large cone ending in a line at the top. These traps are built over a framework made of two, three, or four hoops. Their diameters vary according to their positions. They are set inside the trap, the largest one at the base, the smallest one toward the upper end. The transverse elements, doubled and woven alternately in and out, are spaced 10 to 15 centimeters apart and are usually made of strips of rattan. The inner trap, or entry trap, is plaited in the shape of a broad fan, conical

S M [227 285]

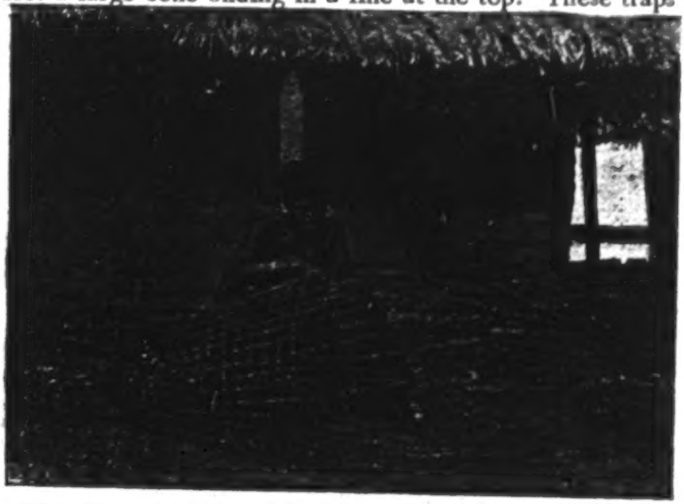


Fig. 52. Making a Fish Trap among the Wadia and Tumba.

in form, with an ellipsoidal base. The open top is the entrance hole. The ends of the splints overlap somewhat on the inside in order to prevent the trapped fish from retracing their paths and escaping. 226 285

These traps are made only by men. When the plaiting is done, the work is flat, and then the finished latticework is fastened to the frame. [462]

The trap is opened by detaching the binding that closes the top.

As the waters recede, a woman lowers the trap. Morning and evening she comes to inspect it and to gather the captured fish. [86] 226

When the waters have fully subsided, the women assemble and go up the river or into the swamp. Standing across the full width of the watercourse, they walk down, chasing before them the fish that remained in the dammed-off area. They make an earshattering din, slapping the water with broad sticks or churning it with arms and legs. The hunted and terrified fish flee wildly only to be caught eventually in the trap. If they try to break through the line of women, the latter do not hesitate to grab and fling them on the bank. [Ed., the text is not translated from the second paragraph, page 86, to the second paragraph, page 87.]

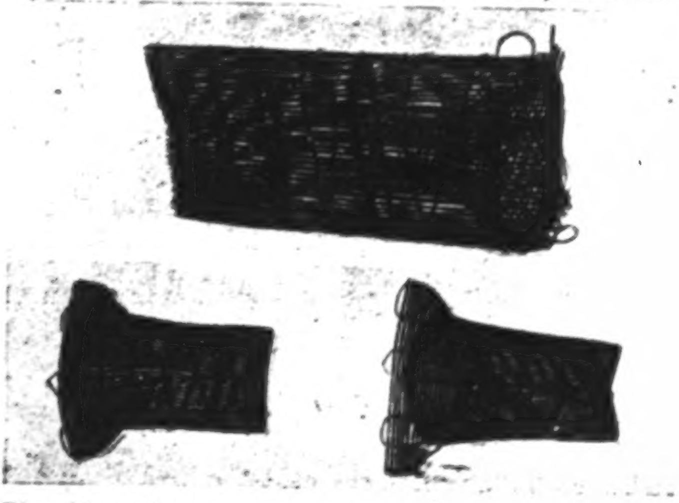


Fig. 53. Fish Traps used by the Peoples of Lake Leopold II.

[226
285]

Yaelima

●226 [87] After the drive through the dammed-off area, there are usually several fish remaining that succeeded in slipping through the chain. The women then take baskets and bail the pool dry, throwing the water over the dam.

Very often the women dam up part of a marsh or stream and bail out the water with baskets without setting traps or waiting for the water level to go down.

In all three cases we find: 1) setting the trap in front of the drain channel; 2) the drive in the dammed-up area; and 3) bailing out this section. The catch is divided equally among the women who participated in the work. [88]

These three methods of fishing prevail among all the riparian peoples of the Congo, Kasai, Fimi, Lake Leopold II, and the lower Lukenie.

On the upper Lukenie, starting with the Oshwe sector, no traps are made. At most the women occasionally dam up a section of the rivers and streams of the interior and bail them out with baskets to catch the fish.

226
184 The Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima do not fish at all. They are people of the forest and not of the water. Hunting is their chief occupation, and fishing is unknown to them.

In this connection, these tribes are wholly distinct from their neighbors to the west. It must be noted, however, that even among the latter all the clans do not engage in fishing. The groups of the interior do not fish any more than their brothers of the sector of Oshwe and Bumbuli. The traps and other contrivances which we shall discuss below are unknown to both groups. In this respect, all these peoples have a common characteristic, recalling their common origin. In the lower Lukenie and farther west, however, part of the population, the Bandzali, "people of the water," have adapted themselves to the new conditions of their environment. The river became for them a source of wealth and well-being, and a part of their social activity was oriented toward the exploitation of this precious resource.

226
258 At the present time fishing and the preparation of salt are practically the only means of subsistence and unquestionably the principal occupations of all the riparian groups in the region of Leopoldville, Kwamouth, Lake Leopold II, and the lower Lukenie.

226 258 Among all the tribes of this region, we were able to distinguish clearly between the groups of the interior, whose chief occupation is hunting, and the riparian groups who prefer to fish and make salt.

Two clans arose in this fashion within a single ethnic group. They both belong to the large family known by the name of the tribe, and yet they are completely different in the habits, practices, and customs relating to that aspect of their lives.

226 During the dry season, one sees the natives from villages located two or three hours' march into the interior come to establish camps on the [89] river bank and to set up veritable fisheries. The information that follows applies to these groups and to all the peoples from Leopoldville to the sector of Tolo inclusively. The rivers, lakes, and marshes in this region are extremely well stocked with fish. As a matter of interest, we give here the list of some native names for fish noted by Mr. Bayens and used by the Bandzali of the Tolo region: kinkure mbieme, lepari, ignognienge, mpushu, lokanga, itike, mokonga, n'sombo, loana, sabere, lboie, moelo, n'ikulu, m'binga, pesule, m'butu, mondja, mshime, moekiki, lupungu, ompara, m'vunu, longelenzali, monkie, komoe, ikeke, koshoie, nokama, singa, n'guikemen, m'pio, mwiki, ekambela, lekumu, elangu, evuya, mekamo, m'beli, motume, idzore, kebaie, kupu, mokeja, kevuni, mopa lekeje, mipari.

Aside from fishing with dams, these different groups fish both individually and communally.

Individual fishing is done by the following methods.

1) Fishing with hook and line, angling. The hook is made of a very fine splint of false bamboo, folded back and held in the shape of a hook by a fine raffia fiber. This raffia fiber extends on to form the fishing line. It is attached to a splint of bamboo which serves as a float. The native does not keep watch over his line. He fastens the lines with the hooks on them to a rope of twisted fibers. The lines are spaced 30 to 50 centimeters apart. The rope is 10 to 15 meters long and is attached to a stick at either end. The native plants two stakes in the river bed. He attaches the two ends of the rope to them, taking care that it is stretched perpendicularly to the current. The lines with float and hook are uncoiled, the bait consisting of a pellet of

● 226 chikwangue [Ed., manioc cake] or an earthworm is fastened to the hook, and everything is thrown into the water. Under the pressure of the current, the lines are drawn out and lie parallel to each other, held at one end by the large rope stretched over the water. A fish, attracted by the bait, seizes it and swallows it along with the hook, which remains in the stomach. All its efforts to free itself merely hooks the fish more securely. The native inspects the rope four or five times during the day and pulls in the lines one by one. The hooked fish is cut loose by severing the string from the hook; it is gutted and thrown into the canoe. [90] The hook is replaced with one held in reserve until the first one is recovered while cleaning the catch.

[227]
[285]

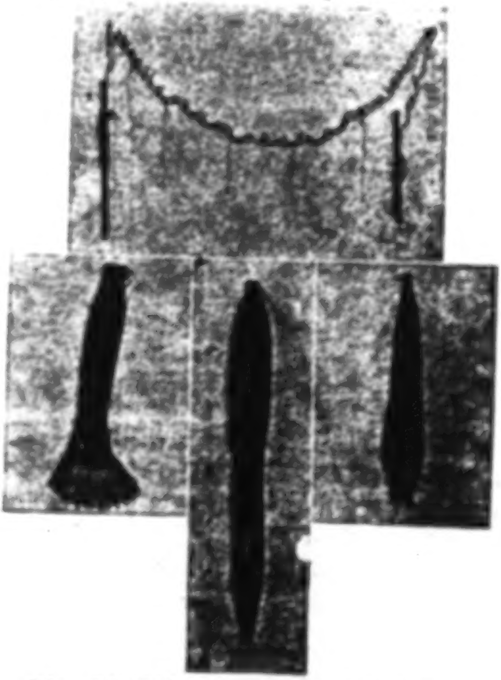


Fig. 54. Fish Traps and Lines, Lake Leopold II.

The native also fishes with a line on the bottom and an inert line without a float. The hook is larger and usually made of iron. The strong rope is coated with oil to make

it more durable. The bait, consisting of a piece of *chikwangue*, entirely covers the hook. The line is thrown into the water, weighted with stones, and attached to a stake on the bank. The native pulls in these lines only in the morning and at night. They are used only for large fish.

2) *Fishing with bow and arrow*. This is a method of fishing at which the natives excel. During the hot hours of the day, they settle themselves comfortably in their canoe among the grasses and wait patiently for a large fish to wander up to the surface of the water. Immediately, they bend the bow and shoot the arrow. They are fine shots and rarely miss their target. The fish is usually run through and impaled on the arrow. Hampered in its movements, it vainly tries to dive. The native puts down his bow, judges his spring, dives, grabs the fish, and climbs back into his canoe. [91]

3) *Harpoon fishing* is practiced especially for capturing fish that live in the mud. The native takes to this with real passion. Standing in his canoe, he lets himself be carried along by the current, advancing slowly so that no disturbance of the water will scare the fish. With a slow, regular, methodical motion, he plunges in his harpoon, guided by chance and his instinct. The jerks made by the harpooned fish trying to escape alert the experienced fisherman to his catch. He immediately increases the pressure, and then with a slow, regular, methodical motion he pulls up the harpoon, avoiding any abrupt motion that might detach the prize.

[41] The fishing harpoon is made of a bamboo shaft about 2.50 meters long onto which four wooden prongs are attached with bonds of rattan splints. At the tip of each of these four prongs is fastened an iron point which has four barbs and terminates in a conical socket.

4) *Fishing with a trap* placed at random in the grass of marshy banks. [92] The traps, made of rattan splints and with an opening that has spikes pointed toward the interior, vary in size, but they are all made by the same technique. The native puts bait inside and submerges the whole trap in the water. The fish, attracted by the bait, try to get it and enter the trap through the opening set on its side. This entrance, easy to negotiate from

the outside, bristles with spikes pointed toward the interior, which prevent the fish from leaving the trap. The shape of the traps for small fish is long, tubular, and narrow. They open at one end, and the entrance with spikes is set toward the middle of the trap. The traps for big fish have the shape of a truncated cone, with the top forming a straight line. The entrance, constructed on the same principle as that of the small traps, is set in the forward part, opening toward the interior. These traps are placed in front of the drain channels of dammed-up marshes and rivers. M 226

5) Fishing with a trap, usually set in waters with a strong current. The trap is in the shape of a cone, its movable base serving as a lid and its tip extended by a strong, flexible strip of rattan which acts as a spring. A liana is attached to the end of the rattan. A free-swinging, trapeze-like apparatus is tied to the body of the trap. The bait is attached to a rattan splint inside the trap. This splint is tied to a small, mobile crossbar on the trapeze. The liana tied to the end of the rattan spring is drawn inside the trap through one of the openings near the supporting hoop of the entrance and is attached to the movable lid. The trap is constructed in such a way that when it is not set, the lid is closed by the pull of the rattan spring. To set the trap, the native ties toward the middle of the liana a rattan splint to which a small stick is attached. The end (A) of the latter passes behind M 226 285

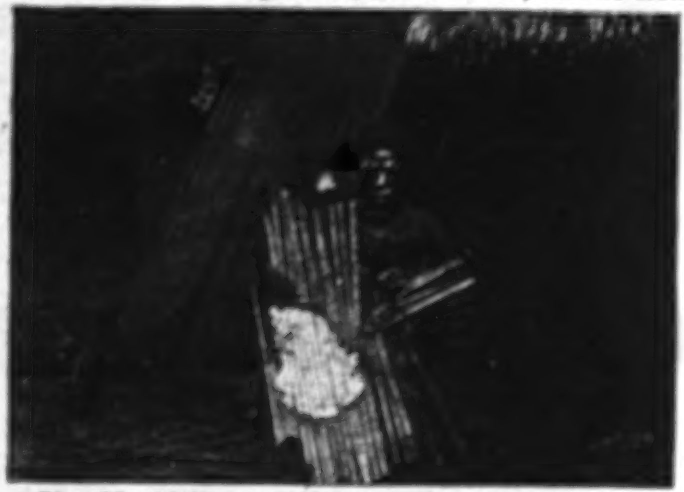


Fig. 55. Making a Fish Trap among the Bobale.

S [227 285]

M 226 285 the bar of the trapeze, and the point (B) is caught behind the mobile crossbar (C). To the latter the native ties a rattan splint, at the end of which he fastens the bait. This consists of a palm nut still covered with pulp. To reach the bait, the fish enters the trap; it takes the bait, pulls on it, and dislodges the triggering crossbar (C). The catches (A) and (B) are freed, the rattan spring is released, and the lid closes, trapping the fish. [93]

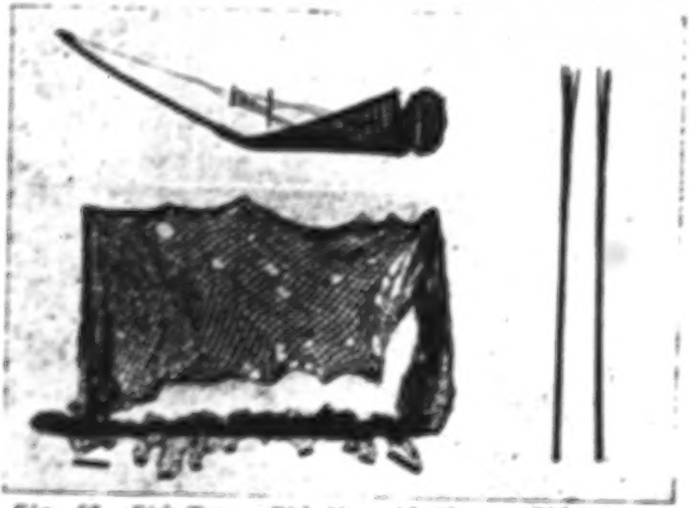


Fig. 56. Fish Trap. Fish Net with Floats. Fishing Harpoons from Lake Leopold II.

M 226 685 In individual fishing, the fish belong to the owner of the trap or to the person who set it. The native respects this right, and, moreover, custom punishes offenses very severely. Native law is rigorous to the point that a man caught red-handed in theft is liable to be driven from the community.

M 226 The yield from individual fishing is of hardly any importance. This kind of fishing is practiced only to vary the diet a little, and it is successful only because of the tremendous abundance of fish in these rivers.

M 5 226 Communal fishing is much more productive. Certain tribes, or to be more exact, certain families among the peoples of the Fimi, Lake Leopold II, and the lower Lukenie make a veritable

Sakata F043

SM 226 industry of it. This sort of thing flourishes especially among the riparian people in the country of the Basakata, Balesa, and Mosengere.

SM 226 361 In the region of the lower Fimi, as well as along the marshy banks of the lower Lulonga, native fishing camps are quite numerous. They are all of the same type and [94] never have the character of a permanent settlement. At the end of the rainy season one sees families of riparian peoples leave their villages temporarily and settle along the marshy rivers. Men and women make this move, while children, old people, and a few able-bodied adults stay in the village to guard the homes.

The fishing camps are set up in very rudimentary fashion. The huts are merely shelters, refuges.

SM [462] Gathering salt grass for making salt is the chief task of the women. The men do the fishing.

SM 226 All the methods for fishing individually are used, but the bulk of the work is done communally.

The procedures are quite varied. We will mention the following.

1) Damming the mouths of small rivers and minor tributaries, along with setting traps in front of the escape channel and the method of driving the fish described above.

SM [286 386] 2) Fishing with a net. Unlike the nets used for hunting, the fishing nets are made of raffia fibers. The type of knot is the same, but the technique is more like the one used for plaiting the hair. The native carefully dyes the fibers black in order to make the mesh invisible under water. He attaches small cylindrical sections of a very light wood to the upper part of the net to serve as floats. At the opposite edge, he attaches the sinkers, made of cylindrical pieces of baked clay. The floats and sinkers are made so that they counterbalance each other and maintain the net in a vertical position in the water. These nets are 20 to 25 meters long. If necessary, the natives use a series of nets and dam the whole river in this way. Five to ten men are stationed with large baskets along the nets. The women go up the river 100 to 200 meters, enter the water, and form a chain to drive the fish before them. These are caught in the meshes of the nets and attract the attention of the fishermen by the efforts they

S M 226 make to free themselves. The fishermen grab them and throw them in their baskets. [95]

Sometimes the natives enclose an area on the grassy banks, move into it, and search the grass for fish. If the fish try to break away for the main channel, they are caught in the meshes of the net.

3) Fishing with screens. This method is the most common. It is easier and more productive than the others. The screens are made of long splints of rattan or raffia, placed parallel to each other one or two centimeters apart. The cross elements of rattan are spaced from 20 to 30 centimeters apart. The height of the screens varies from 66 centimeters to 2.50 meters, and their length from 10 to 20 meters. These screens are used as dams in the river, marshes, coves, and at the mouths of small tributaries. They are fastened to stakes and sunk perpendicularly into the river bed. The natives set them up when the waters first begin to recede. A little upstream of the screens, they throw into the river a number of branches, still bearing their leaves, in such a fashion as to provide a shelter for the fish stopped by the screen. When the water is very low, the natives go a very great distance upstream. They enter the water, form a tight chain, and work methodically downstream toward the screen. All the fish are driven toward it. At 25 or 30 meters from the screen, the natives put another screen in the water. Some of the fishermen are assigned to hold it vertical. The others enter the enclosure formed by the two screens, take out the sheltering branches and grass, and begin to hunt the fish. They have openwork baskets shaped like a truncated cone. The fisherman, with the basket in front of him, sets it down on the river bed, the large opening toward the bottom. If a fish is trapped in the basket, the fisherman can tell by the light bumps against the sides caused by the fish trying to escape. The fisherman plunges his hand into the basket through the top opening, gropes about inside, seizes the fish, breaks its backbone, and throws it into the canoe or on the bank.

S M 251 The catch is carried to the temporary village, and the fish are gutted, cleaned, and thrown on the apparatus for smoking them. This is a [96] grid made with rattan of average thickness, which rests on crossbars placed on forked stakes planted in the ground.

S M The average height is 1.25 meters, the width 2.50 meters, and
251 the length five to ten meters. The women maintain a fire under this smoking-drying apparatus night and day. It is fed with grass and other rubbish, which are not very dry so that a great deal of smoke will be produced. All the fish are turned over twice a day. After eight to ten days the operation is finished. The dried, smoked fish are carefully wrapped after being sorted and graded according to size. Part of the fish will make up the family reserve, and the rest will be used as trade goods. When the grid

S
● M
● [226
285]

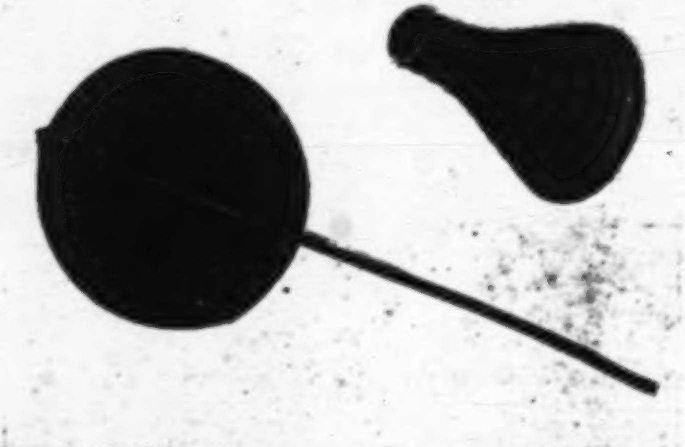


Fig. 57. Baskets for Fishing, Lake Leopold II.

is almost empty, the men go up the river and start fishing again.

S M It is difficult to realize the magnitude of this industry and the unbelievable quantities of fish caught by the natives during their
226 sojourn in the region of the salt grass. We watched one of these miraculous hauls one day, organized through the kind cooperation of Mr. Molin. The river had been dammed for only one night, the natives went up it only 150 [97] meters, this in the middle of the dry season, and yet they brought back four large baskets full of fish.

S M [illegible] The catch from communal fishing is shared at the end of the season. A part is reserved for the chief, the owners of the screens receive a special share, and the rest is divided among all the
008 members of the group participating in the enterprise. [Ed., a

Ntomba

paragraph beginning on page 97 and continued on page 98 is not translated.] 000

[98] On the whole, we note the following special ethnic characteristics. 241

1) Uniformity in the cultivation of manioc, the staple food of all of these peoples.

2) Undertaking the cultivation of maize under the influence of the ephemeral encouragement of Bula Matari [Ed., the European administration] among the peoples of the Congo-Kasai, and rice cultivation under Arab influence in the region of Bena Dibele-Kole. Contrary to what we noted concerning maize, the innovation introduced by the Arabs has become firmly implanted in the life of these natives, and the cultivation of rice will probably eliminate manioc eventually. 241 177

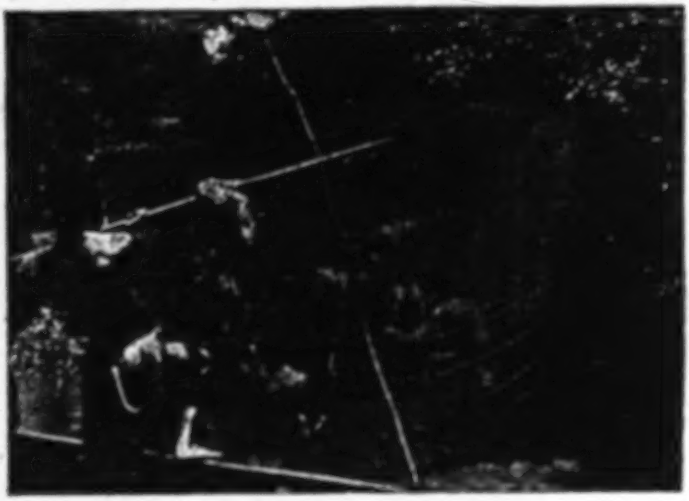


Fig. 58. Weir Fishing at a Dam among the Mosengere. Closing the Screens and Capturing the Trapped Fish.

[226]

3) Formation of a zone of sugar-cane cultivation, the development of which is in inverse proportion to the extent of the palm groves.

4) Complete absence of animal husbandry of any importance. 231

5) Uniformity in the methods of communal hunting and the gradual development of attendant religious customs and practices from east to west, corresponding to a decline in hunting by individuals with traditional weapons. This fact leads us to suppose 224 174

SAKATA FO43

Fishing

M 226 Near rivers, swamps, and lakes, fishing is one of the principal occupations of the native.

M [462] Unlike hunting which is practiced only by men, fishing is done by both men and women. The latter, however, practice it only occasionally and fish only by damming up part of a river bed or marsh. The dam is usually built during the rainy season, but as long as the water is rising, the women leave all the sluices wide open. Toward the end of the rainy season, they narrow the drain channels and set large traps before the openings. These traps are attached to strong wooden stakes on the shore near the dam. M 226 285 The traps are made of splints from the ribs of raffia leaves and are plaited in openwork with the open spaces varying in size. The exterior form is always the same. Cylindrical at one end [85] and the other end closed along the diameter, the trap resembles a large cone ending in a line at the top. These traps

S ● M ● [227 285]

Fig. 52. Making a Fish Trap among the Wadia and Tumba.

are built over a framework made of two, three, or four hoops. Their diameters vary according to their positions. They are set inside the trap, the largest one at the base, the smallest one toward the upper end. The transverse elements, doubled and woven alternately in and out, are spaced 10 to 15 centimeters apart and are usually made of strips of rattan. The inner trap, or entry trap, is plaited in the shape of a broad fan, conical

226 chikwangue [Ed., manioc cake] or an earthworm is fastened to the hook, and everything is thrown into the water. Under the pressure of the current, the lines are drawn out and lie parallel to each other, held at one end by the large rope stretched over the water. A fish, attracted by the bait, seizes it and swallows it along with the hook, which remains in the stomach. All its efforts to free itself merely hooks the fish more securely. The native inspects the rope four or five times during the day and pulls in the lines one by one. The hooked fish is cut loose by severing the string from the hook; it is gutted and thrown into the canoe. [90] The hook is replaced with one held in reserve until the first one is recovered while cleaning the catch.

● [227]
[285]

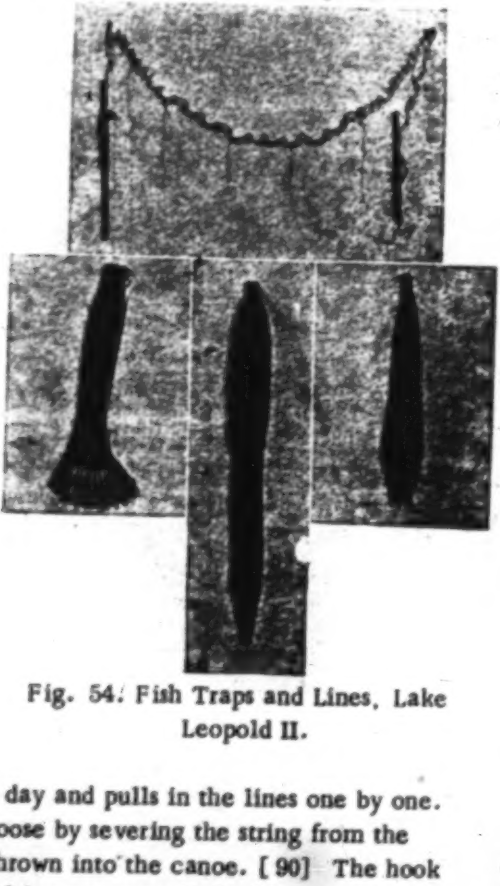


Fig. 54. Fish Traps and Lines, Lake Leopold II.

The native also fishes with a line on the bottom and an inert line without a float. The hook is larger and usually made of iron. The strong rope is coated with oil to make

592 among the Banfumu. [Ed., the remainder of the chapter, through page 54, is not translated.]

[55] Chapter 3

The Native's Means of Subsistence

Animal husbandry: chickens, goats, dogs. -- Agriculture: manioc, maize, rice, bananas, peanuts. -- Hunting: weapons, snares, nkisi, individual method, communal hunting. -- Fishing: general method, dams, basket weirs, traps, harpoons, bows and arrows, cord nets, screens.

● 231 The peoples of the Congo-Kasai-Lake Leopold II region and of the Lukenie do very little animal husbandry. They possess no large animals. At most one may find a few chickens, rare goats, and some hunting dogs in their villages. The dogs get a share of the game and live as best they can the rest of the time.

No care whatever is given to the goats. They wander freely during the day and graze in the forest or plain. Sometimes they venture into the planted fields, from which the hunting dogs chase them at first sight. At night they return to the village and take shelter where they will. During our stay in the village of Toipolo, [485] they even came and disturbed us at night while we were lodged in the hut reserved for strangers.

235 The chickens wander around the village and planted areas during the day and sleep [56] at night in the native's hut, where they have their nest for laying eggs and a place to hatch them.

262 439 435 The native does not eat the eggs. He sells them to agents of the state or of commercial concerns, who collect them for hatching. The chicken itself is rarely eaten by the native. Most often it goes to the kitchens of the Europeans. In 1913-14 the average price of a chicken was half a franc, that of an egg, five centimes, and the price of a goat was from five to 15 francs.

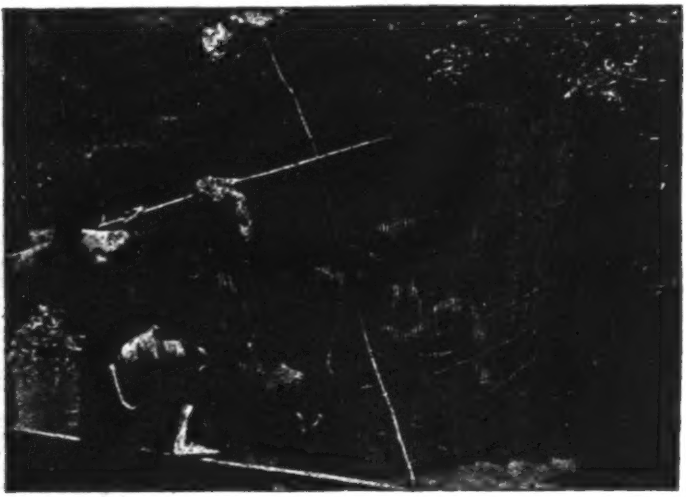
Ntomba

paragraph beginning on page 97 and continued on page 98 is not translated.] 000

[98] On the whole, we note the following special ethnic characteristics. 241

1) Uniformity in the cultivation of manioc, the staple food of all of these peoples.

2) Undertaking the cultivation of maize under the influence of the ephemeral encouragement of Bula Matari [Ed., the European administration] among the peoples of the Congo-Kasai, and rice cultivation under Arab influence in the region of Bena Dibele-Kole. Contrary to what we noted concerning maize, the innovation introduced by the Arabs has become firmly implanted in the life of these natives, and the cultivation of rice will probably eliminate manioc eventually. 241 177



[226]

Fig. 58. Weir Fishing at a Dam among the Mosengere. Closing the Screens and Capturing the Trapped Fish.

3) Formation of a zone of sugar-cane cultivation, the development of which is in inverse proportion to the extent of the palm groves.

4) Complete absence of animal husbandry of any importance. 231 ●

5) Uniformity in the methods of communal hunting and the gradual development of attendant religious customs and practices from east to west, corresponding to a decline in hunting by individuals with traditional weapons. This fact leads us to suppose 224 174

101
619
[825]

recollection of an animal of the leopard family which they call bokonga. Their description of it corresponds to the lion. Some soldiers and other expatriates, who were also young people, shown representations of a lion immediately identified it with their bokonga.

The groups under discussion here lived for a time on the banks of the Luwo (Maringa) and the [11] upper Ikelemba, (1) then under

[173] 1. It appears that between the Ikelemba and its tributary the Losálifa, there is still a bonkom tree called w'ãmenga (of bald heads) under which, according to tradition, the ancestors held their councils. Nearby there is a bosáú whose fruits never ripen.

pressure from other Móngo tribes, they crossed the Tshuapa-Ruki. They evicted the Ekonda and settled in their present location. This exodus must have taken place a fairly long time ago; it is impossible to determine the date and difficult to make any estimates. In any case it must have occurred 150 to 200 years ago.

244 These peoples are primarily farmers; they grow chiefly bananas, manioc, yams, colocasia [taro], sweet potatoes, sugar cane, and various vegetables and condiments. The food crops they grow, together with what they gather and the Elaeis palm trees provide them with a continuous and abundant food supply, as long as elephants do ● [231] not interfere. Their domestic animals include chickens, goats, and 224 dogs. (2) Hunting is a pleasant change of activity rather than an

[177] 2. Ducks have been introduced fairly recently, but they were known long before colonial times. They came from the south. Sheep have been introduced only in the last few decades, and they are found only in a few villages on the river banks in the lowlands.

583* generally packed in baskets or [151] in bẹngonjọ (or bẹtẹtẹ), which
431 are baskets woven of palm leaves.

Some ethnologists have introduced the expression douaire, "dowry," (1) to designate the goods given by the woman's family to

1. See for example Torday, in Africa, Vol. 2, no. 3, p. 279.

the man's family. Actually, the word dot would be a much better translation, because it corresponds more closely to the nature of these payments. But this would require changing the terminology adopted, and the introduction of another term (such as marriage payment) for what is generally understood by the word dot, whose use is in any case unfortunate. [Translator's note: Hulstaert uses dot, which would literally be translated into English as "dowry," to designate the payments made by the husband and his family to the wife's family. However, I have employed the term "bride price" in accordance with the usage of English-speaking anthropologists.]

Furthermore, the word douaire already has a precise and accepted meaning, so that its use in this context would lead to confusion. That is why I prefer provisionally to use an entirely new term, and to translate nkọmf as contre-dot [literally, counter-dowry]. (2)

2. This term was suggested to me by Attorney General A. Sohier.

[Translator's note: The term "dowry" has been used to designate this payment in the translation.]

The nkọmf consists of hens, ducks (3), salt, mats, pots, gourds

● [231]
[177]

3. Ducks have been introduced fairly recently; the Nkundó maintain that their ancestors did not have any, and that they got them from the Ekonda. In their classification they place them under the category of chickens.

592 among the Banfumu. [Ed., the remainder of the chapter, through page 54, is not translated.]

[55] Chapter 3

The Native's Means of Subsistence

Animal husbandry: chickens, goats, dogs. -- Agriculture: manioc, maize, rice, bananas, peanuts. -- Hunting: weapons, snares, *nkisi*, individual method, communal hunting. -- Fishing: general method, dams, basket weirs, traps, harpoons, bows and arrows, cord nets, screens.

231 The peoples of the Congo-Kasai-Lake Leopold II region and of the Lukenie do very little animal husbandry. They possess no large animals. At most one may find a few chickens, rare goats, and some hunting dogs in their villages. The dogs get a share of the game and live as best they can the rest of the time.

No care whatever is given to the goats. They wander freely during the day and graze in the forest or plain. Sometimes they venture into the planted fields, from which the hunting dogs chase them at first sight. At night they return to the village and take shelter where they will. During our stay in the village of Toipolo, [485] they even came and disturbed us at night while we were lodged in the hut reserved for strangers.

235 The chickens wander around the village and planted areas during the day and sleep [56] at night in the native's hut, where they have their nest for laying eggs and a place to hatch them.

262 439 435 The native does not eat the eggs. He sells them to agents of the state or of commercial concerns, who collect them for hatching. The chicken itself is rarely eaten by the native. Most often it goes to the kitchens of the Europeans. In 1913-14 the average price of a chicken was half a franc, that of an egg, five centimes, and the price of a goat was from five to 15 francs.

862 does not really stop nursing till it is about two years old, and sometimes two and a half if it has a weak constitution.

Weaning is not accompanied by any ceremony or feast. In order to break the child's habit, the mother smears her nipples [824] with the sap of the lifété fruit (a kind of small sweet pimento or eggplant) or with a pimento-pepper extract (imbénga). Sometimes she leaves the child with some relative (daughter, sister, etc.) for a time [498] while she lives elsewhere.

As we have seen above, after weaning, the ekelɛ́-bokeka period comes to an end for the mother, and her infidelities no longer have repercussions on the life of her child.

[853] 8) If the mother dies while the infant is still being nursed, [563] the task of nursing is turned over to some woman who is disposed to undertake it even a Botswa, and there always is one. After the child is weaned the woman is suitably recompensed. The use of ●[235] goat's milk is unknown.

854 751 [153] 9) Young children frequently suffer convulsions. This illness is thought to be caused by hawks, and for that reason it is called mpulú (bird). The Nkundó try to prevent it by hanging an amulet around children's necks; it is usually the clavicular triangle of a hen's carcass. In addition they know a remedy whose purpose is to strengthen the nerves: the child is laid on a mat stretched out anywhere on the roof of the hut. An eyewash (bolɔ́ɔ́) is prepared from the sap of leaves from the litɔ́yansombo bush and extract of mbɔ́lɛ́ (fruit of the bosoombɔ́). Using a leaf shaped into a horn, a few drops are put into the child's eyes. Then the father or some other relative pulls out the mat from under the child and lifts it several times, shouting: tɛ́ tɛ́ tɛ́.

856 10) No special importance is attached to teething. But a child whose upper teeth come in before the lower ones (a defect called ingondo) is considered abnormal. Therefore he is forbidden to eat the first fruits of hunting or fishing in an enclosure (mpao), lest the latter lose their productivity.

586x 789 especially very early in the morning at the crowing of the cock. (1)

1. The natives also use this means to call their children who long ago left for the "lowlands" and whose return they ardently desire.

If the one who is called does not return, the charm will take revenge either on her or on her lover, depending on the desire of the person operating it. Another intervention on his part is then required, however, and it varies according to the form used. Note that according to the native view it is impossible for the wife not to hear the call, no matter how far away she may be. If she does not return, it is because she is being obstinate and deserves to be punished.

The spirit of vengeance alone is involved in:

586x 754 [237] 2) The ngondɛ́. This charm comes from the Coquilhatville region or even further away. The word ngondɛ́ is the Lolíngá form of the Lonkundó word nkondɛ́, which means "gavial." The teeth of this reptile actually play a part in its composition. It is used to punish any thief by death. Therefore it has been declared effective against anyone who tries to seduce the wife of another. It will cause the culprit's feet to swell and to open with pus. Like the above practices, this one has not yet crossed Momboyo.

832 177 Such usages like many others have therefore been recently introduced. Before the arrival of Europeans in these parts, only love philters were known. However, it is easily understandable that the Nkundó gladly and confidently received these new practices which are so useful -- in their opinion -- and operate in a domain of capital importance for which colonization has deprived them of their ancient sanctions and means of prevention. [417]

4/2
241
[462] When new fields are prepared, the first work of clearing them falls to the men. This work is done with a knife and an ax. The shape of this latter tool is the same among all the tribes: a wooden handle with a bulge at one end like a club; and a long, narrow, triangular piece of iron embedded laterally in the handle.

After clearing the brush, the men pile the rubbish at the feet of the large trunks and set it on fire. The tree, undermined at its base, finally topples over and remains where it falls.

[462] The women take charge of the other work of cultivation. This varies [57] very little from tribe to tribe, and even the various crops of manioc, maize, peanuts, rice, bananas, and sugar cane require only quite rudimentary special labor.

244
4/2 Manioc is the staple food of the tribes over most of the region we visited. The native cultivates both sweet and bitter manioc. The latter variety is the more widespread. To prepare the ground, the native woman uses an iron hoe, triangular in shape, with a flaring base and a spike at the top. This piece of iron is embedded laterally in a rough-hewn wooden handle which bulges at the end like a club. The purpose of the club-like end is twofold: it provides a better hold for the piece of iron, and it intensifies

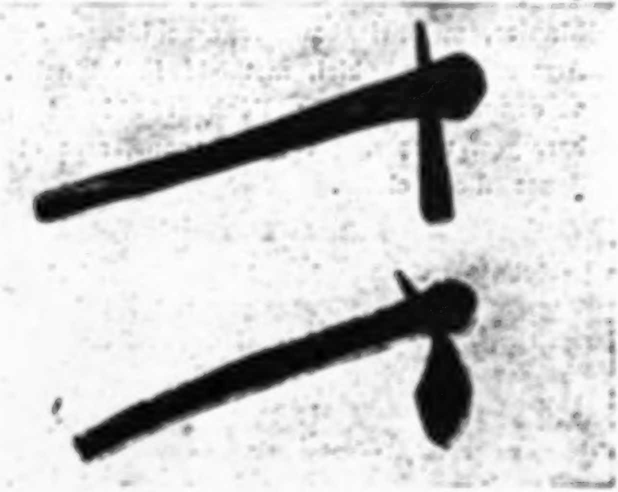


Fig. 37. Ax and Hoe from Lake Leopold II-Lukenie.

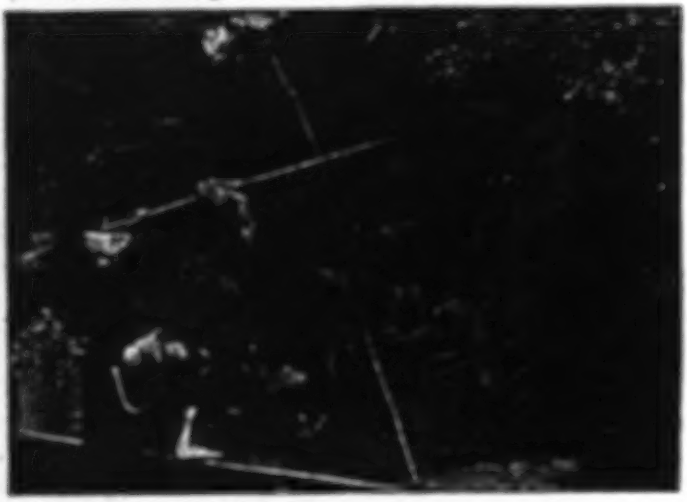
Ntomba

paragraph beginning on page 97 and continued on page 98 is not translated.] 080

[98] On the whole, we note the following special ethnic characteristics. 24/●

1) Uniformity in the cultivation of manioc, the staple food of all of these peoples.

2) Undertaking the cultivation of maize under the influence 241/177



[225]

Fig. 58. Weir Fishing at a Dam among the Mosengere. Closing the Screens and Capturing the Trapped Fish.

of the ephemeral encouragement of Bula Matari [Ed., the European administration] among the peoples of the Congo-Kasai, and rice cultivation under Arab influence in the region of Bena Dibele-Kole. Contrary to what we noted concerning maize, the innovation introduced by the Arabs has become firmly implanted in the life of these natives, and the cultivation of rice will probably eliminate manioc eventually.

3) Formation of a zone of sugar-cane cultivation, the development of which is in inverse proportion to the extent of the palm groves.

4) Complete absence of animal husbandry of any importance. 23/

5) Uniformity in the methods of communal hunting and the gradual development of attendant religious customs and practices from east to west, corresponding to a decline in hunting by individuals with traditional weapons. This fact leads us to suppose 224/776

101 619 [825] recollection of an animal of the leopard family which they call bokonga. Their description of it corresponds to the lion. Some soldiers and other expatriates, who were also young people, shown representations of a lion immediately identified it with their bokonga.

The groups under discussion here lived for a time on the banks of the Luwo (Maringa) and the [11] upper Ikelemba, (1) then under

[173] 1. It appears that between the Ikelemba and its tributary the Losflifa, there is still a bonkom tree called w'āmenga (of bald heads) under which, according to tradition, the ancestors held their councils. Nearby there is a bosfé whose fruits never ripen.

pressure from other Móngo tribes, they crossed the Tshuapa-Ruki. They evicted the Ekonda and settled in their present location. This exodus must have taken place a fairly long time ago; it is impossible to determine the date and difficult to make any estimates. In any case it must have occurred 150 to 200 years ago.

● 241 These peoples are primarily farmers; they grow chiefly bananas, manioc, yams, colocasia [taro], sweet potatoes, sugar cane, and various vegetables and condiments. The food crops they grow, together with what they gather and the Elaeis palm trees provide them with a continuous and abundant food supply, as long as elephants do [231] not interfere. Their domestic animals include chickens, goats, and 224 dogs. (2) Hunting is a pleasant change of activity rather than an

[177] 2. Ducks have been introduced fairly recently, but they were known long before colonial times. They came from the south. Sheep have been introduced only in the last few decades, and they are found only in a few villages on the river banks in the lowlands.

[92] THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE MONGO NEGRO

INDUSTRY

241 One might say that nature throws into the lap of the Mongo
461 Negro everything he needs in order to exist so that he does not have
181 to exert himself in the slightest to get it. Generally speaking, he has only to look for his food in the forest, to pick it up from the ground as it were, with the exception of his bananas, manioc roots, and moma (a yam that, if it is prepared well, reminds one of potatoes) which are cultivated by his women. Hence, it is quite natural that one finds little industry among the Mongo, and that the Mongo Negro is not prepared to put the least effort into developing or perfecting in any way that centuries-old industry which already exists.

461 He can eat, and that is the main thing as far as he is concerned.

A lazy, inert people, effeminate to the core, each one merely
181 living on the efforts of his many wives and female slaves, cannot have a highly developed industry.

In general, except for hunting which is undertaken primarily by the young men of the village, the Mongo Negro does not bother about anything. Eating, sleeping, looking for and listening to quarrels, carousing at gatherings with sugar-cane beer until they are picked up in a drunken state by their wives (a spectacle one also sees in civilized Europe), this is the dreary, monotonous, drowsy life of the Mongo Negro, one of the least culturally developed but at the same time one of the most highly interesting tribes of the Evenaar district if not of the whole Congo.

He loathes and despises work and is indolence personified.

461- Notwithstanding the extreme idleness of the Mongo [93] people,
462 they do have some of the industry that is necessary for their existence. However, it is on a low level and not widespread. In general, the existing industries are carried on by either the men or the women, and a man will never undertake a job belonging to the women, and vice versa. The work is not done in groups or in family units; where a branch of an industry exists, it is the concern of a single person unless more workers are necessary in order to carry out the work.

M
245 Next to manioc, bananas occupy the first rank among the native crops, at least among the peoples of Lake Leopold II, the [59] lower Lukenie, and the region between the Congo and the Kasai. Among the tribes of the upper Lukenie, cultivation of banana trees is less developed, and in the Bena Dibele-Kole region it is almost completely absent.

The natives prefer to cultivate the large banana. It is less juicy and more floury than the small one and yields larger crops. The banana groves are always set up near the village and most often directly behind the dwellings. It follows that these groves have the general shape of the village and, in a way, frame it.

Banana trees, in order to thrive, must be planted in very fertile soil which has been well cleared and deeply turned. To promote their growth and increase their yield, the natives dump into the banana groves all the waste from the kitchen, ordure, ashes, and sweepings from the regular cleaning of the village and huts. They also go into the groves to answer the calls of nature.

Fig. 39. Hut for the Nkisi of the Hunt and a Banana Tree with Flower and Fruit, Village of Madjuku, Bobaie Tribe.

S
[346]

M
[574]

M
● 243 Maize is not cultivated on an important scale. Beyond the post at Tolo, maize seems to be completely unknown. Among

Teke FI33

M
●243 the peoples of the Fimi, Lake Leopold II, and the lower Lukenie, the cultivation of maize is quite rudimentary. On the other hand, we encountered large fields of maize among the Bateke and
T
[243
439] especially among the Banfumu of the Kapanda territories. It is well to note, however, that the intense cultivation of maize in that region was not due to any direct use of it by the native, but to the hope of selling it profitably to the traders and workers of Leopoldville-Kinshasa.

Maize is sown in seed holes, 30 to 60 centimeters apart. The holes are dug in cleared ground as the rainy season draws near. The maize shoots appear after four days. At this time the plants are quite vulnerable to the depredations of birds. The children keep watch over the fields from morning to night for four or five days and drive the birds away with their cries.

Care of the crop includes weeding and thinning out the plants. Maize is neither hoed nor propped. It is sometimes sown as an extra crop in manioc fields. The maturity of maize is marked by the yellow, dry spathes. The harvest takes place some time after its maturity. The maize stalks are pulled out by the women and children, and the ears are cut off on the spot and carried to the village. [60]

The cultivation of rice is unknown in the region we visited, except among the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region. The ground is hoed before sowing. The rice is sown in seed holes during the first quarter of the rainy season. The care of the fields is limited to two or three weedings during the initial stage of the plant's growth. The crop must be guarded regularly and uninterruptedly from morning to night from flowering to harvest. The rice is cut with knives, ear by ear. The ears are gathered by the handful. These are put in loose sheaves and, after several days, piled in stacks. The threshing is done in the village
M
[412] by family groups. The native chooses a large, well-beaten area and uses long rods. Husking is done with a pestle in a wooden mortar. The husked rice is winnowed in baskets of rattan splints, which are circular and shallow with a reinforced rim. The average yield varies between 2,000 and 3,500 kilograms per hectare.

M
●243 The cultivation of rice serves less to nourish the native than for trade. He usually sells his harvest immediately after the husking.

T
M
244 Peanuts thrive in the region of the Banfumu and among the Bankumbu. They grow best in light soil and are not suitable for land cleared from the great forest. The crop demands a great
T
M
[462] deal of care and regular upkeep. Fields invaded by weeds yield nothing. The harvest takes place when the crop is mature and is the task of the women with the help of the children. The peanuts are placed in baskets carried on the back and taken to the village. The native spreads them out in the sun to dry. He turns them again and again, two or three times a day, and brings them into the hut at night.

M
249 Sugar-cane plantations are set up in marshy lowlands.

[462] All the work on this crop falls to the men. These plantations are found only in regions where the natives make masanga, sugar-
[273] cane beer. Sugar-cane fields are especially numerous in the villages on the lower Lukenie and the Fimi.

M
244 As a rule the natives also cultivate a few legumes, sweet potatoes, and yams, but on a small scale and without giving them any particular care. [61]

Hunting

M
224
462 Hunting is practiced only by men. They engage in it, not for sport, diversion, or relaxation, but for the sole purpose of procuring meat and fat.

M
224
857 From their earliest childhood, the boys get together to beat the grass and catch mice, rats, and other rodents which swarm in the bush. Nothing is more interesting than to see them at work. Ten, fifteen, or sometimes twenty of them form a large circle. Armed with sticks, they beat the grass and make an unbelievable din. Little by little the circle narrows, moving in on a small well-cleared space. The oldest, most daring and most agile of the boys keep watch over this space, their eyes alert and riveted on the edge of the grass, ready to pounce. The beaters redouble their zeal, strike, shout, gesture, and gradually drive all the rodents

Dengese FO16
Teke FI 33

M
D
252

the mixture is stirred vigorously. This produces a sort of soft bread called kifunge by the natives. The Bankutshu and Basongo-Meno also use maize or millet flour to make kifunge. Both are ground in the large mortars used to make manioc flour and are sifted through the basketwork sieves.

M
D
[264]

Kifunge is always eaten hot. The housewife serves it on a wooden plate previously rubbed with palm oil.

We thus see that the peoples of the Bena Dibele region are differentiated from the other tribes not only by their way of making manioc flour and the shape of the utensils used, mortar, pestle, sieve, and pottery, but also by the special use made of manioc flour and the use of maize and millet flour in making kifunge. There are then, in this respect, two ethnic groups which seem to be quite different from each other. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to determine whether kifunge is truly indigenous to the civilization of [128] these natives or was introduced by the Basonge-Baluba peoples of the Sankuru-Lubefu. When questioned on this subject, the natives sometimes told us that they had always made kifunge, while some old men claimed that kifunge was still unknown during their childhood.

Fig. 73. Bateke Pulverizing Manioc.

T
[252
415
301
516]

M
T
243

As we have noted, the peoples west of the Bena Dibele-Kole region cultivate maize. This crop is of secondary importance, except in the region of the Banfumungu of Kapanda and Engrei.

M
T
243
252

Maize gathered before maturity is eaten raw or roasted over a low fire. The ears which are allowed to ripen on the stalk are carefully shelled, the kernels ground in a wooden mortar with a cylindrical pestle, and the flour is winnowed or passed through a sieve.

M
T
252
412

The mortar used to make maize flour is made from a section of a tree trunk, with a rectangular opening hollowed in the outer surface and perpendicular to the axis of the trunk. These mortars are very crude, poorly worked, and quite rudimentary. Besides these, one sometimes find others which are better made, small cubes provided with a lug or a liana. Let us note, however, that among the Banfumu southeast of Tua we found a mortar of similar shape which the natives used to prepare vegetables.

M
[252
415
291
854]

Fig. 74. Batitu Women Shelling Maize and Preparing Vegetables.

The sieves used for maize flour in this region are also a special type. The sides are made in an open weave. The general form resembles that of a large bottle with a square bottom, cylindrical body, constricted neck, and slightly flared rim.

M
T
252

The housewife mixes the maize flour with palm oil to form a somewhat thick dough. She wraps it carefully in leaves and boils it for 10 to 15 minutes. This dish, the mokwoſ of the Basakata-Mosengere, is served very hot, usually seasoned a little

4/2 241 [462] When new fields are prepared, the first work of clearing them falls to the men. This work is done with a knife and an ax. The shape of this latter tool is the same among all the tribes: a wooden handle with a bulge at one end like a club; and a long, narrow, triangular piece of iron embedded laterally in the handle.

After clearing the brush, the men pile the rubbish at the feet of the large trunks and set it on fire. The tree, undermined at its base, finally topples over and remains where it falls.

[462] The women take charge of the other work of cultivation. This varies [57] very little from tribe to tribe, and even the various crops of manioc, maize, peanuts, rice, bananas, and sugar cane require only quite rudimentary special labor.

● 244 4/2 Manioc is the staple food of the tribes over most of the region we visited. The native cultivates both sweet and bitter manioc. The latter variety is the more widespread. To prepare the ground, the native woman uses an iron hoe, triangular in shape, with a flaring base and a spike at the top. This piece of iron is embedded laterally in a rough-hewn wooden handle which bulges at the end like a club. The purpose of the club-like end is twofold: it provides a better hold for the piece of iron, and it intensifies

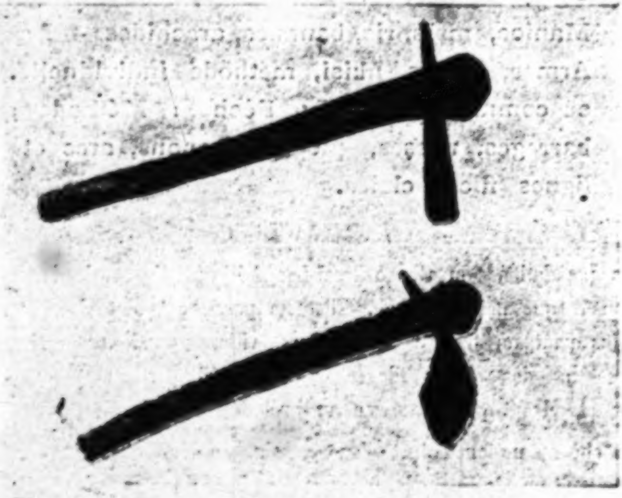


Fig. 37. Ax and Hoe from Lake Leopold II-Lukenie.

Yaelima

244

the worker's efforts without, however, making the use of the tool too tiring. 4/2

After the first hoeing, the woman makes little mounds, 30 centimeters high on the average and spaced about 80 centimeters apart, and inserts four or five manioc cuttings into them. 244

The upkeep of the manioc fields is limited to one or two [58] hoeings to remove the weeds. Manioc requires extremely fertile soil. Its cultivation exhausts the soil to such a point that after three or four years the native must move his fields and abandon the cleared land.

Sweet manioc attains its maximum development at the end of a year, bitter manioc after 15 or 20 months.

Fig. 38. Initial Establishment of the Village of Longinpila in a Clearing, Batitu Tribe.

The manioc tubers or roots are gathered as the family needs them. The root is good to eat at any stage of growth and at any time of year. The maximum yield coincides with the maximum growth of the plant and not with its full maturity. The average yield varies between 12,000 and 14,000 kilograms per hectare. The native woman does not wait until the plants are fully developed to start exploiting the crop. She limits her harvest to a strict minimum throughout the rainy season. At this time the manioc, swollen with water, yields only a little flour and is easily spoiled by soaking.

Teke FI33

M 243 The cultivation of rice serves less to nourish the native than for trade. He usually sells his harvest immediately after the husking.

T M 244 Peanuts thrive in the region of the Banfumu and among the Bankutshu. They grow best in light soil and are not suitable for land cleared from the great forest. The crop demands a great T M [462] deal of care and regular upkeep. Fields invaded by weeds yield nothing. The harvest takes place when the crop is mature and is the task of the women with the help of the children. The peanuts are placed in baskets carried on the back and taken to the village. The native spreads them out in the sun to dry. He turns them again and again, two or three times a day, and brings them into the hut at night.

M 249 Sugar-cane plantations are set up in marshy lowlands.

[462] [273] All the work on this crop falls to the men. These plantations are found only in regions where the natives make masanga, sugar-cane beer. Sugar-cane fields are especially numerous in the villages on the lower Lukenie and the Fimi.

M 244 As a rule the natives also cultivate a few legumes, sweet potatoes, and yams, but on a small scale and without giving them any particular care. [61]

Hunting

M 224 462 Hunting is practiced only by men. They engage in it, not for sport, diversion, or relaxation, but for the sole purpose of procuring meat and fat.

M 224 857 From their earliest childhood, the boys get together to beat the grass and catch mice, rats, and other rodents which swarm in the bush. Nothing is more interesting than to see them at work. Ten, fifteen, or sometimes twenty of them form a large circle. Armed with sticks, they beat the grass and make an unbelievable din. Little by little the circle narrows, moving in on a small well-cleared space. The oldest, most daring and most agile of the boys keep watch over this space, their eyes alert and riveted on the edge of the grass, ready to pounce. The beaters redouble their zeal, strike, shout, gesture, and gradually drive all the rodents

273 a sort of large basin resembling a canoe, two or four beating paddles, a strong stationary bar, a pressing apparatus made of lianas, a storage vat, and calabashes.

244 Sugar cane is grown communally on a rather large scale. [148] The natives cut it shortly before it is fully ripe. Men, women, and children participate in this work. The whole harvest is carried to the brewery shed. The sugar cane, cut in pieces, is thrown into the mash tub, and two or sometimes four men crush it as much as possible with large beetles, reducing it to a sort of whitish pulp. When this pulp is sufficiently thin, the natives put it in the press made of lianas, which is attached so as to hang under the bar and over the vat. To keep the press from coiling up as a result of the twisting, they insert a stick in it perpendicular to the bar. Two men vigorously twist the press, squeezing out every last drop of the sweet juice. The liquid is caught in the vat and then poured into large calabashes and carried to the village. Masanga is truly pleasant, refreshing, and delicious when it is fresh. It has no intoxicating effect. The natives, however, do not drink it until it has fermented. They add to it the bark of a small plains shrub, put the waste from the sugar cane around the calabashes, and expose them to the sun for one or two days to induce very active fermentation.

Sugar-cane beer is always imbibed communally.

All the important ceremonies are accompanied by heavy drinking. Marriage, birth, death, burial, the return from important hunts, the appearance of the new moon, a visit from a neighboring chief, and even our arrival in certain villages are all reasons for organizing big native celebrations where the emptying of great numbers of calabashes of masanga is the order of the day. The natives gather in the shade of the big trees in the village or under the public shelter. The calabashes of masanga are set in the center or poured into big pots. Everyone drinks as much as he wants, as long as there is any left and as long as he can. Meanwhile, the music is in full swing, and there is singing and dancing. Hemp is very often smoked, and the drinking always continues up to the point of brutish drunkenness. It is hard to realize what enormous quantities of this heady beverage some natives can imbibe. Pokei, the Banfumungu chief at Engrei,

M
245
[59] Next to manioc, bananas occupy the first rank among the native crops, at least among the peoples of Lake Leopold II, the lower Lukenie, and the region between the Congo and the Kasai. Among the tribes of the upper Lukenie, cultivation of banana trees is less developed, and in the Bena Dibele-Kole region it is almost completely absent.

The natives prefer to cultivate the large banana. It is less juicy and more floury than the small one and yields larger crops. The banana groves are always set up near the village and most *often directly behind the dwellings*. It follows that these groves have the general shape of the village and, in a way, frame it.

Banana trees, in order to thrive, must be planted in very fertile soil which has been well cleared and deeply turned. To promote their growth and increase their yield, the natives dump into the banana groves all the waste from the kitchen, ordure, ashes, and sweepings from the regular cleaning of the village and huts. They also go into the groves to answer the calls of nature.

S
[346]

Fig. 39. Hut for the Nkisi of the Hunt and a Banana Tree with Flower and Fruit, Village of Madjuku, Bobaie Tribe.

M
[574]

M
243
Maize is not cultivated on an important scale. Beyond the post at Tolo, maize seems to be completely unknown. Among

Teke FI33

M 243 The cultivation of rice serves less to nourish the native than for trade. He usually sells his harvest immediately after the T husking.

M 244 Peanuts thrive in the region of the Banfumu and among the Bankutshu. They grow best in light soil and are not suitable for land cleared from the great forest. T The crop demands a great deal of care and regular upkeep. M Fields invaded by weeds yield [462] nothing. The harvest takes place when the crop is mature and is the task of the women with the help of the children. The peanuts are placed in baskets carried on the back and taken to the village. The native spreads them out in the sun to dry. He turns them again and again, two or three times a day, and brings them into the hut at night.

M ● 249 Sugar-cane plantations are set up in marshy lowlands.

[462] All the work on this crop falls to the men. These plantations are found only in regions where the natives make masanga, sugar- [273] cane beer. Sugar-cane fields are especially numerous in the villages on the lower Lukenie and the Fimi.

M 244 As a rule the natives also cultivate a few legumes, sweet potatoes, and yams, but on a small scale and without giving them any particular care. [61]

Hunting

M 224 Hunting is practiced only by men. They engage in it, not for 462 sport, diversion, or relaxation, but for the sole purpose of procuring meat and fat.

M 224 From their earliest childhood, the boys get together to beat 857 the grass and catch mice, rats, and other rodents which swarm in the bush. Nothing is more interesting than to see them at work. Ten, fifteen, or sometimes twenty of them form a large circle. Armed with sticks, they beat the grass and make an unbelievable din. Little by little the circle narrows, moving in on a small well-cleared space. The oldest, most daring and most agile of the boys keep watch over this space, their eyes alert and riveted on the edge of the grass, ready to pounce. The beaters redouble their zeal, strike, shout, gesture, and gradually drive all the rodents

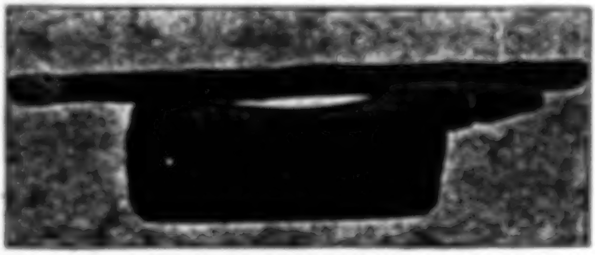
We did not find this particular kind of pottery beyond the Batete area. The Ipanga-Yaelima, as well as the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu, do not seem to be aware of its existence and, in any case, do not use it. [136] 415

I come now to the important subject of palm oil. We have already noted how frequently the native housewife uses it in preparing meals. This oil takes the place of the butter and fats used in European cooking. Gathering the clusters of palm nuts and making the oil are very important among all the tribes. 262 249

The remarks of Mr. Engels on this subject in his work on the Wangata [Ngata] are applicable to all the peoples we visited.

In each village one or several natives chosen from the nimblest and most daring (the local daredevils) specialize in gathering the clusters from the palm trees. They do this not only for themselves, but also for others for a slight fee. 249 464

Gathering these clusters is always somewhat dangerous. The native must climb to the top of palm trees which are sometimes 20 to 25 meters high and, once there, must work hard to disentangle and sever the cluster. 249 481



[412]

Fig. 78. Mortar and Pestle for Preparing Vegetables and Palm Oil.

The method of climbing varies according to the height of the palm trees. We noted two different procedures among all the tribes visited (see Fig. 77). [137]

If the palm tree is not high, the native climbs to the cluster by using the stubs of cut stems as steps. If the tree is very high, the native uses a rattan belt which encircles both man and tree trunk.

Nothing is more interesting than to watch a native climb up to the crown of a palm tree. He does it with truly extraordinary

249 481 skill and speed. Supported by his belt, with his feet propped against the tree trunk, he proceeds quickly by small bounds, moving the belt constantly upward. Upon reaching the root of the cluster, he stands erect or sits on one of the leaves, and with a hatchet or knife he frees the cluster, cuts it, and lets it fall to the foot of the tree. The women collect the nuts, pull off those still attached to the cluster, clean them very carefully, and carry them to the village.

252 According to whether the housewife wants to make a small or large amount of palm oil, she proceeds in one of two ways.

In the first case, she throws a few palm nuts into an earthenware vessel half full of water and puts them on the fire to boil for a good hour. When the outer part is soft, she pours off the water and puts the nuts in a small wooden mortar in order to separate the pulp from the kernels. For this purpose, she avails herself of the mortar and wooden pestle used in preparing vegetables. When the outer part is completely separated from the nut, the woman takes it and extracts the juice by squeezing it tightly in her hands. The kernels are discarded.

Fig. 79. Installation for Making Palm Oil.

In the second case, each village has a special installation for making palm oil. This very primitive factory usually stands slightly apart from the dwellings. Everyone has access to it, and it belongs to the entire community, but each family uses it individually.

T 276 171 with the bowl and tube made of iron. These pipes are usually very long and cruder than the small clay pipes with wooden tubes. Moreover, it is probable that the latter were copied from imported models. We found them chiefly in villages near the large centers and the government posts. Their shape is strikingly similar to that of imported pipes.

M T 276 171 We found this same type among the Bayanzi of the right bank of the Kasai and north of Kwamouth. These natives are thus connected with the Bateke-Banfumungu group. Thus a new ethnic zone appears, and the territory we visited may be subdivided in this respect into three ethnic regions.

The first one includes all the territory occupied by the Bateke-Banfumungu, the Bayanzi, and part of the Baboma, and it is characterized:

1) by the use of a calabash pipe, a nkisi fetish, for smoking hemp;

2) by the use of pipes with large clay bowls, for smoking tobacco communally, and the small tobacco pipe, the property of the individual, used by both men and women. [160]

The second one extends from the mouth of the Fimi to the confines of Batitu territory.

The hemp pipe is not nkisi. The tobacco pipe, very primitive, is made from the rib of a banana leaf and very often has a wooden or clay bowl. The woman smokes neither tobacco nor hemp, and the custom of smoking the pipe communally is not much in favor.

The third zone is the one where we found the wooden tobacco pipe with a calabash mouthpiece or a neck of monkey bone. It includes the whole Yaelima-Bankutshu region, taking in the Bashilele and Bakuba and, very probably, the Dengese region.

N 276 As a rule, the natives like to smoke tobacco very much. They prefer doing it when the weather is cold, maintaining that it heightens the body heat.

● M 541 Tobacco is not cultivated on a large scale. The crop is always strictly limited to the needs of the person who plants it. When the native wants to smoke tobacco, he plucks a leaf from the plant, dries it at the hearth, crushes it, and reduces it to powder. A pinch of this crudely ground tobacco is placed in the

S M 236 make to free themselves. The fishermen grab them and throw them in their baskets. [95]

Sometimes the natives enclose an area on the grassy banks, move into it, and search the grass for fish. If the fish try to break away for the main channel, they are caught in the meshes of the net.

3) Fishing with screens. This method is the most common. It is easier and more productive than the others. The screens are made of long splints of rattan or raffia, placed parallel to each other one or two centimeters apart. The cross elements of rattan are spaced from 20 to 30 centimeters apart. The height of the screens varies from 66 centimeters to 2.50 meters, and their length from 10 to 20 meters. These screens are used as dams in the river, marshes, coves, and at the mouths of small tributaries. They are fastened to stakes and sunk perpendicularly into the river bed. The natives set them up when the waters first begin to recede. A little upstream of the screens, they throw into the river a number of branches, still bearing their leaves, in such a fashion as to provide a shelter for the fish stopped by the screen. When the water is very low, the natives go a very great distance upstream. They enter the water, form a tight chain, and work methodically downstream toward the screen. All the fish are driven toward it. At 25 or 30 meters from the screen, the natives put another screen in the water. Some of the fishermen are assigned to hold it vertical. The others enter the enclosure formed by the two screens, take out the sheltering branches and grass, and begin to hunt the fish. They have openwork baskets shaped like a truncated cone. The fisherman, with the basket in front of him, sets it down on the river bed, the large opening toward the bottom. If a fish is trapped in the basket, the fisherman can tell by the light bumps against the sides caused by the fish trying to escape. The fisherman plunges his hand into the basket through the top opening, gropes about inside, seizes the fish, breaks its backbone, and throws it into the canoe or on the bank.

S M 251 The catch is carried to the temporary village, and the fish are gutted, cleaned, and thrown on the apparatus for smoking them. This is a [96] grid made with rattan of average thickness, which rests on crossbars placed on forked stakes planted in the ground.

Sakata FO43

S M 251 The average height is 1.25 meters, the width 2.50 meters, and the length five to ten meters. The women maintain a fire under this smoking-drying apparatus night and day. It is fed with grass and other rubbish, which are not very dry so that a great deal of smoke will be produced. All the fish are turned over twice a day. After eight to ten days the operation is finished. The dried, smoked fish are carefully wrapped after being sorted and graded according to size. Part of the fish will make up the family reserve, and the rest will be used as trade goods. When the grid is almost empty, the men go up the river and start fishing again.

S M [226 285]

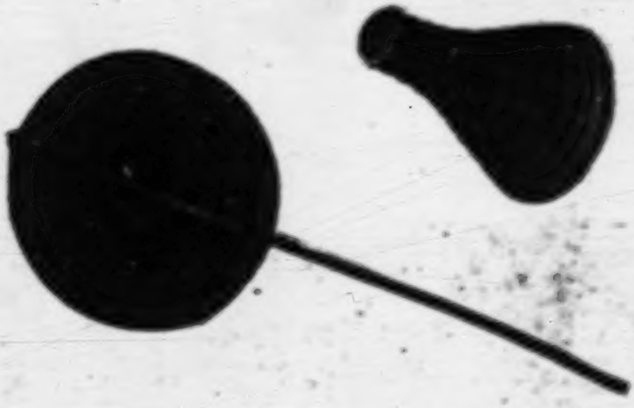


Fig. 57. Baskets for Fishing, Lake Leopold II.

S M 226 It is difficult to realize the magnitude of this industry and the unbelievable quantities of fish caught by the natives during their sojourn in the region of the salt grass. We watched one of these miraculous hauls one day, organized through the kind cooperation of Mr. Molin. The river had been dammed for only one night, the natives went up it only 150 [97] meters, this in the middle of the dry season, and yet they brought back four large baskets full of fish.

S A [illegible] The catch from communal fishing is shared at the end of the season. A part is reserved for the chief, the owners of the screens receive a special share, and the rest is divided among all the members of the group participating in the enterprise. [Ed., a

00[illegible]

M 415 however, shows us that aside from this generally uniform character these different tribes each have their own distinctive pottery. In our opinion the latter should be regarded as a derivative from the original form, known and used by the principal ethnic branch of these various peoples. Each of them has modified the original form according to its tastes, its conceptions, and local circumstances and needs, to the point where each people developed a special and characteristic form that retained only two essential elements of the original: the more or less marked curve of the sides, and the inward, horizontal rim.

M 415 531 Among the Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, the shape of the small pieces of pottery used for preparing meat is altogether different. Here we find neither a regular curvature of the sides nor an inward, horizontal rim. On the contrary, the bottom is a spherical calotte, the body distinctly angled with a sharp edge, the upper surface decorated with incised drawings, and the rim slightly sloping and curved outward. The decoration is the same as that we noted on the pottery for chikwangue in this region.

M D 415 531 Farther east, among the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu, the shape is again quite different. The sides, which slant obliquely inward and have no rim, meet the round bottom at a sharp angle. They usually have considerable decoration with incised drawings and even some molding in relief.

M ● 251 To preserve meat, the natives proceed in two different ways.

For small quantities, the meat is cut into pieces weighing from one to three kilograms, impaled on a stick, and roasted over [132] a low fire. This procedure does not give very good results. Meat smoked in this way spoils after five or six days, but this does not keep the native from eating it. "It's the meat and not the smell that I eat," he says, "for after the meal the meat is gone and the smell is still with us!"

To store large quantities, the meat is cut into pieces weighing from half a kilogram to one kilogram and then boiled over a brisk fire for a little less than an hour in rather salty, well-spiced water. The pieces are then smoked on a large grid, usually set up in the center of the village. This grid, made of large rattan stems and green branches, rests on four forked stakes 90 centimeters to 1.20 meters high. A woman keeps a slow fire burning under the

M 251 grid, which gives off a great deal of smoke. The boiled meat is lightly packed and covered with large banana leaves. It remains on this grid for two or three days. At the end of this time, it is thoroughly smoked, black as coal, dry, and tough, but it keeps almost indefinitely.

The housewife takes her supply and puts it in the storage place inside her hut, where it is safe from the rats, mice, and other marauders which infest the native huts.

Fig. 75. Communal Smoking Apparatus.

M 415 The meat is usually cooked in large earthenware vessels. [133]

Among the Bateke and Banfunungu, these vessels are shaped like irregular spheres with the top cut off.

Among the Baboma and Basakata, on the other hand, this pottery is cylindrical in form, broad, of moderate height, and has a flat bottom. Among the Bobaie, Balesa, and Batete, the bottom is rounded, broad, and shallow, and it extends into a rather high neck in the shape of a truncated cone, decorated with very even and not very artistic impressed designs. The body has sharp edges, and the small rim has a wide flare. This form is found among the Basakata, although less frequently. It seems to be quite common in the region of the Kundu [Nkundu], northern neighbors of the Bobaie, Balesa, and Batete. M [531]

M 415 531 The Ipanga and Yaelima use pottery vessels similar to those they use for making chikwangue, while the Basongo-Meno and

Dengese FO16

Bankutshu use a bell-shaped form; the bottom is a spherical calotte, the body slightly curved, and the decoration consists of heavy moldings, both sunken and in relief. M D 415 [57]

These same pots are also used by all these tribes for preparing and cooking fish. M 415

The riparian peoples of the Congo-Kasai-Fimi and of the lower Lukenie, as well as the Wadia and Mosengere of the Boriempe-Lalonga, fish a great deal.

Fish is never eaten raw. The natives boil it or eat it dried or smoked. M 252 251●

To preserve fish, the natives smoke it on large grids similar to those they use for smoking meat.

Certain peoples, notably the tribes of the Fimi and lake region and of the lower Lukenie, also use a special form of pottery, rare and heretofore unknown. We were able to bring back only two specimens, which are fortunately very characteristic. [134] M 415

This form is open at the base and closed at the top by a large disk pierced with holes. The sides are curved. The diameter of the bottom opening is a little smaller than that of the upper disk. It varies from 45 to 90 centimeters.

This drying pot, called benge by the natives, is placed on three pieces of wood forming a tripod. Under the tripod, a woman maintains a slow fire of leaves, grass and green wood, which sends thick smoke inside the pot. The gutted fish are placed over the disk. They are left there for four or five days, exposed continually to the action of the fire and smoke. At the end of this time they are sufficiently smoked and dried to keep for several months. Naturally, these pots can be used [135] for preparing and preserving only small quantities of food. They form a part of the native house wife's equipment among these various tribes. She also uses them to smoke chikwangue, to dry bananas, manioc tubers, and ears of maize, and sometimes to smoke meat. The manioc tubers, bananas, ears of maize, and other vegetable M 415 251 M [291]

Fig. 76. Rattan Belt.

415 products to be dried are not exposed to heavy smoke, but to a
•251 small fire of very dry wood producing a low, hot flame, or, if possible, to the heat given off by a glowing bed of charcoal.

When completely prepared, protected, and wrapped in leaves, the *chikwangue* are laid above the *benge* for six to eight hours, while the housewife maintains a charcoal fire underneath. When dried and smoked in this way, the *chikwangue* keep a very long time.

Lacking a *benge*, a woman sometimes uses a pottery vessel with a flat bottom, pierced with small holes, and vertical sides.

[14]

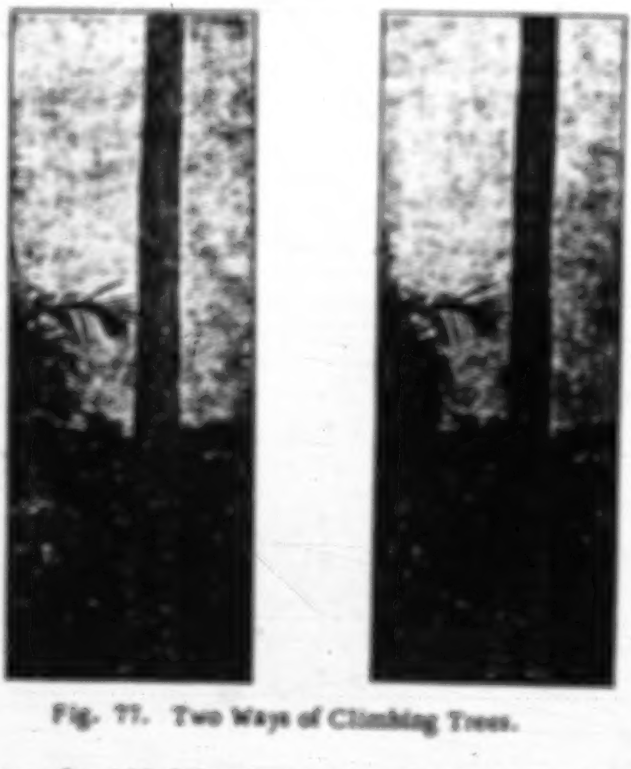


Fig. 77. Two Ways of Climbing Trees.

This fits on top of an old *chikwangue* pot, *mpoko-lepinga*, whose bottom has been broken.

The *mpoko-lepinga* is placed over the fire. The woman seals the juncture between the *mpoko-lepinga* and the *benge* with the pierced bottom, using a paste of clay and potter's earth.

583 on the husband's wealth). Theoretically, the knife should be an efamba.
431 In practice it is sometimes possible to substitute an empɔ̃te in an
[412] attractive wooden sheath amply adorned with "copper-plated nails."
At other times the knife and spears may be replaced by their corresponding value in bakonga. This is considered the most important
[675] boɛngo, and therefore no one gives up his claim to it. If the son-in-law cannot present it to his father-in-law immediately, he promises to do so later, and his father-in-law does not fail to make use of any opportunity to remind him of his promise. Some men insist on a wɛ̌ko as pledge. Others are satisfied with a piece of loasi or a bosɔ́ngɔ́ (splinter or part of the trunk of a palm tree), which the husband gives to the ndonga as a token of acknowledgement of his debt and as evidence of his willingness to pay it as soon as he has the means. Some men, however, insist so strongly on the boɛngo that they will not accept the walo [146] before they have received it. Thus, one day recently, Lomanga d'Ifutɔ́ (Bongîli) refused to accept the walo for his daughter Ekofo, engaged to Bokungɛ́ w'akɔ́yɛ́ (of Bongíli, Ndongɔ́). He insisted that the father of the latter, Bokungɛ́ w'is'ɛ́y'-Ingilɛ́ first go back to get his boɛ́ngo. Since he was unable to find five spears, he substituted for them a second knife and a copper ring; these were accepted by old Lomanga. Shortly thereafter the same thing happened to Bokungɛ́ of Bontole (Bongíli), who wanted to pay the walo for his fiancée Ngelɛ́ of Boɛ́mbo (Bombwanja), the sister of Bongondɛ́, clerk of the Bombwanja. The woman's family refused to take the bride price before receiving the ifakɛ́ l'akongɛ́ b'ïs'ɛ́y'ɔ̌na boɛngo.

2) Byĭkɔ́ byɛ́ nyang'ɛ́y'ɔ̌na, "porcupines for the mother."
● [251] This present consists of two or three fresh or smoked porcupine. Bɛ́tomba, baatɛ́ birds, or bekɔ́ua fish may be substituted for them. The substitution of hens is not well regarded, because they are within the realm of the nkomí. If someone does not have the means to satisfy this requirement, he gives the mother two copper rings saying mɛ́kɛ́ bakonga bɛ́fɛ́ yɔ́somba byĭkɔ́ bikɛ́, "here are two copper rings; go and buy yourself some porcupines." Fabrics are sometimes substituted nowadays.

262 The natives are familiar with two kinds of manioc, sweet and bitter.

Sweet manioc is not highly valued, owing to its insipid taste and the poor consistency of the chikwangue made from it.

● 252 Aside from the soaking, which is done only for bitter manioc, chikwangue is prepared in the same way whether the flour comes from sweet or bitter manioc.

The first harvest of manioc tubers takes place eight to ten months after planting. The natives, however, do not begin harvesting them in earnest until the second year. Only the woman does this work. [462]

[482] The manioc tubers are piled in large baskets carried on the back and taken to the soaking well, a pond of putrid, dirty, muddy water giving off a highly unpleasant odor of putrefaction and fermentation, which is reserved for this task.

262 462 The manioc roots remain submerged from five to eight days to make them ferment and thus eliminate their bitter taste. At the end of this period the woman returns to the pond, tucks up her primitive loincloth as high as possible and enters the swamp. She sinks in up to her knees, and plunging her hands and arms into the mire, she pulls out the roots one by one and throws them on the bank. When her supply seems sufficient, she piles the roots in her basket and goes to wash them in the river. Returning to the village, she cuts the tubers, lets them dry a little in the sun, and then peels them. The Bakete, Banfumungu, and all the tribes of the Fimi-Lake Leopold II-Lukenie region, up to the boundaries of Bobaie and Balesa territory, chop the pieces of manioc root before reducing them to flour, while the Ipanga, Batitu, Yaelima and Bokala crush them between the fingers before throwing them between the fingers before throwing them in the mortar.

412 The chikwangue knife has a double-edged blade, a median rib, and a long, relatively broad oval form. It is pointed at both ends. One of these ends is [120] embedded in a wooden handle with a doubly concave vertical section.

The museum [Ed., Museum of the Belgian Congo] now has only two of these knives, but they are found in every native hut in the Kasai-Fimi-Lukenie region up to the Oshwe sector. It is, however, almost impossible to buy them from the natives. A woman, unable to do without her chikwangue knife a single day

M
442 and never having a spare one, will not let one go at any price.

M
252
462 A woman chops the manioc on a large wooden tray, a crude, slightly hollowed board roughly rectangular in shape among the Bateke, Banfumungu, and Baboma, but circular among the Tumba, Wadia, Mosengere, Bolia, Bobaie, Basakata, and Balesa.

After having chopped up the manioc tubers as finely as she can with the primitive tool at her disposal, the woman removes the woody fibers, remains of rind, and other hard bodies. She then takes the etuti with both hands and rocks it back and forth. While doing this, she is careful to shake the flour from time to time and to remove the impurities she finds in it.

When the flour is quite fine, the housewife sprinkles it with a little water, [121] kneads it, works it into a firm dough of a pale grayish-white color, and carefully removes every little trace of impurities. She then divides the dough into pieces the size of a cubic decimeter which she rolls into more or less symmetrical balls or into sausages 20 to 25 centimeters long.

Fig. 67. Preparation of Manioc Flour among the Bobaie. Special Form of Knife to Chop Manioc.

S
[252
516]

M
[213] These balls or sausages are carefully wrapped in banana or masisa leaves, and the whole bundle is tied with very pliant rattan or raffia splints which serve as string.

Dengese FO16

M
252
4/2

Among the Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, we never found the crushing pestle [Ed., a broad, short pestle]. Instead, the woman uses a long, cylindrical pestle on a wooden mortar, a rough plank, very thick and heavy, sometimes square, sometimes round, but always quite irregular in shape. Very often, the mortar is a basket of rattan or raffia splints, rectangular and very shallow. Instead of crushing the manioc into flour, she kneads it and works the dough the same way and in the same mortar.

When the dough is sufficiently kneaded and all the impurities [122] have been removed, she rolls it into sausages and wraps them in banana leaves as we described above.

M
D
252
4/2

The Basongo-Meno and the Bankutshu crush the manioc in large wooden mortars, roughly cylindrical in shape, and use very large pestles. The height of the mortars and the length of the pestles compel the women of that region to stand when preparing manioc flour, while in the Kasai-Fimi-Lukenie region, including the Oshwe and Bambuli sectors, the women are seated for this work.

Fig. 68. Baboma Chopping Manioc.

Moreover, the former group cannot remove the fibers, hard bodies, and other impurities found in the flour in the course of their work, so they make a point of sifting it.

Dengese FO16
Teke F133

M
D
252
412

The little sieve-basket has the shape of a large calotte with the rim slightly raised and the bottom plaited in openwork.

The sifted flour is gathered in small baskets, then made into dough, rolled into small cakes, and wrapped in banana or masisa leaves in the way we have just described.

M
252

The chikwangue are cooked in the same way by all the peoples visited.

The woman lays a wooden grid in the bottom of an earthenware cooking pot. She pours in water up to the level of the grid, lines the whole inner surface of the pot with banana leaves, and places the cakes or sausages one on top the other. She not only fills the pot, [123] but she piles them well above the rim and covers them with more banana leaves, which are tied together so carefully that the whole thing is hermetically sealed. The pot is placed on the fire for several hours. The chikwangue, then are cooked by the steam.

T
[412
252]

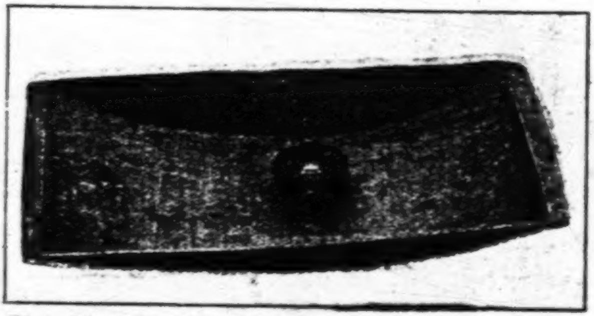


Fig. 69. Mortar with Clay Pestle (Etuti) for Manioc, Banfumu Tribe.

After being cooked, the manioc dough looks like very heavy bread, amber-colored, very slightly translucent on the edges, and of a rather soft consistency. This is chikwangue, the famous kwanga of the natives which plays the same role in their diet as bread does in ours.

M
416

Although the cooking method is the same everywhere we went, the pottery used for the cooking differs notably from one region to the next.

Yaelima

From Stanley Pool to the Bumbuli region, the natives use a large earthenware vessel, generally with very little decoration on the rough, irregular outside surface which is marked with vertical lines. [124] 415 531

The few specimens we collected are the only ones that the Museum of the Belgian Congo possesses.

The vessel is oval and elongated in shape, and the bottom is rounded off so little that the pottery cannot stand upright on a horizontal surface. The opening at the top is wide. Among the Balesa and Bateke, the rim is slightly raised and tilts sharply, while among the Ipanga and Batitu, the rim is wider, and its slope is less accentuated. The latter pottery, moreover, is very often decorated with two or three circular, impressed lines. As one advances eastward, the oval shape tends to disappear. The pot becomes spherical, the rim wider, and the impressed decoration more symmetrical and more painstakingly done.

Fig. 70. Yaelima Women Preparing Manioc.

252
412
516

Among the Bokala and Yaelima, the vessels used to cook the chikwangue have a bottom shaped like a spherical calotte, a rather wide, reversed rim, and a neck and body with sharp edges and distinct angles. The impressed decoration consists of two or three circular lines placed immediately above the bend

Ntomba

415 531 of the body. These parallel lines are intersected in three or four places by small groups of eight to ten little notches. In addition, the part of the body angling inward is quite often decorated with intersecting oblique lines. [125]

415 These types of pottery for chikwangue seem to be modern forms.

The very ancient kind, of which we happily were able to find a specimen still intact, has a less characteristic shape. The bottom is round and irregular; the body is more or less angled but without sharp edges; and the neck is slightly bent back but has no distinct plane surface.

● 252 415 412

Fig. 71. Mortar, Pestle, and Sifter for Manioc Flour among the Bankutu.

252 415 The Bokala, Yaelima, etc., place a wooden grid at the bottom of the chikwangue vessel, line the inside with leaves, and pile the cakes of manioc flour in small mounds higher than the rim of the vessel. To keep these characteristic pyramids stable, they often tie a network of cords, a sort of net with large, wide meshes, to the molding of the neck. The top of this net can be opened or closed at will, and the chikwangue cakes are crammed in it as in a net. Sometimes the wooden grid is replaced by an earthenware shelf which extends beyond the rim of the vessel. This shelf is pierced with large round holes. This type of pottery, however, is quite rare. We were able to find only a few specimens.

M 252 415 The natives do not care for them very much; they regard them as impractical for preparing chikwangue, but readily use them to dry and smoke their provisions.

M 416 531 Beyond the Yaelima, notably among the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, the pottery used to cook manioc cakes [126] is more reminiscent of the old earthenware cooking pots of Europe. It is spheroid in shape, very symmetrical, with the neck curved out a little, rounded, and slightly arched. The upper part of the body is decorated with broad circular lines, small arcs, and little dots. These pots are a mottled brownish-black in color and are lightly glazed.

M 252 262 Here, too, the chikwangue are cooked by steam. It must be noted, however, that chikwangue does not play the same important role in the diet of the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, although it is still one of the chief elements even now.

M D 252 415 The Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu also eat kifunge, a manioc bread which is prepared in the following way. The housewife heats water in a large earthenware receptacle with a rounded bottom. It is shaped like a wide, spherical calotte, with the body almost straight, but in any case having sharp edges, and the neck slightly flared but not arched. M D 252 When the water begins to boil, she throws in the manioc flour a little at a time, stirring constantly with a [127] long spatula of polished wood. When the flour has absorbed practically all the water, the vessel is taken off the fire, and more manioc flour is added while

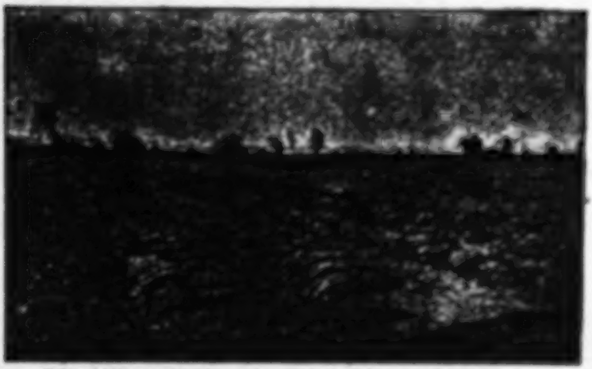


Fig. 72. Chikwangue Brought to the Post.

Dengese FO16
Teke FI 33

M
D
252

the mixture is stirred vigorously. This produces a sort of soft bread called kifunge by the natives. The Bankutshu and Basongo-Meno also use maize or millet flour to make kifunge. Both are ground in the large mortars used to make manioc flour and are sifted through the basketwork sieves.

M
D
262

Kifunge is always eaten hot. The housewife serves it on a wooden plate previously rubbed with palm oil.

We thus see that the peoples of the Bena Dibele region are differentiated from the other tribes not only by their way of making manioc flour and the shape of the utensils used, mortar, pestle, sieve, and pottery, but also by the special use made of manioc flour and the use of maize and millet flour in making kifunge. There are then, in this respect, two ethnic groups which seem to be quite different from each other. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to determine whether kifunge is truly indigenous

T
[252
415
301
576]

Fig. 73. Bateke Pulverizing Manioc.

to the civilization of [128] these natives or was introduced by the Basonge-Baluba peoples of the Sankuru-Lubefu. When questioned on this subject, the natives sometimes told us that they had always made kifunge, while some old men claimed that kifunge was still unknown during their childhood.

M
T
243

As we have noted, the peoples west of the Bena Dibele-Kole region cultivate maize. This crop is of secondary importance, except in the region of the Banfumungu of Kapanda and Engrei.

● M T 243 ● 252

Maize gathered before maturity is eaten raw or roasted over a low fire. The ears which are allowed to ripen on the stalk are carefully shelled, the kernels ground in a wooden mortar with a cylindrical pestle, and the flour is winnowed or passed through a sieve.

M T 252 412

The mortar used to make maize flour is made from a section of a tree trunk, with a rectangular opening hollowed in the outer surface and perpendicular to the axis of the trunk. These mortars are very crude, poorly worked, and quite rudimentary. Besides these, one sometimes find others which are better made, small cubes provided with a leg or a liana. Let us note, however, that among the Bendomu southeast of Tua we found a mortar of similar shape which the natives used to prepare vegetables.

M [25 415 241 854]

Fig. 74. Basitu Women Shelling Maize and Preparing Vegetables.

The sieves used for maize flour in this region are also a special type. The sides are made in an open weave. The general form resembles that of a large bottle with a square bottom, cylindrical body, constricted neck, and slightly flared rim.

M T 252

The housewife mixes the maize flour with palm oil to form a somewhat thick dough. She wraps it carefully in leaves and boils it for 10 to 15 minutes. This dish, the mokwof of the Basakata-Mosengere, is served very hot, usually seasoned a little

T M 252 with palm oil and pili-pili pepper. Whenever the opportunity arises, the native adds fish or meat to it. The dish is very highly regarded among all the peoples of the Bateke-Tselima region, but it should be regarded as a luxury which the family can afford only on special occasions. [129]

M 252 262 The sweet manioc tuber, cooked in ashes, is a more common dish. It is served very hot with slips of manioc greens prepared as vegetables.

Sweet potatoes, which are widespread throughout the region, are peeled, boiled in water, mashed, mixed with palm oil, and served with meat or fish.

Peanuts are eaten boiled or roasted, or sometimes the women crush them raw and mix them with manioc flour or use them instead of palm oil in preparing the meals.

Although the natives eat few vegetables, except yams and sweet potatoes, their diet from time to time includes spinach, native sorrel, small tomatoes, a type of purslane, and leaves of all sorts which the women gather in the forest. The housewife pulverizes them in her small mortar with a cylindrical pestle and stews them over a low fire in small earthenware pots.

M 145 Among certain tribes, notably the Bokala and Tselima, these small pots have an earthenware lid with a small vertical lug, while in other regions the woman covers her pot while it is on the fire with part of a calabash, a piece of bark, or the bottom of an ordinary pot.

Bananas play a major part in the native diet. From Leopoldville to Kole, we found banana trees in all the villages, both near the state posts and far into the interior of the country. Bananas are eaten raw, roasted, stewed, dried in the sun or smoked on grids. Dried bananas are reduced to flour and served as mush with other dishes.

M 262 Meat is greedily devoured by all these peoples, regardless of its origin or condition. The native must content himself with what chance brings him, the game from his hunting, and what the Mundele [Ed., White men] leave for him. The natives do not have enough practical means at their disposal to secure an abundant diet of meat. In the villages of the interior, meat is [130] seldom eaten. The prospect of a good share of meat is enough to get the native to do the hardest kind of work. In the

M 262 course of our journey, our bearers never complained about long marches, heavy loads, or fatigue, as long as they got their ration of one or two kilograms of meat every evening.

M 262 252 The native is passionately fond of meat, and nothing absolutely nothing, is wasted of the animals killed in hunting. The intestines are especially prized. The natives empty them very hastily and do not hesitate to eat them raw. Most often, however, they cut them into small pieces and boil them in big earthenware pots. The fat is very carefully collected and stored for subsequent use in the preparation of vegetables and sauces. The rest is served with vegetables, chikwangue, kifune, etc.

M 252 The meat is cut into small pieces, seasoned with a little palm oil, pepper, and salt, and placed on the fire to boil. It is cooked in small pots which also serve as plates.

T 415 Among the western Bateke and Banfumungu (in the region of Tua, Kunzulu, and Kwamouth), these utensils are very similar to bowls in shape. The bottom is round, and the rim is straight, slightly flared or arched, and not very high.

Among the eastern Banfumungu (in the region of Tua and Bokala), on the other hand, these utensils have an altogether different shape, little known up to now: a wide, spherical calotte, whose rim, two or three centimeters wide, is bent inward and shows a distinctly horizontal surface.

S 415 Among the Baboma in the region of Bokala, Wombali, and Mushie, as well as among the western Wadia and Basakata, the rim of these bowls has the same characteristic inward curve, but the sides are much more symmetrical and better finished. Moreover, the shape is slightly different. The bottom is round and very flat; the body is shallow and curved slightly inward; and the rim is turned back in horizontally. [131]

M 415 The inward curve of the sides of some pottery, terminating in an inward, horizontal rim, is a characteristic that we find again, although much less pronounced, in the bowls used for the same purpose by the Mosengere, Tumba, Bobale, Basakata, and Balesa. All of these peoples thus seem to have a certain ethnic relationship characterized by this special form of pottery rim. The general shape of the various vessels we gathered in this region,

M
D
415
[52]

Baskutshu use a bell-shaped form; the bottom is a spherical calotte, the body slightly curved, and the decoration consists of heavy moldings, both sunken and in relief.

M
415

These same pots are also used by all these tribes for preparing and cooking fish.

The riparian peoples of the Congo-Kasai-Fimi and of the lower Lukenie, as well as the Wadia and Monengere of the Boriempe-Lalonga, fish a great deal.

M
252 ●
251

Fish is never eaten raw. The natives boil it or eat it dried or smoked.

To preserve fish, the natives smoke it on large grids similar to those they use for smoking meat.

M
415

Certain peoples, notably the tribes of the Fimi and lake region and of the lower Lukenie, also use a special form of pottery, rare and heretofore unknown. We were able to bring back only two specimens, which are fortunately very characteristic. [134]

This form is open at the base and closed at the top by a large disk pierced with holes. The sides are curved. The diameter of the bottom opening is a little smaller than that of the upper disk. It varies from 45 to 90 centimeters.

M
415
251

This drying pot, called bonge by the natives, is placed on three pieces of wood forming a tripod. Under the tripod, a woman maintains a slow fire of leaves, grass and green wood, which sends thick smoke inside the pot. The gutted fish are placed over the disk. They are left there for four or five days, exposed continually to the action of the fire and smoke. At the end of this time they are sufficiently smoked and dried to keep for several months. Naturally, these pots can be used [135] for preparing and preserving only small quantities of food. They form a part of the native house wife's equipment among these various tribes. She also uses them to smoke chikwangue, to dry bananas, manioc tubers, and ears of maize, and sometimes to smoke meat. The manioc tubers, bananas, ears of maize, and other vegetable

Fig. 76. Rattan Belt.

M
[291]

249 481 skill and speed. Supported by his belt, with his feet propped against the tree trunk, he proceeds quickly by small bounds, moving the belt constantly upward. Upon reaching the root of the cluster, he stands erect or sits on one of the leaves, and with a hatchet or knife he frees the cluster, cuts it, and lets it fall to the foot of the tree. The women collect the nuts, pull off those still attached to the cluster, clean them very carefully, and carry them to the village.

253 According to whether the housewife wants to make a small or large amount of palm oil, she proceeds in one of two ways.

In the first case, she throws a few palm nuts into an earthenware vessel half full of water and puts them on the fire to boil for a good hour. When the outer part is soft, she pours off the water and puts the nuts in a small wooden mortar in order to separate the pulp from the kernels. For this purpose, she avails herself of the mortar and wooden pestle used in preparing vegetables. When the outer part is completely separated from the nut, the woman takes it and extracts the juice by squeezing it tightly in her hands. The kernels are discarded.

Fig. 79. Installation for Making Palm Oil.

In the second case, each village has a special installation for making palm oil. This very primitive factory usually stands slightly apart from the dwellings. Everyone has access to it, and it belongs to the entire community, but each family uses it individually.

253 It consists of a large hole in the form of a truncated cone. The diameter of the upper part varies from 60 to 70 centimeters, that of the lower part from 20 to 30 centimeters, and the depth varies from 60 to 80 centimeters. The bottom and sides are lined with pieces of raffia stems, placed [137] [Fig. 80 appears here] [138] side by side with their rounded surfaces facing the interior of the pit. The nuts, which have been slightly boiled, are poured into this funnel, which serves as a mortar. The outer part is separated from the nut with a large wooden pestle. The kernels are discarded. The pulp is taken from the hole and tightly pressed between the hands to squeeze out the oil.

Near the funnel-shaped mortar dug in the ground, there is a bench made of two or four forked stakes, graduated in height, over which the natives place large sections of tree bark. The woman throws the pulp from which she has extracted the oil on this bench, spreads it out, and lights a small fire under the wide sections of bark, which serve as drains. Under the influence of the heat, part of the oil remaining in the pulp flows out slowly and is caught in the earthenware vessel placed at the lower end of the drain. Finally, whatever palm oil remains in the pulp is squeezed [101] out by the torsion method. For this purpose, the native has set up a large stationary bar, very strong, to which he attaches one end of a pressing apparatus made of young lianas and fine rattan plaited together. The pulp, still hot, is placed in this press and wrung very tightly to extract every last drop of oil.

252 495 The natives collect and keep the palm oil in large pots covered with banana leaves, in calabashes, or, if possible, in imported bottles. Big demijohns stripped of their protective covering are in special demand for this purpose.

000 We have mentioned above the chief uses the native makes of palm oil in preparing food and the important role it plays in the diet of these primitives. Later we shall have occasion to mention palm oil again when we discuss the role it plays in native body care.

263 A word now about stimulants. Food in general, particularly meat, is always very strongly seasoned with condiments.

The most widespread stimulant is _pili-pili_, red pepper. This pepper, the fruit of _Capsicum minimum_, which is rarely more than one to one and a half centimeters long, is extremely hot. It grows

[text continues on p. 103]

263 wild [140] throughout the region we visited. All the tribes are acquainted with it and use it regularly.

222 Collecting and preparing pili-pili are tasks especially re-
462 served to women. Upon returning from the fields, a woman
252 spreads the fruits on a mat before her hut and lets them dry for
263 five or six days. Sometimes she uses them fresh, mixing them with palm oil enhanced with salt. The native uses this sauce to season his dishes according to taste.

252 When the pili-pili is quite dry, the woman pulverizes it in
263 a small wooden mortar with a cylindrical pestle or with a small
412 piece of elephant's tusk. The shape of the mortars used for this purpose by the different peoples of the Lukenie varies a great deal. From the Bateke to the Batete, we found only very crude mortars hollowed out from the trunk of a tree. Among the Yaelima and Ipanga this utensil is more carefully worked and finished. The shape is rather like that of a small rectangular box without a lid, but provided with a lug. Among the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, we collected very crudely shaped and primitive mortars, while others were well made and carefully carved. All of them, however, have the common characteristic of an elongated vertical form, and most of them have a leg. The pestles are always quite long.

We thus again find three ethnic zones characterized by the special shape of these utensils. Of course, this fact alone could not serve as the basis of any ethnic classification, but it might have a relative value and importance in drawing general conclusions based on the whole assemblage of the ethnic characteristics of these various peoples.

263 Once reduced to a fine powder, pili-pili pepper is mixed with salt to season food after cooking. All sauces are spiced with a generous pinch of this pepper. Meat is sprinkled with it, or even stuffed with whole peppers.

When the natives are traveling, they merely pick a few pili-pili and squeeze the juice into the food while it is cooking. [141]

276 The kola nut also is very well known as a stimulant and is widely used. The kola tree is found nearly everywhere. The natives gather the fruit and chew it. Women do not indulge.

276
842 According to native belief, the kola nut ensures the fertility of a woman if sexual relations take place the night after the man has used this stimulant.

276 The regular use of kola induces very intense nervous excitement. We noticed that the adolescents and men in their prime scarcely use it. Only the old people use it regularly. Kaiua, the old native chief, chewed it from morning to night. One day I pointed this out to him, asking if he were not afraid of the dangerous effects of this overindulgence. He proudly pointed out to me the huts of his seven wives, saying, "Ask them if they don't have children!"

276
263
278 Among the stimulants we may also mention the peanut, widely used by all the tribes, a type of small ground pea, and certain tree roots known to the natives but the exact nature of which we unfortunately could not determine. It is well to note, moreover, that most of the natives use the stimulants as medicaments as well as condiments. They are used for intestinal pains, colic, and as purgatives.

462
● 252 In all the tribes the preparation of food and meals is exclusively the task of women. They always do it with great car
[142]

Fig. 81. Carrying Firewood.

262 The kitchen, if it can be called one, is always very simple. If the weather is good, cooking is done in the open in the middle of the village, in front of the hut or behind it,

45
31 and very often in the shade of the banana trees. If the weather is rainy or cold, the women prepares the meals inside the hut. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

Yaelima

264 The natives eat three meals a day, in the morning, toward noon, and at night after sunset.

The wife is never allowed to eat with her husband or to eat in the same group as he does.

[302] A chief always eats alone, far from the eyes of the common herd. [143]

Leftovers from the meals are ordinarily given to the women and children.

264 415 We did not find tables, spoons, or forks among any of the tribes we visited.

The food is put in small baskets of rattan or raffia splints, plaited in openwork and lined with leaves on the bottom. Sometimes the plate is made of wood or baked clay.

[252]

Fig. 82. Native Outdoor Kitchen, Ipanga-Betiru Tribe.

Among the Betsho-Basfumongo, we collected some earthenware plates which look a great deal like European soup plates, but are less symmetrical in shape and deeper. Among the Baboma-Wadia-Betete, on the other hand, the plates look more like our flat plates. Among the Ipanga-Yaelima, basketwork plates are chiefly used, while in the Bena Dibele-Kole region one finds the pottery plate again, a sort of broadly flared,

356 walls are lined with mats, and the crude bed is raised off the
ground to avoid unpleasant and unhealthy contact with the ground.
A mat is spread over the native's bed, [163] and the pillow which
is customarily used permits him to lie in a restful position.

515 The natives take a bath almost every day. They usually
go to the river during the hottest hours of the day, but sometimes
they do so early in the morning or in the evening. The child
participates in this from an early age. Aside from these regular
baths, the native often washes his whole body with warm water.
[302] He then smears himself with a light film of palm oil to ensure
the suppleness of the skin and to protect it from the sun's rays.

264 Before and after each meal the native makes a point of
515 washing out his mouth. After the meal he brushes his teeth with
a small brush made of rattan or soft wood, the fibers acting as

Fig. 91. A Scene from Native Life among the Riparian People of the Lower Lukenie.

bristles.

252 Meals are prepared with a genuine concern for cleanliness.
264 All the food is washed, cleaned, and boiled before being eaten.
Kitchen utensils are cleaned and carefully put away. Despite
the primitive conditions for preparing manioc flour, the product
is as pure as if it had been prepared by an improved method

252 264 with modern machinery. Not content with the state of the utensils in which she serves the meals, the woman is careful to line them at mealtime with fresh and very clean leaves.

515 The natives keep the nails of their hands and feet cut short.

The care of the feet is explained as a hygienic measure and by the necessity of taking precautions to avoid the vermin which like to get into these places (ticks). The care of the hands can be explained only by the concern for cleanliness shown in native eating habits.

Imported soap is not yet commonly used, although we found it in a number of native huts.

318 Many native women know how to make soap. The process is very simple. Dried banana skins, trunks of papaw trees, bark, the fruits of various vegetables, and waste from palm nuts are gathered together and burned. The ashes are carefully collected and mixed with some water for boiling them. At the first ebullition, the woman removes the ashes and impurities that [166] rise to the surface. Boiling is then continued until the evaporation is almost complete. When only a thick and sirupy grayish-black deposit is left, the woman takes it off the fire, washes it, and kneads it in cold water until it takes on a clearer color. She then adds palm oil, mixes it in with great care, and puts the lot back on the fire. The paste is stirred all through the boiling, which is continued until the woman obtains a mixture whose consistency is slightly firmer than that of our soft soaps. [Ed., a passage is omitted from mid-page 166 to mid-page 167.]

Native soap is used only in the care of the body.

(302 303 [167] The native does not merely smear his body with palm oil. The men and especially the women often powder themselves with tukula dust. The women prepare a cosmetic with this and love to cover their whole body with it in a spirit of coquetry. This practice is so widespread among the peoples of Lake Leopold II that the manufacture of ngula has become a veritable local industry in certain areas. This is especially true of the Mosengere. In a village near the Bongo post, we counted 35 installations for making ngula powder. The simplest set of materials includes two blocks of tukula or redwood, a small receptacle containing water, a handful of sand, and a small hand or painting brush. One of the

584 then does she acquire her own establishment. From that moment on she lives permanently with her husband-to-be.

She has come from her parents' home empty handed, without any utensils whatsoever. In her new dwelling she finds everything. Her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law give her what she needs: baskets, pots, gourds, mats, mortars, pestles, and even chickens.

It will be apparent from the preceding that there are no particular rites or ceremonies nor is any special attire worn.

584
595
By this time the *bompɛka* is already considered a wife; [119] she has all the rights and duties of that status: cohabitation, household tasks, etc. Everything she produces or earns belongs to her husband. Her own family no longer has any rights to the fruits of her work. If, after the payment of the *ikulɛ* and before any further payment, [illegible] the husband discovers that there are relations between his fiancée and another man, the latter is considered an adulterer and is liable to the sanctions designed to check such infractions. The older the woman, the greater the indemnity, which may be as high as 5 to 10 rings (see Chapter VI, Article VII).

It is logically consistent with what we have described that the fiancé has no special name. Since he is actually a husband, that is what he is called (*bɔ́me*).

During this period the engaged pair get to know each other physically and morally (sexual relations, work, temperament, virtues, faults). A figurative expression is used to describe what happens -- *bakɛngola mpokɛ*, "they are trying out the pot." The explanation [595] for this saying is that before a new pot (*mpokɛ*) is used, it is placed on [252] a shelf above the fire and left there for several days, so that it will harden and become heat resistant. If it cracks it is not suitable for food preparation; if not, one can cook in it without fear. This process is called *kɛngola mpokɛ*, and the term has been transferred to the trial period of the newlyweds. Thus it is a sort of novitiate, and the English term which can be used to approximate this situation most closely is clearly "engagement," "engaged."

This first period can last several months. Meanwhile the husband seeks the valuables needed for the *ndanga* payment.

843 777 The Nkundó know an antidote (*nsengó* or *losenjó*), however, a means of getting rid of such annoying obstacles. Of the three known processes the last is especially common at present.

1) The husband (or any person to whom the *weká* is attached and who wants to be rid of it) picks up a *nkôngolí* chilopod, [125] naturally by means of a leaf, encloses it in a large leaf which he binds with a thin creeper, and makes a small package of it, as one makes a package of meat, fish, etc. He gives this package to his wife, who thinks it contains food and opens it without any suspicion. But when she sees the detested arthropod, she throws it far from her with cries of disgust, while her husband says to her, "You are the one who remains with the *wěká*." As a result he himself is freed from it.

2) A second means is to take the pregnant woman by the nose when an opportunity presents itself and to say to her: "May the *wěká* remain attached to you."

[252] [264] 3) The woman prepares some *imbóndó* (manioc leaves [474] salted and dipped in palm oil). The two spouses eat it together contrary to the usual practice. But the husband arranges matters in such a way that his wife gets the last mouthful and keeps the leaf which serves as a plate and represents the *wěká*. Then the husband says to her, "Keep the *wěká* for yourself."

The *wěká* cannot be detached from the woman, for she is the *bomóngo wěká*, "the owner of the *wěká*," the one who is the basis for it. For her it continues until the child is on the point of being born (*elaká ŏ jěmi jǒónda*, literally "he has come to the end of his growth," or *jǒhékama*, "has turned to one side"), and thus, in practice, until the birth of the child.

[152] If a first wife dies at the beginning of her first pregnancy, a cesarian operation must be performed on her. The fetus is removed (it is still no more than an embryo -- *ilóngélá* or *bokelé*, literally "an egg," or *ilóngó*, literally "blood") so that it can be buried behind the hut. An omission of this practice would result in the death through pregnancy of the deceased's husband's other wives or of the women he will subsequently marry.

352 322 [103] Occasionally one sees a native stool, made as described above, but with a kind of back rest chopped out of one piece.

342 171 The Negro who wishes to move with the times makes for his house a chair out of bamboo in the European style: some sticks stuck in the ground, a mat of split bamboo laid over them, and the gentleman can spend his days in *dolce far niente* [pleasant idleness].

352 322 A table made in the same way (otherwise unknown to the Negro) completes the furnishing of his hut.

One does not need to be an expert, either, in order to be able to make a Negro bed. Some straight sticks are chopped out of the *mombambo* (umbrella tree). These are placed lengthwise and then across, on top of each other, trimmed a bit at the edges so that the whole thing fits more or less, and it is then bound together with some split lianas. In this way the Negro has made a bed; this favorite piece of furniture is finished for a sale price of 5 to 10 *mitako*. [835]

[831] The making of beds could be classed among the Mongo trades. I once saw, in the interior, ten of these beds, large and small spread out along the side of the road for sale.

I was assured that the owner of the beds was the very best bedmaker of the village. Of course, I raised my hat to such an important personage.

The *ekoba*, the bed stool, is also indispensable. These *ekoba* take the place of our pillows and are made of one piece, formed to the shape of the head. It is a somewhat hard pillow, but the Negro head is hard and can put up with it; the fellow sleeps without having to be rocked.

322 352 To prepare his food he needs some mortars and pestles, and these are made of wood. He uses hardwood for these utensils so that the mortars do not wear away from the constant pounding.

In addition, the Negro makes his oars, his bow and arrows for the hunt, and the *lokombi*. The *lokombi* is a flat, oblong, hollowed block of wood over which some pegs are stretched [sic]. He plucks these with his fingers, thus producing a monotonous sound. This so-called musical instrument is the constant companion of the young man and accompanies him on his long treks through the Evenaar forest and on his visits to friends and acquaintances. 322 534

624

825 literally that the deceased has hanged the heart, the former is used of a tree which leans over and falls from a great cut at its base.

624 On the announcement of the death, an expert drummer drums out the news. There will be at least four drums of the type known as *lokole*, and a *nsago*.[1] The four
766 drums are called by the names, *Ejamda*, having the 'biggest voice', that is a deep
594 bass note, *Mongyo*, having a higher note, *Mongonda*, a high pitched note, and *Mondoto*,
202 having a very high penetrating note. To these four drums others are added; if the *nkumu* himself did not possess sufficient, they would be borrowed from the surrounding villages, and their notes matched with those of the first three drums, being beaten with them in their turn. *Mondoto* is beaten simultaneously with *Ejamda*, giving a rhythmic tattoo. When the news of the death has been sent out on *Ejamda*, the funeral drumming commences, as follows:

539
Mongonda. Botsangana w'Amba lokolo,
Mongyo. Nsala ikia, otongoneko,
Ejamda. Tokund' ilanga nolom' a nyama,
Ombolaleka nsongo,
Lobanga lolenda ntondo,
Bikeke bilenda lolola.
Nsago. Tobilake nkoi nkonge,
Tobilake nkoi nkonge, &c.

The English and the interpretation are as follows:

Mongonda. A scattering of Amba, the snail. (The mother of twins, always called Amba, here gives her name to the snail because of her prolific progeny, which, upon being introduced to the world, scatter, while the mother dies. So the death of the *nkumu* will cause a scattering of his many wives and children.)

Mongyo. Feathers fall; pick them up. (That is to say, for your arrow shafts, for if you don't, and come back later, the wind will have scattered them and you won't find them. So while the *nkumu* was alive it was the time for his children to learn his teachings so that when palavers came after his death they would be well acquainted with his wisdom and know how to settle them.)

Ejamda. We are burying the *ilanga*, husband of animals, You have just eaten *nsongo*, The chin looks up at the ridge pole, The jaw bones look up at the sky.
[825] (The *ilanga* is an animal much prized for its fat meat; the *nkumu* always gets his share when it is killed, and the skin is made into carrying straps for infants, and into belts.
[563] Batwa are prohibited the use of it for any purpose. It is therefore fitting to liken the *nkumu* to the *ilanga*. *Nsongo* (sing. *losongo*) is the equivalent of a snack. When a woman brings her cassava from the swamp where it has been soaking for several
[367] days, her husband may be too hungry to wait the long hours required to cook it,
[252] so to appease his hunger his wife takes a piece or two of the unprepared root, splits it in two, places salt between, wraps it in a *lokamba* leaf and roasts it in the hot ashes, where it is quickly cooked. So the *nkumu* just had time to eat a few *nsongo*; he didn't wait for the big cooking; his life was suddenly cut off.)

Nsago. Don't pull out the leopard's eyelashes. (That is, while he is alive; now he is dead one can disregard his power.)

---

[1] A *lokole* is a slit-gong made from a hollowed log. Its two notes are produced by striking the two lips of the slit. A *nsago* is a hollowed log, open at one end, across which is stretched a [illegible] skin.

Yaelima

226 [87] After the drive through the dammed-off area, there are usually several fish remaining that succeeded in slipping through the chain. The women then take baskets and bail the pool dry, throwing the water over the dam.

Very often the women dam up part of a marsh or stream and bail out the water with baskets without setting traps or waiting for the water level to go down.

In all three cases we find: 1) setting the trap in front of the drain channel; 2) the drive in the dammed-up area; and 3) bailing out this section. The catch is divided equally among the women who participated in the work. [88]

These three methods of fishing prevail among all the riparian peoples of the Congo, Kasai, Fimi, Lake Leopold II, and the lower Lukenie.

On the upper Lukenie, starting with the Oshwe sector, no traps are made. At most the women occasionally dam up a section of the rivers and streams of the interior and bail them out with baskets to catch the fish.

226 184 The Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima do not fish at all. They are people of the forest and not of the water. Hunting is their chief occupation, and fishing is unknown to them.

In this connection, these tribes are wholly distinct from their neighbors to the west. It must be noted, however, that even among the latter all the clans do not engage in fishing. The groups of the interior do not fish any more than their brothers of the sector of Oshwe and Bumbuli. The traps and other contrivances which we shall discuss below are unknown to both groups. In this respect, all these peoples have a common characteristic, recalling their common origin. In the lower Lukenie and farther west, however, part of the population, the Bandzali, "people of the water," have adapted themselves to the new conditions of their environment. The river became for them a source of wealth and well-being, and a part of their social activity was oriented toward the exploitation of this precious resource.

226 257 At the present time fishing and the preparation of salt are practically the only means of subsistence and unquestionably the principal occupations of all the riparian groups in the region of Leopoldville, Kwamouth, Lake Leopold II, and the lower Lukenie.

226 ●258 Among all the tribes of this region, we were able to distinguish clearly between the groups of the interior, whose chief occupation is hunting, and the riparian groups who prefer to fish and make salt.

Two clans arose in this fashion within a single ethnic group. They both belong to the large family known by the name of the tribe, and yet they are completely different in the habits, practices, and customs relating to that aspect of their lives.

226 During the dry season, one sees the natives from villages located two or three hours' march into the interior come to establish camps on the [89] river bank and to set up veritable fisheries. The information that follows applies to these groups and to all the peoples from Leopoldville to the sector of Tolo inclusively. The rivers, lakes, and marshes in this region are extremely well stocked with fish. As a matter of interest, we give here the list of some native names for fish noted by Mr. Bayens and used by the Bandzali of the Tolo region: *kinkure mbieme*, *lepari*, *ignognienge*, *mpushu*, *lokanga*, *itike*, *mokonga*, *n'tombo*, *loana*, *sabere*, *lboie*, *moelo*, *n'ikulu*, *m'binga*, *pesule*, *m'butu*, *mondja*, *mhime*, *moekiki*, *lupungu*, *ompara*, *m'vunu*, *longelenzali*, *monkie*, *komoe*, *ikeke*, *koshole*, *nokama*, *singa*, *n'guikemen*, *m'pio*, *mwiki*, *ekambela*, *lekumu*, *elangu*, *evuya*, *mekamo*, *m'beli*, *motume*, *idzore*, *kebale*, *kupu*, *mokeja*, *kevuni*, *mopa* *lekeje*, *mipari*.

Aside from fishing with dams, these different groups fish both individually and communally.

Individual fishing is done by the following methods.

1) *Fishing with hook and line*, *angling*. The hook is made of a very fine splint of false bamboo, folded back and held in the shape of a hook by a fine raffia fiber. This raffia fiber extends on to form the fishing line. It is attached to a splint of bamboo which serves as a float. The native does not keep watch over his line. He fastens the lines with the hooks on them to a rope of twisted fibers. The lines are spaced 30 to 50 centimeters apart. The rope is 10 to 15 meters long and is attached to a stick at either end. The native plants two stakes in the river bed. He attaches the two ends of the rope to them, taking care that it is stretched perpendicularly to the current. The lines with float and hook are uncoiled, the bait consisting of a pellet of

Yaelima

372 177 This last method has also been noted among the Balesa, and we were able to verify that some of the natives in the region were familiar with it and used it. It is not indigenous to this tribe, however, and must have been introduced into the region by soldiers or laborers from the old Tolo post, who came from regions where this method was known.

It is also possible that the eastern Yaelima borrowed this method from the peoples of the south, although we were unable to obtain any precise information on this point. This hypothesis, however, is justified by the fact that we found the friction and gyration methods in certain Yaelima villages, and the natives preferred to use the latter method in every such instance. It must be noted that the gyration method is not only less tiring but also faster and permits the natives to take turns. It provides a maximum of yield for a minimum of work. There is, therefore, nothing astonishing in the fact that wherever the natives have had an opportunity to observe the advantages of this method, they have made a point of adopting it.

372 In our opinion, the friction or longitudinal rubbing method should be regarded as having been used exclusively in former times by all the tribes, from the Basfumungu to the Yaelima. This method may still be found among the tribes of the Dekese region, but, unfortunately, we were unable to substantiate this.

All these peoples in this respect would belong to the same ethnic group, which is clearly differentiated *from the group of* tribes in the Bena Dibele-Kole region.

Salt

● 258 The preparation of salt occupies an important place in the life of certain tribes of the Kasai-Lukenie region. Lacking both salt mines and salt water in their territory, the natives proceeded to obtain this precious condiment, indispensable to the diet, by extracting it from plants. [106]

Wherever the introduction of imported products has not eliminated the native method, the extraction of salt is a veritable national industry. The whole community participates in it.

[177] Among the Bateke, Basfumungu, Bakoma, and part of the Wadia, the introduction of salt has completely eliminated the use and preparation of native salt.

M
5
258

Among the Mosengere, Bobaie, Basakata, Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, on the other hand, the natives still use the primitive process.

This varies according to the region, insofar as the materials used in the preparation are concerned.

Among the Mosengere, Wadia, Tumba, Basakata, and Bobaie, the natives use only the salt grass that grows abundantly in the marshes and along the marshy banks of certain rivers in the region.

In the territory of the Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, where this precious resource is lacking, the natives use the trunks of banana trees and especially the flowers of palm trees, whose ashes are quite rich in alkaline matter.

M
5
[361]

Salt grass is harvested toward the end of the dry season.

At this time groups of Mosengere, Wadia, Tumba, Bobaie, and Basakata of the interior leave their villages to camp along the rivers with marshy banks.

M
5
[342]

They choose a site suitable for setting up the few huts that will serve them as shelters during their temporary sojourn in the region. These huts are usually very poorly constructed. Built hastily and carelessly, they are provisional shelters, refuges for the night, rather than dwellings.

M
5
258
423

In former times the whole expanse of the marshy plain covered with salt grass was divided into sections.

Each native group had its own well-defined area and exploited it exclusively. [107]

The site for the huts occupied by each such group was determined by the location of the familial reservation or domain and was chosen so as to lie in the center of it.

The time of year when the salt grass was gathered and the length of the period of exploitation were regulated. In short, the preparation of salt was a national industry, governed by special laws to which the whole tribe had to conform.

At the present time, the groups gather salt grass wherever they think best, without regard for the customs and rights of the past. This work of harvesting the grass falls to the women.

M
5
257
462

While the men are fishing, the women, provided with large knives, cut down the tall grass that grows in the marshes or along

M 5 238 462

the flooded banks of all the rivers in the Mosengere-Basakata region. When the nature of the ground and the level of the river permit, the grass is spread out on the spot to dry in the sun, while in flooded areas the woman loads the harvest in the canoe and takes it to the temporary village set up [100] on the bank. The dry grass is packed in stacks which are like the haystacks on our European farms.

M 5 238

When a family deems that its harvest of grass is sufficient, the chief of the group prepares the incinerating grounds or furnace. Pulverized earth from small termites' nests is mixed with mud from the river. The mixture is well worked and kneaded so as to make a firm and pliant paste and is then spread over the surface of a small hole from 15 to 20 centimeters deep and one or two meters square.

M 5 358 462

When this coating is entirely dry, the women begin their work. One of them loads the furnace and lights it, while the others bring in grass from the stacks.

As the first pile burns down, the woman in charge of the furnace throws in new sheaves, and the work, accompanied by a low, monotonous chant, continues without pause until the full harvest of salt grass is burned.

Fig. 62. Stacks of Salt Grass, among the Bobaie.

M [illegible]

The burning usually lasts a whole day. During this time and during the period when the furnace is being prepared, all

M 5 [illegible] 462

sexual relations are strictly forbidden between the head of the family and the woman in charge of the burning.

When the last sprig is burned, the fire extinguished, and the ashes cold, the women heap them in large baskets.

Meanwhile the head of the family has made a sort of large funnel out of broad and tough rattan splints, bound with fine thongs of raffia stems and lianas. These funnels vary between two and three meters in height. The diameter of the large opening is one and a half to two meters. The bottom is formed by the cluster of rattan splints, roughly tied with a broad rattan thong. This funnel is placed upright between three or four sticks planted in the ground. An earthenware jar is placed under the funnel. The women line the inside of the funnel with banana leaves, placed on top of each other in such a way as to make the sides completely [108] waterproof. They next pour the ashes from the incineration into the funnel, pressing and squeezing them as much as possible.

When the funnel is three-fourths full, the woman draws about two pots of water, or about 30 liters, and pours them over the ashes. This water takes two or sometimes three days to spread through the ashes. When the ashes are saturated, the woman pours two or three more pots of water into the funnel. From then on there is a slow drain of water, strongly salted from the dissolution of the soluble alkaline matter contained in the ashes. The water is caught in the earthenware jar under the funnel. The woman thus obtains four or five pots of a strong salt solution and two pots of water less saturated with salt. After putting aside her six or seven pots of salt water, the woman lights a fire and puts one or several earthenware bowls over it. Into these, little by little, she pours the strong salt solution, which she allows to boil.

When the water evaporates, the first salt deposit forms on the bottom and sides of the bowl.

The heat from these evaporation hearths is so intense that it is impossible to come near them. The woman therefore carefully provides herself with two long ladles to refill the bowls at a distance as the evaporation progresses. The whole lot is left on the fire until all the salt water is evaporated. Even after the evaporation is completed, the woman leaves the jar over the fire, which she stokes, so as to completely dry and solidify the salt deposit. This

M S 257 [462]

deposit naturally acquires the shape of the pot, which is finally overheated and burst, while the salt block remains intact.

When the salt is finally prepared, the family group returns to the village. The temporary installations are abandoned and may be used by other families who may do with them as they please.

M S 258 422

The salt is divided into two parts.

One part makes up the family reserves, reckoned according to the needs of each family in the group, clan, or village which undertook the exploitation. The rest is divided equally among all the members who took part in [110] the harvest, except that the chief and the woman who was in charge of the burning receive double shares.

The salt reserved for family needs is used in the preparation of food and remains the inalienable property of the family. The share distributed to the participants in the undertaking becomes their private property .

M S 258 422 435

Each one of them, man or woman, disposes of his share as he sees fit. Most often the natives use this as trade goods. Among certain tribes, notably the Mosenguere, Wadia, Basakata, and Bobale, the salt blocks are used as currency or as a common trade item whose value is determined by the weight.

M S 257 435

Before our [Ed., European] penetration into the region and more especially before the introduction of legal tender and its imposition by the administration, salt played a much more important part in the economic life of these primitives.

M 326

At the present time, it is used only in local transactions.

The blacksmith and his family, for example, never participate in the preparation of salt. He exchanges the products of his trade, knives, arrowheads, or spearheads, for the stock of the salt makers. [111]

M 437

It even quite frequently happens that the salt makers sell their surplus as a mere commodity to the highest bidder. They bring it to market, display it for sale, haggle about the price in the same fashion as they do for manioc tubers, smoked fish, smoked meat, or baskets of peanuts.

M 422 562

It is singular and interesting to note that the proceeds from this sale do not entirely go to the women who owns the salt.

Sakata FO43

M 622 562 [Ed., an example given by the author, from the third paragraph, page 111, through the fifth paragraph, page 114, is not translated.] .

[114] This clearly shows that the proceeds from the sale of salt, the property of the woman, belong in equal shares to the husband and wife: to the woman because of her work, to the man because of his trouble and travel to put the product on sale.

Among the Wadia, Tumba, Bobeia, Basakata, and Balesa, I had the opportunity to observe the same fact. As long as the woman herself goes to sell her part of the communally made salt, she keeps all the proceeds of the exchange, but according to native custom, when the husband is entrusted with the sale, he is entitled to part of the proceeds.

5 [358]

Fig. 64. Evaporation of Water Saturated with Salt, among the Basakata.

M 454 562 622 The proceeds, however, are not divided immediately after the sale. The total sum is put in a safe place, a hiding place known to both husband and wife. The couple accumulates the mitakos [Ed., a kind of metal currency]; they hoard them until the day when they both agree to divide them. Custom gives one quarter to the man and three quarters to the woman. [115]

M 257 476 This custom does not exist among the tribes east of the Balesa. Salt grass cannot be gathered there, because it is very sparse in the region. The trunks of banana and palm trees and the

257 476 flowers of palm trees are not sufficiently abundant to permit exploitation on a large scale. The women scarcely manage to gather enough material to make the salt needed for everyday life. The whole village takes part in the harvest. The incineration and extraction of the salt is done in the village by the process we have just described, but the product is divided among all the families in proportion to the number of their respective members. The quantity available is usually so small that it is barely sufficient for daily needs; hence the value of salt here is notably higher than among the peoples of the regions where salt grass is abundant. [Ed., the text is not translated from the second paragraph, page 115, to the end of the section, page 118.]

[415]

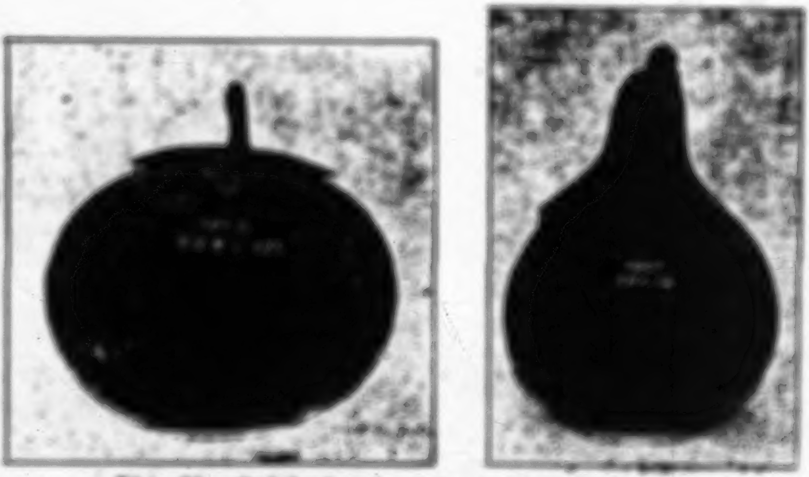


Fig. 66. Calabashes for Salt, Lake Leopold II.

[118] Preparation of Food

262 Manioc may be regarded as the principal food, the dietary staple of all the peoples in the region visited.

From the Bateke of Leopoldville to the Bankutu of Bena Dibele-Kole, [119] all the tribes cultivate manioc, gather the tubers, soak them, and extract the flour with which they make chikwangue.

Dengase FO16
Saketa FO43

M D 415 The fact that these wooden cups are found in the Bena Dibele-Kole region is not without interest. Until the present time they had been reported only among the peoples in the region between the Kasai and the Sankuru, and certain authors even regarded them as characteristic of the Bakuba people. We shall say more on this subject later.

M 266 If cannibalism ever existed, it has disappeared. When questioned about this, the natives as a rule vigorously deny any connection with this barbarous custom, but they do not hesitate to accuse their neighbors of the worst misdeeds. In our opinion, the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region were once anthropophagous and practiced cannibalism until quite recently. It seems probable to us that on a favorable occasion they would not resist temptation even today.

M S 261 Geophagy is better known. Children eat earth among all these peoples. Among the Basakata, Lesa, Mosengere, and Wadia, all the natives and especially the women are earth-eaters.

Fig. 86. Bobete Children. One of them shows signs of geophagy.

Potter's earth and the clay from the nests of certain termites are very highly prized.

The natives seem to eat earth as a delicacy and perhaps also as a medicament. To call it food would be an exaggeration, for the amount eaten is very small. [Ed., a passage is omitted from the last paragraph, page 150, to the end of the section, page 151.]

[151] Hemp and Tobacco

M 276 The consequences of using hemp are more disastrous. This sad practice, which seems to have been quite widespread among certain peoples, is fortunately on the wane, thanks to the vigorous intervention of the government.

592 among the Basfumu. [Ed., the remainder of the chapter, through page 34, is not translated.]

[35]

Chapter 3

The Native's Means of Subsistence

Animal husbandry: chickens, goats, dogs. -- Agriculture: manioc, maize, rice, bananas, peanuts. -- Hunting: weapons, snares, ekidi, individual method, communal hunting. -- Fishing: general method, dams, basket weirs, traps, harpoons, bows and arrows, cord nets, screens.

231 The peoples of the Congo-Kasai-Lake Leopold II region and of the Lukenie do very little animal husbandry. They possess no large animals. At most one may find a few chickens, rare goats, and some hunting dogs in their villages. The dogs get a share of the game and live as best they can the rest of the time.

No care whatever is given to the goats. They wander freely during the day and graze in the forest or plain. Sometimes they venture into the planted fields, from which the hunting dogs chase them at first sight. At night they return to the village and take shelter where they will. During our stay in the village of Toipolo, [233] they even came and disturbed us at night while we were lodged in the hut reserved for strangers.

235 The chickens wander around the village and planted areas during the day and sleep [36] at night in the native's hut, where they have their nest for laying eggs and a place to hatch them.

262 431 835 The native does not eat the eggs. He sells them to agents of the state or of commercial concerns, who collect them for hatching. The chicken itself is rarely eaten by the native. Most often it goes to the kitchens of the Europeans. In 1913-14 the average price of a chicken was half a franc, that of an egg, five centimes, and the price of a goat was from five to 15 francs.

257
476 flowers of palm trees are not sufficiently abundant to permit exploitation on a large scale. The women scarcely manage to gather enough material to make the salt needed for everyday life. The whole village takes part in the harvest. The incineration and extraction of the salt is done in the village by the process we have just described, but the product is divided among all the families in proportion to the number of their respective members. The quantity available is usually so small that it is barely sufficient for daily needs; hence the value of salt here is notably higher than among the peoples of the regions where salt grass is abundant. [Ed., the text is not translated from the second paragraph, page 115, to the end of the section, page 118.]

[115]

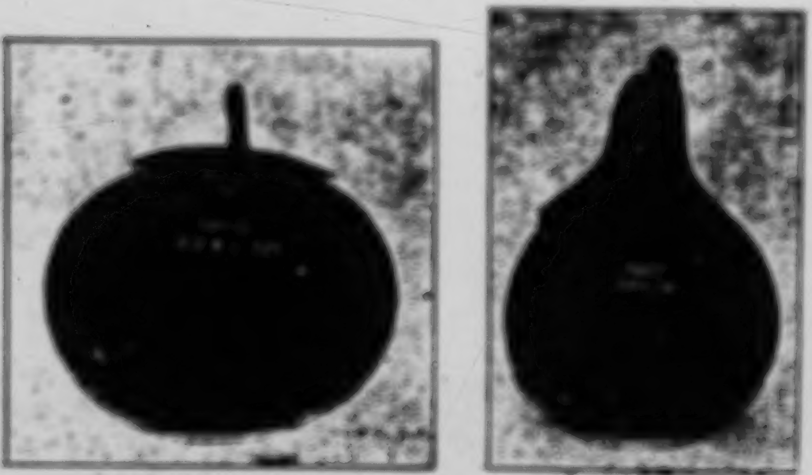


Fig. 66. Calabashes for Salt, Lake Leopold II.

[118] Preparation of Food

● 262 Manioc may be regarded as the principal food, the dietary staple of all the peoples in the region visited.

From the Bateke of Leopoldville to the Bankutu of Bena Dibele-Kole, [119] all the tribes cultivate manioc, gather the tubers, soak them, and extract the flour with which they make chikwangue.

● 262 The natives are familiar with two kinds of manioc, sweet and bitter.

Sweet manioc is not highly valued, owing to its insipid taste and the poor consistency of the chikwangue made from it.

252 Aside from the soaking, which is done only for bitter manioc, chikwangue is prepared in the same way whether the flour comes from sweet or bitter manioc.

The first harvest of manioc tubers takes place eight to ten months after planting. The natives, however, do not begin harvesting them in earnest until the second year. Only the woman does this work. [462]

[illegible] The manioc tubers are piled in large baskets carried on the back and taken to the soaking well, a pond of putrid, dirty, muddy water giving off a highly unpleasant odor of putrefaction and fermentation, which is reserved for this task.

[illegible] The manioc roots remain submerged from five to eight days to make them ferment and thus eliminate their bitter taste. At the end of this period the woman returns to the pond, tucks up her primitive loincloth as high as possible and enters the swamp. She sinks in up to her knees, and plunging her hands and arms into the mire, she pulls out the roots one by one and throws them on the bank. When her supply seems sufficient, she piles the roots in her basket and goes to wash them in the river. Returning to the village, she cuts the tubers, lets them dry a little in the sun, and then peels them. The Bolene, Basilumanga, and all the tribes of the Fimi-Lake Leopold II-Lukenie region, up to the boundaries of Bolobo and Bolena territory, chop the pieces of manioc root before reducing them to flour, while the Ipanga, Batitu, Twelime and Bokala crush them between the fingers before throwing them between the fingers before throwing them in the mortar.

[illegible] The chikwangue knife has a double-edged blade, a median rib, and a long, relatively broad oval form. It is pointed at both ends. One of these ends is [120] embedded in a wooden handle with a doubly concave vertical section.

The museum [Ed., Museum of the Belgian Congo] now has only two of these knives, but they are found in every native hut in the Kasai-Fimi-Lukenie region up to the Oshwe sector. It is, however, almost impossible to buy them from the natives. A woman, unable to do without her chikwangue knife a single day

The natives do not care for them very much; they regard them as impractical for preparing chikwangue, but readily use them to dry and smoke their provisions. M 253 273

Beyond the Tsuilima, notably among the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, the pottery used to cook manioc cakes [136] is more reminiscent of the old earthenware cooking pots of Europe. It is spheroid in shape, very symmetrical, with the neck curved out a little, rounded, and slightly arched. The upper part of the body is decorated with broad circular lines, small arcs, and little dots. These pots are a mottled brownish-black in color and are lightly glazed. M 62 531

Here, too, the chikwangue are cooked by steam. It must be noted, however, that chikwangue does not play the same important role in the diet of the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, although it is still one of the chief elements even now. M 252 262

The Basongo-Meno and Bankutu also eat kifunga, a manioc bread which is prepared in the following way. The

Fig. 72. Chikwangue brought to the Post.

housewife boils water in a large earthenware receptacle with a rounded bottom. It is shaped like a wide, spherical caldron, with the body almost straight, but in any case having sharp edges, and the neck slightly flared but not arched. When the water begins to boil, she throws in the manioc flour a little at a time, stirring constantly with a [137] long spatula of polished wood. When the flour has absorbed practically all the water, the vessel is taken off the fire, and more manioc flour is added while

T
M
252

with palm oil and pili-pili pepper. Whenever the opportunity arises, the native adds fish or meat to it. The dish is very highly regarded among all the peoples of the Batela-Yaelima region, but it should be regarded as a luxury which the family can afford only on special occasions. [129]

M
252
262

The sweet manioc tuber, cooked in ashes, is a more common dish. It is served very hot with slips of manioc greens prepared as vegetables.

Sweet potatoes, which are widespread throughout the region, are peeled, boiled in water, mashed, mixed with palm oil, and served with meat or fish.

Peanuts are eaten boiled or roasted, or sometimes the women crush them raw and mix them with manioc flour or use them instead of palm oil in preparing the meals.

Although the natives eat few vegetables, except yams and sweet potatoes, their diet from time to time includes spinach, native sorrel, small tomatoes, a type of purslane, and leaves of all sorts which the women gather in the forest. The housewife pulverizes them in her small mortar with a cylindrical pestle and stews them over a low fire in small earthenware pots.

M
415

Among certain tribes, notably the Bokala and Yaelima, these small pots have an earthenware lid with a small vertical lug, while in other regions the woman covers her pot while it is on the fire with part of a calabash, a piece of bark, or the bottom of an ordinary pot.

Bananas play a major part in the native diet. From Leopoldville to Kole, we found banana trees in all the villages, both near the state posts and far into the interior of the country. Bananas are eaten raw, roasted, stewed, dried in the sun or smoked on grids. Dried bananas are reduced to flour and served as mush with other dishes.

M
262

Meat is greedily devoured by all these peoples, regardless of its origin or condition. The native must content himself with what chance brings him, the game from his hunting, and what the Mundele [Ed., White men] leave for him. The natives do not have enough practical means at their disposal to secure an abundant diet of meat. In the villages of the interior, meat is [130] seldom eaten. The prospect of a good share of meat is enough to get the native to do the hardest kind of work. In the

M 262 course of our journey, our bearers never complained about long marches, heavy loads, or fatigue, as long as they got their ration of one or two kilograms of meat every evening.

M 262 263 The native is passionately fond of meat, and nothing absolutely nothing, is wasted of the animals killed in hunting. The intestines are especially prized. The natives empty them very hastily and do not hesitate to eat them raw. Most often, however, they cut them into small pieces and boil them in big earthenware pots. The fat is very carefully collected and stored for subsequent use in the preparation of vegetables and sauces. M 263 The rest is served with vegetables, chikwangue, bifune, etc.

The meat is cut into small pieces, seasoned with a little palm oil, pepper, and salt, and placed on the fire to boil. It is cooked in small pots which also serve as plates.

T 415 Among the western Bateke and Banfunungu (in the region of Tua, Kunzulu, and Kwamouth), these utensils are very similar to bowls in shape. The bottom is round, and the rim is straight, slightly flared or arched, and not very high.

Among the eastern Banfunungu (in the region of Tua and Bokala), on the other hand, these utensils have an altogether different shape, little known up to now: a wide, spherical calotte, whose rim, two or three centimeters wide, is bent inward and shows a distinctly horizontal surface.

S 415 Among the Baboma in the region of Bokala, Wombali, and Mushie, as well as among the western Wadia and Basakata, the rim of these bowls has the same characteristic inward curve, but the sides are much more symmetrical and better finished. Moreover, the shape is slightly different. The bottom is round and very flat; the body is shallow and curved slightly inward; and the rim is turned back in horizontally. [131]

M 415 The inward curve of the sides of some pottery, terminating in an inward, horizontal rim, is a characteristic that we find again, although much less pronounced, in the bowls used for the same purpose by the Mosengere, Tumba, Bolaia, Basakata, and Balesa. All of these peoples thus seem to have a certain ethnic relationship characterized by this special form of pottery rim. The general shape of the various vessels we gathered in this region, We did not find this particular kind of pottery beyond the Basete area. The Ipanga-Tselima, as well as the Bosongo-Mono and Bankutshu, do not seem to be aware of its existence and, in any case, do not use it. [136] 415

I come now to the important subject of palm oil. We have already noted how frequently the native housewife uses it in preparing meals. This oil takes the place of the butter and fats used in European cooking. Gathering the clusters of palm nuts and making the oil are very important among all the tribes. 262 244

The remarks of Mr. Engels on this subject in his work on the Wangata [Ngata] are applicable to all the peoples we visited.

In each village one or several natives chosen from the nimblest and most daring (the local daredevils) specialize in gathering the clusters from the palm trees. They do this not only for themselves, but also for others for a slight fee. 241 464

Gathering these clusters is always somewhat dangerous. The native must climb to the top of palm trees which are sometimes 242 421

[4/2]

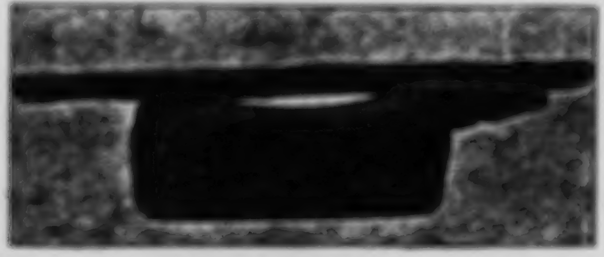


Fig. 78. Mortar and Pestle for Preparing Vegetables and Palm Oil.

20 to 25 meters high and, once there, must work hard to disentangle and sever the cluster.

The method of climbing varies according to the height of the palm trees. We noted two different procedures among all the tribes visited (see Fig. 77). [137]

If the palm tree is not high, the native climbs to the cluster by using the stubs of cut stems as steps. If the tree is very high, the native uses a rattan belt which encircles both man and tree trunk.

Nothing is more interesting than to watch a native climb up to the crown of a palm tree. He does it with truly extraordinary

764 to which a piece of raffia cloth is tied. When the procession has crossed the last barrier, the official witness goes ahead and places the spear in the roof of the head of the family's hut. Hence the name applied specifically to this spear: *[illegible]* (from *[illegible]*, "to pierce," and *[illegible]* "roof"). The spear signifies that the widower's family is not coming with evil intentions, but that they are moved by feelings of the greatest friendship -- *[illegible]*.

The piece of cloth is a sign of respect for the mother of the deceased, in memory of the pain she suffered in giving birth to her daughter and the care she exercised in her upbringing, and as consolation for the terrible blow that has come to her in the death of her child. She will wear this cloth after the end of mourning. If the mother has died before her daughter, this cloth goes to one of the mother's sisters, aunts, or other relatives, who is in some sense her substitute. It is therefore a payment to the mother's clan.

The spear and the cloth are usually designated by the common name *likongá l'endo*, "spear and cloth." A knife, particularly an *[illegible]*, can be substituted for the cloth, but the name *endo* is retained. Nowadays the cloth is no longer given, but a knife which is given the name *endo* is always substituted for it. (1) Nevertheless,

[286] 1. The reason for this substitution is, first of all, the greater value of the knife and, second, the near impossibility of obtaining raffia cloth (see Introduction).

in memory of [432] the ancient custom, a piece of European cloth is often attached to the end of the spear.

When the corpse has been deposited in the head of the family's hut, the two clans greet each other in the usual fashion. The women continue to weep for some time. The husband's clan
[262] go and sit at a little distance. Then the relatives of the deceased
[473] instruct their wives to collect the presents to give the widower.

[262] These consist of various foods: manioc, bananas, smoked meat or fish, caterpillars, salt, hens, etc., one or several dogs ([illegible]) that are alive ([illegible], "dog with hair") or their value in specie (2 rings or 1 ring and an equivalent knife, which for this purpose is called [illegible] or [illegible]), as well as a knife for killing and cutting up animals called [illegible]. The [illegible] and the [illegible] each brings his part. Note that this gift never includes vegetables ([illegible]).

When everything is collected and considered adequate, the [illegible] is called, together with the deceased's own sons, so that they can then give their opinion and later have a good basis for testimony. As remuneration for his services, the [illegible] receives a payment ([illegible]) of a [illegible] fish or a [illegible] rat, as well as a bunch of bananas (for which a ring is sometimes substituted). With reference to this subject I should like to recount an interesting part of the negotiations at which I was present one day. The [illegible] expressed his dissatisfaction with the fact that he was given only a single [illegible]. "It is so little," he said, "in comparison with all the trouble I had to take. I had to settle the matter of the bride price; I had to reconcile man and wife when they quarreled; I had to intervene many times; I always had to run between the two clans; for many years I wore myself out without ever having any rest. And for all that trouble I get such small recompense." I was asked my opinion. I could only express approval of the [illegible]'s view. One of the relatives [403] of the deceased also considered him to be right: "He was always obliged to come and go between the two families; his voice has become hoarse from his endless interventions in palavers and quarrels; he well deserves it if another [illegible] be added." Everyone sided with our opinion, and the [illegible] was satisfied.

After receiving his present, the [illegible] detaches himself from the group. Together with the other [illegible] and any intelligent strangers who may be present and might be able to give an opinion to settle an incidental argument, he sits down between the two opposing clans, a slight distance from each.

847 3) They must not climb up on the roof (they are not forbidden to climb a palm tree in order to cut off nuts).

4) They must not eat animals killed by a carnivore (leopard, crocodile, etc.), or the child would die a sudden and unnatural death like the victims of such wild beasts. [480]

5) They must abstain from animals such as porcupines, anteaters, certain birds, crocodiles, and gavials, (1) who are in the habit of living in the hollows of trees or in dens. The delivery would be very painful if they ate them, for the child would roll up and crouch in the mother's womb. Fish that find shelter in passageways do not produce such consequences and are therefore eaten.

6) They must not eat turtles (2). A very difficult birth is feared, for the turtle withdraws into its shell and encloses its anal extremities as in a vise, and the child would do the same.

7) They must not eat the head of a monkey. The child would be born with deep-set eyes resembling the monkey's.

8) They must not eat the large antelope known as mbuli, because it has a long neck and flabby flesh, and the child would acquire the same defects.

9) They must not eat the [illegible] fish, which would cause migraines, since it swims fiercely without direction.

The results of bokeka and the obligations resulting from it are connected with natural paternity. Thus, if a woman becomes pregnant as a result of relations with a regular, recognized lover, the latter must assume all responsibility. He is required to "fasten the fetus" and to observe all the regulations pertaining to the

1. In this region women never eat snakes or bats (lolóma, [illegible], [illegible]).

2. In some tribes (Bongili, Bonkoso) women always abstain from eating such reptiles.

[illegible] for and fed so that she may regain her strength rapidly. [486]

3. Seclusion

After childbirth the mother remains secluded (-ulama) in her hut for several weeks -- two, three, or more, depending on circumstances and especially on her husband's social position. Her seclusion is called walé. The hut bears the same name, or else it is called jango, "palm leaf." Sometimes the term ekili is also applied to it, denoting the period of seclusion with all the special regulations it involves. These are as follows:

[illegible] 1) Meals. In some tribes the woman may already eat on the day of the delivery. But among others she is only permitted to drink. The reason for this fast is given in the form of a legend. One day [illegible] long ago a Batswa asked his master for a little [illegible], but the master refused to give it to him. The master's wife had just given birth. Annoyed by the refusal, the Batswa cursed his master, saying: "From now on your women will have to fast the day they give birth." (1) Another explanation is that at sometime in the past someone refused food to a slave who was about to be sacrificed at a feast of the lifting of mourning. Tribes and villages that do not give any reason of this sort permit a woman to eat in the evening, if the delivery takes place in the morning.

[illegible] A mother's first meal is prepared by a woman who has performed the carnal act the preceding night. She goes to draw water, and on her return she fastens or attaches over the door of the seclusion hut a piece of palm (jango) or, among the Bombwanja, a piece of dried banana leaf; in this way she informs everyone that it is a house of ekili. Then she prepares the food, which consists of [264] bananas with fish or a hen in palm-oil sauce. It is eaten by the mother and her husband as well as the cook. Their very young children may also delight in it, but [487] the older ones, approaching puberty, may not. The newborn child is given a tiny bit of the sauce to taste.

---

1. Batswa women never fast under such circumstances.

857 763 853 Note, finally, that the confession is restricted to married women. It is never expected of a young unmarried mother. Therefore it would seem to be a practice connected with marriage (a social institution) and not with childbirth (a physiological phenomenon).

This confession is called etato or lotato, from the verb
[592] -tata, "to confess," (for which the generic term, sanga, "to say," is sometimes substituted).

I was unable to find any reason for this practice other than that of avoiding the death of the child. It is evident, however, that this explanation does not exhaust the question, although it is entirely possible that the original and deeper meaning has been lost without leaving any trace in the minds of the present generation. [436]

853 853 3) During the entire duration of nursing, the mother must not be separated from her child. For the usual circumstances of daily life, this rule is broadly interpreted; but during sexual relations it is strict, and no exceptions or excuses are permitted. Negligence under these circumstances would inevitably bring about the death of the child by ndoka as soon as the mother took it back. This rule holds for legitimate relations as much as for illicit ones. Therefore the mother must always keep her child at her breast.

853 [757] [276] 4) If at some point during nursing, the milk no longer flows in sufficient quantity, the mother is given a potion consisting of the extract of the bark of the bolibrgi tree (which has a fruit containing a very sweet milky sap). Then she eats vegetables called londild. (1)

1. The leaves of this plant are also ordinarily eaten as vegetables, but they are consumed especially by those who possess the modern magical practice known as loyalii.

5) An accident to which the Nkundo attach great importance
● [262] is the rejection or vomiting of milk into the mouth of an adult, even if the person affected is the infant's mother. Such a person

853 262 may not eat meat if the child is male, or fish if it is female, until the child in question is grown and kills either an animal (or bird) or a fish, according to the case, and has given it to the victim of the accident. If the child dies young, the person is accused of having violated the prohibition and is obliged to pay a large indemnity. This extremity is not usually reached, however, for the one to whom the accident has befallen scrupulously keeps away from everything that might cause this sort of murder. Then, if death occurs and he has nothing with which to reproach himself, he can resort to an ordeal or to the verdict of a test based on superstition. [563] In addition in villages that have Batswa, a woman of that race must nurse the child for an instant after the accident before its mother gives it her breast again. [497]

854 6) The child is carried on the shoulder, and as soon as it is capable of holding on, on the hip. It does not take many weeks for it to become accustomed to that position. When the mother has to hold it for a long period of time (during a march, on a trip, etc.), she puts it in a scarf-shoulder strap ([illegible]), made from creepers that are scraped and woven as for a mat, or from a cloth of raffia fibers, or even from a pelt (nowadays it is often made from a piece of European cloth). The scarf must be sturdy, for were it to tear and the infant fall, far-reaching consequences would result; all of that woman's subsequent children would be condemned to die in the mother's womb or during the period of nursing.

As the child grows it is sometimes carried astride the mother's back, either because she does not like to be separated from it, or because the tyranny of the little one forces her to keep it with her even during her work, errands, and even dances. She remedies this awkward situation if possible by resorting to the assistance of an older girl, a young niece or cousin, or a little boy from among the immediate kin.

When the child rests during the day, it is laid on an ordinary bed or on a movable bed ([illegible]), without any special arrangements. It has no difficulty sleeping soundly on such hard couches.

853 7) Weaning. Although a child is gradually accustomed to solid food, it does not stop nursing. As it grows older, the nursing times are spaced farther and farther apart. But the child

846 parents to the dance, they must go. When the mother passes a
[778] crossroads or the dwelling place of a spirit or an [illegible] (a place where the Nkundo gather for magical practices, oracles, etc.), she also sings and dances in honor of the spirit, so that he will favor her
846 children. Various songs are popular, such as: [illegible]
[773] [illegible] yalï yeye, "Spirit of [illegible], do not weep; (1) [illegible]

1. [illegible] is an archaic form still in use among the Ekonda, etc

[illegible] yalï yeye, "[illegible]'s [illegible] and [illegible], do not bruise yourself, do not die, do not eat [illegible] mushrooms"; [illegible] yalï yeye, "[illegible] and [illegible], I surround my mother with abundance"; [illegible] yalï yeye, "I shall fall ill, and yet I will walk (be well)"; [illegible] yalï yeye, "difficult childbirth," etc.

Foods forbidden to twins are the mushrooms called [illegible]
846 (or [illegible] or [illegible]), the [illegible] antelope, and the [illegible]
262 pam, which is also forbidden to parents whose child is not yet weaned. (2)

2. This prohibition extends to all food cooked in pots in which such forbidden foods have been prepared. The extension is characteristic of all alimentary prohibitions.

846 When traveling, the parents of twins gird themselves with the
481 creeping plant called [illegible], or wear it like a strap over the shoulder. The mother also attaches a bell to it. Their hair is often
[301] adorned with two feathers from the tail of a gray parrot ([illegible]) and two feathers from a white hen. [304]

846 The greeting to parents of twins and their reply must always
576 be double: [illegible], the reply [illegible]; [illegible], the reply [illegible]. Note that the last greeting is not applied to differently

[847] In other respects he is not differentiated from the other two. Greetings are not tripled in the case of triplets.

A child born directly after twins is called Woteji (from otela, "to repeat"). He is in no way different from other children.

Article VII. Circumcision

Circumcision is generally practiced. It does not have to [881] be performed at any particular age. It is usually done during childhood before the tenth year. The more timorous put it off until puberty or even later. Special customs of individual clans sometimes set a time. Thus, a man of the village of Bosombé is not allowed to be circumcised until he has killed an animal at the hunt. On the other hand, the season during which circumcisions are performed is specified: they must take place during the period when the water level is low.

The operation may be performed by any man who is expert at it. It is carried out behind the huts. No one but the boys being operated on and their fathers are present. The boys stand in a group somewhat apart from the proceedings but place themselves so that with their eyes they can follow the treatment to which their companion is being subjected. The patient squats. One of the elderly assistants places his hands over the boy's eyes so that he cannot see what is happening. The person performing the operation has already dug a small pit to catch the blood. He pulls the foreskin, ties it with a string, and then uses ashes to trace the line which must be followed by the ompolo knife that is used on such occasions. When the blood has stopped flowing, he chews some bondongo [illegible] pepper (Aframomum . . .) or, preferably, [300] a caudal fin of [illegible] the ngolu fish and then spits it onto the wound. The resulting sensation is very painful. But the patient shows that he is brave; for if he cries he is mocked by his companions.

As long as the wound is not healed, the boy must not use [262] manioc leaves (bangobo ja) or manioc bread in the preparation of bosombo or lofe. Nor may he eat the skin, head, or tail of fish.

While the wound is healing, the boy who has been circumcised is cared for, washed, etc., by his mother or, if he has reached

624 and that he may have no more than a month or perhaps a year in which to live and will surely die quickly.

The special objects attaching to the office of nkumu, among them the hat, sceptre, and stool, etc., are at the same time subject to similar magical acts to determine whether they may be produced for the new nkumu's use. They are not present, being in the possession of the ankumu which will appoint him, but are mentioned by name. Apart from the sceptre, no further ceremony is required to identify these objects with their future owner.

[786] 624 787 The songs ended, the Nkumu Akule smears black oil all over his body again, before the elders begin to determine which of his wives is to be known as Nkana, the one who will be closest to her husband throughout his days. For this, magic formulae (bimanfo, sing. emanfo) are used. All the wives sit round in a circle and the nkanga places some irritant such as ground pepper in the eyes of all the women. The wife whose eyes stream most and whose discomfort is also accompanied by a violent shaking of the body is known to be Nkana. [865] Here again, lying is believed to be out of the question, for the shaking of the body is something that is supposed to be impossible of simulation, the real being easily distinguished by all from the false. Nkana is now stripped of all clothing and her body smeared by the nkanga with yellow clay on one side, and with white on the other. A belt of leaves is put round her waist 624 and a small bit of cloth between the legs with each end attached to the belt. Near by 791 a gourd with "medicine" in it has been standing ready for the next step in the ceremonies, and this is now smeared with white clay, a parrot's feather stuck in the neck, and handed to Nkana, who receives it in one hand. Into the other hand is put a section of plantain stalk, into one end of which has been stuck a parrot's feather. A third feather is placed in her mouth so that she cannot speak, greet anyone, or eat. She is now tied with a cord which is held by one of the young men attending Nkumu Akule. At this point of the procedure the nkanga states his price [791] for his work, which will be in the neighbourhood of one hundred brass rods, worth 436 to-day about fifty francs, but formerly double that amount. The future nkumu, accompanied as before, leaves for the village of the ankumu. Nkana starts off at a tremendous pace, for she is now imbued with a sort of frenzied strength, and for this reason has been tied up and put in charge of a strong young man, otherwise she would be off so fast that no one could catch her, and would go into the forest, where she would live for days unseen.

624 In the village of the ankumu the party all sit in an etanga belonging to one of the elders. This is the place where the Tumba men really live—their houses are just [341] sleeping and cooking establishments, but the etanga, having a roof for shade and no walls, is the place where the men congregate and spend their leisure time. It is also 342 the site of the village smithy, which takes up one end. Here, then, Nkumu Akule and his party sit for a day and a night, and neither he nor Nkana may eat food or drink [266] wine during this period. Games are played by the ankumu—mock battles, dances, and [537] songs chiefly of battle, and before the first streaks of dawn appear the group in the etanga begins to march up and down the village singing.

At dawn the whole party, accompanied by a large crowd, make their way to a place in the bush where there is an elevation of some sort. Here Nkumu Akule climbs up and takes his stand, accompanied by Nkana. Now the ankumu choose the Bilaje

THE NKUMU OF THE TUMBA

624 An *nkumu* can never walk alone, but must always be accompanied by others, and on no occasion whatsoever may he run. Even though he never wanders, if he is out in the rain and sees everybody else hurrying for shelter, he will not quicken his pace. His movements must be slow and deliberate. The *nkumu* never sleeps alone; waking and sleeping he is attended by someone. But apart from this he is free to go where he wishes. The *nkumu* is not indiscriminate, as others may be, in his private habits, but must use his own latrine at all times, and if travelling must have his own latrine in each place where he stays. The inland *nkumu* frequently take advantage of this custom by hiding their accumulated brass rods at the bottom of a freshly dug latrine. Such hidden wealth will be acquired by no inheritor at the decease of the *nkumu*.

In speaking of himself the *nkumu* never refers to himself by his title but always by his own name.

624 The couch upon which the *nkumu* sits or reclines during the daytime may not be shared indiscriminately with others, but those permitted to sit upon it at the same time as the *nkumu* are slaves, women, and Batwa. The reservation of this couch for the use of the *nkumu* is not surprising, but the exceptions are. One explanation given was that women and Batwa are not here to be, persons in particular; they do not count for anything in the social life of the community; they are not really "people". Another explanation was that they do not pay fines, this being tantamount to saying that they are exempt from law and therefore cannot break laws even by doing what would be for others an illegal act. The stool of the *nkumu*, however, has closer restrictions in the manner of its use. Besides the *nkumu* only two others may sit upon it, [illegible] and *Mpaga*. It is always carried by one of his wives, though not necessarily by any special one.

The restrictions concerning the food of the *nkumu* are many. He may eat food only in his own house, or, if on a journey, in one given over for his use. He may not enter another house to partake of food even if invited to do so. Likewise the *nkumu* may not eat in the forest, or eat or drink anywhere along the road when on a journey, but must wait until he arrives at a village and has a house at his disposal in order to partake of food and drink. He never "sleeps with hunger"; even if a wife or child should die causing him great sorrow he must partake of food before going to sleep. The Bonginda *nkumu* must never go into mourning, and death must be ignored by them, but the inland *nkumu* are permitted to mourn. All food carried to an *nkumu* must be covered, this rule even applying to water. Food must not be placed in a basket with high sides (*[illegible]*), but in a shallow one (*[illegible]*), and no food that has been kept overnight in a pot may be eaten by him: swelling of the abdomen will result. Various foods are taboo, among them all fast-moving snakes, though slow-moving ones may be eaten; light-coloured palm-nuts may not be eaten, and a variety of yam known as *[illegible]* is disallowed, for it is with the tough stems of the *[illegible]* that the dying body of the *nkumu* will be bound to ensure the sitting posture necessary for burial.

Among regulations roughly classed as social, we have already covered several in references above, and have referred to the *nkumu* in council. It may be added here that he is expected to agree with the majority of the councillors and not fall out with them. The rules affecting the anger of the *nkumu* are accompanied by severe penalties. There must not be any fighting; if anger is aroused to the point of blows the antagonists

263

263 CONDIMENTS--Kinds of condiments used in the preparation and consumption of food (e.g., salt, sugar, honey, spices); processing of savory herbs and spices; uses of condiments; etc. See also:

Use of seasoning in cooking . . . . 252 Salt manufacture 258
Manufacture of sugar and honey collection . . . 257

252 It consists of a large hole in the form of a truncated cone. The diameter of the upper part varies from 60 to 70 centimeters, that of the lower part from 20 to 30 centimeters, and the depth varies from 60 to 80 centimeters. The bottom and sides are lined with pieces of raffia stems, placed [137] [Fig. 00 appears here] [138] side by side with their rounded surfaces facing the interior of the pit. The nuts, which have been slightly boiled, are poured into this funnel, which serves as a mortar. The outer part is separated from the nut with a large wooden pestle. The kernels are discarded. The pulp is taken from the hole and tightly pressed between the hands to squeeze out the oil.

Near the funnel-shaped mortar dug in the ground, there is a bench made of two or four forked stakes, graduated in height, over which the natives place large sections of tree bark. The woman throws the pulp from which she has extracted the oil on this bench, spreads it out, and lights a small fire under the wide sections of bark, which serve as drains. Under the influence of the heat, part of the oil remaining in the pulp flows out slowly and is caught in the earthenware vessel placed at the lower end of the drain. [80] Finally, whatever palm oil remains in the pulp is squeezed out by the torsion method. For this purpose, the native has set up a large stationary bar, very strong, to which he attaches one end of a pressing apparatus made of young lianas and fine rattan plaited together. The pulp, still hot, is placed in this press and wrung very tightly to extract every last drop of oil.

[illegible] The natives collect and keep the palm oil in large pots covered with banana leaves, in calabashes, or, if possible, in imported bottles. Big demijohns stripped of their protective covering are in special demand for this purpose.

262 We have mentioned above the chief uses the native makes of palm oil in preparing food and the important role it plays in the diet of these primitives. Later we shall have occasion to mention palm oil again when we discuss the role it plays in native body care.

● 263 A word now about stimulants. Food in general, particularly meat, is always very strongly seasoned with condiments.

The most widespread stimulant is pili-pili, red pepper. This pepper, the fruit of Capsicum minimum, which is rarely more than one to one and a half centimeters long, is extremely hot. It grows

[text continues on p. 80]

263 wild [140] throughout the region we visited. All the tribes are acquainted with it and use it regularly.

252 462 252 263 Collecting and preparing pili-pili are tasks especially reserved to women. Upon returning from the fields, a woman spreads the fruits on a mat before her hut and lets them dry for five or six days. Sometimes she uses them fresh, mixing them with palm oil enhanced with salt. The native uses this sauce to season his dishes according to taste.

252 263 412 When the pili-pili is quite dry, the woman pulverizes it in a small wooden mortar with a cylindrical pestle or with a small piece of elephant's tusk. The shape of the mortars used for this purpose by the different peoples of the Lukenie varies a great deal. From the Bakela to the Batete, we found only very crude mortars hollowed out from the trunk of a tree. Among the Yaelima and Ipanga this utensil is more carefully worked and finished. The shape is rather like that of a small rectangular box without a lid, but provided with a leg. Among the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, we collected very crudely shaped and primitive mortars, while others were well made and carefully carved. All of them, however, have the common characteristic of an elongated vertical form, and most of them have a leg. The pestles are always quite long.

We thus again find those ethnic zones characterized by the special shape of these utensils. Of course, this fact alone could not serve as the basis of any ethnic classification, but it might have a relative value and importance in drawing general conclusions based on the whole assemblage of the ethnic characteristics of these various peoples.

263 Once reduced to a fine powder, pili-pili pepper is mixed with salt to season food after cooking. All sauces are spiced with a generous pinch of this pepper. Meat is sprinkled with it, or even stuffed with whole peppers.

When the natives are traveling, they merely pick a few pili-pili and squeeze the juice into the food while it is cooking. [141]

276 The kola nut also is very well known as a stimulant and is widely used. The kola tree is found nearly everywhere. The natives gather the fruit and chew it. Women do not indulge.

276 842 According to native belief, the kola nut ensures the fertility of a woman if sexual relations take place the night after the man has used this stimulant.

276 The regular use of kola induces very intense nervous excitement. We noticed that the adolescents and men in their prime scarcely use it. Only the old people use it regularly. Kabua, the old native chief, chewed it from morning to night. One day I pointed this out to him, asking if he were not afraid of the dangerous effects of this overindulgence. He proudly pointed out to me the huts of his seven wives, saying, "Ask them if they don't have children!"

276 263 278 Among the stimulants we may also mention the peanut, widely used by all the tribes, a type of small ground pea, and certain tree roots known to the natives but the exact nature of which we unfortunately could not determine. It is well to note, moreover, that most of the natives use the stimulants as medicaments as well as condiments. They are used for intestinal pains, colic, and as purgatives.

462 252 In all the tribes the preparation of food and meals is exclusively the task of women. They always do it with great care. [142]

252 The kitchen, if it can be called one, is always very simple. If the weather is good, cooking is done in the open in the middle of the village, in front of the hut or behind it, and very often in the shade of the banana trees. If the weather is rainy or cold, the women prepares the meals inside the hut. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

Fig. 81. Carrying Firewood.

462 313

264

264 EATING--regularity of eating; informal eating (e.g., between meals, at work or play); meals (e.g., hours, number per day, participation, composition); techniques of eating; table manners; sequels to eating (e.g., disposal of waste and excess food, cleaning of utensils); associated beliefs and practices; etc. See also:

Eating implements and utensils	[illegible]	Feasts and entertaining at meals	[illegible]
Food preparation	[illegible]	Etiquette	[illegible]
Alimentation	[illegible]	Military mess arrangements	[illegible]

M
R
252

the mixture is stirred vigorously. This produces a sort of soft bread called kifunge by the natives. The Bankutshu and Basonge-Meno also use maize or millet flour to make kifunge. Both are ground in the large mortars used to make manioc flour and are sifted through the basketwork sieves.

Kifunge is always eaten hot. The housewife serves it on a wooden plate previously rubbed with palm oil.

We thus see that the peoples of the Bena Dibele region are differentiated from the other tribes not only by their way of making manioc flour and the shape of the utensils used, mortar, pestle, sieve, and pottery, but also by the special use made of manioc flour and the use of maize and millet flour in making kifunge. There are then, in this respect, two ethnic groups which seem to be quite different from each other. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to determine whether kifunge is truly indigenous to the civilisation of [128] these natives or was introduced by the Basonge-Baluba peoples of the Sankuru-Lubefu. When questioned on this subject, the natives sometimes told us that they had always made kifunge, while some old men claimed that kifunge was still unknown during their childhood.

Fig. 72. Bateke Pulverizing Manioc.

T
[252
425
301
516]

As we have noted, the peoples west of the Bena Dibele-Kole region cultivate maize. This crop is of secondary importance, except in the region of the Banfumungu of Kapanda and Engrei.

M
T
243

264 The natives eat three meals a day, in the morning, toward noon, and at night after sunset.

The wife is never allowed to eat with her husband or to eat in the same group as he does.

[illegible] A chief always eats alone, far from the eyes of the common herd. [143]

Leftovers from the meals are ordinarily given to the women and children.

264 415 We did not find tables, spoons, or forks among any of the tribes we visited.

The food is put in small baskets of rattan or raffia splints, plaited in openwork and lined with leaves on the bottom. Sometimes the plate is made of wood or baked clay.

[252]

Fig. 82. Native Outdoor Kitchen, Ipanga-Bettio Tribe.

Among the Bateke-Banfumango, we collected some earthenware plates which look a great deal like European soup plates, but are less symmetrical in shape and deeper. Among the Baboma-Wadia-Batete, on the other hand, the plates look more like our flat plates. Among the Ipanga-Yaelima, basketwork plates are chiefly used, while in the Bena Dibele-Kole region one finds the pottery plate again, a sort of broadly flared, 266 [465] spherical calabash, and also wooden plates. Sometimes also simple leaves are used as plates, unless the food is served in the cooking pots.

The whole meal is spread on the ground. [164]

The man squats on his mat and dips leisurely in the dishes with his hand, moving from one to another according to his taste.

255 The meal is always eaten in silence. Even when several friends eat together, they never talk during the meal.

After the meal the natives carefully wash their hands and teeth and rinse out their mouths several times.

Beverages

277 465 Water is the only beverage they drink at mealtime, and they use it quite rarely. If they do not have a wooden or earthenware cup, they use part of a calabash or simply a leaf rolled into a little cone.

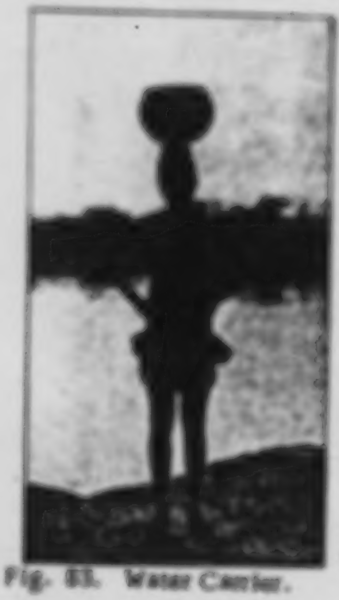


Fig. 83. Water Carrier.

312 462 257 4/2 Water usually comes from a spring near the village. The natives use river water only when it is quite clear. The women and children have the task of fetching water, a chore which is often quite hard. I visited many villages located along or near the river, whose source of drinking water was 20 to 30 minutes away.

At certain hours of the day and more especially in the morning as the sun first comes up, the women and children set out, a calabash or water jug balanced on their heads, to fetch the supply for the day.

271 465 Water is kept in large calabashes or earthenware jugs, sheltered from the sun in a corner of the hut.

356 walls are lined with mats, and the crude bed is raised off the ground to avoid unpleasant and unhealthy contact with the ground. A mat is spread over the native's bed, [103] and the pillow which is customarily used permits him to lie in a restful position.

515 The natives take a bath almost every day. They usually go to the river during the hottest hours of the day, but sometimes they do so early in the morning or in the evening. The child participates in this from an early age. Aside from these regular baths, the native often washes his whole body with warm water. 302 He then smears himself with a light film of palm oil to ensure the suppleness of the skin and to protect it from the sun's rays.

264 515 Before and after each meal the native makes a point of washing out his mouth. After the meal he brushes his teeth with a small brush made of rattan or soft wood, the fibers acting as

Fig. 91. A Scene from Native Life among the Riparian People of the Lower Lukenie.

bristles.

252 264 Meals are prepared with a genuine concern for cleanliness. All the food is washed, cleaned, and boiled before being eaten. Kitchen utensils are cleaned and carefully put away. Despite the primitive conditions for preparing manioc flour, the product is as pure as if it had been prepared by an improved method

262 264 with modern machinery. Not content with the state of the utensils in which she serves the meals, the woman is careful to line them at mealtime with fresh and very clean leaves.

515 The natives keep the nails of their hands and feet cut short. The care of the feet is explained as a hygienic measure and by the necessity of taking precautions to avoid the vermin which like to get into these places (ticks). The care of the hands can be explained only by the concern for cleanliness shown in native eating habits.

Imported soap is not yet commonly used, although we found it in a number of native huts.

388 Many native women know how to make soap. The process is very simple. Dried banana skins, trunks of papaw trees, bark, the fruits of various vegetables, and waste from palm nuts are gathered together and burned. The ashes are carefully collected and mixed with some water for boiling them. At the first ebullition, the woman removes the ashes and impurities that [166] rise to the surface. Boiling is then continued until the evaporation is almost complete. When only a thick and sirupy grayish-black deposit is left, the woman takes it off the fire, washes it, and kneads it in cold water until it takes on a clearer color. She then adds palm oil, mixes it in with great care, and puts the lot back on the fire. The paste is stirred all through the boiling, which is continued until the woman obtains a mixture whose consistency is slightly firmer than that of our soft soaps. [Ed., a passage is omitted from mid-page 166 to mid-page 167.]

Native soap is used only in the care of the body.

[302 303 [167] The native does not merely smear his body with palm oil. The men and especially the women often powder themselves with takula dust. The women prepare a cosmetic with this and love to cover their whole body with it in a spirit of coquetry. This practice is so widespread among the peoples of Lake Leopold II that the manufacture of ngula has become a veritable local industry in certain areas. This is especially true of the Mosengere. In a village near the Bongo post, we counted 35 installations for making ngula powder. The simplest set of materials includes two blocks of takula or redwood, a small receptacle containing water, a handful of sand, and a small hand or painting brush. One of the

Article III. Relations between Spouses; Their Various Rights and Duties

593* [833] Spouses are obliged to fulfill the duties and perform the tasks incumbent upon them.

It is difficult to say just how far the sense of duty to fulfill the debitum conjugale extends among the Nkundó. Normally, they very frequently fulfill this obligation toward each other. But after a good quarrel they abstain, either through mutual consent or because one of them refuses. If one of the parties fails seriously and repeatedly in this respect, the question is resolved by a divorce. [586] The response to temporary lapses is limited to reprimands, disputes, blows, and other common reactions. It should be added that continence is required during the ekila period after the birth of a child and after setting up a new hunting enclosure (lokombo) or a new fishing weir (lenaka), [784] before the third piece of a game or fish is caught.

1. Meals

593* 264 A couple never take their meals together. The husband eats the food prepared for him and served to him by his wife alone, with his grown sons, or with friends or relatives. The wife herself eats with her small children, her daughters, or her female relatives. The two sexes never mingle at meals.

593* 521 The same rule applies to talks, but it is much less strictly maintained; it is not rare to find that, for one reason or another, women participate in the conversation of men.

It will not be long before, through the influence of Christianity, [288] women will generally be admitted in the conversations of the opposite sex. Developments with respect to mixed meals will come with much more difficulty; in practice the question has not even been broached.

593* 362 [354] Thus one finds a kitchen next to the bedroom or separated from the hut; in addition to being the place where food is prepared, it is where the woman spends her day. The kitchen is sometimes a structure separated from the dwelling itself, sometimes a part of the house separated from the bedroom by a partition containing a door.

[843] [777] The Nkundó know as antidote ([illegible] or [illegible]), however, a means of getting rid of such annoying obstacles. Of the three known processes the last is especially common at present.

[789] 1) The husband (or any person to whom the wéké is attached and who wants to be rid of it) picks up a [illegible] chilopod, naturally by means of a leaf, encloses it in a large leaf which he binds with a thin creeper, and makes a small package of it, as one makes a package of meat, fish, etc. He gives this package to his wife, who thinks it contains food and opens it without any suspicion. But when she sees the detested arthropod, she throws it far from her with cries of disgust, while her husband says to her, "You are the one who remains with the wéké." As a result he himself is freed from it.

2) A second means is to take the pregnant woman by the nose when an opportunity presents itself and to say to her: "May the wéké remain attached to you."

[253] [262] 3) The woman prepares some [illegible] (manioc leaves [474] salted and dipped in palm oil). The two spouses eat it together contrary to the usual practice. But the husband arranges matters in such a way that his wife gets the last mouthful and keeps the leaf which serves as a plate and represents the wéké. Then the husband says to her, "Keep the wéké for yourself."

The wéké cannot be detached from the woman, for she is the bomóngo wéké, "the owner of the wéké," the one who is the basis for it. For her it continues until the child is on the point of being born ([illegible], literally "he has come to the end of his growth," or [illegible], "has turned to one side"), and thus, in practice, until the birth of the child.

[752] If a first wife dies at the beginning of her first pregnancy, a cesarian operation must be performed on her. The fetus is removed (it is still no more than an embryo -- [illegible] or bokelé, literally "an egg," or ilóngó, literally "blood") so that it can be buried behind the hut. An omission of this practice would result in the death through pregnancy of the deceased's husband's other wives or of the women he will subsequently marry.

783 literally that the deceased has hanged the heart, the former is used of a tree which leans over and falls from a great cut at its base.

651 786 539 642 On the announcement of the death, an expert drummer drums out the news. There will be at least four drums of the type known as *lokole*, and a *ngomo*.¹ The four drums are called by the names, *Ejambe*, having the "biggest voice", that is a deep bass note, *Mogo*, having a higher note, *Mogomb*, a high pitched note, and *Mbenb*, having a very high penetrating note. To these four drums others are added; if the *elomo* himself did not possess sufficient, they would be borrowed from the surrounding villages, and their notes matched with those of the four three drums, being beaten with them in their turn. *Mbuboo* is beaten simultaneously with *Ejambe*, giving a rhythmic tattoo. When the news of the death has been sent out on *Ejambe*, the funeral drumming commences, as follows:

539

Mogomb.	Bokingomo w'Amba lokolo,
Mogo.	[illegible] [illegible], [illegible],
Ejambe.	[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] a [illegible],
	[illegible] [illegible],
	[illegible] [illegible] [illegible],
	[illegible] [illegible] [illegible].
Nsago.	[illegible] [illegible] [illegible],
	[illegible] [illegible] [illegible], &c.

The English and the interpretation are as follows:

Mogomb. A scattering of *Amba*, the snail. (The mother of twins, always called *Amba*, has given her name to the snail because of her prolific progeny, which, upon being introduced to the world, scatter, while the mother dies. So the death of the *elomo* will cause a scattering of his many wives and children.)

Mogo. Feathers fall; pick them up. (That is to say, for your arrow shafts, for if you don't, and come back later, the wind will have scattered them and you won't find them. So while the *elomo* was alive it was the time for his children to learn his teachings so that when palavers came after his death they would be well acquainted with his wisdom and know how to settle them.)

Ejambe. We are burying the *ilongo*, husband of animals. You have just eaten *nsange*. The chin looks up at the ridge pole, The jaw bones look up at the sky. [503] (The *ilongo* is an animal much prized for its fat meat; the *elomo* always gets his share when it is killed, and the skin is made into carrying straps for infants, and into belts. [568] Bows are prohibited the use of it for any purpose. It is therefore fitting to liken the *elomo* to the *ilongo*. *Nsange* (sing. *lisange*) is the equivalent of a snack. When a woman brings her cassava from the swamp where it has been soaking for several [264] days, her husband may be too hungry to wait the long hours required to cook it, so to appease his hunger his wife takes a piece or two of the unprepared root, splits [252] it in two, places salt between, wraps it in a *lokasa* leaf and roasts it in the hot ashes, where it is quickly cooked. So the *elomo* just had time to eat a few *nsange*; he didn't wait for the big cooking; his life was suddenly cut off.)

Nsago. Don't pull out the leopard's eyelashes. (That is, while he is alive; now he is dead one can disregard his power.)

---

¹ A *lokole* is a slit gong made from a hollowed log. Its two notes are produced by striking the two lips of the slit. A *ngomo* is a hollowed log, open at one end, across which is stretched a reduce hide.

Dengese FO16
Sakata FO43

M D 415 The fact that these wooden cups are found in the Bena Dibele-Kole region is not without interest. Until the present time they had been reported only among the peoples in the region between the Kasai and the Sankuru, and certain authors even regarded them as characteristic of the Bakuba people. We shall say more on this subject later.

M 266 If cannibalism ever existed, it has disappeared. When questioned about this, the natives as a rule vigorously deny any connection with this barbarous custom, but they do not hesitate to accuse their neighbors of the worst misdeeds. In our opinion, the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region were once anthropophagous and practiced cannibalism until quite recently. It seems probable to us that on a favorable occasion they would not resist temptation even today.

M S 261 Geophagy is better known. Children eat earth among all these peoples. Among the Basakata, Lese, Mosengere, and Wadia, all the natives and especially the women are earth-eaters. Potter's earth and the clay from the nests of certain termites are very highly prized. The natives seem to eat earth as a delicacy and perhaps also as a medicament. To call it food would be an exaggeration, for the amount eaten is very small. [Ed., a passage is omitted from the last paragraph, page 150, to the end of the section, page 151.]

Fig. 86. Bobale Children. One of them shows signs of geophagy.

[151] Hemp and Tobacco

M 276 The consequences of using hemp are more disastrous. This sad practice, which seems to have been quite widespread among certain peoples, is fortunately on the wane, thanks to the vigorous intervention of the government.

6. Treason

628 602 Treachery and treason between relatives by marriage were not unusual. The proverb says [illegible], "treason exists [294] chiefly on the part of relative by marriage." Not that this happened through any fundamental maliciousness apart from perhaps some rare exception. But in case of a war or particularly of a vendetta, relative by marriage did not hesitate to betray his in-law and thus send him to his death.

We shall limit ourselves to giving two case histories which are well known to the current generation. (1)

1. I do not know exactly when these events occurred. In any case they date back to the time of the Independent State and to the beginning of the occupation.

At the time when the Ingende post was occupied by the white "Injumbembile" and that of Jéfingé by "Bonfasé," some men from [266] Bofilé (Ilofiema y'Iboko, Bombwanje) surprised an inhabitant of Bokaka (Wângata), killed him, and ate him. Shortly thereafter Lokwa jw'Ōyelé, a man from Bofilé, went to visit his sister Efómé, who was married to Imbilé is'Ey'amola of Ilonjé. It happened that the latter was a maternal uncle of the victim of the Bofilé men. Was Lokwa unaware of this relationship? Or did he trust his brother-in-law? Whatever the case he was well received. Nevertheless, Imbilé had not forgotten his nephew's assassination and went to inform his close kin of this good opportunity to avenge the murder. One evening they broke into the hut that had been placed at the visitor's disposal and found him there with his sister Efómé and his wife Lompoko. The [266] two women managed to escape, but Lokwa was taken, killed, and eaten. Naturally, his sister Efómé did not return to her husband, and there was no question of a restitution of the bride price.

The second case dates from the same period. Two Batswa of [266] Mbilanga (Etsomelé, Bongili), Bokengo and Bolfyengé, surprised Mboko Ilombé of Bofilé in the forest, killed him, and ate him.

621 601 Some time thereafter, a man named Bongfongé from the Ntómbá village of the Bongili went to Bofiló to visit his sister Bosílo, who was married to Eale [illegible] Bofoló. The latter told him that the village was enraged because of the assassination of one of their people by the Batswa of the Bongili. He advised him to go [105] and hide in the fallow ground lest excited men come upon him and revenge themselves on him. He led his brother-in-law there himself. Therefore he knew the exact location of his hiding place and ran to betray him to the others. They encircled the fallow ground and easily found poor Bongfongé, who was pitilessly massacred and eaten. His sister Bosílo never knew of her husband's treachery; she thought that despite all his precautions, the other inhabitants had discovered her brother's hiding place. (1)

[614] 1. We should not be too astonished that during that period the Europeans did not intervene in these wars, vendettas, massacres, and acts of cannibalism. They let the natives do as they pleased among themselves and demanded only that they leave them alone and render them services and tribute. They had other things to do in those times. The white men Ãmbé and [illegible], of whom the natives still speak with respectful fear, were the first to begin punishing acts of barbarism in this region.

602 This hypocrisy on the part of the husband toward his wife and brother-in-law is due to the presence of two opposing feelings within him -- on the one hand, the love of his family and the feeling of solidarity which engenders hate and the desire for vengeance; on the other, love for his spouse. As these feelings are in complete contradiction with each other, he cannot reconcile them. But at least he can preserve appearances.

[537] This situation is referred to in the following proverb: bokiló ekwĩsákí, wẽngoyak'eyalo, "if your bokilo has hidden you, change

grasping the knife with his left hand, with his free right hand he drains a gourd of palm wine to gain courage, hits the first victim on the head with the empty gourd, then transfers the knife to his right hand. He is now ready for his work which he proceeds to do methodically, animated by the heady wine and the rhythm of the drum. When he had finished one of the lines, a pause would be made to bring out the body for burial. Just before this is done an armed band rushes down the path, returns, goes up in the other direction, then returns; this is said by some to ward off any spirits which might be about. The *nkumu* is now brought out by the Batwa slaves.[1] His grave, a circular hole with a crypt in one side of it, its entrance facing west, had been previously prepared. Few people in the Bongindo villages knew or had seen the actual burying place of an *nkumu*. While the corpse was carried to the grave followed by a crowd, the executioner finished his work. Those who stayed behind took the bodies of the decapitated men and women and divided them among all the participants of the funeral who would subsequently devour everything. 781 764 [illegible]

Accompanying the funeral procession to the grave were the *nkil*, one or more men or women who were destined to accompany the *nkumu* to his grave and to the other world beyond. At the burial of an *nkumu* witnessed in [illegible] at which the [illegible] of some of the old rites were carried out, a party of armed men contested the right of the procession to approach the grave, there was a mock battle for a few minutes between two bands of the funeral party, and then the procession gained right of way. At the grave-side the legs and sometimes the arms of one *nkil* were broken by heavy clubs to prevent him from escaping. Then seated on the ground the body of the *nkumu* would be placed on the knees of this one, whose arms would be placed round the *nkumu* and securely fastened by driving a peg right through both wrists. Sometimes two *nkil* were thus used. If the number of victims was sufficient, others would be buried alive too, being placed in the grave in the recumbent [illegible] position, with the corpse on top of them, its weight being sufficient, with the earth filling in the grave, to prevent escape. The *nkumu* was now ready for burial and was placed in the crypt, facing west.[2] The relatives of the *nkumu* approach, they pluck the leaves and stem of a juicy herb known as *[illegible]* and chewing it, expectorate ceremonially on the body while they address it in language somewhat as follows: 'You are going to leave us now, we are mourning, for you were a good and wise man, your discernment in matters of justice was without parallel, &c. . . . we wish that you may be happy where you go, have many wives, beget many children, lack not for meat. But don't take with you our power to beget children, leave us also some of this wisdom of yours, for what you were, we would be.' This prayer over, the [illegible] would be slipped off the head of the corpse and replaced by the informal hat, all done so dexterously that the bare head was not seen. The entrance to the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

---

[1] The body was supposed to have remained in state for seven to nine days, but actually it was buried privately soon after death, a dummy being set up with the [illegible] on its head, and the succeeding ceremonies being conducted with only the dummy in the place of the actual body. The inland villages however did allow the body to remain unburied for the long period, the wives being forced to keep watch in the same house. The Bongindo buried their *nkumu* generally in their house or the spot where they had been accustomed to rest, burying the dummy at some other spot farther off.

[2] All burials have particular regard to this east-west position, those buried in the recumbent position having the feet to the west. The native explanation is that this allows the spirit of the departed to follow the path of the sinking sun.

264 [415] spherical calotte, and also wooden plates. Sometimes also simple leaves are used as plates, unless the food is served in the cooking pots.

The whole meal is spread on the ground. [144]

The man squats on his mat and dips leisurely in the dishes with his hand, moving from one to another according to his taste.

[illegible] The meal is always eaten in silence. Even when several friends eat together, they never talk during the meal.

After the meal the natives carefully wash their hands and teeth and rinse out their mouths several times.

Beverages

271 415 Water is the only beverage they drink at mealtime, and they use it quite rarely. If they do not have a wooden or earthenware cup, they use part of a calabash or simply a leaf rolled into a little cone.

312 462 857 412 Water usually comes from a spring near the village. The natives use river water only when it is quite clear. The women and children have the task of fetching water, a chore which is often quite hard. I visited many villages located along or near the river, whose source of drinking water was 20 to 30 minutes away.

At certain hours of the day and more especially in the morning as the sun first comes up, the women and children set out, a calabash or water jug balanced on their heads, to fetch the supply for the day.

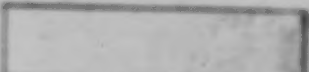


Fig. 83. Water Carrier.

271 415 Water is kept in large calabashes or earthenware jugs, sheltered from the sun in a corner of the hut.

271/415 The shape of these water jugs varies considerably according to the region, and some of them even seem to us to be characteristic of certain ethnic groups. [145]

Among the western Basele and Basfumungu, the spherical shape with straight neck predominates.

Among the Mbelenge of Bokala-Wambali and the eastern Basfumungu, the shape is distinctly spherical, with a very small, funnel-like neck that is usually no more than one or two centimeters high. This form is entirely new. Fortunately, we were able to collect several specimens. The Bateke of the Stanley Pool region use a water jug that resembles the carafes imported from Europe. This shape is particularly common in the Leopoldville-Kinshasa region.

From Mushie to the region of the Basakata-Balesa, including the Wadia and Tumba, the body of the water jug consists of two parts joined at a sharp or slightly rounded edge. The bottom part is shaped like a spherical calotte; the upper part has the shape of a truncated cone. The decoration is very symmetrical. Lightly [53] marked parallel circles cover the conical part of the body and sometimes the neck. The latter is very long, usually wider at its base than at the top and slightly swollen in the middle. This interesting shape is also found, though more rarely, among the Mosengere. Among this tribe we encountered another form, no less interesting and very little known up to the present time. The chief characteristics of this form are the flat bottom, a cylindrical, more or less symmetrical body, rounded edges, and a neck in the shape of a wide funnel.

Among the Bobale of the northeast, the Balesa-Batete, the Ipanga-Batitu, and the Bokala-Yaelima, the water jug has a spherical body and a straight neck. This same shape is also found among the Bankutu [Wankutshu] and Basongo-Meno of the Bena Dibele-Kole region.

Let us note, however, that in the region of the Ipanga-Yaelima, water jugs are relatively rare; the natives commonly use large calabashes, very often provided with a handle and a leg of rattan or bamboo.

271/515 Other than with meals, the natives drink water only to slake their thirst. Each time the porters come to a river, they make it a point to bathe in it and to refresh themselves. [146]

Teke FI33

M 243 The cultivation of rice serves less to nourish the native than for trade. He usually sells his harvest immediately after the husking.

T M 244 Peanuts thrive in the region of the Banfumu and among the Bankutshu. They grow best in light soil and are not suitable for land cleared from the great forest. The crop demands a great T M [462] deal of care and regular upkeep. Fields invaded by weeds yield nothing. The harvest takes place when the crop is mature and is the task of the women with the help of the children. The peanuts are placed in baskets carried on the back and taken to the village. The native spreads them out in the sun to dry. He turns them again and again, two or three times a day, and brings them into the hut at night.

M 249 Sugar-cane plantations are set up in marshy lowlands.

[462] [273] All the work on this crop falls to the men. These plantations are found only in regions where the natives make masanga, sugar-cane beer. Sugar-cane fields are especially numerous in the villages on the lower Lukenie and the Fimi.

M 244 As a rule the natives also cultivate a few legumes, sweet potatoes, and yams, but on a small scale and without giving them any particular care. [61]

Hunting

M 224 462 Hunting is practiced only by men. They engage in it, not for sport, diversion, or relaxation, but for the sole purpose of procuring meat and fat.

M 224 857 From their earliest childhood, the boys get together to beat the grass and catch mice, rats, and other rodents which swarm in the bush. Nothing is more interesting than to see them at work. Ten, fifteen, or sometimes twenty of them form a large circle. Armed with sticks, they beat the grass and make an unbelievable din. Little by little the circle narrows, moving in on a small well-cleared space. The oldest, most daring and most agile of the boys keep watch over this space, their eyes alert and riveted on the edge of the grass, ready to pounce. The beaters redouble their zeal, strike, shout, gesture, and gradually drive all the rodents

000 point to bathe in it and to refresh themselves. [146]

273 In addition to water which is the customary drink of all the tribes, we found the following beverages according to region: palm wine, malafu; sugarcane beer, masanga; and pombe, maize beer.

[415 284]

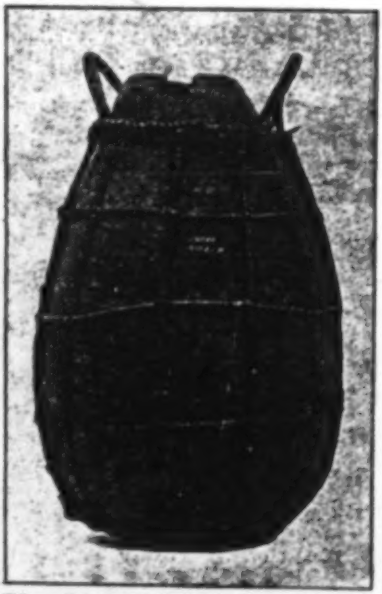


Fig. 84. Calabash for Palm Oil, also for Water.

Palm wine, the native malafu, although liked, is usually not very much in demand, especially when the native can replace it with masanga, sugar-cane beer. We found it among all the peoples, however, although actually only the Ipanga-Yaelima and the Basongo Meno-Bankutu drink it regularly.

[439] In the other regions palm wine is made particularly in the villages near government posts or commercial establishments for the benefit of the Whites. These villages usually have a professional vintager.

The vintage comes from tapping the trees. The nsese palm, raffia, and the oil palm are chiefly used.

273 481 The native has three methods of climbing the trees for the vintage. The first is the one we described for gathering clusters

of the palm nuts, the second one consists of leaning a pole-ladder 273 against the palm or fastening rungs to the trunk itself; the third 481 is to dig holes in the trunk to serve as steps. The native climbs to the crown and cuts a palm leaf just below the terminal bud. He digs a rather deep opening in the wound and plants a palm leaflet in it to serve as a channeling trough. At the other end of this trough, the native fastens a calabash. The palm sap fills the hole and flows slowly [147] down the trough into the calabash. The native comes to collect it early in the morning.

When fresh, this wine seemed delicious to me; fermented, 273 I found it undrinkable!

The natives, on the other hand, went only after it has fermented for three or four days.

Another method, simpler but less profitable, is to cut down the palm tree, lop off the crown, and gather the sap that flows out. Used in this way, a palm tree may yield, at most, 10 to 15 liters of wine and is permanently destroyed. The wine, moreover, is of a decidedly inferior quality. A native would never dare offer it to the head of a post.

Fig. 85. Masanga Brewery, Basakata.

Sugar-cane beer, the native masanga, is the drink most in demand.

In certain regions, notably among the Basakata-Balesa, we found one or two large establishments for making beer in each village. These breweries are located a little outside the village. The equipment is very rudimentary. It consists of a large, cleared space with the ground well beaten, a straw roof sheltering

273 a sort of large basin resembling a canoe, two or four beating paddles, a strong stationary bar, a pressing apparatus made of lianas, a storage vat, and calabashes.

Sugar cane is grown communally on a rather large scale. [244] [148] The natives cut it shortly before it is fully ripe. Men, women, and children participate in this work. The whole harvest is carried to the brewery shed. The sugar cane, cut in pieces, is thrown into the mash tub, and two or sometimes four men crush it as much as possible with large beetles, reducing it to a sort of whitish pulp. When this pulp is sufficiently thin, the natives put it in the press made of lianas, which is attached so as to hang under the bar and over the vat. To keep the press from coiling up as a result of the twisting, they insert a stick in it perpendicular to the bar. Two men vigorously twist the press, squeezing out every last drop of the sweet juice. The liquid is caught in the vat and then poured into large calabashes and carried to the village. Masanga is truly pleasant, refreshing, and delicious when it is fresh. It has no intoxicating effect. The natives, however, do not drink it until it has fermented. They add to it the bark of a small plains shrub, put the waste from the sugar cane around the calabashes, and expose them to the sun for one or two days to induce very active fermentation.

Sugar-cane beer is always imbibed communally.

All the important ceremonies are accompanied by heavy drinking. Marriage, birth, death, burial, the return from important hunts, the appearance of the new moon, a visit from a neighboring chief, and even our arrival in certain villages are all reasons for organizing big native celebrations where the emptying of great numbers of calabashes of masanga is the order of the day. The natives gather in the shade of the big trees in the village or under the public shelter. The calabashes of masanga are set in the center or poured into big pots. Everyone drinks as much as he wants, as long as there is any left and as long as he can. Meanwhile, the music is in full swing, and there is singing and dancing. Hemp is very often smoked, and the drinking always continues up to the point of brutish drunkenness. It is hard to realize what enormous quantities of this heady beverage some natives can imbibe. Pokei, the Banfumungu chief at Engrei,

Teke F133
Dungese FO16

M 273 [579] ordinarily does not stop until his tenth liter, and he is not the biggest drinker. Very often [149] the celebrations degenerate into bloody brawls. The drunken native flies into a rage over trifles, quarrels, and does not hesitate to use his weapons.

T 273 562 Among certain tribes, notably the Banfumungu, women under no circumstances may be present at important festivities or participate in large-scale drinking. Pokei assures us that they are excluded because of their vindictive temperament. "We men," he said, "sometimes fight during these celebrations, but the next day haven't we forgotten our quarrels? The women would also fight. Do they know how to hold their tongues even when they haven't drunk masanga? The next day they would go on quarrelling. The husbands would step in. A village quarrel would follow every celebration! No, the women may not drink masanga."

It would be a mistake, however, to believe that the women strictly observe this prohibition. Oh no! More than one has her little drop of masanga inside her hut, and on occasion intentionally pours herself a little too much. Masanga is not taboo for them!

M 273 [415] Sugar-cane beer is served in small earthenware cups, pieces of a calabash, or wooden cups.

East of Balesa-Batete territory, masanga seems to be unknown, or at least we did not find any, either among the Ipanga-Batitu or among the Bokala-Yaelima.

M D 273 415 Among the Basongo-Meno and Bankutu of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, the natives chiefly consume palm wine.

They also make very inferior beer from maize or millet.

To make this beer, the native crushes the maize or millet, steeps it in spring water, and lets it ferment in earthenware jars.

M D 415 531 These jars are shaped more or less like the water jug with the spherical body, but have a very broad and higher neck. They are usually quite large. The cups used for palm wine and beer by the Basongo-Meno and Bankutu are always carved out of wood. They are found in all shapes, from a simple, undecorated small keg to a splendidly fashioned human figurine. In certain villages, notably at Tipolo and Bakoba, we found cups made of buffalo horn, decorated [150] with carved designs. Cups shaped like horns are sometimes carved out of wood. These are usually larger and more carefully decorated.

396 the owner, and everyone who has helped gets his share according to
476 the amount of work he has done. [99] Frequently a big sugar-cane
[273] beer spree is started, where disgusting scenes often take place until
finally the drunken men are taken home by their wives. In civilized
Europe it is sometimes not much better.

501 Boats are made just large enough for two men, as well as others sufficient for a hundred or even a hundred and fifty men. The big war canoes of the great chief Evoloko of Waka and of the former chief of Bandaka, a certain Isaempoko, are known throughout the region. The war canoe of the latter was said to hold a hundred and fifty men, and the edge of this canoe to reach up to the shoulders of a fairly tall Negro. The ordinary canoe in which Whites travel is, as a rule, sufficiently large for twenty to thirty oarsmen.

435 The prices of canoes vary, according to size and strength, from 200 to 10,000 mitako.

The Lokole

202 The lokole plays a very large part in the life of the Negro. Without the lokole, the life of the Negro would be inconceivable.

The lokole can be best described as the public telephone with which the Negro makes his thoughts known publicly from village to village.

The lokole is to the Negro what the trumpet signal is to the soldier.

The lokole calls the men to meetings, to war, and to the hunt; the lokole calls all the people, great and small, to the dance. During the dance it is the loyal accompanist until deep in the night; its monotonous sound brings the enthusiasm of the dancers almost to the point of frenzy.

The Negro telephones his friends at great distances and explains what he wants. If two Negroes from the same village or from different villages have a quarrel, they abuse each other over the lokole, and the whole world is kept fully up-to-date on the details of the dispute. Each one tries to blacken the reputation of the other in the eyes of the other villagers. If someone dies in the village, it is proclaimed everywhere the whole night through, by means of the lokole, that

263 wild [140] throughout the region we visited. All the tribes are acquainted with it and use it regularly.

222 Collecting and preparing *pili-pili* are tasks especially re-
462 served to women. Upon returning from the fields, a woman
252 spreads the fruits on a mat before her hut and lets them dry for
263 five or six days. Sometimes she uses them fresh, mixing them with
palm oil enhanced with salt. The native uses this sauce to season his dishes according to taste.

252 When the *pili-pili* is quite dry, the woman pulverizes it in
263 a small wooden mortar with a cylindrical pestle or with a small
412 piece of elephant's tusk. The shape of the mortars used for this
purpose by the different peoples of the Lukenie varies a great deal. From the Bateke to the Batete, we found only very crude mortars hollowed out from the trunk of a tree. Among the Yaelima and Ipanga this utensil is more carefully worked and finished. The shape is rather like that of a small rectangular box without a lid, but provided with a lug. Among the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, we collected very crudely shaped and primitive mortars, while others were well made and carefully carved. All of them, however, have the common characteristic of an elongated vertical form, and most of them have a leg. The pestles are always quite long.

We thus again find three ethnic zones characterized by the special shape of these utensils. Of course, this fact alone could not serve as the basis of any ethnic classification, but it might have a relative value and importance in drawing general conclusions based on the whole assemblage of the ethnic characteristics of these various peoples.

263 Once reduced to a fine powder, *pili-pili* pepper is mixed with salt to season food after cooking. All sauces are spiced with a generous pinch of this pepper. Meat is sprinkled with it, or even stuffed with whole peppers.

When the natives are traveling, they merely pick a few *pili-pili* and squeeze the juice into the food while it is cooking. [141]

276 The kola nut also is very well known as a stimulant and is widely used. The kola tree is found nearly everywhere. The natives gather the fruit and chew it. Women do not indulge.

276 842 According to native belief, the kola nut ensures the fertility of a woman if sexual relations take place the night after the man has used this stimulant.

276 The regular use of kola induces very intense nervous excitement. We noticed that the adolescents and men in their prime scarcely use it. Only the old people use it regularly. Kakua, the old native chief, chewed it from morning to night. One day I pointed this out to him, asking if he were not afraid of the dangerous effects of this overindulgence. He proudly pointed out to me the huts of his seven wives, saying, "Ask them if they don't have children!"

276 263 278 Among the stimulants we may also mention the peanut, widely used by all the tribes, a type of small ground pea, and certain tree roots known to the natives but the exact nature of which we unfortunately could not determine. It is well to note, moreover, that most of the natives use the stimulants as medicaments as well as condiments. They are used for intestinal pains, colic, and as purgatives.

462 252 In all the tribes the preparation of food and meals is exclusively the task of women. They always do it with great care. [142]

252 The kitchen, if it can be called one, is always very simple. If the weather is good, cooking is done in the open in the middle of the village, in front of the hut or behind it, [462] [353] and very often in the shade of the banana trees. If the weather is rainy or cold, the women prepares the meals inside the hut. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

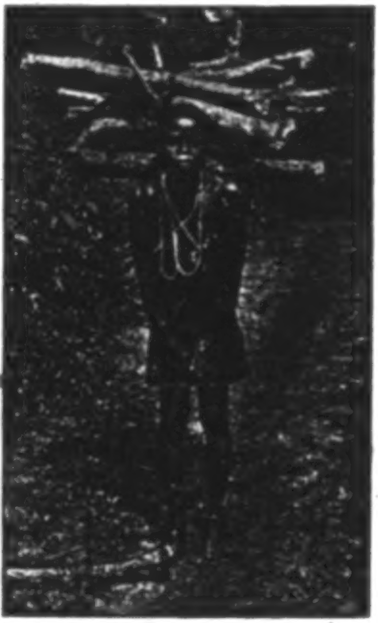


Fig. 81. Carrying Firewood.

Dengese F016
Sakata F043

M D 415 The fact that these wooden cups are found in the Bena Dibele-Kole region is not without interest. Until the present time they had been reported only among the peoples in the region between the Kasai and the Sankuru, and certain authors even regarded them as characteristic of the Bakuba people. We shall say more on this subject later.

M 266 If cannibalism ever existed, it has disappeared. When questioned about this, the natives as a rule vigorously deny any connection with this barbarous custom, but they do not hesitate to accuse their neighbors of the worst misdeeds. In our opinion, the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region were once anthropophagous and practiced cannibalism until quite recently. It seems probable to us that on a favorable occasion they would not resist temptation even today.

M S 261 Geophagy is better known. Children eat earth among all these peoples. Among the Basakata, Lesa, Mosengere, and Wadia, all the natives and especially the women are earth-eaters. Potter's earth and the clay from the nests of certain termites are very highly prized.

Fig. 86. Bobaie Children. One of them shows signs of geophagy.

The natives seem to eat earth as a delicacy and perhaps also as a medicament. To call it food would be an exaggeration, for the amount eaten is very small. [Ed., a passage is omitted from the last paragraph, page 150, to the end of the section, page 151.]

[151] Hemp and Tobacco

M 276 The consequences of using hemp are more disastrous. This sad practice, which seems to have been quite widespread among certain peoples, is fortunately on the wane, thanks to the vigorous intervention of the government.

Take FI33

M
●276 In spite of a most careful search, we found only a few rare proofs of the existence of this baneful custom. [152] [Fig. 87 appears here.] [153]

T
276 Among the Banfumungu of Mpozali, however, we found samples of hemp and calabash pipes, well hidden under the bed.

Asked about the use of these pipes, Lekana, the chief of the Banfumungu of the region, first gave us an evasive answer. I asked him abruptly if he did not know what use was made of the bundle of hemp I found in the same hut. He said simply, "The White man knows everything! Why ask me what use is made of these pipes?"

T
276
778 The few pipes for smoking hemp that we collected in the village of Mpozali are decorated with feathers, beads, and small bags made of raffia fibers or rags of imported cloth, containing the most diverse substances, white clay, cowry shells, ngula, etc. All of these various things taken together make up the essential part of most of the Banfumungu nkisi or ndoki objects. Their presence alone led me to attach a significance to these pipes that I had not previously suspected.

When questioned about this, the natives of Mpozali and particularly their chief, Lekana, were very definite: "Mbula Matari [Ed., European administration] has forbidden the use of hemp, but is it not nkisi?"

"Why can't we use it?"

T
[757] When I explained to them the evil consequences of its use, Lekana asked me, "When we smoke hemp, do we still feel pain? Are not our sick people able to sleep after smoking hemp? Is it evil to make people forget pain and suffering, to give sleep to the sick? Is not hemp nkisi for the sick?"

I insisted, explained, argued, all in vain. Hemp and the pipes for smoking it were and would remain nkisi.

It is not only for the pure love of it, then, that the Banfumungu smoke hemp and that they do it clandestinely, since they cannot do it openly. It is not only the need to indulge a deep-rooted habit that impels them to disobey the severe laws which prohibit the practice.

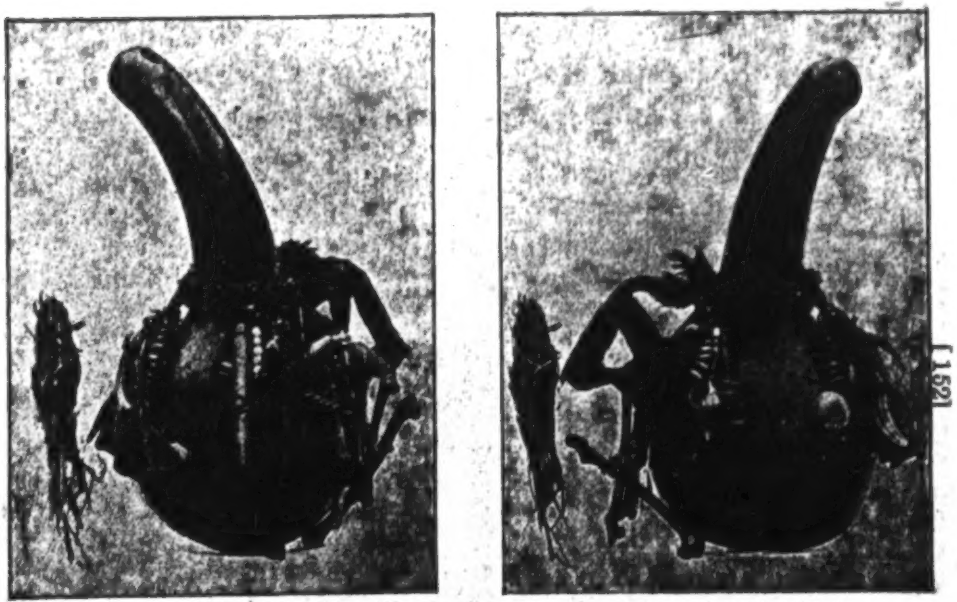


Fig. 87. Pipe for Smoking Hemp, Adorned with Nkisi.
Left: rear view. Right: front view.

Take FI 33

T 276 Belief in the magic force, the occult but beneficial power, of this narcotic keeps them from putting aside the hemp pipe. As long [154] as this belief endures, the Banfumungu will keep this pipe and will not give up the custom. If we could get them to understand that far from being nkisi, hemp is a ndoki and the chief cause of many sufferings, pains, and diseases, the fight against the use of hemp would be over throughout the Banfumungu region.

I would not dare to make the same statement about the tribes of other regions.

M 276 Among the Wadia of Lubamiti, the Bobaie of Lebi, and elsewhere, I collected several calabash pipes, without being able to determine, however, whether or not the natives used them for smoking hemp. None of them was decorated in any way to suggest that the natives attached any magical or religious significance to it. Incidentally, the natives regularly used these pipes to smoke tobacco.

The use of hemp, however, is general from Leopoldville to the Bena Dibele-Kole region, but the custom did not seem to us to be as widespread in the region of Lake Leopold II-Lukenie as it is south of the Kasai-Sankuru.

The shape of the calabash pipe depends mainly on the shape of the calabash itself. This varies a great deal. We believe, however, that we can divide these pipes into two categories: one including the pipes with a simple spheroidal body and a long tube; the other category includes the pipes with a double spheroidal body, a constriction in the middle, and no tube.

This latter shape is more often found in the region between the Congo, the Kasai, and the Kwango.

We cannot, however, regard it as a special ethnic characteristic of this region, because this form of calabash pipe is also found among other tribes, from whom we obtained, as we did from the Banfumungu, pipes with the simple, spheroidal body and long tube which were used to smoke hemp.

The bowl of the calabash pipe is made from a tube of wood or bamboo, or a piece of stem from a banana leaf. The native cuts a small circular opening in the lower body of the calabash and sticks the tubular bowl into it.

The bottom end of the tube is always carved in the shape of a bevel or fork. [155] [Fig. 88 appears here.] [156]

•276

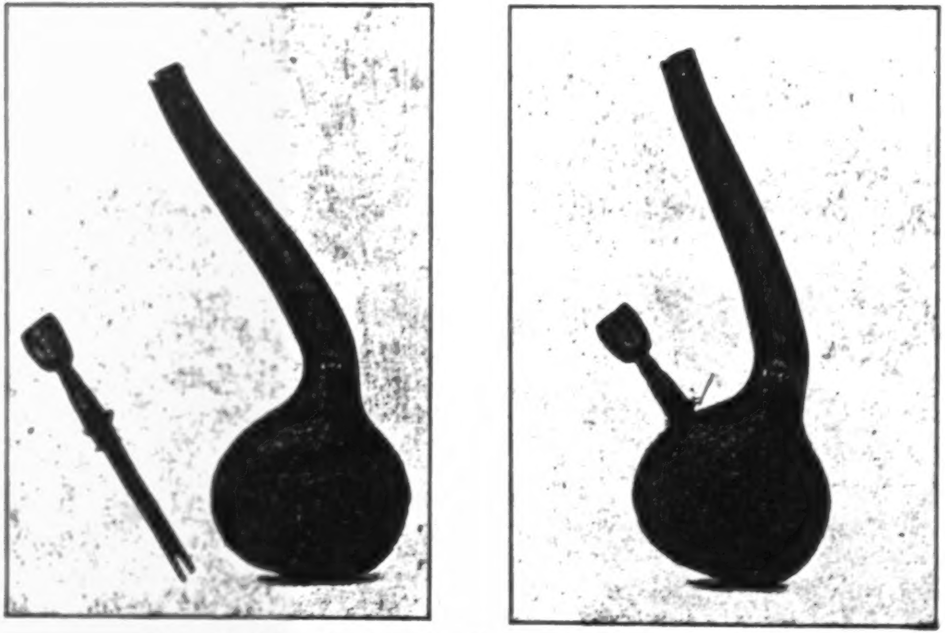


Fig. 88. Pipe for Smoking Hemp. Left: bowl and tube detached. Right: bowl and tube in place.

276 The hole for the mouth is cut at the top of the upper part of the calabash.

Usually very small, the hole is frequently overlaid with a thin wooden or ivory disk with a small hole in it, which is glued on with resin. We found a specimen with this special characteristic among the Tumba in the native village near Inongo.

Before using his calabash pipe, the native takes out the bowl, fills the calabash with water up to a third of the upper part and puts the bowl back in the opening. The bottom end of the tube is thus immersed in water, and the pipe is a sort of hookah.

The hemp smoke is drawn in by creating a vacuum inside the calabash. The smoke passes through the water, leaving all impurities suspended in it.

A calabash pipe found in the hut of Matari, chief of the Banfumu in the village of Kapanda near Kwamouth, has the special characteristic of a double bowl.

To smoke hemp, the native uses a simple bamboo tube stuck in the body of the calabash. To smoke tobacco, he fastens a special earthenware bowl with a considerably larger capacity on top of the tube.

The reason for using these different types of bowls follows from the way hemp and tobacco are smoked.

Hemp is smoked in small quantities at a time, and the pipe used by the Banfumungu for this purpose is his private property.

The native smokes hemp only when he feels safe from prying eyes, hidden in the bush or inside his hut with the door closed.

Tobacco, on the other hand, is smoked in the open during large gatherings, and the well-stuffed pipe passes from mouth to mouth.

As soon as the chief has drawn one or two hearty puffs, he passes the pipe to his neighbor. On such an occasion the tubular bowl, which is large enough for the small quantity of hemp smoked secretly by the native, cannot hold enough tobacco to give each member of the circle a good puff. Matari, therefore, takes care [157] to attach a bigger bowl so that the custom may be observed.

As we noted above, the calabash pipe with single spheroidal body and long tube is found chiefly in the Lake Leopold II and Lukenie region.

276 Of the seven specimens of this type that we collected, only one came from the Banfumungu, while the others belonged to various tribes of the region cited above.

The bowl is usually made of a section of bamboo or the tip from the stem of a banana leaf. All these pipes are of the hookah type.

The one we obtained from the Yaelima has a bowl cut from the kernel of a palm nut. This bowl is glued with a paste of [314] bulungu resin to a bamboo tube whose lower end is cut in the shape of a fork and submerged in the water.

The natives prefer to use this type of pipe for smoking hemp, although we noted more than once that they also use it to smoke tobacco.

The custom of smoking tobacco with a communal pipe does not seem to be practiced much by the peoples of the Fimi-Lukenie. As a rule, each native has a pipe of his own.

Among the tribes of Lake Leopold II, as well as among the Basakata, Bobaie, and Batitu, the tobacco pipe is usually made simply from the rib of a banana leaf. The native often attaches a small earthenware bowl to the lower end of it. This bowl is always very crude, and it is interesting because of its irregular shape which is long, thin, and slightly crooked. The native unquestionably got the idea for this from the shape of the pipe bowls made from the rib of a banana leaf. The latter did not stand up well under use; the bowl was burned as the tobacco was smoked. At first, the native replaced it by another, cut from a harder and tougher piece of wood, but he soon started making the bowls out of baked clay, while retaining the original shape. [158]

Pipes from this region with wooden bowls are very rare. We possess only one, which comes from the Batitu village of Longinpila.

Beyond the Batitu in the Bumbuli region, among the Bokala and Yaelima, the pipe consists of a long wooden tube, usually slightly curved and provided with a small earthenware bowl at one end and a monkey's femur at the other as a mouthpiece.

Sometimes the earthenware bowl is replaced by one of wood, [531] most often decorated with carved designs and often representing a human head. The latter type is very common in the region of Bena Dibele and Kole. Certain specimens are worked with great artistry.

Teke F133

M ●276 Aside from this characteristic form, we found another which is no less interesting. The bowl and tube are always made from the hollowed branch of a special species of tree. The shape is slightly curved, and the top end slightly flared to form the bowl. At the other end of the tube, the native attaches a small spheroidal calabash with two holes, one of which serves as the mouthpiece. This calabash is lightly stuffed with raffia fibers and dry grass to filter the tobacco smoke.

M 276 531 Other than this primitive form, we collected a few pipes belonging to the same category, but with the calabash mouthpiece replaced by a wooden one, sometimes decorated with carved linear designs and with small copper strips inlaid in the wood.

M 276 171 We found, then, two very characteristic pipe shapes in the Yaelima-Bankutsu region which seem to indicate a certain ethnic relationship among these different peoples. We do not know if these same shapes are found among the peoples of the Dekese region, but it seems quite probable to us. We found this same type along the north bank of the Sankuru between Lodi and Isaka, so the ethnic zone characterized by these two special forms of the native pipe, at least in the region south of Dekese, includes the whole area from Bumbuli to Bena Dibele-Kole. These types are also found outside this territory, notably to the north among the Bakuba and Bashilele. It must be noted, however, [159] that the pipe with a femur for the mouthpiece is extremely rare in the north, while that with a calabash mouthpiece is very seldom seen in the south. This seems to indicate that we have here a zone of contact where we once more find evidence of ethnic relationships between the peoples of this region and the tribes to the north and south. It may be inferred from this that the Bakuba and Bashilele tribes of the Kasai-Sankuru region are connected with the peoples between the Sankuru and the Lukenie and that they even have ethnic affinities with the peoples whose territory extends much farther north.

T 276 171 In the region of the Banfumu and Bateke, we find two types of tobacco pipes, one with a large bowl for communal smoking, the other smaller, with an earthenware bowl and a wooden tube and mouthpiece, used individually by both the women and the men. Along with these pipes, we also found several specimens

Teka F133

T 276 171 with the bowl and tube made of iron. These pipes are usually very long and cruder than the small clay pipes with wooden tubes. Moreover, it is probable that the latter were copied from imported models. We found them chiefly in villages near the large centers and the government posts. Their shape is strikingly similar to that of imported pipes.

● M T ● 276 171 We found this same type among the Bayanzi of the right bank of the Kasai and north of Kwamouth. These natives are thus connected with the Bateke-Banfumungu group. Thus a new ethnic zone appears, and the territory we visited may be subdivided in this respect into three ethnic regions.

The first one includes all the territory occupied by the Bateke-Banfumungu, the Bayanzi, and part of the Baboma, and it is characterized:

1) by the use of a calabash pipe, a nkisi fetish, for smoking hemp;

2) by the use of pipes with large clay bowls, for smoking tobacco communally, and the small tobacco pipe, the property of the individual, used by both men and women. [160]

The second one extends from the mouth of the Fimi to the confines of Batitu territory.

The hemp pipe is not nkisi. The tobacco pipe, very primitive, is made from the rib of a banana leaf and very often has a wooden or clay bowl. The woman smokes neither tobacco nor hemp, and the custom of smoking the pipe communally is not much in favor.

The third zone is the one where we found the wooden tobacco pipe with a calabash mouthpiece or a neck of monkey bone. It includes the whole Yaelima-Bankutshu region, taking in the Bashilele and Bakuba and, very probably, the Dengese region.

M 276 As a rule, the natives like to smoke tobacco very much. They prefer doing it when the weather is cold, maintaining that it heightens the body heat.

M 549 Tobacco is not cultivated on a large scale. The crop is always strictly limited to the needs of the person who plants it. When the native wants to smoke tobacco, he plucks a leaf from the plant, dries it at the hearth, crushes it, and reduces it to powder. A pinch of this crudely ground tobacco is placed in the

Ntomba

276 receptacle forming the pipe's bowl, and it is covered with a glowing piece of charcoal. The native strongly draws in the smoke until he has his mouth full, holds it for a few moments, and then blows it out by opening his mouth wide and turning his head slightly to one side. He frequently inhales part of the smoke, which always provokes a violent cough, brings tears to the eyes, and sometimes entails pronounced discomfort. [161]

If the natives are together in a group, they pass the pipe from one to another after taking a good puff. Those waiting for the pipe often show signs of impatience, and anyone who ventures to smoke more than his share risks a real quarrel.

Women are never admitted to the circle of smokers, nor do they gather to smoke among themselves, but always do it in private. [Ed., the remainder of the chapter, through page 162, is not translated.]

516

Fig. 89. Momengere Smoking Tobacco.

Teke FI33

Ntomba

M 778 of the most disparate and incongruous objects, [22] white, black, or red clay, ngula /Ed., redwood powder/, chicken feet, heads, beaks, claws, and feathers, shells, palm nuts, etc., all mixed together in a large pot or in an old worn basket. It is from this magic treasure that the fetisher takes a pinch or two which he wraps carefully in a little bag and hands over to those who resort to him. [T 778] As for the human figurines so often found in the huts of the Bateke and Banfumu, we do not believe that they are fetishes. In our opinion, they are guardian figurines for children, carved before their birth and preserved until they reach marriageable age.

M 791 824 Some fetishers manage to gain quite a reputation, and their services are purchased for a very high fee. They are familiar with the properties of certain plants, and they keep this knowledge secret and exploit it as much as possible. It would be wrong to believe that the fetisher's practices are all based on mystification.

M 278 695 Ebandia, the high chief of the Mosengere, knew the secret of certain poisons. He knew effective remedies for certain kinds of festering wounds; he proportioned the quantity of poison at ordeals so as to make its action violent or slow, and he was familiar with an antidote which cancelled out the effects of the poison.

M 278 695 684 A few hours before our arrival at Penge, Ebandia had subjected [23] one of his wives to trial by poison, on the mere suspicion that she might have gone too far with a native during a slightly prolonged stay in the forest. Ebandia accused her of adultery, prepared the beverage, and compelled the poor woman to prove her innocence by taking the poison. The unfortunate creature rebelled. A quarrel arose, and the village natives, when informed of the matter, protested against it, to no avail, however. The old tyrant carried out the ordeal. He had been notified of our impending arrival, and after allowing the unfortunate woman to suffer horribly for nearly two hours, he gave her the antidote. Five hours later, all the effects of the poison were gone. [Ed., the text is not translated from the last paragraph, page 23, to the second paragraph, page 26.]

T 764 [26] In general the natives have a kind of cult of the dead. In the Bateke-Banfumu region, the corpse is wrapped in fabrics. The more important the deceased person is, the larger the bundle. His whole wealth in fabrics goes with him to the grave. Prior

276 According to native belief, the kola nut ensures the fertility
842 of a woman if sexual relations take place the night after the man has used this stimulant.

276 The regular use of kola induces very intense nervous excitement. We noticed that the adolescents and men in their prime scarcely use it. Only the old people use it regularly. Kakua, the old native chief, chewed it from morning to night. One day I pointed this out to him, asking if he were not afraid of the dangerous effects of this overindulgence. He proudly pointed out to me the huts of his seven wives, saying, "Ask them if they don't have children!"

276 Among the stimulants we may also mention the peanut,
263 widely used by all the tribes, a type of small ground pea, and
● 278 certain tree roots known to the natives but the exact nature of which we unfortunately could not determine. It is well to note, moreover, that most of the natives use the stimulants as medicaments as well as condiments. They are used for intestinal pains, colic, and as purgatives.

462 In all the tribes the prep-
252 aration of food and meals is exclusively the task of women. They always do it with great care. [142]

252 The kitchen, if it can be called one, is always very simple. If the weather is good, cooking is done in the open in the middle of the village, in front of the hut or behind it,
485
313 and very often in the shade of the banana trees. If the weather is rainy or cold, the women prepares the meals inside the hut. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

Fig. 81. Carrying Firewood.

843 bokeka. The same is true if the pregnancy is the result of adultery;
837 the natural father must bear all the consequences of his act. The husband is absolved from them and has no relations with his wife until the end of this particular pregnancy. The culprit must give him a pledge by which he publically recognizes his responsibility, and he is expected to fulfill all the duties of a husband. Therefore he may have relations with the woman during her entire pregnancy without paying additional indemnities. If any accident befalls the mother or the child, he is made to pay a large indemnity.

Note finally that, as we have pointed out in Chapter II, [583] Article XI, no bride-price payment can be made from the time the pregnancy becomes visible until after the end of the period of seclusion.

843
844
757
To facilitate childbirth the previously mentioned concoction of various leaves mixed with kaolin (isaɔ́) is continuously applied to the abdomen. Medical scarifications on the abdomen are also performed.

Finally, as the time of delivery approaches, special douches ● [278] made from a concoction of the bark of the boſmbo tree (1) are administered. All these treatments are called beté byà bosánjá, that is, medicines (for the purpose) of an easy delivery.

Article III. Birth

944 1. Delivery

A woman remains with her husband for childbirth; she does not go home to her family. Only exceptionally does she give birth elsewhere -- for instance, if she has been sent home for one reason or another, or during a trip, while working in the fields, near a stream, or a spring, etc. Such sudden unexpected deliveries

---

1. Certain douches, especially the one made of boſmbo, are also used as abortive agents.

844 are not too rare. (2)

2. Ease in delivery is called bosánjá;
difficulty is called bonsombo.

A husband asks his mother-in-law to come and help her daughter. Other kinswomen of the husband or the wife do not refuse [482] their services either. Among them there is always one who is more expert in these matters and who acts as a midwife (mbótsi).

The delivery takes place in the banana grove behind the hut; there is light and air there. In the house it would be more difficult.

The husband cannot be present at this event. His presence would make it difficult and painful. The further away he is, the better. The prohibition is not rigid, however; if there is no one to help his wife (as in the case of an unexpected delivery in the forest, etc.), he will have no hesitation whatsoever in helping her with all the power and skill at his command.

To facilitate the arrival of the child, the midwife gives [278] the wife a potion to drink "in order to make slippery" (botɛ́ wǎ bosɛ́li), and administers a douche containing boímo bark.

If the pains continue for several days and all medication is 845 without results, it is assumed that some evil spell (liloka) is at work. To neutralize it the woman in labor is "blessed" (-saka). For that purpose her family and that of her husband each bring a stalk of the bokaakɔ́ plant (bosáánga). Two kinswomen, each with the stalk of her respective clan, squeeze out the sap with which they smear the woman's abdomen. After that the delivery takes place in a normal fashion.

845 756 769 The nkanga (doctor-magician) only intervenes when a woman has already had several miscarriages or when all her children die. If he is consulted he invariably attributes such misfortunes to the action of spirits of the deceased, who may be appeased by offerings and the promise that a manifestation of their will be heeded with respect to the naming of the child. Usually he adds that a few alimentary prohibitions must be observed until the child is weaned.

846 of a dried banana leaf. Three knots are tied in it. The helper holds it in one hand and with the other cuts off the first knot, which she carries away with her. The mother keeps her end in her hand and presents the other to her husband. She receives the knife from the hands of the helper and cuts between the two knots so that each spouse carries away his end. Each time the parties involved say, "We have cut the bofofő; we are separating; go away." Having thus bid each other farewell, each fastens his end to the roof of the seclusion hut.

This ceremony ends the period of seclusion and puts an end
846 to the ekelɛ́ prohibitions. From then on the couple may have sexual
837 relations together, the helper can resume her usual life, and
adultery on the part of the father can no longer harm the child or
the mother. Note, however, that the child's immunity to the
father's misconduct implies one condition: the father must not take
it on his knees the day he commits adultery. By the following day
the effects of his act have been nullified. A woman can discover
her husband's infidelity through his refusal to take the child. Often
she makes use of this means to obtain a confirmation of her suspicions. Some men abstain from all misconduct solely to guard
against any such possibility. Adultery may have a harmful influence on the child even after it is weaned if it has a weak constitution. [491] All this seems to indicate that the reaction is considered to be physical and direct rather than a sanction based on religion or superstition.

846 Nkundó therapeutics include an antidote, however; it is
789 called bondandota (from ndota "an illness caused by the infraction
of prohibitions of a sexual nature"). It consists of a potion made
● [278] from the sap of an aroid bearing the same name, which is mixed
with the sap of the libúlúkakó plant. If for some reason or other
the couple have been away from each other for a fairly long time,
they sit or stand face to face and take the child on their knees,
which touch each other, and each one makes the child drink the
potion twice, once from each hand, making sure to turn its face
toward him [or her]. Usually the couple also drink some of the
brew, though it is intended primarily for the child. Without
these precautions the relations between the pair and the father's

837 Note, finally, that the confession is restricted to married
783 women. It is never expected of a young unmarried mother. There-
853 fore it would seem to be a practice connected with marriage (a
social institution) and not with childbirth (a physiological phenomenon).

This confession is called etato or lotato, from the verb
[192] -tata, "to confess," (for which the generic term, sanga, "to say,"
is sometimes substituted).

I was unable to find any reason for this practice other than that of avoiding the death of the child. It is evident, however, that this explanation does not exhaust the question, although it is entirely possible that the original and deeper meaning has been lost without leaving any trace in the minds of the present generation. [496]

3) During the entire duration of nursing, the mother must
853 not be separated from her child. For the usual circumstances of
933 daily life, this rule is broadly interpreted; but during sexual relations it is strict, and no exceptions or excuses are permitted. Negligence under these circumstances would inevitably bring about the death of the child by ndota as soon as the mother took it back. This rule holds for legitimate relations as much as for illicit ones. Therefore the mother must always keep her child at her breast.

4) If at some point during nursing, the milk no longer flows
953 in sufficient quantity, the mother is given a potion consisting of
[757] the extract of the bark of the bolóngé tree (which has a fruit con-
[278] taining a very sweet milky sap). Then she eats vegetables called
lotélé. (1)

1. The leaves of this plant are also ordinarily eaten as vegetables, but they are consumed especially by those who possess the modern magical practice known as boyaóli.

5) An accident to which the Nkundó attach great importance
[262] is the rejection or vomiting of milk into the mouth of an adult,
even if the person affected is the infant's mother. Such a person

Yaelima

224 778 plant and one of the stakes. The customs and ceremonies observed before leaving for the communal hunt are identical to those we have just described.

224 As to the relations between the fetisher, the hunting fetish, and the individual hunter, we will ignore them, having been unable to obtain any information on this subject in these regions.

Throughout the region we visited, large-scale hunting is done communally. As a rule, all the men participate, including young men from the age of 15. [Ed., the text is not translated from the last paragraph, page 81, to the second paragraph, page 83.]

[83] The catch of the communal hunt is shared among all the families in the village, with the chief and the dignitaries having special rights.

224 622 Individual hunting does not entail any distribution, except when a buffalo, leopard, or elephant is involved. [293] The tail of the buffalo goes to the native chief, who uses it as a fly-chaser and a badge of rank. ● [281] The skin of the leopard is reserved for the chief, who makes it into a skirt which he displays ostentatiously at important festivities and public dances. The trunk and tusks of the elephant go to the chief while the bristles go in [778] [301] part to the hunters and [84] in part to the local dignitaries, who use them to make necklaces.

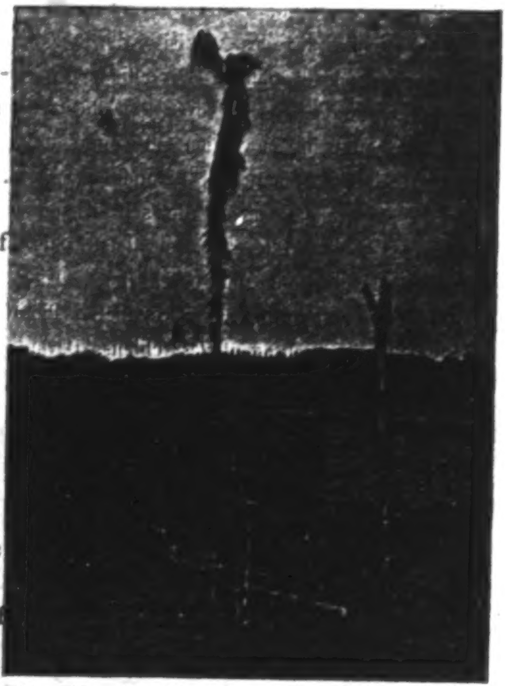


Fig. 51. Yaelima Fetish, Nkisi of the Hunt.

583x
431

For an aunt, a basin, because she had washed the child.

For a brother, a pair of shoes or slippers, because the girl had worn his shoes during the courtship, etc., etc. [150]

All these beɛ́ngo are included in the sum total of the bride price. Should the occasion arise, they must be returned with the rest.

In addition to the beɛ́ngo asked for and received by the woman's relatives, others are demanded by members of the husband's family. As in the case of the former each person voices his claims according to his desires and without any predetermined order but must always do so through the ndonga. The gifts chiefly consist of furs of the ● [281] esɔ́fe otter, the liɔ́ka monkey, bọnkɔ́ngọ and yẹnvi felines; a joint of game (money, antelope, etc.), a mat, a pot, a hunting net, a carrying bag (bokɔ́mbɛ́), a bead necklace, etc. [117] Nowadays there may also be various items introduced by the Europeans: items of clothing, fabrics, saucepans, dishes, etc. This category of beɛ́ngo is included in the sum total of the nkọmí (see the following article). If the nkọmí is given immediately, the parties proceed with this payment. Then the ndonga(s) are remunerated as stated above: each party gives him at least 2 rings.

Finally, the woman's father says to the husband: "In any case, be on your way; we will collect the nkọmí and bring it to you." Whereupon the husband leaves; if he prefers to wait for his wife he remains, and returns home when the items of the nkọmí have been collected.

Article VII. Nkomi

Nkọmí is the name for the objects which the wife's family gives to the husband. The term likọmọ is also sometimes used. The [192] Injɔ́lɔ́ say likọma, the Wǎngatá, Bakáala, Ioanda, and Boángí say likọmi. All these words are derived from the same verb -kọma, "to wrap up, to make a package," (1) for the nkọmí valuables are

1. The Bọ́ɔ́vá say lilonga from the verb -lọnga, which has the same meaning as -kọma.

441 small holes made in the body of the bow four centimeters from the tips. A shallow vertical groove is made at the end of each tip. Tension on the bow is obtained by drawing the bowstring through these notches.

The arrows are made of false bamboo, the two vanes of leaves drawn through a slot. The heads, hardened by fire, have small notches and are smeared with poison. This poison is dangerous only when quite fresh. A small dose of it will not kill, but benumbs the wounded animal.

The natives use these bows and arrows especially for hunting birds and more rarely for hunting monkeys. In the latter case, they like to use a bow made of a strong, very flexible, and very tough stalk. The average length varies between 80 centimeters and 1.10 meters. The stalk tapers gradually toward the ends which are pointed and have a stop notch. The convex side of the vertical section faces inward, the flat side outward. The cord is made of 283 banana tree fibers. The tension is constant, that is to say, the native does not slacken the bow at rest. Under tension the height of the curve of the bow is 12 centimeters; the bow's actual range is 150 meters and its useful range 100 meters, or 15 to 20 meters when shooting upward.

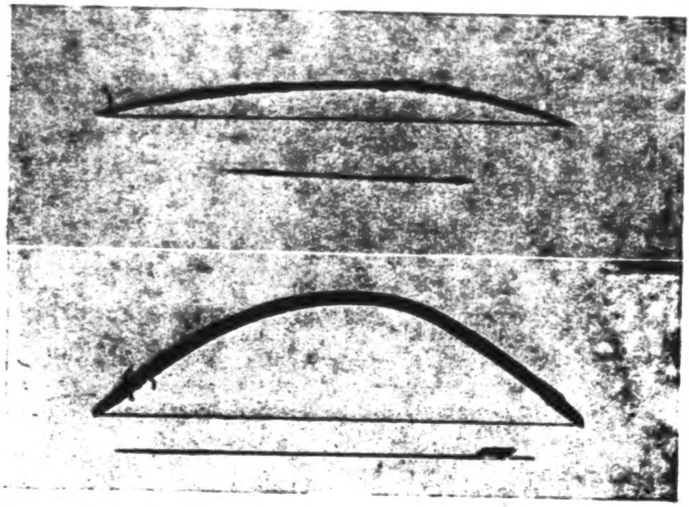


Fig. 41. Bow Strung with Cord and Arrow with Barbed Iron Head.
Fig. 42. Bow Strung with Rattan and Wooden Arrow.

Sakata FO43

M 442 and never having a spare one, will not let one go at any price.

M 252 462 A woman chops the manioc on a large wooden tray, a crude, slightly hollowed board roughly rectangular in shape among the Bateke, Banfumungu, and Baboma, but circular among the Tumba, Wadia, Mosengere, Bolia, Bobaie, Basakata, and Balesa.

After having chopped up the manioc tubers as finely as she can with the primitive tool at her disposal, the woman removes the woody fibers, remains of rind, and other hard bodies. She then takes the etuti with both hands and rocks it back and forth. While doing this, she is careful to shake the flour from time to time and to remove the impurities she finds in it.

Fig. 67. Preparation of Manioc Flour among the Bobaie. Special Form of Knife to Chop Manioc.

S [252 516] When the flour is quite fine, the housewife sprinkles it with a little water, [121] kneads it, works it into a firm dough of a pale grayish-white color, and carefully removes every little trace of impurities. She then divides the dough into pieces the size of a cubic decimeter which she rolls into more or less symmetrical balls or into sausages 20 to 25 centimeters long. These balls or sausages are carefully wrapped in banana or

M [283] masisa leaves, and the whole bundle is tied with very pliant rattan or raffia splints which serve as string.

583* 431 One must be careful not to confuse this boengo with byiko byǎ nyang'éy'ǒna, an expression frequently heard. The latter includes any payment to the mother and includes the goat and the nkando as well as the boéngo discussed above and others. The word used in this case is not byǐkó, singular ǐkó, "porcupine," but rather byiko, singular wiko, "price, value" and derived from the verb -ika, "to set a price."

3) Lokolé: a brother or a cousin of the wife asks for a konga. He beats the gong (lokolé) in order to make noise and thus force the husband to satisfy him. That is how this boéngo seems to have originated. In practice people simply demand a [147] present. The racket can sometimes last for quite a while. But the elders do not allow the gathering to be disrupted if the husband does not have precisely the gift that would give satisfaction.

4) Bakulá, or botúwá: the woman's brothers stick a piece of the trunk of a banana tree (botúwá) into the ground, so that young relatives of the husband may shoot arrows (bakulá) at it. These are then removed by young members of the wife's family who, at the present time, are sometimes given money -- 5 francs, for instance.

● [283] [727] 5) Wambá: prisoner's rope, that is, a rope to which war prisoners were formerly tied, two by two (a system now imitated for prisoners of the colonial law enforcement agencies and administration). In the past the patriarch, or head of the family, demanded a konga or a knife as indemnity against the possibility that he or members of his family might be imprisoned as a result of a war caused by the woman being married. [177] [622] Nowadays the chiefs set up by the administration and given the rights of family heads by the European authority have also claimed rights to this boéngo whose significance, purpose, and even name have completely changed as a result. It is now called bonyoóla w'ǒnkonji, "the chief's chain." It is clear that this payment has become something which it was not meant to be.

6) Etáka: a heavy wooden fork, fastened to the neck. This is a present claimed by the mother, by one of the father's other wives, or by a wife of the woman's brother, against the possibility that they may have to undergo torture by means of the fork because of the women whose bride price is being paid. This could happen if she were

Rope-making

●283 The Mongo rope-maker (one can hardly call him a professional rope-maker) goes to the forest, fetches fibers from a certain kind of palm-tree, scrapes them nicely with his knife, and puts them in the sun to dry.

Whole coils of rope are made in this way. Native rope, finished in this manner, is of a good, strong quality. Nets for the hunt and also for fishing are made of it. As in the case of weaving, it is something done by the men only.

IV. BASKET AND MAT WEAVING

285 462 The weaving of baskets and mats is chiefly the work of the women, especially the fine braidwork.

The men make only the large, roughly finished baskets needed for the transport of their copal. The braiding of mats is done only by the women.

285 314 From the forest they fetch the twigs of the *Bolongote* tree, scrape them nicely or dry them in the sun, and, sitting down, braid their baskets and mats.

They make different kinds of baskets, but the raw materials necessary for braiding are the *bokombe* or *likombe* of the *Bolongote* tree.

285 One or two women together braid the mats on the flat ground. The names of the mats are as follows.

[435]
1. *Efonzolo*, the roughly finished mat (value, five *mitakos*).
2. *Nkongōle*, the finely braided mat (value, half a franc).
3. *Itundō* or *lofole*, the little mat with which the dirt from the road and the ashes from the fire are carried away.
4. *Ifefa*, the little mat used to fan the fire.

A. Th. Gutersohn,
Priest of St. Joseph's Congregation.
(Mill-Hill).

000 point to bathe in it and to refresh themselves. [146]

273 In addition to water which is the customary drink of all the tribes, we found the following beverages according to region: palm wine, malafu; sugarcane beer, masanga; and pombe, maize beer.

[415 • 284]

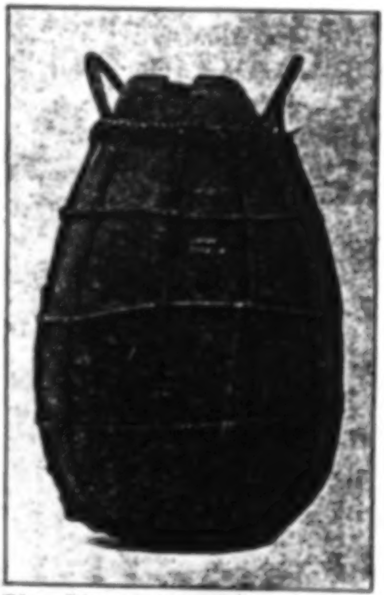


Fig. 84. Calabash for Palm Oil, also for Water.

Palm wine, the native malafu, although liked, is usually not very much in demand, especially when the native can replace it with masanga, sugar-cane beer. We found it among all the peoples, however, although actually only the Ipanga-Yaelima and the Basongo Meno-Bankutu drink it regularly.

[439] In the other regions palm wine is made particularly in the villages near government posts or commercial establishments for the benefit of the Whites. These villages usually have a professional vintager.

The vintage comes from tapping the trees. The mese palm, raffia, and the oil palm are chiefly used.

273 481 The native has three methods of climbing the trees for the vintage. The first is the one we described for gathering clusters

Sakata FO43

Fishing

M 226 Near rivers, swamps, and lakes, fishing is one of the principal occupations of the native.

M [462] Unlike hunting which is practiced only by men, fishing is done by both men and women. The latter, however, practice it only occasionally and fish only by damming up part of a river bed or marsh. The dam is usually built during the rainy season, but as long as the water is rising, the women leave all the sluices wide open. Toward the end of the rainy season, they narrow the drain channels and set large traps before the openings. These traps are attached to strong wooden stakes on the shore near the dam. M 226 285 The traps are made of splints from the ribs of raffia leaves and are plaited in openwork with the open spaces varying in size. The exterior form is always the same. Cylindrical at one end [85] and the other end closed along the diameter, the trap resembles a large cone ending in a line at the top. These traps are built over a framework made of two, three, or four hoops. Their diameters vary according to their positions. They are set inside the trap, the largest one at the base, the smallest one toward the upper end. The transverse elements, doubled and woven alternately in and out, are spaced 10 to 15 centimeters apart and are usually made of strips of rattan. The inner trap, or entry trap, is plaited in the shape of a broad fan, conical

S M [227 285]

Fig. 82. Making a Fish Trap among the Wadia and Tumba.

in form, with an ellipsoidal base. The open top is the entrance hole. The ends of the splints overlap somewhat on the inside in order to prevent the trapped fish from retracing their paths and escaping. 226 285

These traps are made only by men. When the plaiting is done, the work is flat, and then the finished latticework is fastened to the frame. [462]

The trap is opened by detaching the binding that closes the top.

As the waters recede, a woman lowers the trap. Morning and evening she comes to inspect it and to gather the captured fish. [86] 226

When the waters have fully subsided, the women assemble and go up the river or into the swamp. Standing across the full width of the watercourse, they walk down, chasing before them the fish that remained in the dammed-off area. They make an ear-shattering din, slapping the water with broad sticks or churning it with arms and legs. The hunted and terrified fish flee wildly only to be caught eventually in the trap. If they try to break through the line of women, the latter do not hesitate to grab and fling them on the bank. [Ed., the text is not translated from the second paragraph, page 86, to the second paragraph, page 87.]

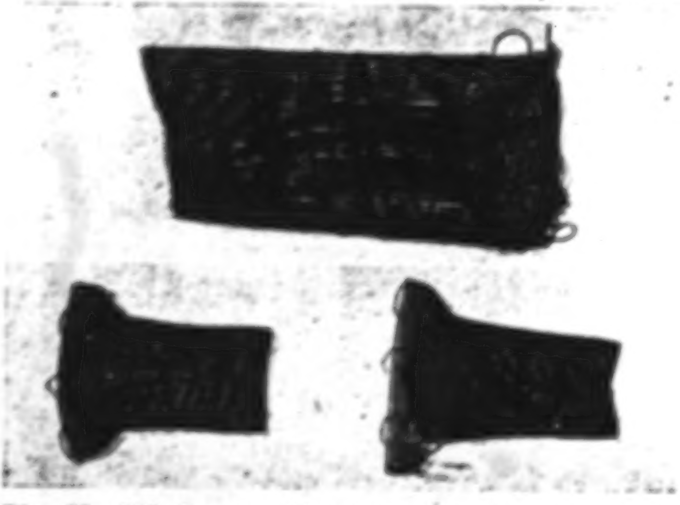


Fig. 53. Fish Traps used by the Peoples of Lake Leopold II.

[226 285]

226 chikwangue [Ed., manioc cake] or an earthworm is fastened to the hook, and everything is thrown into the water. Under the pressure of the current, the lines are drawn out and lie parallel to each other, held at one end by the large rope stretched over the water. A fish, attracted by the bait, seizes it and swallows it along with the hook, which remains in the stomach. All its efforts to free itself merely hooks the fish more securely. The native inspects the rope four or five times during the day and pulls in the lines one by one. The hooked fish is cut loose by severing the string from the hook; it is gutted and thrown into the canoe. [90] The hook is replaced with one held in reserve until the first one is recovered while cleaning the catch.

[227]

● [285]

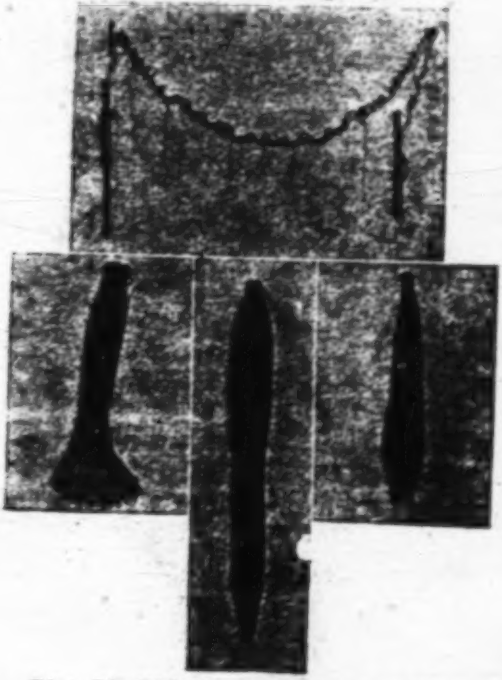


Fig. 54. Fish Traps and Lines, Lake Leopold II.

The native also fishes with a line on the bottom and an inert line without a float. The hook is larger and usually made of iron. The strong rope is coated with oil to make

the outside, bristles with spikes pointed toward the interior, which prevent the fish from leaving the trap. The shape of the traps for small fish is long, tubular, and narrow. They open at one end, and the entrance with spikes is set toward the middle of the trap. The traps for big fish have the shape of a truncated cone, with the top forming a straight line. The entrance, constructed on the same principle as that of the small traps, is set in the forward part, opening toward the interior. These traps are placed in front of the drain channels of dammed-up marshes and rivers. M 226

5) Fishing with a trap, usually set in waters with a strong current. The trap is in the shape of a cone, its movable base serving as a lid and its tip extended by a strong, flexible strip of rattan which acts as a spring. A liana is attached to the end of the rattan. A free-swinging, trapeze-like apparatus is tied to the body of the trap. The bait is attached to a rattan splint inside the trap. This splint is tied to a small, mobile crossbar on M 226 285

Fig. 55. Making a Fish Trap among the Bobaie.

S [227 285]

the trapeze. The liana tied to the end of the rattan spring is drawn inside the trap through one of the openings near the supporting hoop of the entrance and is attached to the movable lid. The trap is constructed in such a way that when it is not set, the lid is closed by the pull of the rattan spring. To set the trap, the native ties toward the middle of the liana a rattan splint to which a small stick is attached. The end (A) of the latter passes behind

M 226 285 the bar of the trapeze, and the point (B) is caught behind the mobile crossbar (C). To the latter the native ties a rattan splint, at the end of which he fastens the bait. This consists of a palm nut still covered with pulp. To reach the bait, the fish enters the trap; it takes the bait, pulls on it, and dislodges the triggering crossbar (C). The catches (A) and (B) are freed, the rattan spring is released, and the lid closes, trapping the fish. [93]

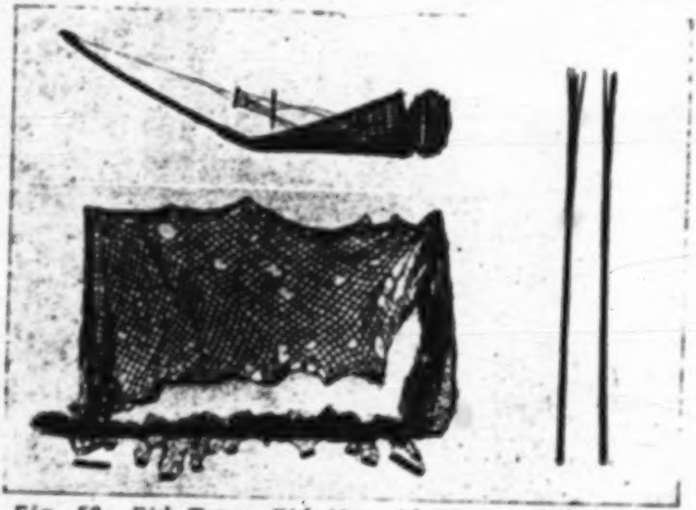


Fig. 56. Fish Trap. Fish Net with Floats. Fishing Harpoons from Lake Leopold II.

M 226 685 In individual fishing, the fish belong to the owner of the trap or to the person who set it. The native respects this right, and, moreover, custom punishes offenses very severely. Native law is rigorous to the point that a man caught red-handed in theft is liable to be driven from the community.

M 226 The yield from individual fishing is of hardly any importance. This kind of fishing is practiced only to vary the diet a little, and it is successful only because of the tremendous abundance of fish in these rivers.

M 5 226 Communal fishing is much more productive. Certain tribes, or to be more exact, certain families among the peoples of the Fimi, Lake Leopold II, and the lower Lukenie make a veritable

S
M
251

The average height is 1.25 meters, the width 2.50 meters, and the length five to ten meters. The women maintain a fire under this smoking-drying apparatus night and day. It is fed with grass and other rubbish, which are not very dry so that a great deal of smoke will be produced. All the fish are turned over twice a day. After eight to ten days the operation is finished. The dried, smoked fish are carefully wrapped after being sorted and graded according to size. Part of the fish will make up the family reserve, and the rest will be used as trade goods. When the grid is almost empty, the men go up the river and start fishing again.

S
● M
[226
● 285]

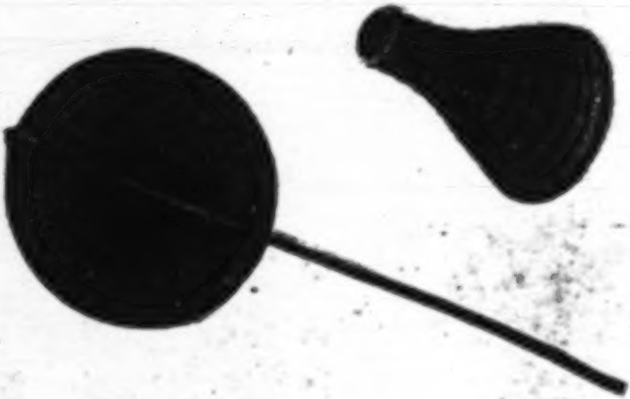


Fig. 57. Baskets for Fishing, Lake Leopold II.

S
M
226

It is difficult to realize the magnitude of this industry and the unbelievable quantities of fish caught by the natives during their sojourn in the region of the salt grass. We watched one of these miraculous hauls one day, organized through the kind cooperation of Mr. Molin. The river had been dammed for only one night, the natives went up it only 150 [97] meters, this in the middle of the dry season, and yet they brought back four large baskets full of fish.

S
A
[622]

The catch from communal fishing is shared at the end of the season. A part is reserved for the chief, the owners of the screens receive a special share, and the rest is divided among all the members of the group participating in the enterprise. [Ed., a

000

M S 258 [134] 482 sexual relations are strictly forbidden between the head of the family and the woman in charge of the burning.

● M S 258 When the last sprig is burned, the fire extinguished, and the ashes cold, the women heap them in large baskets.

● [285] 462 Meanwhile the head of the family has made a sort of large funnel out of broad and tough rattan splints, bound with fine thongs of raffia stems and lianas. These funnels vary between two and three meters in height. The diameter of the large opening is one and a half to two meters. The bottom is formed by the cluster of rattan splints, roughly tied with a broad rattan thong. This funnel is placed upright between three or four sticks planted in the ground. An earthenware jar is placed under the funnel. The women line the inside of the funnel with banana leaves, placed on top of each other in such a way as to make the sides completely [109] waterproof. They next pour the ashes from the incineration into the funnel, pressing and squeezing them as much as possible.

When the funnel is three-fourths full, the woman draws about ten pots of water, or about 50 liters, and pours them over the ashes. This water takes two or sometimes three days to spread through the ashes. When the ashes are saturated, the woman pours two or three more pots of water into the funnel. From then on there is a slow drain of water, strongly salted from the dissolution of the soluble alkaline matter contained in the ashes. The water is caught in the earthenware jar under the funnel. The woman thus obtains four or five pots of a strong salt solution and two pots of water less saturated with salt. After putting aside her six or seven pots of salt water, the woman lights a fire and puts one or several earthenware bowls over it. Into these, little by little, she pours the strong salt solution, which she allows to boil.

When the water evaporates, the first salt deposit forms on the bottom and sides of the bowl.

M S [415] The heat from these evaporation hearths is so intense that it is impossible to come near them. The woman therefore carefully provides herself with two long ladles to refill the bowls at a distance as the evaporation progresses. The whole lot is left on the fire until all the salt water is evaporated. Even after the evaporation is completed, the woman leaves the jar over the fire, which she stokes, so as to completely dry and solidify the salt deposit. This

Pygmies FO4

M 303 the ngula stands before the apparatus. The mixture of water, ngula dust, and a few grains of sand falls into the storage basin as the work progresses. When the stock is large enough, the native plaits small baskets having the shape of a truncated cone and an average capacity of one cubic decimeter. The ngula paste is packed into these baskets, and the lot is then hung under the shelter out of the sun. At the end of a few days the paste is dry. The molded cone of ngula is taken from the mold, wrapped in banana leaves, and

P 142 301 302

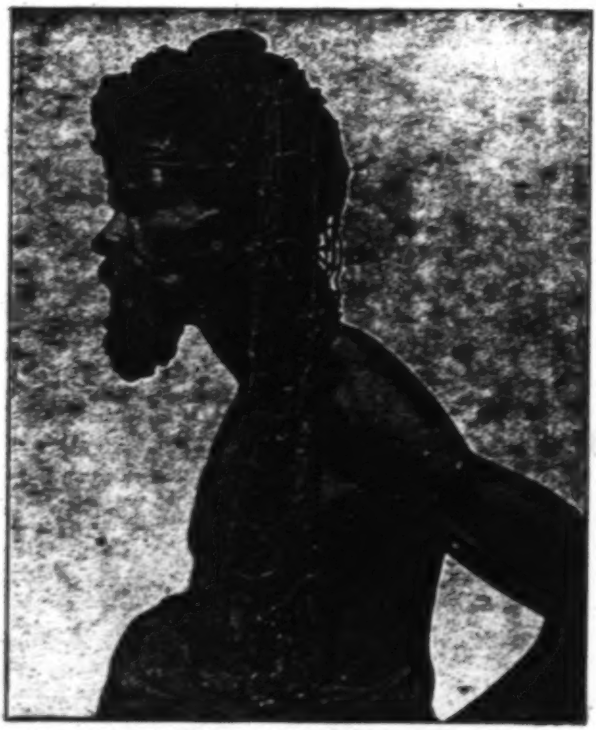


Fig. 92. A Batua Chief Inongo, with a Rope Headdress.

carefully tied with rattan thongs, bamboo splints, or raffia fibers.

M 438 The family supply is usually left in the storage basins of the devices for making ngula; all the molded cakes are sold at outside markets.

M 303 245 The baskets used as ngula molds are all plaited in the same way. Four rattan thongs are laid in a row across four others, without being interlaced or plaited at the points where they cross. This forms the bottom of the basket. The thongs are lifted up at the four

Dengese FO16

M 303 sides of this square and held in place by a binding of twisted
•285 raffia fibers. The sides are then plaited by the simplest method,
that is, with the horizontal band weaving in and out of the vertical thongs. As all of these molds always have approximately the
same height and diameter, the ngula cones are both similar in
M 303 shape and quite constant in weight. The natives use them a great
[436] deal as trade goods. In some regions the ngula cone has become
a veritable currency, with a standard value from one tribe to
M [439] another. [170] A market is organized regularly when steamers
call at Mushie, and there the people of the interior exchange the
products of their industries for the imported objects brought by the Blacks who work for the Whites. Ngula cones are among the principal items of trade and bring a very high price. In the Oshwe region, the old chief Kua Kua was a great ngula trader. He came by regularly with four or five of his wives, bringing various products from the region between the Kasai and the Lukenie to exchange for the ngula made in the Lokoro region.

D 303 Throughout the central Congo regions, the ngula used for
trade has the shape of an elongated truncated cone. Among the Basongo-Meno and farther east, on the other hand, ngula most often is shaped in a ball. The native of these regions often uses it to decorate his pottery and wooden objects and to dye the fibers of cloth used for decoration. He keeps it in cosmetic boxes carved from takula wood and usually decorated with very artistic designs. He also uses it to color his hair. [Ed., a passage from the middle of page 170 to the last paragraph, page 171, is omitted.]

M 302 [171] Aside from ngula, the native sometimes smears his
body with a type of white clay quite frequently found in the river
789 beds. [172] The native calls it mpembe. Its use is far from
being as widespread as that of ngula, and we believe that the native associates it with magic power rather than ornamentation. Mpembe is used chiefly by the peoples of the Congo-Kasai, Lake Leopold II, and Lukenie regions, up to the region of the Batitu.

M We never saw a native smear his whole body with it. The
[765] few women in mourning that we saw were covered with a grayish-yellow mud and not with mpembe. We believe, moreover, that the use of mpembe is reserved to the chief, his wives, and perhaps

562 clothing and dressed her in valuable furs, especially in part of the
556 pelt of a striped antelope called mpangɔ́. In some villages she was permitted to wear leopardskin in front as well as in back.

Then the father would decree (-bɛ́kya) that since his daughter
[582] had become bolɔ́mbɔ́ she would always wear furs and would stop working, and that she would be given in marriage only to a very rich and influential man, not to the first comer. Therefore, a synonym for bolɔ́mbɔ́ is bɔ̌na ɔ́â boɛ́ko, "child of the decree, a child set apart, forbidden."

This ceremony may be held regardless of the child's age, at any time between three years and adolescence.

When the ceremony is ended the girl withdraws (-ulama, transitive -uja) into a hut specially prepared for this occasion, which is called ileke. Her seclusion lasts only a few months. When certain natural needs oblige her to leave the house, she goes out the back way through the banana grove and hides as much of herself as possible under a mat. She does not walk on the bare ground; her feet must not
● [285] touch the earth. That is why mats are spread everywhere she steps. She does no work; her food is prepared by her mother, sister, aunt, etc., or by a slave. When it comes to her toilette, she washes her hands not in water, but in palm oil. [32] All these practices are marks of respect and honor.

When the period of seclusion is ended, the girl's father gives a second feast, with dances, drinks, etc., and the bolɔ́mbɔ́ comes out walking on mats. But there is no further ceremony. From then on the girl is no different from other girls. But she retains the sign of her distinction, the wearing of furs, and she does no housework.

The marriage of a bolɔ́mbɔ́ always occurred very late, since a
[582] man who wanted to take her for his wife had to collect a good deal of
[558] wealth before he could take the risk of asking for her hand. Should his attempt prove fruitless, he was exposed to ridicule in the whole region.

184 Among the tribes living on the left bank of the Luilaka any
556 man who was rich and of good family could ask for the hand of a
562 bolɔ́mbɔ́ in marriage. Among the Injɔ́lɔ́, on the other hand, the re-
582 quirements were more complicated. The suitor had to belong to another tribe or group. For instance, a girl who belonged to the

Rope-making

283 The Mongo rope-maker (one can hardly call him a professional rope-maker) goes to the forest, fetches fibers from a certain kind of palm-tree, scrapes them nicely with his knife, and puts them in the sun to dry.

Whole coils of rope are made in this way. Native rope, finished in this manner, is of a good, strong quality. Nets for the hunt and also for fishing are made of it. As in the case of weaving, it is something done by the men only.

IV. BASKET AND MAT WEAVING

285 The weaving of baskets and mats is chiefly the work of the women,
462 especially the fine braidwork.

The men make only the large, roughly finished baskets needed for the transport of their copal. The braiding of mats is done only by the women.

285 From the forest they fetch the twigs of the *Bolongote* tree,
314 scrape them nicely or dry them in the sun, and, sitting down, braid their baskets and mats.

They make different kinds of baskets, but the raw materials necessary for braiding are the *bokombe* or *likombe* of the *Bolongote* tree.

285 One or two women together braid the mats on the flat ground. The names of the mats are as follows.

[435] 1. *Efonzolo*, the roughly finished mat (value, five *mitakos*).

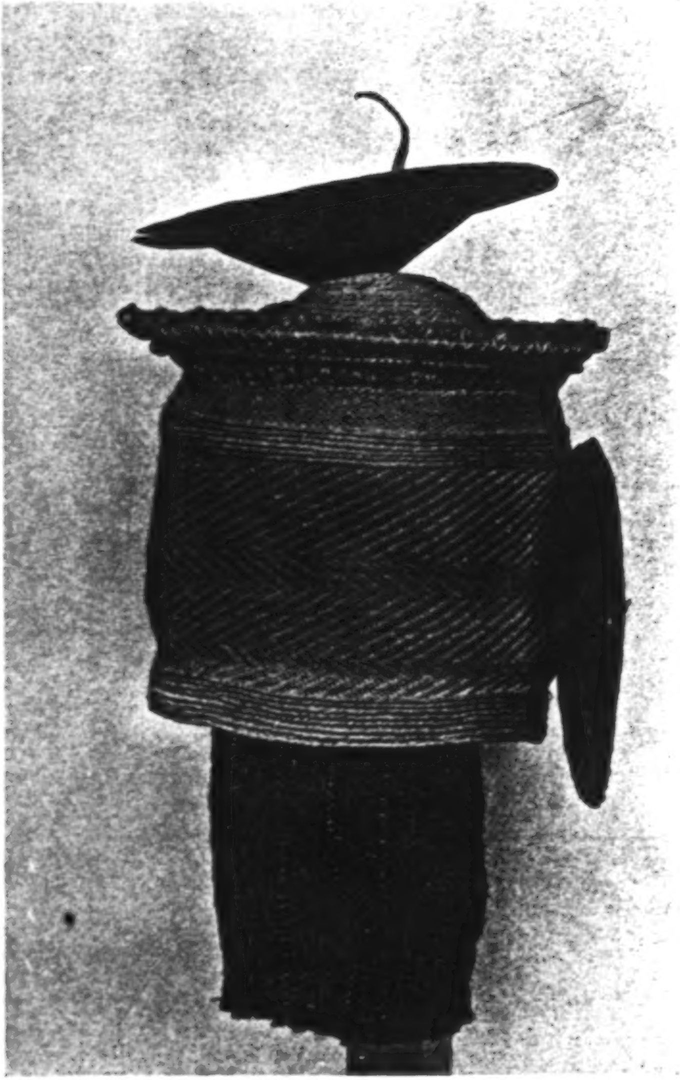
2. *Nkongōle*, the finely braided mat (value, half a franc).

3. *Itundō* or *lofole*, the little mat with which the dirt from the road and the ashes from the fire are carried away.

4. *Ifefa*, the little mat used to fan the fire.

A. Th. Gutersohn,
Priest of St. Joseph's Congregation.
(Mill-Hill).

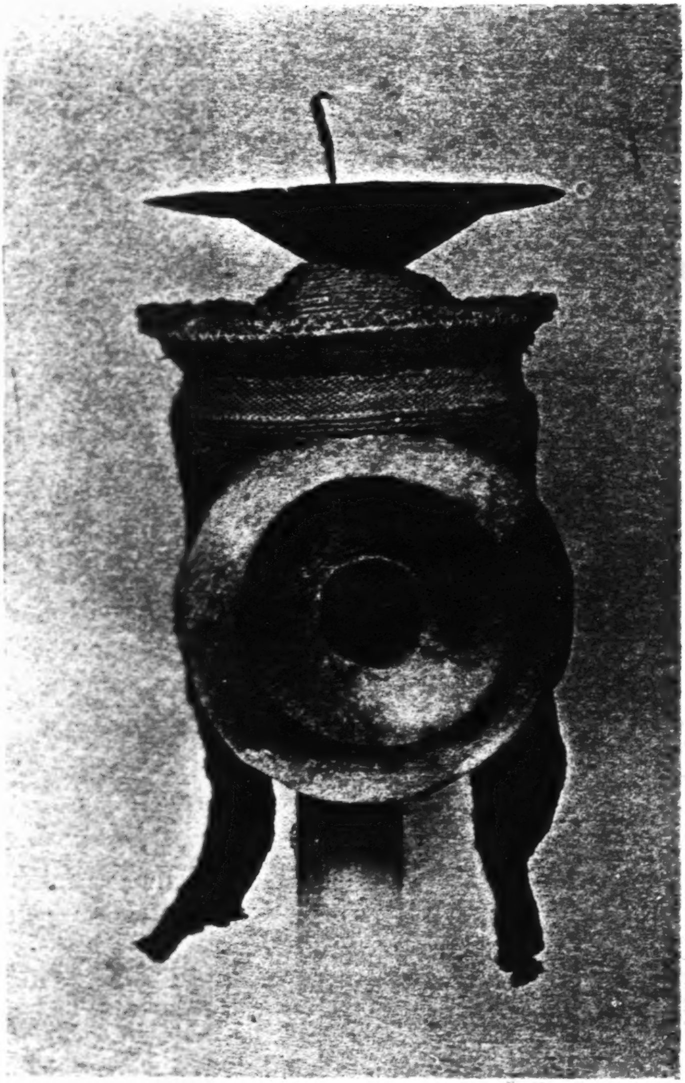
624
292
285



Montole, the hat worn by the *nkumu* as the symbol of his office

[facing page 434]

624
292
285



Mentolo, the hat worn by the *nkumu* as the symbol of his office

[facing page 435]

S M 226 industry of it. This sort of thing flourishes especially among the riparian people in the country of the Basakata, Balesa, and Mosengere.

S M 226 361 In the region of the lower Fimi, as well as along the marshy banks of the lower Lulonga, native fishing camps are quite numerous. They are all of the same type and [94] never have the character of a permanent settlement. At the end of the rainy season one sees families of riparian peoples leave their villages temporarily and settle along the marshy rivers. Men and women make this move, while children, old people, and a few able-bodied adults stay in the village to guard the homes.

The fishing camps are set up in very rudimentary fashion. The huts are merely shelters, refuges.

S M [462] Gathering salt grass for making salt is the chief task of the women. The men do the fishing.

S M 226 All the methods for fishing individually are used, but the bulk of the work is done communally.

The procedures are quite varied. We will mention the following.

1) *Damming the mouths of small rivers and minor tributaries*, along with setting traps in front of the escape channel and the method of driving the fish described above.

● S M ● [286 386] 2) *Fishing with a net*. Unlike the nets used for hunting, the fishing nets are made of raffia fibers. The type of knot is the same, but the technique is more like the one used for plaiting the hair. The native carefully dyes the fibers black in order to make the mesh invisible under water. He attaches small cylindrical sections of a very light wood to the upper part of the net to serve as floats. At the opposite edge, he attaches the sinkers, made of cylindrical pieces of baked clay. The floats and sinkers are made so that they counterbalance each other and maintain the net in a vertical position in the water. These nets are 20 to 25 meters long. If necessary, the natives use a series of nets and dam the whole river in this way. Five to ten men are stationed with large baskets along the nets. The women go up the river 100 to 200 meters, enter the water, and form a chain to drive the fish before them. These are caught in the meshes of the nets and attract the attention of the fishermen by the efforts they

224 absolute and inescapable necessity for those tribes who have Batswá,
since the latter provide them with a certain amount of the necessary
meat, though in insufficient quantity. The people hunt in groups
and individually -- in the latter case primarily by means of traps.
Fishing with nets is also very widespread, although various other
methods are also known. The picking of fruit, caterpillars, mushrooms,
222 vegetables, etc. continues to be popular.

Among trades, that of the smith is foremost. However, iron
463 casting has been abandoned at the present time. Copper is brought
in from other peoples by tribes serving as intermediaries. Wood
sculpture is rapidly disappearing. Basketry [12] remains popular.
[286] Weaving no longer exists at the present time; in fact, looms can no
longer be found in the region.

593x The family is patriarchal and the political organization corresponds to it; there are only heads of families. Indeed, among the
Nkundó the family is the complete nucleus and foundation of the society. The result is a democratic and oligarchic government, but
one very different from any we would call by that name in Europe.
554 Certain men become prominent because of their intelligence, their
eloquence, their bravery, or their wealth, having great influence and
often giving the appearance of chiefs whose authority extends beyond
their own clan, but none of them has ever founded an empire. In
the past the Bongíli were the most courageous tribe, and the one most
feared. Besides, their geographic location was in their favor, as they
had the Lifumba and the Bombomba, two sister tribes, on each side
of them.

[517] The artistic tastes of the Nkundó are directed chiefly toward
538 music and the dance. Their oral literature is also very rich; it includes, for example, the epic of Nsongó and Lianja (1) and that

---

1. The most important portions of this epic have been translated and published by Father Boelaert, M.S.C., in Congo, 1934, Vol. 1, pp. 49 and 197.

of the tortoise.

764 to which a piece of raffia cloth is tied. When the procession has crossed the last barrier, the official witness goes ahead and plants the spear in the roof of the head of the family's hut. Hence the name applied specifically to this spear: itúwansambá (from túwa, "to pierce," and nsambá "roof"). The spear signifies that the widower's family is not coming with evil intentions, but that they are moved by feelings of the greatest friendship -- wéâka te tőfőyé l'etumba; toôyá ndé ólotsíkela iláká y'ɔ̌na.

The piece of cloth is a sign of respect for the mother of the deceased, in memory of the pain she suffered in giving birth to her daughter and the care she exercised in her upbringing, and as consolation for the terrible blow that has come to her in the death of her child. She will wear this cloth after the end of mourning. If the mother has died before her daughter, this cloth goes to one of the mother's sisters, aunts, or other relatives, who is in some sense her substitute. It is therefore a payment to the mother's clan.

The spear and the cloth are usually designated by the common name likongá l'etóo, "spear and cloth." A knife, particularly an ingóndá, can be substituted for the cloth, but the name etóo is retained. Nowadays the cloth is no longer given, but a knife which is given the name etóo is always substituted for it. (1) Nevertheless, in memory of [432] the ancient custom, a piece of European cloth is often attached to the end of the spear.

When the corpse has been deposited in the head of the family's hut, the two clans greet each other in the usual fashion. The women continue to weep for some time. The husband's clan go and sit at a little distance. Then the relatives of the deceased instruct their wives to collect the presents to give the widower. [262] [431]

● [286] 1. The reason for this substitution is, first of all, the greater value of the knife and, second, the near impossibility of obtaining raffia cloth (see Introduction).

[104] III. WEAVING

286 The craft of the Mongo weaver is an honorable one and one that calls for much labor and attentiveness.

[177] Weaving is no longer as much in vogue as it was in earlier times, because the younger people buy European materials. However, the weaver is still able to earn his daily bread comfortably, because [291] the old people are too pagan to give up their old ingrained habit of wearing a loin cloth.

[462] Weaving is a craft carried on by men only. Some are very skillful in the weaving of materials and command our admiration. Pieces of really beautiful workmanship were offered to us for sale; I had myself seen them being woven.

286 314 The weaver takes his knife, goes into the forest, and cuts the "mpekwa ia lifeke," the fibers of a certain kind of palm tree which he also sometimes plants on the open highway near his hut. As soon as he has sufficient fibers for the weaving he has in mind, he goes home and at his leisure scrapes the fibers with his knife until they are all of the same thickness.

286 After that he leaves them in the sun to dry. When they have dried sufficiently, he puts up in his hut or on the open highway the frame on which the fibers are to be hung.

After he has attached the fibers to the top cross-bar (they are bound between the top and bottom cross-bars), he holds down the bottom cross-bar with his foot and goes to work.

Often he uses fibers of different colors, and this gives a lovely effect to the piece of material.

Bofomi afom'eto, "the weaver is weaving material."

386 314 The weaver has a very simple way of giving the fibers their different colors.

From the forest he fetches a liana (longoli) which contains the red, white, or black coloring agent, cuts it in pieces, puts them in a banana leaf which has been quickly scorched in the fire, adds some water and hangs all this, with the fibers, in a bag of banana leaves above the fire. When the dye has soaked thoroughly into the fibers, he has his colored fibers all ready [105] for the material he is about to weave. This mixture is called "bosaka."

5
M of Lake Leopold II.

101 The Bobaie [Baye] are the northern neighbors of the Basakata
131 in the Isoko-Tolo region.

The Balesa [Lesa] -- Batete -- occupy the left bank of the Lukenie between Bokoro and Pobombo.

The Ipanga and the Batitu or Atshitu, inhabit the Oshwe sector both north and south of the Lukenie. The region occupied by the Bokala lies farther east, between the Lodima and Bumbuli.

The Yaelima are found from east of Bumbuli to the Dekese sector and up to Dengese country.

A few Bashilele [Lele] groups are settled at the confluence of the Kasai and Sankuru. Their territory extends far to the south between the Kasai and the Loanga.

The Bankutshu [Wankutshu], also called Basongo-Meno [Songomeno], live on the left bank of the Sankuru up to the sector of Bena-Dibele and Kole. [Ed. the text from here to mid-page 14 is not translated.]

M
[142]
[291]
5
764
152

Fig. 4. Bankutshu.

[14] During our stay in the village of Chief Pokei, Baboma tribe, one of the dignitaries died. This death gave rise to an important mourning ceremony, as required by custom. The whole gunpowder supply of the deceased had been used to announce his death to the neighboring villages. Sorrow was expressed in the noisiest and most unexpected ways. The sobs of the women, the cries of despair of the relatives, and the plaintive chanting of the official female mourners mingled with the roll of the drums and the guttural and incoherent cries of the men, who kept drinking in order to express their sorrow more convincingly. All this display is an act. The screams and cries of grief are duties and are all feigned. [15] The Banfumungu cry over the death of a neighbor in the same way as they go hunting; the women mourn and cry just as they prepare food. All this is done as another job, because it is customary, because it is obligatory.

Yaelima

764 At the village of Tik-ke-Tik in Yaelima territory, we witnessed a similar scene following the death of a young man.

At nightfall his body was wrapped in mats or rattan splints, solidly plaited, tied up, and completely sealed. At dawn the [762] mortuary bundle, attached to a strong branch, was lifted by two men. Instead of taking the village lane, they carried the corpse behind the hut and then through the bush. A few men walking Indian file made up the procession, at the end of which was the mother of the deceased in mourning costume. The path they followed was quite irregular. Largely avoiding the trodden paths, the bearers often retraced their steps and took almost two hours to reach the cemetery, four kilometers from the village.

[742
●291
301
516]

Fig. 12. Mother and Child, Bankutshu Tribe.

764
761 On the way back, the natives explained to me that the numerous turns and the walk through untrodden bush were meant to lead astray the evil spirit who had entered the village and killed the

Sakata FO43
Yaelima

S
766 that it was a small chicken coop, but when I drew near I
985 saw that it was filled with trinkets. Puzzled, I questioned
761 a woman who had been loitering about for a while.

"Is this not my child's house?" she said.

"Where, then, is your child?"

"Is he not there?" and she pointed out a small basket hanging a few paces from the hut.

I came closer, incredulous, and to my great surprise found the mummified body of a child about two years old in the basket. The corpse was completely desiccated. The mother had fed a low fire under the basket for months and months in order to smoke, dry, and preserve her child.

I wanted to have the basket removed and to buy the little hut with the set of small things adorning it. The woman protested strongly. The natives ran up from all sides, and the old chief gave me an explanation for this unexpected gathering. [28]

Fig. 18. Batitu Woman, the Special Favorite of Inunu, Young Batitu Chief.

"If you remove the child, what will happen to his brother? Won't his breath leave him? Can he live here if his spirit is gone? No, Mundele, no! Look, Mundele, look at this child," he said, pointing to a little boy three or four years old, "he and the other one (pointing to the mummy's basket) were born of the same mother on the same day. The life spirit was shared between the two! One of them died! The spirit remained among us in the brother and will remain here as long as the body of the

● M
[591
301]

Yaelima

The native most often uses his spear for hunting big game, or he contents himself with setting traps. 224

The peoples west of the Ipanga have given up elephant hunting. During our sojourn in the region of the Bobale, Basakata, and Balesa, the natives came to complain several times about the invasion of their manioc fields by elephants and the damage done by these inopportune visitors each time they came. They never thought of attacking the animals. To chase them away, they built fires and made an infernal din, while keeping their distance.

[391
411
301]

Fig. 44. Great Yaelima Hunter Showing his Harpoon Arrow.

In the region of the Ipanga-Batitu and among the Bokala-Yaelima, elephant hunting is rather frequent. The most daring hunters attack them with spears. This hunting is done on an individual basis. The hunter covers or smears himself with elephant dung. As he draws near, he takes a thousand precautions not to attract the attention of the animal, who is always on the alert. Once within range, he plants his spear into the under belly of the animal and gets away as fast as he can. The wounded beast

224 lunges forward at random until, exhausted by the wild run and loss of blood, it falls for good. The hunter follows the track for two or three days without ever tiring or losing heart. He infers the probabilities of success from the loss of blood, the footprints, the length of the paces, and many other signs, and as long as any hope remains he keeps up the chase. The animal sometimes manages to get rid of the spear. In this case, the hunter returns to the village and recounts his exploit to all who will listen. He does this not to establish a reputation, but to build up a claim against anyone who might find the animal if, by some wild chance, it should succumb to the wounds.

[441 ●29]

Fig. 45. Leaving for the Hunt in Yaelima Territory with Spears, Bows, Arrows, and Nets.

Communal hunting is more common. The natives use large [71] nets, spears, knives, and dogs. The group is divided into beaters, directed by a leader, and those who own nets and act as lookouts.

The first native hunt I had the pleasure to attend took place at Tua among the Banfumu.

M T 243 252

Maize gathered before maturity is eaten raw or roasted over a low fire. The ears which are allowed to ripen on the stalk are carefully shelled, the kernels ground in a wooden mortar with a cylindrical pestle, and the flour is winnowed or passed through a sieve.

M T 252 412

The mortar used to make maize flour is made from a section of a tree trunk, with a rectangular opening hollowed in the outer surface and perpendicular to the axis of the trunk. These mortars are very crude, poorly worked, and quite rudimentary. Besides these, one sometimes find others which are better made, small cubes provided with a lug or a liana. Let us note, however, that among the Banfumu southeast of Tua we found a mortar of similar shape which the natives used to prepare vegetables.

M [252 415 ● 291 854]

Fig. 74. Batitu Women Shelling Maize and Preparing Vegetables.

The sieves used for maize flour in this region are also a special type. The sides are made in an open weave. The general form resembles that of a large bottle with a square bottom, cylindrical body, constricted neck, and slightly flared rim.

M T 252

The housewife mixes the maize flour with palm oil to form a somewhat thick dough. She wraps it carefully in leaves and boils it for 10 to 15 minutes. This dish, the mokwoi of the Basakata-Mosengere, is served very hot, usually seasoned a little

M
D
415
[53] []

Bankutshu use a bell-shaped form; the bottom is a spherical calotte, the body slightly curved, and the decoration consists of heavy moldings, both sunken and in relief.

M
415

These same pots are also used by all these tribes for preparing and cooking fish.

The riparian peoples of the Congo-Kasai-Fimi and of the lower Lukenie, as well as the Wadia and Mosengere of the Boriempe-Lulonga, fish a great deal.

M
252
251

Fish is never eaten raw. The natives boil it or eat it dried or smoked.

To preserve fish, the natives smoke it on large grids similar to those they use for smoking meat.

M
415

Certain peoples, notably the tribes of the Fimi and lake region and of the lower Lukenie, also use a special form of pottery, rare and heretofore unknown. We were able to bring back only two specimens, which are fortunately very characteristic. [134]

This form is open at the base and closed at the top by a large disk pierced with holes. The sides are curved. The diameter of the bottom opening is a little smaller than that of the upper disk. It varies from 45 to 90 centimeters.

M
415
251

This drying pot, called kenge by the natives, is placed on three pieces of wood forming a tripod. Under the tripod, a woman maintains a slow fire of leaves, grass and green wood, which sends thick smoke inside the pot. The gutted fish are placed over the disk. They are left there for four or five days, exposed continually to the action of the fire and smoke. At the end of this time they are sufficiently smoked and dried to keep for several months. Naturally, these pots can be used [135] for preparing and preserving only small quantities of food. They form a part of the native house wife's equipment among these various tribes. She also uses them to smoke chikwangue, to dry bananas, manioc tubers, and ears of maize, and sometimes to smoke meat. The manioc tubers, bananas, ears of maize, and other vegetable

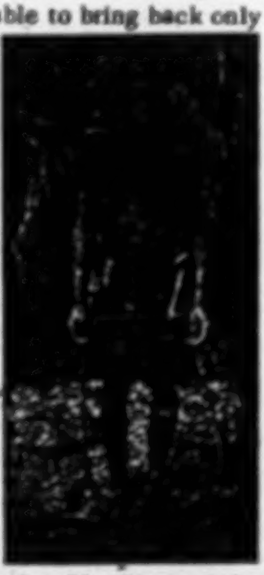


Fig. 76. Rattan Belt.

M
[291]

304 832 [177 291] personal vanity, and to excite the male. At the present time only the latter reason accounts for the practice in the region where our influence has been effective. The introduction of European fabrics, the expansion of the economy and the progress of civilization have led the women to clothe themselves and to hide and screen a large part of the body from indiscreet glances. [189] The small primitive loincloth has given way to a toga of variable length, which hides from the public eye that part [Fig. 112 appears here] of the body which is covered with tattoos. In such cases, the woman can no longer display her tattoos for the sake of vanity. [Figs. 113 and 114 appear here] 304 833 If, despite this, some of them continue to have themselves tattooed just like the old matrons, it is because they hope to attract a man, to please him, and to be able to participate sooner in the pleasures of intimate life. When questioned on this subject, the natives are very definite. The men maintain that the raised tattoos [190] on

[291, 301 304 142]

Fig. 115. Elegant Lady of the Bokala-Yaelima Region. Tattoos, Bracelets, and Necklaces.

1. Clothing. Nudity.

291
855 Until he has reached the age of discretion and even a little later, the Nkundó child wears nothing more around his loins than a belt of beads or a plain string usually adorned with some amulet. Nobody is shocked by this rudimentary attire. Parents take great interest in the adornment of their children; from a very early age [301] they are seen wearing belts of trading beads, bracelets, rings around the ankles made of iron, copper, or brass, and in addition, at the present time, glass beads above the knees.

291 As the child grows older the clothing increases. From the outset there are differences on the basis of sex.

The boy acquires a thin strip of cloth which is attached to his string or belt simply by folding back the two ends. The cloth falls between his legs without being tight, allowing for great freedom of movement and the circulation of air; this is an excellent precaution against perspiration due to extreme heat, but it is not very effective protection against indiscreet looks, at least in certain positions. The fabric made of raffia may be decorated to a greater or a lesser extent. In former times there existed different kinds, which we need not describe here. The length of the hanging borders is dictated by vanity. The string was often replaced by a raffia belt or -- among prominent men -- by a leather thong.

The woman's garment consists of a broad raffia belt whose two ends are gradually narrowed, ending in cords which are tied on the [53] stomach. In the center of this belt (*nkɔ́sɔ́* (1) a ball of raffia fibers is attached (*bonkoko*). A piece of cloth (*efufa* or *lofufa*) whose width may vary from 3 centimeters to 20 centimeters or more, depending on the age and the wearer's intensity of the feeling of modesty, is attached to the cords and falls more or less low on the body. For a [292] feast or display the *efufa* is replaced with a more valuable and longer [illegible] piece of cloth (*imɔ́tɔ́* or, among the Ekɔ́ngɛ of Losanganya, *ifika*).

1. Or *bokangɛ, bokangɛ wá nkɔ́sɔ́*. Among the Bombwanja it is called *likɔ́ngɛ̂*.

29/184 The nkásá is unknown beyond the Jwalé and the Luilaka. In that region the women tie a string (or a belt of beads) around themselves and attach a second piece of cloth to it.

291 Thus the male garment is a rudimentary sort of shorts, open on the sides, while female dress is much more open. In general the efufa is an appropriate protection of one's modesty, but it is inadequate in certain positions. (2)

[611]
[196] 2. It may be interesting to note that etóo nsamányá, or just plain etóo, which is the term for a man's garment, also indicates the male line of descent, while the female line is often designated by the term nkásá (sometimes by the word jwǒmoto derived from bǒmoto, "woman"). Let us add that lonkundó jwá nkásá means "pure, flawless Lonkundo, not corrupted by foreign influences." This expression should be compared with the following phrases: langue maternel, moedertaal, "mother tongue," etc.

291
177 At present the nkásá is no longer worn except by a few elderly inhabitants of villages far from the main communication lines. Everywhere else the ancient mode of dress has been replaced by materials imported from Europe. The women wear at least a sangatámbo, a kind of short skirt which falls from their loins at least to the middle of their thighs if not further. Middle-aged men in the interior have simply changed the material of their garment but not its form. The younger ones, on the contrary, have frankly adopted the European mode of dress.

291
581
[124]
[591] A married woman is not allowed to enter the village of her relatives by marriage (bakiló) or appear before them [54] without supplementing her usual attire with one or more beleleke (banana leaves cut into fringes). The term bakiló must be understood as it is meant by the Nkundó; it excludes those with whom the wife may sometimes perform the sexual act and who are called "husbands" broadly speaking.

291 581 speaking. (1) Is this custom in some way related to modesty? The

1. See Chapter VI, Article VI.

[606] same question may be raised with respect to another strict rule of decorum which forbids a man to look his mother-in-law in the face. (2)

2. For details concerning this custom, see Chapter VI, Article V, 1.

It can readily be answered in the affirmative. (3)

3. Nevertheless, see Chapter X, Article II, 3.

784 576 The rule of decorum which forbids a man to sit down on a seat where a woman is seated who is not his wife seems to me also to be dictated by sexual modesty. On the other hand, stepping over the seat under such circumstances has nothing whatever to do with this feeling. The purpose of this practice is to enable the person seated (regardless of sex) to avoid the evil repercussions of a charm or magic spell in his or her possession. (4)

4. Contrary to the explanation given by Jadot in Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge (Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 90.

291 894 Is the native ashamed to show his nakedness? Let us beware of answering this question in general terms. In order to have an idea of the situation which is sufficiently clear and precise, various cases and circumstances must be taken into account.

1) First of all it can be stated that in the normal course of daily living the Nkundó, men as well as women, do all they can to hide their genital organs. That is to say that basically they are

291 834 embarrassed by the glances of others. This feeling extends even to other parts of the body which, irrespective of the degree of culture they have reached, most peoples try to cover. [55]

834 514 2) Between persons of the same sex and age a certain freedom is permitted. This may be observed especially among young boys when they have to urinate. In our countries of Europe the situation is no different. I must say, however, that I have only noticed this freedom in the schools and never in the villages of the interior. Is there a gap in my observations, or should this laxity in the schools be attributed to the influence of the law of least effort (the suitable places in the schools are at some distance) and to the lack of leisure available to the pupils given the shortness of recreation periods on the one hand and their love of play on the other? It is also possible that among these boys modesty has barely made its appearance, since this feeling is strongly linked to the sexual instinct and awakens only with the latter. It would also seem that living in a group tends to reduce the power of modesty.

834 832 3) It is obvious that sexual excitement runs counter to modesty and that sometimes -- especially among young people -- immodest acts may be used to arouse another person, especially in situations, such as bathing, which lend themselves easily to such actions.

515 834 4) Bathers, whether washing or swimming, are very careless, especially when they are in a group of their own sex and age. In former times no doubt they did not indulge in the luxury of even a rudimentary bathing costume. But at the present time it is not at all difficult for them to obtain the small piece of cloth needed for that purpose. Nevertheless, nude bathing in rivers and streams is a common practice. It is far more frequent among women than among men. The natives with whom I have discussed the subject attribute this fact to levity and a lack of concern; but they see nothing very wrong in it. Whether or not [56] the bathers are in a group also seems to make a difference. If you surprise one or two people under such circumstances, they will hide in haste. If, on the other hand, you find a dozen, they will not move; on the contrary, they will interrupt their toilette to watch you pass. Perhaps they are simply unconcerned about their nakedness. But it is also possible that they

593^x
834 arises but rarely. Furthermore, if a daughter is required to perform similar duties for her father, she will undertake this obligation only [539] with the lament: njôy'ɔ̌ɛna ěkɔ́ 'm wímɔ́kɔ́, "I have come to see where I had my origin." Any woman who has been in that position will later know no oath more sacred than this one: la botakɔ́ wǎ fafɔ́ bǒkɔ́ 'm wɛ̌nɔ́kɔ́ la mpaka, "by my father's nakedness which I saw when he was old."

834
291 Thus we can draw the conclusion that the Nkundó are offended by nakedness and as a rule do not tolerate it. The exceptions do not invalidate this generalization; on the contrary, they tend to support it.

2. Speech. Obscenities and propriety.

521
831 In general the Nkundó see nothing wrong with using obscene expressions. They only describe them as "bad" if they become indecent.

195 If a conversation touches on matters of sex, they may wonder whether a particular topic is necessary, interesting, or entertaining; they will not ask themselves whether it is moral. For it will be apparent throughout this study they have no concept of morality strictly speaking.

The Nkundó possesses a varied and extensive list of obscene words -- nor is he alone in this respect. [58] We are not compiling a dictionary, and therefore we will not list them. What interests us are the circumstances that make these words indecent and under which a proper use of them impossible. The circumstances provide us with a criterion of the degree of obscenity of a word or expression. Let us say at once that we include in this category not only terms applied to organs and phenomena which are of a sexual nature strictly speaking, but also words pertaining to certain anatomical parts or physiological functions such as, for example, excretion, hair and tattooing found on private parts, and the female garment called efufa. We [184] should also point out that some tribes will consider expressions obscene which do not shock others at all.

304 832 and "modern" fashions, as well as some ancient ones, take this into account. In the next paragraph, moreover, we will note ananalogous phenomenon.

Both of the explanations given can be defended, since each has its value. But it seems to me preferable not to oppose them but rather to bring them together, as they probably are in the thinking of the native.

It should also be noted that a man never performs the operation of making a sexual tattoo on a woman, although a woman may indeed operate on a man. And finally it should be mentioned that the [831] specific terms designating these tattoos are considered as obscenities.

The practice of tattooing is decreasing at the present time. [178] Many boys are already without tattoos. But very few girls lack them; among them the fad has not disappeared. Some even have themselves tattooed without the knowledge of their parents and in spite of their opposition. Among the Blacks, as everywhere in the world, fashion is deeply rooted because it is natural. But the designs of the tattoos are now becoming smaller. It seems to me that this change is due, not to a reaction against tattooing as such, but rather to a modification of the style. For tattooing is a real fashion, and like all fashions it is subject to change and development. Nowadays there is a tendency to imitate the designs of other peoples of the Congo. Elsewhere, as among the Injó̲ló̲, for example, an internal evolution may be observed, although it is occurring under foreign influence. The evolution is taking place chiefly in the face motifs, while those of the body are beginning to be omitted. But the sexual tattoos do not seem to be disappearing. [69]

4. Bead Belts

291 901 832 From an early age the Nkundó child is adorned with a belt of trading beads. Before the coming of the Europeans this decoration made its appearance only towards puberty and was restricted to girls. Nowadays, many men also adorn themselves in this manner. And since it is now easier to obtain the beads, women are no longer with a single string but wear several in assorted colors. They add smaller ones below the knee.

291/301/832 According to what I have been told, this type of ornament may also have a sexual significance. Normally -- and this statement is applicable only to the present time -- the beads are entirely covered by clothing and are visible only on a few occasions. If a large number of strings (as many as six, eight, or ten) or very many beads are worn, attention may be attracted to them because there will be a bulge in the clothing worn over them. Their sound will reveal their presence during a race or a dance. And according to my informants, that is enough to awaken passion. Making an allusion to the beads and especially touching them deliberately is considered as an invitation. For her part, a woman sometimes rubs them together in her fingers so that they will make their characteristic noise and thus attract a man's attention and arouse his interest.

The preceding does not mean that simply the wearing of the beads is necessarily intended for a bad purpose. Not only must such an intention be excluded in the case of serious persons, especially if they are elderly and content themselves with wearing a single string, seldom a second one to support the first. But there is also the possi- [152] bility that a young Black beauty may adorn herself with ten or more strands out of sheer vanity, so that the whole world may see that she has so many. [70]

Furthermore, it has been shown that attention to appearance is not necessarily directed to another person. Though that may be generally true, many people like to dress for the pleasure of being well dressed, and girls who never dream of an adventure may still enjoy wearing pretty undergarments. This desire for adornment for its own sake can, no doubt, explain the belts, as well as other embellishments on more than one Nkundó woman.

We should add that those who adhere to the theory that the tattoos have an immediate sexual influence could apply such a theory here as well.

302 891

5. Depilation

All Nkundó of both sexes practice depilation of the genital organs and even the armpits. The natives believe that the hair growing

[104] III. WEAVING

286 The craft of the Mongo weaver is an honorable one and one that calls for much labor and attentiveness.

[177] Weaving is no longer as much in vogue as it was in earlier times, because the younger people buy European materials. However, the weaver is still able to earn his daily bread comfortably, because [291] the old people are too pagan to give up their old ingrained habit of wearing a loin cloth.

[462] Weaving is a craft carried on by men only. Some are very skillful in the weaving of materials and command our admiration. Pieces of really beautiful workmanship were offered to us for sale; I had myself seen them being woven.

286 314 The weaver takes his knife, goes into the forest, and cuts the "mpekwa ia lifeke," the fibers of a certain kind of palm tree which he also sometimes plants on the open highway near his hut. As soon as he has sufficient fibers for the weaving he has in mind, he goes home and at his leisure scrapes the fibers with his knife until they are all of the same thickness.

286 After that he leaves them in the sun to dry. When they have dried sufficiently, he puts up in his hut or on the open highway the frame on which the fibers are to be hung.

After he has attached the fibers to the top cross-bar (they are bound between the top and bottom cross-bars), he holds down the bottom cross-bar with his foot and goes to work.

Often he uses fibers of different colors, and this gives a lovely effect to the piece of material.

Bofomi afom'eto, "the weaver is weaving material."

386 314 The weaver has a very simple way of giving the fibers their different colors.

From the forest he fetches a liana (longoli) which contains the red, white, or black coloring agent, cuts it in pieces, puts them in a banana leaf which has been quickly scorched in the fire, adds some water and hangs all this, with the fibers, in a bag of banana leaves above the fire. When the dye has soaked thoroughly into the fibers, he has his colored fibers all ready [105] for the material he is about to weave. This mixture is called "bosaka."

624

inches long and two inches in width, numbering up to seven are brought and attached [596]
to the back of her *lomboo* by folding them over it.[1]

The first male child which was born to the *nkumu* before he acceded to the office is 852
known as *Iyomi Nkoi*. If he has none, then the right to this name passes to the first
male child to be born to his younger brothers. Any child born on the day that the 624
nkumu is given his *montolo* is also called *Iyomi*; if a male he will be *Mola Iyomi*, if a [551]
female, *Mpembe Iyomi*.[2] These children must not see the *nkumu* until they are old enough to know his name and greet him properly, and so they are taken to some village other than the one in which he has his residence. When such children are considered old enough to take up residence in the village of the *nkumu* it is an occasion for revelry, a big dance, *nteko*, is held, and there is a feast. The child, *Iyomi*, is brought to the village of the *nkumu* with rejoicing, and this is a signal for everybody desiring to do so to help himself to anything belonging to the *nkumu*. Goats and fowls may be killed and eaten, sugar-cane rooted up, bananas, plantains, and other crops growing near by seized for food. Because of this custom the *nkumu* will take precautions and send his livestock, at least, off to some other village in order not to lose more than he can help.[3]

The *nyemba*, the singer or singers, and the *ntotii*, the praisers already mentioned, 624
remain with the *nkumu* during his period of seclusion. Added to these is *ntomba* 533
lokombi, the bearer of the *lokombi*, a stringed instrument played with the fingers, 534
similar to a bass viol in its general appearance.

Inside the *ipana* during the seclusion of the *nkumu*, few people have the right of 624
entrance, but as one enters the *ebanga* where the daylight hours are spent, one finds
the couch of the *nkumu* on the left and towards the rear. On the same side and towards 342
the front are seated the *ntombe lokombi* and the *nyemba*. *Nsono*'s couch is to the right 352
of, and parallel to, that of the *nkumu*, but still to the left of the centre posts. To the right of her couch is the fire in the centre, and beyond the fire on the right side is a couch for the *maomi*, likewise somewhat to the rear, with a space in front for the *ntotii*.

The month's seclusion being completed, the *nkumu* prepares to buy the homage of 624
the village. *Nsono* gets rid of her decorative colours, and assumes ordinary attire,
becoming like any other of the wives, and is ready to take up all the usual duties of 576
a wife, whether in the garden or at the house. The people are called to come and render to the *nkumu* their homage and praise. The men come to the *ipana*, are admitted to the presence of their *nkumu* and seat themselves on the bare earth with their legs wide apart and facing him. They then, without uttering a word, greet him in the

---

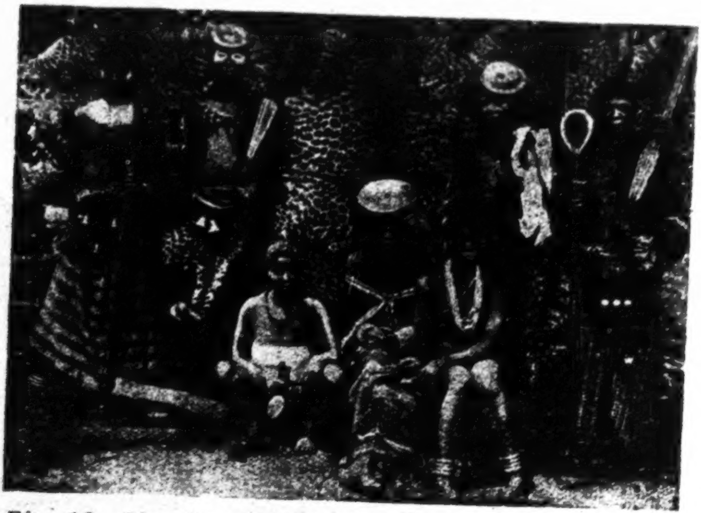
[1] The *lomboo* is a belt which used to be worn by Tumba women encircling the buttocks, and this was used to attach their only garment, the *ekow* among the Bonginda, this being a short loin cloth, or an *mpongo* among other groups, this being a woven cloth strip worn between the legs.

[2] When a new *nkumu* assumes office, one already in office will take this opportunity of getting more of his sons named *Iyomi*. He takes them to the *molembe* of the new *nkumu*, and having placed a bracelet of cowrie shells on the right wrist, and sometimes one on the right ankle, asks the member of the *molembe* whose right it is to give away the *montolo* to name [291]
these sons *Maomi* (pl. of '*Iyomi*'). This man will then take such a son, and presenting him to the people introduce him by giving him a name, and following with praise as, '*Ome Iyomi Lonzue, bototo!*' and the crowd replies with the customary '*Bwoo!*'

[3] It is well to remember that not every individual [551]
bearing names associated with the institution of the *nkumu* is directly concerned with it. With the practice of 'resurrecting' dead relatives by naming new-born children after them, such names as these become widespread.

Take F133
Sakata F043

to burial, the deceased is laid out in the mortuary hut. Relatives, T friends, and acquaintances sit up with the body in turn. Night and 764 day, plaintive and monotonous chants commemorate the high deeds of the deceased, his glory, his qualities, his wealth, his power, his whole life. The burial is carried out with great pomp and ends T with a general consumption of the whole supply of palm wine, [273] malafu, and masanga [Ed., sugar-cane beer].



M
292 ●
516
411

Fig. 16. Ebandia, Chief of the Mosengere, Two Favorite Wives, and Principal Dignitaries.

The peoples of Lake Leopold II place the corpse in a wooden M 764 coffin. Those of the Lukenie region wrap it in mats. Both groups bury the deceased the day after death.

The cemeteries are located outside the village. The relatives lay out a few broken utensils on the grave. If the deceased was a hunter of repute, they plant a long staff upon the grave, and the skull of some animal killed by the dead man is attached at the top of it. [27]

During my stay in the territory of the Baboma-Banfumu of S Bokala, I was struck by the presence of a tiny hut in the center 766 of Chief Pokei's village. It was about 60 centimeters high, 30 845 centimeters wide, and 50 centimeters long. I thought at first 761

301 Among the peoples of Lake Leopold II, hair ornaments are rare. Hairpins seem to be unknown; combs are made of raffia splints. A woman prefers ornaments of metal, iron, brass, or copper, while the chiefs and great dignitaries like to wear belts, necklaces, bracelets, and trimmed with cowries. The necklace of solid brass is very popular. The heavier it is, the more it is liked. We saw women wearing necklaces weighing as much as 25 pounds. These necklaces are riveted around the necks of the favorite wives of great chiefs or wealthy

[292]
[293]
622]

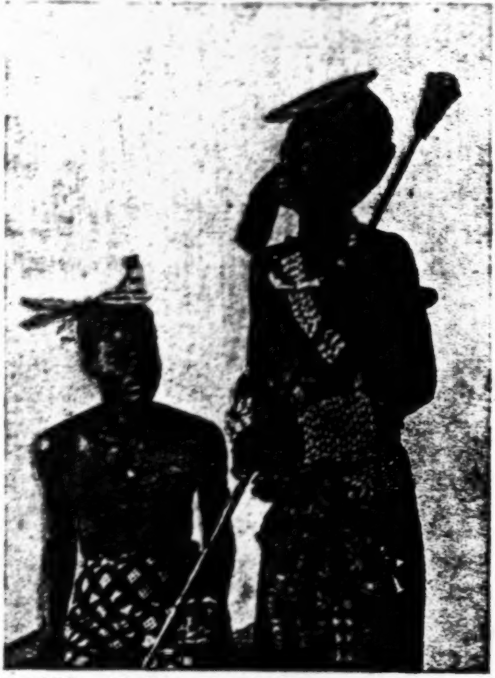
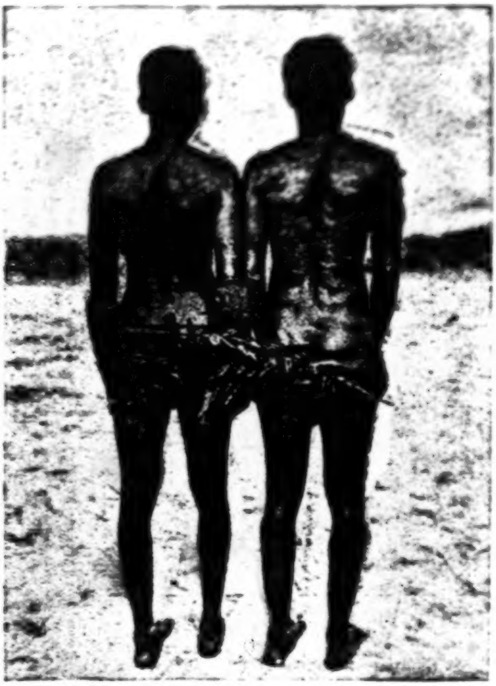


Fig. 104. Native Chief of Lake Leopold II and his Counselor, Highest Dignitary of the Tribe, both in Dress Costume.

[586] dignitaries. In case of divorce or separation, the owner of the necklaces removes them without regard for the suffering or cries of the victim. The women seem to be in no way inconvenienced by these cumbersome ornaments. On rare instances they wrap cloth around them to keep them from rubbing against the collarbone. [183]

reserved to the Mfumu. The large royal knife, encased in a 643
sheath, hung from a brass chain worn diagonally over the shoulder, 293
and Kakua [187] never parted with his great bow and his quiver 301
of arrows with large iron heads.



[304
301
535]

Fig. 109. Dancing Costume of the Yaelima-Bokala of the Wumbuli Region. Tattooing on the Back.

During dances and ceremonies the women attach the most 292
unusual objects around their waists, often large bushy branches. 301
Among the Ipanga and Batitu, as well as in the region of Wumbuli 535
and Dekese, betrothal and wedding dances are executed in special attire, heavily bedecked with beads and cowries.

These ornaments are not at all consistent. They vary according to taste and the whims and means of the natives, but certain parts of the dress costume worn by the betrothed couple at the dances celebrating the engagement seem to have a special meaning, to which we shall return later.

1. Clothing. Nudity.

291
855 Until he has reached the age of discretion and even a little later, the Nkundó child wears nothing more around his loins than a belt of beads or a plain string usually adorned with some amulet. Nobody is shocked by this rudimentary attire. Parents take great interest in the adornment of their children; from a very early age [301] they are seen wearing belts of trading beads, bracelets, rings around the ankles made of iron, copper, or brass, and in addition, at the present time, glass beads above the knees.

291 As the child grows older the clothing increases. From the outset there are differences on the basis of sex.

The boy acquires a thin strip of cloth which is attached to his string or belt simply by folding back the two ends. The cloth falls between his legs without being tight, allowing for great freedom of movement and the circulation of air; this is an excellent precaution against perspiration due to extreme heat, but it is not very effective protection against indiscreet looks, at least in certain positions. The fabric made of raffia may be decorated to a greater or a lesser extent. In former times there existed different kinds, which we need not describe here. The length of the hanging borders is dictated by vanity. The string was often replaced by a raffia belt or -- among prominent men -- by a leather thong.

The woman's garment consists of a broad raffia belt whose two ends are gradually narrowed, ending in cords which are tied on the [53] stomach. In the center of this belt (nkɛ́sɛ́ (1) a ball of raffia fibers is attached (bonkoko). A piece of cloth (efufa or lofufa) whose width may vary from 3 centimeters to 20 centimeters or more, depending on the age and the wearer's intensity of the feeling of modesty, is attached to the cords and falls more or less low on the body. For a [292] feast or display the efufa is replaced with a more valuable and longer [184] piece of cloth (intóló or, among the Ɛlángá of Losanganya, ifika).

---

1. Or bokangɛ́, bokangɛ́ wá nkɛ́sɛ́. Among the Bombwanja it is called likôngâ.

606 the act of procreation on the part of one of them. Perhaps this idea is latent in the native mind, or at least is at the basis of this rule. The fact that this hypothesis applies only to the wife's mother-in-law [mother?] does not weaken it; for in native eyes [291] the other instances are entirely without importance. (1)

1. See, for example, Chapter II, Article X, and Chapter V, Articles II and III.

606 292 Another regulation pertaining to the mother-in-law requires that she -- and all the women who are given the same title in current usage -- may appear in her son-in-law's village only when dressed in a bolelekɛ. A bolelekɛ is a banana leaf, either green or dried, which has been torn in several places perpendicularly to the large [765] central rib, and constitutes the first and principal sign of mourning. Moreover, Batswa women must also dress in this manner before entering a Baotó settlement. The following reason is given for the rule in the second instance: a Botswá woman's dress consists of a lolímba, a belt of small braided ropes about 10 centimeters long. Although in ordinary positions the lolímba provides fairly good protection, it is not considered adequate to really stop all indiscreet looks. And it is popularly believed that if a Bootó sees a Botswá woman's genital organs, she will die. Might we conclude from this last explanation that there is a fundamental connection between the reasons that necessitate the wearing of a bolelekɛ in these three instances? Or is the mother-in-law to imitate a Botswá woman and thus show a certain subordination to her son-in-law?

2. Female relatives

607 837 As long as they are free, that is, as long as no bride-price payment has been made for them, a woman's sisters or cousins are considered by her husband as his wives, and he calls them so (baálí). This term is applied only to relatives of a generation below that of the true wife or to members of the same generation who are younger than she and with whom marriage [292] is permitted. It is therefore never

595 great ceremonies because they lack the necessary wealth.

596 The bomɛ́tsa is never nkɔ́ndɛ́. But before he makes one of his wives a nkɔ́ndɛ́ a husband must ask the advice and approval of the [431] bomɛ́tsa. For that purpose he presents her with a bompɔ́ngɛ́ (a dog, a goat, some rings), which expresses his recognition of her right and authority and at the same time is intended to secure a favorable response. If the bomɛ́tsa does not agree, the matter is not followed through. But that situation is only hypothetical. In practice the bomɛ́tsa yields to her husband's preferences, since he has recognized her rights in the proper fashion.

When a husband wants to create a nkɔ́ndɛ́, he first makes all the preparations, brews the sugar-cane beer and collects all the riches that are to be distributed. Then he invites the neighboring villages and calls together his relatives. On the assigned day, the assembly having gathered, the chosen wife puts on her most beautiful garments and adorns herself with her richest ornaments. She [352] seats herself on a magnificent bofaga [345] (a portable couch) (1) in front of the audience. Her husband then announces to those assembled that henceforth this woman is to be his favorite; woe unto the man who has the temerity to seduce her or even show affection toward her -- he will be a dead man (or he will have to pay an [584] enormous indemnity of 25 to 50 bakonga). In the past it often happened that a seducer was killed or reduced to slavery without further ado. When the husband has paid 25 rings or more to the wife's family and gifts have been distributed to the assembled patriarchs, his words are ratified by the assembly, and henceforth the contract between them and the husband is sealed. Dances, song, and drink follow.

The favorite wears no special garb. She wears the same [292] clothing as all the other women and wears furs only for dances.

---

1. See the excellent drawing in Engels, Les Wangata [The Wangata], (Revue Congolaise, Vol. 1, no. 4, p. 483, 1910).

595 554 On the day set aside for establishing the position of the bolɛ́mbɛ́, there is a great feast. All the clans and neighboring villages that have been invited gather at the home of the polygamist in question. He presents the woman to them and addresses the gathering: "Here is the woman whom I want to make my bolɛ́mbɛ́, as I have already announced to you. Today I am making public the decision I already made a long time ago. Be it known to all that no man may touch her, or he will be severely punished." Then two women (in rare instances, two men) hold the woman, and the husband unfastens her belt and rips off all her clothing. Then the assistants tie a rope or a belt of mpangɛ́ (striped antelope) skin around her, and to it they attach various furs. From that day
[291] until her death she may no longer wear the clothing (bitóo) of other women; she must always [350] be dressed in furs. Hence her name, bolɛ́mbɛ́ wa bikɔ́tɔ́, "bolɛ́mbɛ́ with furs." Then her husband gives her pots of palm oil with which she will have to cover herself. Two men approach her; they are chosen among the handsomest in the village (1) (married or single) and are

[601] 1. They are then (sic) relatives of the husband. Nkundó law dictates that no stranger shall perform a function of the slightest importance -- not even that of silencing a gathering. According to their saying, bofaya ifɔ́kɛ́la lokɛ́anga, "a stranger does not cut up a guinea hen."

[301] richly adorned with furs, belts of mpangɛ́, beads, raffia fabrics with jagged edges, copper rings on their ankles, etc. Stepping in rhythm, they lead her to the house intended for her which is [illegible] surrounded by a fence of bofeko posts (Ricinodendron africanum) held together with palms. This hut with its fence is called ileke.

There the bolɛ́mbɛ́ will reside for months and years (up to three or more, they say). She is secluded there, so to speak,
[illegible] and may not go out. If she needs to go to the banana groves for her personal needs, she covers and surrounds herself with a mat so that no one will see her.

fear of death would deter him from such baseness. Another sign of the chosen successor is some untoward experience, such, for example, as finding cowrie shells (worn by *nkumu*) in a trap in the forest or a net that had been put out to catch fish. 624

Nkumu Akulu, whether the first of his line or a man succeeding in the office, bears the emblems of his rank. He wears an *ilokolo* (a branch of a special bush) stuck into his belt on the right side and hanging downwards. The special hat, *mantsio*, worn by *nkumu* is not yet his to wear, but he wears an ordinary skin hat known as *lopoyo*, which is the mark of any elder. This hat may be ornamented with feathers if so desired. [293] [292]

When *Nkumu Akulu* decides that he has acquired sufficient wealth to enable him properly to claim the right of being made an *nkumu*, he begins his preparatory arrangements. *Mbili*, a mixture of charcoal with some sticky substance, is smeared over his body with plantain leaves. All ornamented clothing is discarded and a single cloth woven from raffia, and known as *esaka*, is worn. He refuses to sit on the benches usually used and instead sits on the bare earth. All this is explained as an attempt on the part of the man about to be raised to the office of *nkumu* to be different from others, a man apart, separate, peculiar, not partaking in the ordinary interests and affairs of his fellow men. [302] [292] [516]

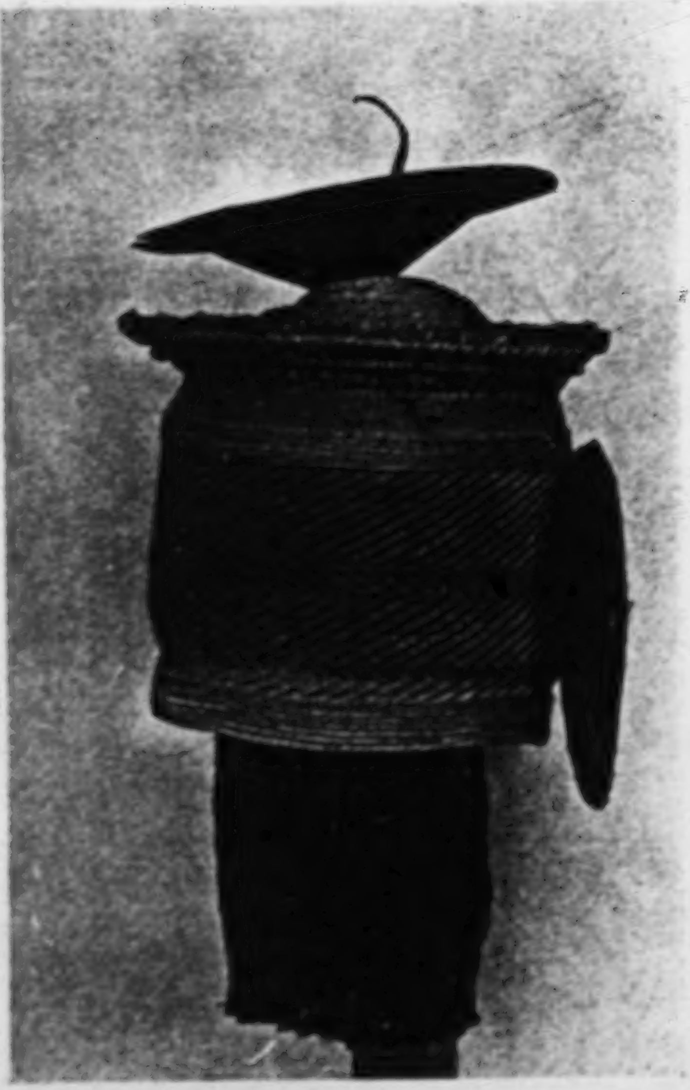
Nkumu Akulu now leaves his own village accompanied by all his wives and children, and also by a singer, *eyemba*, who is paid to sing his praises, and by several male Batwa (pygmies), up to half a dozen in number, known as *atotii* because of their duty of blowing gourds and producing sounds which indicate praise of the great man. This party makes the round of villages wherever relatives are found, and the announcement is made that *Nkumu Akulu* is about to become an *nkumu*. This pilgrimage accomplished, a 'doctor' (*nkanga*) is visited by the aspirant to office, who seeks by magic to discover whether it is the propitious time for the ceremony of installation. The whole company retires to the private enclosure at the rear of the house belonging to the *nkanga* chosen, this being the place where he performs his wonders. The *nkanga* resorts to *nsingo*, that particular branch of magic which has to do with reasons for strange and unaccountable phenomena.[1] *Nkumu Akulu* now seeks some sign as confirmation of his determination to claim his office at this time. Some native pepper may be wrapped in a leaf or merely covered by it, and left within sight of all, and upon being opened it may be found to have turned into salt, or perhaps it may be some earth that is thus turned to salt. Or a cock may be placed upon *Nkumu Akulu*'s head and covered with a basket and thus left for some time. Upon removing the basket it may be discovered that an egg has been laid. All such tests, if successful, will be regarded as indications that it really is time for *Nkumu Akulu* to assume the office of *nkumu*, but if the test fails he will usually go ahead with his plans anyhow, fearing the shame that would come to him should he go back to his home after having made the triumphant round of his relatives' homes. However, should he act thus, and he most certainly will, he knows that his days are numbered, [533] [563] 534] 624 791 787 624

---

[1] If a man's fields do not produce and he cannot understand why, he will resort to *nsingo*. If it is suspected, for example, that the trouble is caused by someone making 'medicine', an arrow shaft is put into a small hole in the ground, and at each name mentioned, the arrow can be pulled out if the person is innocent, but remains stuck fast in the hole at the mention of the guilty name.

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

624
292
285



Mantia, the hat worn by the nkumu as the symbol of his office

[facing page 434]

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

Now the molembe choose the Bilogo

624 *Okula*, a young woman of their own number, who will thereafter be known by this
[533] name. She is an official cymbalist and must always begin beating before others may join in. In reality the members of the *molembe* have decided beforehand who shall be chosen for this position, and the woman of their choice now takes her stand on the elevation together with *Nkumu Akula* and his wife, *Nsona*.

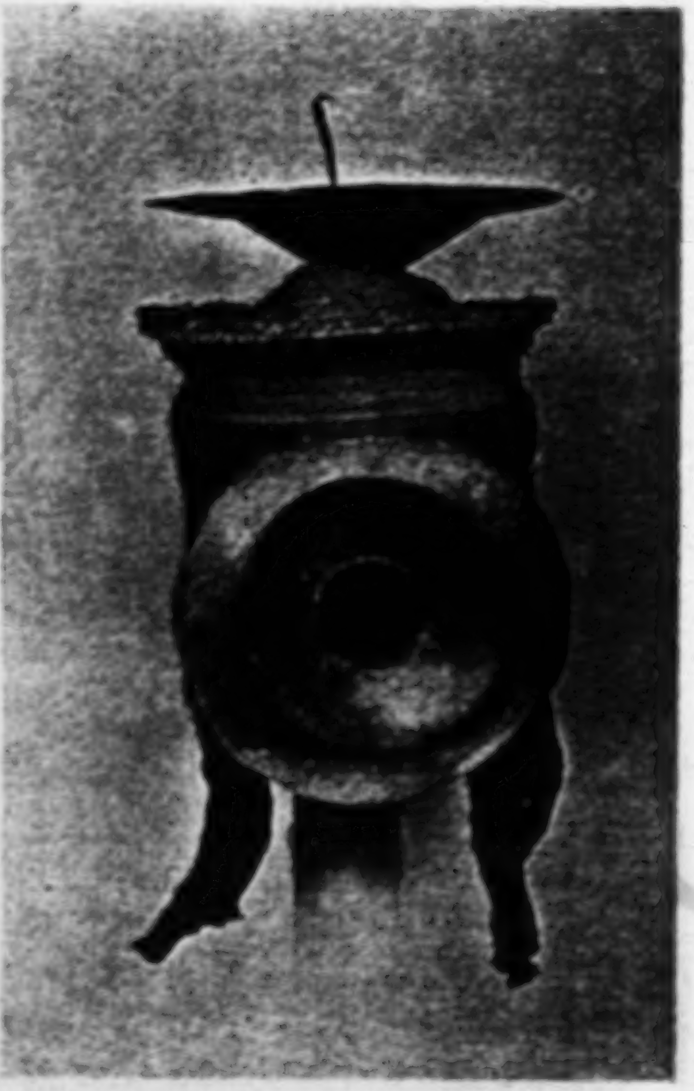
624 The member of the *molembe* whose right it is by inheritance to place the *mentale* (see Plates) upon the head of the *nkumu* now comes forward with it. This hat, about
292 twelve inches in height, is woven of raffia and cylindrical in shape, but the brim, instead of being at the base, encircles the top of the crown. It is usually decorated with a burnished brass plate attached to the front, and perhaps a second one behind, and in these modern days it is quite in style to hang a row of safety pins from the 'brim' or 'halo' encircling the crown. When the *nkumu* is the first of his line, the *mentale* is purchased by him, but in the case of succession it is that used by the deceased predecessor, and has been kept by the *molembe* until this time. It is his badge of office and sign of authority. The bringing out of the *mentale* is an occasion for
624 merriment. *Nkumu Akula* calls for his *mentale*, but the *molembe* tease and tantalize him and ask for money. The amount is a fixed sum, but *Nkumu Akula* pays out at first but a few rods, is teased for more, and so on until he has provided the total amount, usually about one hundred. The member of the *molembe* whose duty it is to place the *mentale* on the head of the *nkumu* begins to tease the crowd. He chooses various names by which the *nkumu* might be called, everybody knowing all the time what his name must be. He asks the people, 'Shall we call him so-and-so?' 'We refuse', reply the people. 'Or so-and-so?' 'We refuse.' And each time names whereby *nkumu* are known are repeated. Finally the correct name is given, as, 'Shall we call him *Nkumu Lobandola*?' and the crowd roars its approval, 'Ooooo!' The *mentale* then being placed on *Nkumu Akula*'s head he now becomes *Nkumu* and leaps down among the crowd, who bear him off to their village with rejoicing. In the choice of names, the first *nkumu* in a village is known as *Nkumu Lobandola*. If there is another section of the village with an *nkumu* of its own, he must take another name, such as *Nkumu Ijali Bokenge*. Successors must always take the names of their predecessors whatever their own personal names may be. An *nkumu* chosen by a *molembe*
[554] which is also the *nsomo molembe*, the hereditary owner of the land, is known as *Nkumu e Bitindi* (*Nkumu* of the heels), for he occupies a more important position than his fellows, and is thus the support which holds up the whole group of *nkumu* chosen by other *molembe*.

624 The *nkumu* is borne off to his *ngogo*, his residence, which in this case is temporary, to be replaced later by a permanent one. The *ngogo* comprises the whole unit of
392 buildings for the *nkumu*, including his own sleeping quarters, the houses for his wives, the *ebonge* where he spends the daylight hours, and a row of houses for his children. His *ebonge* and his own sleeping quarters are screened from the public gaze, making
[351] a place known as *ipomo*. In the case of a new *nkumu* the screen is temporary, but when the permanent *ngogo* is built, a permanent *ipomo* is made by planting umbrella trees (*milembe*, sing. *molembe*) in a rectangular or circular fashion. Here, sheltered
624 from intrusion, the *nkumu* remains in retirement (*asé*) for a month.[1] While he remains

[1] *Asé* refers to the sitting of a hen on eggs, *nkumu* at this juncture of the ceremonies.
the seclusion of a woman after childbirth, or of the

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

624
292
285



[illegible], the hat worn by the nkumu as the symbol of his office

[facing page 435]

no compulsion. If one of the contracting parties fails to fulfil its pledges in this matter 224
of giving part of the kill, or in anything else, the aggrieved party may call the council 624
together. This consists not only of members of the *ankanda* and *elenge*, but of all 596
elders of the village or villages connected with this particular one. The party judged
in the wrong, whether *elenge* or *ankanda*, will be fined, the injured party receiving its 621
share, and both parties will be charged to live together harmoniously and observe
their contracts.

The power of the *nkumu* was apparently limited, and did not supersede that of 624
the *nsomo ankanda*. When trials came up, the aggrieved party might go either to the 695
nsomo ankanda or to the *nkumu*. If it was necessary to call the village elders together
about it, both these authorities were present at the hearing. First the young men of
the group were allowed to give their verdict, then the old men, after that *nsomo
ankanda* (or the *ambimi e ele*), and finally the *nkumu* was given the privilege of the
last word. He would comment on the opinions of each of the judges, criticizing one
young man, commending another, and then giving his own verdict, at which the
group would assent by saying, 'Even so, grandfather'. The whole group of judges
would then fix the fines, a double portion of which went to the *nkumu*.

The actual manual labour which an *nkumu* may do excludes anything endangering 624
life or limb, or requiring agility and speed. He may clear the bush for his gardens:
this is a man's work. He may take part in the building of his houses, but may do
no high work, and, among the inland groups, it is the work of the Batwa to put the [563]
roof on for him. The *nkumu* may also prepare pitfalls for catching game, but cannot
engage in any other type of hunting or do any fishing. Digging a grave is prohibited,
for, as we shall see, everything pertaining to death must be ignored by the *nkumu*.

Other rules affecting the daily life of the *nkumu* may be roughly divided into three:
those affecting his person, those having to do with his food, and social regulations.

One of the great points of observance in the first class of regulations is the impor- 624
tance of the *ntomo*. The *nkumu* must on no account be seen during daylight hours 292
with an uncovered head. If he wishes relief from the cumbersome *ntomo* he may
take it off in the darkness of his house and put on an ordinary hat made of skins,
and when night falls he may walk where he will bareheaded if he so desires. The
skin hat, known as *lodo*, may be made from two animals only, in the case of an [824]
nkumu, one being the *ededeja*, a species of antelope with light-coloured hair, and the
other the *jodo*, an animal resembling a beaver. The skin of the *ededeja* may be used
by anyone, but the *jodo* is reserved for the *nkumu* only with one exception. The skin
of the *jodo* may also be used for the carrying strap for infants known as *ngumba*, [859]
which is worn over one shoulder in bandolier fashion. For the *nkumu* the skin of
the *jodo* is limited to the informal hat, *lodo*, and for making into the *lokolo*, a pouch
used for carrying small objects and worn like a sporran. As a corollary to the impor-
tance of the *ntomo* may be noted the importance attached to the head of the *nkumu*,
which must never be seen uncovered in daylight.

The Bongindo *nkumu* never wash in the daytime, but may wash at night with hot 624
water. The inland *nkumu* never wash. Even the Bongindo *nkumu* never wash their 515
heads, and no *nkumu* ever cuts his hair. If the *nkumu* becomes too greatly incon-
venienced, one of his wives may delouse his head, but only within the privacy of the [184]
house, by the light that enters the rear opening.

Yaelima

224 plant and one of the stakes. The customs and ceremonies observed
778 before leaving for the communal hunt are identical to those we
have just described.

224 As to the relations between the fetisher, the hunting fetish, and
the individual hunter, we will ignore them, having been unable
to obtain any information on this subject in these regions.

Throughout the region we visited, large-scale hunting is done communally. As a rule, all the men participate, including young men from the age of 15. [Ed., the text is not translated from the last paragraph, page 81, to the second paragraph, page 83.]

[83] The catch of the communal hunt is shared among all the families in the village, with the chief and the dignitaries having special rights.

224 Individual hunting
622 does not entail any dis-
tribution, except when
a buffalo, leopard, or
elephant is involved.
● [293] The tail of the buffalo
goes to the native chief
who uses it as a fly-
chaser and a badge of
rank. The skin of the
[281] leopard is reserved for
the chief, who makes
it into a skirt which he
displays ostentatiously
at important festivities
and public dances. The
trunk and tusks of the
elephant go to the chief
while the bristles go in
[778]
[381] part to the hunters and [84] in part to the local dignitaries, who
use them to make necklaces.

Fig. 51. Yaelima Fetish, Nkisi of the Hunt.

301 Among the peoples of Lake Leopold II, hair ornaments are rare. Hairpins seem to be unknown; combs are made of raffia splints. A woman prefers ornaments of metal, iron, brass, or copper, while the chiefs and great dignitaries like to wear belts, necklaces, bracelets, and trimmed with cowries. The necklace of solid brass is very popular. The heavier it is, the more it is liked. We saw women wearing necklaces weighing as much as 25 pounds. These necklaces are riveted around the necks of the favorite wives of great chiefs or wealthy dignitaries. In case of divorce or separation, the owner of the necklaces removes them without regard for the suffering or cries of the victim. The women seem to be in no way inconvenienced by these cumbersome ornaments. On rare instances they wrap cloth around them to keep them from rubbing against the collarbone. [183]

[292]
[293]
[622]

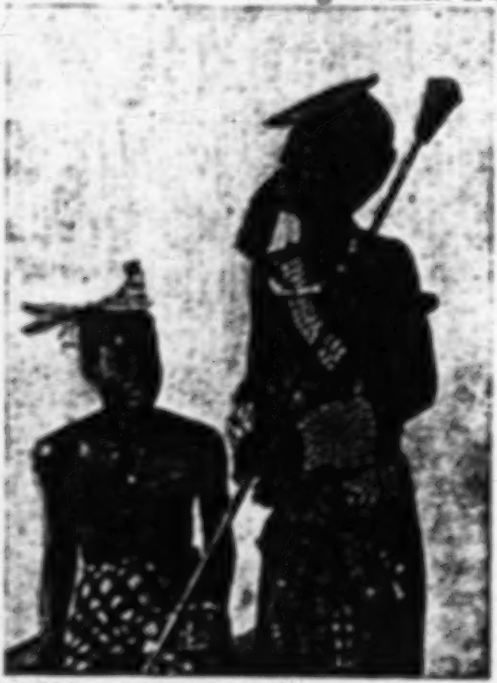


Fig. 104. Native Chief of Lake Leopold II and his Counselor, Highest Dignitary of the Tribe, both in Dress Costume.

[586]

Sakata FO43
Yaelima

M
301

We have already given a description of the dress costume of Natali, chief of the Banfumu of Kapanda.

S
643
301
293
302

For important ceremonies Chief Etoti, an old and unsociable Wadia, wore a hairdo of small braids adorned with three brass disks. He also wore a necklace made of hair from an elephant's tail, from which hung a triangular apron embellished with eight brass disks, signs of his great power and of his title as the oldest and greatest Mfumu na Tse in the whole Lake Leopold II region. His face was smeared with ngula, his eyes encircled with mpembe, and there was a long white line on each arm. In one hand he held the royal fly-chaser, and in the other, two chief's staffs.

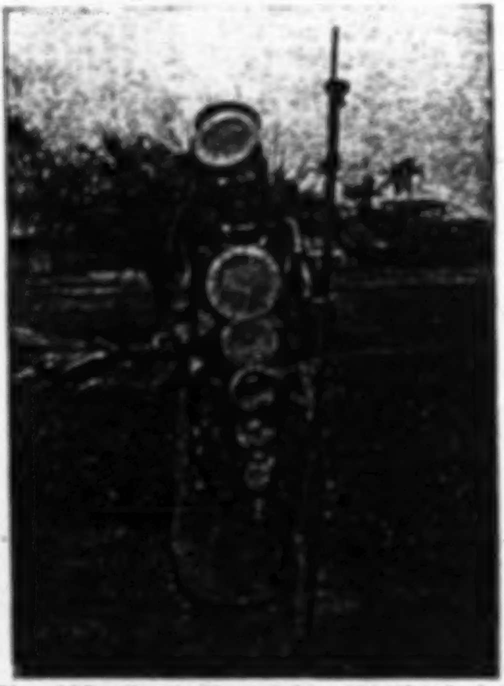


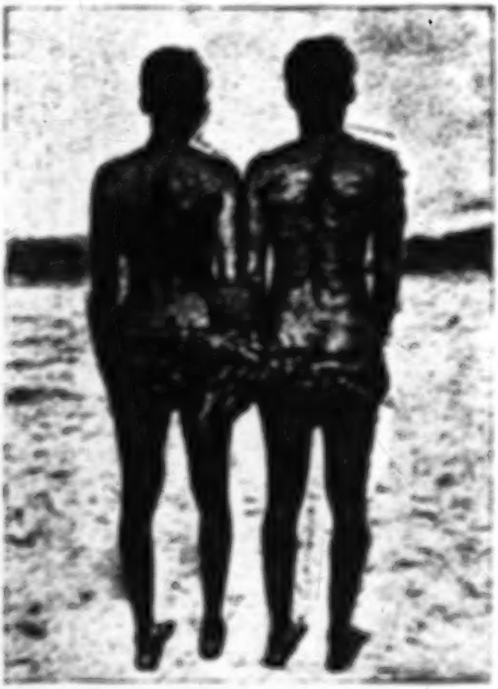
Fig. 108. Etoti, Unsociable Old Chief of the Wadia, in Full Regalia.

M
643
293
301

Kakua, the deposed Batitu chief, at all times wore his hairdo of small braids adorned with a large brass disk. His belt was decorated with a leopard skin and two iron bells, prerogatives

Yaelima

reserved to the Mfumu. The large royal knife, encased in a sheath, hung from a brass chain worn diagonally over the shoulder, and Kakua [187] never parted with his great bow and his quiver of arrows with large iron heads. 643 293 301



[304 301 535]

Fig. 109. Dancing Costume of the Yaelima-Sokala of the Wumbuli Region. Tattooing on the Back.

During dances and ceremonies the women attach the most unusual objects around their waists, often large bushy branches. Among the Ipanga and Batitu, as well as in the region of Wumbuli and Dekese, betrothal and wedding dances are executed in special attire, heavily bedecked with beads and cowries. 292 301 535

These ornaments are not at all consistent. They vary according to taste and the whims and means of the natives, but certain parts of the dress costume worn by the betrothed couple at the dances celebrating the engagement seem to have a special meaning, to which we shall return later.

fear of death would deter him from such baseness. Another sign of the chosen 624
successor is some untoward experience, such, for example, as finding cowrie shells
(worn by *nkumu*) in a trap in the forest or a net that had been put out to catch
fish.

Nkema Akuke, whether the first of his line or a man succeeding in the office, bears [293]
the emblems of his rank. He wears an *ilelembe* (a branch of a special bush) stuck into
his belt on the right side and hanging downwards. The special hat, *montolo*, worn [292]
by *nkumu* is not yet his to wear, but he wears an ordinary skin hat known as *lopepe*,
which is the mark of any elder. This hat may be ornamented with feathers if so
desired.

When *Nkema Akuke* decides that he has acquired sufficient wealth to enable him [302]
properly to claim the right of being made an *nkumu*, he begins his preparatory arrange-
ments. *Mbili*, a mixture of charcoal with some sticky substance, is smeared over his
body with plantain leaves. All ornamented clothing is discarded and a single cloth [292]
woven from raffia, and known as *[illegible]*, is worn. He refuses to sit on the benches usually
used and instead sits on the bare earth. All this is explained as an attempt on the [516]
part of the man about to be raised to the office of *nkumu* to be different from others,
a man apart, separate, peculiar, not partaking in the ordinary interests and affairs of
his fellow men.

Nkema Akuke now leaves his own village accompanied by all his wives and [533]
children, and also by a singer, *[illegible]*, who is paid to sing his praises, and by several
male Batwa (pygmies), up to half a dozen in number, known as *ntotii* because of their [563
duty of blowing gourds and producing sounds which indicate praise of the great 534]
man. This party makes the round of villages wherever relatives are found, and the
announcement is made that *Nkema Akuke* is about to become an *nkumu*. This 624
pilgrimage accomplished, a 'doctor' (*nkanga*) is visited by the aspirant to office, 791
who seeks by magic to discover whether it is the propitious time for the ceremony of
installation. The whole company retires to the private enclosure at the rear of the 787
house belonging to the *nkanga* chosen, this being the place where he performs his
wonders. The *nkanga* resorts to *[illegible]*, that particular branch of magic which has to
do with reasons for strange and unaccountable phenomena.[1] *Nkema Akuke* now
seeks some sign as confirmation of his determination to claim his office at this time.
Some native pepper may be wrapped in a leaf or merely covered by it, and left within
sight of all, and upon being opened it may be found to have turned into salt, or per-
haps it may be some earth that is thus turned to salt. Or a cock may be placed upon
Nkema Akuke's head and covered with a basket and thus left for some time. Upon
removing the basket it may be discovered that an egg has been laid. All such tests, 624
if successful, will be regarded as indications that it really is time for *Nkema Akuke*
to assume the office of *nkumu*, but if the test fails he will usually go ahead with his
plans anyhow, fearing the shame that would come to him should he go back to his
home after having made the triumphant round of his relatives' homes. However,
should he act thus, and he most certainly will, he knows that his days are numbered,

---

[1] If a man's fields do not produce and he cannot understand why, he will resort to *[illegible]*. If it is suspected, for example, that the trouble is caused by someone making 'medicine', an arrow shaft is put into a small hole in the ground, and at each name mentioned, the arrow can be pulled out if the person is innocent, but remains stuck fast in the hole at the mention of the guilty name.

Yaelima

764 At the village of Tik-ke-Tik in Yaelima territory, we witnessed a similar scene following the death of a young man.

At nightfall his body was wrapped in mats or rattan splints, solidly plaited, tied up, and completely sealed. At dawn the [482] mortuary bundle, attached to a strong branch, was lifted by two men. Instead of taking the village lane, they carried the corpse behind the hut and then through the bush. A few men walking Indian file made up the procession, at the end of which was the mother of the deceased in mourning costume. The path they followed was quite irregular. Largely avoiding the trodden paths, the bearers often retraced their steps and took almost two hours to reach the cemetery, four kilometers from the village.

[142
291
●301
516]

Fig. 12. Mother and Child, Bankutshu Tribe.

764
761 On the way back, the natives explained to me that the numerous turns and the walk through untrodden bush were meant to lead astray the evil spirit who had entered the village and killed the

Sakata FO43

Yaelima

S

766 845 761 that it was a small chicken coop, but when I drew near I saw that it was filled with trinkets. Puzzled, I questioned a woman who had been loitering about for a while.

"Is this not my child's house?" she said.

"Where, then, is your child?"

"Is he not there?" and she pointed out a small basket hanging a few paces from the hut.

I came closer, incredulous, and to my great surprise found the mummified body of a child about two years old in the basket. The corpse was completely desiccated. The mother had fed a low fire under the basket for months and months in order to smoke, dry, and preserve her child.

I wanted to have the basket removed and to buy the little hut with the set of small things adorning it. The woman protested strongly. The natives ran up from all sides, and the old chief gave me an explanation for this unexpected gathering. [28]

"If you remove the child, what will happen to his brother? Won't his breath leave him? Can he live here if his spirit is gone? No,

Fig. 18. Batitu Woman, the Special Favorite of Inunu, Young Batitu Chief.

M
[291
●301]

Mundele, no! Look, Mundele, look at this child," he said, pointing to a little boy three or four years old, "he and the other one (pointing to the mummy's basket) were born of the same mother on the same day. The life spirit was shared between the two! One of them died! The spirit remained among us in the brother and will remain here as long as the body of the

Yaelima

The native most often uses his spear for hunting big game, or he contents himself with setting traps. 224

The peoples west of the Ipanga have given up elephant hunting. During our sojourn in the region of the Bobaie, Basakata, and Balesa, the natives came to complain several times about the invasion of their manioc fields by elephants and the damage done by these inopportune visitors each time they came. They never thought of attacking the animals. To chase them away, they built fires and made an infernal din, while keeping their distance.

Fig. 44. Great Yaelima Hunter Showing his Harpoon Arrow.

[291
411
301]

In the region of the Ipanga-Batitu and among the Bokala-Yaelima, elephant hunting is rather frequent. The most daring hunters attack them with spears. This hunting is done on an individual basis. The hunter covers or smears himself with elephant dung. As he draws near, he takes a thousand precautions not to attract the attention of the animal, who is always on the alert. Once within range, he plants his spear into the under belly of the animal and gets away as fast as he can. The wounded beast

Yaelima

224 778 plant and one of the stakes. The customs and ceremonies observed before leaving for the communal hunt are identical to those we have just described.

224 As to the relations between the fetisher, the hunting fetish, and the individual hunter, we will ignore them, having been unable to obtain any information on this subject in these regions.

Throughout the region we visited, large-scale hunting is done communally. As a rule, all the men participate, including young men from the age of 15. [Ed., the text is not translated from the last paragraph, page 81, to the second paragraph, page 83.]

[83] The catch of the communal hunt is shared among all the families in the village, with the chief and the dignitaries having special rights.

224 622 Individual hunting does not entail any distribution, except when a buffalo, leopard, or elephant is involved. [293] The tail of the buffalo goes to the native chief who uses it as a fly-chaser and a badge of rank. [281] The skin of the leopard is reserved for the chief, who makes it into a skirt which he displays ostentatiously at important festivities and public dances. The trunk and tusks of the elephant go to the chief while the bristles go in [778] part to the hunters and [84] in part to the local dignitaries, who ● [301] use them to make necklaces.

Fig. 51. Y[illegible]ma Fetish, Nkisi of the Hunt.

302 532 fashioning most of the statuettes, figurines and bowls that we possess from this region, which are so remarkably decorated. Moreover, we find these same forms among the Babuba and Bashilele, up to the region of the Bankutshu of Bena Dibele-Kole. These various tribes have also reproduced in their sculpture the designs of the shaved parts of the head, which are so uniform and so characteristic. In this respect these various tribes are related, and their ethnic affinity seems very clear. Despite their present remoteness from each other and the absence of all tribal intercourse, their ethnic kinship is clearly shown in the mementos they have preserved of the ancestral culture.

[142 304]

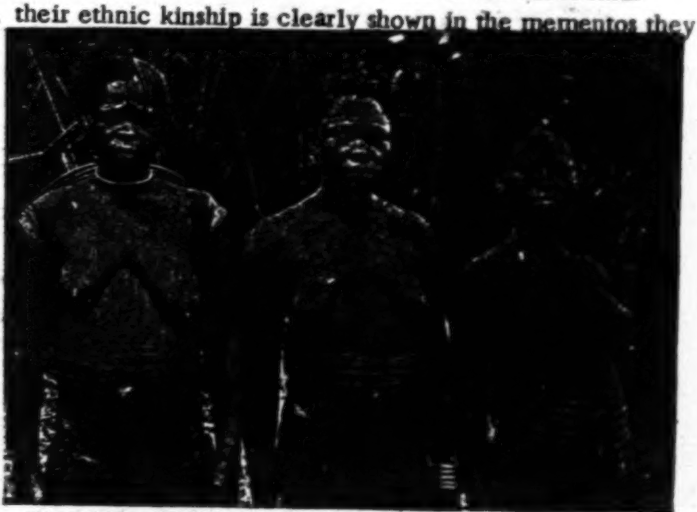


Fig. 100. Hairdos and Tattoos of Lake Leopold II.

302 161 These various observations permit us to divide the peoples into three very distinct groups.

1) The Bateke-Banfumu group, with its chignon hairdo over the nape of the neck and the rest of the head shaved or with the hair cut short.

2) The group including the Ipanga and the eastern peoples, with their hairdo of two braids passing behind the ears and under the chin and the upright roll on top of the head. [179]

3) The group including the tribes of Lake Leopold II and the lower Lukenie up to the Ipanga region, where having the hair arranged in tiny braids predominates.

•301 The love of finery is more or less developed among all the peoples of the Kasai-Lake Leopold II-Lukenie region. Ornaments

Take F133

Yaelima

M 301 ●

are worn in the hair, around the neck, on the wrists and ankles, and at the waist.

From Stanley Pool to Mushie, the women slip a crown of cowries into the hair, sometimes wear bracelets of brass or glass beads on the wrist and forearm, and hang brass necklaces or imported beads strung on fibers around the neck. Very often the necklace goes from the shoulders under the arm. Throughout this region, imported ornaments predominate. Only the chiefs have retained a few special ornaments from the old days, notably the necklace and bracelet of worked brass and the necklace adorned with the teeth of leopards or lions. These latter objects are associated with a privilege, a prerogative, a right of use.

M T 301 554

M [301 516 854]

Fig. 101. Group of Batitu Women. Hairdos and Ornaments.

They are, in a way, badges of rank. In the full regalia worn by [180] Natali, a typical native petty chief, each detail seemed to have a special meaning. He had donned his finest costume in our honor and to impress us: an old tunic from the Belgian Regiment of the Guides, and a government medal around his neck on a chain, the badge of a native chief recognized by the government. He had attached a small whistle to the same chain, along with the five or six medals for his wives' taxes. Over this chain he wore the necklace of the native chiefs, made of brass and

T 301 554 302

Take F1 33

T 301 554 302 decorated with worked designs. His black skin glistened with grease and oil. His face had a wide red line of oil and ngula powder from the tip of his nose to the top of his forehead. A large circle, white above and yellow below, was painted around his right eye. His eyelashes were very long and powdered white, while his eyebrows had been carefully plucked. His head was covered with thick hair, short and woolly. It was gathered at the back into a large chignon roll, to which was fitted a secondary coiffure in small braids, dyed with ngula and shining with grease. A long blue bead dangled below this original headdress, and a long cock feather topped off the whole thing. T [304] The temples and cheeks were marked with a set of light parallel lines, a tattoo which seems to be drawn with an iron comb and which is [181] characteristic of all the Banfumungu. T [481 283] In his left hand Natali held the big walking staff, adorned at the top with a small iron bell, and he M [301 854] carried a fly-chaser made from the tail of a buffalo under his right arm, the badge of a chief. This was Natali: a native chief whose ornaments indicated his authority, recognized by the state whose T [651] medal he possessed, a polygamist who had paid the tax on his wives as attested by the little receipt plates which hung from his neck, a sorcerer and fetisher who knew the art of making nkisi and the magic powders that striped his face.

Fig. 102. A Batitu Mother and her Children, Adorned with Cowry Beads and Brass Rings.

●301 Among the peoples of Lake Leopold II, hair ornaments are rare. Hairpins seem to be unknown; combs are made of raffia splints. A woman prefers ornaments of metal, iron, brass, or copper, while the chiefs and great dignitaries like to wear belts, necklaces, bracelets, and trimmed with cowries. The necklace of solid brass is very popular. The heavier it is, the more it is liked. We saw women wearing necklaces weighing as much as 25 pounds. These necklaces are riveted around the necks of the favorite wives of great chiefs or wealthy

[292]
[293]
[622]

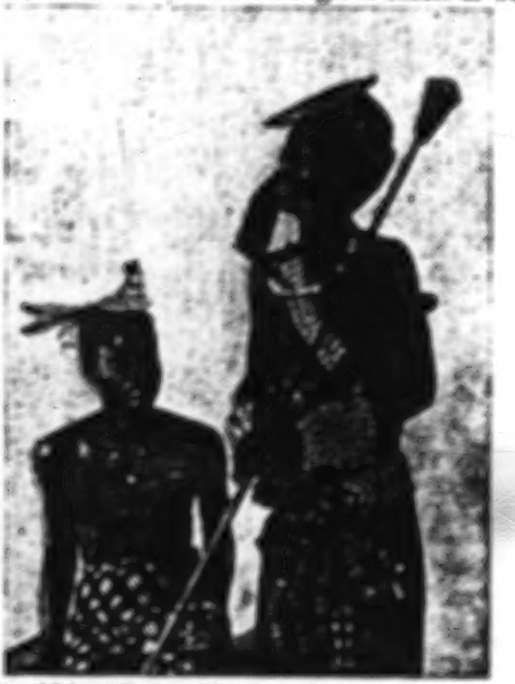


Fig. 104. Native Chief of Lake Leopold II and his Counselor, Highest Dignitary of the Tribe, both in Dress Costume.

[586] dignitaries. In case of divorce or separation, the owner of the necklaces removes them without regard for the suffering or cries of the victim. The women seem to be in no way inconvenienced by these cumbersome ornaments. On rare instances they wrap cloth around them to keep them from rubbing against the collarbone. [183]

M
301 ●

Bracelets and anklets are relatively rare as ornaments among the Mosengere and other riparian tribes of the lake. We found them from time to time among the Bobaie and Balesa.

The elegantly dressed women of the Ipanga-Batitu and Bokala wear heavy brass rings over the ankles, brass rings on the fingers and toes, and leather belts adorned with brass beads, while the necklaces of solid brass gradually disappear as one goes eastward. Among the Yaelima and Bokala they are practically nonexistent, but the men and women like bracelets of brass wire. They wear them like a sheath from the wrist to the elbow. Except for rare exceptions, these people do not wear rings around the ankles. Some dignitaries deck themselves out with imported bead necklaces. The belt decorated with brass beads is rather commonly used. In the Bena-Dibele-Kole region, ornaments of copper and brass seem to be disappearing little by little as imported beads come in. Necklaces of glass beads, incidentally have been introduced throughout the region. [184] we visited. They are particularly in vogue among the Ipanga and Batitu women. The men prefer necklaces made of hair from elephants' tails, or a simple brass ring.

Fig. 105. Two Wadia Women and a Child, Wearing Solid Brass Necklaces.

S
[301,
854]

M
[77]

Bracelets and rings of brass are worn by men from Stanley Pool to Kole. The Bokala and Yaelima dignitaries wear rings

Take F133

M 301 on all the fingers of the hand. Those who can afford it even put them on their toes. M [778] Around the neck they wear fiber necklaces, from which they hang nkisi bags and horns. These amulet necklaces are associated with a religious idea, with magic power, rather than with ornamentation.

M 301 857 Children are usually overloaded with gaudy ornaments: white feathers stuck in the hair, necklaces and belts of glass beads, and small bells attached to the belt. In our opinion, however, these objects are not primarily intended to adorn the child, but to protect it. There is no doubt that the mother sticks the feathers in her child's hair and attaches small bells to his belt in order to find him more easily if he gets lost in the fields or in the bush. As soon as the child is old enough to find his own way and return to the village alone, bells and feathers are given up permanently. [185]

T [292 301 302]

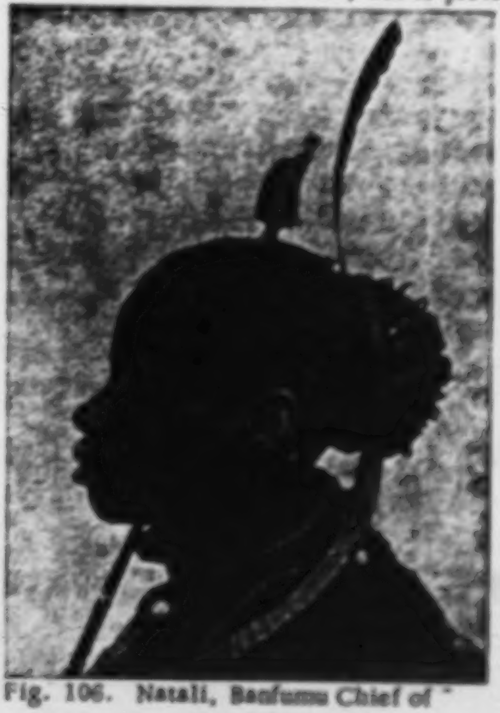


Fig. 106. Natali, Banfumu Chief of Kapanda.

M 301 171 According to their ornaments, the peoples of the Stanley Pool-Kole region are divided into five groups.

The first one includes the Bateke-Banfumu-Baboma, among whom ornaments are relatively rare for the women as well as for the men. 301 171

The second one encompasses all the peoples in the region of Lake Leopold II and the lower Lukenie and is characterized by the solid brass necklace worn by the women and the ornaments trimmed with cowries and the brass plaques worn by the dignitaries and chiefs.

The third one includes the Ipanga and the Batitu, with the belt ornamented with brass beads, rings on the fingers and toes, and solid brass rings worn above the ankles, all of which are peculiar to the women.

Fig. 107. *A Group of Batitu Children.*

142
516
155

The fourth group is characterized by the sheath of brass rings covering the arm from wrist to elbow and worn as much by the men as by the women of the Bokala-Yaelima.

The fifth group includes the Bena Dibele-Kole region, where imported ornaments have replaced the primitive ones. [186]

In addition to all these adornments used regularly in common, everyday life, the native also has ornaments reserved for show and ceremony. 301

Sakata, FO43
Yaelima

M 301 ● We have already given a description of the dress costume of Natali, chief of the Banfumu of Kapanda.

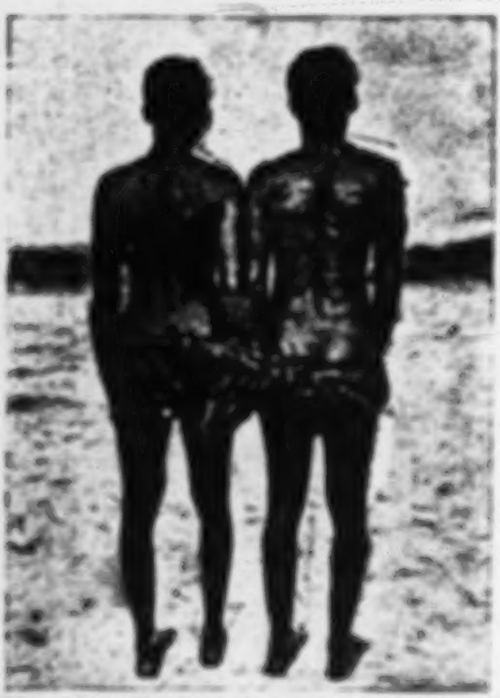
S 643 301 293 302 For important ceremonies Chief Esoti, an old and unsociable Wadia, wore a hairdo of small braids adorned with three brass disks. He also wore a necklace made of hair from an elephant's tail, from which hung a triangular apron embellished with eight brass disks, signs of his great power and of his title as the oldest and greatest Mfumu na Tse in the whole Lake Leopold II region. His face was smeared with ngula, his eyes encircled

Fig. 109. Esoti, Unsociable Old Chief of the Wadia, in Full Regalia.

with mpembe, and there was a long white line on each arm. In one hand he held the royal fly-chaser, and in the other, two chief's staffs.

M 643 293 301 Kabua, the deposed Batitu chief, at all times wore his hairdo of small braids adorned with a large brass disk. His belt was decorated with a leopard skin and two iron bells, prerogatives

reserved to the Mfumu. The large royal knife, encased in a 643
sheath, hung from a brass chain worn diagonally over the shoulder, 293
and Kakma (187) never parted with his great bow and his quiver 301
of arrows with large iron heads.



[304
301
535]

Fig. 109. Dancing Costume of the Yaelima-Bokala of the Wumbali Region. Tattooing on the Back.

During *dances and ceremonies* the women attach the most 297
unusual objects around their waists, often large bushy branches. 301
Among the Ipanga and Betira, as well as in the region of Wumbali 535
and Dekese, betrothal and wedding dances are executed in special
attire, heavily bedecked with beads and cowries.

These ornaments are not at all consistent. They vary according to taste and the whims and means of the natives, but certain parts of the dress costume worn by the betrothed couple at the dances celebrating the engagement seem to have a special meaning, to which we shall return later.

304
132
[171
291]

personal vanity, and to excite the male. At the present time only the latter reason accounts for the practice in the region where our influence has been effective. The introduction of European fabrics, the expansion of the economy and the progress of civilization have led the women to clothe themselves and to hide and screen a large part of the body from indiscreet glances. [189] The small primitive loincloth has given way to a toga of variable length, which hides from the public eye that part [Fig. 112 appears here] of the body which is covered with tattoos. In

[291
●301
304
142]

Fig. 112. Elegant Lady of the Bokala-Tselima Region. Tattoos, Bracelets, and Necklaces.

304
133

such cases, the woman can no longer display her tattoos for the sake of vanity. [Figs. 113 and 114 appear here] If, despite this, some of them continue to have themselves tattooed just like the old matrons, it is because they hope to attract a man, to please him, and to be able to participate sooner in the pleasures of intimate life. When questioned on this subject, the natives are very definite. The men maintain that the raised tattoos [190] on

1. Clothing. Nudity.

291
855 Until he has reached the age of discretion and even a little later, the Nkundó child wears nothing more around his loins than a belt of beads or a plain string usually adorned with some amulet. Nobody is shocked by this rudimentary attire. Parents take great interest in the adornment of their children; from a very early age [301] they are seen wearing belts of trading beads, bracelets, rings around the ankles made of iron, copper, or brass, and in addition, at the present time, glass beads above the knees.

291 As the child grows older the clothing increases. From the outset there are differences on the basis of sex.

The boy acquires a thin strip of cloth which is attached to his string or belt simply by folding back the two ends. The cloth falls between his legs without being tight, allowing for great freedom of movement and the circulation of air; this is an excellent precaution against perspiration due to extreme heat, but it is not very effective protection against indiscreet looks, at least in certain positions. The fabric made of raffia may be decorated to a greater or a lesser extent. In former times there existed different kinds, which we need not describe here. The length of the hanging borders is dictated by vanity. The string was often replaced by a raffia belt or -- among prominent men -- by a leather thong.

The woman's garment consists of a broad raffia belt whose two ends are gradually narrowed, ending in cords which are tied on the [53] stomach. In the center of this belt (nkɔ́sɛ (1) a ball of raffia fibers is attached (bonkoko). A piece of cloth (efufa or lofufa) whose width may vary from 3 centimeters to 20 centimeters or more, depending on the age and the wearer's intensity of the feeling of modesty, is attached to the cords and falls more or less low on the body. For a [292] feast or display the efufa is replaced with a more valuable and longer [illegible] piece of cloth (imɔ́ɔ̂ or, among the Elɔ́ngɛ of Losanganya, ifika).

---

1. Or bokangɛ, bokangɛ wǎ nkɔ́sɛ. Among the Bombwanja it is called likɔ́ngɛ̂.

304/ and "modern" fashions, as well as some ancient ones, take this into
832 account. In the next paragraph, moreover, we will note ananalogous phenomenon.

Both of the explanations given can be defended, since each has its value. But it seems to me preferable not to oppose them but rather to bring them together, as they probably are in the thinking of the native.

It should also be noted that a man never performs the operation of making a sexual tattoo on a woman, although a woman may indeed operate on a man. And finally it should be mentioned that the
[831] specific terms designating these tattoos are considered as obscenities.

The practice of tattooing is decreasing at the present time.
[178] Many boys are already without tattoos. But very few girls lack them; among them the fad has not disappeared. Some even have themselves tattooed without the knowledge of their parents and in spite of their opposition. Among the Blacks, as everywhere in the world, fashion is deeply rooted because it is natural. But the designs of the tattoos are now becoming smaller. It seems to me that this change is due, not to a reaction against tattooing as such, but rather to a modification of the style. For tattooing is a real fashion, and like all fashions it is subject to change and development. Nowadays there is a tendency to imitate the designs of other peoples of the Congo. Elsewhere, as among the Injóló, for example, an internal evolution may be observed, although it is occurring under foreign influence. The evolution is taking place chiefly in the face motifs, while those of the body are beginning to be omitted. But the sexual tattoos do not seem to be disappearing. [69]

4. Bead Belts

291/ From an early age the Nkundó child is adorned with a belt of
301/ trading beads. Before the coming of the Europeans this decoration
832 made its appearance only towards puberty and was restricted to girls. Nowadays, many men also adorn themselves in this manner. And since it is now easier to obtain the beads, women are no longer with a single string but wear several in assorted colors. They add smaller ones below the knee.

291/ ● 301/ 892 According to what I have been told, this type of ornament may also have a sexual significance. Normally -- and this statement is applicable only to the present time -- the beads are entirely covered by clothing and are visible only on a few occasions. If a large number of strings (as many as six, eight, or ten) or very many beads are worn, attention may be attracted to them because there will be a bulge in the clothing worn over them. Their sound will reveal their presence during a race or a dance. And according to my informants, that is enough to awaken passion. Making an allusion to the beads and especially touching them deliberately is considered as an invitation. For her part, a woman sometimes rubs them together in her fingers so that they will make their characteristic noise and thus attract a man's attention and arouse his interest.

The preceding does not mean that simply the wearing of the beads is necessarily intended for a bad purpose. Not only must such an intention be excluded in the case of serious persons, especially if they are elderly and content themselves with wearing a single string, seldom a second one to support the first. But there is also the possibility [152] that a young Black beauty may adorn herself with ten or more strands out of sheer vanity, so that the whole world may see that she has so many. [70]

Furthermore, it has been shown that attention to appearance is not necessarily directed to another person. Though that may be generally true, many people like to dress for the pleasure of being well dressed, and girls who never dream of an adventure may still enjoy wearing pretty undergarments. This desire for adornment for its own sake can, no doubt, explain the belts, as well as other embellishments on more than one Nkundó woman.

We should add that those who adhere to the theory that the tattoos have an immediate sexual influence could apply such a theory here as well.

302 831

8. Depilation

All Nkundó of both sexes practice depilation of the genital organs and even the armpits. The natives believe that the hair growing

2. The nature of walo valuables

583 [101] [526] [535] The walo primarily consists of copper and brass rings. Wrought metal objects (bifeko), such as spears, knives, or axes are also added. Nowadays a part may be made up of simple brass or iron (steel) bars. Goats may be given in addition; a she-goat is worth 5 to 6 rings (nowadays 10), and a he-goat, 3 to 4 bakonga (nowadays 6 to 7). One or more elɔ́njɛ bells are greatly prized as gifts.

583 435 Payment in iron or copper chains (bengɛ́-tyola), in various kinds of bead necklaces, and in leopard's teeth has almost entirely disappeared. Formerly, certain kinds of beads had great value; the big, round bluish-white ones (lonyɔ́ngo, pl. nnyɔ́ngo) were worth 1 bonga each, the big, oblong blackish ones, cylindrical or rectangular in shape, 2 to 3 centimeters in diameter and 5 to 10 centimeters long (called nkɔ́ngɛ) were worth one slave or, nowadays, 20 to 25 bakonga each.

583 Copper (konga) and brass (bɔ́ngo) are the most important of all. Thus paying the bride price is often referred to as ɛ́ɔga la bɔ́ngo la konga.

[178] The statement by R.P. Kaptein (in Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, pp. 452-543) that original valuables were the bonkata, the bingetele, and the mitako is based on an error. [132] The first two types of valuables, also called bendɔ́ngo by some tribes, were used exclusively by the Ntɔ́mbɛ of Lake Tumba and the adjacent Ekonda (Bosange, Bolɔ́ngɔ, Lonyanyanga, etc.). The mitako, known in Lonkundo as ngele, [436] singular longele, are not native; this monetary unit was introduced by the Independent State.

[177] The practice of making the payment at least partially in money or in objects of European origin (such as fabrics, blankets, sewing machines, trunks, household utensils, etc.) is gradually being introduced. Before the crisis it was already very popular among "white people."

3. The source of the valuables

A young man obtains the valuables for the bride price in various ways. The most usual way and the one which also conforms best to the Nkundɔ's familial and social regulations is the use of valuables

583* 587 If the woman has not yet publicly given her consent because -- as may happen in the case of remarriage after a divorce -- ikulɛ, ndanga, and walo are all being paid at the same time, she now performs that ceremony. We need not describe it again; it is performed as indicated in Article III, 2. But in this instance the woman hands her father one or two rings, or a ring and a knife.

583* 585 Subsequently, the ndonga conveys the valuables to the woman's parents. He asks the husband: yɛlɛ bafimba bá walo, "bring the walo valuables." The latter replies: "Here they are; hand them over to my father-in-law." The witness takes a few rings and places them in front of the latter, or rather he touches them and makes a gesture of pushing them toward the woman's parents, and they pull them toward themselves.

As soon as the walo is paid, the bomgɛlia becomes wali or "wife." As has already been said, this word has no connection with walo, or with the root bal, "to marry"; etymologically it is related to analogous terms denoting "wife" and "woman" in other Bantu languages.

Article V. Valuables for the Mother

583* 431 Directly after he has conveyed the walo valuables to the woman's father, the ndonga asks the husband to pay the valuables for her mother; yɛlɛ ntaa la nkando [143] yă nyang'ɛy'ɔ̌na, "bring the goat and the nkando for the child's mother." The following gifts are given:

1) At least one nanny goat and sometimes two or more according to the situation; never a billy-goat.

[90] 2) Two nkando, which are copper spirals worn on the legs. Formerly, two more for the arms were also required, and old women are still sometimes seen wearing them, but they have become much rarer than the spirals worn on the legs. Instead of nkando, the Elinga, the Wăngata, the Bokala, and the Ionda use the term mongɛ. (1)

1. In Lokonda the term is ojakɛ.

583* 432 [301] 3) In the past the mother was also entitled to a bongembwɛ or bongombwɛ (depending on the dialect) (2) a heavy copper necklace.

2. The Lolonda term is lonkaɛ.

It was worth 5 bakonga. Nowadays this type of adornment has disappeared almost entirely. It is no longer demanded, for the mother prefers more interesting objects (see the following article).

Furthermore, at the present time substitutions for the goat and the nkando are being asked for in the form of shoes, suits, fabrics, etc.

The mother justifies her demands by recalling the suffering she has endured in bringing her daughter into the world and bringing her up. The valuables she receives belong exclusively to her and her family; they never pass into her husband's clan. She wears the nkando herself, or, if she already has some, she gives them to her sister or her brother, who may have need of them for his wife's bride price. The goats she similarly keeps or gives to her family, depending on her own preference. Upon her death these valuables are inherited by her relatives, never by her husband or even her own children.

Obviously, the mother's clan has exclusive rights over this payment.

[586] (582) The situation does not change if the mother divorces the girl's father and is married to another man. The "mother's" valuables [144] will belong to her. Even if the separation occurs before her daughter's marriage, she retains her rights to nyang'ɛy'ɔ̌na.

If she dies before her daughter's marriage, the valuables to which she would have been entitled are given to the representative of her clan (her father, brother, sister, uncle, etc.)

[586] In case of divorce the husband must be reimbursed for these valuables as for all the rest; but the restitution must be made by the mother's clan, who has received them.

If the husband does not have the valuables for the mother on hand, he gives her a pledge for the payment (wǒho; verb, ɛkya), consisting of one or two knives or bakonga. He could never settle

595 554 On the day set aside for establishing the position of the boldmbd, there is a great feast. All the clans and neighboring villages that have been invited gather at the home of the polygamist in question. He presents the woman to them and addresses the gathering: "Here is the woman whom I want to make my boldmbd, as I have already announced to you. Today I am making public the decision I already made a long time ago. Be it known to all that no man may touch her, or he will be severely punished." Then two women (in rare instances, two men) hold the woman, and the husband unfastens her belt and rips off all her clothing. Then the assistants tie a rope or a belt of mpangá (striped antelope) skin around her, and to it they attach various furs. From that day [292] until her death she may no longer wear the clothing (bitóo) of other women; she must always [350] be dressed in furs. Hence her name, bolímbó wa bikótó, "bolímbó with furs." Then her husband gives her pots of palm oil with which she will have to cover herself. Two men approach her; they are chosen among the handsomest in the village (1) (married or single) and are

[609] 1. They are then (sic) relatives of the husband. Nkundó law dictates that no stranger shall perform a function of the slightest importance -- not even that of silencing a gathering. According to their saying, bofaya áfótélé lokfanga, "a stranger does not cut up a guinea hen."

● [301] richly adorned with furs, belts of mpangá, beads, raffia fabrics with jagged edges, copper rings on their ankles, etc. Stepping in rhythm, they lead her to the house intended for her which is [351] [324] surrounded by a fence of bofeko posts (Ricinodendron africanum) held together with palms. This hut with its fence is called ileke.

There the bolímbó will reside for months and years (up to three or more, they say). She is secluded there, so to speak, [579] and may not go out. If she needs to go to the banana groves for her personal needs, she covers and surrounds herself with a mat so that no one will see her.

845 parents to the dance, they must go. When the mother passes a [178] crossroads or the dwelling place of a spirit or an *efeno* (a place where the Nkundó gather for magical practices, oracles, etc.), she also sings and dances in honor of the spirit, so that he will favor her 845 children. Various songs are popular, such as: *Elím'é'Ǎmbá* 533 *tongólela yelí yeye*, "Spirit of Ǎmbá, do not weep; (1) *Bokétu la Mbóy'é'Ambá tofúkáké tonyongáké, toléké bilingoi yelí yeye*, "Ǎmbá's Bokétu and Mbóyó, do not bruise yourself, do not stir, do not eat *bilingoi* mushrooms"; *Bokétu 'a Mbóyó njóátela ngóy' emengo yelí yeye*, "Bokétu and Mbóyó, I surround my mother with abundance"; *Bokétu'a Mbóyó lá'okono lá'okendo yelí yeye*, "I shall fall ill, and yet I will walk (be well)"; *Bokétu'a Mbóyó, lióta bokekesano yelí yeye*, "difficult childbirth," etc.

845 262 Foods forbidden to twins are the mushrooms called *bilingoi* (or *bilingondo* or *bankǎnkíndá*), the *mpambí* antelope, and the *ǒlí* yam, which is also forbidden to parents whose child is not yet weaned. (2)

845 464 When traveling, the parents of twins gird themselves with the creeping plant called *boyayenga*, or wear it like a strap over the shoulder The mother also attaches a bell to it. Their hair is often [301] adorned with two feathers from the tail of a gray parrot (*nkoso*) and two feathers from a white hen. [504]

845 576 The greeting to parents of twins and their reply must always be double: *w'ǒnɛ́ w'ǒnɛ́*, the reply *em'ǒnɛ́ em'ǒnɛ́*; *oǒyá, oǒyá*, the reply *bóka bóka*. Note that the last greeting is not replied to differently

---

1. *Tongólela* is an archaic form still in use among the Ekonda, etc

2. This prohibition extends to all food cooked in pots in which such forbidden foods have been prepared. The extension is characteristic of all alimentary prohibitions.

326 The objects of iron made by the Mongo smith are as follows.

411 Bibui: all that is of iron

1. Likula: arrow.
2. Bosuki: arrow for hunting pigs; also used to cut copal and spear fish.
3. Bongelo: lance.
4. Ifombolo: lance.
5. Mpokwankoi: lance.
6. Liswa: axe.

Jokula: knives

326
412 1. Mombi; 2. Boli; 3. Bolengwa; 4. Lingonda; 5. Limenga;
6. Likodzi; 7. Efamba; 8. Momba; 9. More little knives;
10. Lizangi.

Basongo: needles

1. Ingwala.
2. Lokili: tattooing needle. [413]
3. Jyolo: small needle to get flea beetles out of the feet.
4. Efoli: small pin.

Ngonga: bells

326
534
● 301
[789]

1. Ngonga ea tosisi: bells worn on the hips by women and children so that as they walk the ringing will keep away the evil spirits.
2. Bongonga: a bell attached to the point of a war-lance which makes it like the head of a walking-stick but upside down.
3. Lingwete: little round bell worn on the wrist by men.
4. Elondza ea itumba: the war-bell. An oblong pipe [97] in the form of a long cup attached to a stick. It is struck with a piece of soft wood, and the sound travels surprisingly far.

These bells are all made of wrought iron.

326 The native smith works not only with iron but also with copper which he melts down in the same manner from copper sticks (longele: mitako) and old, worn copper rings.

[439 435] The copper sticks, that nowadays sell at 30 for a franc, come from Europe; copper ore is unknown here.

The copper objects made by the smith are as follows.

326 301 Bakonga: all that is of copper

1. Bongombwa: necklace, often weighing ten kilograms or more; value, 1,000 mitako.
2. Lokolo: leg ring, weighing four to six kilograms and more; value, 200 to 500 mitako.
3. Bolongu: arm ring, not heavy.
4. Ingwete: arm ring, not heavy.
5. Bongenza: leg ring that rattles when the wearer walks.
6. Bosankere: leg ring.
7. Limpala: great leg rings in spiral form, twisted out of thick copper wire, which cover the whole of the lower leg. They [435] bear much resemblance to the springs in a mattress. Among the Negroes these have a value of 500 mitako.
8. Bompulenge: resembling a small limpala, these were formerly worn on the arms by old people, but they are now out of fashion and no longer made.

326 554 In the whole district there is only one smith, a certain Elumbu in the village Lilangi (Basankusu), who knows how to make copper bells. This Black is a celebrity to every Mongo Negro.

According to the Negroes, there is a smith, a certain Bokedzu from the vicinity of the Ikelemba River, who knew how to put a new rifle together from the parts of old broken ones and did so successfully. According to the Negroes, the government agent, however, took the rifle away from him, but in my opinion, and in that of others, this black [577] rifle manufacturer belongs in the realm of fable, the more so as a Negro is not at all afraid of a lie.

436 1. Benkata: this was thin iron or copper wire rolled into small rings; the thickness of the wire was about 3 millimeters; the length, 20 to 25 centimeters.

2. Bingetele: iron or copper bars about 8 millimeters thick and 15 centimeters long; these are still in use in Bikoro.

436 ●301 3. Bekata: copper wire; thickness about 7 or 8 millimeters, and 1 meter or 1.50 meters long; spiral shaped; the women wore these rolled around their legs as copper leggings.

[543] 4. Bakonga: copper rings which served as arm bands and foot bands and also as collars. The size differed for small or large persons; the weight is from one half kilo to 5 kilos.

436 5. Mitako: copper wire about 4 millimeters thick and 25 centimeters long, usually bent like a hairpin. The mitako served as a uniform currency, from which the other values and prices were reckoned, like the franc with us. The value of the mitako was formerly reckoned at five centimes.

583 435 Formerly the bride price, which was paid for a wife in almost all of Equatorial Africa, was from 5 to 20 bakonga. (The value of the bakonga differed greatly according to the weight. The average value, however, is estimated at 2.50 francs.) This payment was further supplemented with slaves or wives. This manner of payment and the bride price still exist in the districts where the natives have not yet, or practically not, come in contact with Europeans. Also, [567] it was sometimes paid with only slaves or women. The price for one female slave, was relatively much less than for another woman.

178 583 Through the occupation of the Congo by Europeans, the family life of the natives has necessarily undergone great changes, and their customs and habits as well.

In the first place the natives have found themselves deprived of their wives by the sentinels of the Independent Congo State. [661] These black sentinels, appointed in the villages by the State to supervise the reaping of caoutchouc, assumed an unlimited power. They took as many wives of the natives as they chose and did not pay for a single one.

Next many black soldiers, servant boys, and workmen of the Europeans also took wives everywhere in the beginning, without bothering about the native customs, that is, without paying for those wives; and this often happened under the protective power of their Whites.

356 walls are lined with mats, and the crude bed is raised off the
ground to avoid unpleasant and unhealthy contact with the ground.
A mat is spread over the native's bed, [165] and the pillow which
is customarily used permits him to lie in a restful position.

515 The natives take a bath almost every day. They usually
go to the river during the hottest hours of the day, but sometimes
they do so early in the morning or in the evening. The child
participates in this from an early age. Aside from these regular
baths, the native often washes his whole body with warm water.
●[302] He then smears himself with a light film of palm oil to ensure
the suppleness of the skin and to protect it from the sun's rays.

264 Before and after each meal the native makes a point of
515 washing out his mouth. After the meal he brushes his teeth with
a small brush made of rattan or soft wood, the fibers acting as
bristles.

Fig. 91. A Scene from Native Life among the Riparian People of the Lower Lukenie.

262 Meals are prepared with a genuine concern for cleanliness.
264 All the food is washed, cleaned, and boiled before being eaten.
Kitchen utensils are cleaned and carefully put away. Despite
the primitive conditions for preparing manioc flour, the product
is as pure as if it had been prepared by an improved method

252 with modern machinery. Not content with the state of the
264 utensils in which she serves the meals, the woman is careful to line them at mealtime with fresh and very clean leaves.

515 The natives keep the nails of their hands and feet cut short.

The care of the feet is explained as a hygienic measure and by the necessity of taking precautions to avoid the vermin which like to get into these places (ticks). The care of the hands can be explained only by the concern for cleanliness shown in native eating habits.

Imported soap is not yet commonly used, although we found it in a number of native huts.

388 Many native women know how to make soap. The process is very simple. Dried banana skins, trunks of papaw trees, bark, the fruits of various vegetables, and waste from palm nuts are gathered together and burned. The ashes are carefully collected and mixed with some water for boiling them. At the first ebullition, the woman removes the ashes and impurities that [166] *rise* to the surface. Boiling is then continued until the evaporation is almost complete. When only a thick and sirupy grayish-black deposit is left, the woman takes it off the fire, washes it, and kneads it in cold water until it takes on a clearer color. She then adds palm oil, mixes it in with great care, and puts the lot back on the fire. The paste is stirred all through the boiling, which is continued until the woman obtains a mixture whose consistency *is slightly firmer than that of our soft soaps.* [Ed., a passage is omitted from mid-page 166 to mid-page 167.]

Native soap is used only in the care of the body.

[302 [167] The native does not merely smear his body with palm
303 oil. The men and especially the women often powder themselves with takula dust. The women prepare a cosmetic with this and love to cover their whole body with it in a spirit of coquetry. This practice is so widespread among the peoples of Lake Leopold II that the manufacture of ngula has become a veritable local industry in certain areas. This is especially true of the Mosengere. In a village near the Bongo post, we counted 35 installations for making ngula powder. The simplest set of materials includes two blocks of takula or redwood, a small receptacle containing water, a handful of sand, and a small hand or painting brush. One of the

Dengese FO16

M 303 465 sides of this square and held in place by a binding of twisted
raffia fibers. The sides are then plaited by the simplest method,
that is, with the horizontal band weaving in and out of the verti-
cal thongs. As all of these molds always have approximately the
same height and diameter, the *ngula* cones are both similar in
M 303 [438] shape and quite constant in weight. The natives use them a great
deal as trade goods. In some regions the *ngula* cone has become
a veritable currency, with a standard value from one tribe to
another. [170] A market is organized regularly when steamers
M [437] call at Mushie, and there the people of the interior exchange the
products of their industries for the imported objects brought by the
Blacks who work for the Whites. *Ngula* cones are among the prin-
cipal items of trade and bring a very high price. In the Oshwe
region, the old chief Kua Kua was a great *ngula* trader. He
came by regularly with four or five of his wives, bringing various
products from the region between the Kasai and the Lukenie to
exchange for the *ngula* made in the Lokoro region.

D 303 Throughout the central Congo regions, the *ngula* used for
trade has the shape of an elongated truncated cone. Among the
Basongo-Meno and farther east, on the other hand, *ngula* most
often is shaped in a ball. The native of these regions often uses
it to decorate his pottery and wooden objecrs and to dye the
fibers of cloth used for decoration. He keeps it in cosmetic boxes
carved from *tukula* wood and usually decorated with very artistic
designs. He also uses it to color his hair. [Ed., a passage from
the middle of page 170 to the last paragraph, page 171, is
omitted.]

● M 302 781 [171] Aside from *ngula*, the native sometimes smears his
body with a type of white clay quite frequently found in the river
beds. [172] The native calls it *mpembe*. Its use is far from
being as widespread as that of *ngula*, and we believe that the
native associates it with magic power rather than ornamentation.
Mpembe is used chiefly by the peoples of the Congo-Kasai, Lake
Leopold II, and Lukenie regions, up to the region of the Batira.

M [765] We never saw a native smear his whole body with it. The
few women in mourning that we saw were covered with a grayish-
yellow mud and not with *mpembe*. We believe, moreover, that
the use of *mpembe* is reserved to the chief, his wives, and perhaps

Take F133

M 302 789 dignitaries and their families, but it was impossible for us to prove the accuracy of our hypothesis. When questioned about this, the natives always confined themselves to uncertain and evasive replies. The native chief rarely appears at a large gathering without having his face and sometimes his arms and chest covered with lines drawn with mpembe. At all official receptions, the chief, a few dignitaries, and sometimes some of the chiefs' wives had a more or less symmetrical rectangle drawn with mpembe around the eyes.

M 304 302 We observed the following artificial deformations in the course of our journey:

1) depilation;
2) filing of the teeth;
3) tattooing by incision;
4) circumcision.

M 302 Depilation is practiced by all the peoples of the regions visited. The native plucks out every last hair on his body. Where the hair cannot be plucked, it is shaved with great care. For the parts of the body that are hard to reach, men and women help one another. Eyebrows and eyelashes are both plucked, while beards and mustaches, on the other hand, are cared for with great pride. It is very unusual to see a full beard. We ran across only one such case. The happy possessor of this beautiful [173] beard was as proud of it as he could be, and Natali, chief of the Basfumu of Kwamouth, was heartbroken to have only a few hairs on his chin while one of his dignitaries was endowed with such a fine beard.

T 302 Among the Bateke-Basfumu peoples, up to the Ipanga, the natives frequently shave the base of their scalp all around the head. Their headdress looks like a very symmetrical calotte.

M 302 Among the Yaelima we encountered men whose heads were completely shaved except for one strip just above the nape of the neck. A similar custom must have prevailed among the Bateke and Basfumu, but the unshaved part was broader.

Among the Yaelima and up to the region of the Bankutshu north of Bena Dibele, the natives shave their hair in such a way

M 302 as to broaden the forehead. The brow is sharply delineated at right angles and framed by two corners projecting over the temples.

M 302 537 Let us note that the custom of shaving part of the scalp is hardly a general one. The types of headdress we have just described are seen regularly, but by no means are worn by all the natives. It even seemed to us that they tend to be the prerogative of the chiefs, dignitaries, and their families, but we dare not assert that they constitute a right, a strict prerogative. [174]

S [302 301 142]

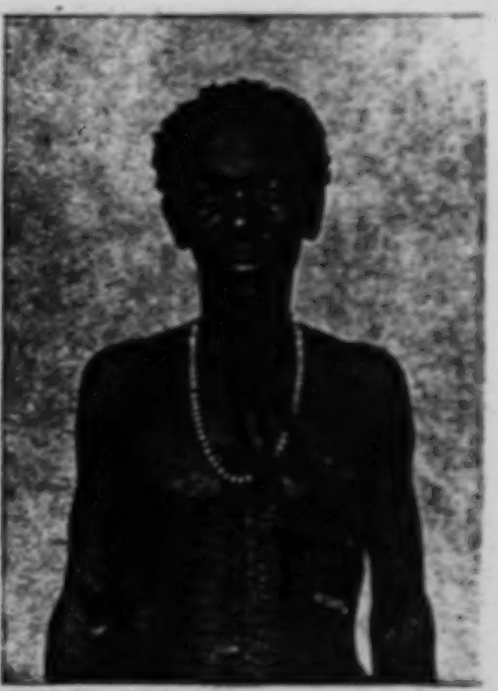


Fig. 93. Batete Type with Long Beard, Plucked Eyelashes and Eyebrows.

M S T 304 The Bateke and Banfumu file the middle upper incisors in the shape of an isosceles triangle, break them, or pull them out. We observed this custom among some of the Baboma. The majority of the Baboma, however, have their teeth filed to a point, a custom that prevails up to the Bokala region and along the north bank of the Kasai up to 23° longitude east of Greenwich. "Basongo-Meno" seems to mean "people with filed teeth" and may have M 304

304 been the name used by the southern peoples to designate their neighbors to the north whose real name they did not know. The custom of deforming the teeth tends to disappear rapidly. The younger generation already refuses to submit to it, and we often heard the natives with filed teeth referred to as basengi, that is, "savages." The deformation of the teeth is accomplished with a [329] small iron chisel and a wooden mallet. The village blacksmith does this for a small fee. The teeth are broken with short, sharp blows while the patient is seated with his head against the knees of the blacksmith, who stands behind the patient. The operation is very painful and takes several sittings. The last ones are for the filing, which is done with a small native file.

• 302 The native takes special pains with his hairdo, which sometimes is a true little marvel, the fruit of long and patient work.

Both men and women attach great importance to this. They strive [175] to surpass themselves and to achieve the most coquettish coiffure possible. Since every native is a born hair stylist and they aid each other with complete unselfishness, the hairdo not only varies from one tribe to another, but the most disparate types are found within the same tribe, according to our observation.

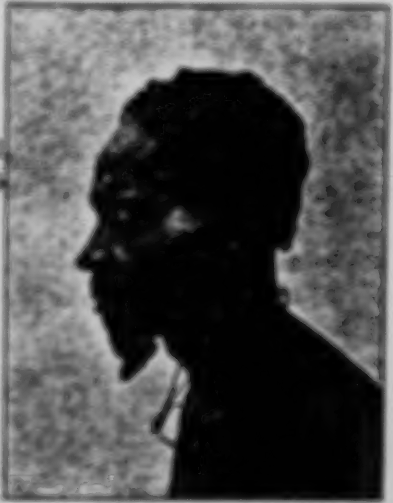


Fig. 94. A Balesa with a Small Goatee and with Eyelashes and Eyebrows Carefully Plucked.

A very popular method is to smear the hair with a rather thick paste of palm oil and ngula and then to separate the locks and roll them up so that they form small, very irregular balls. To enhance this hairdo, the native does not hesitate to insert peanuts into the hair, first smearing them carefully with ngula paste in order to conceal the deception.

Take F133

Ntomba

M 302

A very common hairdo around Lake Leopold II and in the region of the lower Lukenie consists of a multitude of small, perfect braids covering the whole head, falling over the forehead, the ears, and the nape of the neck. These braids are sometimes arranged in star-shaped formations originating at the top of the head or sometimes in crossed strips; sometimes they are partially parallel and then branch away at the sides, and sometimes they are placed in concentric circles or spirals. The more civilized element tends [170] to adopt a hairdo resembling a cock's comb, single, double, or triple.

Fig. 95. Deformation of the Teeth, Lake Leopold II.

Fig. 96. Deformation of the Teeth and Headdress among the Batele.

T [304 302]

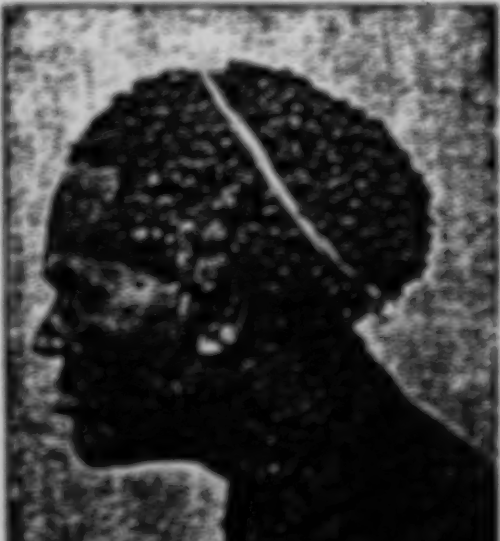
Among the Mosengere and Bolia, we greatly admired a hairdo arranged in an adjustable aureole. A narrow strip of hair was finely plaited all around the head. The braids were mounted on very thin raffia splints in a circular arrangement. The native could raise or lower this hairdo at will, so that he sometimes seemed to wear a very smooth calotte and at other times a fanned-out crown. This hairdo was highly prized by the Mosengere. Among the Tumba and Wadia, having the hair in an arrangement of conical bags was fashionable for the men. Basfumo women, on the occasion of great celebrations, selected a hairdo in the

Take F133
Tetela F047

M
●302 shape of a big, raised, circular roll held up by a band of plaited fibers and decorated with one or two rows of cowry shells.

None of these types of native headdress, however, seemed to be a stable characteristic. We found them all more or less regularly in the various regions, without being able to characterize them as distinctly local products.

Tk
344
358
757 Some less widespread forms, on the other hand, do have a strong ethnic character. Such is the case for the chignon hairdo



Tt
[302]

Fig. 97. Bankutu Chief's Coiffure Enhanced with Ngula. The eyelashes and eyebrows are carefully plucked.

which prolongs the heads of the Bakela-Bankutu. This coiffure, together [177] with the general appearance of the head -- with its plucked eyebrows and eyelashes, the skull covered for the most part with little tufts of wooly hair, beard, mustache, and tattooing made with a comb on the temples and cheeks -- is indeed the typical and characteristic form, representing the artistic ideal of

Take F133

T
382
859
761

of the Basake-Basafumu. All the natives would like to adopt it, but only the great chiefs and dignitaries may thus glorify themselves. It is this model that the Basake-Basafumu use to fashion the figurines which are often called fetishes, but which are really nkisi, protectors of the children. The form of these nkisi is the same for adults or for children, for the poor or for the wealthy. This form is found throughout the region, from Stanley Pool to the Kwango, and belongs specifically to the Basake-Basafumu peoples, whose ethnic unity it demonstrates anew.

M
382
832

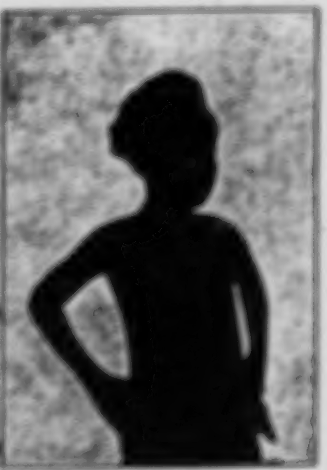


Fig. 96. Mosongwo with his Hair in an Adjustable Aureole.

A no less characteristic coiffure is that worn by the dignitaries of the Ipanga-Tsolima region. The hair is parted in the middle, with the part running from the forehead to the nape of the neck, and the hair is gathered into one braid on each side. The braids originate just over the ears and then pass behind them to meet under the chin, where they are sometimes knotted. The hair at the top of the head used to be plaited in an upright roll over a small circumference. Only the favorite wife of the young Batitu chief still wore this ancestral coiffure when we passed through the region. This hairdo seems to have been very widespread in the region of the Tsolima and perhaps [178] much farther east. It corresponded to the local ethnic type which the sculptors followed in

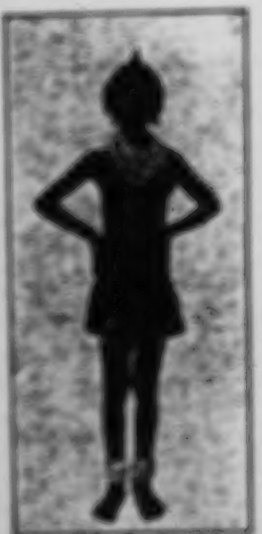


Fig. 95. Batitu Woman, Favorite Wife of Chief Iname.

302. fashioning most of the statuettes, figurines and bowls that we
43. possess from this region, which are so remarkably decorated. Moreover, we find these same forms among the Bakuba and Bashilele, up to the region of the Bankutshu of Bena Dibele-Kole. These various tribes have also reproduced in their sculpture the designs of the shaved parts of the head, which are so uniform and so characteristic. In this respect these various tribes are related, and their ethnic affinity seems very clear. Despite their present remoteness from each other and the absence of all tribal intercourse, their ethnic kinship is clearly shown in the mementos they have preserved of the ancestral culture.

[162 30]

Fig. 180. Hairdos and Tattoos of Lake Leopold II.

382 These various observations permit us to divide the peoples
[6] into three very distinct groups.

1) The Bateke-Banfunu group, with its chignon hairdo over the nape of the neck and the rest of the head shaved or with the hair cut short.

2) The group including the Ipanga and the eastern peoples, with their hairdo of two braids passing behind the ears and under the chin and the upright roll on top of the head. [178]

3) The group including the tribes of Lake Leopold II and the lower Lukenie up to the Ipanga region, where having the hair arranged in tiny braids predominates.

The love of finery is more or less developed among all the
30| peoples of the Kasai-Lake Leopold II-Lukenie region. Ornaments

Sakata FO43

M 302 554

No less interesting is the full ceremonial regalia of the chiefs of the Lake Leopold II tribes. This varies according to the importance of the chief, but it always includes a number of cowries and one or several brass disks attached to the hairdo and the loincloth. The right to wear disks in the hairdo dates from olden times and is reserved to the chiefs and great dignitaries by ancestral custom.

The practice is found all along the Lukenie. From Lake Leopold II to Dekese, these disks have the same shape and ornamental designs. Their manufacture is reserved to the important blacksmiths upon authorization by the local Mfumu na Tse of the region. [102]

S [291 352 534]

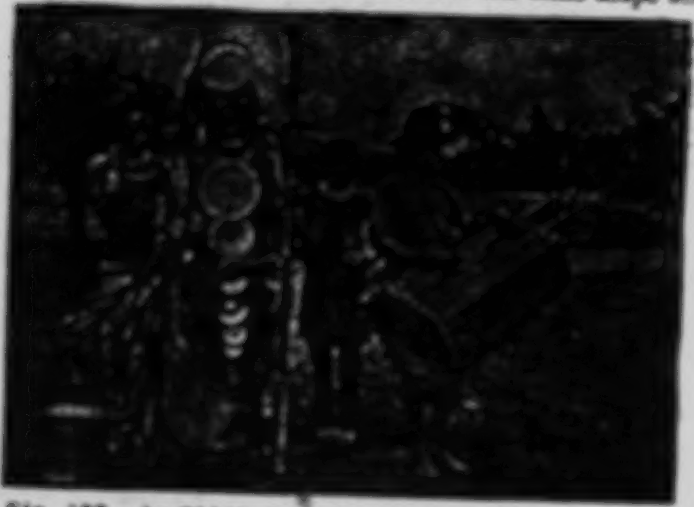


Fig. 102. An Old Native Chief of Lake Leopold II Adorned with his Insignia and Accompanied by his Two Favorite Wives and his Lokombe Player.

M [526]

Leopard skins, iron or brass bells hung from the waist, and the right to wear certain knives of a special shape at the waist are also prerogatives of the chiefs and dignitaries throughout the Lake Leopold II and Lukenie region.

We are thus confronted with various manifestations in the material life which are so many indications of the common origin or kinship of these different tribes.

Yaelima

304
171
we made of the many figures we saw in this region showed us that the variations are so numerous, so diverse, and so closely intertwined that it is totally impossible to use this as a basis for determining ethnic sectors with clearly-defined characteristics.

304
171
833
Finally, if we consider only those tattoo figures to which

302
142

Fig. 124. Yaelima Headdress and Tattooing. Typical Longomo or Dignitary.

we attributed, if not a familial origin, at least a familial nature [200] (incitement to sexual relations), we see that throughout the region this type of tattoo is peculiar to women.

From Leopoldville to the confines of Bacitu territory and even among some Bokala women, this tattoo consists (where it still exists) of a number of small, aligned dots, just like the ornamental tattoos.

Among the Ipanga-Bacitu, these figures sometimes embellish the arms and part of the back, while among the other tribes they are less elaborate.

304
771
833 In the region of the Yaelima, Dengese, and some of the Bokala, this tattoo consists of a series of broken, concentric lines with the pubic region as the main center.

We do not know if this tattoo is also worn by the Bosongo-Mena and Bankutshu women, but this seems probable to us. We can, however, assert that among those peoples this tattoo does not extend to the upper thighs, except for one or two lines of small incised dots running parallel to the fold of the groin.

[142]
[302]

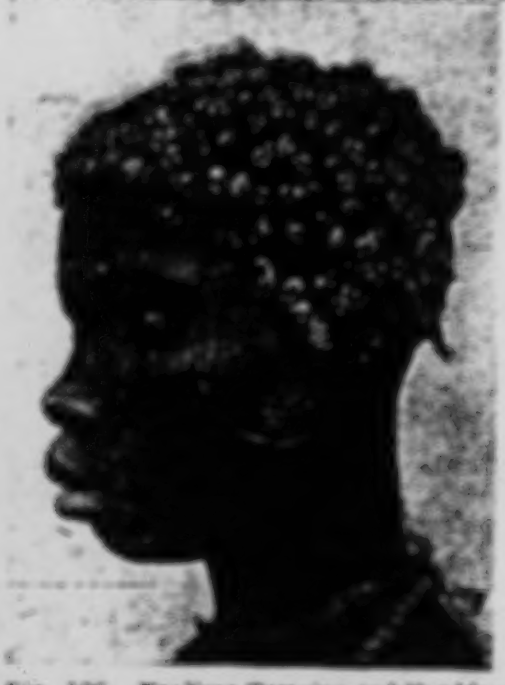


Fig. 125. Yaelima Tattooing and Headdress Adorned with Peanuts Smeared with Ngula.

The incisions for ornamental and sexual tattoos are usually made by women, although a man sometimes takes over this task.

304 The operation is carried out at very irregular intervals and at practically any [201] time of life. Moreover, it requires several sittings, usually spaced from 10 to 15 days apart.

The tattooing knife, which is also used for depilation, consists of a small, broad iron blade with a curved, very sharp cutting edge.

831/ 301/ 832 According to what I have been told, this type of ornament may also have a sexual significance. Normally -- and this statement is applicable only to the present time -- the beads are entirely covered by clothing and are visible only on a few occasions. If a large number of strings (as many as six, eight, or ten) or very many beads are worn, attention may be attracted to them because there will be a bulge in the clothing worn over them. Their sound will reveal their presence during a race or a dance. And according to my informants, that is enough to awaken passion. Making an allusion to the beads and especially touching them deliberately is considered as an invitation. For her part, a woman sometimes rubs them together in her fingers so that they will make their characteristic noise and thus attract a man's attention and arouse his interest.

The preceding does not mean that simply the wearing of the beads is necessarily intended for a bad purpose. Not only must such an intention be excluded in the case of serious persons, especially if they are elderly and content themselves with wearing a single string, seldom a second one to support the first. But there is also the possibility [832] that a young Black beauty may adorn herself with ten or more strands out of sheer vanity, so that the whole world may see that she has so many. (70)

Furthermore, it has been shown that attention to appearance is not necessarily directed to another person. Though that may be generally true, many people like to dress for the pleasure of being well dressed, and girls who never dream of an adventure may still enjoy wearing pretty undergarments. This desire for adornment for its own sake can, no doubt, explain the belts, as well as other embellishments on more than one Nkundó woman.

We should add that those who adhere to the theory that the tattoos have an immediate sexual influence could apply such a theory here as well.

302 (5)

5. Depilation

All Nkundó of both sexes practice depilation of the genital organs and even the armpits. The natives believe that the hair growing

302 under the arms is related to sexuality and give it the same name as
831 they use for their pubic hair.

A person removes his or her own hair, or it is removed by a friend of the same sex. Formerly, the hairs were simply pulled out. Nowadays, many people shave with a lotɛ. Moreover the practice tends to be confined to the hair connected with sexuality, but in the past everything was removed: eyebrows, eyelashes, mustaches, beards.

For the Nkundɔ hair removal is a form of beauty care. Their
302 explanation must be accepted, though the term "beauty care" must be broadly defined so that it will include also the depilation of parts of the body that are always hidden. This last form however, might have some relation to the tattoos: it makes tattooing easier and its effect more obvious. [71]

Article III. Prostitution

The dictionary defines prostitution as follows: "a trade which
831 consists in providing one's body for the pleasures of the public in exchange for money." In addition to this limited sense, the most important aspect of which is "in exchange for money," the word also has several broader meanings.

Prostitution is found in the world in various forms: 1) the kept woman, 2) the brothel, 3) the professional streetwalker, 4) the occasional streetwalker, 5) the married woman who has a steady relationship with a lover who pays her, 6) the woman who is the concubine of a number of men in succession and who is paid by each of them. We will examine the forms under which this misconduct has occurred and occurs among the Nkundɔ.

The first question we should ask is whether a Nkundɔ woman gave herself to a man for profit before the European occupation. It is true that a woman often demanded remuneration but, as we have already said, it is very difficult to determine whether she did so for gain or simply to be reassured of her lover's affection. Knowing the mentality of the Nkundɔ woman of today, we must admit that her greed sometimes brings her to acts of venal love. One or another of them has no doubt given her body in order to possess various

2: Hulstaert--444 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

3. The period of prohibitions

847 When a pregnancy is far advanced -- about two or three months before delivery (a period which has now been reduced to one or two weeks) -- the Nkundó proceed with the "preservation of the fetus" (*bkomba jémi*, "they preserve the fetus," or *bkaka jémi*, "they fasten the fetus"). The period called *bokeka* or *bokeko* begins at that moment and does not end until after childbirth. The oral expression is *lémba bokeka*, "to bind the period of sexual prohibitions." (1) This term also extends to all special prohibitions (*bilóló*) resulting from this condition. [475]

For the first pregnancy the period begins with the following
[516] ceremony: The woman's mother smears her daughter's head and
[502] all of her body with a red paint called *ngóla*. This paint, usually used as make-up, is used here as a mark of affection and given to honor and congratulate the future mother on this happy occasion. When the *ngóla* is somewhat hardened, the mother smears her daughter's hair with it and rolls the hair into little balls, using an iron *bosingó*, which is the instrument usually used for hairdressing. Then she gives her daughter a hen and some bananas to eat. From then on the pregnant woman may no longer eat hens, for the con-
[835] sumption of this bird (which the Nkundó place in the same category as ducks) and its eggs would stop the normal development of the fetus. The ceremony is called *fia bongata* (*elaka* among the Bombwanja), "to smear with red paint in little balls."

The woman's father and the husband's kin feel strongly about being present at this ceremony, for it is considered very important. I know of an intense palaver which occurred because

---

[834] 1. The expression *lémba lémbá* is also used. A similar period of sexual prohibitions called by the same name still exists for, among other things, circumcision, the construction of a hunting enclosure, and the setting of elephant traps.

843 a woman's mother proceeded with the ceremony in the absence of the husband and his family. The latter were furious. They revealed the matter so that if anything should happen later to the mother or the child the law would be on their side. In that way the husband could evade responsibility and place the blame on his wife and her family so that they would have to pay an indemnity.

The pregnant woman does not remove the paint for three or [302] four weeks after the ceremony. Nowadays the use of paint having [178] disappeared except for certain occasions and among older persons, it is left on for only one night. In addition the surface smeared has been reduced to a line in the middle of the head or even one single spot.

[783] During this ceremony the Bombwanja have a public confession [843] (etato) of the lovers. But since the Bokote wait until after delivery, we will deal with it later on.

On the night following the ceremony described, the couple [831] (476) "fasten the fetus" through their carnal union. Were they to omit this act, the child would die before birth.

For subsequent pregnancies the fastening of the fetus is no longer preceded by the same formalities.

The couple continue to have relations during the entire [831] period of pregnancy "in order to open an easy passage for the child." 843 On the other hand, they must strictly observe marital fidelity. 837 Nevertheless, a polygamist may have relations with his other wives.

In addition to this essential art, the interdict also includes a secondary part; the couple may not even commit acts even very remotely related to procreation. Thus they may not:

1) Touch in any way whatsoever -- even to shaking their hands -- persons with whom they have had adulterous relations; such persons must therefore be avoided.

2) Sit next to such persons.

3) Look at them.

4) Enter a house or apartment where they are.

5) Eat "from the same pot."

6) Lie in another couple's bed.

7) Other persons may no longer sleep in the bed of the couple bound by the bokoka.

846 515 In order to facilitate the flowing out of all the blood, the mother is given hot baths. However, they are not begun before noon, for the Nkundó say that in the morning and evening it is too cool and the blood is not sufficiently fluid. Those who have been [177] in greater contact with the Whites give the mother beer or wine to drink. The hot baths are administered behind the hut in an en- [341] closure set up for the occasion. They are of two kinds: baths by sprinkling (bompólo wă mbŏomba) and steam baths (bompólo w'ëlíngé). For the first method [485] very hot water is used, and by using a bunch of palms, the woman's abdomen, loins, and ribs are sprinkled. In the second method a pit is dug and large leaves (or a basin) containing boiling water are placed in it. Three or four strong, wide sticks are placed on top, and the woman is seated on them. She is wrapped in several mats to which, today, one or two blankets are added. She is left thus exposed to the action of the steam for several minutes. According to the natives, it is the ideal system because it makes all the blood come out, or almost all. Some people first give a sprinkle bath, and then follow it with a steam bath; others are satisfied with one or the other, depending on the circumstances. In any case more than one bath is never given in one day. This care may be given for one or two weeks, or it may stop after two or three days. The effect of "civilizing" is more inclined to the latter. But no Nkundó would want to omit the baths, for the woman's life is at stake.

After the bath the woman is carefully rubbed and dried, ● [302] and then anointed with oil mixed with red paint.

From time to time, usually every second day, she is given a douche.

846 As long as the mother remains weak, a large fire is maintained in her hut to keep her warm, and the doors are closed by means of palms. The husband and his relatives fetch the firewood. But the first log must be cut and brought by the husband who, to use the Nkundó expression, must "remove the violence" (ilonola lofasó). In the beginning the woman lies down on a bokoga right near the fire. She turns the front of her body toward it. The fire plays a great role in her quick recovery. She is very well cared

618 umbilical cord was not buried; how dare you boast? You are but a
614 stranger." Therefore this custom constitutes a sort of matriculation into the family. If anyone wants to be entirely certain of a Nkundô's clan, he has only to look for the place where his umbilical cord was buried.

5) The end of seclusion is marked by a few ceremonies.

846 A. A meal. Early in the morning of the day set, the hus-
● 852 band goes and cuts a bunch of fruit of the palm tree, and the helper goes and picks manioc leaves (nowadays leaves and fruit collected the day before are sometimes used). The helper crushes all of this to make a dish of food. While she cooks it over the fire, she shaves a little hair off the mother, plucks out one eyebrow, and cuts one of her nails. Then she does the same to the child. The helper moves away, and the father comes in. His wife subjects him to the same treatment, and he reciprocates, doing the same to the child. The rubbish is simply thrown away without any ceremony. This practice has no special name; the Nkundô say: bâyatôna bekenge, bâyakenga, "They shave each other's heads."

When the vegetables are ready, all the women of the vil-
846 lage are gathered together. A little pit is dug in front of the hut. A large leaf is placed in it to serve as a dish, and the vegetables are poured into it. The mother, the helper, and all those assembled eat. Except for a few small boys no representatives of the stronger sex are present. When the meal is completed, [430] the leaf that served as a plate and those that served as spoons are buried in the pit. Today the more advanced of the population use a European plate and spoons. The meal and the vegetables eaten are called losanganya, "reunion," because the entire village is united in partaking of them, or lofanjola, "dispersion," because it is the prelude to the end of the bokeka.

B. Then follows the ceremony of separation (-têna bofoli, or, among the Injôlô, bofofolôlô). (1) The bofoli is the mid-rib

[78]

1. The expression and the ceremony designated by it are used whenever an important matter, such as a trial, etc., is to be terminated.

[illegible] The event is announced by the usual signal, but the signal is doubled or, if the children are of different sexes, the signal for each sex is given once. It is followed by the dance beat: two [illegible] or three long and two short.

[illegible] The next day the father's relatives go outside the village, preferably to a crossroads. On each side they plant a stalk of [illegible]. All around the stalk they spread a little heap of small branches and various leaves called [illegible]. It is a sign and a place of benediction and good fortune. Each passer-by stops, picks two leaves, places one on each pile, spits on it, and says twá.(2) Then they clap hands and twice sing out, yeli yeye. Such behavior brings the benediction of the twins upon a person's journey, his undertakings, his marriage. The umbilical cord as well as the placenta and membrane are buried under the heap.

[illegible] Every morning the mother and father draw two stripes with kaolin on the middle of their foreheads and on their arms, above and below the elbow. They do the same to the twins.(3) They continue doing so until the child is weaned. If after that time one of the children falls ill, they begin again treating him in this manner until he is cured, taking care not to omit his brother, lest he too fall ill. For while these designs are signs of joy, they are [751] above all a prophylactic measure against children's fever ([illegible]), [900] called [illegible] when it occurs in twins or in a child following them, and manifests itself chiefly by tumors of the head and face.

[illegible] Twins are invariably called [illegible] and [illegible], names given to the first born and the second respectively, whatever their sex. The Bombwanja (like the Ekonda) use the names [illegible] and Mpia, respectively. The mother takes the name of [illegible].

2. Onomatopoeia for "spit."

3. Sometimes a double stripe is added at the temples. The kaolin may be used pure or mixed with the red paint called [illegible].

fear of death would deter him from such heresies. *Another* sign of the chosen successor is some untoward experience, such, for example, as finding cowrie shells (worn by *nkumu*) in a trap in the forest or a net that had been put out to catch fish. 624

Nkumu Akulu, whether the first of his line or a man succeeding in the office, bears the emblems of his rank. He wears an *[illegible]* (a branch of a special bush) stuck into his belt on the right side and hanging downwards. The special hat, *[illegible]*, worn by *nkumu* is not yet his to wear, but he wears an ordinary skin hat known as *[illegible]*, which is the mark of any elder. This hat may be ornamented with feathers if so desired. [293] [292]

When *Nkumu Akulu* decides that he has acquired sufficient wealth to enable him properly to claim the right of being made an *nkumu*, he begins his preparatory arrangements. *[illegible]*, a mixture of charcoal with some sticky substance, is smeared over his body with plantain leaves. All ornamental clothing is discarded and a single cloth woven from raffia, and known as *[illegible]*, is worn. He refuses to sit on the benches usually used and instead sits on the bare earth. All this is explained as an attempt on the part of the man about to be raised to the office of *nkumu* to be different from others, a man apart, separate, peculiar, not partaking in the ordinary interests and affairs of his fellow men. [302] [291] [514]

Nkumu Akulu now leaves his own village accompanied by all his wives and children, and also by a singer, *[illegible]*, who is paid to sing his praises, and by several male Batwa (pygmies), up to half a dozen in number, known as *[illegible]* because of their duty of blowing gourds and producing sounds which indicate praise of the great man. This party makes the round of villages wherever relatives are found, and the announcement is made that *Nkumu Akulu* is about to become an *nkumu*. This pilgrimage accomplished, a "doctor" (*nkanga*) is visited by the aspirant to office, who seeks by magic to discover whether it is the propitious time for the ceremony of installation. The whole company retires to the private enclosure at the rear of the house belonging to the *nkanga* chosen, this being the place where he performs his wonders. The *nkanga* resorts to *[illegible]*, that particular branch of magic which has to do with reasons for strange and unaccountable phenomena.* *Nkumu Akulu* now seeks some sign as confirmation of his determination to claim his office at this time. Some native pepper may be wrapped in a leaf or merely covered by it, and left within sight of all, and upon being opened it may be found to have turned into salt, or perhaps it may be some earth that is thus turned to salt. Or a cock may be placed upon *Nkumu Akulu's* head and covered with a basket and thus left for some time. Upon removing the basket it may be discovered that an egg has been laid. All such tests, if successful, will be regarded as indications that it really is time for *Nkumu Akulu* to assume the office of *nkumu*, but if the test fails he will usually go ahead with his plans anyhow, fearing the shame that would come to him should he go back to his home after having made the triumphant round of his relatives' houses. However, should he act thus, and he most certainly will, he knows that his days are numbered, [533] [563] 536 624 791 787 624

---

* If a man's fields do not produce and he cannot understand why, he will resort to *[illegible]*. If it is suspected, for example, that the trouble is caused by someone making "medicine", an arrow shaft is put into a small hole in the ground, and as each name is mentioned, the arrow can be pulled out if the person is innocent, but remains stuck fast in the hole at the mention of the guilty name.

624 and that he may have no more than a month or perhaps a year in which to live and will surely die speedily.

The special objects attaching to the office of **nkumu**, among these the hat, ostrich, and stool, **ekolo**, are at the same time subject to similar magical acts to determine whether they may be produced for the new **nkumu**'s use. They are not present, being in the possession of the **ankanda** which will appoint him, but are mentioned by name. Apart from the ostrich, no further ceremony is required to identify these objects with their future owner.

[302] The songs ended, the *Nkumu Akolo* smears black ndzil all over his body again, 624 before the elders begin to determine which of his wives is to be known as *Nkasa*, 787 the one who will be closest to her husband throughout his days. For this, magic formulae (**bianzelo**, sing. **eanzelo**) are used. All the wives sit round in a circle and the **nganga** places some irritant such as ground pepper in the eyes of all the women. The wife whose eyes stream most and whose discomfort is also accompanied by a violent [802] shaking of the body is known to be *Nkasa*. Here again, lying is believed to be out of the question, for the shaking of the body is something that is supposed to be impossible of simulation, the real being easily distinguished by all from the false. *Nkasa* is now stripped of all clothing and her body smeared by the **nganga** with yellow clay on one side, and with white on the other. A belt of leaves is put round her waist 624 and a small bit of cloth between the legs with each end attached to the belt. Near by 789 a gourd with "medicine" in it has been standing ready for the next step in the ceremonies, and this is now smeared with white clay, a parrot's feather stuck in the neck, and handed to *Nkasa*, who receives it in one hand. Into the other hand is put a section of plantain stalk, into one end of which has been stuck a parrot's feather. A third feather is placed in her mouth so that she cannot speak, greet anyone, or eat. She is now tied with a cord which is held by one of the young men attending *Nkumu Akolo*. At this point of the procedure the **nganga** states his price [79] for his work, which will be in the neighbourhood of one hundred brass rods, worth 436 to-day about fifty francs, but formerly double that amount. The future **nkumu**, accompanied as before, leaves for the village of the **ankanda**. *Nkasa* starts off at a tremendous pace, for she is now imbued with a sort of fanatical strength, and for this reason has been tied up and put in charge of a strong young man, otherwise she would be off so fast that no one could catch her, and would go into the forest, where she would live for days unseen.

624 In the village of the **ankanda** the party all sit in an **ilonga** belonging to one of the elders. This is the place where the Tumba men really live—their houses are just [343] sleeping and cooking establishments, but the **ilonga**, having a roof for shade and no walls, is the place where the men congregate and spend their leisure time. It is also 342 the site of the village smithy, which takes up one end. Here, then, *Nkumu Akolo* and [843] his party sit for a day and a night, and neither he nor *Nkasa* may eat food or drink wine during this period. Games are played by the **ankanda**—mock battles, dances, and [597] songs chiefly of battle, and before the first streaks of dawn appear the group in the **ilonga** begins to march up and down the village singing.

At dawn the whole party, accompanied by a large crowd, make their way to a place in the bush where there is an elevation of some sort. Here *Nkumu Akolo* climbs up and takes his stand, accompanied by *Nkasa*. Now the **ankanda** choose the [illegible]

629 tion, *Nsese* is a very prominent figure. Still arrayed as previously described, she sits outside the *ango* near the road on the special stool of the *nkumu*. Nobody may pass her with food, a humane law, considering that she must spend the day fasting. If anyone attempts to do so she catches the unlucky individual, helps herself to as much of his food as she wants, the victim meanwhile begging her to be merciful and leave him a small portion, and the booty is taken into the *ijumu*. During this sessional duty *Nsese* must still keep the parrot's feather in her mouth and maintain silence, so, in case she catches an unsuspecting bearer of food, the remonstrances and arguments are all one-sided.[1] After the first day *Nsese* no longer sits outside the *ango* but goes from place to place in the village, choosing spots where people may least expect her, hoping thus to reap a bigger harvest for her pains. This is kept up for eight days, which comprise two Tumba "weeks" of three days' work and one of rest. The rest-day is appropriately named *bolse lo nsese* after the duty of *Nsese* of sitting doing nothing day by day. The eight days of this ceremony over, *Nsese* lays aside her parrot and plantain stalk, which are placed at the foot of the first central supporting post of the *nkanga* on entering. She is given a fresh coating of chalk and three coloured stripes are drawn the length of her back and down her arms. She still remains close to the *nkumu*. [502]

[507] Various personalities are connected with the *ango* of an *nkumu*. The *Bosiá* is a male slave, clothed in a skin loincloth, whose duty it is to receive callers at the *ijumu* before admitting them to the presence of the *nkumu*.

624 595 *Mpongo* is the name taken by the wife first married by the *nkumu*. From henceforth she no longer accompanies her husband, and their cohabitation ceases unless the *nkumu* is willing to pay her each time the sum of one hundred rods. But the *nkumu* is obliged to eat all food she cooks for him even though they have a quarrel. *Mpongo* does not honour her husband with the special greeting accorded to *nkumu*, but greets her husband and all other *nkumu* as she would ordinary people.[2] The second wife of an *nkumu* must assume the name of *Ijumba Angondo*, but no importance attaches to her position.

629 586 Among the Tumba generally, apart from the Bongandu, a woman is chosen from the *ndonde* to bear the title *Bolumbu Itma i Ekopo* (*Bolumbu*, the "raison d'être" of the *ekopo*). She is, it would seem, a symbolical figure, a reminder that the *ekopo* owes its existence to the *ndonde* of which this woman becomes the titular head. While the *nkumu* is still in seclusion the chosen woman is taken to the open space between the *ijumu* and the row of men' houses, known as the *mbalo*. Here, in the presence of the assembled crowd she is greeted by being addressed, "*Bolumbu Itma, bonsai!*" and the crowd exclaims, "*Bona!*"[3] Strips of leopard skin, about eighteen

---

[593] [1] It is interesting to note that there are some exceptions to those who may be caught and robbed by *Nsese* during her eight days of watching. No member of the *ndonde* may be thus treated, twins and their parents are exempt, and also all children born to the *nkumu* before he attains office, these being termed *nsake*.

[594 585] [2] Besides *Mpongo*, a mother of twins is also exempt from according *nkumu* special salutations, and among some groups the father of twins is also exempt.

[3] This ceremony gives husbands of any village, whether they are members of the *ndonde* or not, the opportunity to single out a favourite wife for special honour, for at this time any woman may be given the name of *Bolumbu*, though not with the significant complement of *Itma i Ekopo*. The ceremony is similar, is performed in the *mbalo*, but besides receiving the strips of leopard skin, she must be divested of all her clothing, a new loincloth and *nsanga* are then placed round her, and the strips of skin then attached to the new belt.

624 customary manner, with a double clap. They are told by the *nkumu* to repeat the salutation, and having done so may be asked to do it a third time. They are then
576 given a few rods in payment. If the *nkumu* sees some member of his own *ekopo* coming to greet him, he gives him special honour by ordering him to lie flat on his back instead of merely sitting, and at the end he gives him a larger gift of rods than the others receive. In this way the *nkumu* may pay out a great many rods to those who thus render him homage. Ordinarily a man will receive five or six, but one
624 specially honoured may be given as many as twenty. From the beginning the *nkumu* has to pay heavily for his honours, and only a wealthy man can hope to attain them.
[554] For this reason a lawful successor, if not wealthy, may be glad to give up his rights to another more fortunate member of the *ekopo*. Homage having been paid, word is sent out that the *nkumu* is about to come forth, and crowds begin to gather. A coat
[302] of red camwood powder mixed with oil is smeared over the *nkumu*, the brass plates are attached to his *mwanja*, and he is attired in all his finery. The crowd outside gathers, and when tired sits on the ground to await the rest of the ceremony. Inside,
[533] the *lokombi* begins to play, the *gongs* to sing, and the Batwa *otsiti* to praise the *nkumu* by uttering an ululating sound. Accompanied by *Nsese*, *Bilgis*, and the *ntomi*, the *nkumu* himself begins to dance. The temporary protecting screen round the *ijama* is pulled down, and he is seen by all. After his dance he retires again and the crowd disperses.

When *Nkoma Abolo* becomes *nkumu* he changes everything possible so as to
[41] become different from other men. Thus he assumes a different gait, a sort of bow-legged waddle, a different tone of voice, and it seems that under this influence even his facial features undergo a change. Accompanied by his retinue, he visits the various villages where he has friends and relatives in order to greet them. This over, the musicians wish to take their departure and are paid for their services by the *nkumu*.

626 At the conclusion of these ceremonies the *nkumu* with his *ekopo* and the *mbinda* negotiate concerning their obligations to one another. If the *nkumu* is the first of his
596 line, he and his *ekopo* are given land to cultivate, while succeeding *nkumu* simply take over the land originally apportioned. The *mbinda* call their *nkumu* their wife, and they
621 designate themselves husband. They thus reckon the relationship between *mbinda* and *ekopo* to be that of husband and wife, and, as in an actual marriage, there must be an interchange of obligations performed in a spirit of harmony. Also, as in marriage a wife may be divorced, so an *nkumu* with his *ekopo* could be sent off to their home and the arrangement terminated. It not infrequently happened that as strangers the *ekopo* fell out with their hosts and if such a disagreement could not be righted they might be refunded the payments with which they had purchased their rights, and sent off home.

224 Among the reciprocal obligations of *mbinda* and *ekopo* are included the sharing of certain animals and birds killed in the hunt, among which are the leopard and
626 elephant. All killed, whether male or female, must be divided. Of certain other animals, including the wild pig, antelope, and buffalo, if a female, no portion is given,
621 if a male, the required portion is presented. These reciprocal obligations are limited
596 strictly to the *ekopo* and *mbinda*; if others outside of these groups wish to present the *nkumu* with meat to honour him or to curry favour, they may do so, but they are under

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

This funeral drumming is kept up for a long time, off and on for days, and is very stirring in its rhythm. While it is going on, the elders congregate in an *[illegible]*. They fast and have nothing to do with their wives during this time. The *[illegible]* is mourning, and the *[illegible]* may be likewise mourning, but for the others it is a time of rejoicing, and also of the relaxing of moral restraints. It is an occasion for dancing by both Batwa and "[illegible]", the former regarding this as a time for special rejoicing, for the *nkumu* was their master and now he is dead they are no longer under restraint. They are free to take any of their master's goods and even to snatch blankets off the corpse. Men and women do not dance together; the women, taking some of their husbands' weapons, go off in one direction, and the men, arrayed in finery, dance at the other end of the village. 624 766 [533] [535] [565]

While the *nkumu* is still unburied and the drumming is going on, the *[illegible]* look for a successor among the *[illegible]*. Often this man will, as we have seen, have already been designated. The *[illegible]*, Batwa, and others in the village make up a party, and attired in war finery go off with their weapons as though after a man they wished to kill. As they go they sing: [539]

[illegible]
[illegible]
Hawk, thou hast destroyed the nest,
Where art thou going to sleep?

Before catching the real successor they catch one or another in fun, singing this song. The man of course refuses to be *nkumu*, and the point of the song is that because of his refusal the *[illegible]* no longer fulfils its function of supplying the *[illegible]* with *nkumu* and therefore ceases to be of any use to them. If this man by refusing thus destroys the family nest, where will they sleep?

Finally, after this fun, the real successor is caught, his face daubed with black, and the group sing: [307] [539]

[illegible]
The cunning animal is hiding, avoid the tortoise.

Thus the new *nkumu*, like a cunning animal, is hiding, but when discovered, like the tortoise, he will not try to run away. The whole group conducts the new *nkumu* to the *[illegible]* and sits all night guarding him. Earlier on the day of the actual interment of the dead *nkumu*, the new one is installed with ceremonies as already described.

On the day the *nkumu* dies his people scatter to other villages to look for slaves for the executions on the day of the burial. Slave-owners or husbands of unwanted wives ask quietly how much money there is for the man or woman, accept the agreed amount, and tell the buyers to go quietly and catch the slave or wife before anything is suspected and an escape is made. In this connexion we may note two classes of wives, *[illegible]* and *[illegible]*. A third class, *[illegible]*, acquired by the payment of a very small bride price, was not nearly as common formerly as at present and may be passed by. A *[illegible]* was a slave wife acquired by capture in war or stolen. If loved by her husband she will take her place practically on an equality with the members of the village, but she may be killed, for she is her husband's possession, "his money" is the native expression. An *[illegible]* is a wife for whom a very high bride price has been paid, obliging her family to give wives to the other family in perpetuity, supplying 766 567 762 562

262 264 with modern machinery. Not content with the state of the utensils in which she serves the meals, the woman is careful to line them at mealtime with fresh and very clean leaves.

515 The natives keep the nails of their hands and feet cut short. The care of the feet is explained as a hygienic measure and by the necessity of taking precautions to avoid the vermin which like to get into these places (ticks). The care of the hands can be explained only by the concern for cleanliness shown in native eating habits.

Imported soap is not yet commonly used, although we found it in a number of native huts.

388 Many native women know how to make soap. The process is very simple. Dried banana skins, trunks of papaw trees, bark, the fruits of various vegetables, and waste from palm nuts are gathered together and burned. The ashes are carefully collected and mixed with some water for boiling them. At the first ebullition, the woman removes the ashes and impurities that [166] rise to the surface. Boiling is then continued until the evaporation is almost complete. When only a thick and sirupy grayish-black deposit is left, the woman takes it off the fire, washes it, and kneads it in cold water until it takes on a clearer color. She then adds palm oil, mixes it in with great care, and puts the lot back on the fire. The paste is stirred all through the boiling, which is continued until the woman obtains a mixture whose consistency is slightly firmer than that of our soft soaps. [Ed., a passage is omitted from mid-page 166 to mid-page 167.]

Native soap is used only in the care of the body.

[302] ● 303 [167] The native does not merely smear his body with palm oil. The men and especially the women often powder themselves with *takula* dust. The women prepare a cosmetic with this and love to cover their whole body with it in a spirit of coquetry. This practice is so widespread among the peoples of Lake Leopold II that the manufacture of *ngula* has become a veritable local industry in certain areas. This is especially true of the Mosengere. In a village near the Bongo post, we counted 35 installations for making *ngula* powder. The simplest set of materials includes two blocks of *takula* or redwood, a small receptacle containing water, a handful of sand, and a small hand or painting brush. One of the

112 blocks is placed on the ground. The woman sits during the work. The second block is placed flat on the top surface of the first, which is moistened and sprinkled with sand. The woman holds the top block in both hands and rubs it back and forth with a rotary motion, taking care to keep the two grinding surfaces wet. The rubbing and the action of the grains of sand as fine graters produce a fine, red, almost impalpable powder mixed with water. The skill in this process consists of proceeding in such a way that the gritty sand is mixed as little as possible with the wood dust. The skill of some persons is so [168] great that one can find hardly any traces of sand in their *ngula* (1).

[113] 1. On this subject see the monograph on *ngula* and its manufacture in the Belgian Congo by Dr. J. Maes in the periodical, *Congo*, 1920 volume.

In the region of the Mosengere, the apparatus for making *ngula* is usually more elaborate. A thick piece of tree bark is used as a basin. Four or six rather strong sticks are fastened to this basin, and to these the native attaches one of the *takula* blocks. A special device permits this apparatus to be fastened in place. Some natives even have an improved apparatus set up under a crude shelter in front of their hut, which permits them to make *ngula* while standing up. Four heavy stakes driven perpendicularly into the ground support a large basin of tree bark 15 centimeters above the ground. [169] One meter from the ground, horizontal crossbars are attached to the forked ends of the stakes, and one of the blocks of *takula* is fastened to these crossbars. An earthenware receptacle, held in the three forks of a stake driven into the ground beside the apparatus, contains a mixture of water and a small portion of oil. A brush made of a piece of soft wood is immersed in the mixture and permits the craftsman to wet the *takula* block at will. A small piece of a calabash holds the sand which is rubbed on the wood to grate it to dust. Despite all the skill of the worker, this sand gets mixed into the dust and must be replaced from time to time. The person making

Pygmies Fig4

M 303 the *ngula* stands before the apparatus. The mixture of water, *ngula* dust, and a few grains of sand falls into the storage basin as the work progresses. When the stock is large enough, the native plaits small baskets having the shape of a truncated cone and an average capacity of one cubic decimeter. The *ngula* paste is packed into these baskets, and the lot is then hung under the shelter out of the sun. At the end of a few days the paste is dry. The molded cone of *ngula* is taken from the mold, wrapped in banana leaves, and

9 140 301 302

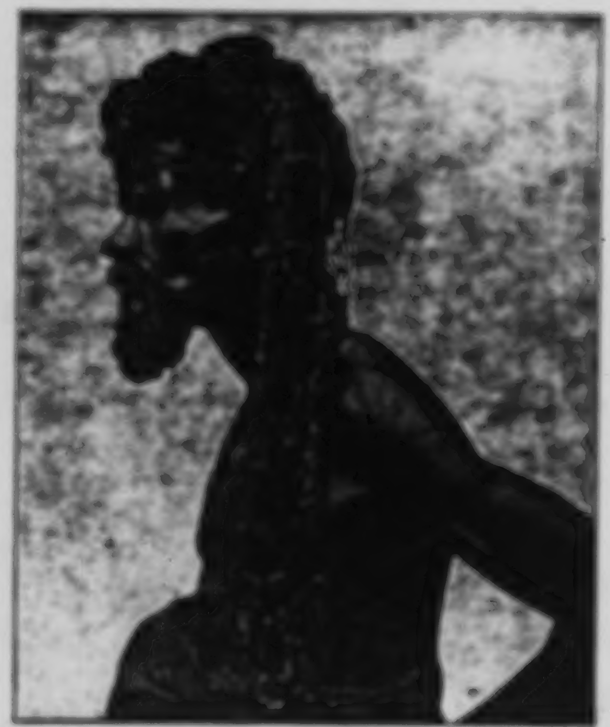


Fig. 92. A Batua Chief Inongo, with a Rope Headdress.

carefully tied with rattan thongs, bamboo splints, or raffia fibers.

M [431] The family supply is usually left in the storage basins of the devices for making *ngula*; all the molded cakes are sold at outside markets.

M 303 285 The baskets used as *ngula* molds are all plaited in the same way. Four rattan thongs are laid in a row across four others, without being interlaced or plaited at the points where they cross. This forms the bottom of the basket. The thongs are lifted up at the four

M 303 285 sides of this square and held in place by a binding of twisted raffia fibers. The sides are then plaited by the simplest method, that is, with the horizontal band weaving in and out of the vertical thongs. As all of these molds always have approximately the same height and diameter, the *ngula* cones are both similar in shape and quite constant in weight. M 303 The natives use them a great deal as trade goods. 436 In some regions the *ngula* cone has become a veritable currency, with a standard value from one tribe to another. [170] M 437 A market is organized regularly when steamers call at Mushie, and there the people of the interior exchange the products of their industries for the imported objects brought by the Blacks who work for the Whites. *Ngula* cones are among the principal items of trade and bring a very high price. In the Oshwe region, the old chief Kue Kue was a great *ngula* trader. He came by regularly with four or five of his wives, bringing various products from the region between the Kasai and the Lukenie to exchange for the *ngula* made in the Lokoro region.

D 303 Throughout the central Congo regions, the *ngula* used for trade has the shape of an elongated truncated cone. Among the Basongo-Meno and farther east, on the other hand, *ngula* most often is shaped in a ball. The native of these regions often uses it to decorate his pottery and wooden objects and to dye the fibers of cloth used for decoration. He keeps it in cosmetic boxes carved from *tukula* wood and usually decorated with very artistic designs. He also uses it to color his hair. [Ed., a passage from the middle of page 170 to the last paragraph, page 171, is omitted.]

M 302 761 [171] Aside from *ngula*, the native sometimes smears his body with a type of white clay quite frequently found in the river beds. [172] The native calls it *mpembe*. Its use is far from being as widespread as that of *ngula*, and we believe that the native associates it with magic power rather than ornamentation. *Mpembe* is used chiefly by the peoples of the Congo-Kasai, Lake Leopold II, and Lukenie regions, up to the region of the Batira.

M 765 We never saw a native smear his whole body with it. The few women in mourning that we saw were covered with a grayish-yellow mud and not with *mpembe*. We believe, moreover, that the use of *mpembe* is reserved to the chief, his wives, and perhaps

M 302 789 dignitaries and their families, but it was impossible for us to prove the accuracy of our hypothesis. When questioned about this, the natives always confined themselves to uncertain and evasive replies. The native chief rarely appears at a large gathering without having his face and sometimes his arms and chest covered with lines drawn with *mpemba*. At all official receptions, the chief, a few dignitaries, and sometimes some of the chiefs' wives had a more or less symmetrical rectangle drawn with *mpemba* around the eyes.

● M 304 302 We observed the following artificial deformations in the course of our journey:

1) depilation;
2) filing of the teeth;
3) tattooing by incision;
4) circumcision.

M 302 Depilation is practiced by all the peoples of the regions visited. The native plucks out every last hair on his body. Where the hair cannot be plucked, it is shaved with great care. For the parts of the body that are hard to reach, men and women help one another. Eyebrows and eyelashes are both plucked, while beards and mustaches, on the other hand, are cared for with great pride. It is very unusual to see a full beard. We ran across only one such case. The happy possessor of this beautiful [172] beard was as proud of it as he could be, and Natali, chief of the Banfumu of Kwamouth, was heartbroken to have only a few hairs on his chin while one of his dignitaries was endowed with such a fine beard.

T 302 Among the Bateke-Banfumu peoples, up to the Ipanga, the natives frequently shave the base of their scalp all around the head. Their headdress looks like a very symmetrical calotte.

M 302 Among the Yaelima we encountered men whose heads were completely shaved except for one strip just above the nape of the neck. A similar custom must have prevailed among the Bateke and Banfumu, but the unshaved part was broader.

Among the Yaelima and up to the region of the Bankutshu north of Bena Dibele, the natives shave their hair in such a way

Sakata FO43
Teke FI33

M 302 as to broaden the forehead. The brow is sharply delineated at right angles and framed by two corners projecting over the temples.

M 302 554 Let us note that the custom of shaving part of the scalp is hardly a general one. The types of headdress we have just described are seen regularly, but by no means are worn by all the natives. It even seemed to us that they tend to be the prerogative of the chiefs, dignitaries, and their families, but we dare not assert that they constitute a right, a strict prerogative. [176]

S [302 301 142]

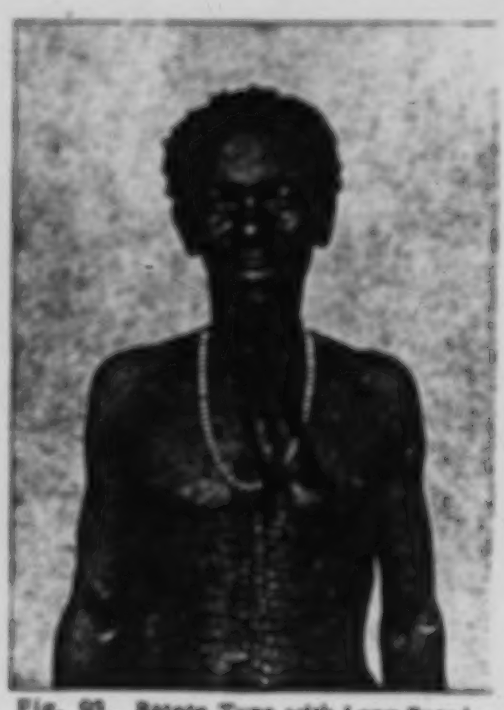


Fig. 93. Batete Type with Long Beard, Plucked Eyelashes and Eyebrows.

M S F 304 The Batele and Banfumu file the middle upper incisors in the shape of an isosceles triangle, break them, or pull them out. We observed this custom among some of the Baboma. The majority of the Baboma, however, have their teeth filed to a point, a custom that prevails up to the Bokala region and along the north bank of the Kasai up to 23° longitude east of Greenwich. "Basongo-

M 304 Meno" seems to mean "people with filed teeth" and may have

● 304 been the name used by the southern peoples to designate their neighbors to the north whose real name they did not know. The custom of deforming the teeth tends to disappear rapidly. The younger generation already refuses to submit to it, and we often heard the natives with filed teeth referred to as *basenji*, that is, "savages." The deformation of the teeth is accomplished with a [324] small iron chisel and a wooden mallet. The village blacksmith does this for a small fee. The teeth are broken with short, sharp blows while the patient is seated with his head against the knees of the blacksmith, who stands behind the patient. The operation is very painful and takes several sittings. The last ones are for the filing, which is done with a small native file.

302 The native takes special pains with his hairdo, which sometimes is a true little marvel, the fruit of long and patient work. Both men and women attach great importance to this. They strive [175] to surpass themselves and to achieve the most coquettish coiffure possible. Since every native is a born hair stylist and they aid each other with complete unselfishness, the hairdo not only varies from one tribe to another, but the most disparate types are found within the same tribe, according to our observation.

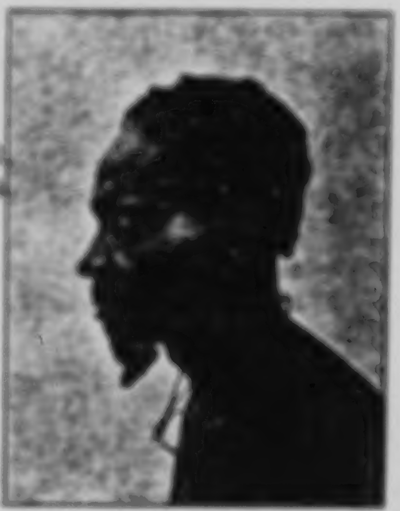


Fig. 94. A Balesa with a Small Goatee and with Eyelashes and Eyebrows Carefully Plucked.

A very popular method is to smear the hair with a rather thick paste of palm oil and *ngula* and then to separate the locks and roll them up so that they form small, very irregular balls. To enhance this hairdo, the native does not hesitate to insert peanuts into the hair, first smearing them carefully with *ngula* paste in order to conceal the deception.

302. 432. fashioning most of the statuettes, figurines and bowls that we possess from this region, which are so remarkably decorated. Moreover, we find these same forms among the Bakuba and Bashilele, up to the region of the [illegible] of Bena Dibele-Kole. These various tribes have also reproduced in their sculpture the designs of the shaved parts of the head, which are so uniform and so characteristic. In this respect these various tribes are related, and their ethnic affinity seems very clear. Despite their present remoteness from each other and the absence of all tribal intercourse, their ethnic kinship is clearly shown in the peculiarities they have preserved of the ancestral culture.

[192 384]

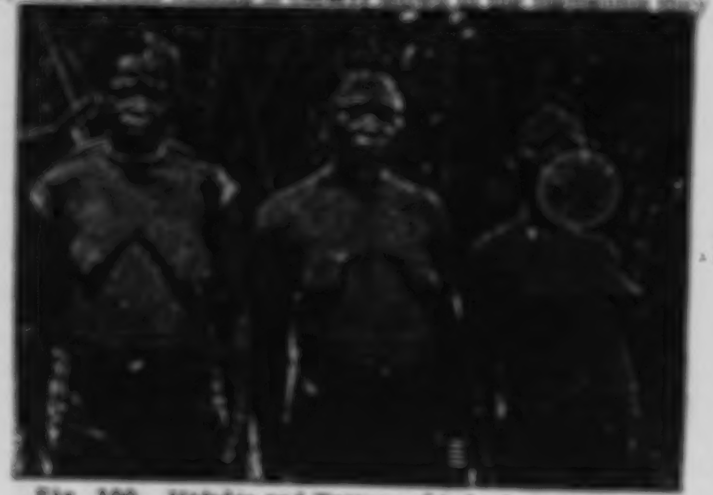


Fig. 190. Hairdos and Tattoos of Lake Leopold II.

302 16| These various observations permit us to divide the peoples into three very distinct groups.

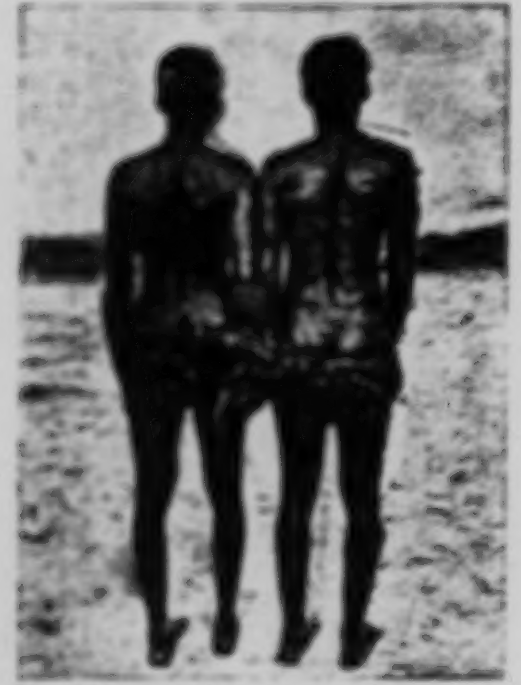
1) The Batake-Basfumu group, with its chignon hairdo over the nape of the neck and the rest of the head shaved or with the hair cut short.

2) The group including the Ipanga and the eastern peoples, with their hairdo of two braids passing behind the ears and under the chin and the upright roll on top of the head. [179]

3) The group including the tribes of Lake Leopold II and the lower Lukenie up to the Ipanga region, where having the hair arranged in tiny braids predominates.

30| The love of finery is more or less developed among all the peoples of the Kasai-Lake Leopold II-Lukenie region. Ornaments

reserved to the Mfumu. The large royal knife, encased in a 643
sheath, hung from a brass chain worn diagonally over the shoulder, 293
and Kaisa [107] never parted with his great bow and his quiver 301
of arrows with large iron heads.



[304
301
535]

Fig. 109. Dancing Costume of the Yaelima-Bokala of the Wumbali Region. Tattooing on the Back.

During dances and ceremonies the women attach the most 292
unusual objects around their waists, often large bushy branches. 301
Among the Ipanga and Bolia, as well as in the region of Wumbali 535
and Dekese, betrothal and wedding dances are executed in special attire, heavily bedecked with beads and cowries.

These ornaments are not at all consistent. They vary according to taste and the whims and means of the natives, but certain parts of the dress costume worn by the betrothed couple at the dances celebrating the engagement seem to have a special meaning, to which we shall return later.

Teke FT33
Sakata FO43

M 304 From Leopoldville to Kole the peoples know and practice tattooing. This varies, however, from one region to another in motif and design, the symmetry of application, its extensiveness, and the manner of execution.

T 304 Among the Bateke and Banfunungu, we noted two distinct tattooings: that of the men and that of the women. [188]

For the men, the face is covered with striated, parallel lines, irregular, slightly concave, shallow, and covering the cheeks from the temples to near the chin. For the women, there is no facial tattooing, but the abdominal region is symmetrically covered with small lines or elongated dots in relief, placed side by side and covering the whole region extending from the pit of the stomach to the lower abdomen.

S [304]

Fig. 110. Tribal Tattooing Executed by a Man, Wadia Tribe.

Fig. 111. Ornamental Tattooing Executed by a Woman, Wadia Tribe.

The males are tattooed by simple incisions, usually made at the age of seven or eight as manhood draws near. Women are tattooed at all ages.

M 304 832 Prior to our [Ed., European] penetration of the region, a young girl was tattooed before puberty, according to the information we obtained. There was a twofold reason for this: to satisfy

[text continues on p. 147]

304
132
[777
291]

personal vanity, and to excite the male. At the present time only the latter reason accounts for the practice in the region where our influence has been effective. The introduction of European fabrics, the expansion of the economy and the progress of civilization have led the women to clothe themselves and to hide and screen a large part of the body from indiscreet glances. [189] The small primitive loincloth has given way to a toga of variable length, which hides from the public eye that part [Fig. 112 appears here] of the body which is covered with tattoos. In such cases, the woman can no longer display her tattoos for the sake of vanity. [Figs. 113 and 114 appear here] If, despite this, some of them continue to have themselves tattooed just like the old matrons, it is because they hope to attract a man, to please him, and to be able to participate sooner in the pleasures of intimate life. When questioned on this subject, the natives are very definite. The men maintain that the raised tattoos [190] on

[291
301
304
142]

Fig. 115. Elegant Lady of the Bokala-Yaelima Region. Tattoos, Bracelets, and Necklaces.

304
133

304 [133] certain parts of the female body is very exciting to them, essentially as a result of the very pronounced movements of the women during sexual contact. This explanation, which according to the natives seems to be the only reason for tattooing the women of certain tribes (this applies, in our opinion, to the Basake, Basfumungu, Bakuma, and, up to a certain point, to all the riparian peoples of Lake Leopold II), also enables us to explain the special character of the tattooing of Yaelima women. It extends all around the *mons Veneris*, follows the fold of the groin, and continues in concentric circles on the inside of the upper thighs. The tattoo scars on those parts of the women's body are usually more symmetrical and in more pronounced relief, and these characteristics increase in direct proportion to the nearness of the pubic region. Coquetry cannot be the reason for making these raised scars. Their presence is largely hidden, even by the flimsiest and most primitive loincloth. Among certain tribes, the loincloth completely covers this part of the body, and since native women exercise a great deal of care and modesty in hiding these tattoos from the public eye, it was only with great difficulty that we were able to verify their existence. Let us note in passing [130] that despite earnest endeavors, we never were able to persuade a native woman of the interior to be photographed without her loincloth. The civilized women, whether local demimondaines or housewives, were, it is true, less [131] timid. The natives themselves make a distinction between these tattoos and those which appear on other parts of the body, notably on the arms, back, and face.

304 [132] Tattoos on the back, arms, and throat are always essentially decorative. We found them especially on the women, who are coquettish by nature even among the most primitive peoples. These tattoos generally lack the characteristic uniformity which is such a clear mark of the racial tattoos. The latter are found in their most characteristic form on the men, particularly on the forehead, temples, cheeks, and sometimes the chest. Among certain tribes, the women have also taken over this artificial deformation peculiar to the men. Elsewhere, the women have special tattoos which are clearly distinct from those of the men, and, finally, among some peoples the women have no racial tattoos.

1: Maes--169 E-5 (1913-1924) 1924 FO32 Mongo FO32

Sakata FO43
Teke FO33

M
1
5
304
171

We have seen earlier that among the Bateke, Bafumungu, and Baboma, the men's characteristic tattoo consists of lines scratched on the face, while that of the women consists of small dots in relief, juxtaposed in parallel lines, more or less horizontal, covering the body from the pit of the stomach to the lower abdomen. This same design [130] is found among the women of all the riparian peoples of Lake Leopold II and among the tribes of the Lukenie up to the Bambuli sector. It must be noted, however, that in this last region the relief is less clear and less pronounced.

M
304
171
[140]

Fig. 116. Tattooing among the Women of Lake Leopold II and the Lower Lukenie.

Moreover, as a general rule, the relief gradually decreases as one goes farther from the lake. In this respect, then, all these peoples seem to belong to the same ethnic group, and it is probable that this characteristic tattooing is one of the traits of the ancestral civilization, retained until the present time by all

M
304
171

the branches of the original group despite migrations and displacements. In the same region, the tattoo of the men is a small rosette, consisting of a large central dot and two or three concentric circles in relief, decorating the temples. In the region north of Lake Leopold II, the native usually adds to this a line of small dots all across the forehead.

M
5
304

Among the Tumba, Ntomagere, Wadia, and Basakata-Bolia-Baloie, on the other hand, this line is replaced by a series of small incisions in relief which form a little cock's crest in the hollow at the root of the nose.

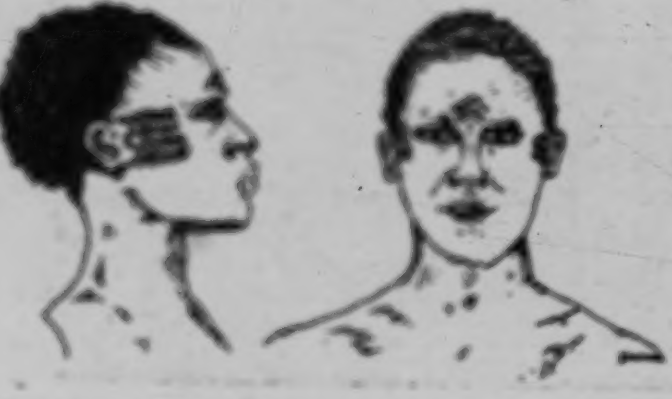


Fig. 117. Batitu-Ipanga Tattoos.

Among all these tribes the woman has also adopted the racial tattoo, although it must be noted that we quite often met women with no tattooing on their faces, while others had the rosette alone, the rosette [193] and the cock's crest, or the line crossing the forehead, and sometimes the three tattoos were combined.

This irregularity in the application of facial tattoos leads us to suppose that this tattooing is more a matter of vanity for the women of these various tribes than a practice imposed by the usages and customs, while for the men this artificial deformation is a true distinguishing mark imposed by local tradition.

M
304

Among the Ipanga and Batitu, tattoos include designs on the face and on the breastbone. The chest tattoo consists of a vertical line of small linear scars, obliquely parallel and slightly

Yaelima

breast, running from the top of the breastbone to the navel. To the left and right of this main line we see a double row of small oblique lines separated from each other by a space from one to three centimeters wide. The facial tattoo consists of a double or triple row of oblique lines, arranged in such a way that they look like palm leaves, and a small crest formed by short, curved incisions at the root of the nose. According to a photograph sent by Mr. Timmermans this same type of tattoo is also found among 304

[622
142]

Fig. 118. Inuna, the Young and Excellently Endowed Batitu Chief of the Oshwe Region.

the Yaelima. We ought to note in this connection that in the course of our journey [194] through this region we did not observe this anywhere, despite numerous investigations. We therefore believe that an error was made in transmitting the information. The persons involved were probably Ipanga-Batitu who happened to be in the Yaelima region.

304
159
The tattoos of Ipanga and Batito women differ considerably from those of the men, except for the facial designs. The lines of small dots that we observed and described for the women among the western peoples are quite widespread throughout the region. On certain women these scars are not only found on the abdomen and upper thighs, but they decorate the whole body and sometimes even the arms.

In the region of the Oshwe sector, especially near the eastern limits of the territory occupied by the Batito, we encountered, moreover, several women whose tattoos were notably different from those of their sisters to the west. The palm-leaf designs on the temples are replaced by a series of concentric circles around a small dot in strong relief. This dot is placed half-way between the eye and the ear. These women were probably not natives of the region. In our opinion, they had come in through trade or even through abduction. They probably belonged to the Bokala or Yaelima tribe, although we were unable to get confirmation of this from the natives. Among these [195] latter tribes, tattooing is very much in fashion. The women in particular seem to be very fond of this type of ornamentation.

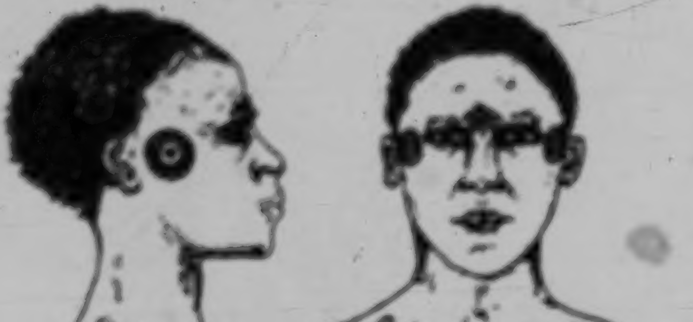


Fig. 119. Tattoos of the Lake Leopold II Tribes.

304
The designs are so many and varied that we could not attempt to provide a detailed description of them. We believe that we may divide them, on the whole, into three main classes or categories.

1) The racial or tribal tattoo.

Yaelima

This consists of a set of small curves drawn above the root 304●
of the nose, similar to those we previously noted among the Ipanga-Batitu, but usually sharper and more pronounced. This identical and characteristic motif seems to establish an affinity between these two groups, but it must be noted that the motif on the temples varies considerably from one region to another. Here we find again the rosette of the peoples of Lake Leopold II, although much larger. The concentric circles cover the temples, and very often they extend over a wider area as arcs, always concentric, are added above the cheeks.

Both men and women have adopted this tattoo.

2) Sexual tattoos, reserved for women. 304

These consist of scars in relief which are found on all parts 833
of the body from just above and between the breasts to the middle of the thighs.

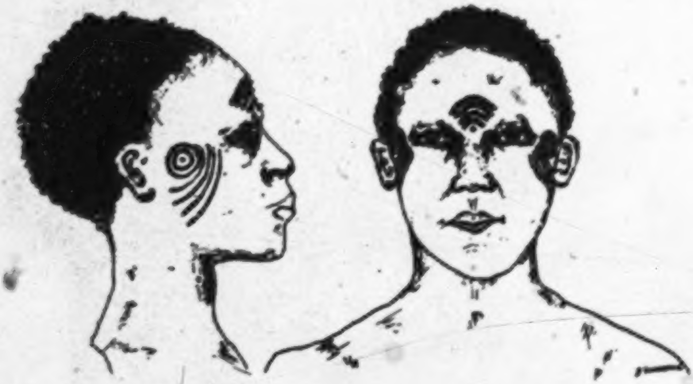


Fig. 120. Bokala-Yaelima Tattoos.

3) Ornamental or coquettish tattoos. [196] 304

These extend irregularly over all the other parts of the body, including the arms and back.

The tattoos in the second category form a series of concen- 304
tric, rounded triangles whose tip is actually the mons Veneris. 833

The designs between the breasts and the navel vary considerably from one person to another. The rosettes and palm-leaf motif clearly predominate. The man does not use this type of tattoo, but the woman, on the other hand, takes a great deal of

Dengese FO 16

M 304 833 pains with it, from which we may conclude that her chief aim is a heightening of sensation in sexual relations.

M 304 The motifs or designs in the third category are extremely varied [197] and most irregular, as we noted earlier. Aside from the concentric rosette, we saw the most varied designs: small dots, stippled lines, crescents, diamond shapes, palm-leaf motifs, and other figures cross, cut into each other, are superimposed on each other, and are mixed in such a way that the scars seem to have been scattered at random all over the body.

Men and women both have adopted these designs, but the

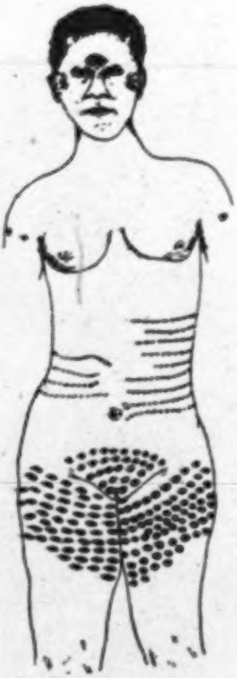


Fig. 121. Ipanga-Batitu Tattoos.

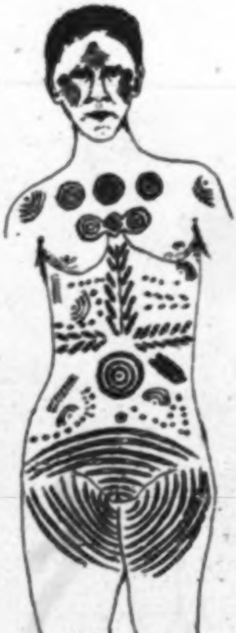


Fig. 122. Bokala-Yaelima Tattoos.

M D 304 woman seems to be especially fond of them. In this respect the Bokala and Yaelima differ sharply from their neighbors to the west, but seem to resemble closely the tribes to the east, especially the peoples of the Dekese region. Photographs sent by Mr. Van den Broeck and designated as Dengese show us the undeniable

Dengesa FO16

D M 304

likeness of their tattoo designs and those of the Yaelima. Among the Dengese, however, the designs are generally more symmetrical, and the rosette on the temple is smaller and usually framed by two or three lines of small dots, one of which sometimes extends into the forehead. Another figure, no less characteristic, consists of [198] a band of three parallel lines drawn in such a way as to form the native imbolo, which looks like two eights joined horizontally.

This motif is usually drawn above the navel and on the arm, and it is found almost exclusively on women.

Fig. 123. Tattoos of the Bokala-Yaelima Woman, Front and Back.

Finally, the small scarified dots which adorn the neck of certain Dengese women show us that they are related as much to the eastern peoples as to their neighbors to the west.

The characteristic tattoo of the women of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, Basongo-Meno as well as Bankutshu, consists precisely of these sets of small scarified dots adorning the neck, temples, and forehead. To this must be added the design very often drawn on the upper arm. This motif, consisting of three broken parallel lines arranged in the form of a diamond with the sides shifted out of place, may be justly regarded as a special characteristic of this region.

● D M ● 304

Tattoos on the chest and the upper and lower abdomen are less uniformly worn by the women of this region, but where they do exist the design is always outstandingly symmetrical. It is formed by small juxtaposed dots in strong relief.

M 304 171

To sum up, we believe that we may divide the racial tattoos of the various populations we visited into four groups.

The first consists of the tattoo of the Bateke-Banfumungu-Baboma, made with a comb.

The second is characterized by the rosette on the temples and the semi-concentric crest at the root of the nose, and this includes all the riparian peoples of Lake Leopold II and the Lukenie, with the exception of the Ipanga-Batitu.

The third group is distinguished by the semi-concentric crest at the root of the nose and the palm-leaf designs at the temples, which we observed among the Ipanga-Batitu and up to the Bokala region.

Lastly, the fourth group is marked by the small, raised dots with which the woman of the Bena Dibele-Kole region adorns her neck and forehead, as well as by the characteristic figure on the upper arm.

We have noted earlier that, thanks to photographs by Mr. Van den Broech, we were able to verify the fact that the peoples of the Dekese sector are related particularly to their western neighbors as far as tattooing is concerned, although they [199] show strong resemblances to the eastern tribes. Their territory, therefore, should be regarded as a mixed zone or an area of transition between the two ethnic groups.

The study of the different figures of ornamental tattooing permits us to subdivide the region we visited into two large provinves.

The first one includes all the peoples who have few ornamental tattoos, and these few are not very elaborate. In this case, there are no true figures involved, for the tattoos invariably consist of small dots aligned horizontally.

This region extends from Leopoldville to Oshwe.

The second one includes the tribes with highly elaborate ornamental tattoos. This province covers the rest of the region we visited, and its major center is the Yaelima region. The study

Yaelima

304 171 we made of the many figures we saw in this region showed us that the variations are so numerous, so diverse, and so closely intertwined that it is totally impossible to use this as a basis for determining ethnic sectors with clearly-defined characteristics.

304 171 833 Finally, if we consider only those tattoo figures to which

[307 142]

Fig. 124. Yaelima Headdress and Tattooing. Typical Longomo or Dignitary.

we attributed, if not a familial origin, at least a familial nature [200] (incitement to sexual relations), we see that throughout the region this type of tattoo is peculiar to women.

From Leopoldville to the confines of Batitu territory and even among some Bokala women, this tattoo consists (where it still exists) of a number of small, aligned dots, just like the ornamental tattoos.

Among the Ipanga-Batitu, these figures sometimes embellish the arms and part of the back, while among the other tribes they are less elaborate.

304 171 833 In the region of the Yaelima, Dengese, and some of the Bokala, this tattoo consists of a series of broken, concentric lines with the pubic region as the main center.

We do not know if this tattoo is also worn by the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu women, but this seems probable to us. We can, however, assert that among those peoples this tattoo does not extend to the upper thighs, except for one or two lines of small incised dots running parallel to the fold of the groin.

[142] [302]

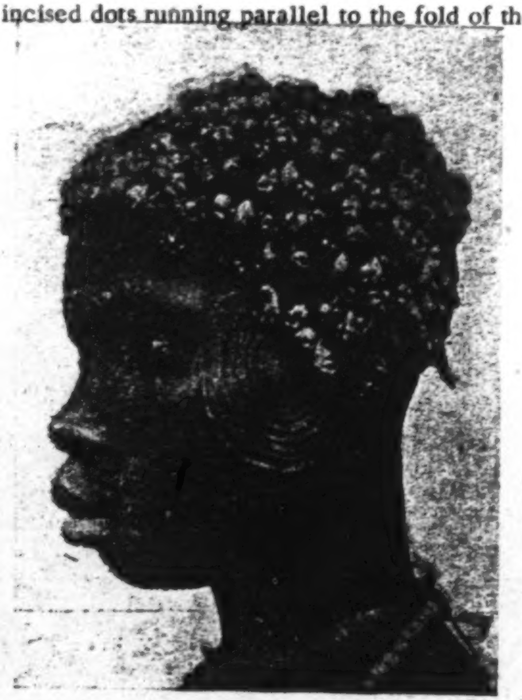


Fig. 125. Yaelima Tattoing and Headdress Adorned with Peanuts Smeared with Ngula.

The incisions for ornamental and sexual tattoos are usually made by women, although a man sometimes takes over this task.

304 The operation is carried out at very irregular intervals and at practically any [201] time of life. Moreover, it requires several sittings, usually spaced from 10 to 15 days apart.

The tattooing knife, which is also used for depilation, consists of a small, broad iron blade with a curved, very sharp cutting edge.

Sakata FO43
Teke F133

M 304 ● The patient is seated. The operator draws the designs or motifs on the body with mpembe. He pinches the skin between his left thumb and forefinger and makes the line with a sharp blow of the lancet. The wound is sprinkled with powdered charcoal, mpembe, and a powder made of dried and crushed tree bark. This mixture slows the healing process. The operation is repeated three or four times until the relief of the raised scars is deemed sufficiently pronounced.

T S 304 Among the Bateke, Banfumungu, and Baboma, facial tattoos are obtained by scratching or scraping the skin with a sort of iron comb with relatively broad, dull teeth. The operation requires only one sitting among these peoples, and the wounds are not powdered. These two procedures are explained by the difference in these tribes between racial tattoos and the scarified ornamental figures worn by the women. The former are ordinary cicatrized wounds; the latter are raised scars.

M 304 The racial tattoos are always made prior to the other figures. In 1913-14 boys and girls were compelled to have them inscribed before they reached marriageable age.

The familial tattoos are usually begun some time before the girl's marriage, and they are quickly elaborated during the last few weeks preceding the union.

As for the coquettish tattoos or ornamental figures, there seems to be no rule regarding the age at which they are applied. Sometimes even an old woman will not hesitate to acquire new incisions.

M 304 178 It is probable that the custom of tattooing will soon disappear among these peoples. The spread of the principles of European civilization will invariably suppress this primitive custom. [202]

We were able, moreover, to observe this trend during our visit to the villages of the houseboys, laborers, and soldiers of Leopoldville, Kinshasa, and other large centers. In these villages, the children and even the young men are no longer tattooed. The young girls are tattooed only slightly, and in general they have incisions only on the lower abdomen. Racial tattoos are totally lacking. On the other hand, in the villages of the interior, less influenced by the principles of civilization,

● 304 178 tattoos are very much in vogue at the present time. We concede that the custom of tattooing is now at its height in the region we visited.

It is probable that this custom will not long survive our penetration.

304 174 It would be very difficult to determine the approximate time of its introduction into the life of these natives. We believe, however, that we may regard racial tattoos as one of the ethnic characteristics peculiar to the contemporary culture and not as a specific custom of the ancestral civilization, transmitted from generation to generation and preserved or even elaborated by each one. The clearest proof of this fact comes from our observations of the present generation of old men. As a rule they have no racial tattoos. The old women who have no [203] trace of ornamental or ethnic tattooing are rarer. Ornamental incisions are more often lacking than tribal scars, and we encountered only rare cases where the sexual tattoos were lacking.

Fig. 126. Return from the Fields.

304
174
These facts prove that when the elders of the present generation were young, tattooing, if it was customary, was practiced with some regularity only by the women and originally had an essentially familial character in this region.

304
152
A woman bears the pain of the incisions without showing the least sign of suffering, without a complaint or a sigh. She even submits to this custom with some joy, mixed with a bit of pride, knowing that she will be held in higher esteem by the man.

This point, in our opinion, is much more important to the women among primitive peoples than one would generally suppose. It appears to us to be the leitmotiv of the major part of the variations that we observed in the grooming of the native woman.

The anxiety to please, the wishes of the man, these lead the woman to seek constantly the means that would enable her to be tattooed as soon and as often as possible. This natural desire and inner necessity are the reasons why the woman stoically bears all the torture, all the suffering. In primitive life the sexual side naturally is dominant. In this way we can explain, and in a way understand, why tattooing in the beginning was the exclusive appanage of the woman in this region and how she came to decorate the sexual organ and its immediate vicinity in order subsequently to display it; covering nearly all the body with decorations came about, perhaps, simply through coquetry.

856 864 During a girl's early childhood beginning when she is still nursing, a mother with foresight will work to make her organs as perfect as possible. By applying pressure repeatedly and for long periods, she molds, so to speak, the outside in order to make it narrow, as this quality is greatly valued by our people.

It is the mother, too, who trains the girl in her preparations for married life. She teaches her how to behave toward her future husband, and at the same time instructs her in the duties of a good housewife (see Chapter X, Article VIII).

836 864 Certain forms of behavior, although their relationship to our subject is only superficial and external, must nevertheless be mentioned. An adult man will often take in his arms a little girl who has not yet been weaned, or perhaps only slightly more developed. He considers this child to be his wife. He has paid no bride price for her. But since she is a sister, cousin, or other relative of one of his wives, she is a "wife" from his point of view; that is, not only will it be possible for him to marry her later on, but even without becoming her husband he will enjoy a certain liberty in relation to her. (1) Thus, when such a man takes his young "wife" in his arms,

1. See Chapter VI, Article V, 2.

he is enjoying an anticipation of the future and speaks to her [66] in that sense, often accompanying his words with intimate caresses.

The same practice, mutatis mutandis, may be observed on the part of a woman toward a small boy whom she can consider as her "husband."

304 582

2. Circumcision

Circumcision is generally practiced. It is usually performed at an early age. Without going into the details at this point (1) or

1. They will be found in Chapter X, Article VII.

304
582 wishing to commit myself on the reason for this custom, it is a fact that a Nkundó woman will refuse to marry a man who has not been circumcised. Consequently, all the natives want to undergo this operation. That is the reply given by the natives when we asked about the reason for circumcision. When we pushed the inquiry further, they added that the women abhor the deposits that form under the foreskin. I mention this explanation for what it's worth. Nevertheless, this may really be the reason that impels them.

In any case circumcision would seem to have no religious or initiatory significance.

304
832

3. Tattooing

Two kinds of tattoos exist among the Nkundó: purely ornamental tattoos and sexual tattoos. (2) The latter are to be found only on women. The [67] designs are located on portions of the body surrounding the sex organs and even on the outside of the latter.

[619] 2. I will not discuss tribal tattoos because these do not seem to exist among the Nkundó. The reasons for tattooing vary from people to people and from group to group. It is for this reason that they are a distinctive mark. But that does not mean that such is their purpose. The distinctions apparent among the tattoos of various tribes are not an objective but a consequence, as are, for example, the variations among national costumes in Europe. Moreover, the contacts of our people in peace or war have extended by and large only to neighboring clans or tribes, who use the same type of ornamentation as they did. And in these encounters dialect differences serve as a much better means of identification.

304
832 What brings the Nkundô to practice this second form of tattooing? First of all the following considerations must be taken into account: since a woman is by nature more eager than the man to appear beautiful, it seems altogether appropriate that her tattoos should be more abundant, more elaborate than the man's And since coquetry is a form of the desire to appeal to the opposite sex and since members of the latter are susceptible to it, the tattoos attract them. Therefore, too, the women's tattoos have been most elaborated on those parts of her body which are nearest the sex organs.

The reason for the existence of these tattoos may be that they add additional pleasure to intercourse. (1) This explanation does not seem entirely implausible. I have never been able to obtain a clear-cut or direct confirmation of this point, but it is a fact that a man sometimes makes malicious remarks to his wife if she is not sufficiently tattooed to his taste ("You, your body is as smooth as a man's"). This fact lends considerable validity to the explanation given. The persistence of these tattoos in spite of modern dress also makes it convincing, although the evidence is not entirely conclusive, considering that its significance is not diminished by the psychological explanation that follows.

The figures are placed in such a way that they converge toward the sex organ. Moreover, the men see the tattooing at some time or other, either in its entirety or in part. Clothing may cover them more or less, but at some time for one reason or another the woman uncovers them, if only partially. [68] The imagination works on what is seen and quite naturally arouses sexual desire. The accuracy of this psychological explanation can be verified even in Europe; one is tempted particularly by what one has only glimpsed,

1. This is the explanation given, for example, by Dr. J. Maes in Notes sur les Populations des Bassins du Kasai, de la Lukenie et du lac Léopold II (Notes Concerning the Peoples of the Kasai and Lukenie Basins and of Lake Leopold II), p. 189 ff.

304 and "modern" fashions, as well as some ancient ones, take this into
832 account. In the next paragraph, moreover, we will note ananalogous
phenomenon.

Both of the explanations given can be defended, since each has its value. But it seems to me preferable not to oppose them but rather to bring them together, as they probably are in the thinking of the native.

It should also be noted that a man never performs the operation of making a sexual tattoo on a woman, although a woman may indeed operate on a man. And finally it should be mentioned that the
[831] specific terms designating these tattoos are considered as obscenities.

The practice of tattooing is decreasing at the present time.
[178] Many boys are already without tattoos. But very few girls lack them; among them the fad has not disappeared. Some even have themselves tattooed without the knowledge of their parents and in spite of their opposition. Among the Blacks, as everywhere in the world, fashion is deeply rooted because it is natural. But the designs of the tattoos are now becoming smaller. It seems to me that this change is due, not to a reaction against tattooing as such, but rather to a modification of the style. For tattooing is a real fashion, and like all fashions it is subject to change and development. Nowadays there is a tendency to imitate the designs of other peoples of the Congo. Elsewhere, as among the Injó̲ló̲, for example, an internal evolution may be observed, although it is occurring under foreign influence. The evolution is taking place chiefly in the face motifs, while those of the body are beginning to be omitted. But the sexual tattoos do not seem to be disappearing. [69]

4. Bead Belts

291 From an early age the Nkundó child is adorned with a belt of
301 trading beads. Before the coming of the Europeans this decoration
832 made its appearance only towards puberty and was restricted to girls.
Nowadays, many men also adorn themselves in this manner. And since it is now easier to obtain the beads, women are no longer with a single string but wear several in assorted colors. They add smaller ones below the knee.

593x 606 578 We should add that in some households, difficulties arise rather easily during the visits of parents or parents-in-law, because of the sensibilities, incompatibility of character, or discontent of one party who may consider the other guilty of discourtesy, lack of delicacy, disrespect, or stinginess toward the visiting parents. The same is true for the rearing of children. [273]

4. Punishments

593x 578 Nkundó law permits a husband to inflict corporeal punishment (bikɔ́njwá, sing. ekɔ́njwá) on his wife, its nature varying with the seriousness of the case. Obviously these sanctions, expressly [576] permitted by law, cannot give rise to claims on the woman's part or result in the obligation to pay a boóndo. [Editor's note: Unless, of course, the husband -- acting in excess of his rights -- is more violent than the occasion warrants for under such conditions, the [684] wife, supported by her family, attacks the husband, who is then forced to acknowledge the harm he has done and make reparation by means of a boóndo.] If she is hurt she may claim a supplementary payment called liombo (from the verb bomba) or "bandage" (for the wound); it consists of 5 rings or more, depending on the situation. [826] The loss or breaking of a tooth is considered a serious injury. For this is a real injury to the woman and, in the case of front teeth, to her beauty. (1) Of course, as explained above, the wife will first have run home, and it is there that the dispute is examined.

593x 578 684 For the sake of a clearer understanding, let us go into a few details concerning the penal stipulations of Nkundó law in relation to the life of a married couple.

Usually, in a simple domestic quarrel, the couple does no more than tell each other some home truths, seasoning their speeches

---

● [304] 1. Because they are filed, the incisors are much less resistant than normal teeth. Teeth filing is practiced for reasons of beauty.

845 In other respects he is not differentiated from the other two. Greetings are not tripled in the case of triplets.

A child born directly after twins is called Wuteji (from utela, "to repeat"). He is in no way different from other children.

Article VII. Circumcision

Circumcision is generally practiced. It does not have to 304 be performed at any particular age. It is usually done during childhood before the tenth year. The more timorous put it off until puberty or even later. Special customs of individual clans sometimes set a time. Thus, a man of the village of Besombó is not allowed to be circumcised until he has killed an animal at the hunt. On the other hand, the season during which circimcisions are performed is specified: they must take place during the period when the water level is low.

The operation may be performed by any man who is expert at it. It is carried out behind the huts. No one but the boys being operated on and their fathers are present. The boys stand in a group somewhat apart from the proceedings but place themselves so that with their eyes they can follow the treatment to which their companion is being subjected. The patient squats. One of the elderly assistants places his hands over the boy's eyes so that he cannot see what is happening. The person performing the operation has already dug a small pit to catch the blood. He pulls the foreskin, ties it with a string, and then uses ashes to trace the line which must be followed by the empúte knife that is used on such occasions. When the blood has stopped flowing, he chews some bondóngó [824] pepper (Aframomum . . .) or, preferably, [506] a caudal fin of [825] the ngolo fish and then spits it onto the wound. The resulting sensation is very painful. But the patient shows that he is brave; for if he cries he is mocked by his companions.

As long as the wound is not healed, the boy must not use [262] manioc leaves (bangánju) or manioc bread in the preparation of bosombó or lóóto. Nor may he eat the skin, head, or tail of fish.

While the wound is healing, the boy who has been circumcised is cared for, washed, etc., by his mother or, if he has reached

361 The first essential condition is a nearby source of drinking water, 312 a stream, a marsh, or one or more natural springs. These springs are quite numerous in the region we visited. Their water is clear, limpid, and refreshing; the supply is abundant and regular in the dry season as well as in the rainy season. The natives value their 462 benefits so highly that the women willingly go 200 or 300 meters to a spring in the forest rather than to draw water from the stream.

361 [35] In addition to a bountiful spring, the native seeks a healthful location and takes this into account when choosing the future site for his household. The ground that suits him best is slightly raised, dry, open, and located near the forest or in the midst of a fertile plain.

Aside from their hygienic benefits, such locations afford a measure of security to the settler. At the slightest alarm, the whole community leaves both village and home to run into the forest, where they are sheltered and completely safe.

Finally, the native looks for the fertile soil essential to the welfare of his crops. The well-being and even the existence of his whole family depend in large measure on the yields from these crops.

The new site then, must fulfill all these indispensable conditions. If the place that meets these requirements is to be found in a region full of game and not far distant from a stream, marsh, or watercourse rich in fish, the native will not fail to choose such a privileged spot. These conditions will determine the duration of the native's settlement. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

361 When the community has decided to move and a location suitable 313 for a new settlement has been found, all the adult males leave to prepare the ground. This work is particularly arduous in forested areas. In the grasslands it is sufficient to cut the grass, or simply to burn it, and then to hoe thoroughly the area for the new village and its fields and to carry off all the rubbish, while the establishment of a village in the heart of the forest requires far greater effort and work. The first few days are devoted to marking out the boundaries and clearing the small trees, creepers, bushes, grass, etc. Everything that can be cut with a knife or ax is hacked down. Large tree trunks are chinked at the base; then the native heaps all the rubbish [36] from the first stage of clearing around them and

264 [415] spherical calotte, and also wooden plates. Sometimes also simple leaves are used as plates, unless the food is served in the cooking pots.

The whole meal is spread on the ground. [144]

The man squats on his mat and dips leisurely in the dishes with his hand, moving from one to another according to his taste.

[522] The meal is always eaten in silence. Even when several friends eat together, they never talk during the meal.

After the meal the natives carefully wash their hands and teeth and rinse out their mouths several times.

Beverages

271 415 Water is the only beverage they drink at mealtime, and they use it quite rarely. If they do not have a wooden or earthenware cup, they use part of a calabash or simply a leaf rolled into a little cone.

312 462 857 482

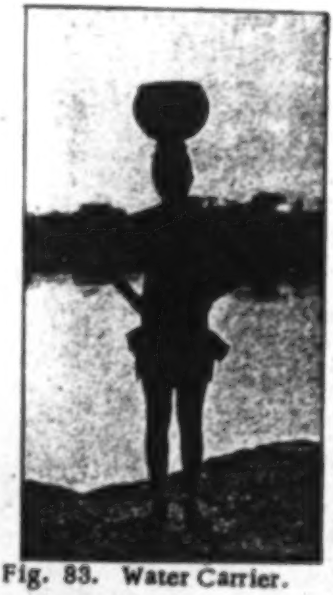


Fig. 83. Water Carrier.

Water usually comes from a spring near the village. The natives use river water only when it is quite clear. The women and children have the task of fetching water, a chore which is often quite hard. I visited many villages located along or near the river, whose source of drinking water was 20 to 30 minutes away.

At certain hours of the day and more especially in the morning as the sun first comes up, the women and children set out, a calabash or water jug balanced on their heads, to fetch the supply for the day.

271 415 Water is kept in large calabashes or earthenware jugs, sheltered from the sun in a corner of the hut.

361 The first essential condition is a nearby source of drinking water,
312 a stream, a marsh, or one or more natural springs. These springs
are quite numerous in the region we visited. Their water is clear,
limpid, and refreshing; the supply is abundant and regular in the
dry season as well as in the rainy season. The natives value their
462 benefits so highly that the women willingly go 200 or 300 meters
to a spring in the forest rather than to draw water from the stream.

361 [35] In addition to a bountiful spring, the native seeks a healthful location and takes this into account when choosing the future site for his household. The ground that suits him best is slightly raised, dry, open, and located near the forest or in the midst of a fertile plain.

Aside from their hygienic benefits, such locations afford a measure of security to the settler. At the slightest alarm, the whole community leaves both village and home to run into the forest, where they are sheltered and completely safe.

Finally, the native looks for the fertile soil essential to the welfare of his crops. The well-being and even the existence of his whole family depend in large measure on the yields from these crops.

The new site then, must fulfill all these indispensable conditions. If the place that meets these requirements is to be found in a region full of game and not far distant from a stream, marsh, or watercourse rich in fish, the native will not fail to choose such a privileged spot. These conditions will determine the duration of the native's settlement. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

361 When the community has decided to move and a location suitable
● 313 for a new settlement has been found, all the adult males leave to
prepare the ground. This work is particularly arduous in forested areas. In the grasslands it is sufficient to cut the grass, or simply to burn it, and then to hoe thoroughly the area for the new village and its fields and to carry off all the rubbish, while the establishment of a village in the heart of the forest requires far greater effort and work. The first few days are devoted to marking out the boundaries and clearing the small trees, creepers, bushes, grass, etc. Everything that can be cut with a knife or ax is hacked down. Large tree trunks are chinked at the base; then the native heaps all the rubbish [36] from the first stage of clearing around them and

361 sets it on fire. Two or three days later the giants of the
313 forest topple one after another amidst an indescribable din and the joyous cries of the natives. The brushwood is quickly cut up and branches and crowns are lopped off. The large logs are left where they fall.

Nothing is more interesting to see than these barely outlined villages in the midst of the great equatorial forest. The clearing, still poorly defined, is framed by a dome of wild greenery over this small open spot where man has decided to settle. The whole clearing is strewn with thick trunks, pieces of wood, charred wood, and rubbish of all sorts. Stumps, cut about one meter from the ground, rise on every side, like so many relics of a life and vegetation recently passed away. Amidst this tortured heap of debris
341 a few very crude huts left and right, as though scattered
342 completely at random. They are really nothing but shelters, places of refuge, where the native spends the night for the time being, protected from dampness and inclement weather. Their miserable appearance, their ramshackle exterior, and the roughness of their construction

Fig. 22. Corner of a Batitu Village Barely Outlined.

276 According to native belief, the kola nut ensures the fertility
842 of a woman if sexual relations take place the night after the man has used this stimulant.

276 The regular use of kola induces very intense nervous excitement. We noticed that the adolescents and men in their prime scarcely use it. Only the old people use it regularly. Kakua, the old native chief, chewed it from morning to night. One day I pointed this out to him, asking if he were not afraid of the dangerous effects of this overindulgence. He proudly pointed out to me the huts of his seven wives, saying, "Ask them if they don't have children!"

276 Among the stimulants we may also mention the peanut,
263 widely used by all the tribes, a type of small ground pea, and
278 certain tree roots known to the natives but the exact nature of which we unfortunately could not determine. It is well to note, moreover, that most of the natives use the stimulants as medicaments as well as condiments. They are used for intestinal pains, colic, and as purgatives.

462 In all the tribes the preparation of food and meals is ex-
252 clusively the task of women. They always do it with great care [142]

252 The kitchen, if it can be called one, is always very simple. If the weather is good, cooking is done in the open in the middle of the village, in front of the hut or behind it, and very often in the shade of the banana trees. If the weather is rainy or cold, the women prepares the meals inside the hut. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

Fig. 81. Carrying Firewood.

465
313

[98]

II CARPENTRY.

335 Carpentry plays an important part in the life of the Mongo Negro. The primitive utensils in his house as well as his canoe and his lokole (the Negro telephone with which he spreads his thoughts from village to village) are made of wood.

The making of the canoe and the lokole takes a great deal of work.

The Canoe.

313
396 The following three kinds of wood, namely, (1) Bokeswa, (2) Lifake, (3) Bomposo, make a good canoe, especially Bokeswa. This tree is much sought after because its wood makes a strong, light canoe.

The Negro who wants a canoe goes into the forest, picks out a nice slender tree, brings out his axe, and fells at his leisure the tree he has chosen. He hacks off the unnecessary branches and hollows the tree out in the rough form of the canoe. (Aulema watu: he shapes the canoe.)

[476] He calls some of his friends together, and they proceed, for payment, of course (nothing for nothing, says the Negro), to hollow out the tree.

396 When they have finished hollowing out the tree, the owner of the canoe calls the wongiwa biatu, the proper canoe maker, a heavy man and one of some account among his fellow villagers. This wongiwa biatu gives a nice, slender form to the canoe with his axe, planes it off nicely, and with the help of the esuwa, a small axe, marks off the edge of the canoe with sharp, short, regular grooves.

483
476 Often the Negroes make their canoes hours away from the nearest water. In order to transport it, they place sticks on the ground and draw the canoe over them. In addition to a number of strong men, all the spes patriae [hope of the fatherland] of the village help with this task. They get a mitako as a reward and feel themselves on top of the world.

396
476 The canoe maker is well paid, the price reckoned according to the size of the canoe. Several dogs are slaughtered at the expense of

M
411
[162] The manufacture of bows and arrows is practiced only by men.

M
411
322 The native chooses the wood for his arrows very carefully. It must be light and very tough. After scraping it carefully with a small knife, he carves one end into a point and cuts a notch at the other end for the bowstring. Both ends are slightly hardened by fire. The part where the vanes are to be attached is scraped with the greatest care. The lines marking the place for the vanes are drawn with the point of the knife, and the vanes are made out of half a feather from the wing of an eagle or guinea fowl.

S
411
[142
291] The native sets all [68] three vanes in place at the same time and fastens them with a fiber thread coiled in spirals.

M
● [314] This fine ligature is strengthened with bulungu resin which is applied in a liquid state and thus forms a very light sheath when dry.

Fig. 43. Basakata Armed with Spears, Bow and Arrows.

M
411 The arrowhead ends in an elongated, conical socket into which the upper end of the wooden shaft is fitted. The general shape of the head is that of a narrow, oblong leaf, sometimes provided with one or two barbs. This shape is found throughout the Lake Leopold II and Lukenie regions. The notch for the bowstring is quite even and shallow, although among the

276 Of the seven specimens of this type that we collected, only one came from the Banfumungu, while the others belonged to various tribes of the region cited above.

The bowl is usually made of a section of bamboo or the tip from the stem of a banana leaf. All these pipes are of the hookah type.

The one we obtained from the Yaelima has a bowl cut from the kernel of a palm nut. This bowl is glued with a paste of ● [314] bulungu resin to a bamboo tube whose lower end is cut in the shape of a fork and submerged in the water.

The natives prefer to use this type of pipe for smoking hemp, although we noted more than once that they also use it to smoke tobacco.

The custom of smoking tobacco with a communal pipe does not seem to be practiced much by the peoples of the Fimi-Lukenie. As a rule, each native has a pipe of his own.

Among the tribes of Lake Leopold II, as well as among the Basakata, Bobaie, and Batitu, the tobacco pipe is usually made simply from the rib of a banana leaf. The native often attaches a small earthenware bowl to the lower end of it. This bowl is always very crude, and it is interesting because of its irregular shape which is long, thin, and slightly crooked. The native unquestionably got the idea for this from the shape of the pipe bowls made from the rib of a banana leaf. The latter did not stand up well under use; the bowl was burned as the tobacco was smoked. At first, the native replaced it by another, cut from a harder and tougher piece of wood, but he soon started making the bowls out of baked clay, while retaining the original shape. [158]

Pipes from this region with wooden bowls are very rare. We possess only one, which comes from the Batitu village of Longinpila.

Beyond the Batitu in the Bumbuli region, among the Bokala and Yaelima, the pipe consists of a long wooden tube, usually slightly curved and provided with a small earthenware bowl at one end and a monkey's femur at the other as a mouthpiece.

[531] Sometimes the earthenware bowl is replaced by one of wood, most often decorated with carved designs and often representing a human head. The latter type is very common in the region of Bena Dibele and Kole. Certain specimens are worked with great artistry.

[104]

III. WEAVING

286 The craft of the Mongo weaver is an honorable one and one that calls for much labor and attentiveness.

[177] Weaving is no longer as much in vogue as it was in earlier times, because the younger people buy European materials. However, the weaver is still able to earn his daily bread comfortably, because
[591] the old people are too pagan to give up their old ingrained habit of wearing a loin cloth.

[462] Weaving is a craft carried on by men only. Some are very skillful in the weaving of materials and command our admiration. Pieces of really beautiful workmanship were offered to us for sale; I had myself seen them being woven.

286 The weaver takes his knife, goes into the forest, and cuts the
314 "mpekwa ia lifeke," the fibers of a certain kind of palm tree which he also sometimes plants on the open highway near his hut. As soon as he has sufficient fibers for the weaving he has in mind, he goes home and at his leisure scrapes the fibers with his knife until they are all of the same thickness.

286 After that he leaves them in the sun to dry. When they have dried sufficiently, he puts up in his hut or on the open highway the frame on which the fibers are to be hung.

After he has attached the fibers to the top cross-bar (they are bound between the top and bottom cross-bars), he holds down the bottom cross-bar with his foot and goes to work.

Often he uses fibers of different colors, and this gives a lovely effect to the piece of material.

Bofomi afom'eto, "the weaver is weaving material."

386 The weaver has a very simple way of giving the fibers their
314 different colors.

From the forest he fetches a liana (longoli) which contains the red, white, or black coloring agent, cuts it in pieces, puts them in a banana leaf which has been quickly scorched in the fire, adds some water and hangs all this, with the fibers, in a bag of banana leaves above the fire. When the dye has soaked thoroughly into the fibers, he has his colored fibers all ready [105] for the material he is about to weave. This mixture is called "bosaka."

Rope-making

283 The Mongo rope-maker (one can hardly call him a professional rope-maker) goes to the forest, fetches fibers from a certain kind of palm-tree, scrapes them nicely with his knife, and puts them in the sun to dry.

Whole coils of rope are made in this way. Native rope, finished in this manner, is of a good, strong quality. Nets for the hunt and also for fishing are made of it. As in the case of weaving, it is something done by the men only.

IV. BASKET AND MAT WEAVING

285 462 The weaving of baskets and mats is chiefly the work of the women, especially the fine braidwork.

The men make only the large, roughly finished baskets needed for the transport of their copal. The braiding of mats is done only by the women.

285 314 From the forest they fetch the twigs of the Bolongote tree, scrape them nicely or dry them in the sun, and, sitting down, braid their baskets and mats.

They make different kinds of baskets, but the raw materials necessary for braiding are the bokombe or likombe of the Bolongote tree.

285 One or two women together braid the mats on the flat ground. The names of the mats are as follows.

[435] 1. Efonzolo, the roughly finished mat (value, five mitakos).

2. Nkongōle, the finely braided mat (value, half a franc).

3. Itundô or lofole, the little mat with which the dirt from the road and the ashes from the fire are carried away.

4. Ifefa, the little mat used to fan the fire.

A. Th. Gutersohn,
Priest of St. Joseph's Congregation.
(Mill-Hill).

Sakata FO43

M
411
[862]

The manufacture of bows and arrows is practiced only by men.

M
411
● 322

S
411
142
291

M
[314]

The native chooses the wood for his arrows very carefully. It must be light and very tough. After scraping it carefully with a small knife, he carves one end into a point and cuts a notch at the other end for the bowstring. Both ends are slightly hardened by fire. The part where the vanes are to be attached is scraped with the greatest care. The lines marking the place for the vanes are drawn with the point of the knife, and the vanes are made out of half a feather from the wing of an eagle or guinea fowl. The native sets all [68] three vanes in place at the same time and fastens them with a fiber thread coiled in spirals. This fine ligature is strengthened with bulungu resin which is applied in a liquid state and thus forms a very light sheath when dry.

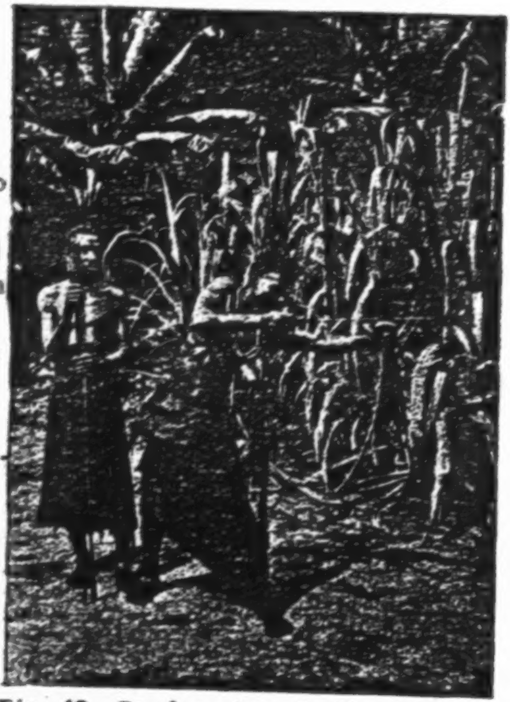


Fig. 43. Basakata Armed with Spears, Bow and Arrows.

M
411

The arrowhead ends in an elongated, conical socket into which the upper end of the wooden shaft is fitted. The general shape of the head is that of a narrow, oblong leaf, sometimes provided with one or two barbs. This shape is found throughout the Lake Leopold II and Lukenie regions. The notch for the bowstring is quite even and shallow, although among the

202 so-and-so has died. Hours before his actual death, people everywhere know that a certain person is on his deathbed and that his death is imminent.

[100] If the witch doctor is up to his tricks of duping the silly Negro, people everywhere around know just what nonsense he is performing at what moment.

The White announces his morning and midday orders by means of the lokole and tells his workers when they may cease work for the day by the same means.

In the mornings and evenings and in the case of wet weather, the lokole carries especially far, but in the full sun it is not so effective.

202 The lokole is a large block of wood which is split down the mid-
534 dle for almost the whole of its length, and the inside part is carefully
hollowed out. The lokole has the shape of an extra long, open mussel
shell although, in general, the outside edges are flattened out.

● 322 The making of lokole is the trade of a certain person, and some Negroes are well-known for the lokole they have made.

Only four kinds of wood are suitable for the making of a lokole.
[824] These are (1) Bokungu; (2) Likoso; (3) Bolondo; and (4) Isi. The last
is the most excellent kind of wood and the one used by the Mongo
[386] Negro to manufacture his "ngula" (red dye) with which he smears his
body for even the least important event that occurs in his village.
The Isi is probably a species of redwood. The Mongo Negro makes
322 five different lokole: (1) Ingonga, small in shape; (2) lokole ja losali,
534 medium size; (3) bongungu, large lokole. These three are all like
the one described above. They are struck with sticks (bosolu) from the
"momambo" tree (umbrella tree). (4) Bonkuka is the large, high
lokole that is struck with two sticks to the ends of which are attached
several balls of caoutchouc. The sound of these lokole carries for the
greatest distance. (5) Ngomo is the large, oblong, upright dance lokole.
This lokole is simply a large, oblong piece of wood, completely
hollowed out, decorated a little, about 1.25 meters high, and
covered at the top with a piece of dried antelope or leopard skin. It
is struck with the fingers and the palm of the hand. This lokole is
the well-known tom-tom, still used by the Negroes on the steam-
boats to announce their arrival in the villages along the river.

202 And now something about lokole language.

198 The beat of the lokole varies, and it is by this means that the Negroes [101] understand the different words. The tempo varies also.

202
198 Bansele nsele ba nkanga, "The one always screaming who is followed into the high grass, the strong branch, the districts go along with the priest (Father).

1. The missionary is seen here as a witch doctor (bansele nsele ba nkanga is a general lokole name for the Negro witch doctor), who, like the Negro doctor, is looked upon as a doctor and a priest.

2. Bofala boki ndaki lisako nda lokombe [sic]. The priest, because he is always seeking converts everywhere, is here compared with an antelope which, when it is followed, runs around and around in the high grass.

3. Etafe bolo. The missionary is here compared with a strong branch. He is strong because he is influential and highly regarded by the Negroes.

4. Benanga bekendaka la mperu. The districts all go along with the Father (priest). They all follow his instructions.

The nkombo of the Protestant Anglican missionary is as follows:

Bofanga sembola bonanga boso nkenda l'Inglese.

"The fishing net is spread out; the country goes along with the Englishman."

In the same way as the fishing net cordons off a part of the river and everything is caught in it, so all the people go along with the Englishman. The Protestant Anglican missionary was in this district [79] before the arrival of the Catholic missionary, so this nkombo refers, of course, to this period. Since the arrival of the Catholic missionary, the situation has changed completely in this district.

These few examples give an indication of the difficulty in understanding the lokole language.

352
322 In addition, the Negro makes a few chairs, the most important of which is the Iyeko ia mpaka, the chair for the elder, a three-legged affair with two props under it, topped with a piece out of the umbrella tree; into this the elder can throw himself as lazily as he wishes.

Then there is the so-called ebonga, a little stool chopped out of a block of wood with the native axe. This is finished off attractively with an esumwa, a small paring chisel, and the seat is decorated around the edge with studs which have been bought in some factory or other.

352 322 [103] Occasionally one sees a native stool, made as described above, but with a kind of back rest chopped out of one piece.

342 177 The Negro who wishes to move with the times makes for his house a chair out of bamboo in the European style: some sticks stuck in the ground, a mat of split bamboo laid over them, and the gentleman can spend his days in dolce far niente [pleasant idleness].

352 322 A table made in the same way (otherwise unknown to the Negro) completes the furnishing of his hut.

One does not need to be an expert, either, in order to be able to make a Negro bed. Some straight sticks are chopped out of the mombambo (umbrella tree). These are placed lengthwise and then across, on top of each other, trimmed a bit at the edges so that the whole thing fits more or less, and it is then bound together with some
[435] split lianas. In this way the Negro has made a bed; this favorite piece of furniture is finished for a sale price of 5 to 10 mitako.

The making of beds could be classed among the Mongo trades.
[438] I once saw, in the interior, ten of these beds, large and small spread out along the side of the road for sale.

I was assured that the owner of the beds was the very best bedmaker of the village. Of course, I raised my hat to such an important personage.

The ekoba, the bed stool, is also indispensable. These ekoba take the place of our pillows and are made of one piece, formed to the shape of the head. It is a somewhat hard pillow, but the Negro head is hard and can put up with it; the fellow sleeps without having to be rocked.

322 252 To prepare his food he needs some mortars and pestles, and these are made of wood. He uses hardwood for these utensils so that the mortars do not wear away from the constant pounding.

In addition, the Negro makes his oars, his bow and arrows for
322 534 the hunt, and the lokombi. The lokombi is a flat, oblong, hollowed block of wood over which some pegs are stretched [sic]. He plucks these with his fingers, thus producing a monotonous sound. This so-called musical instrument is the constant companion of the young man and accompanies him on his long treks through the Evenaar forest and on his visits to friends and acquaintances.

326 521 571 Whereas with us the village inn is the place where the affairs of the week are noisily debated, it is at the smithy where the Mongo Negroes congregate. There the elders gather -- the younger men have no voice here; there the various differences about (or among) wives and the impending taxes are discussed; amidst the billows of smoke -- drawn with deep puffs out of their huge bamboo pipes -- the smith is the only one who works on and earns his living nobly.

326 428 The smith is the most judicious craftsman among the Mongo Negroes.

His trade is practically the only one which is a family affair and is passed on from father to son. If a smith does not have any children, the business is taken over by his younger brother.

This right of inheritance is by no means general in the other trades; the trade of the smith is inherited while the others are taken up by any Tom, Dick, or Harry who happens to have a liking for them.

●325 348 The smithy where the smith plies his trade is a wide oblong dark hut (about five meters by ten meters) built alongside the public highway. In contrast with the other dwellings of the Negroes, the floors of which are generally built about 20 centimeters above the road, the floor of the smithy is dug out from 30 to 70 centimeters below the level of the road so that one goes down a step from the road into the smithy.

The reason why the floor of the smithy should be dug out in this way is not quite clear to me, but most probably it is to prevent the danger of fire when the storm winds that accompany the heavy tropical rains sweep through the huts. By digging out the floor in this way, an earthen enclosure about half a meter high is formed around the smithy, and this protects the smith from the wind and enables him to continue quietly at work.

325 In spite of the primitiveness of his tools [95] and the primitive manipulation of them, the smith knows how to get what he needs from his implements. The forge (lotulu) is constructed as follows: a block of wood is cut about 60 centimeters long, 40 centimeters wide, and 30 centimeters high, with a hollow pipe, half a meter long, connected to it. This is all formed of one piece. With the aid of a banana stalk, on which the clay is moulded, a smith's pipe is formed. The banana stalk is removed from the clay, and the hollow pipe (boongo) remains. Two, sometimes four, bellows (njasa) are placed on the

325 wooden block. These bellows have the openings covered with the dried hide of some wild animal to which piston rods (biongonga) have been attached. The "biongonga" are pushed up and down in quick tempo by two men to make the draft that fans the little charcoal fire.

In front of the "boongo" the smith (botuli) has dug a kind of trench in which the little charcoal fire is laid. In this fire the iron ore, European iron, and copper sticks (njele-mitakos) are smelted.

Botuli atula la lotulo: "The smith forges with the forge."

325 439 In former times when it was not possible for the Mongo to get European iron, iron ore (bikense bia bokili) was dug out of the forest and heated to melting point in the smithy. Impurities which came to the top were skimmed off, and in this manner the Mongo Negro got his iron. Today, now that the Negro can get his iron so easily from the various trading-posts, he prefers to work with European iron. The imported iron makes a better product, and the Negro no longer has to take the trouble of going to look for his ore. Indeed, the Mongo smith would no longer be able to dispose of lances made of native iron ore because the imported iron is so much better.

325 The implements the smith uses are as follows.

1. Boengwa: the small pounding iron.
2. Loaka: the large pounding iron.
3. Etulaka: the sledgehammer.
4. Eala: the anvil.
5. Lingwata: a hammer which is very much like a European hammer and serves the same purpose.
6. Kongwa: a split stick used to get the hot iron out of the fire and to hold it tightly during the forging.

An iron [96] ring or a piece of liana is placed around the split stick and pushed down to hold the hot object as tightly as possible while it is being forged.

7. Loseno: chisel.
8. Losio: small chisel fastened on a stick, with which the decorations on knives, lances, and rings are carved.
9. Jyoka: the implement chest, a nicely finished box with a lid and a European lock.

000 The objects of iron made by the Mongo smith are as follows.

M S 258 [462] deposit naturally acquires the shape of the pot, which is finally overheated and bursts, while the salt block remains intact.

When the salt is finally prepared, the family group returns to the village. The temporary installations are abandoned and may be used by other families who may do with them as they please.

M S 258 422 The salt is divided into two parts.

One part makes up the family reserves, reckoned according to the needs of each family in the group, clan, or village which undertook the exploitation. The rest is divided equally among all the members who took part in [110] the harvest, except that the chief and the woman who was in charge of the burning receive double shares.

The salt reserved for family needs is used in the preparation of food and remains the inalienable property of the family. The share distributed to the participants in the undertaking becomes their private property .

M S 258 422 435 Each one of them, man or woman, disposes of his share as he sees fit. Most often the natives use this as trade goods. Among certain tribes, notably the Mosengere, Wadia, Basakata, and Bobaie, the salt blocks are used as currency or as a common trade item whose value is determined by the weight.

M S 258 435 Before our [Ed., European] penetration into the region and more especially before the introduction of legal tender and its imposition by the administration, salt played a much more important part in the economic life of these primitives.

At the present time, it is used only in local transactions.

M 326 The blacksmith and his family, for example, never participate in the preparation of salt. He exchanges the products of his trade, knives, arrowheads, or spearheads, for the stock of the salt makers. [111]

M 437 It even quite frequently happens that the salt makers sell their surplus as a mere commodity to the highest bidder. They bring it to market, display it for sale, haggle about the price in the same fashion as they do for manioc tubers, smoked fish, smoked meat, or baskets of peanuts.

M 422 562 It is singular and interesting to note that the proceeds from this sale do not entirely go to the woman who owns the salt.

2. The nature of *walo* valuables

583x The *walo* primarily consists of copper and brass rings. Wrought
[301] metal objects (*bifeko*), such as spears, knives, or axes are also added.
● [326] Nowadays a part may be made up of simple brass or iron (steel) bars.
[435] Goats may be given in addition; a she-goat is worth 5 to 6 rings
(nowadays 10), and a he-goat, 3 to 4 *bakonga* (nowadays 6 to 7). One
or more *elɔ́njɛ́* bells are greatly prized as gifts.

583x Payment in iron or copper chains (*bengɛ́-nyola*), in various
435 kinds of bead necklaces, and in leopard's teeth has almost entirely
disappeared. Formerly, certain kinds of beads had great value; the big, round bluish-white ones (*lonyɔ́ngu*, pl. *nnyɔ́ngu*) were worth 1 *konga* each, the big, oblong blackish ones, cylindrical or rectangular in shape, 2 to 3 centimeters in diameter and 5 to 10 centimeters long (called *nkángɛ́*) were worth one slave or, nowadays, 20 to 25 *bakonga* each.

583x Copper (*konga*) and brass (*kɔ́ngo*) are the most important of all. Thus paying the bride price is often referred to as *ɛ́nga la kɔ́ngo la konga*.

The statement by R.P. Kaptein (in *Congo*, 1922, Vol. 1, pp.
[114] 452-543) that original valuables were the *benkata*, the *bingetele*, and
the *mitako* is based on an error. [132] The first two types of valuables, also called *bendɔ́ngu* by some tribes, were used exclusively by the Ntɔ́mbɛ of Lake Tumba and the adjacent Ekonda (Bosanga, Balɪ́ngɔ́, Lonyanyanga, etc.). The *mitako*, known in Lonkundo as *nngelo*,
[436] singular *longelo*, are not native; this monetary unit was introduced by
the Independent State.

The practice of making the payment at least partially in
[177] money or in objects of European origin (such as fabrics, blankets, sewing
machines, trunks, household utensils, etc.) is gradually being introduced. Before the crisis it was already very popular among "white people."

3. The source of the valuables

A young man obtains the valuables for the bride price in various ways. The most usual way and the one which also conforms best to the Nkundɔ́'s familial and social regulations is the use of valuables

304 been the name used by the southern peoples to designate their neighbors to the north whose real name they did not know. The custom of deforming the teeth tends to disappear rapidly. The younger generation already refuses to submit to it, and we often heard the natives with filed teeth referred to as basengi, that is, "savages." The deformation of the teeth is accomplished with a [322] small iron chisel and a wooden mallet. The village blacksmith does this for a small fee. The teeth are broken with short, sharp blows while the patient is seated with his head against the knees of the blacksmith, who stands behind the patient. The operation is very painful and takes several sittings. The last ones are for the filing, which is done with a small native file.

Fig. 94. A Balesa with a Small Goatee and with Eyelashes and Eyebrows Carefully Plucked.

302 The native takes special pains with his hairdo, which sometimes is a true little marvel, the fruit of long and patient work. Both men and women attach great importance to this. They strive [175] to surpass themselves and to achieve the most coquettish coiffure possible. Since every native is a born hair stylist and they aid each other with complete unselfishness, the hairdo not only varies from one tribe to another, but the most disparate types are found within the same tribe, according to our observation.

A very popular method is to smear the hair with a rather thick paste of palm oil and ngula and then to separate the locks and roll them up so that they form small, very irregular balls. To enhance this hairdo, the native does not hesitate to insert peanuts into the hair, first smearing them carefully with ngula paste in order to conceal the deception.

Sakata FO43

M
302
534

No less interesting is the full ceremonial regalia of the chiefs of the Lake Leopold II tribes. This varies according to the importance of the chief, but it always includes a number of cowries and one or several brass disks attached to the hairdo and the loincloth. The right to wear disks in the hairdo dates from olden times and is reserved to the chiefs and great dignitaries by ancestral custom.

S
[291
352
534]

The practice is found all along the Lukenie. From Lake Leopold II to Dekese, these disks have the same shape and ornamental designs. Their manufacture is reserved to the important blacksmiths upon authorization by the local Mfumu na Tse of the region. [182]

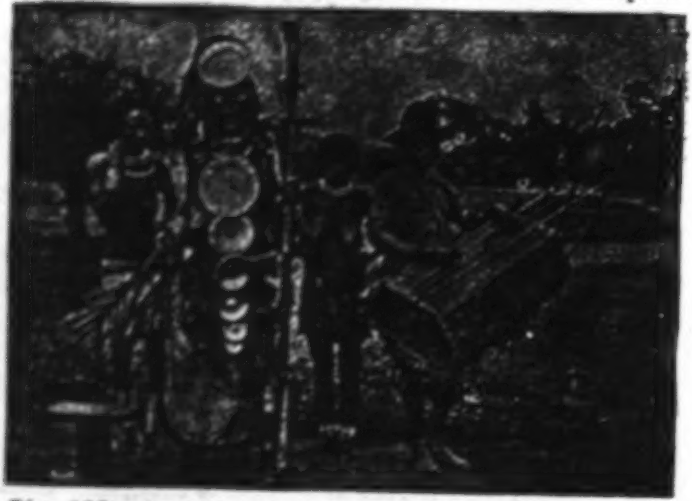


Fig. 103. An Old Native Chief of Lake Leopold II Adorned with his Insignia and Accompanied by his Two Favorite Wives and his Lukumbe Player.

M
[326]

Leopard skins, iron or brass bells hung from the waist, and the right to wear certain knives of a special shape at the waist are also prerogatives of the chiefs and dignitaries throughout the Lake Leopold II and Lukenie region.

We are thus confronted with various manifestations in the material life which are so many indications of the common origin or kinship of these different tribes.

463 [177] Division of labor is unknown, and each person works entirely on his own, without the help of a middleman. There are no laborers and certainly no artisans unless there happens to be some artisan or other who learned his trade under the government or at one or other of the Mission posts and has returned to his village after having completed his contract.

As a rule, such people do not find sufficient work in their own villages, and, as they are usually in possession of a few boxes, clothes, and pots and pans which they have acquired with the savings of their monthly salary, they play the grand gentleman in their village until their goods and chattels have been used up and worn out.

"Njolemwa Bosala," he says, "I am tired of work." "Njowa l'ompele," "I am dying of the heavy, difficult work."

Several of them there return to one or the other of the centers of the White settlers and again offer themselves as craftsmen.

554 A good craftsman has a high reputation among the natives, and his social position is even a very good one for a Negro. He is able regularly to supply food for his wife and children and also to get himself clothes.

326 Although most Negroes work individually, this is not true of the smith who has to have helpers in order to do his job.

465 436 Since the Mongo Negro knows nothing of wages, his helpers get part of the income, consisting of mitako [a kind of metal currency] or some part of the work that has been done, either a knife or a lance, or a foot or arm ring.

I. THE SMITH'S TRADE.

326 554 Of the various industrial trades, that of the smith is certainly the first in rank. The smith is one of the leading people [94] in the village and one of the inevitable persons to have a decisive voice in village affairs whether in settling differences or in meetings.

In fact, the smith is the only one of the Mongo Negroes who works regularly and does not rest on his oars. From what he earns he is able to buy quite a number of wives, and he is regarded as one of the village heads whose wishes must be consulted.

326 521 571 Whereas with us the village inn is the place where the affairs of the week are noisily debated, it is at the smithy where the Mongo Negroes congregate. There the elders gather -- the younger men have no voice here; there the various differences about (or among) wives and the impending taxes are discussed; amidst the billows of smoke -- drawn with deep puffs out of their huge bamboo pipes -- the smith is the only one who works on and earns his living nobly.

326 428 The smith is the most judicious craftsman among the Mongo Negroes.

His trade is practically the only one which is a family affair and is passed on from father to son. If a smith does not have any children, the business is taken over by his younger brother.

This right of inheritance is by no means general in the other trades; the trade of the smith is inherited while the others are taken up by any Tom, Dick, or Harry who happens to have a liking for them.

325 348 The smithy where the smith plies his trade is a wide oblong dark hut (about five meters by ten meters) built alongside the public highway. In contrast with the other dwellings of the Negroes, the floors of which are generally built about 20 centimeters above the road, the floor of the smithy is dug out from 30 to 70 centimeters below the level of the road so that one goes down a step from the road into the smithy.

The reason why the floor of the smithy should be dug out in this way is not quite clear to me, but most probably it is to prevent the danger of fire when the storm winds that accompany the heavy tropical rains sweep through the huts. By digging out the floor in this way, an earthen enclosure about half a meter high is formed around the smithy, and this protects the smith from the wind and enables him to continue quietly at work.

325 In spite of the primitiveness of his tools [95] and the primitive manipulation of them, the smith knows how to get what he needs from his implements. The forge (lotulu) is constructed as follows: a block of wood is cut about 60 centimeters long, 40 centimeters wide, and 30 centimeters high, with a hollow pipe, half a meter long, connected to it. This is all formed of one piece. With the aid of a banana stalk, on which the clay is moulded, a smith's pipe is formed. The banana stalk is removed from the clay, and the hollow pipe (boongo) remains. Two, sometimes four, bellows (njasa) are placed on the

326
411
The objects of iron made by the Mongo smith are as follows.

Bibui: all that is of iron

1. Likula: arrow.
2. Bosuki: arrow for hunting pigs; also used to cut copal and spear fish.
3. Bongelo: lance.
4. Ifombolo: lance.
5. Mpokwankoi: lance.
6. Liswa: axe.

Jokula: knives

326
412
1. Mombi; 2. Boli; 3. Bolengwa; 4. Lingonda; 5. Limenga;
6. Likodzi; 7. Efamba; 8. Momba; 9. More little knives;
10. Lizangi.

Basongo: needles

1. Ingwala.
2. Lokili: tattooing needle. [413]
3. Jyolo: small needle to get flea beetles out of the feet.
4. Efoli: small pin.

Ngonga: bells

326
534
301
[789]
1. Ngonga ea tosisi: bells worn on the hips by women and children so that as they walk the ringing will keep away the evil spirits.
2. Bongonga: a bell attached to the point of a war-lance which makes it like the head of a walking-stick but upside down.
3. Lingwete: little round bell worn on the wrist by men.
4. Elondza ea itumba: the war-bell. An oblong pipe [97] in the form of a long cup attached to a stick. It is struck with a piece of soft wood, and the sound travels surprisingly far.

These bells are all made of wrought iron.

326 The native smith works not only with iron but also with copper which he melts down in the same manner from copper sticks (longele: mitako) and old, worn copper rings.

[439 435] The copper sticks, that nowadays sell at 30 for a franc, come from Europe; copper ore is unknown here.

The copper objects made by the smith are as follows.

326 301 Bakonga: all that is of copper

1. Bongombwa: necklace, often weighing ten kilograms or more; value, 1,000 mitako.
2. Lokolo: leg ring, weighing four to six kilograms and more; value, 200 to 500 mitako.
3. Bolongu: arm ring, not heavy.
4. Ingwete: arm ring, not heavy.
5. Bongenza: leg ring that rattles when the wearer walks.
6. Bosankere: leg ring.
7. Limpala: great leg rings in spiral form, twisted out of thick copper wire, which cover the whole of the lower leg. They
[435] bear much resemblance to the springs in a mattress. Among the Negroes
these have a value of 500 mitako.
8. Bompulenge: resembling a small limpala, these were formerly worn on the arms by old people, but they are now out of fashion and no longer made.

326 554 In the whole district there is only one smith, a certain Elumbu in the village Lilangi (Basankusu), who knows how to make copper bells.

This Black is a celebrity to every Mongo Negro.

According to the Negroes, there is a smith, a certain Bokedzu from the vicinity of the Ikelemba River, who knew how to put a new rifle together from the parts of old broken ones and did so successfully. According to the Negroes, the government agent, however, took the rifle away from him, but in my opinion, and in that of others, this black
[577] rifle manufacturer belongs in the realm of fable, the more so as a Negro
is not at all afraid of a lie.

[98]

II CARPENTRY.

335 Carpentry plays an important part in the life of the Mongo Negro. The primitive utensils in his house as well as his canoe and his lokole (the Negro telephone with which he spreads his thoughts from village to village) are made of wood.

The making of the canoe and the lokole takes a great deal of work.

The Canoe.

313
396 The following three kinds of wood, namely, (1) Bokeswa, (2) Lifake, (3) Bomposo, make a good canoe, especially Bokeswa. This tree is much sought after because its wood makes a strong, light canoe.

The Negro who wants a canoe goes into the forest, picks out a nice slender tree, brings out his axe, and fells at his leisure the tree he has chosen. He hacks off the unnecessary branches and hollows the tree out in the rough form of the canoe. (Aulema watu: he shapes the canoe.)

[476] He calls some of his friends together, and they proceed, for payment, of course (nothing for nothing, says the Negro), to hollow out the tree.

396 When they have finished hollowing out the tree, the owner of the canoe calls the wongiwa biatu, the proper canoe maker, a heavy man and one of some account among his fellow villagers. This wongiwa biatu gives a nice, slender form to the canoe with his axe, planes it off nicely, and with the help of the esuwa, a small axe, marks off the edge of the canoe with sharp, short, regular grooves.

483
476 Often the Negroes make their canoes hours away from the nearest water. In order to transport it, they place sticks on the ground and draw the canoe over them. In addition to a number of strong men, all the spes patriae [hope of the fatherland] of the village help with this task. They get a mitako as a reward and feel themselves on top of the world.

396
476 The canoe maker is well paid, the price reckoned according to the size of the canoe. Several dogs are slaughtered at the expense of

Yaelima

361 313 sets it on fire. Two or three days later the giants of the forest topple one after another amidst an indescribable din and the joyous cries of the natives. The brushwood is quickly cut up and branches and crowns are lopped off. The large logs are left where they fall.

Nothing is more interesting to see than these barely outlined villages in the midst of the great equatorial forest. The clearing, still poorly defined, is framed by a dome of wild greenery over this small open spot where man has decided to settle. The whole clearing is strewn with thick trunks, pieces of wood, charred wood, and rubbish of all sorts. Stumps, cut about one meter from the ground, rise on every side, like so many relics of a life and vegetation recently passed away. Amidst this tortured heap of debris

361 342 a few very crude huts left and right, as though scattered completely at random. They are really nothing but shelters, places of refuge, where the native spends the night for the time being, protected from dampness and inclement weather. Their miserable appearance, their ramshackle exterior, and the roughness of their construction

Fig. 22. Corner of a Batitu Village Barely Outlined.

Teke F133
Kongo FO21
Yaelima

M
361
342

show [37] that the native has built them in great haste, without attaching any importance to them. He nevertheless lives there until a more permanent hut is built, and this provisional state of affairs sometimes lasts quite a long time.

These initial shelters are built without order or method. An odd assortment of materials are used. The shape of the huts varies, and, curiously enough, it usually bears no resemblance whatever to the ultimate dwelling or to the shape typical of the region.

Fig. 23. Longinipila, a Batitu Village Newly Erected in the midst of the Equatorial Forest.

T
K
361
342

Among the Bateke and Babuende [Bwende], the hut is rectangular and on the average is twice as long as it is wide. The very low side walls are rarely higher than 1.50 meters. The door is cut into the gable end, placed a little to the side, opening on the large village square. The roof slopes away on both sides in a curve from a horizontal ridge. Its edges project considerably beyond the side walls and form a small protective roof all around the outside of the hut. The native uses this protected area to store part of his firewood supply, pottery, and other objects of lesser value.

All the huts are built separately and spaced from 10 to 15 meters apart. They stand parallel to each other, facing the main thoroughfare. [38]

Take F133
Sakata FO43

S/T 361 The conical huts are not arranged in family groupings, but are built along an irregular double line. The free space between the two rows of huts forms the principal artery of the village, and the whole assemblange is surrounded by luxuriant plantings of banana trees and manioc.

M 342 The dwellings of the Baboma, Wadia, Mosengere, and all the peoples along the right shore of Lake Leopold II and the Fimi have the same appearance: rectangular base; roof with an oblique double slope, horizontal ridge; triangular gable; veranda formed by the projection of the roof from one to one and a half meters beyong the façade which faces the chief artery of the village; and an entrance through this same wall with a raised, sliding door.

M 352 The furnishings of all these huts are in general limited to

S/T [346]

Fig. 26. Baboma Hut for the Nkisi of the Hunt. In background, Basonge type hut with conical roof and square base.

kitchen utensils and a storage place in the first room and to the bed in the sleeping chamber. The bed is built on stakes from 30 to 50 centimeters high. Mats serve as a mattress, and the pillow consists of a crude wooden block which has hardly been squared, except among the Baboma who still use the small stool-pillow that we found among the Banfumu-Bateke. S [352]

M 342 All the peoples of this region build their huts with great care. After carefully marking the area of the new site, the native drives

M 342 in three large stakes to support the main crosspieces. Then he builds the vertical framework of his hut by planting strong, straight stalks all around the perimeter, 70 centimeters apart. To these vertical stalks, the native attaches horizontal crosspieces made of strong raffia stems and spaced from five to seven centimeters apart. The same method is followed for the interior partition, although weaker and thinner raffia stems are used. The space reserved for the door is left open. At this stage, the dwelling resembles a large cage, [32] fully open to the sky, with its bars arranged horizontally. It remains in that state all through the period of time required to prepare the materials that will line the interior walls. To this end, the native cuts leaves of the nse-nse, a very common type of palm throughout this swampy region. The leaves are assembled in groups of four, the fronds having first been folded in along the rib and roughly braided. The free ends are tied with a fine thong, and the ribs are bound together at intervals of five centimeters. Once the leaves have been prepared, the native goes inside the hut under construction and begins to cover the walls. Proceeding systematically, he works from bottom to top, attaching the nse-nse leaves to the horizontal slats and placing them so that they overlap. When the wall has been covered, it is strengthened with a few slats placed vertically and tied to the outer framework

M
S
342

M
353
576

Fig. 27. Hut of the Wadia and Mosengere.

Sakata FO43
Ntomba

M 342 ● with rattan thongs. These walls are very strong and durable. The roof is usually covered with thatch, but it frequently happens that the native also uses panels of nse-nse to cover his hut. [43]

M 361 Among the peoples who live west of the lake, the huts are grouped in clusters of two or three and placed in two parallel lines. The free space between the clusters is very limited, so much so that at first sight all the huts seem to be continuous. The doors always open on the large street.

M 342 177 656 We also visited a number of villages where earthen dwellings, built by administrative order, stretched out the whole length of the village. As a rule, however, these huts, which we regard as an improvement from the standpoint of hygiene and comfort, were not favored by the natives. The Negro had carried out the task imposed upon him, but he refused to enjoy it. His primitive hut, which was better adapted to the necessities of his life, retained its appeal and its occupants.

M 361 342 Among the Tumba of the east shore of the lake, we observed that the hut tends to present certain characteristics relating it to the type of hut with an arched roof found among the Buli [Oli] and farther north. The ridge, instead of being straight, extends beyond the ends of the hut and dips down, giving the whole structure the appearance of a bow bent [44] chiefly at the two ends. In certain dwellings the doors are placed in the side wall facing the main thoroughfare, and the huts are built in groups standing more or less close together. In other huts, on the other hand, the door is located in the gable wall and opens on a small veranda formed by the projecting roof front. The huts built this way are placed in a line, but are separated, and although the space between the two lines forms the chief thoroughfare of the village, each hut nevertheless boasts a small individual courtyard in front of the veranda. As to the method of construction, it is identical to those we noted in the region west of the lake.

M S 361 342 Among the peoples of the lower Lukenie, the huts are also built by the same method and with identical materials. The door, however, is nearly always in the gable wall, at the end where the roof projects, slightly curved, to form the veranda. When the huts are separated, one notices again a tendency toward an arc in the

Sakata FO43

Ntomba

M ●
S
361
342 ●

ridge, although it is true that this is not very pronounced. It happens very frequently, however, that the natives help each other in building the village and proceed so as to form long lines of uninterrupted huts. [45] As a result, the ridgepiece is continuous and straight. The opening that serves as a door is in the gable wall and opens on a small empty space. This courtyard is common to two adjacent huts, but their doors are not placed face to face.

This type of continuous dwelling is found most frequently among the Basakata of the interior. It is characterized by the careful attention the natives give to its construction and completion.

M
361
342

As regards dwelling type and general village layout, all the peoples along the shores of Lake Leopold II and the banks of the lower Lukenie seem to belong to a single ethnic group characterized by the rectangular hut having a roof with an oblique double slope and a horizontal ridgepiece parallel to the village thoroughfare. The single huts, however, with slightly arched roofs and placed perpendicular to the main axis of the village, which we noted to the east of Lake Leopold II, reveal certain traces of an ethnic affinity with the peoples farther east. Before we proceed

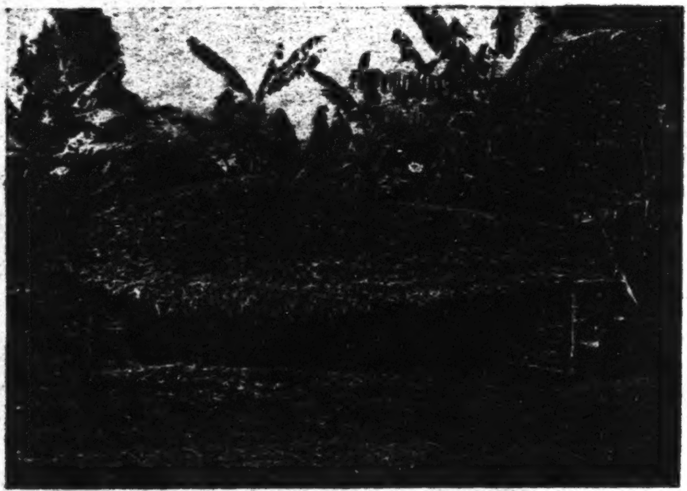


Fig. 28. Tumba Hut with Rectangular Base and Slightly Arched Roof.

Sakata FO43

M 361 ● 342 643 Before we proceed to the study of dwellings in that region, it is well to note that among all the western populations, the hut of the great chief, that is to say, the "chief of the [46] earth," Mfumu na Tse, is built separately, a little apart from the general alignment or facing the principal street. This hut is surrounded by a fence, and the enclosure contains the royal hut, the reception palace, and the huts of the chief's wives.

M 644 Entry into the chief's courtyard is forbidden to his subjects. Only the dignitaries are admitted there when royal audiences are held, and to receive them the chief holds court in the hut that serves as a reception building. All around the enclosure, the "chief of the earth" has special trees of the cactus family planted. This, we were assured by the future successor of the Mosengere chief of Penge, is a royal prerogative very strictly observed. The existence of this enclosure around the royal dwelling recalls the custom in Banfumu villages of arranging the huts in family groups, and it seems to indicate a certain affinity between these different tribes.

S [342] [415]

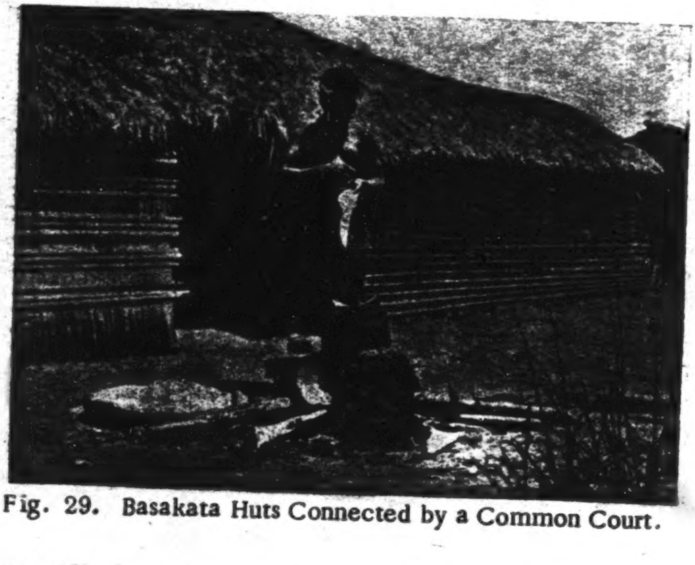


Fig. 29. Basakata Huts Connected by a Common Court.

M 342 In the region of the Ipanga-Batitu, besides the small hut whose roof has the oblique double slope and horizontal ridge and is covered with vegetal tiles, which serves as a secondary, temporary

Yaelima

342

establishment, we find another type of hut reminiscent of the type found north of Lake Leopold II. The base is rectangular, but the front half forms an open veranda or one closed [47] at the sides. The interior of the hut is square. The roof is arched, with a more or less pronounced curve. After first having cleaned, beaten, and prepared the interior area, the native traces the outline of his hut and erects on the perimeter and the median line the supports for the main rafters. The central stake is 50 to 75 centimeters higher than those placed at the two ends. The latter are, on the average, one meter higher than the stakes of the lateral walls. The three stakes of the median line are connected by a strong horizontal crosspiece, and a second crosspiece is laid over this. The latter must form an arc. The curve is obtained by attaching very strong lianas to the ends, from which the native suspends very large wooden blocks. The roof is covered with raffia stems bent at dihedral angles and attached to the ridgepole and to the two horizontal crosspieces of the side walls. The spaces between the large wall stakes are filled in with smaller rods that are tied to the horizontal crosspiece. Upon this framework, the native ties raffia stalks, placed horizontally 15 or 20 centimeters apart. The gable walls are built in the

Fig. 30. View of the Interior of a Ypanga Hut.

415

same way, but the tips of the vertical beams are attached to the crosspieces of the roof. The huts are covered with overlapping *nse-nse* by the same method as that used among the peoples of Lake Leopold II, or they are covered with the large *ndele* leaves that form vegetal tiles. The native proceeds to cover the roof before finishing the walls of his hut. The rows of *nse-nse* are fastened directly to the framework of the roof. The *ndele* tiles, on the other hand, are plaited into an openwork mat with the horizontally aligned holes very close together. The mat is spread over the framework of the roof and fastened to it. It often happens that the native covers the part of the hut that forms the bedroom with *ndele* and the roof of the veranda with *nse-nse*. When asked the reason for using such different materials on the same structure, Inunu, chief of the Batitu of the Oshwe territory, explained to us that the *ndele* make good vegetal tiles which are tough and in which rodents cannot nest because of the thorns, sharp as needles, with which the leaf is covered. In the *nse-nse*, on the other hand, rats and mice settle quite willingly. They cut the leaves to make their nests and quickly reproduce there, unless they are driven away by smoke from the hearth. "That is why," said Inunu, "we prefer to cover with *ndele* that part of the hut where our wives set up their hearth." [48]

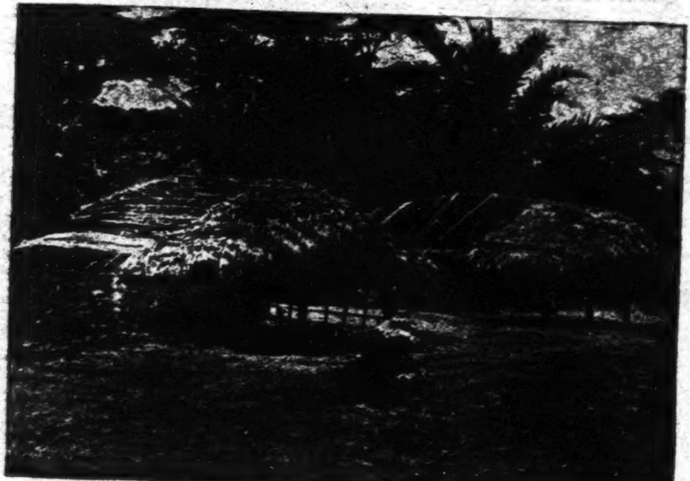


Fig. 31. Batitu Huts with Arched Roof, Under Contruction.

The walls are usually covered with *ndele* leaves or with panels

● 342 of tree bark. Walls of nse-nse are exceedingly rare.

The door of the hut opens on the interior of the veranda. The latter is always open on the side facing the main artery of the village. Sometimes it is open both in front and to one side; it is very rarely open on all sides.

In the Bokala region and in a very few Yaelima villages, we found this same characteristic type of hut. Such cases, however, were quite rare. Most often the huts in this area had an appearance that reminded us of the Batitu type only by the presence of a veranda with a roof that was more or less curved in the extension of the main axis.

Fig. 32. Another Form of Batitu Hut, under Construction in the Village of Longinpila.

The Bokala-Yaelima hut has a rectangular base and a roof with an oblique double slope and a horizontal ridge.

The interior of the hut has two parts, one serving as living room, kitchen, and dining room, the other as the bedchamber. The door opens into the first part and is cut in the wall facing the main artery of the [49] village. All the huts are built separately
[361] and laid out lengthwise in such a fashion that two parallel rows make up the village. The huts are built with stakes and raffia stems for the framework and nse-nse to cover the walls as well

Yaelima

as the roof. The natives of the Bumbuli region usually build their huts quite carelessly. Although their villages are remarkably clean, the general appearance suffers a great deal from the shabby state of most of the dwellings. Even quite new huts are poorly finished, compared to those of other regions. 342

The furnishings of Batitu and Yaelima huts do not differ from those of other regions, except in the shape of the utensils and the presence of chairs. The bed is always very low, raised barely 10 or 15 centimeters from the ground. The interior of the hut is only very rarely lined with mats. Among the furnishings one should note the large drying basket which serves as a storage place and which is hung above the hearth. It is hexagonal in shape, and 352 [415]

Fig. 33. Temporary Hut of the Bokala-Yaelima.

its radius varies from one to one and a half meters. Its edges are straight, the thongs by which it hangs are attached to the six corners of the hexagon, and it is made entirely in an open-work weave like that [50] of the caned chairs of Europe, a special technique of which we found no other instances in the region. No less interesting are the chairs, relatively rare among the Batitu, common among the Bokala, and in daily use among the Yaelima. Their special form is characteristic. The natives 352
sometimes take the utmost care to ornament them with carved 531
designs, and the remarkably artistic appearance of certain ones

Yaelima
Ntomba

352
531 give them in general a very interesting local ethnic character. 415 531 One might say as much of the carved wooden cups, the engraved horns, and the vessels of artistically worked wood which up to now have been regarded as local to the region occupied by the Bakuba [Kuba] and which we found throughout the territory south of Wumbuli.

342 As a rule, the hut of the Bena Dibele-Kole region is much trimmer, it is constructed much more carefully, and the work is accomplished with order and method. The shape is rectangular, the roof has a double slope, and the ridgepole is slightly arched. This curve, however slight, is nevertheless quite characteristic and quite constant. It is undeniably reminiscent of the typical form of the ancestral hut.

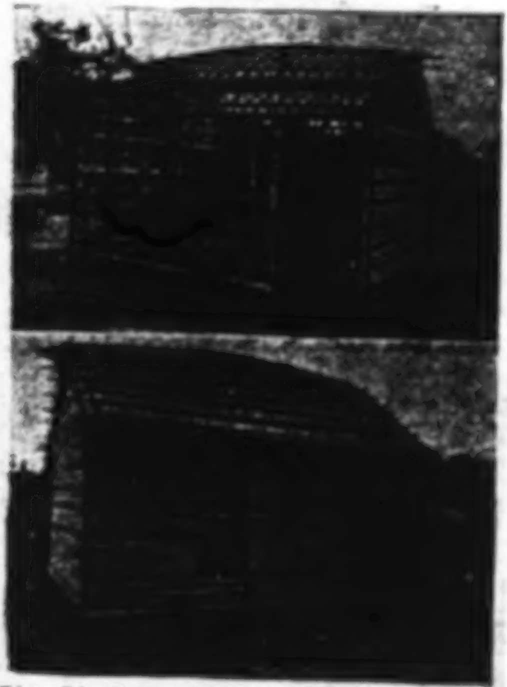


Fig. 34. (1) Bankutu-Bakuba Hut under Construction.
(2) Completed Bankutu-Bankuba Hut.

The door is located either on the side or in the gable wall, according to whether the hut is oriented parallel or perpendicular to

the main axis [51] of the village. This door is always placed 342●
rather high and closes on an inner slide. Since nse-nse and ndele are lacking in this region, the framework of the huts is made of stakes and pieces of raffia, and the walls and roof are covered with raffia leaves plaited flat in the form of a mat.

The huts are built singly, a method which again reminds one of the customs of the Oshwe-Bumbuli region. The native does sometimes cover his hut with grass, but this is very rare.

In this region we also observed that in certain villages the huts 361
were arranged in family groupings and that each group had a special 342
area clearly set apart from the rest of the village. The 592
various huts of a single group are inside a fairly solid stake fence 351
from one and three-quarters to two meters high and sometimes covered with mats of raffia leaves. The doors of all the huts within an enclosure open toward the interior of the courtyard.

Fig. 35. Interior of a Lupango and Drying Peanuts,
Bena Dibele-Kole Region.

The whole forms the lupango. By counting the number of huts in 592
a lupango one may determine how many wives the chief or head of the place has, since each one has her own home. [52] The
lupango are of recent introduction and are derived from Arab in- [177]
fluence. One cannot take them into account in establishing relationships of kinship or ethnic affinity between the different peoples. There is no connection whatever between the lupango of the Bena Dibele-Kole region and the familial grouping of huts

M S 258 Among the Mosengere, Bobaie, Basakata, Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, on the other hand, the natives still use the primitive process.

This varies according to the region, insofar as the materials used in the preparation are concerned.

Among the Mosengere, Wadia, Tumba, Basakata, and Bobaie, the natives use only the salt grass that grows abundantly in the marshes and along the marshy banks of certain rivers in the region.

In the territory of the Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, where this precious resource is lacking, the natives use the trunks of banana trees and especially the flowers of palm trees, whose ashes are quite rich in alkaline matter.

M S [361] Salt grass is harvested toward the end of the dry season.

At this time groups of Mosengere, Wadia, Tumba, Bobaie, and Basakata of the interior leave their villages to camp along the rivers with marshy banks.

M S [342] They choose a site suitable for setting up the few huts that will serve them as shelters during their temporary sojourn in the region. These huts are usually very poorly constructed. Built hastily and carelessly, they are provisional shelters, refuges for the night, rather than dwellings.

M S 258 423 In former times the whole expanse of the marshy plain covered with salt grass was divided into sections.

Each native group had its own well-defined area and exploited it exclusively. [107]

The site for the huts occupied by each such group was determined by the location of the familial reservation or domain and was chosen so as to lie in the center of it.

The time of year when the salt grass was gathered and the length of the period of exploitation were regulated. In short, the preparation of salt was a national industry, governed by special laws to which the whole tribe had to conform.

At the present time, the groups gather salt grass wherever they think best, without regard for the customs and rights of the past. This work of harvesting the grass falls to the women.

M S 237 462 While the men are fishing, the women, provided with large knives, cut down the tall grass that grows in the marshes or along

593x
574 ótswɛ́kɛ́ liɛ́la otswɛ̂k'olɛ́, bɛ́fɔ́kolaka mbɔ́k'ɛ́y'olɛ́ la ngɔm'a nkolɛ́, "If you are married go back to your parents, or you will be taught the way with drums and gongs," that is, "when you are dead." (2)

[764]
[illegible]
[534]
2. A woman is buried in her own native clan. Her corpse is transported there to the accompaniment of drums and horns. The lokolɛ́ gong announces her death.

593x
602 A married woman may not evade the duty of helping her relatives under special circumstances (pregnancy, illness, serious accidents, death). This obligation [285] is not limited to her mother and father, but extends to all her relatives; the closer the degree of kinship, the stricter the obligation.

Besides, love of family is sufficiently developed so that there is no danger of the woman forgetting herself too much in this realm. [626] And a husband who would like to prevent her from fulfilling these elementary duties would be much criticized by all and should expect a dissolution of the marriage.

593x
574
342
592 It was said above that a husband builds a hut for his wife. His relatives often assist him in this task. But it also happened -- in the past, for colonization has removed the possibility of it -- that the woman's father wanted to build his daughter's house himself or at least to make the pavement out of clay brought from her native land. This act was a demonstration of wealth and politico-social importance as well as proof of fatherly affection. The husband, for his part, was honored to have married the daughter of such an important man and loved her all the more. Thus a number of women say that "they only cooked on ancestral soil." This soil was brought in baskets across distances up to 50 kilometers by Batswa and by men of the woman's clan or village. Her father could do it because of his great influence and regal rewards (bokɔ́ndo, verb kɔ́nda) were distributed during a feast (ntɛkɛ) given for the workers and their relatives after the task was completed. This was done for Bompeli, daughter of Bokombe of Litɛ́li (Bombwanja) married to Bonyeme w'enyuka of the Basɛ́kɛ́ Mbangó (Bonkoso); for Beluka, daughter of

593 longo of Bokɛ́kyɛ́ (Boselo, Bombwanja), married to Bokaa is 'Ifonda
594 of Bowɛ́lɛ́; for Mbalaka, daughter of Bolekela wa Imangaiso of the
● 342 Basɛ́kɛ́ Lokuli (Bongíli), married to Mbuli is'ea Wela of Bombɔ́ngo
556 w'Etefa (Bongale) (1) [286]

[551] 1. She bore the name of Mbɛ́laka (meaning indemnity), because her father had solemnly proclaimed (-bɛ́kya) and publicly promised that he intended, one day, to place himself in the position of having to pay an indemnity because of his daughter, as proof of his love. Indeed [782] when Mbɛ́laka was married, he killed one of his wives, cut her into pieces, and sent the "meat" to his son-in-law as "the first hen" that his wife would prepare for him. But he did not have to pay [602] [614] the indemnity because the victim's clan was too weak to attempt a war; they did not dare to make a claim and, in order to avoid even greater misfortunes, they resigned themselves to this revolting ignominy.

Article V

Relations Between the Husband and His Wife's Family

606 607 As has already been said, kinship by marriage is called likilɔ́, and relatives by marriage are called bokilɔ́, bakilɔ́. Mbɔ́tsolɔ́ is a term of respect for very close relatives by marriage (father-in-law, mother-in-law, sometimes brother-in-law or sister-in-law). When there is a considerable age difference between two affinal relatives, the elder one sometimes calls the younger bokilɔ́walɛ́. This happens most frequently when the son-in-law is so young that he can still be considered a child. This term can even be used by an elder brother

352 322 [103] Occasionally one sees a native stool, made as described above, but with a kind of back rest chopped out of one piece.

● 342 177 The Negro who wishes to move with the times makes for his house a chair out of bamboo in the European style: some sticks stuck in the ground, a mat of split bamboo laid over them, and the gentleman can spend his days in dolce far niente [pleasant idleness].

352 322 A table made in the same way (otherwise unknown to the Negro) completes the furnishing of his hut.

One does not need to be an expert, either, in order to be able to make a Negro bed. Some straight sticks are chopped out of the mombambo (umbrella tree). These are placed lengthwise and then across, on top of each other, trimmed a bit at the edges so that the whole thing fits more or less, and it is then bound together with some
[435] split lianas. In this way the Negro has made a bed; this favorite piece of furniture is finished for a sale price of 5 to 10 mitako.

The making of beds could be classed among the Mongo trades.
[437] I once saw, in the interior, ten of these beds, large and small spread out along the side of the road for sale.

I was assured that the owner of the beds was the very best bedmaker of the village. Of course, I raised my hat to such an important personage.

The ekoba, the bed stool, is also indispensable. These ekoba take the place of our pillows and are made of one piece, formed to the shape of the head. It is a somewhat hard pillow, but the Negro head is hard and can put up with it; the fellow sleeps without having to be rocked.

322 252 To prepare his food he needs some mortars and pestles, and these are made of wood. He uses hardwood for these utensils so that the mortars do not wear away from the constant pounding.

In addition, the Negro makes his oars, his bow and arrows for
322 the hunt, and the lokombi. The lokombi is a flat, oblong, hollowed
534 block of wood over which some pegs are stretched [sic]. He plucks these with his fingers, thus producing a monotonous sound. This so-called musical instrument is the constant companion of the young man and accompanies him on his long treks through the Evenaar forest and on his visits to friends and acquaintances.

624 and that he may have no more than a month or perhaps a year in which to live and will surely die speedily.

The special objects attaching to the office of *nkumu*, among these the hat, *mentale*, and stool, [illegible], are at the same time subject to similar magical arts to determine whether they may be produced for the new *nkumu*'s use. They are not present, being in the possession of the *mukonde* which will appoint him, but are mentioned by name. Apart from the *mentale*, no further ceremony is required to identify these objects with their future owner.

[300] The *esingo* ended, the *Nkoma Akulu* smears black *mbil* all over his body again,
624 before the rites begin to determine which of his wives is to be known as *Nsomo*,
787 the one who will be closest to her husband throughout his days. For this, magic formulae (*biamale*, sing. *amale*) are used. All the wives sit round in a circle and the *nkanga* places some irritant such as ground pepper in the eyes of all the women. The wife whose eyes stream most and whose discomfort is also accompanied by a violent
[827] shaking of the body is known to be *Nsomo*. Here again, lying is believed to be out of the question, for the shaking of the body is something that is supposed to be impossible of simulation, the real being easily distinguished by all from the false. *Nsomo* is now stripped of all clothing and her body smeared by the *nkanga* with yellow clay on one side, and with white on the other. A belt of leaves is put round her waist
624 and a small bit of cloth between the legs with each end attached to the belt. Near by
789 a gourd with 'medicine' in it has been standing ready for the next step in the ceremonies, and this is now smeared with white clay, a parrot's feather stuck in the neck, and handed to *Nsomo*, who receives it in one hand. Into the other hand is put a section of plantain stalk, into one end of which has been stuck a parrot's feather. A third feather is placed in her mouth so that she cannot speak, greet anyone, or eat. She is now tied with a cord which is held by one of the young men attending *Nkoma Akulu*. At this point of the procedure the *nkanga* states his price
[791] for his work, which will be in the neighbourhood of one hundred brass rods, worth
435] to-day about fifty francs, but formerly double that amount. The future *nkumu*, accompanied as before, leaves for the village of the *mukonde*. *Nsomo* starts off at a tremendous pace, for she is now imbued with a sort of frenzied strength, and for this reason has been tied up and put in charge of a strong young man, otherwise she would be off so fast that no one could catch her, and would go into the forest, where she would live for days unseen.

624 In the village of the *mukonde* the party all sit in an *esanga* belonging to one of the elders. This is the place where the Tumba men really live—their houses are just
[343 sleeping and cooking establishments, but the *esanga*, having a roof for shade and no walls, is the place where the men congregate and spend their leisure time. It is also
● 342] the site of the village smithy, which takes up one end. Here, then, *Nkoma Akulu* and his party sit for a day and a night, and neither he nor *Nsomo* may eat food or drink
[362] wine during this period. Games are played by the *mukonde*—mock battles, dances, and
[517] songs chiefly of battle, and before the first streaks of dawn appear the group in the *esanga* begins to march up and down the village singing.

At dawn the whole party, accompanied by a large crowd, make their way to a place in the bush where there is an elevation of some sort. Here *Nkoma Akulu* climbs up and takes his stand, accompanied by *Nsomo*. Now the *mukonde* choose the *Bilo*

Now the molembe choose the Bilepo

624 [533] *Okulo*, a young woman of their own number, who will thereafter be known by this name. She is an official cymbalist and must always begin beating before others may join in. In reality the members of the *molembe* have decided beforehand who shall be chosen for this position, and the woman of their choice now takes her stand on the elevation together with *Nkumu Akulo* and his wife, *Nsana*.

624 242 The member of the *molembe* whose right it is by inheritance to place the *mantolo* (see Plates) upon the head of the *nkumu* now comes forward with it. This hat, about twelve inches in height, is woven of raffia and cylindrical in shape, but the brim, instead of being at the base, encircles the top of the crown. It is usually decorated with a burnished brass plate attached to the front, and perhaps a second one behind, and in these modern days it is quite in style to hang a row of safety pins from the 'brim' or 'halo' encircling the crown. When the *nkumu* is the first of his line, the *mantolo is purchased by him, but in the case of succession it is that used by* the deceased predecessor, and has been kept by the *molembe* until this time. It is his badge of office and sign of authority. The bringing out of the *mantolo* is an occasion for 624 merriment. *Nkumu Akulo* calls for his *mantolo*, but the *molembe* tease and tantalize him and ask for money. The amount is a fixed sum, but *Nkumu Akulo* pays out at first but a few rods, is teased for more, and so on until he has provided the total amount, usually about one hundred. The member of the *molembe* whose duty it is to place the *mantolo* on the head of the *nkumu* begins to tease the crowd. He chooses various names by which the *nkumu* might be called, everybody knowing all the time what his name must be. He asks the people, 'Shall we call him so-and-so?' 'We refuse', reply the people. 'Or so-and-so?' 'We refuse.' And each time names whereby *nkumu* are known are repeated. Finally the correct name is given, as, 'Shall we call him *Nkumu Lokondolo*?' and the crowd roars its approval, 'Ooooo!' The *mantolo* then being placed on *Nkumu Akulo's* head he now becomes *Nkumu* and leaps down among the crowd, who bear him off to their village with rejoicing. In the choice of names, the first *nkumu* in a village is known as *Nkumu Lokondolo*. If there is another section of the village with an *nkumu* of its own, he must take another name, such as *Nkumu Ijoli Bokanga*. Successors must always take the names of their predecessors whatever their own personal names may be. An *nkumu* chosen by a *molembe* [554] which is also the *nsome molondo*, the hereditary owner of the land, is known as *Nkumu e Bitindi* (*Nkumu* of the heels), for he occupies a more important position than his fellows, and is thus the support which holds up the whole group of *nkumu* chosen by other *molembe*.

624 342 The *nkumu* is borne off to his *nsago*, his residence, which in this case is temporary, to be replaced later by a permanent one. The *nsago* comprises the whole unit of buildings for the *nkumu*, including his own sleeping quarters, the houses for his wives, the *ebanga* where he spends the daylight hours, and a row of houses for his children. His *ebanga* and his own sleeping quarters are screened from the public gaze, making [351] a place known as *ipama*. In the case of a new *nkumu* the screen is temporary, but when the permanent *nsago* is built, a permanent *ipama* is made by planting umbrella trees (*malemba*, sing. *molemba*) in a rectangular or circular fashion. Here, sheltered 624 from intrusion, the *nkumu* remains in retirement (*ndi*) for a month.[1] While he remains

---

[1] *Ndi* refers to the sitting of a hen on eggs, the seclusion of a woman after childbirth, or of the *nkumu* at this juncture of the ceremonies.

624

inches long and two inches in width, numbering up to seven are brought and attached to the back of her *lombo* by folding them over it.[1] [596]

The first male child which was born to the *nkumu* before he acceded to the office is known as *Iyomi Nkoi*. If he has none, then the right to this name passes to the first male child to be born to his younger brothers. Any child born on the day that the *nkumu* is given his *montolo* is also called *Iyomi*; if a male he will be *Mola Iyomi*, if a female, *Mpembe Iyomi*.[2] These children must not see the *nkumu* until they are old enough to know his name and greet him properly, and so they are taken to some village other than the one in which he has his residence. When such children are considered old enough to take up residence in the village of the *nkumu* it is an occasion for revelry, a big dance, *ateke*, is held, and there is a feast. The child, *Iyomi*, is brought to the village of the *nkumu* with rejoicing, and this is a signal for everybody desiring to do so to help himself to anything belonging to the *nkumu*. Goats and fowls may be killed and eaten, sugar-cane rooted up, bananas, plantains, and other crops growing near by seized for food. Because of this custom the *nkumu* will take precautions and send his livestock, at least, off to some other village in order not to lose more than he can help.[3] 852 624 [551]

The *nyemba*, the singer or singers, and the *ntotii*, the praisers already mentioned, remain with the *nkumu* during his period of seclusion. Added to these is *ntomba lokombi*, the bearer of the *lokombi*, a stringed instrument played with the fingers, similar to a bass viol in its general appearance. 624 533 534

Inside the *ipona* during the seclusion of the *nkumu*, few people have the right of entrance, but as one enters the *ehanga* where the daylight hours are spent, one finds the couch of the *nkumu* on the left and towards the rear. On the same side and towards the front are seated the *ntomba lokombi* and the *nyemba*. *Nsomo*'s couch is to the right of, and parallel to, that of the *nkumu*, but still to the left of the centre posts. To the right of her couch is the fire in the centre, and beyond the fire on the right side is a couch for the *mamei*, likewise somewhat to the rear, with a space in front for the *ntotii*. 624 342 ● 352

The month's seclusion being completed, the *nkumu* prepares to buy the homage of the village. *Nsomo* gets rid of her decorative colours, and assumes ordinary attire, becoming like any other of the wives, and is ready to take up all the usual duties of a wife, whether in the garden or at the house. The people are called to come and render to the *nkumu* their homage and praise. The men come to the *ipona*, are admitted to the presence of their *nkumu* and seat themselves on the bare earth with their legs wide apart and facing him. They then, without uttering a word, greet him in the 624 576

---

[1] The *lombo* is a belt which used to be worn by Tumba women encircling the buttocks, and this was used to attach their only garment, the *elow* among the Bonginda, this being a short loin cloth, or an *mpanga* among other groups, this being a woven cloth strip worn between the legs.

[2] When a new *nkumu* assumes office, one already in office will take this opportunity of getting more of his sons named *Iyomi*. He takes them to the *molondo* of the new *nkumu*, and having placed a bracelet of cowrie shells on the right wrist, and sometimes one on the right ankle, asks the member of the *molondo* whose right it is to give away the *montolo* to name these sons *Mamei* (pl. of '*Iyomi*'). This man will then take such a son, and presenting him to the people introduce him by giving him a name, and following with praise as, '*Ow Iyomi Loomo, bototo!*' and the crowd replies with the customary '*Bow!*' [291]

[3] It is well to remember that not every individual bearing names associated with the institution of the *nkumu* is directly concerned with it. With the practice of 'resurrecting' dead relatives by naming new-born children after them, such names as these become widespread. [551]

515 834 are reassured by the fact that they are in a group, so that no one feels singled out by the gaze of the passer-by. Washing away from major streams is always surrounded by more propriety. For this purpose a [343] small enclosure (*ikomba*) is built behind the hut or among the banana trees, or a small thicket is allowed to grow there. By this means the native is sheltered from indiscreet glances if he wants to take a [157] bath or give himself an enema. As a matter of fact these things are done preferably after dark.

834 152 5) Violent anger or sorrow drown out modesty, just as they momentarily destroy the use of reason and suppress all feelings which are contradictory or simply different. In this situation, too, the man shows himself superior to the woman. He is less impulsive, calmer, less prone to lose control of his actions, to be carried away by his anger. Thus he almost never strips himself bare. The woman, on the other hand, readily strips off all her clothing. This behavior is extremely common; a woman undresses completely whenever she experiences great sorrow or intense anger. Luckily for propriety's sake some friend or relative always hastens to cover at least the essential parts. For a woman who throws off her clothing exposes herself to the mockery and jeers of spectators. (1)

[593]ˣ [578]

1. An angry woman may also undress to shame her husband; it is a way of insulting and mocking him.

853 6) The Nkundó practice sexual intercourse only at night. I believe that this custom is due to their sense of propriety, [57] supplemented by a superstitious explanation which will be described in detail in Article V.

593ˣ 834 7) The sense of modesty has its fullest expression in relation to parents, brothers, sisters, etc. Thus it is unheard of that a son should see his mother naked: *bɔ́na ɛtɛ́nɛ́kɛ́ ɛ̌sunvɛ́ nyangó*. If an adult daughter is ill and requires personal care (such as an enema, for example), the father has to take care of her himself if no other female relative is near by. But their sense of modesty is such that they both shed tears over the event. As a matter of fact this situation

2: Hulstaert--249 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

Article III. Relations between Spouses; Their Various Rights and Duties

593x 833 Spouses are obliged to fulfill the duties and perform the tasks incumbent upon them .

It is difficult to say just how far the sense of duty to fulfill the debitum conjugale extends among the Nkundó. Normally, they very frequently fulfill this obligation toward each other. But after a good quarrel they abstain, either through mutual consent or because one of them refuses. [586] If one of the parties fails seriously and repeatedly in this respect, the question is resolved by a divorce. The response to temporary lapses is limited to reprimands, disputes, blows, and other common reactions. [834] It should be added that continence is required during the ekelé period after the birth of a child and after setting up a new hunting enclosure (lokombo) or a new fishing weir (bosaka), before the third piece of a game or fish is caught.

1. Meals

593x 264 A couple never take their meals together. The husband eats the food prepared for him and served to him by his wife alone, with his grown sons, or with friends or relatives. The wife herself eats with her small children, her daughters, or her female relatives. The two sexes never mingle at meals.

593x 521 The same rule applies to talks, but it is much less strictly maintained; it is not rare to find that, for one reason or another, women participate in the conversation of men.

It will not be long before, through the influence of Christianity, [268] women will generally be admitted in the conversations of the opposite sex. Developments with respect to mixed meals will come with much more difficulty; in practice the question has not even been broached.

593x ● 343 [342] Thus one finds a kitchen next to the bedroom or separated from the hut; in addition to being the place where food is prepared, it is where the woman spends her day. The kitchen is sometimes a structure separated from the dwelling itself, sometimes a part of the house separated from the bedroom by a partition containing a door.

2: Hulstaert--250 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

578* ●343 Polygamists as well as some monogamists have a kind of shed where they receive their friends, take care of their affairs, eat their meals, etc. (1)

> 1. Such a shed is called esamba by the Bombwanja, ingɔ́mba by the other tribes. The Beloko, like the Ntɔ́mbɔ and Bolɛ́ngɛ located between the Congo and the Boloko, say bongɔ́mbo. The Ekonda say ewɛ́nga.

[626] A man who is frequently found in the kitchen or who likes to rest there is the butt of ridicule by both men and women. He is called ikɔ́mbelinga (derived from bolinga, "smoke," and kɔ́mba, "to dodge; to turn the head away in order to protect the eyes against smoke").

2. Illness

593* 758 A wife is required to nurse her husband if he is ill, together with his other wives if he is polygamous and, in case of serious illness, with the aid of his female relatives (mother, sisters). Even if they are married and living at a distance, they come to take care of a brother or son; it behooves their husbands to be reasonable and not to try and forbid their absence or prevent this exercise of their duty, for otherwise a man runs a great risk of seeing his wife leave him for good, outraged by this demonstration of his lack of affection for her family.

Together the wives and relatives seek medications and prepare the appropriate potions.

When a wife is ill the husband's female relatives usually come to see her, console her, and administer what care they are capable of giving; as a rule they are well disposed toward the wife of their son, brother, etc. The husband, for his part, must seek medications and help his sick wife. I recall a great palaver apropos of this question. During the illness of his wife Efetsɔ, a certain Bokangɛ continuously had relations in his hut with another woman. The matter became public. The guilty husband was

846 515 In order to facilitate the flowing out of all the blood, the mother is given hot baths. However, they are not begun before noon, for the Nkundó say that in the morning and evening it is too cool and the blood is not sufficiently fluid. Those who have been [177] in greater contact with the Whites give the mother beer or wine to drink. The hot baths are administered behind the hut in an en- ●[843] closure set up for the occasion. They are of two kinds: baths by sprinkling (bompúlo wǎ mbǎomba) and steam baths (bompúlo w'ɛlángɛ́). For the first method [485] very hot water is used, and by using a bunch of palms, the woman's abdomen, loins, and ribs are sprinkled. In the second method a pit is dug and large leaves (or a basin) containing boiling water are placed in it. Three or four strong, wide sticks are placed on top, and the woman is seated on them. She is wrapped in several mats to which, today, one or two blankets are added. She is left thus exposed to the action of the steam for several minutes. According to the natives, it is the ideal system because it makes all the blood come out, or almost all. Some people first give a sprinkle bath, and then follow it with a steam bath; others are satisfied with one or the other, depending on the circumstances. In any case more than one bath is never given in one day. This care may be given for one or two weeks, or it may stop after two or three days. The effect of "civilizing" is more inclined to the latter. But no Nkundó would want to omit the baths, for the woman's life is at stake.

After the bath the woman is carefully rubbed and dried, [302] and then anointed with oil mixed with red paint.

From time to time, usually every second day, she is given a douche.

846 As long as the mother remains weak, a large fire is maintained in her hut to keep her warm, and the doors are closed by means of palms. The husband and his relatives fetch the firewood. But the first log must be cut and brought by the husband who, to use the Nkundó expression, must "remove the violence" (ímola lofasó. In the beginning the woman lies down on a boánga right near the fire. She turns the front of her body toward it. The fire plays a great role in her quick recovery. She is very well cared

845 However, these names are not used exclusively by such persons;
551 they may be given to others as well. The father, on the other hand, does not receive a new name; but he bears the title Is'éy'ǎfé, which literally means "father of two." (1) Twins are also said to be Ǎmbámba (pl. Byǎmbámba) from the verb -ámba, "to accept, to receive," because they are permitted to accept and to take everything, since none of the usual prohibitions apply to them.

The mother of twins is not required to go into seclusion
845 (nyang'éy'aása áfóáte waékelé). The shed belonging to the head
343 of the clan, that is, the one in whose home important animals (leopards, etc.) are dismembered, is set up for her. (2) The shed is closed by means of palms. Neither the parents, nor the helper, nor the persons who enter this place are required to observe continence or the other prohibitions involved in ekelé.

All the members of the kin group come to greet the twins
845 and give each one a present (hens, knives, arrows, food), which is received by the father or the mother. Whenever anything is given to one of the twins, even if it is the smallest object, the same must be given to the other; otherwise the latter would die. If the mother takes one in her arms, the other one must also be picked up, either by her or by the father. If she strikes one, she must also strike his brother. This [503] duality therefore applies to everything, and with even greater reason to nursing.

If a twin child cries or is ill, the parents must sing and
[534] dance to the accompaniment of a lokolé and a ngòmo drum, a ceremony called -béngá baása. If someone invites a twin or his

---

1. Among the Ekonda he is called Buka.

2. Therefore, at the bonsenge place or the place of dismembering important animals (nyama yǎ bikofo, literally "superb animals").

624 and that he may have no more than a month or perhaps a year in which to live and
will surely die speedily.

The special objects attaching to the office of *nkumu*, among these the hat, *montolo*, and stool, *mbata*, are at the same time subject to similar magical arts to determine whether they may be produced for the new *nkumu*'s use. They are not present, being in the possession of the *molembe* which will appoint him, but are mentioned by name. Apart from the *montolo*, no further ceremony is required to identify these
[302] objects with their future owner.

The *nsingo* ended, the *Nkema Akuke* smears black *mbili* all over his body again,
624 before the rites begin to determine which of his wives is to be known as *Nsono*,
787 the one who will be closest to her husband throughout his days. For this, magic
formulae (*bienzako*, sing. *eenzako*) are used. All the wives sit round in a circle and the
nkanga places some irritant such as ground pepper in the eyes of all the women. The
wife whose eyes stream most and whose discomfort is also accompanied by a violent
[827] shaking of the body is known to be *Nsono*. Here again, lying is believed to be out
of the question, for the shaking of the body is something that is supposed to be impossible of simulation, the real being easily distinguished by all from the false. *Nsono*
is now stripped of all clothing and her body smeared by the *nkanga* with yellow clay
on one side, and with white on the other. A belt of leaves is put round her waist
624 and a small bit of cloth between the legs with each end attached to the belt. Near by
789 a gourd with 'medicine' in it has been standing ready for the next step in the
ceremonies, and this is now smeared with white clay, a parrot's feather stuck in
the neck, and handed to *Nsono*, who receives it in one hand. Into the other hand
is put a section of plantain stalk, into one end of which has been stuck a parrot's
feather. A third feather is placed in her mouth so that she cannot speak, greet anyone, or eat. She is now tied with a cord which is held by one of the young men
attending *Nkema Akuke*. At this point of the procedure the *nkanga* states his price
[791] for his work, which will be in the neighbourhood of one hundred brass rods, worth
435] to-day about fifty francs, but formerly double that amount. The future *nkumu*,
accompanied as before, leaves for the village of the *molembe*. *Nsono* starts off at a
tremendous pace, for she is now imbued with a sort of frenzied strength, and for
this reason has been tied up and put in charge of a strong young man, otherwise she
would be off so fast that no one could catch her, and would go into the forest, where
she would live for days unseen.

624 In the village of the *molembe* the party all sit in an *ebanga* belonging to one of the
elders. This is the place where the Tumba men really live—their houses are just
● [343 sleeping and cooking establishments, but the *ebanga*, having a roof for shade and no
walls, is the place where the men congregate and spend their leisure time. It is also
342] the site of the village smithy, which takes up one end. Here, then, *Nkema Akuke* and
his party sit for a day and a night, and neither he nor *Nsono* may eat food or drink
[262] wine during this period. Games are played by the *molembe*—mock battles, dances, and
[517] songs chiefly of battle, and before the first streaks of dawn appear the group in the
ebanga begins to march up and down the village singing.

At dawn the whole party, accompanied by a large crowd, make their way to a place in the bush where there is an elevation of some sort. Here *Nkema Akuke* climbs up and takes his stand, accompanied by *Nsono*. Now the *molembe* choose the *Bilapo*

326 521 571 Whereas with us the village inn is the place where the affairs of the week are noisily debated, it is at the smithy where the Mongo Negroes congregate. There the elders gather -- the younger men have no voice here; there the various differences about (or among) wives and the impending taxes are discussed; amidst the billows of smoke -- drawn with deep puffs out of their huge bamboo pipes -- the smith is the only one who works on and earns his living nobly.

326 428 The smith is the most judicious craftsman among the Mongo Negroes.

His trade is practically the only one which is a family affair and is passed on from father to son. If a smith does not have any children, the business is taken over by his younger brother.

This right of inheritance is by no means general in the other trades; the trade of the smith is inherited while the others are taken up by any Tom, Dick, or Harry who happens to have a liking for them.

325 348 The smithy where the smith plies his trade is a wide oblong dark hut (about five meters by ten meters) built alongside the public highway. In contrast with the other dwellings of the Negroes, the floors of which are generally built about 20 centimeters above the road, the floor of the smithy is dug out from 30 to 70 centimeters below the level of the road so that one goes down a step from the road into the smithy.

The reason why the floor of the smithy should be dug out in this way is not quite clear to me, but most probably it is to prevent the danger of fire when the storm winds that accompany the heavy tropical rains sweep through the huts. By digging out the floor in this way, an earthen enclosure about half a meter high is formed around the smithy, and this protects the smith from the wind and enables him to continue quietly at work.

325 In spite of the primitiveness of his tools [95] and the primitive manipulation of them, the smith knows how to get what he needs from his implements. The forge (lotulu) is constructed as follows: a block of wood is cut about 60 centimeters long, 40 centimeters wide, and 30 centimeters high, with a hollow pipe, half a meter long, connected to it. This is all formed of one piece. With the aid of a banana stalk, on which the clay is moulded, a smith's pipe is formed. The banana stalk is removed from the clay, and the hollow pipe (boongo) remains. Two, sometimes four, bellows (njasa) are placed on the

the main axis [51] of the village. This door is always placed 342
rather high and closes on an inner slide. Since *nse-nse* and *ndele* are lacking in this region, the framework of the huts is made of stakes and pieces of raffia, and the walls and roof are covered with raffia leaves plaited flat in the form of a mat.

The huts are built singly, a method which again reminds one of the customs of the Oshwe-Bumbuli region. The native does sometimes cover his hut with grass, but this is very rare.

In this region we also observed that in certain villages the huts 361
were arranged in family groupings and that each group had a spe- 542
cial area clearly set apart from the rest of the village. The 592
various huts of a single group are inside a fairly solid stake fence 351
from one and three-quarters to two meters high and sometimes covered with mats of raffia leaves. The doors of all the huts within an enclosure open toward the interior of the courtyard.

Fig. 35. Interior of a Lupango and Drying Peanuts,
Bena Dibele-Kole Region.

The whole forms the *lupango*. By counting the number of huts in 592
a *lupango* one may determine how many wives the chief or head
of the place has, since each one has her own home. [52] The
lupango are of recent introduction and are derived from Arab in- [177]
fluence. One cannot take them into account in establishing relationships of kinship or ethnic affinity between the different peoples. There is no connection whatever between the *lupango* of the Bena Dibele-Kole region and the familial grouping of huts

595^x On the day set aside for establishing the position of the
554 bolɔ́mbɔ́, there is a great feast. All the clans and neighboring
villages that have been invited gather at the home of the polygamist in question. He presents the woman to them and addresses
the gathering: "Here is the woman whom I want to make my
bolɔ́mbɔ́, as I have already announced to you. Today I am making
public the decision I already made a long time ago. Be it known
to all that no man may touch her, or he will be severely punished."
Then two women (in rare instances, two men) hold the woman, and
the husband unfastens her belt and rips off all her clothing. Then
the assistants tie a rope or a belt of mpangá (striped antelope)
skin around her, and to it they attach various furs. From that day
[292] until her death she may no longer wear the clothing (bitɔ́o) of
other women; she must always [350] be dressed in furs. Hence
her name, bolɔ́mbɔ́ wa bikɔ́tɔ́, "bolɔ́mbɔ́ with furs." Then her
husband gives her pots of palm oil with which she will have to
cover herself. Two men approach her; they are chosen among
the handsomest in the village (1) (married or single) and are

[609] 1. They are then (sic) relatives of the
husband. Nkundɔ́ law dictates that no
stranger shall perform a function of the
slightest importance -- not even that of
silencing a gathering. According to
their saying, bofaya áfɔ́tɛ́le lokáanga, "a
stranger does not cut up a guinea hen."

[301] richly adorned with furs, belts of mpangá, beads, raffia fabrics
with jagged edges, copper rings on their ankles, etc. Stepping
● [351] in rhythm, they lead her to the house intended for her which is
[524] surrounded by a fence of bofɛko posts (Ricinodendron africanum)
held together with palms. This hut with its fence is called ilɛke.

There the bolɔ́mbɔ́ will reside for months and years (up to
three or more, they say). She is secluded there, so to speak,
[514] and may not go out. If she needs to go to the banana groves for
her personal needs, she covers and surrounds herself with a mat so
that no one will see her.

Now the molembe choose the Bilega

624 *Otala*, a young woman of their own number, who will thereafter be known by this
[533] name. She is an official cymbalist and must always begin beating before others may join in. In reality the members of the *molembe* have decided beforehand who shall be chosen for this position, and the woman of their choice now takes her stand on the elevation together with *Nkumu Akulu* and his wife, *Nkum*.

624 The member of the *molembe* whose right it is by inheritance to place the *mantolo*
342 (see Plates) upon the head of the *nkumu* now comes forward with it. This hat, about twelve inches in height, is woven of raffia and cylindrical in shape, but the brim, instead of being at the base, encircles the top of the crown. It is usually decorated with a burnished brass plate attached to the front, and perhaps a second one behind, and in these modern days it is quite in style to hang a row of safety pins from the 'brim' or 'halo' encircling the crown. When the *nkumu* is the first of his line, the *mantolo* is purchased by him, but in the case of succession it is that used by the deceased predecessor, and has been kept by the *molembe* until this time. It is his badge of office and sign of authority. The bringing out of the *mantolo* is an occasion for
624 merriment. *Nkumu Akulu* calls for his *mantolo*, but the *molembe* tease and tantalize him and ask for money. The amount is a fixed sum, but *Nkumu Akulu* pays out at first but a few rods, is teased for more, and so on until he has provided the total amount, usually about one hundred. The member of the *molembe* whose duty it is to place the *mantolo* on the head of the *nkumu* begins to tease the crowd. He chooses various names by which the *nkumu* might be called, everybody knowing all the time what his name must be. He asks the people, 'Shall we call him so-and-so?' 'We refuse', reply the people. 'Or so-and-so?' 'We refuse.' And each time names whereby *nkumu* are known are repeated. Finally the correct name is given, as, 'Shall we call him *Nkumu Lobondola*?' and the crowd roars its approval, 'Ooooo!' The *mantolo* then being placed on *Nkumu Akulu*'s head he now becomes *Nkumu* and leaps down among the crowd, who bear him off to their village with rejoicing. In the choice of names, the first *nkumu* in a village is known as *Nkumu Lobondola*. If there is another section of the village with an *nkumu* of its own, he must take another name, such as *Nkumu Ijuli Bolongo*. Successors must always take the names of their predecessors whatever their own personal names may be. An *nkumu* chosen by a *molembe*
[554] which is also the *mwene mokonda*, the hereditary owner of the land, is known as *Nkumu e Bitindi* (*Nkumu* of the heels), for he occupies a more important position than his fellows, and is thus the support which holds up the whole group of *nkumu* chosen by other *molembe*.

624 The *nkumu* is borne off to his *engo*, his residence, which in this case is temporary, to be replaced later by a permanent one. The *engo* comprises the whole unit of
342 buildings for the *nkumu*, including his own sleeping quarters, the houses for his wives, the *ebanga* where he spends the daylight hours, and a row of houses for his children. His *ebanga* and his own sleeping quarters are screened from the public gaze, making
● [351] a place known as *ijomo*. In the case of a new *nkumu* the screen is temporary, but when the permanent *engo* is built, a permanent *ijomo* is made by planting umbrella trees (*melombo*, sing. *molombo*) in a rectangular or circular fashion. Here, sheltered
624 from intrusion, the *nkumu* remains in retirement (*andi*) for a month.[1] While he remains

---

[1] *Andi* refers to the sitting of a hen on eggs, the seclusion of a woman after childbirth, or of the *nkumu* at this juncture of the ceremonies.

Take F133
Sakata FO43

S/f The conical huts are not arranged in family groupings, but are
361 built along an irregular double line. The free space between the two rows of huts forms the principal artery of the village, and the whole assemblange is surrounded by luxuriant plantings of banana trees and manioc.

M The dwellings of the Baboma, Wadia, Mosengere, and all the
342 peoples along the right shore of Lake Leopold II and the Fimi have the same appearance: rectangular base; roof with an oblique double slope, horizontal ridge; triangular gable; veranda formed by the projection of the roof from one to one and a half meters beyong the façade which faces the chief artery of the village; and an entrance through this same wall with a raised, sliding door.

M The furnishings of all these huts are in general limited to
352

S/f
[346]

Fig. 26. Baboma Hut for the Nkisi of the Hunt. In background, Basonge type hut with conical roof and square base.

kitchen utensils and a storage place in the first room and to the bed in the sleeping chamber. The bed is built on stakes from 30 to 50 centimeters high. Mats serve as a mattress, and the pillow consists
S of a crude wooden block which has hardly been squared, except
[illegible] among the Baboma who still use the small stool-pillow that we found among the Banfunu-Bateke.

H All the peoples of this region build their huts with great care.
342 After carefully marking the area of the new site, the native drives

as the roof. The natives of the Bumbuli region usually build their huts quite carelessly. Although their villages are remarkably clean, the general appearance suffers a great deal from the shabby state of most of the dwellings. Even quite new huts are poorly finished, compared to those of other regions. 342

The furnishings of Batitu and Yaelima huts do not differ from those of other regions, except in the shape of the utensils and the presence of chairs. The bed is always very low, raised barely 10 or 15 centimeters from the ground. The interior of the hut is only very rarely lined with mats. Among the furnishings one should note the large drying basket which serves as a storage place and which is hung above the hearth. It is hexagonal in shape, and 352 ● [415]

Fig. 33. Temporary Hut of the Bokala-Yaelima.

its radius varies from one to one and a half meters. Its edges are straight, the thongs by which it hangs are attached to the six corners of the hexagon, and it is made entirely in an open-work weave like that [50] of the caned chairs of Europe, a special technique of which we found no other instances in the region. No less interesting are the chairs, relatively rare among the Batitu, common among the Bokala, and in daily use among the Yaelima. Their special form is characteristic. The natives sometimes take the utmost care to ornament them with carved designs, and the remarkably artistic appearance of certain ones 352 531

Yaelima
Ntomba

352
531 give them in general a very interesting local ethnic character.
415 One might say as much of the carved wooden cups, the engraved
531 horns, and the vessels of artistically worked wood which up to now have been regarded as local to the region occupied by the Bakuba [Kuba] and which we found throughout the territory south of Wumbuli.

342 As a rule, the hut of the Bena Dibele-Kole region is much trimmer, it is constructed much more carefully, and the work is accomplished with order and method. The shape is rectangular, the roof has a double slope, and the ridgepole is slightly arched. This curve, however slight, is nevertheless quite characteristic and quite constant. It is undeniably reminiscent of the typical form of the ancestral hut.

Fig. 34. (1) Bankutu-Bakuba Hut under Construction.
(2) Completed Bankutu-Bankuba Hut.

The door is located either on the side or in the gable wall, according to whether the hut is oriented parallel or perpendicular to

595 great ceremonies because they lack the necessary wealth.

596 The bomɛtsa is never nkóndɛ. But before he makes one of his wives a nkóndɛ a husband must ask the advice and approval of the [431] bomɛtsa. For that purpose he presents her with a bompɛngɛ (a dog, a goat, some rings), which expresses his recognition of her right and authority and at the same time is intended to secure a favorable response. If the bomɛtsa does not agree, the matter is not followed through. But that situation is only hypothetical. In practice the bomɛtsa yields to her husband's preferences, since he has recognized her rights in the proper fashion.

When a husband wants to create a nkóndɛ, he first makes all the preparations, brews the sugar-cane beer and collects all the riches that are to be distributed. Then he invites the neighboring villages and calls together his relatives. On the assigned day, the assembly having gathered, the chosen wife puts on her most beautiful garments and adorns herself with her richest ornaments. She [592] seats herself on a magnificent bofɛnga [345] (a portable couch) (1) in front of the audience. Her husband then announces to those assembled that henceforth this woman is to be his favorite; woe unto the man who has the temerity to seduce her or even show affection toward her -- he will be a dead man (or he will have to pay an [684] enormous indemnity of 25 to 50 bakonga). In the past it often happened that a seducer was killed or reduced to slavery without further ado. When the husband has paid 25 rings or more to the wife's family and gifts have been distributed to the assembled patriarchs, his words are ratified by the assembly, and henceforth the contract between them and the husband is sealed. Dances, song, and drink follow.

[291] The favorite wears no special garb. She wears the same clothing as all the other women and wears furs only for dances.

---

1. See the excellent drawing in Engels, Les Wangata [The Wangata], (Revue Congolaise, Vol. 1, no. 4, p. 483, 1910).

Incontinence is severely punished by the deceased; she
165 molests the culprit and even drags him or another person who is in mourning to the grave.

The severity of the seclusion is lessened at the time of the
[352] ceremony which marks the widower's return to a small bed raised
[711] above the ground. It is made from tree trunks or branches in the manner of the Batswá. The widower is washed by the deceased's elder sister and then is led to the bed by his elder brother's wife. He receives a knife from his father, and from then on is permitted to perform his usual tasks.

A widower (or widow) must purchase gradual dispensations from prohibitions of foods, in contrast to relatives, who are simply released (Coutumes funéraires [Funeral Customs], Vol. 2, no. 2, E). This distinction shows the fundamental difference that exists between mourning for a spouse and for a relative. In the first instance, it is a strict social obligation from which he can be absolved only by a purchase, a compensation, or commutation of sorts; in the second instance, it is a convention from which a person is freed without any ceremony or compensation. The fact that this regulation is extended to the close relatives of the widower (or widow) does not lessen the validity of this conclusion. On the contrary, it corroborates it. For [421] the persons to whom the rule applies remain clearly in the affinal line; the regulation is never extended to relatives of the deceased.

After the death of a husband, his widows and the wives of his close relatives buy dispensations from the deceased's kinswomen. After a wife's death, the husband and his close relatives buy them from their own wives. The total amount of the purchase made by all the persons involved must be divided. Half goes to the women who have married into the clan; the other half is kept for the family of the deceased.

Like all periods of mourning, that of the widower -- with all the regulations and prohibitions involved -- ends in a great feast. When the family of the deceased have performed their duties, they organize a second feast at their own home, and the widower is

Nkundu
Pygmies FO4
Batswa

M 765 587 marriage after the end of mourning, they have the right to accept various foods and firewood from them. But a rather dim view is taken of these services rendered by strangers, that is, by persons not related to the heirs. For theoretically the widows belong to the heirs and are their wives, since the financial marriage agreement continues. (2) Nevertheless, if these men are not at enmity

---

2. See Chapter III, Article IX.

---

with the heirs, they encounter no opposition. For once the period of seclusion is terminated, the widows are free to go back to their respective families and be taken in marriage by anyone able to pay the bride price. Nevertheless, suitors are not permitted to enter the seclusion hut even in the last period. They must therefore transmit presents through the agency of the biúnanyí (sing. eúnanyí), that is, the relatives of the deceased.

M 765 M P [952] [513] This last period begins with the ceremony of being lifted off the ground. The widows are made to get up onto the beóngá -- [423] bákondeja bituka ndá beóngá. The beóngá consist of split branches of the parasol tree, placed on long branches, which are in turn attached to posts, forming a small primitive bed, which is the usual bed of the Batswá that is sometimes also used by the Baotó, if the latter have nothing better. From then on the widows can rest on these; they may "rise from the ground." The parasol tree branches are called beóngá (sing. boóngá), "dead, dry wood." The same root is also used with other prefixes: eóngá, pl. bióngá; loóngá, pl. mbóngá. The verbs used are áta, "to split, rend" or fanja, "to cut." Nowadays the severity of this custom is mitigated by the substitution of beánga, transportable wicker beds, for the beóngá.

The ceremony is accompanied by a few dances and a bit of beer. The head of the family addresses the widows as follows: "We have split beóngá for you; climb up on them." Then he presents them with a few hens, given by relatives of the deceased. The widows prepare them and eat them all.

202
198 Bansele nsele ba nkanga. "The one always screaming who is followed into the high grass, the strong branch, the districts go along with the priest (Father).

1. The missionary is seen here as a witch doctor (bansele nsele ba nkanga is a general lokole name for the Negro witch doctor), who, like the Negro doctor, is looked upon as a doctor and a priest.

2. Bofala boki ndaki lisako nda lokombe [sic]. The priest, because he is always seeking converts everywhere, is here compared with an antelope which, when it is followed, runs around and around in the high grass.

3. Etafe bolo. The missionary is here compared with a strong branch. He is strong because he is influential and highly regarded by the Negroes.

4. Benanga bekendaka la mperu. The districts all go along with the Father (priest). They all follow his instructions.

The nkombo of the Protestant Anglican missionary is as follows:
Bofanga sembola bonanga boso nkenda l'Inglese.
"The fishing net is spread out; the country goes along with the Englishman."

In the same way as the fishing net cordons off a part of the river and everything is caught in it, so all the people go along with the Englishman. The Protestant Anglican missionary was in this district
[197] before the arrival of the Catholic missionary, so this nkombo refers, of course, to this period. Since the arrival of the Catholic missionary, the situation has changed completely in this district.

These few examples give an indication of the difficulty in understanding the lokole language.

●352
322 In addition, the Negro makes a few chairs, the most important of which is the lyeko ia mpaka, the chair for the elder, a three-legged affair with two props under it, topped with a piece out of the umbrella tree; into this the elder can throw himself as lazily as he wishes.

Then there is the so-called ebonga, a little stool chopped out of a block of wood with the native axe. This is finished off attractively with an esumwa, a small paring chisel, and the seat is decorated around the edge with studs which have been bought in some factory or other.

352
322 [103] Occasionally one sees a native stool, made as described
above, but with a kind of back rest chopped out of one piece.

342 The Negro who wishes to move with the times makes for his
177 house a chair out of bamboo in the European style: some sticks stuck in the ground, a mat of split bamboo laid over them, and the gentleman can spend his days in dolce far niente [pleasant idleness].

352 A table made in the same way (otherwise unknown to the Negro)
322 completes the furnishing of his hut.

One does not need to be an expert, either, in order to be able to make a Negro bed. Some straight sticks are chopped out of the mombambo (umbrella tree). These are placed lengthwise and then across, on top of each other, trimmed a bit at the edges so that the whole thing fits more or less, and it is then bound together with some
[435] split lianas. In this way the Negro has made a bed; this favorite
piece of furniture is finished for a sale price of 5 to 10 mitako.

The making of beds could be classed among the Mongo trades.
[438] I once saw, in the interior, ten of these beds, large and small spread out along the side of the road for sale.

I was assured that the owner of the beds was the very best bedmaker of the village. Of course, I raised my hat to such an important personage.

The ekoba, the bed stool, is also indispensable. These ekoba take the place of our pillows and are made of one piece, formed to the shape of the head. It is a somewhat hard pillow, but the Negro head is hard and can put up with it; the fellow sleeps without having to be rocked.

322 To prepare his food he needs some mortars and pestles, and these
252 are made of wood. He uses hardwood for these utensils so that the mortars do not wear away from the constant pounding.

In addition, the Negro makes his oars, his bow and arrows for
322 the hunt, and the lokombi. The lokombi is a flat, oblong, hollowed
534 block of wood over which some pegs are stretched [sic]. He plucks these with his fingers, thus producing a monotonous sound. This so-called musical instrument is the constant companion of the young man and accompanies him on his long treks through the Evenaar forest and on his visits to friends and acquaintances.

624

inches long and two inches in width, numbering up to seven are brought and attached [596]
to the back of her *bonbo* by folding them over it.[1]

The first male child which was born to the *nkumu* before he acceded to the office is 852
known as *Iyumi Nkai*. If he has none, then the right to this name passes to the first 624
male child to be born to his younger brothers. Any child born on the day that the
nkumu is given his *mentale* is also called *Iyumi*; if a male he will be *Mola Iyumi*, if a [551]
female, *Mpembe Iyumi*.[2] These children must not see the *nkumu* until they are old enough to know his name and greet him properly, and so they are taken to some village other than the one in which he has his residence. When such children are considered old enough to take up residence in the village of the *nkumu* it is an occasion for revelry, a big dance, *ainda*, is held, and there is a feast. The child, *Iyumi*, is brought to the village of the *nkumu* with rejoicing, and this is a signal for everybody desiring to do so to help himself to anything belonging to the *nkumu*. Goats and fowls may be killed and eaten, sugar-cane rooted up, bananas, plantains, and other crops growing near by seized for food. Because of this custom the *nkumu* will take precautions and send his livestock, at least, off to some other village in order not to lose more than he can help.[3]

The *eyamba*, the singer or singers, and the *atoti*, the praisers already mentioned, 624
remain with the *nkumu* during his period of seclusion. Added to these is *atambo* 533
lokombi, the bearer of the *lokombi*, a stringed instrument played with the fingers, 534
similar to a bass viol in its general appearance.

Inside the *ipamu* during the seclusion of the *nkumu*, few people have the right of 624
entrance, but as one enters the *elongo* where the daylight hours are spent, one finds
the couch of the *nkumu* on the left and towards the rear. On the same side and towards 342
the front are seated the *atambo lokombi* and the *eyamba*. *Nsona*'s couch is to the right 352
of, and parallel to, that of the *nkumu*, but still to the left of the centre posts. To the right of her couch is the fire in the centre, and beyond the fire on the right side is a couch for the *mumwi*, likewise somewhat to the rear, with a space in front for the *atoti*.

The month's seclusion being completed, the *nkumu* prepares to buy the homage of 624
the village. *Nsona* gets rid of her decorative colours, and assumes ordinary attire,
becoming like any other of the wives, and is ready to take up all the usual duties of 576
a wife, whether in the garden or at the house. The people are called to come and render to the *nkumu* their homage and praise. The men come to the *ipamu*, are admitted to the presence of their *nkumu* and seat themselves on the bare earth with their legs wide apart and facing him. They then, without uttering a word, greet him in the

[1] The *bonbo* is a belt which used to be worn by Tumba women encircling the buttocks, and this was used to attach their only garment, the *elow* among the Bangindo, this being a short loin cloth, or an *ejwapo* among other groups, this being a woven cloth strip worn between the legs.

[2] When a new *nkumu* assumes office, one already in office will take this opportunity of getting some of his sons named *Iyumi*. He takes them to the *mokondo* of the new *nkumu*, and having placed a bracelet of cowrie shells on the right wrist, and sometimes one on the right ankle, asks the member of the *mokondo* whose right it is to give away the *mentale* to name these sons *Bayumi* (pl. of 'Iyumi'). This man will then take each a son, and presenting him to the people introduces him by giving him a name, and following with praise as, '*Ose Iyumi Lonoo, botaki!*' and the crowd replies with the customary '*Bwa!*' [291]

[3] It is well to remember that not every individual bearing names associated with the institution of the *nkumu* is directly connected with it. With the practice of 'reincarnating' dead relatives by naming new-born children after them, such names as these become widespread. [551]

624 [781] [513] An *nkumu* can never walk alone, but must always be accompanied by others, and on no occasion whatsoever may he run. Even though he never washes, if he is out in the rain and sees everybody else hurrying for shelter, he will not quicken his pace. His movements must be slow and deliberate. The *nkumu* never sleeps alone; waking and sleeping he is attended by someone. But apart from this he is free to go where he wishes. The *nkumu* is not indiscriminate, as others may be, in his private habits, but [514] must use his own latrine at all times, and if travelling must have his own latrine in each place where he stays. The inland *nkumu* frequently take advantage of this custom [562] by hiding their accumulated brass rods at the bottom of a freshly dug latrine. Such hidden wealth will be acquired by an inheritor at the decease of the *nkumu*.

In speaking of himself the *nkumu* never refers to himself by his title but always by his own name.

624 ●352 [562 565] The couch upon which the *nkumu* sits or reclines during the daytime may not be shared indiscriminately with others, but those permitted to sit upon it at the same time as the *nkumu* are *mumi*, women, and Batwa. The reservation of this couch for the use of the *nkumu* is not surprising, but the exceptions are. One explanation given was that women and Batwa are not *bato ba ate*, persons in particular; they do not count for anything in the social life of the community; they are not really 'people'. [672] Another explanation was that they do not pay fines, this being tantamount to saying that they are exempt from laws and therefore cannot break laws even by doing what would be for others an illegal act. The stool of the *nkumu*, however, has closer restrictions in the manner of its use. Besides the *nkumu* only two others may sit upon it, *Nsoso* and *Mpenge*. It is always carried by one of his wives, though not necessarily by any special one.

624 262 The restrictions concerning the food of the *nkumu* are many. He may eat food only in his own house, or, if on a journey, in one given over for his use. He may not enter another house to partake of food even if invited to do so. Likewise the *nkumu* may not eat in the forest, or eat or drink anywhere along the road when on a journey, but must wait until he arrives at a village and has a house at his disposal in order to partake of food and drink. He never 'sleeps with hunger'; even if a wife or child should die causing him great sorrow he must partake of food before going to sleep. [765] The Bonginda *nkumu* must never go into mourning, and death must be ignored by them, but the inland *nkumu* are permitted to mourn. All food carried to an *nkumu* must be covered, this rule even applying to water. Food must not be placed in a basket with high sides (*elodo*), but in a shallow one (*mpale*), and no food that has been kept overnight in a pot may be eaten by him: swelling of the abdomen will result. Various foods are taboo, among these all fast-moving snakes, though slow- [824] moving ones may be eaten; light-coloured palm-nuts may not be eaten, and a variety of yam known as *mokidi* is shunned, for it is with the tough stems of the *mokidi* that the dying body of the *nkumu* will be bound to ensure the sitting posture necessary for burial.

624 [623] [6[illegible]] Among regulations roughly classed as social, we have already covered several in references above, and have referred to the *nkumu* in council. It may be added here that he is expected to agree with the majority of the councillors and not fall out with them. The rules affecting the songs of the *nkumu* are accompanied by severe penalties. There must not be any fighting; if anger is aroused to the point of blows the antagonists

Article III. Relations between Spouses; Their Various Rights and Duties

593x
183 Spouses are obliged to fulfill the duties and perform the tasks incumbent upon them .

It is difficult to say just how far the sense of duty to fulfill the debitum conjugale extends among the Nkundó. Normally, they very frequently fulfill this obligation toward each other. But after a good quarrel they abstain, either through mutual consent or because one of them refuses. [586] If one of the parties fails seriously and repeatedly in this respect, the question is resolved by a divorce. The response to temporary lapses is limited to reprimands, disputes, blows, and other common reactions. [174] It should be added that continence is required during the ekelé period after the birth of a child and after setting up a new hunting enclosure (lokombo) or a new fishing weir (bosaka), before the third piece of a game or fish is caught.

1. Meals

593x
264 A couple never take their meals together. The husband eats the food prepared for him and served to him by his wife alone, with his grown sons, or with friends or relatives. The wife herself eats with her small children, her daughters, or her female relatives. The two sexes never mingle at meals.

593x
521 The same rule applies to talks, but it is much less strictly maintained; it is not rare to find that, for one reason or another, women participate in the conversation of men.

It will not be long before, through the influence of Christianity, [266] women will generally be admitted in the conversations of the opposite sex. Developments with respect to mixed meals will come with much more difficulty; in practice the question has not even been broached.

593x
348 ●[354] Thus one finds a kitchen next to the bedroom or separated from the hut; in addition to being the place where food is prepared, it is where the woman spends her day. The kitchen is sometimes a structure separated from the dwelling itself, sometimes a part of the house separated from the bedroom by a partition containing a door.

[163] Chapter 5

Care of the Body

Hygiene. -- Soap making. -- Ngula and mpembe. -- Artificial deformations. -- Depilation. -- Filing the teeth. -- Hairdos. -- Ornaments and objects suspended from the body. -- Tattooing by incision. -- Circumcision [Ed., the author does not discuss circumcision in this volume].

515 356 A person who has only limited contact with the natives tends to depict them as very careless in their grooming, ignorant of the principles of hygiene and cleanliness, and, we may say, even as foul and filthy. If, however, one has an opportunity for closer contact with these primitives, he quickly realizes the inaccuracy of these judgments which are based on hasty and superficial observation. In closely studying the native's customs, in watching him in his daily, ordinary life, one notices many small things which show us [164] that the native, apparently heedless of all hygienic measures and inattentive to cleanliness, does take into account rudimentary principles of hygiene and tries to apply them in many small ways.

356 At first glance the native hut looks like a miserable hovel. Its often dilapidated appearance, narrow and low entrance, lack of windows or ventilating shaft, the general disorder reigning in the area which is used as shelter, kitchen, etc., all are reasons for the unpleasant impression acquired from a rapid investigation. The native, however, puts a great deal of care into the construction of his dwelling. The woman works hard at cleaning the inside of her hut regularly. If, pushing our investigation further, we proceed to the area reserved for the husband and wife and closely study the organization and arrangement of what serves as the bedroom, we see that a cleanliness reigns here that stands in conspicuous contrast to the unpleasant first impression. The

356 walls are lined with mats, and the crude bed is raised off the ground to avoid unpleasant and unhealthy contact with the ground. A mat is spread over the native's bed, [165] and the pillow which is customarily used permits him to lie in a restful position.

515 The natives take a bath almost every day. They usually go to the river during the hottest hours of the day, but sometimes they do so early in the morning or in the evening. The child participates in this from an early age. Aside from these regular baths, the native often washes his whole body with warm water.
[302] He then smears himself with a light film of palm oil to ensure the suppleness of the skin and to protect it from the sun's rays.

264 Before and after each meal the native makes a point of
575 washing out his mouth. After the meal he brushes his teeth with a small brush made of rattan or soft wood, the fibers acting as bristles.

Fig. 91. A Scene from Native Life among the Riparian People of the Lower Lukenie.

252 Meals are prepared with a genuine concern for cleanliness.
264 All the food is washed, cleaned, and boiled before being eaten. Kitchen utensils are cleaned and carefully put away. Despite the primitive conditions for preparing manioc flour, the product is as pure as if it had been prepared by an improved method

595* 554 that no one will see her. She lives in this house in the company of her ebísa, her daughters, some female relatives, or even another of her husband's wives, who must wait on her, prepare food for her, etc., and who go out and enter freely. Her husband also enters at will and spends the usual number of nights with her. No other man is permitted to enter the enclosure.

During her period of seclusion, the bolúmbú may not do the slightest work. She does not wash with water, but only with palm oil. She walks only on mats. She is also exempt from mourning for her parents. (Compare with Chapter I, Part 1, Article II.)

When the period of seclusion comes to an end, the husband announces the coming-out feast. There is merrymaking, dancing, and drinking. Mats are spread from the door of [351] the hut of seclusion all the way to the middle of the street. The two men who brought the woman to the hut come again and, taking her by the arms at the entrance to the enclosure, lead her over the mats. The ceremony thus ends without further ado.

The bolúmbú is henceforth free and acts like any other woman except for the wearing of furs. She may work, draw water, cook, travel, visit her parents, etc. But her husband's
[563] honor and his reputation as a rich man require that he give his
[567] bolúmbú one or several slaves, or Batswa, or -- as is more frequently done -- one or two bibísa, who are supposed to take
[357] care of her housework and thus free the princess.

595* 554 837 614 Adultery with her -- after her seclusion -- is more severely punished than misconduct with an ordinary woman as regards the indemnity to be paid. But as a flagrant insult, it is considered very serious indeed, not so much as an infringement or marital rights as an attack on the honor of the whole clan or group of clans involved. Thus, while adultery with a nkóndé, for instance, is a private matter, arousing the husband's jealousy and anger, misconduct with a bolúmbú is a public offense. The whole clan is enraged -- for they believe that their honor has been attacked, and all the members together press for vengeance for

[5]

Chapter 1

The Land and Its Inhabitants

The appearance of the land. -- Location of the tribes. -- General characteristics of the natives. -- Maternal feelings. -- The fetisher. -- Religious beliefs. -- Cult of the dead. -- The Mfumu. -- Medicine.

[137] The area between the Congo, the Kasai, and the Kwango is covered with tall grass interspersed with stunted trees and a few small forests whose verdant canopy rises majestically over a boundless plain. A curtain of trees stretches along the rivers and gradually thins out as one penetrates into the interior. The path [487] beaten by the regular passage of endless columns of natives, walking Indian file, winds sadly and monotonously across these lightly rolling plains. During the rainy season the grass, whose stems grow as high as two or two and a half meters, obstructs the view. During the dry season, destroyed by brush fires, it has given way to a blackish-yellow plain from which all life seems to have been [361] banished. From time to [6] time, at distances of 30 and sometimes 40 kilometers apart, we find groupings of huts, surrounded by a few manioc fields, [Fig. 1 appears here] banana groves, and sometimes small plots of maize and peanuts. Upon our arrival, [608] the men look at us without concern, the mistrustful women hide [Fig. 2 appears here] in their huts or take refuge in the forest and fields, and the less timid children stare at us with the insouciance characteristic of their age. [7]

Beyond the Kasai, in the region of the Fimi, around Lake Leopold II, and along the Lukenie, the bush gives way to the forest, damp, swampy, dark, and mysterious.

137
361 At the confluence of the Fimi and the Kasai, a vast swampy area stretches as far as the eye can see, bare of all arborescent vegetation, crossed by innumerable channels which are narrow and shallow during the dry season and wide to the point of covering practically the whole region during the rainy season.

[text continues on p. 3]

Take FI33
Sakata FO43

M
137
361

The few groups of natives who inhabit this region have built their villages along the river on raised ground, safe from the periodic floods.

In the forest region the villages seem to be scattered purely at random.

The huts are built in the center of a large clearing, surrounded by manioc plots and banana groves which are encircled in the distance by uncleared forest.

Such is the region that we crossed from Stanley Pool to Kasai-Kwango, from the Fimi to Lake Leopold II, and over the entire basin of the Lukenie.

S
14
101
131

The first peoples we encountered there belong to the Bateke [Teke] group. Their territory lies around Stanley Pool and extends to the north as far as the Lufimi. Beyond that live the Banfumungu [Fumu], also called Banfugumu, Banfumuka, Baumbu, or simply Bamfumu.

North of the Kasai and along the banks of the Congo live the Bayanzi [Yanzi] or Babangi. Their neighbors to the east, the Baboma [Boma] or Babuma, occupy the whole of the confluence of the Fimi and the Kasai, up to the left bank of the lower Kwango.

Fig. 3

Bateke Woman and Child.

T
[184
291]

The Wadia [Dia] live to the north of the Baboma between Nioki and Kutu and extend along the Boriempa and the western shore of Lake Leopold II up to the territory of the Mosengere [Sengele].

The region occupied by the Basakata [Sakata] stretches along the left bank of the Lukenie-Fimi between Bokoro and Moleke.

The Mosengere or Mousengere are settled along the Olonga-Uele in the region of Bongo. Northwest of this group we encountered the Bakutu [Kutu], whose territory extends beyond the boundaries of the Lake Leopold II district. [8]

The Bolia occupy the country northeast of Bongo as far as the Bolia-Kiri region.

The Tumba [Ntomba] are settled all along the eastern shore

S 643 764 out of his hut, speaks to the people, and the boloko replies, "Ngulo, ngulo, ngulo." A few days later, the burial of the dead chief takes place. The dignitaries are supposed to go and recover the body, place it in a coffin, [33] and have it buried with great pomp in the morning. It appears that the body remains in the chiefs' cemetery and that the coffin actually holds nothing but a tree trunk, but here again a more detailed investigation would seem indispensable. The burial is carried out with great pomp, and then the new chief is definitely installed. How does the chief acquire the secrets of his occult powers? From whom does he learn how to measure the poison, how to prepare the medicines? So many questions which are yet to be elucidated.

C 757 Aside from these secrets, the art of healing is not highly developed among the natives. A string around the forehead, cupping, and scarification are supposed to cure neuralgia. The cups consist of small gourds with a narrow hole. The native puts a few twigs of very dry grass inside it, sets them on fire, and immediately places the opening of the gourd against the skin. The combustion creates a vacuum, and suction is produced automatically. Scarification is done with a small razor-like knife. [34]

Chapter 2

Dwellings

Conditions for setting up a village. -- General arrangement of the huts. -- The typical Bateke-Bamfumu hut. -- The conical Baboma hut. -- Shape of the hut in the region of Lake Leopold II. -- Hut with arched roof on the Lukenie. -- Villages of the Sankuru-Kasai. -- Babuba hut. -- General conclusions.

M 361 Although all the peoples in the region we visited have reached the sedentary stage, local migrations and changes of abode are rather frequent. In short, the dwelling and the village are stable only as long as the resources of the site and its environment can provide the basic needs of the community.

● 36/ 312 The first essential condition is a nearby source of drinking wate a stream, a marsh, or one or more natural springs. These springs are quite numerous in the region we visited. Their water is clear, limpid, and refreshing; the supply is abundant and regular in the dry season as well as in the rainy season. The natives value their [illegible] benefits so highly that the women willingly go 200 or 300 meters to a spring in the forest rather than to draw water from the stream.

36/ [35] In addition to a bountiful spring, the native seeks a health ful location and takes this into account when choosing the future si for his household. The ground that suits him best is slightly raised, dry, open, and located near the forest or in the midst of a fertile plain.

Aside from their hygienic benefits, such locations afford a meas ure of security to the settler. At the slightest alarm, the whole community leaves both village and home to run into the forest, where they are sheltered and completely safe.

Finally, the native looks for the fertile soil essential to the welfare of his crops. The well-being and even the existence of his whole family depend in large measure on the yields from these crops.

The new site then, must fulfill all these indispensable conditions If the place that meets these requirements is to be found in a region full of game and not far distant from a stream, marsh, or water-course rich in fish, the native will not fail to choose such a privileged spot. These conditions will determine the duration of the native's settlement. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

36/ 313 When the community has decided to move and a location suitabl for a new settlement has been found, all the adult males leave to prepare the ground. This work is particularly arduous in forested areas. In the grasslands it is sufficient to cut the grass, or simply to burn it, and then to hoe thoroughly the area for the new village and its fields and to carry off all the rubbish, while the establishment of a village in the heart of the forest requires far greater effort and work. The first few days are devoted to marking out the boundaries and clearing the small trees, creepers, bushes, grass, etc. Everything that can be cut with a knife or ax is hacked down. Large tree trunks are chinked at the base; then the native heaps all the rubbish [36] from the first stage of clearing around them and

311 sets it on fire. Two or three days later the giants of the
313 forest topple one after another amidst an indescribable din and the joyous cries of the natives. The brushwood is quickly cut up and branches and crowns are lopped off. The large logs are left where they fall.

Nothing is more interesting to see than these barely outlined villages in the midst of the great equatorial forest. The clearing, still poorly defined, is framed by a dome of wild greenery over this small open spot where man has decided to settle. The whole clearing is strewn with thick trunks, pieces of wood, charred wood, and rubbish of all sorts. Stumps, cut about one meter from the ground, rise on every side, like so many relics of a life and vegetation recently passed away. Amidst this tortured heap of debris
341 a few very crude huts left and right, as though scattered
342 completely at random. They are really nothing but shelters, places of refuge, where the native spends the night for the time being, protected from dampness and inclement weather. Their miserable appearance, their ramshackle exterior, and the roughness of their construction

Fig. 22. *Corner of a Batitu Village Barely Outlined.*

Teke FI33
Kongo FO21
Yaelima

M
361
342

show [37] that the native has built them in great haste, without attaching any importance to them. He nevertheless lives there until a more permanent hut is built, and this provisional state of affairs sometimes lasts quite a long time.

These initial shelters are built without order or method. An odd assortment of materials are used. The shape of the huts varies, and, curiously enough, it usually bears no resemblance whatever to the ultimate dwelling or to the shape typical of the region.

Fig. 23. Longinipila, a Batitu Village Newly Erected in the midst of the Equatorial Forest.

T
K
361
342

Among the Bateke and Babuende [Bwende], the hut is rectangular and on the average is twice as long as it is wide. The very low side walls are rarely higher than 1.50 meters. The door is cut into the gable end, placed a little to the side, opening on the large village square. The roof slopes away on both sides in a curve from a horizontal ridge. Its edges project considerably beyond the side walls and form a small protective roof all around the outside of the hut. The native uses this protected area to store part of his firewood supply, pottery, and other objects of lesser value.

All the huts are built separately and spaced from 10 to 15 meters apart. They stand parallel to each other, facing the main thoroughfare. [38]

M 342 with rattan thongs. These walls are very strong and durable. The roof is usually covered with thatch, but it frequently happens that the native also uses panels of *nse-nse* to cover his hut. [43]

M 361 Among the peoples who live west of the lake, the huts are grouped in clusters of two or three and placed in two parallel lines. The free space between the clusters is very limited, so much so that at first sight all the huts seem to be continuous. The doors always open on the large street.

M 342 177 656 We also visited a number of villages where earthen dwellings, built by administrative order, stretched out the whole length of the village. As a rule, however, these huts, which we regard as an improvement from the standpoint of hygiene and comfort, were not favored by the natives. The Negro had carried out the task imposed upon him, but he refused to enjoy it. His primitive hut, which was better adapted to the necessities of his life, retained its appeal and its occupants.

M 361 342 Among the Tumba of the east shore of the lake, we observed that the hut tends to present certain characteristics relating it to the type of hut with an arched roof found among the Buli [Oli] and farther north. The ridge, instead of being straight, extends beyond the ends of the hut and dips down, giving the whole structure the appearance of a bow bent [44] chiefly at the two ends. In certain dwellings the doors are placed in the side wall facing the main thoroughfare, and the huts are built in groups standing more or less close together. In other huts, on the other hand, the door is located in the gable wall and opens on a small veranda formed by the projecting roof front. The huts built this way are placed in a line, but are separated, and although the space between the two lines forms the chief thoroughfare of the village, each hut nevertheless boasts a small individual courtyard in front of the veranda. As to the method of construction, it is identical to those we noted in the region west of the lake.

M S 361 342 Among the peoples of the lower Lukenie, the huts are also built by the same method and with identical materials. The door, however, is nearly always in the gable wall, at the end where the roof projects, slightly curved, to form the veranda. When the huts are separated, one notices again a tendency toward an arc in the

Sakata FO43

Ntomba

M
S
361
342

ridge, although it is true that this is not very pronounced. It happens very frequently, however, that the natives help each other in building the village and proceed so as to form long lines of uninterrupted huts. [45] As a result, the ridgepiece is continuous and straight. The opening that serves as a door is in the gable wall and opens on a small empty space. This courtyard is common to two adjacent huts, but their doors are not placed face to face.

This type of continuous dwelling is found most frequently among the Basakata of the interior. It is characterized by the careful attention the natives give to its construction and completion.

M
361
342

As regards dwelling type and general village layout, all the peoples along the shores of Lake Leopold II and the banks of the lower Lukenie seem to belong to a single ethnic group characterized by the rectangular hut having a roof with an oblique double slope and a horizontal ridgepiece parallel to the village thoroughfare. The single huts, however, with slightly arched roofs and placed perpendicular to the main axis of the village, which we noted to the east of Lake Leopold II, reveal certain traces of an ethnic affinity with the peoples farther east. Before we proceed

Fig. 28. Tumba Hut with Rectangular Base and Slightly Arched Roof.

Sakata FO 43

Before we proceed

M 361 342 643 to the study of dwellings in that region, it is well to note that among all the western populations, the hut of the great chief, that is to say, the "chief of the [46] earth," Mfumu na Tse, is built separately, a little apart from the general alignment or facing the principal street. This hut is surrounded by a fence, and the enclosure contains the royal hut, the reception palace, and the huts of the chief's wives.

M 644 Entry into the chief's courtyard is forbidden to his subjects. Only the dignitaries are admitted there when royal audiences are held, and to receive them the chief holds court in the hut that serves as a reception building. All around the enclosure, the "chief of the earth" has special trees of the cactus family planted. This, we were assured by the future successor of the Mosengere chief of Penge, is a royal prerogative very strictly observed. The existence of this enclosure around the royal dwelling recalls the custom in Bafumu villages of arranging the huts in family groups, and it seems to indicate a certain affinity between these different tribes.

S [342] [415]

Fig. 29. Basakata Huts Connected by a Common Court.

M 342 In the region of the Ipanga-Batitu, besides the small hut whose roof has the oblique double slope and horizontal ridge and is covered with vegetal tiles, which serves as a secondary, temporary

342 of tree bark. Walls of nse-nse are exceedingly rare.

The door of the hut opens on the interior of the veranda. The latter is always open on the side facing the main artery of the village. Sometimes it is open both in front and to one side; it is very rarely open on all sides.

In the Bokala region and in a very few Yaelima villages, we found this same characteristic type of hut. Such cases, however, were quite rare. Most often the huts in this area had an appearance

Fig. 32. Another Form of Batitu Hut, under Construction in the Village of Longinpila.

that reminded us of the Batitu type only by the presence of a veranda with a roof that was more or less curved in the extension of the main axis.

The Bokala-Yaelima hut has a rectangular base and a roof with an oblique double slope and a horizontal ridge.

The interior of the hut has two parts, one serving as living room, kitchen, and dining room, the other as the bedchamber. The door opens into the first part and is cut in the wall facing the main artery of the [49] village. All the huts are built separately [361] and laid out lengthwise in such a fashion that two parallel rows make up the village. The huts are built with stakes and raffia stems for the framework and nse-nse to cover the walls as well

Ntomba

the main axis [51] of the village. This door is always placed 342
rather high and closes on an inner slide. Since nse-nse and
ndele are lacking in this region, the framework of the huts is
made of stakes and pieces of raffia, and the walls and roof are
covered with raffia leaves plaited flat in the form of a mat.

The huts are built singly, a method which again reminds one of the customs of the Oshwe-Bumbuli region. The native does sometimes cover his hut with grass, but this is very rare.

In this region we also observed that in certain villages the huts 361
were arranged in family groupings and that each group had a spe- 592
cial area clearly set apart from the rest of the village. The 592
various huts of a single group are inside a fairly solid stake fence 351
from one and three-quarters to two meters high and sometimes
covered with mats of raffia leaves. The doors of all the huts
within an enclosure open toward the interior of the courtyard.

Fig. 35. Interior of a Lupango and Drying Peanuts, Bena Dibele-Kole Region.

The whole forms the lupango. By counting the number of huts in 592
a lupango one may determine how many wives the chief or head
of the place has, since each one has her own home. [52] The
lupango are of recent introduction and are derived from Arab in- [177]
fluence. One cannot take them into account in establishing re-
lationships of kinship or ethnic affinity between the different
peoples. There is no connection whatever between the lupango
of the Bena Dibele-Kole region and the familial grouping of huts

S M 226 industry of it. This sort of thing flourishes especially among the riparian people in the country of the Basakata, Balesa, and Mosengere.

S M 226 361 In the region of the lower Fimi, as well as along the marshy banks of the lower Lulonga, native fishing camps are quite numerous. They are all of the same type and [94] never have the character of a permanent settlement. At the end of the rainy season one sees families of riparian peoples leave their villages temporarily and settle along the marshy rivers. Men and women make this move, while children, old people, and a few able-bodied adults stay in the village to guard the homes.

The fishing camps are set up in very rudimentary fashion. The huts are merely shelters, refuges.

S M [462] Gathering salt grass for making salt is the chief task of the women. The men do the fishing.

S M 226 All the methods for fishing individually are used, but the bulk of the work is done communally.

The procedures are quite varied. We will mention the following.

1) Damming the mouths of small rivers and minor tributaries, along with setting traps in front of the escape channel and the method of driving the fish described above.

S M [226 386] 2) Fishing with a net. Unlike the nets used for hunting, the fishing nets are made of raffia fibers. The type of knot is the same, but the technique is more like the one used for plaiting the hair. The native carefully dyes the fibers black in order to make the mesh invisible under water. He attaches small cylindrical sections of a very light wood to the upper part of the net to serve as floats. At the opposite edge, he attaches the sinkers, made of cylindrical pieces of baked clay. The floats and sinkers are made so that they counterbalance each other and maintain the net in a vertical position in the water. These nets are 20 to 25 meters long. If necessary, the natives use a series of nets and dam the whole river in this way. Five to ten men are stationed with large baskets along the nets. The women go up the river 100 to 200 meters, enter the water, and form a chain to drive the fish before them. These are caught in the meshes of the nets and attract the attention of the fishermen by the efforts they

MS 258 Among the Mosengere, Bobaie, Basakata, Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, on the other hand, the natives still use the primitive process.

This varies according to the region, insofar as the materials used in the preparation are concerned.

Among the Mosengere, Wadia, Tumba, Basakata, and Bobaie, the natives use only the salt grass that grows abundantly in the marshes and along the marshy banks of certain rivers in the region.

In the territory of the Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, where this precious resource is lacking, the natives use the trunks of banana trees and especially the flowers of palm trees, whose ashes are quite rich in alkaline matter.

● MS ● [361] Salt grass is harvested toward the end of the dry season.

At this time groups of Mosengere, Wadia, Tumba, Bobaie, and Basakata of the interior leave their villages to camp along the rivers with marshy banks.

MS [342] They choose a site suitable for setting up the few huts that will serve them as shelters during their temporary sojourn in the region. These huts are usually very poorly constructed. Built hastily and carelessly, they are provisional shelters, refuges for the night, rather than dwellings.

MS 258 423 In former times the whole expanse of the marshy plain covered with salt grass was divided into sections.

Each native group had its own well-defined area and exploited it exclusively. (107)

The site for the huts occupied by each such group was determined by the location of the familial reservation or domain and was chosen so as to lie in the center of it.

The time of year when the salt grass was gathered and the length of the period of exploitation were regulated. In short, the propagation of salt was a national industry, governed by special laws to which the whole tribe had to conform.

At the present time, the groups gather salt grass wherever they think best, without regard for the customs and rights of the past. This work of harvesting the grass falls to the women.

MS 251 862 While the men are fishing, the women, provided with large knives, cut down the tall grass that grows in the marshes or along

369
548 2) There is a considerable excess of bachelors over eligible women.

[694] 3) The freedom to commit adultery: no sanctions were provided.[a]

[586] 4) The difficulty of finding a suitable husband experienced by many girls born in the centers. Marriages between individuals belonging to different groups (especially certain ones) seldom last. And since inhabitants of the centers have no fixed or stable residence, they intend sooner or later to go back to their tribe of origin. Serious-minded parents therefore discourage and thwart these "mixed" marriages. (1)

1. On this subject, read Jadot's fine page in Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 132, beginning: "La prostitution devait inévitablement . . . (Prostitution was inevitably . . .).

[361] In the region under discussion there are only a few lightly populated centers: plantations, government or business stations, and small commercial centers. From time to time the bachelors there satisfy their desires with the wives of their fellow workers, and especially with women who come from the interior to sell their products at market. But they do not avoid one of the consequences of prostitution, namely the spreading of venereal diseases.

It is possible to conclude that in the past prostitution existed only in a very broad sense [78] and there was very little of it. In [illegible] Engel's article, "Les Wangata" op. cit., he writes that among the Wangata "prostitution no longer exists." If the eminent author is using the term according to the meaning in the dictionary, we may ask on what basis he is implicitly stating that this institution existed in the past. If prostitution is broadly defined, then the facts contradict his remark, for actually it has not ceased to develop among the tribes be discussed, who are located very close to the city of Coquilhatville and its various suburbs.

[a] [i.e., in the centers.--Analyst]

8: Müller--7 E-5 (1951-1954) 1956 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ekonda

621
361 ●
614

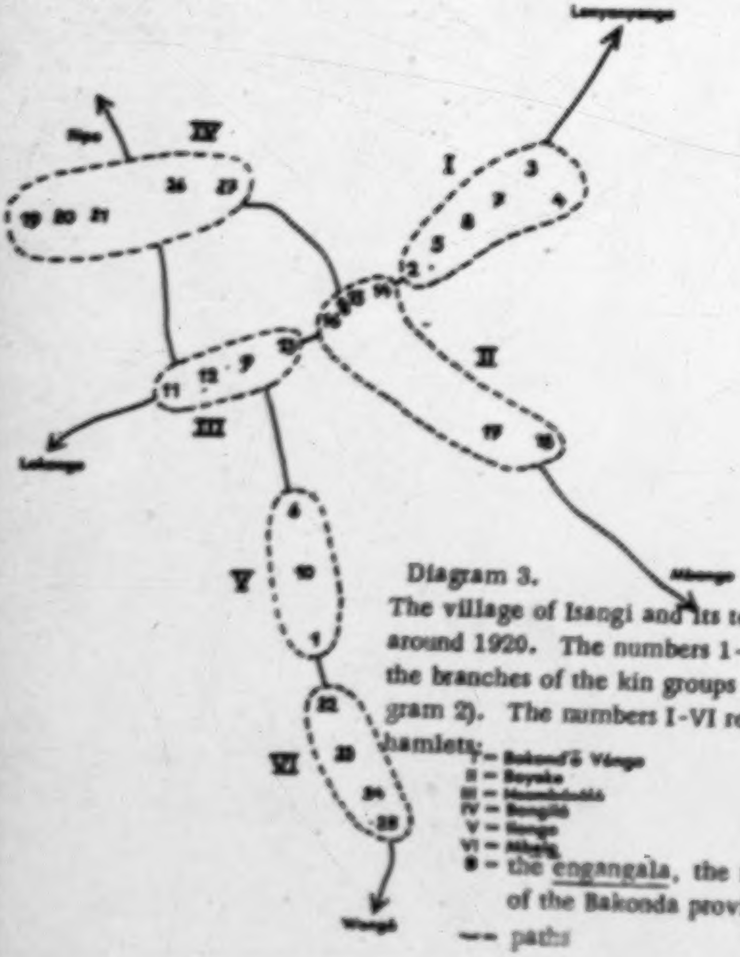

I
II
III
IV
V
VI
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27

Diagram 3.
The village of Isangi and its territory around 1920. The numbers 1-27 denote the branches of the kin groups (see Diagram 2). The numbers I-VI refer to the hamlets:

I — [illegible]
II — [illegible]
III — [illegible]
IV — [illegible]
V — [illegible]
VI — [illegible]
● — the engangala, the meeting place of the Bakonda province
— — paths

614 kinship subgroup [Untersippe] for groups of rank C;
kinship group [Sippe] for groups of rank D (the exogamous units);
large kinship group [Grossippe] for groups of rank E.

Local Organization

●361 The second diagram[1] shows the settlement pattern of the
621 Isangi group in its old settlement area up to 1949. At this time
Isangi was relocated near the highway. Only two of the nuclear
178 kinship groups of Isangi can lay claim to territory reaching far enough toward the east as to extend beyond the new highway. Thus, the resettlement process has led to a complete change of the settlement pattern. However, the functions of the settlement communities have not yet been adapted to the new settlement. At present the inhabitants are still so engaged in speculation about the possibility of a return to their own old territory that they have not yet reformed their village organization.

621 We observe that the village is divided into six settlement
614 communities (30), each of which consists only of the members of one of the two kinship groups of Isangi. [200] We find that only the group of the father, which formerly was a kinship group in its own right, is attached to one settlement community of the kinship group Ngelé. Incidentally, we might point out that the names of the two kinship groups, Ngelé and Nkoto, mean "down the river" and "up the river." The older group is called "down the river" since in ngelé the river is large and wide. We come across this honorary term for the older group in some other villages although there is not always an "up-river" group. No corresponding settlement pattern can be found.

614 The degree of cohesion among the constituent kinship
621 groups in settlement community I is so strong that the entire
202 community has a communal bokendi, a communal messenger.
624

30. See Diagram 3.

[1] [page 7, category 116.—Analyst]

614 621 202 624 It is the task of the messengers to transmit all important messages to the other groups in accordance with a precise plan; this is particularly true regarding the invitations to the meetings of the village council with the nkúmú. At the same time they inform the other groups as to the program of the meeting. The first messenger calls on the messenger of the other community; the old men are gathered at the latter's house in order to receive and to discuss the message. The messenger of this community, in turn, departs for the next in line. As a result of this practice the messenger and his home became one of the centers of social life.

621 614 ●361 623 The same uniformity is found in community II. Here we can also see the engangala, the meeting place of the village Isangi and of its branch villages. The meeting place is an open space in which stands a short tree with a broad crown. The representatives of the several villages gather in the shade of this tree since one of the open men's houses could not accommodate all of them. The senior of the nuclear kinship groups Mpia (No. 14), Nsambi (No. 15), and Liengo (No. 16) has his house on this spot which is situated on the border of the territory belonging to these three groups. The elder of Mpia, however, is the messenger for the hamlet of Boyeke; he may of course be identical with the "elder on the engangala."

614 621 Cohesion within the third settlement community was also so strong that it employs only one messenger. The kinship subgroup Nsambásílá which is concentrated in this hamlet is said to consist of the descendants of an illegitimate child of the daughter of the village founder (see Diagram 1). As is the case in many [782] other villages, it is therefore entrusted with the office of the [624] botóni, who carries out the sacrifice of human beings and animals on the proper occasions.

614 621 624 202 The three communities just described are relatively homogeneous groups; the three following ones are quite heterogeneous. The two groups of hamlet IV belong to the kinship subgroups Iyolo and Mbo. In contrast to the kinship subgroups Lovendo and Basilo, they regard themselves as sufficiently different from

614 each other to employ their own messengers. When the messenger
621 of settlement II arrives here, he first calls on the messenger of
624 the nuclear kinship group Bosɔ́bɛ́ (No. 19) and then to Impínga
202 (No. 26). The messenger from Bosɔ́bɛ́ calls on his relatives in settlement VI, who are the nuclear kinship group Mbelo-Mmuna (No. 22), while the messenger from Impínga-Ndongɔ́ formerly had to call on the group Bommambo which is now extinct.

Settlement V consisted of three different groups. Bolíma, the group of the father, had its own messenger; however, he only received the messages without having to pass them on, which is also the case with all these last groups of the village. Both neighbors had their own messenger. The messenger from settlement I called on the nuclear kinship group Bolesangi, his relatives; the messenger from settlement III went to his relatives of the nuclear kinship group Ituli.

There were also two messengers in the last hamlet, but reports on this subject are insufficient since the nuclear kinship group Bommambo has been extinct for a long time.

178 All the settlements just mentioned have a common
614 characteristic: formerly, at important dance festivals, their
621 young men performed together in one joint *corps de ballet*. The
595 population was decimated as a result of the rigors of [201] the occupation period and also as a result of the population move-
[161] ment into the cities. Consequently, there are not enough young people any more, and I with II, III with IV, and V with VI act together. Thus, in each case we find Ngelɛ́ and Nkoto united in one ballet. Although these groups have also been scattered
[361] as a result of the new settlement pattern (next to the highway), the old organizational structure has been preserved, and the young people do not hesitate to walk the long distance to the practice field every day so they can dance in the old groupings.

All of Isangi, all three kinship groups, have one common
621 village chief, the Nkúmú, with an *iyolo nsáka* who gets the meet-
624 ings started, and a village court with its judges. There are other
622 groups which correspond to Isangi (31), but have more than one

---

31. See Müller, *Fürstentum*, pp. 73 ff., 76 ff., 133 f.

614 Each hamlet includes one or several message districts.
621 Even at the time of the old settlement pattern the messenger
624 system was determined by the hierarchical structure and not
[202] at all by considerations of what was most practical (for example,
the shortest route). Consequently this conservative institution
of the conservative old men has not been affected at all by the
relocation.

The villages are the communities of jurisdiction and of political life. Usually a nkúmú, presides over the meetings. If a village has several nkúmú, one of whom may be the judge or all may preside together, I have used the term "part of a village" [Dorfteil] for the district from which each nkúmú originates.

Those areas which have a special meeting place are here
361 referred to as a "province" [Gau]. The meeting place lies
621 within the territory of the oldest or second-oldest kinship group.
178 The practical importance of this institution for the entire province is minimal, but the two meeting places [202] which we discovered still constituted, until a short time ago, important social centers for the duplicate villages forming the administrative centers of the respective provinces. As a result of the relocation, the meeting places have now lost their function completely.

000 I hope that this paper has added new material to the discussion on the subject of ethno-sociological terminology, and that it will stimulate criticism and a new discussion of this important subject.

548 The name ɛ́fɔ́tswâɛ́la does not mean that the girl will stay
582 single all her life. Her marriage is not permanently excluded; it is
882 only postponed.

As for her behaviour, the efɔ́tswâɛ́la conducts herself like any Nkundɔ́ girl. Nothing distinguishes her from her companions. If a good match is proposed to her, she marries like everyone else.

This custom -- if one can use the term -- therefore has no real connection with prostitution. All that can be said is that the girl who stays single longer and until adulthood, is exposed to more libertinism and a life of debauchery.

586x It also happens that parents who are angry because their daughter has dissolved a marriage to a man they consider a good son-in-law prevent her from remarrying in an effort to make her return to her legitimate husband. If the parents and their child each hold to their viewpoint without yielding, such a situation can go on for many months until the wife is -- practically speaking -- no longer under the authority of her husband. And since the opposition of her parents prevents her from being married by another man, she easily comes to give herself to all. It should be added that at present this case is chiefly hypothetical. Parents no longer have the authority [178] to thwart the desires of an adult daughter in this way; if she is stubborn they have to yield out of fear that she will run far away. And that would be to go from the frying pan into the fire. But in the past the kind of situation I have described was not unusual.

548
369 The most fertile places for the breeding and development of prostitution are to be sought in the centers. The following principal causes can be given:

1) Female vanity is overexcited by the sight [74] of all the dazzling riches which have been imported by white men and which are such a temptation to Negro women. It requires a considerable income to satisfy this desire to enhance one's native beauty. Ordinary laborers and artisans do not earn enough money to satisfy their wives or daughters in this respect. Mistresses of Europeans or of foreign black men, the wives of "clerks" and other representatives of Negro high society display a degree of luxury startling and striking to the rest.

369
548 2) There is a considerable excess of bachelors over eligible women.

[684] 3) The freedom to commit adultery: no sanctions were provided.[1]

[586] 4) The difficulty of finding a suitable husband experienced by many girls born in the centers. Marriages between individuals belonging to different groups (especially certain ones) seldom last. And since inhabitants of the centers have no fixed or stable residence, they intend sooner or later to go back to their tribe of origin. Serious-minded parents therefore discourage and thwart these "mixed" marriages. (1)

> 1. On this subject, read Jadot's fine page in Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 132, beginning: "La prostitution devait inevitablement . . . (Prostitution was inevitably . . .).

[361] In the region under discussion there are only a few lightly populated centers: plantations, government or business stations, and small commercial centers. From time to time the bachelors there satisfy their desires with the wives of their fellow workers, and especially with women who come from the interior to sell their products at market. But they do not avoid one of the consequences of prostitution, namely the spreading of venereal diseases.

It is possible to conclude that in the past prostitution existed only in a very broad sense [78] and there was very little of it. In [114] Engel's article, "Les Wangata" op. cit., he writes that among the Wangata "prostitution no longer exists." If the eminent author is using the term according to the meaning in the dictionary, we may ask on what basis he is implicitly stating that this institution existed in the past. If prostitution is broadly defined, then the facts contradict his remark, for actually it has not ceased to develop among the tribes he discussed, who are located very close to the city of Coquilhatville and its various suburbs.

[1] [i.e., in the centers.— Analyst]

568 178 The fact of colonization has greatly changed the situation. The freedom of communication across great distances, the introduction of new and varied goods and especially of money, have had a great influence on the development of prostitution. The economic system of the people remains the same; but when the women are away from their families or their husbands, they spend their means at their own discretion. And, since the objects of adornment available to them have greatly increased, they have a personal incentive to engage in immoral conduct.

The vice has not therefore taken on European forms; modern changes have simply increased -- but in enormous proportions -- the number of occasional streetwalkers. The development of this state of affairs is encouraged by the procuring activities of certain polygamous and even monogamous men living near European centers, which give rise to the attitude of their wives. For though the husband may reap the primary financial benefit, the wife is not deprived of her little gain, and her native cupidity easily pushes her to engage without scruple in commercializing her body.

837 578 The women under discussion are usually married. Often they have a recognized lover among the laborers in the camps, and he usually pays for their faithfulness. Thus we arrive at the married woman with a regular paying lover. [76]

This form of prostitution has developed even outside laborers' camps. It is to be found among the people on the river banks, who are more in contact with the Whites and their people and in the neighboring villages. It is especially prevalent among the Boloko, fairly near Coquilhatville, where it is spreading even among wives of monogamists. This perversion takes root all the more rapidly because it has a certain resemblance to the ancestral custom of a recognized concubinage (see Chapter VI, Article VIII, 2) and like the latter, it often does not take the form of prostitution. That is to say, the illicit relationship is not engaged in for the sake of gain. Furthermore, an arrangement is often made with the husband.

[569] As to the other forms of prostitution listed, they are still unknown in the native villages and in the small centers located in the territory studied. Some of them, however, may develop in the fairly near future.

Take FI 33

Making Fire

M 372 The natives of the Kasai-Fimi-Lukenie region make fire i three different ways.

The Bateke and Banfumungu of the river use flint and steel the Banfumungu of the interior, the Boboma, Mosengere, Tumba

M [516]

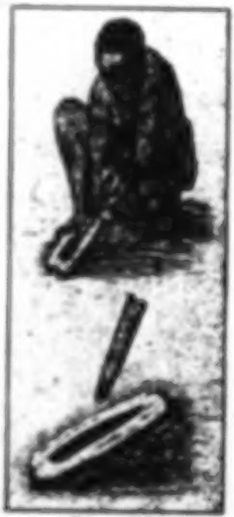


Fig. 59.
Making Fire by Friction.

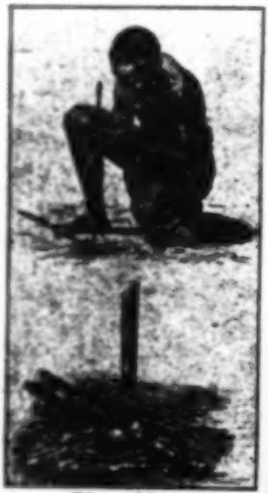


Fig. 60.
Making Fire by Rotation.

Wadia, Basakata, Bobaie, Balesa, Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and some of the Yaelima use the friction method [102] or longitudi nal rubbing; and the Yaelima of the east, the Basongo-Meno, the Bankutshu of the Bena-Dibele-Kole region obtain fire by gyration or rotary rubbing.

M [177] The native method tends to disappear rapidly everywhere with the introduction of matches, although most of the natives have kept their primitive strike-a-light and always carry it wit them on journeys. If there are no matches or if through some circumstance -- the humidity, the crossing of a river or marsh the matches will not work, the native takes out his strike-a-lig and makes fire by the native method.

T 372 The strike-a-light of the Bateke and Banfumungu of the river consists of an iron or steel blade from three to eight centi meters long and two to three centimeters wide, a flint (a mere

Teke FI 33

T 372 chip of gneiss or silex, a gunflint or quartz fragment), and tinder. Any dry and highly inflammable matter, such as dry leaves, etc., may serve as tinder, but tufts of the vegetable fiber that the natives gather from the trunks of palm or banana trees are commonly used. [103]

To make fire, the Bateke and Banfumungu of the river prepare a small bundle of dry twigs in the midst of which they set a pinch of tinder. A few strokes of the strike-a-light produce a spark, and the fire is started. A small, incandescent dot, barely visible, a trifle suffices. The native immediately blows very lightly on the tinder, fans the fire, slightly stirs the twigs, and soon the flame leaps up.

M 372 To make fire by friction or the longitudinal rubbing method, the native uses two pieces of wood, one broad, flat, and soft, the other long, more or less evenly cylindrical, and very hard.

During my journey to the interior of the Kasai-Fimi-Lukenie region, I had an opportunity to observe firsthand this method of making fire, notably at Bomu among the Banfumungu, at Mpa among the Mosengere, at Kempa among the Basakata, at Lubamiti among the Wadia, at Wambia among the Batitu, at Wumbuli among the Bokala, and, finally, at Lopori among the Taelima.

The native proceeds in the same fashion everywhere.

When he is alone, he sets the piece of soft wood, which has a groove parallel to its axis, flat on the ground. He kneels and pins the wood under one of his knees. Holding the rod of hard wood in both hands, he vigorously rubs the point along the groove with a continual back-and-forth movement. In no time at all fine, charred wood dust accumulates at one end of the groove. In less than a minute one sees a spot ignited. The native took care to prepare the tinder in advance. He puts the little incandescent nucleus on it, blows, and the flame soon leaps up.

When there are several natives, as is usually the case, one man puts his foot on the grooved piece, while a second man kneels and rubs the end of the small rod in the groove, as though to carve it deeper.

In the gyration or rotary rubbing method used by the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region and among part of the eastern

● 372 Yaelima, the apparatus consists of two small cylindrical rods. [104] One of the rods, cut from relatively soft wood, has one or more notches. The other, rounded at one end, is of hard wood. The notched rod is placed over the tinder; the other one is held perpendicularly, with the round end inserted in the notch. The native gives the latter rod a rapid rotary motion by spinning it between his hands. At the same time he slides his hands from top to bottom in order to increase the pressure as much as possible.

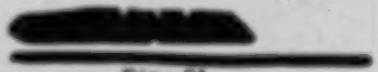


Fig. 61
Rod and Small Board with Notches.

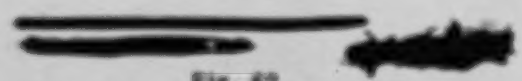


Fig. 62
Two rods, One with Notches.

The special skill consists in producing this motion with as few pauses as possible. This is why several natives usually participate. One holds the notched rod in place, a second one spins the other rod, while a third stands by ready to maintain the gyrating motion as soon as his companion reaches the bottom of the rod. The first spinner will relieve the other in turn. After several rotations, a small incandescent spot appears in the charred wood dust in the notch, and a spark falls on the tinder, which catches fire.

The areas in which these three methods of making fire are found form three distinct ethnic zones in the region visited.

The first one includes only the Bateke and part of the Basfumungu and is characterized by use of the iron blade and flint.

The second one with the system of friction or longitudinal rubbing extends from the interior of Basfumungu territory to the center of the region occupied by the Yaelima. [105]

372, 177 The third, with the system of gyration or rotary rubbing, includes the easternmost part of Yaelima territory and the whole Bena Dibele-Kole region.

Yaelima

372 177 This last method has also been noted among the Balesa, and we were able to verify that some of the natives in the region were familiar with it and used it. It is not indigenous to this tribe, however, and must have been introduced into the region by soldiers or laborers from the old Tolo post, who came from regions where this method was known.

It is also possible that the eastern Yaelima borrowed this method from the peoples of the south, although we were unable to obtain any precise information on this point. This hypothesis, however, is justified by the fact that we found the friction and gyration methods in certain Yaelima villages, and the natives preferred to use the latter method in every such instance. It must be noted that the gyration method is not only less tiring but also faster and permits the natives to take turns. It provides a maximum of yield for a minimum of work. There is, therefore, nothing astonishing in the fact that wherever the natives have had an opportunity to observe the advantages of this method, they have made a point of adopting it.

372 In our opinion, the friction or longitudinal rubbing method should be regarded as having been used exclusively in former times by all the tribes, from the Basfumungu to the Yaelima. This method may still be found among the tribes of the Dekese region, but, unfortunately, we were unable to substantiate this.

All these peoples in this respect would belong to the same ethnic group, which is clearly differentiated from the group of tribes in the Bena Dibele-Kole region.

Salt

258 The preparation of salt occupies an important place in the life of certain tribes of the Kasai-Lukenie region. Lacking both salt mines and salt water in their territory, the natives proceeded to obtain this precious condiment, indispensable to the diet, by extracting it from plants. [106]

Wherever the introduction of imported products has not eliminated the native method, the extraction of salt is a veritable national industry. The whole community participates in it.

[177] Among the Basaka, Basfumungu, Baboma, and part of the Wadia, the introduction of salt has completely eliminated the use and preparation of native salt.

S A 226 industry of it. This sort of thing flourishes especially among the riparian people in the country of the Basakata, Balese, and Mosengere.

S A 226 361 In the region of the lower Fimi, as well as along the marshy banks of the lower Lukenga, native fishing camps are quite numerous. They are all of the same type and [94] never have the character of a permanent settlement. At the end of the rainy season one sees families of riparian peoples leave their villages temporarily and settle along the marshy rivers. Men and women make this move, while children, old people, and a few able-bodied adults stay in the village to guard the homes.

The fishing camps are set up in very rudimentary fashion. The huts are merely shelters, refuges.

S A [263] Gathering salt grass for making salt is the chief task of the women. The men do the fishing.

S A 226 All the methods for fishing individually are used, but the bulk of the work is done communally.

The procedures are quite varied. We will mention the following.

1) Damming the mouths of small rivers and minor tributaries, along with setting traps in front of the escape channel and the method of driving the fish described above.

S A [226] [386] 2) Fishing with a net. Unlike the nets used for hunting, the fishing nets are made of raffia fibers. The type of knot is the same, but the technique is more like the one used for plaiting the hair. The native carefully dyes the fibers black in order to make the mesh invisible under water. He attaches small cylindrical sections of a very light wood to the upper part of the net to serve as *floats*. At the opposite edge, he attaches the sinkers, made of cylindrical pieces of baked clay. The floats and sinkers are made so that they counterbalance each other and maintain the net in a vertical position in the water. These nets are 20 to 25 meters long. If necessary, the natives use a series of nets and dam the whole river in this way. Five to ten men are stationed with large baskets along the nets. The women go up the river 100 to 200 meters, enter the water, and form a chain to drive the fish before them. These are caught in the meshes of the nets and attract the attention of the fishermen by the efforts they

3. The period of prohibitions

843 When a pregnancy is far advanced -- about two or three months before delivery (a period which has now been reduced to one or two weeks) -- the Nkundó proceed with the "preservation of the fetus" (bɔ́omba jɛ́mi, "they preserve the fetus," or bɔ́aka jɛ́mi, "they fasten the fetus"). The period called bokeka or bokeko begins at that moment and does not end until after childbirth. The oral expression is lémba bokeka, "to bind the period of sexual prohibitions." (1) This term also extends to all special prohibitions (bikilá) resulting from this condition. [475]

For the first pregnancy the period begins with the following [316] ceremony: The woman's mother smears her daughter's head and [302] all of her body with a red paint called ngɔ̂la. This paint, usually used as make-up, is used here as a mark of affection and given to honor and congratulate the future mother on this happy occasion. When the ngɔ̂la is somewhat hardened, the mother smears her daughter's hair with it and rolls the hair into little balls, using an iron bosɔ́ngɔ́, which is the instrument usually used for hairdressing. Then she gives her daughter a hen and some bananas to eat. From then on the pregnant woman may no longer eat hens, for the con- [125] sumption of this bird (which the Nkundó place in the same category as ducks) and its eggs would stop the normal development of the fetus. The ceremony is called fla bongata (elaku among the Bombwanja), "to smear with red paint in little balls."

The woman's father and the husband's kin feel strongly about being present at this ceremony, for it is considered very important. I know of an intense palaver which occurred because

---

[834] 1. The expression lémba lɔ́mbɔ́ is also used. A similar period of sexual prohibitions called by the same name still exists for, among other things, circumcision, the construction of a hunting enclosure, and the setting of elephant traps.

845 [202] The event is announced by the usual signal, but the signal is doubled or, if the children are of different sexes, the signal for each sex is given once. It is followed by the dance beat: two [535] or three long and two short.

845 778 The next day the father's relatives go outside the village, preferably to a crossroads. On each side they plant a stalk of lokókólókó. All around the stalk they spread a little heap of small branches and various leaves called jikó. It is a sign and a place of benediction and good fortune. Each passer-by stops, picks two leaves, places one on each pile, spits on it, and says swǎ.(2) Then they clap hands and twice sing out, yelí yeye. Such behavior brings the benediction of the twins upon a person's journey, his undertakings, his marriage. The umbilical cord as well as the placenta and membrane are buried under the heap.

845 382 [301] Every morning the mother and father draw two stripes with kaolin on the middle of their foreheads and on their arms, above and below the elbow. They do the same to the twins. (3) They continue doing so until the child is weaned. If after that time one of the children falls ill, they begin again treating him in this manner until he is cured, taking care not to omit his brother, lest he too fall ill. For while these designs are signs of joy, they are [751] above all a prophylactic measure against children's fever (ilókowákó), [502] called wãsanyi when it occurs in twins or in a child following them, and manifests itself chiefly by tumors of the head and face.

845 551 Twins are invariably called Mbóyó and Bokétu, names given to the first born and the second respectively, whatever their sex. The Bombwanja (like the Ekonda) use the names Mbóó and Mpia, respectively. The mother takes the name of Ǎmbá.

---

2. Onomatopoeia for "spit."

3. Sometimes a double stripe is added at the temples The kaolin may be used pure or mixed with the red paint called ngóla.

202 so-and-so has died. Hours before his actual death, people everywhere know that a certain person is on his deathbed and that his death is imminent.

[100] If the witch doctor is up to his tricks of duping the silly Negro, people everywhere around know just what nonsense he is performing at what moment.

The White announces his morning and midday orders by means of the lokole and tells his workers when they may cease work for the day by the same means.

In the mornings and evenings and in the case of wet weather, the lokole carries especially far, but in the full sun it is not so effective.

202 534 The lokole is a large block of wood which is split down the middle for almost the whole of its length, and the inside part is carefully hollowed out. The lokole has the shape of an extra long, open mussel shell although, in general, the outside edges are flattened out.

322 The making of lokole is the trade of a certain person, and some Negroes are well-known for the lokole they have made.

Only four kinds of wood are suitable for the making of a lokole. [illegible] These are (1) Bokungu; (2) L[illegible]; (3) Bolondo; and (4) lsi. The last is the most excellent kind of wood and the one used by the Mongo [illegible] Negro to manufacture his "ngula" (red dye) with which he smears his body for even the least important event that occurs in his village. The lsi is probably a species of redwood. The Mongo Negro makes 322 534 five different lokole: (1) lingonge, small in shape; (2) lokole ja lonali, medium size; (3) bongungu, large lokole. These three are all like the one described above. They are struck with sticks (bemola) from the "momambo" tree (umbrella tree). (4) Bonkuka is the large, high lokole that is struck with two sticks to the ends of which are attached several balls of caoutchouc. The sound of these lokole carries for the greatest distance. (5) Ngomo is the large, oblong, upright dance lokole. This lokole is simply a large, oblong piece of wood, completely hollowed out, decorated a little, about 1.25 meters high, and covered at the top with a piece of dried antelope or leopard skin. It is struck with the fingers and the palm of the hand. This lokole is the well-known tom-tom, still used by the Negroes on the steamboats to announce their arrival in the villages along the river.

202 198 And now something about lokole language.

The beat of the lokole varies, and it is by this means that the Negroes [101] understand the different words. The tempo varies also.

[104]

III. WEAVING

286 The craft of the Mongo weaver is an honorable one and one that calls for much labor and attentiveness.

[177] Weaving is no longer as much in vogue as it was in earlier times, because the younger people buy European materials. However, the weaver is still able to earn his daily bread comfortably, because [541] the old people are too pagan to give up their old ingrained habit of wearing a loin cloth.

[462] Weaving is a craft carried on by men only. Some are very skillful in the weaving of materials and command our admiration. Pieces of really beautiful workmanship were offered to us for sale; I had myself seen them being woven.

286 314 The weaver takes his knife, goes into the forest, and cuts the "mpekwa ia lifeke," the fibers of a certain kind of palm tree which he also sometimes plants on the open highway near his hut. As soon as he has sufficient fibers for the weaving he has in mind, he goes home and at his leisure scrapes the fibers with his knife until they are all of the same thickness.

286 After that he leaves them in the sun to dry. When they have dried sufficiently, he puts up in his hut or on the open highway the frame on which the fibers are to be hung.

After he has attached the fibers to the top cross-bar (they are bound between the top and bottom cross-bars), he holds down the bottom cross-bar with his foot and goes to work.

Often he uses fibers of different colors, and this gives a lovely effect to the piece of material.

Bofomi afom'eto, "the weaver is weaving material."

● 386 314 The weaver has a very simple way of giving the fibers their different colors.

From the forest he fetches a liana (longoli) which contains the red, white, or black coloring agent, cuts it in pieces, puts them in a banana leaf which has been quickly scorched in the fire, adds some water and hangs all this, with the fibers, in a bag of banana leaves above the fire. When the dye has soaked thoroughly into the fibers, he has his colored fibers all ready [105] for the material he is about to weave. This mixture is called "bosaka."

262 264 with modern machinery. Not content with the state of the utensils in which she serves the meals, the woman is careful to line them at mealtime with fresh and very clean leaves.

515 The natives keep the nails of their hands and feet cut short.

The care of the feet is explained as a hygienic measure and by the necessity of taking precautions to avoid the vermin which like to get into these places (ticks). The care of the hands can be explained only by the concern for cleanliness shown in native eating habits.

Imported soap is not yet commonly used, although we found it in a number of native huts.

388 Many native women know how to make soap. The process is very simple. Dried banana skins, trunks of papaw trees, bark, the fruits of various vegetables, and waste from palm nuts are gathered together and burned. The ashes are carefully collected and mixed with some water for boiling them. At the first ebullition, the woman removes the ashes and impurities that [166] rise to the surface. Boiling is then continued until the evaporation is almost complete. When only a thick and sirupy grayish-black deposit is left, the woman takes it off the fire, washes it, and kneads it in cold water until it takes on a clearer color. She then adds palm oil, mixes it in with great care, and puts the lot back on the fire. The paste is stirred all through the boiling, which is continued until the woman obtains a mixture whose consistency is slightly firmer than that of our soft soaps. [Ed., a passage is omitted from mid-page 166 to mid-page 167.]

Native soap is used only in the care of the body.

[302] 303 [167] The native does not merely smear his body with palm oil. The men and especially the women often powder themselves with takula dust. The women prepare a cosmetic with this and love to cover their whole body with it in a spirit of coquetry. This practice is so widespread among the peoples of Lake Leopold II that the manufacture of ngula has become a veritable local industry in certain areas. This is especially true of the Mosengere. In a village near the Bongo post, we counted 35 installations for making ngula powder. The simplest set of materials includes two blocks of takula or redwood, a small receptacle containing water, a handful of sand, and a small hand or painting brush. One of the

II CARPENTRY.

335 Carpentry plays an important part in the life of the Mongo Negro. The primitive utensils in his house as well as his canoe and his *lokole* (the Negro telephone with which he spreads his thoughts from village to village) are made of wood.

The making of the canoe and the *lokole* takes a great deal of work.

The Canoe.

313 316 The following three kinds of wood, namely, (1) *Bokeswa*, (2) *Lifake*, (3) *Bomposo*, make a good canoe, especially *Bokeswa*. This tree is much sought after because its wood makes a strong, light canoe.

The Negro who wants a canoe goes into the forest, picks out a nice slender tree, brings out his axe, and fells at his leisure the tree he has chosen. He hacks off the unnecessary branches and hollows the tree out in the rough form of the canoe. (*Aulema watu*: he shapes the canoe.)

[illegible] He calls some of his friends together, and they proceed, for payment, of course (nothing for nothing, says the Negro), to hollow out the tree.

316 When they have finished hollowing out the tree, the owner of the canoe calls the *wongiwa biatu*, the proper canoe maker, a heavy man and one of some account among his fellow villagers. This *wongiwa biatu* gives a nice, slender form to the canoe with his axe, planes it off nicely, and with the help of the *esuwa*, a small axe, marks off the edge of the canoe with sharp, short, regular grooves.

413 476 Often the Negroes make their canoes hours away from the nearest water. In order to transport it, they place sticks on the ground and draw the canoe over them. In addition to a number of strong men, all the *spes patriae* [hope of the fatherland] of the village help with this task. They get a *mitako* as a reward and feel themselves on top of the world.

316 476 The canoe maker is well paid, the price reckoned according to the size of the canoe. Several dogs are slaughtered at the expense of

396 476 [273] the owner, and everyone who has helped gets his share according to the amount of work he has done. [99] Frequently a big sugar-cane beer spree is started, where disgusting scenes often take place until finally the drunken men are taken home by their wives. In civilized Europe it is sometimes not much better.

501 Boats are made just large enough for two men, as well as others sufficient for a hundred or even a hundred and fifty men. The big war canoes of the great chief Evoloko of Waka and of the former chief of Bandaka, a certain Iseempoko, are known throughout the region. The war canoe of the latter was said to hold a hundred and fifty men, and the edge of this canoe to reach up to the shoulders of a fairly tall Negro. The ordinary canoe in which Whites travel is, as a rule, sufficiently large for twenty to thirty oarsmen.

435 The prices of canoes vary, according to size and strength, from 200 to 10,000 mitako.

The Lokole

202 The lokole plays a very large part in the life of the Negro. Without the lokole, the life of the Negro would be inconceivable.

The lokole can be best described as the public telephone with which the Negro makes his thoughts known publicly from village to village.

The lokole is to the Negro what the trumpet signal is to the soldier.

The lokole calls the men to meetings, to war, and to the hunt; the lokole calls all the people, great and small, to the dance. During the dance it is the loyal accompanist until deep in the night; its monotonous sound brings the enthusiasm of the dancers almost to the point of frenzy.

The Negro telephones his friends at great distances and explains what he wants. If two Negroes from the same village or from different villages have a quarrel, they abuse each other over the lokole, and the whole world is kept fully up-to-date on the details of the dispute. Each one tries to blacken the reputation of the other in the eyes of the other villagers. If someone dies in the village, it is proclaimed everywhere the whole night through, by means of the lokole, that

252 It consists of a large hole in the form of a truncated cone. The diameter of the upper part varies from 60 to 70 centimeters, that of the lower part from 20 to 30 centimeters, and the depth varies from 60 to 80 centimeters. The bottom and sides are lined with pieces of raffia stems, placed [138] [Fig. 80 appears here] [139] side by side with their rounded surfaces facing the interior of the pit. The nuts, which have been slightly boiled, are poured into this funnel, which serves as a mortar. The outer part is separated from the nut with a large wooden pestle. The kernels are discarded. The pulp is taken from the hole and tightly pressed between the hands to squeeze out the oil.

Near the funnel-shaped mortar dug in the ground, there is a bench made of two or four forked stakes, graduated in height, over which the natives place large sections of tree bark. The woman throws the pulp from which she has extracted the oil on this bench, spreads it out, and lights a small fire under the wide sections of bark, which serve as drains. Under the influence of the heat, part of the oil remaining in the pulp flows out slowly and is caught in the earthenware vessel placed at the lower end of the drain. Finally, whatever palm oil remains in the pulp is squeezed [401] out by the torsion method. For this purpose, the native has set up a large stationary bar, very strong, to which he attaches one end of a pressing apparatus made of young lianas and fine rattan plaited together. The pulp, still hot, is placed in this press and wrung very tightly to extract every last drop of oil.

252 46 The natives collect and keep the palm oil in large pots covered with banana leaves, in calabashes, or, if possible, in imported bottles. Big demijohns stripped of their protective covering are in special demand for this purpose.

008 We have mentioned above the chief uses the native makes of palm oil in preparing food and the important role it plays in the diet of these primitives. Later we shall have occasion to mention palm oil again when we discuss the role it plays in native body care.

263 A word now about stimulants. Food in general, particularly meat, is always very strongly seasoned with condiments.

The most widespread stimulant is pili-pili, red pepper. This pepper, the fruit of Capsicum minimum, which is rarely more than one to one and a half centimeters long, is extremely hot. It grows

[Text continues on p. 103]

Teke FH33
Sakata FO43

to burial, the deceased is laid out in the mortuary hut. Relatives, friends, and acquaintances sit up with the body in turn. Night and day, plaintive and monotonous chants commemorate the high deeds of the deceased, his glory, his qualities, his wealth, his power, his whole life. The burial is carried out with great pomp and ends with a general consumption of the whole supply of palm wine, malafu, and masanga [Ed., sugar-cane beer].

T
764

T
572

Fig. 16. Ebandia, Chief of the Mosengere, Two Favorite Wives, and Principal Dignitaries.

M
292
516
411

The peoples of Lake Leopold II place the corpse in a wooden coffin. Those of the Lukenie region wrap it in mats. Both groups bury the deceased the day after death.

M
764

The cemeteries are located outside the village. The relatives lay out a few broken utensils on the grave. If the deceased was a hunter of repute, they plant a long staff upon the grave, and the skull of some animal killed by the dead man is attached at the top of it. [27]

During my stay in the territory of the Babuma-Banfunu of Bokala, I was struck by the presence of a tiny hut in the center of Chief Pokei's village. It was about 60 centimeters high, 30 centimeters wide, and 50 centimeters long. I thought at first

S
766
845
761

324 Another trap, very often used for the hippopotamus, is made of a heavy iron point suspended above the path frequented by the pachyderms. During the day, they prefer to stay in the water or to sleep on a sand bank. At night, they leave their refuge to graze on the grass of the plain. More often than not the animal leaves quite visible traces of his passage on the bank as he leaves or enters the water. The native places his trap near these places, but avoids putting it at the exact spot where the animal comes out. Experience has shown him that the hippopotamus, being extremely cautious, is alerted by the least (41) alteration of this place, and changes to another one immediately.

•[41]

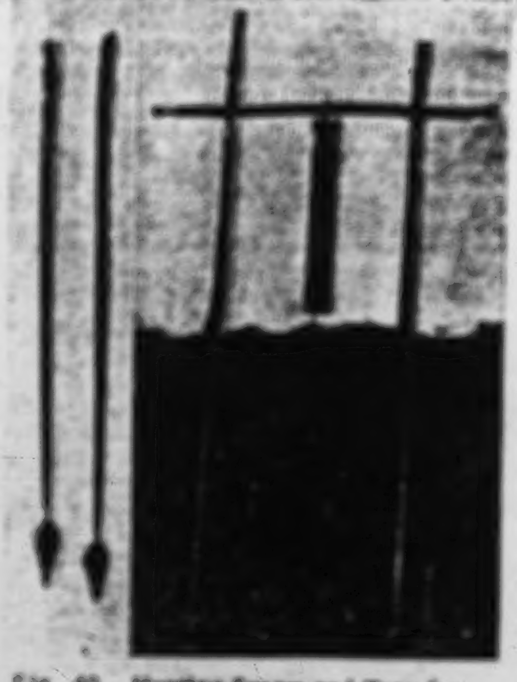


Fig. 40. Hunting Spears and Trap for Large Game, Lake Leopold II.

The iron point is embedded in a large block of wood. The whole apparatus is suspended four or five meters above the ground. A crossbar, one meter above the ground across the track, is held in place by the trigger device which controls the suspension of the

Teke FI38
Sakata FO43

weapon. As he passes, the pachyderm strikes and dislodges the crossbar, springs the trigger, disrupts the suspension, and the spear falls heavily upon him. The trap is arranged in such a way as to hit the animal on the nape of the neck. M 224

The native hunts with bow and arrow as well as with spear. The bow and arrow, however, is more a weapon than a hunting instrument. M 224 411

The peoples in the territory between the Congo and the Kasai, as well as the Babuma of the Fimi have now given up these weapons. A few privileged persons own percussion guns which are usually more dangerous to the hunter than to the hunted. When the native fires a shot, he extends his arms, directs the barrel towards the prey, and turns his head aside. If, through cunning and patience, he gets to within a few meters of the game without arousing its attention, the shot has a chance [66] of success. Ordinarily the animal is more or less gravely wounded, unless the overloaded gun explodes in the hands of the imprudent hunter.

The Bateke, Banfumu, and Babuma store powder in small receptacles made of a simple calabash or cut out of a block of hard wood. The calabashes are sometimes covered with a sheath of serpent or lizard skin to protect the powder more effectively from dampness. The wooden powder flasks are usually pear-shaped, probably to imitate the shape of the calabash. They have a wooden cover that fits very tightly into the body of the object, and the leather strap for hanging it up is attached to two holes cut in the body of the receptacle and drawn through two side openings in the cover. Very often these carved powder flasks are decorated with designs engraved in bas relief, linear motifs arranged in bands. The lines are sometimes curved, sometimes straight, and sometimes also oblique. The bottom of the powder flask is flat so that it may be placed upright [67] on a horizontal surface. The body of the powder flask extends into the straight cylindrical neck onto which the cover is fitted. S 411 322 S [62]

The bow with rattan thong is relatively rare. We found it only among the Tumba, Balesa, Bolaia, Batete [Tete], Ipanga, Bacito, and the Pygmies. This bow is made with a rattan stem, its convex section facing out and its flat section facing in. The rattan thong is attached to the two ends after having been drawn through M 411 [77]

● 4/41 small holes made in the body of the bow four centimeters fron
the tips. A shallow vertical groove is made at the end of eac
tip. Tension on the bow is obtained by drawing the bowstring
through these notches.

The arrows are made of false bamboo, the two vanes of le
drawn through a slot. The heads, hardened by fire, have sma
notches and are smeared with poison. This poison is dangerou
only when quite fresh. A small dose of it will not kill, but be
numbs the wounded animal.

The natives use these bows and arrows especially for huntin
birds and more rarely for hunting monkeys. In the latter case,
they like to use a bow made of a strong, very flexible, and v
tough stalk. The average length varies between 80 centimete

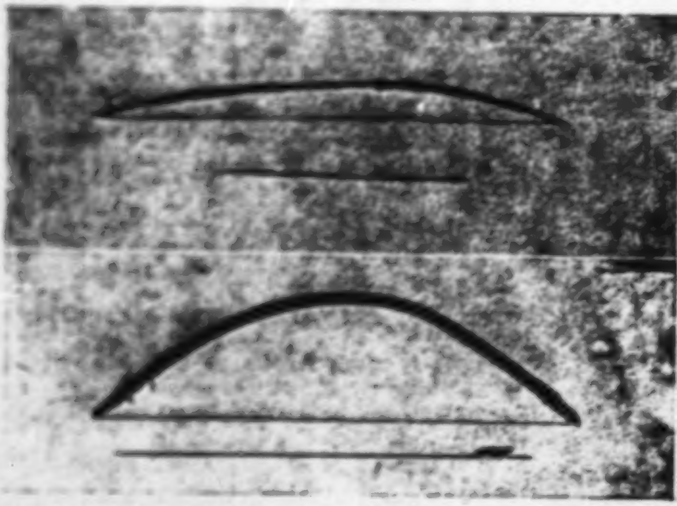


Fig. 41. Bow Strung with Cord and Arrow with Barbed Iron
Fig. 42. Bow Strung with Rattan and Wooden Arrow.

and 1.10 meters. The stalk tapers gradually toward the ends w
are pointed and have a stop notch. The convex side of the ver
section faces inward, the flat side outward. The cord is made
[203] banana tree fibers. The tension is constant, that is to say, the
native does not slacken the bow at rest. Under tension the hei
of the curve of the bow is 12 centimeters; the bow's actual ra
is 150 meters and its useful range 100 meters, or 15 to 20 mete
when shooting upward.

M
411
[462]
The manufacture of bows and arrows is practiced only by men.

M
411
322
The native chooses the wood for his arrows very carefully. It must be light and very tough. After scraping it carefully with a small knife, he carves one end into a point and cuts a notch at the other end for the bowstring. Both ends are slightly hardened by fire. The part where the vanes are to be attached is scraped with the greatest care. The lines marking the place for the vanes are drawn with the point of the knife, and the vanes are made out of half

S
411
[182]
241
a feather from the wing of an eagle or guinea fowl. The native sets all [68] three vanes in place at the same time and fastens them with a fiber thread coiled in spirals. This fine ligature

M
[314]
is strengthened with bulungu resin which is applied in a liquid state and thus forms a very light sheath when dry.

M
411
The arrowhead ends in an elongated, conical socket into which the upper end of the wooden shaft is fitted. The general shape of the head is that of a narrow, oblong leaf, sometimes provided with one or two barbs. This shape is found throughout the Lake Leopold II and Lukenie regions. The notch for the bowstring is quite even and shallow, although among the

Fig. 43. Basakata Armed with Spears, Bow and Arrows.

Yaelima

● 411 Yaelima it is sometimes as deep as five centimeters. The bow and arrow of the type we have just described serves both as an offensive and a defensive weapon. Its importance as a weapon must have formerly been greater. In our time wars between
[721 tribes have become almost impossible. Attacks and reprisals by
678] individuals, on the other hand, are still rather frequent. This is especially true of the region east of Opombo. Every free Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima owns a bow and arrows and does not hesitate to use them either to defend himself or to attack.

224 Hunting with bow and arrow is done on an individual basis. The game taken in this way belongs wholly to the hunter. [69]

[411] Among the Yaelima we found an arrow with a removable head that is notably larger, wider, and stronger, and that is attached to the shaft by thin cords. The natives use these arrows for hunting antelope and buffalo. When the animal is hit, the arrowhead penetrates its body, and the surprised victim flees into the bush or forest. The shaft of the arrow, buffeted by the tall grass or lianas, gradually works itself loose. The head, attached to the shaft by a cord, remains in the wound. With each motion, the animal enlarges its wound. The shaft, sooner or later, is caught in the lianas or grass, with the result that the head is violently jerked from the wound, making it a mortal one. This very dangerous weapon is not widespread, and for good cause. The native can use it effectively only for a point-blank shot. The range of the bow is limited; the arrow with the removable point is heavy; the iron point is very wide and has small barbs. To succeed in planting this arrow in the body of the animal, it is necessary to creep to within several meters of the game, to string the bow without attracting the animal's attention, and to hit it in the belly. The wounded beast may seek its salvation in wild and fatal running, but it sometimes turns against its attacker. In any case, the hunter who uses these arrows cannot do so without risking great [70] danger. Although the native likes to hunt, he also fears the dangers associated with this occupation. The only ones who use these arrows are the intrepid true hunters who have inherited some of the instinct and audacity of the Batua [Twa]. Inunu, chief of the Batitu of the Oshwe region, who was audacious to the highest possible degree and feared no animal, obstacle, or danger, asserted to me that he and a few other hunters did not hesitate to attack elephants with this weapon.

Yaelima

The native most often uses his spear for hunting big game, 224
or he contents himself with setting traps.

The peoples west of the Ipanga have given up elephant hunting. During our sojourn in the region of the Bokala, Bassikata, and Balesa, the natives came to complain several times about the invasion of their manioc fields by elephants and the damage done by these inopportune visitors each time they came. They never thought of attacking the animals. To chase them away, they built fires and made an infernal din, while keeping their distance.

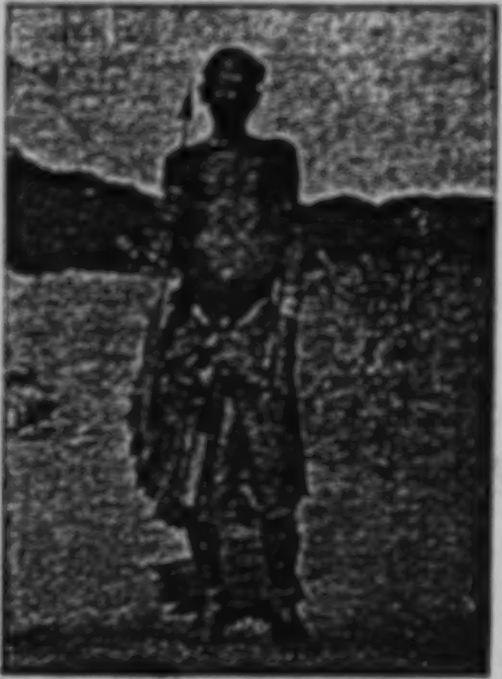


Fig. 44. Great Yaelima Hunter Showing his Harpoon Arrow.

[391
411
301]

In the region of the Ipanga-Betiru and among the Bokala-Yaelima, elephant hunting is rather frequent. The most daring hunters attack them with spears. This hunting is done on an individual basis. The hunter coveys or smears himself with elephant dung. As he draws near, he takes a thousand precautions not to attract the attention of the animal, who is always on the alert. Once within range, he plants his spear into the under belly of the animal and gets away as fast as he can. The wounded beast

229/ lunges forward at random until, exhausted by the wild run and loss of blood, it falls for good. The hunter follows the track for two or three days without ever tiring or losing heart. He infers the probabilities of success from the loss of blood, the footprints, the length of the paces, and many other signs, and as long as any hope remains he keeps up

[46/
29[]

Fig. 45. Leaving for the Hunt in Tsolima Territory with Spears, Bows, Arrows, and Nets.

the chase. The animal sometimes manages to get rid of the spear. In this case, the hunter returns to the village and recounts his exploit to all who will listen. He does this not to establish a reputation, but to build up a claim against anyone who might find the animal if, by some wild chance, it should succumb to the wounds.

Communal hunting is more common. The natives use large [71] nets, spears, knives, and dogs. The group is divided into beaters, directed by a leader, and those who own nets and act as lookouts.

The first native hunt I had the pleasure to attend took place at Tua among the Banfums.

226 it more durable. The bait, consisting of a piece of *chikwangue*, entirely covers the hook. The line is thrown into the water, weighted with stones, and attached to a stake on the bank. The native pulls in these lines only in the morning and at night. They are used only for large fish.

2) *Fishing with bow and arrow*. This is a method of fishing at which the natives excel. During the hot hours of the day, they settle themselves comfortably in their canoe among the grasses and wait patiently for a large fish to wander up to the surface of the water. Immediately, they bend the bow and shoot the arrow. They are fine shots and rarely miss their target. The fish is usually run through and impaled on the arrow. Hampered in its movements, it vainly tries to dive. The native puts down his bow, judges his spring, dives, grabs the fish, and climbs back into his canoe. [91]

3) *Harpoon fishing* is practiced especially for capturing fish that live in the mud. The native takes to this with real passion. Standing in his canoe, he lets himself be carried along by the current, advancing slowly so that no disturbance of the water will scare the fish. With a slow, regular, methodical motion, he plunges in his harpoon, guided by chance and his instinct. The jerks made by the harpooned fish trying to escape alert the experienced fisherman to his catch. He immediately increases the pressure, and then with a slow, regular, methodical motion he pulls up the harpoon, avoiding any abrupt motion that might detach the prize.

[411] The fishing harpoon is made of a bamboo shaft about 2.50 meters long onto which four wooden prongs are attached with bonds of rattan splints. At the tip of each of these four prongs is fastened an iron point which has four barbs and terminates in a conical socket.

4) *Fishing with a trap* placed at random in the grass of marshy banks. [92] The traps, made of rattan splints and with an opening that has spikes pointed toward the interior, vary in size, but they are all made by the same technique. The native puts bait inside and submerges the whole trap in the water. The fish, attracted by the bait, try to get it and enter the trap through the opening set on its side. This entrance, easy to negotiate from

326 The objects of iron made by the Mongo smith are as follows.
411

Bibui: all that is of iron

1. Likula: arrow.
2. Bosuki: arrow for hunting pigs; also used to cut copal and spear fish.
3. Bongolo: lance.
4. Ifombolo: lance.
5. Mpokwankoi: lance.
6. Liswa: axe.

Jokula: knives

326
412
1. Mombi; 2. Boli; 3. Bolengwa; 4. Lingonda; 5. Limenga;
6. Likodzi; 7. Efamba; 8. Momba; 9. More little knives;
10. Lizangi.

Basongo: needles

1. Ingwala.
[413] 2. Lokili: tattooing needle.
3. Jyolo: small needle to get flea beetles out of the feet.
4. Efoli: small pin.

Ngonga: bells

326
534
301
[789]
1. Ngonga ea tosisi: bells worn on the hips by women and children so that as they walk the ringing will keep away the evil spirits.
2. Bongonga: a bell attached to the point of a war-lance which makes it like the head of a walking-stick but upside down.
3. Lingwete: little round bell worn on the wrist by men.
4. Elondza ea itumba: the war-bell. An oblong pipe [97] in the form of a long cup attached to a stick. It is struck with a piece of soft wood, and the sound travels surprisingly far.

These bells are all made of wrought iron.

412
241
462

When new fields are prepared, the first work of clearing them falls to the men. This work is done with a knife and an ax. The shape of this latter tool is the same among all the tribes: a wooden handle with a bulge at one end like a club; and a long, narrow, triangular piece of iron embedded laterally in the handle.

After clearing the brush, the men pile the rubbish at the foot of the large trunks and set it on fire. The tree, undermined at its base, finally topples over and remains where it falls.

462

The women take charge of the other work of cultivation. This varies [37] very little from tribe to tribe, and even the various crops of manioc, maize, peanuts, rice, bananas, and sugar cane require only quite rudimentary special labor.

244
412

Manioc is the staple food of the tribes over most of the region we visited. The native cultivates both sweet and bitter manioc. The latter variety is the more widespread. To prepare the ground, the native woman uses an iron hoe, triangular in shape, with a flaring base and a spike at the top. This piece of iron is embedded laterally in a rough-hewn wooden handle which bulges at the end like a club. The purpose of the club-like end is two-fold: it provides a better hold for the piece of iron, and it intensifies

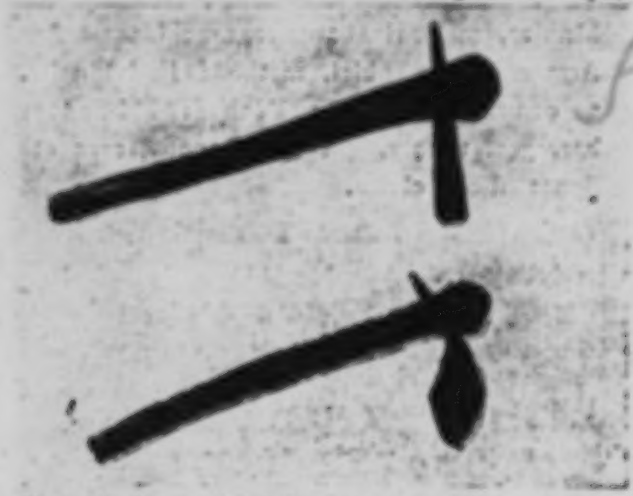


Fig. 37. Ax and Hoe from Lake Leopold II-Lukenie.

Yaelman

244

the worker's efforts without, however, making the use of the tool too tiring. 4/2

After the first hoeing, the woman makes little mounds, 30 centimeters high on the average and spaced about 80 centimeters apart, and inserts four or five manioc cuttings into them. 244

The upkeep of the manioc fields is limited to one or two [58] hoeings to remove the weeds. Manioc requires extremely fertile soil. Its cultivation exhausts the soil to such a point that after three or four years the native must move his fields and abandon the cleared land.

Sweet manioc attains its maximum development at the end of a year, bitter manioc after 15 or 20 months.

Fig. 38. Initial Establishment of the Village of Longinpila in a Clearing, Batitu Tribe.

The manioc tubers or roots are gathered as the family needs them. The root is good to eat at any stage of growth and at any time of year. The maximum yield coincides with the maximum growth of the plant and not with its full maturity. The average yield varies between 12,000 and 14,000 kilograms per hectare. The native woman does not wait until the plants are fully developed to start exploiting the crop. She limits her harvest to a strict minimum throughout the rainy season. At this time the manioc, swollen with water, yields only a little flour and is easily spoiled by soaking.

Tele F533

M 243 use peoples of the Fimi, Lake Leopold II, and the lower Lukenie, the cultivation of maize is quite rudimentary. On the other hand, we encountered large fields of maize among the Bateke and especially among the Banfunu of the Kapanda territories. It is well to note, however, that the intense cultivation of maize in that region was not due to any direct use of it by the native, but to the hope of selling it profitably to the traders and workers of Leopoldville-Kinshasa. T [243, 434]

Maize is sown in seed holes, 30 to 60 centimeters apart. The holes are dug in cleared ground as the rainy season draws near. The maize shoots appear after four days. At this time the plants are quite vulnerable to the depredations of birds. The children keep watch over the fields from morning to night for four or five days and drive the birds away with their cries.

Care of the crop includes weeding and thinning out the plants. Maize is neither hoed nor propped. It is sometimes sown as an extra crop in manioc fields. The maturity of maize is marked by the yellow, dry spathes. The harvest takes place some time after its maturity. The maize stalks are pulled out by the women and children, and the ears are cut off on the spot and carried to the village. [60]

The cultivation of rice is unknown in the region we visited, except among the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region. The ground is hoed before sowing. The rice is sown in seed holes during the first quarter of the rainy season. The care of the fields is limited to two or three weedings during the initial stage of the plant's growth. The crop must be guarded regularly and uninterruptedly from morning to night from flowering to harvest. The rice is cut with knives, ear by ear. The ears are gathered by the handful. These are put in loose sheaves and, after several days, piled in stacks. The threshing is done in the village by family groups. The native chooses a large, well-beaten area and uses long rods. Husking is done with a pestle in a wooden mortar. The husked rice is winnowed in baskets of rattan splints, which are circular and shallow with a reinforced rim. The average yield varies between 2,000 and 3,500 kilograms per hectare. M [6/2]

262 The natives are familiar with two kinds of manioc, sweet and bitter.

Sweet manioc is not highly valued, owing to its insipid taste and the poor consistency of the chikwangue made from it.

252 Aside from the soaking, which is done only for bitter manioc, chikwangue is prepared in the same way whether the flour comes from sweet or bitter manioc.

The first harvest of manioc tubers takes place eight to ten months after planting. The natives, however, do not begin harvesting them in earnest until the second year. Only the woman [462] does this work.

[412] The manioc tubers are piled in large baskets carried on the back and taken to the soaking well, a pond of putrid, dirty, muddy water giving off a highly unpleasant odor of putrefaction and fermentation, which is reserved for this task.

252 412 The manioc roots remain submerged from five to eight days to make them ferment and thus eliminate their bitter taste. At the end of this period the woman returns to the pond, tucks up her primitive loincloth as high as possible and enters the swamp. She sinks in up to her knees, and plunging her hands and arms into the mire, she pulls out the roots one by one and throws them on the bank. When her supply seems sufficient, she piles the roots in her basket and goes to wash them in the river. Returning to the village, she cuts the tubers, lets them dry a little in the sun, and then peels them. The Bakete, Banfumungu, and all the tribes of the Fimi-Lake Leopold II-Lukenie region, up to the boundaries of Bobale and Balesa territory, chop the pieces of manioc root before reducing them to flour, while the Ipanga, Batitu, Yaelima and Bokala crush them between the fingers before throwing them between the fingers before throwing them in the mortar.

● 412 The chikwangue knife has a double-edged blade, a median rib, and a long, relatively broad oval form. It is pointed at both ends. One of these ends is [120] embedded in a wooden handle with a doubly concave vertical section.

The museum [Ed., Museum of the Belgian Congo] now has only two of these knives, but they are found in every native hut in the Kasai-Fimi-Lukenie region up to the Oshwe sector. It is, however, almost impossible to buy them from the natives. A woman, unable to do without her chikwangue knife a single day

Sakata FO43

M 412 and never having a spare one, will not let one go at any price.

M 252 462 A woman chops the manioc on a large wooden tray, a crude, slightly hollowed board roughly rectangular in shape among the Boteke, Bosfumango, and Bakoma, but circular among the Tumba, Wadia, Mosengere, Bolia, Bobale, Basakata, and Balesa.

After having chopped up the manioc tubers as finely as she can with the primitive tool at her disposal, the woman removes the woody fibers, remains of rind, and other hard bodies. She then takes the etuti with both hands and rocks it back and forth. While doing this, she is careful to shake the flour from time to time and to remove the impurities she finds in it.

Fig. 67. Preparation of Manioc Flour among the Bobale. Special Form of Knife to Chop Manioc.

S [252 516] When the flour is quite fine, the housewife sprinkles it with a little water, [121] kneads it, works it into a firm dough of a pale grayish-white color, and carefully removes every little trace of impurities. She then divides the dough into pieces the size of a cubic decimeter which she rolls into more or less symmetrical balls or into sausages 20 to 25 centimeters long.

M [253] These balls or sausages are carefully wrapped in banana or masisa leaves, and the whole bundle is tied with very pliant rattan or raffia splints which serve as string.

M
252
4/2

Among the Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, we never found the crushing pestle [Ed., a broad, short pestle]. Instead, the women use a long, cylindrical pestle on a wooden mortar, a rough plank, very thick and heavy, sometimes square, sometimes round, but always quite irregular in shape. Very often, the mortar is a basket of rattan or raffia splints, rectangular and very shallow. Instead of crushing the manioc into flour, she kneads it and works the dough the same way and in the same mortar.

When the dough is sufficiently kneaded and all the impurities [122] have been removed, she rolls it into sausages and wraps them in banana leaves as we described above.

M
252
4/2

The Basongo-Meno and the Bankutshu crush the manioc in large wooden mortars, roughly cylindrical in shape, and use very large pestles. The height of the mortars and the length of the pestles compel the women of that region to stand when preparing manioc flour, while in the Kasai-Fimi-Lukenie region, including the Oshwe and Bambuli sectors, the women are seated for this work.

L

Fig. 68. Baboma Chopping Manioc.

Moreover, the former group cannot remove the fibers, hard bodies, and other impurities found in the flour in the course of their work, so they make a point of sifting it.

Dengese FO 6
Take F|33

M
252
412

The little sieve-basket has the shape of a large calotte with the rim slightly raised and the bottom plaited in openwork.

The sifted flour is gathered in small baskets, then made into dough, rolled into small cakes, and wrapped in banana or manioc leaves in the way we have just described.

M
2B

The chikwangue are cooked in the same way by all the peoples visited.

The woman lays a wooden grid in the bottom of an earthenware cooking pot. She pours in water up to the level of the grid,

T
(412
252)

Fig. 69. Mortar with Clay Pestle (Etuti) for Manioc, Bankutu Tribe.

lines the whole inner surface of the pot with banana leaves, and places the cakes or sausages one on top the other. She not only fills the pot, [123] but she piles them well above the rim and covers them with more banana leaves, which are tied together so carefully that the whole thing is hermetically sealed. The pot is placed on the fire for several hours. The chikwangue, then are cooked by the steam.

After being cooked, the manioc dough looks like very heavy bread, amber-colored, very slightly translucent on the edges, and of a rather soft consistency. This is chikwangue, the famous kwanga of the natives which plays the same role in their diet as bread does in ours.

M
416

Although the cooking method is the same everywhere we went, the pottery used for the cooking differs notably from one region to the next.

Yaelima

From Stanley Pool to the Bussindi region, the natives use a large earthenware vessel, generally with very little decoration on the rough, irregular outside surface which is marked with vertical lines. [124] 416 531

The few specimens we collected are the only ones that the Museum of the Belgian Congo possesses.

The vessel is oval and elongated in shape, and the bottom is rounded off so little that the pottery cannot stand upright on a horizontal surface. The opening at the top is wide. Among the Bolesa and Basaka, the rim is slightly raised and tilts sharply, while among the Ipanga and Batito, the rim is wider, and its slope is less accentuated. The latter pottery, moreover, is very often decorated with two or three circular, impressed lines. As one advances eastward, the oval shape tends to disappear. The pot becomes spherical, the rim wider, and the impressed decoration more symmetrical and more painstakingly done.

Fig. 70. Yaelima Women Preparing Manioc.

252
412
516

Among the Bokala and Yaelima, the vessels used to cook the chikwangue have a bottom shaped like a spherical calotte, a rather wide, reversed rim, and a neck and body with sharp edges and distinct angles. The impressed decoration consists of two or three circular lines placed immediately above the bend

465 of the body. These parallel lines are intersected in three or four
531 places by small groups of eight to ten little notches. In addition, the part of the body angling inward is quite often decorated with intersecting oblique lines. [125]

465 These types of pottery for chikwangue seem to be modern forms.

The very ancient kind, of which we happily were able to find a specimen still intact, has a less characteristic shape. The bottom is round and irregular; the body is more or less angled but without sharp edges; and the neck is slightly bent back but has no distinct plane surface.

252
465
472

Fig. 71. Mortar, Pestle, and Sifter for Manioc Flour among the Bankutu.

252
465 The Bokala, Yaelima, etc., place a wooden grid at the bottom of the chikwangue vessel, line the inside with leaves, and pile the cakes of manioc flour in small mounds higher than the rim of the vessel. To keep these characteristic pyramids stable, they often tie a network of cords, a sort of net with large, wide meshes, to the molding of the neck. The top of this net can be opened or closed at will, and the chikwangue cakes are crammed in it as in a net. Sometimes the wooden grid is replaced by an earthenware shelf which extends beyond the rim of the vessel. This shelf is pierced with large round holes. This type of pottery, however, is quite rare. We were able to find only a few specimens.

Take FI 33

M
T
243
252

Maize gathered before maturity is eaten raw or roasted over a low fire. The ears which are allowed to ripen on the stalk are carefully shelled, the kernels ground in a wooden mortar with a cylindrical pestle, and the flour is winnowed or passed through a sieve.

M
T
252
412

The mortar used to make maize flour is made from a section of a tree-trunk, with a rectangular opening hollowed in the outer surface and perpendicular to the axis of the trunk. These mortars are very crude, poorly worked, and quite rudimentary. Besides these, one sometimes find others which are better made, small cubes provided with a lug or a liana. Let us note, however, that among the Banfumu southeast of Tua we found a mortar of similar shape which the natives used to prepare vegetables.

M
[25
415
291
854]

Fig. 74. Batitu Women Shelling Maize and Preparing Vegetables.

The sieves used for maize flour in this region are also a special type. The sides are made in an open weave. The general form resembles that of a large bottle with a square bottom, cylindrical body, constricted neck, and slightly flared rim.

M
T
252

The housewife mixes the maize flour with palm oil to form a somewhat thick dough. She wraps it carefully in leaves and boils it for 10 to 15 minutes. This dish, the mokwoľ of the Basakata-Mosengere, is served very hot, usually seasoned a little

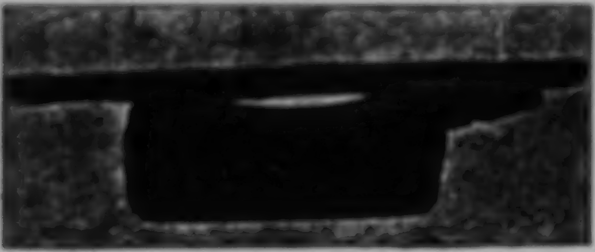
We did not find this particular kind of pottery beyond the Basoko area. The Ipanga-Yaelima, as well as the Basongo-Mono and Benkundu, do not seem to be aware of its existence and, in any case, do not use it. [136] 415

I come now to the important subject of palm oil. We have already noted how frequently the native housewife uses it in preparing meals. This oil takes the place of the butter and fats used in European cooking. Gathering the clusters of palm nuts and making the oil are very important among all the tribes. 262 249

The remarks of Mr. Engels on this subject in his work on the Wangata [Ngata] are applicable to all the peoples we visited.

In each village one or several natives chosen from the nimblest and most daring (the local daredevils) specialize in gathering the clusters from the palm trees. They do this not only for themselves, but also for others for a slight fee. 249 464

Gathering these clusters is always somewhat dangerous. The native must climb to the top of palm trees which are sometimes 249 481



[412]

Fig. 78. Mortar and Pestle for Preparing Vegetables and Palm Oil.

20 to 25 meters high and, once there, must work hard to disentangle and sever the cluster.

The method of climbing varies according to the height of the palm trees. We noted two different procedures among all the tribes visited (see Fig. 77). [137]

If the palm tree is not high, the native climbs to the cluster by using the stubs of cut stems as steps. If the tree is very high, the native uses a rattan belt which encircles both man and tree trunk.

Nothing is more interesting than to watch a native climb up to the crown of a palm tree. He does it with truly extraordinary

263 wild [140] throughout the region we visited. All the tribes are
acquainted with it and use it regularly.

222 Collecting and preparing *pili-pili* are tasks especially re-
462 served to women. Upon returning from the fields, a woman
252 spreads the fruits on a mat before her hut and lets them dry for
263 five or six days. Sometimes she uses them fresh, mixing them with
palm oil enhanced with salt. The native uses this sauce to season
his dishes according to taste.

252 When the *pili-pili* is quite dry, the woman pulverizes it in
263 a small wooden mortar with a cylindrical pestle or with a small
412 piece of elephant's tusk. The shape of the mortars used for this
purpose by the different peoples of the Lukenie varies a great deal.
From the Bateke to the Batete, we found only very crude mortars
hollowed out from the trunk of a tree. Among the Yaelima and
Ipanga this utensil is more carefully worked and finished. The
shape is rather like that of a small rectangular box without a lid,
but provided with a lug. Among the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu
of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, we collected very crudely shaped
and primitive mortars, while others were well made and carefully
carved. All of them, however, have the common characteristic
of an elongated vertical form, and most of them have a leg. The
pestles are always quite long.

We thus again find three ethnic zones characterized by the special shape of these utensils. Of course, this fact alone could not serve as the basis of any ethnic classification, but it might have a relative value and importance in drawing general conclusions based on the whole assemblage of the ethnic characteristics of these various peoples.

263 Once reduced to a fine powder, *pili-pili* pepper is mixed with salt to season food after cooking. All sauces are spiced with a generous pinch of this pepper. Meat is sprinkled with it, or even stuffed with whole peppers.

When the natives are traveling, they merely pick a few *pili-pili* and squeeze the juice into the food while it is cooking. [141]

276 The kola nut also is very well known as a stimulant and is widely used. The kola tree is found nearly everywhere. The natives gather the fruit and chew it. Women do not indulge.

589 on the husband's wealth). Theoretically, the knife should be an efamba.
431 In practice it is sometimes possible to substitute an empûte in an
[412] attractive wooden sheath amply adorned with "copper-plated nails."
At other times the knife and spears may be replaced by their corresponding value in bakonga. This is considered the most important
[675] boéngo, and therefore no one gives up his claim to it. If the son-in-law cannot present it to his father-in-law immediately, he promises to do so later, and his father-in-law does not fail to make use of any opportunity to remind him of his promise. Some men insist on a wěko as pledge. Others are satisfied with a piece of loasi or a bosóngó (splinter or part of the trunk of a palm tree), which the husband gives to the ndonga as a token of acknowledgement of his debt and as evidence of his willingness to pay it as soon as he has the means. Some men, however, insist so strongly on the boéngo that they will not accept the walo [146] before they have received it. Thus, one day recently, Lomanga d'Ifutó (Bongíli) refused to accept the walo for his daughter Ekofo, engaged to Bokungú w'akáyá (of Bongíli, Ndongó). He insisted that the father of the latter, Bokungú w'is'éy'-Ingilá first go back to get his boéngo. Since he was unable to find five spears, he substituted for them a second knife and a copper ring; these were accepted by old Lomanga. Shortly thereafter the same thing happened to Bokungú of Bontole (Bongíli), who wanted to pay the walo for his fiancée Ngelé of Boímbo (Bombwanja), the sister of Bongondé, clerk of the Bombwanja. The woman's family refused to take the bride price before receiving the ifaká l'akongá b'is'éy'óna boéngo.

2) Byǐkó byá nyang'éy'ǒna, "porcupines for the mother."
[251] This present consists of two or three fresh or smoked porcupine. Bétomba, baatá birds, or bekósa fish may be substituted for them. The substitution of hens is not well regarded, because they are within the realm of the nkomí. If someone does not have the means to satisfy this requirement, he gives the mother two copper rings saying máká bakonga báfé yósombe byǐkó bikě, "here are two copper rings; go and buy yourself some porcupines." Fabrics are sometimes substituted nowadays.

326 411 The objects of iron made by the Mongo smith are as follows.

Bibui: all that is of iron

1. **Likula**: arrow.
2. **Bosuki**: arrow for hunting pigs; also used to cut copal and spear fish.
3. **Bongelo**: lance.
4. **Ifombolo**: lance.
5. **Mpokwankoi**: lance.
6. **Liswa**: axe.

Jokula: knives

326 412 1. **Mombi**; 2. **Boli**; 3. **Bolengwa**; 4. **Lingonda**; 5. **Limenga**; 6. **Likodzi**; 7. **Efamba**; 8. **Momba**; 9. More little knives; 10. **Lizangi**.

Basongo: needles

1. **Ingwala**.
2. [413] **Lokili**: tattooing needle.
3. **Jyolo**: small needle to get flea beetles out of the feet.
4. **Efoli**: small pin.

Ngonga: bells

326 534 301 [789]

1. **Ngonga ea tosisi**: bells worn on the hips by women and children so that as they walk the ringing will keep away the evil spirits.
2. **Bongonga**: a bell attached to the point of a war-lance which makes it like the head of a walking-stick but upside down.
3. **Lingwete**: little round bell worn on the wrist by men.
4. **Elondza ea itumba**: the war-bell. An oblong pipe [97] in the form of a long cup attached to a stick. It is struck with a piece of soft wood, and the sound travels surprisingly far.

These bells are all made of wrought iron.

766 a successor to replace a deceased woman, and thus maintaining the balance between
587 the two families. Such wives were seldom killed, for they had relatives who cared
782 for them and would object, and who had the power to do so by refusing to
562 fulfil their obligations and by retaining the bride price already received. The group of men and women gathered together for execution thus comprised males and *bopika* women from the 'free' group (*baato*, as applied to all men and women not Batwa), and Batwa men and women whose owners had consented to their death. It sometimes happened that a man, seeing a woman among this group who took his fancy, might obtain her by paying for her in money or substituting one of his own slaves.

766 In some cases the executioner, *bomembe*, was chosen from among the family of the dead *nkumu*, in others he was selected from among the whole group of people over
782 which the *nkumu* held sway. The man having been chosen, the knife is brought out of the house where it has been kept by some elder. This, a blade some sixteen
[912] inches in length, two-edged, decorated by alternating longitudinal lines of polished and blackened steel and inserted in a wooden handle, is sharpened on one edge, carefully wrapped in a plantain leaf, and laid away for use on the following day.

At dawn the prisoners are taken to the water and washed to clean them, inland towns accomplishing this purpose by dragging them up and down the village in the dew-drenched grass tied by a liana. The prisoners then are arranged in a V shape, the apex nearest the spot where the *nkumu*'s body is sitting in state. Low seats are made by resting a stick in the forks of two perpendicular ones, and this cross bar is straddled by the victim. His hands are tied behind his back and his head tied to a sapling securely fixed at one end in the ground, the other bent down sufficiently to allow for tying the head with considerable tension on the rope. When all is thus arranged an expert drummer begins to pound out a rhythmic beat, and the ceremony of handing over the knife takes place.

The executioner of the day is dressed in finery but no camwood powder is evident, for it is a time of mourning and not of rejoicing. He wears a hat with many feathers, a vine encircles his waist, and bracelets of the same his arms. Then the man who last occupied the position of executioner comes forward. An elder has already brought the knife wrapped in its leaf and also a heap of ash on a leaf, both of which are placed on the ground. The old executioner picks up the knife while the new one faces him. The former demonstrates with gestures how he used to go about his work, the motions, the attitudes, the fine arts of the task. Even though the executioner of the day may have had previous experience, this part of the ceremony must be gone
[516] through. Then, holding the knife aloft, the instructor raises his right leg at right angles to his body, bends it at the knee so that the shin hangs perpendicularly, and the new executioner passes underneath it, returning the same way. He now faces the old executioner, who lays the knife in his own hands, arms outstretched and palms open, the handle resting in his right palm, the blade in his left. The new man, facing his instructor, places his outstretched and open palms on the shoulders of the other, draws his hands down his arms, finally coming to the knife, which, because of its position is thus received, handle in the left hand, blade in the right. Releasing his right-hand grasp of the blade, he stoops, sprinkles the blade with some of the ash, then rubs his right hand in the dirt to remove all slippery sweat. Then still

326 411 The objects of iron made by the Mongo smith are as follows.

Bibui: all that is of iron

1. Likula: arrow.
2. Bosuki: arrow for hunting pigs; also used to cut copal and spear fish.
3. Bongelo: lance.
4. Ifombolo: lance.
5. Mpokwankoi: lance.
6. Liswa: axe.

Jokula: knives

326 412
1. Mombi; 2. Boli; 3. Bolengwa; 4. Lingonda; 5. Limenga;
6. Likodzi; 7. Efamba; 8. Momba; 9. More little knives;
10. Lizangi.

Basongo: needles

1. Ingwala.
2. Lokili: tattooing needle. [413]
3. Jyolo: small needle to get flea beetles out of the feet.
4. Efoli: small pin.

Ngonga: bells

326 534 301 [789]

1. Ngonga ea tosisi: bells worn on the hips by women and children so that as they walk the ringing will keep away the evil spirits.
2. Bongonga: a bell attached to the point of a war-lance which makes it like the head of a walking-stick but upside down,
3. Lingwete: little round bell worn on the wrist by men.
4. Elondza ea itumba: the war-bell. An oblong pipe [97] in the form of a long cup attached to a stick. It is struck with a piece of soft wood, and the sound travels surprisingly far.

These bells are all made of wrought iron.

Yaelima

342

establishment, we find another type of hut reminiscent of the type found north of Lake Leopold II. The base is rectangular, but the front half forms an open veranda or one closed [47] at the sides. The interior of the hut is square. The roof is arched, with a more or less pronounced curve. After first having cleaned, beaten, and prepared the interior area, the native traces the outline of his hut and erects on the perimeter and the median line the supports for the main rafters. The central stake is 50 to 75 centimeters higher than those placed at the two ends. The latter are, on the average, one meter higher than the stakes of the lateral walls. The three stakes of the median line are connected by a strong horizontal crosspiece, and a second crosspiece is laid over this. The latter must form an arc. The curve is obtained by attaching very strong lianas to the ends, from which the native suspends very large wooden blocks. The roof is covered with raffia stems bent at dihedral angles and attached to the ridgepole and to the two horizontal crosspieces of the side walls. The spaces between the large wall stakes are filled in with smaller rods that are tied to the horizontal crosspiece. Upon this framework, the native ties raffia stalks, placed horizontally 15 or 20 centimeters apart. The gable walls are built in the

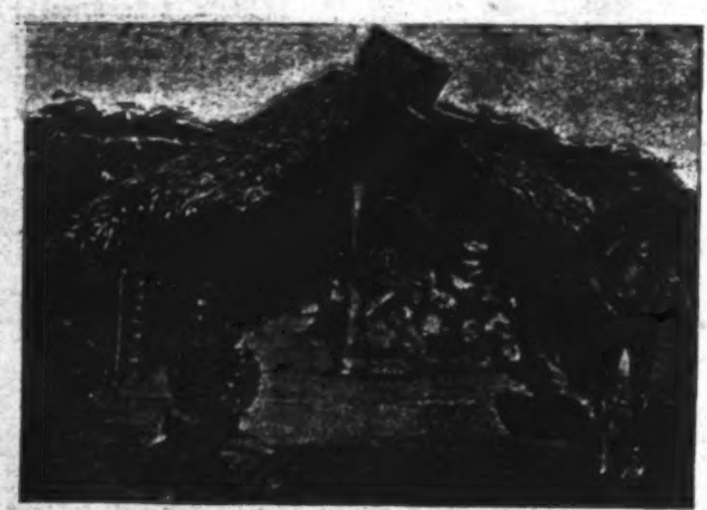


Fig. 30. View of the Interior of a Ypanga Hut.

[415]

Yaelima

as the roof. The natives of the Bumbuli region usually build their 342
huts quite carelessly. Although their villages are remarkably
clean, the general appearance suffers a great deal from the shabby
state of most of the dwellings. Even quite new huts are poorly
finished, compared to those of other regions.

The furnishings of Batitu and Yaelima huts do not differ from 352
those of other regions, except in the shape of the utensils and the
presence of chairs. The bed is always very low, raised barely 10
or 15 centimeters from the ground. The interior of the hut is only
very rarely lined with mats. Among the furnishings one should [415] ●
note the large drying basket which serves as a storage place and
which is hung above the hearth. It is hexagonal in shape, and
its radius varies from one to one and a half meters. Its edges
are straight, the thongs by which it hangs are attached to the
six corners of the hexagon, and it is made entirely in an openwork
weave like that [50] of the caned chairs of Europe, a
special technique of which we found no other instances in the
region. No less interesting are the chairs, relatively rare among
the Batitu, common among the Bokala, and in daily use among
the Yaelima. Their special form is characteristic. The natives 352
sometimes take the utmost care to ornament them with carved 531
designs, and the remarkably artistic appearance of certain ones

Fig. 33. Temporary Hut of the Bokala-Yaelima.

Yaelima
Ntomba

352
531 give them in general a very interesting local ethnic character. 415
531 One might say as much of the carved wooden cups, the engraved horns, and the vessels of artistically worked wood which up to now have been regarded as local to the region occupied by the Bakuba [Kuba] and which we found throughout the territory south of Wumbuli.

342 As a rule, the hut of the Bena Dibele-Kole region is much trimmer, it is constructed much more carefully, and the work is accomplished with order and method. The shape is rectangular, the roof has a double slope, and the ridgepole is slightly arched. This curve, however slight, is nevertheless quite characteristic and quite constant. It is undeniably reminiscent of the typical form of the ancestral hut.

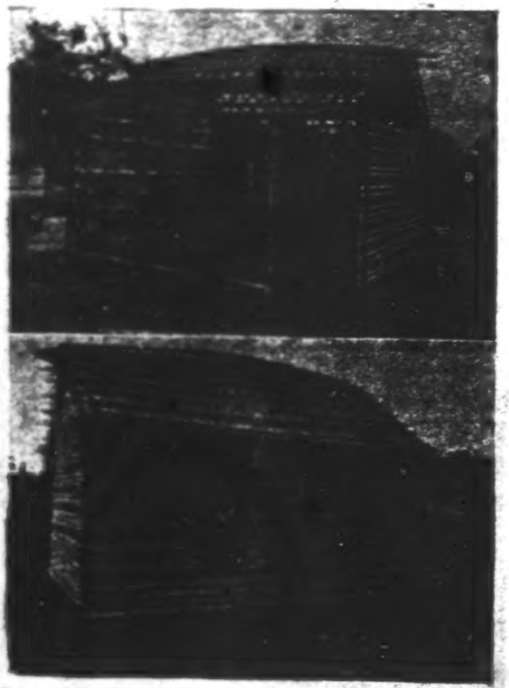


Fig. 34. (1) Bankutu-Bakuba Hut under Construction.
(2) Completed Bankutu-Bankuba Hut.

The door is located either on the side or in the gable wall, according to whether the hut is oriented parallel or perpendicular to

M S 258 [834] 462 sexual relations are strictly forbidden between the head of the family and the woman in charge of the burning.

M S 258 [285] 462 When the last sprig is burned, the fire extinguished, and the ashes cold, the women heap them in large baskets.

Meanwhile the head of the family has made a sort of large funnel out of broad and tough rattan splints, bound with fine thongs of raffia stems and lianas. These funnels vary between two and three meters in height. The diameter of the large opening is one and a half to two meters. The bottom is formed by the cluster of rattan splints, roughly tied with a broad rattan thong. This funnel is placed upright between three or four sticks planted in the ground. An earthenware jar is placed under the funnel. The women line the inside of the funnel with banana leaves, placed on top of each other in such a way as to make the sides completely [109] waterproof. They next pour the ashes from the incineration into the funnel, pressing and squeezing them as much as possible.

When the funnel is three-fourths full, the woman draws about ten pots of water, or about 50 liters, and pours them over the ashes. This water takes two or sometimes three days to spread through the ashes. When the ashes are saturated, the woman pours two or three more pots of water into the funnel. From then on there is a slow drain of water, strongly salted from the dissolution of the soluble alkaline matter contained in the ashes. The water is caught in the earthenware jar under the funnel. The woman thus obtains four or five pots of a strong salt solution and two pots of water less saturated with salt. After putting aside her six or seven pots of salt water, the woman lights a fire and puts one or several earthenware bowls over it. Into these, little by little, she pours the strong salt solution, which she allows to boil.

When the water evaporates, the first salt deposit forms on the bottom and sides of the bowl.

● M S ● [415] The heat from these evaporation hearths is so intense that it is impossible to come near them. The woman therefore carefully provides herself with two long ladles to refill the bowls at a distance as the evaporation progresses. The whole lot is left on the fire until all the salt water is evaporated. Even after the evaporation is completed, the woman leaves the jar over the fire, which she stokes, so as to completely dry and solidify the salt deposit. This

258 476 flowers of palm trees are not sufficiently abundant to permit exploitation on a large scale. The women scarcely manage to gather enough material to make the salt needed for everyday life. The whole village takes part in the harvest. The incineration and extraction of the salt is done in the village by the process we have just described, but the product is divided among all the families in proportion to the number of their respective members. The quantity available is usually so small that it is barely sufficient for daily needs; hence the value of salt here is notably higher than among the peoples of the regions where salt grass is abundant. [Ed., the text is not translated from the second paragraph, page 115, to the end of the section, page 118.]

[115]

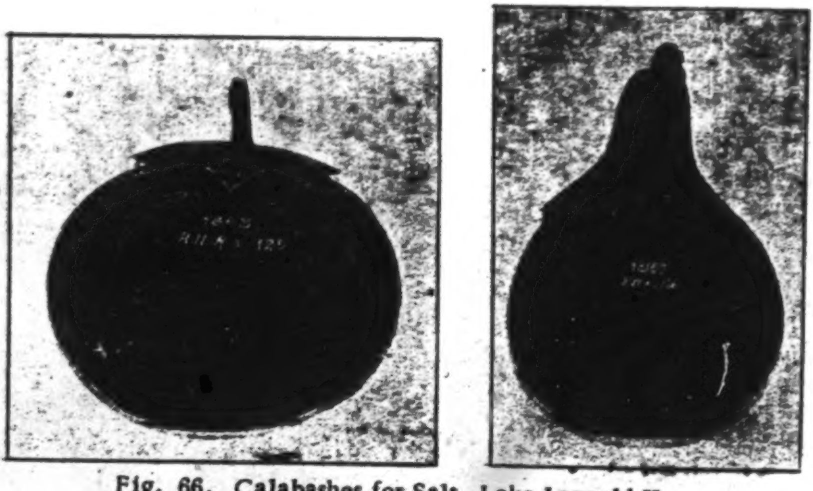


Fig. 66. Calabashes for Salt, Lake Leopold II.

[118] Preparation of Food

262 Manioc may be regarded as the principal food, the dietary staple of all the peoples in the region visited.

From the Bateke of Leopoldville to the Bankutshu of Bena Dibele-Kole, [119] all the tribes cultivate manioc, gather the tubers, soak them, and extract the flour with which they make chikwangue.

Dengese FO16
Teke F133

M
D
252
412

The little sieve-basket has the shape of a large calotte with the rim slightly raised and the bottom plaited in openwork.

The sifted flour is gathered in small baskets, then made into dough, rolled into small cakes, and wrapped in banana or masisa leaves in the way we have just described.

M
252

The chikwangue are cooked in the same way by all the peoples visited.

The woman lays a wooden grid in the bottom of an earthenware cooking pot. She pours in water up to the level of the grid,

T
[412
252]

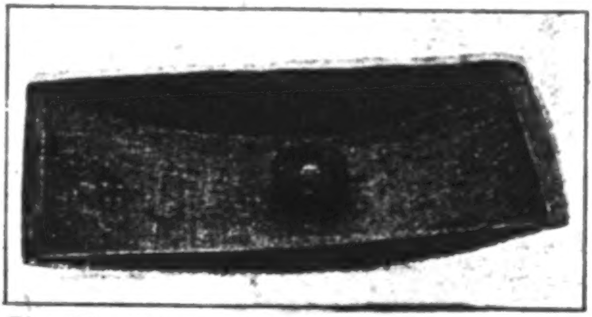


Fig. 69. Mortar with Clay Pestle (Etuti) for Manioc, Banfumu Tribe.

lines the whole inner surface of the pot with banana leaves, and places the cakes or sausages one on top the other. She not only fills the pot, [123] but she piles them well above the rim and covers them with more banana leaves, which are tied together so carefully that the whole thing is hermetically sealed. The pot is placed on the fire for several hours. The chikwangue, then are cooked by the steam.

After being cooked, the manioc dough looks like very heavy bread, amber-colored, very slightly translucent on the edges, and of a rather soft consistency. This is chikwangue, the famous kwanga of the natives which plays the same role in their diet as bread does in ours.

M
416

Although the cooking method is the same everywhere we went, the pottery used for the cooking differs notably from one region to the next.

From Stanley Pool to the Bumbuli region, the natives use a large earthenware vessel, generally with very little decoration on the rough, irregular outside surface which is marked with vertical lines. [124] 415 531

The few specimens we collected are the only ones that the Museum of the Belgian Congo possesses.

The vessel is oval and elongated in shape, and the bottom is rounded off so little that the pottery cannot stand upright on a horizontal surface. The opening at the top is wide. Among the Balesa and Bateke, the rim is slightly raised and tilts sharply, while among the Ipanga and Batitu, the rim is wider, and its slope is less accentuated. The latter pottery, moreover, is very often decorated with two or three circular, impressed lines. As one advances eastward, the oval shape tends to disappear. The pot becomes spherical, the rim wider, and the impressed decoration more symmetrical and more painstakingly done.

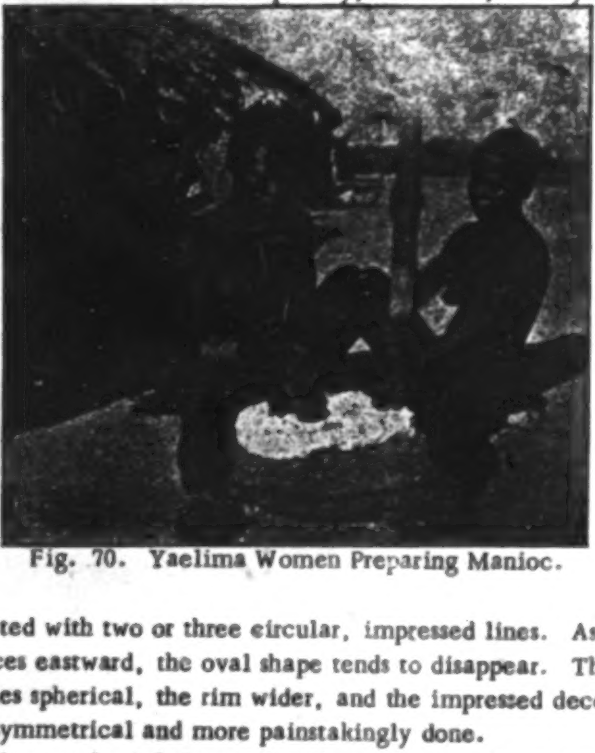


Fig. 70. Yaelima Women Preparing Manioc.

252
412
516

Among the Bokala and Yaelima, the vessels used to cook the chikwangue have a bottom shaped like a spherical calotte, a rather wide, reversed rim, and a neck and body with sharp edges and distinct angles. The impressed decoration consists of two or three circular lines placed immediately above the bend

415 531 of the body. These parallel lines are intersected in three or four places by small groups of eight to ten little notches. In addition, the part of the body angling inward is quite often decorated with intersecting oblique lines. [125]

415 These types of pottery for chikwangue seem to be modern forms.

The very ancient kind, of which we happily were able to find a specimen still intact, has a less characteristic shape. The bottom is round and irregular; the body is more or less angled but without sharp edges; and the neck is slightly bent back but has no distinct plane surface.

252
415
412

Fig. 71. Mortar, Pestle, and Sifter for Manioc Flour among the Bankutu.

252
415 The Bokala, Yaelima, etc., place a wooden grid at the bottom of the chikwangue vessel, line the inside with leaves, and pile the cakes of manioc flour in small mounds higher than the rim of the vessel. To keep these characteristic pyramids stable, they often tie a network of cords, a sort of net with large, wide meshes, to the molding of the neck. The top of this net can be opened or closed at will, and the chikwangue cakes are crammed in it as in a net. Sometimes the wooden grid is replaced by an earthenware shelf which extends beyond the rim of the vessel. This shelf is pierced with large round holes. This type of pottery, however, is quite rare. We were able to find only a few specimens.

The natives do not care for them very much; they regard them as impractical for preparing chikwangue, but readily use them to dry and smoke their provisions. M 252 415

Beyond the Yaelima, notably among the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, the pottery used to cook manioc cakes [126] is more reminiscent of the old earthenware cooking pots of Europe. It is spheroid in shape, very symmetrical, with the neck curved out a little, rounded, and slightly arched. The upper part of the body is decorated with broad circular lines, small arcs, and little dots. These pots are a mottled brownish-black in color and are lightly glazed. M 415 531

Here, too, the chikwangue are cooked by steam. It must be noted, however, that chikwangue does not play the same important role in the diet of the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, although it is still one of the chief elements even now. M 252 262

The Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu also eat kifunge, a manioc bread which is prepared in the following way. The M D 252 415

Fig. 72. Chikwangue Brought to the Post.

housewife heats water in a large earthenware receptacle with a rounded bottom. It is shaped like a wide, spherical calotte, with the body almost straight, but in any case having sharp edges, and the neck slightly flared but not arched. When the water begins to boil, she throws in the manioc flour a little at a time, stirring constantly with a [127] long spatula of polished wood. When the flour has absorbed practically all the water, the vessel is taken off the fire, and more manioc flour is added while M D 252

Teke FI 33

M T 243 252 Maize gathered before maturity is eaten raw or roasted over a low fire. The ears which are allowed to ripen on the stalk are carefully shelled, the kernels ground in a wooden mortar with a cylindrical pestle, and the flour is winnowed or passed through a sieve.

M T 252 412 The mortar used to make maize flour is made from a section of a tree trunk, with a rectangular opening hollowed in the outer surface and perpendicular to the axis of the trunk. These mortars are very crude, poorly worked, and quite rudimentary. Besides these, one sometimes find others which are better made, small cubes provided with a lug or a liana. Let us note, however, that among the Banfumu southeast of Tua we found a mortar of similar shape which the natives used to prepare vegetables.

Fig. 74. Batitu Women Shelling Maize and Preparing Vegetables.

M [25 ●415 291 854]

The sieves used for maize flour in this region are also a special type. The sides are made in an open weave. The general form resembles that of a large bottle with a square bottom, cylindrical body, constricted neck, and slightly flared rim.

M T 252 The housewife mixes the maize flour with palm oil to form a somewhat thick dough. She wraps it carefully in leaves and boils it for 10 to 15 minutes. This dish, the mokwoľ of the Basakata-Mosengere, is served very hot, usually seasoned a little

T M 252 with palm oil and pili-pili pepper. Whenever the opportunity arises, the native adds fish or meat to it. The dish is very highly regarded among all the peoples of the Bateke-Yaelima region, but it should be regarded as a luxury which the family can afford only on special occasions. [129]

M 252 262 The sweet manioc tuber, cooked in ashes, is a more common dish. It is served very hot with slips of manioc greens prepared as vegetables.

Sweet potatoes, which are widespread throughout the region, are peeled, boiled in water, mashed, mixed with palm oil, and served with meat or fish.

Peanuts are eaten boiled or roasted, or sometimes the women crush them raw and mix them with manioc flour or use them instead of palm oil in preparing the meals.

Although the natives eat few vegetables, except yams and sweet potatoes, their diet from time to time includes spinach, native sorrel, small tomatoes, a type of purslane, and leaves of all sorts which the women gather in the forest. The housewife pulverizes them in her small mortar with a cylindrical pestle and stews them over a low fire in small earthenware pots. M

● [415] Among certain tribes, notably the Bokala and Yaelima, these small pots have an earthenware lid with a small vertical lug, while in other regions the woman covers her pot while it is on the fire with part of a calabash, a piece of bark, or the bottom of an ordinary pot.

Bananas play a major part in the native diet. From Leopoldville to Kole, we found banana trees in all the villages, both near the state posts and far into the interior of the country. Bananas are eaten raw, roasted, stewed, dried in the sun or smoked on grids. Dried bananas are reduced to flour and served as mush with other dishes.

M 262 Meat is greedily devoured by all these peoples, regardless of its origin or condition. The native must content himself with what chance brings him, the game from his hunting, and what the Mundele [Ed., White men] leave for him. The natives do not have enough practical means at their disposal to secure an abundant diet of meat. In the villages of the interior, meat is [130] seldom eaten. The prospect of a good share of meat is enough to get the native to do the hardest kind of work. In the

Teke F133
Sakata FO43

M 262 course of our journey, our bearers never complained about long marches, heavy loads, or fatigue, as long as they got their ration of one or two kilograms of meat every evening.

M 262 252 The native is passionately fond of meat, and nothing absolutely nothing, is wasted of the animals killed in hunting. The intestines are especially prized. The natives empty them very hastily and do not hesitate to eat them raw. Most often, however, they cut them into small pieces and boil them in big earthenware pots. The fat is very carefully collected and stored for subsequent use in the preparation of vegetables and sauces. The rest is served with vegetables, chikwangue, kifune, etc.

M T 252 The meat is cut into small pieces, seasoned with a little palm oil, pepper, and salt, and placed on the fire to boil. It is cooked in small pots which also serve as plates.

T 415 Among the western Bateke and Banfumungu (in the region of Tua, Kunzulu, and Kwamouth), these utensils are very similar to bowls in shape. The bottom is round, and the rim is straight, slightly flared or arched, and not very high.

Among the eastern Banfumungu (in the region of Tua and Bokala), on the other hand, these utensils have an altogether different shape, little known up to now: a wide, spherical calotte, whose rim, two or three centimeters wide, is bent inward and shows a distinctly horizontal surface.

S 415 Among the Baboma in the region of Bokala, Wombali, and Mushie, as well as among the western Wadia and Basakata, the rim of these bowls has the same characteristic inward curve, but the sides are much more symmetrical and better finished. Moreover, the shape is slightly different. The bottom is round and very flat; the body is shallow and curved slightly inward; and the rim is turned back in horizontally. [131]

M •415 The inward curve of the sides of some pottery, terminating in an inward, horizontal rim, is a characteristic that we find again, although much less pronounced, in the bowls used for the same purpose by the Mosengere, Tumba, Bobaie, Basakata, and Balesa. All of these peoples thus seem to have a certain ethnic relationship characterized by this special form of pottery rim. The general shape of the various vessels we gathered in this region,

Dengese FO16

M 415 however, shows us that aside from this generally uniform character these different tribes each have their own distinctive pottery. In our opinion the latter should be regarded as a derivative from the original form, known and used by the principal ethnic branch of these various peoples. Each of them has modified the original form according to its tastes, its conceptions, and local circumstances and needs, to the point where each people developed a special and characteristic form that retained only two essential elements of the original: the more or less marked curve of the sides, and the inward, horizontal rim.

M 415 531 Among the Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, the shape of the small pieces of pottery used for preparing meat is altogether different. Here we find neither a regular curvature of the sides nor an inward, horizontal rim. On the contrary, the bottom is a spherical calotte, the body distinctly angled with a sharp edge, the upper surface decorated with incised drawings, and the rim slightly sloping and curved outward. The decoration is the same as that we noted on the pottery for chikwangue in this region.

M D 415 531 Farther east, among the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu, the shape is again quite different. The sides, which slant obliquely inward and have no rim, meet the round bottom at a sharp angle. They usually have considerable decoration with incised drawings and even some molding in relief.

M 251 To preserve meat, the natives proceed in two different ways.

For small quantities, the meat is cut into pieces weighing from one to three kilograms, impaled on a stick, and roasted over [132] a low fire. This procedure does not give very good results. Meat smoked in this way spoils after five or six days, but this does not keep the native from eating it. "It's the meat and not the smell that I eat," he says, "for after the meal the meat is gone and the smell is still with us!"

To store large quantities, the meat is cut into pieces weighing from half a kilogram to one kilogram and then boiled over a brisk fire for a little less than an hour in rather salty, well-spiced water. The pieces are then smoked on a large grid, usually set up in the center of the village. This grid, made of large rattan stems and green branches, rests on four forked stakes 90 centimeters to 1.20 meters high. A woman keeps a slow fire burning under the

M 251 grid, which gives off a great deal of smoke. The boiled meat is lightly packed and covered with large banana leaves. It remains on this grid for two or three days. At the end of this time, it is thoroughly smoked, black as coal, dry, and tough, but it keeps almost indefinitely.

The housewife takes her supply and puts it in the storage place inside her hut, where it is safe from the rats, mice, and other marauders which infest the native huts.

Fig. 75. Communal Smoking Apparatus.

● M 415 The meat is usually cooked in large earthenware vessels. [133]

Among the Bateke and Banfunumgu, these vessels are shaped like irregular spheres with the top cut off.

M [531] Among the Baboma and Basakata, on the other hand, this pottery is cylindrical in form, broad, of moderate height, and has a flat bottom. Among the Bobaie, Balesa, and Batete, the bottom is rounded, broad, and shallow, and it extends into a rather high neck in the shape of a truncated cone, decorated with very even and not very artistic impressed designs. The body has sharp edges, and the small rim has a wide flare. This form is found among the Basakata, although less frequently. It seems to be quite common in the region of the Kundu [Nkundu], northern neighbors of the Bobaie, Balesa, and Batete.

M D 415 531 The Ipanga and Yaelima use pottery vessels similar to those they use for making chikwangue, while the Basongo-Meno and

M ●
D

Bankutshu use a bell-shaped form; the bottom is a spherical calotte, the body slightly curved, and the decoration consists of heavy moldings, both sunken and in relief. 415● [531]

These same pots are also used by all these tribes for preparing and cooking fish. M 415

The riparian peoples of the Congo-Kasai-Fimi and of the lower Lukenie, as well as the Wadia and Mosengere of the Boriempe-Lulonga, fish a great deal.

Fish is never eaten raw. The natives boil it or eat it dried or smoked. M 252 251

To preserve fish, the natives smoke it on large grids similar to those they use for smoking meat.

Certain peoples, notably the tribes of the Fimi and lake region and of the lower Lukenie, also use a special form of pottery, rare and heretofore unknown. We were able to bring back only two specimens, which are fortunately very characteristic. [134] M 415

Fig. 76. Rattan Belt.

This form is open at the base and closed at the top by a large disk pierced with holes. The sides are curved. The diameter of the bottom opening is a little smaller than that of the upper disk. It varies from 45 to 90 centimeters.

This drying pot, called kenge by the natives, is placed on three pieces of wood forming a tripod. Under the tripod, a woman maintains a slow fire of leaves, grass and green wood, which sends thick smoke inside the pot. The gutted fish are placed over the disk. They are left there for four or five days, exposed continually to the action of the fire and smoke. At the end of this time they are sufficiently smoked and dried to keep for several months. Naturally, these pots can be used [135] for preparing and preserving only small quantities of food. They form a part of the native house wife's equipment among these various tribes. She also uses them to smoke chikwangue, to dry bananas, manioc tubers, and ears of maize, and sometimes to smoke meat. The manioc tubers, bananas, ears of maize, and other vegetable M 415 251 M [291]

415
251
products to be dried are not exposed to heavy smoke, but to a small fire of very dry wood producing a low, hot flame, or, if possible, to the heat given off by a glowing bed of charcoal.

When completely prepared, protected, and wrapped in leaves, the chikwangue are laid above the kenge for six to eight hours, while the housewife maintains a charcoal fire underneath. When dried and smoked in this way, the chikwangue keep a very long time.

Lacking a kenge, a woman sometimes uses a pottery vessel with a flat bottom, pierced with small holes, and vertical sides.

[481]

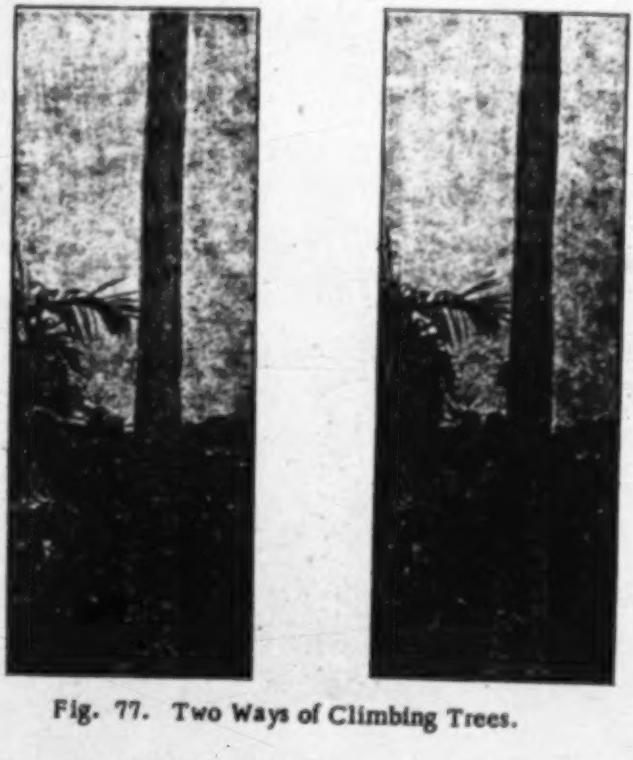


Fig. 77. Two Ways of Climbing Trees.

This fits on top of an old chikwangue pot, mpoko-kepinga, whose bottom has been broken.

The mpoko-kepinga is placed over the fire. The woman seals the juncture between the mpoko-kepinga and the kenge with the pierced bottom, using a paste of clay and potter's earth.

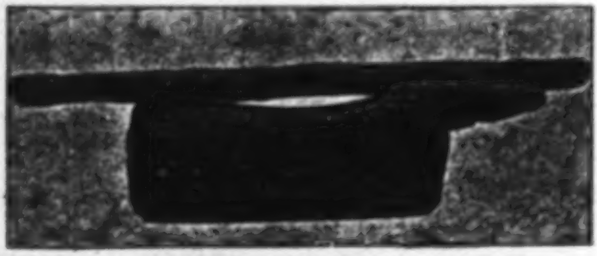
We did not find this particular kind of pottery beyond the 415
Batete area. The Ipanga-Yaelima, as well as the Basongo-Meno
and Bankutshu, do not seem to be aware of its existence and, in
any case, do not use it. [136]

I come now to the important subject of palm oil. We have 262
already noted how frequently the native housewife uses it in pre-
paring meals. This oil takes the place of the butter and fats used
in European cooking. Gathering the clusters of palm nuts and 249
making the oil are very important among all the tribes.

The remarks of Mr. Engels on this subject in his work on the Wangata [Ngata] are applicable to all the peoples we visited.

In each village one or several natives chosen from the 249
nimblest and most daring (the local daredevils) specialize in 464
gathering the clusters from the palm trees. They do this not only
for themselves, but also for others for a slight fee.

Gathering these clusters is always somewhat dangerous. The 249
native must climb to the top of palm trees which are sometimes 481
20 to 25 meters high and, once there, must work hard to disentangle and sever the cluster.



[412]

Fig. 78. Mortar and Pestle for Preparing Vegetables and Palm Oil.

The method of climbing varies according to the height of the palm trees. We noted two different procedures among all the tribes visited (see Fig. 77). [137]

If the palm tree is not high, the native climbs to the cluster by using the stubs of cut stems as steps. If the tree is very high, the native uses a rattan belt which encircles both man and tree trunk.

Nothing is more interesting than to watch a native climb up to the crown of a palm tree. He does it with truly extraordinary

252 It consists of a large hole in the form of a truncated cone. The diameter of the upper part varies from 60 to 70 centimeters, that of the lower part from 20 to 30 centimeters, and the depth varies from 60 to 80 centimeters. The bottom and sides are lined with pieces of raffia stems, placed [138] [Fig. 80 appears here] [139] side by side with their rounded surfaces facing the interior of the pit. The nuts, which have been slightly boiled, are poured into this funnel, which serves as a mortar. The outer part is separated from the nut with a large wooden pestle. The kernels are discarded. The pulp is taken from the hole and tightly pressed between the hands to squeeze out the oil.

Near the funnel-shaped mortar dug in the ground, there is a bench made of two or four forked stakes, graduated in height, over which the natives place large sections of tree bark. The woman throws the pulp from which she has extracted the oil on this bench, spreads it out, and lights a small fire under the wide sections of bark, which serve as drains. Under the influence of the heat, part of the oil remaining in the pulp flows out slowly and is caught in the earthenware vessel placed at the lower end of the drain. [401] Finally, whatever palm oil remains in the pulp is squeezed out by the torsion method. For this purpose, the native has set up a large stationary bar, very strong, to which he attaches one end of a pressing apparatus made of young lianas and fine rattan plaited together. The pulp, still hot, is placed in this press and wrung very tightly to extract every last drop of oil.

253 415 The natives collect and keep the palm oil in large pots covered with banana leaves, in calabashes, or, if possible, in imported bottles. Big demijohns stripped of their protective covering are in special demand for this purpose.

000 We have mentioned above the chief uses the native makes of palm oil in preparing food and the important role it plays in the diet of these primitives. Later we shall have occasion to mention palm oil again when we discuss the role it plays in native body care.

263 A word now about stimulants. Food in general, particularly meat, is always very strongly seasoned with condiments.

The most widespread stimulant is pili-pili, red pepper. This pepper, the fruit of Capsicum minimum, which is rarely more than one to one and a half centimeters long, is extremely hot. It grows

[text continues on p. 103]

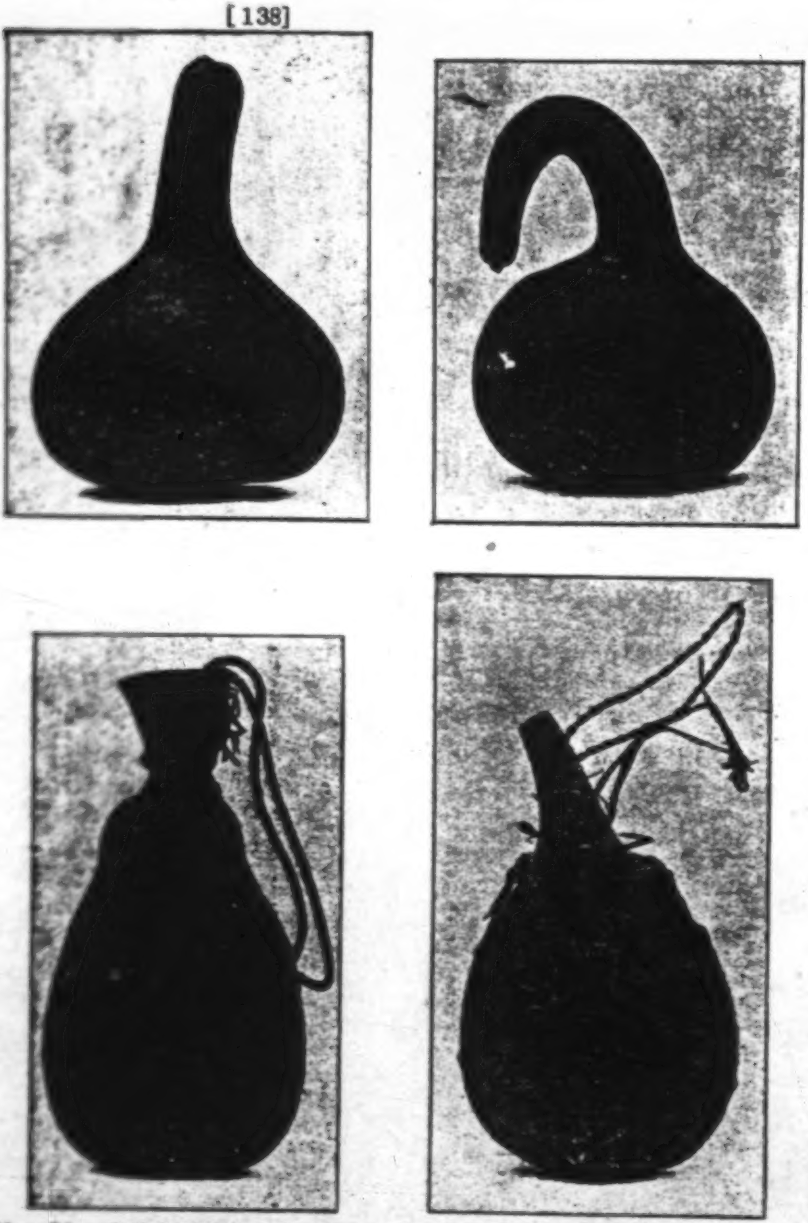


Fig. 80. Calabashes used as Receptacles for Water, Wine, Beer, and Oil.

Yaelima

264 The natives eat three meals a day, in the morning, toward noon, and at night after sunset.

The wife is never allowed to eat with her husband or to eat in the same group as he does.

[622] A chief always eats alone, far from the eyes of the common herd. [143]

Leftovers from the meals are ordinarily given to the women and children.

264 415 We did not find tables, spoons, or forks among any of the tribes we visited.

The food is put in small baskets of rattan or raffia splints, plaited in openwork and lined with leaves on the bottom. Sometimes the plate is made of wood or baked clay.

[252]

Fig. 82. Native Outdoor Kitchen, Ipanga-Batitu Tribe.

Among the Bateke-Banfumungu, we collected some earthenware plates which look a great deal like European soup plates, but are less symmetrical in shape and deeper. Among the Baboma-Wadia-Batete, on the other hand, the plates look more like our flat plates. Among the Ipanga-Yaelima, basketwork plates are chiefly used, while in the Bena Dibele-Kole region one finds the pottery plate again, a sort of broadly flared,

264 [415] spherical calotte, and also wooden plates. Sometimes also simple leaves are used as plates, unless the food is served in the cooking pots.

The whole meal is spread on the ground. [144]

The man squats on his mat and dips leisurely in the dishes with his hand, moving from one to another according to his taste.

[522] The meal is always eaten in silence. Even when several friends eat together, they never talk during the meal.

After the meal the natives carefully wash their hands and teeth and rinse out their mouths several times.

Beverages

271 415 Water is the only beverage they drink at mealtime, and they use it quite rarely. If they do not have a wooden or earthenware cup, they use part of a calabash or simply a leaf rolled into a little cone.

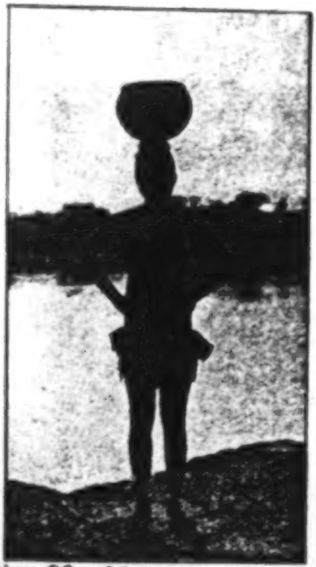


Fig. 83. Water Carrier.

312 462 857 482 Water usually comes from a spring near the village. The natives use river water only when it is quite clear. The women and children have the task of fetching water, a chore which is often quite hard. I visited many villages located along or near the river, whose source of drinking water was 20 to 30 minutes away.

At certain hours of the day and more especially in the morning as the sun first comes up, the women and children set out, a calabash or water jug balanced on their heads, to fetch the supply for the day.

271 415 Water is kept in large calabashes or earthenware jugs, sheltered from the sun in a corner of the hut.

271 ●415 The shape of these water jugs varies considerably according to the region, and some of them even seem to us to be characteristic of certain ethnic groups. [145]

Among the western Bateke and Banfumungu, the spherical shape with straight neck predominates.

Among the Maboma of Bokala-Wombali and the eastern Banfumungu, the shape is distinctly spherical, with a very small, funnel-like neck that is usually no more than one or two centimeters high. This form is entirely new. Fortunately, we were able to collect several specimens. The Bateke of the Stanley Pool region use a water jug that resembles the carafes imported from Europe. This shape is particularly common in the Leopoldville-Kinshasa region.

From Mushie to the region of the Basakata-Balesa, including the Wadia and Tumba, the body of the water jug consists of two parts joined at a sharp or slightly rounded edge. The bottom part is shaped like a spherical calotte; the upper part has the shape of a truncated cone. The decoration is very symmetrical. Lightly [531] marked parallel circles cover the conical part of the body and sometimes the neck. The latter is very long, usually wider at its base than at the top and slightly swollen in the middle. This interesting shape is also found, though more rarely, among the Mosengere. Among this tribe we encountered another form, no less interesting and very little known up to the present time. The chief characteristics of this form are the flat bottom, a cylindrical, more or less symmetrical body, rounded edges, and a neck in the shape of a wide funnel.

Among the Bobaie of the northeast, the Balesa-Batete, the Ipanga-Batitu, and the Bokala-Yaelima, the water jug has a spherical body and a straight neck. This same shape is also found among the Bankutu [Wankutshu] and Basongo-Meno of the Bena Dibele-Kole region.

Let us note, however, that in the region of the Ipanga-Yaelima, water jugs are relatively rare; the natives commonly use large calabashes, very often provided with a handle and a leg of rattan or bamboo.

271 515 Other than with meals, the natives drink water only to slake their thirst. Each time the porters come to a river, they make it a point to bathe in it and to refresh themselves. [146]

000 point to bathe in it and to refresh themselves. [146]

273 In addition to water which is the customary drink of all the tribes, we found the following beverages according to region: palm wine, malafu; sugarcane beer, masanga; and pombe, maize beer.

● [415 284]

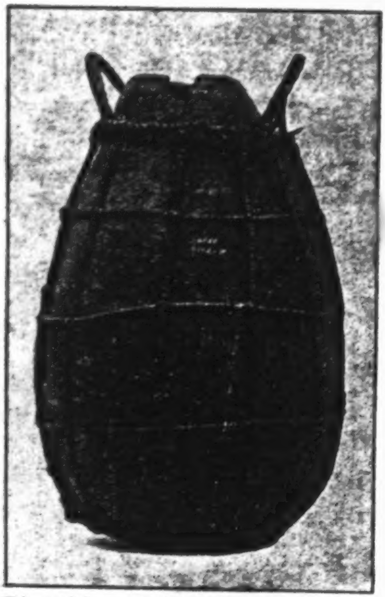


Fig. 84. Calabash for Palm Oil, also for Water.

Palm wine, the native malafu, although liked, is usually not very much in demand, especially when the native can replace it with masanga, sugar-cane beer. We found it among all the peoples, however, although actually only the Ipanga-Yaelima and the Basongo Meno-Bankutu drink it regularly.

[439] In the other regions palm wine is made particularly in the villages near government posts or commercial establishments for the benefit of the Whites. These villages usually have a professional vintager.

The vintage comes from tapping the trees. The nsese palm, raffia, and the oil palm are chiefly used.

273 981 The native has three methods of climbing the trees for the vintage. The first is the one we described for gathering clusters

Teke F133
Dungese FO16

M 273 [579] ordinarily does not stop until his tenth liter, and he is not the biggest drinker. Very often [149] the celebrations degenerate into bloody brawls. The drunken native flies into a rage over trifles, quarrels, and does not hesitate to use his weapons.

T 273 562 Among certain tribes, notably the Banfumungu, women under no circumstances may be present at important festivities or participate in large-scale drinking. Pokei assures us that they are excluded because of their vindictive temperament. "We men," he said, "sometimes fight during these celebrations, but the next day haven't we forgotten our quarrels? The women would also fight. Do they know how to hold their tongues even when they haven't drunk *masanga*? The next day they would go on quarrelling. The husbands would step in. A village quarrel would follow every celebration! No, the women may not drink *masanga*."

It would be a mistake, however, to believe that the women strictly observe this prohibition. Oh no! More than one has her little drop of *masanga* inside her hut, and on occasion intentionally pours herself a little too much. *Masanga* is not taboo for them!

M 273 ● [415] Sugar-cane beer is served in small earthenware cups, pieces of a calabash, or wooden cups.

East of Balesa-Batete territory, *masanga* seems to be unknown, or at least we did not find any, either among the Ipanga-Batitu or among the Bokala-Yaelima.

M D 273 415 Among the Basongo-Meno and Bankutu of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, the natives chiefly consume palm wine.

They also make very inferior beer from maize or millet.

To make this beer, the native crushes the maize or millet, steeps it in spring water, and lets it ferment in earthenware jars.

M D 415 531 These jars are shaped more or less like the water jug with the spherical body, but have a very broad and higher neck. They are usually quite large. The cups used for palm wine and beer by the Basongo-Meno and Bankutu are always carved out of wood. They are found in all shapes, from a simple, undecorated small keg to a splendidly fashioned human figurine. In certain villages, notably at Tipolo and Bakoba, we found cups made of buffalo horn, decorated [150] with carved designs. Cups shaped like horns are sometimes carved out of wood. These are usually larger and more carefully decorated.

Dengese FO16
Sakata FO43

● M D ●415 The fact that these wooden cups are found in the Bena Dibele-Kole region is not without interest. Until the present time they had been reported only among the peoples in the region between the Kasai and the Sankuru, and certain authors even regarded them as characteristic of the Bakuba people. We shall say more on this subject later.

M 266 If cannibalism ever existed, it has disappeared. When questioned about this, the natives as a rule vigorously deny any connection with this barbarous custom, but they do not hesitate to accuse their neighbors of the worst misdeeds. In our opinion, the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region were once anthropophagous and practiced cannibalism until quite recently. It seems probable to us that on a favorable occasion they would not resist temptation even today.

M S 261 Geophagy is better known. Children eat earth among all these peoples. Among the Basakata, Lesa, Mosengere, and Wadia, all the natives and especially the women are earth-eaters. Potter's earth and the clay from the nests of certain termites are very highly prized.

The natives seem to eat earth as a delicacy and perhaps also as a medicament. To call it food would be an exaggeration, for the amount eaten is very small. [Ed., a passage is omitted from the last paragraph, page 150, to the end of the section, page 151.]

Fig. 86. Bobaie Children. One of them shows signs of geophagy.

[151] Hemp and Tobacco

M 276 The consequences of using hemp are more disastrous.

This sad practice, which seems to have been quite widespread among certain peoples, is fortunately on the wane, thanks to the vigorous intervention of the government.

584 then does she acquire her own establishment. From that moment on she lives permanently with her husband-to-be.

She has come from her parents' home empty handed, without any utensils whatsoever. In her new dwelling she finds everything. Her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law give her what she needs: baskets, pots, gourds, mats, mortars, pestles, and even chickens.

It will be apparent from the preceding that there are no particular rites or ceremonies nor is any special attire worn.

584 By this time the bompáka is already considered a wife; [119]
595 she has all the rights and duties of that status: cohabitation, household tasks, etc. Everything she produces or earns belongs to her husband. Her own family no longer has any rights to the fruits of her work. If, after the payment of the ikulá and before any further payment,
[684] the husband discovers that there are relations between his fiancée and another man, the latter is considered an adulterer and is liable to the sanctions designed to check such infractions. The older the woman, the greater the indemnity, which may be as high as 5 to 10 rings (see Chapter VI, Article VII).

It is logically consistent with what we have described that the fiancé has no special name. Since he is actually a husband, that is what he is called (bǒme).

During this period the engaged pair get to know each other physically and morally (sexual relations, work, temperament, virtues, faults). A figurative expression is used to describe what happens -- bákángola mpoké, "they are trying out the pot." The explanation
[415] for this saying is that before a new pot (mpoké) is used, it is placed on
[252] a shelf above the fire and left there for several days, so that it will harden and become heat resistant. If it cracks it is not suitable for food preparation; if not, one can cook in it without fear. This process is called kángola mpoké, and the term has been transferred to the trial period of the newlyweds. Thus it is a sort of novitiate, and the English term which can be used to approximate this situation most closely is clearly "engagement," "engaged."

This first period can last several months. Meanwhile the husband seeks the valuables needed for the ndanga payment.

Article II. Property

593x Through marriage, a woman does not become a member of
614 her husband's clan. If for example she is born into the Bofétola
clan, she remains all her life bosí Bofétola, "member of the Bofétola
[764] clan," and her corpse has to be buried in her native soil. In case of
divorce and remarriage, the new husband does not refund the bride
price to the former one; he pays the woman's parents, and they reimburse the forsaken husband.

593x All the wife's activity, however, is directed toward the good
421 of her husband and his family, and this is so from the time of the
ikulá payment. Her parents have no further rights over their daughter.
All the fruits of her labor are her husband's property.

If she finds objects that have no owner, such as, for example, elephant tusks or buried copper rings of which no one claims ownership, they do not belong to her nor to her family, but exclusively to her husband. If he shares with his parents-in-law, he does so out of affection and respect for them. He has no legal obligation to do so, but propriety and cordial relations impose a certain duty on him.

Profits from the sale of the products of her industry (such as foods for market, mats, salt, pots, baskets) belong not to her but to her husband.

Even whatever she acquires during a visit to her parents, everything she finds while she is with her family, the fish she catches, the caterpillars she gathers in the forest there, all that belong exclusively to her husband.

It sometimes happens that a woman infringes on the husband's
rights in this respect. If he is kind he will generally let her do as she
[577] pleases. Severity on his part would be attributed to a lack of affection toward his wife or a lack of delicacy toward his parents-in-law,
and he would even be criticized for being stingy (never unjust!), a
more serious criticism than the others from the Nkundó point of view.
[263] Dishonest conduct on the part of a wife, however, may give
rise to incidents, and even to serious ones. That is what happened in
the historic case of Efoloko of Ikengya (Bongíli), who was married to
[578] Mpokú of Imomo. She had gone fishing at home and had given all her fish

593x to her brother Bolómaóngá. Her husband did not press the point. But
421 at a meeting where much beer was consumed, his companions teased
518 him for his excessive leniency, which they explained as a weakness on his part. Mpokó hereupon went into a rage, and the result was a bloody war between the two clans.

593x A husband is expected to provide for his wife and to set aside
421 a fair portion of profits gained for her clothes, her utensils, etc., or quite simply to give her the means to take care of her own needs and those of the house.

Thus, although the husband is the sole legitimate owner of the fruits of his wife's labor, another law requires him to give her the amount she reasonably requires for her maintenance. If the wife appropriates the profits without informing her husband in advance, her action is an infraction of the law. If the husband does not give his wife what is necessary and useful to her to the extent that he is able, his action, too, is an infraction of the law.

Fish caught by the wife are cooked, and those that remain are smoked and thus preserved for the use of the household as a whole. If a husband is not too badly disposed toward his wife, he will let her have a portion for her family.

The fields set up jointly by the couple (the man cuts the forest, the woman burns and clears the field, plants and cares for the crops) are the husband's property. The fruits of the field are used for their joint maintenance and that of their children. Profits from the sale of a portion of them are for their common use. They settle these matters between themselves as do most European families. Naturally, there are infractions in this respect also, and one spouse or the other sometimes enlarges his share for his own benefit or that of his parents, or disposes of goods without communicating his intention do so to the other in advance. [264] But all decent people disapprove of such behavior. (1)

1. There is a fable which teaches the right attitude to adopt in such situations.

593x If one day the marriage is dissolved, the wife may no longer
● 421 claim any right to the fields, utensils, clothing, etc. She does not
[586] inherit from her husband. When she herself dies, her family has no right to anything she may have left except, of course, to valuables she has received on the occasion of the marriage of one of her daughters. (2)

2. See Chapter II, Article V. For fuller details, see Chapter VIII, Article V, and Chapter IX, Articles IV and VII.

593x The woman's position with respect to property has yet another
672 consequence; a husband is responsible for damage caused by his wife.
421 He is the one who must pay the indemnity. The same is true for any debts she may have contracted. If she has borrowed, her creditor claims his due not from the woman nor her family, but from her husband. He alone is recognized as legally responsible, since he alone has the rights to his wife's economic activity, and profits as well as losses from it. Afterward he has the right to scold and even beat his wife for causing him this financial injury. However, an exception is made in cases where the woman's family officially acknowledges, by publicly paying a *ndanga* before witnesses, that she is at fault and thus frees the husband of any responsibility.

We may thus draw the following conclusions:

1) A woman is not an owner.

2) However she has the right to a reasonable amount for her various needs. This right is not a true property right (*jus in re*); it is a right to what is necessary for subsistence (*jus ad rem*).

3) Thus it is not possible for a woman's parents to inherit the goods which her husband has placed at her disposal [265].

4) A wife never acts in her own name but as her husband's agent; therefore he is legally responsible.

Article VI. The Economic Position of a Widow

736
768
As long as her seclusion lasts, a widow continues to live with the family of her deceased husband. She supplies herself with food from the crops she has grown. The tools her husband has given her remain in her hands, and she makes use of them as soon as she can. As to the various utensils which must be destroyed, they are replaced by others lent her by the family of the deceased, for she may no longer use those which served her in her husband's lifetime.

In order to better express the magnitude of their mourning, the Nkundó often refrain [441] from using the products of the farms established by the deceased. Therefore, instead of continuing to cultivate the existing crops of manioc and vegetables, the widow prefers to seek provisions in the fields of the close relatives of the deceased. Or a man who has already chosen her may place his fields at her disposal. If neither of these sources is available and she wishes to observe the rule rigorously, she must purchase what she needs in this realm.

736
768
● 421
As we have seen in Chapter VI, Article II, a widow has no claim to the fruits of her labors. Neither the money she has earned and which is intended for the common needs of the household, nor the crops she has set up, nor the fish she has caught, nor the caterpillars she has gathered in the forest belong to her. Everything goes to the heirs. Her property is limited to objects she may have received as her personal share in her daughter's bride price, or as some other payment belonging exclusively to the mother.

If the widow remains in the family of the deceased, however, her fields, tools, etc., are left to her, for under those conditions there is no reason to take them away from her. But if she [781] remarries elsewhere, the heirs are pitiless. A Nkundó does not want the family wealth to be scattered or squandered in any way. The law says lokutu lǒkísó lófótsw'înyamó, "our patrimony can not be alienated."

736
768
In point of fact the widow is treated more favorably, at least in the best instances. If her relations with the family have been good, they will not refuse her some small object that she

Nkundu

601 politically, his whole society is, in fact, based on those relationships
561 which are incomprehensible to us. Indeed, the order of duty and re-
613 sponsibility, of authority and honor, are socially, legally, and politically determined by the order of birth. That order is determined by generation, and within the generation, by age: from the oldest father down the whole line of fathers to the oldest "child" in the whole row of children. The children of your older brother, even if they are younger in years, go before your own children. As we shall see later, the female members of the family, who practically fall outside this order, recover their place of honor through their sons.

613 From this short description of the paternal clan, it is immediately apparent that the clan is not a geographical concept among the Nkundo. Wherever the daughter may marry, wherever the son may wander in service to the Whites, that person always and everywhere continues by law to belong to his *wise*, and he remains bound to all the rights and duties of his place in that community.

602 It also appears that clan and blood relationship do not come any-
613 where near to blanketing each other. Each "blood relationship" of the Nkundo extends itself over various paternal clans, since the blood relations of the mother, as well as the descendants of all the other women of my *wise* who are lawfully married out of the clan, belong to another *wise*.

/152/ 3. Inheritance in the Clan

613 Each clan has possessions that constitute the inheritance or patrimony
421 of the members, the domain of the family. These goods are of two kinds: economic and dotal. The former are subdivided into real property, or inalienable property, and personal property.

613 The real property of the clan consists of land and waters. The land
423 is divided into: arable land, land for gardens, and hunting areas. These constitute common property, whose cultivation or usufruct is divided among the members of the clan: each one receives his garden land and hunting ground to clear; as soon as the user leaves it, that ground is free again for the community. Palm groves, of course, also remain common property of the members. A similar arrangement applies to water rights. Larger fishing areas remain common property and are, under the leadership of the clan head, communally exploited. Smaller fishing grounds, creeks, ponds, etc., are allotted to each

613 member. In the case of common use or of an exceptionally good
423 yield (large game, a rich haul of fish, large yield from a particular
cultivation of common property, such as palm beer), these are divided
by the clan leader and their respective shares allotted to all members.

Personal property consists of the hut and the tools of the man, the
613 furniture of the woman, and the domestic animals. These are movable
422 and can also go out of the clan through inheritance. Should they leave
their husbands, married women may taken with them whatever they
have received or inherited personally from their wise.

In contrast to the economic property of the clan, there is the dotal
421 or capital property, the marriage settlements, which do not have
613 economic, but only legal value. They represent the rights over people.
583 In the first place we find those persons who themselves are the source
of rights: the marriageable girls (bibunanyi) of the clan /A/ and the
substitutes for women married into the clan /A/—that is, the women
who are married into the allied clan /B/ with the acquired bride price
(nkita). /Ed. Clan A pays bride price for a woman from clan B, the
allied clan. Then clan B uses this acquired bride price to obtain
another woman in marriage, a "substitute." This substitute is nkita to
[567] the original woman./ In addition, there are the slaves who can re-
place a caput. In the second place, there are the titles which represent
421 a caput: the /153/ so-called dotal securities (baumba). These dotal
613 securities or titles are kept by the clan leader and, with the knowledge
of his immediate successor, hidden somewhere in the ground. With
the approval of the clan council, he may also lend them out. These
dotal possessions or rights are also common property of the clan and
are used to procure a wife for the clan members, each in his turn.

The common ownership of the economic property makes possible the difficult sharing of woods and river, prevents the cutting up of the property, hinders the impoverishment and the proletarization of the poor, and insures the livelihood of all of the clan members. This common ownership has nothing more to do with communism than the common ownership of property in our nuclear families.

The dotal or capital property, the bride price titles, which have perhaps aroused the most indignant and lofty compassion of our civilized world, have less to do with buying and selling the wife then our own dowry and class system. They are permanent legal titles of the contract which is made between the clans of the couple on the occasion of the marriage. Our individualistic liberalism and mercantilism have regarded these legal securities only through economic spectacles and

421 have seen them as money transactions. We have obtruded our point
613 of view and destroyed the whole legal system of the natives. It is through our materialization of those securities that we have lowered the native woman to a plaything of money and a piece of merchandise.

586 As for the two outgrowths of the native system, divorce and polyg-
585 amy, neither is inherent in the legal system as such. They are only abuses which have taken root and which clash with the principles of the native law itself. By its nature, native marriage is also indissoluble, and polygamy has only been able to exist through a popular confusion between paternal and marital law.

4. Legal Power in the Clan

613 In Nkundo society all individuals do not have equal rights or powers,
627 as in the Napoleonic law books, /154/ but the natural rights concerning people are still completely recognized. All value and power comes from God, through the ancestors. Those who are nearest to God are thus the highest in position, his first representatives. There is no question of absolutism or despotism. Just as the blood is divided among all clan members in a descending line, so also are authority and legal power. They are one as a legal entity in relation to the outside world; nevertheless, each member takes part and has a vote in the internal administration of justice, so that, when clan interests are discussed and dealt with, each member may sit in the place accorded to him and take part in decisions. In a legal sense there is, therefore, no question of a separate family council, which would assist the clan leader, but all decisions are made communally.

594 A single exception to this does exist, namely, that which gives the
627 head of the nuclear family legal power over his wife and children, and then only with the acknowledgment and approval of the clan. Differences between autonomous clans are settled by the clans involved, a sort of international court of law where friendly clans may also be brought in as arbiters.

627 Such an arrangement made the court absolutely "paternal." The whole procedure was one of a reconciliatory character, which resorted to coercive measures only when necessary, and did its utmost to save the honor and the welfare of the involved clans, and to compensate for, to restore, and to prevent further offenses.

Sakata FO43

M
S
258 deposit naturally acquires the shape of the pot, which is finally
[462] overheated and bursts, while the salt block remains intact.

When the salt is finally prepared, the family group returns to the village. The temporary installations are abandoned and may be used by other families who may do with them as they please.

● M The salt is divided into two parts.

S One part makes up the family reserves, reckoned according
258 to the needs of each family in the group, clan, or village which
● 422 undertook the exploitation. The rest is divided equally among
all the members who took part in [110] the harvest, except that
the chief and the woman who was in charge of the burning receive double shares.

The salt reserved for family needs is used in the preparation of food and remains the inalienable property of the family. The share distributed to the participants in the undertaking becomes their private property .

M
S Each one of them, man or woman, disposes of his share as
258 he sees fit. Most often the natives use this as trade goods. Among
422 certain tribes, notably the Mosengere, Wadia, Basakata, and
435 Bobaie, the salt blocks are used as currency or as a common trade
item whose value is determined by the weight.

M Before our [Ed., European] penetration into the region and
S more especially before the introduction of legal tender and its
258 imposition by the administration, salt played a much more im-
435 portant part in the economic life of these primitives.

At the present time, it is used only in local transactions.

M
326 The blacksmith and his family, for example, never participate in the preparation of salt. He exchanges the products of his trade, knives, arrowheads, or spearheads, for the stock of the salt makers. [111]

M It even quite frequently happens that the salt makers sell
437 their surplus as a mere commodity to the highest bidder. They
bring it to market, display it for sale, haggle about the price in the same fashion as they do for manioc tubers, smoked fish, smoked meat, or baskets of peanuts.

M It is singular and interesting to note that the proceeds from
422 this sale do not entirely go to the woman who owns the salt.
562

Sakata FO43

M 422 562 [Ed., an example given by the author, from the third paragraph, page 111, through the fifth paragraph, page 114, is not translated.]

[114] This clearly shows that the proceeds from the sale of salt, the property of the woman, belong in equal shares to the husband and wife: to the woman because of her work, to the man because of his trouble and travel to put the product on sale.

Among the Wadia, Tumba, Bobaie, Basakata, and Balesa, I had the opportunity to observe the same fact. As long as the woman herself goes to sell her part of the communally made salt, she keeps all the proceeds of the exchange, but according to native custom, when the husband is entrusted with the sale, he is entitled to part of the proceeds.

S [258]

Fig. 64. Evaporation of Water Saturated with Salt, among the Basakata.

M 454 562 422 The proceeds, however, are not divided immediately after the sale. The total sum is put in a safe place, a hiding place known to both husband and wife. The couple accumulates the mitakos [Ed., a kind of metal currency]; they hoard them until the day when they both agree to divide them. Custom gives one quarter to the man and three quarters to the woman. [115]

M 259 476 This custom does not exist among the tribes east of the Balesa. Salt grass cannot be gathered there, because it is very sparse in the region. The trunks of banana and palm trees and the

586 x to be touched. Even if the belonga and other payments total less than the bride price, nothing can be subtracted from the bosóngo. It must always be returned in its entirety.

As to slaves or domestic animals, not only are they subject [422] to the reimbursement law, but in addition restitution must be made of all their progeny, even when it includes several generations. This regulation applies to the maternal line (compare it with the ancient Roman adage: partus sequitur ventrem). Hens and ducks are excepted, however.

To indicate that each side must make restitution of absolutely everything that has been paid, the Nkundó use the expression: lă nsɔngi lá lɔtɛ́ɛ́, "even the needle and the tiny razor."

[409] The reimbursement of the bride price in a case where the woman is returning to her first husband is governed by no special rule. The second husband simply obtains restitution of what is due him. The wife's family often appeals to the first husband's generosity in order to hasten the reimbursement.

If the woman leaves her second husband as well as her first, without the latter having been previously reimbursed, restitution is made to both.

We have seen that the first husband can seize his rival's bride-price valuables as indemnity for the damages the latter has caused him. The woman's family is not required to return those valuables, since they have not received them. This affair therefore does not concern them and involves only the two rivals. In spite of the first husband's every right, such an action often resulted in war. Because of the fear of quarrels and other unpleasant consequences, this custom is no longer practiced. Nevertheless, the idea is not dead as the following case shows. It occurred in 1932.

x Engóngó de Lǒngá (Nkóle) made the acquaintance of Bosánjá,
586 daughter of Bokelé wǎ Yelemeya of Ntómbá (Wǎngatá). She was
587 married to a Lǒnga (Ekonda) laborer named Isongó, a native Boángi, but left her husband to follow her new lover. The latter paid the ikulá -ndanga (9 rings and 35 francs). After a certain number of months, the union broke up. Bosánjá was found unsuitable as a wife. Among the faults with which she was reproached was a lack of affection for her fiancé's mother and other relatives, and a

613 member. In the case of common use or of an exceptionally good
423 yield (large game, a rich haul of fish, large yield from a particular
cultivation of common property, such as palm beer), these are divided
by the clan leader and their respective shares allotted to all members.

Personal property consists of the hut and the tools of the man, the
613 furniture of the woman, and the domestic animals. These are movable
● 422 and can also go out of the clan through inheritance. Should they leave
their husbands, married women may taken with them whatever they
have received or inherited personally from their *wise*.

In contrast to the economic property of the clan, there is the dotal
421 or capital property, the marriage settlements, which do not have
613 economic, but only legal value. They represent the rights over people.
583 In the first place we find those persons who themselves are the source
of rights: the marriageable girls (*bibunanyi*) of the clan /A/ and the
substitutes for women married into the clan /A/—that is, the women
who are married into the allied clan /B/ with the acquired bride price
(*nkita*). /Ed. Clan A pays bride price for a woman from clan B, the
allied clan. Then clan B uses this acquired bride price to obtain
another woman in marriage, a "substitute." This substitute is *nkita* to
[567] the original woman./ In addition, there are the slaves who can re-
place a *caput*. In the second place, there are the titles which represent
421 a *caput*: the /153/ so-called dotal securities (*baumba*). These dotal
613 securities or titles are kept by the clan leader and, with the knowledge
of his immediate successor, hidden somewhere in the ground. With
the approval of the clan council, he may also lend them out. These
dotal possessions or rights are also common property of the clan and
are used to procure a wife for the clan members, each in his turn.

The common ownership of the economic property makes possible the difficult sharing of woods and river, prevents the cutting up of the property, hinders the impoverishment and the proletarization of the poor, and insures the livelihood of all of the clan members. This common ownership has nothing more to do with communism than the common ownership of property in our nuclear families.

The dotal or capital property, the bride price titles, which have perhaps aroused the most indignant and lofty compassion of our civilized world, have less to do with buying and selling the wife then our own dowry and class system. They are permanent legal titles of the contract which is made between the clans of the couple on the occasion of the marriage. Our individualistic liberalism and mercantilism have regarded these legal securities only through economic spectacles and

Sakata FO43

MS 258 Among the Mosengere, Bobaie, Basakata, Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, on the other hand, the natives still use the primitive process.

This varies according to the region, insofar as the materials used in the preparation are concerned.

Among the Mosengere, Wadia, Tumba, Basakata, and Bobaie, the natives use only the salt grass that grows abundantly in the marshes and along the marshy banks of certain rivers in the region.

In the territory of the Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, where this precious resource is lacking, the natives use the trunks of banana trees and especially the flowers of palm trees, whose ashes are quite rich in alkaline matter.

MS [361] Salt grass is harvested toward the end of the dry season.

At this time groups of Mosengere, Wadia, Tumba, Bobaie, and Basakata of the interior leave their villages to camp along the rivers with marshy banks.

MS [342] They choose a site suitable for setting up the few huts that will serve them as shelters during their temporary sojourn in the region. These huts are usually very poorly constructed. Built hastily and carelessly, they are provisional shelters, refuges for the night, rather than dwellings.

● MS 258 ● 423 In former times the whole expanse of the marshy plain covered with salt grass was divided into sections.

Each native group had its own well-defined area and exploited it exclusively. [107]

The site for the huts occupied by each such group was determined by the location of the familial reservation or domain and was chosen so as to lie in the center of it.

The time of year when the salt grass was gathered and the length of the period of exploitation were regulated. In short, the preparation of salt was a national industry, governed by special laws to which the whole tribe had to conform.

At the present time, the groups gather salt grass wherever they think best, without regard for the customs and rights of the past. This work of harvesting the grass falls to the women.

MS 258 462 While the men are fishing, the women, provided with large knives, cut down the tall grass that grows in the marshes or along

601 politically, his whole society is, in fact, based on those relationships
561 which are incomprehensible to us. Indeed, the order of duty and re-
613 sponsibility, of authority and honor, are socially, legally, and politically determined by the order of birth. That order is determined by generation, and within the generation, by age: from the oldest father down the whole line of fathers to the oldest "child" in the whole row of children. The children of your older brother, even if they are younger in years, go before your own children. As we shall see later, the female members of the family, who practically fall outside this order, recover their place of honor through their sons.

613 From this short description of the paternal clan, it is immediately apparent that the clan is not a geographical concept among the K Nkundo. Wherever the daughter may marry, wherever the son may wander in service to the Whites, that person always and everywhere continues by law to belong to his wise, and he remains bound to all the rights and duties of his place in that community.

602 It also appears that clan and blood relationship do not come any-
613 where near to blanketing each other. Each "blood relationship" of the Nkundo extends itself over various paternal clans, since the blood relations of the mother, as well as the descendants of all the other women of my wise who are lawfully married out of the clan, belong to another wise.

/152/ 3. Inheritance in the Clan

613 Each clan has possessions that constitute the inheritance or patrimony
421 of the members, the domain of the family. These goods are of two kinds: economic and dotal. The former are subdivided into real property, or inalienable property, and personal property.

613 The real property of the clan consists of land and waters. The land is divided into: arable land, land for gardens, and hunting areas.
483 These constitute common property, whose cultivation or usufruct is divided among the members of the clan: each one receives his garden land and hunting ground to clear; as soon as the user leaves it, that ground is free again for the community. Palm groves, of course, also remain common property of the members. A similar arrangement applies to water rights. Larger fishing areas remain common property and are, under the leadership of the clan head, communally exploited. Smaller fishing grounds, creeks, ponds, etc., are allotted to each

Nkundu

613 423 member. In the case of common use or of an exceptionally good yield (large game, a rich haul of fish, large yield from a particular cultivation of common property, such as palm beer), these are divided by the clan leader and their respective shares allotted to all members.

613 422 Personal property consists of the hut and the tools of the man, the furniture of the woman, and the domestic animals. These are movable and can also go out of the clan through inheritance. Should they leave their husbands, married women may taken with them whatever they have received or inherited personally from their wise.

421 613 583 In contrast to the economic property of the clan, there is the dotal or capital property, the marriage settlements, which do not have economic, but only legal value. They represent the rights over people. In the first place we find those persons who themselves are the source of rights: the marriageable girls (bibunanyi) of the clan /A/ and the substitutes for women married into the clan /A/—that is, the women who are married into the allied clan /B/ with the acquired bride price (nkita). /Ed. Clan A pays bride price for a woman from clan B, the allied clan. Then clan B uses this acquired bride price to obtain another woman in marriage, a "substitute." This substitute is nkita to [567] the original woman./ In addition, there are the slaves who can replace a caput. In the second place, there are the titles which represent 421 613 a caput: the /153/ so-called dotal securities (baumba). These dotal securities or titles are kept by the clan leader and, with the knowledge of his immediate successor, hidden somewhere in the ground. With the approval of the clan council, he may also lend them out. These dotal possessions or rights are also common property of the clan and are used to procure a wife for the clan members, each in his turn.

The common ownership of the economic property makes possible the difficult sharing of woods and river, prevents the cutting up of the property, hinders the impoverishment and the proletarization of the poor, and insures the livelihood of all of the clan members. This common ownership has nothing more to do with communism than the common ownership of property in our nuclear families.

The dotal or capital property, the bride price titles, which have perhaps aroused the most indignant and lofty compassion of our civilized world, have less to do with buying and selling the wife then our own dowry and class system. They are permanent legal titles of the contract which is made between the clans of the couple on the occasion of the marriage. Our individualistic liberalism and mercantilism have regarded these legal securities only through economic spectacles and

614 only of lesser importance (see below, under local groups). The 554 headman of the B-group is the oldest of the seniors of the related A-groups, that is, the senior of the B-group. He is not, however, fully in charge of affairs like the elder of the A-group; he should rather be seen as princeps inter pares. This, of course, does not affect his position as senior of his own A-group.

614 Within a B-group landed property is often still regarded as belonging together, even though fixed boundaries between 423 the territories of the constituent groups may already exist. In general, however, it may be assumed that the other elders will not object if a hunting expedition is extended to their territory, if, under certain circumstances, the soil of their district is used for planting, or if certain wild plants are taken from there for building a house or as raw material for a craftsman. Membership in a B-group is determined by membership in an A-group.

614 At this point we shall not enter into a discussion of the 885 genealogical peculiarities which result from the significance of the bride price. We learned of one case of incest which occurred between members of two A-groups which formed a B-group, but we have not heard of anything like that occurring within an A-group. In this connection, however, we do not refer to those acts of incest which are required to make a particularly powerful charm become effective.

Summing up all that is characteristic of B-groups:

614 There is only one priest of the kinship group; cohesion within a B-group is very close, people cooperate extensively, all important matters are decided by the group, even those which, strictly speaking, concern only the constituent A-groups; in this connection, the oldest of the seniors has a somewhat privileged position.

Groups of Rank C

The cohesion within a group of this category is considerably looser, although on this level particularly one can find great differences among the individual groups. For example, the groups Lovendo and Besilo consider themselves much closer

583 × 431 and, if the woman's family is wealthy, a goat and formerly even a slave. Nowadays, objects of European manufacture are also given.

[563] To give the impression of being a great lord, an unusually wealthy family head sometimes gave human beings as a dowry. These were preferably Batswá or, if possible, dependents (Mpámá) who only changed masters up to a certain point. Actually it was the father's intention to glorify his daughter by turning them over to her; they had to assist her through various services, and her descendants became their "owners."

Thus Mpumo, one of the ancestors of the Boɛ́ndɛ́ (of the Bomwanja tribe) had received the slave, Bonkɔ́tulɔ́, as part of the nkɔmɛ́ from Ikɔ́lɛ́, father of his wife, [152] Lifomi of Mbɔ́ngá (Liɔ́kɔ́, Ekonda). The descendants of this slave comprise the Bonkɔ́tambɛ́lá and Batsɛ́na clan [sic], who have settled with the Bosánjo and the Bongangá. (1)

1. See also the example cited in Chapter III, Article V.

583 × 431 ● 425 Even real estate can be included in the nkɔmɛ́. Thus a fishing territory (such as a stream, creek, pond, fishing holes) or a section of a palm grove may be given (2). Like the gift of human beings,

2. But never land or forests.

such property is given only by a very wealthy family head. If he is not sole owner (and in practice he can be only in the case of fishing territory), he must obtain in advance the consent of the co-owners, whether they be brothers or heads of other families. Since it must be assumed that he is intelligent enough not to give away a piece of property which they themselves need, he always obtains their consent. In fact, anyone who opposed the gift would be considered to have acted maliciously toward the woman, who is also his "daughter," in depriving her of this source of pride.

The objects given as nkɔmɛ́ are the property of the husband. The greatest part of it he gives to his wife's nkɔ́lo, that is to the

583x female relative thanks to whom he was able to obtain this wife (see
431 below, Article X). He keeps a small part for himself and, in agree-
425 ment with his wife, uses it according to his needs. When husband and wife are on good terms, he consults her before giving away or selling any of it. And if she wishes to dispose of any of it, she asks his permission. Thus they work the matter out aimiably. But legally it all belongs to the husband. Should he want to use it for gifts or for any payment of his own, his wife can make no claim; she will not win her case before the law. But from a practical point of view, it is much wiser to come to an agreement in advance and thus avoid any annoyance
583x or quarrel.

431 The size of the nkomf depends on the wealth of the woman's
[556] parents. Not only is a large one a point [152] of honor and esteem;
[593x] it is also a means of increasing the stability of the marriage and securing harmony. The bigger the nkomf the more obliged the husband is to treat his wife well and see that she is content with him, out of fear of having to return the entire fortune if the marriage should ever be broken.

The nkomf may be very large, even as great or greater than the bride price; in these extreme cases the girl is spoken of as
[192] lifaya-njoku, for like an elephant (njoku) she goes to live elsewhere (lifaya) because of all the riches she carries with her. The term njokwobwo is also used; literally, it refers to a kind of mushroom which grows in abundance all over the bosdld tree. (1)

1. The use of these terms is not specifically confined to the situation described above. They are also applied to any stranger who settles in, or simply passes through, the village, bringing many riches -- to the white men, for example.

556 With reference to this subject an old custom should be men-
583x tioned. Because of his love for his daughter and a desire for renown,
431 a father might give his son-in-law a quantity of bakonga, in varying amounts but enough to pay for the acquisition of a wife, hence bride-price valuables, so to speak.

Article V. The Offer of a Wife

4/26
583

This type of "marital" union can be more readily and clearly explained by an example than by a long description. Suppose that a man named Eale is in need of valuables to terminate some sort of palaver (pertaining to a debt, a fine, an indemnity, a bride price to be paid, etc.). Since he has none and the matter is urgent, he borrows from Ekamba and offers him his daughter Wětsi. This offer is the means of persuading Ekamba to give the valuables Eale has requested. As a result Wětsi belongs to Ekamba, who now has a husband's rights over her. She is not a slave. She could be called a security, but that is not the name used by the Nkundó. They have a term which specifically designates this status, *boóngá*.

The term *boóngá* is used by all the tribes under discussion. (1)

The Injóló alone call such a woman simply *wǎji óâ njélá*, "a wife that was brought," and therefore taken without a bride price and without the husband's initiative. The expression used for "to give a woman in *boóngá* "is *kúndela Ekamba boóngá*. It reveals the origin of the term. *Boónga* actually signifies a piece of wood, a switch. In this case the reference is to a moderately thick branch which is placed across a small well and which, when attached to another stick of a different thickness, can function as a *lokolé*. *Kúndela* is a form of *kúnda* ("to hit," "to strike") which expresses the relationship with an indirect object. Thus the original meaning of the expression is "to strike the *boóngá* in order to get someone to help." The mention, not of the *lokolé*, but of its substitute, is intended to express the fact that a given individual is at an impasse and is asking for the means to extricate himself from it. The matter is serious and urgent; he hasn't time to look for the proper instrument, but in [122] his haste he must be satisfied with the first means he sees by which he can call someone who might save him from his distress.

---

1. Also among the Ekonda, although in keeping with the general rule of dialect variation they say *bowóngá*.

426
583
Another expression used is foma losáka, fomela N. losáka, "to strike a losaka," that is, a clapping of the hands. The idea involved is the same as above: a man who sees no way out of his difficulties is represented as clapping his hands to attract the attention of someone who can help him. His action is a call for help. Therefore the term losáka is sometimes used to designate the woman, through the same type of analogy that leads to the use of the word boóngá.

Although the husband has full conjugal rights over the boóngá and her activities, she is not strictly speaking his wife. It may simply be said that she belongs to him, and the fact that she belongs to him gives him the rights of a so-called husband. He has no obligations toward her, as he would have in an ordinary marriage. Thus in the example given above, if the woman dies while living with Ekamba, her father has no claim, even if no bride-price payment has been made, because he gave his daughter to Ekamba on his own initiative. If the boóngá runs away from her owner he is entitled to a normal reimbursement of the valuables lent by him and to an additional 10 to 20 rings (or more, in proportion to the size of the loan) as damages for his loss. This supplement is due him even if he has paid a bride price to the woman's father for a legitimate marriage.

For if he loves this woman there is no reason why he cannot marry her properly. He will be especially willing to do so because as long as she remains simply a security, she is viewed with contempt and mocked by her fellows. They say, "You are not a wife, you are only a boóngá; there is no difference between you and a slave, for your husband has not paid a bride price for you."

Once the bride price is paid the boóngá becomes a real wife, and all the rules of law are applicable to this [212] union, which from then on is a normal marriage in every way comparable to a marriage by nkumbó. As to the loan, it is then included in the total amount of the bride price.

426
583
675
The pawning of a woman is also carried out through the mediation of a ndonga who, however, bears a special name, ndonga éâ ntsíkoónda, which is literally translated as "witness of I have not asked you." He is thus contrasted with a ndonga in the usual sense for the

426 following reason: a true ndonga is designated by the husband while, 583* in this instance, on the contrary, the intervention is requested by 675 the girl's father. Consequently, a man who takes a boɔ́ngá as security against a loan is not obliged to recognize him as a proper official witness. This witness is not a ndonga of a marriage, but he must bear witness to the security agteement.

When a woman given as boɔ́ngá ran away from her owner, the latter attacked the ndonga and, if he found an opportunity, made him prisoner. If the matter were not settled, he could reduce the ndonga to slavery. But if he did so, he had to expect vengeance on part of the ndonga's family, although, according to the usual and legitimate norm, their vengeance should rather be directed against the man who asked for their relative's intervention. For it is he who is responsible for everything and who rightly should bear all the consequences. The exception, which sometimes really occurred, was due to the idea that "might is right" which, here as in "civilized" countries, is often true. (1)

1. This situation is not the only one in which a ndonga ɛ́â ntsikoońda participates. The intervention of such a person may also be required under other circumstances. For example, Esalɛ́ of Bonkoso was taken prisoner by Isia of Bongíli. Mpetsí was related to Esalɛ́ and bound by friendship to Isia. He begged the latter to give Esalɛ́ back his freedom and guaranteed the payment of the ransom; he thus became a ndonga ɛ́â ntsikoońd. If the payment is delayed too long, Isia will take vengeance upon Mpetsí and even has the right to abduct his wife as compensation.

When a man who has received a boɔ́ngá wants to marry her properly he designates his own ndonga, who must fulfill [213] all the conditions required. Thus the ndonga who participates in the pawning is not the ndonga of the marriage. However, since the former has

426 583x 675 participated in handing over the boóngɛ, he is usually allowed the honor of being a supplementary witness to the chief ndonga.

Everything that has been said shows clearly that the offer of a boóngɛ may in no way be considered a marriage, even though it has some of the external characteristics of a marital union.

A very similar practice but one which now belongs to the past is that of offering a woman in begging for peace (boóndo). The following is an example from history: (1) At the time when the peoples now living in this area were still settled near the sources of the Ikelemba, there was a war between the families of Mpumo, ancestor of the Boéndɛ, and Lonyango, ancestor of the Bonkoso. The latter, defeated, called for help from the family of Bokungɔ, their bonankɛnɛ and one of the ancestors of the Bongíli. Bokungɔ's family inflicted a stinging defeat on Mpumo.

Mpumo was frightened and begged for peace, offering Bokungɔ his sister Mbɛlaka. Bokungɔ accepted. But since he liked this woman, he wanted to contract a regular marriage with her. Therefore he paid a high bride price. But as Mbɛlaka was of a good family, she declared that she did not want to go to her husband alone and insisted that her father send an ebísa with her. (2) Her relative Wẹla of Ngọmbẹ (Boímbo) was assigned to her. But the old father, wanting to show off his wealth, went even further and added a second ebísa, namely Éufɛ, daughter of Bokelɛ of Bokɛtola, his maternal uncle. Finally, to complete this already ample dowry, Mpumo gave his daughter several men who were Mpɛmɛ (dependents) "to work the bellows in Bokungɔ's iron foundry." [214] Among them, according to the story, were Bokuka, Líkitɛ, Engota, Lofalanga, and others.

---

1. We are giving this story in detail because it is a living illustration of certain manifestations of Nkundó social life.

2. See Chapter VII, Article IV.

426 583 675 Similarly, Mpumo received Lifomɛ́, daughter of Ikɔ́lɛ́ as a boɔ́ndo. Her brother, Ndyɛ̂ntíkala, ancestor of the Mbɔ́ngɛ (Liɔ́ko, Ekonda), offered her to Mpumo in asking for peace. Mpumo married her in the regular manner. In his fight against the Ekonda this same Mpumo in the same manner obtained Boɔ́ngɔ́, the sister of Bangɔ́ndɔ́ of Mpɛ́njwɛ (Wɛ̂yɛ).

Since the victor in war usually wanted to marry the woman in the proper fashion by paying a bride price, the handing over of a relative as boɔ́ndo may be compared to the practice common in Europe in the Middle Ages, when a prince would marry his daughter or sister off to a competitor or an adversary to seal the peace between them. In both cases, therefore, a kind of political marriage is involved.

Article VI. Exchange

583x 184 When they speak of the exchange of women (yenjɛ, from the verb enja, "to exchange" in general), the tribes under discussion do not all refer to the same thing. According to the situation, several types of exchange may be distinguished.

1) The pure Nkundɔ́ have a practice of exchanging daughters, sisters, relatives. This exchange is always carried out through the payment of bride price and the agency of a ndonga. Thus two regular marriages by nkumbɔ́ are involved, and the term "exchange" is only very inappropriately applied to them. The two men who give each other their sisters in marriage are each contracting an ordinary marriage according to the usual norms.

2) Sometimes the term "exchange" is applied to the practice of ikɛkelo, which is better explained through an example than by a long discussion. Suppose that Eale marries the woman Ámbɛ́. Lokio, Eale's sister, [215] is married to Isia. Âmbɛ́ leaves her husband for one of Isia's relatives. At the first opportunity Eale detains his sister Lokio at his home, thus taking her from her husband, and since his wife Ámbɛ́ does not return to him, he hands his sister Lokio over to another man in marriage. Or suppose that Eale has married one of Isia's relatives, and Isia has married a relative of Eale. If one of the wives leaves her

200 [547] Unfortunately the system was not continued. Also, it must not be said that it would be unjust to lower the price of the women. Rather, injustice would thus be redressed, a degenerate custom be improved. Through the present system, ever more injustice is committed and suffered.

583 595 A few polygynists would suffer some material loss through the lowering of the price of the women, namely, by receiving less for one woman than they (sometimes) paid for them, for they inherited most of the women. But they are also the ones who are responsible for the irregular situation. In a large part of the district, the polygynists are by far the minority of the population. They are the ones who are hostile to the Colonial Administration. They are in possession of the women and have a monopoly on them. They fix prices which a young man can almost never pay, namely, two nkesi at least.

583 The difficulties for Christian marriages become daily still more difficult. This is true for the marriages already entered into and for the future marriages.

583 428 436 [446 511] The bride price to be paid for the wife ought to be such that every young man can pay that sum with his own money, with the money that he has earned himself by his work. This sum cannot be high, for the ordinary working man in the Congo, who makes up the large part of the population, does not earn much more than what he needs for board and clothing. Therefore to pay an excessively large sum as a bride price forces him to borrow and to run up debts among his relatives and friends. The result of this is that the system of the Nkita goes over unnoticed into the Christian marriages, and the woman remains an object for inheritance. Indeed, when the man dies the creditors will come, namely, those who have loaned him money -- and demand the wife. The disputes over the bride price then begin anew, and they will again give the wife in marriage in return for a new bride price. Thus, there is no end to it. The wife, the mother, will never achieve any rights but will always remain an object of inheritance. There has been talk about declaring the widow free at the death of her husband in order to prevent the inheriting of wives, but how will it be possible to [548] achieve that if the bride price is not lessened, considerably lessened? When a

583 428 426 young man can pay for his wife, or rather pay her bride price with his own earned money, then that wife becomes his property. At his death, no creditors or mortgage holders can come to demand the wife since she will then actually be free. There will also be no difficulty in making her heir to the property of her husband, for herself and her children. The bride price or payment for wives among the civilized Blacks could be very much simplified. To abolish it would not be so easy. Indeed, it seems to be in the customs and the habits of the whole Black race. Then too, with respect to bride price, usually still in entanglements with their heathen relatives.

The bride price, as it exists among the heathens, will always remain a source of difficulties for civilization and a support for polygyny.

000 When the price is lowered, the large number of wives of polygynists will be seen to disperse and go to the men who have no wife. Thus, single marriages will be increased, and the district, whose population is greatly decreased, will become populated again. Lowering the price will also prevent women being paid for with women; and thus the trading of women will be hindered, since then the whole bride price can be paid in currency. It is also anticipated that the woman will become less a material object; and by changing the wife from an object of inheritance to an heiress, her moral value will be raised in her own eyes and in the eyes of the men.

In order to civilize the land, Christian marriages must be established. In order to establish Christian marriages, the impediments that stand in the way must be removed, and everything be put to work to benefit what the good outcome of that can assure.

[549] Family Nomenclature

601

The name of:	is given to:
Ise, father	one's own father brothers of the father sons and grandsons of father's sisters

583 604 not forget that we are speaking of a young man who has not yet received a wife in his own clan.)

1) The uncle has priority rights if he has only one wife, even if she is the nkita of the nephew's mother. If that wife cannot live in peace with her husband, however, and if she is always trying to break up the marriage and go to another man, the husband's family can itself intervene and assign the wife to the nephew, if the couple love each other. By this means they try to prevent her from going elsewhere; it is preferable that she remain within the kin group. For if the marriage is broken and she leaves them, the family becomes involved in a long restitution process, [135] giving rise to numerous difficulties and to an end of revenue -- if that expression can be used -- from bride-price valuables.

2) If his uncle has two wives, the nephew can claim rights only over the one acquired by means of his own mother's bride price. The exception cited under item 1) holds even more true in this case.

In the two situations cited above, however, the family tries to appease the nephew by assigning to him the expected bride price of a female cousin. They do not yield to his demands unless no other solution is available.

3) If his uncle has several wives (four, five, or more), the nephew has the right to take one of them, if none of them were acquired by means of the bride price paid for the uncle's sister, that is, the nephew's mother.

583 604 428 If any of these eventualities materialize, the nephew is required to leave his father's clan (wisě) and to enter his mother's family (bonyangő). Actually, he is not averse to doing so. For we may suppose that in his father's kin group he has neither wealth nor future, while in that of his uncle he finds all he needs. He is considered his uncle's own child, and even has seniority over his cousins. He is their father (isě) and consequently has precedence over them; and he can succeed his uncle as family patriarch. Moreover, upon his uncle's death he always inherits one of his widows and becomes the first -- and often the only -- successor after the brothers of the deceased. (1)

---

1. This inheritance right is valid even if he continues to live in his own clan, in which case, however, it is impossible for him to become the chief or only heir.

Article II. Marriage by Inheritance

587
427 This form of marriage is called *liála jǎ lisangó* or simply *lisangó*. The meaning of *lisangó* is "inheritance," from the verb *sangol*, "to inherit." The word is used in the broad sense and is applicable to any object.

The death of a husband does not in itself free his widow. She remains bound to the deceased's family.

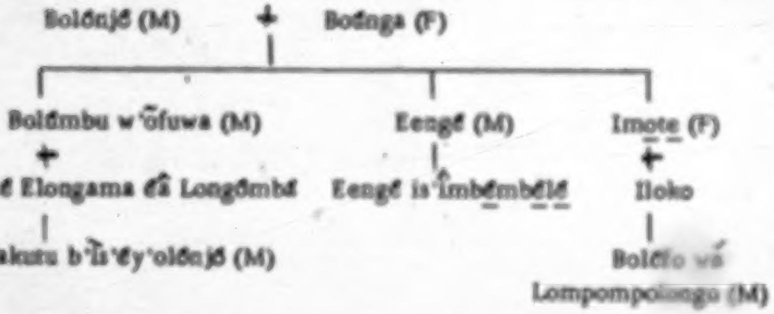
After the celebration of the end of mourning, the widows of the deceased, required to abstain from all sexual relations until that time, go back to their respective families. During the last period of mourning they have already had the opportunity of being courted or of resuming their relationships with their former lovers, whether or not they are relatives of the deceased husband.

A person wishing to marry the widow must address himself to her own family. Therefore, except in the case of the *bosóló*, to be discussed in the article which follows, the distribution of wives among the heirs cannot be considered as a distribution [189] of persons as such. Rather it is a division based on the valuables which these persons represent. Theoretically, the wives are inherited by the brother of the deceased, but other relatives, especially nephews, may have partial or total rights over one or another among them. (1) These rights are based on the source of the bride prices by means of which the wives were acquired. We have already touched on this subject in the preceding chapter in relation to certain relatives. Still other situations may arise, but instead of going into a long discussion I shall explain them by giving two case histories.

---

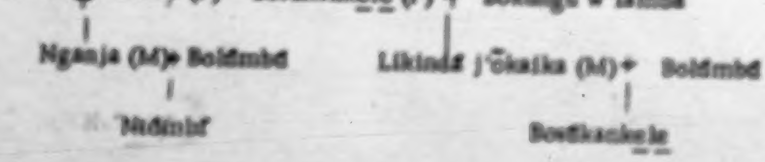
1. See Chapter II, Article IV, 3, as well as Article X.

● 428
587


Bolɔ́njɔ́ (M)
Boɛ́nga (F)
Bolɛ́mbu w'ɔ̃fuwa (M)
Eengɛ́ (M)
Imote (F)
Ikɛ́tɛ́ Elongama ɛ́â Longɔ́mbɛ́
Eengɛ́ is'îmbɛmbɛlɛ́
Iloko
Bakutu b'ĩs'ɛy'olɔ́njɔ́ (M)
Bolɛ́fo wá
Lompompolongo (M)

Imote of Eleke (Bongíli), one of the Lokongo clans, married Iloko of Imomo (Bongíli). With valuables received from his mother's family their son, Bolɔ́fo, married three women: Wãngi, Bomi, his favorite, and a slave from Bolakɛ́ (Wãngatɛ́). When he died, his widows went to the Eleke clan which was the source of his wealth. Two claimants appeared: Eengɛ́ (first cousin of the deceased but in [601] Nkundɔ́ terminology his son) and Bakutu of Bokenda (Besombɔ́) also a first cousin, and considered one by the Nkundɔ́. They were to divide the widows. But both of them chose the deceased's favorite and quarreled over her. In the end she was assigned to Bakutu who was the "father" of his rival and the "elder brother" of the deceased. The slave also went to Bakutu, (2) while Eengɛ́ had to be satisfied with the first wife. But he and his clan retained a right over these women and their [190] progeny. This is rather an old case; in fact two grandsons of Bakutu and Ikɛ́ndɔ́ respectively, whom I know very well personally, are now between fifty and sixty years old.

The following is a more recent example:


Ekɔ́bi
Ɔ́nika (F)
Boɛ́kankele (F)
Bokungɔ́ w'ĩambɛ́
Nganja (M)
Bolɛ́mbɛ́
Likindɛ́ j'ɔ̃kaika (M)
Bolɛ́mbɛ́
Ntɛ́minɛ́
Boɛ́kankele

2. Who yielded her to Ikɛ́ndɔ́ y'ãngamba of Eleke.

● 428 587 Two sisters, Osɛka and Bosɛkankele of Ikengo, Ntɔmbɛ (Wángatɛ), were married respectively to Ekɔbɛ of Likɛala (Besombɔ, Bombwanja) and Bokungɛ of Bombɛnga wă Ikolɛ (Besombɛ. Nganja married Bolɛmbɛ of Iɛmbo (Bonkoso). When Bolɛmbɛ became a widow she was inherited by Likɛndɛ, the first cousin of the deceased on his mother's side, so that the patrimony would not be scattered. She gave Likɛndɛ a daughter, Bosukankele, whose bride price he used to get himself a wife, Bombɛla (Teresa), daughter of Ilito of Bolɛngɛ (Bongíli). At Likɛndɛ's death the rights returned to Ntombɛ (Joseph) in the person of the widow Bombɛla, the nkita of his uterine sister.

587 428 589 If the legitimate heir, or some other close relative of the deceased, wants to marry a widow, he consults the head of the family and then goes to the woman's parents and gives them bekooli (1),

1. The plural of the noun derived from the verb koola, "to seek, to take for someone," hence, "objects in order to go and take someone."

which consists of 1 to 3 copper rings, added to the amount of the bride price. This gift shows the suitor's respect for the woman's family. (2) If after a time the woman no longer wants to stay with

2. In addition to this native interpretation another may be given which is more profound and of a legal nature. This will be done further on (Article IX).

him, but loves another close relative, the latter also brings his bekooli. This is expected of him even if the woman has not gone home in between, but has gone directly from one man to the other.

[591] [191] The bekooli of the first man are then returned.

If the new husband is only distantly related to the deceased, (1)

[601]

1. In that case he is called ɛɔto ɛâ ntɔngɛ, literally "relative from the summit," as against ɛɔto ɛâ nkina, "relative of the base," therefore a close relative.

428
589x
587
431

against eɔ̂to ɛ̂ ntsína, "relative of the base," therefore a close relative.

he must not only bring bekooli to the woman's parents but also give a bompɛ́ngɛ́ called nsǎsangɔ́ or bosangɔ́jwɛ́ a goat, a dog, or 5 to 10 copper rings, depending on the circumstances) to the heir. This is not part of the bride price, which is a payment to the woman's family. It is a gift intended to assuage the feelings of the heir and to secure or strengthen his good will. It is equivalent to a request for permission to cohabit with this woman and to profit by her work.

428
587
Thus we must distinguish between two types of marriage by inheritance:

1) The new husband and heir belongs to the immediate family of the deceased; he is eɔ̂to ɛ̂â ntsína -- a son, brother, uncle, nephew, or cousin.

2) The new husband and heir is distantly related; he is eɔ̂to ɛ̂â mɔ́ngɛ́.

In the first instance the marriage is considered fairly stable and difficult to break, but nevertheless more easily dissolved than a marriage by nkumbɔ́. With how much difficulty it is dissolved depends on the degree of kinship. The reason given by the Nkundɔ́ for the greater ease with which such a marriage is broken is that the heir-husband did not himself pay the bride price; he only received the woman from someone else. Thus, if he no longer wants her, he justifies sending her away by saying, "It was not I personally who paid your bride price." For her part, the woman will invoke the same reason, mutatis mutandis. In all other respects the union is like a marriage by nkumbɔ́. Therefore, [192] when the woman leaves her husband the term kɔ́fa is used here as in the case of a marriage by nkumbɔ́.

428
587
471
The second type of marriage by inheritance is clearly different from the first. The new husband is not a husband from the legal standpoint; he is only a husband in the improper sense, physically. In spite of the nsǎsangɔ́ paid by the common-law husband, the legitimate heirs, hence the close kin of the deceased, especially the relative who was entitled to the woman and to whom she was given when the

471/587/428 inheritance was divided, remain her masters. This is apparent from all the consequences resulting from the situation:

1) Children born of the union belong, not to their natural father, but to the owners of the woman, the *bankɔ́lɔ́*. They are the ones who will eventually consent to the children's marriages and receive their bride prices. They alone have the right to give the children a name. [553]

2) The man functioning as husband has only partial rights to the results of the woman's activities. Thus, if she finds a treasure buried in her field, captures a fleeing slave, or finds any valuable object that has been abandoned or lost and whose owner is not known, such as, for example, rings, objects of worked metal, elephant tusks, etc., these will not belong to her husband, as they would in a marriage by *nkumbɔ́*, but to the masters. The latter are also entitled to a part of the fruits of her labor: fish, caterpillars, and even food she has prepared.

3) If, on some occasion or other, the new husband wishes to make a gift or a payment to the woman's family, he has to request the intervention of the husband-owner. He therefore asks the latter to accompany him, saying: *ɔ́ndakɛ́ likilɔ́*, "make me acquainted with my parents-in-law; introduce me to them." They go there with the *ndonga*.

428/587 It may even happen that the *bosɔ́ngo* has not been paid yet and that the common-law husband has the slave [193] or the equivalent valuables needed for the payment. With the permission of the owner and accompanied by the *ndonga* he may make this payment. Nevertheless, he obtains no additional rights over the woman.

If one day the woman returns to the immediate family of the deceased, who are her "masters," the latter must make restitution to the common-law husband for these supplementary valuables and for all the payments he has made. If any stranger marries her by *nkumbɔ́*, the entire bride price is returned to the heirs of the deceased, who must reimburse the man who has acted as her husband for all the bride-price payments he has made.

428
587 This practice of ndǎlaka likiló is not without disadvantages. It may be feared that the heir deny that the payments were made and refuse to reimburse the man for them. His refusal is facilitated by the fact that the ndonga involved is the same one who participated in arranging the marriage agreement. Thus, there is a tendency to omit the practice.

Note that the expression ndǎlaka likiló is not applied only to
this situation; it is also used in the obvious sense -- for instance,
when the man is simply to make the acquaintance of the woman's
[431] family without presenting any payment (though of course it is in-
[574] conceivable that such a visit would be made without bringing presents),
or in the case of a man who wants to be united with a relative of the
wife of one of his relatives or friends.

4) Any presents given by the woman's family to the common-
[431] law husband, for instance during a visit or for a service rendered, etc.,
do not belong to him; by right they go to the heirs. If the latter
are kindly disposed toward him, they will allow him the usufruct of a
portion of these goods, but he has no right to them strictly speaking.

429 5) If the woman breaks this union the verb used is not -kófa
586 but -kumbwa, "to be taken in [194] marriage." If she returns to a
587 close relative of the deceased, that is, to one of his bankóló, the
Nkundó say that "she has returned to her husband," aólut'ěka bǒm'ǒkáé.
For his part, the man who has taken the woman in common-law mar-
riage may repudiate her at any time. He says to her: kendá ěka baóm'-
ǎké, emí ntsíkwěngáki, "go to your husbands; I did not pay your bride
price." The valuables he has given as nsásangó will be refunded.

6) Lastly, if the woman dies while living with this man, he has to pay an indemnity (-foma mbálaka), usually a slave or its equivalent, to the legitimate heirs.

428 Thus the second type of marriage by inheritance has none of
587 the characteristics of a legitimate Nkundó marriage. The husband
has only the enjoyment of the woman. Only the heir of the deceased
may truly and legally call her his "wife." Usually a woman involved
in such a union is called the heir's "thing" (yǒmba). The heir is called
her "owner," her "master," and the term "husband" is reserved for
the man who cohabits with her.

● 428 Because of all these obvious differences, the Nkundɔ́ tend to
587 consider this second type of union nonmarital. It resembles actual
581 marriage only externally; in the final analysis, the difference is fundamental, since it has none of the specific properties of a marriage. Therefore such a union is not a marriage, but a continuous concubinage.

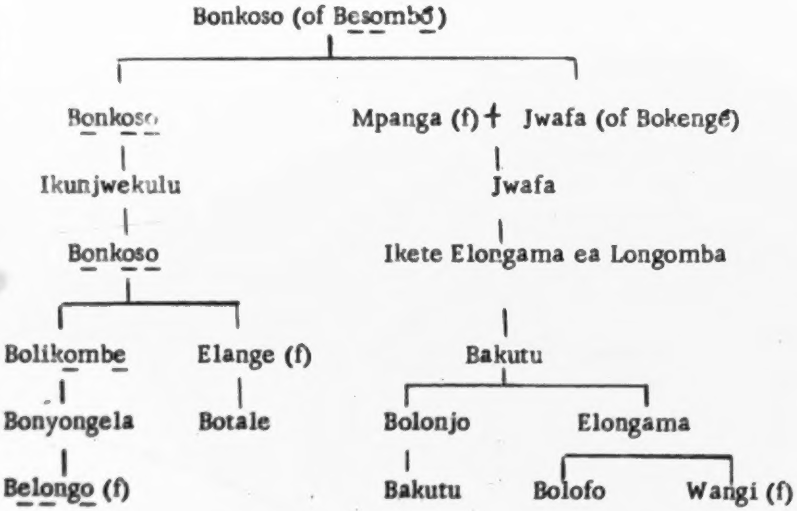
A man who cohabits in this manner with a woman for whom others have paid the bride price is often the object of humiliating allusions. He is treated as nkolasangɔ́, "inheritance taker" (that is, of inherited women). If a woman involved in the type of union described quarrels with one who has been "bought" in the regular manner, the latter will sometimes clap her hands (-foma losáka) to indicate her superiority. That is why such a woman is sometimes called wálí ɔ́â fomalosáka in contrast to the other. [195]

Present-day circumstances make all this even more clearly
[797] apparent. Nowadays, even pagan natives almost everywhere are aware of the intransigence of the Catholic Church on the question of the indissolubility of a marriage which has been effected through the religious ceremony. For this reason the "masters" of a woman who is legally theirs but who is actually living with another man in the manner described, will not permit her to enter into a religious marriage with this man unless he pays the bride price.

Therefore we may consider the type of union described above a concubinage which does not satisfy the moral conditions for a true marital union. As to the first type of marriage by inheritance, namely a union with a close relative of the deceased, the question is more complicated; but it is my opinion that such a marriage is valid from the moral standpoint. I hope, however, that in order to attain greater certainty on this point, others will re-examine the case in the light of the various aspects of the solution that have been presented.

The following historic case pertaining to individuals whose genealogy appears below will illustrate the preceding discussion:

428
587
581


Bonkoso (of Besombó)
Bonkoso
Mpanga (f) + Jwafa (of Bokengé)
Ikunjwekulu
Jwafa
Bonkoso
Ikete Elongama ea Longomba
Bolikombe
Elange (f)
Bakutu
Bonyongela
Botale
Bolonjo
Elongama
Belongo (f)
Bakutu
Bolofo
Wangi (f)

Elongama (the younger) married Ikókó of Bongíli, daughter of Bolékélá wǎ Nkunja and Tómpénda. After his death, his widow was taken as inheritance [196] by Bonyongela, to whom she gave a daughter, Belóngó. Bakutu (the younger) and his first cousin Bolófo were the ones who disposed of the daughter's bride price and were responsible for the marriage palavers; her father, Bonyongela, (since deceased) and his brother, Bonkoso, were not. Out of kindness, Bonyongela was given 18 rings. Bolófo added the other 30 to his sister Wǎngi's bride price to obtain his wife Ióngó (of Likolí, now deceased). After x number of years, Ikókó left Bonyongela for Botálé, a sister's son who, being a close relative, gave no nsǎnsangó. That which had been paid by Bonyongela was returned to him by Bakutu, since the union was broken. Five years later, Ikókó left Botálé with whom she was dissatisfied because he was lazy and did not bring her enough game, clothing, etc. She went to live with Ilumbé of Ngombe Mbálanga (Bongíli), who was a distant maternal relative and therefore gave the prescribed nsǎsangó.

Another instance turned up recently (May, 1933). One of our Christians, Babolá Michel of Ianda (Bonkoso) wanted to take a wife.

428 He had set his heart on Bolúmbú, daughter of Ntando éy'ilengu of
587 Bofalambóka. Upon the death of Bolúmbú's husband, Esalé éâ
581 Lonkongá, (in 1926), she had been asked for by Bombóngo, a distant relative of Esalé. Proceeding in the customary fashion, Bombóngo had made his request through the medium of his elder brother Engambí and had paid a bompángá of 4 bakonga and 20 francs. In the meantime, Babolá reached adulthood; he left our school and returned to his native village. Being a true nephew of Esalé éâ Lonkongá, he had a direct right over this woman, who left Bombóngo. Since the latter protested, however, the priest was faced with a moral problem; the question was whether or not there was a real marriage between Bombóngo and Bolúmbú. If there were, there would be no question of a marriage between Babolá and Bolúmbú, since the Church could not break a valid marriage between Christians. I have said above that a union of the sort involved in this case is not, in Nkundo eyes, a typical marriage. However, I wanted to have every assurance and to be as certain as possible. To that end, I went to Bonjoku at the time of the tax collection. I found many men gathered there. I raised the question of marriage by inheritance. The discussion ended on the unanimous expression of the opinion that in the instance involved nothing opposed the new marriage. The men gathered there added that all similar cases are rather a sort of concubinage accepted by ancestral law, but lacking all characteristics of a true marriage.

In order to avoid the many disadvantages inherent in this second form of marriage by inheritance, the husband, if he has any wealth, will do everything he can to collect the valuables needed for the bride price and pay his father-in-law. The latter will use the bride price to reimburse the heir. By making this payment, which is handed over through a new ndonga designated by him, the husband obtains complete possession of the woman. The marriage by inheritance than changes into a marriage by nkumbó. The besangójwá which the husband had previously given the heir must be returned, and the heir's ties with the woman are broken by these formalities.

[579] It sometimes happens that the heir takes a very dim view of this new payment and takes offense. In the past a war, through illegal, could result -- after which, as always, the matter was settled just the same.

428 587 581 On the other hand, it also happens sometimes, and even quite often, that although the woman loves her "husband" (in the improper sense) she does not want any change. At heart she remains attached to the kin of her deceased husband, through her love for him or because of her affection for his family, who have always treated her well. It is not unusual for the common-law husband to encounter unalterable opposition to a regular marriage. [578] The woman may [198] even take such offense at the proposal that she will leave the man for a close relative of the deceased.

In this type of situation another sort of development may also occur, although it is quite rare. For example, there is the case of Lowâka, daughter of Bompúkú of Bo̱nto̱le̱. After the death of her husband, Botúna of the Baséka Ilúka (Lofelí), she was taken in marriage by one of his relatives, Nse̱nge̱, who gave the prescribed *besangójwá* to Imo̱mo̱ of Bofalambóka, Botúna's *bonankáná*. After a certain time Imo̱mo̱, who had had a slight palaver with Nse̱nge̱, did not want the situation to continue. He demanded a regular marriage so that he could make use of his rights to Lowâka's bride price. Nse̱nge̱ agreed and paid 60 *bakonga* to the woman's parents, who reimbursed Imo̱mo̱. Imo̱mo̱ returned the *besangójwá* he had received, and thus Lowâka became the true wife of Nse̱nge̱.

One can see that the gamut of individual variations comes into play here, depending on the temperament and the feelings of the persons involved. But the most common practice is for the widow to remain attached to the family of the deceased or to remarry in the prescribed fashion.

In the latter case the widow goes to a man who is not related to the deceased, either immediately after mourning or after a period of conjugal life with the heir. The latter is entitled to a reimbursement of the bride price. The new husband must make all the customary payments through the medium of his own *ndonga*, exactly as he would for a first marriage by *nkumbó*. Consequently, this union is not considered a "marriage by inheritance," with which it has nothing in common.

428 587 431 In any marriage by inheritance -- that is, where no bride price payment is involved -- the husband, whether he be the heir or

428 simply a relative of the deceased, must give the woman a present
587 called isangó, or inheritance gift. The woman either hands this gift
431 over to her family or keeps it for her personal needs. In any case [199] it is not considered a part of the bride price.

Finally, when a widow remarries, either by inheritance or by a new nkumbó, her husband must make her a present of one or two rings or knives of equivalent value before having conjugal relations with her. This present is given either on the same day as the isangó or on another, depending on the circumstances. It is called boángá, "couch," or, more commonly, ikondeyantangé (from -kondeya, "to make someone get on," and ntangé "bed"). It is a gift of consolation for widowhood. This gift of ikondeyantangé is probably what Engels referred to in his study on the Wǎngata we have already cited, when he spoke of "buying off mourning."

428 An examination of marriage by inheritance shows that the
587 widow is free to remarry a man of her choice, whether he be the heir or another relative of the deceased or some stranger. The only exception is a woman who has been willed to someone by the deceased. (1) If the heir subsequently does not fulfill his obligations toward her, she can react the same way as in a marriage by nkumbó. As for the special case of the bosóló, we will deal with it separately.

Another law may be deduced from the facts observed: as long as no new bride price is paid, the woman continues to belong to the family of the deceased. Only a restitution of the bride price breaks the contract and destroys all its consequences. (2)

---

1. The Nkundó scrupulously observe the stipulations of a will (boango or bowâko) because they fear the vengeance of the deceased. When a person expresses his last wishes he usually adds the threat, "If you don't carry out my wishes, you will follow me in death."

2. We will come back to these points in Article IX, and in Chapters VIII and IX.

428
587 Lastly, these facts demonstrate collective ownership within the clan or the extended family. When a close relative, such as Bosɔ́lɔ́ for instance, marries a widow, he considers her legally as his legitimate spouse, just as she was the legitimate spouse of the deceased. [200] No new bride-price agreement is necessary, since the preceding one continues to be valid. The only new element introduced is that another person in the family of the deceased enters into a marriage bond with the widow. Whether the person marrying the woman is the legitimate heir or a close relative makes no difference because of the community of interests that exists (the children belong to Bosɔ́lɔ́ as much as to the heir, for example). (1)

1. We will come back to this question further on (see Article IX).

837 Because of the superficial resemblance between different situations, it should be mentioned here that the enjoyment of a woman in a common-law relationship is not asked for exclusively in the case of a widow. Such a request may also be made in connection with the wife of a polygamist while the husband is still living, but this is done only by a close relative and even then is not well regarded. Usually the situation is as follows: a man falls in love with one of the wive's in his relative's harem, and she shares his sentiments. He takes her home with him. There is a palaver. The husband is furious, breaks of all relations with the seducer, and wants no more of his invitations or his gifts, which means the quarrel is serious. Therefore, other relatives intervene to try and reconcile the two adversaries; seeing that there is no way to prevent the cohabitation of the pair or judging that such action would not be expedient, they try to pacify the legitimate husband. Through the agency of his elder brother, the lover sends him a gift in entreaty. The husband, finding no one on his side, bows down before the fait accompli, accepts the gift (bompángɔ́), and yields the enjoyment of the woman. Instead of going about the matter in this cavalier fashion, the lover may also make his request in the normal manner. If for one reason or another the lovers want to stop living together, they separate without further

837 ceremony. If the husband is kindly disposed toward them, he gives back to his relative the valuables the latter has paid, and the incident is closed. [201]

That is what happened some time ago to Insɛ́lo, of Bokenyola (Bonjoku). (1) In the harem of his maternal uncle, Efonja Is'Ôfuwa, who was originally from Bonjoku but had been integrated into the Bongale, he had noticed a certain Mbilɛ́eyenga, originally from Bosɛ́ɛ́, and "his heart was rent asunder," as the Nkundɔ́ say. Through the agency of his older first cousins Mpetsɛ́ ɛ́â Lingomo, ye sent Efonja a bompɛ́ngɛ́ of 6 rings, asking him to be kind enough to allow him to cohabit with this woman. His request was well received. But after a certain number of years their passion cooled, and Insɛ́lo wished to contract a proper marriage to give himself posterity. He therefore parted from Mbilɛ́, who went back to her husband. The latter returned the 6 rings to Insɛ́lo, because he did not want to enrich himself at the expense of a relative.

Article III. The Bosɔ́lɔ́

● 428 The marriage of a bosɔ́lɔ́ is a special form of the inheritance
587 of women.

768 The term bosɔ́lɔ́ is used everywhere. The Injɔ́lɔ́ also use a synonym, njɛ́mɔ́, an incorrect term derived from the verb ɛ́mola, "to make [someone] get up." Thus they say ɛ́moja bǒna njɛ́mɔ́, "to give the child (son, daughter) a bosɔ́lɔ́. (2) Among the Beloko and their Elɛ́ngɛ́ the term bombɛ́jɛ́ is used as well as bosɔ́lɔ́.

On the day when the widows are "lifted from the ground" and

---

1. Now chief of the Bonkoso.

2. The Elanga tribes in the Losanganya region also use this expression.

428 permitted "to return to the bed," (3) all those entitled to the rights
587
768

of a father -- that is, those who have precedence, whether men or women -- gather with the sister's son to proceed with the ceremony. As always, each person yields his right to speak out of mutual respect, Finally, the eldest again has the floor [202]; it may be the deceased's father, brother, or paternal aunt (isɔ́moto). This individual who is in charge, makes a short speech appropriate to the occasion, and then gives one of the widows to the first-born of the children (nsɔ́mɛ). He takes the latter's preferences into account, having made sure of them in advance. The widow is given to him with the statement: "We have wrested for you the bosɔ́lɔ́ which your father has left you," tɔ́kokumela bosɔ́lɔ́ bɔ̌kɛ isɛ́ okotsɛkɛ́lákɛ. The actual meaning of kumá is "to seize by pulling toward oneself, to pull up," and includes the idea of strength. The word is primarily used in such expressions as kuma baflo, "to pull up weeds," kuma nsɛ́lɛ́, "to pull out feathers," etc. But it is also employed whenever anything is taken or pulled forcefully toward oneself, as in kuma mbombo, "to pull a chikwangue out of a heap."

The bosɔ́lɔ́ is always given to the first-born, regardless of sex, to the exclusion of the other children. If the eldest is a girl, she passes the bosɔ́lɔ́ on to her brother, first-born among the boys. This is a real seniority right, and it must be bought, or rather paid for, by the brother by giving his sister a present which most frequently consists of hens, money, small useful objects, or often a quantity of beer. The same rule applies if the eldest yields his right to a younger brother because the latter is passionately in love with her or -- nowadays -- because he does not want to take a second wife.

---

3. See "Les Coutumes funeraires des Nkundo" [The Funeral Customs of the Nkundɔ́] (in press, Anthropos). The Elɛ́ngɛ perform this ceremony only a few days after the burial; the Boangi do so even before it. The Injolɔ́ are beginning to imitate the Elɛ́ngɛ.

428 768 587 In addition a bósoló is also given to the bɔ̌nankánɛ. Only the eldest son of the sister whose bride price was used by the deceased may claim this right. If the bride price of the nephew's mother was not involved in the establishment of the harem which is to be divided, he is only entitled to a bosóló who is not someone else's nkita, that is, who was acquired by means of riches procured through the deceased's own efforts. If the deceased obtained wives with the bride prices of two sisters, both of whom have left sons, only the eldest son of the eldest sister has this right. (1) [203]

> 1. It may happen that one of the sons of the deceased is disinherited because of the rights of the bɔ̌nankánɛ. If that happens and the latter at least has a wife or can obtain the necessary valuables in his father's clan, he is supposed to yield the woman to his unfortunate cousin. This is a duty imposed by the love of family (lióta), and he may not evade it.

The practice of handing over a bosóló to relatives other than the son or daughter of the deceased seems to be an extension of a right originally reserved for his child.

The desires of the person entitled to the bosóló are taken into account when she is handed over. However, the eldest son can never obtain his father's favorite; only an elder brother may inherit her.

It is thus possible for a son to receive his own mother as bosóló, but only if there are no other widows and if he has no way of obtaining a wife. Naturally, he may not marry her. She is given to him so that when she remarries he will receive the amount of the bride price which will be repaid.

If the deceased leaves no harem but does leave a good deal of other wealth, the bosóló consists of some object of great value. This practice would seem to indicate that the word bosóló is applied to a woman only by an extension of its basic and original meaning, "inheritance by right of seniority."

428 764 587 As soon as the bosɔ́lɔ́ is assigned to the person entitled to her, she leaves the group of widows and goes to the home of her new husband. From then on she may cohabit with him, since from that moment the pair are absolved from the observance of the regulations and prohibitions of mourning. Because of her affection for her deceased husband and her sorrow, the woman sometimes begs her new husband to be patient and wait a while. Her wishes are respected, for a refusal to acquiesce would be a very serious offense, which could lead to an immediate rupture of the relationship.

The woman chosen as bosɔ́lɔ́ may refuse the husband for whom she is intended, though such cases are rare and in the past were even unknown. The following instance [204] goes back to 1932: Mpia of Mbanja "acquired" Bôngongo of Ilɛ́ngɛ́ as wife for his eldest son, Bompelɛ́. But the young man did not want her. So as not to waste his money, the father incorporated the woman into his harem. When the old man died, Bôngongo was given to this same Bompelɛ́ as a bosɔ́lɔ́. This time it was she who did not want him, and, to make matters worse, all the other widows also refused. Subsequently, a second cousin of Bompelɛ́ named Bosɛ́njá wanted to marry Bôngongo. But out of spite, Bompelɛ́ did not want to yield her to him except against the payment of a bride price.

Even if the woman makes no objection -- and she generally does not -- and accepts the new husband without loving him, either out of indifference, or to be able to come out of seclusion, or for any other reason, she may always find a way to leave him, if she wishes, for another close relative whom she prefers. This fact indicates that, although theoretically the union of the bosɔ́lɔ́ is supposed to be more stable than a simple marriage by inheritance, in practice it is not; and it does not attain the degree of permanence characteristic of a marriage by nkumbɔ́. The reason is probably to be found in the fact that the union with a bosɔ́lɔ́ and the ordinary form of marriage by inheritance are fundamentally identical, and the rights of the family play a great role in both of them. The following is a recent case history: Ifungɛ́, daughter of Esukɔ́lu of Bongangɛ́ (Boɛ́ndɛ́) and widow of Bolɛ́kɛ́lɛ́ of Bongíli was assigned as bosɔ́lɔ́ to her husband's eldest son, named Boongo. Later she claimed that she did not love Boongo but [illegible] 590

429 768 587 689 that she wanted to become the wife of his brother Ekamba. Ekamba did not object. But very soon she broke this union as well. This time the chief decided she was going too far and to please Boongo, who had settled with his mother's clan of which he also was a member, he sentenced her to several weeks in prison. All sensible people approved of the chief's attitude. In spite of the suppression of such excesses, a suppression which is necessary, the woman's freedom is protected.

428 768 587 We have already indicated that from a moral point of view the marriage of a bosálé may be considered on the same level as the inheritance of any woman if she remains among the close kin of the deceased. The only difference is that such a union is somewhat more difficult to break.

Article IV. The Replacement or Substitution

586 587 When a marriage is broken, instead of completing the divorce by restitution of the bride price, the woman's family often has recourse to the practice of replacing the divorcée by one of her relatives (such as a sister, cousin, or niece). The act of replacement, as well as the woman substituted, is called bankitó. (1) This name is plural noun derived from kita, "to become," kitana, "to replace, to succeed." The singular would be linkitó, but it is never applied to this situation.

The substitute usually does not object to the social obligation that falls upon her, unless she feels an unusual repugnance toward the husband. In that case an attempt is made to find someone else in the family. A family may go so far as to take one of its members away from her husband in order to substitute her for the divorcée, especially if no other substitute is to be found and if they care more about the marriage that has been broken than about her union.

The Nkundó give the following justifications for the practice of substitution:

1. The Ekonda say nkitó.

582 583 whose bride price will fall to him, is only three. At that age, she is married. The children's father is in a hurry to use the capital he has received, small as it is, rather than to let it lie unproductive and run the risk of losing it one day for some reason or other. Therefore, he uses it to obtain a wife, often a child, for himself or his brother. Thus the boy is deprived of the means which would enable him to establish a home when he attains adulthood. He will have to wait till he can acquire new wealth, either through his own work, or thanks to the assistance of [237] various relatives, or through the death of his father or his uncles, or -- frequently -- from the bride price of a daughter to be born to his sister's nkita. In the last instance, which formerly occurred very often, he was obviously forced to wait many years. Thus in the example cited in Chapter II, Article X, had the events occurred a few decades earlier, Bakutu would have had to wait for the bride price of his cousin Wǎngi, who was a good twenty-five years younger than he. If he had then been given the first part of the bride price, he would probably still have had to wait over ten years before becoming a husband in the full sense of the word, because the ikulɛ would have been used for an engagement with a very young child. More probably he would have been considered too young; the bride price would have been used for the benefit of another, and he would have had to wait another indeterminate number of years. Once the practice of marrying girls when they are small children is accepted, there is no other way out; everything is linked, and the result is inevitable, given the mentality of this society.

582 428 583 The elders' power to act in this way to their own advantage stems from the collective nature of the people's inheritance system (Chapter II, Article X and XI, 3, B). A bride price goes to the family; the right of the individual members is not personal or exclusive but is derived from their position in the hierarchy within the group.

Nevertheless, the fact that a man may claim priority to the bride price of his uterine sister over a brother born of a different mother seems to indicate that he originally held the chief rights to these valuables. The exercise of this right is postponed, and the concomitant transfers result.

582 We have spoken of the unproductivity of the bride price.
583 This is a Nkundó notion, and it is accurate only because the old men want to satisfy themselves before their sons. Actually, they could very easily reconcile their desire that the bride price should be productive with the aspirations of the youths, at least in many instances. All they would need to do would be to use the valuables they have received for their sons' benefit by acquiring girls of the same age for them. The productivity of the valuables would not diminish [238] in the least, of course, since the goods would remain in the family. On the contrary, it would be increased because a
[842] greater number of progeny would probably be born. But our natives
[601] knowledge of physiology does not seem to be sufficiently developed for them to come to this conclusion. And even more probably their egoism has greatly clouded their intelligence and silenced the voice of good sense and fatherly love to make it possible for them to multiply the number of their wives and thus increase the easy satisfaction of their sensuality, augment their wealth, and reinforce their social position. It will be their sons' turn after their death.

561 This situation is aggravated by the fact that, except for the
● 923 *bonfio*, the brothers, not the sons, of the deceased inherited the
595. widows, who thus remained in the hands of the old men.

582 Because of their attitudes the old men monopolized most of the women. They established large harems for themselves, so that it was very difficult for the young men to find a woman to marry; they had to consider themselves lucky if their father provided them with a child.

582 Thus it was unheard of that a young man between twenty and
178 thirty years old should marry, except for a few instances where a man acquired a child who was to become his wife after a number of years. Men were usually forty years old or older before they married.

Nowadays the situation has changed entirely; the attitude of the old men favors the young much more and has become almost normal. The great majority of fathers, if they have the means, procure a wife for their sons as soon as the latter are old enough to express a desire for one. This improvement is due to the fact that it has become

595^x 554 In little domestic quarrels, the bomſtsa's children like to take advantage of the top rank occupied by their mother. Later, they will have the right to priority, before their brothers, in matters of inheritance and family authority.

595^x 567 578 The children of slave women are loved by their father in the same way as their brothers and sisters. However, they are often the object of manifestations of contempt and humiliation on the part of others, especially verbal ones, but only when disputes arise. In particular, they have to submit to the insult of having it said [369] that they are without bonyangō, "a maternal clan." This is one of the most serious insults that can be inflicted by a Nkundō. Nevertheless, their father protects them as much as he can.

● [428] The child of a slave woman has no right to an inheritance. Clearly, he lacks for nothing. But he has no political rights, even if he is his father's first-born.

595^x 567 The posterity of a slave are not considered as such in matrimonial matters, as we have pointed out in Chapeer V, Article II. If the groups descended from free women are extinct, the rights of the clan are inherited by the posterity of a slave, to the exclusion of related clans whose ancestors were entirely free.

595^x What is the effect of the system of polygamy on the birth rate? There has been much debate on this question for it is very difficult to answer. Complete statistics well compiled from detailed methodical lists would be necessary. For it is a fact that in many monogamous households the woman is the former wife of a polygamist and for that reason can no longer be counted as a monogamist's wife. In addition it would be necessary to exclude from monogamous households those women who did not marry until an advanced age, after having lived freely for a fairly long time, for example in the centers.

In my opinion the birth rate is endangered above all by the need for individual love and the difference in the ages of the spouses, which is inseparable from the system of polygamy as it now exists. The polygamist's wife instinctively seeks another

768
583x Therefore there is a very great difference between the consequences of divorce and of death. In divorce the bride price must be considered more or less like a deposit. In case of death, on the contrary, it remains permanently in the hands of those who have acquired it. This difference weakens the theory that maintains that the bride price is only a guarantee; rather, it tends to favor the theory that it is a compensation for the loss experienced by a clan when it gives one of its members in marriage. In case of divorce the clan's loss [443] is nullified, since the woman returns to her family or -- as is the usual outcome -- remarries and becomes the object of a new bride-price payment. The death of a woman, on the other hand, makes the clan's loss permanent rather than bringing an end to it. This does not mean that the bride price does not constitute a guarantee; in reality it is one. But this guarantee is an effect of the bride price, not the reason for its existence -- which is something altogether different.

2. Inheritance from the husband

768
● 428
178 Since we are not dealing with Nkundó property laws, the question of inheritance is not, strictly speaking, within the realm of our study. Nevertheless, we cannot refrain from saying a word about it, since the study of marriage must naturally contain a chapter on children. Thus we shall examine the question from that particular angle. What interests us here is knowing what rights children have over their father's inheritance. We have already dealt with the position of the widow in the preceding article.

The inheritance from the deceased includes three parts:

1) The bride-price valuables, that is, everything that is used chiefly to obtain a wife: copper and brass rings, iron objects, widows and daughters insofar as they represent bride-price valuables.

2) Domestic animals: goats, dogs, hens, ducks.

3) Real property: fruit trees, fields and crops, hunting enclosures, fishing places; and personal property: nets, hunting snares, bows and arrows, shields.

The bride-price valuables become the common property of the close relatives. Each one receives his share of the inheritance.

768 The widows are awarded to the brothers, uncles, and nephews
428 (bänankánä) of the deceased, in accordance with their position in
178 the group hierarchy and their respective rights, [444] which may derive from financial assistance lent to the deceased so that he could obtain one of his wives, or from the application of the nkita system. Rings (bakonga) and iron objects (bifeko) are distributed in the same manner. Similarly, unmarried daughters are assigned to various relatives -- that is, the "fathers" who preside at the division of the inheritance discuss and specify which persons have the right to receive the bride prices that will later be paid for them. Of the sons only the eldest receives a wife or a certain amount of bride-price valuables as bosáko. (1)

1. Chapter III, Article III.

That is the traditional rule. Nowadays a far-reaching change has already taken place. The sons of the deceased are no longer excluded from the distribution. They are given either a wife, or a sufficient quantity of rings, or the right to the bride price of a sister or a cousin, if it is possible. For the rest see Chapter II, Article IV, 3 and Article XI, 3, 13, and Chapter IV, Article II.

The domestic animals go to the bäänayí, who take them home to their husbands and they are thus included in the amount of the dowry. A few goats, however, might be given to one of the men in the kin group who needs them to complete the payment of a bride price.

As to the other property (real or personal), they pass directly to the sons. The first born receives the lion's share and the most precious items, but the younger sons are not excluded in the distribution.

It should be noted that a will may affect this distribution by assigning a specific object to a given son, or by excluding one of the heirs with whom the deceased has had a serious quarrel. Such a will is always executed, because the Nkundó fear the vengeance of the deceased, who causes anyone guilty of an

768 infraction to follow him in death. It is obeyed even if [445] it is
● 428 manifestly unfair. They fear reprisal by the deceased, such as that
178 which is thought to have happened after the death of Iloko is'Efekele of Lofelf. He had killed his own brother, Mpénda éá nkotonkale,
[682] because the latter had tasted freshly brewed beer instead of leaving that honor to him -- an action which constituted an extremely serious offense. But since the punishment was out of all proportion to the act, the whole family united against the murderer, who was obliged to flee. At his death he disinherited all his brothers in favor of his sons. This will, considered unreasonable and unfair, was not respected; Iloko's only brother, Bondélé wa Wilima, took Bonyengá, the favorite, for himself. But he soon died, and his death was attributed to Iloko's vengeance. Several years ago the family met to finally settle the matter of the inheritance. The largest portion was set aside for Iloko's sons, but one part was awarded to other relatives who were not named in the excluding clause, which referred only to the Baéká Bankogá, that is, to Iloko's own brothers.

Sons are never disinherited. If one of them behaves very badly toward his father, when the latter dies he refuses him his benediction (bokako w'ôôtsi) and curses him bokako wá ta yɔ).

3. Inheritance from the wife

78
428 As we have seen in Chapter VI, Article II, a wife has no rights of ownership over the fruits of her own labors or of the couple's joint efforts. Consequently, her family can make no claims as regards inheritance; there is nothing to inherit.

Although all the fruits of the wife's activities belong to the husband, most men do not require that their rights be rigidly respected. They leave a part, or the whole, to the family of the [446] deceased, as is done in the case of a widow. (1) After the feast at the end of mourning, the two clans make an inventory of the property in question. Usually whatever products of her work the woman has left are divided equally between the two clans. Some

---

1. See the previous article.

365 428 men are generous enough to renounce all of it. If the deceased had an *ebísa*, or if the parents-in-law give their son-in-law a substitute, the possessions fall to her. She even inherits the fields [*culture*] that have been set up by her kinswoman, to the extent that they have not been destroyed. Under other circumstances the cultivated lands [*plantations*] are never left to the family of the deceased.

The only items to which a woman is entitled strictly speaking are the various portions of the bride price and similar payments awarded to her by Nkundó law: goats and spiral bands and the mother's gifts as part of the bride price; the cloth and belt given at a funeral. At a wife's death these possessions pass to her clan, if she has not previously given them to her relatives. In no case may they be appropriated by the husband.

[52.1] Finally, when a wife dies she may leave a tool (knife, hoe, etc.) to her daughter. This custom is observed particularly by very active women in order to inculcate their daughters with the love of work. Such an object often became an heirloom, transmitted from mother to daughter for several generations. It is called *botsikájwá* (from *tsíkela*, "to leave to"; see the Latin *reliquiae*) or, among the Bombwanja, *elífi*. These terms are also applied to other objects included in the inheritance when they are considered separately (altogether they are called *lokutu*, "patrimony," "property," or *lisangó*, "inheritance"). Such a *botsikájwá* can never be appropriated by a husband. [447]

Article VIII

Death of the Fiancé Before the Payment of the Bride Price

368 584 Here we shall deal with the situation resulting from the death of a husband during the engagement, after the payment of the *ikulá* or the *ndanga* but before the *walo*. The procedure for dissolving an engagement may already lead us to suppose that death also breaks it without any special difficulties. And in fact, if the fiancé dies the woman is free. Therefore she may go home, and the family of the deceased is reimbursed for the payments that have been made.

326 521 571 Whereas with us the village inn is the place where the affairs of the week are noisily debated, it is at the smithy where the Mongo Negroes congregate. There the elders gather -- the younger men have no voice here; there the various differences about (or among) wives and the impending taxes are discussed; amidst the billows of smoke -- drawn with deep puffs out of their huge bamboo pipes -- the smith is the only one who works on and earns his living nobly.

326 428 The smith is the most judicious craftsman among the Mongo Negroes.

His trade is practically the only one which is a family affair and is passed on from father to son. If a smith does not have any children, the business is taken over by his younger brother.

This right of inheritance is by no means general in the other trades; the trade of the smith is inherited while the others are taken up by any Tom, Dick, or Harry who happens to have a liking for them.

325 348 The smithy where the smith plies his trade is a wide oblong dark hut (about five meters by ten meters) built alongside the public highway. In contrast with the other dwellings of the Negroes, the floors of which are generally built about 20 centimeters above the road, the floor of the smithy is dug out from 30 to 70 centimeters below the level of the road so that one goes down a step from the road into the smithy.

The reason why the floor of the smithy should be dug out in this way is not quite clear to me, but most probably it is to prevent the danger of fire when the storm winds that accompany the heavy tropical rains sweep through the huts. By digging out the floor in this way, an earthen enclosure about half a meter high is formed around the smithy, and this protects the smith from the wind and enables him to continue quietly at work.

325 In spite of the primitiveness of his tools [95] and the primitive manipulation of them, the smith knows how to get what he needs from his implements. The forge (lotulu) is constructed as follows: a block of wood is cut about 60 centimeters long, 40 centimeters wide, and 30 centimeters high, with a hollow pipe, half a meter long, connected to it. This is all formed of one piece. With the aid of a banana stalk, on which the clay is moulded, a smith's pipe is formed. The banana stalk is removed from the clay, and the hollow pipe (boongo) remains. Two, sometimes four, bellows (njasa) are placed on the

583 to an old, worn-out, gray-haired man, it naturally often occurred that when she arrived at maturity, she no longer wished to remain with him. She therefore left him and went to another, or back to her family. In the latter case, however, great difficulties arose concerning the return of the bride price. Indeed, with the bride price the father had received for his daughter, he bought himself another wife. This wife was then called the Nkita of the daughter. We could translate Nkita in this case as "substitute." The Nkita represented the value of the sold or married daughter. Meanwhile, the daughter herself was often the Nkita of the daughter or sister of her husband. Thus, many women were the Nkita of each other. According to their customs, the children (boys) were in theory the heirs of the Nkita of their mother. The Nkita was, in fact, the value or the bride price of their mother.

One might ask whether the wife was then always content that she was, so to speak, an object of trade. In general, yes, she was satisfied with this. This is how the customs were, and nobody gave a thought to changing them. Usually the wife simply found herself in an arranged situation (fait accompli). Gradually a certain sense of honor is coming into being among the Christian wives against these heathen customs.

If the woman desired that a large bride price or purchase
price be paid for her, was it also because she wished to care for the
future of her children who would be heirs of her bride price? No,
they say, not for that reason -- for, they add, what woman knew
in advance that she would have children, and moreover boys? There
[163] are, in fact, many women who have no children. Also, [536] only
583 the boys are eligible for the inheritance; the girls are heirs only in
● 428 name. When it came to the inheritance, the children inherited the
587 Nkita of their mother only if there were no more brothers of the
mother or uncles on their father's side. The mightiest always had
the greatest right.

Usually a youth had to acquire a wife with the bride price or supplement of the bride price of his sister. The inheritance of the Nkita of his mother was only secondary. Still we often see a heathen wife leave her husband in order to go to another, without bothering much about her children who remain with the deserted husband, their father.

567 439 562 Everywhere there were also abducted women and female slaves; these were simply sold. Furthermore women were bought and sold with women [as payment]. Also women who were inherited and no longer in the hands of their family were sold by their second, third, or other subsequent husband. In all of these cases, the family no longer came into consideration for the bride price. One would have to stretch the point in order to consider the sums paid in these cases as a bride price, and consequently as a native custom which one must respect.

562 439 Or one should have to assume that such a native woman remains a "bride" for her whole lifetime. It will be said that the woman consented to her sale by one man to the other.

858 Often this was indeed the case, but not always by any means, for children and slaves were also sold. Even the consent of the woman did not prevent it from being a sale; her consent was rather an extra transaction that simplified the sale of a human article of trade. It still remains woman trade.

764 567 The Inheritance. Upon the death of a polygynist, the burial ceremony was conducted according to the class and rank of the deceased. One or two or several [539] slaves were killed and buried with the polygynist in the same grave. Sometimes the arms and legs of those male and female slaves were broken, and then they were buried alive in the same grave with the body.

When these slaves still had family, it might happen that the family members, having learned of the unfortunate lot of their relative, would hasten from faraway districts to buy him or her free if it was not yet too late. Several Negroes have told us of those heartbreaking scenes at which they were present as children. 765 The mourning and the lamenting over the dead lasted from a week to a month.

768 428 The eldest son immediately succeeded his father in position and immediately took one of the wives of his father.

587 The other sons divided among them the lances and knives of their father.

If the deceased had left no son, or if he was still too young, the oldest brother succeeded the deceased. All of the wives had to remain in their own home, except the wife who was immediately taken by the eldest son. They were obliged to await the day of the distribution. This day was put off for from one to four months.

768 428 587 Meanwhile, these wives were subjected to a certain discipline. They were called *Bituka*, which we translate here as "widow." During this time they were allowed to speak with the relatives of the deceased, but they had to remain at home; it was not permitted for anyone to take these wives.

When the time came for the distribution, the one in charge, namely, the son or the brother of the deceased, called together the heirs and parties concerned. On the day of the distribution, in the morning before dawn, the *bituka* left their dwelling place and went to the man with whom they had already come to an agreement, so that by daybreak all the huts of the *bituka* stood empty. Each of the wives of the polygynist usually has her own hut. At the appointed hour, the meeting was announced by the usual beating of the tomtom. The wives, the heirs, and all parties concerned then came together.

If there were many wives to distribute, the order of distribution was as follows: in the first place the brothers of the deceased received their share; in the second [540] place came the sons; and in the third place, the grandsons, that is, the sons of the daughters who received their share from the *Nkita* of their mother. If at this time the wife did not want to go with the man for whom she was designated, she was sold to another. Sometimes the family of the wife was not satisfied with that, and if they could, they gave the bride price back in order thereby to free their daughter or sister. Such a wife then came back to her family, where, however, she was again married in return for another bride price. The family acted thus to prevent its daughter or sister from simply being sold. When the grandsons were still too young, their share of the *Nkita* of their mother went to their uncle, the son of the deceased. The latter had then to provide a wife for them later, which he usually never did without making a great deal of trouble. If the daughters had no sons who could inherit their *Nkita*, they received some of the father's personal property as inheritance: goats, dogs, lances, knives, proas, etc. If the deceased had left a daughter but no sons or brothers, the daughter had to supervise the distribution of the inheritance.

Our civilized idea that the wife, the mother of the family, is the first heir, is thus not taken into consideration there. Indeed, the wife, the mother herself, is inherited if she is not too old.

000 What is one to do if even in such cases it is taught, "One must respect" the native customs?

587 428 [184] The inheriting of wives existed everywhere; it was, in fact, the only wealth left behind by the native. The details of the distribution differed according to district or tribe. Thus, for instance, in some districts it was the eldest son who alone inherited all of the wives of his father. This was in order to preserve the rank and the class of the family. Prestige and power actually depended only on the number of wives that one possessed. In this case, however, this eldest son had, in place of his father, to provide a wife for his younger brothers and the sons of his sisters. [582] As far as impediments to marriage were concerned, generally they strictly observed the impediment of blood relationship; two blood relatives, even in a distant degree, should never enter into marriage, [541] with the exception of the irregularities mentioned above. As for relatives by marriage, these do not exist for them in any degree. There is, nevertheless, one case that somewhat resembles relationship by marriage, namely, the Nkita might never be in the home of a man together with the woman whose Nkita she was. Thus, the son-in-law or the brother-in-law might never take the Nkita of his wife into his home. If, however, the wife had left or died, there was no further impediment.

587 428 431 When, like the inheritance above, the family had returned the bride price and had then married the woman to another man, this second husband also had to give a gift to the one who, according to the law of inheritance, had the right to the wife. This gift was called a bampanga.

587 428 If the wife who was freed by the family had children, only a part of the bride price had to be returned. Sometimes the wife was freed completely through her children. The children then remained with the family of the deceased husband, and they then represented the value of the bride price of their mother. If, however, such a woman was married again by her family, they demanded a second bride price for that.

587 428 583 Sometimes a single woman was the Nkita of several other women. In the inheritance several people then had a right over her, and everyone demanded his share. For instance, a young man

527 428 583 had to acquire a wife with the bride price or with a supplement of the bride price of his sisters. Three of his sisters, for instance, were married, and he needed 3,000 *mitako* to pay for his intended wife. Now he went with presents to his three brothers-in-law and asked for 1,000 *mitako* from each of them. The bride price was already paid to the father; the 1,000 *mitako* that he asks are a supplement of the bride price.

With these 3,000 *mitako*, our young man pays for his wife. This wife now becomes the *Nkita* of the three sisters. If this young man dies, his three sisters and his three brothers-in-law all demand their share back from the widow. If she is sold, the price must be divided among the three brothers-in-law. If she remains in the family of her husband, with the uncle or brother, she continues to be the *Nkita* of her three sisters-in-law.

431 583 [542] There also exists a general rule and custom that the family which has received the bride price regularly give gifts to their daughter and son-in-law or sister and brother-in-law. These gifts consisted of goats, dogs (which also have a rather large value among the natives), ducks, etc., but the gifts never consisted of money. These gifts were in turn given by the son-in-law or brother-in-law to the one who had helped him pay the bride price.

For instance, if the young man of whom we just spoke received gifts from the family of his wife, he would then have given these gifts to his three brothers-in-law. These gifts were often so much that the value of them was almost equal to the bride price that the man had paid for his wife. Custom demanded, in such a case, that the man then pay a supplement to the bride price.

In case the bride price had to be given back, the gifts that the family had already given might be subtracted from the bride price. When such disputes are brought before a European, it is difficult for him to settle them, for the value is tremendously exaggerated by the parties. The husband will demand the return of a much larger bride price than he actually gave, while the family on its side will estimate the gifts that they had given as much higher than the actual value or amount.

436 *Something about prices, the bride price for wives, and native money value.*

Their first original money was as follows.

000 [547] Unfortunately the system was not continued. Also, it must not be said that it would be unjust to lower the price of the women. Rather, injustice would thus be redressed, a degenerate custom be improved. Through the present system, ever more injustice is committed and suffered.

583 595 A few polygynists would suffer some material loss through the lowering of the price of the women, namely, by receiving less for one woman than they (sometimes) paid for them, for they inherited most of the women. But they are also the ones who are responsible for the irregular situation. In a large part of the district, the polygynists are by far the minority of the population. They are the ones who are hostile to the Colonial Administration. They are in possession of the women and have a monopoly on them. They fix prices which a young man can almost never pay, namely, two nkesi at least.

583 The difficulties for Christian marriages become daily still more difficult. This is true for the marriages already entered into and for the future marriages.

583 ●428 426 [465 511] The bride price to be paid for the wife ought to be such that every young man can pay that sum with his own money, with the money that he has earned himself by his work. This sum cannot be high, for the ordinary working man in the Congo, who makes up the large part of the population, does not earn much more than what he needs for board and clothing. Therefore to pay an excessively large sum as a bride price forces him to borrow and to run up debts among his relatives and friends. The result of this is that the system of the Nkita goes over unnoticed into the Christian marriages, and the woman remains an object for inheritance. Indeed, when the man dies the creditors will come, namely, those who have loaned him money -- and demand the wife. The disputes over the bride price then begin anew, and they will again give the wife in marriage in return for a new bride price. Thus, there is no end to it. The wife, the mother, will never achieve any rights but will always remain an object of inheritance. There has been talk about declaring the widow free at the death of her husband in order to prevent the inheriting of wives, but how will it be possible to [548] achieve that if the bride price is not lessened, considerably lessened? When a

583 428 426 young man can pay for his wife, or rather pay her bride price with his own earned money, then that wife becomes his property. At his death, no creditors or mortgage holders can come to demand the wife since she will then actually be free. There will also be no difficulty in making her heir to the property of her husband, for herself and her children. The bride price or payment for wives among the civilized Blacks could be very much simplified. To abolish it would not be so easy. Indeed, it seems to be in the customs and the habits of the whole Black race. Then too, with respect to bride price, usually still in entanglements with their heathen relatives.

The bride price, as it exists among the heathens, will always remain a source of difficulties for civilization and a support for polygyny.

000 When the price is lowered, the large number of wives of polygynists will be seen to disperse and go to the men who have no wife. Thus, single marriages will be increased, and the district, whose population is greatly decreased, will become populated again. Lowering the price will also prevent women being paid for with women; and thus the trading of women will be hindered, since then the whole bride price can be paid in currency. It is also anticipated that the woman will become less a material object; and by changing the wife from an object of inheritance to an heiress, her moral value will be raised in her own eyes and in the eyes of the men.

In order to civilize the land, Christian marriages must be established. In order to establish Christian marriages, the impediments that stand in the way must be removed, and everything be put to work to benefit what the good outcome of that can assure.

[549] Family Nomenclature

601

The name of:	is given to:
Ise, father	one's own father brothers of the father sons and grandsons of father's sisters

556
562
582 bride-to-be was introduced to her bridegroom, she walked toward him across a row of mats. A feast was organized to celebrate this important and joyous event. Dances accompanied with a flow of beer went on for weeks, sometimes for a whole month.

● [431] The father gave his son-in-law a great many nkomí (3) objects

3. See Chapter II, Article VII.

so that the bolɔ́mbɔ́ often became yɛ̌ngaende or at least lifayɛ̌njoku. (4)

4. See Chapter VII, Article IV.

He did not allow his daughter to leave without giving her at least one ebña to wait on her. (5) Thus when Bolɛ́ngɛ́ w'Ioma of Lokɔ́ndola

5. See Chapter VII, Article III.

(Injɔ́lo, Ngombe) married Bonjɛ́ngɔ́, daughter of Ilɔ́njɔ́ y'Ókɛ́kema of Bompɔ́ma (Injɔ́lɔ́, Engɔ́njɔ́) (who died in 1934), the bride received from her father four bibña to do the work, as well as a young cousin who was to stay with her [34] to bring her firewood. In this way the father made sure that his beloved daughter would retain her honorable position as a great lady.

556
562 The husband, who wanted his wife to retain her superior status, now makes her his bolɔ́mbɔ́ as well. (1) The term was: Bɔ́n'ɔ́w'olɔ́mbɔ́

1. See Chapter VII, Article III. That is, unless she is his first wife. See ibid. and Article I.

ɛtswɛ́ ɔ́ wɛ̌lɛ́ ɔ́w'olɔ́mbɔ́ ɔ́k'ɔ́me. He would say to those assembled: "Her father proclaimed her bolɔ́mbɔ́, and I proclaim her bolɔ́mbɔ́ as well (Is'ɛ́kɛ́ɛ́ ɔ̂ɛ́kvɛ́kɛ́, emí mpɛ́ njɔ́ɛ́kya â ng' ɔ́kɔ́)."

What was the reason for the existence of this custom?

572 [201] Friends seldom or never give signs of their affection, apart from gifts and mutual assistance. Men are seldom seen embracing, although women do so frequently.

The Nkundó are familiar with friendship pacts (called *boseka* or, among the Bombwanja, *likandeko*) (1). Two persons of the same sex are bound to one another in friendship (*kota boseka* or *likandeko*) [431] in the presence of a witness (*ndonga*), whose duty it is to deliver the gifts that are exchanged.

The conclusion of a friendship agreement is actually a custom of the women; men -- usually the husbands -- create friendship bonds only secondarily, in imitation of their wives. This pact is not automatically hereditary; the children may continue it -- through the same *ndonga* as their fathers -- but they are free to let it lapse. (2)

Two elements may be distinguished in the friendship pact: congeniality or affection and mutual assistance. The latter is in itself a sign of friendship, but it is not infrequently the sole reason for the pact among men who seek reciprocal support by this means. [36] As for the women, it may be said, on the contrary, that gifts are considered purely as tokens of affection and their bonds are based exclusively on affection. Often women who are very fond of each other do not bind themselves in a friendship pact but are content to show their affection in all simplicity. Men also may be very good friends without having recourse to a pact. Bu[illegible]e conclusion of an agreement makes their relationship public and thus protects it against deleterious influences such as misunderstandings, disagreements, outbursts of anger, etc. One might say that the pact represents the addition of the element of reason to the element of emotion.

---

1. *Bofilí* among the *Ekonda*, mbale among the Batswa.

2. See also a special reason for friendship pacts in Chapter IV, Article I.

832 husband will change to revulsion, and she will leave him to be with her charmer.

Part 3

The Search for a Wife

584 When a young man old enough to marry believes he has the means to do so, he goes out to seek a wife. Naturally, he knows a number of girls, and as a rule he has no trouble finding one who suits him. The courtship is quite simple. As everywhere there are meetings, [831] visits, chats, and jokes; but there is no romanticism or sentimentality, for they are absolutely unknown to these peoples. Since they are in a hurry [103] to reach the objective of their relationship, namely conjugal life, -- and their progress toward this goal is facilitated by usages and customs -- there remains little time for poetry.

There is no specific term for courtship itself. The Nkundő simply speak of "talking with a woman," sooja bǒmoto, "looking for a woman," asa bőmoto. The girl who is its object is referred to as bombőyő (or boambá among the Injőlő).

First, the young man addresses his proposals to the girl: "ńdanga ńkokolé (ńkokumbőle) la wǎlí, "I want to take you for wife." She shows her agreement by saying, "ńkolanga wě ng'őkő, "I love you also," or more frequently, "elaká ô wě, "as you wish," ői ő liké, "it's up to you," or something of this sort. (1)

---

[195]
[576]
1. Note that for the Nkundő these expressions have quite a different significance than would appear from the words. They express a real agreement and an explicit and personal consent. In fact it is considered improper for a woman to use a more direct expression.

584
831 The lovers exchange gifts. The girl gives food which her mother has provided, or which she has been able to procure herself.

584 491 For his part, the young man gives her some small game animals (especially the big rat called *botɔ́mba*, lemurs of the genus *esɔndɛ́*, etc.) or fish. These gifts have no specific name. The man's gifts are simply called *mpatɔ́* "gift sent"; the woman's are called *botɛ́mo*, a term used for all presents given by a woman to her lover (see also Chapter VI, Article VII, 2). The verb used with this noun is *tumba*, "to make burn." Etymologically the two words are in no way related.

Sometimes the sweethearts give each other a secret mutual pledge of their desire to be married. This pledge is called *bondengɛ́* or *bonengɛ́* and consists particularly of a necklace of beads called *bafomakongo* (or, more rarely, *bisengɛ́* or *bisengɛ́la*). [103]

581 In choosing their wives, the men allow themselves to be motivated by the various factors which may influence them in this realm, such as physical or moral attractions. Wealth or social rank almost never play a part in determining the choice. Youth is easily carried away by physical attraction and passionate love. Men who are already more settled as well as the more sensible young men pay more attention to moral qualities, such as general conduct, submissiveness, goodness, gentleness, and especially diligence, careful attention to work, etc. In short, we find here the full range of individual variations that are encountered elsewhere, with the exception of marriages motivated by financial or political interests or by the degree of moral elevation that can be aroused by the Christian religion, such as pure devotion.

584 After a few days of courtship the girl lets her suitor know that if he really loves her he had better settle the matter and that consequently he must obtain her parents' consent. Meanwhile they have [836 already had intimate relations several times; therefore the moment of official negotiations should not be delayed.

586 587 584 Seeking a wife who is already married is in no way different from the procedure we have just described, but a great deal of circumspection must be used so that the husband's suspicions will not be aroused. The exchange of the secret pledge we have mentioned occurs especially in this situation.

Once the divorce is completed, the woman falls in the same category as a single girl since she is free.

Seeking a future wife in an as yet unborn child or one that is very young will be discussed in a special section (Chapter IV, Article I). [105]

589ˣ If the woman has not yet publicly given her consent because --
587 as may happen in the case of remarriage after a divorce -- ikulɛ, ndonga, and walo are all being paid at the same time, she now performs that ceremony. We need not describe it again; it is performed as indicated in Article III, 2. But in this instance the woman hands her father one or two rings, or a ring and a knife.

585ˣ Subsequently, the ndonga conveys the valuables to the woman's
585 parents. He asks the husband: yɛlɛ bakɔmba la walo, "bring the walo valuables." The latter replies: "Here they are; hand them over to my father-in-law." The witness takes a few rings and places them in front of the latter, or rather he touches them and makes a gesture of pushing them toward the woman's parents, and they pull them toward themselves.

As soon as the walo is paid, the bompɛka becomes walɛ or "wife." As has already been said, this word has no connection with walo, or with the root bal, "to marry"; etymologically it is related to analogous terms denoting "wife" and "woman" in other Bantu languages.

Article V. Valuables for the Mother

583ˣ Directly after he has conveyed the walo valuables to the woman's
431 father, the ndonga asks the husband to pay the valuables for her mother: yɛlɛ ntaa la nkando [143] yă nyang'ɛy'ɔ̌na, "bring the goat and the nkando for the child's mother." The following gifts are given:

1) At least one nanny goat and sometimes two or more according to the situation; never a billy-goat.

[301] 2) Two nkando, which are copper spirals worn on the legs. Formerly, two more for the arms were also required, and old women are still sometimes seen wearing them, but they have become much rarer than the spirals worn on the legs. Instead of nkando, the Elingɛ, the Wăngatɛ, the Bakɔala, and the Ionda use the term ntongɛ. (1)

---

1. In Lokonda the term is njekɛ.

585* 431 [501] 3) In the past the mother was also entitled to a bonganmbwé or bongombwé (depending on the dialect) (2) a heavy copper necklace.

2. The Lokonda term is lonkaé.

It was worth 5 bakonga. Nowadays this type of adornment has disappeared almost entirely. It is no longer demanded, for the mother prefers more interesting objects (see the following article).

Furthermore, at the present time substitutions for the goat and the nkando are being asked for in the form of shoes, suits, fabrics, etc.

The mother justifies her demands by recalling the suffering she has endured in bringing her daughter into the world and bringing her up. The valuables she receives belong exclusively to her and her family; they never pass into her husband's clan. She wears the nkando herself, or, if she already has some, she gives them to her sister or her brother, who may have need of them for his wife's bride price. The goats she similarly keeps or gives to her family, depending on her own preferences. Upon her death these valuables are inherited by her relatives, never by her husband or even her own children.

Obviously, the mother's clan has exclusive rights over this payment.

[586] [922] The situation does not change if the mother divorces the girl's father and is married to another man. The "mother's" valuables [144] still belong to her. Even if the separation occurs before her daughter's marriage, she retains her rights to nyang'éy'ána.

If she dies before her daughter's marriage, the valuables to which she would have been entitled are given to the representative of her clan (her father, brother, sister, uncle, etc.)

[588] In case of divorce the husband must be reimbursed for these valuables as for all the rest; but the restitution must be made by the mother's clan, who has received them.

If the husband does not have the valuables for the mother on hand, he gives her a pledge for the payment (wéko; verb, ékya), consisting of one or two knives or bakonga. He could never settle

585 a palaver concerning the bride price without giving at least this
93/ pledge. He will then fulfill this obligation as quickly as possible, because most mothers-in-law are so eager for this payment that if the son-in-law is too slow in giving them satisfaction, they do everything to break up the marriage. And often they succeed. They will win their case before the tribunal, unless they have been too short of patience.

Article VI. Presents, or Befongo

After the bulk of the bride price has been paid to the wife's mother and father, her parents as well as various other members of the family demand various small payments and presents called befongo (sing. bofongo) from the husband. The noun is derived from the verb -fonga which is only used with it. An analogous reciprocal form,
[92] -fongana means "to touch one another, to collide." Was the original meaning of -fonga "to attract to oneself?" Or are the two verbs totally unconnected etymologically? Whatever the case, these terms are also used to denote the remuneration received by judges for settling a dispute. [143]

There are many varieties of befongo; some are used by particular groups and unknown elsewhere. The various relatives claim them without following any predetermined order. But in any case it is necessary to go through the ndonga. Each relative therefore tells him what he wishes in a voice loud enough for everyone present to hear; and it is the ndonga who passes the request on to the husband. "Give this or that bofongo to so-and-so," he will say. Note also that the payment of these befongo is not absolutely essential. Often requests are only partially fulfilled; others may be refused with some excuse, "In-law, I cannot satisfy you; I do not possess such an object." Thus the marriage arrangement is neither hindered nor delayed because everybody cannot be satisfied. The principal befongo for the father (1) and sometimes that of the mother (2) are exceptions.

Let us go into some of the particulars concerning the various befongo thus requested:

1) Ifakâ l'akongá b'is'ewɔ́na, "knife and spears for the girl's father." This consists of a knife and five spears (or more, depending

589 on the husband's wealth). Theoretically, the knife should be an efamba.
● 431 In practice it is sometimes possible to substitute an empɛ̃te in an
[412] attractive wooden sheath amply adorned with "copper-plated nails."
At other times the knife and spears may be replaced by their corre-
sponding value in bakonga. This is considered the most important
[675] boɛ̃ngo, and therefore no one gives up his claim to it. If the son-in-
law cannot present it to his father-in-law immediately, he promises
to do so later, and his father-in-law does not fail to make use of any
opportunity to remind him of his promise. Some men insist on a
wẽko as pledge. Others are satisfied with a piece of loasi or a
bosɔ̃ngɔ́ (splinter or part of the trunk of a palm tree), which the hus-
band gives to the ndonga as a token of acknowledgement of his debt
and as evidence of his willingness to pay it as soon as he has the means.
Some men, however, insist so strongly on the boɛ̃ngo that they will
not accept the walo [146] before they have received it. Thus, one
day recently, Lomanga d'Ifutɔ́ (Bongîli) refused to accept the walo
for his daughter Ekofo, engaged to Bokungɛ́ w'akɛ́yɛ́ (of Bongili,
Ndongɔ́). He insisted that the father of the latter, Bokungɛ́ w'is'ɛ́y'-
Ingilɛ́ first go back to get his boɛ̃ngo. Since he was unable to find
five spears, he substituted for them a second knife and a copper ring;
these were accepted by old Lomanga. Shortly thereafter the same
thing happened to Bokungɛ́ of Bontole (Bongíli), who wanted to pay the
walo for his fiancée Ngelɛ́ of Bofimbo (Bombwanja), the sister of
Bongondɛ́, clerk of the Bombwanja. The woman's family refused to
take the bride price before receiving the ifakɛ́ l'akongɛ́ b'is'ɛ́y'ɔ́na
boɛ̃ngo.

2) Byǐkɔ́ byɛ́ nyang'ɛy'ɔ́na, "porcupines for the mother."
[251] This present consists of two or three fresh or smoked porcupine.
Bɛ̃tomba, baatɛ́ birds, or bekɔ̃sa fish may be substituted for them.
The substitution of hens is not well regarded, because they are within
the realm of the nkomí. If someone does not have the means to satisfy
this requirement, he gives the mother two copper rings saying mɛ́kɛ́
bakonga báfé yɔ́ɔmbe byǐkɔ́ bíkɛ́, "here are two copper rings; go and
buy yourself some porcupines." Fabrics are sometimes substituted
nowadays.

583* 431 One must be careful not to confuse this boengo with byiko byǎ nyang'éy'ǒna, an expression frequently heard. The latter includes any payment to the mother and includes the goat and the nkando as well as the bośngo discussed above and others. The word used in this case is not byikó, singular ikó, "porcupine," but rather byiko, singular wiko, "price, value" and derived from the verb -ika, "to set a price."

3) Lokolé: a brother or a cousin of the wife asks for a longa. He beats the gong (lokolé) in order to make noise and thus force the husband to satisfy him. That is how this bośngo seems to have originated. In practice people simply demand a [147] present. The racket can sometimes last for quite a while. But the elders do not allow the gathering to be disrupted if the husband does not have precisely the gift that would give satisfaction.

4) Bakulé, or botówé: the woman's brothers stick a piece of the trunk of a banana tree (botówé) into the ground, so that young relatives of the husband may shoot arrows (bakulé) at it. These are then removed by young members of the wife's family who, at the present time, are sometimes given money -- 5 francs, for instance.

[289] [721] 5) Wambé: prisoner's rope, that is, a rope to which war prisoners were formerly tied, two by two (a system now imitated for prisoners of the colonial law enforcement agencies and administration). In the past the patriarch, or head of the family, demanded a longa or a knife as indemnity against the possibility that he or members of his family might be imprisoned as a result of a war caused by the woman being married. [177] [622] Nowadays the chiefs set up by the administration and given the rights of family heads by the European authority have also claimed rights to this bośngo whose significance, purpose, and even name have completely changed as a result. It is now called lonyodia w'ónkumji, "the chief's chain." It is clear that this payment has become something which it was not meant to be.

6) Etáka: a heavy wooden fork, fastened to the neck. This is a present claimed by the mother, by one of the father's other wives, or by a wife of the woman's brother, against the possibility that they may have to undergo torture by means of the fork because of the woman whose bride price is being paid. This could happen if she were

515 to leave her husband and he, in revenge, were to lay hands on her
431 mother or on one of the other wives of the clan. (1) [148]

1. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 4, (1), and Chapter VIII, Article II, 1.

7) Lɔmbɛ: a wide shoulder strap made of fur or braided [124] bekombe reeds (Calamus sp.), though valuables of equal worth (one knife or a bonga) may be given. Nowadays this bofɔngo consists of 2 or 3 rings; it goes to the mother in compensation for the wearying burden of carrying and nursing her daughter. (1)

1. Note that when a mother-in-law brings a child into the world, her son-in-law sends her a shoulder strap of liengɛ otterskin or a bonga of equivalent value. He does not repeat this gift at each birth, however.

[159] 8) Betɔtswɛ byâ nkwɛ: leaves of the bonkongɛ bush used to remove, wipe off, and carry away (tɔta) a child's excrement. This bofɔngo consists of a ring and goes to the mother as compensation for her performance of these tasks. In the absence of the mother, it is claimed by another of the father's wives or by a female relative of the mother.

[224] 9) The bojɛngɛ, "hunting net," is demanded in many villages for no special reason. Certain clans, however, scoffed at by others because they have few members, officially ask a man belonging to one of the latter and wishing to marry one of their daughters to bring a net, saying: *"You make fun of us because we have no people; bring us a hunting net to surround and enclose us, since we are not many."* Thus the village of Boyela of the Bakɔala, never gives one of its members in marriage without this bofɔngo.

[illegible] 10) Wɛngɛ w'ɛfɛɛ: a bofɔngo which is not known everywhere but which is customary in certain groups, for example among the Bakɔala. One of the woman's relatives takes a piece of a young thorny trunk of the wɛngɛ tree. Having scraped one end of it, he holds this

583 end in his hand and offers the other to the husband, saying, "Take-it."
431 The husband naturally refuses and extricates himself by means of a knife or a piece of copper. [149]

11) Bofngo w'ëyeo, or "weeds." These are demanded by some clans because the husband's clan scoffs at them on account of the number of weeds and chaff they allow to grow in their village instead of keeping it clean. One or two rings are given.

12) Engumbé: known in some groups, such as the Bakdala, where it is the last one demanded. It is a bofngo of authority. (1)

[62] 1. An engumbé is a temporary hut in a newly settled village. The family patriarchs are the first who must go and live there in order to urge the others to follow and to exorcise all the evil of possible magic spells.

claimed by the patriarchs of the families belonging to the grouping from which the woman has come. Formerly, the amount went as high as 3 to 5 bakonga, depending on the number of families, groups of families, or clans related through marriage that were living in the
[17] same village. Now the payment is made primarily in European currency, and the amount may be 50 francs, for example. This bofngo is later divided among the various kin groupings related to the wife's family.

Various male and female relatives of the woman ask for assorted small objects, such as a small knife (ilfeka), a native razor (longé), a pin for braiding hair (bosfugé), a needle (nsongé), a necklace of blue beads (bisangéla), etc.

Nowadays many other objects are also demanded: clothing, dishes, etc. Thus, one day on the occasion of a single bride-price payment, I heard demands for the following objects:

For the father, a pair of trousers and a jacket, because when the woman was a young child she soiled his clothing without troubling herself about the matter.

For the mother, a bed, because worries about her daughter often kept her from resting.

585* For an aunt, a basin, because she had washed the child.

●431 For a brother, a pair of shoes or slippers, because the girl had worn his shoes during the courtship, etc., etc. [150]

All these befogo are included in the sum total of the bride price. Should the occasion arise, they must be returned with the rest.

In addition to the befogo asked for and received by the woman's relatives, others are demanded by members of the husband's family. As in the case of the former each person voices his claims according to his desires and without any predetermined order but must always do so through the ndongo. The gifts chiefly consist of furs of the [151] oofo otter, the lifika monkey, bonkɔ́ŋɔ and ngoi felines; a joint of game (monkey, antelope, etc.), a mat, a pot, a hunting net, a [151] carrying bag (bokɔ́ndo), a bead necklace, etc. Nowadays these may also be various items introduced by the Europeans: items of clothing, fabrics, saucepans, dishes, etc. This category of befogo is included in the sum total of the nkomi (see the following article). If the nkomi is given immediately, the parties proceed with this payment. Then the ndongo(s) are remunerated as stated above: each party gives him at least 2 rings.

Finally, the woman's father says to the husband: "In any case, be on your way; we will collect the nkomi and bring it to you." Whereupon the husband leaves; if he prefers to wait for his wife he remains, and returns home when the items of the nkomi have been collected.

Article VII. Nkomi

Nkomi is the name for the objects which the wife's family gives to the husband. The term likomo is also sometimes used. The [152] Injɔlɔ say likoma, the Wangata, Bokala, Ioanda, and Bolingo say likomi. All these words are derived from the same verb -koma, "to wrap up, to make a package," (1) for the nkomi valuables are

1. The Bolia say lilonga from the verb -longa, which has the same meaning as -koma.

95 generally packed in baskets or [151] in bongonjo (or betete), which
[41] are baskets woven of palm leaves.

Some ethnologists have introduced the expression douaire, "dowry," (1) to designate the goods given by the woman's family to

> 1. See for example Torday, in Africa, Vol. 2, no. 3, p. 278.

the man's family. Actually, the word dot would be a much better translation, because it corresponds more closely to the nature of these payments. But this would require changing the terminology adopted, and the introduction of another term (such as marriage payment) for what is generally understood by the word dot, whose use is in any case unfortunate. [Translator's note: Hulstaert uses dot, which would literally be translated into English as "dowry," to designate the payments made by the husband and his family to the wife's family. However, I have employed the term "bride price" in accordance with the usage of English-speaking anthropologists.]

Furthermore, the word douaire already has a precise and accepted meaning, so that its use in this context would lead to confusion. That is why I prefer provisionally to use an entirely new term, and to translate nkomf as contre-dot [literally, counter-dowry]. (2)

> 2. This term was suggested to me by Attorney General A. Sohier.

[Translator's note: The term "dowry" has been used to designate this payment in the translation.]

The nkomf consists of hens, ducks (3), salt, mats, pots, gourds

[239]
[171]

> 3. Ducks have been introduced fairly recently; the Nkundó maintain that their ancestors did not have any, and that they got them from the Ekonda. In their classification they place them under the category of chickens.

583x 431 and, if the woman's family is wealthy, a goat and formerly even a slave. Nowadays, objects of European manufacture are also given.

563 To give the impression of being a great lord, an unusually wealthy family head sometimes gave human beings as a dowry. These were preferably Batswɛ or, if possible, dependents (Mpɛmɛ) who only changed masters up to a certain point. Actually it was the father's intention to glorify his daughter by turning them over to her; they had to assist her through various services, and her descendants became their "owners."

Thus Mpumo, one of the ancestors of the Boɛndɛ (of the Bomwanja tribe) had received the slave, Bonkɔtulɔ, as part of the nkɔmɛ from Ikɔlɛ, father of his wife, [152] Lifomi of Mbɔngɔ (Lifɔkɔ, Ekonda). The descendants of this slave comprise the Bonkɔtambɛlɛ and Bamɛna clan [sic], who have settled with the Boɛnjo and the Bongangɔ. (1)

1. See also the example cited in Chapter III, Article V.

583x 431 425 Even real estate can be included in the nkɔmɛ. Thus a fishing territory (such as a stream, creek, pond, fishing holes) or a section of a palm grove may be given (2). Like the gift of human beings,

2. But never land or forests.

such property is given only by a very wealthy family head. If he is not sole owner (and in practice he can be only in the case of fishing territory), he must obtain in advance the consent of the co-owners, whether they be brothers or heads of other families. Since it must be assumed that he is intelligent enough not to give away a piece of property which they themselves need, he always obtains their consent. In fact, anyone who opposed the gift would be considered to have acted maliciously toward the woman, who is also his "daughter," in depriving her of this source of pride.

The objects given as nkɔmɛ are the property of the husband. The greatest part of it he gives to his wife's nkɔlo, that is to the

583ˣ female relative thanks to whom he was able to obtain this wife (see
431 below, Article X). He keeps a small part for himself and, in agree-
435 ment with his wife, uses it according to his needs. When husband and wife are on good terms, he consults her before giving away or selling any of it. And if she wishes to dispose of any of it, she asks his permission. Thus they work the matter out aimiably. But legally it all belongs to the husband. Should he want to use it for gifts or for any payment of his own, his wife can make no claim; she will not win her case before the law. But from a practical point of view, it is much wiser to come to an agreement in advance and thus avoid any annoyance
583ˣ or quarrel.

431 The size of the nkɔmɛ depends on the wealth of the woman's
[556] parents. Not only is a large one a point [152] of honor and esteem;
[593] it is also a means of increasing the stability of the marriage and securing harmony. The bigger the nkɔmɛ the more obliged the husband is to treat his wife well and see that she is content with him, out of fear of having to return the entire fortune if the marriage should ever be broken.

The nkɔmɛ may be very large, even as great or greater than the bride price; in these extreme cases the girl is spoken of as
(192) lifaya-njɔku, for like an elephant (njɔku) she goes to live elsewhere (lifaya) because of all the riches she carries with her. The term njɔkwɔbwɔ is also used; literally, it refers to a kind of mushroom which grows in abundance all over the bosfiɛ tree. (1)

1. The use of these terms is not specifically confined to the situation described above. They are also applied to any stranger who settles in, or simply passes through, the village, bringing many riches -- to the white men, for example.

582 With reference to this subject an old custom should be men-
583ˣ tioned. Because of his love for his daughter and a desire for renown,
431 a father might give his son-in-law a quantity of bakonga, in varying amounts but enough to pay for the acquisition of a wife, hence bride-price valuables, so to speak.

583ˣ Although given by the father-in-law to his son-in-law and therefore
●431 part of the nkɔmɛ, yet these valuables have neither their significance
586 nor their purpose. They are disbursed at the time of the payment of the ikulɛ. This practice was customary only among men who were unusually wealthy and influential, that is, family heads who occupied prominent positions in native society. It was never omitted for a bolɛmbɛ (see Chapter I, Part 2, Article II). The woman's father gave these valuables to his son-in-law, saying: "I am giving you my daughter in marriage. She has always occupied a high position; she is of a very good family. I want her to retain her prominent rank. Therefore here is a bride price; go and get yourself a second wife with these rings, so that my daughter will have her nkita [154] from the very first day. Then come back and pay me the bride price for her."

The woman who was honored by such preferential treatment was called yɛ́ngaende. This word is composed of the roots ɛ́ng, "to acquire by means of a bride price," and ende, "a man (vir)." The name comes from the fact that she herself paid the price for her husband, so to speak, and did so even before he paid the bride price for her.

The Nkundɔ́ have given up this manner of ostentatiously dis-
[118] playing their wealth, so that the custom we have just described now belongs to the past. Nevertheless there are still women who bear the
[551] name Yɛ́ngaende, in memory of some ancestor who had been the object of this honor which put her in a privileged position, a royal position, so to speak.

585ˣ From all the foregoing it will be apparent that marriage payments are not unilateral in Nkundɔ́ law and practice. Rather, there is a mutual handing over of goods. Although the goods given by each party differ clearly from one another, they all have an economic and financial value. Therefore we can speak of a real reciprocity in these payments. And although the husband has to furnish the largest and highest amount, it would be wrong to say that he alone must "pay for his spouse," for though he does actually "pay for his wife," she must to a certain extent "pay for her husband." That is what the

585^{x} 178 probably due to the penetration of the Lombwanja dialect and its rather strong influence, even in relation to other words, on the dialect of the Bongili and Bonkoso, as well as in central Flandria.] Among the Bombwanja, -sɔ́ng and bosɔ́ngo are synonyms of the Lokɔ́tɛ́ -ɛ́ng, jɛ́ngí. For the payment of a slave they use only the word ilengɛ and the expression -lekya ilengɛ, "to give a slave." But the old people loudly protest against this confusion and consider it an error, a mix-up, a corruption of the language.

585^{x} The bosɔ́ngo used to be paid at the same time as the walo or shortly thereafter. Nowadays years may pass between the two payments. If the husband is too slow in meeting his obligation, the wife's family complains. Often when their daughter visits her parents, they prevent her from returning to her husband as a means of coercing him into making the payment. As in the case of the jɛ́ngí, it is up to the husband to bring the payment; the wife's family is not expected to fetch it.

We have said that copper rings may be substituted for the slave. No other objects -- such as knives, for example -- come under consideration. If the rings are to be counted as bosɔ́ngo, they must be explicitly designated as such by the husband or by the ndonga. If the intention is not verbally expressed they will be considered jɛ́ngí, since they are the kind of valuables used for the latter payments.

585^{x} ● 431 The bosɔ́ngo is the final and definitive bride-price payment. This does not mean that the husband does not thereafter have to pay in certain circumstances. On the contrary, financial transactions are terminated only by death. But [161] subsequent payments spring from other obligations which follow the final completion of the marriage agreement though they result from it. Such are, for instance, the belonga (gifts brought when visiting), valuables given at the time of a death, the nkunjí (funeral payment), and assistance to members of the wife's damily (for example, in the settlement of a bride price). Or perhaps the wife's mother comes to help her daughter at childbirth; when she goes back home her son-in-law gives her a farewell present (bolingako), such as 4 belonga. The statement of natives that the jɛ́ngí never ends -- jɛ́ngí ilifolle elakɛ́ ɛ́k'iwɛ́ -- should be interpreted in the light of these practices.

428 587 Two sisters, Osɔ́ka and Bosɔ́kankele of Ikengo, Ntɔ́mbá (Wángatá), were married respectively to Ekɔ́bɛ́ of Likɛ́ala (Besombɔ́, Bombwanja) and Bokungɔ́ of Bombɛ́nga wǎ Ikolɛ́ (Besombɛ́. Nganja married Bolɔ́mbɔ́ of Iɛ́mbo (Bonkoso). When Bolɔ́mbɔ́ became a widow she was inherited by Likɔ́ndɛ́, the first cousin of the deceased on his mother's side, so that the patrimony would not be scattered. She gave Likɔ́ndɛ́ a daughter, Bosukankele, whose bride price he used to get himself a wife, Bombɔ́la (Teresa), daughter of Ilito of Bolɛ́ngɛ́ (Bongíli). At Likɔ́ndɛ́'s death the rights returned to Ntombɛ́ (Joseph) in the person of the widow Bombɔ́la, the nkita of his uterine sister.

587 428 585 If the legitimate heir, or some other close relative of the deceased, wants to marry a widow, he consults the head of the family and then goes to the woman's parents and gives them bekooli (1), which consists of 1 to 3 copper rings, added to the amount of the bride price. This gift shows the suitor's respect for the woman's family. (2) If after a time the woman no longer wants to stay with him, but loves another close relative, the latter also brings his bekooli. This is expected of him even if the woman has not gone home in between, but has gone directly from one man to the other. [191] (191) The bekooli of the first man are then returned.

[601] If the new husband is only distantly related to the deceased, (1)

[1] The plural of the noun derived from the verb koola, "to seek, to take for someone," hence, "objects in order to go and take someone."

[2] In addition to this native interpretation another may be given which is more profound and of a legal nature. This will be done further on (Article IX).

[1] In that case he is called eɔ́to eǎ mɔ́ngɛ́, literally "relative from the summit," as against [illegible], "relative of the base," therefore a close relative.

428
589x
587
against eóto éâ ntsína, "relative of the base," therefore a close relative.

●431 he must not only bring bekooli to the woman's parents but also give a bompángá called nsăsangó or bosangójwá a goat, a dog, or 5 to 10 copper rings, depending on the circumstances) to the heir. This is not part of the bride price, which is a payment to the woman's family. It is a gift intended to assuage the feelings of the heir and to secure or strengthen his good will. It is equivalent to a request for permission to cohabit with this woman and to profit by her work.

428
587 Thus we must distinguish between two types of marriage by inheritance:

1) The new husband and heir belongs to the immediate family of the deceased; he is eóto éâ ntsína -- a son, brother, uncle, nephew, or cousin.

2) The new husband and heir is distantly related; he is eóto éâ nsóngé.

In the first instance the marriage is considered fairly stable and difficult to break, but nevertheless more easily dissolved than a marriage by nkumbó. With how much difficulty it is dissolved depends on the degree of kinship. The reason given by the Nkundó for the greater ease with which such a marriage is broken is that the heir-husband did not himself pay the bride price; he only received the woman from someone else. Thus, if he no longer wants her, he justifies sending her away by saying, "It was not I personally who paid your bride price." For her part, the woman will invoke the same reason, mutatis mutandis. In all other respects the union is like a marriage by nkumbó. Therefore, [192] when the woman leaves her husband the term kófa is used here as in the case of a marriage by nkumbó.

428
587
471 The second type of marriage by inheritance is clearly different from the first. The new husband is not a husband from the legal standpoint; he is only a husband in the improper sense, physically. In spite of the nsăsangó paid by the common-law husband, the legitimate heirs, hence the close kin of the deceased, especially the relative who was entitled to the woman and to whom she was given when the

428 This practice of ndǎlaka likilɔ́ is not without disadvantages.
587 It may be feared that the heir deny that the payments were made and refuse to reimburse the man for them. His refusal is facilitated by the fact that the ndonga involved is the same one who participated in arranging the marriage agreement. Thus, there is a tendency to omit the practice.

Note that the expression ndǎlaka likilɔ́ is not applied only to this situation; it is also used in the obvious sense -- for instance, when the man is simply to make the acquaintance of the woman's
[431] family without presenting any payment (though of course it is in-
[574] conceivable that such a visit would be made without bringing presents), or in the case of a man who wants to be united with a relative of the wife of one of his relatives or friends.

4) Any presents given by the woman's family to the common-
[431] law husband, for instance during a visit or for a service rendered, etc., do not belong to him; by right they go to the heirs. If the latter are kindly disposed toward him, they will allow him the usufruct of a portion of these goods, but he has no right to them strictly speaking.

429 5) If the woman breaks this union the verb used is not -kɔ́fa
586 but -kumbwa, "to be taken in [194] marriage." If she returns to a
587 close relative of the deceased, that is, to one of his bankɔ́lɔ́, the Nkundɔ́ say that "she has returned to her husband," aɔ́lut'ɛ̌ka bɔ̌m'ɔ́kaɛ. For his part, the man who has taken the woman in common-law marriage may repudiate her at any time. He says to her: kendɛ ɛ́ka baɔm'ɔ́kɛ̌, emí ntsíkwɛ̌ngɛ́ki, "go to your husbands; I did not pay your bride price." The valuables he has given as nsǎsangɔ́ will be refunded.

6) Lastly, if the woman dies while living with this man, he has to pay an indemnity (-foma mbɛ́laka), usually a slave or its equivalent, to the legitimate heirs.

428 Thus the second type of marriage by inheritance has none of
587 the characteristics of a legitimate Nkundɔ́ marriage. The husband has only the enjoyment of the woman. Only the heir of the deceased may truly and legally call her his "wife." Usually a woman involved in such a union is called the heir's "thing" (yǒmba). The heir is called her "owner," her "master," and the term "husband" is reserved for the man who cohabits with her.

428 On the other hand, it also happens sometimes, and even quite
587 often, that although the woman loves her "husband" (in the improper
581 sense) she does not want any change. At heart she remains attached to the kin of her deceased husband, through her love for him or because of her affection for his family, who have always treated her well. It is not unusual for the common-law husband to encounter unalterable opposition to a regular marriage. The woman may [198]
[578] even take such offense at the proposal that she will leave the man for a close relative of the deceased.

In this type of situation another sort of development may also occur, although it is quite rare. For example, there is the case of Lowâka, daughter of Bompɔ́kɛ́ of Bontole. After the death of her husband, Botɔ́na of the Basɛ́ka Ilɛ́ka (Lofelɛ́), she was taken in marriage by one of his relatives, Nsenge, who gave the prescribed *besangɔ́jwɛ́* to Imomo of Bofalambɔ́ka, Botɔ́na's *bonankɔ́nɛ́*. After a certain time Imomo, who had had a slight palaver with Nsenge, did not want the situation to continue. He demanded a regular marriage so that he could make use of his rights to Lowâka's bride price. Nsenge agreed and paid 60 *bakonga* to the woman's parents, who reimbursed Imomo. Imomo returned the *besangɔ́jwɛ́* he had received, and thus Lowâka became the true wife of Nsenge.

One can see that the gamut of individual variations comes into play here, depending on the temperament and the feelings of the persons involved. But the most common practice is for the widow to remain attached to the family of the deceased or to remarry in the prescribed fashion.

In the latter case the widow goes to a man who is not related to the deceased, either immediately after mourning or after a period of conjugal life with the heir. The latter is entitled to a reimbursement of the bride price. The new husband must make all the customary payments through the medium of his own *ndonga*, exactly as he would for a first marriage by *nkumbɔ́*. Consequently, this union is not considered a "marriage by inheritance," with which it has nothing in common.

428
587 In any marriage by inheritance -- that is, where no bride
431 price payment is involved -- the husband, whether he be the heir or

428 587 431 simply a relative of the deceased, must give the woman a present called *isangó*, or inheritance gift. The woman either hands this gift over to her family or keeps it for her personal needs. In any case [199] it is not considered a part of the bride price.

Finally, when a widow remarries, either by inheritance or by a new *nkumbó*, her husband must make her a present of one or two rings or knives of equivalent value before having conjugal relations with her. This present is given either on the same day as the *isangó* or on another, depending on the circumstances. It is called *bofngé*, "couch," or, more commonly, *ihondeyantangé* (from *-hondeya*, "to make someone get on," and *ntangé* "bed"). It is a gift of consolation for widowhood. This gift of *ihondeyantangé* is probably what Engels referred to in his study on the Wângata we have already cited, when he spoke of "buying off mourning."

428 587 An examination of marriage by inheritance shows that the widow is free to remarry a man of her choice, whether he be the heir or another relative of the deceased or some stranger. The only exception is a woman who has been willed to someone by the deceased. (1)

> 1. The Nkundó scrupulously observe the stipulations of a will (*boango* or *bowâho*) because they fear the vengeance of the deceased. When a person expresses his last wishes he usually adds the threat, "If you don't carry out my wishes, you will follow me in death."

If the heir subsequently does not fulfill his obligations toward her, she can react the same way as in a marriage by *nkumbó*. As for the special case of the *bonkió*, we will deal with it separately.

Another law may be deduced from the facts observed: as long as no new bride price is paid, the woman continues to belong to the family of the deceased. Only a restitution of the bride price breaks the contract and destroys all its consequences. (2)

> 2. We will come back to these points in Article IX, and in Chapters VIII and IX.

593 586 gravity of the situation. In general, the wife's parents judge impartially, because they value the stability of the marriage. If the husband feels that he has been wronged, he can always appeal to the nkanga, but ordinarily there is no need to do so and the matter is settled in a friendly fashion and in private. If the woman is found to be in the wrong, her parents scold her and take her to task. Provided with some gift (two or three bakonga, for example), they [591] return her to her husband, advising her to behave in a more suitable fashion in the future. Should she resist, her parents will not hesitate to use threats and curses, and these seldom fail to have their effect. Nowadays women have become more emancipated, and it does sometimes happen that such a woman will scorn her parents' decision, especially if she has a lover somewhere beyond the reach of family justice. If it is the husband who is in the wrong, his wife will not go back with him until he has begged her to do so by paying a few copper rings or other valuables, the amount depending on the seriousness of the situation. This act on the husband's part is expressed by the verb bɔnda [271] and the noun bɔndɔ, terms which [576] do not apply specifically to this case only but are used whenever pardon is asked for a serious offense. This payment is not a fine or indemnity; it is more closely equivalent to the apologies and retractions customary among Europeans.

597 591 578 At the present time some women go back to their families for very slight reasons. Freedom and a greater ease of communication, together with a desire for emancipation, which is no longer held back by the rein of ancestral sanctions, are the cause for this state of affairs. They are still held back somewhat by the risk of a rupture of the marriage, a possibility which they generally would rather not see realized, especially if the bride price is quite large.

In the past, if a woman was married a short distance away from her parents, she could always run away to them when there were domestic disputes. Even if the route led through other villages, it [621] was always possible to take a direct path through the forest, for such paths exist everywhere; they go around the villages in between so that, in case of conflict or danger of assassination, a traveler can go his way without being seen. When a woman was married into a

606
607
with reference to the young wife of his junior. (1)

> 1. The second component of this term is used by some Elinga as a synonym of bokiló. It should be related to walé, a term which among the Mbole and the Bakutu denotes a girl who is bolómbé or a woman who has just given birth (the same is true among the Ekonda).

The present practice is to exclude from among the bakiló those persons with whom marriage is permitted. They are more frequently called "husband" or "wife."

The opposite of bokiló is bokanga. The bakanga are members of the family that has received the bride price, while the bakiló are those who have paid it. In common practice the word bokiló is often used in place of bokanga, but never the reverse. Bokiló l'okanga is the expression denoting the whole group.

606
1. Father-in-law and mother-in-law

A husband owes respect, love, and assistance to his parents-in-law. This point is vital to harmony in the home. In this sphere a wife is very intolerant [287] of forgetfulness and even more of ill will. Offensive comments, insults pointed at parents-in-law even in their absence result in serious difficulties. Sometimes a husband expresses his bad humor or anger against his spouse in that way. This kind of behavior never wins approval, unless his in-laws first insulted him. The law of retaliation applies fully in this situation. The Nkundó say: ôswá mbóngó l'ôndambe olóngaka ók'ôndambe. "He who replies to evil comments is in the right, not the one who began." For a fuller discussion of this topic, see above (Article III).

606
577
43
To remain on good terms with his parents-in-law, the husband must visit them from time to time. By the very nature of things, his visits are less frequent than those of his wife. One reason why they cannot be too frequent is that the husband must bring gifts at each visit (belanga). One does not go to one's parents-in-law empty handed.

606 574 583/ The extent of the riches brought depends on circumstances. Some greedy persons hope for large gifts if their daughter's marriage proves stable. Others prefer not to receive too much, lest they be required to give back an equal amount and -- if they are not especially wealthy -- thus find themselves one day in great financial difficulties. For the [585] belonga are added to the sum total of the bride price and must therefore be restored, should the occasion arise.

The parents-in-law do not allow their son-in-law to depart without giving him countergifts as a farewell (belingako). These take the form of hens and ducks, and their value is added to the total amount of nkomi.

Neither son-in-law nor parents-in-law like to see the generosity of the other party exceed their own, except in a few unusual cases. As a matter of fact, this is a very intelligent policy; equality is maintained on both sides, so that there can be no reproaches on the grounds of greed or stinginess (288), and if the marriage should be dissolved, it would be easy to re-establish equilibrium.

A son-in-law is expected to help his father-in-law to an extent which varies with the situation and with his means. He may fell the trees of the forest for him or set up a field, he may build him a house or make a hunting enclosure (lokombe), etc. A good son-in-law never fails to fulfill these obligations, and the father-in-law does not let him leave without having given him some present.

It is very important to a wife that her husband acquit himself conscientiously of these duties of visiting and assisting her parents. His failure to do so would lead to serious palavers and their usual consequences.

The father-in-law, for his part, does not fail to help his son-in-law in his various tasks. When the work is completed, the latter gives him a belingako of a few copper rings, which are included in belonga.

The visits of a woman's parents to their son-in-law are more frequent. It is their way of showing their love for him and their daughter and their interest in the household. The visits can last weeks and months, whether only one or both of the parents come. If they stay too long, they are accepted with less enthusiasm. Gifts (belingako) must always be brought out when the farewells are said.

606 574 586 577 Even if the parents' union has been dissolved and the mother has remarried, she does not cease to visit her daughter and son-in-law. If her new husband seems not to agree to her going, difficulties result. And if he does not change his attitude, his behavior may cause his wife to leave him in order to return to her first husband, the girl's father.

606 574 431 583 Thus, visits are accompanied by an exchange of gifts which are *belongo* if given by the son-in-law, and part of the *nkomi* valuables if given by the father-in-law. Farewell gifts are *belongo* (289) and part of the bride price if given by the son-in-law, part of the *nkomi* if given by the father-in-law.

These same rules apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to various relatives on each side with respect to visits made, services rendered, and presents given on these occasions.

606 One very strict law regarding relations between son-in-law and parents-in-law should be noted: a man is forbidden to see the face of his wife's mother. This prohibition is scrupulously observed by all. He is allowed to see her face only once, at the beginning of the marriage, "to learn to know her so that they can avoid each other." If, for example, they meet while traveling in the forest, they must turn their backs to each other. Usually the woman turns her face toward the edge of the path to let her son-in-law pass. They greet each other by word of mouth, ask for each other's news, but do not shake hands or look at each other. It is funny for us to see a woman visiting her son-in-law. The two place themselves on each side of a partition or in two corners, and they talk in that way, asking for news, carrying on a discussion, etc., without seeing each other. Sometimes mother-in-law and son-in-law find themselves in each other's presence unexpectedly, in the forest or in the fields, without having seen each other approach or having been warned by anyone. They immediately turn their backs on each other; the man excuses himself and quickly disappears, even if to do so he has to plunge into a dense forest full of prickly and tangled creepers.

This law extends also to the husband's very close relatives, such as his younger brothers (who are also "husbands"), and to all

837
[196] 4) To indicate a tendency toward adultery (especially on the part of women) the Nkundó use the verb [illegible] which literally denotes clothing that is too big and that flies in the wind. The noun [illegible] or [illegible] is also used.

The verb used for discovering a case of adultery is [illegible], the noun is [illegible].

Occasional or permanent adultery has always been very common. This fact is undoubtedly due to the relative ease with which it is possible to escape discovery and consequent sanctions. A woman [574] going to visit her family cannot possibly be followed or watched by her husband; the distances make such surveillance difficult and, furthermore, it would have disastrous consequences for the stability of the marriage, since neither the woman nor her family would put up with it. Other partial causes are lasciviousness, polygamy, etc., as we will see later in the text.

2. Gifts

837
431
[641] An adulterous man and woman send each other presents; his consist of meat, arrows, etc., hers of food and various small objects. A woman's gifts to her lover are called bofímo (the noun used with the verb tumba, "to make bars" (1). Very young relatives generally serve as intermediaries. Note that a woman rarely sends her son, for she has reason to fear that the gift would not reach its destination; the boy would give himself a treat with it. She can have more confidence in a daughter.

A man's gift is called by the generic term [illegible], "a gift that is sent, a dispatch." [513]

In isolated cases ([illegible]) a man sends an arrow, some small object, beads, meat, etc. Nowadays money or cloth have been

---

1. Note that the noun and the verb are not etymologically related. Perhaps bofímo might be related to ofima, "to show, to designate." The Ekonda call this gift elika. See Chapter II, Article I.

837 431 substituted for all these items. As a rule the woman demands some remuneration although there are exceptions, which may be frequent or rare, depending on the region and on the nature of the persons involved. They are due to extraordinary passion or to the woman's love for her lover. (1)

1. See Chapter I, Part 1, Article IV.

3. Evidence of adultery

577 684 The strength of the evidence may vary.

1) The strongest evidence is finding the couple in flagrante delicto. No objection will hold up against it, and it constitutes for the application of the severest sanctions. The act must be observed by the husband. The testimony of a third party is never introduced. If another person discovers the adultery and favors the husband, that person will inform the latter so that he can take precautions in order to catch the culprits personally. If it is discovered by the woman's father or other close relative who favors the husband, [64c] he informs the latter and, if possible, calls him to witness the infraction himself. If he does so, the husband must give the indemnity to his father-in-law. This is not a legal obligation but one imposed by good relations and decorum, since the father-in-law has shown good will and affection toward his son-in-law.

2) A wife's admission is almost as important and always decisive. Such a confession mitigates her husband's anger toward her and directs it chiefly toward her accomplice. Therefore most women do not hesitate to denounce their paramours if they feel somewhat cornered. (On the other hand, women never denounce each other.) [314]

3) A third form of evidence can be obtained by surprising the lovers while they are planning a meeting. The husband can accuse them on the spot and try to extract a complete confession from his wife on the subject of the past or the future. If possible he assures himself of the co-operation of witnesses. If he foresees a denial on his wife's part, he lets the occasion pass and looks for a good opportunity to surprise the culprits in the act. Regardless of the

837 age mates, the friendship pact has no connection with the wives of
572 the men involved. If [335] there is a very firm friendship between them, one may lend his wife to the other in some situation or other, but this is a fairly rare occurrence. The Nkundó say that the boseka relationship is for mutual assistance only.

If a case of adultery occurs, the husband has every right to demand an indemnity, but if the occurrence is not repeated, he never goes to extremes, and, because of the friendship, he may ask as little as 2 or 3 rings. If the occurrences are repeated without reciprocity, however, the husband often makes a great to-do; he demands a large indemnity and breaks the friendship pact.

Instead of demanding an indemnity some men give their
●[43] friend a gift (mpólí) asking him to stop the illicit relations. Often this action is but a subterfuge to relax the other's vigilance so that, feeling freer, he will be more easily apprehended.

837
551
Between persons bearing the same name (ndoí, pl. bandoí), (1) there is no free access to wives, nor are persons of opposite sexes ever considered ndoí. Such relations would be considered concubinage or pure and simple adultery.

To summarize, a certain freedom of access to each other's
837 wives exists among age mates, but it is subject to the expressed or tacit consent of the respective husbands. These relations are not considered adulterous. Such freedom does not exist with respect to other categories of persons. But these, nevertheless, had to be mentioned here because the similarity among the kinds of relationship discussed might produce errors in the reader's mind, and because in certain parts of the Congo such persons fall into the same category as Nkundó age mates.

2. Concubinage

595*
Concubinage (called limámbá among the Bokote, ingbé
837 among the Bombwanja as well as the Ekonda) is a union [336] between

---

1. See Chapter I, Part 1, Article III.

595 597 the concubinage come out," (the intransitive of the verb is ôla), or leja (lela) [illegible], "to bring out into daylight, to make public."

The payment for the right of concubinage is called [illegible], although it may also be designated simply by the term [illegible] ([illegible]). To show his agreement the woman's husband sends the partner a dog or a few hens (2, 3, 5, or more, depending on his wealth or his satisfaction). The intermediary is not the woman involved but one of her co-wives. Nor is one of the husband's children ever charged with this office. Thereafter, the two partners [596] regularly give each other gifts. The husband's presents are all called botúmo (the generic term given to all presents from a woman to her lover), while those of the other man are called by the term mpaó, "package, gift sent" -- also a generic term.

Often the woman herself urges her lover to make their concubinage public because she wishes to regularize the situation as she fears its possible consequences. Sometimes she threatens to break off all relations, but usually she nevertheless succumbs to temptation.

As soon as the concubinage is made public in the manner described, that publication itself renders it legitimate. The expression used for the act of contracting such a union is [illegible].

If a woman's official lover catches her in the act of adultery, he does not denounce her to her husband but personally demands an indemnity as if he himself were the legitimate husband. If the culprit refuses to pay him, the lover breaks off relations with the woman and denounces her to her husband. Thus the adulterer is punished in any case, and from his point of view it is preferable to pay the [illegible], who will be satisfied with a smaller indemnity. [338]

Since the woman does not belong to her lover, he has no rights whatsoever to the fruits of her labor or to her children, who are considered her husband's. But the partner has a right to expect that the woman will prepare food for him. The husband, for his part, has the right to his partner's assistance. The social situation is therefore entirely in the husband's favor. The lover's only gain is to have access to a woman whom he could not otherwise have obtained. But the respect due to the legitimate husband prohibits him from freely availing himself of the woman while he is in the village.

595 great ceremonies because they lack the necessary wealth.

596 The bondúa is never nkúndé. But before he makes one of his wives a nkúndé a husband must ask the advice and approval of the bondúa. For that purpose he presents her with a [illegible] (a dog, a goat, some rings), which expresses his recognition of her right and authority and at the same time is intended to secure a favorable response. If the bondúa does not agree, the matter is not followed through. But that situation is only hypothetical. In practice the bondúa yields to her husband's preferences, since he has recognized her rights in the proper fashion.

When a husband wants to create a nkúndé, he first makes all the preparations, brews the sugar-cane beer and collects all the riches that are to be distributed. Then he invites the neighboring villages and calls together his relatives. On the assigned day, the assembly having gathered, the chosen wife puts on her most beautiful garments and adorns herself with her richest ornaments. She seats herself on a magnificent bofonge [348] (a portable couch) (1) in front of the audience. Her husband then announces to those assembled that henceforth this woman is to be his favorite; woe unto the man who has the temerity to seduce her or even show affection toward her -- he will be a dead man (or he will have to pay an enormous indemnity of 25 to 50 bakonga). In the past it often happened that a seducer was killed or reduced to slavery without further ado. When the husband has paid 25 rings or more to the wife's family and gifts have been distributed to the assembled patriarchs, his words are ratified by the assembly, and henceforth the contract between them and the husband is sealed. Dances, song, and drink follow.

The favorite wears no special garb. She wears the same clothing as all the other women and wears furs only for dances.

---

1. See the excellent drawing in Engels, Les Wangata [The Wangata], Revue Congolaise, Vol. 1, no. 4, p. 483, 1910).

595 [illegible] Thus a favorite is in every way the object of her husband's preference. He divides with her all presents he receives, while the other wives are not included in this expression of generosity. But in the matter of sexual relations, apart from his trips, he has obligations to all of them. The most he can do is to add one night to the usual number (see below).

The co-wives adapt fairly well to this preferential system. Nevertheless, there is a good deal of backbiting on account of it. It may also happen that one or another of the wives is jealous to the point of being unable to bear it. [367] The signs of her rancor multiply, and a divorce results in the end.

The *[illegible]* does not have to go into mourning for anyone other than her husband. Even then she does not remove her clothing. But she does not have to abide by mourning regulations either for her parents or her own children.

Like the other wives, the favorite is passed on through inheritance. But she cannot be taken as a *[illegible]* by anyone except an elder brother of the deceased.

595 *[illegible]* is the specific term by which a favorite is designated. Its etymology is unknown to me. The word is used everywhere, although the [illegible] often say *bokilo* (whose etymology is equally obscure). Another less common (older?) term known to the [illegible], Bongili, Wangata, and [illegible] is *bongili* or *bongi* (1). In addition to the term *[illegible]*, already cited, there is also the word *[illegible]*, a generic term meaning "preference, predilection" or, when applied to a child or a slave, "an object one does not want to dispose of." The favorite is also called *[illegible]*, "untouchable," because other men may not have relations with her.

1. The Ekonda call the favorite *bokolo*. The Elanga of [illegible] say *bolif*, a name borne by certain women among the Nkundo between [illegible] and [illegible]. Might this also be an old name?

595 591 less influence than a monogamist or bigamist who is intelligent and fearless. And in the present circumstances one meets monogamists who, because of either their economic situation or their social or political position, enjoy a much greater authority [371] than many polygamists. Intellectual and moral superiority on their part is beginning to make its value felt.

2) Fame and vanity. Because of the very nature of the marriage system, which is intimately bound to -- not to say based on -- financial transactions, the number of wives determines the extent of a man's wealth. And here as everywhere wealth has a fascination; it is considered a mark of superiority. Vanity seizes upon it. And since the possession of wives is the most obvious expression of wealth, the Nkundó see it as a superior means by which to acquire great renown and an illustrious name.

3) A concern over keeping the capital in the family. Personal wealth consists almost entirely of metals (especially copper) and domestic animals. Thus this is the capital involved in the financial transactions accompanying marriage, and in that way it is invested with interest (children, work, influence).

595 574 557 Like all pagan people the Nkundó are essentially covetous and egoistic. They do not like to give but want everything for themselves. Except for persons to whom he is bonded by natural ties or sincere affection, a Nkundó does not help others except through interdependence or in the hope of reciprocity in some form or other. Thus when he possesses an excess of wealth, even if it is considerable and entirely superfluous, he does not yield it. ● [43] The idea would never occur to him to give a few copper rings to an indigent bachelor, for example, if he is not forced to do so because of interdependence in the family. Thus, if there are more girls than boys, the excess bride price will be used by him to augment the number of his own wives. For in order that his daughter not be deprived of her ekila, the bride price received must be used again as a bride price. Note that this reasoning has but a limited validity. It is a fact that the ancient custom [372] was for the father to take all his daughters' bride prices for himself, as we have seen in Chapter IV. He did not become polygamous because of excess [bride prices]; he was polygamous before his sons married.

764 [576] to return to join the procession, or may be able to do so only with difficulty.

The act of carrying a corpse to its native clan is not designated by any specific term. The expression is simply tofka jôkie, "to go and return the corpse."

764 431 In one or more places near the entrance to the village, a barrier (bokiko, lokombé, or lofiaka) made of posts and palms is set up. There the relatives of the deceased, armed, wait for the procession of the husband's relatives, who are also armed, and forbid them to continue their march. Before passing, the latter must make a payment. The valuables given are called by'leo by'kakio or simply bokiko (or lofiaka). The family of the deceased calls to the procession, "Halt! You will not pass here." The latter reply, "We come to bring [436] you the corpse of your child; we want to break down the barrier. Let us pass; here are [574] the gifts." The ndonga hands over a knife, a brass or copper ring, or some equivalent object (for instance, money, nowadays). Thereupon the members of the deceased's clan move away. The bilonambikowé (persons related to both clans) break down the barrier, and the procession passes, headed by the ndonga and the bilonambikowé. The husband follows the coffin.

In the past it was almost always necessary to force a passage 764 578 through the barrier. The wife's family did not want to open and the husband's family did not want to pay, and so they came to blows. The group bearing the corpse tried to break down the barrier, while their adversaries tried to prevent them from doing so. The arms used in that struggle were chiefly pointed sticks which the members of the two camps threw at each other; more rarely, arrows were used. The specific name for this sort of brawl is gigála. Certain clans specialize in this sport. Thus between Bolinko and Lileko, there is a regular battle every time. In such serious cases the barrier is heavily fortified; the posts are thick and hard, and intertwined with thorny creepers (bokilo, loongolé, wangongila, etc.) and thorny shrubs (wlingé, etc.). A quantity [illegible] of venomous biting ants (bafumba, nkkonké, bofembo, etc.) are added. If the brawl becomes serious, the ndonga and the other bilonambikowe intervene and impose peace by requiring the husband's clan to pay.

[764] to which a piece of raffia cloth is tied. When the procession has crossed the last barrier, the official witness goes ahead and places the spear in the roof of the head of the family's hut. Hence the name applied specifically to this spear: *itówamamiá* (from *tówa*, "to pierce," and *mamiá* "roof"). The spear signifies that the widower's family is not coming with evil intentions, but that they are moved by feelings of the greatest friendship -- *wêtsa to tóóyé l'emumba; tofyá ndé ilombola iläkä y'ôna*.

The piece of cloth is a sign of respect for the mother of the deceased, in memory of the pain she suffered in giving birth to her daughter and the care she exercised in her upbringing, and as consolation for the terrible blow that has come to her in the death of her child. She will wear this cloth after the end of mourning. If the mother has died before her daughter, this cloth goes to one of the mother's sisters, aunts, or other relatives, who is in some sense her substitute. It is therefore a payment to the mother's clan.

The spear and the cloth are usually designated by the common name *likongá l'etóo*, "spear and cloth." A knife, particularly an *ingóndó*, can be substituted for the cloth, but the name *etóo* is retained. Nowadays the cloth is no longer given, but a knife which is given the name *etóo* is always substituted for it. (1) Nevertheless,

[286] 1. The reason for this substitution is, first of all, the greater value of the knife and, second, the near impossibility of obtaining raffia cloth (see Introduction).

in memory of [432] the ancient custom, a piece of European cloth is often attached to the end of the spear.

When the corpse has been deposited in the head of the family's hut, the two clans greet each other in the usual fashion. The women continue to weep for some time. The husband's clan
[262] go and sit at a little distance. Then the relatives of the deceased
[431] instruct their wives to collect the presents to give the widower.

764 431 [262] These consist of various foods: manioc, bananas, smoked meat or fish, caterpillars, salt, hens, etc., one or several dogs (bompángá) that are alive (mbwá éâ nkunja, "dog with hair") or their value in specie (2 rings or 1 ring and an equivalent knife, which for this purpose is called mbwá éâ bašimbá or éâ bakongo), as well as a knife for killing and cutting up animals called lofifola. The bósanyi and the bašâla each brings his part. Note that this gift never includes vegetables (bimuáŋá).

769 587 When everything is collected and considered adequate, the ndonga is called, together with the deceased's own sons, so that they can thus give their opinion and later have a good basis for testimony. As remuneration for his services, the ndonga receives a payment (nyongo) of a bolúfoo fish or a bondimbe rat, as well as a bunch of bananas (for which a ring is sometimes substituted). With reference to this subject I should like to recount an interesting part of the negotiations at which I was present one day. The ndonga expressed his dissatisfaction with the fact that he was given only a single bolúfoo. "It is so little," he said, "in comparison with all the trouble I had to take. I had to settle the matter of the bride price; I had to reconcile man and wife when they quarreled; I had to intervene many times; I always had to run between the two clans; for many years I wore myself out without ever having any rest. And for all that trouble I get such small recompense." I was asked my opinion. I could only express approval of the ndonga's view. One of the relatives [423] of the deceased also considered him to be right: "He was always obliged to come and go between the two families; his voice has become hoarse from his endless interventions in palavers and quarrels; he well deserves that another bolúfoo be added." Everyone sided with our opinion, and the ndonga was satisfied.

After receiving his present, the ndonga detaches himself from the group. Together with the other banambátomá and any intelligent strangers who may be present and might be able to give an opinion to settle an incidental argument, he sits down between the two opposing clans, a slight distance from each.

764
584
All the payments must pass through the *ndonga*. He is the one who transmits the desired objects from one group to the other. He intervenes in the disputes that arise in order to settle them and re-establish peace. He explains the various points of view, elucidates some consideration whose significance the other group does not seem to fully comprehend, etc.

As has already been said many times, there can be several *ndonga*. Legally all of them can intervene personally or through their officially recognized representations. Thus, several months ago (1933) at Bonjoko, Bafombe, wife of Ilomo of Bosombé, was present at a *nkanji* discussion. No one paid any attention to her. At one point she threw herself into the discussion by reprimanding the chief *ndonga* and the families involved, asking them on what basis they were excluding her from this affair. Did not her husband have the right to intervene? Was he not also a *ndonga*? Since he had gone fishing in the Juapa, it was impossible for him to come. She could therefore legitimately substitute for him. Then why was she being left out? She was quickly pacified, and the persons involved admitted that she was right and apologized for their forgetfulness and negligence. [578]

764
584
431
The wives of the deceased's clan place the gifts of food at the *ndonga*'s feet. The *bokilad* (the youngest) of the clan goes and explains to him what they are and for whom [434] the gifts are intended. (1) One portion goes to the *bokali* of the deceased, that is, the *baifála* of the husband's clan; another portion goes to the *baome* (the husbands), that is, to the widower and his family; a third part is set aside for kinswomen of the deceased who have come from villages into which they are married in order to be present at the funeral.

764
The clan of the deceased first asks the other clan "for news" (*bosa nsango*). The latter reply that one of their members had

1. In the Nkundó hierarchy it is always the youngest who is charged with the execution of all such small tasks, at the behest of the head of the family.

764 married the daughter of the first clan, and she had lived happily with her husband, performed conjugal services for him, and had begotten children for him. Subsequently she fell ill, as they were informed at the time, and now God has taken her away and they have come to bring the corpse back to them. The wife's clan replies: "That is understood, but before we continue to ask each other for news, do accept the present (lionja) which we offer you." Thereupon the ndonga enumerates all that has been collected and passes it to the widower.

764 431 The foods thus given are a friendly welcoming gift, therefore they are not counted as a payment nor, furthermore, as part of the nkomí. Only the domestic animals are considered such. They can be eaten on the spot or kept alive. Since the prepared food is a present, it must be eaten on the spot. Theoretically, none of it may be taken home. If it is taken home for some reason or other, however, it is still forbidden to allow anyone to eat of it who was not present at the funeral gathering. As for the raw food, the recipients are free to carry it away if some is left over.

764 571 Disputes may arise on the subject of the dog -- such as one I witnessed one day. The presents offered included the equivalent of the value of a dog in rings rather than a living dog. [436] The head of the widower's family demanded a dog in flesh and blood. The reason he gave was that many of his bakimanyi had come to the funeral and, as an expression of his thanks for their condolences, he wanted to give them a dog. As he would not yield, the wife's family had to replace the two rings with the animal demanded.

Then the ndonga explains to the family of the deceased that he has already brought the nsango, the likongá, and the eolo. Nowadays it happens that the spear and the cloth are not given until this time, especially if the families refrain from erecting barriers and fighting. In such cases the payments of passage are made at the same time. If the two settlements are very near each other, the people are even beginning to omit the sending of the nsango; a [illegible] goes and confirms the news of the death, which is already expected and which the lokolé will just have announced.

001 What is one to do if even in such cases it is taught, "One must respect" the native customs?

587 428 [592] The inheriting of wives existed everywhere; it was, in fact, the only wealth left behind by the native. The details of the distribution differed according to district or tribe. Thus, for instance, in some districts it was the eldest son who alone inherited all of the wives of his father. This was in order to preserve the rank and the class of the family. Prestige and power actually depended only on the number of wives that one possessed. In this case, however, this eldest son had, in place of his father, to provide a wife for his younger brothers and the sons of his sisters. As far as impediments [582] to marriage were concerned, generally they strictly observed the impediment of blood relationship; two blood relatives, even in a distant degree, should never enter into marriage, [341] with the exception of the irregularities mentioned above. As for relatives by marriage, these do not exist for them in any degree. There is, nevertheless, one case that somewhat resembles relationship by marriage, namely, the Nkita might never be in the home of a man together with the woman whose Nkita she was. Thus, the son-in-law or the brother-in-law might never take the Nkita of his wife into his home. If, however, the wife had left or died, there was no further impediment.

587 428 [illegible] When, like the inheritance above, the family had returned the bride price and had then married the woman to another man, this second husband also had to give a gift to the one who, according to the law of inheritance, had the right to the wife. This gift was called a bompanga.

587 428 If the wife who was freed by the family had children, only a part of the bride price had to be returned. Sometimes the wife was freed completely through her children. The children then remained with the family of the deceased husband, and they then represented the value of the bride price of their mother. If, however, such a woman was married again by her family, they demanded a second bride price for that.

587 428 [illegible] Sometimes a single woman was the Nkita of several other women. In the inheritance several people then had a right over her, and everyone demanded his share. For instance, a young man

587 428 583 had to acquire a wife with the bride price or with a supplement of the bride price of his sisters. Three of his sisters, for instance, were married, and he needed 3,000 mitako to pay for his intended wife. Now he went with presents to his three brothers-in-law and asked for 1,000 mitako from each of them. The bride price was already paid to the father; the 1,000 mitako that he asks are a supplement of the bride price.

With these 3,000 mitako, our young man pays for his wife. This wife now becomes the Nkita of the three sisters. If this young man dies, his three sisters and his three brothers-in-law all demand their share back from the widow. If she is sold, the price must be divided among the three brothers-in-law. If she remains in the family of her husband, with the uncle or brother, she continues to be the Nkita of her three sisters-in-law.

● 431 583 [542] There also exists a general rule and custom that the family which has received the bride price regularly give gifts to their daughter and son-in-law or sister and brother-in-law. These gifts consisted of goats, dogs (which also have a rather large value among the natives), ducks, etc., but the gifts never consisted of money. These gifts were in turn given by the son-in-law or brother-in-law to the one who had helped him pay the bride price.

For instance, if the young man of whom we just spoke received gifts from the family of his wife, he would then have given these gifts to his three brothers-in-law. These gifts were often so much that the value of them was almost equal to the bride price that the man had paid for his wife. Custom demanded, in such a case, that the man then pay a supplement to the bride price.

In case the bride price had to be given back, the gifts that the family had already given might be subtracted from the bride price. When such disputes are brought before a European, it is difficult for him to settle them, for the value is tremendously exaggerated by the parties. The husband will demand the return of a much larger bride price than he actually gave, while the family on its side will estimate the gifts that they had given as much higher than the actual value or amount.

436 Something about prices, the bride price for wives, and native money value.

Their first original money was as follows.

593 men although their first marriage has not been broken and no new
591 marriage agreement has been concluded.
114 The data given above provides no confirmation in the
[114] Nkundó tribes under study of the statement made by Engels "Les Wangata [The Wangata]," Revue congolaise, 1910, p. 25) that among the Wangata "her husband can exchange her . . . she can make no protest." (1)

1. The Ekonda apply the term liengé only to an exchange of daughters or sisters. They have a specific term: mpéngé. Note, by the way, that certain Nkundó tribes who practice a true wife exchange designate it by the same name: impéngé.

Article VII. Purchase

582 The purchase of women is not practiced by the Nkundó tribes
583 under discussion here nor even by the Bombwanja. The practice is to
589 be found only among the Elingá. What is involved is not a marriage by means of a bride price but a real purchase; that is, a man buys a woman from her husband for a certain sum. He does not go through the woman's parents, as in an ordinary marriage by bride-price payment, but addresses himself directly to the husband.

In general it is the woman who makes the proposal that a man buy her in this manner. Sometimes a man wants to take a woman and [726] first comes to an agreement with her. Before the Europeans arrived such a situation generally led to a war between clans or villages. After an armistice the palaver was settled, and the [115] purchaser paid the husband. Nowadays, since the Nkundó no longer dare to [illegible] fight because of the legal sanctions that inevitably follow, when a woman abandons her husband for another man who wants to buy her, the parties involved bring the palaver before the judges. As the woman wants only her new husband, and as, on the other hand, war and the punishment of women have been abolished, the first husband has no

596 alternative but to yield and settle the amount to be paid. (1)
552
582

> 1. This is the situation that has prevailed up to the present. The native tribunals have been given the power to punish the offenders and they are therefore obliged to decree the punishments designated. In my opinion, if the legitimate husband brings complaint, the court should decide in his favor, not only because the purchase of a woman is involved but also because there is a question of polyandry, since the marriage has not been dissolved.

472 The amount that the purchaser must pay the husband corresponds to the amount of the bride price. But since the valuables do
563 not pass through the hands of the woman's family, the first marriage
583 has not been dissolved. Thus the word used is not *[illegible]* but *[illegible]* (from the verb *[illegible]*, "to buy"), a term applicable to any purchase. The Nkundo also say *[illegible]*, "he makes a purchase from the husband" (literally, "from the payer of the bride price"). Instead of valuables equivalent to the bride price, the purchaser may give the husband a live woman to replace the woman purchased.

It is a common practice for the husband, in that case, to demand a second woman as well, who is a wife or relative of the purchaser, as an *[illegible]* to the first. She does not have to be a real *[illegible]*, that is, a relative of the first woman. She is an *[illegible]* only in a very inaccurate sense. She bears a special name, *[illegible]*, "gatherer of pepper," to indicate her role as a helper serving the woman who has been handed over in payment or acquired by means of the purchase price.

Finally, the purchaser (*[illegible]*) must establish the bonds of alliance between himself and his new parents-in-law. For that purpose he makes a payment of valuables to them in addition to the original bride price. Although in practice [1938] this payment [illegible] constitutes a bride price, it does not bear that name because its legal significance is not the same. The specific name for this particular payment is [illegible], from [illegible], "to add something new" and [illegible], "path." Thus the new husband adds a new alliance. The verb [illegible] or [illegible] is also used under other circumstances: for a new tile or leaf that is added on to a damaged spot on a roof, for a patch on a piece of clothing, or for something that has been newly introduced. The term therefore seems to indicate that what is involved is not a new marriage but rather a modification grafted on to the old one. Furthermore, the term is often used pejoratively. One may thus suppose that this custom is not very ancient, but of course the evidence is not sufficient.

[illegible] It is apparent from the above that the purchase of a woman is a difficult and expensive operation. A kind of second bride price ([illegible]) and a second wife ([illegible]) cost quite a fortune. In the past the purchaser also had to pay indemnities to the families of men killed in combat (he might have had to pay as much as 100 rings, for the price of one "corpse" was 15 to 20 [illegible], the monetary value of a man) (1). One gets the impression that, though for reasons unknown to us the tribes in question permitted the exchange of women in their laws and customs, they did so unwillingly, and that the persons in authority increased the difficulties, so to speak, in order to frighten the amateurs and to reduce the number of cases to an inescapable minimum.

One might wonder why men do not hesitate in the face of such great financial difficulties. Psychologically, it seems entirely plausible that a man who is in love with another's wife and has the necessary wealth would in his passion throw himself into such an adventure. Probably that is how the practice originated. But this likelihood does not explain the existence of a purchase, since the breaking of the first marriage and the commitment to a new one could just as well be

---

1. Five dead were an enormous number in this sort of "war."

●-152 583 carried out by the ordinary means of the payment and restitution of a bride price.

At the present time cases of purchase are becoming increasingly [illegible] rare. This change is probably due to a wider distribution of wealth [illegible] which has produced a second change, namely that the man makes the [illegible] initial proposal rather than the woman, who did so according to the ancient custom.

The woman's invitation is public. The man must reply for the sake of his honor. As in the case of an exchange among the Bofyé, he can only escape mockery by following through. If he did not, he would be considered a coward. He would be treated as a pariah; his wife (wives) would leave him, and he would no longer be included in the company of his fellows or at their meals.

Although strictly speaking the matter is outside the limits of this study, it seems to me that it is not irrelevant to mention, for the sake of comparison, that wife purchase is also practiced among the Ntómbá (Walígané, Ibenga) and the Bolóngó (or Bolíjí) between the Congo and the Boloko. They call it by the same name -- isómba, "purchase," and the man who buys is bosómbi, "purchaser." The woman always invites the man by sending him a piece of the rib of a banana leaf, called a bosengé. She does this publicly; she hands the bosengé to a relative or friend and says to him out loud and in front of everyone, "Take this bosengé to so-and-so for me, so that he will come and buy me."

[illegible] The same custom still exists in certain Ekonda settlements under the jurisdiction of the Bikoro station, such as the Lonyanyanga, Bosengo, Bolángo, Bokonja, etc., but not in the others, which are within the territory of the Kiri (Boli) station. It is called ekósombaka or esómbaka (the root and [222] the meaning are the same as those of bosómbi and isómba). Since these peoples are neighbors of the above-mentioned Ntómbá and of other Ntómbá living near the lake which bears their name (in a distorted form) and since, on the other hand, the rest of the Ekonda do not know this custom, we may assume that it was introduced to them by their neighbors to the north and to the west.

582
583
177
If we examine the data on the geographical distribution of this custom in relation to the ethnic nature of the practicing tribes, we are led to assume that it is not of Nkundó origin. The tribes that do not practice it do not approve of it among their neighbors; rather they hold them in contempt because of it, since for them a purchased woman is a slave. Thus they make fun of them saying, "They sell their women like slaves or goats." Could this be evidence that the Nkundó-Bolingé are not pure Nkundó, or that they have been subjected to foreign influences? Would the same be true of the riverain tribes who practice the purchase of women?

Article VIII. General Conclusions

581 Having analyzed in detail the various forms of marriage and pseudo-marital unions among the Nkundó, we must now make a synthesis.

Certain kinds of unions are considered legitimate marriages by the Nkundó although they differ to some degree from the standard marriage because they are adapted to special circumstances. Among these are a widow's marriage with the heir of the deceased and a marriage by replacement after a divorce. As for ourselves, we can go along with native opinion, for when these unions are concluded in the normal fashion they involve nothing which is contrary to our conception of a valid marriage. (1)

1. This is true of a replacement after divorce only when the dissolution of the previous marriage is legitimate and valid in every respect.

Other types of union, on the other hand, are not considered by the Nkundó [226] to correspond, or only very imperfectly, to their idea of a regular marriage. The union of a widow with a distant relative of the deceased is only a sort of legitimate concubinage. The offer of a wife as security, the exchange or purchase of women, are considered as absolutely inferior forms of union. Therefore it is better to designate these by the term "pseudo-marital unions." For although they are accepted as legitimate by the tribes among

572 among the Basfumu. [Ed., the remainder of the chapter, through page 56, is not translated.]

[56] Chapter 3

The Native's Means of Subsistence

Animal husbandry: chickens, goats, dogs. -- Agriculture: manioc, maize, rice, bananas, peanuts. -- Hunting: weapons, snares, skill, individual method, communal hunting. -- Fishing: general method, dams, basket weirs, traps, harpoons, bows and arrows, cord nets, screens.

231 The peoples of the Congo-Kasai-Lake Leopold II region and of the Lukenie do very little animal husbandry. They possess no large animals. At most one may find a few chickens, rare goats, and some hunting dogs in their villages. The dogs get a share of the game and live as best they can the rest of the time.

No care whatever is given to the goats. They wander freely during the day and graze in the forest or plain. Sometimes they venture into the planted fields, from which the hunting dogs chase them at first sight. At night they return to the village and take shelter where they will. During our stay in the village of Toipolo, [illegible] they even came and disturbed us at night while we were lodged in the hut reserved for strangers.

235 The chickens wander around the village and planted areas during the day and sleep [58] at night in the native's hut, where they have their nest for laying eggs and a place to hatch them.

[illegible] The native does not eat the eggs. He sells them to agents of the state or of commercial concerns, who collect them for hatching. The chicken itself is rarely eaten by the native. Most often it goes to the kitchens of the Europeans. In 1913-14 the average price of a chicken was half a franc, that of an egg, five centimes, and the price of a goat was from five to 15 francs.

M
5
257
[443]

deposit naturally acquires the shape of the pot, which is finally overheated and burns, while the salt block remains intact.

When the salt is finally prepared, the family group returns to the village. The temporary installations are abandoned and may be used by other families who may do with them as they please.

M
5
257
423

The salt is divided into two parts.

One part makes up the family reserves, reckoned according to the needs of each family in the group, clan, or village which undertook the exploitation. The rest is divided equally among all the members who took part in [110] the harvest, except that the chief and the woman who was in charge of the burning receive double shares.

The salt reserved for family needs is used in the preparation of food and remains the inalienable property of the family. The share distributed to the participants in the undertaking becomes their private property .

M
5
257
422
436

Each one of them, man or woman, disposes of his share as he sees fit. Most often the natives use this as trade goods. Among certain tribes, notably the Mosengere, Wadia, Basakata, and Bobaie, the salt blocks are used as currency or as a common trade item whose value is determined by the weight.

M
5
257
435

Before our [Ed., European] penetration into the region and more especially before the introduction of legal tender and its imposition by the administration, salt played a much more important part in the economic life of these primitives.

At the present time, it is used only in local transactions.

M
326

The blacksmith and his family, for example, never participate in the preparation of salt. He exchanges the products of his trade, knives, arrowheads, or spearheads, for the stock of the salt makers. [111]

M
437

It even quite frequently happens that the salt makers sell their surplus as a mere commodity to the highest bidder. They bring it to market, display it for sale, haggle about the price in the same fashion as they do for manioc tubers, smoked fish, smoked meat, or baskets of peanuts.

M
432
532

It is singular and interesting to note that the proceeds from this sale do not entirely go to the woman who owns the salt.

2. The nature of *walo* valuables

583x The *walo* primarily consists of copper and brass rings. Wrought [301] metal objects (*bifeko*), such as spears, knives, or axes are also added. [326] Nowadays a part may be made up of simple brass or iron (steel) bars. [435] Goats may be given in addition; a she-goat is worth 5 to 6 rings (nowadays 10), and a he-goat, 3 to 4 *bakonga* (nowadays 6 to 7). One or more *elɔ́njɛ* bells are greatly prized as gifts.

583x 435 Payment in iron or copper chains (*bengɛ-nyola*), in various kinds of bead necklaces, and in leopard's teeth has almost entirely disappeared. Formerly, certain kinds of beads had great value; the big, round bluish-white ones (*lonyɔ́ngu*, pl. *nnyɔ́ngu*) were worth 1 *konga* each, the big, oblong blackish ones, cylindrical or rectangular in shape, 2 to 3 centimeters in diameter and 5 to 10 centimeters long (called *nkɔ́ngɛ*) were worth one slave or, nowadays, 20 to 25 *bakonga* each.

583x Copper (*konga*) and brass (*kɔ́ngo*) are the most important of all. Thus paying the bride price is often referred to as *ɛ́nga la kɔ́ngo la konga*.

The statement by R.P. Kaptein (in *Congo*, 1922, Vol. 1, pp. [14] 452-543) that original valuables were the *benkata*, the *bingetele*, and the *mitako* is based on an error. [132] The first two types of valuables, also called *bendɔ́ngu* by some tribes, were used exclusively by the Ntɔ́mbɛ of Lake Tumba and the adjacent Ekonda (Bosanga, Balɔ́ngó, Lonyanyanga, etc.). The *mitako*, known in Lonkundo as *nngelo*, [436] singular *longelo*, are not native; this monetary unit was introduced by the Independent State.

The practice of making the payment at least partially in [177] money or in objects of European origin (such as fabrics, blankets, sewing machines, trunks, household utensils, etc.) is gradually being introduced. Before the crisis it was already very popular among "white people."

3. The source of the valuables

A young man obtains the valuables for the bride price in various ways. The most usual way and the one which also conforms best to the Nkundó's familial and social regulations is the use of valuables

579x daughter or ward in marriage without reference to her wishes, money paid for a slave wife," and p. 314, *sóngya*: the same) therefore does not correspond to the sense in which these terms are used by the Nkundó tribes under discussion.

Another term for this payment is *tsinola bonto* (*ilengé*). I know of no other use of the verb *tsinola*.

An expression which brings out the idea of its being a last payment is *kumbola bonto* (*ilengé*). The verb *kumbola* means to strike the last blow in felling a tree. (1) [192]

1. Note that *kumbola* also means "to take in marriage."

Formerly, the payment of a real slave, that is, of a human being, was absolutely obligatory. Nowadays, since slavery has been abolished, the worth of a slave in *bakonga* has been substituted; it consists of 25 rings, or of 15 to 20 if they are especially beautiful. (2) [567] [436]

2. In the past, the price of a slave was from 10 to 15 rings.

To distinguish between these forms of the *bosóngo*, the Nkundó say *bont'ɔ̃w'abwɔ́* (*ilengé y'ãbwɔ́*), "a slave with hair," therefore a human being, or *bont'ɔ̃w'akonga* (*ilengé y'ãkonga*), "slave in copper rings."

583x 563 Batswá, instead of slaves, could be given as *bosóngo*. They were not reduced to slavery, however, but remained in the same position as before, except that they changed masters.

Sometimes a master who wanted to be rid of an incorrigible Botswá gave him away as a real slave in a *bosóngo*; in that case it was as if a slave in the strict sense of the word had been given.

In other instances the master acted with the more or less explicit consent of the Botswá. Those who were thus handed over as a bride-price payment were usually women. [159] Since in matrimonial matters of the Batswá, the Bootó master fulfills the role of "Father," he is entitled to the girls' bride price and has the duty of

583 182 of our peoples. Its pure and simple abolition would upset their established order completely. *First* their mentality has to change, and that end can be accomplished only gradually, since a moral change is involved. And the present state of these peoples is not sufficiently evolved for the abolition of the bride price to be beneficial. Here, if ever, the axiom: *nihil leges sine moribus* is valid.

680 But what might perhaps be done in that direction now is to place a limitation on the amount of the bride price. This measure should be strictly enforced to make sure that it is carried out -- although in practice its enforcement would be very difficult, for at the beginning [180], many interested parties would try to circumvent it. If good results are to be obtained, an efficacious repression of adultery and the frequency of divorce should accompany the limitation on the bride price. It would be a first step towards the ideal. Others could follow according to the extent of the natives' evolution toward a higher level of morality.

Apropos of these considerations we should like to say a few words concerning:

583 177 3. Traffic in bride prices

This term may be taken to mean two different things. It may be used to *refer* to a general increase in the amount of the bride price, which has reached enormous proportions since the European penetration of the area. Or it may refer to the increase in the bride price of a single woman for successive marriages, from which her family profits.

The first meaning of the term refers to a fact, namely that the amount of the bride price has increased considerably. The reason for this development is the increase in material wealth resulting from colonization. Riches are more easily acquired. But we should not exclude the role of the greed of many parents, which has also increased. It is the most important and can reach scandalous proportions in areas where the bride price is paid in European goods (money, fabrics, appliances, utensils); in such regions, as for
177, example among the riverain people of the Lower Congo, it goes up
583 to and easily exceeds 2,000 francs. Think of what this amount
445 represents, especially in times of economic depression. (1)
●435

1. For the sake of comparison, here are some average figures for 1934:

591
177
[562]
[487]

Wages	. . . . fr.	20,00 to 25,00
Copal, per kilogram	. . .	0,50 to 0,70
Palmnuts	. . . .	0,10 to 0,20
Palm nuts	. . . .	0,05 to 0,10

Inevitably the action of one man leads another to follow suit for -- need I repeat? -- everything is interdependent.

Another reason may be, and sometimes is, involved. It is the desire [181] of a husband to bind a woman more securely to him by paying a lot for her. This is certainly a praiseworthy feeling, especially considering the women's readiness to resort to divorce. Its practice, however, is full of dangers. If it is limited to an isolated case, that is, to a single monogamist who gives his entire fortune for his only wife, the danger is minimal. Such is the case of one of our catechists who paid an enormous amount, without its having the slightest repercussion on his region. But the danger is very great if a man does this to establish a harem, especially if for that purpose he entices the wives of others. Thus, for instance, a man to whom the administration gave great political powers caused a fantastic increase in the general bride price among the Ekonda of the north. (1)

1. One factor which helped increase the bride price among the Wangata and other tribes in the vicinity of Coquilhatville has been described by Father Kaptein in Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 544. Since his study is written in Dutch, I think it would be useful if I translated the whole text here:

"When the first Europeans arrived at Leopoldville and Brazzaville, fabrics and other European articles soon made their appearance in Coquilhatville. The chiefs Yoma of Boyeka, Ilnka of Boyera (Boyela), Yamba of Eala; Nkake of Bokele, etc., went up the Tshuapa and Ikelemba rivers and, by means of these goods, bought slaves, women, and ivory.

326 The native smith works not only with iron but also with copper which he melts down in the same manner from copper sticks (*longele-mitako*) and old, worn copper rings.

[439] The copper sticks, that nowadays sell at 20 for a franc, come from
[325] Europe; copper ore is unknown here.

The copper objects made by the smith are as follows.

326 *Bekongo*: all that is of copper

301
1. *Bongombwa*: necklace, often weighing ten kilograms or more; value, 1,000 *mitako*.
2. *Lokolo*: leg ring, weighing four to six kilograms and more; value, 200 to 500 *mitako*.
3. *Bekongo*: arm ring, not heavy.
4. *Ingwese*: arm ring, not heavy.
5. *Bongosale*: leg ring that rattles when the wearer walks.
6. *Bosashaso*: leg ring.
7. *Limpele*: great leg rings in spiral form, twisted out of thick copper wire, which cover the whole of the lower leg. They bear much resemblance to the springs in a mattress. Among the Negroes these have a value of 500 *mitako*.

8. *Bompelenge*: resembling a small *limpele*, these were formerly worn on the arms by old people, but they are now out of fashion and no longer made.

326 In the whole district there is only one smith, a certain Ebambo in
557 the village Lilongi (Bosombora), who knows how to make copper bells.

This Black is a celebrity to every Mongo Negro.

According to the Negroes, there is a smith, a certain Bokedwa from the vicinity of the Ikelemba River, who knew how to put a new rifle together from the parts of old broken ones and did so successfully. According to the Negroes, the government agent, however, took the rifle away from him, but in my opinion, and in that of others, this black rifle manufacturer belongs in the realm of fable, the more so as a Negro is not at all afraid of a lie.

[illegible] the owner, and everyone who has helped gets his share according to [illegible] the amount of work he has done. [98] Frequently a big sugar-cane [illegible] beer spree is started, where disgusting scenes often take place until finally the drunken men are taken home by their wives. In civilized Europe it is sometimes not much better.

[illegible] Boats are made just large enough for two men, as well as others sufficient for a hundred or even a hundred and fifty men. /The big war canoes of the great chief Evoloko of Waka and of the former chief of Bandaka, a certain Iseempolo, are known throughout the region. The war canoe of the latter was said to hold a hundred and fifty men, and the edge of this canoe to reach up to the shoulders of a fairly tall Negro. The ordinary canoe in which Whites travel is, as a rule, sufficiently large for twenty to thirty oarsmen.

[illegible] The prices of canoes vary, according to size and strength, from 200 to 10,000 _mikako_.

The _Lokole_

203 The _lokole_ plays a very large part in the life of the Negro. Without the _lokole_, the life of the Negro would be inconceivable.

The _lokole_ can be best described as the public telephone with which the Negro makes his thoughts known publicly from village to village.

The _lokole_ is to the Negro what the trumpet signal is to the soldier.

The _lokole_ calls the men to meetings, to war, and to the hunt; the _lokole_ calls all the people, great and small, to the dance. During the dance it is the loyal accompanist until deep in the night; its monotonous sound brings the enthusiasm of the dancers almost to the point of frenzy.

The Negro telephones his friends at great distances and explains what he wants. If two Negroes from the same village or from different villages have a quarrel, they abuse each other over the _lokole_, and the whole world is kept fully up-to-date on the details of the dispute. Each one tries to blacken the reputation of the other in the eyes of the other villagers. If someone dies in the village, it is proclaimed everywhere the whole night through, by means of the _lokole_, that

352
323 [103] Occasionally one sees a native stool, made as described above, but with a kind of back rest chopped out of one piece.

354
(7) The Negro who wishes to move with the times makes for his house a chair out of bamboo in the European style: some sticks stuck in the ground, a mat of split bamboo laid over them, and the gentleman can spend his days in dolce far niente [pleasant idleness].

352
353 A table made in the same way (otherwise unknown to the Negro) completes the furnishing of his hut.

One does not need to be an expert, either, in order to be able to make a Negro bed. Some straight sticks are chopped out of the mombambo (umbrella tree). These are placed lengthwise and then across, on top of each other, trimmed a bit at the edges so that the whole thing fits more or less, and it is then bound together with some split lianas. In this way the Negro has made a bed; this favorite piece of furniture is finished for a sale price of 5 to 10 mitako.

The making of beds could be classed among the Mongo trades. I once saw, in the interior, ten of these beds, large and small spread out along the side of the road for sale.

I was assured that the owner of the beds was the very best bedmaker of the village. Of course, I raised my hat to such an important personage.

The ekoko, the bed stool, is also indispensable. These ekoko take the place of our pillows and are made of one piece, formed to the shape of the head. It is a somewhat hard pillow, but the Negro head is hard and can put up with it; the fellow sleeps without having to be rocked.

322
252 To prepare his food he needs some mortars and pestles, and these are made of wood. He uses hardwood for these utensils so that the mortars do not wear away from the constant pounding.

323
534 In addition, the Negro makes his oars, his bow and arrows for the hunt, and the lokombi. The lokombi is a flat, oblong, hollowed block of wood over which some pegs are stretched [sic]. He plucks these with his fingers, thus producing a monotonous sound. This so-called musical instrument is the constant companion of the young man and accompanies him on his long treks through the Evenaar forest and on his visits to friends and acquaintances.

Rope-making

283 The Mongo rope-maker (one can hardly call him a professional rope-maker) goes to the forest, fetches fibers from a certain kind of palm-tree, scrapes them nicely with his knife, and puts them in the sun to dry.

Whole coils of rope are made in this way. Native rope, finished in this manner, is of a good, strong quality. Nets for the hunt and also for fishing are made of it. As in the case of weaving, it is something done by the men only.

IV. BASKET AND MAT WEAVING

285 [illegible] The weaving of baskets and mats is chiefly the work of the women, especially the fine braidwork.

The men make only the large, roughly finished baskets needed for the transport of their copal. The braiding of mats is done only by the women.

285 [illegible] From the forest they fetch the twigs of the Bolongoto tree, scrape them nicely or dry them in the sun, and, sitting down, braid their baskets and mats.

They make different kinds of baskets, but the raw materials necessary for braiding are the bokombe or likombe of the Bolongoto tree.

285 One or two women together braid the mats on the flat ground. The names of the mats are as follows.

[illegible] 1. Efonsolo, the roughly finished mat (value, five mitakos).

2. likongolo, the finely braided mat (value, half a franc).

3. Itundo or lofolo, the little mat with which the dirt from the road and the ashes from the fire are carried away.

4. Ilefa, the little mat used to fan the fire.

A. Th. Gutersohn,
Priest of St. Joseph's Congregation.
(Mill-Hill).

434 1. Bonkata: this was thin iron or copper wire rolled into small rings; the thickness of the wire was about 3 millimeters; the length, 20 to 25 centimeters.

2. Bingenele: iron or copper bars about 8 millimeters thick and 15 centimeters long; these are still in use in Bikoro.

436 531 3. Bekenn: copper wire; thickness about 7 or 8 millimeters, and 1 meter or 1.50 meters long, spiral shaped; the women wore these coiled around their legs as copper leggings.

[142] 4. Bokongo: copper rings which served as arm bands and foot bands and also as collars. The size differed for small or large persons; the weight is from one half kilo to 5 kilos.

436 5. Mitako: copper wire about 4 millimeters thick and 25 centimeters long, usually bent like a hairpin. The mitako served as a uniform currency, from which the other values and prices were reckoned, like the franc with us. The value of the mitako was formerly reckoned at five centimes.

573 436 Formerly the bride price, which was paid for a wife in almost all of Equatorial Africa, was from 5 to 20 bokongo. (The value of the bokongo differed greatly according to the weight. The average value, however, is estimated at 2.50 francs.) This payment was further supplemented with slaves or wives. This manner of payment and the bride price still exist in the districts where the natives have not yet, or practically not, come in contact with Europeans. Also, [863] it was sometimes paid with only slaves or women. The price for one female slave was relatively much less than for another woman.

178 573 Through the occupation of the Congo by Europeans, the family life of the natives has necessarily undergone great changes, and their customs and habits as well.

In the first place the natives have found themselves deprived of their wives by the sentinels of the Independent Congo State. [861] These black sentinels, appointed in the villages by the State to supervise the reaping of caoutchouc, assumed an unlimited power. They took as many wives of the natives as they chose and did not pay for a single one.

Next many black soldiers, servant boys, and workmen of the Europeans also took wives everywhere in the beginning, without bothering about the native customs, that is, without paying for those wives; and this often happened under the protective power of their Whites.

177 583 We can add to that also a large number of black women who become the famous "housekeepers" of the Europeans. Although payment for these women was usually given to their owners, they were still withdrawn from the family life and the native customs. Finally, the Christian women, who now live in Christian marriage, must also be mentioned.

In addition, the price of wives and the bride price have [584] undergone great changes, primarily in those districts where the natives came into more immediate contact with Europeans. Before the arrival of the Europeans, their main medium of payment was the woman herself; a woman was paid for with a woman. Now it is forbidden to use women as currency. Therefore the natives have raised the price in the payment of *bokongo* and *mitako*.

177 583 435 In some districts close to the European centers, the natives have brought the price for wives and the bride price to a height never before known. For one wife they ask several *nkoti*.

A *nkoti* is 10,000 *mitako*. Such a sum is much too high in relation to their means. In a village there are, for instance, 50 women; for one woman, 40,000 to 50,000 *mitako* are asked, while at present in the whole village together the sum of 50,000 *mitako* is no more to be found. Therefore to oblige someone to pay two or three *nkoti* is usually to make it impossible for him to pay, or rather to make it necessary for him to pay with women, which is nothing else than encouraging woman trade, which then occurs.

802 177 A remark should also be made here about the nomenclature of the numerals. *Nkoti* is not a word of the Equatorial peoples; it was brought in from elsewhere with the Europeans. Their amounts were as follows:

10 was *jum* or *bonkama*;

100 was *nkama*; and with the arrival of the Whites and foreign population came

1,000 *nkoti*.

The present numerical value is: 10, *jum*; 100, *bonkama*; 1,000, *nkama*; and 10,000, *nkoti*. Some very old Negroes, however, will say *bonkama* for 10.

[583] This is the probable origin of the great rise in price of wives, especially in the area of Coquilhatville.

178
439
583 When the first Europeans arrived at Leopoldville and Brazzaville, it was not long before European materials and other articles also came to Coquilhatville to the hands of the great village chiefs who carried on trade on the rivers, primarily in slaves and ivory. The village chiefs, Yoma from the village of Boyeka, Iloko of Boyera, Tomba of [563] Eala, Mboko of Bokele, etc., carried these European articles up the Tshuapa and Ikelemba rivers, and they bought slaves and wives with them.

Returning home again, they bought wives from their own district and paid for them with the slaves and women whom they themselves had bought cheaply with the European articles. For one woman of their district they paid three or four women. The arrival

803 of the Whites and foreign Blacks acquainted them with the number *nkesi* which, however, in their definition was only 1,000 and which they formerly called 10 *nkama* or 10 times 100.

178
583 It was not long before the Europeans had to concern themselves with hearing disputes over the wives. In the Black land such a thing is unavoidable. Whenever the Blacks came to the Whites with their disputes, they dared not or would not say, "I paid for this woman with three women, but they said, "I paid for this woman with three *nkesi*," that is, 3 times 1,000 *mitako*. Meanwhile, the *nkama* and *nkesi* acquired their value of 1,000 and 10,000. The statement, however, that a woman was paid for with *nkesi* was retained, through the error of the Whites or through the greed of the polygynists or both. Indeed, later some women were paid for with *nkesi*, namely, when the prevalent currency in the Congo was the *mitako*. It was also no wonder, for the polygynists had a monopoly on the wives, and it was to their advantage to raise the price.

Therefore, if the native of Coquilhatville says now that his father or his uncle paid for that woman with three or four *nkesi*, this generally means that the wife was paid for with three or four women. The price of the women in Wangata, near Coquilhatville, was formerly no higher than in the other areas. Many women were paid for with only five *bakongo*, for instance, in Bokala, near Bamania, a village which belonged to the village chief Yoma of Boyeka.

178
583
435 It should also be noted that the *nkesi* which have been paid in recent years in Wangata have been paid not in *mitako* or in

178 583 635 currency, but in articles on which the natives fix a conventional price, usually much higher than the actual value. Thus, for instance, a potoki, or piston rifle, was always reckoned at 3,000 mitako; it did not matter that it was only worth 1,500. There are, [566] therefore, only very few women who are paid for with [illegible] in real currency or mitako.

691 583 178 The tragic result of this exaggerated rise in prices is that the mutual debts and difficulties among the natives have been increased, so that they are almost impossible to solve. In the attempt to settle a dispute, five other disputes come into it, all equally complicated, for the simple reason that the money, the mitako, to be paid does not exist, and it is forbidden to pay with women. To settle a dispute, several months are sometimes necessary, or a whole year. Other disputes never end, but pass on from father to son and are brought by each one in turn before each new District Administrator. In the districts where the bride price has not been raised, the difficulties and disputes are not nearly as numerous and are easy to solve. In the districts where the purchase price and the bride price of the women have become excessively high, the natives themselves admit that their disputes could formerly be solved easily, but that this is at present almost impossible.

It is unnecessary to say that this situation is harmful to the task of civilizing [the country] and to the mutual good relations of the natives. The natives are constantly coming to the District Administrator of the area to lay before him their disputes over women who have not been paid for. These disputes take up a great deal of the costly time of the administrator. He must hear and settle these usually very complicated disputes, for often the general peace of a village or district depends on it.

Also the natives themselves spend whole days and weeks doing nothing besides holding meetings to discuss the unpayable debts of bride price and the purchase price of wives, simply because the prices are excessive. For lack of currency, they pay each other with each other's debts, which usually complicates the business even more.

To improve this condition, the price of women and the bride price should be lowered, greatly lowered. We have seen that this was possible and practical when once a District Administrator who knew the native customs very well in the area of Coquilhatville really began to do it.

624 and that he may have no more than a month or perhaps a year in which to live and
will surely die speedily.

The special objects attaching to the office of *nkumu*, among these the hat, [illegible],
and stool, [illegible], are at the same time subject to similar magical acts to determine
whether they may be produced for the new *nkumu's* use. They are not present,
being in the possession of the *ankolo* which will appoint him, but are mentioned
by name. Apart from the [illegible], no further ceremony is required to identify these
objects with their future owner.

[796] The songs ended, the *Nkumu Akolo* smears black [illegible] all over his body again,
624 before the elders begin to determine which of his wives is to be known as *Nkana*,
787 the one who will be closest to her husband throughout his days. For this, magic
formulae (*[illegible]*, sing. *[illegible]*) are used. All the wives sit round in a circle and the
nkanga places some irritant such as ground pepper in the eyes of all the women. The
wife whose eyes stream most and whose discomfort is also accompanied by a violent
shaking of the body is known to be *Nkana*. Here again, lying is believed to be out
[827] of the question, for the shaking of the body is something that is supposed to be impossible of simulation, the real being easily distinguished by all from the false. *Nkana*
is now stripped of all clothing and her body smeared by the *nkanga* with yellow clay
on one side, and with white on the other. A belt of leaves is put round her waist
624 and a small bit of cloth between the legs with each end attached to the belt. Near by
788 a gourd with "medicine" in it has been standing ready for the next step in the
ceremonies, and this is now smeared with white clay, a parrot's feather stuck in
the neck, and handed to *Nkana*, who receives it in one hand. Into the other hand
is put a section of plantain stalk, into one end of which has been stuck a parrot's
feather. A third feather is placed in her mouth so that she cannot speak, greet anyone, or eat. She is now tied with a cord which is held by one of the young men
attending *Nkumu Akolo*. At this point of the procedure the *nkanga* states his price
[792] for his work, which will be in the neighbourhood of one hundred brass rods, worth
458 to-day about fifty francs, but formerly double that amount. The future *nkumu*,
accompanied as before, leaves for the village of the *ankolo*. *Nkana* starts off at a
tremendous pace, for she is now imbued with a sort of frenzied strength, and for
this reason has been tied up and put in charge of a strong young man, otherwise she
would be off so fast that no one could catch her, and would go into the forest, where
she would live for days unseen.

624 In the village of the *ankolo* the party all sit in an *elanga* belonging to one of the
elders. This is the place where the Tumba men really live—their houses are just
[343] sleeping and cooking establishments, but the *elanga*, having a roof for shade and no
walls, is the place where the men congregate and spend their leisure time. It is also
342 the site of the village smithy, which takes up one end. Here, then, *Nkumu Akolo* and
his party sit for a day and a night, and neither he nor *Nkana* may eat food or drink
[861] wine during this period. Games are played by the *ankolo*—mock battles, dances, and
[571] songs chiefly of battle, and before the first streaks of dawn appear the group in the
elanga begins to march up and down the village singing.

At dawn the whole party, accompanied by a large crowd, make their way to a place
in the bush where there is an elevation of some sort. Here *Nkumu Akolo* climbs up
and takes his stand, accompanied by *Nkana*. Now the *ankolo* choose the *[illegible]*

Dengese FO16

sides of this square and held in place by a binding of twisted raffia fibers. The sides are then plaited by the simplest method, that is, with the horizontal band weaving in and out of the vertical thongs. As all of these molds always have approximately the same height and diameter, the ngula cones are both similar in shape and quite constant in weight. The natives use them a great deal as trade goods. In some regions the ngula cone has become a veritable currency, with a standard value from one tribe to another. [170] A market is organized regularly when steamers call at Mushie, and there the people of the interior exchange the products of their industries for the imported objects brought by the Blacks who work for the Whites. Ngula cones are among the principal items of trade and bring a very high price. In the Oshwe region, the old chief Kua Kua was a great ngula trader. He came by regularly with four or five of his wives, bringing various products from the region between the Kasai and the Lukenie to exchange for the ngula made in the Lokoro region.

Throughout the central Congo regions, the ngula used for trade has the shape of an elongated truncated cone. Among the Basongo-Meno and farther east, on the other hand, ngula most often is shaped in a ball. The native of these regions often uses it to decorate his pottery and wooden objects and to dye the fibers of cloth used for decoration. He keeps it in cosmetic boxes carved from tukula wood and usually decorated with very artistic designs. He also uses it to color his hair. [Ed., a passage from the middle of page 170 to the last paragraph, page 171, is omitted.]

[171] Aside from ngula, the native sometimes smears his body with a type of white clay quite frequently found in the river beds. [172] The native calls it mpembe. Its use is far from being as widespread as that of ngula, and we believe that the native associates it with magic power rather than ornamentation. Mpembe is used chiefly by the peoples of the Congo-Kasai, Lake Leopold II, and Lukenie regions, up to the region of the [illegible].

We never saw a native smear his whole body with it. The few women in mourning that we saw were covered with a grayish-yellow mud and not with mpembe. We believe, moreover, that the use of mpembe is reserved to the chief, his wives, and perhaps

2. The nature of *walo* valuables

585 [801] [526] [560] The *walo* primarily consists of copper and brass rings. Wrought metal objects (*bilóko*), such as spears, knives, or axes are also added. Nowadays a part may be made up of simple brass or iron (steel) bars. Goats may be given in addition; a she-goat is worth 5 to 6 rings (nowadays 10), and a he-goat, 3 to 4 *bakonga* (nowadays 6 to 7). One or more *[illegible]* bells are greatly prized as gifts.

437 435 Payment in iron or copper chains (*[illegible]*), in various kinds of bead necklaces, and in leopard's teeth has almost entirely disappeared. Formerly, certain kinds of beads had great value; the big, round bluish-white ones (*lomoñgo*, pl. *nsoñgo*) were worth 1 *bonga* each, the big, oblong blackish ones, cylindrical or rectangular in shape, 2 to 3 centimeters in diameter and 8 to 10 centimeters long (called *nkóngó*) were worth one slave or, nowadays, 20 to 25 *bakonga* each.

437 Copper (*bonga*) and brass (*bôñgo*) are the most important of all. Thus paying the bride price is often referred to as *fiya la bôñgo la bonga*.

[18] The statement by R.P. Kaptein (in *Congo*, 1922, Vol. 1, pp. 402-043) that original valuables were the *bonkata*, the *bingotole*, and the *mitako* is based on an error. [130] The first two types of valuables, also called *bendôngo* by some tribes, were used exclusively by the Ntómbá of Lake Tumba and the adjacent Ekonda (Bonanga, Bolingó, Lonyanyanga, etc.). The *mitako*, known in Lonkundo as *ngele*,

● [illegible] singular *longele*, are not native; this monetary unit was introduced by the Independent State.

[77] The practice of making the payment at least partially in money or in objects of European origin (such as fabrics, blankets, sewing machines, trunks, household utensils, etc.) is gradually being introduced. Before the crisis it was already very popular among "white people."

3. The source of the valuables

A young man obtains the valuables for the bride price in various ways. The most usual way and the one which also conforms best to the Nkundó's familial and social regulations in the use of valuables

4. The amount of the *walo*

583 Formerly the amount of the *walo* averaged 20 to 30 *bakonga*, or their equivalent. The value of any object included in the bride [436] price could be calculated in copper, so that the *konga* was, as to speak, the monetary unit of the Nkundó.

At the present time in the districts near Flandria, the minimum is from 55 to 60 rings. Among the Bofiji and the Injólo the rings [illegible] are noticeably bigger and their weight in copper or brass is greater; there the minimum can be 30 rings. Elsewhere the figure is a good deal higher.

The price of the *walo* generally exceeds the minimum, which is found rather rarely. The average is about 60 to 80 rings. The number of 200 is reached only in extremely rare cases and it is exceeded even less frequently (see cases given below).

Differences in the amount of the *walo* are due primarily to the relative wealth of the contracting parties, the husband's valuation of his wife, the greed of the latter's parents, and the size of the bride price demanded for the woman they want to obtain with their daughter's (sister's) bride price. The cases of women who have left their previous husbands also must not be forgotten, for the new bride price must serve to reimburse him.

The amount of the *walo* may also be increased to satisfy the [556] vanity of the woman, who wants to appear superior to her companions, or of the husband, who wants to be recognized as very wealthy. (1)

> 1. The man who pays a great deal for his wife is given the honorific epithet *esfikobwo*, "wells and mushrooms." All can find as much water as they want at wells, and there the mushrooms multiply. Thus many can benefit from the riches brought by the son-in-law.

[578] It is not unusual to hear of a woman boasting in the course of a dispute: "I am not a slave; my husband paid so-and-so much for me. [138] But you -- your husband doesn't love you, or else he is poor, for he paid only so much."

463 Division of labor is unknown, and each person works entirely on his own, without the help of a middleman. There are no laborers
[17] and certainly no artisans unless there happens to be some artisan or other who learned his trade under the government or at one or other of the Mission posts and has returned to his village after having completed his contract.

As a rule, such people do not find sufficient work in their own villages, and, as they are usually in possession of a few boxes, clothes, and pots and pans which they have acquired with the savings of their monthly salary, they play the grand gentleman in their village until their goods and chattels have been used up and worn out.

"Njolémwa bosala," he says, "I am tired of work." "Njowa l'ompele," "I am dying of the heavy, difficult work."

Several of them then return to one or the other of the centers of the White settlers and again offer themselves as craftsmen.

554 A good craftsman has a high reputation among the natives, and his social position is even a very good one for a Negro. He is able regularly to supply food for his wife and children and also to get himself clothes.

326 Although most Negroes work individually, this is not true of the smith who has to have helpers in order to do his job.

465 Since the Mongo Negro knows nothing of wages, his helpers get part of the income, consisting of mitako (a kind of metal currency)
436 or some part of the work that has been done, either a knife or a lance, or a foot or arm ring.

1. THE SMITH'S TRADE.

326 Of the various industrial trades, that of the smith is certainly the
554 first in rank. The smith is one of the leading people [94] in the village and one of the inevitable persons to have a decisive voice in village affairs whether in settling differences or in meetings.

In fact, the smith is the only one of the Mongo Negroes who works regularly and does not rest on his oars. From what he earns he is able to buy quite a number of wives, and he is regarded as one of the village heads whose wishes must be consulted.

573 586 [591] consists of a beautifully fashioned native knife, or a lance, or mitako [copper wire used as currency]. In some areas, it was the polygynist who attended the mother at the birth of the daughter. He had the wood gathered, water brought, and food prepared. If, then, the expected child was a boy, the security was usually returned, and the contract declared null and void. If, however, the one who had given the security was a village chief or a man of importance, then the father of the child tried to give him another daughter. The father had, for instance, at an earlier time given a daughter to another man of much less importance. In the above-mentioned case, he would give back the bride price received, take his daughter back, and give her to the polygynist from whom he expected a larger bride price.

573 Sometimes too the boy was taken by the polygynist and remained in his family until the father could trade a daughter for him.

573 591 While very young and still a child, the little daughter was installed in the harem of the polygynist. She was brought up there, together with other children of her age and status; or rather, she grew up there in the midst of these heathen customs without any upbringing.

585 The composition of the harem of a polygamist:

The first wife was called the Bomatsa; she preceded all the other wives in rank, and in the absence of the polygynist, she was the mistress of the harem.

The second wife was called Ekila; she was the most loved and preceded all the remaining wives. She was also called Nkonde.

The third wife was called Bolumbu. At the appointment of the Bolumbu, a certain ceremony took place, and the wife was clothed with an animal skin. The Nkum, a sort of patriarch and magician, sometimes had three or four Bolumbu who served as [202] messengers to other villages. In this capacity they had special [121] privileges. For instance, to attack a Bolumbu was a reason for declaring war.

[533] The remaining women were simply women of the harem, without distinction.

585 In the area of Monjoku, among the Bolee [Bole], the first wife was called Nkisa, with the same rank as Bomatsa. The second

527 had to acquire a wife with the bride price or with a supplement of
428 the bride price of his sisters. Three of his sisters, for instance, were
583 married, and he needed 3,000 mitako to pay for his intended wife. Now he went with presents to his three brothers-in-law and asked for 1,000 mitako from each of them. The bride price was already paid to the father; the 1,000 mitako that he asks are a supplement of the bride price.

With these 3,000 mitako, our young man pays for his wife. This wife now becomes the Nkita of the three sisters. If this young man dies, his three sisters and his three brothers-in-law all demand their share back from the widow. If she is sold, the price must be divided among the three brothers-in-law. If she remains in the family of her husband, with the uncle or brother, she continues to be the Nkita of her three sisters-in-law.

431 [542] There also exists a general rule and custom that the family which has received the bride price regularly give gifts to their
583 daughter and son-in-law or sister and brother-in-law. These gifts consisted of goats, dogs (which also have a rather large value among the natives), ducks, etc., but the gifts never consisted of money. These gifts were in turn given by the son-in-law or brother-in-law to the one who had helped him pay the bride price.

For instance, if the young man of whom we just spoke received gifts from the family of his wife, he would then have given these gifts to his three brothers-in-law. These gifts were often so much that the value of them was almost equal to the bride price that the man had paid for his wife. Custom demanded, in such a case, that the man then pay a supplement to the bride price.

In case the bride price had to be given back, the gifts that the family had already given might be subtracted from the bride price. When such disputes are brought before a European, it is difficult for him to settle them, for the value is tremendously exaggerated by the parties. The husband will demand the return of a much larger bride price than he actually gave, while the family on its side will estimate the gifts that they had given as much higher than the actual value or amount.

436 Something about prices, the bride price for wives, and native money value.

Their first original money was as follows.

436 1. Benkata: this was thin iron or copper wire rolled into small rings; the thickness of the wire was about 3 millimeters; the length, 20 to 25 centimeters.

2. Bingetele: iron or copper bars about 8 millimeters thick and 15 centimeters long; these are still in use in Bikoro.

436
301 3. Bekata: copper wire; thickness about 7 or 8 millimeters, and 1 meter or 1.50 meters long; spiral shaped; the women wore these rolled around their legs as copper leggings.

[543] 4. Bakonga: copper rings which served as arm bands and foot bands and also as collars. The size differed for small or large persons; the weight is from one half kilo to 5 kilos.

436 5. Mitako: copper wire about 4 millimeters thick and 25 centimeters long, usually bent like a hairpin. The mitako served as a uniform currency, from which the other values and prices were reckoned, like the franc with us. The value of the mitako was formerly reckoned at five centimes.

583
435 Formerly the bride price, which was paid for a wife in almost all of Equatorial Africa, was from 5 to 20 bakonga. (The value of the bakonga differed greatly according to the weight. The average value, however, is estimated at 2.50 francs.) This payment was further supplemented with slaves or wives. This manner of payment and the bride price still exist in the districts where the natives have not yet, or practically not, come in contact with Europeans. Also, [567] it was sometimes paid with only slaves or women. The price for one female slave was relatively much less than for another woman.

178
583 Through the occupation of the Congo by Europeans, the family life of the natives has necessarily undergone great changes, and their customs and habits as well.

In the first place the natives have found themselves deprived of their wives by the sentinels of the Independent Congo State. [661] These black sentinels, appointed in the villages by the State to supervise the reaping of caoutchouc, assumed an unlimited power. They took as many wives of the natives as they chose and did not pay for a single one.

Next many black soldiers, servant boys, and workmen of the Europeans also took wives everywhere in the beginning, without bothering about the native customs, that is, without paying for those wives; and this often happened under the protective power of their Whites.

M S 258 [462] deposit naturally acquires the shape of the pot, which is finally overheated and bursts, while the salt block remains intact.

When the salt is finally prepared, the family group returns to the village. The temporary installations are abandoned and may be used by other families who may do with them as they please.

M The salt is divided into two parts.

S 258 422 One part makes up the family reserves, reckoned according to the needs of each family in the group, clan, or village which undertook the exploitation. The rest is divided equally among all the members who took part in [110] the harvest, except that the chief and the woman who was in charge of the burning receive double shares.

The salt reserved for family needs is used in the preparation of food and remains the inalienable property of the family. The share distributed to the participants in the undertaking becomes their private property .

M S 258 422 435 Each one of them, man or woman, disposes of his share as he sees fit. Most often the natives use this as trade goods. Among certain tribes, notably the Mosengere, Wadia, Basakata, and Bobaie, the salt blocks are used as currency or as a common trade item whose value is determined by the weight.

M S 258 435 Before our [Ed., European] penetration into the region and more especially before the introduction of legal tender and its imposition by the administration, salt played a much more important part in the economic life of these primitives.

At the present time, it is used only in local transactions.

M 326 The blacksmith and his family, for example, never participate in the preparation of salt. He exchanges the products of his trade, knives, arrowheads, or spearheads, for the stock of the salt makers. [111]

M ● 437 It even quite frequently happens that the salt makers sell their surplus as a mere commodity to the highest bidder. They bring it to market, display it for sale, haggle about the price in the same fashion as they do for manioc tubers, smoked fish, smoked meat, or baskets of peanuts.

M 422 562 It is singular and interesting to note that the proceeds from this sale do not entirely go to the woman who owns the salt.

M
303 the ngula stands before the apparatus. The mixture of water, ngula dust, and a few grains of sand falls into the storage basin as the work progresses. When the stock is large enough, the native plaits small baskets having the shape of a truncated cone and an average capacity of one cubic decimeter. The ngula paste is packed into these baskets, and the lot is then hung under the shelter out of the sun. At the end of a few days the paste is dry. The molded cone of ngula is taken from the mold, wrapped in banana leaves, and carefully tied with rattan thongs, bamboo splints, or raffia fibers.

P
142
301
302

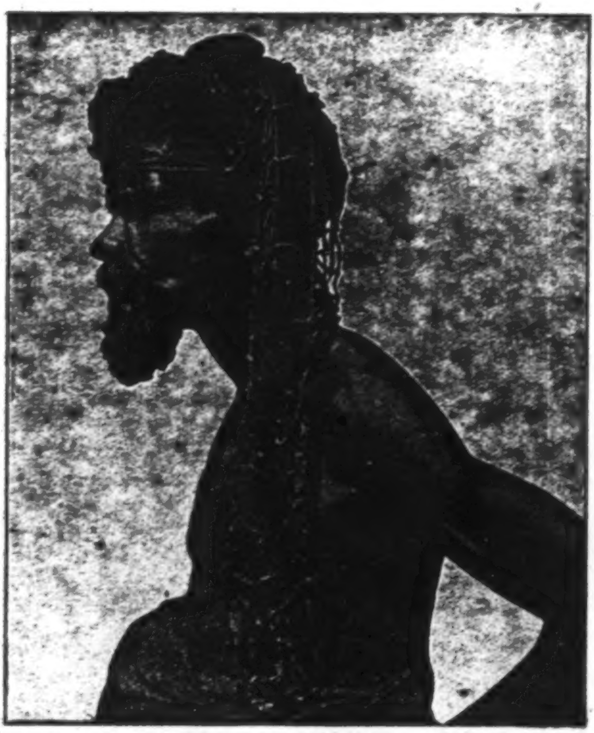


Fig. 92. A Batua Chief Inongo, with a Rope Headdress.

M
438 The family supply is usually left in the storage basins of the devices for making ngula; all the molded cakes are sold at outside markets.

M
303
385 The baskets used as ngula molds are all plaited in the same way. Four rattan thongs are laid in a row across four others, without being interlaced or plaited at the points where they cross. This forms the bottom of the basket. The thongs are lifted up at the four

352 322 [103] Occasionally one sees a native stool, made as described above, but with a kind of back rest chopped out of one piece.

342 177 The Negro who wishes to move with the times makes for his house a chair out of bamboo in the European style: some sticks stuck in the ground, a mat of split bamboo laid over them, and the gentleman can spend his days in *dolce far niente* [pleasant idleness].

352 322 A table made in the same way (otherwise unknown to the Negro) completes the furnishing of his hut.

One does not need to be an expert, either, in order to be able to make a Negro bed. Some straight sticks are chopped out of the *mombambo* (umbrella tree). These are placed lengthwise and then across, on top of each other, trimmed a bit at the edges so that the whole thing fits more or less, and it is then bound together with some
[435] split lianas. In this way the Negro has made a bed; this favorite piece of furniture is finished for a sale price of 5 to 10 *mitako*.

[438] The making of beds could be classed among the Mongo trades. I once saw, in the interior, ten of these beds, large and small spread out along the side of the road for sale.

I was assured that the owner of the beds was the very best bedmaker of the village. Of course, I raised my hat to such an important personage.

The *ekoba*, the bed stool, is also indispensable. These *ekoba* take the place of our pillows and are made of one piece, formed to the shape of the head. It is a somewhat hard pillow, but the Negro head is hard and can put up with it; the fellow sleeps without having to be rocked.

322 252 To prepare his food he needs some mortars and pestles, and these are made of wood. He uses hardwood for these utensils so that the mortars do not wear away from the constant pounding.

In addition, the Negro makes his oars, his bow and arrows for
322 534 the hunt, and the *lokombi*. The *lokombi* is a flat, oblong, hollowed block of wood over which some pegs are stretched [sic]. He plucks these with his fingers, thus producing a monotonous sound. This so-called musical instrument is the constant companion of the young man and accompanies him on his long treks through the Evenaar forest and on his visits to friends and acquaintances.

592 among the Banfumu. [Ed., the remainder of the chapter, through page 54, is not translated.]

[55] Chapter 3

The Native's Means of Subsistence

Animal husbandry: chickens, goats, dogs. -- Agriculture: manioc, maize, rice, bananas, peanuts. -- Hunting: weapons, snares, nkisi, individual method, communal hunting. -- Fishing: general method, dams, basket weirs, traps, harpoons, bows and arrows, cord nets, screens.

231 The peoples of the Congo-Kasai-Lake Leopold II region and of the Lukenie do very little animal husbandry. They possess no large animals. At most one may find a few chickens, rare goats, and some hunting dogs in their villages. The dogs get a share of the game and live as best they can the rest of the time.

No care whatever is given to the goats. They wander freely
during the day and graze in the forest or plain. Sometimes they
venture into the planted fields, from which the hunting dogs chase
them at first sight. At night they return to the village and take
shelter where they will. During our stay in the village of Toipolo,
[485] they even came and disturbed us at night while we were lodged in
the hut reserved for strangers.

235 The chickens wander around the village and planted areas during the day and sleep [56] at night in the native's hut, where they have their nest for laying eggs and a place to hatch them.

262 The native does not eat the eggs. He sells them to agents of
● 439 the state or of commercial concerns, who collect them for
435 hatching. The chicken itself is rarely eaten by the native. Most
often it goes to the kitchens of the Europeans. In 1913-14 the
average price of a chicken was half a franc, that of an egg, five
centimes, and the price of a goat was from five to 15 francs.

000 point to bathe in it and to refresh themselves. [146]

In addition to water which is the customary drink of all the
273 tribes, we found the following beverages according to region:
palm wine, malafu; sugarcane beer, masanga; and pombe,
maize beer.

[415
284]

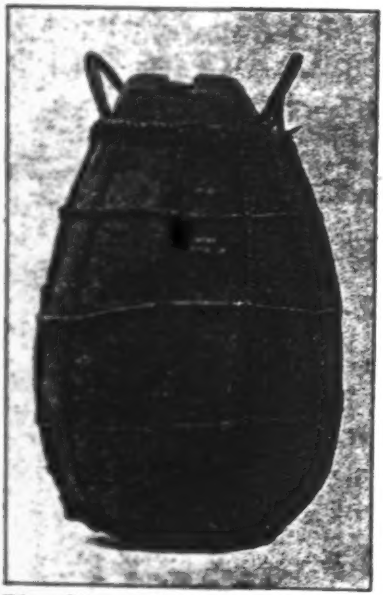


Fig. 84. Calabash for Palm Oil, also for Water.

Palm wine, the native malafu, although liked, is usually not very much in demand, especially when the native can replace it with masanga, sugar-cane beer. We found it among all the peoples, however, although actually only the Ipanga-Yaelima and the Basongo Meno-Bankutu drink it regularly.

● [439] In the other regions palm wine is made particularly in the
villages near government posts or commercial establishments for
the benefit of the Whites. These villages usually have a professional
vintager.

The vintage comes from tapping the trees. The nsese palm, raffia, and the oil palm are chiefly used.

273 The native has three methods of climbing the trees for the
481 vintage. The first is the one we described for gathering clusters

Dengese FO16

M 303 285 sides of this square and held in place by a binding of twisted raffia fibers. The sides are then plaited by the simplest method, that is, with the horizontal band weaving in and out of the vertical thongs. As all of these molds always have approximately the same height and diameter, the ngula cones are both similar in M 303 436 shape and quite constant in weight. The natives use them a great deal as trade goods. In some regions the ngula cone has become a veritable currency, with a standard value from one tribe to another. [170] A market is organized regularly when steamers M 439 call at Mushie, and there the people of the interior exchange the products of their industries for the imported objects brought by the Blacks who work for the Whites. Ngula cones are among the principal items of trade and bring a very high price. In the Oshwe region, the old chief Kua Kua was a great ngula trader. He came by regularly with four or five of his wives, bringing various products from the region between the Kasai and the Lukenie to exchange for the ngula made in the Lokoro region.

D 303 Throughout the central Congo regions, the ngula used for trade has the shape of an elongated truncated cone. Among the Basongo-Meno and farther east, on the other hand, ngula most often is shaped in a ball. The native of these regions often uses it to decorate his pottery and wooden objects and to dye the fibers of cloth used for decoration. He keeps it in cosmetic boxes carved from takula wood and usually decorated with very artistic designs. He also uses it to color his hair. [Ed., a passage from the middle of page 170 to the last paragraph, page 171, is omitted.]

M 302 789 [171] Aside from ngula, the native sometimes smears his body with a type of white clay quite frequently found in the river beds. [172] The native calls it mpembe. Its use is far from being as widespread as that of ngula, and we believe that the native associates it with magic power rather than ornamentation. Mpembe is used chiefly by the peoples of the Congo-Kasai, Lake Leopold II, and Lukenie regions, up to the region of the Batitu.

M 765 We never saw a native smear his whole body with it. The few women in mourning that we saw were covered with a grayish-yellow mud and not with mpembe. We believe, moreover, that the use of mpembe is reserved to the chief, his wives, and perhaps

325 wooden block. These bellows have the openings covered with the dried hide of some wild animal to which piston rods (biongonga) have been attached. The "biongonga" are pushed up and down in quick tempo by two men to make the draft that fans the little charcoal fire.

In front of the "boongo" the smith (botuli) has dug a kind of trench in which the little charcoal fire is laid. In this fire the iron ore, European iron, and copper sticks (njele-mitakos) are smelted.

Botuli atula la lotulo: "The smith forges with the forge."

325 In former times when it was not possible for the Mongo to get

439 European iron, iron ore (bikense bia bokili) was dug out of the forest and heated to melting point in the smithy. Impurities which came to the top were skimmed off, and in this manner the Mongo Negro got his iron. Today, now that the Negro can get his iron so easily from the various trading-posts, he prefers to work with European iron. The imported iron makes a better product, and the Negro no longer has to take the trouble of going to look for his ore. Indeed, the Mongo smith would no longer be able to dispose of lances made of native iron ore because the imported iron is so much better.

325 The implements the smith uses are as follows.

1. Boengwa: the small pounding iron.
2. Loaka: the large pounding iron.
3. Etulaka: the sledgehammer.
4. Eala: the anvil.
5. Lingwata: a hammer which is very much like a European hammer and serves the same purpose.
6. Kongwa: a split stick used to get the hot iron out of the fire and to hold it tightly during the forging.

An iron [96] ring or a piece of liana is placed around the split stick and pushed down to hold the hot object as tightly as possible while it is being forged.

7. Loseno: chisel.
8. Losio: small chisel fastened on a stick, with which the decorations on knives, lances, and rings are carved.
9. Jyoka: the implement chest, a nicely finished box with a lid and a European lock.

000 The objects of iron made by the Mongo smith are as follows.

326 The native smith works not only with iron but also with copper which he melts down in the same manner from copper sticks (*longele: mitako*) and old, worn copper rings.

[439 435] The copper sticks, that nowadays sell at 30 for a franc, come from Europe; copper ore is unknown here.

The copper objects made by the smith are as follows.

326 301 *Bakonga*: all that is of copper

1. *Bongombwa*: necklace, often weighing ten kilograms or more; value, 1,000 *mitako.*
2. *Lokolo:* leg ring, weighing four to six kilograms and more; value, 200 to 500 *mitako.*
3. *Bolongu*: arm ring, not heavy.
4. *Ingwete*: arm ring, not heavy.
5. *Bongenza*: leg ring that rattles when the wearer walks.
6. *Bosankere:* leg ring.
7. *Limpala*: great leg rings in spiral form, twisted out of thick copper wire, which cover the whole of the lower leg. They [435] bear much resemblance to the springs in a mattress. Among the Negroes these have a value of 500 *mitako*.
8. *Bompulenge:* resembling a small *limpala*, these were formerly worn on the arms by old people, but they are now out of fashion and no longer made.

326 554 In the whole district there is only one smith, a certain Elumbu in the village Lilangi (Basankusu), who knows how to make copper bells.

This Black is a celebrity to every Mongo Negro.

According to the Negroes, there is a smith, a certain Bokedzu from the vicinity of the Ikelemba River, who knew how to put a new rifle together from the parts of old broken ones and did so successfully. According to the Negroes, the government agent, however, took the rifle away from him, but in my opinion, and in that of others, this black [577] rifle manufacturer belongs in the realm of fable, the more so as a Negro is not at all afraid of a lie.

837 When a wife of a polygynist had illicit relations with another
586 man of the same village, this was called Bonsamba. When she had
such relations with a man of another village, this was called Isoke.
As we have observed, the ordinary wives of the harem often had such
relations. When the woman eloped with her bonsamba or isoke, or
with whomever it was, she was pursued by her husband or owner, who
tried to get her back. If the wife refused, negotiations over the bride
price began.

If an agreement was reached or if a pledge was given as
guarantee for the payment, the first bond was considered broken, and
the woman was considered bound to this second man, even though
he had been her bonsamba or isoke.

It might also happen that the first husband was so jealous that
he did not want to make any agreement; then he attempted to kill
either the guilty wife or her second husband. If the woman became
593 ill at the home of her husband, he went to tell her family and had to
758 give a security to the family.

583 Often the family came to get the wife, in order to be able
to care for her better. If, in such a case, the wife [538] died at
the home of her family, there were no further difficulties about the
bride price, according to their customs. If, however, the bride
price had still not been completely paid, the family asked their
son-in-law to pay the remainder.

583 In recent times, now that the heathen customs have been
178 undermined by the European occupation, we see that the husbands
whose wives have gone to their family when sick and have died there,
demand the return of the bride price from the family, but this is
completely contrary to their old customs. In one case the husband
could demand the return of the bride price, namely, if the wife
had left while healthy to go to her family and had died there.

562 Buying or Trading of Women. The woman was also in many
439 cases an acknowledged object of trade. The great village chiefs,
among others Ibuka and Yoma, of whom we shall speak further,
carried on a sort of woman trade. With European articles and also
native currency, they went to other districts of the Equator [Province]
to buy women with them, just like someone who goes to market, even
though no public markets where women were sold actually existed.

567 Everywhere there were also abducted women and female
439 slaves; these were simply sold. Furthermore women were bought
562 and sold with women [as payment]. Also women who were inherited
and no longer in the hands of their family were sold by their second,
third, or other subsequent husband. In all of these cases, the family
no longer came into consideration for the bride price. One would
have to stretch the point in order to consider the sums paid in these
cases as a bride price, and consequently as a native custom which
one must respect.

562 Or one should have to assume that such a native woman re-
439 mains a "bride" for her whole lifetime. It will be said that the
woman consented to her sale by one man to the other.

Often this was indeed the case, but not always by any means,
[858] for children and slaves were also sold. Even the consent of the woman
did not prevent it from being a sale; her consent was rather an extra
transaction that simplified the sale of a human article of trade. It
still remains woman trade.

764 The Inheritance. Upon the death of a polygynist, the burial
ceremony was conducted according to the class and rank of the de-
567 ceased. One or two or several [539] slaves were killed and buried
with the polygynist in the same grave. Sometimes the arms and legs
of those male and female slaves were broken, and then they were
buried alive in the same grave with the body.

When these slaves still had family, it might happen that the
family members, having learned of the unfortunate lot of their rela-
tive, would hasten from faraway districts to buy him or her free if it
was not yet too late. Several Negroes have told us of those heart-
breaking scenes at which they were present as children. The mourn-
[765] ing and the lamenting over the dead lasted from a week to a month.

768 The eldest son immediately succeeded his father in position
428 and immediately took one of the wives of his father.

587 The other sons divided among them the lances and knives of
their father.

If the deceased had left no son, or if he was still too young, the oldest brother succeeded the deceased. All of the wives had to remain in their own home, except the wife who was immediately taken by the eldest son. They were obliged to await the day of the distribution. This day was put off for from one to four months.

178 When the first Europeans arrived at Leopoldville and
439 Brazzaville, it was not long before European materials and other
articles also came to Coquilhatville to the hands of the great vil-
583 lage chiefs who carried on trade on the rivers, primarily in slaves
and ivory. The village chiefs, Yoma from the village of Boyeka,
Ibuka of Boyere, Yamba of [545] Eala, Nkake of Bokele, etc.,
carried these European articles up the Tshuapa and Ikelemba rivers,
and they bought slaves and wives with them.

Returning home again, they bought wives from their own district and paid for them with the slaves and women whom they themselves had bought cheaply with the European articles. For one woman of their district they paid three or four women. The arrival
[802] of the Whites and foreign Blacks acquainted them with the number
nkesi which, however, in their definition was only 1,000 and which
they formerly called 10 *nkoto* or 10 times 100.

178 It was not long before the Europeans had to concern themselves
with hearing disputes over the wives. In the Black land such a thing
583 is unavoidable. Whenever the Blacks came to the Whites with their disputes, they dared not or would not say, "I paid for this woman with three women, but they said, "I paid for this woman with three *nkesi*," that is, 3 times 1,000 *mitako*. Meanwhile, the *nkoto* and *nkesi* acquired their value of 1,000 and 10,000. The statement, however, that a woman was paid for with *nkesi* was retained, through the error of the Whites or through the greed of the polygynists or both. Indeed, later some women were paid for with *nkesi*, namely, when the prevalent currency in the Congo was the *mitako*. It was also no wonder, for the polygynists had a monopoly on the wives, and it was to their advantage to raise the price.

Therefore, if the native of Coquilhatville says now that his father or his uncle paid for that woman with three or four *nkesi*, this generally means that the wife was paid for with three or four women. The price of the women in Wangata, near Coquilhatville, was formerly no higher than in the other areas. Many women were paid for with only five *bakonga*, for instance, in Bokala, near Bamania, a village which belonged to the village chief Yoma of Boyeka.

178 It should also be noted that the *nkesi* which have been paid
583 in recent years in Wangata have been paid not in *mitako* or in
435

M 422 562 [Ed., an example given by the author, from the third paragraph, page 111, through the fifth paragraph, page 114, is not translated.]

[114] This clearly shows that the proceeds from the sale of salt, the property of the woman, belong in equal shares to the husband and wife: to the woman because of her work, to the man because of his trouble and travel to put the product on sale.

Among the Wadia, Tumba, Bobaie, Basakata, and Balesa, I had the opportunity to observe the same fact. As long as the woman herself goes to sell her part of the communally made salt, she keeps all the proceeds of the exchange, but according to native custom, when the husband is entrusted with the sale, he is entitled to part of the proceeds.

S [258]

Fig. 64. Evaporation of Water Saturated with Salt, among the Basakata.

M 454 562 422 The proceeds, however, are not divided immediately after the sale. The total sum is put in a safe place, a hiding place known to both husband and wife. The couple accumulates the mitakos [Ed., a kind of metal currency]; they hoard them until the day when they both agree to divide them. Custom gives one quarter to the man and three quarters to the woman. [115]

M 258 476 This custom does not exist among the tribes east of the Balesa. Salt grass cannot be gathered there, because it is very sparse in the region. The trunks of banana and palm trees and the

583ˣ received as bride price for a sister, aunt, niece, cousin, etc.

If he has no female relatives (efánanyí, bomena), or if no bride price to which he is entitled remains, he may receive a part or all of the needed capital from his father. The various members of his family each obtain either 2, 5, or from 10 to 20 rings for him ● [454] that they have been able to save from bride prices they have received or which they have acquired as belonga (see Chapter VI, Article V, 1), as any kind of remuneration (for work, for judging in a palaver, for mediation as ndonga, etc.), the sale price for animals, streams, or ponds, or as damages or settlement of some debt.

583ˣ 602 Indeed the worst mischance that may befall a man in love is not to have a bride price readily available and to have to set out in search of the necessary valuables anywhere he can find them. These trips take a good deal of time. For these things are not done with the great speed of nervous Europeans. He cannot simply send a message [133] to uncle X or to the husband of aunt Y, or even go to them and explain the purpose of the visit, and expect to be able to leave at once with a present. His hosts keep him for days and weeks. "Wait a bit, I will find some for you; stay a while longer, then we'll see; it's been so long since we've seen you, you can't leave so fast," etc. Quite often in fact it is entirely in the young man's interest not to leave in a hurry; he must sometimes perform a great many small services for them to win their good will, and it is even expected that he will perform larger tasks such as helping with clearing, building a hut, hunting, etc. A European would need the patience of an angel. But even the young natives, who are sometimes relatively nervous and excited, especially because they want to conclude the matter of the bride price, and who in any case do not as yet possess the calm of the older people to whom they go, must be capable of resignation and perseverance. Hence the proverbs: lokámo ntákundólákí bakonga ndá [539] lifaya, "haste will not dig up rings in foreign territory" (bakonga are often buried in the ground for better safekeeping -- a useful precaution particularly in the past, when there were brawls between villages, and raids), and bomwa w'inkɔ́nɛ́ ntásingólákí bakonga ndá lokendo, "a child's mouth does not unroll rings in the course of travels" ("unroll" -- that is, from the feet of the wife of the relative being visited).

[92] THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE MONGO NEGRO

INDUSTRY

241 One might say that nature throws into the lap of the Mongo
461 Negro everything he needs in order to exist so that he does not have
181 to exert himself in the slightest to get it. Generally speaking, he
has only to look for his food in the forest, to pick it up from the
ground as it were, with the exception of his bananas, manioc roots,
and moma (a yam that, if it is prepared well, reminds one of potatoes) which are cultivated by his women. Hence, it is quite natural that one finds little industry among the Mongo, and that the Mongo Negro is not prepared to put the least effort into developing or perfecting in any way that centuries-old industry which already exists.

461 He can eat, and that is the main thing as far as he is concerned.

181 A lazy, inert people, effeminate to the core, each one merely living on the efforts of his many wives and female slaves, cannot have a highly developed industry.

In general, except for hunting which is undertaken primarily by the young men of the village, the Mongo Negro does not bother about anything. Eating, sleeping, looking for and listening to quarrels, carousing at gatherings with sugar-cane beer until they are picked up in a drunken state by their wives (a spectacle one also sees in civilized Europe), this is the dreary, monotonous, drowsy life of the Mongo Negro, one of the least culturally developed but at the same time one of the most highly interesting tribes of the Evenaar district if not of the whole Congo.

He loathes and despises work and is indolence personified.

461- Notwithstanding the extreme idleness of the Mongo [93] people,
462 they do have some of the industry that is necessary for their existence.
However, it is on a low level and not widespread. In general, the existing industries are carried on by either the men or the women, and a man will never undertake a job belonging to the women, and vice versa. The work is not done in groups or in family units; where a branch of an industry exists, it is the concern of a single person unless more workers are necessary in order to carry out the work.

361 The first essential condition is a nearby source of drinking water,
312 a stream, a marsh, or one or more natural springs. These springs
are quite numerous in the region we visited. Their water is clear,
limpid, and refreshing; the supply is abundant and regular in the
dry season as well as in the rainy season. The natives value their
● [462] benefits so highly that the women willingly go 200 or 300 meters
to a spring in the forest rather than to draw water from the stream.

361 [35] In addition to a bountiful spring, the native seeks a healthful location and takes this into account when choosing the future site for his household. The ground that suits him best is slightly raised, dry, open, and located near the forest or in the midst of a fertile plain.

Aside from their hygienic benefits, such locations afford a measure of security to the settler. At the slightest alarm, the whole community leaves both village and home to run into the forest, where they are sheltered and completely safe.

Finally, the native looks for the fertile soil essential to the welfare of his crops. The well-being and even the existence of his whole family depend in large measure on the yields from these crops.

The new site then, must fulfill all these indispensable conditions. If the place that meets these requirements is to be found in a region full of game and not far distant from a stream, marsh, or watercourse rich in fish, the native will not fail to choose such a privileged spot. These conditions will determine the duration of the native's settlement. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

361 When the community has decided to move and a location suitable
313 for a new settlement has been found, all the adult males leave to prepare the ground. This work is particularly arduous in forested areas. In the grasslands it is sufficient to cut the grass, or simply to burn it, and then to hoe thoroughly the area for the new village and its fields and to carry off all the rubbish, while the establishment of a village in the heart of the forest requires far greater effort and work. The first few days are devoted to marking out the boundaries and clearing the small trees, creepers, bushes, grass, etc. Everything that can be cut with a knife or ax is hacked down. Large tree trunks are chinked at the base; then the native heaps all the rubbish [36] from the first stage of clearing around them and

412 241 462 When new fields are prepared, the first work of clearing them falls to the men. This work is done with a knife and an ax. The shape of this latter tool is the same among all the tribes: a wooden handle with a bulge at one end like a club; and a long, narrow, triangular piece of iron embedded laterally in the handle.

After clearing the brush, the men pile the rubbish at the feet of the large trunks and set it on fire. The tree, undermined at its base, finally topples over and remains where it falls.

462 The women take charge of the other work of cultivation. This varies [57] very little from tribe to tribe, and even the various crops of manioc, maize, peanuts, rice, bananas, and sugar cane require only quite rudimentary special labor.

244 412 Manioc is the staple food of the tribes over most of the region we visited. The native cultivates both sweet and bitter manioc. The latter variety is the more widespread. To prepare the ground, the native woman uses an iron hoe, triangular in shape, with a flaring base and a spike at the top. This piece of iron is embedded laterally in a rough-hewn wooden handle which bulges at the end like a club. The purpose of the club-like end is twofold: it provides a better hold for the piece of iron, and it intensifies

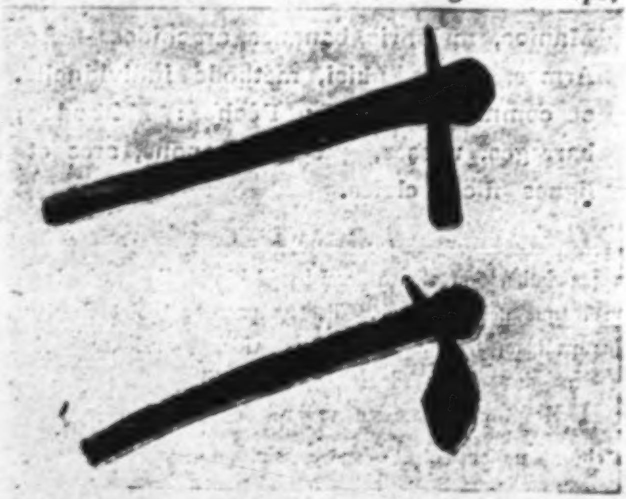


Fig. 37. Ax and Hoe from Lake Leopold II-Lukenie.

M 243 The cultivation of rice serves less to nourish the native than for trade. He usually sells his harvest immediately after the husking.

T M 244 Peanuts thrive in the region of the Banfumu and among the Bankutshu. They grow best in light soil and are not suitable for land cleared from the great forest. The crop demands a great T ● M deal of care and regular upkeep. Fields invaded by weeds yield ● [462] nothing. The harvest takes place when the crop is mature and is the task of the women with the help of the children. The peanuts are placed in baskets carried on the back and taken to the village. The native spreads them out in the sun to dry. He turns them again and again, two or three times a day, and brings them into the hut at night.

M 249 Sugar-cane plantations are set up in marshy lowlands.

[462] All the work on this crop falls to the men. These plantations are found only in regions where the natives make masanga, sugar- [273] cane beer. Sugar-cane fields are especially numerous in the villages on the lower Lukenie and the Fimi.

M 244 As a rule the natives also cultivate a few legumes, sweet potatoes, and yams, but on a small scale and without giving them any particular care. [61]

Hunting

M 224 462 Hunting is practiced only by men. They engage in it, not for sport, diversion, or relaxation, but for the sole purpose of procuring meat and fat.

M 224 857 From their earliest childhood, the boys get together to beat the grass and catch mice, rats, and other rodents which swarm in the bush. Nothing is more interesting than to see them at work. Ten, fifteen, or sometimes twenty of them form a large circle. Armed with sticks, they beat the grass and make an unbelievable din. Little by little the circle narrows, moving in on a small well-cleared space. The oldest, most daring and most agile of the boys keep watch over this space, their eyes alert and riveted on the edge of the grass, ready to pounce. The beaters redouble their zeal, strike, shout, gesture, and gradually drive all the rodents

Sakata FO43

M
411
● [762] The manufacture of bows and arrows is practiced only by men.

M
411
322 The native chooses the wood for his arrows very carefully. It must be light and very tough. After scraping it carefully with a small knife, he carves one end into a point and cuts a notch at the other end for the bowstring. Both ends are slightly hardened by fire. The part where the vanes are to be attached is scraped with the greatest care. The lines marking the place for the vanes are drawn with the point of the knife, and the vanes are made out of half

S
[411
[142]
291]

a feather from the wing of an eagle or guinea fowl. The native sets all [68] three vanes in place at the same time and fastens

M
[314] them with a fiber thread coiled in spirals. This fine ligature is strengthened with bulungu resin which is applied in a liquid state and thus forms a very light sheath when dry.

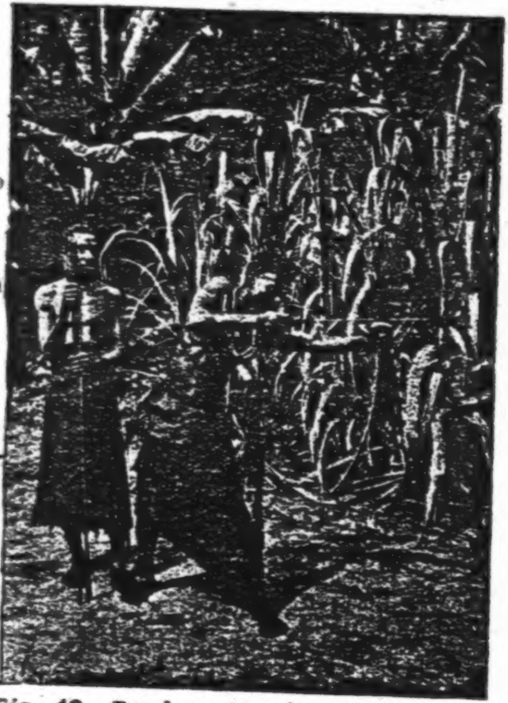


Fig. 43. Basakata Armed with Spears, Bow and Arrows.

M
411 The arrowhead ends in an elongated, conical socket into which the upper end of the wooden shaft is fitted. The general shape of the head is that of a narrow, oblong leaf, sometimes provided with one or two barbs. This shape is found throughout the Lake Leopold II and Lukenie regions. The notch for the bowstring is quite even and shallow, although among the

SAKAta FO43

Fishing

M 226 Near rivers, swamps, and lakes, fishing is one of the principal occupations of the native.

M ● [462] Unlike hunting which is practiced only by men, fishing is done by both men and women. The latter, however, practice it only occasionally and fish only by damming up part of a river bed or marsh. The dam is usually built during the rainy season, but as long as the water is rising, the women leave all the sluices wide open. Toward the end of the rainy season, they narrow the drain channels and set large traps before the openings. These traps are attached to strong wooden stakes on the shore near the dam. M 226 285 The traps are made of splints from the ribs of raffia leaves and are plaited in openwork with the open spaces varying in size. The exterior form is always the same. Cylindrical at one end [85] and the other end closed along the diameter, the trap resembles a large cone ending in a line at the top. These traps are built over a framework made of two, three, or four hoops. Their diameters vary according to their positions. They are set inside the trap, the largest one at the base, the smallest one toward the upper end. The transverse elements, doubled and woven alternately in and out, are spaced 10 to 15 centimeters apart and are usually made of strips of rattan. The inner trap, or entry trap, is plaited in the shape of a broad fan, conical

S M [227 285]

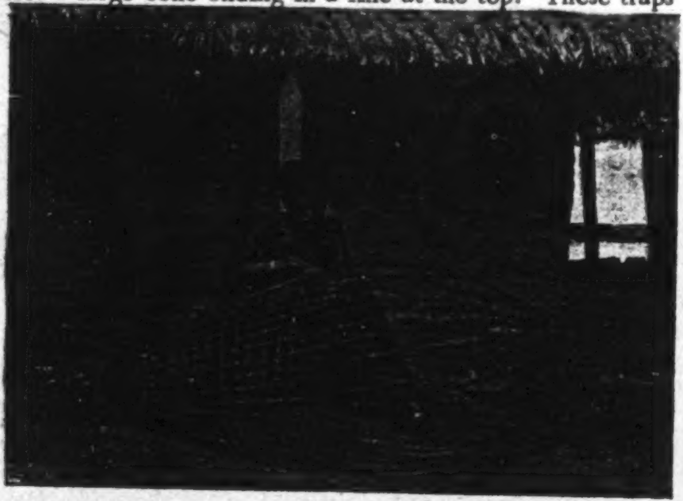


Fig. 52. Making a Fish Trap among the Wadia and Tumba.

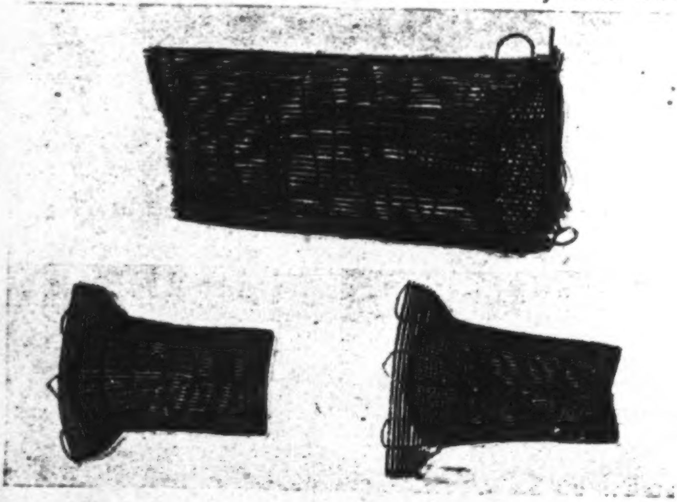
in form, with an ellipsoidal base. The open top is the entrance hole. The ends of the splints overlap somewhat on the inside in order to prevent the trapped fish from retracing their paths and escaping. 226 285

These traps are made only by men. When the plaiting is done, the work is flat, and then the finished latticework is fastened to the frame. [462]

The trap is opened by detaching the binding that closes the top.

As the waters recede, a woman lowers the trap. Morning and evening she comes to inspect it and to gather the captured fish. [86] 226

When the waters have fully subsided, the women assemble and go up the river or into the swamp. Standing across the full width of the watercourse, they walk down, chasing before them the fish that remained in the dammed-off area. They make an earshattering din, slapping the water with broad sticks or churning it with arms and legs. The hunted and terrified fish flee wildly only to be caught eventually in the trap. If they try to break through the line of women, the latter do not hesitate to grab and fling them on the bank. [Ed., the text is not translated from the second paragraph, page 86, to the second paragraph, page 87.]



[226 285]

Fig. 53. Fish Traps used by the Peoples of Lake Leopold II.

Sakata FO43

S M 226 industry of it. This sort of thing flourishes especially among the riparian people in the country of the Basakata, Balesa, and Mosengere.

S M 226 361 In the region of the lower Fimi, as well as along the marshy banks of the lower Lulonga, native fishing camps are quite numerous. They are all of the same type and [94] never have the character of a permanent settlement. At the end of the rainy season one sees families of riparian peoples leave their villages temporarily and settle along the marshy rivers. Men and women make this move, while children, old people, and a few able-bodied adults stay in the village to guard the homes.

The fishing camps are set up in very rudimentary fashion. The huts are merely shelters, refuges.

S M [462] Gathering salt grass for making salt is the chief task of the women. The men do the fishing.

S M 226 All the methods for fishing individually are used, but the bulk of the work is done communally.

The procedures are quite varied. We will mention the following.

1) Damming the mouths of small rivers and minor tributaries, along with setting traps in front of the escape channel and the method of driving the fish described above.

S M [286 386] 2) Fishing with a net. Unlike the nets used for hunting, the fishing nets are made of raffia fibers. The type of knot is the same, but the technique is more like the one used for plaiting the hair. The native carefully dyes the fibers black in order to make the mesh invisible under water. He attaches small cylindrical sections of a very light wood to the upper part of the net to serve as floats. At the opposite edge, he attaches the sinkers, made of cylindrical pieces of baked clay. The floats and sinkers are made so that they counterbalance each other and maintain the net in a vertical position in the water. These nets are 20 to 25 meters long. If necessary, the natives use a series of nets and dam the whole river in this way. Five to ten men are stationed with large baskets along the nets. The women go up the river 100 to 200 meters, enter the water, and form a chain to drive the fish before them. These are caught in the meshes of the nets and attract the attention of the fishermen by the efforts they

MS 258 Among the Mosengere, Bobaie, Basakata, Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, on the other hand, the natives still use the primitive process.

This varies according to the region, insofar as the materials used in the preparation are concerned.

Among the Mosengere, Wadia, Tumba, Basakata, and Bobaie, the natives use only the salt grass that grows abundantly in the marshes and along the marshy banks of certain rivers in the region.

In the territory of the Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, where this precious resource is lacking, the natives use the trunks of banana trees and especially the flowers of palm trees, whose ashes are quite rich in alkaline matter.

MS [361] Salt grass is harvested toward the end of the dry season.

At this time groups of Mosengere, Wadia, Tumba, Bobaie, and Basakata of the interior leave their villages to camp along the rivers with marshy banks.

MS [342] They choose a site suitable for setting up the few huts that will serve them as shelters during their temporary sojourn in the region. These huts are usually very poorly constructed. Built hastily and carelessly, they are provisional shelters, refuges for the night, rather than dwellings.

MS 258 423 In former times the whole expanse of the marshy plain covered with salt grass was divided into sections.

Each native group had its own well-defined area and exploited it exclusively. [107]

The site for the huts occupied by each such group was determined by the location of the familial reservation or domain and was chosen so as to lie in the center of it.

The time of year when the salt grass was gathered and the length of the period of exploitation were regulated. In short, the preparation of salt was a national industry, governed by special laws to which the whole tribe had to conform.

At the present time, the groups gather salt grass wherever they think best, without regard for the customs and rights of the past. This work of harvesting the grass falls to the women.

MS 258 462 While the men are fishing, the women, provided with large knives, cut down the tall grass that grows in the marshes or along

M S 258 462 the flooded banks of all the rivers in the Mosengere-Basakata region. When the nature of the ground and the level of the river permit, the grass is spread out on the spot to dry in the sun, while in flooded areas the woman loads the harvest in the canoe and takes it to the temporary village set up [108] on the bank. The dry grass is packed in stacks which are like the haystacks on our European farms.

M S 258 When a family deems that its harvest of grass is sufficient, the chief of the group prepares the incinerating grounds or furnace. Pulverized earth from small termites' nests is mixed with mud from the river. The mixture is well worked and kneaded so as to make a firm and pliant paste and is then spread over the surface of a small hole from 15 to 20 centimeters deep and one or two meters square.

M S 258 462 When this coating is entirely dry, the women begin their work. One of them loads the furnace and lights it, while the others bring in grass from the stacks.

As the first pile burns down, the woman in charge of the furnace throws in new sheaves, and the work, accompanied by a low, monotonous chant, continues without pause until the full harvest of salt grass is burned.

Fig. 63. Stacks of Salt Grass, among the Bobaie.

M S 533

M S 258 834 462 The burning usually lasts a whole day. During this time and during the period when the furnace is being prepared, all

● M S 258 [834] 462

sexual relations are strictly forbidden between the head of the family and the woman in charge of the burning.

● M S 258 [285] 462

When the last sprig is burned, the fire extinguished, and the ashes cold, the women heap them in large baskets.

Meanwhile the head of the family has made a sort of large funnel out of broad and tough rattan splints, bound with fine thongs of raffia stems and lianas. These funnels vary between two and three meters in height. The diameter of the large opening is one and a half to two meters. The bottom is formed by the cluster of rattan splints, roughly tied with a broad rattan thong. This funnel is placed upright between three or four sticks planted in the ground. An earthenware jar is placed under the funnel. The women line the inside of the funnel with banana leaves, placed on top of each other in such a way as to make the sides completely [109] waterproof. They next pour the ashes from the incineration into the funnel, pressing and squeezing them as much as possible.

When the funnel is three-fourths full, the woman draws about ten pots of water, or about 50 liters, and pours them over the ashes. This water takes two or sometimes three days to spread through the ashes. When the ashes are saturated, the woman pours two or three more pots of water into the funnel. From then on there is a slow drain of water, strongly salted from the dissolution of the soluble alkaline matter contained in the ashes. The water is caught in the earthenware jar under the funnel. The woman thus obtains four or five pots of a strong salt solution and two pots of water less saturated with salt. After putting aside her six or seven pots of salt water, the woman lights a fire and puts one or several earthenware bowls over it. Into these, little by little, she pours the strong salt solution, which she allows to boil.

When the water evaporates, the first salt deposit forms on the bottom and sides of the bowl.

M S [415]

The heat from these evaporation hearths is so intense that it is impossible to come near them. The woman therefore carefully provides herself with two long ladles to refill the bowls at a distance as the evaporation progresses. The whole lot is left on the fire until all the salt water is evaporated. Even after the evaporation is completed, the woman leaves the jar over the fire, which she stokes, so as to completely dry and solidify the salt deposit. This

M
S
258 deposit naturally acquires the shape of the pot, which is finally
[462] overheated and bursts, while the salt block remains intact.

When the salt is finally prepared, the family group returns to the village. The temporary installations are abandoned and may be used by other families who may do with them as they please.

M The salt is divided into two parts.

S One part makes up the family reserves, reckoned according
258 to the needs of each family in the group, clan, or village which
422 undertook the exploitation. The rest is divided equally among all the members who took part in [110] the harvest, except that the chief and the woman who was in charge of the burning receive double shares.

The salt reserved for family needs is used in the preparation of food and remains the inalienable property of the family. The share distributed to the participants in the undertaking becomes their private property .

M
S Each one of them, man or woman, disposes of his share as
258 he sees fit. Most often the natives use this as trade goods. Among
422 certain tribes, notably the Mosengere, Wadia, Basakata, and
435 Bobaie, the salt blocks are used as currency or as a common trade item whose value is determined by the weight.

M Before our [Ed., European] penetration into the region and
S more especially before the introduction of legal tender and its
258 imposition by the administration, salt played a much more im-
435 portant part in the economic life of these primitives.

At the present time, it is used only in local transactions.

M The blacksmith and his family, for example, never par-
326 ticipate in the preparation of salt. He exchanges the products of his trade, knives, arrowheads, or spearheads, for the stock of the salt makers. [111]

M It even quite frequently happens that the salt makers sell
437 their surplus as a mere commodity to the highest bidder. They bring it to market, display it for sale, haggle about the price in the same fashion as they do for manioc tubers, smoked fish, smoked meat, or baskets of peanuts.

M It is singular and interesting to note that the proceeds from
422 this sale do not entirely go to the woman who owns the salt.
562

262 The natives are familiar with two kinds of manioc, sweet and bitter.

Sweet manioc is not highly valued, owing to its insipid taste and the poor consistency of the chikwangue made from it.

252 Aside from the soaking, which is done only for bitter manioc, chikwangue is prepared in the same way whether the flour comes from sweet or bitter manioc.

The first harvest of manioc tubers takes place eight to ten months after planting. The natives, however, do not begin harvesting them in earnest until the second year. Only the woman [462] does this work.

[482] The manioc tubers are piled in large baskets carried on the back and taken to the soaking well, a pond of putrid, dirty, muddy water giving off a highly unpleasant odor of putrefaction and fermentation, which is reserved for this task.

252 462 The manioc roots remain submerged from five to eight days to make them ferment and thus eliminate their bitter taste. At the end of this period the woman returns to the pond, tucks up her primitive loincloth as high as possible and enters the swamp. She sinks in up to her knees, and plunging her hands and arms into the mire, she pulls out the roots one by one and throws them on the bank. When her supply seems sufficient, she piles the roots in her basket and goes to wash them in the river. Returning to the village, she cuts the tubers, lets them dry a little in the sun, and then peels them. The Bakete, Banfumungu, and all the tribes of the Fimi-Lake Leopold II-Lukenie region, up to the boundaries of Bobaie and Balesa territory, chop the pieces of manioc root before reducing them to flour, while the Ipanga, Batitu, Yaelima and Bokala crush them between the fingers before throwing them between the fingers before throwing them in the mortar.

412 The chikwangue knife has a double-edged blade, a median rib, and a long, relatively broad oval form. It is pointed at both ends. One of these ends is [120] embedded in a wooden handle with a doubly concave vertical section.

The museum [Ed., Museum of the Belgian Congo] now has only two of these knives, but they are found in every native hut in the Kasai-Fimi-Lukenie region up to the Oshwe sector. It is, however, almost impossible to buy them from the natives. A woman, unable to do without her chikwangue knife a single day

M 442 and never having a spare one, will not let one go at any price.

M 252 ●462 A woman chops the manioc on a large wooden tray, a crude, slightly hollowed board roughly rectangular in shape among the Bateke, Banfumungu, and Baboma, but circular among the Tumba, Wadia, Mosengere, Bolia, Bobaie, Basakata, and Balesa.

After having chopped up the manioc tubers as finely as she can with the primitive tool at her disposal, the woman removes the woody fibers, remains of rind, and other hard bodies. She then takes the etuti with both hands and rocks it back and forth. While doing this, she is careful to shake the flour from time to time and to remove the impurities she finds in it.

When the flour is quite fine, the housewife sprinkles it with a little water, [121] kneads it, works it into S [252 516] a firm dough of a pale grayish-white color, and carefully removes every little trace of impurities. She then divides the dough into pieces the size of a cubic decimeter which she rolls into more or less symmetrical balls or into sausages 20 to 25 centimeters long. M [283] These balls or sausages are carefully wrapped in banana or masisa leaves, and the whole bundle is tied with very pliant rattan or raffia splints which serve as string.

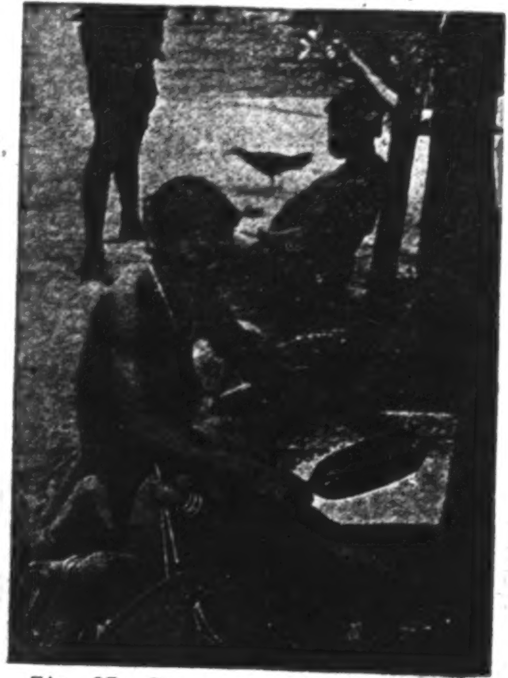


Fig. 67. Preparation of Manioc Flour among the Bobaie. Special Form of Knife to Chop Manioc.

263 wild [140] throughout the region we visited. All the tribes are
acquainted with it and use it regularly.

222 Collecting and preparing pili-pili are tasks especially re-
●462 served to women. Upon returning from the fields, a woman
252 spreads the fruits on a mat before her hut and lets them dry for
263 five or six days. Sometimes she uses them fresh, mixing them with
palm oil enhanced with salt. The native uses this sauce to season
his dishes according to taste.

252 When the pili-pili is quite dry, the woman pulverizes it in
263 a small wooden mortar with a cylindrical pestle or with a small
412 piece of elephant's tusk. The shape of the mortars used for this
purpose by the different peoples of the Lukenie varies a great deal. From the Bateke to the Batete, we found only very crude mortars hollowed out from the trunk of a tree. Among the Yaelima and Ipanga this utensil is more carefully worked and finished. The shape is rather like that of a small rectangular box without a lid, but provided with a lug. Among the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, we collected very crudely shaped and primitive mortars, while others were well made and carefully carved. All of them, however, have the common characteristic of an elongated vertical form, and most of them have a leg. The pestles are always quite long.

We thus again find three ethnic zones characterized by the special shape of these utensils. Of course, this fact alone could not serve as the basis of any ethnic classification, but it might have a relative value and importance in drawing general conclusions based on the whole assemblage of the ethnic characteristics of these various peoples.

263 Once reduced to a fine powder, pili-pili pepper is mixed
with salt to season food after cooking. All sauces are spiced with a generous pinch of this pepper. Meat is sprinkled with it, or even stuffed with whole peppers.

When the natives are traveling, they merely pick a few pili-pili and squeeze the juice into the food while it is cooking. [141]

276 The kola nut also is very well known as a stimulant and is
widely used. The kola tree is found nearly everywhere. The natives gather the fruit and chew it. Women do not indulge.

276 842 According to native belief, the kola nut ensures the fertility of a woman if sexual relations take place the night after the man has used this stimulant.

276 The regular use of kola induces very intense nervous excitement. We noticed that the adolescents and men in their prime scarcely use it. Only the old people use it regularly. Kakua, the old native chief, chewed it from morning to night. One day I pointed this out to him, asking if he were not afraid of the dangerous effects of this overindulgence. He proudly pointed out to me the huts of his seven wives, saying, "Ask them if they don't have children!"

276 263 278 Among the stimulants we may also mention the peanut, widely used by all the tribes, a type of small ground pea, and certain tree roots known to the natives but the exact nature of which we unfortunately could not determine. It is well to note, moreover, that most of the natives use the stimulants as medicaments as well as condiments. They are used for intestinal pains, colic, and as purgatives.

462 252 In all the tribes the preparation of food and meals is exclusively the task of women. They always do it with great care [142]

252 The kitchen, if it can be called one, is always very simple. If the weather is good, cooking is done in the open in the middle of the village, in front of the hut or behind it, [462] [313] and very often in the shade of the banana trees. If the weather is rainy or cold, the women prepares the meals inside the hut. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

Fig. 81. Carrying Firewood.

264 [415] spherical calotte, and also wooden plates. Sometimes also simple leaves are used as plates, unless the food is served in the cooking pots.

The whole meal is spread on the ground. [144]

The man squats on his mat and dips leisurely in the dishes with his hand, moving from one to another according to his taste.

[522] The meal is always eaten in silence. Even when several friends eat together, they never talk during the meal.

After the meal the natives carefully wash their hands and teeth and rinse out their mouths several times.

Beverages

271 415 Water is the only beverage they drink at mealtime, and they use it quite rarely. If they do not have a wooden or earthenware cup, they use part of a calabash or simply a leaf rolled into a little cone.

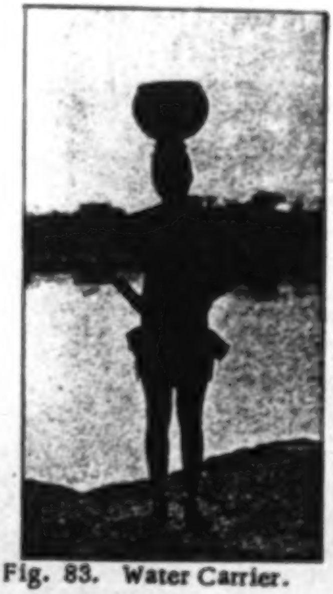


Fig. 83. Water Carrier.

312 ● 462 857 482 Water usually comes from a spring near the village. The natives use river water only when it is quite clear. The women and children have the task of fetching water, a chore which is often quite hard. I visited many villages located along or near the river, whose source of drinking water was 20 to 30 minutes away.

At certain hours of the day and more especially in the morning as the sun first comes up, the women and children set out, a calabash or water jug balanced on their heads, to fetch the supply for the day.

271 415 Water is kept in large calabashes or earthenware jugs, sheltered from the sun in a corner of the hut.

Chapter VI

Married Life

593x As soon as an engaged pair begin to live together, as described above, they acquire all the rights and duties of married people. No special ceremony marks the consummation of the marriage.

To translate "married life" the Nkundó use the noun iśanelo, from the verb bálana, which is the reciprocal form of the root -bal, "to get married." The noun, like the verb, is used in the physical as well as the moral and social sense. Our terms "household" and "family" have no exact equivalents in their language. The only term they have is ilongo, denoting the family in the broad sense that includes all related persons; but it could easily be adopted to translate our European terms. (1)

> 1. From the absence of a specific name, we cannot conclude that the thing itself is lacking. The Nkundó have a family in the sense of a household, though their idea of it and their organization is different from that of many peoples. But the word familia had a very different meaning among the Romans than that given to the French word, which also has a double meaning.

In this chapter we will examine the position of the spouses in relation to each other: the division of labor, property, various rights and duties, the relationship of the spouses with their families or relatives by marriage, and, finally, extramarital sexual relations.

Article I. The Division of Labor

462
593x The care of the household falls to the woman. It includes the preserving and preparation of food, the cleaning of the hut and the court, the planting and care of the fields and various crops, and the care of the [261] children. She also fishes with scoops and does

462
593

basketwork (mats, baskets, scoops). Among the Elinga women mold and fire the pots. It is also the woman who gathers the small pieces of firewood for which a knife and a machete are adequate; the large pieces of wood which must be cut with an axe are brought by the husband. She, too, is the one who gathers the vegetables, mushrooms, and caterpillars. She tends to the extraction of oil, makes the salt, and goes to the markets. And she also takes care of the farmyard.

A man, for his part, gives his attention not only to various political and social pursuits, but also to those tasks which are more difficult, more dangerous, more in conformity with his nature and constitution, such as hunting, fishing, cutting clusters of palm nuts, working in wood and metal, building the hut and annexes, weaving the nets and screens for fishing, felling the forest for cultivation (the woman burns the growth, then plants and cares for the crops).

Thus the division of labor is well regulated. Each one takes care of the task that suits his nature. We are not too astonished at the fact that a man never helps his wife, or vice versa; each limits himself to his own sphere. The Nkundó would consider it shameful to participate in the work of the opposite sex. Neither one nor the other complains about the matter. Besides, the fact that a woman has most of the trouble in the household, especially if there are several children, is in conformity with the nature of things. Consequently, we would be mistaken in considering the Nkundó woman a beast of burden and her husband a lazy profiteer. (1) [262]

1. Compare what I have said with what was written by Father Dubernet in Missions Catholiques, 65th year, no. 3185, August, 1933, p. 387: "Except for the rare few who are in a position of wealth, the woman, among the Blacks we have known, tends to her household tasks more or less like a good peasant back home. She has seldom seemed to us the beast of burden that others have been pleased to describe."

[92] THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE MONGO NEGRO

INDUSTRY

241 One might say that nature throws into the lap of the Mongo
461 Negro everything he needs in order to exist so that he does not have
181 to exert himself in the slightest to get it. Generally speaking, he
has only to look for his food in the forest, to pick it up from the
ground as it were, with the exception of his bananas, manioc roots,
and moma (a yam that, if it is prepared well, reminds one of potatoes)
which are cultivated by his women. Hence, it is quite natural
that one finds little industry among the Mongo, and that the Mongo
Negro is not prepared to put the least effort into developing or perfecting
in any way that centuries-old industry which already exists.

461 He can eat, and that is the main thing as far as he is concerned.

A lazy, inert people, effeminate to the core, each one merely
181 living on the efforts of his many wives and female slaves, cannot
have a highly developed industry.

In general, except for hunting which is undertaken primarily by the young men of the village, the Mongo Negro does not bother about anything. Eating, sleeping, looking for and listening to quarrels, carousing at gatherings with sugar-cane beer until they are picked up in a drunken state by their wives (a spectacle one also sees in civilized Europe), this is the dreary, monotonous, drowsy life of the Mongo Negro, one of the least culturally developed but at the same time one of the most highly interesting tribes of the Evenaar district if not of the whole Congo.

He loathes and despises work and is indolence personified.

461 Notwithstanding the extreme idleness of the Mongo [93] people,
462 they do have some of the industry that is necessary for their existence.
However, it is on a low level and not widespread. In general, the
existing industries are carried on by either the men or the women,
and a man will never undertake a job belonging to the women, and
vice versa. The work is got done in groups or in family units; where
a branch of an industry exists, it is the concern of a single person
unless more workers are necessary in order to carry out the work.

202 198 The White hears only the difference in tempo, nothing more. The Negro miles away understands what is being telephoned.

The *lokole* language consists chiefly of metaphors and is thus not intelligible to any White in the whole of the Congo. The Negroes are proud of their invention and also pleased that the White, who otherwise can do everything, is not able to understand their *lokole*.

Every man has his own name *(nkombo)* on the *lokole* with which he makes himself known. Because such a name often covers several lines of script, chiefly expressed in metaphors giving facts of the public life of the Negro concerned, it would be a physical impossibility for a White to master the *lokole* language in the way a Negro does. Actually, not even all Negroes understand the art of beating the *lokole*.

[462] The women have a general name; beating the *lokole* is only for the men, and no woman understands the art. The women understand what is being broadcast when the *lokole* is beaten, but they cannot beat it themselves. Moreover, they would be ashamed to attempt it; this is no task for a woman, and they would be laughed at. The *lokole* name, or *nkombo*, of the woman is as follows:

Bali la tolombo basalaki lisala, basalaki tomboloko, tond' al' isusu, befambe eka lisala.

"Women in numbers, worked the garden, prepared much to eat, consisting of bananas, to eat out of the garden."

A White, personally, has no *nkombo* of his own on the *lokole*, but to announce the arrival of a White in a village, the following is spread around far and wide:

Lolema ja lifeka feka, esongo etenaka nkola.

"The bat flies about everywhere, the pin wounds the nails of the feet."

With "the bat flies about everywhere" is to be understood the government agent who goes from village to village collecting the [726] taxes. "The pin wounds the nails of the feet" means that, just as the Negroes go on the warpath with sharp pointed sticks dipped in poison to wound the enemies' feet, the government agent is always on his rounds with his rifle, ready for the fray.

The *nkombo* of the Catholic missionary is as follows: [102]

(1) *Bansele nsele ba nkanga*; (2) *bofala boki ndaki lisako nda lokombo*; (3) *etafe bolo*; (4) *benanga bekendaka la mperu*.

[104]

III. WEAVING

286 The craft of the Mongo weaver is an honorable one and one that calls for much labor and attentiveness.

[177] Weaving is no longer as much in vogue as it was in earlier times, because the younger people buy European materials. However, the weaver is still able to earn his daily bread comfortably, because [591] the old people are too pagan to give up their old ingrained habit of wearing a loin cloth.

[462] Weaving is a craft carried on by men only. Some are very skillful in the weaving of materials and command our admiration. Pieces of really beautiful workmanship were offered to us for sale; I had myself seen them being woven.

286 314 The weaver takes his knife, goes into the forest, and cuts the "mpekwa ia lifeke," the fibers of a certain kind of palm tree which he also sometimes plants on the open highway near his hut. As soon as he has sufficient fibers for the weaving he has in mind, he goes home and at his leisure scrapes the fibers with his knife until they are all of the same thickness.

286 After that he leaves them in the sun to dry. When they have dried sufficiently, he puts up in his hut or on the open highway the frame on which the fibers are to be hung.

After he has attached the fibers to the top cross-bar (they are bound between the top and bottom cross-bars), he holds down the bottom cross-bar with his foot and goes to work.

Often he uses fibers of different colors, and this gives a lovely effect to the piece of material.

Bofomi afom'eto, "the weaver is weaving material."

386 314 The weaver has a very simple way of giving the fibers their different colors.

From the forest he fetches a liana (longoli) which contains the red, white, or black coloring agent, cuts it in pieces, puts them in a banana leaf which has been quickly scorched in the fire, adds some water and hangs all this, with the fibers, in a bag of banana leaves above the fire. When the dye has soaked thoroughly into the fibers, he has his colored fibers all ready [105] for the material he is about to weave. This mixture is called "bosaka."

Rope-making

283 The Mongo rope-maker (one can hardly call him a professional rope-maker) goes to the forest, fetches fibers from a certain kind of palm-tree, scrapes them nicely with his knife, and puts them in the sun to dry.

Whole coils of rope are made in this way. Native rope, finished in this manner, is of a good, strong quality. Nets for the hunt and also for fishing are made of it. As in the case of weaving, it is something done by the men only.

IV. BASKET AND MAT WEAVING

285 The weaving of baskets and mats is chiefly the work of the women,
462 especially the fine braidwork.

The men make only the large, roughly finished baskets needed for the transport of their copal. The braiding of mats is done only by the women.

285 From the forest they fetch the twigs of the Bolongote tree,
314 scrape them nicely or dry them in the sun, and, sitting down, braid their baskets and mats.

They make different kinds of baskets, but the raw materials necessary for braiding are the bokombe or likombe of the Bolongote tree.

285 One or two women together braid the mats on the flat ground. The names of the mats are as follows.

[435] 1. Efonzolo, the roughly finished mat (value, five mitakos).
2. Nkongōle, the finely braided mat (value, half a franc).
3. Itundō or lofole, the little mat with which the dirt from the road and the ashes from the fire are carried away.
4. Ifefa, the little mat used to fan the fire.

A. Th. Gutersohn,
Priest of St. Joseph's Congregation.
(Mill-Hill).

224 absolute and inescapable necessity for those tribes who have Batswá, since the latter provide them with a certain amount of the necessary meat, though in insufficient quantity. The people hunt in groups and individually -- in the latter case primarily by means of traps. Fishing with nets is also very widespread, although various other methods are also known. The picking of fruit, caterpillars, mush-
222 rooms, vegetables, etc. continues to be popular.

● 463 Among trades, that of the smith is foremost. However, iron casting has been abandoned at the present time. Copper is brought in from other peoples by tribes serving as intermediaries. Wood sculpture is rapidly disappearing. Basketry [12] remains popular.
[286] Weaving no longer exists at the present time; in fact, looms can no longer be found in the region.

593x The family is patriarchal and the political organization corresponds to it; there are only heads of families. Indeed, among the Nkundó the family is the complete nucleus and foundation of the society. The result is a democratic and oligarchic government, but one very different from any we would call by that name in Europe.
554 Certain men become prominent because of their intelligence, their eloquence, their bravery, or their wealth, having great influence and often giving the appearance of chiefs whose authority extends beyond their own clan, but none of them has ever founded an empire. In the past the Bongili were the most courageous tribe, and the one most feared. Besides, their geographic location was in their favor, as they had the Lifumba and the Bombomba, two sister tribes, on each side of them.

[517]
538 The artistic tastes of the Nkundó are directed chiefly toward music and the dance. Their oral literature is also very rich; it includes, for example, the epic of Nsongó and Lianja (1) and that of the tortoise.

---

1. The most important portions of this epic have been translated and published by Father Boelaert, M.S.C., in Congo, 1934, Vol. 1, pp. 49 and 197.

463 Division of labor is unknown, and each person works entirely on his own, without the help of a middleman. There are no laborers [177] and certainly no artisans unless there happens to be some artisan or other who learned his trade under the government or at one or other of the Mission posts and has returned to his village after having completed his contract.

As a rule, such people do not find sufficient work in their own villages, and, as they are usually in possession of a few boxes, clothes, and pots and pans which they have acquired with the savings of their monthly salary, they play the grand gentleman in their village until their goods and chattels have been used up and worn out.

"Njolemwa Bosala," he says, "I am tired of work." "Njowa l'ompele," "I am dying of the heavy, difficult work."

Several of them there return to one or the other of the centers of the White settlers and again offer themselves as craftsmen.

554 A good craftsman has a high reputation among the natives, and his social position is even a very good one for a Negro. He is able regularly to supply food for his wife and children and also to get himself clothes.

326 Although most Negroes work individually, this is not true of the smith who has to have helpers in order to do his job.

465 436 Since the Mongo Negro knows nothing of wages, his helpers get part of the income, consisting of mitako [a kind of metal currency] or some part of the work that has been done, either a knife or a lance, or a foot or arm ring.

I. THE SMITH'S TRADE.

326 554 Of the various industrial trades, that of the smith is certainly the first in rank. The smith is one of the leading people [94] in the village and one of the inevitable persons to have a decisive voice in village affairs whether in settling differences or in meetings.

In fact, the smith is the only one of the Mongo Negroes who works regularly and does not rest on his oars. From what he earns he is able to buy quite a number of wives, and he is regarded as one of the village heads whose wishes must be consulted.

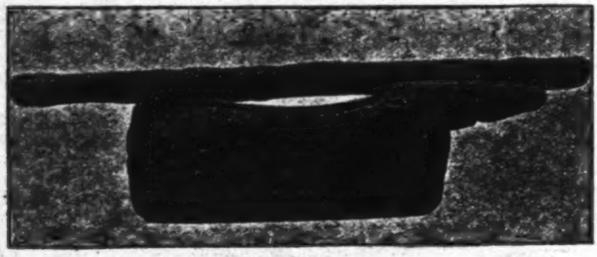
We did not find this particular kind of pottery beyond the 415
Batete area. The Ipanga-Yaelima, as well as the Basongo-Meno
and Bankutshu, do not seem to be aware of its existence and, in
any case, do not use it. [136]

I come now to the important subject of palm oil. We have 262
already noted how frequently the native housewife uses it in preparing
meals. This oil takes the place of the butter and fats used
in European cooking. Gathering the clusters of palm nuts and 249
making the oil are very important among all the tribes.

The remarks of Mr. Engels on this subject in his work on the Wangata [Ngata] are applicable to all the peoples we visited.

In each village one or several natives chosen from the 249
nimblest and most daring (the local daredevils) specialize in 464
gathering the clusters from the palm trees. They do this not only
for themselves, but also for others for a slight fee.

Gathering these clusters is always somewhat dangerous. The 249
native must climb to the top of palm trees which are sometimes 481
20 to 25 meters high and, once there, must work hard to disentangle and sever the cluster.



[412]

Fig. 78. Mortar and Pestle for Preparing Vegetables and Palm Oil.

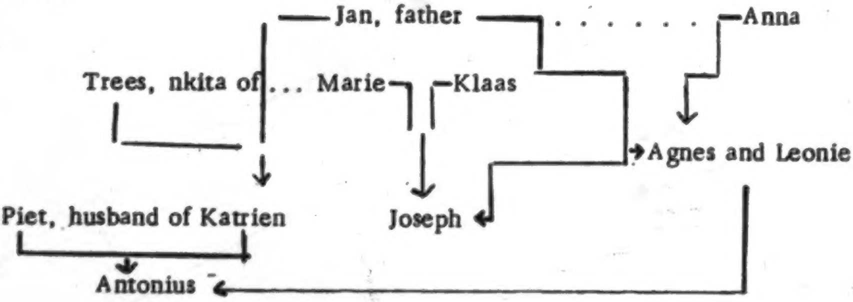
The method of climbing varies according to the height of the palm trees. We noted two different procedures among all the tribes visited (see Fig. 77). [137]

If the palm tree is not high, the native climbs to the cluster by using the stubs of cut stems as steps. If the tree is very high, the native uses a rattan belt which encircles both man and tree trunk.

Nothing is more interesting than to watch a native climb up to the crown of a palm tree. He does it with truly extraordinary

583 searching for old disputes and old arguments about wives to get a wife.
604 And then they were still not always successful; their youth itself was
against them here and robbed them constantly of the little that they
464 had saved for that purpose. The means for getting money, such as
lances, knives, arm and foot bands, were extremely scarce. The
Blacks do not know of workers or servants, and if one of those poor
souls presented himself at the home of one who was better endowed by
fortune and offered to chop wood for him, to lay out a manioc field,
or to build a house for him, to gather straw and bamboo in the forest
for that purpose, then the inborn laziness of the Negro would require
long months to complete that work. As salary, the worker received
only a few bakonga (copper arm of leg bands); these he already owed
to the owner for having shown too much inclination for one or another of
his wives. The result of this was that many young men remained with-
589 out a wife and that those who were favored by chance, that is to say,
595 had many children of the female sex in their family, each had several
562 wives. I consider this a primary cause of polygyny. The woman had a
relatively high monetary value and represented capital. Thus, it did
not happen that anyone gave his daughter or sister to another for
nothing, just as among us it does not happen that a farmer gives his
cow or horse to a poor devil for nothing.

583 If the father or brother sold a daughter born of the nkita of his
daughter or sister -- a right that general custom gave him and which
604 usually occurred, since the children of the female sex were sold very
603 young and the boys, the rightful claimants or owners, in that case were
still very young -- this was done in order to buy another wife. The rights
of the children shifted then as follows:
[338]



583x of our peoples. Its pure and simple abolition would upset their established order completely. First their mentality has to change, and
182 that end can be accomplished only gradually, since a moral change is involved. And the present state of these peoples is not sufficiently evolved for the abolition of the bride price to be beneficial. Here, if ever, the axiom: nihil leges sine moribus is valid.

000 But what might perhaps be done in that direction now is to place a limitation on the amount of the bride price. This measure should be strictly enforced to make sure that it is carried out -- although in practice its enforcement would be very difficult, for at the beginning [180], many interested parties would try to circumvent it. If good results are to be obtained, an efficacious repression of adultery and the frequency of divorce should accompany the limitation on the bride price. It would be a first step towards the ideal. Others could follow according to the extent of the natives' evolution toward a higher level of morality.

Apropos of these considerations we should like to say a few words concerning:

583x 3. Traffic in bride prices
177

This term may be taken to mean two different things. It may be used to refer to a general increase in the amount of the bride price, which has reached enormous proportions since the European penetration of the area. Or it may refer to the increase in the bride price of a single woman for successive marriages, from which her family profits.

The first meaning of the term refers to a fact, namely that the amount of the bride price has increased considerably. The reason for this development is the increase in material wealth resulting from colonization. Riches are more easily acquired. But we should not exclude the role of the greed of many parents, which has also increased. It is the most important and can reach scandalous proportions in areas where the bride price is paid in European goods (money, fabrics, appliances, utensils); in such regions, as for
177 example among the riverain people of the Lower Congo, it goes up
583x to and easily exceeds 2,000 francs. Think of what this amount
465 represents, especially in times of economic depression. (1)
435

---

1. For the sake of comparison, here are some average figures for 1934:

589x
177
[465]
[435]

Wages	fr. 20.00 to 25.00
Copal, per kilogram . . .	0.50 to 0.70
Palmettos	0.10 to 0.20
Palm nuts	0.05 to 0.10

Inevitably the action of one man leads another to follow suit for -- need I repeat? -- everything is interdependent.

Another reason may be, and sometimes is, involved. It is the desire [181] of a husband to bind a woman more securely to him by paying a lot for her. This is certainly a praiseworthy feeling, especially considering the women's readiness to resort to divorce. Its practice, however, is full of dangers. If it is limited to an isolated case, that is, to a single monogamist who gives his entire fortune for his only wife, the danger is minimal. Such is the case of one of our catechists who paid an enormous amount, without its having the slightest repercussion on his region. But the danger is very great if a man does this to establish a harem, especially if for that purpose he entices the wives of others. Thus, for instance, a man to whom the administration gave great political powers caused a fantastic increase in the general bride price among the Ekonda of the north. (1)

1. One factor which helped increase the bride price among the Wangata and other tribes in the vicinity of Coquilhatville has been described by Father Kaptein in Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 544. Since his study is written in Dutch, I think it would be useful if I translated the whole text here:

"When the first Europeans arrived at Leopoldville and Brazzaville, fabrics and other European articles soon made their appearance in Coquilhatville. The chiefs Yoma of Boyeka, Ibuka of Boyere (Boyela), Yamba of Eala; Nkake of Bokele, etc., went up the Tshuapa and Ikelemba rivers and, by means of these goods, bought slaves, women, and ivory.

463 Division of labor is unknown, and each person works entirely on his own, without the help of a middleman. There are no laborers [177] and certainly no artisans unless there happens to be some artisan or other who learned his trade under the government or at one or other of the Mission posts and has returned to his village after having completed his contract.

As a rule, such people do not find sufficient work in their own villages, and, as they are usually in possession of a few boxes, clothes, and pots and pans which they have acquired with the savings of their monthly salary, they play the grand gentleman in their village until their goods and chattels have been used up and worn out.

"Njolemwa Bosala," he says, "I am tired of work." "Njowa l'ompele," "I am dying of the heavy, difficult work."

Several of them there return to one or the other of the centers of the White settlers and again offer themselves as craftsmen.

554 A good craftsman has a high reputation among the natives, and his social position is even a very good one for a Negro. He is able regularly to supply food for his wife and children and also to get himself clothes.

326 Although most Negroes work individually, this is not true of the smith who has to have helpers in order to do his job.

●465 Since the Mongo Negro knows nothing of wages, his helpers get part of the income, consisting of mitako [a kind of metal currency]
436 or some part of the work that has been done, either a knife or a lance, or a foot or arm ring.

I. THE SMITH'S TRADE.

326
554 Of the various industrial trades, that of the smith is certainly the first in rank. The smith is one of the leading people [94] in the village and one of the inevitable persons to have a decisive voice in village affairs whether in settling differences or in meetings.

In fact, the smith is the only one of the Mongo Negroes who works regularly and does not rest on his oars. From what he earns he is able to buy quite a number of wives, and he is regarded as one of the village heads whose wishes must be consulted.

000 [547] Unfortunately the system was not continued. Also, it must not be said that it would be unjust to lower the price of the women. Rather, injustice would thus be redressed, a degenerate custom be improved. Through the present system, ever more injustice is committed and suffered.

583 595 A few polygynists would suffer some material loss through the lowering of the price of the women, namely, by receiving less for one woman than they (sometimes) paid for them, for they inherited most of the women. But they are also the ones who are responsible for the irregular situation. In a large part of the district, the polygynists are by far the minority of the population. They are the ones who are hostile to the Colonial Administration. They are in possession of the women and have a monopoly on them. They fix prices which a young man can almost never pay, namely, two nkesi at least.

583 The difficulties for Christian marriages become daily still more difficult. This is true for the marriages already entered into and for the future marriages.

583 428 426 [465 511] The bride price to be paid for the wife ought to be such that every young man can pay that sum with his own money, with the money that he has earned himself by his work. This sum cannot be high, for the ordinary working man in the Congo, who makes up the large part of the population, does not earn much more than what he needs for board and clothing. Therefore to pay an excessively large sum as a bride price forces him to borrow and to run up debts among his relatives and friends. The result of this is that the system of the Nkita goes over unnoticed into the Christian marriages, and the woman remains an object for inheritance. Indeed, when the man dies the creditors will come, namely, those who have loaned him money -- and demand the wife. The disputes over the bride price then begin anew, and they will again give the wife in marriage in return for a new bride price. Thus, there is no end to it. The wife, the mother, will never achieve any rights but will always remain an object of inheritance. There has been talk about declaring the widow free at the death of her husband in order to prevent the inheriting of wives, but how will it be possible to [548] achieve that if the bride price is not lessened, considerably lessened? When a

428
589x
587 against eɔ́to ɛ́â ntsína, "relative of the base," therefore a close relative.

431 he must not only bring bekooli to the woman's parents but also give a bompɛ́ngɛ́ called nsǎsangɔ́ or bosangɔ́jwɛ́ a goat, a dog, or 5 to 10 copper rings, depending on the circumstances) to the heir. This is not part of the bride price, which is a payment to the woman's family. It is a gift intended to assuage the feelings of the heir and to secure or strengthen his good will. It is equivalent to a request for permission to cohabit with this woman and to profit by her work.

428
587 Thus we must distinguish between two types of marriage by inheritance:

1) The new husband and heir belongs to the immediate family of the deceased; he is eɔ́to ɛ́â ntsína -- a son, brother, uncle, nephew, or cousin.

2) The new husband and heir is distantly related; he is eɔ́to ɛ́â nsɔ́ngɛ́.

In the first instance the marriage is considered fairly stable and difficult to break, but nevertheless more easily dissolved than a marriage by nkumbɔ́. With how much difficulty it is dissolved depends on the degree of kinship. The reason given by the Nkundɔ́ for the greater ease with which such a marriage is broken is that the heir-husband did not himself pay the bride price; he only received the woman from someone else. Thus, if he no longer wants her, he justifies sending her away by saying, "It was not I personally who paid your bride price." For her part, the woman will invoke the same reason, mutatis mutandis. In all other respects the union is like a marriage by nkumbɔ́. Therefore, [192] when the woman leaves her husband the term kɔ́fa is used here as in the case of a marriage by nkumbɔ́.

428
587
471 The second type of marriage by inheritance is clearly different from the first. The new husband is not a husband from the legal standpoint; he is only a husband in the improper sense, physically. In spite of the nsǎsangɔ́ paid by the common-law husband, the legitimate heirs, hence the close kin of the deceased, especially the relative who was entitled to the woman and to whom she was given when the

471 587 428 inheritance was divided, remain her masters. This is apparent from all the consequences resulting from the situation:

1) Children born of the union belong, not to their natural father, but to the owners of the woman, the bankɔ́lɔ́. They are the ones who will eventually consent to the children's marriages and receive their bride prices. They alone have the right to give the children a name. [553]

2) The man functioning as husband has only partial rights to the results of the woman's activities. Thus, if she finds a treasure buried in her field, captures a fleeing slave, or finds any valuable object that has been abandoned or lost and whose owner is not known, such as, for example, rings, objects of worked metal, elephant tusks, etc., these will not belong to her husband, as they would in a marriage by nkumbɔ́, but to the masters. The latter are also entitled to a part of the fruits of her labor: fish, caterpillars, and even food she has prepared.

3) If, on some occasion or other, the new husband wishes to make a gift or a payment to the woman's family, he has to request the intervention of the husband-owner. He therefore asks the latter to accompany him, saying: ɔ́ndakɛ́ likilɔ́, "make me acquainted with my parents-in-law; introduce me to them." They go there with the ndonga.

428 587 It may even happen that the bosɔ́ngo has not been paid yet and that the common-law husband has the slave [193] or the equivalent valuables needed for the payment. With the permission of the owner and accompanied by the ndonga he may make this payment. Nevertheless, he obtains no additional rights over the woman.

If one day the woman returns to the immediate family of the deceased, who are her "masters," the latter must make restitution to the common-law husband for these supplementary valuables and for all the payments he has made. If any stranger marries her by nkumbɔ́, the entire bride price is returned to the heirs of the deceased, who must reimburse the man who has acted as her husband for all the bride-price payments he has made.

M 422 562 [Ed., an example given by the author, from the third paragraph, page 111, through the fifth paragraph, page 114, is not translated.]

[114] This clearly shows that the proceeds from the sale of salt, the property of the woman, belong in equal shares to the husband and wife: to the woman because of her work, to the man because of his trouble and travel to put the product on sale.

Among the Wadia, Tumba, Bobaie, Basakata, and Balesa, I had the opportunity to observe the same fact. As long as the woman herself goes to sell her part of the communally made salt, she keeps all the proceeds of the exchange, but according to native custom, when the husband is entrusted with the sale, he is entitled to part of the proceeds.

5 [258]

Fig. 64. Evaporation of Water Saturated with Salt, among the Basakata.

M 454 562 422 The proceeds, however, are not divided immediately after the sale. The total sum is put in a safe place, a hiding place known to both husband and wife. The couple accumulates the mitakos [Ed., a kind of metal currency]; they hoard them until the day when they both agree to divide them. Custom gives one quarter to the man and three quarters to the woman. [115]

M 258 ● 476 This custom does not exist among the tribes east of the Balesa. Salt grass cannot be gathered there, because it is very sparse in the region. The trunks of banana and palm trees and the

258 476 flowers of palm trees are not sufficiently abundant to permit exploitation on a large scale. The women scarcely manage to gather enough material to make the salt needed for everyday life. The whole village takes part in the harvest. The incineration and extraction of the salt is done in the village by the process we have just described, but the product is divided among all the families in proportion to the number of their respective members. The quantity available is usually so small that it is barely sufficient for daily needs; hence the value of salt here is notably higher than among the peoples of the regions where salt grass is abundant. [Ed., the text is not translated from the second paragraph, page 115, to the end of the section, page 118.]

[115]

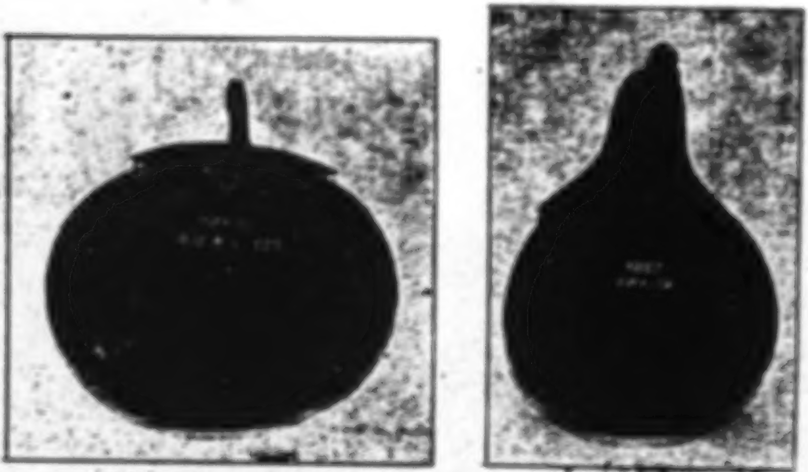


Fig. 66. Calabashes for Salt, Lake Leopold II.

[118] Preparation of Food

262 Manioc may be regarded as the principal food, the dietary staple of all the peoples in the region visited.

From the Bateke of Leopoldville to the Baskutshu of Bena Dibele-Kole, [119] all the tribes cultivate manioc, gather the tubers, soak them, and extract the flour with which they make chikwangue.

[98]

II CARPENTRY.

335 Carpentry plays an important part in the life of the Mongo Negro. The primitive utensils in his house as well as his canoe and his lokole (the Negro telephone with which he spreads his thoughts from village to village) are made of wood.

The making of the canoe and the lokole takes a great deal of work.

The Canoe.

313
316 The following three kinds of wood, namely, (1) Bokeswa, (2) Lifake, (3) Bomposo, make a good canoe, especially Bokeswa. This tree is much sought after because its wood makes a strong, light canoe.

The Negro who wants a canoe goes into the forest, picks out a nice slender tree, brings out his axe, and fells at his leisure the tree he has chosen. He hacks off the unnecessary branches and hollows the tree out in the rough form of the canoe. (Aulema watu: he shapes the canoe.)

● [474] He calls some of his friends together, and they proceed, for payment, of course (nothing for nothing, says the Negro), to hollow out the tree.

316 When they have finished hollowing out the tree, the owner of the canoe calls the wongiwa biatu, the proper canoe maker, a heavy man and one of some account among his fellow villagers. This wongiwa biatu gives a nice, slender form to the canoe with his axe, planes it off nicely, and with the help of the esuwa, a small axe, marks off the edge of the canoe with sharp, short, regular grooves.

413
476 Often the Negroes make their canoes hours away from the nearest water. In order to transport it, they place sticks on the ground and draw the canoe over them. In addition to a number of strong men, all the spes patriae [hope of the fatherland] of the village help with this task. They get a mitako as a reward and feel themselves on top of the world.

316
476 The canoe maker is well paid, the price reckoned according to the size of the canoe. Several dogs are slaughtered at the expense of

396 the owner, and everyone who has helped gets his share according to
476 the amount of work he has done. [99] Frequently a big sugar-cane
[273] beer spree is started, where disgusting scenes often take place until finally the drunken men are taken home by their wives. In civilized Europe it is sometimes not much better.

501 Boats are made just large enough for two men, as well as others sufficient for a hundred or even a hundred and fifty men. The big war canoes of the great chief Evoloko of Waka and of the former chief of Bandaka, a certain Isaempoko, are known throughout the region. The war canoe of the latter was said to hold a hundred and fifty men, and the edge of this canoe to reach up to the shoulders of a fairly tall Negro. The ordinary canoe in which Whites travel is, as a rule, sufficiently large for twenty to thirty oarsmen.

435 The prices of canoes vary, according to size and strength, from 200 to 10,000 mitako.

The Lokole

202 The lokole plays a very large part in the life of the Negro. Without the lokole, the life of the Negro would be inconceivable.

The lokole can be best described as the public telephone with which the Negro makes his thoughts known publicly from village to village.

The lokole is to the Negro what the trumpet signal is to the soldier.

The lokole calls the men to meetings, to war, and to the hunt; the lokole calls all the people, great and small, to the dance. During the dance it is the loyal accompanist until deep in the night; its monotonous sound brings the enthusiasm of the dancers almost to the point of frenzy.

The Negro telephones his friends at great distances and explains what he wants. If two Negroes from the same village or from different villages have a quarrel, they abuse each other over the lokole, and the whole world is kept fully up-to-date on the details of the dispute. Each one tries to blacken the reputation of the other in the eyes of the other villagers. If someone dies in the village, it is proclaimed everywhere the whole night through, by means of the lokole, that

415 251 products to be dried are not exposed to heavy smoke, but to a small fire of very dry wood producing a low, hot flame, or, if possible, to the heat given off by a glowing bed of charcoal.

When completely prepared, protected, and wrapped in leaves, the chikwangue are laid above the kenge for six to eight hours, while the housewife maintains a charcoal fire underneath. When dried and smoked in this way, the chikwangue keep a very long time.

Lacking a kenge, a woman sometimes uses a pottery vessel with a flat bottom, pierced with small holes, and vertical sides.

[481]

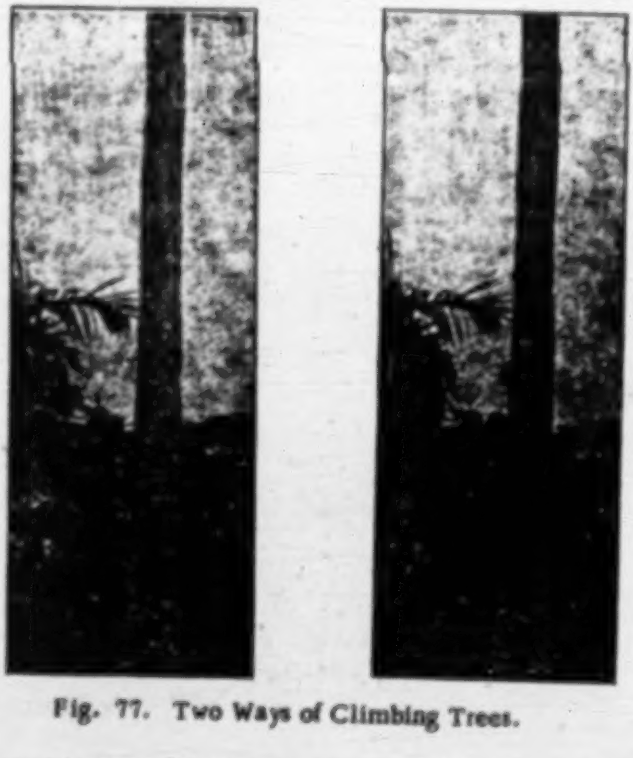


Fig. 77. Two Ways of Climbing Trees.

This fits on top of an old chikwangue pot, mpoko-kepinga, whose bottom has been broken.

The mpoko-kepinga is placed over the fire. The woman seals the juncture between the mpoko-kepinga and the kenge with the pierced bottom, using a paste of clay and potter's earth.

We did not find this particular kind of pottery beyond the 415
Batete area. The Ipanga-Yaelima, as well as the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu, do not seem to be aware of its existence and, in any case, do not use it. [136]

I come now to the important subject of palm oil. We have 262
already noted how frequently the native housewife uses it in preparing meals. This oil takes the place of the butter and fats used
in European cooking. Gathering the clusters of palm nuts and 249
making the oil are very important among all the tribes.

The remarks of Mr. Engels on this subject in his work on the Wangata [Ngata] are applicable to all the peoples we visited.

In each village one or several natives chosen from the 249
nimblest and most daring (the local daredevils) specialize in 464
gathering the clusters from the palm trees. They do this not only for themselves, but also for others for a slight fee.

Gathering these clusters is always somewhat dangerous. The 249
native must climb to the top of palm trees which are sometimes 181●

[412]

Fig. 78. Mortar and Pestle for Preparing Vegetables and Palm Oil.

20 to 25 meters high and, once there, must work hard to disentangle and sever the cluster.

The method of climbing varies according to the height of the palm trees. We noted two different procedures among all the tribes visited (see Fig. 77). [137]

If the palm tree is not high, the native climbs to the cluster by using the stubs of cut stems as steps. If the tree is very high, the native uses a rattan belt which encircles both man and tree trunk.

Nothing is more interesting than to watch a native climb up to the crown of a palm tree. He does it with truly extraordinary

249 skill and speed. Supported by his belt, with his feet propped
481 against the tree trunk, he proceeds quickly by small bounds, moving the belt constantly upward. Upon reaching the root of the cluster, he stands erect or sits on one of the leaves, and with a hatchet or knife he frees the cluster, cuts it, and lets it fall to the foot of the tree. The women collect the nuts, pull off those still attached to the cluster, clean them very carefully, and carry them to the village.

252 According to whether the housewife wants to make a small or large amount of palm oil, she proceeds in one of two ways.

In the first case, she throws a few palm nuts into an earthenware vessel half full of water and puts them on the fire to boil for a good hour. When the outer part is soft, she pours off the water and puts the nuts in a small wooden mortar in order to separate the pulp from the kernels. For this purpose, she avails herself of the mortar and wooden pestle used in preparing vegetables. When the outer part is completely separated from the nut, the woman takes it and extracts the juice by squeezing it tightly in her hands. The kernels are discarded.

Fig. 79. Installation for Making Palm Oil.

In the second case, each village has a special installation for making palm oil. This very primitive factory usually stands slightly apart from the dwellings. Everyone has access to it, and it belongs to the entire community, but each family uses it individually.

000 point to bathe in it and to refresh themselves. [146]

273 In addition to water which is the customary drink of all the tribes, we found the following beverages according to region: palm wine, malafu; sugarcane beer, masanga; and pombe, maize beer.

[415
284]

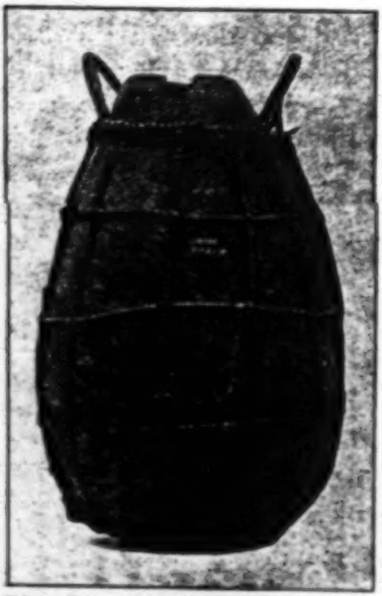


Fig. 84. Calabash for Palm Oil, also for Water.

Palm wine, the native malafu, although liked, is usually not very much in demand, especially when the native can replace it with masanga, sugar-cane beer. We found it among all the peoples, however, although actually only the Ipanga-Yaelima and the Basongo Meno-Bankutu drink it regularly.

[432] In the other regions palm wine is made particularly in the villages near government posts or commercial establishments for the benefit of the Whites. These villages usually have a professional vintager.

The vintage comes from tapping the trees. The mese palm, raffia, and the oil palm are chiefly used.

273
241 The native has three methods of climbing the trees for the vintage. The first is the one we described for gathering clusters

of the palm nuts; the second one consists of leaning a pole-ladder 273 against the palm or fastening rungs to the trunk itself; the third 481 is to dig holes in the trunk to serve as steps. The native climbs to the crown and cuts a palm leaf just below the terminal bud. He digs a rather deep opening in the wound and plants a palm leaflet in it to serve as a channeling trough. At the other end of this trough, the native fastens a calabash. The palm sap fills the hole and flows slowly [147] down the trough into the calabash. The native comes to collect it early in the morning.

When fresh, this wine seemed delicious to me; fermented, 273 I found it undrinkable!

The natives, on the other hand, went only after it has fermented for three or four days.

Another method, simpler but less profitable, is to cut down the palm tree, lop off the crown, and gather the sap that flows out. Used in this way, a palm tree may yield, at most, 10 to 15 liters of wine and is permanently destroyed. The wine, moreover, is of a decidedly inferior quality. A native would never dare offer it to the head of a post.

Fig. 85. Masanga Brewery, Basakata.

Sugar-cane beer, the native masanga, is the drink most in demand.

In certain regions, notably among the Basakata-Balesa, we found one or two large establishments for making beer in each village. These breweries are located a little outside the village. The equipment is very rudimentary. It consists of a large, cleared space with the ground well beaten, a straw roof sheltering

624 customary manner, with a double clap. They are told by the *nkumu* to repeat the
salutation, and having done so may be asked to do it a third time. They are then
576 given a few rods in payment. If the *nkumu* sees some member of his own *ekopo*
coming to greet him, he gives him special honour by ordering him to lie flat on his
back instead of merely sitting, and at the end he gives him a larger gift of rods than
the others receive. In this way the *nkumu* may pay out a great many rods to those
who thus render him homage. Ordinarily a man will receive five or six, but one
624 specially honoured may be given as many as twenty. From the beginning the *nkumu*
has to pay heavily for his honours, and only a wealthy man can hope to attain them.
[556] For this reason a lawful successor, if not wealthy, may be glad to give up his rights
to another more fortunate member of the *ekopo*. Homage having been paid, word is
sent out that the *nkumu* is about to come forth, and crowds begin to gather. A coat
[302] of red camwood powder mixed with oil is smeared over the *nkumu*, the brass plates
are attached to his *montolo*, and he is attired in all his finery. The crowd outside
dances, and when tired sits on the ground to await the rest of the ceremony. Inside,
[533] the *lokombi* begins to play, the *nyembe* to sing, and the Batwa *ntotii* to praise the
nkumu by uttering an ululating sound. Accompanied by *Nsomo*, *Bilepo*, and the
maomi, the *nkumu* himself begins to dance. The temporary protecting screen round
the *ipana* is pulled down, and he is seen by all. After his dance he retires again and
the crowd disperses.

When *Nkema Akuke* becomes *nkumu* he changes everything possible so as to
[481] become different from other men. Thus he assumes a different gait, a sort of bow-legged waddle, a different tone of voice, and it seems that under this influence even
his facial features undergo a change. Accompanied by his retinue, he visits the
various villages where he has friends and relatives in order to greet them. This over,
the musicians wish to take their departure and are paid for their services by
the *nkumu*.

624 At the conclusion of these ceremonies the *nkumu* with his *ekopo* and the *molembe*
negotiate concerning their obligations to one another. If the *nkumu* is the first of his
596 line, he and his *ekopo* are given land to cultivate, while succeeding *nkumu* simply take
over the land originally accorded. The *molembe* call their *nkumu* their wife, and they
621 designate themselves husband. They thus reckon the relationship between *molembe*
and *ekopo* to be that of husband and wife, and, as in an actual marriage, there must
be an interchange of obligations performed in a spirit of harmony. Also, as in
marriage a wife may be divorced, so an *nkumu* with his *ekopo* could be sent off to their
home and the arrangement terminated. It not infrequently happened that as strangers
the *ekopo* fell out with their hosts and if such a disagreement could not be righted
they might be refunded the payments with which they had purchased their rights,
and sent off home.

224 Among the reciprocal obligations of *molembe* and *ekopo* are included the sharing
of certain animals and birds killed in the hunt, among which are the leopard and
624 elephant. All killed, whether male or female, must be divided. Of certain other
animals, including the wild pig, antelope, and buffalo, if a female, no portion is given,
621 if a male, the required portion is presented. These reciprocal obligations are limited
596 strictly to the *ekopo* and *molembe*; if others outside of these groups wish to present the
nkumu with meat to honour him or to curry favour, they may do so, but they are under

624 An *nkumu* can never walk alone, but must always be accompanied by others, and
on no occasion whatsoever may he run. Even though he never washes, if he is out
[487] in the rain and sees everybody else hurrying for shelter, he will not quicken his pace.
[513] His movements must be slow and deliberate. The *nkumu* never sleeps alone; waking
and sleeping he is attended by someone. But apart from this he is free to go where he
wishes. The *nkumu* is not indiscriminate, as others may be, in his private habits, but
[514] must use his own latrine at all times, and if travelling must have his own latrine in
each place where he stays. The inland *nkumu* frequently take advantage of this custom
[556] by hiding their accumulated brass rods at the bottom of a freshly dug latrine. Such
hidden wealth will be acquired by an inheritor at the decease of the *nkumu*.

In speaking of himself the *nkumu* never refers to himself by his title but always by his own name.

624 The couch upon which the *nkumu* sits or reclines during the daytime may not be
shared indiscriminately with others, but those permitted to sit upon it at the same
352 time as the *nkumu* are *maomi*, women, and Batwa. The reservation of this couch for
[562 the use of the *nkumu* is not surprising, but the exceptions are. One explanation given
563] was that women and Batwa are not *bato ba zee*, persons in particular; they do not
count for anything in the social life of the community; they are not really 'people'.
[672] Another explanation was that they do not pay fines, this being tantamount to saying
that they are exempt from laws and therefore cannot break laws even by doing what
would be for others an illegal act. The stool of the *nkumu*, however, has closer
restrictions in the manner of its use. Besides the *nkumu* only two others may sit upon
it, *Nsono* and *Mpenge*. It is always carried by one of his wives, though not necessarily
by any special one.

624 The restrictions concerning the food of the *nkumu* are many. He may eat food
only in his own house, or, if on a journey, in one given over for his use. He may not
262 enter another house to partake of food even if invited to do so. Likewise the *nkumu*
may not eat in the forest, or eat or drink anywhere along the road when on a journey,
but must wait until he arrives at a village and has a house at his disposal in order to
partake of food and drink. He never 'sleeps with hunger'; even if a wife or child
should die causing him great sorrow he must partake of food before going to sleep.
[765] The Bonginda *nkumu* must never go into mourning, and death must be ignored by
them, but the inland *nkumu* are permitted to mourn. All food carried to an *nkumu*
must be covered, this rule even applying to water. Food must not be placed in a
basket with high sides (*eboko*), but in a shallow one (*moyala*), and no food that has
been kept overnight in a pot may be eaten by him: swelling of the abdomen will
result. Various foods are taboo, among these all fast-moving snakes, though slow-
[824] moving ones may be eaten; light-coloured palm-nuts may not be eaten, and a variety
of yam known as *menkiki* is shunned, for it is with the tough stems of the *menkiki*
that the dying body of the *nkumu* will be bound to ensure the sitting posture necessary
for burial.

624 Among regulations roughly classed as social, we have already covered several in
references above, and have referred to the *nkumu* in council. It may be added here that
[623] he is expected to agree with the majority of the councillors and not fall out with them.
The rules affecting the *nongo* of the *nkumu* are accompanied by severe penalties. There
[689] must not be any fighting; if anger is aroused to the point of blows the antagonists

482

Fig. 1. En Route in the Bush and Savanna of the Lukenie.

000

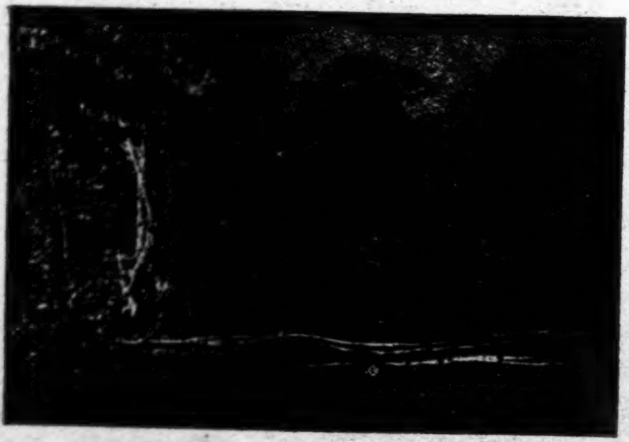


Fig. 2. In the Equatorial Forest.

Yaelima

764 At the village of Tik-ke-Tik in Yaelima territory, we witnessed a similar scene following the death of a young man.

At nightfall his body was wrapped in mats or rattan splints,
solidly plaited, tied up, and completely sealed. At dawn the
[482] mortuary bundle, attached to a strong branch, was lifted by two
men. Instead of taking the village lane, they carried the corpse
behind the hut and then through the bush. A few men walking
Indian file made up the procession, at the end of which was the mother of the deceased in mourning costume. The path they followed was quite irregular. Largely avoiding the trodden paths, the bearers often retraced their steps and took almost two hours to reach the cemetery, four kilometers from the village.

[142
291
301
516]

Fig. 12. Mother and Child, Bankutshu Tribe.

764 761 On the way back, the natives explained to me that the numerous turns and the walk through untrodden bush were meant to lead astray the evil spirit who had entered the village and killed the

262 The natives are familiar with two kinds of manioc, sweet and bitter.

Sweet manioc is not highly valued, owing to its insipid taste and the poor consistency of the chikwangue made from it.

252 Aside from the soaking, which is done only for bitter manioc, chikwangue is prepared in the same way whether the flour comes from sweet or bitter manioc.

The first harvest of manioc tubers takes place eight to ten months after planting. The natives, however, do not begin [462] harvesting them in earnest until the second year. Only the woman does this work.

● [482] The manioc tubers are piled in large baskets carried on the back and taken to the soaking well, a pond of putrid, dirty, muddy water giving off a highly unpleasant odor of putrefaction and fermentation, which is reserved for this task.

252 462 The manioc roots remain submerged from five to eight days to make them ferment and thus eliminate their bitter taste. At the end of this period the woman returns to the pond, tucks up her primitive loincloth as high as possible and enters the swamp. She sinks in up to her knees, and plunging her hands and arms into the mire, she pulls out the roots one by one and throws them on the bank. When her supply seems sufficient, she piles the roots in her basket and goes to wash them in the river. Returning to the village, she cuts the tubers, lets them dry a little in the sun, and then peels them. The Bakete, Banfumungu, and all the tribes of the Fimi-Lake Leopold II-Lukenie region, up to the boundaries of Bobaie and Balesa territory, chop the pieces of manioc root before reducing them to flour, while the Ipanga, Batitu, Yaelima and Bokala crush them between the fingers before throwing them between the fingers before throwing them in the mortar.

412 The chikwangue knife has a double-edged blade, a median rib, and a long, relatively broad oval form. It is pointed at both ends. One of these ends is [120] embedded in a wooden handle with a doubly concave vertical section.

The museum [Ed., Museum of the Belgian Congo] now has only two of these knives, but they are found in every native hut in the Kasai-Fimi-Lukenie region up to the Oshwe sector. It is, however, almost impossible to buy them from the natives. A woman, unable to do without her chikwangue knife a single day

276 842 According to native belief, the kola nut ensures the fertility of a woman if sexual relations take place the night after the man has used this stimulant.

276 The regular use of kola induces very intense nervous excitement. We noticed that the adolescents and men in their prime scarcely use it. Only the old people use it regularly. Kakua, the old native chief, chewed it from morning to night. One day I pointed this out to him, asking if he were not afraid of the dangerous effects of this overindulgence. He proudly pointed out to me the huts of his seven wives, saying, "Ask them if they don't have children!"

276 263 278 Among the stimulants we may also mention the peanut, widely used by all the tribes, a type of small ground pea, and certain tree roots known to the natives but the exact nature of which we unfortunately could not determine. It is well to note, moreover, that most of the natives use the stimulants as medicaments as well as condiments. They are used for intestinal pains, colic, and as purgatives.

462 252 In all the tribes the preparation of food and meals is exclusively the task of women. They always do it with great care. [142]

252 The kitchen, if it can be called one, is always very simple. If the weather is good, cooking is done in the open in the middle of the village, in front of the hut or behind it, 462 313 and very often in the shade of the banana trees. If the weather is rainy or cold, the women prepares the meals inside the hut. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

Fig. 81. Carrying Firewood.

264 [415] spherical calotte, and also wooden plates. Sometimes also simple leaves are used as plates, unless the food is served in the cooking pots.

The whole meal is spread on the ground. [144]

The man squats on his mat and dips leisurely in the dishes with his hand, moving from one to another according to his taste.

[522] The meal is always eaten in silence. Even when several friends eat together, they never talk during the meal.

After the meal the natives carefully wash their hands and teeth and rinse out their mouths several times.

Beverages

271 415 Water is the only beverage they drink at mealtime, and they use it quite rarely. If they do not have a wooden or earthenware cup, they use part of a calabash or simply a leaf rolled into a little cone.

312 462 857 ● 482 Water usually comes from a spring near the village. The natives use river water only when it is quite clear. The women and children have the task of fetching water, a chore which is often quite hard. I visited many villages located along or near the river, whose source of drinking water was 20 to 30 minutes away.

At certain hours of the day and more especially in the morning as the sun first comes up, the women and children set out, a calabash or water jug balanced on their heads, to fetch the supply for the day.

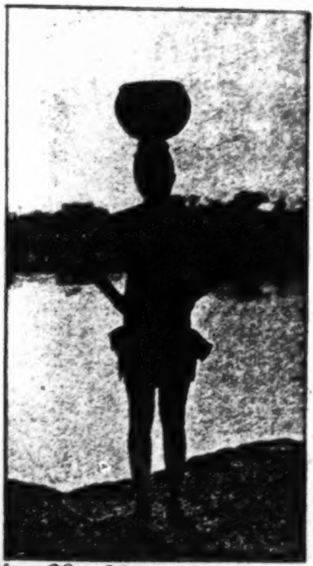


Fig. 83. Water Carrier.

271 415 Water is kept in large calabashes or earthenware jugs, sheltered from the sun in a corner of the hut.

595x She does no work in the farm or kitchen. She always has an ebísa to wait on her. If her family has no member they can let her have, she will borrow an ebísa from a distant relative or a friend.

● [402] A nkɔ́ndɛ́ does not travel on foot; she is carried in a hammock (hunting net). Her husband accompanies her on foot, however. But [556] this was done only for a true nkɔ́ndɛ́ of a rich man, and the custom is disappearing today.

A favorite may not leave her husband, even to go and see her parents. In the past some men were so jealous of their favorites [514] that they would not allow them to satisfy even their most private needs unless they themselves or some sentinel (usually a Botswá) stood watch. A man could not even go into the vicinity of her hut, which is built just behind the husband's shed. For although the husband is sometimes tolerant of the passions of his other wives, he always shows [152] an intransigeant jealousy [346] in relation to his favorite. He never travels without having her accompany him.

The favorite has the honor of performing small personal serv- [515] ices for her husband; she cuts his hair, helps him in the removal of body hair, scratches his pustules from ringworm or prickly heat, anoints him with oil, paints him with ngɔ́la, and, in a word, performs all the tasks connected with his appearance and hygiene.

Out of love for his favorite, her husband can buy her corpse 595x 766 for the price of a slave (in kind or in money). By doing so he obtains the right to have it buried beside his own while those of the other wives must be buried with their native clans. That is why in some regions a husband calls his favorite his ikundaka (from kunda "to bury"). Nevertheless, if her husband dies before she does, his heirs may not trouble themselves about his wishes and no longer require that the favorite be buried in their cemetery. That is what happened to Bongɔ́la of Bongíli, whose husband Ikilinganya of Bongangá (Boɛ́ndɛ́) had paid the price of two slaves for this right. When the husband has [224] killed large game, the favorite, like the bomátsa, has the right to receive her personal predetermined portion (boando). Her part is the neck or a chop, which in her absence, goes to the sons or their wives. The other wives do not have the same right; each one obtains only an ordinary piece (liondo).

764 for it was necessary first to celebrate the farewell feast, and the
widower's family had to gather to discuss the matter and collect
the valuables needed for the funeral payment (see the article which
follows). Only after all that did the young men belonging to the
[482] husband's family take the mortal remains upon their shoulders --
wrapped in a mat or enclosed in a coffin, depending on the case.

If possible all the husband's relatives take part in the procession. The pallbearers walk at the head. The men are armed
with bows and arrows, knives and sticks, seldom with spears. The
women accompany them [425], wailing. The husband and, if
necessary, a few relatives carry with them the various objects
they will need for the payments. Some men have a lotótsi (an
[534] ocarina) (1) or an antelope horn on which they play intermittently. (2)

---

1. See my "Note sur les Instruments de Musique à l'Equateur (Note on Musical Instruments at the Equator)" in Congo, 1935, Vol. 2, July, p. 187, figs. 1 and 2 (p. 199).

2. Sometimes there is also an accompaniment of drums.

At the time the corpse is lifted and while passing through villages
[201] between their own and their destination, the lokolé is struck with
regular and equal blows (-kémya) to announce the arrival of the
funeral procession.

The chief personage among those who follow the corpse is
584 not the husband, but the ndonga. He may never be absent at that
764 time. Even if the husband is deceased and the procession is that of
a widow who has not remarried, the ndonga must always be in the
party. The duty of bringing the corpse of a married woman is above
all his.

The ndonga may go ahead of the procession to inform the family of the deceased of her death, and if there is a great distance between the wife's village and the husband's, he may not be able

II CARPENTRY.

335 Carpentry plays an important part in the life of the Mongo Negro. The primitive utensils in his house as well as his canoe and his lokole (the Negro telephone with which he spreads his thoughts from village to village) are made of wood.

The making of the canoe and the lokole takes a great deal of work.

The Canoe.

313 396 The following three kinds of wood, namely, (1) Bokeswa, (2) Lifake, (3) Bomposo, make a good canoe, especially Bokeswa. This tree is much sought after because its wood makes a strong, light canoe.

The Negro who wants a canoe goes into the forest, picks out a nice slender tree, brings out his axe, and fells at his leisure the tree he has chosen. He hacks off the unnecessary branches and hollows the tree out in the rough form of the canoe. (Aulema watu: he shapes the canoe.)

[474] He calls some of his friends together, and they proceed, for payment, of course (nothing for nothing, says the Negro), to hollow out the tree.

396 When they have finished hollowing out the tree, the owner of the canoe calls the wongiwa biatu, the proper canoe maker, a heavy man and one of some account among his fellow villagers. This wongiwa biatu gives a nice, slender form to the canoe with his axe, planes it off nicely, and with the help of the esuwa, a small axe, marks off the edge of the canoe with sharp, short, regular grooves.

413 476 Often the Negroes make their canoes hours away from the nearest water. In order to transport it, they place sticks on the ground and draw the canoe over them. In addition to a number of strong men, all the spes patriae [hope of the fatherland] of the village help with this task. They get a mitako as a reward and feel themselves on top of the world.

396 476 The canoe maker is well paid, the price reckoned according to the size of the canoe. Several dogs are slaughtered at the expense of

595 parents to the dance, they must go. When the mother passes a [178] crossroads or the dwelling place of a spirit or an efeno (a place where the Nkundó gather for magical practices, oracles, etc.), she also sings and dances in honor of the spirit, so that he will favor her children. 595 533 Various songs are popular, such as: Elím'é'Ămbá tongólela yelí yeye, "Spirit of Ămbá, do not weep; (1) Bokétu la

1. Tongólela is an archaic form still in use among the Ekonda, etc

Mbóy'é'Ambá tofíkáké tonyongáké, tolíké bilingoi yelí yeye, "Ămbá's Bokétu and Mbóyó, do not bruise yourself, do not stir, do not eat bilingoi mushrooms"; Bokétu 'a Mbóyó njóátela ngóy' gongngo yelí yeye, "Bokétu and Mbóyó, I surround my mother with abundance"; Bokétu'a Mbóyó lá'ókong lá'okendo yelí yeye, "I shall fall ill, and yet I will walk (be well)"; Bokétu'a Mbóyó, lióta bokekesano yelí yeye, "difficult childbirth," etc.

595 262 Foods forbidden to twins are the mushrooms called bilingoi (or bilingondo or bankănkfodá), the mpambí antelope, and the bií yam, which is also forbidden to parents whose child is not yet weaned. (2)

2. This prohibition extends to all food cooked in pots in which such forbidden foods have been prepared. The extension is characteristic of all alimentary prohibitions.

595 [illegible] When traveling, the parents of twins gird themselves with the creeping plant called boyayenga, or wear it like a strap over the shoulder. The mother also attaches a bell to it. Their hair is often [301] adorned with two feathers from the tail of a gray parrot (nkoso) and two feathers from a white hen. [504]

595 576 The greeting to parents of twins and their reply must always be double: w'ĕná w'ĕná, the reply em'ĕná em'ĕná; obyá, obyá, the reply bíka bíka. Note that the last greeting is not replied to differently

595 wife was called Lonkata. This was, however, more a category, for there were sometimes four Lonkata in a harem. The rest were ordinary wives. Among the Ekonda, the first wife was called Nkumokolo, just like the Bomatsa. The second wife was called Ekila or Nkonde. The remaining wives were the ordinary wives of the harem.

595 484 The first wife, Bomatsa, always remained at home and never left the harem. The second, Ekila or Nkonde, accompanied the polygynist everywhere; she was at his side on all his trips. The Bolumbu usually went completely alone to do errands in other villages.

595 These old customs of priority among the wives are now gradually beginning to disappear.

684 It was forbidden under severe penalty to have relations with the first, second, or third wife of the polygynist. The penalties were death, slavery, or a large fine.

This was their law concerning adultery, enforced with severe punishment.

595 837 The ordinary wives of the harem were less strictly guarded. This often depended on the jealousy or indifference of the polygynist. Anyone who had relations with these wives had to pay a fine, or rather, a price of prostitution. Since the wives were almost all in the possession of the polygynists, there were naturally many men without a wife. These, then, often had relations with the ordinary wives of the polygynists. Also, the sons of the polygynist had relations with them; the polygynist himself sometimes even had relations with the ordinary wives of his neighbor. This was the bad consequence and the immorality of polygyny.

595 586 It is easy to understand that the ordinary wives of the polygynist, having relations with others, often left their husband, or rather, their master in order to go to another. The ordinary wives constituted the largest number. It is because of this that one now finds many women who have had three or four, sometimes even seven, different husbands in succession. Among some tribes, [534] the Ekonda among them, they were stricter; a wife who had already left her husband or master two or more times was considered to have little worth.

567 595 The female slaves who were taken in war were given by the polygynist to his male slaves as wives. They could also be installed in the harem among the ordinary wives. Their children could have the same rights as the other children of the polygynist

592 among the Banfumu. [Ed., the remainder of the chapter, through page 54, is not translated.]

[55] Chapter 3

The Native's Means of Subsistence

Animal husbandry: chickens, goats, dogs. -- Agriculture: manioc, maize, rice, bananas, peanuts. -- Hunting: weapons, snares, nkisi, individual method, communal hunting. -- Fishing: general method, dams, basket weirs, traps, harpoons, bows and arrows, cord nets, screens.

231 The peoples of the Congo-Kasai-Lake Leopold II region and of the Lukenie do very little animal husbandry. They possess no large animals. At most one may find a few chickens, rare goats, and some hunting dogs in their villages. The dogs get a share of the game and live as best they can the rest of the time.

No care whatever is given to the goats. They wander freely
during the day and graze in the forest or plain. Sometimes they
venture into the planted fields, from which the hunting dogs chase
them at first sight. At night they return to the village and take
shelter where they will. During our stay in the village of Toipolo,
● 465 they even came and disturbed us at night while we were lodged in
the hut reserved for strangers.

235 The chickens wander around the village and planted areas during the day and sleep [56] at night in the native's hut, where they have their nest for laying eggs and a place to hatch them.

262 The native does not eat the eggs. He sells them to agents of
439 the state or of commercial concerns, who collect them for
435 hatching. The chicken itself is rarely eaten by the native. Most
often it goes to the kitchens of the Europeans. In 1913-14 the
average price of a chicken was half a franc, that of an egg, five
centimes, and the price of a goat was from five to 15 francs.

[3] Chapter 1

The Land and Its Inhabitants

The appearance of the land. -- Location of the tribes. -- General characteristics of the natives. -- Maternal feelings. -- The fetisher. -- Religious beliefs. -- Cult of the dead. -- The Mfumu. -- Medicine.

[13] The area between the Congo, the Kasai, and the Kwango is covered with tall grass interspersed with stunted trees and a few small forests whose verdant canopy rises majestically over a boundless plain. A curtain of trees stretches along the rivers and gradually thins out as one penetrates into the interior. The path [137] beaten by the regular passage of endless columns of natives, walking Indian file, winds sadly and monotonously across these lightly rolling plains. During the rainy season the grass, whose stems grow as high as two or two and a half meters, obstructs the view. During the dry season, destroyed by brush fires, it has given way to a blackish-yellow plain from which all life seems to have been banished. From time to [4] time, at distances of 30 and some- [361] times 40 kilometers apart, we find groupings of huts, surrounded by a few manioc fields, [Fig. 1 appears here] banana groves, and sometimes small plots of maize and peanuts. Upon our arrival, [60] the men look at us without concern, the mistrustful women hide [Fig. 2 appears here] in their huts or take refuge in the forest and fields, and the less timid children stare at us with the insouciance characteristic of their age. [7]

Beyond the Kasai, in the region of the Fimi, around Lake Leopold II, and along the Lukenie, the bush gives way to the forest, damp, swampy, dark, and mysterious.

[137] At the confluence of the Fimi and the Kasai, a vast swampy [36] area stretches as far as the eye can see, bare of all arborescent vegetation, crossed by innumerable channels which are narrow and shallow during the dry season and wide to the point of covering practically the whole region during the rainy season.

[text continues on p. 5]

593 gravity of the situation. In general, the wife's parents judge im-
586 partially, because they value the stability of the marriage. If the
husband feels that he has been wronged, he can always appeal to the
ndonga, but ordinarily there is no need to do so and the matter is
settled in a friendly fashion and in private. If the woman is found
to be in the wrong, her parents scold her and take her to task. Pro-
[illegible] vided with some gift (two or three bakonga, for example), they re-
turn her to her husband, advising her to behave in a more suitable
fashion in the future. Should she resist, her parents will not hesitate
to use threats and curses, and these seldom fail to have their effect.
Nowadays women have become more emancipated, and it does some-
times happen that such a woman will scorn her parents' decision,
especially if she has a lover somewhere beyond the reach of family
justice. If it is the husband who is in the wrong, his wife will not go
back with him until he has begged her to do so by paying a few
copper rings or other valuables, the amount depending on the
seriousness of the situation. This act on the husband's part is ex-
[576] pressed by the verb bɔ́nda [271] and the noun bɔɔ́ndɔ, terms which
do not apply specifically to this case only but are used whenever
pardon is asked for a serious offense. This payment is not a fine or
indemnity; it is more closely equivalent to the apologies and re-
tractions customary among Europeans.

593 At the present time some women go back to their families
591 for very slight reasons. Freedom and a greater ease of communica-
578 tion, together with a desire for emancipation, which is no longer
held back by the rein of ancestral sanctions, are the cause for this
state of affairs. They are still held back somewhat by the risk of a
rupture of the marriage, a possibility which they generally would
rather not see realized, especially if the bride price is quite large.

In the past, if a woman was married a short distance away
from her parents, she could always run away to them when there were
domestic disputes. Even if the route led through other villages, it
● [487] was always possible to take a direct path through the forest, for such
paths exist everywhere; they go around the villages in between so
that, in case of conflict or danger of assassination, a traveler can go
his way without being seen. When a woman was married into a

396 476 [273] the owner, and everyone who has helped gets his share according to the amount of work he has done. [99] Frequently a big sugar-cane beer spree is started, where disgusting scenes often take place until finally the drunken men are taken home by their wives. In civilized Europe it is sometimes not much better.

501 Boats are made just large enough for two men, as well as others sufficient for a hundred or even a hundred and fifty men. The big war canoes of the great chief Evoloko of Waka and of the former chief of Bandaka, a certain Isaempoko, are known throughout the region. The war canoe of the latter was said to hold a hundred and fifty men, and the edge of this canoe to reach up to the shoulders of a fairly tall Negro. The ordinary canoe in which Whites travel is, as a rule, sufficiently large for twenty to thirty oarsmen.

435 The prices of canoes vary, according to size and strength, from 200 to 10,000 mitako.

The Lokole

202 The lokole plays a very large part in the life of the Negro. Without the lokole, the life of the Negro would be inconceivable.

The lokole can be best described as the public telephone with which the Negro makes his thoughts known publicly from village to village.

The lokole is to the Negro what the trumpet signal is to the soldier.

The lokole calls the men to meetings, to war, and to the hunt; the lokole calls all the people, great and small, to the dance. During the dance it is the loyal accompanist until deep in the night; its monotonous sound brings the enthusiasm of the dancers almost to the point of frenzy.

The Negro telephones his friends at great distances and explains what he wants. If two Negroes from the same village or from different villages have a quarrel, they abuse each other over the lokole, and the whole world is kept fully up-to-date on the details of the dispute. Each one tries to blacken the reputation of the other in the eyes of the other villagers. If someone dies in the village, it is proclaimed everywhere the whole night through, by means of the lokole, that

000 [547] Unfortunately the system was not continued. Also, it must not be said that it would be unjust to lower the price of the women. Rather, injustice would thus be redressed, a degenerate custom be improved. Through the present system, ever more injustice is committed and suffered.

583 595 A few polygynists would suffer some material loss through the lowering of the price of the women, namely, by receiving less for one woman than they (sometimes) paid for them, for they inherited most of the women. But they are also the ones who are responsible for the irregular situation. In a large part of the district, the polygynists are by far the minority of the population. They are the ones who are hostile to the Colonial Administration. They are in possession of the women and have a monopoly on them. They fix prices which a young man can almost never pay, namely, two nkesi at least.

583 The difficulties for Christian marriages become daily still more difficult. This is true for the marriages already entered into and for the future marriages.

583 429 426 [465 511] The bride price to be paid for the wife ought to be such that every young man can pay that sum with his own money, with the money that he has earned himself by his work. This sum cannot be high, for the ordinary working man in the Congo, who makes up the large part of the population, does not earn much more than what he needs for board and clothing. Therefore to pay an excessively large sum as a bride price forces him to borrow and to run up debts among his relatives and friends. The result of this is that the system of the Nkita goes over unnoticed into the Christian marriages, and the woman remains an object for inheritance. Indeed, when the man dies the creditors will come, namely, those who have loaned him money -- and demand the wife. The disputes over the bride price then begin anew, and they will again give the wife in marriage in return for a new bride price. Thus, there is no end to it. The wife, the mother, will never achieve any rights but will always remain an object of inheritance. There has been talk about declaring the widow free at the death of her husband in order to prevent the inheriting of wives, but how will it be possible to [548] achieve that if the bride price is not lessened, considerably lessened? When a

M 765 587 marriage after the end of mourning, they have the right to accept various foods and firewood from them. But a rather dim view is taken of these services rendered by strangers, that is, by persons not related to the heirs. For theoretically the widows belong to the heirs and are their wives, since the financial marriage agreement continues. (2) Nevertheless, if these men are not at enmity with the heirs, they encounter no opposition. For once the period of seclusion is terminated, the widows are free to go back to their respective families and be taken in marriage by anyone able to pay the bride price. Nevertheless, suitors are not permitted to enter the seclusion hut even in the last period. They must therefore transmit presents through the agency of the biúnanyí (sing. eúnanyí), that is, the relatives of the deceased.

M 765 This last period begins with the ceremony of being lifted off the ground. The widows are made to get up onto the beóngá --
● M [423] bákondeja bituka ndá beóngá. The beóngá consist of split
P branches of the parasol tree, placed on long branches, which are
[352] in turn attached to posts, forming a small primitive bed, which is
● [513] the usual bed of the Batswá that is sometimes also used by the Baotó, if the latter have nothing better. From then on the widows can rest on these; they may "rise from the ground." The parasol tree branches are called beóngá (sing. boóngá), "dead, dry wood." The same root is also used with other prefixes: eóngá, pl. bióngá; loóngá, pl. mbóngá. The verbs used are áta, "to split, rend" or fanja, "to cut." Nowadays the severity of this custom is mitigated by the substitution of beánga, transportable wicker beds, for the beóngá.

The ceremony is accompanied by a few dances and a bit of beer. The head of the family addresses the widows as follows: "We have split beóngá for you; climb up on them." Then he presents them with a few hens, given by relatives of the deceased. The widows prepare them and eat them all.

---

2. See Chapter III, Article IX.

624 An *nkumu* can never walk alone, but must always be accompanied by others, and
on no occasion whatsoever may he run. Even though he never washes, if he is out
[481] in the rain and sees everybody else hurrying for shelter, he will not quicken his pace.
[513] His movements must be slow and deliberate. The *nkumu* never sleeps alone; waking
and sleeping he is attended by someone. But apart from this he is free to go where he
wishes. The *nkumu* is not indiscriminate, as others may be, in his private habits, but
[514] must use his own latrine at all times, and if travelling must have his own latrine in
each place where he stays. The inland *nkumu* frequently take advantage of this custom
[556] by hiding their accumulated brass rods at the bottom of a freshly dug latrine. Such
hidden wealth will be acquired by an inheritor at the decease of the *nkumu*.

In speaking of himself the *nkumu* never refers to himself by his title but always
by his own name.

624 The couch upon which the *nkumu* sits or reclines during the daytime may not be
shared indiscriminately with others, but those permitted to sit upon it at the same
352 time as the *nkumu* are *maomi*, women, and Batwa. The reservation of this couch for
[562 the use of the *nkumu* is not surprising, but the exceptions are. One explanation given
was that women and Batwa are not *bato ba zee*, persons in particular; they do not
563] count for anything in the social life of the community; they are not really 'people'.
Another explanation was that they do not pay fines, this being tantamount to saying
[672] that they are exempt from laws and therefore cannot break laws even by doing what
would be for others an illegal act. The stool of the *nkumu*, however, has closer
restrictions in the manner of its use. Besides the *nkumu* only two others may sit upon
it, *Nsono* and *Mperge*. It is always carried by one of his wives, though not necessarily
by any special one.

624 The restrictions concerning the food of the *nkumu* are many. He may eat food
only in his own house, or, if on a journey, in one given over for his use. He may not
262 enter another house to partake of food even if invited to do so. Likewise the *nkumu*
may not eat in the forest, or eat or drink anywhere along the road when on a journey,
but must wait until he arrives at a village and has a house at his disposal in order to
partake of food and drink. He never 'sleeps with hunger'; even if a wife or child
should die causing him great sorrow he must partake of food before going to sleep.
[765] The Bonginda *nkumu* must never go into mourning, and death must be ignored by
them, but the inland *nkumu* are permitted to mourn. All food carried to an *nkumu*
must be covered, this rule even applying to water. Food must not be placed in a
basket with high sides (*eboko*), but in a shallow one (*moyala*), and no food that has
been kept overnight in a pot may be eaten by him: swelling of the abdomen will
result. Various foods are taboo, among these all fast-moving snakes, though slow-
[824] moving ones may be eaten; light-coloured palm-nuts may not be eaten, and a variety
of yam known as *menkiki* is shunned, for it is with the tough stems of the *menkiki*
that the dying body of the *nkumu* will be bound to ensure the sitting posture necessary
for burial.

624 Among regulations roughly classed as social, we have already covered several in
references above, and have referred to the *nkumu* in council. It may be added here that
[623] he is expected to agree with the majority of the councillors and not fall out with them.
The rules affecting the *nongo* of the *nkumu* are accompanied by severe penalties. There
[689] must not be any fighting; if anger is aroused to the point of blows the antagonists

M
245 Next to manioc, bananas occupy the first rank among the native crops, at least among the peoples of Lake Leopold II, the [59] lower Lukenie, and the region between the Congo and the Kasai. Among the tribes of the upper Lukenie, cultivation of banana trees is less developed, and in the Bena Dibele-Kole region it is almost completely absent.

The natives prefer to cultivate the large banana. It is less juicy and more floury than the small one and yields larger crops. The banana groves are always set up near the village and most often directly behind the dwellings. It follows that these groves have the general shape of the village and, in a way, frame it.

Banana trees, in order to thrive, must be planted in very fertile soil which has been well cleared and deeply turned. To promote their growth and increase their yield, the natives dump into the banana groves all the waste from the kitchen, ordure, ashes, and sweepings from the regular cleaning of the village and huts. They also go into the groves to answer the calls of nature.

S
[346]

Fig. 39. Hut for the Nkisi of the Hunt and a Banana Tree with Flower and Fruit, Village of Madjuku, Bobaie Tribe.

M
[574]

M
213 Maize is not cultivated on an important scale. Beyond the post at Tolo, maize seems to be completely unknown. Among

291 embarrassed by the glances of others. This feeling extends even to
834 other parts of the body which, irrespective of the degree of culture they have reached, most peoples try to cover. [55]

2) Between persons of the same sex and age a certain freedom
834 is permitted. This may be observed especially among young boys
●514 when they have to urinate. In our countries of Europe the situation is no different. I must say, however, that I have only noticed this freedom in the schools and never in the villages of the interior. Is there a gap in my observations, or should this laxity in the schools be attributed to the influence of the law of least effort (the suitable places in the schools are at some distance) and to the lack of leisure available to the pupils given the shortness of recreation periods on the one hand and their love of play on the other? It is also possible that among these boys modesty has barely made its appearance, since this feeling is strongly linked to the sexual instinct and awakens only with the latter. It would also seem that living in a group tends to reduce the power of modesty.

834 3) It is obvious that sexual excitement runs counter to modesty
832 and that sometimes -- especially among young people -- immodest acts may be used to arouse another person, especially in situations, such as bathing, which lend themselves easily to such actions.

4) Bathers, whether washing or swimming, are very careless,
515 especially when they are in a group of their own sex and age. In
834 former times no doubt they did not indulge in the luxury of even a rudimentary bathing costume. But at the present time it is not at all difficult for them to obtain the small piece of cloth needed for that purpose. Nevertheless, nude bathing in rivers and streams is a common practice. It is far more frequent among women than among men. The natives with whom I have discussed the subject attribute this fact to levity and a lack of con[illegible]; but they see nothing very wrong in it. Whether or not [56] the bathers are in a group also seems to make a difference. If you surprise one or two people under such circumstances, they will hide in haste. If, on the other hand, you find a dozen, they will not move; on the contrary, they will interrupt their toilette to watch you pass. Perhaps they are simply unconcerned about their nakedness. But it is also possible that they

521
831
195 which do not shock others at all. (1)

1. These comments are applicable also to peoples in other parts of the world.

[554] The general rule of decorum among the Nkundő permits the use of such terms only among equals. Their use when speaking to inferiors is tolerated but not approved of. The use of obscenities when speaking to any strangers meets with definite disapproval. Among persons of different sexes the prohibition is particularly strict.

Nevertheless, the use of these expressions is judged less severely if they are uttered in a moment of anger or as a reprimand, even in the presence of a member of the opposite sex.

Exclamations of anger, vexation, and sorrow are often nothing but obscenities (2). No one is shocked by them in such situations.

2. See "Les Coutumes Funéraires" [Funeral Customs], No. 1, to be published in Anthropos.

Some elderly or more modest persons do not make use of them, however; if the habit of using a particular expression is thoroughly ingrained, they may make a slight change in its pronounciation (as is common for some of our "swear words").

195
831
514
521
576 To circumvent the difficulties caused by the need to use certain words frequently, [59] euphemisms are coined to take their place. Thus the Nkundő say: ńtswá bokako w'ákusa, "I am going behind the house," to indicate that they are going to urinate, and njôtsw'ésendó, "I am going for small pieces of firewood," or njôtsw' óténa lokásá, "I am going to pick a leaf," meaning that they are going to the toilet. On the way they say: ńjeta felé, "I am leaving the path" or "I am going to the forest." A husband is permitted to use accurate terminology when speaking to his wife, but it is considered very improper for her to do so in speaking to him.

574
576 When someone is satisfying a natural need, others keep a distance away from him; they will not even speak to him. Moreover, the person would not reply even if he were called. A woman will not

574 576 even answer her husband, but he may indicate his presence by coughing lightly.

Any infraction of these rules is considered a grave insult. A
514 person offended in this manner may seek revenge by violent means,
576 either personally or through the medium of his son, brother, etc.
578 According to native justice he will always be in the right, even if
831 the quarrel becomes bloody. The simple act of uttering obscenities while passing in front of a house in which there is someone who is entitled to the speaker's respect may result in reprisals by the latter. (1)

---

1. See Jadot, Blancs et Noirs au Congo belge [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 90.

578 Crude language is especially reprehensible and wounding if it
834 contains allusions to incest or other reflections on a relative whom the speaker wants to insult. And it must be admitted that such expressions may go beyond the limits (for example: coi cum patre, matre, fratre, sorore, etc.). In connection with this topic it should be noted that reference is always made to a relative of the opposite sex to that of the person who is directly or indirectly being addressed. Furthermore, licentious talk and the use of indecorous language are more severely condemned when they take place in the presence of
[554] women and old people [60] or are said by a slave in front of his master, by a Botswa in front of a Bootó (1).

---

1. See Introduction, footnote 2, p. 4.

578 If a man catches anyone uttering obscenities in front of his
684 wife, especially if they are addressed to her personally, he can start
834 action in adultery proceedings. If the woman refuses to listen to the seducer, she will not answer him, or sometimes, annoyed at the insult, she may retort by insulting his mother. She can complain, but generally she does not do so. Is she ashamed, or is she afraid that the tempter might make public some excess in her conduct which he has discovered? In any case a woman is more sensitive than a man to the

595? She does no work in the farm or kitchen. She always has an ebísa to wait on her. If her family has no member they can let her have, she will borrow an ebísa from a distant relative or a friend.

A nkɔ́ndɔ́ does not travel on foot; she is carried in a hammock [482] (hunting net). Her husband accompanies her on foot, however. But [552] this was done only for a true nkɔ́ndɔ́ of a rich man, and the custom is disappearing today.

A favorite may not leave her husband, even to go and see her parents. In the past some men were so jealous of their favorites [574] that they would not allow them to satisfy even their most private needs unless they themselves or some sentinel (usually a Botswá) stood watch. A man could not even go into the vicinity of her hut, which is built just behind the husband's shed. For although the husband is sometimes tolerant of the passions of his other wives, he always shows [152] an intransigeant jealousy [346] in relation to his favorite. He never travels without having her accompany him.

The favorite has the honor of performing small personal serv- [585] ices for her husband; she cuts his hair, helps him in the removal of body hair, scratches his pustules from ringworm or prickly heat, anoints him with oil, paints him with ngóla, and, in a word, performs all the tasks connected with his appearance and hygiene.

595? 766 Out of love for his favorite, her husband can buy her corpse for the price of a slave (in kind or in money). By doing so he obtains the right to have it buried beside his own while those of the other wives must be buried with their native clans. That is why in some regions a husband calls his favorite his ikundaka (from kunda "to bury"). Nevertheless, if her husband dies before she does, his heirs may not trouble themselves about his wishes and no longer require that the favorite be buried in their cemetery. That is what happened to Bongɔla of Bongíli, whose husband Ikilinganya of Bongangɛ (Bokɔndɔ) had paid the price of two slaves for this right. When the husband has [224] killed large game, the favorite, like the bomɛtsa, has the right to receive her personal predetermined portion (boando). Her part is the neck or a chop, which in her absence, goes to the sons or their wives. The other wives do not have the same right; each one obtains only an ordinary piece (liondo).

595 584 On the day set aside for establishing the position of the bolɔ́mbɛ́, there is a great feast. All the clans and neighboring villages that have been invited gather at the home of the polygamist in question. He presents the woman to them and addresses the gathering: "Here is the woman whom I want to make my bolɔ́mbɛ́, as I have already announced to you. Today I am making public the decision I already made a long time ago. Be it known to all that no man may touch her, or he will be severely punished." Then two women (in rare instances, two men) hold the woman, and the husband unfastens her belt and rips off all her clothing. Then the assistants tie a rope or a belt of mpangɛ (striped antelope) skin around her, and to it they attach various furs. From that day [575] until her death she may no longer wear the clothing (bitóo) of other women; she must always [300] be dressed in furs. Hence her name, bolɔ́mbɛ́ wa bikótó, "bolɔ́mbɛ́ with furs." Then her husband gives her pots of palm oil with which she will have to cover herself. Two men approach her; they are chosen among the handsomest in the village (1) (married or single) and are

[624] 1. They are then (sic) relatives of the husband. Nkundó law dictates that no stranger shall perform a function of the slightest importance -- not even that of silencing a gathering. According to their saying, bofaya ɛ́kɛ́kɛ́la lokɔ́nga, "a stranger does not cut up a guinea hen."

[301] richly adorned with furs, belts of mpangɛ, beads, raffia fabrics with jagged edges, copper rings on their ankles, etc. Stepping in rhythm, they lead her to the house intended for her which is [342] [534] surrounded by a fence of bɔfɛ́kɔ posts (Ricinodendron africanum) held together with palms. This hut with its fence is called ilɛ́kɔ.

There the bolɔ́mbɛ́ will reside for months and years (up to three or more, they say). She is secluded there, so to speak, ● [579] and may not go out. If she needs to go to the banana groves for her personal needs, she covers and surrounds herself with a mat so that no one will see her.

624 [781] [513] An *nkumu* can never walk alone, but must always be accompanied by others, and on no occasion whatsoever may he run. Even though he never washes, if he is out in the rain and sees everybody else hurrying for shelter, he will not quicken his pace. His movements must be slow and deliberate. The *nkumu* never sleeps alone; waking and sleeping he is attended by someone. But apart from this he is free to go where he wishes. The *nkumu* is not indiscriminate, as others may be, in his private habits, but [514] [592] must use his own latrine at all times, and if travelling must have his own latrine in each place where he stays. The inland *nkumu* frequently take advantage of this custom by hiding their accumulated brass rods at the bottom of a freshly dug latrine. Such hidden wealth will be acquired by an inheritor at the decease of the *nkumu*.

In speaking of himself the *nkumu* never refers to himself by his title but always by his own name.

624 352 [562 565] The couch upon which the *nkumu* sits or reclines during the daytime may not be shared indiscriminately with others, but those permitted to sit upon it at the same time as the *nkumu* are *nsami*, women, and Batwa. The reservation of this couch for the use of the *nkumu* is not surprising, but the exceptions are. One explanation given was that women and Batwa are not *bato ba soo*, persons in particular; they do not count for anything in the social life of the community; they are not really 'people'. [572] Another explanation was that they do not pay fines, this being tantamount to saying that they are exempt from laws and therefore cannot break laws even by doing what would be for others an illegal act. The stool of the *nkumu*, however, has closer restrictions in the manner of its use. Besides the *nkumu* only two others may sit upon it, *Nkomo* and *Mpanga*. It is always carried by one of his wives, though not necessarily by any special one.

621 262 The restrictions concerning the food of the *nkumu* are many. He may eat food only in his own house, or, if on a journey, in one given over for his use. He may not enter another house to partake of food even if invited to do so. Likewise the *nkumu* may not eat in the forest, or eat or drink anywhere along the road when on a journey, but must wait until he arrives at a village and has a house at his disposal in order to partake of food and drink. He never 'sleeps with hunger'; even if a wife or child should die causing him great sorrow he must partake of food before going to sleep. [765] The Bonginda *nkumu* must never go into mourning, and death must be ignored by them, but the inland *nkumu* are permitted to mourn. All food carried to an *nkumu* must be covered, this rule even applying to water. Food must not be placed in a basket with high sides (*ekoko*), but in a shallow one (*ntpala*), and no food that has been kept overnight in a pot may be eaten by him: swelling of the abdomen will result. Various foods are taboo, among these all fast-moving snakes, though slow-[824] moving ones may be eaten; light-coloured palm-nuts may not be eaten, and a variety of yam known as *nsekiki* is shunned, for it is with the tough stems of the *nsekiki* that the dying body of the *nkumu* will be bound to ensure the sitting posture necessary for burial.

624 [623] [681] Among regulations roughly classed as social, we have already covered several in references above, and have referred to the *nkumu* in council. It may be added here that he is expected to agree with the majority of the councillors and not fall out with them. The rules affecting the usage of the *nkumu* are accompanied by severe penalties. There must not be any fighting; if anger is aroused to the point of blows the antagonists

271 415 The shape of these water jugs varies considerably according to the region, and some of them even seem to us to be characteristic of certain ethnic groups. [145]

Among the western Bateke and Banfumungu, the spherical shape with straight neck predominates.

Among the Maboma of Bokala-Wombali and the eastern Banfumungu, the shape is distinctly spherical, with a very small, funnel-like neck that is usually no more than one or two centimeters high. This form is entirely new. Fortunately, we were able to collect several specimens. The Bateke of the Stanley Pool region use a water jug that resembles the carafes imported from Europe. This shape is particularly common in the Leopoldville-Kinshasa region.

From Mushie to the region of the Basakata-Balesa, including the Wadia and Tumba, the body of the water jug consists of two parts joined at a sharp or slightly rounded edge. The bottom part is shaped like a spherical calotte; the upper part has the shape of a truncated cone. The decoration is very symmetrical. Lightly
[53] marked parallel circles cover the conical part of the body and sometimes the neck. The latter is very long, usually wider at its base than at the top and slightly swollen in the middle. This interesting shape is also found, though more rarely, among the Mosengere. Among this tribe we encountered another form, no less interesting and very little known up to the present time. The chief characteristics of this form are the flat bottom, a cylindrical, more or less symmetrical body, rounded edges, and a neck in the shape of a wide funnel.

Among the Bobale of the northeast, the Balesa-Batete, the Ipanga-Batitu, and the Bokala-Yaelima, the water jug has a spherical body and a straight neck. This same shape is also found among the Bankutu [Wankutshu] and Basongo-Meno of the Bena Dibele-Kole region.

Let us note, however, that in the region of the Ipanga-Yaelima, water jugs are relatively rare; the natives commonly use large calabashes, very often provided with a handle and a leg of rattan or bamboo.

271 515 Other than with meals, the natives drink water only to slake their thirst. Each time the porters come to a river, they make it a point to bathe in it and to refresh themselves. [146]

[163] Chapter 5

Care of the Body

Hygiene. -- Soap making. -- Ngula and mpembe. -- Artificial deformations. -- Depilation. -- Filing the teeth. -- Hairdos. -- Ornaments and objects suspended from the body. -- Tattooing by incision. -- Circumcision [Ed., the author does not discuss circumcision in this volume].

●515 356 A person who has only limited contact with the natives tends to depict them as very careless in their grooming, ignorant of the principles of hygiene and cleanliness, and, we may say, even as foul and filthy. If, however, one has an opportunity for closer contact with these primitives, he quickly realizes the inaccuracy of these judgments which are based on hasty and superficial observation. In closely studying the native's customs, in watching him in his daily, ordinary life, one notices many small things which show us [164] that the native, apparently heedless of all hygienic measures and inattentive to cleanliness, does take into account rudimentary principles of hygiene and tries to apply them in many small ways.

356 At first glance the native hut looks like a miserable hovel. Its often dilapidated appearance, narrow and low entrance, lack of windows or ventilating shaft, the general disorder reigning in the area which is used as shelter, kitchen, etc., all are reasons for the unpleasant impression acquired from a rapid investigation. The native, however, puts a great deal of care into the construction of his dwelling. The woman works hard at cleaning the inside of her hut regularly. If, pushing our investigation further, we proceed to the area reserved for the husband and wife and closely study the organization and arrangement of what serves as the bedroom, we see that a cleanliness reigns here that stands in conspicuous contrast to the unpleasant first impression. The

356 walls are lined with mats, and the crude bed is raised off the ground to avoid unpleasant and unhealthy contact with the ground. A mat is spread over the native's bed, [165] and the pillow which is customarily used permits him to lie in a restful position.

● 515 The natives take a bath almost every day. They usually go to the river during the hottest hours of the day, but sometimes they do so early in the morning or in the evening. The child participates in this from an early age. Aside from these regular baths, the native often washes his whole body with warm water. [302] He then smears himself with a light film of palm oil to ensure the suppleness of the skin and to protect it from the sun's rays.

264 515 Before and after each meal the native makes a point of washing out his mouth. After the meal he brushes his teeth with a small brush made of rattan or soft wood, the fibers acting as bristles.

Fig. 91. A Scene from Native Life among the Riparian People of the Lower Lukenie.

263 264 Meals are prepared with a genuine concern for cleanliness. All the food is washed, cleaned, and boiled before being eaten. Kitchen utensils are cleaned and carefully put away. Despite the primitive conditions for preparing manioc flour, the product is as pure as if it had been prepared by an improved method

262 264 with modern machinery. Not content with the state of the utensils in which she serves the meals, the woman is careful to line them at mealtime with fresh and very clean leaves.

● 515 The natives keep the nails of their hands and feet cut short. The care of the feet is explained as a hygienic measure and by the necessity of taking precautions to avoid the vermin which like to get into these places (ticks). The care of the hands can be explained only by the concern for cleanliness shown in native eating habits.

Imported soap is not yet commonly used, although we found it in a number of native huts.

388 Many native women know how to make soap. The process is very simple. Dried banana skins, trunks of papaw trees, bark, the fruits of various vegetables, and waste from palm nuts are gathered together and burned. The ashes are carefully collected and mixed with some water for boiling them. At the first ebullition, the woman removes the ashes and impurities that [166] rise to the surface. Boiling is then continued until the evaporation is almost complete. When only a thick and sirupy grayish-black deposit is left, the woman takes it off the fire, washes it, and kneads it in cold water until it takes on a clearer color. She then adds palm oil, mixes it in with great care, and puts the lot back on the fire. The paste is stirred all through the boiling, which is continued until the woman obtains a mixture whose consistency is slightly firmer than that of our soft soaps. [Ed., a passage is omitted from mid-page 166 to mid-page 167.]

Native soap is used only in the care of the body.

[302 303 [167] The native does not merely smear his body with palm oil. The men and especially the women often powder themselves with tukula dust. The women prepare a cosmetic with this and love to cover their whole body with it in a spirit of coquetry. This practice is so widespread among the peoples of Lake Leopold II that the manufacture of ngula has become a veritable local industry in certain areas. This is especially true of the Basengere. In a village near the Bongo post, we counted 35 installations for making ngula powder. The simplest set of materials includes two blocks of tukula or redwood, a small receptacle containing water, a handful of sand, and a small hand or painting brush. One of the

291 embarrassed by the glances of others. This feeling extends even to 839 other parts of the body which, irrespective of the degree of culture they have reached, most peoples try to cover. [55]

856 514 2) Between persons of the same sex and age a certain freedom is permitted. This may be observed especially among young boys when they have to urinate. In our countries of Europe the situation is no different. I must say, however, that I have only noticed this freedom in the schools and never in the villages of the interior. Is there a gap in my observations, or should this laxity in the schools be attributed to the influence of the law of least effort (the suitable places in the schools are at some distance) and to the lack of leisure available to the pupils given the shortness of recreation periods on the one hand and their love of play on the other? It is also possible that among these boys modesty has barely made its appearance, since this feeling is strongly linked to the sexual instinct and awakens only with the latter. It would also seem that living in a group tends to reduce the power of modesty.

836 832 3) It is obvious that sexual excitement runs counter to modesty and that sometimes -- especially among young people -- immodest acts may be used to arouse another person, especially in situations, such as bathing, which lend themselves easily to such actions.

515 836 4) Bathers, whether washing or swimming, are very careless, especially when they are in a group of their own sex and age. In former times no doubt they did not indulge in the luxury of even a rudimentary bathing costume. But at the present time it is not at all difficult for them to obtain the small piece of cloth needed for that purpose. Nevertheless, nude bathing in rivers and streams is a common practice. It is far more frequent among women than among men. The natives with whom I have discussed the subject attribute this fact to levity and a lack of concern; but they see nothing very wrong in it. Whether or not [56] the bathers are in a group also seems to make a difference. If you surprise one or two people under such circumstances, they will hide in haste. If, on the other hand, you find a dozen, they will not move; on the contrary, they will interrupt their toilette to watch you pass. Perhaps they are simply unconcerned about their nakedness. But it is also possible that they

575 634 are reassured by the fact that they are in a group, so that no one feels singled out by the gaze of the passer-by. Washing away from major streams is always surrounded by more propriety. For this purpose a [573] small enclosure (ikomba) is built behind the hut or among the banana trees, or a small thicket is allowed to grow there. By this means the native is sheltered from indiscreet glances if he wants to take a [757] bath or give himself an enema. As a matter of fact these things are done preferably after dark.

634 152 5) Violent anger or sorrow drown out modesty, just as they momentarily destroy the use of reason and suppress all feelings which are contradictory or simply different. In this situation, too, the man shows himself superior to the woman. He is less impulsive, calmer, less prone to lose control of his actions, to be carried away by his anger. Thus he almost never strips himself bare. The woman, on the other hand, readily strips off all her clothing. This behavior is extremely common; a woman undresses completely whenever she experiences great sorrow or intense anger. Luckily for propriety's sake some friend or relative always hastens to cover at least the essential parts. For a woman who throws off her clothing exposes herself to the mockery and jeers of spectators. (1)

[593] [578] 1. An angry woman may also undress to shame her husband; it is a way of insulting and mocking him.

853 6) The Nkundó practice sexual intercourse only at night. I believe that this custom is due to their sense of propriety, [57] supplemented by a superstitious explanation which will be described in detail in Article V.

573 634 7) The sense of modesty has its fullest expression in relation to parents, brothers, sisters, etc. Thus it is unheard of that a son should see his mother naked: [illegible]. If an adult daughter is ill and requires personal care (such as an enema, for example), the father has to take care of her himself if no other female relative is near by. But their sense of modesty is such that they both shed tears over the event. As a matter of fact this situation

834
177 It goes without saying that the feeling of sexual modesty and its various manifestations among these people are being transformed by two different currents. On the one hand, their moral laxity is increased by their contact with all sorts of other peoples, by a greater freedom, by the partial emancipation of women, and by the attraction of the large centers and their luxury. On the other hand, there is the preaching of Christian morality, although its effects are still very slight and certainly do not counterbalance the influences mentioned above.

Article II. Preparation for Sexual Life

1. The Woman's preparation

833

When a girl wishes to indulge in pleasures of the flesh, she prepares her sexual organs in advance. The preparation itself consists of "opening the way" (lifola mbɔ́ka). This operation, which is repeated several times, is performed in hiding, preferably in the forest. The girl may or may not have companions with her who share her intentions. Each girl operates on herself. In order to gradually enlarge the organ, a girl uses progressively thicker shoots of the [824] bosáŋgo or bokaakɔ́ plant (Costus afer), making sure first to remove the tip. Later these shoots are replaced by the lombɔ́lɔ́ fruit of the bosómbó plant (Aframomum) or, more infrequently, by a young manioc tuber.

This is the general practice; exceptions are few or nonexistent. It is followed because the girls want the event to which they aspire to occur without difficulty (bɛ́lota bɛ́lɔ́v'ɛ́kɛɛla).

835
515 In addition to this basic preparation, girls [66] also wash the private parts of their bodies. This is a cleanliness measure which they continue to practice save in exceptional cases for the rest of their lives. According to my informants, the native woman -- as a very general rule -- stresses this cleanliness as much for herself as for the sake of not repelling her husband or lover. When a girl begins to practice this personal hygiene, it is a sign that she wants to begin her sexual life.

833 753 684 which has a strong resemblance to sleeping sickness. (1) One of its

1. It is not sleeping sickness itself, however, for that disease seems formerly to have been unknown in this area.

symptoms is a weakness of the lower limbs. Instances are cited of individuals who were unable to resist their passions and were punished in this manner. Apparently only the woman dies. As soon as her family discovers that she is stricken, the guilty woman denounces her accomplice. The latter is held responsible and is required to pay a heavy indemnity, which may amount to several dozen copper rings.

833 751 Here as in many other situations the Nkundô have found a way to avoid the danger. There is an antidote (mengô), and it is water (bâsi bale mengô êâ bombilé). Thus those who are unable to control their aroused passions during the day, satisfy it in a shallow stream.

837 753 The fear of bombilé has been greatly shaken [93] by colonization. If we are to believe the natives, foreign soldiers are responsible for this change also. But the behavior of the latter could not completely destroy the ancient feeling, probably due to a natural shame which makes them seek darkness and privacy for acts of this sort.

833 [842] [847] After intercourse a native woman usually gives herself a douche. She does so for the sake of cleanliness. It often happens, however, that she does not wait long enough before doing so, and thus she neutralizes the effect of the intercourse. This is chiefly a matter of carelessness. Nevertheless, under certain circumstances she may use this means to prevent conception. (1)

1. See Chapter X, Article I, 2.

833 826 According to my informants, some women have constitutional abnormalities which repel men. As everything readily becomes public, such flaws are quickly known after marriage, though not quite as readily beforehand. Actually love can -- and often does -- cause them to be overlooked. But after the first ardor has cooled, such a situation may become a threat to the stability of a marriage. When quarrels

595a She does no work in the farm or kitchen. She always has an ebíla to wait on her. If her family has no member they can let her have, she will borrow an ebíla from a distant relative or a friend.

[482] A nkóndé does not travel on foot; she is carried in a hammock (hunting net). Her husband accompanies her on foot, however. But [552] this was done only for a true nkóndé of a rich man, and the custom is disappearing today.

[574] A favorite may not leave her husband, even to go and see her parents. In the past some men were so jealous of their favorites that they would not allow them to satisfy even their most private needs unless they themselves or some sentinel (usually a bɔtswá) stood watch. A man could not even go into the vicinity of her hut, which is built just behind the husband's shed. For although the husband is [152] sometimes tolerant of the passions of his other wives, he always shows an intransigeant jealousy [346] in relation to his favorite. He never travels without having her accompany him.

● [515] The favorite has the honor of performing small personal services for her husband; she cuts his hair, helps him in the removal of body hair, scratches his pustules from ringworm or prickly heat, anoints him with oil, paints him with ngóla, and, in a word, performs all the tasks connected with his appearance and hygiene.

595b 764 Out of love for his favorite, her husband can buy her corpse for the price of a slave (in kind or in money). By doing so he obtains the right to have it buried beside his own while those of the other wives must be buried with their native clans. That is why in some regions a husband calls his favorite his ilundaka (from kunda "to bury"). Nevertheless, if her husband dies before she does, his heirs may not trouble themselves about his wishes and no longer require that the favorite be buried in their cemetery. That is what happened to Bongála of Bongíli, whose husband Ilibingaaya of Bongangɛ (Bokondɛ) had paid the price of two slaves for this right. [224] When the husband has killed large game, the favorite, like the bambúsa, has the right to receive her personal predetermined portion (bsanda). Her part is the neck or a chop, which in her absence, goes to the sons or their wives. The other wives do not have the same right; each one obtains only an ordinary piece (lisanda).

846 In order to facilitate the flowing out of all the blood, the mother is given hot baths. However, they are not begun before 515 noon, for the Nkundó say that in the morning and evening it is too cool and the blood is not sufficiently fluid. Those who have been [177] in greater contact with the Whites give the mother beer or wine to drink. The hot baths are administered behind the hut in an en- [843] closure set up for the occasion. They are of two kinds: baths by sprinkling (bompúlo wǎ mbǎomba) and steam baths (bompúlo w'elángé). For the first method [485] very hot water is used, and by using a bunch of palms, the woman's abdomen, loins, and ribs are sprinkled. In the second method a pit is dug and large leaves (or a basin) containing boiling water are placed in it. Three or four strong, wide sticks are placed on top, and the woman is seated on them. She is wrapped in several mats to which, today, one or two blankets are added. She is left thus exposed to the action of the steam for several minutes. According to the natives, it is the ideal system because it makes all the blood come out, or almost all. Some people first give a sprinkle bath, and then follow it with a steam bath; others are satisfied with one or the other, depending on the circumstances. In any case more than one bath is never given in one day. This care may be given for one or two weeks, or it may stop after two or three days. The effect of "civilizing" is more inclined to the latter. But no Nkundó would want to omit the baths, for the woman's life is at stake.

After the bath the woman is carefully rubbed and dried, [301] and then anointed with oil mixed with red paint.

From time to time, usually every second day, she is given a douche.

846 As long as the mother remains weak, a large fire is maintained in her hut to keep her warm, and the doors are closed by means of palms. The husband and his relatives fetch the firewood. But the first log must be cut and brought by the husband who, to use the Nkundó expression, must "remove the violence" (ímola lofaí). In the beginning the woman lies down on a boínga right near the fire. She turns the front of her body toward it. The fire plays a great role in her quick recovery. She is very well cared

no compulsion. If one of the contracting parties fails to fulfil its pledges in this matter 224
of giving part of the kill, or in anything else, the aggrieved party may call the council 624
together. This consists not only of members of the *molembe* and *ekope*, but of all 624
elders of the village or villages connected with this particular one. The party judged 596
in the wrong, whether *ekope* or *molembe*, will be fined, the injured party receiving its 621
share, and both parties will be charged to live together harmoniously and observe their contracts.

The power of the *nkumu* was apparently limited, and did not supersede that of 624
the *momene mokonda*. When trials came up, the aggrieved party might go either to the 695
momene mokonda or to the *nkumu*. If it was necessary to call the village elders together about it, both these authorities were present at the hearing. First the young men of the group were allowed to give their verdict, then the old men, after that *momene mokonda* (or the *moloni e ele*), and finally the *nkumu* was given the privilege of the last word. He would comment on the opinions of each of the judges, criticizing one young man, commending another, and then giving his own verdict, at which the group would assent by saying, 'Even so, grandfather'. The whole group of judges would then fix the fines, a double portion of which went to the *nkumu*.

The actual manual labour which an *nkumu* may do excludes anything endangering 624
life or limb, or requiring agility and speed. He may clear the bush for his gardens: this is a man's work. He may take part in the building of his houses, but may do
no high work, and, among the inland groups, it is the work of the Batwa to put the [563]
roof on for him. The *nkumu* may also prepare pitfalls for catching game, but cannot engage in any other type of hunting or do any fishing. Digging a grave is prohibited, for, as we shall see, everything pertaining to death must be ignored by the *nkumu*.

Other rules affecting the daily life of the *nkumu* may be roughly divided into three: those affecting his person, those having to do with his food, and social regulations.

One of the great points of observance in the first class of regulations is the impor- 624
tance of the *mentole*. The *nkumu* must on no account be seen during daylight hours 292
with an uncovered head. If he wishes relief from the cumbersome *mentole* he may take it off in the darkness of his house and put on an ordinary hat made of skins, and when night falls he may walk where he will bareheaded if he so desires. The
skin hat, known as *lonka*, may be made from two animals only, in the case of an [824]
nkumu, one being the *ndaipo*, a species of antelope with light-coloured hair, and the other the *ijedo*, an animal resembling a beaver. The skin of the *ndaipo* may be used by anyone, but the *ijedo* is reserved for the *nkumu* only with one exception. The skin
of the *ijedo* may also be used for the carrying strap for infants known as *ngumba*, [859]
which is worn over one shoulder in bandoleer fashion. For the *nkumu* the skin of the *ijedo* is limited to the informal hat, *lonka*, and for making into the *lokata*, a pouch used for carrying small objects and worn like a sporran. As a corollary to the importance of the *mentole* may be noted the importance attached to the head of the *nkumu*, which must never be seen uncovered in daylight.

The Bonginda *nkumu* never wash in the daytime, but may wash at night with hot 624
water. The inland *nkumu* never wash. Even the Bonginda *nkumu* never wash their 515
heads, and no *nkumu* ever cuts his hair. If the *nkumu* becomes too greatly incon-
venienced, one of his wives may delouse his head, but only within the privacy of the [184]
house, by the light that enters the rear opening.

Yaelima

764 At the village of Tik-ke-Tik in Yaelima territory, we witnessed a similar scene following the death of a young man.

At nightfall his body was wrapped in mats or rattan splints, solidly plaited, tied up, and completely sealed. At dawn the [482] mortuary bundle, attached to a strong branch, was lifted by two men. Instead of taking the village lane, they carried the corpse behind the hut and then through the bush. A few men walking Indian file made up the procession, at the end of which was the

[142
291
301
516]

Fig. 12. Mother and Child, Bankutshu Tribe.

mother of the deceased in mourning costume. The path they followed was quite irregular. Largely avoiding the trodden paths, the bearers often retraced their steps and took almost two hours to reach the cemetery, four kilometers from the village.

764
764 On the way back, the natives explained to me that the numerous turns and the walk through untrodden bush were meant to lead astray the evil spirit who had entered the village and killed the

Take FH33
Sakata FO43

to burial, the deceased is laid out in the mortuary hut. Relatives, T
friends, and acquaintances sit up with the body in turn. Night and 764
day, plaintive and monotonous chants commemorate the high deeds
of the deceased, his glory, his qualities, his wealth, his power,
his whole life. The burial is carried out with great pomp and ends T
with a general consumption of the whole supply of palm wine, [273]
malafu, and masanga [Ed., sugar-cane beer].

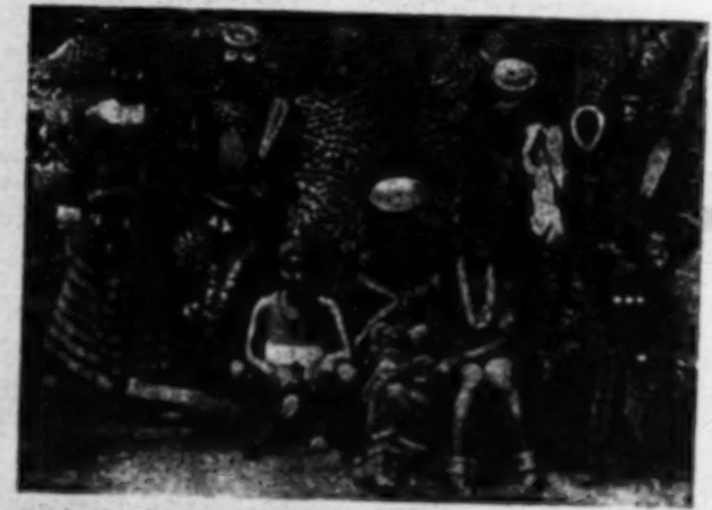


Fig. 16. Ebandia, Chief of the Mosengere, Two Favorite Wives, and Principal Dignitaries.

M
292
516
411

The peoples of Lake Leopold II place the corpse in a wooden M
coffin. Those of the Lukenie region wrap it in mats. Both groups 764
bury the deceased the day after death.

The cemeteries are located outside the village. The relatives lay out a few broken utensils on the grave. If the deceased was a hunter of repute, they plant a long staff upon the grave, and the skull of some animal killed by the dead man is attached at the top of it. [27]

During my stay in the territory of the Baboma-Banfumu of S
Bokala, I was struck by the presence of a tiny hut in the center 766
of Chief Pokei's village. It was about 60 centimeters high, 30 895
centimeters wide, and 50 centimeters long. I thought at first 761

M
342

in three large stakes to support the main crosspieces. Then he builds the vertical framework of his hut by planting strong, straight stalks all around the perimeter, 70 centimeters apart. To these vertical stalks, the native attaches horizontal crosspieces made of strong raffia stems and spaced from five to seven centimeters apart. The same method is followed for the interior partition, although weaker and thinner raffia stems are used. The space reserved for the door is left open. At this stage, the dwelling resembles a large cage, [32] fully open to the sky, with its bars arranged horizontally. It remains in that state all through the period of time required to prepare the materials that will line the interior walls. To this end, the native cuts leaves of the _nse-nse_, a very common type of palm throughout this swampy region. The leaves are assembled in groups of four, the fronds having first been folded in along the rib and roughly braided. The free ends are tied with a fine thong, and the ribs are bound together at intervals of five centimeters. Once the leaves have been prepared, the native goes inside the hut under construction and begins to cover the walls. Proceeding systematically, he works from bottom to top, attaching the _nse-nse_ leaves to the horizontal slats and placing them so that they overlap. When the wall has been covered, it is strengthened with a few slats placed vertically and tied to the outer framework

M
S
[342]

M
[353
576]

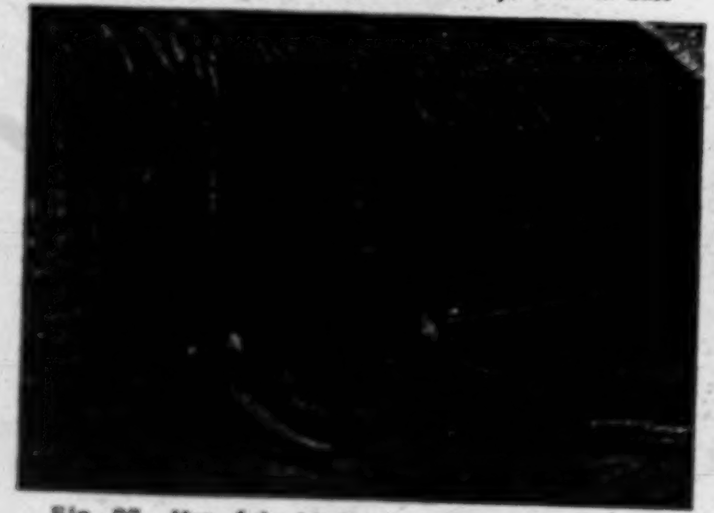


Fig. 27. Hut of the Wadia and Mosengere.

Making Fire

M 372 The natives of the Kasai-Fimi-Lukenie region make fire in three different ways.

The Bateke and Banfumungu of the river use flint and steel; the Banfumungu of the interior, the Boboma, Mosengere, Tumba, Wadia, Basakata, Bobaie, Balesa, Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and some of the Yaelima use the friction method [102] or longitudinal rubbing; and the Yaelima of the east, the Basongo-Meno, and the Bankutshu of the Bena-Dibele-Kole region obtain fire by gyration or rotary rubbing.

● M [516]

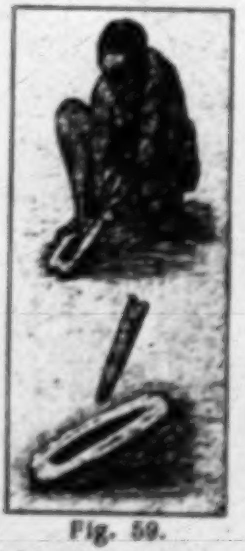


Fig. 59.
Making Fire by Friction.

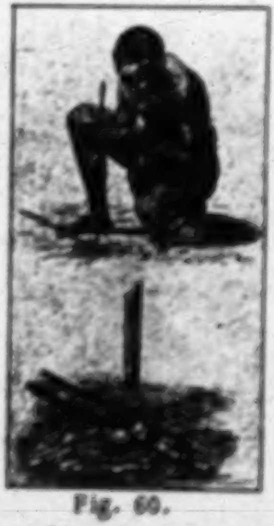


Fig. 60.
Making Fire by Rotation.

M [177] The native method tends to disappear rapidly everywhere with the introduction of matches, although most of the natives have kept their primitive strike-a-light and always carry it with them on journeys. If there are no matches or if through some circumstance -- the humidity, the crossing of a river or marsh -- the matches will not work, the native takes out his strike-a-light and makes fire by the native method.

T 372 The strike-a-light of the Bateke and Banfumungu of the river consists of an iron or steel blade from three to eight centimeters long and two to three centimeters wide, a flint (a mere

Yaelima

From Stanley Pool to the Bumbuli region, the natives use a large earthenware vessel, generally with very little decoration on the rough, irregular outside surface which is marked with vertical lines. [124] 415 531

The few specimens we collected are the only ones that the Museum of the Belgian Congo possesses.

The vessel is oval and elongated in shape, and the bottom is rounded off so little that the pottery cannot stand upright on a horizontal surface. The opening at the top is wide. Among the Balesa and Bateke, the rim is slightly raised and tilts sharply, while among the Ipanga and Batitu, the rim is wider, and its slope is less accentuated. The latter pottery, moreover, is very often decorated with two or three circular, impressed lines. As one advances eastward, the oval shape tends to disappear. The pot becomes spherical, the rim wider, and the impressed decoration more symmetrical and more painstakingly done.

Fig. 70. Yaelima Women Preparing Manioc.

252
412
516

Among the Bokala and Yaelima, the vessels used to cook the chikwangue have a bottom shaped like a spherical calotte, a rather wide, reversed rim, and a neck and body with sharp edges and distinct angles. The impressed decoration consists of two or three circular lines placed immediately above the bend

2% receptacle forming the pipe's bowl, and it is covered with a glowing piece of charcoal. The native strongly draws in the smoke until he has his mouth full, holds it for a few moments, and then blows it out by opening his mouth wide and turning his head slightly to one side. He frequently inhales part of the smoke, which always provokes a violent cough, brings tears to the eyes, and sometimes entails pronounced discomfort. [161]

If the natives are together in a group, they pass the pipe from one to another after taking a good puff. Those waiting for the pipe often show signs of impatience, and anyone who ventures to smoke more than his share risks a real quarrel.

Women are never admitted to the circle of smokers, nor do they gather to smoke among themselves, but always do it in private. [Ed., the remainder of the chapter, through page 162, is not translated.]

[516]

Fig. 89. Mosengere Smoking Tobacco.

Take# F133

Yaelima

M 301

are worn in the hair, around the neck, on the wrists and ankles, and at the waist.

From Stanley Pool to Mushie, the women slip a crown of cowries into the hair, sometimes wear bracelets of brass or glass beads on the wrist and forearm, and hang brass necklaces or imported beads strung on fibers around the neck. Very often the necklace goes from the shoulders under the arm. Throughout this region, imported ornaments predominate. Only the chiefs have retained a few special ornaments from the old days, notably the necklace and bracelet of worked brass and the necklace adorned with the teeth of leopards or lions. These latter objects are associated with a privilege, a prerogative, a right of use.

M T 301 534

M [301 516● 534]

Fig. 101. Group of Bateke Women. Hairdos and Ornaments.

They are, in a way, badges of rank. In the full regalia worn by [100] Nenali, a typical native petty chief, each detail seemed to have a special meaning. He had donned his finest costume in our honor and to impress us: an old tunic from the Belgian Regiment of the Guides, and a government medal around his neck on a chain, the badge of a native chief recognized by the government. He had attached a small whistle to the same chain, along with the five or six medals for his wives' taxes. Over this chain he wore the necklace of the native chiefs, made of brass and

T 301 534 302

The first one includes the Bateke-Basfumu-Baboma, among whom ornaments are relatively rare for the women as well as for the men. 301 171

The second one encompasses all the peoples in the region of Lake Leopold II and the lower Lukenie and is characterized by the solid brass necklace worn by the women and the ornaments trimmed with cowries and the brass plaques worn by the dignitaries and chiefs.

The third one includes the Ipanga and the Batitu, with the belt ornamented with brass beads, rings on the fingers and toes, and solid brass rings worn above the ankles, all of which are peculiar to the women.

Fig. 107. A Group of Batitu Children.

142
516
855

The fourth group is characterized by the sheath of brass rings covering the arm from wrist to elbow and worn as much by the men as by the women of the Bokala-Yaelima.

The fifth group includes the Bena Dibele-Kole region, where imported ornaments have replaced the primitive ones. (186)

In addition to all these adornments used regularly in common, everyday life, the native also has ornaments reserved for show and ceremony. 301

291 581 speaking. (1) Is this custom in some way related to modesty? The

1. See Chapter VI, Article VI.

[606] same question may be raised with respect to another strict rule of decorum which forbids a man to look his mother-in-law in the face. (2)

2. For details concerning this custom, see Chapter VI, Article V, 1.

It can readily be answered in the affirmative. (3)

3. Nevertheless, see Chapter X, Article II, 3.

784 576 The rule of decorum which forbids a man to sit down on a seat where a woman is seated who is not his wife seems to me also to be dictated by sexual modesty. On the other hand, stepping over the seat under such circumstances has nothing whatever to do with this feeling. The purpose of this practice is to enable the person seated (regardless of sex) to avoid the evil repercussions of a charm or magic spell in his or her possession. (4)

4. Contrary to the explanation given by Jadot in Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge (Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 90.

291 894 Is the native ashamed to show his nakedness? Let us beware of answering this question in general terms. In order to have an idea of the situation which is sufficiently clear and precise, various cases and circumstances must be taken into account.

1) First of all it can be stated that in the normal course of daily living the Nkundó, men as well as women, do all they can to hide their genital organs. That is to say that basically they are

fear of death would deter him from such honours. Another sign of the chosen successor is some untoward experience, such, for example, as finding cowrie shells (worn by *nkumu*) in a trap in the forest or a net that had been put out to catch fish. 624

Nkumu Akolo, whether the first of his line or a man succeeding in the office, bears the emblems of his rank. He wears an *ilolendo* (a branch of a special bush) stuck into his belt on the right side and hanging downwards. The special hat, *mantoh*, worn by *nkumu* is not yet his to wear, but he wears an ordinary skin hat known as *lokoto*, which is the mark of any elder. This hat may be ornamented with feathers if so desired. [293] [292]

When *Nkumu Akolo* decides that he has acquired sufficient wealth to enable him properly to claim the right of being made an *nkumu*, he begins his preparatory arrangements. *Mbili*, a mixture of charcoal with some sticky substance, is smeared over his body with plantain leaves. All ornamented clothing is discarded and a single cloth woven from raffia, and known as *ntoko*, is worn. He refuses to sit on the benches usually used and instead sits on the bare earth. All this is explained as an attempt on the part of the man about to be raised to the office of *nkumu* to be different from others, a man apart, separate, peculiar, not partaking in the ordinary interests and affairs of his fellow men. [302] [292] [516]

Nkumu Akolo now leaves his own village accompanied by all his wives and children, and also by a singer, *nyimba*, who is paid to sing his praises, and by several male Batwa (pygmies), up to half a dozen in number, known as *ntoli* because of their duty of blowing gourds and producing sounds which indicate praise of the great man. This party makes the round of villages wherever relatives are found, and the announcement is made that *Nkumu Akolo* is about to become an *nkumu*. This pilgrimage accomplished, a 'doctor' (*nkanga*) is visited by the aspirant to office, who seeks by magic to discover whether it is the propitious time for the ceremony of installation. The whole company retires to the private enclosure at the rear of the house belonging to the *nkanga* chosen, this being the place where he performs his wonders. The *nkanga* resorts to *mingo*, that particular branch of magic which has to do with reasons for strange and unaccountable phenomena.* *Nkumu Akolo* now seeks some sign as confirmation of his determination to claim his office at this time. Some native pepper may be wrapped in a leaf or merely covered by it, and left within sight of all, and upon being opened it may be found to have turned into salt, or perhaps it may be some earth that is thus turned to salt. Or a cock may be placed upon *Nkumu Akolo's* head and covered with a basket and then left for some time. Upon removing the basket it may be discovered that an egg has been laid. All such tests, if successful, will be regarded as indications that it really is time for *Nkumu Akolo* to assume the office of *nkumu*, but if the test fails he will usually go ahead with his plans anyhow, fearing the shame that would come to him should he go back to his home after having made the triumphant round of his relatives' homes. However, should he act thus, and he most certainly will, he knows that his days are numbered, [533] [563] [534] 624 791 787 624

---

* If a man's fields do not produce and he cannot understand why, he will resort to *mingo*. If it is suspected, for example, that the trouble is caused by someone making 'medicine', an arrow shaft is put into a small hole in the ground, and at each name mentioned, the arrow can be pulled out if the person is innocent, but remains stuck fast in the hole at the mention of the guilty name.

764 a successor to replace a deceased woman, and thus maintaining the balance between
587 the two families. Such wives were seldom killed, for they had relatives who cared
792 for them and would object, and who had the power to do so by refusing to
562 fulfil their obligations and by retaining the bride price already received. The group of men and women gathered together for execution thus comprised males and *bapika* women from the 'free' group (*bato*, as applied to all men and women not Batwa), and Batwa men and women whose owners had consented to their death. It sometimes happened that a man, seeing a woman among this group who took his fancy, might obtain her by paying for her in money or substituting one of his own slaves.

764 In some cases the executioner, *bonsele*, was chosen from among the family of the
792 dead *nkumu*, in others he was selected from among the whole group of people over
[412] which the *nkumu* held sway. The man having been chosen, the knife is brought out of the house where it has been kept by some elder. This, a blade some sixteen inches in length, two-edged, decorated by alternating longitudinal lines of polished and blackened steel and inserted in a wooden handle, is sharpened on one edge, carefully wrapped in a plantain leaf, and laid away for use on the following day.

At dawn the prisoners are taken to the water and washed to clean them, inland towns accomplishing this purpose by dragging them up and down the village in the dew-drenched grass tied by a liana. The prisoners then are arranged in a V shape, the apex nearest the spot where the *nkumu*'s body is sitting in state. Low seats are made by resting a stick in the forks of two perpendicular ones, and this cross bar is straddled by the victim. His hands are tied behind his back and his head tied to a sapling securely fixed at one end in the ground, the other bent down sufficiently to allow for tying the head with considerable tension on the rope. When all is thus arranged an expert drummer begins to pound out a rhythmic beat, and the ceremony of handing over the knife takes place.

The executioner of the day is dressed in finery but no camwood powder is evident, for it is a time of mourning and not of rejoicing. He wears a hat with many feathers, a vine encircles his waist, and bracelets of the same his arms. Then the man who last occupied the position of executioner comes forward. An elder has already brought the knife wrapped in its leaf and also a heap of ash on a leaf, both of which are placed on the ground. The old executioner picks up the knife while the new one faces him. The former demonstrates with gestures how he used to go about his work, the motions, the attitudes, the fine arts of the task. Even though the executioner of the day may have had previous experience, this part of the ceremony must be gone
[512] through. Then, holding the knife aloft, the instructor raises his right leg at right angles to his body, bends it at the knee so that the shin hangs perpendicularly, and the new executioner passes underneath it, returning the same way. He now faces the old executioner, who lays the knife in his own hands, arms outstretched and palms open, the handle resting in his right palm, the blade in his left. The new man, facing his instructor, places his outstretched and open palms on the shoulders of the other, draws his hands down his arms, finally coming to the knife, which, because of its position is thus received, handle in the left hand, blade in the right. Releasing his right-hand grasp of the blade, he stoops, sprinkles the blade with some of the ash, then rubs his right hand in the dirt to remove all slippery sweat. Then still

782
764

grasping the knife with his left hand, with his free right hand he drains a gourd of palm wine to gain courage, hits the nearest victim on the head with the empty gourd, then transfers the knife to his right hand. He is now ready for his work which he proceeds to do methodically, sustained by the heady wine and the rhythm of the drum. When he had finished one of the lines, a pause would be made to bring out the body for burial. Just before this is done an armed band rushes down the path, returns, goes up in the other direction, then returns; this is said by some to ward off any spirits which might be about. The *nkumu* is now brought out by the Batwa clowns. His grave, a circular hole with a crypt in one side of it, its entrance facing west, had been previously prepared. Few people in the Bongindo villages knew or had seen the actual burying place of an *nkumu*. While the corpse was carried to the grave followed by a crowd, the executioner finished his work. Those who stayed behind took the bodies of the decapitated men and women and divided them among all the participants of the funeral who would subsequently devour everything. [266]

Accompanying the funeral procession to the grave were the *adzi*, one or more men or women who were destined to accompany the *nkumu* to his grave and to the other world beyond. At the burial of an *nkumu* witnessed in 1932 at which the semblance of some of the old rites were carried out, a party of armed men contested the right of the procession to approach the grave, there was a mock battle for a few minutes between two bands of the funeral party, and then the procession gained right of way. At the grave-side the legs and sometimes the arms of one *adzi* were broken by heavy clubs to prevent him from escaping. Then seated on the ground the body of the *nkumu* would be placed on the knees of this one, whose arms would be placed around the *nkumu* and securely fastened by driving a peg right through both wrists. Sometimes two *adzi* were thus used. If the number of victims was sufficient, others would be buried alive too, being placed in the grave in the recumbent [illegible] position, with the corpse on top of them, its weight being sufficient, with the earth filling in the grave, to prevent escape. The *nkumu* was now ready for burial and was placed in the crypt, facing west. The relatives of the *nkumu* approach, they pluck the leaves and stem of a juicy bush known as *[illegible]* and chewing it, expectorate ceremonially on the body while they address it in language somewhat as follows: 'You are going to leave us now, we are mourning, for you were a good and wise man, your discernment in matters of justice was without parallel, &c. . . . we wish that you may be happy where you go, have many wives, beget many children, lack not for meat. But don't take with you our power to beget children, leave us also some of this wisdom of yours, for what you were, we would be.' This prayer over, the [illegible] would be slipped off the head of the corpse and replaced by the informal hat, all done so dexterously that the bare head was not seen. The entrance to the [312] [826] [164] [813]

The body was supposed to have remained in state for seven to nine days, but actually it was buried privately soon after death, a dummy being set up with the [illegible] on its head, and the succeeding ceremonies being conducted with only the dummy in the place of the actual body. The inland villages however did allow the body to remain unburied for the long period, the wives being forced to keep watch in the same house. The Bongindo buried their *nkumu* generally in their house or the spot where they had been accustomed to rest, leaving the dummy in some other spot farther off.

All burials have particular regard to this east-west position, those buried in the recumbent position having the feet to the west. The native explanation is that this allows the spirit of the departed to follow the path of the sinking sun.

224 absolute and inescapable necessity for those tribes who have Batiwá, since the latter provide them with a certain amount of the necessary meat, though in insufficient quantity. The people hunt in groups and individually -- in the latter case primarily by means of traps. Fishing with nets is also very widespread, although various other methods are also known. The picking of fruit, caterpillars, mush- 222 rooms, vegetables, etc., continues to be popular.

325 Among trades, that of the smith is foremost. However, iron casting has been abandoned at the present time. Copper is brought in from other peoples by tribes serving as intermediaries. Wood sculpture is rapidly disappearing. Basketry [12] remains popular. [286] Weaving no longer exists at the present time; in fact, looms can no longer be found in the region.

593 The family is patriarchal and the political organization corresponds to it; there are only heads of families. Indeed, among the Nkundó the family is the complete nucleus and foundation of the society. The result is a democratic and oligarchic government, but one very different from any we would call by that name in Europe. 554 Certain men become prominent because of their intelligence, their eloquence, their bravery, or their wealth, having great influence and often giving the appearance of chiefs whose authority extends beyond their own clan, but none of them has ever founded an empire. In the past the Bongili were the most courageous tribe, and the one most feared. Besides, their geographic location was in their favor, as they had the Lifumba and the Bombomba, two sister tribes, on each side of them.

[533] 576 The artistic tastes of the Nkundó are directed chiefly toward music and the dance. Their oral literature is also very rich; it includes, for example, the epic of Nsongó and Lianja (1) and that

1. The most important portions of this epic have been translated and published by Father Boelaert, M.S.C., in Congo, 1934, Vol. 1, pp. 49 and 197.

of the tortoise.

629 and that he may have no more than a month or perhaps a year in which to live and will surely die speedily.

The special objects attaching to the office of *nkumu*, among these the hat, anklets, and stool, etc., are at the same time subject to similar magical acts to determine whether they may be produced for the new *nkumu's* use. They are not present, being in the possession of the notables which will appoint him, but are mentioned by name. Apart from the anklets, no further ceremony is required to identify these objects with their future owner. [302]

The songs ended, the *Nkumu Abale* smears black *nkila* all over his body again, 629 before the elders begin to determine which of his wives is to be known as *Nkana*, 787 the one who will be closest to her husband throughout his days. For this, magic formulae (*bianda*, sing. *etanda*) are used. All the wives sit round in a circle and the *nganga* places some irritant such as ground pepper in the eyes of all the women. The wife whose eyes stream most and whose discomfort is also accompanied by a violent shaking of the body is known to be *Nkana*. Here again, lying is believed to be out [857] of the question, for the shaking of the body is something that is supposed to be impossible of simulation, the real being easily distinguished by all from the false. *Nkana* is now stripped of all clothing and her body smeared by the *nganga* with yellow clay on one side, and with white on the other. A belt of leaves is put round her waist 624 and a small bit of cloth between the legs with each end attached to the belt. Near by 781 a gourd with 'medicine' in it has been standing ready for the next step in the ceremonies, and this is now smeared with white clay, a parrot's feather stuck in the neck, and handed to *Nkana*, who receives it in one hand. Into the other hand is put a section of plantain stalk, into one end of which has been stuck a parrot's feather. A third feather is placed in her mouth so that she cannot speak, grunt, cry, or eat. She is now tied with a cord which is held by one of the young men attending *Nkumu Abale*. At this point of the proceedings the *nganga* states his price [78] for his work, which will be in the neighbourhood of one hundred brass rods, worth 432 to-day about fifty francs, but formerly double that amount. The future *nkumu*, accompanied as before, leaves for the village of the notables. *Nkana* starts off at a tremendous pace, for she is now imbued with a sort of frenzied strength, and for this reason has been tied up and put in charge of a strong young man, otherwise she would be off so fast that no one could catch her, and would go into the forest, where she would live for days unseen.

629 In the village of the notables the party all sit in an *elanga* belonging to one of the elders. This is the place where the Tumba men really live—their houses are just [343] sleeping and cooking establishments, but the *elanga*, having a roof for shade and no walls, is the place where the men congregate and spend their leisure time. It is also 342 the site of the village smithy, which takes up one end. Here, then, *Nkumu Abale* and his party sit for a day and a night, and neither he nor *Nkana* may eat food or drink [563] wine during this period. Games are played by the notables—mock battles, dances, and [57] songs chiefly of battle, and before the first streaks of dawn appear the group in the *elanga* begins to march up and down the village singing.

At dawn the whole party, accompanied by a large crowd, make their way to a place in the bush where there is an elevation of some sort. Here *Nkumu Abale* climbs up and takes his stand, accompanied by *Nkana*. Now the notables choose the *Bikpe*

579*
834 arises but rarely. Furthermore, if a daughter is required to perform similar duties for her father, she will undertake this obligation only [578] with the lament: [illegible] 'm wǐndɛ́lɛ́, "I have come to see where I had my origin." Any woman who has been in that position will later know no oath more sacred than this one: la [illegible] wǎ fafá bǎkɛ 'm wǐndɛ́lɛ́ la mpaka, "by my father's nakedness which I saw when he was old."

834
29] Thus we can draw the conclusion that the Nkundó are offended by nakedness and as a rule do not tolerate it. The exceptions do not invalidate this generalization; on the contrary, they tend to support it.

2. Speech. Obscenities and propriety.

CLI
831] In general the Nkundó see nothing wrong with using obscene expressions. They only describe them as "bad" if they become indecent.

195 If a conversation touches on matters of sex, they may wonder whether a particular topic is necessary, interesting, or entertaining; they will not ask themselves whether it is moral. For it will be apparent throughout this study they have no concept of morality strictly speaking.

The Nkundó possesses a varied and extensive list of obscene words -- nor is he alone in this respect. [14] We are not compiling a dictionary, and therefore we will not list them. What interests us are the circumstances that make these words indecent and under which a proper use of them impossible. The circumstances provide us with a criterion of the degree of obscenity of a word or expression. Let us say at once that we include in this category not only terms applied to organs and phenomena which are of a sexual nature strictly speaking, but also words pertaining to certain anatomical parts or physiological functions such as, for example, excretion, hair and tattooing found on private parts, and the female garment called [illegible]. We [196] should also point out that some tribes will consider expressions obscene which do not shock others at all.

521 which do not shock others at all. (1)
831
195

1. These comments are applicable also to peoples in other parts of the world.

559 The general rule of decorum among the Nkundó permits the use of such terms only among equals. Their use when speaking to inferiors is tolerated but not approved of. The use of obscenities when speaking to any strangers meets with definite disapproval. Among persons of different sexes the prohibition is particularly strict.

Nevertheless, the use of these expressions is judged less severely if they are uttered in a moment of anger or as a reprimand, even in the presence of a member of the opposite sex.

Exclamations of anger, vexation, and sorrow are often nothing but obscenities (2). No one is shocked by them in such situations.

2. See "Les Coutumes Funéraires" [Funeral Customs], No. 1, to be published in *Anthropos*.

Some elderly or more modest persons do not make use of them, however; if the habit of using a particular expression is thoroughly ingrained, they may make a slight change in its pronunciation (as is common for some of our "swear words").

195 To circumvent the difficulties caused by the need to use certain words frequently, [58] euphemisms are coined to take their place. Thus the Nkundó say: *[illegible] bokoko w'ôtumo*, "I am going behind the house," to indicate that they are going to urinate, and *[illegible]*, "I am going for small pieces of firewood," or *[illegible]*, "I am going to pick a leaf," meaning that they are going to the toilet. On the way they say: *[illegible]*, "I am leaving the path" or "I am going to the forest." A husband is permitted to use accurate terminology when speaking to his wife, but it is considered very improper for her to do so in speaking to him.

When someone is satisfying a natural need, others keep a distance away from him; they will not even speak to him. Moreover, the person would not reply even if he were called. A woman will not

Article III. Relations between Spouses; Their Various Rights and Duties

[illegible] Spouses are obliged to fulfill the duties and perform the tasks incumbent upon them.

It is difficult to say just how far the sense of duty to fulfill the *debitum conjugale* extends among the Nkundó. Normally, they very frequently fulfill this obligation toward each other. But after a good quarrel they abstain, either through mutual consent or because one of them refuses. If one of the parties fails seriously and repeatedly in this respect, the question is resolved by a divorce. The response to temporary lapses is limited to reprimands, disputes, blows, and other common reactions. It should be added that continence is required during the *ekila* period after the birth of a child and after setting up a new hunting enclosure (*lokombo*) or a new fishing weir (*bosaka*), before the third piece of a game or fish is caught.

1. Meals

[illegible] A couple never take their meals together. The husband eats the food prepared for him and served to him by his wife alone, with his grown sons, or with friends or relatives. The wife herself eats with her small children, her daughters, or her female relatives. The two sexes never mingle at meals.

[illegible] The same rule applies to talks, but it is much less strictly maintained; it is not rare to find that, for one reason or another, women participate in the conversation of men.

It will not be long before, through the influence of Christianity, [588] women will generally be admitted in the conversations of the opposite sex. Developments with respect to mixed meals will come with much more difficulty; in practice the question has not even been broached.

[illegible] Thus one finds a kitchen next to the bedroom or separated from the hut. In addition to being the place where food is prepared, it is where the woman spends her day. The kitchen is sometimes a structure separated from the dwelling itself, sometimes a part of the house separated from the bedroom by a partition containing a door.

326 Whereas with us the village inn is the place where the affairs of
●521 the week are noisily debated, it is at the smithy where the Mongo
571 Negroes congregate. There the elders gather -- the younger men have no voice here; there the various differences about (or among) wives and the impending taxes are discussed; amidst the billows of smoke -- drawn with deep puffs out of their huge bamboo pipes -- the smith is the only one who works on and earns his living nobly.

326 The smith is the most judicious craftsman among the Mongo
428 Negroes.

His trade is practically the only one which is a family affair and is passed on from father to son. If a smith does not have any children, the business is taken over by his younger brother.

This right of inheritance is by no means general in the other trades; the trade of the smith is inherited while the others are taken up by any Tom, Dick, or Harry who happens to have a liking for them.

325 The smithy where the smith plies his trade is a wide oblong dark
318 hut (about five meters by ten meters) built alongside the public highway. In contrast with the other dwellings of the Negroes, the floors of which are generally built about 20 centimeters above the road, the floor of the smithy is dug out from 30 to 70 centimeters below the level of the road so that one goes down a step from the road into the smithy.

The reason why the floor of the smithy should be dug out in this way is not quite clear to me, but most probably it is to prevent the danger of fire when the storm winds that accompany the heavy tropical rains sweep through the huts. By digging out the floor in this way, an earthen enclosure about half a meter high is formed around the smithy, and this protects the smith from the wind and enables him to continue quietly at work.

325 In spite of the primitiveness of his tools [96] and the primitive manipulation of them, the smith knows how to get what he needs from his implements. The forge (lotulu) is constructed as follows: a block of wood is cut about 60 centimeters long, 40 centimeters wide, and 30 centimeters high, with a hollow pipe, half a meter long, connected to it. This is all formed of one piece. With the aid of a banana stalk, on which the clay is moulded, a smith's pipe is formed. The banana stalk is removed from the clay, and the hollow pipe (bosongo) remains. Two, sometimes four, bellows (njasa) are placed on the

264 [415] spherical calotte, and also wooden plates. Sometimes also simple leaves are used as plates, unless the food is served in the cooking pots.

The whole meal is spread on the ground. [144]

The man squats on his mat and dips leisurely in the dishes with his hand, moving from one to another according to his taste.

● [532] The meal is always eaten in silence. Even when several friends eat together, they never talk during the meal.

After the meal the natives carefully wash their hands and teeth and rinse out their mouths several times.

Beverages

271 415 Water is the only beverage they drink at mealtime, and they use it quite rarely. If they do not have a wooden or earthenware cup, they use part of a calabash or simply a leaf rolled into a little cone.

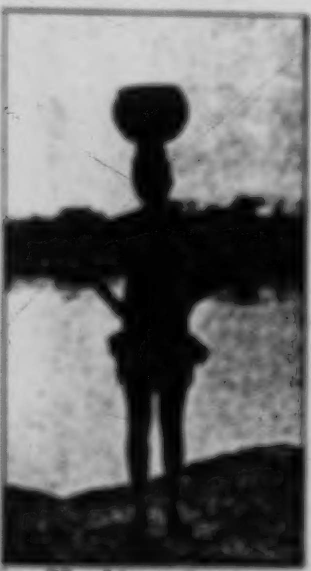


Fig. 83. Water Carrier.

312 462 857 412 Water usually comes from a spring near the village. The natives use river water only when it is quite clear. The women and children have the task of fetching water, a chore which is often quite hard. I visited many villages located along or near the river, whose source of drinking water was 20 to 30 minutes away.

At certain hours of the day and more especially in the morning as the sun first comes up, the women and children set out, a calabash or water jug balanced on their heads, to fetch the supply for the day.

271 415 Water is kept in large calabashes or earthenware jugs, sheltered from the sun in a corner of the hut.

Article VII. Monogamy

595 The Nkundɔ do not esteem monogamy. It is polygamy that they desire. If a man has only one wife, that is because he ● 592 is poor. Thus he is made fun of and called etula or bolɔlɔ, "a nobody," or bɔsɛ, "a weak man." Songs dealing with this theme [592] can often be heard during drinking parties, especially among the Elinga. All this is a great obstacle in the struggle against polygamy. Not only is the Nkundɔ tempted by the material ad- [552] vantages of polygamy, but he is unable to bear teasing. He is extremely sensitive to humiliation and is the slave to other men's respect.

595 In spite of all this, and apart from the influence of the Christian religion, monogamous marriages that were not simply imposed by necessity but were spontaneously desired, have existed in the past and still exist, although they are extremely rare. Here are the names of a few men who wished to remain united to one woman, although they had the means to establish a harem for themselves. I have chosen them at random from two villages: Bonjoku-Bonkoso (27 taxpayers in 1931) and Bongɛlɛ wa Ikɔngɔ together with the affinally related clan Ilɛlɛ (47 taxpayers in 1931).

Bonjoku-Bonkoso:

Esalɛ ea Elema of Bokenyola married to Iombe of Nkɛlongo;
Bokanɛ of Bokenyola married to Wanga of Likolɔ;
Bolenge w'Ilɔngɔ of Bokenyola married to Balɔfogola;
Ikɛ yɛ Lokɛfola of Bolɛfola married to Nkɛlɛ of Bongɛlɛ.

All died before 1935.

Bongɛlɛ:

Nsanga (still alive) married to Toyɔngwa of Elɔngɔ. Even when he was widowed, he did not want to remarry, because of his attachment to his deceased wife.
Ekɔnɔko ea Bonkɔngɔ married to Bonkɛla of Bofɛlɛ;
Bongolɛ married to Bolɛfɛ of Bompɔngɔ;
Bokɔnda w'onkongɔ married to Bokele of Efɛla;
Lofalanga of Ilɛlɛ married to Imana of Bonsɔlɛ. After his wife's death, he remained a widower until he himself died.

768 men are generous enough to renounce all of it. If the deceased
428 had an *ebisa*, or if the parents-in-law give their son-in-law a substitute, the possessions fall to her. She even inherits the fields [*culture*] that have been set up by her kinswoman, to the extent that they have not been destroyed. Under other circumstances the cultivated lands [*plantations*] are never left to the family of the deceased.

The only items to which a woman is entitled strictly speaking are the various portions of the bride price and similar payments awarded to her by Nkundó law: goats and spiral bands and the mother's gifts as part of the bride price; the cloth and belt given at a funeral. At a wife's death these possessions pass to her clan, if she has not previously given them to her relatives. In no case may they be appropriated by the husband.

Finally, when a wife dies she may leave a tool (knife, hoe, etc.) to her daughter. This custom is observed particularly by very active women in order to inculcate their daughters with the love
[523] of work. Such an object often became an heirloom, transmitted from mother to daughter for several generations. It is called *bosiâdjwâ* (from *tsiéla*, "to leave to"; see the Latin *reliquiae*) or, among the Bombwanja, *elili*. These terms are also applied to other objects included in the inheritance when these are considered separately (altogether they are called *lokuta*, "patrimony," "property," or *lisangá*, "inheritance"). Such a *bosiâdjwâ* can never be appropriated by a husband. [447]

Article VIII

Death of the Fiancé Before the Payment of the Bride Price

768
584 Here we shall deal with the situation resulting from the death of a husband during the engagement, after the payment of the *ikulá* or the *nsango* but before the *walo*. The procedure for dissolving an engagement may already lead us to suppose that death also breaks it without any special difficulties. And in fact, if the fiancé dies the woman is free. Therefore she may go home, and the family of the deceased is reimbursed for the payments that have been made.

as the roof. The natives of the Bombali region usually build their huts quite carelessly. Although their villages are remarkably clean, the general appearance suffers a great deal from the shabby state of most of the dwellings. Even quite new huts are poorly finished, compared to those of other regions. 342

The furnishings of Betito and Yaelima huts do not differ from those of other regions, except in the shape of the utensils and the presence of chairs. The bed is always very low, raised barely 10 or 15 centimeters from the ground. The interior of the hut is only very rarely lined with mats. Among the furnishings one should note the large drying basket which serves as a storage place and which is hung above the hearth. It is hexagonal in shape, and its radius varies from one to one and a half meters. Its edges are straight, the thongs by which it hangs are attached to the six corners of the hexagon, and it is made entirely in an open-work weave like that [16] of the caned chairs of Europe, a special technique of which we found no other instances in the region. No less interesting are the chairs, relatively rare among the Betito, common among the Bokala, and in daily use among the Yaelima. Their special form is characteristic. The natives sometimes take the utmost care to ornament them with carved designs, and the remarkably artistic appearance of certain ones 352 345 352 351

Fig. 22. Temporary Hut of the Bokala-Yaelima.

Yaelima
Ekonda

535
534 give them in general a very interesting local ethnic character.
415 One might say as much of the carved wooden cups, the engraved
531 horns, and the vessels of artistically worked wood which up to now have been regarded as local to the region occupied by the Bakuba [Kuba] and which are found throughout the territory south of Wumbali.

342 As a rule, the hut of the Bosa Dibele-Kole region is much trimmer, it is constructed much more carefully, and the work is accomplished with order and method. The shape is rectangular, the roof has a double slope, and the ridgepole is slightly arched. This curve, however slight, is nevertheless quite characteristic

Fig. 56. (1) Bankutu-Batetela Hut under Construction.
(2) Completed Bankutu-Batetela Hut.

and quite common. It is undeniably reminiscent of the typical form of the ancestral hut.

The door is located either on the side or in the gable wall, according to whether the hut is oriented parallel or perpendicular to

Yaelima

From Stanley Pool to the Bomboli region, the natives use a large earthenware vessel, generally with very little decoration on the rough, irregular outside surface which is marked with vertical lines. [134] 415 531

The few specimens we collected are the only ones that the Museum of the Belgian Congo possesses.

The vessel is oval and elongated in shape, and the bottom is rounded off so little that the pottery cannot stand upright on a horizontal surface. The opening at the top is wide. Among the Bolesa and Bateke, the rim is slightly raised and tilts sharply, while among the Ipanga and Batitu, the rim is wider, and its slope is less accentuated. The latter pottery, moreover, is very often decorated with two or three circular, impressed lines. As one advances eastward, the oval shape tends to disappear. The pot becomes spherical, the rim wider, and the impressed decoration more symmetrical and more painstakingly done.

Fig. 70. Yaelima Women Preparing Manioc.

252
412
516

Among the Bokala and Yaelima, the vessels used to cook the chikwangue have a bottom shaped like a spherical calotte, a rather wide, reversed rim, and a neck and body with sharp edges and distinct angles. The impressed decoration consists of two or three circular lines placed immediately above the bend

415 531 of the body. These parallel lines are intersected in three or four places by small groups of eight to ten little notches. In addition, the part of the body angling inward is quite often decorated with intersecting oblique lines. [125]

415 These types of pottery for chikwangue seem to be modern forms.

The very ancient kind, of which we happily were able to find a specimen still intact, has a less characteristic shape. The bottom is round and irregular; the body is more or less angled but without sharp edges; and the neck is slightly bent back but has no distinct plane surface.

252
415
412

Fig. 71. Mortar, Pestle, and Sifter for Manioc Flour among the Bankutu.

252 415 The Bokala, Yaelima, etc., place a wooden grid at the bottom of the chikwangue vessel, line the inside with leaves, and pile the cakes of manioc flour in small mounds higher than the rim of the vessel. To keep these characteristic pyramids stable, they often tie a network of cords, a sort of net with large, wide meshes, to the molding of the neck. The top of this net can be opened or closed at will, and the chikwangue cakes are crammed in it as in a net. Sometimes the wooden grid is replaced by an earthenware shelf which extends beyond the rim of the vessel. This shelf is pierced with large round holes. This type of pottery, however, is quite rare. We were able to find only a few specimens.

M 252 475

The natives do not care for them very much; they regard them as impractical for preparing chikwangue, but readily use them to dry and smoke their provisions.

M 40 531

Beyond the Tselima, notably among the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, the pottery used to cook manioc cakes [126] is more reminiscent of the old earthenware cooking pots of Europe. It is spheroid in shape, very symmetrical, with the neck curved out a little, rounded, and slightly arched. The upper part of the body is decorated with broad circular lines, small arcs, and little dots. These pots are a mottled brownish-black in color and are lightly glazed.

M 252 262

Here, too, the chikwangue are cooked by steam. It must be noted, however, that chikwangue does not play the same important role in the diet of the peoples of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, although it is still one of the chief elements even now.

M D 252 415

The Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu also eat kifunge, a manioc bread which is prepared in the following way. The housewife heats water in a large earthenware receptacle with a rounded bottom. It is shaped like a wide, spherical calotte, with the body almost straight, but in any case having sharp edges, and the neck slightly flared but not arched. When the water begins to boil, she throws in the manioc flour a little at a time, stirring constantly with a [127] long spatula of polished wood. When the flour has absorbed practically all the water, the vessel is taken off the fire, and more manioc flour is added while

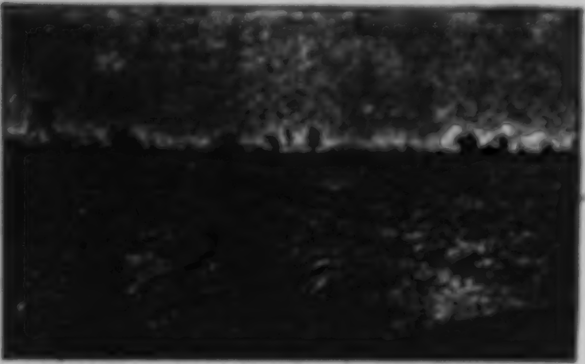


Fig. 72. Chikwangue Brought to the Post.

M D 252

M
415 however, shows us that aside from this generally uniform character these different tribes each have their own distinctive pottery. In our opinion the latter should be regarded as a derivative from the original form, known and used by the principal ethnic branch of these various peoples. Each of them has modified the original form according to its tastes, its conceptions, and local circumstances and needs, to the point where each people developed a special and characteristic form that retained only two essential elements of the original: the more or less marked curve of the sides, and the inward, horizontal rim.

M
415
531 Among the Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Tselima, the shape of the small pieces of pottery used for preparing meat is altogether different. Here we find neither a regular curvature of the sides nor an inward, horizontal rim. On the contrary, the bottom is a spherical calotte, the body distinctly angled with a sharp edge, the upper surface decorated with incised drawings, and the rim slightly sloping and curved outward. The decoration is the same as that we noted on the pottery for chikwangue in this region.

M
D
415
531 Farther east, among the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu, the shape is again quite different. The sides, which slant obliquely inward and have no rim, meet the round bottom at a sharp angle. They usually have considerable decoration with incised drawings and even some molding in relief.

M
251 To preserve meat, the natives proceed in two different ways.

For small quantities, the meat is cut into pieces weighing from one to three kilograms, impaled on a stick, and roasted over [132] a low fire. This procedure does not give very good results. Meat smoked in this way spoils after five or six days, but this does not keep the native from eating it. "It's the meat and not the smell that I eat," he says, "for after the meal the meat is gone and the smell is still with us!"

To store large quantities, the meat is cut into pieces weighing from half a kilogram to one kilogram and then boiled over a brisk fire for a little less than an hour in rather salty, well-spiced water. The pieces are then smoked on a large grid, usually set up in the center of the village. This grid, made of large rattan stems and green branches, rests on four forked stakes 90 centimeters to 1.20 meters high. A woman keeps a slow fire burning under the

M
257 grid, which gives off a great deal of smoke. The boiled meat is lightly packed and covered with large banana leaves. It remains on this grid for two or three days. At the end of this time, it is thoroughly smoked, black as coal, dry, and tough, but it keeps almost indefinitely.

The housewife takes her supply and puts it in the storage place inside her hut, where it is safe from the rats, mice, and other marauders which infest the native huts.

Fig. 75. Communal Smoking Apparatus.

M
415 The meat is usually cooked in large earthenware vessels. [123]

Among the Bateke and Banfunungu, these vessels are shaped like irregular spheres with the top cut off.

Among the Babuma and Basakata, on the other hand, this pottery is cylindrical in form, broad, of moderate height, and has a flat bottom. Among the Bobaie, Balesa, and Batete, the bottom is rounded, broad, and shallow, and it extends into a

M
[531] rather high neck in the shape of a truncated cone, decorated with very even and not very artistic impressed designs. The body has sharp edges, and the small rim has a wide flare. This form is found among the Basakata, although less frequently. It seems to be quite common in the region of the Kundu [Nkundu], northern neighbors of the Bobaie, Balesa, and Batete.

M
415
531 The Ipanga and Yaelima use pottery vessels similar to those they use for making chikwangue, while the Basongo-Meno and

Dingawa FO16

M
8
415
[291]

Bankutu use a bell-shaped form; the bottom is a spherical calotte, the body slightly curved, and the decoration consists of heavy moldings, both sunken and in relief.

M
415

These same pots are also used by all these tribes for preparing and cooking fish.

The riparian peoples of the Congo-Kasai-Fimi and of the lower Lukenie, as well as the Wadia and Mongandu of the Busiempe-Lulonga, fish a great deal.

M
252
251

Fish is never eaten raw. The natives boil it or eat it dried or smoked.

To preserve fish, the natives smoke it on large grids similar to those they use for smoking meat.

M
415

Certain peoples, notably the tribes of the Fimi and lake region and of the lower Lukenie, also use a special form of pottery, rare and heretofore unknown. We were able to bring back only two specimens, which are fortunately very characteristic. [134]

This form is open at the base and closed at the top by a large disk pierced with holes. The sides are curved. The diameter of the bottom opening is a little smaller than that of the upper disk. It varies from 45 to 80 centimeters.

M
415
251

This drying pot, called bongo by the natives, is placed on three pieces of wood forming a tripod. Under the tripod, a woman maintains a slow fire of leaves, grass and green wood, which sends thick smoke inside the pot. The gutted fish are placed over the disk. They are left there for four or five days, exposed continually to the action of the fire and smoke. At the end of this time they are sufficiently smoked and dried to keep for several months. Naturally, these pots can be used [135] for preparing and preserving only small quantities of food. They form a part of the native house wife's equipement among these various tribes. She also uses them to smoke chikwangue, to dry bananas, manioc tubers, and ears of maize, and sometimes to smoke meat. The manioc tubers, bananas, ears of maize, and other vegetable

Fig. 76. Rattan Belt.

M
[291]

27/815 The shape of these water jugs varies considerably according to the region, and some of them even seem to us to be characteristic of certain ethnic groups. [145]

Among the western Bateke and Basfumungu, the spherical shape with straight neck predominates.

Among the Mabema of Bokala-Wombali and the eastern Basfumungu, the shape is distinctly spherical, with a very small, funnel-like neck that is usually no more than one or two centimeters high. This form is entirely new. Fortunately, we were able to collect several specimens. The Bateke of the Stanley Pool region use a water jug that resembles the carafes imported from Europe. This shape is particularly common in the Leopoldville-Kinshasa region.

From Mushie to the region of the Basakata-Balesa, including the Wadia and Tumba, the body of the water jug consists of two parts joined at a sharp or slightly rounded edge. The bottom part is shaped like a spherical calotte; the upper part has the shape of a truncated cone. The decoration is very symmetrical. Lightly •[51] marked parallel circles cover the conical part of the body and sometimes the neck. The latter is very long, usually wider at its base than at the top and slightly swollen in the middle. This interesting shape is also found, though more rarely, among the Mosengere. Among this tribe we encountered another form, no less interesting and very little known up to the present time. The chief characteristics of this form are the flat bottom, a cylindrical, more or less symmetrical body, rounded edges, and a neck in the shape of a wide funnel.

Among the Bobale of the northeast, the Balesa-Batete, the Ipanga-Batitu, and the Bokala-Yaelima, the water jug has a spherical body and a straight neck. This same shape is also found among the Bankutu [Wankutshu] and Basongo-Meno of the Bena Dibele-Kole region.

Let us note, however, that in the region of the Ipanga-Yaelima, water jugs are relatively rare; the natives commonly use large calabashes, very often provided with a handle and a leg of rattan or bamboo.

27/815 Other than with meals, the natives drink water only to slake their thirst. Each time the porters come to a river, they make it a point to bathe in it and to refresh themselves.[146]

Boka F132
Dengese FO16

M
273 ordinarily does not stop until his tenth liter, and he is not the biggest drinker. Very often [149] the celebrations degenerate
[149] into bloody brawls. The drunken native flies into a rage over trifles, quarrels, and does not hesitate to use his weapons.

T
273
562 Among certain tribes, notably the Baalumongo, women under no circumstances may be present at important festivities or participate in large-scale drinking. Pokei assures us that they are excluded because of their vindictive temperament. "We men," he said, "sometimes fight during these celebrations, but the next day haven't we forgotten our quarrels? The women would also fight. Do they know how to hold their tongues even when they haven't drunk _masanga_? The next day they would go on quarrelling. The husbands would step in. A village quarrel would follow every celebration! No, the women may not drink _masanga_."

It would be a mistake, however, to believe that the women strictly observe this prohibition. Oh no! More than one has her little drop of _masanga_ inside her hut, and on occasion intentionally pours herself a little too much. _Masanga_ is not taboo for them!

M
273
[149] Sugar-cane beer is served in small earthenware cups, pieces of a calabash, or wooden cups.

East of Balesa-Batete territory, _masanga_ seems to be unknown, or at least we did not find any, either among the Ipanga-Batitu or among the Bokala-Yaalima.

M
D
273
415 Among the Basongo-Meno and Bankutu of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, the natives chiefly consume palm wine.

They also make very inferior beer from maize or millet. To make this beer, the native crushes the maize or millet, steeps it in spring water, and lets it ferment in earthenware jars.

● M
D
415
● 531 These jars are shaped more or less like the water jug with the spherical body, but have a very broad and higher neck. They are usually quite large. The cups used for palm wine and beer by the Basongo-Meno and Bankutu are always carved out of wood. They are found in all shapes, from a simple, undecorated small keg to a splendidly fashioned human figurine. In certain villages, notably at Tipolo and Bakoba, we found cups made of buffalo horn, decorated [150] with carved designs. Cups shaped like horns are sometimes carved out of wood. These are usually larger and more carefully decorated.

276 Of the seven specimens of this type that we collected, only one came from the Banfumungu, while the others belonged to various tribes of the region cited above.

The bowl is usually made of a section of bamboo or the tip from the stem of a banana leaf. All these pipes are of the hookah type.

The one we obtained from the Yaelima has a bowl cut from the kernel of a palm nut. This bowl is glued with a paste of bolongo resin to a bamboo tube whose lower end is cut in the shape of a fork and submerged in the water.

The natives prefer to use this type of pipe for smoking hemp, although we noted more than once that they also use it to smoke tobacco.

The custom of smoking tobacco with a communal pipe does not seem to be practiced much by the peoples of the Fimi-Lukenie. As a rule, each native has a pipe of his own.

Among the tribes of Lake Leopold II, as well as among the Basakata, Bobale, and Batitu, the tobacco pipe is usually made simply from the rib of a banana leaf. The native often attaches a small earthenware bowl to the lower end of it. This bowl is always very crude, and it is interesting because of its irregular shape which is long, thin, and slightly crooked. The native unquestionably got the idea for this from the shape of the pipe bowls made from the rib of a banana leaf. The latter did not stand up well under use; the bowl was burned as the tobacco was smoked. At first, the native replaced it by another, cut from a harder and tougher piece of wood, but he soon started making the bowls out of baked clay, while retaining the original shape. (156)

Pipes from this region with wooden bowls are very rare. We possess only one, which comes from the Batitu village of Longinpila.

Beyond the Batitu in the Bambuli region, among the Bokala and Yaelima, the pipe consists of a long wooden tube, usually slightly curved and provided with a small earthenware bowl at one end and a monkey's femur at the other as a mouthpiece.

[53] Sometimes the earthenware bowl is replaced by one of wood, most often decorated with carved designs and often representing a human head. The latter type is very common in the region of Bena Dibele and Kole. Certain specimens are worked with great artistry.

Teke. F133

M
276

Aside from this characteristic form, we found another which is no less interesting. The bowl and tube are always made from the hollowed branch of a special species of tree. The shape is slightly curved, and the top end slightly flared to form the bowl. At the other end of the tube, the native attaches a small spheroidal calabash with two holes, one of which serves as the mouthpiece. This calabash is lightly stuffed with raffia fibers and dry grass to filter the tobacco smoke.

M
276
531

Other than this primitive form, we collected a few pipes belonging to the same category, but with the calabash mouthpiece replaced by a wooden one, sometimes decorated with carved linear designs and with small copper strips inlaid in the wood.

M
276
171

We found, then, two very characteristic pipe shapes in the Yaelima-Bankutu region which seem to indicate a certain ethnic relationship among these different peoples. We do not know if these same shapes are found among the peoples of the Dekese region, but it seems quite probable to us. We found this same type along the north bank of the Sankuru between Lodi and Isaka, so the ethnic zone characterized by these two special forms of the native pipe, at least in the region south of Dekese, includes the whole area from Bambuli to Bena Dibele-Kole. These types are also found outside this territory, notably to the north among the Bakuba and Bashilele. It must be noted, however, [158] that the pipe with a femur for the mouthpiece is extremely rare in the north, while that with a calabash mouthpiece is very seldom seen in the south. This seems to indicate that we have here a zone of contact where we once more find evidence of ethnic relationships between the peoples of this region and the tribes to the north and south. It may be inferred from this that the Bakuba and Bashilele tribes of the Kasai-Sankuru region are connected with the peoples between the Sankuru and the Lukenie and that they even have ethnic affinities with the peoples whose territory extends much farther north.

T
276
171

In the region of the Banfumu and Bateke, we find two types of tobacco pipes, one with a large bowl for communal smoking, the other smaller, with an earthenware bowl and a wooden tube and mouthpiece, used individually by both the women and the men. Along with these pipes, we also found several specimens

Take F/33

T
302
554
761

of the Bateke-Banfumu. All the natives would like to adopt it, but only the great chiefs and dignitaries may thus glorify themselves. It is this model that the Bateke-Banfumu use to fashion the figurines which are often called fetishes, but which are really sikan, protectors of the children. The form of these sikan is the same for adults or for children, for the poor or for the wealthy. This form is found throughout the region, from Stanley Pool to the Kwango, and belongs specifically to the Bateke-Banfumu peoples, whose ethnic unity it demonstrates anew.

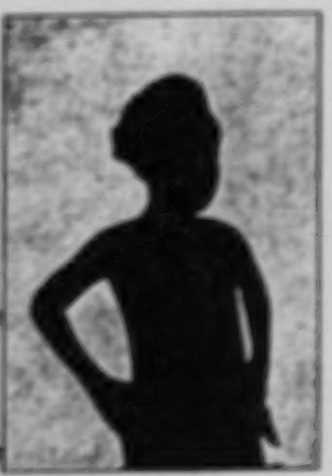


Fig. 98. Mosengere with his Hair in an Adjustable Aureole.

M
302
302

A no less characteristic coiffure is that worn by the dignitaries of the Ipanga-Yaelima region. The hair is parted in the middle, with the part running from the forehead to the nape of the neck, and the hair is gathered into one braid on each side. The braids originate just over the ears and then pass behind them to meet under the chin, where they are sometimes knotted. The hair at the top of the head used to be plaited in an upright roll over a small circumference. Only the favorite wife of the young Batitu chief still wore this ancestral coiffure when we passed through the region. This hairdo seems to have been very widespread in the region of the Yaelima and perhaps [178] much farther east. It corresponded to the local ethnic type which the sculptors followed in

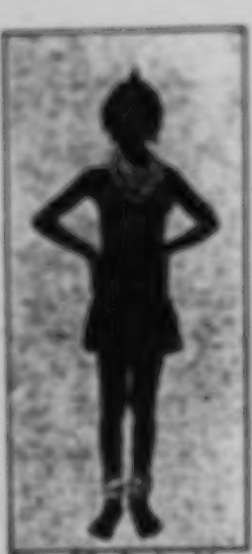


Fig. 99. Batitu Woman, Favorite Wife of Chief Isuma.

302. 232. fashioning most of the statuettes, figurines and bowls that we possess from this region, which are so remarkably decorated. Moreover, we find these same forms among the Bakuba and Bashilele, up to the region of the Bankutshu of Bena Dibele-Kole. These various tribes have also reproduced in their sculpture the designs of the shaved parts of the head, which are so uniform and so characteristic. In this respect these various tribes are related, and their ethnic affinity seems very clear. Despite their present remoteness from each other and the absence of all tribal intercourse, their ethnic kinship is clearly shown in the mementos they have preserved of the ancestral culture.

[142 384]

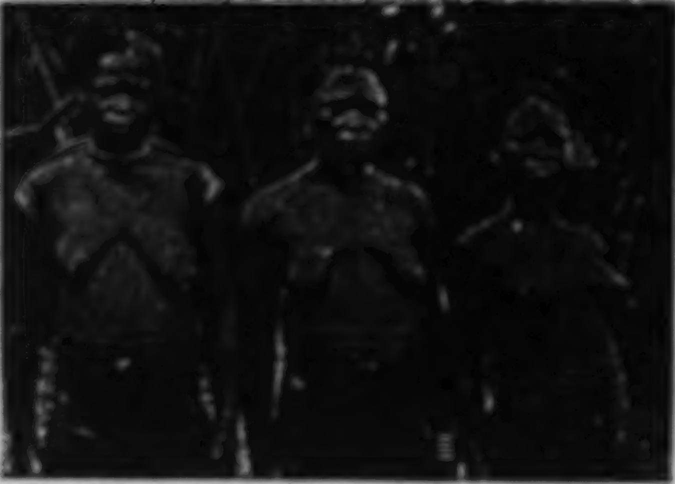


Fig. 180. Hairdos and Tattoos of Lake Leopold II.

382 16| These various observations permit us to divide the peoples into three very distinct groups.

1) The Bateke-Banfunu group, with its chignon hairdo over the nape of the neck and the rest of the head shaved or with the hair cut short.

2) The group including the Ipanga and the eastern peoples, with their hairdo of two braids passing behind the ears and under the chin and the upright roll on top of the head. [179]

3) The group including the tribes of Lake Leopold II and the lower Lukenie up to the Ipanga region, where having the hair arranged in tiny braids predominates.

30| The love of finery is more or less developed among all the peoples of the Kasai-Lake Leopold II-Lukenie region. Ornaments the flooded banks of all the rivers in the [illegible]-Basakata region. When the nature of the ground and the level of the river permit, the grass is spread out on the spot to dry in the sun, while in flooded areas the woman loads the harvest in the canoe and takes it to the temporary village set up [108] on the bank. The dry grass is packed in stacks which are like the haystacks on our European farms.

When a family deems that its harvest of grass is sufficient, the chief of the group prepares the incinerating grounds or furnace. Pulverized earth from small termites' nests is mixed with mud from the river. The mixture is well worked and kneaded so as to make a firm and pliant paste and is then spread over the surface of a small hole from 15 to 20 centimeters deep and one or two meters square.

When this coating is entirely dry, the women begin their work. One of them loads the furnace and lights it, while the others bring in grass from the stacks.

As the first pile burns down, the woman in charge of the furnace throws in new sheaves, and the work, accompanied by a low, monotonous chant, continues without pause until the full harvest of salt grass is burned.

Fig. 62. Stacks of Salt Grass, among the Bolia.

The burning usually lasts a whole day. During this time and during the period when the furnace is being prepared, all

535 for the most inventive tribe. All the dances have two distinguishable parts: the dance strictly speaking and the finale or lifeyo. The latter consists of acrobatic exhibitions or a theatrical performance. It varies with each performance and sometimes goes beyond the limits of decency, especially in certain scenes of the women's dances. Here everything depends on the attitude of the actors and spectators.

535 784 [831] The words sung are usually proper. Passages that may be less so occur only exceptionally. The exclamations of some of the male or female dancers, but mostly those of the audience when the intensity of the performance reaches a climax, are somewhat less innocent. Thus this climax [63] is the weak spot morally speaking. This is true especially of the dances performed by the women who, led on by their passion and encouraged by the cheering and applause of the spectators, make provocative movements ([illegible], [illegible]). A European will see nothing wrong, but the native knows the gestures and their meaning. The spectators then applaud with even greater enthusiasm, either because of sexual feelings or out of aesthetic enjoyment, for to them these movements are beautiful. All the artistic dances for women which are the fashion at the present time contain a similar phase of exaggerated excitement. It is therefore understandable that in the past the elders strictly forbade children and adolescents to attend these dances.

[584] After what has just been said, no one will be astonished to hear that these great dances are often the cause of adultery and divorce. And to a limited extent the same can be said for the men's dances, for masculine beauty is exhibited in an enticing manner.

533 535 The rhythmic motions which sometimes accompany singing during drinking parties cannot really be called dances; nothing shocking is implied by them and the words of the songs are seldom improper. Salacious songs are rarely sung in the course of daily living, but they are never omitted from funeral ceremonies.

535 527 5 Up to now we have spoken of artistic dances, which are always very popular. They were -- and are -- reserved for certain special occasions. For ordinary circumstances the Nkundó have a few little entertaining dances which have nothing at all in common with the dance as such. They are more like games. The lyrics of the songs

Article VII. Monogamy

The Nkundó do not esteem monogamy. It is polygamy that they desire. If a man has only one wife, that is because he is poor. Thus he is made fun of and called ntala or bokolé, "a nobody," or bosé, "a weak man." Songs dealing with this theme can often be heard during drinking parties, especially among the Elinga. All this is a great obstacle in the struggle against polygamy. Not only is the Nkundó tempted by the material advantages of polygamy, but he is unable to bear teasing. He is extremely sensitive to humiliation and is the slave to other men's respect.

In spite of all this, and apart from the influence of the Christian religion, monogamous marriages that were not simply imposed by necessity but were spontaneously desired, have existed in the past and still exist, although they are extremely rare. Here are the names of a few men who wished to remain united to one woman, although they had the means to establish a harem for themselves. I have chosen them at random from two villages: Bonjoko-Bonkoso (37 taxpayers in 1931) and Bongili wă Ndongé together with the affinally related clan Ilelo (47 taxpayers in 1931).

Bonjoko-Bonkoso:

Esalé eă Etoto of Bokonyola married to Iombe of Nkelongo;
Bokeli of Bokonyola married to Wanga of Liholi;
Bofenge w'Elinga of Bokonyola married to Bolengola;
Ilefe yă Lokofola of Bofefola married to Nkoy of Bongale.

All died before 1935.

Bongili:

Nsenge (still alive) married to Toyilingwa of Elinga. Even when he was widowed, he did not want to remarry, because of his attachment to his deceased wife.
Efoloko eă Bonkongyá married to Bombolia of Bofilé;
Bongolé married to Bakéfé of Bompanga;
Bolémba w'ombengé married to Bokolé of Ekila;
Lofalanga of Ilelo married to Imene of Bosombo. After his wife's death, he remained a widower until he himself died.

845 parents to the dance, they must go. When the mother passes a
[778] crossroads or the dwelling place of a spirit or an efomo (a place where the Nkundó gather for magical practices, oracles, etc.), she also sings and dances in honor of the spirit, so that he will favor her
845 children. Various songs are popular, such as: Elimo'é Ámbá
533 tongilela yelí yeye, "Spirit of Ámbá, do not weep; (1) Bokéfo la

1. Tongilela is an archaic form still in use among the Ekonda, etc

Mbóyo'é Ámbá tofíndelaí tonyongóló, tolíéé bilinggi yelí yeye, "Ámbá's Bokéfo and Mbóyó, do not bruise yourself, do not stir, do not eat bilinggi mushrooms"; Bokéfo 'a Mbóyó ngilánela ngóy' gonyango yelí yeye, "Bokéfo and Mbóyó, I surround my mother with abundance"; Bokéfo'a Mbóyó lá'gkona lá'ngenda yelí yeye, "I shall fall ill, and yet I will walk (be well)"; Bokéfo'a Mbóyó, lika bokokonano yelí yeye, "difficult childbirth," etc.

Foods forbidden to twins are the mushrooms called bilinggi
845 (or bilinggando or bankánkfndé), the mpambí antelope, and the lií
262 yam, which is also forbidden to parents whose child is not yet weaned. (2)

2. This prohibition extends to all food cooked in pots in which such forbidden foods have been prepared. The extension is characteristic of all alimentary prohibitions.

845 When traveling, the parents of twins gird themselves with the
484 creeping plant called boyáyenga, or wear it like a strap over the shoulder The mother also attaches a bell to it. Their hair is often
[301] adorned with two feathers from the tail of a gray parrot (nkoso) and two feathers from a white hen. [504]

845 The greeting to parents of twins and their reply must always
576 be double: w'ǒné w'ǒné, the reply em'ǒné em'ǒné; obyá, obyá, the reply bíka bíka. Note that the last greeting is not replied to differently

fear of death would deter him from such heresies. *Another sign of the chosen* successor is some untoward experience, such, for example, as finding cowrie shells (worn by *nkumu*) in a trap in the forest or a net that had been put out to catch fish. 629

Nkumu Akala, whether the first of his line or a man succeeding to the office, bears the emblems of his rank. He wears an *[illegible]* (a branch of a special bush) stuck into his belt on the right side and hanging downwards. The special hat, *[illegible]*, worn by *nkumu* is not yet his to wear, but he wears an ordinary skin hat known as *[illegible]*, which is the mark of any elder. This hat may be ornamented with feathers if so desired. [293] [292]

When *Nkumu Akala* decides that he has acquired sufficient wealth to enable him properly to claim the right of being made an *nkumu*, he begins his preparatory arrangements. *[illegible]*, a mixture of charcoal with some sticky substance, is smeared over his body with plantain leaves. All ornamented clothing is discarded and a single cloth woven from raffia, and known as *[illegible]*, is worn. He refuses to sit on the benches usually used and instead sits on the bare earth. All this is explained as an attempt on the part of the man about to be raised to the office of *nkumu* to be different from others, a man apart, separate, peculiar, not partaking in the ordinary interests and affairs of his fellow men. [302] [292] [514]

Nkumu Akala now leaves his own village accompanied by all his wives and children, and also by a singer, *[illegible]*, who is paid to sing his praises, and by several male Batwa (pygmies), up to half a dozen in number, known as *[illegible]* because of their duty of blowing gourds and producing sounds which indicate praise of the great man. This party makes the round of villages wherever relatives are found, and the announcement is made that *Nkumu Akala* is about to become an *nkumu*. This pilgrimage accomplished, a 'doctor' (*nkanga*) is visited by the aspirant to office, who seeks by magic to discover whether it is the propitious time for the ceremony of installation. The whole company retires to the private enclosure at the rear of the house belonging to the *nkanga* chosen, this being the place where he performs his wonders. The *nkanga* resorts to *[illegible]*, that particular branch of magic which has to do with reasons for strange and unaccountable phenomena.[1] *Nkumu Akala* now seeks some sign as confirmation of his determination to claim his office at this time. Some native pepper may be wrapped in a leaf or merely covered by it, and left within sight of all, and upon being opened it may be found to have turned into salt, or perhaps it may be some earth that is thus turned to salt. Or a cock may be placed upon *Nkumu Akala*'s head and covered with a basket and thus left for some time. Upon removing the basket it may be discovered that an egg has been laid. All such tests, if successful, will be regarded as indications that it really is time for *Nkumu Akala* to assume the office of *nkumu*, but if the test fails he will usually go ahead with his plans anyhow, fearing the shame that would come to him should he go back to his home after having made the triumphant round of his relatives' homes. However, should he act thus, and he most certainly will, he knows that his days are numbered, [533] [565] [536] 629 791 787 624

---

[1] If a man's fields do not produce and he cannot understand why, he will resort to *[illegible]*. If it is suspected, for example, that the trouble is caused by someone making 'medicine', an arrow shaft is put into a small hole in the ground, and as each name is mentioned, the arrow can be pulled out if the person is innocent, but remains stuck fast in the hole at the mention of the guilty name.

Now the molembe choose the Bilepo

624 *Okuke*, a young woman of their own number, who will thereafter be known by this
[533] name. She is an official cymbalist and must always begin beating before others may join in. In reality the members of the *molembe* have decided beforehand who shall be chosen for this position, and the woman of their choice now takes her stand on the elevation together with *Nkema Akuke* and his wife, *Nsose*.

624 The member of the *molembe* whose right it is by inheritance to place the *montolo* (see Plates) upon the head of the *nkumu* now comes forward with it. This hat, about
292 twelve inches in height, is woven of raffia and cylindrical in shape, but the brim, instead of being at the base, encircles the top of the crown. It is usually decorated with a burnished brass plate attached to the front, and perhaps a second one behind, and in these modern days it is quite in style to hang a row of safety pins from the 'brim' or 'halo' encircling the crown. When the *nkumu* is the first of his line, the *montolo* is purchased by him, but in the case of succession it is that used by the deceased predecessor, and has been kept by the *molembe* until this time. It is his badge of office and sign of authority. The bringing out of the *montolo* is an occasion for
624 merriment. *Nkema Akuke* calls for his *montolo*, but the *molembe* tease and tantalize him and ask for money. The amount is a fixed sum, but *Nkema Akuke* pays out at first but a few rods, is teased for more, and so on until he has provided the total amount, usually about one hundred. The member of the *molembe* whose duty it is to place the *montolo* on the head of the *nkumu* begins to tease the crowd. He chooses various names by which the *nkumu* might be called, everybody knowing all the time what his name must be. He asks the people, 'Shall we call him so-and-so?' 'We refuse', reply the people. 'Or so-and-so?' 'We refuse.' And each time names whereby *nkumu* are known are repeated. Finally the correct name is given, as, 'Shall we call him *Nkumu Lobondola*?' and the crowd roars its approval, 'Ooooo!' The *montolo* then being placed on *Nkema Akuke's* head he now becomes *Nkumu* and leaps down among the crowd, who bear him off to their village with rejoicing. In the choice of names, the first *nkumu* in a village is known as *Nkumu Lobondola*. If there is another section of the village with an *nkumu* of its own, he must take another name, such as *Nkumu Iyoli Bokonga*. Successors must always take the names of their predecessors whatever their own personal names may be. An *nkumu* chosen by a *molembe*
[554] which is also the *momene mokonda*, the hereditary owner of the land, is known as *Nkumu e Bitindi* (*Nkumu* of the heels), for he occupies a more important position than his fellows, and is thus the support which holds up the whole group of *nkumu* chosen by other *melembe*.

624 The *nkumu* is borne off to his *mongo*, his residence, which in this case is temporary, to be replaced later by a permanent one. The *mongo* comprises the whole unit of
342 buildings for the *nkumu*, including his own sleeping quarters, the houses for his wives, the *ebongo* where he spends the daylight hours, and a row of houses for his children. His *ebongo* and his own sleeping quarters are screened from the public gaze, making
[351] a place known as *ipoma*. In the case of a new *nkumu* the screen is temporary, but when the permanent *mongo* is built, a permanent *ipoma* is made by planting umbrella trees (*melembe*, sing. *molembe*) in a rectangular or circular fashion. Here, sheltered
624 from intrusion, the *nkumu* remains in retirement (*auli*) for a month.[1] While he remains

---

[1] *Auli* refers to the sitting of a hen on eggs, the seclusion of a woman after childbirth, or of the *nkumu* at this juncture of the ceremonies.

624

inches long and two inches in width, numbering up to seven are brought and attached [596]
to the back of her *lomboo* by folding them over it.[1]

The first male child which was born to the *nkumu* before he acceded to the office is 852
known as *Iyomi Nkoi*. If he has none, then the right to this name passes to the first
male child to be born to his younger brothers. Any child born on the day that the 624
nkumu is given his *montolo* is also called *Iyomi*; if a male he will be *Mola Iyomi*, if a [551]
female, *Mpembe Iyomi*.[2] These children must not see the *nkumu* until they are old enough to know his name and greet him properly, and so they are taken to some village other than the one in which he has his residence. When such children are considered old enough to take up residence in the village of the *nkumu* it is an occasion for revelry, a big dance, *nteko*, is held, and there is a feast. The child, *Iyomi*, is brought to the village of the *nkumu* with rejoicing, and this is a signal for everybody desiring to do so to help himself to anything belonging to the *nkumu*. Goats and fowls may be killed and eaten, sugar-cane rooted up, bananas, plantains, and other crops growing near by seized for food. Because of this custom the *nkumu* will take precautions and send his livestock, at least, off to some other village in order not to lose more than he can help.[3]

The *nyemba*, the singer or singers, and the *ntotii*, the praisers already mentioned, 624
remain with the *nkumu* during his period of seclusion. Added to these is *ntomba* 533 ●
lokombi, the bearer of the *lokombi*, a stringed instrument played with the fingers, 534
similar to a bass viol in its general appearance.

Inside the *ipana* during the seclusion of the *nkumu*, few people have the right of 624
entrance, but as one enters the *ebanga* where the daylight hours are spent, one finds
the couch of the *nkumu* on the left and towards the rear. On the same side and towards 342
the front are seated the *ntombe lokombi* and the *nyemba*. *Nsomo*'s couch is to the right 352
of, and parallel to, that of the *nkumu*, but still to the left of the centre posts. To the right of her couch is the fire in the centre, and beyond the fire on the right side is a couch for the *maomi*, likewise somewhat to the rear, with a space in front for the *ntotii*.

The month's seclusion being completed, the *nkumu* prepares to buy the homage of 624
the village. *Nsomo* gets rid of her decorative colours, and assumes ordinary attire,
becoming like any other of the wives, and is ready to take up all the usual duties of 576
a wife, whether in the garden or at the house. The people are called to come and render to the *nkumu* their homage and praise. The men come to the *ipana*, are admitted to the presence of their *nkumu* and seat themselves on the bare earth with their legs wide apart and facing him. They then, without uttering a word, greet him in the

---

[1] The *lomboo* is a belt which used to be worn by Tumba women encircling the buttocks, and this was used to attach their only garment, the *ekow* among the Bongindu, this being a short loin cloth, or an *mpongo* among other groups, this being a woven cloth strip worn between the legs.

[2] When a new *nkumu* assumes office, one already in office will take this opportunity of getting more of his sons named *Iyomi*. He takes them to the *molombe* of the new *nkumu*, and having placed a bracelet of cowrie shells on the right wrist, and sometimes one on the right ankle, asks the member of the *molombe* whose right it is to give away the *montolo* to name these sons *Maomi* (pl. of '*Iyomi*'). This man will then take such a son, and presenting him to the people introduce him by giving him a name, and following with praise as, '*Ow Iyomi Lomme, bototo!*' and the crowd replies with the customary '*Booo!*' [291]

[3] It is well to remember that not every individual bearing names associated with the institution of the *nkumu* is directly concerned with it. With the practice of 'resurrecting' dead relatives by naming new-born children after them, such names as these become widespread. [551]

624 customary manner, with a double clap. They are told by the *nkumu* to repeat the
salutation, and having done so may be asked to do it a third time. They are then
576 given a few rods in payment. If the *nkumu* sees some member of his own *ekopo*
coming to greet him, he gives him special honour by ordering him to lie flat on his
back instead of merely sitting, and at the end he gives him a larger gift of rods than
the others receive. In this way the *nkumu* may pay out a great many rods to those
who thus render him homage. Ordinarily a man will receive five or six, but one
624 specially honoured may be given as many as twenty. From the beginning the *nkumu*
has to pay heavily for his honours, and only a wealthy man can hope to attain them.
[556] For this reason a lawful successor, if not wealthy, may be glad to give up his rights
to another more fortunate member of the *ekopo*. Homage having been paid, word is
sent out that the *nkumu* is about to come forth, and crowds begin to gather. A coat
[302] of red camwood powder mixed with oil is smeared over the *nkumu*, the brass plates
are attached to his *montolo*, and he is attired in all his finery. The crowd outside
dances, and when tired sits on the ground to await the rest of the ceremony. Inside,
[533] the *lokombi* begins to play, the *nyemba* to sing, and the Batwa *ntotii* to praise the
nkumu by uttering an ululating sound. Accompanied by *Nsomo*, *Bilepo*, and the
maomi, the *nkumu* himself begins to dance. The temporary protecting screen round
the *ipana* is pulled down, and he is seen by all. After his dance he retires again and
the crowd disperses.

When *Nkema Akuke* becomes *nkumu* he changes everything possible so as to
[481] become different from other men. Thus he assumes a different gait, a sort of bow-legged
waddle, a different tone of voice, and it seems that under this influence even
his facial features undergo a change. Accompanied by his retinue, he visits the
various villages where he has friends and relatives in order to greet them. This over,
the musicians wish to take their departure and are paid for their services by
the *nkumu*.

624 At the conclusion of these ceremonies the *nkumu* with his *ekopo* and the *molembe*
negotiate concerning their obligations to one another. If the *nkumu* is the first of his
596 line, he and his *ekopo* are given land to cultivate, while succeeding *nkumu* simply take
over the land originally accorded. The *molembe* call their *nkumu* their wife, and they
621 designate themselves husband. They thus reckon the relationship between *molembe*
and *ekopo* to be that of husband and wife, and, as in an actual marriage, there must
be an interchange of obligations performed in a spirit of harmony. Also, as in
marriage a wife may be divorced, so an *nkumu* with his *ekopo* could be sent off to their
home and the arrangement terminated. It not infrequently happened that as strangers
the *ekopo* fell out with their hosts and if such a disagreement could not be righted
they might be refunded the payments with which they had purchased their rights,
and sent off home.

224 Among the reciprocal obligations of *molembe* and *ekopo* are included the sharing
of certain animals and birds killed in the hunt, among which are the leopard and
624 elephant. All killed, whether male or female, must be divided. Of certain other
621 animals, including the wild pig, antelope, and buffalo, if a female, no portion is given,
if a male, the required portion is presented. These reciprocal obligations are limited
596 strictly to the *ekopo* and *molembe*; if others outside of these groups wish to present the
nkumu with meat to honour him or to curry favour, they may do so, but they are under

This funeral drumming is kept up for a long time, off and on for days, and is very 624
stirring in its rhythm. While it is going on, the elders congregate in an *ebonga*. They 766
fast and have nothing to do with their wives during this time. The *ekopo* is mourning,
and the *molembe* may be likewise mourning, but for the others it is a time of rejoicing, [533]
and also of the relaxing of moral restraints. It is an occasion for dancing by both
Batwa and 'freemen', the former regarding this as a time for special rejoicing, [535]
for the *nkumu* was their master and now he is dead they are no longer under restraint.
They are free to take any of their master's goods and even to snatch blankets off the [563]
corpse. Men and women do not dance together; the women, taking some of their husbands' weapons, go off in one direction, and the men, arrayed in finery, dance at the other end of the village.

While the *nkumu* is still unburied and the drumming is going on, the *molembe* look for a successor among the *ekopo*. Often this man will, as we have seen, have already been designated. The *molembe*, Batwa, and others in the village make up a party, and attired in war finery go off with their weapons as though after a man they wished to kill. As they go they sing: [539]

Nkombe w'oepiita elimbo
Wa alale we nko?
Hawk, thou hast destroyed the nest,
Where art thou going to sleep?

Before catching the real successor they catch one or another in fun, singing this song. The man of course refuses to be *nkumu*, and the point of the song is that because of his refusal the *ekopo* no longer fulfils its function of supplying the *molembe* with *nkumu* and therefore ceases to be of any use to them. If this man by refusing thus destroys the family nest, where will they sleep?

Finally, after this fun, the real successor is caught, his face daubed with black, and [303]
the group sing: [539]

Bola lasa-oo, lasola nkulu.
The cunning animal is hiding, reveal the tortoise.

Thus the new *nkumu*, like a cunning animal, is hiding, but when discovered, like the tortoise, he will not try to run away. The whole group conducts the new *nkumu* to the *ipame* and sits all night guarding him. Earlier on the day of the actual interment of the dead *nkumu*, the new one is installed with ceremonies as already described.

On the day the *nkumu* dies his people scatter to other villages to look for slaves 766
for the executions on the day of the burial. Slave-owners or husbands of unwanted
wives ask quietly how much money there is for the man or woman, accept the agreed 567
amount, and tell the buyers to go quietly and catch the slave or wife before anything 782
is suspected and an escape is made. In this connexion we may note two classes of 562
wives, *bopika* and *iboto*. A third class, *boambe*, acquired by the payment of a very small bride price, was not nearly as common formerly as at present and may be passed by. A *bopika* was a slave wife acquired by capture in war or stolen. If loved by her husband she will take her place practically on an equality with the members of the village, but she may be killed, for she is her husband's possession, 'his money' is the native expression. An *iboto* is a wife for whom a very high bride price has been paid, obliging her family to give wives to the other family in perpetuity, supplying

593ˣ 574 ótswáká liála otswâk'olá, báfókolaka mbók'ěy'olá la ngom'a nkolé, "If you are married go back to your parents, or you will be taught the way with drums and gongs," that is, "when you are dead." (2)

[764] [644] ● [534]

> 2. A woman is buried in her own native clan. Her corpse is transported there to the accompaniment of drums and horns. The lokolé gong announces her death.

593ˣ 602 A married woman may not evade the duty of helping her relatives under special circumstances (pregnancy, illness, serious accidents, death). This obligation [285] is not limited to her mother and father, but extends to all her relatives; the closer the degree of kinship, the stricter the obligation.

Besides, love of family is sufficiently developed so that there is no danger of the woman forgetting herself too much in this realm. [626] And a husband who would like to prevent her from fulfilling these elementary duties would be much criticized by all and should expect a dissolution of the marriage.

593ˣ 574 342 556 It was said above that a husband builds a hut for his wife. His relatives often assist him in this task. But it also happened -- in the past, for colonization has removed the possibility of it -- that the woman's father wanted to build his daughter's house himself or at least to make the pavement out of clay brought from her native land. This act was a demonstration of wealth and politico-social importance as well as proof of fatherly affection. The husband, for his part, was honored to have married the daughter of such an important man and loved her all the more. Thus a number of women say that "they only cooked on ancestral soil." This soil was brought in baskets across distances up to 50 kilometers by Batswa and by men of the woman's clan or village. Her father could do it because of his great influence and regal rewards (bokóndo, verb kónda) were distributed during a feast (nteke) given for the workers and their relatives after the task was completed. This was done for Bompeli, daughter of Bokombe of Litáli (Bombwanja) married to Bonyeme w'enyuka of the Basékí Mbangó (Bonkoso); for Beluka, daughter of

595x
554 this outrage (nkẹlẹ eleki ɛ́y'olɔ́mbɔ́). It is a kind of national dis-
587 honor. This observation also clearly pinpoints the great differ-
614 ence between the favorite and the bolɔ́mbɔ́.

The following custom should be mentioned in this con-
595x nection: if any man, even a stranger or one who comes from a
721 great distance, comes and -- over the fence -- strikes the roof
554 of a bolɔ́mbɔ́'s ilẹkẹ of seclusion with his elefɔ́ (1) as a call to war, the whole village is obliged to take up arms to defend him. All the men [352] accompany him and unite with his family against the enemy clan, whatever the distance may be. The Nkundɔ́ say that the act of touching the bolɔ́mbɔ́'s hut infuriates the entire clan and makes them take up arms without hesitation. (1)

595x
554 One last indication of the social nature of this institution is the fact that the bolɔ́mbɔ́ has the right to sit beside her husband at public gatherings and feasts, a prerogative which she alone of all women possesses. With her is a boy or girl who serves as her "boy" and carries the seat (boɔ́nga) on which she sits.

When a bolɔ́mbɔ́ dies her husband may put another in her place. To do so he repeats the ceremony described above. It is called sangoja bolɔ́mbɔ́, "to make succeed to the title of bolɔ́mbɔ́."

As we saw in Chapter I, Part 1, Article II, a man may even make his daughter a bolɔ́mbɔ́.

● [554] 1. A wooden bell (see Congo, 1935, Vol. 2, p. 366, figs. 4 and 5).

1. Compare the result of a serious offense, whose effect is entirely in the offender's favor, to analogous cases described previously, for example in Chapter III, Article VII; Chapter VI, Article V, 4, Appendix; and below in Chapter VIII, Article II, 3, (2).

764 for it was necessary first to celebrate the farewell feast, and the widower's family had to gather to discuss the matter and collect the valuables needed for the funeral payment (see the article which follows). Only after all that did the young men belonging to the [482] husband's family take the mortal remains upon their shoulders -- wrapped in a mat or enclosed in a coffin, depending on the case.

If possible all the husband's relatives take part in the procession. The pallbearers walk at the head. The men are armed with bows and arrows, knives and sticks, seldom with spears. The women accompany them [425], wailing. The husband and, if necessary, a few relatives carry with them the various objects they will need for the payments. Some men have a lotótsi (an [534] ocarina) (1) or an antelope horn on which they play intermittently. (2)

1. See my "Note sur les Instruments de Musique à l'Equateur (Note on Musical Instruments at the Equator)" in Congo, 1935, Vol. 2, July, p. 187, figs. 1 and 2 (p. 199).

2. Sometimes there is also an accompaniment of drums.

[201] At the time the corpse is lifted and while passing through villages between their own and their destination, the lokolé is struck with regular and equal blows (-kémya) to announce the arrival of the funeral procession.

The chief personage among those who follow the corpse is 584 764 not the husband, but the ndonga. He may never be absent at that time. Even if the husband is deceased and the procession is that of a widow who has not remarried, the ndonga must always be in the party. The duty of bringing the corpse of a married woman is above all his.

The ndonga may go ahead of the procession to inform the family of the deceased of her death, and if there is a great distance between the wife's village and the husband's, he may not be able

845 However, these names are not used exclusively by such persons;
551 they may be given to others as well. The father, on the other hand, does not receive a new name; but he bears the title Is'éy'ǎfé, which literally means "father of two." (1) Twins are also said to be Ǎmbámba (pl. Byǎmbámba) from the verb -ámba, "to accept, to receive," because they are permitted to accept and to take everything, since none of the usual prohibitions apply to them.

The mother of twins is not required to go into seclusion
845 (nyang'éy'aása áfóáte waékelé). The shed belonging to the head
343 of the clan, that is, the one in whose home important animals (leopards, etc.) are dismembered, is set up for her. (2) The shed is closed by means of palms. Neither the parents, nor the helper, nor the persons who enter this place are required to observe continence or the other prohibitions involved in ekelé.

All the members of the kin group come to greet the twins
845 and give each one a present (hens, knives, arrows, food), which is received by the father or the mother. Whenever anything is given to one of the twins, even if it is the smallest object, the same must be given to the other; otherwise the latter would die. If the mother takes one in her arms, the other one must also be picked up, either by her or by the father. If she strikes one, she must also strike his brother. This [503] duality therefore applies to everything, and with even greater reason to nursing.

If a twin child cries or is ill, the parents must sing and
●[534] dance to the accompaniment of a lokolé and a ngòmo drum, a ceremony called -bénga baása. If someone invites a twin or his

---

1. Among the Ékonda he is called Buka.

2. Therefore, at the bonsenge place or the place of dismembering important animals (nyama yǎ bikofo, literally "superb animals").

326 The objects of iron made by the Mongo smith are as follows.

411

Bibui: all that is of iron

1. Likula: arrow.
2. Bosuki: arrow for hunting pigs; also used to cut copal and spear fish.
3. Bongelo: lance.
4. Ifombolo: lance.
5. Mpokwankoi: lance.
6. Liswa: axe.

Jokula: knives

326

412

1. Mombi; 2. Boli; 3. Bolengwa; 4. Lingonda; 5. Limenga;
6. Likodzi; 7. Efamba; 8. Momba; 9. More little knives;
10. Lizangi.

Basongo: needles

1. Ingwala.
2. Lokili: tattooing needle. [413]
3. Jyolo: small needle to get flea beetles out of the feet.
4. Efoli: small pin.

Ngonga: bells

326

534

301

[789]

1. Ngonga ea tosisi: bells worn on the hips by women and children so that as they walk the ringing will keep away the evil spirits.
2. Bongonga: a bell attached to the point of a war-lance which makes it like the head of a walking-stick but upside down.
3. Lingwete: little round bell worn on the wrist by men.
4. Elondza ea itumba: the war-bell. An oblong pipe [97] in the form of a long cup attached to a stick. It is struck with a piece of soft wood, and the sound travels surprisingly far.

These bells are all made of wrought iron.

202 so-and-so has died. Hours before his actual death, people everywhere know that a certain person is on his deathbed and that his death is imminent.

[100] If the witch doctor is up to his tricks of duping the silly Negro, people everywhere around know just what nonsense he is performing at what moment.

The White announces his morning and midday orders by means of the lokole and tells his workers when they may cease work for the day by the same means.

In the mornings and evenings and in the case of wet weather, the lokole carries especially far, but in the full sun it is not so effective.

202 The lokole is a large block of wood which is split down the mid-
534 dle for almost the whole of its length, and the inside part is carefully
hollowed out. The lokole has the shape of an extra long, open mussel
shell although, in general, the outside edges are flattened out.

322 The making of lokole is the trade of a certain person, and some Negroes are well-known for the lokole they have made.

Only four kinds of wood are suitable for the making of a lokole.
[824] These are (1) Bokungu; (2) Likoso; (3) Bolondo; and (4) Isi. The last
is the most excellent kind of wood and the one used by the Mongo
[386] Negro to manufacture his "ngula" (red dye) with which he smears his
body for even the least important event that occurs in his village.
The Isi is probably a species of redwood. The Mongo Negro makes
322 five different lokole: (1) Ingonga, small in shape; (2) lokole ja losali,
534 medium size; (3) bongungu, large lokole. These three are all like
the one described above. They are struck with sticks (bosolu) from the
"momambo" tree (umbrella tree). (4) Bonkuka is the large, high
lokole that is struck with two sticks to the ends of which are attached
several balls of caoutchouc. The sound of these lokole carries for the
greatest distance. (5) Ngomo is the large, oblong, upright dance lokole.
This lokole is simply a large, oblong piece of wood, completely
hollowed out, decorated a little, about 1.25 meters high, and
covered at the top with a piece of dried antelope or leopard skin. It
is struck with the fingers and the palm of the hand. This lokole is
the well-known tom-tom, still used by the Negroes on the steam-
boats to announce their arrival in the villages along the river.

202 And now something about lokole language.

198 The beat of the lokole varies, and it is by this means that the Negroes [101] understand the different words. The tempo varies also.

352 322 [103] Occasionally one sees a native stool, made as described above, but with a kind of back rest chopped out of one piece.

342 177 The Negro who wishes to move with the times makes for his house a chair out of bamboo in the European style: some sticks stuck in the ground, a mat of split bamboo laid over them, and the gentleman can spend his days in dolce far niente [pleasant idleness].

352 322 A table made in the same way (otherwise unknown to the Negro) completes the furnishing of his hut.

One does not need to be an expert, either, in order to be able to make a Negro bed. Some straight sticks are chopped out of the mombambo (umbrella tree). These are placed lengthwise and then across, on top of each other, trimmed a bit at the edges so that the whole thing fits more or less, and it is then bound together with some
[435] split lianas. In this way the Negro has made a bed; this favorite piece of furniture is finished for a sale price of 5 to 10 mitako.

The making of beds could be classed among the Mongo trades.
[438] I once saw, in the interior, ten of these beds, large and small spread out along the side of the road for sale.

I was assured that the owner of the beds was the very best bedmaker of the village. Of course, I raised my hat to such an important personage.

The ekoba, the bed stool, is also indispensable. These ekoba take the place of our pillows and are made of one piece, formed to the shape of the head. It is a somewhat hard pillow, but the Negro head is hard and can put up with it; the fellow sleeps without having to be rocked.

322 252 To prepare his food he needs some mortars and pestles, and these are made of wood. He uses hardwood for these utensils so that the mortars do not wear away from the constant pounding.

In addition, the Negro makes his oars, his bow and arrows for
322 534 the hunt, and the lokombi. The lokombi is a flat, oblong, hollowed block of wood over which some pegs are stretched [sic]. He plucks these with his fingers, thus producing a monotonous sound. This so-called musical instrument is the constant companion of the young man and accompanies him on his long treks through the Evenaar forest and on his visits to friends and acquaintances.

fear of death would deter him from such baseness. Another sign of the chosen 624 successor is some untoward experience, such, for example, as finding cowrie shells (worn by *nkumu*) in a trap in the forest or a net that had been put out to catch fish.

Nkema Akuke, whether the first of his line or a man succeeding in the office, bears [293] the emblems of his rank. He wears an *ilelembe* (a branch of a special bush) stuck into his belt on the right side and hanging downwards. The special hat, *montolo*, worn [292] by *nkumu* is not yet his to wear, but he wears an ordinary skin hat known as *lopope*, which is the mark of any elder. This hat may be ornamented with feathers if so desired.

When *Nkema Akuke* decides that he has acquired sufficient wealth to enable him [302] properly to claim the right of being made an *nkumu*, he begins his preparatory arrangements. *Mbili*, a mixture of charcoal with some sticky substance, is smeared over his body with plantain leaves. All ornamented clothing is discarded and a single cloth [292] woven from raffia, and known as *molele*, is worn. He refuses to sit on the benches usually used and instead sits on the bare earth. All this is explained as an attempt on the [516] part of the man about to be raised to the office of *nkumu* to be different from others, a man apart, separate, peculiar, not partaking in the ordinary interests and affairs of his fellow men.

Nkema Akuke now leaves his own village accompanied by all his wives and [533] children, and also by a singer, *nyemba*, who is paid to sing his praises, and by several male Batwa (pygmies), up to half a dozen in number, known as *ntotii* because of their [563] duty of blowing gourds and producing sounds which indicate praise of the great 534] man. This party makes the round of villages wherever relatives are found, and the announcement is made that *Nkema Akuke* is about to become an *nkumu*. This 624 pilgrimage accomplished, a 'doctor' (*nkanga*) is visited by the aspirant to office, 791 who seeks by magic to discover whether it is the propitious time for the ceremony of installation. The whole company retires to the private enclosure at the rear of the 787 house belonging to the *nkanga* chosen, this being the place where he performs his wonders. The *nkanga* resorts to *nsingo*, that particular branch of magic which has to do with reasons for strange and unaccountable phenomena.[1] *Nkema Akuke* now seeks some sign as confirmation of his determination to claim his office at this time. Some native pepper may be wrapped in a leaf or merely covered by it, and left within sight of all, and upon being opened it may be found to have turned into salt, or perhaps it may be some earth that is thus turned to salt. Or a cock may be placed upon *Nkema Akuke*'s head and covered with a basket and thus left for some time. Upon removing the basket it may be discovered that an egg has been laid. All such tests, 624 if successful, will be regarded as indications that it really is time for *Nkema Akuke* to assume the office of *nkumu*, but if the test fails he will usually go ahead with his plans anyhow, fearing the shame that would come to him should he go back to his home after having made the triumphant round of his relatives' homes. However, should he act thus, and he most certainly will, he knows that his days are numbered,

---

[1] If a man's fields do not produce and he cannot understand why, he will resort to *nsingo*. If it is suspected, for example, that the trouble is caused by someone making 'medicine', an arrow shaft is put into a small hole in the ground, and at each name mentioned, the arrow can be pulled out if the person is innocent, but remains stuck fast in the hole at the mention of the guilty name.

624

inches long and two inches in width, numbering up to seven are brought and attached [596] to the back of her *lombee* by folding them over it.[1]

The first male child which was born to the *nkumu* before he acceded to the office is 852 known as *Iyomi Nkoi*. If he has none, then the right to this name passes to the first 624 male child to be born to his younger brothers. Any child born on the day that the *nkumu* is given his *montolo* is also called *Iyomi*; if a male he will be *Mola Iyomi*, if a [551] female, *Mpembe Iyomi*.[2] These children must not see the *nkumu* until they are old enough to know his name and greet him properly, and so they are taken to some village other than the one in which he has his residence. When such children are considered old enough to take up residence in the village of the *nkumu* it is an occasion for revelry, a big dance, *nteko*, is held, and there is a feast. The child, *Iyomi*, is brought to the village of the *nkumu* with rejoicing, and this is a signal for everybody desiring to do so to help himself to anything belonging to the *nkumu*. Goats and fowls may be killed and eaten, sugar-cane rooted up, bananas, plantains, and other crops growing near by seized for food. Because of this custom the *nkumu* will take precautions and send his livestock, at least, off to some other village in order not to lose more than he can help.[3]

The *nyemba*, the singer or singers, and the *ntotii*, the praisers already mentioned, 624 remain with the *nkumu* during his period of seclusion. Added to these is *ntomba* 533 *lokombi*, the bearer of the *lokombi*, a stringed instrument played with the fingers, 534 similar to a bass viol in its general appearance.

Inside the *ipana* during the seclusion of the *nkumu*, few people have the right of 624 entrance, but as one enters the *ehanga* where the daylight hours are spent, one finds 342 the couch of the *nkumu* on the left and towards the rear. On the same side and towards 352 the front are seated the *ntombe lokombi* and the *nyemba*. *Nsono*'s couch is to the right of, and parallel to, that of the *nkumu*, but still to the left of the centre posts. To the right of her couch is the fire in the centre, and beyond the fire on the right side is a couch for the *mammi*, likewise somewhat to the rear, with a space in front for the *ntotii*.

The month's seclusion being completed, the *nkumu* prepares to buy the homage of 624 the village. *Nsono* gets rid of her decorative colours, and assumes ordinary attire, 576 becoming like any other of the wives, and is ready to take up all the usual duties of a wife, whether in the garden or at the house. The people are called to come and render to the *nkumu* their homage and praise. The men come to the *ipana*, are admitted to the presence of their *nkumu* and seat themselves on the bare earth with their legs wide apart and facing him. They then, without uttering a word, greet him in the

---

[1] The *lombee* is a belt which used to be worn by Tumba women encircling the buttocks, and this was used to attach their only garment, the *ekoa* among the Bonginda, this being a short loin cloth, or an *mpange* among other groups, this being a woven cloth strip worn between the legs.

[2] When a new *nkumu* assumes office, one already in office will take this opportunity of getting more of his sons named *Iyomi*. He takes them to the *molembe* of the new *nkumu*, and having placed a bracelet of cowrie shells on the right wrist, and sometimes one on the right ankle, asks the member of the *molembe* whose right it is to give away the *montolo* to name these sons *Mammi* (pl. of '*Iyomi*'). This man will then take such a son, and presenting him to the people introduce him by giving him a name, and following with praise as, '*Ow Iyomi Lomow, botolo!*' and the crowd replies with the customary '*Booo!*' [291]

[3] It is well to remember that not every individual [551] bearing names associated with the institution of the *nkumu* is directly concerned with it. With the practice of 'resurrecting' dead relatives by naming new-born children after them, such names as these become widespread.

763 literally that the deceased has hanged the heart, the former is used of a tree which
leans over and falls from a great cut at its base.

On the announcement of the death, an expert drummer drums out the news.
624 There will be at least four drums of the type known as *lokuku*, and a *nungu*.[1] The four
766 drums are called by the names, *Epunda*, having the 'biggest voice', that is a deep
594 bass note, *Mongoye*, having a higher note, *Mongonda*, a high pitched note, and *Monkoto*,
202 having a very high penetrating note. To these four drums others are added; if the
nkumu himself did not possess sufficient, they would be borrowed from the surrounding villages, and their notes matched with those of the first three drums, being beaten with them in their turn. *Monkoto* is beaten simultaneously with *Epunda*, giving a rhythmic tattoo. When the news of the death has been sent out on *Epunda*, the funeral drumming commences, as follows:

539 *Mongonda.* Botianganu w'Amba lokolo,
Mongoye. Ntsala ikita, otongonoko,
Epunda. Tokund' ibenge molom' o nyama,
Ombolekeke mmenge,
Lobanga lolenda ntondo,
Bikeku bilenda lobola.
Nungu. Tobilake nkoi nkonge,
Tobilake nkoi nkonge, &c.

The English and the interpretation are as follows:

Mongonda. A scattering of Amba, the snail. (The mother of twins, always called Amba, here gives her name to the snail because of her prolific progeny, which, upon being introduced to the world, scatter, while the mother dies. So the death of the *nkumu* will cause a scattering of his many wives and children.)

Mongoye. Feathers fall; pick them up. (That is to say, for your arrow shafts, for if you don't, and come back later, the wind will have scattered them and you won't find them. So while the *nkumu* was alive it was the time for his children to learn his teachings so that when palavers came after his death they would be well acquainted with his wisdom and know how to settle them.)

Epunda. We are burying the *ibenge*, husband of animals, You have just eaten
mmenge, The chin looks up at the ridge pole, The jaw bones look up at the sky.
[825] (The *ibenge* is an animal much prized for its fat meat; the *nkumu* always gets his share
when it is killed, and the skin is made into carrying straps for infants, and into belts.
[563] Batwa are prohibited the use of it for any purpose. It is therefore fitting to liken
the *nkumu* to the *ibenge*. *Mmenge* (sing. *lobenge*) is the equivalent of a snack. When a
woman brings her cassava from the swamp where it has been soaking for several
[264] days, her husband may be too hungry to wait the long hours required to cook it,
so to appease his hunger his wife takes a piece or two of the unprepared root, splits
[252] it in two, places salt between, wraps it in a *lokombe* leaf and roasts it in the hot ashes,
where it is quickly cooked. So the *nkumu* just had time to eat a few *mmenge*; he didn't
wait for the big cooking; his life was suddenly cut off.)

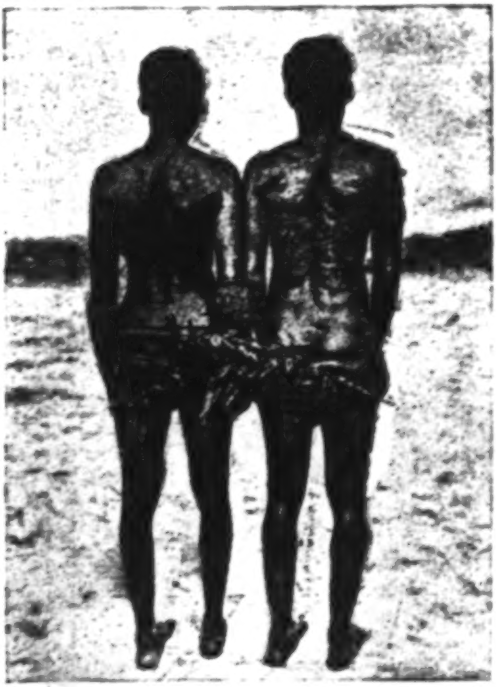
Nungu. Don't pull out the leopard's eyelashes. (That is, while he is alive; now he is dead one can disregard his power.)

---

[1] A *lokuku* is a slit gong made from a hollowed log. Its two notes are produced by striking the two lips of the slit. A *nungu* is a hollowed log, open at one end, across which is stretched a vellum hide.

Yaelima

reserved to the Mfumu. The large royal knife, encased in a 643
sheath, hung from a brass chain worn diagonally over the shoulder, 293
and Kakua [187] never parted with his great bow and his quiver 301
of arrows with large iron heads.



[304
301
535]

Fig. 109. Dancing Costume of the Yaelima-Bokala of the Wumbuli Region. Tattooing on the Back.

During dances and ceremonies the women attach the most 292
unusual objects around their waists, often large bushy branches. 301
Among the Ipanga and Batitu, as well as in the region of Wumbuli 535
and Dekese, betrothal and wedding dances are executed in special attire, heavily bedecked with beads and cowries.

These ornaments are not at all consistent. They vary according to taste and the whims and means of the natives, but certain parts of the dress costume worn by the betrothed couple at the dances celebrating the engagement seem to have a special meaning, to which we shall return later.

578 shame of obscenities. They say: ɔlekɛ nsɔ́nvi ɛâ bitɔ́li ń'kɔ́moto.
684 Bɔ́moto ndɛ́ ndota (itɔ́fá) "A woman is a ndota snake. Just as that
834 reptile twists through the grass and rolls up as soon as it sees a man approaching, so a woman finds it difficult to endure any obscenity."

The ideal way to be sure whether an expression is actually considered indecent is to check whether it may be used in the presence of a close relative, for a Nkundó never utters an obscenity in front of such a person.

195 Among the Nkundó, as in Europe, certain indelicate exclama-
578 tions are so deeply rooted that they seem to have lost their original
834 meaning, that is, most of the population no longer thinks of it at all. That a few more serious and modest individuals are still aware of it is apparent from the way they change the pronounciation of the terms in question.

Licentious expressions are never considered indecent and shock no one when they are uttered in a group or during group activities.
[571] Such activities include communal fishing and hunting expeditions, [61] drinking parties, dances, funerals, and -- at the present time -- communal work on a road, a resthouse, etc.

Thus we see that in these matters there is a remarkable discretion side by side with a certain degree of tolerance, which may be carried quite far. Licentious remarks are not condemned in themselves, but only because of fortuitous circumstances, so we see that the Nkundó do not consider them from a moral point of view, as we do, but from a social one. But the fact that those are precisely the words which can become indecent and socially bad shows that the native sees in their content something shocking, shameful, some quality likely to give offense. The freedom exercised in certain cases does not alter this general conclusion but simply gives evidence of he inclinations of a passionate nature.

3. Dances

535

Nkundó dances change periodically, as is the fashion in Europe. Old dances are given up after a time and are replaced by others which are newly invented or recently introduced. The dances fashionable at the present time came from the Besongó, who are by

535 far the most inventive tribe. All the dances have two distinguishable parts: the dance strictly speaking and the finale or ikőeyo. The latter consists of acrobatic exhibitions or a theatrical performance. It varies with each performance and sometimes goes beyond the limits of decency, especially in certain scenes of the women's dances. Here everything depends on the attitude of the actors and spectators.

535 786 [553] The words sung are usually proper. Passages that may be less so occur only exceptionally. The exclamations of some of the male or female dancers, but mostly those of the audience when the intensity of the performance reaches a climax, are somewhat less innocent. Thus this climax [62] is the weak spot morally speaking. This is true especially of the dances performed by the women who, led on by their passion and encouraged by the cheering and applause of the spectators, make provocative movements (bitékő, bembőnjo). A European will see nothing wrong, but the native knows the gestures and their meaning. The spectators then applaud with even greater enthusiasm, either because of sexual feelings or out of aesthetic enjoyment, for to them these movements are beautiful. All the artistic dances for women which are the fashion at the present time contain a similar phase of exaggerated excitement. It is therefore understandable that in the past the elders strictly forbade children and adolescents to attend these dances.

[586] After what has just been said, no one will be astonished to hear that these great dances are often the cause of adultery and divorce. And to a limited extent the same can be said for the men's dances, for masculine beauty is exhibited in an enticing manner.

533 535 The rhythmic motions which sometimes accompany singing during drinking parties cannot really be called dances; nothing shocking is implied by them and the words of the songs are seldom improper. Salacious songs are rarely sung in the course of daily living, but they are never omitted from funeral ceremonies.

535 177 8 Up to now we have spoken of artistic dances, which are always very popular. They were -- and are -- reserved for certain special occasions. For ordinary circumstances the Nkundő have a few little entertaining dances which have nothing at all in common with the dance as such. They are more like games. The lyrics of the songs

595 177 871 may be ribald, but this occurs rather rarely. However, at the present time, they are often actually obscene -- especially since "European-style" dancing has been introduced, and more particularly in the centers, small and large, and among those who have come under [63] its influence. This kind of dancing for amusement is chiefly practiced by young people.

To the credit of morality it should be noted that mixed dancing is unknown to strictly native ways. It occurs in the centers (in the form of the mixed bofenya or the balinga, grotesque imitations of European dances) but is spreading -- and rapidly -- to the villages of the interior. The second variety especially raises havoc, for it has a deleterious influence on morality. It has been the cause of a number of cases of adultery, divorce, palavers, and quarrels, and has been forbidden by certain chiefs and headmen, who would like to be able to severely punish anyone who dances it.

Conclusion

834 The data presented in the foregoing section forces us to conclude that sexual modesty does exist among the Nkundó. The wearing of clothing, the various prohibitions, the attitude of the older and wiser members of the community show that they experience this feeling. It is the same here as elsewhere. In certain areas it is even carried to an extreme. The exceptions should be attributed to individual deviations; and because of the reactions they provoke, they even provide conclusive evidence. The general laxity which may be observed on some special occasions does not provide material for a serious objection against the existence of modesty. Yet it is difficult to determine the reason for such an attitude which seems to contradict the rest of our data. Should it be interpreted as a yielding to human weakness, or seen as a weakening of public morality? Or is it not rather because these special circumstances make an unfavorable interpretation of such actions impossible? An allusion made in public, in a group, [64] does not have the same significance as that same allusion may have between two people, where it implies a suspicious intimacy.

842 differences can be found here, although they are less apparent to
855 a European observer since we usually approach the natives as a
152 group and our contact with them is often too impersonal.

2. Abortion

847 A great enemy of maternal love is the practice of abortion, which has always been known to the Nkundó. Here we cannot describe all the prescriptions used for that purpose. It will be sufficient to enumerate the reasons for which they have recourse to this practice. They are as follows:

1) A woman's lasciviousness: the procreation and subsequent care of a child to some extent prevent the indulging in carnal pleasures. Formerly this cause of abortion was nonexistent or very [178] rare. Needless to say, it has become more common, especially in the centers where it is constantly on the increase and where, in addition, occasional or regular "housekeepers" learn new means of sterilization and abortion.

2) A woman's antipathy or persistent anger toward her husband may encourage her to prevent conception or destroy its effect.

3) An excessive weakening of the mother's organism caused by a large number of conceptions and childbirths at too short intervals.

4) The encumberance and the difficulty of watching, carrying, and taking care of many small children -- bɔ́lota bokɛkɛsano [467]
● [535] wǎ bána nsátɛ́lá nsátɛ́lá. This reason is especially important for well-known dancers.

It goes without saying that several of these motives may be combined in the same person. For instance, I knew of a woman who aborted at the time of her eighth child. Her recurrent pregnancies, together with continuous work, had greatly reduced her strength. A palaver with her husband was the last straw; she decided to get rid of the fruit she carried in her body.

Outside of these exceptions the natives of this country ardently desire their own continuation through a large number of progeny. (1)

[184]

1. The same is not true elsewhere. Examples to that effect are cited from regions that are

845 [202] The event is announced by the usual signal, but the signal is doubled or, if the children are of different sexes, the signal for each sex is given once. It is followed by the dance beat: two [535] or three long and two short.

845 778 The next day the father's relatives go outside the village, preferably to a crossroads. On each side they plant a stalk of lokɔ́kɔ́lɔ́kɔ́. All around the stalk they spread a little heap of small branches and various leaves called jǔkɛ́. It is a sign and a place of benediction and good fortune. Each passer-by stops, picks two leaves, places one on each pile, spits on it, and says swâ.(2) Then they clap hands and twice sing out, yelí yeye. Such behavior brings the benediction of the twins upon a person's journey, his undertakings, his marriage. The umbilical cord as well as the placenta and membrane are buried under the heap.

845 302 [386] Every morning the mother and father draw two stripes with kaolin on the middle of their foreheads and on their arms, above and below the elbow. They do the same to the twins. (3) They continue doing so until the child is weaned. If after that time one of the children falls ill, they begin again treating him in this manner until he is cured, taking care not to omit his brother, lest he too fall ill. For while these designs are signs of joy, they are [751] above all a prophylactic measure against children's fever (ikűtswákí), [502] called wɔ̌sanyi when it occurs in twins or in a child following them, and manifests itself chiefly by tumors of the head and face.

845 551 Twins are invariably called Mbɔ́yɔ́ and Bokɛ́tu, names given to the first born and the second respectively, whatever their sex. The Bombwanja (like the Ekonda) use the names Mbɔ́ɔ́ and Mpia, respectively. The mother takes the name of Ǎmbɔ́.

2. Onomatopoeia for "spit."

3. Sometimes a double stripe is added at the temples The kaolin may be used pure or mixed with the red paint called ngɔ́la.

This funeral drumming is kept up for a long time, off and on for days, and is very stirring in its rhythm. While it is going on, the elders congregate in an *elungu*. They fast and have nothing to do with their wives during this time. The *ekopo* is mourning, and the *molembe* may be likewise mourning, but for the others it is a time of rejoicing, and also of the relaxing of moral restraints. It is an occasion for dancing by both Batwa and 'freemen', the former regarding this as a time for special rejoicing, for the *nkumu* was their master and now he is dead they are no longer under restraint. They are free to take any of their master's goods and even to snatch blankets off the corpse. Men and women do not dance together; the women, taking some of their husbands' weapons, go off in one direction, and the men, arrayed in finery, dance at the other end of the village. 624 766 [533] [535] [563]

While the *nkumu* is still unburied and the drumming is going on, the *molembe* look for a successor among the *ekopo*. Often this man will, as we have seen, have already been designated. The *molembe*, Batwa, and others in the village make up a party, and attired in war finery go off with their weapons as though after a man they wished to kill. As they go they sing: [539]

Nkombe w'oopiita elimbo
We elale we nko?
Hawk, thou hast destroyed the nest,
Where art thou going to sleep?

Before catching the real successor they catch one or another in fun, singing this song. The man of course refuses to be *nkumu*, and the point of the song is that because of his refusal the *ekopo* no longer fulfils its function of supplying the *molembe* with *nkumu* and therefore ceases to be of any use to them. If this man by refusing thus destroys the family nest, where will they sleep?

Finally, after this fun, the real successor is caught, his face daubed with black, and the group sing: [302] [539]

Bola lesw-oo, lasola nkulu.
The cunning animal is hiding, reveal the tortoise.

Thus the new *nkumu*, like a cunning animal, is hiding, but when discovered, like the tortoise, he will not try to run away. The whole group conducts the new *nkumu* to the *ipamo* and sits all night guarding him. Earlier on the day of the actual interment of the dead *nkumu*, the new one is installed with ceremonies as already described.

On the day the *nkumu* dies his people scatter to other villages to look for slaves for the executions on the day of the burial. Slave-owners or husbands of unwanted wives ask quietly how much money there is for the man or woman, accept the agreed amount, and tell the buyers to go quietly and catch the slave or wife before anything is suspected and an escape is made. In this connexion we may note two classes of wives, *bopika* and *iboto*. A third class, *boomba*, acquired by the payment of a very small bride price, was not nearly as common formerly as at present and may be passed by. A *bopika* was a slave wife acquired by capture in war or stolen. If loved by her husband she will take her place practically on an equality with the members of the village, but she may be killed, for she is her husband's possession, 'his money' is the native expression. An *iboto* is a wife for whom a very high bride price has been paid, obliging her family to give wives to the other family in perpetuity, supplying 766 567 782 562

601 Bonsonga and etúkɛ́ are terms used for kinship groups of
621 ranks B, C, and D, but occasionally they may also refer to
614 [192] the groups listed under A and, in addition, to the local
groups which in size approximately correspond to the kinship
units mentioned above. Etúkɛ́ is the term used for the oil palm
grove and for a certain kind of termite hill; apparently it is
used for local groups more frequently than the term bonsonga.

[571] Another term whose meaning varies is ekíndɛ́. This word
[535] designates, first of all, a dance group, a corps de ballet, and
also the social unit which sends such a joint dance troupe to
dance festivals.

Esɛ́ also has strong local connotations. It is usually identical with what we call a village, but frequently units which are larger or smaller than a village are designated as esɛ́. Very large groups, tribes and even larger units, are called bonanga.

614 As a criterion for placing the individual groups within a certain rank, one or several functions have been chosen in each case. The groups of the individual ranks are described below relative to their functions. On the subject of groups it should be added that in general they do not differ from each other in certain traits. All groups of all ranks are kinship units of patrilineal descent. They consider themselves descendants of one ancestor. No continuous and complete genealogy which can be traced back to the original ancestor is known. The genealogy of the entire group of the Bakonda is shown in Diagram 1.

In Isangi two of the ancestors of the groups of rank D are brothers, the third is the brother of their father. A D-group (Ngelɛ́) includes, in addition, the descendants of an illegitimate child of the paternal sister of the ancestor. These offspring form the C-group, Nsambásɛlɛ́.

There is a gap between this ancient genealogy and the
known ancestors from the recent past. In contrast with that
of the neighboring Bokótɛ́ [Bokete] (see, for example, Boelaert,
[173] "Les Bongili"), the genealogical memory of the Ekonda is weak.
It does not reach back to the ancestor of the group of rank A. In
this connection we must take into account the fact that a group

614 each other to employ their own messengers. When the messenger
621 of settlement II arrives here, he first calls on the messenger of
624 the nuclear kinship group Bosóbé (No. 19) and then to Impínga
202 (No. 26). The messenger from Bosóbé calls on his relatives in settlement VI, who are the nuclear kinship group Mbelo-Mmuna (No. 22), while the messenger from Impínga-Ndongó formerly had to call on the group Bommambo which is now extinct.

Settlement V consisted of three different groups. Bolíma, the group of the father, had its own messenger; however, he only received the messages without having to pass them on, which is also the case with all these last groups of the village. Both neighbors had their own messenger. The messenger from settlement I called on the nuclear kinship group Bolesangi, his relatives; the messenger from settlement III went to his relatives of the nuclear kinship group Ituli.

There were also two messengers in the last hamlet, but reports on this subject are insufficient since the nuclear kinship group Bommambo has been extinct for a long time.

178 All the settlements just mentioned have a common
614 characteristic: formerly, at important dance festivals, their
621 young men performed together in one joint *corps de ballet*. The
● 595 population was decimated as a result of the rigors of [201] the occupation period and also as a result of the population move-
[/161] ment into the cities. Consequently, there are not enough young people any more, and I with II, III with IV, and V with VI act together. Thus, in each case we find Ngelé and Nkoto united in one ballet. Although these groups have also been scattered
[961] as a result of the new settlement pattern (next to the highway), the old organizational structure has been preserved, and the young people do not hesitate to walk the long distance to the practice field every day so they can dance in the old groupings.

All of Isangi, all three kinship groups, have one common
621 village chief, the Nkúmú, with an *iyolo nsíka* who gets the meet-
624 ings started, and a village court with its judges. There are other
622 groups which correspond to Isangi (31), but have more than one

---

31. See Müller, *Fürstentum*, pp. 73 ff., 76 ff., 133 f.

224 absolute and inescapable necessity for those tribes who have Batswá,
since the latter provide them with a certain amount of the necessary
meat, though in insufficient quantity. The people hunt in groups
and individually -- in the latter case primarily by means of traps.
Fishing with nets is also very widespread, although various other
methods are also known. The picking of fruit, caterpillars, mush-
222 rooms, vegetables, etc. continues to be popular.

Among trades, that of the smith is foremost. However, iron
463 casting has been abandoned at the present time. Copper is brought
in from other peoples by tribes serving as intermediaries. Wood
sculpture is rapidly disappearing. Basketry [12] remains popular.
[286] Weaving no longer exists at the present time; in fact, looms can no
longer be found in the region.

593x The family is patriarchal and the political organization cor-
responds to it; there are only heads of families. Indeed, among the
Nkundó the family is the complete nucleus and foundation of the so-
ciety. The result is a democratic and oligarchic government, but
one very different from any we would call by that name in Europe.
554 Certain men become prominent because of their intelligence, their
eloquence, their bravery, or their wealth, having great influence and
often giving the appearance of chiefs whose authority extends beyond
their own clan, but none of them has ever founded an empire. In
the past the Bongíli were the most courageous tribe, and the one most
feared. Besides, their geographic location was in their favor, as they
had the Lifumba and the Bombomba, two sister tribes, on each side
of them.

[517] The artistic tastes of the Nkundó are directed chiefly toward
538 music and the dance. Their oral literature is also very rich; it in-
cludes, for example, the epic of Nsongó and Lianja (1) and that
of the tortoise.

---

1. The most important portions of this epic have been translated and published by Father Boelaert, M.S.C., in Congo, 1934, Vol. 1, pp. 49 and 197.

593x possible to speak of love toward several individuals in spite of differ-
562 ences in its intensity, depending on the various persons who [43] are
595x its objects, although we may consider such a divided love as very
152 imperfect. But whatever name one calls it and however weak in intensity one finds it, it is impossible to deny its existence.

Among women, it is necessary to distinguish between wives
595x of monogamous men and those of polygamists, especially in the case
152 of "supplementary" wives. It is not hard to understand that among the latter, love is more likely to cool. Since the husband must divide his attentions and signs of affection, if only to preserve harmony, the situation could hardly be otherwise, even without the fact of very early marriages. In addition to the above-mentioned case of the cooling of affection among wives in polygamous marriages, there is no question that in these marriages, a community of souls, feelings, and interests is not established between wives and husbands to the same extent as in monogamous marriages. However, one could not state as a general rule that the wife of a polygamist does not love him, at least to some extent, depending on the individual. To maintain *à priori* that a man cannot be loved simultaneously by several women is logically inadmissible and contrary to the facts. Here it happens quite often that a wife leaves her polygamous husband for another because she has transferred her love to the latter. It is for the exceptions that proof should be required. Even if there are many of them, they do not invalidate the cases of real affection.

When a polygamist returns home after a long absence, he is often the object of affectionate demonstrations by his wives which are surprising to Europeans. The women fall at his feet, embrace his legs, roll on the ground, and perform contortions out of joy and emotion. It is true that the freedom resulting from colonization has done much to cool these fine sentiments.

Is it beside the point to quote the saying of [44] polygamists'
● [539] wives: *bokungɔ ɔkafola bitáfɛ, lolango ɔkafola botɛma*, "the *bokungɔ* tree divides its branches, love divides the heart"? And then there is the following fable which teaches true love: a polygamist who has three wives, is accidentally wounded and lies dying on the opposite side of the river. His wives run to the shore but find no canoe. The river is infested with crocodiles. The chief wives refuse to risk their

595X 152 lives by swimming across; it is the least important one who throws herself in the midst of the dangers to go and help her husband.

In most cases a woman no longer feels affection for her husband when she has given her heart to a lover. She stays with him because it would be hard to do otherwise. Her husband continues to have the use of her body and her arms, but she no longer gives him a place in her heart. As this proverb so subtly expresses it:
●[539] bǒm'akwěta, ḿbw'â nkánge; bonsámb'ákwěta, omeka é ńtegume.
"the husband calls you, 'I am sick and may die '; the lover calls you, 'I will try to come. ' "

595X 586X The objection concerning the frequency of divorce is difficult to handle because the question is very complicated. First of all, the fact that a couple remains together, that they remain faithful to one another, is no proof of love in a society where the idea of duty is very strong. A Christian woman may come to feel a real aversion for an unfaithful husband, yet she may remain with him out of a sense of duty, out of love for the children, etc. Conversely, in a society where the idea of duty is relaxed or does not exist spouses may readily be unfaithful to one another, although basically they love each other; if it is easy to divorce they will do so rashly, for trivial reasons, without realizing that there is still love between them. (1)

1. The Honorary Attorney General A. Sohier has informed me that the experiences of his long judiciary carreer entirely confirms my statements. Their truth is reflected in the fact that for some years now in European countries, it has been necessary to permit divorced couples to remarry each other. Thus we see that they find each other again after several years of separation.

The first of my two assertions is not to be found among the Nkundó, [45] since they have no moral concept of duty in our sense. But it sometimes happens that a couple who no longer love each other remain together because it is not possible for them to separate.

595* 837 548 Finally, let us not forget the spirit of gain and greed. Except in a few instances, a woman expects remuneration from a man to whom she has surrendered her body. Many infidelities may be explained by this practice, at least at the present time. But on the other hand, it should be noted that the woman's demand for a "wage" from her lover may be explained by an amorous concern; by giving the woman a gift or an amount of money the man shows [49] his regard for her; it is a demonstration of his affection for her, and the woman wants to be paid in order to be sure of her lover's love. That is not to say that such instances are common or frequent, but such a feeling is natural and actually exists in more than one case. (1)

1. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 2.

It is not surprising that the woman who lives in circumstances which are always unfavorable to chastity and marital fidelity is easily led to adultery and often falls. That is the basis of the proverb: ●[599] bǒmoto ndɛ́ lofolókó, nkó ngonda ěfá 'nd'ósengámɛ́, "the woman is a chrysalis; there is no forest where she does not hang" -- a clear condemnation of the frivolity of the daughters of Eve in the land of the Nkundó. Nevertheless, these moral criticisms in the form of proverbs can be accepted only in a general way and must be understood cum grano salis; they leave the door wide open for exceptions.

595* 152 In his Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], (p. 38), Jadot has written: "The Bantu is capable of love . . . and that is all, and his wife -- no matter what has been said -- of a certain amount of marital fidelity. In general, neither the one nor the other go too far. Platonism, Petrarchism, and Romanticism are foreign to the love of the natives . . . I know . . . of cases of fierce jealousy and of beautiful faithfulness." (2)

2. See also ibid., p. 208 ff.

152 We conclude that love exists among the Nkundó. This feeling is subjected to harsh attacks and is affected by many unfavorable circumstances, which may account for its imperfection and for certain

593ˣ
834 arises but rarely. Furthermore, if a daughter is required to perform similar duties for her father, she will undertake this obligation only with the lament: njôy'ɔ́ɛna ěkɛ́'m wimáká, "I have come to see where I had my origin." Any woman who has been in that position will later know no oath more sacred than this one: la botaká wǎ fafá bǒkɛ́ 'm wɛ̌náká la mpaka, "by my father's nakedness which I saw when he was old." [539]

834
291 Thus we can draw the conclusion that the Nkundɔ́ are offended by nakedness and as a rule do not tolerate it. The exceptions do not invalidate this generalization; on the contrary, they tend to support it.

2. Speech. Obscenities and propriety.

521
831 In general the Nkundɔ́ see nothing wrong with using obscene expressions. They only describe them as "bad" if they become indecent.

195 If a conversation touches on matters of sex, they may wonder whether a particular topic is necessary, interesting, or entertaining; they will not ask themselves whether it is moral. For it will be apparent throughout this study they have no concept of morality strictly speaking.

The Nkundɔ́ possesses a varied and extensive list of obscene words -- nor is he alone in this respect. [58] We are not compiling a dictionary, and therefore we will not list them. What interests us are the circumstances that make these words indecent and under which a proper use of them impossible. The circumstances provide us with a criterion of the degree of obscenity of a word or expression. Let us say at once that we include in this category not only terms applied to organs and phenomena which are of a sexual nature strictly speaking, but also words pertaining to certain anatomical parts or physiological functions such as, for example, excretion, hair and tattooing found on private parts, and the female garment called efufa. We should also point out that some tribes will consider expressions obscene which do not shock others at all. [184]

562 exclusive rights over her. Hence the proverb: Mbɛ́mbo ǐle nd'ânsɔ̂imbo
836 ɛ́a la nkɔ́lɔ́, "boimbo fruit found under the tree have no owner; they
[539] belong to the first person who gathers them." Thus a girl for whom nothing has been paid belongs to no one. A woman free in this manner does not infringe on the rights of any man in her sexual relations. There are therefore no sanctions against her licentiousness.

836
864 Furthermore, the discovery of her activities gives rise to no shame. At most more serious parents will rebuke children who go too far -- the girls because they abuse the body and reduce their value for a prospective marriage (2), the boys because they [83] run the risk of financial difficulties (the dangers of adultery, indemnity for childbirth with death as a result, etc.).

626
836 Public opinion is even more lenient than the parents. This attitude is easy to understand: strangers need fear no unpleasant consequences. Errors of this sort are generally considered natural weaknesses, provided that they do not occur too frequently. For public opinion is hard on people who run from one to another; they are stigmatized with the name ebábɔ́ɛ, "unfaithful, flighty, without intelligence or reasoning powers," or ebɔ́ngɛ, a stronger term with the same meaning.

836 From all the foregoing should we deduce that every woman is free to indulge fully in fornication? On the basis of the above considerations we could frankly conclude the affirmative. The behavior that can be observed from day to day fully confirms this answer. Some people stray more or less accidentally, but for others the practice quickly becomes a habit. And it can be said of all of them that

---

[585] 2. Not that a smaller bride price would be given for them. But a serious man would rather not take a woman for wife who has "run around" a great deal and therefore is more likely to commit adultery, to be unfaithful, and less likely to become the mother of a numerous progeny.

583x received as bride price for a sister, aunt, niece, cousin, etc.

If he has no female relatives (eɔ́nanyɛ́, bomena), or if no bride price to which he is entitled remains, he may receive a part or all of the needed capital from his father. The various members of his family each obtain either 2, 5, or from 10 to 20 rings for him [454] that they have been able to save from bride prices they have received or which they have acquired as belonga (see Chapter VI, Article V, 1), as any kind of remuneration (for work, for judging in a palaver, for mediation as ndonga, etc.), the sale price for animals, streams, or ponds, or as damages or settlement of some debt.

583x 602 Indeed the worst mischance that may befall a man in love is not to have a bride price readily available and to have to set out in search of the necessary valuables anywhere he can find them. These trips take a good deal of time. For these things are not done with the great speed of nervous Europeans. He cannot simply send a message [133] to uncle X or to the husband of aunt Y, or even go to them and explain the purpose of the visit, and expect to be able to leave at once with a present. His hosts keep him for days and weeks. "Wait a bit, I will find some for you; stay a while longer, then we'll see; it's been so long since we've seen you, you can't leave so fast," etc. Quite often in fact it is entirely in the young man's interest not to leave in a hurry; he must sometimes perform a great many small services for them to win their good will, and it is even expected that he will perform larger tasks such as helping with clearing, building a hut, hunting, etc. A European would need the patience of an angel. But even the young natives, who are sometimes relatively nervous and excited, especially because they want to conclude the matter of the bride price, and who in any case do not as yet possess the calm of the older people to whom they go, must be capable of resignation and perseverance. Hence the proverbs: lokámo ntákundɔ́láká bakonga ndá ●[539] lifaya, "haste will not dig up rings in foreign territory" (bakonga are often buried in the ground for better safekeeping -- a useful precaution particularly in the past, when there were brawls between villages, and raids), and bomwa w'inkɔ́nɛ́ ntásingɔ́láká bakonga ndá lokendo, "a child's mouth does not unroll rings in the course of travels" ("unroll" -- that is, from the feet of the wife of the relative being visited).

593 distant village, the situation was different. Not only did she run
574 many grave risks on the way, but it was not easy for her clan to
578 intervene on her behalf and to obtain respect for her rights by means of force. It can be readily understood that if a wife found herself alone and isolated, without effective support from her family, her husband and parents-in-law could feel free to do her many injustices if they were unkindly disposed toward her, unless the ndonga was sufficiently influential to keep them within limits. Hence the proverb
[539] bol'ôsíkɛ, mbila ngɛ likwɛla, "if the native village is far away, peace (in the household) is like slavery." [272]

In the course of domestic quarrels an exasperated husband may shout at his wife: "Go away, go home." Usually she simply goes to the home of some female relative to wait till calm returns. But sometimes she may take his words literally and go home. When her parents are informed of what has happened, they tell their daughter that she is in the wrong. Such a thing cannot be taken tragically. The husband has acted in a moment of bad humor and extreme indignation. He did not really send her away or repudiate her. There is no question of hate or indifference. Thus the matter is not taken seriously, and when the wife calms down, her parents persuade her to go back to her husband. If he likes her enough the matter ends there; it is forgiven and forgotten. Even if, having gone to her family under these circumstances, the woman becomes ill or dies there, she herself is responsible. Thus sending her away in that manner is not in any way taken seriously; it has nothing in common with a repudiation and cannot even be compared with a wife's flight because of bad treatment.

To summarize, if a wife leaves the house in which she lives with her husband, he is obliged to go and fetch her whether she is in the right or in the wrong. On the other hand, parents will send a daughter back to her husband if she is too easily angered and runs away over trifles. The following are generally acknowledged as serious and justifiable reasons for flight: serious failures in fulfilling marital duties, punishments or repressions without just cause, excesses in just punishments.

593* 578 dare to maintain that a woman's speaking out about her husband is a sign of affection. On the other hand, a woman who instead bewails her lot softly and quietly saying, ngɔ́ya ńkeke lɔ́í l'ɔ̌m'ongɛ na?, ("mother, what shall I do with this husband?"), will not be with him long. Her complaint is chiefly egoistic, while the other seeks the good of her spouse and her household.

As we have already mentioned, the perfect punishment, and one frequently employed in ordinary cases, is a husband's refusal to eat food prepared by his wife or to wash with water she has drawn or boiled. It is a type of reprimand to which she is sensitive. The husband's aversion must not last too long, however, for it could lead to [831] a breaking up of the marriage, more especially since in the end the woman would begin to suspect infidelities -- which do occur.

The fact that Nkundɔ́ law does not allow the husband complete freedom and clearly limits his rights does not in any way exclude the occurrence of infractions. The mass of human beings is always inferior to the moral ideal imposed by legislation. But these provisions of Nkundɔ́ law do protect a woman against her husband's excesses. We have already cited the expedients available to her: abandonment of the home shared with her husband; legal apologies (boɔ́ndo), indemnity for injuries (liombo). In addition, a wife who has been wronged will abstain from foods (such as meat or palm nuts) given her by her husband and, even more important, will refuse to have sexual relations with him. And for our people this is a great affront. In order to re-establish a normal and peaceful situation, a husband often has to pacify [281] his spouse by means of a boɔ́ndo. In addition to the measures mentioned, a wife may of course use insults, of which every native has a rich and varied collection.

No one can condemn or reprimand a woman for abusing a lazy husband. If he does not go to the hunt and bring back game, if he neglects the building or repair of the house, if he is too much of a laggard, if he does not fell the forest to set up food crops, it is clearly he who is in the wrong, and he will find no one who will approve of his conduct and condemn his wife. If he turns out to be incorrigible, it will not be long before the marriage is broken, according to the axiom [539] elɔ́ng'ey'ɔ̌moto ńk'okɔ́fo, "the woman's victory is divorce."

578 If a woman injures her husband during a quarrel he may not
595x retaliate, for she is recognized as inferior and weaker than he. The
577 husband's weapon is abstention from any food, drink, baths, etc., that she offers him. To re-establish peace she must pay a *boɔ́ndo*. Nevertheless, nowadays some impetuous men no longer like to observe these rules; they want to act with violence come what may. But they are strongly reprimanded by the old men, who maintain that it is unworthy of a man to retaliate against a weaker being. This traditional attitude of the Nkundɔ́ seems to me to indicate a sort of chivalrous nobility based on two feelings, justice and pride. It becomes more understandable when we know that similar conduct is
[563] expected with regard to Batswa, inferiors, and subjugated clans (*baulɛ́*, sing. *julɛ́*) in their respective spheres. (1) Thus a Booto may not apply the law of retaliation to a *Botswa*. Under certain circumstances, a *julɛ́* clan may, with impunity, take what they please from the banana groves of the master's clan, etc.

Note also that it is very much out of place for a man [282] to strike his wife or punish her in any way in the presence of her parents,
[607] brothers, etc. In fact, this is a very grave offense. And, according to the code of honor, the brother (cousin, etc.) must pick up the glove and fight his brother-in-law to avenge the insult. In many cases the matter ends in a divorce. For such conduct takes away the combined feeling of modesty and embarrassment (*nsɔ́nyi*) that the two parties normally feel toward one another.

Finally, we must note that the various payments made as *boɔ́ndo* are included in the total amount of *jéngí* or *nkomí*, respectively.

In order to more clearly illustrate the Nkundɔ́ attitude con-
593x cerning the relationship of husband and wife, it might be of interest to
● 539 cite a few proverbs pertaining to the subjects discussed above:

1) *Baníngá bakɔ́ndaka wǎj'â ntaka*: *Lombɔ́mbɛ́ aɔ̂kɔ́nda Ntɛlá la nganja*, "All the others slap their wives (but) Lombɔ́mbɛ́ beats Ntɛlá with a stick." (This is a reference to a historical fact.)

---

1. See below, Articles V, VI, and VII, 4, B.

593x 2) Oótón'ifóló, wɛ̌ ńk'onjemba, "If you do not put up with
539 excesses of speech (on the part of your wife) you (will remain) a bachelor." (Because this is an innate fault of all women, and it is not a major one.)

3) Ófâmb'ȇmwa al'ɛ̌ mbóka, "Do not answer the mouth, it is a road" (it has no end).

4) Bobɛ́ 'á wǎlɪ́, ófótón'ompɛ́lo, "A mean woman, you (nevertheless) do not refuse the warm bath (she has prepared for you)." (Do not attach much importance to her unpleasant statements. What are they in comparison to the services she performs for you?)

5) Ěkí'm'ólámbáká la wɛ̌li w'ǒtánsǔyá, josó ô wǐlima ógɛ̌n'anto ólangǎ ńdambe bióko botóá?, "When I prepared (the food) by moonlight, you were not satisfied; nevertheless (now that it is) dark and [283] you don't see anyone, you would like me to prepare six baskets?" (It is implied that the wife addresses her husband, who is dissatisfied with the food but nevertheless wants her to prepare more of it.)

6) Ióókó lokúmo ńk'ǒm'aokolanga, "A little (food) basket is highly praised if your husband but love you." (Love appreciates even the slightest thing. Discontent springs from a lack of affection.)

7) Etuka lofoso, wǎj'óky'ôwɛ́i, "A flashy widow, (but she is that way because she is) the wife of (another, who is) dead." (You criticize her; but don't you treat her like someone else's wife? Then what are you complaining about?)

8) Ěkokumbólá wɛ̌ jwende, baíso ng'ônkóno: ókite nd'îlombe, baíso ng'inkótsi, "When a man takes you in marriage, (his) eyes (are) like (those of a) bonkóno (a wild cat); you arrive in his house, (his) eyes (are) like (those of a) inkótsi (a kind of frog with protruding eyes). (At the beginning of a marriage a husband is extremely obliging and kind; but after a while he puts on a sullen face and gets angry at the least provocation.)

9) Emangá liála, mpokɛ́ ɛ́kángola, "The beginnings of marriage are honeymoons." (But afterwards . . . .)

10) Wǎlí nd'ɛ́tóo, wokánda wokáka, "A wife is a kind of material; strike her, cover her." (She is a delicate object; strike her when she deserves it, but do so with calm and a sense of proportion; hold the stick with one hand and cover her body with the other.)

606
685
If one of the wife's relatives were found guilty of stealing from his (or her) relative by marriage, or even from one of the latter's relatives, the family tribunal was assembled. Out of consideration for the ties of kinship between the thief and the wife and in order not to sadden her and her family, the guilty person was not sold as a slave. He was simply turned over to the woman [293] and her family, and they were told: "Here he is; he has been found guilty of theft and should have been reduced to slavery. Out of respect for you, however, we are not selling him; we are rolling (-kilimola) him toward you. Take him as bride price and add him to the sum of the bosɔ́ngɔ." Thus the matter was settled in a friendly fashion. If subsequently there was a divorce, the wife's family had to restore not only the bride price that had been paid but also an additional slave for the member of their group that the husband had yielded in this fashion. Thus, the transaction was not at all a fictional one.

Conversely, the same procedure was adopted in relation to a relative of the husband who had violated the rules of justice to the detriment of a member of the family related by marriage. But in that case the extradition of the guilty party was considered as the addition of a slave to the amount of the nkɔmɛ.

[539] Hence the saying: bokiló ntɛ́wɛ́kɛ́ ndɛ́ ngond'ɛ̌y'okanga, "a parent-in-law cannot die in the forest of his relatives by marriage."

The situation is no different nowadays. The only change is that, instead of giving back a slave if a dissolution of the marriage occurs, the equivalent value is paid in copper rings, etc.

727
606
The same customs governed conduct toward prisoners of war. For instance, in the course of a war Eale became the master of Bombolo, whose cousin is married to Iloko, a close relative of Eale. Iloko interceded with Eale in order to obtain Bombolo's freedom, and Bombolo was sent home but was to be considered as bosɔ́ngɔ. The liberated prisoner thus was classed as a slave given as part of the bride price, as in the preceding case, and all the appropriate rules were followed.

628 602 Some time thereafter, a man named Bengɔ́ngɔ́ from the Ndɔngɔ́ village of the Bongíli went to Bofílɛ to visit his sister Bosɛ́ka, who was married to Eale ɛ́ɛ Bofekɛ́. The latter told him that the village was enraged because of the assassination of one of their people by the Batswa of the Bongíli. He advised him to go [295] and hide in the fallow ground lest excited men come upon him and revenge themselves on him. He led his brother-in-law there himself. Therefore he knew the exact location of his hiding place and ran to betray him to the others. They encircled the fallow ground and easily found [266] poor Bengɔ́ngɔ́, who was pitilessly massacred and eaten. His sister Bosɛ́ka never knew of her husband's treachery; she thought that despite all his precautions, the other inhabitants had discovered her brother's hiding place. (1)

[649] 1. We should not be too astonished that during that period the Europeans did not intervene in these wars, vendettas, massacres, and acts of cannibalism. They let the natives do as they pleased among themselves and demanded only that they leave them alone and render them services and tribute. They had other things to do in those times. The white men Ǎmbɛ and Baisɛ̌nkoi, of whom the natives still speak with respectful fear, were the first to begin punishing acts of barbarism in this region.

602 This hypocrisy on the part of the husband toward his wife and brother-in-law is due to the presence of two opposing feelings within him -- on the one hand, the love of his family and the feeling of solidarity which engenders hate and the desire for vengeance; on the other, love for his spouse. As those feelings are in complete contradiction with each other, he cannot reconcile them. But at least he can preserve appearances.

[539] This situation is referred to in the following proverb: bokilɔ́ ɛkwɛ̌ɛ́kɛ́, wɛ́ngoyak'eyalo, "If your bokilɔ́ has hidden you, change

602 559 shelters." There is another, which is cruder: bokiló tótswe nkɛ́lɛ́: bafumba bálɛkɛ mbá, emi ńkolɛ́kɛ wɛ̌. "relative by marriage, let us go to the palm grove; the bafumba ants (Dorylus wilverthii) eat palm nuts; I will eat you." The following saying, applied to someone who is always trying to clear himself, is a more or less involuntary accusation: mpɔ́lí 'okiló, ńdɔ́fa ó mpɔ́ngo; mpɔ́ngo y'okiló nsako ngá mbwá. "I do not eat my relative by marriage; on the contrary, I dip (food) in his fat; an in-law's fat is as tasty as a dog's." [296]

Nevertheless, a man never goes so far as to cause the death 602 628 of his sister's daughter's or other relative's husband. Or, as the Nkundó say, one does not kill a person by whom one has been enriched. What is the reason for this distinction? According to our people it is the affection they feel toward their sister, daughter, etc.; they love them too much to pain them by taking away their husbands.

This treacherous and barbarous conduct is therefore directed by the bokiló toward the bokanga, that is, by those who have paid the bride price to those who have received it, but never the reverse.

Appendix

000 This appendix pertains to each of the three preceding articles. Therefore it may reasonably be placed here. It does not deal with any special law nor with a custom that is legal, universal, or common. It is concerned with isolated cases. But it seems to me that the few lines to follow are not without interest, since they give a good indication of the mentality that may be found among these people.

602 571 It may happen that a woman has a complaint or feels she has cause to be dissatisfied with one of her relatives, for example her brother. In her opinion he may not be sufficiently kind and generous toward her, or he may treat her in a manner she considers unfair. In a moment of anger she reveals her feelings to her husband and incites him to avenge her by injuring or even killing the one who has offended her.

That is what happened several decades ago to Bosela w'Empwengé of Boléngé (Bongili) (who died in 1932, a very old man). His wife Ilumbé was very dissatisfied in that her brother did not give

586x on his own authority, for the offense was considered very serious.
584 We can assume that the reason for this rule was to allow time for
[567] the woman's family to intervene and keep their daughter from becoming a slave by refunding the bride price paid for her.

c) In exceptional instances an exasperated husband resorted to the immolation of his wife when someone died. People cite the case of Bengóngó of Bongilá (Besombó, Bombwanja), who had his wife, Litúli of Bontole, decapitated at the ikweí at the death of his father, Bengóngó byá Yese.

If the woman had children old enough to intervene on her behalf, her husband could be prevented from carrying out his violent intentions. The proverb says, Mbótsi ntáwáká, "a mother
[599] does not perish." The husband also abstained if the woman had
[595] a co-wife (ebísa) who was her sister or other close relative -- either out of a feeling of shame, [385] or out of fear of undesirable repercussions. Sometimes, when a husband was caught between his wish to use the etáka and his shame or his fear of the ebísa, he hid
[601] the wife who was confined by this fork. Preferably, he asked a brother-in-law to give her hospitality. In that way he got around the difficulty to a great extent, because through the law of exogamy such an arrangement placed the wife in another village, sometimes a considerable distance away. This practice was called isángyá; tómba walí isángyá.

Instead of resorting to the procedures listed, a husband could
586x also place his wife in the hands of the ndonga. However, it was a
584 very unusual thing to do. The natives maintain that such action was due to a lack of affection for the wife, together with the husband's certainty that he could recover his valuables -- either because he was assured that his father-in-law was well disposed toward him (and would reimburse him or provide a replacement), or because he knew he could use the ikákelo.

As we have said, direct repudiation was extremely rare. Here we are not speaking of repudiation caused by a wife's incorrigible misconduct -- which we have just discussed -- but of repudiation against the wife's wishes. If it did occur the husband was expected to hand her over to the ndonga, and the latter, seeing

763 literally that the deceased has hanged the heart, the former is used of a tree which leans over and falls from a great cut at its base.

On the announcement of the death, an expert drummer drums out the news. 624 There will be at least four drums of the type known as *lokulu*, and a *nanga*.[1] The four 766 drums are called by the names, *Epanda*, having the 'biggest voice', that is a deep 594 bass note, *Mongoye*, having a higher note, *Mongenda*, a high pitched note, and *Monkoto*, 202 having a very high penetrating note. To these four drums others are added; if the *nkumu* himself did not possess sufficient, they would be borrowed from the surrounding villages, and their notes matched with those of the first three drums, being beaten with them in their turn. *Monkoto* is beaten simultaneously with *Epanda*, giving a rhythmic tattoo. When the news of the death has been sent out on *Epanda*, the funeral drumming commences, as follows:

539
Mongenda. Botiangana w'Amba lokolo,
Mongoye. Ntsala ikita, otongonoko,
Epanda. Tokund' ibenge molom' o nyama,
Ombolekeke mmenge,
Lobanga lolenda ntondo,
Bikeku bilenda lobola.
Nanga. Tobilake nkoi nkonge,
Tobilake nkoi nkonge, &c.

The English and the interpretation are as follows:

Mongenda. A scattering of Amba, the snail. (The mother of twins, always called Amba, here gives her name to the snail because of her prolific progeny, which, upon being introduced to the world, scatter, while the mother dies. So the death of the *nkumu* will cause a scattering of his many wives and children.)

Mongoye. Feathers fall; pick them up. (That is to say, for your arrow shafts, for if you don't, and come back later, the wind will have scattered them and you won't find them. So while the *nkumu* was alive it was the time for his children to learn his teachings so that when palavers came after his death they would be well acquainted with his wisdom and know how to settle them.)

Epanda. We are burying the *ibenge*, husband of animals, You have just eaten *mmenge*, The chin looks up at the ridge pole, The jaw bones look up at the sky. [825] (The *ibenge* is an animal much prized for its fat meat; the *nkumu* always gets his share when it is killed, and the skin is made into carrying straps for infants, and into belts. [563] Batwa are prohibited the use of it for any purpose. It is therefore fitting to liken the *nkumu* to the *ibenge*. *Mmenge* (sing. *lobenge*) is the equivalent of a snack. When a woman brings her cassava from the swamp where it has been soaking for several [264] days, her husband may be too hungry to wait the long hours required to cook it, so to appease his hunger his wife takes a piece or two of the unprepared root, splits [252] it in two, places salt between, wraps it in a *lokambe* leaf and roasts it in the hot ashes, where it is quickly cooked. So the *nkumu* just had time to eat a few *mmenge*; he didn't wait for the big cooking; his life was suddenly cut off.)

Nanga. Don't pull out the leopard's eyelashes. (That is, while he is alive; now he is dead one can disregard his power.)

---

[1] A *lokulu* is a slit gong made from a hollowed log. Its two notes are produced by striking the two lips of the slit. A *nanga* is a hollowed log, open at one end, across which is stretched a vellum hide.

This funeral drumming is kept up for a long time, off and on for days, and is very stirring in its rhythm. 624 While it is going on, the elders congregate in an *ebanga*. They 766 fast and have nothing to do with their wives during this time. The *ekopo* is mourning, and the *molembe* may be likewise mourning, but for the others it is a time of rejoicing, [533] and also of the relaxing of moral restraints. It is an occasion for dancing by both Batwa and 'freemen', the former regarding this as a time for special rejoicing, for the *nkumu* was their master and now he is dead they are no longer under restraint. [535] They are free to take any of their master's goods and even to snatch blankets off the corpse. [563] Men and women do not dance together; the women, taking some of their husbands' weapons, go off in one direction, and the men, arrayed in finery, dance at the other end of the village.

While the *nkumu* is still unburied and the drumming is going on, the *molembe* look for a successor among the *ekopo*. Often this man will, as we have seen, have already been designated. The *molembe*, Batwa, and others in the village make up a party, and attired in war finery go off with their weapons as though after a man they wished to kill. As they go they sing: [539] ●

Nkombe w'ompiita elimbo
W'e alale we oko?
Hawk, thou hast destroyed the nest,
Where art thou going to sleep?

Before catching the real successor they catch one or another in fun, singing this song. The man of course refuses to be *nkumu*, and the point of the song is that because of his refusal the *ekopo* no longer fulfils its function of supplying the *molembe* with *nkumu* and therefore ceases to be of any use to them. If this man by refusing thus destroys the family nest, where will they sleep?

Finally, after this fun, the real successor is caught, his face daubed with black, and [302] the group sing: [539]

Bolo lowa-eo, lomba nkulu.
The cunning animal is hiding, reveal the tortoise.

Thus the new *nkumu*, like a cunning animal, is hiding, but when discovered, like the tortoise, he will not try to run away. The whole group conducts the new *nkumu* to the *ipamo* and sits all night guarding him. Earlier on the day of the actual interment of the dead *nkumu*, the new one is installed with ceremonies as already described.

On the day the *nkumu* dies his people scatter to other villages to look for slaves 766 for the executions on the day of the burial. Slave-owners or husbands of unwanted wives ask quietly how much money there is for the man or woman, accept the agreed 567 amount, and tell the buyers to go quietly and catch the slave or wife before anything 762 is suspected and an escape is made. In this connexion we may note two classes of 562 wives, *bopika* and *ibato*. A third class, *boumba*, acquired by the payment of a very small bride price, was not nearly as common formerly as at present and may be passed by. A *bopika* was a slave wife acquired by capture in war or stolen. If loved by her husband she will take her place practically on an equality with the members of the village, but she may be killed, for she is her husband's possession, 'his money' is the native expression. An *ibato* is a wife for whom a very high bride price has been paid, obliging her family to give wives to the other family in perpetuity, supplying

595x 837 ●548 Finally, let us not forget the spirit of gain and greed. Except in a few instances, a woman expects remuneration from a man to whom she has surrendered her body. Many infidelities may be explained by this practice, at least at the present time. But on the other hand, it should be noted that the woman's demand for a "wage" from her lover may be explained by an amorous concern; by giving the woman a gift or an amount of money the man shows [49] his regard for her; it is a demonstration of his affection for her, and the woman wants to be paid in order to be sure of her lover's love. That is not to say that such instances are common or frequent, but such a feeling is natural and actually exists in more than one case. (1)

1. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 2.

It is not surprising that the woman who lives in circumstances which are always unfavorable to chastity and marital fidelity is easily led to adultery and often falls. That is the basis of the proverb: [589] *bǒmoto ndɛ́ lofolɔ́kɔ́, nkɔ́ ngonda ěfá nd'ɔ́engámɛ́*, "the woman is a chrysalis; there is no forest where she does not hang" -- a clear condemnation of the frivolity of the daughters of Eve in the land of the Nkundɔ́. Nevertheless, these moral criticisms in the form of proverbs can be accepted only in a general way and must be understood *cum grano salis*; they leave the door wide open for exceptions.

595x 152 In his *Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge* [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], (p. 38), Jadot has written: "The Bantu is capable of love . . . and that is all, and his wife -- no matter what has been said -- of a certain amount of marital fidelity. In general, neither the one nor the other go too far. Platonism, Petrarchism, and Romanticism are foreign to the love of the natives . . . I know . . . of cases of fierce jealousy and of beautiful faithfulness." (2)

2. See also *ibid.*, p. 208 ff.

152 We conclude that love exists among the Nkundɔ́. This feeling is subjected to harsh attacks and is affected by many unfavorable circumstances, which may account for its imperfection and for certain

302 under the arms is related to sexuality and give it the same name as
851 they use for their pubic hair.

A person removes his or her own hair, or it is removed by a friend of the same sex. Formerly, the hairs were simply pulled out. Nowadays, many people shave with a lotɛ́a. Moreover the practice tends to be confined to the hair connected with sexuality, but in the past everything was removed: eyebrows, eyelashes, mustaches, beards.

For the Nkundó hair removal is a form of beauty care. Their
302 explanation must be accepted, though the term "beauty care" must be broadly defined so that it will include also the depilation of parts of the body that are always hidden. This last form however, might have some relation to the tattoos: it makes tattooing easier and its effect more obvious. [71]

Article III. Prostitution

The dictionary defines prostitution as follows: "a trade which
● 548 consists in providing one's body for the pleasures of the public in exchange for money." In addition to this limited sense, the most important aspect of which is "in exchange for money," the word also has several broader meanings.

Prostitution is found in the world in various forms: 1) the kept woman, 2) the brothel, 3) the professional streetwalker, 4) the occasional streetwalker, 5) the married woman who has a steady relationship with a lover who pays her, 6) the woman who is the concubine of a number of men in succession and who is paid by each of them. We will examine the forms under which this misconduct has occurred and occurs among the Nkundó.

The first question we should ask is whether a Nkundó woman gave herself to a man for profit before the European occupation. It is true that a woman often demanded remuneration but, as we have already said, it is very difficult to determine whether she did so for gain or simply to be reassured of her lover's affection. Knowing the mentality of the Nkundó woman of today, we must admit that her greed sometimes brings her to acts of venal love. One or another of them has no doubt given her body in order to possess various

548 ornaments or objects for her toilette (hairpins, for example), and it is probable therefore that individual cases of this sort occurred. But it is altogether unlikely that the practice was widespread, as it does not fit in with the economic organization of this people, among whom wealth is more or less collectively owned and, moreover, (as will be shown in Chapter VI, Article II) a woman has no property rights. [72] Therefore we can assume that there were only a few occasional prostitutes.

On the other hand, there have never been any professional prostitutes; that is, Nkundó women have never made a job out of prostitution, and the same thing may be said of the other forms listed above.

The number of prostitutes was necessarily limited, however, by the fact that the great majority of women were always married young (Chapter IV, Article I), and that adultery was severely punished (Chapter VI, Article VII).

Nevertheless, there is something which superficially resembles prostitution; that is, there is a category of girls and women whom at first glance one would be tempted to call prostitutes. Therefore it would be useful to examine the situation somewhat more closely, for though in itself it is entirely different from prostitution, it could easily lend itself to it.

548
582
882
It sometimes happens that a girl, besides the bolúmbú (a socio-political institution in no way related to the degeneration of female sexuality), is kept in the home of her parents beyond the customary age before she is given in marriage. Such a girl is called éfótswâála, "the one who does not marry." She is not bolúmbú. Externally or -- to use philosophical terminology -- materially, the two customs resemble each other; but formally they are entirely different. Creating a bolúmbú involves authority and influence and is thus a public matter. Whether a girl becomes an éfótswâála, on the other hand, is a private matter between father and daughter. While the creation of a bolúmbú is accompanied by public feasts and a decree officially proclaimed (boéko) by the father and accepted by the council of family heads [73], the establishment of a éfótswâála involves no official act or ceremony.

548 582 882 The name *áfótswâála* does not mean that the girl will stay single all her life. Her marriage is not permanently excluded; it is only postponed.

As for her behaviour, the *efótswâála* conducts herself like any Nkundó girl. Nothing distinguishes her from her companions. If a good match is proposed to her, she marries like everyone else.

This custom -- if one can use the term -- therefore has no real connection with prostitution. All that can be said is that the girl who stays single longer and until adulthood, is exposed to more libertinism and a life of debauchery.

586x It also happens that parents who are angry because their daughter has dissolved a marriage to a man they consider a good son-in-law prevent her from remarrying in an effort to make her return to her legitimate husband. If the parents and their child each hold to their viewpoint without yielding, such a situation can go on for many months until the wife is -- practically speaking -- no longer under the authority of her husband. And since the opposition of her parents prevents her from being married by another man, she easily comes to give herself to all. It should be added that at present this case is chiefly hypothetical. Parents no longer have the authority [178] to thwart the desires of an adult daughter in this way; if she is stubborn they have to yield out of fear that she will run far away. And that would be to go from the frying pan into the fire. But in the past the kind of situation I have described was not unusual.

548 369 The most fertile places for the breeding and development of prostitution are to be sought in the centers. The following principal causes can be given:

1) Female vanity is overexcited by the sight [74] of all the dazzling riches which have been imported by white men and which are such a temptation to Negro women. It requires a considerable income to satisfy this desire to enhance one's native beauty. Ordinary laborers and artisans do not earn enough money to satisfy their wives or daughters in this respect. Mistresses of Europeans or of foreign black men, the wives of "clerks" and other representatives of Negro high society display a degree of luxury startling and striking to the rest.

369 548 2) There is a considerable excess of bachelors over eligible women.

[694] 3) The freedom to commit adultery: no sanctions were provided.[1]

[586] 4) The difficulty of finding a suitable husband experienced by many girls born in the centers. Marriages between individuals belonging to different groups (especially certain ones) seldom last. And since inhabitants of the centers have no fixed or stable residence, they intend sooner or later to go back to their tribe of origin. Serious-minded parents therefore discourage and thwart these "mixed" marriages. (1)

1. On this subject, read Jadot's fine page in *Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge* [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 132, beginning: "*La prostitution devait inevitablement* . . . (Prostitution was inevitably . . .).

[361] In the region under discussion there are only a few lightly populated centers: plantations, government or business stations, and small commercial centers. From time to time the bachelors there satisfy their desires with the wives of their fellow workers, and especially with women who come from the interior to sell their products at market. But they do not avoid one of the consequences of prostitution, namely the spreading of venereal diseases.

It is possible to conclude that in the past prostitution existed only in a very broad sense [75] and there was very little of it. In [114] Engel's article, "Les Wangata" *op. cit.*, he writes that among the Wangata "prostitution no longer exists." If the eminent author is using the term according to the meaning in the dictionary, we may ask on what basis he is implicitly stating that this institution existed in the past. If prostitution is broadly defined, then the facts contradict his remark, for actually it has not ceased to develop among the tribes he discussed, who are located very close to the city of Coquilhatville and its various suburbs.

[1] [i.e., in the centers.– Analyst]

548 178 The fact of colonization has greatly changed the situation. The freedom of communication across great distances, the introduction of new and varied goods and especially of money, have had a great influence on the development of prostitution. The economic system of the people remains the same; but when the women are away from their families or their husbands, they spend their means at their own discretion. And, since the objects of adornment available to them have greatly increased, they have a personal incentive to engage in immoral conduct.

The vice has not therefore taken on European forms; modern changes have simply increased -- but in enormous proportions -- the number of occasional streetwalkers. The development of this state of affairs is encouraged by the procuring activities of certain polygamous and even monogamous men living near European centers, which give rise to the attitude of their wives. For though the husband may reap the primary financial benefit, the wife is not deprived of her little gain, and her native cupidity easily pushes her to engage without scruple in commercializing her body.

837 548 The women under discussion are usually married. Often they have a recognized lover among the laborers in the camps, and he usually pays for their faithfulness. Thus we arrive at the married woman with a regular paying lover. [76]

This form of prostitution has developed even outside laborers' camps. It is to be found among the people on the river banks, who are more in contact with the Whites and their people and in the neighboring villages. It is especially prevalent among the Beloko, fairly near Coquilhatville, where it is spreading even among wives of monogamists. This perversion takes root all the more rapidly because it has a certain resemblance to the ancestral custom of a recognized concubinage (see Chapter VI, Article VIII, 2) and like the latter, it often does not take the form of prostitution. That is to say, the illicit relationship is not engaged in for the sake of gain. Furthermore, an arrangement is often made with the husband.

[369] As to the other forms of prostitution listed, they are still unknown in the native villages and in the small centers located in the territory studied. Some of them, however, may develop in the fairly near future.

● 548 In a center like Coquilhatville there are loose women who live in concubinage, first with one man and then another, a few days or weeks with this one, then the same length of time with that one; they are paid by each man but refuse to give up their freedom permanently. It is true that this city is outside the geographical limits of our study, but since it is located close to Nkundó territory and is important to them, I have touched on it briefly. No brothels are to be found there, and one does not encounter professional streetwalkers except for a few women who solicit among ship's crews. Most of the prostitutes in Coquilhatville are single girls or divorcées (legally or in fact). This disguised form of prostitution is not regulated here as it is in Leopoldville. (1) Nevertheless, the [77] government recognizes, at least in practice, the existence of a class of "free women" present in considerable numbers. Their way of life is contagious to such a degree that -- to an extent which varies greatly -- a noticeable number of girls who live with their parents but aspire to luxury have been seduced by it. (1)

[651]

1. In the capital all native women who are adult and able bodied and who theoretically are living alone are taxed 50 francs (the certificates of payment show, in addition to other information, the number, name and address of the person taxed). This tax is not the equivalent of a permit to engage in licentious behavior or libertinism. It is not called a "prostitution tax" or any equivalent name, but some Europeans call it that because it has that appearance.

In addition there is a real regulation concerning prostitution; it is the Governor General's order of November 5, 1913, which establishes cards and periodical sanitary examinations for prostitutes. It would seem to be applied in Matadi, Leopoldville, and Elisabethville.

1. According to the latest figures

549 available to me, the government recognizes the presence of 702 free women out of a population of 8, 386 persons who are not permanent residents.

Article IV. Premarital Sexuality

836 Under this heading we will examine:

1. What the Nkundó think about virginity.
2. Relations between single people.
3. The Nkundó's attitude toward births outside of wedlock.

1. Virginity

The word "virginity" has a double meaning. It may signify the presence of the hymen, the wholeness of the body, or it may have the meaning given in the dictionary: "virgin, a girl who has never had intercourse with a man."

Because of the practice described in Article II, 1, Nkundó girls who remain physically virgin until adulthood are extremely rare. Even if a girl does not begin sexual life until after her body has reached maturity -- a situation which occurs rarely today but which was formerly common, (2) [78] she will not give herself up to carnal

2. See no. 2 of the present article.

pleasures until after she has broken her hymen.

585
836 What is the Nkundó attitude toward virginity? This question must be divided into two parts:

1) Does the future husband attach any importance to the physical virginity of his fiancée? Evidently not from what we have seen.

2) Does he attach any importance to her moral virginity? That is, is it a matter of indifference to him whether or not he is the first to have intercourse with her?

672
837
[842] in the case of an unmarried mother, see Chapter I, Part 1, Article III, 3.

[843] Adultery also becomes especially serious during the period preceding childbirth when there is a special prohibition against it, as endangering the lives of both mother and child, as we will explain in Chapter X, Article III.

7. Remarks and general conclusions

837
[721] 1) In former times the offense of adultery, even in its mildest form, that is, an isolated act, was one of the chief causes of "wars" between villages. Sometimes both sides called on their relatives by marriage to assist them, and the result was a general upheaval.

837
595x 2) As a rule a husband wants his wife to be faithful. Doubtless there are exceptions. Most if not all of them were formerly found among the old polygamists. At their age they were disgusted with continual palavers, and their experience as men had taught them that they often became angry and uselessly complicated their little lives. They preferred to close their eyes, like good old Bo̱no̱f w'îko̱lo̱ngó̱ of Ite̱ko̱ (the Bombwanja clan of the Boóyá). He came to see me in the Christian village of Bombomba through which I was passing at the beginning of March, 1933. I asked him why he was adorned with so many bells, and he answered naively, "I always wear them. That way my wives know of my coming already from a distance. It gives them time to stop slandering me and to send their lovers away." When I expressed my surprise that he did not want to catch them in the act in order to punish them and end their infidelities, he answered me with a smile, "No, Father, jealousy . . . is for the young. As for me, I have seen so much of it that I no longer have any desire to get angry and make palavers for these trivialities."

● 548
837
595x Since the coming of the Europeans some unscrupulous men -- especially polygamists -- have been engaging in [328] a kind of procuring. They send their wives to commit adultery in order to be able to catch them in the act and thus enrich themselves. Or else they lend their wives for one night or more to laborers or soldiers who are

548 837 595 x bachelors in law or in fact.

Knowing their wives' weak and sensual natures, some men save the rings that come to them as indemnities -- today as in the past. When this capital has grown sufficiently, they use it to acquire a new wife. The latter is in a sense the other wife's nkita, and she is called, rather crudely, nkita é' efufa, efufa being the piece of cloth (apron) worn by the women. Such action does not mean that the husband wishes to speculate in immorality. He simply profits from what is a fact. But this attitude could easily degenerate, and at the present time the danger that it might is no longer imaginary, although for the moment things have not gone that far. Watchfulness on the part of administrative authorities can avoid all exploitation of marital infidelity by preventing the development of this evil or checking it where it already exists.

837 593 x The attitude toward a spouse's adultery varies greatly with different situations. These variations spring not only from the temperament of the injured party -- this goes without saying -- but also from the way the one guilty of adultery fulfills other marital obligations. This is particularly true with respect to a woman's "weaknesses." If she otherwise shows herself to be a devoted wife who is attentive, respectful, hard working, and one who takes the interests of her husband and children to heart, in a word, a good housewife, her husband will regret her infidelities, but he will pay less attention to these failings, since she compensates for them by many good qualities which show that she seriously loves him and lets herself go solely out of weakness. On the other hand, if a wife becomes neglectful, [329], disagreeable, and disrespectful, the change will indicate that something other than just weakness is involved, that her love for her husband has cooled and has chosen another object.

This is the sound philosophy of conjugal life among the Nkundó, as it is proclaimed and taught by all their old men and sages.

837 3) In spite of the terrible sanctions against adultery, it would appear that this offence has always been common. Certain events, such as deaths, feasts, and dances which last long into the night, are especially conducive to laxity. But even under ordinary

572 Unlike the affection among relatives, friendships cool and even end. This is especially true for pacts based purely on mutual assistance. Thus, if one of the friends is somewhat too stingy in comparison to the other, a rupture quickly results.

[561] The Nkundó also have especially affectionate feelings for their "age mates" (*boníngá*, pl. *baníngá*), that is, for all those who were born the same day, week, month, or period as they. They feel united by special ties. Among themselves age mates consider and treat each other as brothers, help and assist each other, etc.

Their affection is natural; the sort of selfishness that may be found among "friends" is not present among age mates.

Their relationship is so close that if the occasion arises, they lend each other their wives. (1)

1. See Chapter VI, Article VIII, 1.

[551] Lastly, individuals bearing the same name (*ndoí*, pl. *bandoí*) show real affection toward each other; they help each other and exchange gifts. They make no pact as do the *boseka*, however.

It should be noted that these various bonds do not exist between persons of opposite sexes, among whom they would be condemned as concubinage. [37]

Article IV. Conjugal Love

593x The question has often been asked: how about love among these peoples? Do husbands and wives really love each other? We are not speaking here of sexual passion, which is generally present in addition to love between man and woman, but which in itself is clearly distinct from it. Love is the result of various emotions -- congeniality, affection, mutual appreciation, admiration, devotion, etc., and we judge the perfection of love according to the presence or absence of any one of these elements and their degree.

The question is by its very nature a very delicate one to answer. Actually, it is difficult to observe and analyze clear and precise facts pertaining to the subject. Our notion of it must of

583x 431 556 Although given by the father-in-law to his son-in-law and therefore part of the nkomɔ, yet these valuables have neither their significance nor their purpose. They are disbursed at the time of the payment of the ikulɔ. This practice was customary only among men who were unusually wealthy and influential, that is, family heads who occupied prominent positions in native society. It was never omitted for a bolɔ́mbɔ (see Chapter I, Part 2, Article II). The woman's father gave these valuables to his son-in-law, saying: "I am giving you my daughter in marriage. She has always occupied a high position; she is of a very good family. I want her to retain her prominent rank. Therefore here is a bride price; go and get yourself a second wife with these rings, so that my daughter will have her nkita [154] from the very first day. Then come back and pay me the bride price for her."

The woman who was honored by such preferential treatment was called yɛ̌ngaende. This word is composed of the roots ɛ́ng, "to acquire by means of a bride price," and ende, "a man (vir)." The name comes from the fact that she herself paid the price for her husband, so to speak, and did so even before he paid the bride price for her.

[178] ●[551] The Nkundɔ́ have given up this manner of ostentatiously displaying their wealth, so that the custom we have just described now belongs to the past. Nevertheless there are still women who bear the name Yɛ̌ngaende, in memory of some ancestor who had been the object of this honor which put her in a privileged position, a royal position, so to speak.

583x From all the foregoing it will be apparent that marriage payments are not unilateral in Nkundɔ́ law and practice. Rather, there is a mutual handing over of goods. Although the goods given by each party differ clearly from one another, they all have an economic and financial value. Therefore we can speak of a real reciprocity in these payments. And although the husband has to furnish the largest and highest amount, it would be wrong to say that he alone must "pay for his spouse," for though he does actually "pay for his wife," she must to a certain extent "pay for her husband." That is what the

593 longo of Bokɔ́kyɔ́ (Boselo, Bombwanja), married to Bokaa is 'Ifonda
574 of Bowɛ́lɛ́; for Mbalaka, daughter of Bolekela wa Imangaiso of the
342 Basɛ́kɔ́ Lokuli (Bongíli), married to Mbuli is'ea Wela of Bombɔ́ngo
556 w'Etefa (Bongale) (1) [286]

[531] 1. She bore the name of Mbɔ́laka (meaning indemnity), because her father had solemnly proclaimed (-bɛ́kya) and publicly promised that he intended, one day, to place himself in the position of having to pay an indemnity because of his daughter, as proof of his love. Indeed [782] when Mbɔ́laka was married, he killed one of his wives, cut her into pieces, and sent the "meat" to his son-in-law as "the first hen" that his wife would prepare for him. But he did not have to pay [682] [614] the indemnity because the victim's clan was too weak to attempt a war; they did not dare to make a claim and, in order to avoid even greater misfortunes, they resigned themselves to this revolting ignominy.

Article V

Relations Between the Husband and His Wife's Family

606 607 As has already been said, kinship by marriage is called likilɔ́, and relatives by marriage are called bokilɔ́, bakilɔ́. Mbɔ́tsolɔ́ is a term of respect for very close relatives by marriage (father-in-law, mother-in-law, sometimes brother-in-law or sister-in-law). When there is a considerable age difference between two affinal relatives, the elder one sometimes calls the younger bokilɔ́walɔ́. This happens most frequently when the son-in-law is so young that he can still be considered a child. This term can even be used by an elder brother

606 women called "mother," such as the mother's sisters and the father's wives. The law does not seem strictly applicable to these persons, but seems to cover them by extension. On the other hand, there is no comparable law with regard to a woman and her father-in-law.

A violation of this prohibition results in a great palaver, for
606 it is considered a serious lack of respect. It may produce a serious
578 domestic quarrel. [290] A wife will refuse to perform the conjugal act with her husband because he has looked at his mother-in-law. That is why people help each other by warning each other of the "danger" when their respective mothers-in-law arrive.

Compensation for the offense may be made by the payment of a boóndo of several bakonga to the mother-in-law. As long as the payment has not been made, the wife will not fulfill her conjugal duties. After it has been made, everything goes back in order. If it is proved that the situation came about involuntarily, there is no palaver and no payment is required. Nowadays the best Christians tend to give a boóndo once and for all to definitively settle any palaver that may occur in the future and to avoid the obligation of having to submit to this prohibition, since they are beginning to vaguely perceive its uselessness.

A man is even forbidden to pronounce the name of his mother-
[551] in-law in her presence, even to address or call another person of the same name. In such a situation he must resort to a surname or paraphrase. Usually he addresses her as mbótsoló. An infraction of this rule results in the same punishment as if a man were to look at his mother-in-law.

If we ask the Nkundó to give us the reason for this custom, as
606 it is so strange to our point of view, they reply that they are ashamed or embarrassed to see the women who begot their wives, and that to do so would be a grave offense to her. The custom is a means of expressing the respect a son-in-law owes his mother-in-law, and of avoiding unceremonious behavior or too great a familiarity toward her. That is all the explanation they give. For our philosophical turn of mind, it does not exhaust the subject. We are tempted to look for a connection between the intimate relations of the married couple and

587 age mates, the friendship pact has no connection with the wives of
572 the men involved. If [335] there is a very firm friendship between them, one may lend his wife to the other in some situation or other, but this is a fairly rare occurrence. The Nkundó say that the booka relationship is for mutual assistance only.

If a case of adultery occurs, the husband has every right to demand an indemnity, but if the occurrence is not repeated, he never goes to extremes, and, because of the friendship, he may ask as little as 2 or 3 rings. If the occurrences are repeated without reciprocity, however, the husband often makes a great to-do; he demands a large indemnity and breaks the friendship pact.

Instead of demanding an indemnity some men give their
[593] friend a gift (mpóli) asking him to stop the illicit relations. Often this action is but a subterfuge to relax the other's vigilance so that, feeling freer, he will be more easily apprehended.

Between persons bearing the same name (ndoí, pl. bandoí). (1)
587
● 557

1. See Chapter I, Part 1, Article III.

there is no free access to wives, nor are persons of opposite sexes ever considered ndoí. Such relations would be considered concubinage or pure and simple adultery.

To summarize, a certain freedom of access to each other's
587 wives exists among age mates, but it is subject to the expressed or tacit consent of the respective husbands. These relations are not considered adulterous. Such freedom does not exist with respect to other categories of persons. But these, nevertheless, had to be mentioned here because the similarity among the kinds of relationship discussed might produce errors in the reader's mind, and because in certain parts of the Congo such persons fall into the same category as Nkundó age mates.

2. Concubinage

595x Concubinage (called linámbé among the Bolote, ingk
587 among the Bombwanja as well as the Ekonda) is a union [335] between

595* 554 The name bolémbé seems to come from the fact that for an instant during the installation ceremony the woman is naked. In fact in certain dialects the word means "nudity."

● [551] Nowadays this name is common among Nkundó women (rarely men), but it does not indicate that they are bolémbé. The name is borne in memory of ancestresses or relatives who had that position and is transmitted in the family like any other name.

[19] All the tribes under discussion here use the same term, bolémbé. The Bombomba alone say bofié. (2)

2. Elsewhere, as in the Losanganya region, among the Bosaka, etc., the bolémbé is called ekila (interdiction, taboo).

It is clear from everything that has been said that the nkóndé and the bolémbé have nothing in common with each other. [353] The two institutions are decidedly different. Nowadays they are beginning to be confused with each other, however. [171] For the installation of a bolémbé has become extremely rare, and in some regions it has already disappeared. The colonial government has established districts and appointed chiefs in charge of them. Very frequently, they are not those who in the purely indigenous order would have been the most influential men, the masters, those who would have the biggest say in their society, who would be said to have the loko, the first place.

As far as I have been able to observe, the other tribes on the equator also have the two types of wives with special positions, who bear names which vary with the dialects.

171] 595* 554 Do the Ntómbá and the Boléngé between the Boloko and the Congo have only the bolémbé? That is the conclusion one draws from Engels' study of the Wangata (Revue congolaise, Vol. 2, no. 1, p. 32). If that were so, the frequent contacts with this people may have increased the confusion even more. Natives who are strangers to the Boléngé tribe but who have lived many years among them as catechists, have maintained, however, that

Article V. Name Giving

553 Naming does not occur on any predetermined date. It is not delayed without a special reason. No feast or ceremony accompanies the event. The father simply puts colored powder on the child's forehead as a sign of joy.

It is the father's right to choose a name for his child. Sometimes he asks for the family's opinion. Preferably he gives names of his relatives, deceased or living, or sometimes his own. But it is proper to respect the mother's feelings also. Failure to take them into account could provoke the woman to cause an abortion in order to punish him for being so willful as to neglect her family.

[845] [769] A painful childbirth, like the repeated death of preceding children, is often attributed to the rancor of a dead person who is discontented. In such a situation the Nkundó await the verdict [787] of a dream, or they have recourse to the judgment of a nkanga (doctor-magician) in order to be able to satisfy the irascible dead.

If the situation recurs too often, the calamity is attributed 553 to a rivalry between dead persons who are fighting over which of 551 their respective names should be given to the newborn; the envious loser kills the child. In order to avoid such mean vengeance and make everyone content while satisfying none, the father gives the child a neutral name or a Botswa name, such as Botswá, Sáka, Ěfâlǐna (nameless), Botsilá (lack of success, bad luck), Litúli (dead without known cause), etc. If the child has already received a name, but for one reason or another the inauspicious fury of a ghost is feared, it is always possible to change from that name to another.

Children are usually given the names of relatives of the same sex. Exceptions are sometimes made, however, if one of the sexes is not sufficiently represented among the progeny, in which case the bearer of the name can always change it later, and he almost always does. Nevertheless, there are [500] no specifically male or female names, except for those that consist of the relative form of a verb, such as Ósásuka, "the coquette," Óyémengo, "she who comes with plenty," Ófénji, "she who excels." Finally, certain names are sometimes used for either sex.

551 The etymology of most names is impossible to trace, and they have no meaning. Some are borrowed from the nomenclature of the realms of nature or of things, but no attention is paid to their original meaning, and allusions to it -- sometimes attempted by certain Europeans -- are either not understood or badly received. Other names are dictated by the child's constitution, for example Ókunjoló, "who will be buried even today," or Báwáólóí, "one dies only later." (1) Names sometimes also commemorate a special

1. Both names are intended to prevent allusions to the child's debility and to express the equivalent of the saying: it is but a life of languor.

event, such as a great mourning (Báwá, "they die"; Bálela, "people weep"), a rivalry (Báunela, "they fight for," meaning that two men are rivals for the possession of the mother of the child to whom the name is given). Finally, some names carry the meaning of a saying, such as Báwake, "all men must die," etc.

[572] In closing let us repeat that persons who bear the same name are often bound by a special friendship, give each other presents, and help each other. However, such a relationship does not entitle persons of different sexes to have intimate relations with each other, and if they do so such relations are treated as concubinage or simply adultery.

Article VI. Twins

845 Although for the Nkundó the birth of twins (baása, sing. jása), does not have the importance that other peoples attach to it [501], it does have some special features, the chief of which is the absence of the prohibitions and regulations that go with ordinary births. Twins are free from all common prohibitions; they are fulángó. (1) Let is examine the details.

1. This is true even with respect to abstentions during mourning.

845 The event is announced by the usual signal, but the signal [202] is doubled or, if the children are of different sexes, the signal for each sex is given once. It is followed by the dance beat: two [535] or three long and two short.

The next day the father's relatives go outside the village, 845 preferably to a crossroads. On each side they plant a stalk of 778 lokókólókó. All around the stalk they spread a little heap of small branches and various leaves called jùkó. It is a sign and a place of benediction and good fortune. Each passer-by stops, picks two leaves, places one on each pile, spits on it, and says swâ.(2) Then they clap hands and twice sing out, yelí yeye. Such behavior brings the benediction of the twins upon a person's journey, his undertakings, his marriage. The umbilical cord as well as the placenta and membrane are buried under the heap.

845 382 [886] Every morning the mother and father draw two stripes with kaolin on the middle of their foreheads and on their arms, above and below the elbow. They do the same to the twins. (3) They continue doing so until the child is weaned. If after that time one of the children falls ill, they begin again treating him in this manner until he is cured, taking care not to omit his brother, lest he too fall ill. For while these designs are signs of joy, they are [751] above all a prophylactic measure against children's fever (ikótswákí), [502] called wásanyi when it occurs in twins or in a child following them, and manifests itself chiefly by tumors of the head and face.

845 551 Twins are invariably called Mbóyó and Bokétu, names given to the first born and the second respectively, whatever their sex. The Bombwanja (like the Ekonde) use the names Mbóó and Mpía, respectively. The mother takes the name of Ámbá.

2. Onomatopoeia for "spit."

3. Sometimes a double stripe is added at the temples The kaolin may be used pure or mixed with the red paint called ngóla.

845 However, these names are not used exclusively by such persons;
551 they may be given to others as well. The father, on the other hand, does not receive a new name; but he bears the title Is'ɛ́y'ǎfɛ́, which literally means "father of two." (1) Twins are also said to be Ǎmbǎmba (pl. Byǎmbǎmba) from the verb -ámba, "to accept, to receive," because they are permitted to accept and to take everything, since none of the usual prohibitions apply to them.

The mother of twins is not required to go into seclusion
595 (nyang'ɛ́y'aáa ǎfǒáte waékelé). The shed belonging to the head
593 of the clan, that is, the one in whose home important animals (leopards, etc.) are dismembered, is set up for her. (2) The shed is closed by means of palms. Neither the parents, nor the helper, nor the persons who enter this place are required to observe continence or the other prohibitions involved in ekelé.

All the members of the kin group come to greet the twins
845 and give each one a present (hens, knives, arrows, food), which is received by the father or the mother. Whenever anything is given to one of the twins, even if it is the smallest object, the same must be given to the other; otherwise the latter would die. If the mother takes one in her arms, the other one must also be picked up, either by her or by the father. If she strikes one, she must also strike his brother. This [503] duality therefore applies to everything, and with even greater reason to nursing.

If a twin child cries or is ill, the parents must sing and
[534] dance to the accompaniment of a lokolé and a ngomo drum, a ceremony called -bónga baáa. If someone invites a twin or his

1. Among the Ekonda he is called Buka.

2. Therefore, at the bonanga place or the place of dismembering important animals (nyama yǎ bikofo, literally "superb animals").

000 the same rights as the other children of the polygynist.

595 The polygynist always sought to increase the number of his
wives, for his prestige rose and his fortune increased in that manner.
556 If anyone in civilized lands seeks to enlarge his fortune, this is
593 done, people say, in order to insure the future of his children. The
native thinks little about that; his primary idea is to enjoy himself
and to surpass others in prestige and esteem. As far as the future
of his children is concerned, there are polygynists who possess twenty
or thirty wives or even more, and sometimes they have only one or
two children. Also it is little in keeping with their notions to care
for the future; he who is still alive tomorrow must take care of
595 tomorrow then, so they reason. On the contrary, instead of caring
for his children, the polygynist often took great trouble to obtain a
593 wife for his son. The son, however, was not yet the owner of his
584 wife; it was, so to speak, only a loan. Not until after the death of
606 his father did he become owner. In some districts, when the father
had obtained a wife for his son, he first kept this wife for some time
for himself. Only after a few months did he give her to his son. In
595 other districts, when the wife was pregnant by the son, he was obliged
593 to send her for a few days to his father. He was not allowed to bear
606 the honor of fatherhood alone; his father must share that with him.
592 The father reserved for himself the honor of naming all of the chil-
● 551 dren of his children. In some areas of the Congo, morals were so
835 low and common that the father even kept his own daughters in his
harem. This did not occur in Equatorial Africa, but there was a
custom that was not much better. The magician was sometimes
583 consulted about the bride price which the father tried to get for his
791 daughter, or the brother for his sister.

The magician then gave them the advice that they themselves should first have relations with their own daughter or sister. This custom existed almost everywhere in Equatorial Africa.

583 [536] Bride Price. In general, the daughter was given in marriage upon payment of a bride price. The father had little choice of the future husband of his daughter. The one who guaranteed the most goods in payment was certain to get her. Since, in most cases, the little daughter had not yet arrived at the years of maturity, there was naturally no question of her consent. The bride price was not paid all at once, but gradually during the years while the daughter grew up. Since the daughter was given without her consent

624

inches long and two inches in width, numbering up to seven are brought and attached to the back of her *lombo* by folding them over it.[1] [596]

The first male child which was born to the *nkumu* before he acceded to the office is 852
known as *Iyomi Nkoi*. If he has none, then the right to this name passes to the first
male child to be born to his younger brothers. Any child born on the day that the 624
nkumu is given his *montolo* is also called *Iyomi*; if a male he will be *Mola Iyomi*, if a [551]
female, *Mpombe Iyomi*.[2] These children must not see the *nkumu* until they are old enough to know his name and greet him properly, and so they are taken to some village other than the one in which he has his residence. When such children are considered old enough to take up residence in the village of the *nkumu* it is an occasion for revelry, a big dance, *ateke*, is held, and there is a feast. The child, *Iyomi*, is brought to the village of the *nkumu* with rejoicing, and this is a signal for everybody desiring to do so to help himself to anything belonging to the *nkumu*. Goats and fowls may be killed and eaten, sugar-cane rooted up, bananas, plantains, and other crops growing near by seized for food. Because of this custom the *nkumu* will take precautions and send his livestock, at least, off to some other village in order not to lose more than he can help.[3]

The *nyemba*, the singer or singers, and the *atatii*, the praisers already mentioned, 624
remain with the *nkumu* during his period of seclusion. Added to these is *ntombe* 533
lokombi, the bearer of the *lokombi*, a stringed instrument played with the fingers, 534
similar to a bass viol in its general appearance.

Inside the *ipana* during the seclusion of the *nkumu*, few people have the right of 624
entrance, but as one enters the *ebanga* where the daylight hours are spent, one finds
the couch of the *nkumu* on the left and towards the rear. On the same side and towards 342
the front are seated the *ntombe lokombi* and the *nyemba*. *Nsomo*'s couch is to the right 352
of, and parallel to, that of the *nkumu*, but still to the left of the centre posts. To the right of her couch is the fire in the centre, and beyond the fire on the right side is a couch for the *mami*, likewise somewhat to the rear, with a space in front for the *atatii*.

The month's seclusion being completed, the *nkumu* prepares to buy the homage of 624
the village. *Nsomo* gets rid of her decorative colours, and assumes ordinary attire,
becoming like any other of the wives, and is ready to take up all the usual duties of 576
a wife, whether in the garden or at the house. The people are called to come and render to the *nkumu* their homage and praise. The men come to the *ipana*, are admitted to the presence of their *nkumu* and seat themselves on the bare earth with their legs wide apart and facing him. They then, without uttering a word, greet him in the

---

[1] The *lombo* is a belt which used to be worn by Tumba women encircling the buttocks, and this was used to attach their only garment, the *ekow* among the [illegible], this being a short loin cloth, or an *ampaga* among other groups, this being a woven cloth only worn between the legs.

[2] When a new *nkumu* assumes office, one already in office will take this opportunity of getting more of his own named *Iyomi*. He takes them to the *ndonde* of the new *nkumu*, and having placed a bracelet of cowrie shells on the right wrist, and sometimes one on the right ankle, asks the member of the *ndonde* whose right it is to give away the *montolo* to name these sons *Mami* (pl. of '*Iyomi*'). This man will then take each a son, and presenting him to the people introduce him by giving him a name, and following with praise as, '*Ow Iyomi Lonne, botoo!*' and the crowd replies with the customary '*Boo!*' [291]

[3] It is well to remember that not every individual bearing names associated with the institution of the *nkumu* is directly concerned with it. With the practice of 'resurrecting' dead relatives by naming new-born children after them, such names as these become widespread. [551]

602 All the groups represented on the diagram (Diagram 2)
619 are known by their names to the adults of Isangi. In addition to
621 their regular name, all these groups also have a "drum" name
[552] and an "honorary" name. Only the three Boyeke groups of rank
B have different drum names but no individual group names. The arrangement of groups as found on the diagram does not represent a genealogy. It is based simply on the characteristics and functions of the individual groups [190] which in each case are equal to each other on one rank. Thus, we have here an organizational diagram, not a genealogical table. [Diagrams 1 and 2 appear here.]

The people of Isangi are also well aware of the relationships between the individual groups, but they are not as clearly conscious of the system as it appears in our diagram. They are able to describe the kinship relations between the groups and they can point out which functions are assigned to the individual groups without, however, regarding the groups as equal to one another because they have like functions and without seeing them as part of a system as we do. Thus, our diagram represents a systematization which, by its very nature, does not wholly do justice to reality. Correspondingly, therefore, there is no satisfactory Ekonda social terminology.

[191] [Diagram 3 appears here.] Just as in nonscientific European usage, the terms lack sufficient precision. Furthermore, in principle the nature of the groups between rank A to E and of the still larger units is similar, and as a result all the terms are used almost indiscriminately for large and small units alike.

Usually, the word ikundɛ (literally, "lap") refers to small
601 units, approximately those of ranks A and B, but it is also used
621 for larger and large units if their relatively close degree of
614 kinship is to be stressed. Thus it approximately corresponds to
the meaning of the word "family" as used in nonscientific language. The word ilongo refers both to what in European usage is described as the small family [Kleinfamilie] and also to groups of ranks A and B.

471
587 inheritance was divided, remain her masters. This is apparent from
428 all the consequences resulting from the situation:

1) Children born of the union belong, not to their natural father, but to the owners of the woman, the bankɔ́lɔ́. They are the ones who will eventually consent to the children's marriages and receive their bride prices. They alone have the right to give the children a name. [553]

2) The man functioning as husband has only partial rights to the results of the woman's activities. Thus, if she finds a treasure buried in her field, captures a fleeing slave, or finds any valuable object that has been abandoned or lost and whose owner is not known, such as, for example, rings, objects of worked metal, elephant tusks, etc., these will not belong to her husband, as they would in a marriage by nkumbɔ́, but to the masters. The latter are also entitled to a part of the fruits of her labor: fish, caterpillars, and even food she has prepared.

3) If, on some occasion or other, the new husband wishes to make a gift or a payment to the woman's family, he has to request the intervention of the husband-owner. He therefore asks the latter to accompany him, saying: ɔ́ndakɛ́ likilɔ́, "make me acquainted with my parents-in-law; introduce me to them." They go there with the ndonga.

428
587 It may even happen that the bɔsɔ́ngo has not been paid yet and that the common-law husband has the slave [193] or the equivalent valuables needed for the payment. With the permission of the owner and accompanied by the ndonga he may make this payment. Nevertheless, he obtains no additional rights over the woman."

If one day the woman returns to the immediate family of the deceased, who are her "masters," the latter must make restitution to the common-law husband for these supplementary valuables and for all the payments he has made. If any stranger marries her by nkumbɔ́, the entire bride price is returned to the heirs of the deceased, who must reimburse the man who has acted as her husband for all the bride-price payments he has made.

Article V. Name Giving

Naming does not occur on any predetermined date. It is
553 not delayed without a special reason. No feast or ceremony accompanies the event. The father simply puts colored powder on the child's forehead as a sign of joy.

It is the father's right to choose a name for his child. Sometimes he asks for the family's opinion. Preferably he gives names of his relatives, deceased or living, or sometimes his own. But it is proper to respect the mother's feelings also. Failure to take them into account could provoke the woman to cause an abortion in order to punish him for being so willful as to neglect her family.

[845] A painful childbirth, like the repeated death of preceding
[768] children, is often attributed to the rancor of a dead person who is
discontented. In such a situation the Nkundó await the verdict
[787] of a dream, or they have recourse to the judgment of a nkanga
(doctor-magician) in order to be able to satisfy the irascible dead.

If the situation recurs too often, the calamity is attributed
553 to a rivalry between dead persons who are fighting over which of
551 their respective names should be given to the newborn; the envious
loser kills the child. In order to avoid such mean vengeance and make everyone content while satisfying none, the father gives the child a neutral name or a Botswa name, such as Botswá, Sáka, Ěfâlǐna (nameless), Botsilá (lack of success, bad luck), Litúli (dead without known cause), etc. If the child has already received a name, but for one reason or another the inauspicious fury of a ghost is feared, it is always possible to change from that name to another.

Children are usually given the names of relatives of the same sex. Exceptions are sometimes made, however, if one of the sexes is not sufficiently represented among the progeny, in which case the bearer of the name can always change it later, and he almost always does. Nevertheless, there are [500] no specifically male or female names, except for those that consist of the relative form of a verb, such as Ósâsuka, "the coquette," "Óyémengo, "she who comes with plenty," Ófénji, "she who excels." Finally, certain names are sometimes used for either sex.

Sakata F043
Teke F133

M 302 as to broaden the forehead. The brow is sharply delineated at right angles and framed by two corners projecting over the temples.

M 302 554 Let us note that the custom of shaving part of the scalp is hardly a general one. The types of headdress we have just described are seen regularly, but by no means are worn by all the natives. It even seemed to us that they tend to be the prerogative of the chiefs, dignitaries, and their families, but we dare not assert that they constitute a right, a strict prerogative. [174]

S [302 301 142]

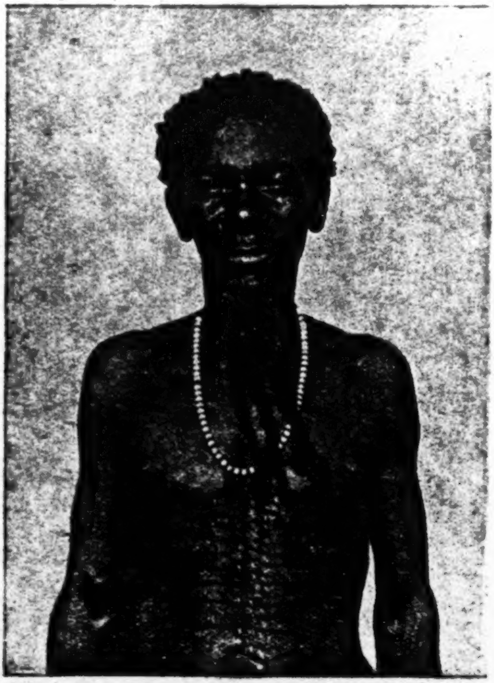


Fig. 93. Batete Type with Long Beard, Plucked Eyelashes and Eyebrows.

M S T 304 The Bateke and Banfumu file the middle upper incisors in the shape of an isosceles triangle, break them, or pull them out. We observed this custom among some of the Baboma. The majority of the Baboma, however, have their teeth filed to a point, a custom that prevails up to the Bokala region and along the north M 304 bank of the Kasai up to 23° longitude east of Greenwich. "Basongo-Meno" seems to mean "people with filed teeth" and may have

Teke FI33

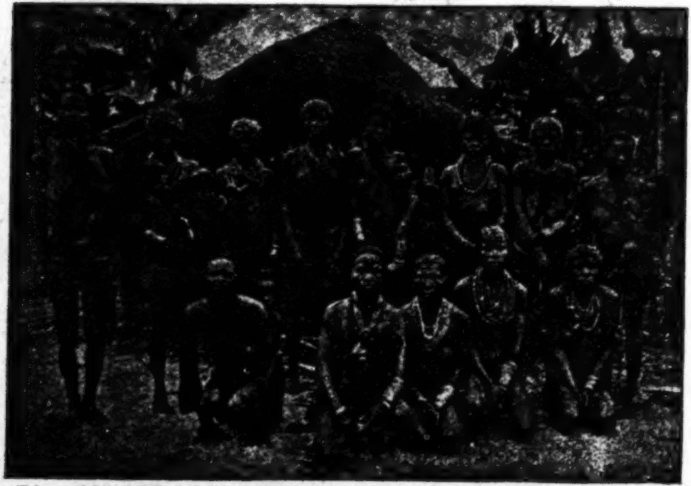
Yaelima

M
301

are worn in the hair, around the neck, on the wrists and ankles, and at the waist.

M
T
301
554

From Stanley Pool to Mushie, the women slip a crown of cowries into the hair, sometimes wear bracelets of brass or glass beads on the wrist and forearm, and hang brass necklaces or imported beads strung on fibers around the neck. Very often the necklace goes from the shoulders under the arm. Throughout this region, imported ornaments predominate. Only the chiefs have retained a few special ornaments from the old days, notably the necklace and bracelet of worked brass and the necklace adorned with the teeth of leopards or lions. These latter objects are associated with a privilege, a prerogative, a right of use.



M
[301.
516
854]

Fig. 101. Group of Batitu Women. Hairdos and Ornaments.

T
301
554
302

They are, in a way, badges of rank. In the full regalia worn by [180] Natali, a typical native petty chief, each detail seemed to have a special meaning. He had donned his finest costume in our honor and to impress us: an old tunic from the Belgian Regiment of the Guides, and a government medal around his neck on a chain, the badge of a native chief recognized by the government. He had attached a small whistle to the same chain, along with the five or six medals for his wives' taxes. Over this chain he wore the necklace of the native chiefs, made of brass and

1: Maes---138 E-5 (1913-1914) 1924 FO32 Mongo FO32
SAKata FO43

M
302
554

No less interesting is the full ceremonial regalia of the chiefs of the Lake Leopold II tribes. This varies according to the importance of the chief, but it always includes a number of cowries and one or several brass disks attached to the hairdo and the loincloth. The right to wear disks in the hairdo dates from olden times and is reserved to the chiefs and great dignitaries by ancestral custom.

The practice is found all along the Lukenie. From Lake Leopold II to Dekese, these disks have the same shape and ornamental designs. Their manufacture is reserved to the important blacksmiths upon authorization by the local Mfumu na Tse of the region. [182]

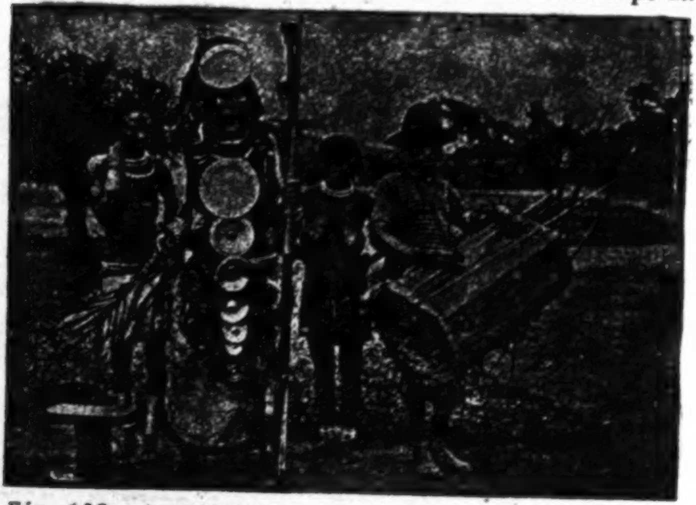


Fig. 103. An Old Native Chief of Lake Leopold II Adorned with his Insignia and Accompanied by his Two Favorite Wives and his Lukumbe Player.

S
[291
352
534]

M
[326]

Leopard skins, iron or brass bells hung from the waist, and the right to wear certain knives of a special shape at the waist are also prerogatives of the chiefs and dignitaries throughout the Lake Leopold II and Lukenie region.

We are thus confronted with various manifestations in the material life which are so many indications of the common origin or kinship of these different tribes.

224 absolute and inescapable necessity for those tribes who have Batswá, since the latter provide them with a certain amount of the necessary meat, though in insufficient quantity. The people hunt in groups and individually -- in the latter case primarily by means of traps. Fishing with nets is also very widespread, although various other methods are also known. The picking of fruit, caterpillars, mush-
222 rooms, vegetables, etc. continues to be popular.

463 Among trades, that of the smith is foremost. However, iron casting has been abandoned at the present time. Copper is brought in from other peoples by tribes serving as intermediaries. Wood sculpture is rapidly disappearing. Basketry [12] remains popular.
[286] Weaving no longer exists at the present time; in fact, looms can no longer be found in the region.

593x The family is patriarchal and the political organization corresponds to it; there are only heads of families. Indeed, among the Nkundó the family is the complete nucleus and foundation of the society. The result is a democratic and oligarchic government, but one very different from any we would call by that name in Europe.
554 Certain men become prominent because of their intelligence, their eloquence, their bravery, or their wealth, having great influence and often giving the appearance of chiefs whose authority extends beyond their own clan, but none of them has ever founded an empire. In the past the Bongili were the most courageous tribe, and the one most feared. Besides, their geographic location was in their favor, as they had the Lifumba and the Bombomba, two sister tribes, on each side of them.

[517] 538 The artistic tastes of the Nkundó are directed chiefly toward music and the dance. Their oral literature is also very rich; it includes, for example, the epic of Nsongó and Lianja (1) and that of the tortoise.

---

1. The most important portions of this epic have been translated and published by Father Boelaert, M.S.C., in Congo, 1934, Vol. 1, pp. 49 and 197.

521 831 195 which do not shock others at all. (1)

1. These comments are applicable also to peoples in other parts of the world.

● [554] The general rule of decorum among the Nkundó permits the use of such terms only among equals. Their use when speaking to inferiors is tolerated but not approved of. The use of obscenities when speaking to any strangers meets with definite disapproval. Among persons of different sexes the prohibition is particularly strict.

Nevertheless, the use of these expressions is judged less severely if they are uttered in a moment of anger or as a reprimand, even in the presence of a member of the opposite sex.

Exclamations of anger, vexation, and sorrow are often nothing but obscenities (2). No one is shocked by them in such situations.

2. See "Les Coutumes Funéraires" [Funeral Customs], No. 1, to be published in *Anthropos*.

Some elderly or more modest persons do not make use of them, however; if the habit of using a particular expression is thoroughly ingrained, they may make a slight change in its pronounciation (as is common for some of our "swear words").

195 831 514 521 576 To circumvent the difficulties caused by the need to use certain words frequently, [59] euphemisms are coined to take their place. Thus the Nkundó say: ńtswá bokako w'ǎkusa, "I am going behind the house," to indicate that they are going to urinate, and njôtsw'ȇsendó, "I am going for small pieces of firewood," or njôtsw' óténa lokásá, "I am going to pick a leaf," meaning that they are going to the toilet. On the way they say: ńjeta felé, "I am leaving the path" or "I am going to the forest." A husband is permitted to use accurate terminology when speaking to his wife, but it is considered very improper for her to do so in speaking to him.

514 576 When someone is satisfying a natural need, others keep a distance away from him; they will not even speak to him. Moreover, the person would not reply even if he were called. A woman will not

514 576 even answer her husband, but he may indicate his presence by coughing lightly.

Any infraction of these rules is considered a grave insult. A
514 person offended in this manner may seek revenge by violent means,
576 either personally or through the medium of his son, brother, etc.
578 According to native justice he will always be in the right, even if
831 the quarrel becomes bloody. The simple act of uttering obscenities
while passing in front of a house in which there is someone who is
entitled to the speaker's respect may result in reprisals by the latter. (1)

---

1. See Jadot, Blancs et Noirs au Congo belge [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 90.

578 Crude language is especially reprehensible and wounding if it
834 contains allusions to incest or other reflections on a relative whom
the speaker wants to insult. And it must be admitted that such expressions may go beyond the limits (for example: coi cum patre, matre, fratre, sorore, etc.). In connection with this topic it should be noted that reference is always made to a relative of the opposite sex to that of the person who is directly or indirectly being addressed. Furthermore, licentious talk and the use of indecorous language are more severely condemned when they take place in the presence of
[554] women and old people [60] or are said by a slave in front of his
master, by a Botswa in front of a Bootó (1).

---

1. See Introduction, footnote 2, p. 4.

578 If a man catches anyone uttering obscenities in front of his
684 wife, especially if they are addressed to her personally, he can start
834 action in adultery proceedings. If the woman refuses to listen to the
seducer, she will not answer him, or sometimes, annoyed at the insult, she may retort by insulting his mother. She can complain, but generally she does not do so. Is she ashamed, or is she afraid that the tempter might make public some excess in her conduct which he has discovered? In any case a woman is more sensitive than a man to the

P
178 588 563 164 doctor who was in charge of the dispensary at Flandria at that time informed me of the case of a Botswa fruit harvester in the service of the H.C.B. who had syphilis of unquestionably sexual origin.

M
582 Though a racial difference constitutes an obstacle to marriage, a tribal or ethnic one does not. Where the geographic situation permits, true Nkundó, such as the Elinga, marry members of neighboring groups such as the Ngombe, the Mbole, or the Ekonda.

Article II. Social Status

M
554 582 [565] [571] Among the Nkundó a difference in social status is not an obstacle to marriage. They have no social classes strictly speaking. They differentiate between those with authority, those who are inferiors, and the individuals or families who are not entitled to their word in political matters; but these ideas do not come into play in ordinary social relations, [245] and especially not with respect to marriage. A person may belong to a clan which is inferior, subject, dependent, foreign, or descended from a slave; nevertheless he may marry even a member of the group's senior clan. These distinctions are in the realm of politics; a marriage is a matter of law, affection, and good relations based on the payment of a bride price.

M
567 582 Actual slaves are an exception, but here a distinction must be made between the sexes. Unions with slave women were very common, but they were not marriages strictly speaking. Before a real marriage was entered into, the woman was set free. More details on this subject will be given in Chapter VII, Article V. For men the situation is altogether different. The condition of a slave was not only inferior, it was dishonorable, though a bit less so than among the Ancients. It might be overlooked if the love between the pair was unusually ardent, and there are a few clans descended from a "free" woman and a slave man, who were united in a proper and legitimate marriage for which the master paid the bride price.

There is no longer any opposition to the union of a "free" person with the descendant of a mixed marriage. The children may always claim kinship with their maternal ancestors who in these

592
567 matters are more important than the father's ancestry. (1)

● [554] 1. Among the Nkundó no shame is attached to not knowing the family of one's father. But not to be able to name the mother's clan is a great dishonor for it proves that she was a slave.

There is less opposition to the first generation born of a couple who were both slaves than for their parents, and it progressively decreases with each succeeding generation. There is practically no opposition now to the grandsons. The reason seems to be [591] that although receiving a wife from one's master in a regular marriage does not constitute emancipation (*usikó*, *mikola*) for the slave, it is a kind of adoption (*wémya*, *-émya*). [246]

Article III. Kinship

592
595 Marriage between members of the same kin group (*isangano*, *bosangema*, from the verb *-sangema*, "to be related") is forbidden. But how far does such a kin group extend? It is impossible to give a general rule. On the one hand, it is certain that if two groups are not descended from a common ancestor there is no bond of kinship between them, even if they live side by side. But on the other hand, it is not possible to say that all those who are descended from the same ancestor are relatives and that marriage is forbidden between the various branches of the grouping they comprise. The question therefore amounts to knowing by which ancestor the exogamous grouping is defined. A decision on this point may only be made through the examination of each case individually.

614 It is impossible to deduce anything from the meaning of the term clan, for it is usually defined as "a grouping of families united to one another by kinship." This leaves us back where we started. The characteristics usually given for a clan are: generic name,

595^x 592 Qualifying expressions are sometimes added to the name nkɔ́ndɔ́: eâ bosánga, referring to the bosánga on which the favorite is seated during the ceremony in which her position is established, and eâ bɔnjo, "true." The two terms are used as opposed to a nkɔ́ndɔ́ eâ wɔ̂li, whose position is established without any special ceremony, in imitation of a true, officially recognized favorite.

The expression for "making a nkɔ́ndɔ́" is ója nkɔ́ndɔ́, "to make a nkɔ́ndɔ́ come out," because she is proclaimed as such before the public gathering. Nowadays one often hears the expression tɛ́na nkɔ́ndɔ́, a term which is very probably transferred from the bolɔ́mbɛ́. (See the next article.) [348]

Article III. The Bolɔ́mbɛ́

595^x 597 The polygamist who by birth or influence is recognized as the primus inter pares of a group of clans and who, to use the Nkundó term, is jɛkɔ j'ɛ̂lɛ (1) has the exclusive right to make one of his wives a bolɔ́mbɛ́. Therefore, doing so was not, as with a favorite, a matter of wealth and preference, but rather a mark of influence and authority.

In relation to this subject, here is a historical incident showing how an attack on this law resulted in a mysterious punishment, interpreted by the natives as an intervention from beyond the grave for the protection of the ancestral order. The events occurred at Bosɔmbɛ́ (Bombwanja), in the Bongilɛ family. Bɔnkoso w'Iiumwa had married Eyeke of Bokɔ́ma and by her had his eldest son

---

619 1. Nowadays one would call him the chief. But actually he was not a chief; he was simply the most respected and influential member of the oligarchy of clan patriarchs. This oligarchy constituted the political administration of the Nkundó, and from time to time an eminent personality gained recognition within it.

536 Ikunjwêkulu. (2) But before her marriage to Bonkoso, Eyeke had al-
537

2. For his genealogy see Chapter III, Article II. A great-grandson of this Ikunjwêkulu is, I should say, approximately fifty years old.

ready given birth to another boy, Mbéo, whom she brought with her "in the shoulder strap." (3) Subsequently, Mbéo acquired much

3. See Chapter I, Part 2, Article IV, 3.

wealth and built a large harem for himself. He wanted to show his important position and decided to make one of his wives a bolémbé. Thereupon, his uterine brother Ikunjwêkulu became furious and called together the three other family heads of Besombó: Elongama of Longómbé of Bokenda Embombó of Ikolé, and Esola of Beféola. He said to them: "Come and see the extraordinary and astonishing thing that is happening. Mbéo came with my mother in the shoulder strap. How then does he dare to create bolémbé?" They examined the facts and were very angry [349]. They called a meeting of all the family heads of all the neighboring villages in order to explain the case to them. Seated under the tree where the deliberations were held, all the men spent a long time awaiting Mbéo's arrival. As he was too long in coming, one of his wives was sent to ask him to hurry. She found him dead, already quite stiff.

A bolémbé is created much later than a favorite, for a polygamist can attain the necessary social position only at a fairly advanced age.

The choice of a bolémbé is not a matter of preferential love. It is not a question of relations within the harem, but of the statement of the husband's social importance. Usually he chooses a woman who belongs to an influential clan and is a model of conjugal life and good breeding. She is certainly the object of special affection on his part, but not of a preference in love. Note again that the bomáma can never become bolémbé, but she must be consulted and her opinion is decisive. Thus her own ebísa is often chosen as bolémbé.

595* 554 On the day set aside for establishing the position of the bolɛ́mbɔ́, there is a great feast. All the clans and neighboring villages that have been invited gather at the home of the polygamist in question. He presents the woman to them and addresses the gathering: "Here is the woman whom I want to make my bolɛ́mbɔ́, as I have already announced to you. Today I am making public the decision I already made a long time ago. Be it known to all that no man may touch her, or he will be severely punished." Then two women (in rare instances, two men) hold the woman, and the husband unfastens her belt and rips off all her clothing. Then the assistants tie a rope or a belt of mpangɛ́ (striped antelope) skin around her, and to it they attach various furs. From that day [292] until her death she may no longer wear the clothing (bitɔ́ɔ) of other women; she must always [350] be dressed in furs. Hence her name, bolɛ́mbɔ́ wa bɛkɔ́tɔ́, "bolɛ́mbɔ́ with furs." Then her husband gives her pots of palm oil with which she will have to cover herself. Two men approach her; they are chosen among the handsomest in the village (1) (married or single) and are

[609] 1. They are then (sic) relatives of the husband. Nkundó law dictates that no stranger shall perform a function of the slightest importance -- not even that of silencing a gathering. According to their saying, bofaya ɛ́fɔ́tɛ́lɔ lokɔ́ɔnga, "a stranger does not cut up a guinea hen."

[301] richly adorned with furs, belts of mpangɛ́, beads, raffia fabrics with jagged edges, copper rings on their ankles, etc. Stepping in rhythm, they lead her to the house intended for her which is [351] [824] surrounded by a fence of bofeko posts (Ricinodendron africanum) held together with palms. This hut with its fence is called liɛko.

There the bolɛ́mbɔ́ will reside for months and years (up to three or more, they say). She is secluded there, so to speak, [illegible] and may not go out. If she needs to go to the banana groves for her personal needs, she covers and surrounds herself with a mat so that no one will see her.

595* that no one will see her. She lives in this house in the company
554 of her *ebísa*, her daughters, some female relatives, or even another of her husband's wives, who must wait on her, prepare food for her, etc., and who go out and enter freely. Her husband also enters at will and spends the usual number of nights with her. No other man is permitted to enter the enclosure.

During her period of seclusion, the *bolɛ́mbɔ́* may not do the slightest work. She does not wash with water, but only with palm oil. She walks only on mats. She is also exempt from mourning for her parents. (Compare with Chapter I, Part 1, Article II.)

When the period of seclusion comes to an end, the husband announces the coming-out feast. There is merrymaking, dancing, and drinking. Mats are spread from the door of [351] the hut of seclusion all the way to the middle of the street. The two men who brought the woman to the hut come again and, taking her by the arms at the entrance to the enclosure, lead her over the mats. The ceremony thus ends without further ado.

The *bolɛ́mbɔ́* is henceforth free and acts like any other woman except for the wearing of furs. She may work, draw water, cook, travel, visit her parents, etc. But her husband's
[563] honor and his reputation as a rich man require that he give his
[567] *bolɛ́mbɔ́* one or several slaves, or Batswa, or -- as is more fre-
[377] quently done -- one or two *bilísa*, who are supposed to take care of her housework and thus free the princess.

595* Adultery with her -- after her seclusion -- is more
554 severely punished than misconduct with an ordinary woman as
837 regards the indemnity to be paid. But as a flagrant insult, it is
614 considered very serious indeed, not so much as an infringement or marital rights as an attack on the honor of the whole clan or group of clans involved. Thus, while adultery with a *nkɔ́ndɛ́*, for instance, is a private matter, arousing the husband's jealousy and anger, misconduct with a *bolɛ́mbɔ́* is a public offense. The whole clan is enraged -- for they believe that their honor has been attacked, and all the members together press for vengeance for

586* 597 591 608 this outrage (nkɔlɔ eloki ɛy'olɛmbɛ). It is a kind of national dishonor. This observation also clearly pinpoints the great difference between the favorite and the bolɛmbɛ.

595* 721 539 The following custom should be mentioned in this connection: if any man, even a stranger or one who comes from a great distance, comes and -- over the fence -- strikes the roof of a bolɛmbɛ's ilaka of seclusion with his elefɔ (1) as a call to

[534] 1. A wooden bell (see Congo, 1938, Vol. 2, p. 366, figs. 4 and 5).

war, the whole village is obliged to take up arms to defend him. All the men [302] accompany him and unite with his family against the enemy clan, whatever the distance may be. The Nkundɔ say that the act of touching the bolɛmbɛ's hut infuriates the entire clan and makes them take up arms without hesitation. (1)

1. Compare the result of a serious offense, whose effect is entirely in the offender's favor, to analogous cases described previously, for example in Chapter III, Article VII; Chapter VI, Article V, 4, Appendix; and below in Chapter VIII, Article II, 3, (2).

595* 554 One last indication of the social nature of this institution is the fact that the bolɛmbɛ has the right to sit beside her husband at public gatherings and feasts, a prerogative which she alone of all women possesses. With her is a boy or girl who serves as her "boy" and carries the seat (bofɔŋga) on which she sits.

When a bolɛmbɛ dies her husband may put another in her place. To do so he repeats the ceremony described above. It is called sangoja bolɛmbɛ, "to make succeed to the title of bolɛmbɛ."

As we saw in Chapter I, Part 1, Article II, a man may even make his daughter a bolɛmbɛ.

2: Hulstaert--331 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundo

596
● 554 The name bolɔ́mbɔ́ seems to come from the fact that for an instant during the installation ceremony the woman is naked. In fact in certain dialects the word means "nudity."

[551] Nowadays this name is common among Nkundó women (rarely men), but it does not indicate that they are bolɔ́mbɔ́. The name is borne in memory of ancestresses or relatives who had that position and is transmitted in the family like any other name.

[554] All the tribes under discussion here use the same term, bolɔ́mbɔ́. The Bombomba alone say bofíé. (2)

> 2. Elsewhere, as in the Losanganya region, among the Boaka, etc., the bolɔ́mbɔ́ is called ekila (interdiction, taboo).

It is clear from everything that has been said that the nkɔ́mbɛ́ and the bolɔ́mbɔ́ have nothing in common with each other. [353] The two institutions are decidedly different. Nowadays they are beginning to be confused with each other, however.
[171] For the installation of a bolɔ́mbɔ́ has become extremely rare, and in some regions it has already disappeared. The colonial government has established districts and appointed chiefs in charge of them. Very frequently, they are not those who in the purely indigenous order would have been the most influential men, the masters, those who would have the biggest say in their society, who would be said to have the [illegible], the first place.

As far as I have been able to observe, the other tribes on the equator also have the two types of wives with special positions, who bear names which vary with the dialects.

171
596
554 Do the Nkɔ́mbɛ́ and the Bolɛ́ngɛ́ between the Boloko and the Congo have only the bolɔ́mbɔ́? That is the conclusion one draws from Engels' study of the Wangata (Revue congolaise, Vol. 2, no. 1, p. 33). If that were so, the frequent contacts with this people may have increased the confusion even more. Natives who are strangers to the Bolɛ́ngɛ́ tribe but who have lived many years among them as catechists, have maintained, however, that

171 they distinguish very clearly between the bolɛ́mbɛ́ and the
595 favorite. They even added that the nkɛ́nɛ́ enjoy no privileges
537 in this realm. (1)

> 1. The institution of the nkɛ́nɛ́ is not very widespread among the tribes treated in our study. (See "Les Coutumes funéraires des Nkundó [Funeral customs of the Nkundo]," in *Anthropos*) (in press).

In the course of a visit I myself made to the western Bolɛ́ngɛ́ (in September, 1933), I learned that a man who had a special position could have two belɛ́mbɛ́; the bomɛ́tua proposed her ebísa as candidate, and the second wife did the same for hers. Thus there was a bolɛ́mbɛ́ w'ìlɔ́me and a bolɛ́mbɛ́ w'ìɛ́li (the latter more especially called ekila. I also observed that they made a very clear distinction between bolɛ́mbɛ́ and [354] nkɛ́ndɛ́, just like the peoples treated in this study.

As to the function of messenger, which is attributed to the bolɛ́mbɛ́ by Engels (as well as by Father Kaptein, in *Congo*, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 532), it is not performed more by her than by any other woman in the harem. Any of them, without distinction based on rank or date of marriage, may be charged with a mission. The only custom of this sort which involves such a distinction is found among the Bolɛ́ngɛ́-Ntɔ́mbá living between the Congo and the Boloko. It is as follows: an influential
[726] man sometimes sent his belɛ́mbɛ́ (one or two) to stop a quarrel, or even a battle between two villages. When she intervened, the opposing parties made a truce, pending the arrival and the decision of her husband in person.

Article IV. The Ebísa

595 An ebísa is a woman taken as wife by the husband of one
583 of her relatives -- a sister, aunt, or older cousin. The relative

595^{x} In little domestic quarrels, the *bomɛ́tsa*'s children like
554 to take advantage of the top rank occupied by their mother. Later, they will have the right to priority, before their brothers, in matters of inheritance and family authority.

595^{x} The children of slave women are loved by their father
567 in the same way as their brothers and sisters. However, they are
578 often the object of manifestations of contempt and humiliation on the part of others, especially verbal ones, but only when disputes arise. In particular, they have to submit to the insult of having it said [369] that they are without *bonyangɔ́*, "a maternal clan." This is one of the most serious insults that can be inflicted by a Nkundɔ́. Nevertheless, their father protects them as much as he can.

[428] The child of a slave woman has no right to an inheritance. Clearly, he lacks for nothing. But he has no political rights, even if he is his father's first-born.

595^{x} The posterity of a slave are not considered as such in
567 matrimonial matters, as we have pointed out in Chapter V, Article II. If the groups descended from free women are extinct, the rights of the clan are inherited by the posterity of a slave, to the exclusion of related clans whose ancestors were entirely free.

595^{x} What is the effect of the system of polygamy on the birth rate? There has been much debate on this question for it is very difficult to answer. Complete statistics well compiled from detailed methodical lists would be necessary. For it is a fact that in many monogamous households the woman is the former wife of a polygamist and for that reason can no longer be counted as a monogamist's wife. In addition it would be necessary to exclude from monogamous households those women who did not marry until an advanced age, after having lived freely for a fairly long time, for example in the centers.

In my opinion the birth rate is endangered above all by the need for individual love and the difference in the ages of the spouses, which is inseparable from the system of polygamy as it now exists. The polygamist's wife instinctively seeks another

576
845 from the others. They thus rank with the great notables of the past. [sic]

845 When the children grow up and become self-sufficient, all
the special regulations lose their force and they become like
554 everybody else. Nothing distinguishes them from the rest in marriage, death, etc. No preference is shown for or against them. But their descendants will again produce twins.

Thus the Nkundó consider twins as extraordinary children,
845 but they do not carry this view to extremes. They are pleased to receive two children at a time, although they believe that under such circumstances the pregnancy and delivery are more dangerous for the mother. That is why she is called boyéngwá since, despite the seriousness of the situation, she did not die. This epithet is also applied to the father and to the twins, probably for the same reason as well as because of their immunity with respect to prohibitions. If the twins are of different sexes, however, the mother is not as likely to be called boyéngwá, since she is likoka, "harmful." (1)

1. See above, Article II, 3.

845 It is apparent from the above description that twins are
789 considered to be somewhat tainted with magic. The existence of
754 this belief is confirmed by the prohibition against throwing anything (stone, palm kernel, etc.) onto their hut, the same prohibition applying to anyone who possesses a charm or practices sorcery or protective magic. In addition they possess a certain innate ability to cast a spell over the activities (hunting, fishing) of others. That is why persons who are afraid of being harmed by them smear themselves with kaolin in the same way as do such children and their parents. [505]

The Nkundó have had cases of triplets, but they are ex-
845 tremely rare. The youngest of the three is called Yéndembe, or Yéndende, or Yélele. The only special practice with reference to the youngest one is that he can never be ordered to do any work, be sent to carry a message, run any errand, etc., ífóswé ntómo.

463 Division of labor is unknown, and each person works entirely on his own, without the help of a middleman. There are no laborers [177] and certainly no artisans unless there happens to be some artisan or other who learned his trade under the government or at one or other of the Mission posts and has returned to his village after having completed his contract.

As a rule, such people do not find sufficient work in their own villages, and, as they are usually in possession of a few boxes, clothes, and pots and pans which they have acquired with the savings of their monthly salary, they play the grand gentleman in their village until their goods and chattels have been used up and worn out.

"*Njolemwa Bosala*," he says, "I am tired of work." "*Njowa l'ompele*," "I am dying of the heavy, difficult work."

Several of them there return to one or the other of the centers of the White settlers and again offer themselves as craftsmen.

554 A good craftsman has a high reputation among the natives, and his social position is even a very good one for a Negro. He is able regularly to supply food for his wife and children and also to get himself clothes.

326 Although most Negroes work individually, this is not true of the smith who has to have helpers in order to do his job.

465 Since the Mongo Negro knows nothing of wages, his helpers get part of the income, consisting of *mitako* [a kind of metal currency] 436 or some part of the work that has been done, either a knife or a lance, or a foot or arm ring.

I. THE SMITH'S TRADE.

326 Of the various industrial trades, that of the smith is certainly the 554 first in rank. The smith is one of the leading people [94] in the village and one of the inevitable persons to have a decisive voice in village affairs whether in settling differences or in meetings.

In fact, the smith is the only one of the Mongo Negroes who works regularly and does not rest on his oars. From what he earns he is able to buy quite a number of wives, and he is regarded as one of the village heads whose wishes must be consulted.

326 The native smith works not only with iron but also with copper which he melts down in the same manner from copper sticks (longele: mitako) and old, worn copper rings.

[439 435] The copper sticks, that nowadays sell at 30 for a franc, come from Europe; copper ore is unknown here.

The copper objects made by the smith are as follows.

326 301 Bakonga: all that is of copper

1. Bongombwa: necklace, often weighing ten kilograms or more; value, 1,000 mitako.
2. Lokolo: leg ring, weighing four to six kilograms and more; value, 200 to 500 mitako.
3. Bolongu: arm ring, not heavy.
4. Ingwete: arm ring, not heavy.
5. Bongenza: leg ring that rattles when the wearer walks.
6. Bosankere: leg ring.
7. Limpala: great leg rings in spiral form, twisted out of thick copper wire, which cover the whole of the lower leg. They [435] bear much resemblance to the springs in a mattress. Among the Negroes these have a value of 500 mitako.
8. Bompulenge: resembling a small limpala, these were formerly worn on the arms by old people, but they are now out of fashion and no longer made.

326 554 In the whole district there is only one smith, a certain Elumbu in the village Lilangi (Basankusu), who knows how to make copper bells. This Black is a celebrity to every Mongo Negro.

According to the Negroes, there is a smith, a certain Bokedzu from the vicinity of the Ikelemba River, who knew how to put a new rifle together from the parts of old broken ones and did so successfully. According to the Negroes, the government agent, however, took the rifle away from him, but in my opinion, and in that of others, this black [577] rifle manufacturer belongs in the realm of fable, the more so as a Negro is not at all afraid of a lie.

Now the molembe choose the Bilepo

624 *Okeke*, a young woman of their own number, who will thereafter be known by this name. She is an official cymbalist and must always begin beating before others may [533] join in. In reality the members of the *molembe* have decided beforehand who shall be chosen for this position, and the woman of their choice now takes her stand on the elevation together with *Nkema Akuke* and his wife, *Nsomo*.

624 The member of the *molembe* whose right it is by inheritance to place the *montolo* (see Plates) upon the head of the *nkumu* now comes forward with it. This hat, about 292 twelve inches in height, is woven of raffia and cylindrical in shape, but the brim, instead of being at the base, encircles the top of the crown. It is usually decorated with a burnished brass plate attached to the front, and perhaps a second one behind, and in these modern days it is quite in style to hang a row of safety pins from the 'brim' or 'halo' encircling the crown. When the *nkumu* is the first of his line, the *montolo* is purchased by him, but in the case of succession it is that used by the deceased predecessor, and has been kept by the *molembe* until this time. It is his badge of office and sign of authority. The bringing out of the *montolo* is an occasion for 624 merriment. *Nkema Akuke* calls for his *montolo*, but the *molembe* tease and tantalize him and ask for money. The amount is a fixed sum, but *Nkema Akuke* pays out at first but a few rods, is teased for more, and so on until he has provided the total amount, usually about one hundred. The member of the *molembe* whose duty it is to place the *montolo* on the head of the *nkumu* begins to tease the crowd. He chooses various names by which the *nkumu* might be called, everybody knowing all the time what his name must be. He asks the people, 'Shall we call him so-and-so?' 'We refuse', reply the people. 'Or so-and-so?' 'We refuse.' And each time names whereby *nkumu* are known are repeated. Finally the correct name is given, as, 'Shall we call him *Nkumu Lobondola?*' and the crowd roars its approval, 'Ooooo!' The *montolo* then being placed on *Nkema Akuke*'s head he now becomes *Nkumu* and leaps down among the crowd, who bear him off to their village with rejoicing. In the choice of names, the first *nkumu* in a village is known as *Nkumu Lobondola*. If there is another section of the village with an *nkumu* of its own, he must take another name, such as *Nkumu Ijoli Bokonga*. Successors must always take the names of their predecessors whatever their own personal names may be. An *nkumu* chosen by a *molembe* [554] which is also the *mwene mokonda*, the hereditary owner of the land, is known as *Nkumu e Bitindi* (*Nkumu* of the heels), for he occupies a more important position than his fellows, and is thus the support which holds up the whole group of *nkumu* chosen by other *molembe*.

624 The *nkumu* is borne off to his *nongo*, his residence, which in this case is temporary, to be replaced later by a permanent one. The *nongo* comprises the whole unit of 342 buildings for the *nkumu*, including his own sleeping quarters, the houses for his wives, the *ebanga* where he spends the daylight hours, and a row of houses for his children. His *ebanga* and his own sleeping quarters are screened from the public gaze, making [351] a place known as *ipama*. In the case of a new *nkumu* the screen is temporary, but when the permanent *nongo* is built, a permanent *ipama* is made by planting umbrella trees (*mikonde*, sing. *mokonde*) in a rectangular or circular fashion. Here, sheltered 624 from intrusion, the *nkumu* remains in retirement (*anli*) for a month.[1] While he remains

---

[1] *Anli* refers to the sitting of a hen on eggs, the seclusion of a woman after childbirth, or of the *nkumu* at this juncture of the ceremonies.

624 thus, *Nsono* is a very prominent figure. Still arrayed as previously described, she sits outside the *mongo* near the road on the special stool of the *nkumu*. Nobody may pass her with food, a humane law, considering that she must spend the day fasting. If anyone attempts to do so she catches the unlucky individual, helps herself to as much of his food as she wants, the victim meanwhile begging her to be merciful and leave him a small portion, and the booty is taken into the *ipana*. During this sentinel duty *Nsono* must still keep the parrot's feather in her mouth and maintain silence, so, in case she catches an unsuspecting bearer of food, the remonstrance and argument are all one-sided.[1] After the first day *Nsono* no longer sits outside the *mongo* but goes from place to place in the village, choosing spots where people may least expect her, hoping thus to reap a bigger harvest for her pains. This is kept up for eight days, which comprise two Tumba 'weeks' of three days' work and one of rest. The rest-day is appropriately named *boina bo nsono* after the duty of *Nsono* of sitting doing nothing day by day. The eight days of this ceremony over, *Nsono* lays aside her gourd and plantain stalk, which are placed at the foot of the first central supporting post [302] of the *ebanga* on entering. She is given a fresh coating of chalk and three coloured stripes are drawn the length of her back and down her arms. She still remains close to the *nkumu*.

[567] Various personalities are connected with the *nongo* of an *nkumu*. The *Basele* is a male slave, clothed in a skin breech cloth, whose duty it is to receive callers at the *ipana* before admitting them to the presence of the *nkumu*.

624 595 *Mpenge* is the name taken by the wife first married by the *nkumu*. From henceforth she no longer accompanies her husband, and their cohabitation ceases unless the *nkumu* is willing to pay her each time the sum of one hundred rods. But the *nkumu* is obliged to eat all food she cooks for him even though they have a quarrel. *Mpenge* does not honour her husband with the special greeting accorded to *nkumu*, but greets her husband and all other *nkumu* as she would ordinary people.[2] The second wife of an *nkumu* must assume the name of *Iyombo Angonda*, but no importance attaches to her position.

624 516 Among the Tumba generally, apart from the Bonginda, a woman is chosen from the *molembe* to bear the title *Bolumbu Itina i Ekopo* (*Bolumbu*, the 'raison d'être' of the *ekopo*). She is, it would seem, a symbolical figure, a reminder that the *ekopo* owes its existence to the *molembe* of which this woman becomes the titular head. While the *nkumu* is still in seclusion the chosen woman is taken to the open space between the *ipana* and the row of sons' houses, known as the *nanda*. Here, in the presence of the assembled crowd she is praised by being addressed, '*Bolumbu Itina, bototo!*' and the crowd exclaims, '*Bwoo!*'[3] Strips of leopard skin, about eighteen

---

[845] [1] It is interesting to note that there are some exceptions to those who may be caught and robbed by *Nsono* during her eight days of watching. No member of the *molembe* may be thus treated, twins and their parents are exempt, and also all children born to the *nkumu* before he attains office, these being termed *manni*.

● [554 595] [2] Besides *Mpenge*, a mother of twins is also exempt from according *nkumu* special salutations, and among some groups the father of twins is also exempt.

[3] This ceremony gives husbands of any village, whether they are members of the *molembe* or not, the opportunity to single out a favourite wife for special honour, for at this time any woman may be given the name of *Bolumbu*, though not with the significant complement of *Itina i Ekopo*. The ceremony is similar, is performed at the *nanda*, but besides receiving the strips of leopard skin, she must be divested of all her clothing, a new *lombeo* and *mpongo* are then placed round her, and the strips of skin then attached to the new belt.

614 homestead, it is deserted by the inhabitants. On the new dwelling
596 site the sons each build their own shelter. In contrast to the
592 groups of the type A-E, the group living within a homestead is
[768] finite: its existence ends with the father's death. Only a man whose father (in the European meaning of the term) has died may have a shelter. Thus the homestead community is interposed between the A-group and the small family.

To sum up the characteristic features of the A-groups:

614 Membership determined by male descent; unity of legal power, especially insofar as landed property and inheritance law is concerned the senior has full power; succession by simple seniority; theoretically unlimited existence of the group. The A-groups consist of small families who live together in homesteads under one father in each case.

Groups of Rank B

614 There is usually a friendly, neighborly relationship be-
793 tween the A-groups which form part of a B-group. People assist each other to a large extent, and there is joint consultation on most matters. Group B has only one Nkúmú iloki, "master of the hidden power," the priest of the kinship group, who is consulted by all the members of the group. He functions during the magical preparations for the hunt; he is consulted before any important undertaking. During the leave-taking ceremony after a burial, he converses with the deceased, and people turn to him when the ancestors have appeared to them in their dreams to transmit their desires, orders, or other information to the living. He protects the people of his group from the ill will, ndoki, of the dead and the living. The priest of the kinship group is used as the criterion [194] to determine which group of homogeneous A-groups represents a B-group. The priest of the kinship group is descended from a certain one of the related A-groups.

614 There is a difference in rank among the A-groups of a
554 B-group -- one group will be regarded as older -- but this is

614 554 only of lesser importance (see below, under local groups). The headman of the B-group is the oldest of the seniors of the related A-groups, that is, the senior of the B-group. He is not, however, fully in charge of affairs like the elder of the A-group; he should rather be seen as princeps inter pares. This, of course, does not affect his position as senior of his own A-group.

614 423 Within a B-group landed property is often still regarded as belonging together, even though fixed boundaries between the territories of the constituent groups may already exist. In general, however, it may be assumed that the other elders will not object if a hunting expedition is extended to their territory, if, under certain circumstances, the soil of their district is used for planting, or if certain wild plants are taken from there for building a house or as raw material for a craftsman. Membership in a B-group is determined by membership in an A-group.

614 885 At this point we shall not enter into a discussion of the genealogical peculiarities which result from the significance of the bride price. We learned of one case of incest which occurred between members of two A-groups which formed a B-group, but we have not heard of anything like that occurring within an A-group. In this connection, however, we do not refer to those acts of incest which are required to make a particularly powerful charm become effective.

Summing up all that is characteristic of B-groups:

614 There is only one priest of the kinship group; cohesion within a B-group is very close, people cooperate extensively, all important matters are decided by the group, even those which, strictly speaking, concern only the constituent A-groups; in this connection, the oldest of the seniors has a somewhat privileged position.

Groups of Rank C

The cohesion within a group of this category is considerably looser, although on this level particularly one can find great differences among the individual groups. For example, the groups Lovendo and Besilo consider themselves much closer

586 x In most cases the husband and his parents-in-law try to continue their relationship despite the breakup. If the woman persists in not wanting to go back to her husband despite the pressure, the entreaties, and even the curses of her family, the parents sub-[587]stitute a sister or relative (bankitsa) for her, unless, of course, no relative is available. For in that case they must resign themselves to the restitution of the bride price and a permanent dissolution of the relationship. No new bride-price payment is made for the substitute, as the original bride price is valid for the new union, as we have explained in Chapter III, Article IV.

Finally, there is an exception to the general principle: there is no restitution of the bride price if for some reason there is equivalent compensation of some sort. Nowadays this exception is seldom encountered, as will be apparent from the following details: for example, such an exception occurs if the right of ikákelo has been exercised, or if the wife of one of the relatives-in-law has been seized. Even if the amount of one bride price is larger than the other, the excess is not returned. Nor is there any obligation to restore the bride price if the wife has been reduced to slavery or has been killed. There are also the cases of the dissolution of marriage cited in Chapter V, Article IV, 2, no. 2, example 17, and in Chapter VI, Article V, 4. If the breakup caused [727] a war and the number killed on each side was considerable (three, five, six corpses), the matter rests there; when the families of those killed have been indemnified, there is no more talk of reimbursement. Occasionally, an influential and rich man who at the same time was spiteful or excessively proud, would take up arms a second time. He claimed that he would not stop until he had the bride-price valuables in his hands. Such behavior met with disapproval everywhere, and even [illegible] own family tried to stop him. If the opposing clan was sufficiently strong and stubborn in the struggle, the husband obtained nothing at all. But the desire to ● [555] get revenge or to be famous as a warrior sometimes caused a man to scorn financial losses. Finally, according to the notions of our natives, a case of enmity between two clans (which we have cited in relation to a woman's application for refuge) should be included in the category of compensations.

593 receive more attention, will get his way more readily -- as among ourselves. These preferences do not give rise to jealousy among brothers as long as they remain within the limits of fairness, which they almost always do.

● [556] Some rich men who have a dominant social rank have a means of expressing their preference for one of their daughters, a means which is a demonstration of their wealth and at the same time an assertion of their position. This practice will be described in the article that follows.

The children for their part sincerely love their parents. This love is composed more of respect for the father and of more tenderness for the mother, as is the case among Europeans. The same variants of sentiment, depending on whether the child is a boy or girl, are to be found among the Nkundó. The children may be remiss in their dutiful affection and respect, but these are exceptions due to thoughtlessness, stubbornness, or sudden anger. (1) Here one does [152] not encounter the deep discord that among Europeans divides parents and children, nor the coarseness and brutality of which one reads quite often in our newspapers. Among the Nkundó these family dramas are unknown.

[155] Nevertheless, what we have said above does not exclude disobedience. The Nkundó child, too, prefers play to work and freedom to discipline. He tries to shun the commands of his parents which tie him down and keep him from frolicking with his companions. (2)

Love for the mother is especially deep. No matter how old a Nkundó may be, his feelings of tenderness for her do not decrease; he always remains her child. Whenever he feels pain, disappointment, or sorrow, one word is on his lips: ngóya, "mother." Among these

---

1. For an example see Chapter X, Article VIII.

2. One of the first words learned by a Nkundó child is mbói, "I don't want to."

2: Hulstaert--27   M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938   FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

Article II. The Bolɛ́mbɛ́

562
556
178

In the old days, if an extremely rich man wanted to show his affection for one of his daughters and show off his wealth, he made that daughter bolɛ́mbɛ́. Today this custom has almost completely disappeared. (1) It has been almost impossible to maintain the practice because of a greater distribution of wealth and the reduction of leisure due to the work imposed by the white man. This work has been imposed directly in the form of forced labor, labor on roads, economic projects, etc., or indirectly because a sum had to be raised for the payment of taxes. All this has made it more difficult to bring large numbers of people together for ceremonies lasting days and weeks. (2) Nevertheless, the custom must be described here.

> 1. On the left bank of the Luilaka it disappeared a good many years ago. The Injóló still followed it until quite recently.

> 2. One might suppose that the new uses of wealth made possible by economic development would have contributed to the disappearance of this custom. Theoretically such might have been the case, but in fact these developments were not involved in the change that has been noted.

562
556
[602]

When a native wanted his favorite daughter to become bolɛ́mbɛ́, he had first to obtain the consent and financial support of all his kin. Then enormous preparations were made, for everything had to be special -- beverages, various foods, dances. On the date which had been set and made known through messengers to the entire region, an enormous crowd gathered at his house. Public festivities went on day after day. In an address suited to the occasion, he announced to those assembled his intention to set his daughter up as a bolɛ́mbɛ́. Two relatives or two of the father's wives then stripped off the girl's

562 556 clothing and dressed her in valuable furs, especially in part of the pelt of a striped antelope called mpangé. In some villages she was permitted to wear leopardskin in front as well as in back.

Then the father would decree (-lákya) that since his daughter [582] had become bolómbó she would always wear furs and would stop working, and that she would be given in marriage only to a very rich and influential man, not to the first comer. Therefore, a synonym for bolómbó is bóna óa bofíko, "child of the decree, a child set apart, forbidden."

This ceremony may be held regardless of the child's age, at any time between three years and adolescence.

When the ceremony is ended the girl withdraws (-olama, transitive -ola) into a hut specially prepared for this occasion, which is called ileke. Her seclusion lasts only a few months. When certain natural needs oblige her to leave the house, she goes out the back way through the banana grove and hides as much of herself as possible under a mat. She does not walk on the bare ground; her feet must not [285] touch the earth. That is why mats are spread everywhere she steps. She does no work; her food is prepared by her mother, sister, aunt, etc., or by a slave. When it comes to her toilette, she washes her hands not in water, but in palm oil. [22] All these practices are marks of respect and honor.

When the period of seclusion is ended, the girl's father gives a second feast, with dances, drinks, etc., and the bolómbó comes out walking on mats. But there is no further ceremony. From then on the girl is no different from other girls. But she retains the sign of her distinction, the wearing of furs, and she does no housework.

[582] [558] The marriage of a bolómbó always occurred very late, since a man who wanted to take her for his wife had to collect a good deal of wealth before he could take the risk of asking for her hand. Should his attempt prove fruitless, he was exposed to ridicule in the whole region.

184 556 562 582 Among the tribes living on the left bank of the Luileka any man who was rich and of good family could ask for the hand of a bolómbó in marriage. Among the Injólo, on the other hand, the requirements were more complicated. The suitor had to belong to another tribe or group. For instance, a girl who belonged to the

[illegible] Engɔnjɔ́ group would be given only to a man from the West, the
556 Ngombe, or a neighboring tribe, but never to an Engɔnjɔ́. All the
582 Engɔnjɔ́ considered the bolɔ́mbɔ́ their sister. Thus when the future hus-
592 band went to the family of the bolɔ́mbɔ́ to ask for her hand, every village barred his way by means of a fence. All the bride price valuables which he carried with him were taken from him, and an equivalent amount in various kinds of goods, such as hens, ducks, dogs, mats, etc., was substituted for it. That is, he exchanged bride price valuables for nkomi valuables [dowry]. (1) The suitor could pass only when the

1. See Chapter II, Article VII.

village that barred his way had nothing left with which to continue the exchange. If he found his riches exhausted, he had to go back home to replenish the supply. Everything he gave in this [?] fashion was counted as bride price, [illegible] (1) and everything he received was part of the nkomi [dowry]. (2)

1. See Chapter II, Article VIII.

2. See Chapter II, Article VII.

556 It is understandable that under these conditions asking to
582 marry a bolɔ́mbɔ́ was a luxury that the common man could not afford.
592 The suitor had to belong to a rich and influential family all of whose members would assist him.

When the suitor finally succeeded in clearing a passage to the father of the chosen one with sufficient treasures, the latter put no further obstacles in his way. As for the girl, she felt exceedingly honored and delighted that a man loved her so much that he would go to so much trouble and spend such a vast amount out of affection for her.

As for the rest of the proceedings, the bride price payment was made in the same way as for any other marriage. But when the

556 562 582 bride-to-be was introduced to her bridegroom, she walked toward him across a row of mats. A feast was organized to celebrate this important and joyous event. Dances accompanied with a flow of beer went on for weeks, sometimes for a whole month.

[431] The father gave his son-in-law a great many nkomɛ (3) objects

3. See Chapter II, Article VII.

so that the bolɔ́mbɔ́ often became yɛ́ngaende or at least lifayɛ̂njoku. (4)

4. See Chapter VII, Article IV.

He did not allow his daughter to leave without giving her at least one ebɔ́ɔ́a to wait on her. (5) Thus when Bolɛ́ngɛ́ w'Ioma of Lokɔ́ndola

5. See Chapter VII, Article III.

(Injɔ́lo, Ngombe) married Bonjɛ́ngɔ́, daughter of Ilɔ́njɔ́ y'Ôkɔ́tema of Bompóma (Injɔ́lɔ́, Engɔ́njɔ́) (who died in 1934), the bride received from her father four bibɔ́ɔ́a to do the work, as well as a young cousin who was to stay with her [34] to bring her firewood. In this way the father made sure that his beloved daughter would retain her honorable position as a great lady.

556 562 The husband, who wanted his wife to retain her superior status, now makes her his bolɔ́mbɔ́ as well. (1) The term was: iɔ́ɔ́n'ɔ́w'olɔ́mbɔ́

1. See Chapter VII, Article III. That is, unless she is his first wife. See ibid. and Article I.

atswɛ́ ô wɛ̂lɛ́ ɔ́w'olɔ́mbɔ́ ɛ́k'ɔ̂me. He would say to those assembled: "Her father proclaimed her bolɔ́mbɔ́, and I proclaim her bolɔ́mbɔ́ as well (la'ɛ́kɛ́ɛ́ ɔ̂ɛ́kvɛ́kɛ́, emi mpɛ́ njɔ̂ɛ́kya â ng'ɔ́kɔ́)."

What was the reason for the existence of this custom?

556
562 According to the natives it was a public assertion of the father's high social position and at the same time the greatest token of affection he could bestow on his daughter; the two things were inseparable. Not every native had the right to make his daughter a *bolúmbú*. On the contrary, he had to hold an especially prominent rank, that is to say, he had to be a wealthy, influential, and powerful head of a family. All the ceremonies, practices, and rules involved in this institution point in that direction. A comparison with the *bolúmbú* wife (1) lends additional plausibility to this explanation.

556
562
178 As we have said, this custom is in the process of disappearing completely. In certain tribes such as the Boloko, subtribe of the Lifumba, a substitute has actually been introduced. The favored daughter is dressed and adorned as before, except that European materials have replaced the fun. But the public character of the older institution has disappeared. The occasion is not surrounded with so many ceremonies. Finally, the girl is not called *bolúmbú*, for a new name has been invented; it is *bondelóóngola*, "the white man raises (educates) her." [31]

Article III. Friendship

572 Friendship is not unknown to the Nkundó. It is founded on the same basis as in Europe. I have seen more than one instance of true mutual affection between persons who were in no way related. Among the Blacks with whom I have associated there are some whom I personally consider sincere friends and who have shown me real affection, helped me to the full extent of their powers, and shown me complete confidence. There have even been some who have not been afraid to place themselves in serious difficulties and who have gone so far as to incriminate themselves in order to clear me, thereby exposing themselves to troubles and sanctions.

1. See Chapter VII, Article III. Unless she is his first wife. See *ibid*, and Article I.

192 *tomba*, "to spy"; the former may be an extension of the meaning of
184 the word *bokɛlo*, "promise." (1)

[572] 1. Note in passing that a *ndonga* is also necessary for the *boseka*, or contract of friendship and mutual assistance. (See Chapter I, Part 1, Article III.)

Article III. The Engagement

584 585 1. The payment of the *ilulɛ*

The engagement begins with the first bride-price payment, which in former times was an arrow and for that reason is called *likulɛ* or *ilulɛ*. If the suitor was very rich, he sometimes gave an *ingɔlɔlɛ* knife or even an *empɔmbɔ*. A poorer one would merely give the shaft of an arrow. Nowadays 1 or 2 copper rings are given. But the original name of this payment has been retained. ●[556]

Arriving at the home of the father of his intended, [112] the suitor, his father (or a substitute for him), the *ndonga*(s) and often other relatives as well, sit down on one side of the *lofɔlɛ* (the court in front of a dwelling), after an exchange of the usual courtesies. The girl and the representatives of her family sit down on the opposite side. As in all matters that a Nkundɔ has to settle, the host begins by inquiring into the reason for the visit. The young man's father answers: "We have come to ask for your daughter for our son." "How do you ask for her?" "We ask for her in marriage." These preliminary negotiations are called simply *ɛwana mango*, "to ask each other for news."

Then the girl's father asks: "Who will bring the *linkɔ* (banana) or the *bonyɛku* (partially ripe banana), that is, the gifts?" Through this figurative expression he asks who has been proposed as *ndonga*. The young man's father replies: so-and-so, and so-and-so. When they have been accepted, the fiancée's father has bananas, smoked fish, and sometimes hens brought in, and the witness passes them over to the future husband's group.

585^6
604 These rights prevail even if the nephew has wealth at home. In that case -- which is extremely rare since ordinarily he prefers to remain with his own clan -- he does not make use of them if his uncle has only two or three wives (whom, however, he can inherit), [576] or if other close relatives [126] are in need. For to do so would show a great lack of affection for the family (likita), and he would be severely reprimanded.

Because of all that, the nephew (bɔnankána, "sister's son") sometimes abuses his rights. That is the basis for the following proverbs: nkoi ákumb'omɔ́ngɔ́ lokombo, "the leopard takes the owner of the hunting enclosure" (that is to say, the hunter); bɔnankána ákonola nyangómpáná walí nd'ééko, "the nephew abducts the uncle's wife even in his own domain"; bɔnankána ale ingenja y'ãliko, "a nephew is a stick overhead." This last proverb is the Nkundó version of the sword of Damocles.

In short, a nephew has a right to the assistance of his maternal uncle if he settles with him and is adopted by him. Upon the death of his uncles he becomes heir and head of the family. But his rights are second to those of his uncle's brothers, who are also his "mothers." If he remains in his own clan, he receives help and can even obtain the bride price of one of his female cousins born of his mother's ekita. He may even receive part of the inheritance, if it is large. His rights are based on the fact that his uncle was enriched by the valuables given him by the nephew's clan in payment for his sister's marriage.

585^5
● 556 Finally, if a young man does not even have any close relatives, because all are deceased, and if for some reason he has no patrimony *(because of dissipation, debts, exploitation of the weak by the strong)*, he is forced to procure the bride price through his own labor: carving, hunting, fishing, setting elephant snares, making traps and hunting enclosures, clearing fields, or, nowadays, working in the service of the Whites; in former times there was also the possibility of war or raids by which he could obtain valuables or prisoners to sell as slaves. The wealth which someone acquires by his own work is called bafɔ́mbá (bakonga, etc.) bá mpambɔ́ngɔ (literally, "by the strength of his arms"). [127]

4. The amount of the walo

583* Formerly the amount of the walo averaged 20 to 30 bekonga, or their equivalent. The value of any object included in the bride price could be calculated in copper, so that the konga was, so to speak, the monetary unit of the Nkundó. [436]

At the present time in the districts near Flandria, the minimum is from 55 to 60 rings. Among the Bofongé and the Injolo the rings are noticeably bigger and their weight in copper or brass is greater; there the minimum can be 30 rings. Elsewhere the figure is a good deal higher. [illegible]

The price of the walo generally exceeds the minimum, which is found rather rarely. The average is about 60 to 80 rings. The number of 200 is reached only in extremely rare cases and it is exceeded even less frequently (see cases given below).

Differences in the amount of the walo are due primarily to the relative wealth of the contracting parties, the husband's valuation of his wife, the greed of the latter's parents, and the size of the bride price demanded for the woman they want to obtain with their daughter's (sister's) bride price. The cases of women who have left their previous husbands also must not be forgotten, for the new bride price must serve to reimburse him.

The amount of the walo may also be increased to satisfy the [576] vanity of the woman, who wants to appear superior to her companions, or of the husband, who wants to be recognized as very wealthy. (1)

1. The man who pays a great deal for his wife is given the honorific epithet etšikolwo, "wells and mushrooms." All can find as much water as they want at wells, and there the mushrooms multiply. Thus many can benefit from the riches brought by the son-in-law.

[578] It is not unusual to hear of a woman boasting in the course of a dispute: "I am not a slave; my husband paid so-and-so much for me. [130] But you -- your husband doesn't love you, or else he is poor, for he paid only so much."

583 female relative thanks to whom he was able to obtain this wife (see
431 below, Article X). He keeps a small part for himself and, in agree-
565 ment with his wife, uses it according to his needs. When husband and wife are on good terms, he consults her before giving away or selling any of it. And if she wishes to dispose of any of it, she asks his permission. Thus they work the matter out aimiably. But legally it all belongs to the husband. Should he want to use it for gifts or for any payment of his own, his wife can make no claim; she will not win her case before the law. But from a practical point of view, it is much wiser to come to an agreement in advance and thus avoid any annoyance
583 or quarrel.

431 The size of the nkomf depends on the wealth of the woman's
[556] parents. Not only is a large one a point [152] of honor and esteem;
[586] it is also a means of increasing the stability of the marriage and securing harmony. The bigger the nkomf the more obliged the husband is to treat his wife well and see that she is content with him, out of fear of having to return the entire fortune if the marriage should ever be broken.

The nkomf may be very large, even as great or greater than the bride price; in these extreme cases the girl is spoken of as
[192] lifaya-njoku, for like an elephant (njoku) she goes to live elsewhere (lifaya) because of all the riches she carries with her. The term njawobwo is also used; literally, it refers to a kind of mushroom which grows in abundance all over the boaEtE tree. (1)

1. The use of these terms is not specifically confined to the situation described above. They are also applied to any stranger who settles in, or simply passes through, the village, bringing many riches -- to the white men, for example.

556 With reference to this subject an old custom should be men-
583 tioned. Because of his love for his daughter and a desire for renown,
431 a father might give his son-in-law a quantity of bakonga, in varying amounts but enough to pay for the acquisition of a wife, hence bride-price valuables, so to speak.

583x Although given by the father-in-law to his son-in-law and therefore
431 part of the *nkomɛ*, yet these valuables have neither their significance
586 nor their purpose. They are disbursed at the time of the payment of the *ikulɛ*. This practice was customary only among men who were unusually wealthy and influential, that is, family heads who occupied prominent positions in native society. It was never omitted for a *bolɛmbɛ* (see Chapter I, Part 2, Article II). The woman's father gave these valuables to his son-in-law, saying: "I am giving you my daughter in marriage. She has always occupied a high position; she is of a very good family. I want her to retain her prominent rank. Therefore here is a bride price; go and get yourself a second wife with these rings, so that my daughter will have her *nkita* [154] from the very first day. Then come back and pay me the bride price for her."

The woman who was honored by such preferential treatment was called *yɛ́ngaende*. This word is composed of the roots *ɛ́ng*, "to acquire by means of a bride price," and *ende*, "a man (vir)." The name comes from the fact that she herself paid the price for her husband, so to speak, and did so even before he paid the bride price for her.

The Nkundɔ́ have given up this manner of ostentatiously dis-
[118] playing their wealth, so that the custom we have just described now belongs to the past. Nevertheless there are still women who bear the
[551] name Yɛ́ngaende, in memory of some ancestor who had been the object of this honor which put her in a privileged position, a royal position, so to speak.

583x From all the foregoing it will be apparent that marriage payments are not unilateral in Nkundɔ́ law and practice. Rather, there is a mutual handing over of goods. Although the goods given by each party differ clearly from one another, they all have an economic and financial value. Therefore we can speak of a real reciprocity in these payments. And although the husband has to furnish the largest and highest amount, it would be wrong to say that he alone must "pay for his spouse," for though he does actually "pay for his wife," she must to a certain extent "pay for her husband." That is what the

584 safeguard freedom, and the impression should not be given that childhood unions are encouraged -- as it sometimes is -- by the exemption of immature wives of polygamists from a supplementary tax.

There is no law requiring an elder sister to be married before a younger one, but such is the common practice. Exceptions are made only under certain circumstances, and particularly if the younger girl finds a suitor earlier than the older one, a reason which includes and sums up all the others (such as disadvantageous physical and psychological tendencies of the older sister).

178 584 This practice of marrying daughters off before maturity is beginning to change because of the increase in freedom which has been introduced by colonization. Nevertheless, as this change is not especially advantageous [236] its manifestations are still very slight. The Christian education of parents must of necessity delay the time of the daughter's marriage and will do so ipso facto as soon as Christian influence becomes sufficiently strong in the region.

Article II. Boys

582 Except in the rare instances of an engagement of two young children, it was formerly the common and normal practice for men to remain bachelors for many years after puberty. The old men tended first to their own wants, and the youths had to wait their turn, like their elders. This was considered entirely natural. Later on they could establish a home and "profit" from life. Meanwhile they found a little compensation with the wives of certain relatives or of others, if the opportunity arose.

582 561 To explain this state of affairs we can invoke the political organization of Nkundó society, which is based on age. It is therefore natural that those possessing authority should have its external ● [556] signs, and one of the foremost of these is the wealth manifested in the possession of wives. But, as we will point out later, the present situation greatly weakens this explanation.

582 585 It is more natural to consider the delay in the marriage of young men a logical consequence of the marriage of girls at an early age. Suppose that a boy is fifteen years old while his sister,

573² 574 ötswɛ́kɛ́ liɛ́la otswɛ̂k'olɛ́, bɛ́fɔ́kolaka mbɔ́k'ɛ́y'olɛ́ la ngom'a nkolɛ́, "If you are married go back to your parents, or you will be taught the way with drums and gongs," that is, "when you are dead." (2)

[164] [167] 534 2. A woman is buried in her own native clan. Her corpse is transported there to the accompaniment of drums and horns. The lokolɛ gong announces her death.

573¹ 602 A married woman may not evade the duty of helping her relatives under special circumstances (pregnancy, illness, serious accidents, death). This obligation [285] is not limited to her mother and father, but extends to all her relatives; the closer the degree of kinship, the stricter the obligation.

Besides, love of family is sufficiently developed so that there is no danger of the woman forgetting herself too much in this realm. [626] And a husband who would like to prevent her from fulfilling these elementary duties would be much criticized by all and should expect a dissolution of the marriage.

573^A 574 342 576 It was said above that a husband builds a hut for his wife. His relatives often assist him in this task. But it also happened -- in the past, for colonization has removed the possibility of it -- that the woman's father wanted to build his daughter's house himself or at least to make the pavement out of clay brought from her native land. This act was a demonstration of wealth and politico-social importance as well as proof of fatherly affection. The husband, for his part, was honored to have married the daughter of such an important man and loved her all the more. Thus a number of women say that "they only cooked on ancestral soil." This soil was brought in baskets across distances up to 50 kilometers by Batswa and by men of the woman's clan or village. Her father could do it because of his great influence and regal rewards (bokɔ́ndo, verb kɔ́nda) were distributed during a feast (nkɔ́kɔ) given for the workers and their relatives after the task was completed. This was done for Bompeli, daughter of Bokombe of Lifɛli (Bombwanja) married to Bonyeme w'enyuka of the Baafɛkɛ Mbangɔ (Bonkoso); for Beluka, daughter of

593 Iongo of Bokɛkyɛ (Boselo, Bombwanja), married to Bokaa is 'Ifonda
594 of Bowɛlɛ; for Mbalaka, daughter of Bolekela wa Imangaiso of the
592 Basɛkɛ Lokuli (Bongíli), married to Mbuli is'ea Wela of Bombɔngo
552 w'Etefa (Bongale) (1) [286]

[551] 1. She bore the name of Mbɛlaka (meaning indemnity), because her father had solemnly proclaimed (-bɛkya) and publicly promised that he intended, one day, to place himself in the position of having to pay an indemnity because of his daughter, as proof of his love. Indeed [782] when Mbɛlaka was married, he killed one of his wives, cut her into pieces, and sent the "meat" to his son-in-law as "the first hen" that his wife would prepare for him. [642] [644] But he did not have to pay the indemnity because the victim's clan was too weak to attempt a war; they did not dare to make a claim and, in order to avoid even greater misfortunes, they resigned themselves to this revolting ignominy.

Article V

Relations Between the Husband and His Wife's Family

606 607 As has already been said, kinship by marriage is called likilɔ, and relatives by marriage are called bokilɔ, bakilɔ. Mbɔsolɔ is a term of respect for very close relatives by marriage (father-in-law, mother-in-law, sometimes brother-in-law or sister-in-law). When there is a considerable age difference between two affinal relatives, the elder one sometimes calls the younger bokilɔwalɛ. This happens most frequently when the son-in-law is so young that he can still be considered a child. This term can even be used by an elder brother

595 537 Some men are strict on this point, while others are more tolerant. Clearly, the technique of such men is most subtle. The more a wife's lover is permitted his freedom, the greater is the likelihood that other women, who prefer a young man passionately enamoured of them to their husband, will ask the polygamist to marry them. A ● [592] man who is sufficiently wealthy and influential can in this manner build up a harem from which he does not benefit physically but which assures him of a dominant social position.

This practice exists almost exclusively in conjunction with polygamy, but cases do occur among monogamists. And among more "civilized" tribes, such as the riverain people of the Lower Congo, a tendency in that direction is developing.

A request for concubinate made by a relative of the husband cannot be considered in the same category with the situation we have just examined. Such a request is more closely related to the request for an inherited wife (see Chapter III, Article II). The difference is obvious. The only thing the two situations have in common is the fact of legitimate cohabitation with another man's wife. One perceives this immediately upon comparing the two.

Article IX. The Family's Role in Marriage

596 581 We have found that there are situations in which a woman is to some extent considered and treated as the wife not only of her husband, but also of certain of his relatives (Article VI). Moreover, we have seen in Chapter II the big role that the families play in the arrangement and continuation of their children's marriage. In discussing the question of the inheritance of wives, we have seen that the close relatives of the deceased have rights over the widow; one of them may marry her without any obligations toward the chief heir, and the new union is not a new marriage but a continuation of the previous marriage, which is not broken in spite of the first husband's death. A similar observation was made in relation to the practice of wife replacement (Chapter III, Article IV).

All this leads us to raise a question: To what extent does the family have collective rights over the wife? The following answer is

595x magic known as yoli. She alone participates in the ceremonies
789 that accompany it; with her husband she eats half of the hen that
has been killed for that purpose, and on that night she alone may
share his bed. Finally, only with her, to the exclusion of the co-wives,
may the husband eat the fish called wengɛ, and only she may and must
burn the leavings. Otherwise the magical practice would turn
against its owner.

When a piece of game is divided, the bomɛtsa is entitled
595x to the lintɔ́la (the lower portion of the breast), which would go to
[724] the man's mother (or his father's or his elder brother's wife) were
he a bachelor.

In the bomɛtsa's absence, her place is taken by her ebísa (see below, Article IV) or by the wife who follows her in seniority. At her death, the same rules govern her succession.

The name bomɛtsa is probably derived from the root mɛtsa, "to begin." She is the one who founds the family. Sometimes she is also called ikɔ́kɔ́yɔ́njemba, literally "bachelor's love." The Bombwanja say itɔ́kɔ́yɔ́njemba (the Ekonda, nkɛmukolo).

In addition to the bomɛtsa, reference is sometimes made to
[344] bomɛtsa w'ilɛli, or "bomɛtsa of the left." The bomɛtsa in the
strict sense of the term is contrasted to the latter as bomɛtsa w'ilɔ́me
("of the right"). The bomɛtsa of the left is a polygamist's second
wife. She is given this name because her house is at the left end of
[592] the lofɛnjɛ. She has no special rights or duties, however, unless the
actual bomɛtsa delegates to her the task of looking after her end of
the compound. If the harem is large, the husband may set aside
[224] for her a special portion of the game, called itɔ́mbantɔ́ta, or nape
of the neck. In her absence it goes to the eldest daughter.

Article II. The Favorite

595A All polygamists of any importance have a favorite wife, or
nkɔ́ndɛ́. But only the rich and the notables have a true nkɔ́ndɛ́.
● 556 The minor polygamists, of course, imitate the others (nkɔ́ndɛ́ ɛ́ɛ
wedɛ́ɛ or ɛ́ɛ inɔ́ɔ, "without great importance"), but they do so without

595 great ceremonies because they lack the necessary wealth.

596 The *bomɛ́tsa* is never *nkɔ́ndɛ́*. But before he makes one of his wives a *nkɔ́ndɛ́* a husband must ask the advice and approval of the [431] *bomɛ́tsa*. For that purpose he presents her with a *bompɛ́ngɛ́* (a dog, a goat, some rings), which expresses his recognition of her right and authority and at the same time is intended to secure a favorable response. If the *bomɛ́tsa* does not agree, the matter is not followed through. But that situation is only hypothetical. In practice the *bomɛ́tsa* yields to her husband's preferences, since he has recognized her rights in the proper fashion.

When a husband wants to create a *nkɔ́ndɛ́*, he first makes all the preparations, brews the sugar-cane beer and collects all the riches that are to be distributed. Then he invites the neighboring villages and calls together his relatives. On the assigned day, the assembly having gathered, the chosen wife puts on her most beautiful garments and adorns herself with her richest ornaments. She [352] seats herself on a magnificent *boɛ́nga* [345] (a portable couch) (1) in front of the audience. Her husband then announces to those assembled that henceforth this woman is to be his favorite; woe unto the man who has the temerity to seduce her or even show affection toward her -- he will be a dead man (or he will have to pay an [684] enormous indemnity of 25 to 50 *bakonga*). In the past it often happened that a seducer was killed or reduced to slavery without further ado. When the husband has paid 25 rings or more to the wife's family and gifts have been distributed to the assembled patriarchs, his words are ratified by the assembly, and henceforth the contract between them and the husband is sealed. Dances, song, and drink follow.

[292] The favorite wears no special garb. She wears the same clothing as all the other women and wears furs only for dances.

1. See the excellent drawing in Engels, *Les Wangata* [The Wangata], (*Revue Congolaise*, Vol. 1, no. 4, p. 483, 1910).

595 She does no work in the farm or kitchen. She always has an ebísa to wait on her. If her family has no member they can let her have, she will borrow an ebísa from a distant relative or a friend.

A nkóndé does not travel on foot; she is carried in a hammock [482] (hunting net). Her husband accompanies her on foot, however. But [586] this was done only for a true nkóndé of a rich man, and the custom is disappearing today.

A favorite may not leave her husband, even to go and see her parents. In the past some men were so jealous of their favorites [514] that they would not allow them to satisfy even their most private needs unless they themselves or some sentinel (usually a Botswá) stood watch. A man could not even go into the vicinity of her hut, which is built just behind the husband's shed. For although the husband is sometimes tolerant of the passions of his other wives, he always shows [152] an intransigeant jealousy [346] in relation to his favorite. He never travels without having her accompany him.

The favorite has the honor of performing small personal serv- [585] ices for her husband; she cuts his hair, helps him in the removal of body hair, scratches his pustules from ringworm or prickly heat, anoints him with oil, paints him with ngóla, and, in a word, performs all the tasks connected with his appearance and hygiene.

595 766 Out of love for his favorite, her husband can buy her corpse for the price of a slave (in kind or in money). By doing so he obtains the *right to have it buried beside his own while those of the other* wives must be buried with their native clans. That is why in some regions a husband calls his favorite his ikundaka (from kunda "to bury"). Nevertheless, if her husband dies before she does, his heirs may not trouble themselves about his wishes and no longer require that the favorite be buried in their cemetery. That is what happened to Bongóla of Bongíli, whose husband Ikilinganya of Bongangí (Bofodé) had paid the price of two slaves for this right. When the husband has [124] killed large game, the favorite, like the bomátsa, has the right to receive her personal predetermined portion (boando). Her part is the neck or a chop, which in her absence, goes to the sons or their wives. The other wives do not have the same right; each one obtains only an ordinary piece (liondo).

595 man who corresponds better to her heart's desires. In the past, at least in small-scale polygamy, the situation was not the same as it is today. Because of the constraint of traditional laws, limited freedom, lack of good communications, a husband's respect for his young wife's body and the lack of venereal diseases, conditions must have been much more favorable to the birth rate. [370]

Article X. Causes of Polygamy

Under this title we can deal with two quite different and distinct things: 1) the motives that push the Nkundó toward polygamy; 2) the causes that led to the origin of that practice.

The first question can be answered through a methodical observation of facts. The second, on the contrary, is in the realm of history. Thus the two do not coincide in any way, and it would be a mistake to confuse them.

Only the ethnographic problem falls within the framework of this study. But our conclusions can help to explain the historical documents, if any exist, or to clarify a hypothesis concerning the origin of the practice in the past.

What are the reasons by which the Nkundó justify practicing polygamy? *They are: 1) social influence, 2) fame, 3)* concern over keeping the capital in the family, 4) precautions against a wife's illness, death, or divorce, and 5) the desire to increase the number of children.

595 556 1) A man's social influence grows in proportion to the number of his wives, for they and their children's marriages increase the number of his affinal relationships with other clans. These strengthen his military position. Furthermore, through the system of official concubinage -- which is impossible in a monogamous system -- he can secure dependents.

The more wives a man has, the more he is respected, listened to, and feared. This correlation is neither necessary nor infallible, however, for a polygamist of weak character may have

595* less influence than a monogamist or bigamist who is intelligent
● 556 and fearless. And in the present circumstances one meets monogamists who, because of either their economic situation or their social or political position, enjoy a much greater authority [371] than many polygamists. Intellectual and moral superiority on their part is beginning to make its value felt.

2) Fame and vanity. Because of the very nature of the marriage system, which is intimately bound to -- not to say based on -- financial transactions, the number of wives determines the extent of a man's wealth. And here as everywhere wealth has a fascination; it is considered a mark of superiority. Vanity seizes upon it. And since the possession of wives is the most obvious expression of wealth, the Nkundó see it as a superior means by which to acquire great renown and an illustrious name.

3) A concern over keeping the capital in the family. Personal wealth consists almost entirely of metals (especially copper) and domestic animals. Thus this is the capital involved in the financial transactions accompanying marriage, and in that way it is invested with interest (children, work, influence).

595* Like all pagan people the Nkundó are essentially covetous
556 and egoistic. They do not like to give but want everything for
157 themselves. Except for persons to whom he is bound by natural ties or sincere affection, a Nkundó does not help others except through interdependence or in the hope of reciprocity in some form or other. Thus when he possesses an excess of wealth, even
[473] if it is considerable and entirely superfluous, he does not yield it. The idea would never occur to him to give a few copper rings to an indigent bachelor, for example, if he is not forced to do so because of interdependence in the family. Thus, if there are more girls than boys, the excess bride price will be used by him to augment the number of his own wives. For in order that his daughter not be deprived of her nkita, the bride price received must be used again as a bride price. Note that this reasoning has but a limited validity. It is a fact that the ancient custom [372] was for the father to take all his daughters' bride prices for himself, as we have seen in Chapter IV. He did not become polygamous because of excess [bride price]; he was polygamous before his sons married.

595* 556 Even if a fortune was acquired through a man's own efforts, he would reproach himself if he did not make productive use of it for himself. And under the circumstances the surest investment is in a harem.

Finally, since a wife represents financial value, the Nkundó likes to inherit those of his deceased relatives in order to incorporate them in his own harem or to obtain the means of enlarging it by means of them.

That is the explanation for the Nkundó statement that the wealth of the family (lokutu) cannot pass into the hands of strangers. It is not only a personal desire that impels them to act in that manner; but they feel the collective will of the family behind them. And in this will, as well as in the reprimands and the teasing which are inevitably the consequences of a more independent attitude, lies one of the chief causes of so much backsliding on the part of men who seem permanently won over to the practice of monogamy.

595* 4) A precaution against accidents, such as illness, death, or divorce. This reason is often given: "What would I do," they say, "if I had only one wife, and one day she fell ill, left me, or died? I would be alone. There would be no one to take care of me or feed me. The Whites have their "boys," but we Blacks have only our wives." This reasoning is not without validity, but it does not seem to express the whole truth for, although nothing surpasses his own home for meals, a bachelor can always count on the kind assistance of his female relatives and sisters-in-law. The chief argument is more from the sexual angle. [373] It is not unusual to find women who advise their husbands to take a second wife for that reason. In case of divorce or death the difficulty can be solved through remarriage. But this imposes a certain delay for the collection of bride-price valuables and, above all, for the negotiations. In the case of illness the difficulty is much greater.

In any case, such accidents cannot justify true polygamy, for bigamy or trigamy would be quite sufficient to avoid the inconveniences cited. And yet no one seems to be satisfied with two or three wives when he has the means to acquire more.

845 puberty, by his father. The performance of this role entails continence (bokeka) for the person who undertakes it, even with respect to the spouse. A violation of this rule prevents healing of the wound or at least makes the process very long and difficult. (1)

[755] 1. A similar bokeka applies to anyone nursing a large gangrenous ulcer (wîlé).

The foreskin that has been cut off is dried on the bolíkó (tray or shelf). Then no one bothers with it any longer, and it usually remains there, dusty and dirty, for an indefinite period of time if the rats leave it alone.

In the centers the young people are beginning to neglect [177] the native skilled in circumcising and resort instead to European surgeons.

Circumcision is not an occasion for feasts or ceremonies. [58] Sometimes a man who is rich and vain will give a feast, but this is not at all a common practice.

The term "to circumcise" is translated in Lonkundo as téna bongó, "to cut off the foreskin." The less vulgar term and one used much more frequently is téna nsóngé, "to cut off the tip." A much too decent circumlocution is téna batói, "to cut off the ears."

The reason for this custom has already been given in Chapter I, Part II, Article II, 2.

Article VIII. Education

From an early age a Nkundó child must perform various 868 small services for his parents, especially in the household; he is 857 asked to draw water, fetch firewood, take care of a little brother or sister, etc. The demands for such services are addressed chiefly to girls, but boys are not at all exempt. By the very nature of things, however, the latter are less frequently asked to help.

Quite early a boy may accompany his father on trips, at meetings, legal debates, etc. The father makes a bow and arrows for him and teaches him the art of using them. The great pastime

000 the same rights as the other children of the polygynist.

595 The polygynist always sought to increase the number of his wives, for his prestige rose and his fortune increased in that manner. ●556 If anyone in civilized lands seeks to enlarge his fortune, this is 593 done, people say, in order to insure the future of his children. The native thinks little about that; his primary idea is to enjoy himself and to surpass others in prestige and esteem. As far as the future of his children is concerned, there are polygynists who possess twenty or thirty wives or even more, and sometimes they have only one or two children. Also it is little in keeping with their notions to care for the future; he who is still alive tomorrow must take care of 595 tomorrow then, so they reason. On the contrary, instead of caring for his children, the polygynist often took great trouble to obtain a 593 wife for his son. The son, however, was not yet the owner of his 584 wife; it was, so to speak, only a loan. Not until after the death of 606 his father did he become owner. In some districts, when the father had obtained a wife for his son, he first kept this wife for some time for himself. Only after a few months did he give her to his son. In 595 other districts, when the wife was pregnant by the son, he was obliged 593 to send her for a few days to his father. He was not allowed to bear 606 the honor of fatherhood alone; his father must share that with him. 592 The father reserved for himself the honor of naming all of the chil- 551 dren of his children. In some areas of the Congo, morals were so 835 low and common that the father even kept his own daughters in his harem. This did not occur in Equatorial Africa, but there was a custom that was not much better. The magician was sometimes 583 consulted about the bride price which the father tried to get for his 791 daughter, or the brother for his sister.

The magician then gave them the advice that they themselves should first have relations with their own daughter or sister. This custom existed almost everywhere in Equatorial Africa.

583 [530] Bride Price. In general, the daughter was given in marriage upon payment of a bride price. The father had little choice of the future husband of his daughter. The one who guaranteed the most goods in payment was certain to get her. Since, in most cases, the little daughter had not yet arrived at the years of maturity, there was naturally no question of her consent. The bride price was not paid all at once, but gradually during the years while the daughter grew up. Since the daughter was given without her consent

516 invading groups of kinsfolk there was always one who was considered as the family head, and this man could claim the title of ***nkolo mokonda***, the owner of the land. Round this man the rest of the members of the family group clustered, and he had the general direction of their affairs. He could scarcely be termed a chief, having a paternal oversight rather than exercising any wide authority demanding organizing ability and political acumen. The succession of ***nkolo mokonda*** runs collaterally through younger brothers in the first place; hence if a first-born male happens to hold that position, the succession among his younger brothers is in the order of their birth. When these have all died the succession passes to the next generation. If all the males of a group die, it is possible for a daughter's son to leave his father's side in order to assume the position of ***nkolo mokonda*** on his mother's side.

A ***nkolo mokonda*** can delegate his duties as head to another member of the family, who is then termed *nkolo e ola*, the husband of the settlement. For such a privilege payment is generally made to the ***nkolo mokonda***. Round these ***nkolo mokonda*** and their immediate kinsmen others gathered, forming, it may be, another section of the same settlement, known then as an *etuka*, or, if numerous, another settlement.[1]

624 [593] The ***nkolo mokonda*** (or *nkolo e ola*) hears and judges cases that come to him, aided always by a group of elders, and directs the activities of the settlement. However, this does not entirely satisfy the Tumba; they want an ***nkumu*** also. The ***nkumu*** is chosen, not by the whole settlement, but by a single village, or it may be even one *etuka* of a village. If the villages of a settlement were without an ***nkumu*** it would generally, but not necessarily, be the *etuka* of the ***nkolo mokonda*** which would lead off by seeking one out. The group desiring an ***nkumu*** are known as the ***mokonda***, and they look about for a man of the same tribe but not of the same settlement or village, an outsider. He must be a man of some wealth, for actually he will buy his right of authority and pay heavily for it. If the man who is approached accepts, he is known from then on until his accession as *Nkomo Akolo*, the term ***nkumu*** not being used until he is finally invested with the insignia of office, the ***mpaku***, or hat of special design. *Nkomo Akolo*'s family is known as the *ekolo*, or ***nsanga***. This man, [556] once having accepted the invitation to become ***nkumu***, sets about amassing wealth in the form of wives and brass rods. He may be years about it, but he does not thereby forfeit his right to the office, nor apparently weary those who extended the invitation. Should *Nkomo Akolo* die before he is installed as ***nkumu***, or should he wish to withdraw from the honour bestowed upon him, the succession passes to another member of his *ekolo*. The succession would normally pass to the eldest male of the *ekolo*, [787] but many circumstances may interfere to give it to another member of the family. A dream dreamed by a male of the *ekolo* to the effect that he should be the ***nkumu*** is sufficient to give him the right of succession over the elder male. When asked [688] whether it was common to lie about such a dream having occurred, in order to gain the right of succession, those questioned received the suggestion with emphatic negatives, for this is no time to lie; any man so doing would be sure to die, and the fear of death would deter him from such falsehood.

---

[1] Where possible, the nominal chiefs set up by the Belgian Colonial Government are men chosen because of their right to be known as ***nkolo mokonda*** or *nkolo e ola*. Often, however, the settlements are so small and lacking in cohesion that it has been necessary to set up chiefs arbitrarily over chiefdoms very much larger than were their own hereditary spheres of influence.

624 customary manner, with a double clap. They are told by the *nkumu* to repeat the salutation, and having done so may be asked to do it a third time. They are then
576 given a few rods in payment. If the *nkumu* sees some member of his own *elefe* coming to greet him, he gives him special honour by ordering him to lie flat on his back instead of merely sitting, and at the end he gives him a larger gift of rods than the others receive. In this way the *nkumu* may pay out a great many rods to those who thus render him homage. Ordinarily a man will receive five or six, but one
624 specially honoured may be given as many as twenty. From the beginning the *nkumu* has to pay heavily for his honours, and only a wealthy man can hope to attain them.
● [556] For this reason a lawful successor, if not wealthy, may be glad to give up his rights to another more fortunate member of the *elefe*. Homage having been paid, word is sent out that the *nkumu* is about to come forth, and crowds begin to gather. A coat
[302] of red camwood powder mixed with oil is smeared over the *nkumu*, the brass plates are attached to his *mesmib*, and he is attired in all his finery. The crowd outside clusters, and when tired sits on the ground to await the rest of the ceremony. Inside,
[553] the *lokombi* begins to play, the *gowele* to sing, and the Batwa *etsiti* to praise the *nkumu* by uttering an ululating sound. Accompanied by *Nkoso*, *Bikpe*, and the *mamri*, the *nkumu* himself begins to dance. The temporary protecting screen round the *ijasa* is pulled down, and he is seen by all. After his dance he retires again and the crowd disperses.

When *Nkumu Akuku* becomes *nkumu* he changes everything possible so as to
[791] become different from other men. Thus he assumes a different gait, a sort of bow-legged waddle, a different tone of voice, and it seems that under this influence even his facial features undergo a change. Accompanied by his retinue, he visits the various villages where he has friends and relatives in order to greet them. This over, the musicians wish to take their departure and are paid for their services by the *nkumu*.

624 At the conclusion of these ceremonies the *nkumu* with his *elefe* and the *mokondo* negotiate concerning their obligations to one another. If the *nkumu* is the first of his
596 line, he and his *elefe* are given land to cultivate, while succeeding *nkumu* simply take over the land originally occupied. The *mokondo* call their *nkumu* their wife, and they
621 designate themselves husband. They thus reckon the relationship between *mokondo* and *elefe* to be that of husband and wife, and, as in an actual marriage, there must be an interchange of obligations performed in a spirit of harmony. Also, as in marriage a wife may be divorced, so an *nkumu* with his *elefe* could be sent off to their home and the arrangement terminated. It not infrequently happened that as strangers the *elefe* fell out with their hosts and if such a disagreement could not be righted they might be refunded the payments with which they had purchased their rights, and sent off home.

224 Among the reciprocal obligations of *mokondo* and *elefe* are included the sharing of certain animals and birds killed in the hunt, among which are the leopard and
624 elephant. All killed, whether male or female, must be divided. Of certain other
621 animals, including the wild pig, antelope, and buffalo, if a female, no portion is given, if a male, the required portion is presented. These reciprocal obligations are limited
546 strictly to the *elefe* and *mokondo*; if others outside of these groups wish to present the *nkumu* with meat to honour him or to curry favour, they may do so, but they are under

624 An *nkumu* can never walk alone, but must always be accompanied by others, and
[481] on no occasion whatsoever may he run. Even though he never washes, if he is out in the rain and sees everybody else hurrying for shelter, he will not quicken his pace.
[513] His movements must be slow and deliberate. The *nkumu* never sleeps alone; waking and sleeping he is guarded by someone. But apart from this he is free to go where he wishes. The *nkumu* is not indiscriminate, as others may be, in his private habits, but
[514] must use his own latrine at all times, and if travelling must have his own latrine in each place where he stays. The inland *nkumu* frequently take advantage of this custom
[556] by hiding their accumulated brass rods at the bottom of a freshly dug latrine. Such hidden wealth will be acquired by an inheritor at the decease of the *nkumu*.

In speaking of himself the *nkumu* never refers to himself by his title but always by his own name.

624 The couch upon which the *nkumu* sits or reclines during the daytime may not be shared indiscriminately with others, but those permitted to sit upon it at the same
352 time as the *nkumu* are *[illegible]*, women, and Batwa. The reservation of this couch for
[562 the use of the *nkumu* is not surprising, but the exceptions are. One explanation given
563] was that women and Batwa are not *bato ba ase*, persons in particular; they do not count for anything in the social life of the community; they are not really "people".
[672] Another explanation was that they do not pay fines, this being tantamount to saying that they are exempt from laws and therefore cannot break laws even by doing what would be for others an illegal act. The stool of the *nkumu*, however, has closer restrictions in the manner of its use. Besides the *nkumu* only two others may sit upon it, *Nsese* and *Mpenge*. It is always carried by one of his wives, though not necessarily by any special one.

624 The restrictions concerning the food of the *nkumu* are many. He may eat food only in his own house, or, if on a journey, in one given over for his use. He may not
262 enter another house to partake of food even if invited to do so. Likewise the *nkumu* may not eat in the forest, or eat or drink anywhere along the road when on a journey, but must wait until he arrives at a village and has a house at his disposal in order to partake of food and drink. He never "sleeps with hunger"; even if a wife or child should die causing him great sorrow he must partake of food before going to sleep.
[765] The Bonginda *nkumu* must never go into mourning, and death must be ignored by them, but the inland *nkumu* are permitted to mourn. All food carried to an *nkumu* must be covered, this rule even applying to water. Food must not be placed in a basket with high sides (*ebobo*), but in a shallow one (*engalo*), and no food that has been kept overnight in a pot may be eaten by him: swelling of the abdomen will result. Various foods are taboo, among these all fast-moving snakes, though slow-
[924] moving ones may be eaten; light-coloured palm-nuts may not be eaten, and a variety of yam known as *mokiki* is shunned, for it is with the tough stems of the *mokiki* that the dying body of the *nkumu* will be bound to ensure the sitting posture necessary for burial.

624 Among regulations roughly classed as social, we have already covered several in references above, and have referred to the *nkumu* in council. It may be added here that
[623] he is expected to agree with the majority of the councillors and not fall out with them.
The rules affecting the *[illegible]* of the *nkumu* are accompanied by severe penalties. There
[689] must not be any fighting; if anger is aroused to the point of blows the antagonists

562 clothing and dressed her in valuable furs, especially in part of the
556 pelt of a striped antelope called mpangé. In some villages she was permitted to wear leopardskin in front as well as in back.

Then the father would decree (-lɛ́kya) that since his daughter
[582] had become bolúmbú she would always wear furs and would stop working, and that she would be given in marriage only to a very rich and influential man, not to the first comer. Therefore, a synonym for bolúmbú is bóna wă bofiko, "child of the decree, a child set apart, forbidden."

This ceremony may be held regardless of the child's age, at any time between three years and adolescence.

When the ceremony is ended the girl withdraws (-siama, transitive -uja) into a hut specially prepared for this occasion, which is called ilɔkɔ. Her seclusion lasts only a few months. When certain natural needs oblige her to leave the house, she goes out the back way through the banana grove and hides as much of herself as possible under a mat. She does not walk on the bare ground; her feet must not
[285] touch the earth. That is why mats are spread everywhere she steps. She does no work; her food is prepared by her mother, sister, aunt, etc., or by a slave. When it comes to her toilette, she washes her hands not in water, but in palm oil. [32] All these practices are marks of respect and honor.

When the period of seclusion is ended, the girl's father gives a second feast, with dances, drinks, etc., and the bolúmbú comes out walking on mats. But there is no further ceremony. From then on the girl is no different from other girls. But she retains the sign of her distinction, the wearing of furs, and she does no housework.

[582] The marriage of a bolúmbú always occurred very late, since a man who wanted to take her for his wife had to collect a good deal of
[557] wealth before he could take the risk of asking for her hand. Should his attempt prove fruitless, he was exposed to ridicule in the whole region.

584 Among the tribes living on the left bank of the Luilaka any
556 man who was rich and of good family could ask for the hand of a
562 bolúmbú in marriage. Among the Injɔlɔ, on the other hand, the re-
582 quirements were more complicated. The suitor had to belong to another tribe or group. For instance, a girl who belonged to the

572 Unlike the affection among relatives, friendships cool and even end. This is especially true for pacts based purely on mutual assistance. Thus, if one of the friends is somewhat too stingy in comparison to the other, a rupture quickly results.

[561] The Nkundó also have especially affectionate feelings for their "age mates" (bondingi, pl. bandingi), that is, for all those who were born the same day, week, month, or period as they. They feel united by special ties. Among themselves age mates consider and treat each other as brothers, help and assist each other, etc.

Their affection is natural; the sort of selfishness that may be found among "friends" is not present among age mates.

Their relationship is so close that if the occasion arises, they lend each other their wives. (1)

1. See Chapter VI, Article VIII, 1.

[551] Lastly, individuals bearing the same name (ndoi, pl. bandoi) show real affection toward each other; they help each other and exchange gifts. They make no pact as do the [illegible], however.

It should be noted that these various bonds do not exist between persons of opposite sexes, among whom they would be condemned as concubinage. [27]

Article IV. Conjugal Love

583* The question has often been asked: how about love among these peoples? Do husbands and wives really love each other? We are not speaking here of sexual passion, which is generally present in addition to love between man and woman, but which in itself is clearly distinct from it. Love is the result of various emotions -- congeniality, affection, mutual appreciation, admiration, devotion, etc., and we judge the perfection of love according to the presence or absence of any one of these elements and their degree.

The question is by its very nature a very delicate one to answer. Actually, it is difficult to observe and analyze clear and precise facts pertaining to the subject. Our notion of it must of

584 safeguard freedom, and the impression should not be given that childhood unions are encouraged -- as it sometimes is -- by the exemption of immature wives of polygamists from a supplementary tax.

There is no law requiring an older sister to be married before a younger one, but such is the common practice. Exceptions are made only under certain circumstances, and particularly if the younger girl finds a suitor earlier than the older one, a reason which includes and sums up all the others (such as disadvantageous physical and psychological tendencies of the older sister).

171 584 This practice of marrying daughters off before maturity is beginning to change because of the increase in freedom which has been introduced by colonization. Nevertheless, as this change is not especially advantageous [236] its manifestations are still very slight. The Christian education of parents must of necessity delay the time of the daughter's marriage and will do so ipso facto as soon as Christian influence becomes sufficiently strong in the region.

Article II. Boys

582 Except in the rare instances of an engagement of two young children, it was formerly the common and normal practice for men to remain bachelors for many years after puberty. The old men tended first to their own wants, and the youths had to wait their turn, like their elders. This was considered entirely natural. Later on they could establish a home and "profit" from life. Meanwhile they found a little compensation with the wives of certain relatives or of others, if the opportunity arose.

562 584 [554] To explain this state of affairs we can invoke the political organization of Nkundó society, which is based on age. It is therefore natural that those possessing authority should have its external signs, and one of the foremost of these is the wealth manifested in the possession of wives. But, as we will point out later, the present situation greatly weakens this explanation.

582 584 It is more natural to consider the delay in the marriage of young men a logical consequence of the marriage of girls at an early age. Suppose that a boy is fifteen years old while his sister,

582 We have spoken of the unproductivity of the bride price.
583 This is a Nkundó notion, and it is accurate only because the old men want to satisfy themselves before their sons. Actually, they could very easily reconcile their desire that the bride price should be productive with the aspirations of the youths, at least in many instances. All they would need to do would be to use the valuables they have received for their sons' benefit by acquiring girls of the same age for them. The productivity of the valuables would not diminish [228] in the least, of course, since the goods would remain in the family. On the contrary, it would be increased because a
[842] greater number of progeny would probably be born. But our natives
[561] knowledge of physiology does not seem to be sufficiently developed for them to come to this conclusion. And even more probably their egoism has greatly clouded their intelligence and silenced the voice of good sense and fatherly love to make it possible for them to multiply the number of their wives and thus increase the easy satisfaction of their sensuality, augment their wealth, and reinforce their social position. It will be their sons' turn after their death.

561 This situation is aggravated by the fact that, except for the
428 bondio, the brothers, not the sons, of the deceased inherited the
595 widows, who thus remained in the hands of the old men.

582 Because of their attitudes the old men monopolized most of the women. They established large harems for themselves, so that it was very difficult for the young men to find a woman to marry; they had to consider themselves lucky if their father provided them with a child.

582 Thus it was unheard of that a young man between twenty and
578 thirty years old should marry, except for a few instances where a man acquired a child who was to become his wife after a number of years. Men were usually forty years old or older before they married.

Nowadays the situation has changed entirely; the attitude of the old men favors the young much more and has become almost normal. The great majority of fathers, if they have the means, procure a wife for their sons as soon as the latter are old enough to express a desire for one. This improvement is due to the fact that it has become

583 / 178 much easier to get married. A great number of young men who would still be bachelors had they lived under the old regime now have wives. The young people leave home to go and work for the Whites, and the parents feel sorry for their sons and do not want to see them leave without a wife [228] to take care of them and prepare their food. This feeling has dealt the old custom a severe blow. And even for the young men who stay at home, it is no longer so difficult to obtain a wife. Paternal love has here triumphed over egoism.

Furthermore, the elders have been forced to take a more humanitarian attitude because, since the European occupation has given the young women a new freedom, they have abandoned their husbands and fled to the centers where, under the protection of the Whites, they have joined lovers who are as young as they. Therefore, it was much more intelligent to obtain a wife for their sons in an honest fashion rather than to expose themselves to loud palavers by the abandoned husband.

From all the preceding description it is clear that the man was considerably older than his wife. But because of the inheritance of widows it also happened -- and still happens -- that a man acquired wives who were older than he. When young men marry at the present time, many wives are definitely younger than their husbands; many adolescents have received prepubescent little girls for wives.

As a general rule a Nkundó woman does not like her husband to be much older than she, and she likes it even less if he is younger. Nowadays unions between persons of the same age increase continually. This increase is due more to the remarriage of divorcées, who prefer husbands of their own generation to the old men who first paid for them, than to first marriages between equals. The influence of Christian couples is called upon to play a great educational role in normalizing the situation of the girls.

56/ 582 The boys must marry in turn, according to age, because of the seniority rule which regulates social relations. That is the rule, but it may be mitigated by the application of another rule, namely the one pertaining to the direct or indirect rights to a sister's bride

592 591 price. The rights of a polygamist's sons over their sisters' bride prices are not absolutely equal (240). One of them can oppose the decision that one of his brothers, born of a different mother not related to his, should benefit from the bride price paid for his uterine sister. His right will incontestably prevail. But if he has other sisters, it is his duty out of brotherly love to help his less fortunate brother. If both of them have uterine sisters, there may be an exchange of bride-price rights which will hurt no one. Finally, if only the younger brother has a sister, his right to her bride price is precisely defined and personal, and it may therefore happen that he marries before his elder brother. But unless the mother is absolutely opposed to any such arrangement, an attempt is usually made to settle the matter in a friendly fashion by assigning the future bride price of a niece or cousin to the younger brother. The rules as we have explained them hold absolutely only for the present time. They also existed in the past, but the delay in the sons' marriages, as described above, resulted in a transferring of rights which could completely upset this order. Since, in practice, many men began their married lives after the death of their fathers or uncles, thus with inherited wives, the older brothers benefited from the rules before the younger ones did. (1)

---

1. See also Chapter II, Article X.

593 598 Lastly, the eldest son may be deprived of his rights for certain reasons, such as a serious failure in his duties of respect and submission to his father. To punish him his father may curse him publicly, declare that he has lost his position as eldest son, and forbid him to acquire a wife. This practice is no longer common today; it would have little effect, for the young man would go and seek his fortune elsewhere. But history has left us some examples like that of Iléfé ya Lonkinja, the first-born son of Iléfé Elongama ea Longóndó, the ancestor of the Bombóngo wá Bokondo family ([illegible]).

(69) new legislation emanating from the European power, a very slow and complex system (the law against adultery which has been requested for decades is still in the realm of studies and projects), lacking in flexibility and the ability to adapt to the very varied circumstances of the peoples of the Congo. A law is needed only for the persons who do not fall within the jurisdiction of the native courts, in order to preserve harmony and impartiality in the exercise of justice, since native society must of necessity feel its effects.

Article VIII. Relations Permitted to the Wife

[83] In this article we will examine the relations a wife may have -- under certain conditions -- with various persons. According to our law, such relations would be adulterous, but Nkundó law does not consider them as such. From this arises the difference between this article and the preceding one. Such relations may be 1) transitory or 2) permanent (concubinage).

1. Transitory relations

[83] [56] [574] A wife is permitted to have sexual relations with her husband's age mates (baningá, sing. boningá). (1) When one comes to

1. See Chapter I, Part 1, Article III.

the home of another in the course of travel, the host lends his wives to the visitor, saying: "Here is your house; here are your wives." If he is monogamous he leaves his house and his spouse at the visitor's disposal and goes to bed elsewhere alone. If a woman who is traveling arrives in the village of one of her husband's age mates, the latter -- as soon as he learns of her presence -- invites her to stay in his home for the length of her stay. When they say good-by he gives her a present for her husband" with the boningá's compliments." When one visits another, wives are often exchanged.

837
561 Such is the practice among age mates who maintain good and true relationships. They have free access to each other's wives, and [334] their actions cannot give rise to claims or fines. Nor if one is more "stingy" in the native view than another, can the latter start palavers with him on that account. But such an attitude will result in a cooling of the cordiality of their relationship, and refusals will be reciprocated.

Age mates do not demand indemnities from each other because it is not fitting for one to enrich himself at the other's expense. This rule applies even to "private" relations, to a simple "call," occurring without the lending described above. But if one of them goes too far, that is if he avails himself of another's wife two or three times without the latter doing likewise, a palaver may arise. The husband will believe that he has been wronged and will demand an indemnity. If his companion refuses on the grounds of the relationship which unites them, he may receive a reply such as the following: bóngá ilowángola ndé basí é? "Is the age-mate relationship a means for acquiring wives?" A regular battle may follow, and the husband is the one who will win the case before the court.

There are no relations permitted between men and women age mates. Such relations would be considered typical adultery.

The relations between a man and his age-mate's wife are therefore permitted not in themselves, but because of the husband's willingness to have them occur. Furthermore, the husband is not strictly required to yield his wife to him. That he does so is a
[837]
[572] matter of good friendship, harmony, payment for services, and mutual respect and affection. From the purely matrimonial point of view, the terrain is free and neutral since, they say, the relations involved are purely private between them, and each one does what he thinks best.

561
572 In addition to the bosángá, the Nkundó have a relationship called bomia, "friendship," "friend." (It is called bokandeko among the Bombwanja). (1) In contrast to the practices that prevail between

---

1. See Chapter I, Part I., Article III.

613 they always refer to their descent from the ancestor-founder: "We are baseka Ngoi (descendants of Ngoi; we belong to the clan of Ngoi)."

Naturally the Nkundo-Mongo know very well that all the Mongo clans are descended from a common ancestor. They even believe in the common descent of all people. However, in clan unity they only go back to that ancestor who made their group legally autonomous, who made himself independent.

To that group belong, thus, all the children of that founder, all of the children of his sons, all of the children of his grandsons and great-grandsons; thus, all those who keep the same family name in our society.

The Nkundo-Mongo call the clan from the father's side their wise, from ise (father). The children of the lawfully married daughters belong to another wise, since they go back on their father's side to another ancestor. However, children of an unmarried daughter of the 598 clan continue to bear their mother's name, and thus belong to the wise of the mother, just as, in our society, they take on the family name of the mother.

Married women, however, continue ethnically to belong to their own paternal clan and do not form part of the wise of their husband.

2. Kinship Terms in the Paternal Clan

601 613 All of the living members of the paternal clan constitute one extended family. In the bosom of that one family, all members of the same /151/ generation also bear the same title. All of the members of the grandfather's generation are grandfathers. All the members of the father's generation are fathers, also including the female members. Thus, the sisters and female cousins of the father who belong to the wise are all called "female fathers": isomoto or faomoto (from ise or fafa, father, and bomoto, woman). All of the older brothers and male cousins of the wise are batomolo; all younger brothers or male cousins of the wise are bakune; all sisters or female cousins of the wise are nkana. All of the children of brothers and male cousins, and also all of the children of sisters and female cousins who remain in the wise, are bana (children).

601 561 613 Such terms are to us, of course, a never ending source of mistakes, complications, and ridicule. The native cannot possible understand this and underneath takes it very much amiss. Socially, legally, and

601 politically, his whole society is, in fact, based on those relationships
561 which are incomprehensible to us. Indeed, the order of duty and re-
613 sponsibility, of authority and honor, are socially, legally, and politically determined by the order of birth. That order is determined by generation, and within the generation, by age: from the oldest father down the whole line of fathers to the oldest "child" in the whole row of children. The children of your older brother, even if they are younger in years, go before your own children. As we shall see later, the female members of the family, who practically fall outside this order, recover their place of honor through their sons.

613 From this short description of the paternal clan, it is immediately apparent that the clan is not a geographical concept among the Nkundo. Wherever the daughter may marry, wherever the son may wander in service to the Whites, that person always and everywhere continues by law to belong to his wise, and he remains bound to all the rights and duties of his place in that community.

602 It also appears that clan and blood relationship do not come any-
613 where near to blanketing each other. Each "blood relationship" of the Nkundo extends itself over various paternal clans, since the blood relations of the mother, as well as the descendants of all the other women of my wise who are lawfully married out of the clan, belong to another wise.

/132/ 3. Inheritance in the Clan

613 Each clan has possessions that constitute the inheritance or patrimony
421 of the members, the domain of the family. These goods are of two kinds: economic and dotal. The former are subdivided into real property, or inalienable property, and personal property.

613 The real property of the clan consists of land and waters. The land
423 is divided into arable land, land for gardens, and hunting areas. These constitute common property, whose cultivation or usufruct is divided among the members of the clan: each one receives his garden land and hunting ground to clear; as soon as the user leaves it, that ground is free again for the community. Palm groves, of course, also remain common property of the members. A similar arrangement applies to water rights. Larger fishing areas remain common property and are, under the leadership of the clan head, communally exploited. Smaller fishing grounds, creeks, ponds, etc., are allotted to each

M S 257 [462] deposit naturally acquires the shape of the pot, which is finally overheated and burns, while the salt block remains intact.

When the salt is finally prepared, the family group returns to the village. The temporary installations are abandoned and may be used by other families who may do with them as they please.

M S 358 422 The salt is divided into two parts.

One part makes up the family reserves, reckoned according to the needs of each family in the group, clan, or village which undertook the exploitation. The rest is divided equally among all the members who took part in [110] the harvest, except that the chief and the woman who was in charge of the burning receive double shares.

The salt reserved for family needs is used in the preparation of food and remains the inalienable property of the family. The share distributed to the participants in the undertaking becomes their private property.

M S 358 433 435 Each one of them, man or woman, disposes of his share as he sees fit. Most often the natives use this as trade goods. Among certain tribes, notably the Mowangere, Wadia, Basakata, and Bolaie, the salt blocks are used as currency or as a common trade item whose value is determined by the weight.

M S 358 435 Before our [Ed., European] penetration into the region and more especially before the introduction of legal tender and its imposition by the administration, salt played a much more important part in the economic life of these primitives.

M 436 At the present time, it is used only in local transactions.

The blacksmith and his family, for example, never participate in the preparation of salt. He exchanges the products of his trade, knives, arrowheads, or spearheads, for the stock of the salt makers. [111]

M 437 It even quite frequently happens that the salt makers sell their surplus as a mere commodity to the highest bidder. They bring it to market, display it for sale, haggle about the price in the same fashion as they do for manioc tubers, smoked fish, smoked meat, or baskets of peanuts.

M 437 562 It is singular and interesting to note that the proceeds from this sale do not entirely go to the woman who owns the salt.

Sabata FO43

M
822
562

[Ed., an example given by the author, from the third paragraph, page 111, through the fifth paragraph, page 114, is not translated.]

[114] This clearly shows that the proceeds from the sale of salt, the property of the women, belong in equal shares to the husband and wife: to the woman because of her work, to the man because of his trouble and travel to put the product on sale.

Among the Wadia, Tumba, Boboie, Basakata, and Balesa, I had the opportunity to observe the same fact. As long as the woman herself goes to sell her part of the communally made salt, she keeps all the proceeds of the exchange, but according to

S
[358]

Fig. 64. Evaporation of Water Saturated with Salt, among the Basakata.

native custom, when the husband is entrusted with the sale, he is entitled to part of the proceeds.

M
659
562
822

The proceeds, however, are not divided immediately after the sale. The total sum is put in a safe place, a hiding place known to both husband and wife. The couple accumulates the mitakos [Ed., a kind of metal currency]; they hoard them until the day when they both agree to divide them. Custom gives one quarter to the man and three quarters to the woman. [115]

M
257
472

This custom does not exist among the tribes east of the Balesa. Salt grass cannot be gathered there, because it is very sparse in the region. The trunks of banana and palm trees and the

Article II. The Boiłmbł

562
556
178 In the old days, if an extremely rich man wanted to show his affection for one of his daughters and show off his wealth, he made that daughter boiłmbł. Today this custom has almost completely disappeared. (1) It has been almost impossible to maintain the practice because of a greater distribution of wealth and the reduction of leisure due to the work imposed by the white man. This work has been imposed directly in the form of forced labor, labor on roads, economic projects, etc., or indirectly because a sum had to be raised for the payment of taxes. All this has made it more difficult to bring large numbers of people together for ceremonies lasting days and weeks. (2) Nevertheless, the custom must be described here.

> 1. On the left bank of the Luilaka it disappeared a good many years ago. The Injɔlɔ still followed it until quite recently.

> 2. One might suppose that the new uses of wealth made possible by economic development would have contributed to the disappearance of this custom. Theoretically such might have been the case, but in fact these developments were not involved in the change that has been noted.

562
556
[602] When a native wanted his favorite daughter to become boiłmbł, he had first to obtain the consent and financial support of all his kin. Then enormous preparations were made, for everything had to be special -- beverages, various foods, dances. On the date which had been set and made known through messengers to the entire region, an enormous crowd gathered at his house. Public festivities went on day after day. In an address suited to the occasion, he announced to those assembled his intention to set his daughter up as a boiłmbł. Two relatives or two of the father's wives then stripped off the girl's

562 clothing and dressed her in valuable furs, especially in part of the
576 pelt of a striped antelope called mpengé. In some villages she was permitted to wear leopardskin in front as well as in back.

Then the father would decree (-fíkya) that since his daughter
[582] had become bolúmbú she would always wear furs and would stop working, and that she would be given in marriage only to a very rich and influential man, not to the first comer. Therefore, a synonym for bolúmbú is bɔ́na ea bafíko, "child of the decree, a child set apart, forbidden."

This ceremony may be held regardless of the child's age, at any time between three years and adolescence.

When the ceremony is ended the girl withdraws (-olama, transitive -oja) into a hut specially prepared for this occasion, which is called ileke. Her seclusion lasts only a few months. When certain natural needs oblige her to leave the house, she goes out the back way through the banana grove and hides as much of herself as possible under a mat. She does not walk on the bare ground; her feet must not
[285] touch the earth. That is why mats are spread everywhere she steps. She does no work; her food is prepared by her mother, sister, aunt, etc., or by a slave. When it comes to her toilette, she washes her hands not in water, but in palm oil. [30] All these practices are marks of respect and honor.

When the period of seclusion is ended, the girl's father gives a second feast, with dances, drinks, etc., and the bolúmbú comes out walking on mats. But there is no further ceremony. From then on the girl is no different from other girls. But she retains the sign of her distinction, the wearing of furs, and she does no housework.

[582] The marriage of a bolúmbú always occurred very late, since a
[557] man who wanted to take her for his wife had to collect a good deal of wealth before he could take the risk of asking for her hand. Should his attempt prove fruitless, he was exposed to ridicule in the whole region.

159 Among the tribes living on the left bank of the Luilaka any
556 man who was rich and of good family could ask for the hand of a
562 bolúmbú in marriage. Among the Ingɛlɛ, on the other hand, the re-
582 quirements were more complicated. The suitor had to belong to another tribe or group. For instance, a girl who belonged to the

592 Engfeuf group would be given only to a man from the West, the
573 Ngombe, or a neighboring tribe, but never to an Engfeuf. All the
562 Engfeuf considered the bolifonjú their sister. Thus when the future hus-
582 band went to the family of the bolifonjú to ask for her hand, every village barred his way by means of a fence. All the bride price valuables which he carried with him were taken from him, and an equivalent amount in various kinds of goods, such as hens, ducks, dogs, mats, etc., was substituted for it. That is, he exchanged bride price valuables for nkomi valuables [dowry]. (1) The suitor could pass only when the village that barred his way had nothing left with which to continue the exchange. If he found his riches exhausted, he had to go back home to replenish the supply. Everything he gave in this [sic] fashion was counted as bride price, [walo] (1) and everything he received was part of the nkomi [dowry]. (2)

586 It is understandable that under these conditions asking to
582 marry a bolifonjú was a luxury that the common man could not afford.
592 The suitor had to belong to a rich and influential family all of whose members would assist him.

When the suitor finally succeeded in clearing a passage to the father of the chosen one with sufficient treasures, the latter put no further obstacles in his way. As for the girl, she felt exceedingly honored and delighted that a man loved her so much that he would go to so much trouble and spend such a vast amount out of affection for her.

As for the rest of the proceedings, the bride price payment was made in the same way as for any other marriage. But when the

---

1. See Chapter II, Article VII.

1. See Chapter II, Article VIII.

2. See Chapter II, Article VII.

578 592 bride-to-be was introduced to her bridegroom, she walked toward him across a row of men. A feast was organized to celebrate this important and joyous event. Dances accompanied with a flow of beer went on for weeks, sometimes for a whole month.

[403] The father gave his son-in-law a great many [illegible] (3) objects

3. See Chapter II, Article VII.

so that the [illegible] often became [illegible] or at least [illegible]. (4)

4. See Chapter VII, Article IV.

He did not allow his daughter to leave without giving her at least one [illegible] to wait on her. (5) Thus when [illegible] w'[illegible] of [illegible]

5. See Chapter VII, Article III.

([illegible], [illegible]) married [illegible], daughter of [illegible] y'[illegible] of [illegible] ([illegible], [illegible]) (who died in 1936), the bride received from her father four [illegible] to do the work, as well as a young cousin who was to stay with her [134] to bring her firewood. In this way the father made sure that his beloved daughter would retain her honorable position as a great lady.

578 582 The husband, who wanted his wife to retain her superior status, now makes her his [illegible] as well. (1) The term was: [illegible]

1. See Chapter VII, Article III. That is, unless she is his first wife. See ibid. and Article I.

[illegible]. He would say to those assembled: "Her father proclaimed her [illegible], and I proclaim her [illegible] as well ([illegible])."

What was the reason for the existence of this custom?

556 562 According to the natives it was a public assertion of the father's high social position and at the same time the greatest token of affection he could bestow on his daughter; the two things were inseparable. Not every native had the right to make his daughter a bolɔmbɔ. On the contrary, he had to hold an especially prominent rank, that is to say, he had to be a wealthy, influential, and powerful head of a family. All the ceremonies, practices, and rules involved in this institution point in that direction. A comparison with the bolɔmbɔ wife (1) lends additional plausibility to this explanation.

556 562 176 As we have said, this custom is in the process of disappearing completely. In certain tribes such as the Boloko, subtribe of the Lifumba, a substitute has actually been introduced. The favored daughter is dressed and adorned as before, except that European materials have replaced the furs. But the public character of the older institution has disappeared. The occasion is not surrounded with so many ceremonies. Finally, the girl is not called bolɔmbɔ, for a new name has been invented; it is bondelɔ́ngola, "the white man raises (educates) her." [30]

Article III. Friendship

572 Friendship is not unknown to the Nkundɔ. It is founded on the same basis as in Europe. I have seen more than one instance of true mutual affection between persons who were in no way related. Among the Blacks with whom I have associated there are some whom I personally consider sincere friends and who have shown me real affection, helped me to the full extent of their powers, and shown me complete confidence. There have even been some who have not been afraid to place themselves in serious difficulties and who have gone so far as to incriminate themselves in order to clear me, thereby exposing themselves to troubles and sanctions.

---

1. See Chapter VIII, Article III. Unless she is his first wife. See ibid. and Article I.

593x against the presence of love are based chiefly on the instability of
581 unions, the high frequency of divorce, infidelity, and polygamy -- objections which we shall examine in somewhat greater detail.

593x To judge the situation properly, we must first distinguish between the sexes, which are not at all alike in this respect. Fur-
562 thermore, among women [42] we must distinguish between those who are wives of polygamous men and those who are not.

Let us speak first of all of the men. They seem superior to the opposite sex in the matter of conjugal love, at least if we base our conclusions on their greater fidelity. Divorce is almost always
[586] caused by the wife. As a matter of fact, this is quite natural. The man marries at a fairly mature age and therefore becomes involved when he is well aware of what he is doing, while the girl most often becomes engaged before the age of discretion and is thus unable to choose according to her own heart.

595x On the other hand, the polygamous man's heart must be divided. As we will see suo loco, he has a special love for one of his wives. His love for the first one deepens, becomes more rational, more deliberate, whereas his love for his favorite would seem to be more a matter of emotion in the strict sense of the word. As to the others, he has usually chosen them of his own will and perhaps has even seduced them to the point of making them leave a previous husband. It would therefore seem unfair to deny the presence of some affection toward them.

562
593x But is the term "love" still applicable? According to the European point of view, conjugal love is exclusive. Among the
152 Nkundó this does not seem to be the case. It has often been said
595x that the polygamist considers his wives, with one or two exceptions, as human capital, so many production machines. I would not deny that the harem constitutes human capital and a source of wealth, but in my opinion such a statement is much too extreme and absolute. In most cases a real affection for his wives must be attributed to the polygamist. I understand this affection to be a kind of love in reduced proportions. And I compare this situation -- mutatis mutandis -- to that of someone who loves several friends at the same time. It is

593 possible to speak of love toward several individuals in spite of differ-
[illegible] ences in its intensity, depending on the various persons who [43] are
595 its objects, although we may consider such a divided love as very
152 imperfect. But whatever name one calls it and however weak in intensity one finds it, it is impossible to deny its existence.

Among women, it is necessary to distinguish between wives
595 of monogamous men and those of polygamists, especially in the case
152 of "supplementary" wives. It is not hard to understand that among the latter, love is more likely to cool. Since the husband must divide his attentions and signs of affection, if only to preserve harmony, the situation could hardly be otherwise, even without the fact of very early marriages. In addition to the above-mentioned case of the cooling of affection among wives in polygamous marriages, there is no question that in these marriages, a community of souls, feelings, and interests is not established between wives and husbands to the same extent as in monogamous marriages. However, one could not state as a general rule that the wife of a polygamist does not love him, at least to some extent, depending on the individual. To maintain *a priori* that a man cannot be loved simultaneously by several women is logically inadmissible and contrary to the facts. Here it happens quite often that a wife leaves her polygamous husband for another because she has transferred her love to the latter. It is for the exceptions that proof should be required. Even if there are many of them, they do not invalidate the cases of real affection.

When a polygamist returns home after a long absence, he is often the object of affectionate demonstrations by his wives which are surprising to Europeans. The women fall at his feet, embrace his legs, roll on the ground, and perform contortions out of joy and emotion. It is true that the freedom resulting from colonization has done much to cool these fine sentiments.

Is it beside the point to quote the saying of [44] polygamists'
[595] wives: bokungé ékafola bitáfé, lolango ékafola botéma, "the bokungé tree divides its branches, love divides the heart"? And then there is the following fable which teaches true love: a polygamist who has three wives, is accidentally wounded and lies dying on the opposite side of the river. His wives run to the shore but find no canoe. The river is infested with crocodiles. The chief wives refuse to risk their

595 not appreciate marital fidelity the same way we do. A wife's un-
837 faithfulness is severely punished by the laws. But adultery may be discovered and known to all without causing shame or remorse. This is a marked difference between our way of thinking and that of the Nkundó. They maintain that a passing infidelity which is not followed through does not denote an absence of love for one's spouse, even if it is repeated. In spite of the implausibility of this statement, I had to accept it, for those who argued with me were so many, their positions so various, and they were really serious. Among them were a number of Christians with whom we are very satisfied and who conduct themselves admirably, as do their wives. They consider these errors to be momentary failings [48] due to passion, which permit love to remain. Indeed, often these men and women are models in the performance of their other duties. This misbehaviour is without doubt considered very serious -- their anger shows clearly that they do not consider it trivial -- but it does not exclude love and thus, as far as everything else is concerned, the spouses continue giving proof of it to each other.

Let us not forget that many elements may lead to a fall and that consciences may go far astray. On the other hand, the fact that a husband is tolerant, even to the point of exploiting his wife, does not exclude a certain love for her; a husband may be extremely indulgent and at the same time jealous to the point of crime. All that may be found among the Whites, after all. Love without the feeling of duty will not suffice to sustain a union.

Moreover, there is no dogma, no moral teaching based on religion, to restrain the instincts. And we should add that among these
● [582] primitive people, the woman's natural tendency to please, to submit to a man's desires, is highly developed. In Europe these feelings are channeled by the Christian religion and its influence on society. Here they encounter no direct obstacle except for sanctions. Before marriage
[834] sexual passion and all sensations connected with it and adjunct to it can be pursued without physical, moral, or social obstacles, at least at the present time. The surroundings in which a girl grows up and the example and conversations of her companions will tend even to push her in that direction.

831 conquered only by repeated assaults of passion. Thus it is generally
837 known among the natives that young women used to seek refuge in
864 their mother's house when the husband wanted to begin making use of his rights as a husband. The mother would try to persuade her daughter to submit to the law of life. But sometimes, if her child seemed too resistant, the mother made excuses for her and asked the husband to consider her daughter's youth. The man usually wanted to remain on good terms with his mother-in-law so he did not insist and resigned himself to waiting till nature influenced the spirit and heart of his wife.

Since young people were brought up in deep fear of dangerous relations, it should not surprise us that this feeling became a real habit and did not disappear spontaneously the moment a certain degree of liberty was permitted. As a matter of fact, could we not make similar observations in Europe?

This is the natural explanation for the praiseworthy degree of morality among adolescents in the past.

[178
836
864 Nowadays all that has changed. The young people follow where their passions lead them. Not the slightest check is placed on their impulses. Parents pay only slight attention to the conduct of their children. [82] It is better not to inquire into the morality of modern youth. Husbands no longer respect the bodies of their adolescent brides, who are themselves quite used to a sexual life and eagerly look forward to it; and no longer know the feeling of "the fear of man." Should we then be astonished at the frightening de-
[164] crease in the birth rate (1) and the ever increasing spread of venereal diseases, which seem to have been unknown in the past?

The reasons for this change will be investigated further on, under the letter C.

837 B. Between adults. Here the Nkundó are very lenient. There is a difference, however, between the socio-legal and moral viewpoints, although as we shall see the latter is influenced by the former.

● [582] A woman is entirely free, legally speaking, as long as the first payment on her bride price has not been made. No man has

---

1. The natives say that in the past young wives quickly became pregnant. And now ...

582 836 [579] exclusive rights over her. Hence the proverb: [illegible] [illegible], "[illegible] fruit found under the tree have no owner; they belong to the first person who gathers them." Thus a girl for whom nothing has been paid belongs to no one. A woman free in this manner does not infringe on the rights of any man in her sexual relations. There are therefore no sanctions against her incontinence.

836 837 Furthermore, the discovery of her activities gives rise to no shame. At most more serious parents will rebuke children who go too far -- the girls because they abuse the body and reduce their value for a prospective marriage (1), the boys because they [82] run the risk of financial difficulties (the dangers of adultery, indemnity for childbirth with death as a result, etc.).

626 836 Public opinion is even more lenient than the parents. This attitude is easy to understand: strangers need fear no unpleasant consequences. Errors of this sort are generally considered natural weaknesses, provided that they do not occur too frequently. For public opinion is hard on people who run from one to another; they are stigmatised with the name [illegible], "unfaithful, flighty, without intelligence or reasoning powers," or [illegible], a stronger term with the same meaning.

836 From all the foregoing should we deduce that every woman is free to indulge fully in fornication? On the basis of the above considerations we could frankly conclude the affirmative. The behavior that can be observed from day to day fully confirms this answer. Some people stray more or less accidentally, but for others the practice quickly becomes a habit. And it can be said of all of them that

---

[587] 1. Not that a smaller bride price would be given for them. But a serious man would rather not take a woman for wife who has "run around" a great deal and therefore is more likely to commit adultery, to be unfaithful, and less likely to become the mother of a numerous progeny.

576 they succumb to any favorable opportunity. The validity of this generalization is not affected by extremely rare exceptions which may be encountered and which are due either to a constitutional abnormality or to an extraordinarily firm Christian conviction. How should
576
177 these observations be reconciled with the statement so often heard from natives that the situation was entirely different before the coming of the white men? It was not unusual to see young women not only abstaining from sexual relations but having such a "fear of men" that they drove away seducers and defended their chastity by hitting them with a stick.

When the woman did not accept the young man's proposition, she considered it a grave insult. The initiator was entitled to no indemnity "for blows and wounds." The woman replied only in violent terms, in word or act. [84] Often she went and insulted the mother of the guilty party. When the latter was told the reason for this behavior, she could only turn on her misbehaving son and usually gave him a good talking to; if he was young enough she gave him a good beating. Thus the girl had every right to defend herself.

If the provocation gave rise to no complications in family or society, the parents paid a lot less attention. But they tried to teach [illegible] their children discretion in these dangerous matters, though their instruction primarily took the form of a lesson after an error was committed, or sometimes apropos of an incident that had befallen someone else. Some parents were very severe. These attitudes were based on a vague sense of morality which was not deduced from philosophical reasoning or religious or superstitious ideas but which was innate and instinctive so to speak. In addition, the fear of excesses and eventual social consequences no doubt also played a considerable [577] role. Excesses were feared above all, and an isolated occurrence was regarded more or less as a momentary weakness.

To form an accurate picture of the situation that existed in the past, we must not lose sight of the fact that, because of very early marriages, the number of young single women was necessarily limited.

562 The attitude toward single men was more lenient than toward
156 girls, unless their behavior had any consequences and apart from the danger of their actions becoming habitual, leading inevitably to palavers.

Article XII. The Attitude Toward the Bride Price

583
562 1. What is the woman's attitude toward the bride price?

Only we Europeans can ask such a question. To the Nkundó mind it is superfluous -- in fact it is really stupid. The bride-price system is the normal system [170] of marriage. The Nkundó do not conceive of marriage in any other way. Without the payment of a bride price there is no marriage; the woman is not considered to be a wife, she is simply a slave. This notion is a necessary consequence of the bride-price system. Thus it is not surprising that the woman is very much attached to this system, and that under normal conditions -- that is, when there is no European influence -- she does not want any union without a bride price, for she would then be a slave. This is obvious. All these ideas are held together like the links of a chain.

2. Our attitude toward the bride price

583
648 At the beginning of colonization the Europeans, government agents as well as missionaries, viewed with repugnance a marriage system based on the payment of a bride price. In their eyes it was neither more nor less than the sale of women and therefore a form of slavery. They felt they should counteract it by abolishing the bride price and introducing marriage in the European manner, which seemed more consistent with man's free nature. Many Blacks employed by the Whites as soldiers, laborers, etc., were thus married without bride price. Nevertheless, no direct action was taken against the system. Later it became apparent that it would be harmful to abolish this ancestral custom before it was possible to replace it with a better system. (1) In the end it was realized that the payment

(1) It is not even enough to substitute a better system; those who are to benefit from it must understand it and be convinced that it is better.

585 men although their first marriage has not been broken and no new
571 marriage agreement has been concluded.
119 The data given above provides no confirmation in the
[114] Nkundɔ tribes under study of the statement made by Engels "Les Wangata [The Wangata]," Revue congolaise, 1910, p. 37) that among the Wangata "her husband can exchange her . . . she can make no protest." (1)

1. The Ekonda apply the term liangɔ only to an exchange of daughters or sisters. They have a specific term: mpɛngɔ. Note, by the way, that certain Mbɔlɛ tribes who practice a true wife exchange designate it by the same name: impɛngɔ.

Article VII. Purchase

432 The purchase of women is not practiced by the Nkundɔ tribes
582 under discussion here nor even by the Bombwanja. The practice is to
588 be found only among the Elíngá. What is involved is not a marriage by means of a bride price but a real purchase; that is, a man buys a woman from her husband for a certain sum. He does not go through the woman's parents, as in an ordinary marriage by bride-price payment, but addresses himself directly to the husband.

In general it is the woman who makes the proposal that a man buy her in this manner. Sometimes a man wants to take a woman and
[721] first comes to an agreement with her. Before the Europeans arrived such a situation generally led to a war between clans or villages. After an armistice the palaver was settled, and the [219] purchaser paid the husband. Nowadays, since the Nkundɔ no longer dare to
[117] fight because of the legal sanctions that inevitably follow, when a woman abandons her husband for another man who wants to buy her, the parties involved bring the palaver before the judges. As the woman wants only her new husband, and as, on the other hand, war and the punishment of women have been abolished, the first husband has no

684 alternative but to yield and settle the amount to be paid. (1)
432
582

> 1. This is the situation that has prevailed up to the present. The native tribunals have been given the power to punish the offenders and they are therefore obliged to decree the punishments designated. In my opinion, if the legitimate husband brings complaint, the court should decide in his favor, not only because the purchase of a woman is involved but also because there is a question of polyandry, since the marriage has not been dissolved.

432
582
583 The amount that the purchaser must pay the husband corresponds to the amount of the bride price. But since the valuables do not pass through the hands of the woman's family, the first marriage has not been dissolved. Thus the word used is not jíngí but lisómbá (from the verb -sómba, "to buy"), a term applicable to any purchase. The Nkundó also say básómbana endé la njíngi, "he makes a purchase from the husband" (literally, "from the payer of the bride price"). Instead of valuables equivalent to the bride price, the purchaser may give the husband a live woman to replace the woman purchased.

It is a common practice for the husband, in that case, to demand a second woman as well, who is a wife or relative of the purchaser, as an ebísa to the first. She does not have to be a real ebísa, that is, a relative of the first woman. She is an ebísa only in a very inaccurate sense. She bears a special name, imukambónga, "gatherer of pepper," to indicate her role as a helper serving the woman who has been handed over in payment or acquired by means of the purchase price.

Finally, the purchaser (bosómbi) must establish the bonds of alliance between himself and his new parents-in-law. For that purpose he makes a payment of valuables to them in addition to the original pride price. Although in practice [220] this payment

585 constitutes a bride price, it does not bear that name because its legal
583 significance is not the same. The specific name for this particular
593 payment is bongyambéko, from -ongya, "to add something new" and mbéko, "path." Thus the new husband adds a new alliance. The verb yonga or yongya is also used under other circumstances: for a new tile or leaf that is added on to a damaged spot on a roof, for a patch on a piece of clothing, or for something that has been newly introduced. The term therefore seems to indicate that what is involved is not a new marriage but rather a modification grafted on to the old one. Furthermore, the term is often used pejoratively. One may thus suppose that this custom is not very ancient, but of course the evidence is not sufficient.

587 It is apparent from the above that the purchase of a woman is
592 a difficult and expensive operation. A kind of second bride price (bongyambéko) and a second wife (bokambéfuge) cost quite a fortune. In the past the purchaser also had to pay indemnities to the families of men killed in combat (he might have had to pay as much as 100 rings, for the price of one "corpse" was 15 to 20 bekonga, the monetary value
[436] of a man) (1). One gets the impression that, though for reasons unknown to us the tribes in question permitted the exchange of women in their laws and customs, they did so unwillingly, and that the persons in authority increased the difficulties, so to speak, in order to frighten the amateurs and to reduce the number of cases to an inescapable minimum.

One might wonder why men do not hesitate in the face of such great financial difficulties. Psychologically, it seems entirely plausible that a man who is in love with another's wife and has the necessary wealth would in his passion throw himself into such an adventure. Probably that is how the practice originated. But this likelihood does not explain the existence of a purchase, since the breaking of the first marriage and the commitment to a new one could just as well be

---

[437] 1. Five dead were an enormous number in this sort of "war."

recourse to the assistance of a third party who -- for remuneration, of course -- undertook to carry out his project. This task was usually confided to Batswa, who did not disdain this type of work, which was quite suited to their taste.

The fact that the law gives the husband the right to punish his wife [377] for the type of oratory under discussion meant that a wife had to exercise some discretion in her choice of expressions. Fearing violent reactions, she often spoke the more serious insults softly.

Since the European penetration women are more daring. For their husbands fear European justice, which follows principles entirely different from their ancestral law. Thus they complain bitterly of the insolence of their wives: "We have become slaves; the women are now all-powerful. They may do as they please, for we can no longer do anything to them." But as soon as native courts are sufficiently educated and are freed from what an eminent colonial jurist has called "the jurisdiction of palavers" (1), they will no doubt effect a salutary change in this situation.

The emancipation of women is one of the factors that have increased the frequency of divorce. For a man who cannot avenge continuous outrages remains dominated by shame, and the presence of the one who is the cause of it must become unbearable in the long run; whence the indifference, antipathy, hate, and the inevitable results of that permanent confusion in the household.

Men among whom the feeling of modesty was highly developed hanged themselves out of shame instead of attacking the guilty wife. That is what many natives have maintained in talking with me. Nevertheless, I have no knowledge of a present-day example. When this happened, the wife's family no longer took action against their daughter. Nor were they obliged to pay an indemnity, although their child had brought about the death. They simply had to acquit

---

1. See A. Sohier, Bulletin des Séances de l'Institut Royal Colonial Belge, Vol. 6, 1935, 1, p. 60 and passim.

593 to which she devotes her time, sitting on a couch or a log, so oc-
594 cupies her attention that she is no longer aware that her narrow
(154) garment is no longer in its proper modest position, and the gossip is therefore exposed to shame and ridicule.

597 In addition to giving his wife a good whipping, the husband
591 also brings out his vocabulary of invective and sarcasm. The woman does not run the risk of complaining, for she knows in advance that she will be placed in the wrong. Nevertheless, the discreet husband will not go too far. The elders suggest that the young people moderate the violence of their expressions. For, they say, "a woman is more sensitive to it than a man; she might go and hang herself
[825] in the forest," Išinya ěyakóma lá la nsóyi. "Išinya (the ant) will hang herself one day out of an excess of shame" (this is a reference to the way this insect bites into a blade of grass or some other object and dies rather than let go). "And above all," they say, "do not extend your insults to your wives' parents, for they could urge their daughters to leave you."

With respect to adultery, the punishments prescribed in Nkundó law will be examined below in Article VIII.

It is apparent from the preceding description that the Nkundó attach relatively little importance to the outpourings of loquacious eloquence characteristic of the weaker sex as long as they do not go beyond limits or degenerate into outrageous and ignominious insults. The elders teach youth to be calm in the face of these demonstrations of the declamatory art at which most Negresses are as adept as our fishwives at home.

●[562] They say that a woman is like an elephant: bǒmoto ale ě njoku. There is nothing to be done about her. It is futile [280] to try and speak gently to her; she does not even listen. To impose silence on her is impossible. To try and calm her, make her listen to reason, is a waste of effort. It is the same with an elephant: He
[825] can perhaps be chased away with cries and noise, but he will destroy the crops nonetheless.

The fact that a woman readily opens her mouth is not considered a sign that she does not love her husband. The Nkundó even

payment rightly owed, and in the absence of an adequate translation, "indemnity" is still the least inaccurate. (1)

1. The words used for "reward" are [illegible], which is a reward for an unusual service, like the capture of a leopard or another "royal" animal ([illegible], such as a python, an eagle, etc.) or a beautiful dance, and [illegible], which is a reward for small services.

One point remains to be noted. The two forms of punishment, violence and indemnity, may not be combined, and this principle is applied in all situations (2). Should this prohibition be

2. For example, see also Chapter VIII, Article III, 1.

construed as an implicit condemnation of violent measures? Or have we here the use of a system of settlement? It is difficult to settle this question, and actually the two explanations overlap at least in part.

It is not without interest to note that, in order to justify sanctions against the accomplice, the Nkundó invoke his frequently dominant role in adultery. Actually they reason that a woman is weak by nature; her emotions predominate, she is easily led and resists enticement only with difficulty. A man on the other hand is more reasonable, better able to control himself. Sanctions enacted and applied against the wife alone would not only leave out the punishment of one of the two culprits, but they would also be inadequate for the preservation of social order, since the woman remains exposed to succumbing out of weakness in spite of the penalties. The severity of Nkundó law with regard to the corporal punishment of the wife, which exists in spite of these considerations, are explained in terms of the woman's sensitive nature and of the power her husband has over her which he lacks in relation to her accomplice.

684
[587]

D. Against the go-between (1) Nkundó law permits all sorts of invective, blows, and a good whipping. Formerly the most serious situation arose if a woman was called directly. In the past, if favored by circumstances (especially the social position of the families involved), certain of the more jealous and bold men caught the go-between and sold him as a slave. This punishment was entirely legitimate, even though the person for whom the go-between acted was the one primarily guilty and therefore the prisoner's family could attack him on that account. People cite the rather recent historic case of Bokáfiá of Iloko of Bosanga (Ntómbá, Wángata), who sold a Botswa named Bompílo into slavery because the latter had brought a lover's gift to Wályo, his favorite.

684
582
581

E. Conclusion. In examining the various sanctions that Nkundó law provides against adulterers and their accomplices, we are struck by a noticeable difference among the cases. Although a wife has certain means to check her husband's misconduct, she is unquestionably less well armed than he. This is a logical consequence of the nature of Nkundó marriage. A husband defends his "property," whereas a wife is not an "owner." Furthermore, in this realm the requirements are stricter for a woman than for a man. Even in Europe the misconduct of a man is judged very differently than a woman's weakness, the latter being considered much more serious and shameful, even though -- in an absolute sense -- the two are equal. Finally, the system of polygamy plays a role, for it tends to weaken a wife's love and consequently her jealousy, so

---

1. The Nkundó generally use go-betweens to tender invitations to women; these are frequently children between the ages of six and fourteen. The disastrous effect of such a practice on the bringing up of young people is easily understood. In some groups it has inflicted a real moral evil.

[illegible] that she becomes accustomed to her husband's relations with various
[illegible] other women. Consequently, the reaction of the women in general
[illegible] [333] against adultery is much weaker than that of the men. Moreover, because of this same system, a woman is much more exposed to weakness, and stronger sanctions are therefore necessary to insure her fidelity.

Finally, there is one last reason for considering a woman's misconduct as more serious. It is the danger of conception through adultery, with all the attendant consequences: risks for the pregnant woman, forced continence for the husband, etc. (1)

1. See no. 6 below as well as Chapter I, Part 2, Article IV, 3, and Chapter X, Article II, 3.

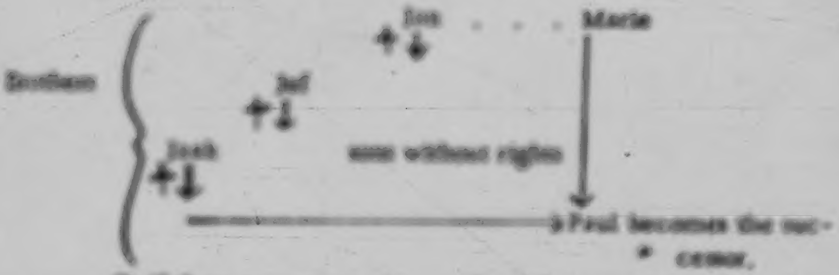
562
649
From the description of sanctions it is apparent that in spite of the woman's inferior position, Nkundó law does not leave husbands the full and complete freedom which, according to certain writers, they are accorded among other peoples. Even if the means of repression available to the wife do not incontestably prove that the husband has an obligation of conjugal fidelity -- and the wife's legal status explains a great deal -- the fact remains that the nkonga as well as public opinion approve of even her violent reaction, proving that she is right and the husband wrong.

5. Public opinion

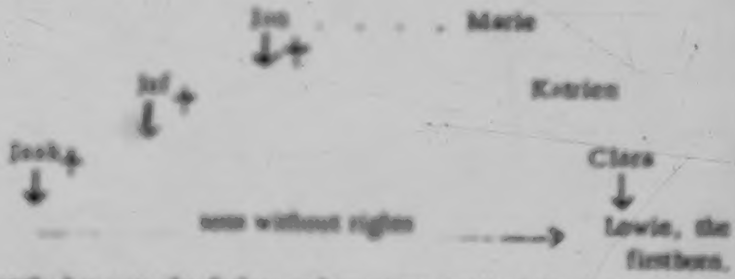
626
637
Public opinion is fairly lenient in relation to isolated instances (yôsí, elonga). It clearly recognizes the error involved in infringing on the conjugal rights of another, but the error is attributed to human weakness. In the case of habit the situation is different: it is criticized frequently and severely. Habitual sinners
[92] are called elilóká (from the verb lofoka, literally "to flutter" and figuratively "to flirt"), ebóngó or ebóbóngó (from the verb bôbonga) or ebóbóá (from bôboa) "to flutter, to be flighty and fickle." These epithets are applied primarily to women, who are more subject to this failing than men.

596

their sisters, bana wa [illegible]. As an example:


Brothers
Jan
Jef
Jooh
Marie
sons without rights
Paul becomes the successor.

Or if there were more sisters, the rights passed to the firstborn son of these sisters; for instance:


Jan
Marie
Jef
Katrien
Jooh
Clara
sons without rights
Lowie, the firstborn.

He consequently became the father and supreme head of the family upon the death of the three brothers.

596
583
584

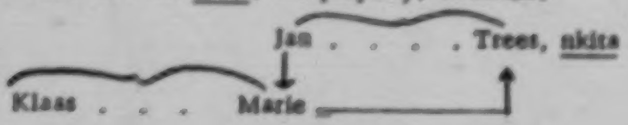
In order to understand this peculiar custom clearly, some explanations should be given. The custom in this country is that the woman is sold; not a single one escaped that general rule in former days. With that money the father or brother bought, or rather, had to buy himself another woman. This wife belonged, however, to the daughter or sister who had been sold; the daughter or sister called her nkita, "goods" or "property." The children born of this nkita called her [the woman sold]: is'e 'omoto, "female father." Even if she brought male children into the world, the rights of their mother passed to them, and [304] their mother was called father by the children of the nkita. According to our ideas, they were only nephews. That held even if the woman was still not paid for; it was enough that a ndanga, a security as proof of further payment, had been given. It was also not

576 583 586 necessary for her father or brother to have brought her to the man and to have received money for her; another member of the family was sufficient. She was sold by her family and accordingly, wherever the money had remained or whoever had received it, she had her rights in the family. Since the family maintained itself through the sale of the children of the female sex, the male children born of them were considered as the masters, the rightful claimants, the fathers. There was no exception to this rule; it was not to be altered, and no one had ever thought of disputing the place of the claimant or of laying claim to his rights. I have only heard of one single case of that sort, namely, at the succession of the Bobi, the younger brother was said to have killed his older brother in order to take over his place. He was said to have made a hole in his brother's prau, so that it sank when it reached the middle of the stream. The matter in itself seems an impossibility; also I consider it a legend, unless an accident might have happened that was interpreted in a mistaken or deliberately false manner.

596 576 The rightful claimant, bona wa nkana, sister's son, might still be a child; nevertheless he was called father and everyone vied with one another in showing him the honor due a father. That was the unbreakable law, not only for the father common to the hamlet, boloi, but also for the father of each individual family.

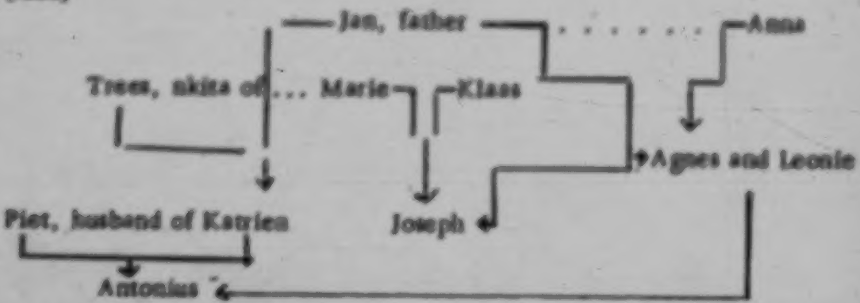
Nkita

583 602 Nkita is what the woman is called who is bought with the money that the father or brother has received for his daughter or sister on the occasion of her marriage. In reality, however, she is only the nkita, goods or property, of the sold woman. Nkita ekam, "my property," this woman calls her. For instance, Jan [336] sells his daughter, Marie, to Klaas and buys another wife, Trees, with the money received. The latter woman is now the nkita, the property, of Marie.



583 searching for old disputes and old arguments about wives to get a wife.
604 And then they were still not always successful; their youth itself was against them here and robbed them constantly of the little that they
464 had saved for that purpose. The means for getting money, such as lances, knives, arm and foot bands, were extremely scarce. The Blacks do not know of workers or servants, and if one of these poor souls presented himself at the home of one who was better endowed by fortune and offered to chop wood for him, to lay out a manioc field, or to build a house for him, to gather straw and bamboo in the forest for that purpose, then the inborn laziness of the Negro would require long months to complete that work. As salary, the worker received only a few bokongo (copper arm of leg bonds); these he already owed to the owner for having shown too much inclination for one or another of
589 his wives. The result of this was that many young men remained with-
out a wife and that those who were favored by chance, that is to say,
595 had many children of the female sex in their family, each had several
562 wives. I consider this a primary cause of polygyny. The women had a relatively high monetary value and represented capital. Thus, it did not happen that anyone gave his daughter or sister to another for nothing, just as among us it does not happen that a farmer gives his cow or horse to a poor devil for nothing.

583 If the father or brother sold a daughter born of the nkita of his
604 daughter or sister -- a right that general custom gave him and which
683 usually occurred, since the children of the female sex were sold very young and the boys, the rightful claimants or owners, in that case were still very young -- this was done in order to buy another wife. The rights of the children shifted then as follows:
[228]



583 Jan, the father, by selling Katrien, the nkita of his daughter
604 Marie, becomes indebted to Joseph, the son of Marie and at the same
603 time his own grandson; and on the other side he becomes the debtor of
Antonius, his other grandson, by selling his mother, Katrien.

Anna, whom he bought, was then the nkita of Katrien and the quasi-nkita of Marie. Both sons, Joseph and Antonius, were hard pressed because of Anna, the nkita of both of their mothers. If Anna bore two daughters, as I have indicated, the case was simple: the first daughter belonged to Joseph and the second to Antonius. If, however, she gave birth to only one daughter, then this child belonged to Joseph, and Antonius was left out in the cold. If father Jan had no children of the female sex by Anna, then the matter was extremely thorny for both of them, and if their grandfather or uncle possessed no money, had no more wives by whom he had daughters, there was nothing left for them to do but, at his death, to take the nkita of their mother as a wife. For this reason it happened many times that young men lived with old women, and even though there was then generally no more hope of children, those wives were then still good enough to cook the meals and do the little work that a Negro household requires.

000 I will not digress any further about the method of distribution of women, about the rights over the women which the nkita system brings with it. It would take us too far. Furthermore, not only the present, but also the past and the future are involved in it; so that one would have to be a Negro and raised in those matters to understand them clearly . . . and even then they involve numerous palavers (disputes), which continually agitate the families and the villages.

[339]

The Origin of the Nkita?

596 The sale of the woman and the immediate loss of her freedom
583 must naturally have given her cause for revolt. It has perhaps cost the
562 man a severe struggle to make the woman content with her lot. A compensation or reimbursement had to be given to her, and most certainly the nkita system has its origin there. It was at least a partial compensation that the man gave to the woman. It gave her rights over her nkita

596 583 562 and over the children who were born to the latter; even more, it gave her own children rights which exist nowhere else in the world and probably among no other people: they became the superiors, the fathers of the family of their mother. Unfortunately, practically considered, the woman enjoyed very little of the gift which was given her; she remained what she was, slave of money, slave of the man. Even her children, for whom the nkita-ship secured such great advantages in her family, brought them into a false situation, in that it robbed them in the home of their own father of all the advantages that it brought them in the home of their mother's father. It was only the old and well-favored who actually gained advantage from the nkita system and enjoyed them.

1) It relieved them in the first place of all care on behalf of their daughters whom they sold while still children; and if later, after they were grown up, these daughters complained about the injustice done to them, they could answer them, "But, my dear daughter, I have done you no wrong; here in my own house is the woman whom I bought with your money; she belongs to you always, and the children that I have by her are your children; you are both their father and their mother; they will call you is'eomoto (female father), and in that capacity they will honor and serve you; the boys will at the same time be the children of your children, and the girls will be sold to give your sons the opportunity to buy a wife for themselves."

2) It discharged them for the most part from all care of providing a wife for their sons, and it denied the latter the right to make claims to the women whom the father possessed. [340] If the son begged his father for a woman, he could put him off and say to him, "But, my boy, you have the nkita of your mother; the children (girls) who will be born of her are for you. We shall sell them, and with the money we will buy you a wife." Most of those girls, however, were traded by the father for another wife, since his son was still, in that case, small. Almost all the women then ended up in the harem of the father before passing on to the son. Thus, after all, the nkita system only benefited the lust and the lasciviousness of the old Negro and made him the one and only master of the woman. Sons, daughters, wives, and children were, in contrast, the dupes and victims of the nkita-ship.

837 When a wife of a polygynist had illicit relations with another 586 man of the same village, this was called Bonsamba. When she had such relations with a man of another village, this was called Isoke. As we have observed, the ordinary wives of the harem often had such relations. When the woman eloped with her bonsamba or isoke, or with whomever it was, she was pursued by her husband or owner, who tried to get her back. If the wife refused, negotiations over the bride price began.

If an agreement was reached or if a pledge was given as guarantee for the payment, the first bond was considered broken, and the woman was considered bound to this second man, even though he had been her bonsamba or isoke.

It might also happen that the first husband was so jealous that he did not want to make any agreement; then he attempted to kill either the guilty wife or her second husband. If the woman became 593 ill at the home of her husband, he went to tell her family and had to 758 give a security to the family.

583 Often the family came to get the wife, in order to be able to care for her better. If, in such a case, the wife [538] died at the home of her family, there were no further difficulties about the bride price, according to their customs. If, however, the bride price had still not been completely paid, the family asked their son-in-law to pay the remainder.

583 In recent times, now that the heathen customs have been 178 undermined by the European occupation, we see that the husbands whose wives have gone to their family when sick and have died there, demand the return of the bride price from the family, but this is completely contrary to their old customs. In one case the husband could demand the return of the bride price, namely, if the wife had left while healthy to go to her family and had died there.

562 Buying or Trading of Women. The woman was also in many 439 cases an acknowledged object of trade. The great village chiefs, among others Ibuka and Yoma, of whom we shall speak further, carried on a sort of woman trade. With European articles and also native currency, they went to other districts of the Equator [Province] to buy women with them, just like someone who goes to market, even though no public markets where women were sold actually existed.

624 An *nkumu* can never walk alone, but must always be accompanied by others, and on no occasion whatsoever may he run. Even though he never washes, if he is out [481] in the rain and sees everybody else hurrying for shelter, he will not quicken his pace. [513] His movements must be slow and deliberate. The *nkumu* never sleeps alone; waking and sleeping he is attended by someone. But apart from this he is free to go where he wishes. The *nkumu* is not indiscriminate, as others may be, in his private habits, but [514] must use his own latrine at all times, and if travelling must have his own latrine in each place where he stays. The inland *nkumu* frequently take advantage of this custom [556] by hiding their accumulated brass rods at the bottom of a freshly dug latrine. Such hidden wealth will be acquired by an inheritor at the decease of the *nkumu*.

In speaking of himself the *nkumu* never refers to himself by his title but always by his own name.

624 The couch upon which the *nkumu* sits or reclines during the daytime may not be shared indiscriminately with others, but those permitted to sit upon it at the same 352 time as the *nkumu* are *mooni*, women, and Batwa. The reservation of this couch for [562 the use of the *nkumu* is not surprising, but the exceptions are. One explanation given was that women and Batwa are not *bato ba ase*, persons in particular; they do not 563] count for anything in the social life of the community; they are not really 'people'. Another explanation was that they do not pay fines, this being tantamount to saying [672] that they are exempt from laws and therefore cannot break laws even by doing what would be for others an illegal act. The stool of the *nkumu*, however, has closer restrictions in the manner of its use. Besides the *nkumu* only two others may sit upon it, *Nsoo* and *Mpenge*. It is always carried by one of his wives, though not necessarily by any special one.

624 The restrictions concerning the food of the *nkumu* are many. He may eat food only in his own house, or, if on a journey, in one given over for his use. He may not 262 enter another house to partake of food even if invited to do so. Likewise the *nkumu* may not eat in the forest, or eat or drink anywhere along the road when on a journey, but must wait until he arrives at a village and has a house at his disposal in order to partake of food and drink. He never 'sleeps with hunger'; even if a wife or child should die causing him great sorrow he must partake of food before going to sleep. [765] The Bonginda *nkumu* must never go into mourning, and death must be ignored by them, but the inland *nkumu* are permitted to mourn. All food carried to an *nkumu* must be covered, this rule even applying to water. Food must not be placed in a basket with high sides (*ebuka*), but in a shallow one (*mpale*), and no food that has been kept overnight in a pot may be eaten by him: swelling of the abdomen will result. Various foods are taboo, among these all fast-moving snakes, though slow- [824] moving ones may be eaten; light-coloured palm-nuts may not be eaten, and a variety of yam known as *menkiki* is shunned, for it is with the tough stems of the *menkiki* that the dying body of the *nkumu* will be bound to ensure the sitting posture necessary for burial.

624 Among regulations roughly classed as social, we have already covered several in references above, and have referred to the *nkumu* in council. It may be added here that [623] he is expected to agree with the majority of the councillors and not fall out with them. The rules affecting the *mage* of the *nkumu* are accompanied by severe penalties. There [689] must not be any fighting; if anger is aroused to the point of blows the antagonists

This funeral drumming is kept up for a long time, off and on for days, and is very stirring in its rhythm. While it is going on, the elders congregate in an *ebanga*. They fast and have nothing to do with their wives during this time. The *ekopo* is mourning, and the *molembe* may be likewise mourning, but for the others it is a time of rejoicing, and also of the relaxing of moral restraints. It is an occasion for dancing by both Batwa and 'freemen', the former regarding this as a time for special rejoicing, for the *nkumu* was their master and now he is dead they are no longer under restraint. They are free to take any of their master's goods and even to snatch blankets off the corpse. Men and women do not dance together; the women, taking some of their husbands' weapons, go off in one direction, and the men, arrayed in finery, dance at the other end of the village. 624 766 [533] [535] [563]

While the *nkumu* is still unburied and the drumming is going on, the *molembe* look for a successor among the *ekopo*. Often this man will, as we have seen, have already been designated. The *molembe*, Batwa, and others in the village make up a party, and attired in war finery go off with their weapons as though after a man they wished to kill. As they go they sing: [539]

Nkombe w'oopiita elimbo
We elale we nko?
Hawk, thou hast destroyed the nest,
Where art thou going to sleep?

Before catching the real successor they catch one or another in fun, singing this song. The man of course refuses to be *nkumu*, and the point of the song is that because of his refusal the *ekopo* no longer fulfils its function of supplying the *molembe* with *nkumu* and therefore ceases to be of any use to them. If this man by refusing thus destroys the family nest, where will they sleep?

Finally, after this fun, the real successor is caught, his face daubed with black, and the group sing: [302] [539]

Bola lasw-oo, lasola nkulu.
The cunning animal is hiding, reveal the tortoise.

Thus the new *nkumu*, like a cunning animal, is hiding, but when discovered, like the tortoise, he will not try to run away. The whole group conducts the new *nkumu* to the *ipamu* and sits all night guarding him. Earlier on the day of the actual interment of the dead *nkumu*, the new one is installed with ceremonies as already described.

On the day the *nkumu* dies his people scatter to other villages to look for slaves for the executions on the day of the burial. Slave-owners or husbands of unwanted wives ask quietly how much money there is for the man or woman, accept the agreed amount, and tell the buyers to go quietly and catch the slave or wife before anything is suspected and an escape is made. In this connexion we may note two classes of wives, *bopika* and *iboto*. A third class, *boamba*, acquired by the payment of a very small bride price, was not nearly as common formerly as at present and may be passed by. A *bopika* was a slave wife acquired by capture in war or stolen. If loved by her husband she will take her place practically on an equality with the members of the village, but she may be killed, for she is her husband's possession, 'his money' is the native expression. An *iboto* is a wife for whom a very high bride price has been paid, obliging her family to give wives to the other family in perpetuity, supplying 766 567 762 562

766 a successor to replace a deceased woman, and thus maintaining the balance between
567 the two families. Such wives were seldom killed, for they had relatives who cared
for them and would object, and who had the power to do so by refusing to
782 fulfil their obligations and by retaining the bride price already received. The group
562 of men and women gathered together for execution thus comprised males and
bopika women from the 'free' group (*baoto*, as applied to all men and women
not Batwa), and Batwa men and women whose owners had consented to their
death. It sometimes happened that a man, seeing a woman among this group who
took his fancy, might obtain her by paying for her in money or substituting one of
his own slaves.

In some cases the executioner, *bomembe*, was chosen from among the family of the
766 dead *nkumu*, in others he was selected from among the whole group of people over
782 which the *nkumu* held sway. The man having been chosen, the knife is brought out
of the house where it has been kept by some elder. This, a blade some sixteen
[412] inches in length, two-edged, decorated by alternating longitudinal lines of polished
and blackened steel and inserted in a wooden handle, is sharpened on one edge,
carefully wrapped in a plantain leaf, and laid away for use on the following day.

At dawn the prisoners are taken to the water and washed to clean them, inland towns accomplishing this purpose by dragging them up and down the village in the dew-drenched grass tied by a liana. The prisoners then are arranged in a V shape, the apex nearest the spot where the *nkumu's* body is sitting in state. Low seats are made by resting a stick in the forks of two perpendicular ones, and this cross bar is straddled by the victim. His hands are tied behind his back and his head tied to a sapling securely fixed at one end in the ground, the other bent down sufficiently to allow for tying the head with considerable tension on the rope. When all is thus arranged an expert drummer begins to pound out a rhythmic beat, and the ceremony of handing over the knife takes place.

The executioner of the day is dressed in finery but no camwood powder is evident,
for it is a time of mourning and not of rejoicing. He wears a hat with many feathers,
a vine encircles his waist, and bracelets of the same his arms. Then the man who last
occupied the position of executioner comes forward. An elder has already brought
the knife wrapped in its leaf and also a heap of ash on a leaf, both of which are placed
on the ground. The old executioner picks up the knife while the new one faces him.
The former demonstrates with gestures how he used to go about his work, the
motions, the attitudes, the fine arts of the task. Even though the executioner of the
day may have had previous experience, this part of the ceremony must be gone
[516] through. Then, holding the knife aloft, the instructor raises his right leg at right
angles to his body, bends it at the knee so that the shin hangs perpendicularly, and
the new executioner passes underneath it, returning the same way. He now faces
the old executioner, who lays the knife in his own hands, arms outstretched and
palms open, the handle resting in his right palm, the blade in his left. The new man,
facing his instructor, places his outstretched and open palms on the shoulders of
the other, draws his hands down his arms, finally coming to the knife, which, because
of its position is thus received, handle in the left hand, blade in the right. Releasing
his right-hand grasp of the blade, he stoops, sprinkles the blade with some of the
ash, then rubs his right hand in the dirt to remove all slippery sweat. Then still

621 nkúmú. They, too, however, have only one man who opens a
624 meeting and one investigating judge. Only one of the nkúmú
622 has the function of judge. Consequently, we may say that even
if the office is divided, the group still forms a unit as far as
jurisdiction and political organization are concerned.

Among these groups we usually can observe a balanced
614 system of distribution as far as titles and offices are concerned.
621 It may either be predominantly democratic, as in Isangi, so
622 that all groups may lay claim to titles and offices, or it may be
624 oligarchic, as in Mbanga, where all power is vested in the oldest group of sons. In most cases, oligarchical groups tend to disintegrate; the younger groups attempt to free themselves from the rule. Democratic villages usually have a greater degree of cohesion.

In Isangi the small kinship groups of Ndɔngɔ́ (Nos. 2-4), Ngonga (No. 5), and Boyeke (Nos. 14-18) formerly had the privilege of furnishing the nkúmú. This practice has been discarded, and the honor is now rotated among the six local groups of the village. Only the small kinship groups of the Bolíma, Besilo, and Njálɛ́okuli are excluded.

The six settlement communities of Isangi and similar
621 groupings found in other villages are parts of a village which
614 in my opinion are best described by the term hamlet [Weiler].

These are units which are predominantly intentional in nature. In spite of their functional weakness, they have survived even in the new settlement although they may not dwell together in a block. As a result of reintegration, they have lost their function as conscription district for the dancing groups in Isangi (see p. 25), but even at the present time they still represent the most important grouping in Isangi; we were aware of it before identifying any of the kinship groups. It is expected that they will lose their importance if Isangi does not return to its original site. By nature less closely connected with the or-
[562] ganization of the village of their husbands, the women have
become the point of departure for the new order of things (e.g., for dance groups) which fulfills the requirements of the new settlement conditions.

101 classifies the Bakela (or Boyéla), who are unquestionably pure Móngo, among the Wakutshu [Wakusu] or Batetela is highly significant.

161 It is impossible to give an exact figure for the size of the population we have just defined. In any case one can estimate that it is more than a million.

184 Throughout the huge territory occupied by this people, only insignificant differences in institutions or language can be observed. Greater divergences appear in the material manifestations of culture.

101
563 In my opinion it is likely that certain groups which belong among the Nkundo-Móngo as far as culture and speech are concerned, may be distinguished from them in genealogy and history. Among these are the true Elíña or riverain people (the Bolóki, the Eleku, the Elíngá of the upper Lomela and the upper Tshuapa), (2) the Ngombe tribes

2. We exclude a few Libinja and Basokó clans living near Coquilhatville, since they are clearly of alien origin. The native name for the Tshuapa [River] is Jwafa or Jafa and, higher up, Lwafa. Among the Bongandó and the Bahamba it is called the Laha.

of the Lomela, the Mbólé, the Bakutu of the Lomela-Tshuapa (with whom one should probably include the Ntómbá and the Nkóle), (3)

3. See my article in *Congo*, 1931, Vol. 1, pp. 21 ff.

and perhaps also the Mpámá and the Losakanyi. (4). This likelihood

4. The latter are erroneously called Losakanja by Father Schebesta in *Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge*, p. 199. They seem to have lived formerly on the lower Momboyo River (Luilaka); the land on which Flandria Mission has been established still bears their name.

M 101 563 does not exclude the possibility of a distant kinship, but the present state of our knowledge makes the solution to this question impossible; for very close resemblances may be explained by a common origin as well as by a period of living in close contact, and differences may be due to diverse origins [5] or to a temporary separation at a certain point in history.

P M 101 563 144 A considerable number of Pygmoids or Pygmiforms (1) (Batswá, Jófe, Balímbe, Bilángi, Boné) are to be found scattered among the Nkundó. They share a community of social and economic interests with their "masters." The Botswá belongs to his master and depends on him, but he is not, strictly speaking, his slave. His master not only has rights over him; he also has obligations to fulfill. Most of the Pygmoids are to be found in the western part of Nkundó territory; in the east they are very rare.

M 101 173 The Nkundó-Móngo came from the north or northeast, while the Mbólé claim to have come from the northwest, and the Bakutu from the west. (2)

M 101 A word should be said about the name of these people. Ordinarily, we call them the Nkundó-Móngo. The first of these names is used in the west and in the south, the second especially in the north and in the east. The Elángá of the Losanganya region are called the Mongo éâ Lolo, or the Upstream Móngo, by the peoples to the west of them. Foreigners call all these peoples, including the Nkundó, the Mbólé, the Bakutu, etc., by the name of Móngo. In literature one sometimes encounters the name of Lolo or Balolo. (3) But, as we have seen, *lolo* is not a proper noun but simply the word meaning "upstream"

---

1. This name was proposed by Father Schebesta, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

2. See my study, previously cited, *passim*.

3. For example, the name of the Protestant mission of the Lulonga is "Congo Balolo Mission."

We have excluded the majority of these groups from the scope
101 of our study and have confined ourselves to a territory limited as follows: it is bound in the north by the Ruki-Tshuapa; in the east by the Salonga as far as the Mbólé boundary; in the south by a line running from the junction of the Luilaka and the Lwfle to the northern boundary of the Bombwanja of the Lokoló and then to the boundary of the Ekonda; in the west by the Boloko, a tributary of the Ruki. In other words, we are considering only a very small part of the territory of the Nkundó tribes. But [8] it is the only part we have been able to investigate thoroughly. We are including the Bombwanja and the Elíngá who have settled in the area thus outlined.

The Elíngá live only along the big rivers. In our area they
101 include in addition to the true Elíngá (of whom there are only about
563 ten clans belonging to the Bolóki group, who have settled between Ikéngé and Bokéle and Mpaká, and the four or five Eleku villages on the Salonga), the Nkóle and Ekonda (1) villages who have adopted the way of life and customs of the Elíngá. (2)

As to the Bombwanja, their clans may be found scattered throughout the area. They are more or less dependent on clans of other peoples with whom they live and form hamlets of a sort in a great many villages. A solid bloc of them is to be found in the vicinity of Bokátola. It is constituted as an independent district [chefferie] even though, according to "custom," it "belongs" as a julé (pl. baulé), "subject," or "subjugated clan" (the verb is uja) to certain Bokóté villages or groups. (3) It is quite possible that these

1. Related respectively to the Nkóle of the Lokoló and the Ekonda of Lake Leopold II.

2. See the data on the history and life of the Elíngá published by Father Boelaert, M.S.C., in Congo, 1935, Vol. 2, p. 705.

3. The same is true of the Bombwanja group of the Lokoló. Other clans are scattered

Bombwanja were originally Mbólé, for certain words and idioms in their dialect are reminiscent of the Lombólé.

Let us briefly enumerate the other tribes -- "pure" Nkundó --

101 who form the subject of this study:

619 1. The Injóló, "sister's son" (*bonankáná*) of the Ntómbá and the Bolénge who live beyond the Boloko. They are divided into three groups [9] -- Engónjó, Wesé, and Ngombe, (1) each of which comprises a subdistrict [sous-chefferie] for administrative purposes. A small segment is to be found outside the area under discussion, between the Boloko and Coq. (2)

2. The Boángé (and their subgroup, the Besombó), related to the Bokála of the Losanganya region. (3)

---

101 among the Elángá beyond the Tshuapa.
563 All of them are beyond the scope of this study. The Bombwanja are divided into Basuné and Bonkoso, and the Boéndé are considered their *bónankáná* (sister's son).

1. West of their territory are to be found the remains of a group of former inhabitants of the area, whom the present inhabitants call Tompoko (or Baséká Bofáka l'Eléké) but who are completely unknown to me.

2. The southern Injóló are often called Imoma.

[114] 3. On the ethnographic map of the Belgian Congo prepared and published by Dr. J. Maes, the territory of the Boangi is marked with the name "Bokuala." There is no tribe or village by that name. Unless an insulting and humiliating nickname (*bokwala*, "slave") is involved, the name may result from an erroneous use of the name of the present chief of the Boangi, Bokwála.

101
619 9. The Bongale. Three large villages belonging to this group are to be found in the territory under discussion. In order of their size they are: Bongale wǎ Botɔ́lɔ́ (among the Lifumba, between the Bonsɔ́mbɛ́, Lolíma and Saási rivers), Bongale wǎ Ilinga (among the Bakáalá, near Ikɛ́ngɛ́), and Bongale wǎ Bosongú (among the Bonkoso, near Bempumba). [569] The difference between their rules of exogamy and those of the other tribes confirms the view that the Bongale are not true Nkundɔ́. (2)

2. See Chapter V, Article III. There are several other small Bongale groups, but I do not know whether they are related to those mentioned above. Among them are those living near Bonyeka (Busira) among the Boángi (Bokála, Boɛ́njola). They may be descended from different ancestors who all bore the name Ngale. The same name may indicate an identical origin, but it may also be derived from different individuals whose names were the same. This statement is generally applicable.

The tribes living between the Jwalɛ́ and the Boloko, with whom the Bolɛ́ngɛ́ and the Ntɔ́mbá between the Congo and the Boloko are sometimes classified, are grouped under the general name of Ilángá by the Boángí, Injɔ́lɔ́, and Elángá. (3)

[114] 3. The Bokele tribe listed on the above-mentioned map does not exist. Could this error be due to an incorrect extension of the name of a Boloki village near Bokíma which is called Bokɛ́lɛ́?

The Nkundɔ́-Mɔ́ngo came from the north or the northeast. (4)

[825] 4. The following note may be of interest: The stories and songs of the Nkundɔ́ indicate a

583× 431 and, if the woman's family is wealthy, a goat and formerly even a slave. Nowadays, objects of European manufacture are also given.

● [563] To give the impression of being a great lord, an unusually wealthy family head sometimes gave human beings as a dowry. These were preferably Batswá or, if possible, dependents (Mpámá) who only changed masters up to a certain point. Actually it was the father's intention to glorify his daughter by turning them over to her; they had to assist her through various services, and her descendants became their "owners."

Thus Mpumo, one of the ancestors of the Boɛ́ndɛ́ (of the Bomwanja tribe) had received the slave, Bonkɔ́tulɔ́, as part of the nkomí from Ikɔ́lɛ́, father of his wife, [152] Lifomi of Mbángá (Liɔ́kɔ́, Ekonda). The descendants of this slave comprise the Bonkɔ́tambɛ́lá and Batsína clan [sic], who have settled with the Bosánjo and the Bongangá. (1)

1. See also the example cited in Chapter III, Article V.

583× 431 425 Even real estate can be included in the nkomí. Thus a fishing territory (such as a stream, creek, pond, fishing holes) or a section of a palm grove may be given (2). Like the gift of human beings,

2. But never land or forests.

such property is given only by a very wealthy family head. If he is not sole owner (and in practice he can be only in the case of fishing territory), he must obtain in advance the consent of the co-owners, whether they be brothers or heads of other families. Since it must be assumed that he is intelligent enough not to give away a piece of property which they themselves need, he always obtains their consent. In fact, anyone who opposed the gift would be considered to have acted maliciously toward the woman, who is also his "daughter," in depriving her of this source of pride.

The objects given as nkomí are the property of the husband. The greatest part of it he gives to his wife's nkɔ́lo, that is to the

583× The expression for being the object of a bride-price payment is kwɛ baámbá, literally, "to make valuables fall." Hence the name Ɔ̌kwáámbá, "one who is the object of a payment of valuables."

As we have said, it is possible to make all the payments described at the same time. This is done only in the case of remarriage. All the valuables are handed over at the same time, and there is no longer any distinction between the three payments.

Article IX. The Bosóngo

1. The nature of the bosóngo and the relevant terminology

The bosóngo is the last portion of the bride price. It consists of the payment of a slave or the equivalent value in currency. Hence the very common term bonto, which strictly speaking means "man" but is used to mean "slave" ("He is only a man, "they say; that is to say, a slave; njôáta la bonto, la linto, "I possess him as a slave"). The word which actually means "slave," bokwála, or bontamba among the Elíngá and the Boóyá, (1) is never used in relation to the bride price. The Ekonda, however, do use the term ilengé, which is a synonym of bokwála and means "slave" in the strict sense of the word. The neighboring Nkundó tribes also use it, probably as a result of their influence. The Bombwanja, the Bongíli, the Bonkoso, and the Bombomba likewise do so. (2)

[192] The noun bosóngo (lisóngí among the various Elíngá groups) is derived from sóng, "to pay this part of the bride price." Thus a man will say to his son-in-law, ôósíl 'ǒénga bǒn' ǒkámí, yákáká yǒsóngé, "You have already paid the jěngí for my daughter; now come [158] and pay the bosóngo." The definition given by Ruskin (Dictionary of the Lomongo Language, p. 67: "bosóngo: the passing over of a

---

1. Elsewhere the terms boómbo or bǒmbo are also used.

[568] 2. The Batswá never make this payment.

589ˣ daughter or ward in marriage without reference to her wishes, money paid for a slave wife," and p. 314, sóngya: the same) therefore does not correspond to the sense in which these terms are used by the Nkundó tribes under discussion.

Another term for this payment is tsinola bonto (ilengé). I know of no other use of the verb tsinola.

An expression which brings out the idea of its being a last payment is kumbola bonto (ilengé). The verb kumbola means to strike the last blow in felling a tree. (1) [192]

1. Note that kumbola also means "to take in marriage."

Formerly, the payment of a real slave, that is, of a human being, was absolutely obligatory. Nowadays, since slavery has been abolished, the worth of a slave in bakonga has been substituted; it consists of 25 rings, or of 15 to 20 if they are especially beautiful. (2) [567] [435]

2. In the past, the price of a slave was from 10 to 15 rings.

To distinguish between these forms of the bosóngo, the Nkundó say bont'ǒw'abwó (ilengé y'ǎbwó), "a slave with hair," therefore a human being, or bont'ǒw'akonga (ilengé y'ǎkonga), "slave in copper rings."

583ˣ 563 Batswá, instead of slaves, could be given as bosóngo. They were not reduced to slavery, however, but remained in the same position as before, except that they changed masters.

Sometimes a master who wanted to be rid of an incorrigible Botswá gave him away as a real slave in a bosóngo; in that case it was as if a slave in the strict sense of the word had been given.

In other instances the master acted with the more or less explicit consent of the Botswá. Those who were thus handed over as a bride-price payment were usually women. [159] Since in matrimonial matters of the Batswá, the Bootó master fulfills the role of "Father," he is entitled to the girls' bride price and has the duty of

583x ●563 obtaining wives for the boys. Therefore he can turn a Botswá girl belonging to him over to his father-in-law. The father-in-law never takes this woman as his wife or as a wife for one of his relatives; but he gives her in marriage to one of his own Batswá or to a stranger of that race who pays him a bride price for her. Socially and financially the result is exactly the same as if the son-in-law had made his payment in the form of a slave.

Thus the bride price paid by Lokonda jw'ǐsano y'ânkanja of Ngombe (Bongíli) for Bakutu of the Basɛ́ká Elongama (Besombó, Bombwanja) and used by the latter's cousin, Bofɛ́nda of Ekúkola (Bongíli) to obtain for wife, Iloa of Ndongó (Bongíli), consisted of 60 rings and the woman Ómâmenga (Antonia) of the Mbálanga clan of Botswá. Ómâmenga was later married to Wanja (Pius), a Botswá belonging to her new masters.

[567] There may be two or more slaves, for the same reasons that determine the size of the *walo*. The Bombwanja are only exceptionally satisfied with a single one. But all the slaves always comprise a single *bosóngo*.

583x The *bosóngo* is not part of the *jěngí*. The natives say *bosóngo ěmí ńk'omóngó*, "the *bosóngo* is entirely separate." Their statements on this subject are markedly categorical.

A characteristic expression which designates the entire bride price is *baúmbá la bonto*, "rings and a man" (slave). The rings are the *jěngí*; they are valuables of a purely material nature. The *bosóngo* is, on the contrary, a human being.

There is no term in Lonkundo which covers both kinds of payments. The whole cannot be expressed precisely in a single word.

583x 178 In the vicinity of Flandria, however, the young people [160] are beginning to confuse the two words *jěngí* and *bosóngo* and to use one in place of the other. (1) [Editor's note: The confusion today is

1. The young people from Injóló who are about twenty years of age and whom I have known at Flandria Mission and in their own settlements, do not confuse these terms but distinguish clearly between them.

2: Hulstaert--223   M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938   FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu
Pygmies FO4
Batswa

Chapter V. Obstacles to Marriage

M
582 There is no specific term in Lonkundo for an "obstacle to marriage." General terms are used, as in our European languages.

Our people make no distinction between obstacles which nullify a marriage and those which are prohibitive in nature. Therefore, we will simply speak of obstacles without making any distinctions among them.

Article I. "Race"

M
P
582
563 The question of a diversity of races can be considered only with reference to the Batswá. Marriages with them are strictly forbidden. Nkundó rules of behavior are very strict with respect to relations between Baotó and Batswá. It is unheard of that opposite sexes of the two races should mingle, even for a simple conversation. There would then obviously be no question of marriage.

M
P
563
588 Among the Bilángi, a Batswá tribe of the Injóló of the Salonga-Luilaka (who absolutely refuse to be called Batswá or Balúmbe), there have been two cases of such unions to my knowledge. Two Baotó women were involved, both, by a singular coincidence, from Lotángonda (Injóló, Engónjó). One was Njalí, daughter of Yole and sister of Lomúlú, the other Nsombola, sister of Limpema.

Njalí was taken in marriage by Bakáo of Ikíndatói. She wanted children desperately and, not having had any by her two successive Nkundó husbands, she ran away to the Bilángi in hopes of having better luck there. [242] She was not disappointed in her expectations. She gave birth to four sons: the eldest, Bonkono, who died some years ago; Bakao (Georges), who died in 1933; two sons, Bonkomí (Louis) and Joke (Henri), who are still alive. In 1933 the descent of the four numbered thirteen sons, six daughters, four grandsons, and one granddaughter. But there was never a legitimate marriage between Bakao and Njalí since no bride price was paid. And the descent have formed a small Bilángi clan, which is dependent on the grandmother's clan (Ilongó of Lotángonda).

P M 565 588 The second case is somewhat more recent. It occurred at the beginning of the European penetration of the area. During the general upheaval at that time, the natives of Bosɛ́ka village (Bilɔ́ngi of Lingonju) took advantage of the absence of many adult men whom the soldiers had taken on an expedition against the Mbole. They were able to capture a woman named Nsombola and take her home with them. She loved one of the men of Bosɛ́ka, and after many years, he "purchased" her for the price of two slaves. She lived there happily until quite recently, when she was overcome with a desire to return to her own race. (She leaves no descendants.)

In this second instance, then, the Nkundɔ́ bowed to the woman's wishes and, in accepting a bride price for Nsombola, gave in to the inevitable. This example shows that they can be flexible in their customary requirements if the situation warrants it.

Nevertheless, there have been no admirers or imitators of these exceptional cases, and the opposition against unions between the two races remains firm. Mixtures are not desired. The position which the hybrid family of Bakao occupies in the village of Lotɔ́ngonda is highly significant. For it is an exception to the rule applicable to such cases, namely, that a child who has no legitimate father is incorporated into his mother's clan. The descendants of Bakao and Njalɛ́ are dependents of Lotɔ́ngonda and are a part of it politically, but [243] they are not included in the kin group. For they have inherited a Bilɔ́ngi nature from their father, and therefore, contrary to the logic usually applied, they have not become relatives of their ancestress. Here, too, the "racial principle" has prevailed against common law. P M [851]

P M 563 588 595 Nor does one hear of temporary relationships or concubinage between them. I know only of one instance; its outcome was not happy, and it did not invite imitators. It happened around 1913. A certain polygamist, Lokɔ́ta of Bokeke (Bombwanja) fell in love with the wife of Bonkíngɔ́, who at the present time is headman of Bosɛ́ola (Batswá of Ntɔ́mbá, Bombwanja). He became the laughing stock of the entire region, but because of his love, it did not deter him. In his own household, however, the situation was more serious. One of his wives (Ámbɔ̂nsele) soon left him. The others refused him their bodies

P
m
563
588
[575]

and prepared for divorce. Consequently, Lokóta was obliged to give up his unreasonable love, and in the end everything was set to rights. (1)

1. No children were born as a result of that relationship.

Instances of mixing have occurred because of colonization, outside the usual environment, between Batswá and members of tribes which are not acquainted with this race. At the Bokúma Mission there lives a Botswa woman of the Ekonda who was taken away by foreign soldiers and had two children by a Mbole man. These children are held in contempt by both the Baoto and the Batswá in the vicinity, and they will only be able to marry if they settle in their mother's clan.

In the veterans' village of Ingende there lives a Botswa of Boólama (Bombwanja) who married an Urundi woman while he was a soldier in the war. She probably did not know her husband's race. They came to this region, and the marriage has proved to be excellent, and the wife has always remained deeply attached to her husband. Their five children are not treated with the slightest contempt. Their situation would undoubtedly [244] be different if they lived in truly native surroundings, where they would certainly be incorporated into the Batswá.

P
178
563
588

The introduction of the Batswá into the economic life of the Europeans and their training in it may favor, and result in, a mixing of the races. The wealth thus placed within their reach may serve to seduce some of the more lascivious or greedy Baoto women, particularly those who always hang about the centers, camps, and markets and in whom vice has extinguished all feelings of propriety and honesty. The danger increases when Batswá bachelors are hired as laborers for some purpose and sent far from home to do their work, especially if the proportion of married men in the group is insufficient.

P
178
164
563
588

This is not a description of an existing situation -- for the barrier between the two races is still impassable -- but of a possibility that is not out of the question, as an occurrence in 1932 would indicate. The

578 595x 577 If a woman injures her husband during a quarrel he may not retaliate, for she is recognized as inferior and weaker than he. The husband's weapon is abstention from any food, drink, baths, etc., that she offers him. To re-establish peace she must pay a boɔ́ndo. Nevertheless, nowadays some impetuous men no longer like to observe these rules; they want to act with violence come what may. But they are strongly reprimanded by the old men, who maintain that it is unworthy of a man to retaliate against a weaker being. This traditional attitude of the Nkundɔ́ seems to me to indicate a sort of chivalrous nobility based on two feelings, justice and pride. It becomes more understandable when we know that similar conduct is ● [563] expected with regard to Batswa, inferiors, and subjugated clans (baulɛ́, sing. julɛ́) in their respective spheres. (1) Thus a Booto may not apply the law of retaliation to a Botswa. Under certain circumstances, a julɛ́ clan may, with impunity, take what they please from the banana groves of the master's clan, etc.

Note also that it is very much out of place for a man [282] to strike his wife or punish her in any way in the presence of her parents, [607] brothers, etc. In fact, this is a very grave offense. And, according to the code of honor, the brother (cousin, etc.) must pick up the glove and fight his brother-in-law to avenge the insult. In many cases the matter ends in a divorce. For such conduct takes away the combined feeling of modesty and embarrassment (nsɔ́nyi) that the two parties normally feel toward one another.

Finally, we must note that the various payments made as boɔ́ndo are included in the total amount of jɛ́ngí or nkomí, respectively.

593x 539 In order to more clearly illustrate the Nkundɔ́ attitude concerning the relationship of husband and wife, it might be of interest to cite a few proverbs pertaining to the subjects discussed above:

1) Banínga bakɔ́ndaka wǎj'â ntaka: Lombɔ́mbɛ aɔ̂kɔ́nda Ntelá la nganja, "All the others slap their wives (but) Lombɔ́mbɛ beats Ntelá with a stick." (This is a reference to a historical fact.)

---

1. See below, Articles V, VI, and VII, 4, B.

595ˣ that no one will see her. She lives in this house in the company
554 of her ebísa, her daughters, some female relatives, or even
another of her husband's wives, who must wait on her, prepare
food for her, etc., and who go out and enter freely. Her husband
also enters at will and spends the usual number of nights with her.
No other man is permitted to enter the enclosure.

During her period of seclusion, the bolɔ́mbɔ́ may not do the slightest work. She does not wash with water, but only with palm oil. She walks only on mats. She is also exempt from mourning for her parents. (Compare with Chapter I, Part 1, Article II.)

When the period of seclusion comes to an end, the husband announces the coming-out feast. There is merrymaking, dancing, and drinking. Mats are spread from the door of [351] the hut of seclusion all the way to the middle of the street. The two men who brought the woman to the hut come again and, taking her by the arms at the entrance to the enclosure, lead her over the mats. The ceremony thus ends without further ado.

The bolɔ́mbɔ́ is henceforth free and acts like any other
woman except for the wearing of furs. She may work, draw
water, cook, travel, visit her parents, etc. But her husband's
● [563] honor and his reputation as a rich man require that he give his
[567] bolɔ́mbɔ́ one or several slaves, or Batswa, or -- as is more frequently done -- one or two bibísa, who are supposed to take
[357] care of her housework and thus free the princess.

595ˣ Adultery with her -- after her seclusion -- is more
554 severely punished than misconduct with an ordinary woman as
837 regards the indemnity to be paid. But as a flagrant insult, it is
614 considered very serious indeed, not so much as an infringement
or marital rights as an attack on the honor of the whole clan or
group of clans involved. Thus, while adultery with a nkɔ́ndɔ́,
for instance, is a private matter, arousing the husband's jealousy
and anger, misconduct with a bolɔ́mbɔ́ is a public offense. The
whole clan is enraged -- for they believe that their honor has been
attacked, and all the members together press for vengeance for

586x and this was generally the case -- he did not kill him personally
682 but assigned the task to someone else -- his son, his younger
[563] brother, or nephew, etc. Preferably, he hired a Botswá. The price for this service was 20 copper rings, the sum of the bride price paid
[612] for a Botswá woman. Nkundó law places the entire responsibility for an assassination and all its consequences upon the person who orders it performed. Certain of the Batswa specialized in this field. Among them (of those dependent on the Bombwanja) were Esenge of Bokengé, Mbólókó of Bombembe, Wai w'ìtúmola of Bakoyó; Lǘwá jw'ìtómbengándá (died in 1933) also of Bakoyó; Botómba wǎ Lokio and Mpótó éy'Ilókó of Mbanja (still alive).

The scorned husband had still other means of taking revenge
586x or obtaining indemnification. He made use of them only if the occasion was favorable or if he was not in a position [382] to go into expensive adventures such as a war or an assassination. They were the following:

3) *Ikákelo*: (1) A relative of his who was married into the unfaithful wife's clan could be prevented from returning to her husband.

4) *The seizure of one of the wives of his recalcitrant father-in-law*, or of one of the latter's relatives. This action is called by the generic term *lowáála*, which signifies "compensation." (2) The prisoner was usually put in an *etáka* (a wooden fork fastened to the neck) (3) to prevent her flight and hasten the reimbursement of
[567] the bride price. If the matter was not settled she became a slave.

---

1. See Chapter III, Article VI.

2. The woman who was seized was called *nginda* and her descendants, if there were any, were known as *bonginda*.

3. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 4, A, b), (1).

853 may not eat meat if the child is male, or fish if it is female, un-
262 til the child in question is grown and kills either an animal (or bird) or a fish, according to the case, and has given it to the victim of the accident. If the child dies young, the person is accused of having violated the prohibition and is obliged to pay a large indemnity. This extremity is not usually reached, however, for the one to whom the accident has befallen scrupulously keeps away from everything that might cause this sort of murder. Then, if death occurs and he has nothing with which to reproach himself, he can resort to an ordeal or to the verdict of a test based on superstition. In addition in villages that have Batswa, a woman of that
● [863] race must nurse the child for an instant after the accident before its mother gives it her breast again. [497]

6) The child is carried on the shoulder, and as soon as it is
854 capable of holding on, on the hip. It does not take many weeks for it to become accustomed to that position. When the mother has to hold it for a long period of time (during a march, on a trip, etc.), she puts it in a scarf-shoulder strap (lombě), made from creepers that are scraped and woven as for a mat, or from a cloth of raffia fibers, or even from a pelt (nowadays it is often made from a piece of European cloth). The scarf must be sturdy, for were it to tear and the infant fall, far-reaching consequences would result; all of that woman's subsequent children would be condemned to die in the mother's womb or during the period of nursing.

As the child grows it is sometimes carried astride the mother's back, either because she does not like to be separated from it, or because the tyranny of the little one forces her to keep it with her even during her work, errands, and even dances. She remedies this awkward situation if possible by resorting to the assistance of an older girl, a young niece or cousin, or a little boy from among the immediate kin.

When the child rests during the day, it is laid on an ordinary bed or on a movable bed (bońnga), without any special arrangements. It has no difficulty sleeping soundly on such hard couches.

7) Weaning. Although a child is gradually accustomed
862 to solid food, it does not stop nursing. As it grows older, the nursing times are spaced farther and farther apart. But the child

862 does not really stop nursing till it is about two years old, and sometimes two and a half if it has a weak constitution.

Weaning is not accompanied by any ceremony or feast. In order to break the child's habit, the mother smears her nipples
[824] with the sap of the lifété fruit (a kind of small sweet pimento or
eggplant) or with a pimento-pepper extract (imbénga). Sometimes she leaves the child with some relative (daughter, sister, etc.) for a time [498] while she lives elsewhere.

As we have seen above, after weaning, the ekelé-bokeka period comes to an end for the mother, and her infidelities no longer have repercussions on the life of her child.

[853] 8) If the mother dies while the infant is still being nursed,
● [563] the task of nursing is turned over to some woman who is disposed to
undertake it even a Botswa, and there always is one. After the child is weaned the woman is suitably recompensed. The use of
[235] goat's milk is unknown.

9) Young children frequently suffer convulsions. This illness
854 751 is thought to be caused by hawks, and for that reason it is called
[853] mpulú (bird). The Nkundó try to prevent it by hanging an amulet
around children's necks; it is usually the clavicular triangle of a hen's carcass. In addition they know a remedy whose purpose is to strengthen the nerves: the child is laid on a mat stretched out anywhere on the roof of the hut. An eyewash (bolóí) is prepared from the sap of leaves from the litóyansombo bush and extract of mbólé (fruit of the bosoombó). Using a leaf shaped into a horn, a few drops are put into the child's eyes. Then the father or some other relative pulls out the mat from under the child and lifts it several times, shouting: tá tá tá.

856 10) No special importance is attached to teething. But a
child whose upper teeth come in before the lower ones (a defect called ingondo) is considered abnormal. Therefore he is forbidden to eat the first fruits of hunting or fishing in an enclosure (mpao), lest the latter lose their productivity.

2: Hulstaert
101, 131, 563, 619
●

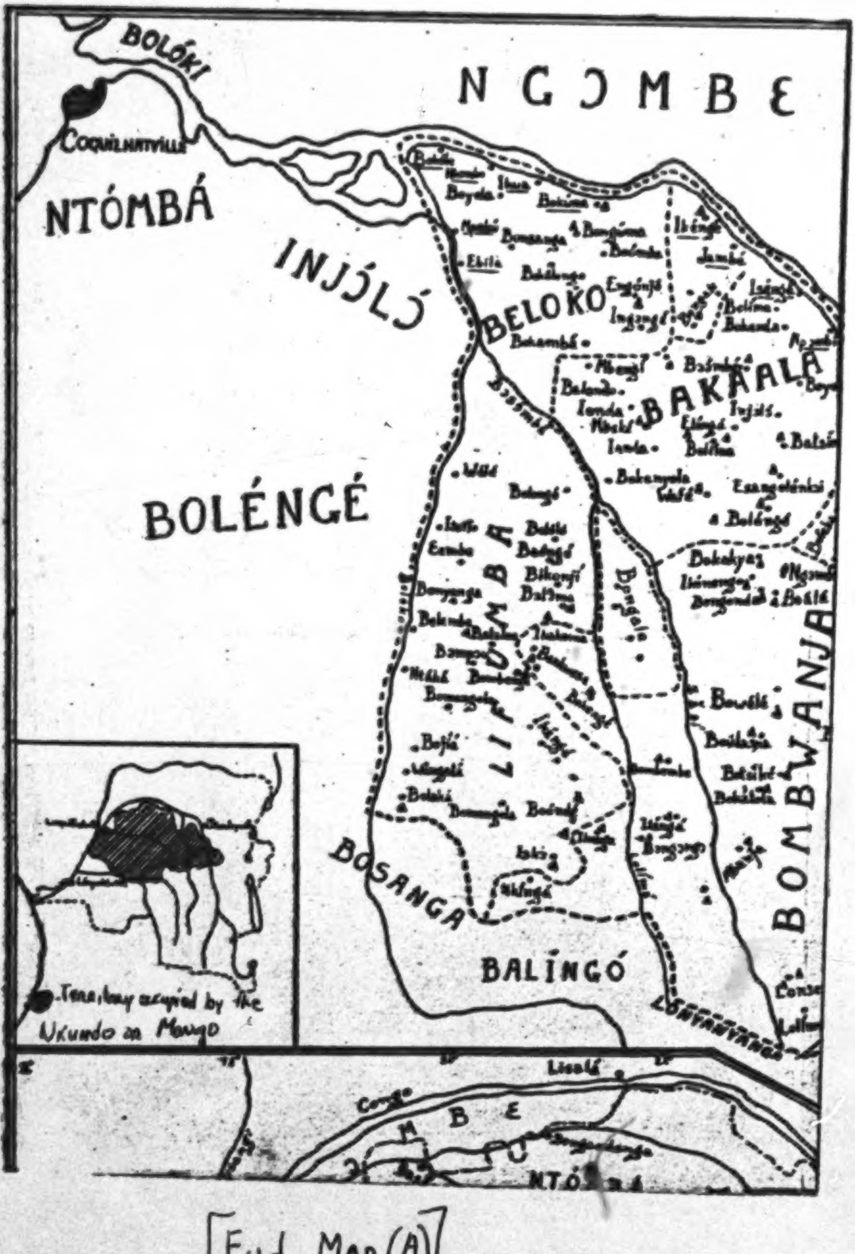
Mongo FO32

/The division of sections in the end map is as follows:/

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H

2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

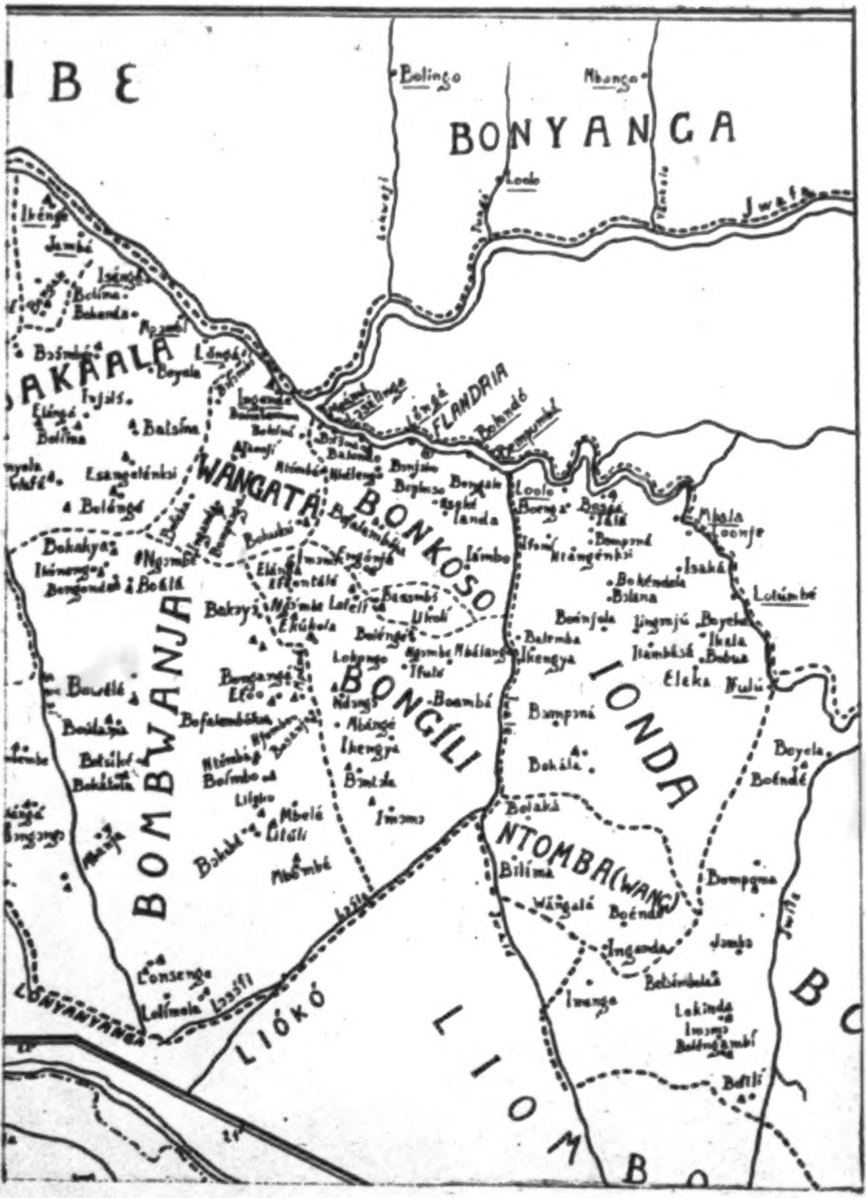
101
131
●563
619


BOLÓKI
NGƆMBƐ
COQUILHATVILLE
NTÓMBÁ
INJƆ́LƆ́
BELOKO
BAKAALA
BOLÉNGÉ
LIFUMBA
BOMBWANJA
BOSANGA
BALINGÓ
LOMANYANGA
Congo
Lisalá
MBE
NTÓMBA
Territory occupied by the Nkundo or Mongo

[End Map (A)]

2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

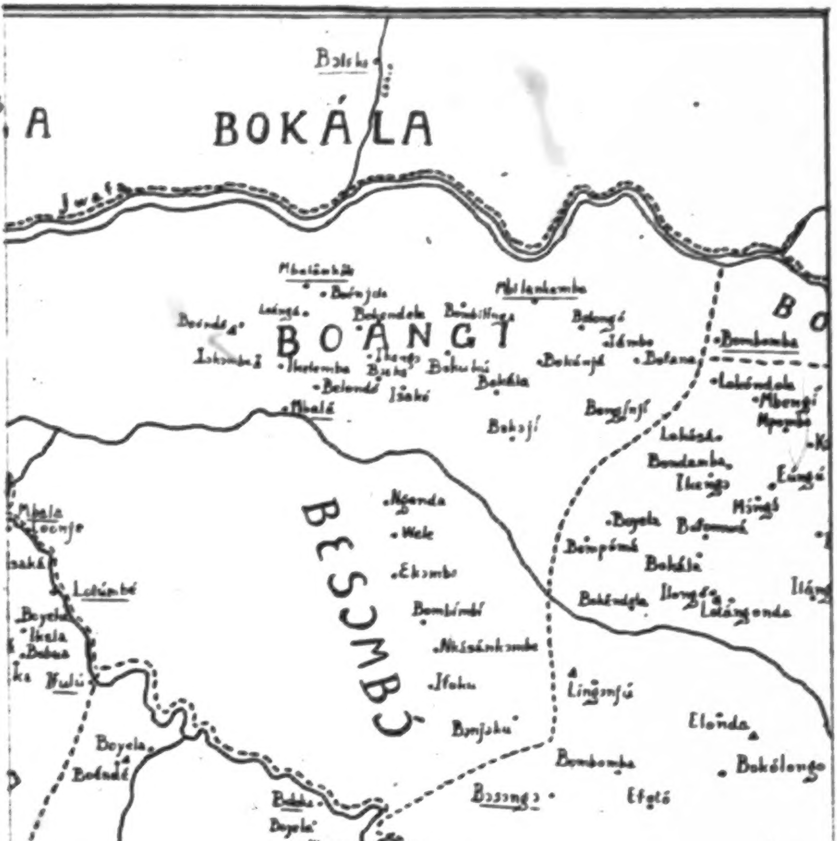
101
131
563
619


IBE
BONYANGA
Bolingo
Mbonga
Loolo
AKAALA
WANGATA
BONKOSO
FLANDRIA
BOMBWANJA
BONGILI
IONDA
NTOMBA(WANGATA)
LIOKO
LIOMBO
BO
B
Ikenge
Jambe
Isenge
Bolima
Bokanda
Boyela
Injolo
Elinga
Balsina
Esangelenksi
Bolenge
Bokakya
Ngombe
Bokala
Bongandanga
Ingende
Bolenda
Bonjolo
Iyanda
Loolo
Bonsenge
Ikala
Mbala
Loonje
Isaka
Lotumbe
Bokendela
Ikengya
Bamba
Bombala
Lokongo
Ilau
Bombenga
Ekila
Boyela
Bolimba
Bokala
Wangala
Boenda
Inganda
Iwanga
Bompama
Bolendo
Bolimbolaa
Lokinda
Imomo
Bolungambi
Belli
Bompena
Jamba
Isonji
Loiindi
Consenge
Lolimala
LONYANYANGA
Mbele
Mbombe
Bokolo
Ntomba
Lilolo
Eleo
Bongonge
Bowele
Bofalamboka
Bombimba
Ikengya
Imomo
Boamba
Ntombe
Ifulu
Eleka
Nulu
Bompona
Bokala
Bolaka
Bilima

[End Map (B)]

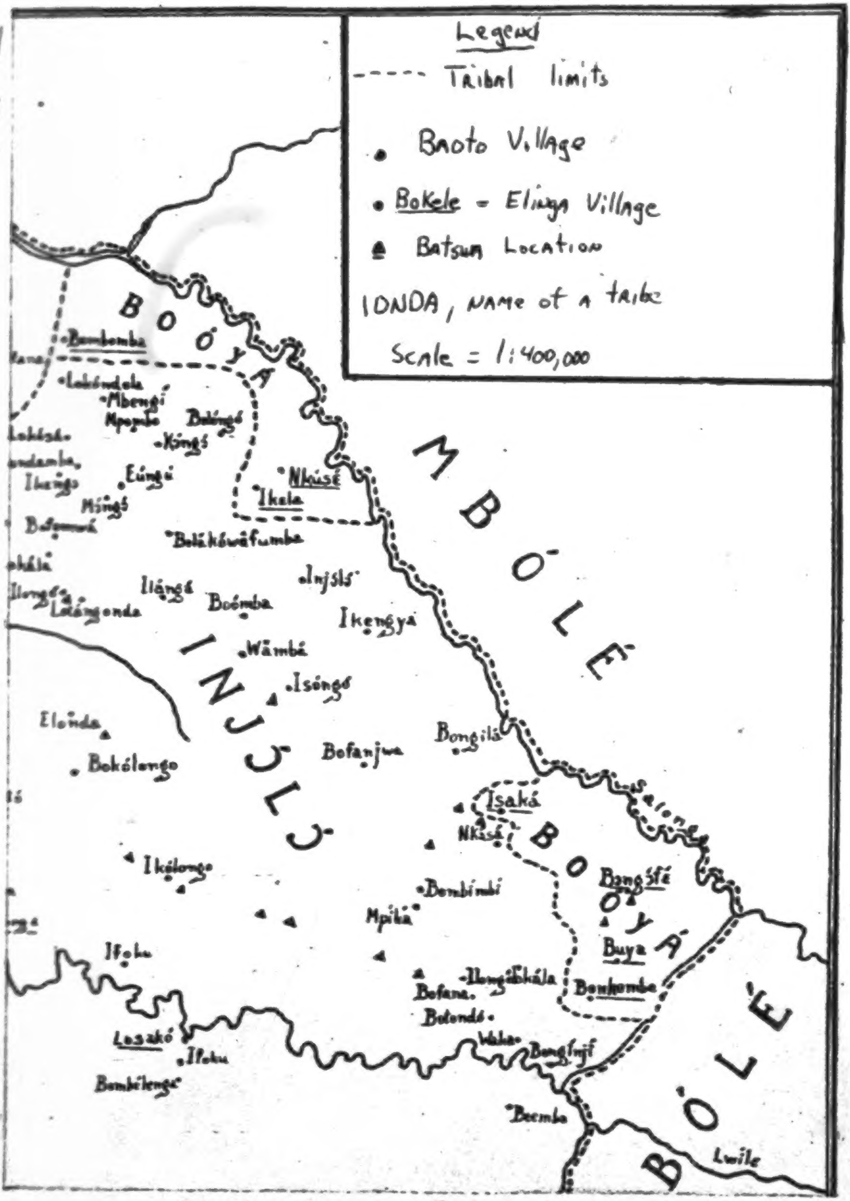
2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

101
131
● 563
619


A
BOKÁLA
BOANGI
BO
BƐSƆMBƆ
BOMBOMB
Bombomba
Lolondola
Mbala
Lotúmbé
Boyela
Bokala
Linganjú
Elonda
Bokólongo
Bombomba
Bosanga
Boenjola
Imbonga
Ifoku
Lusakó
Bombólongo
Bompúma
Mbanga
Ikele
Nkásánkɔmbe
Bombímbí
Ekɔmbɔ
Wele
Ngonda

[End Map (c)]

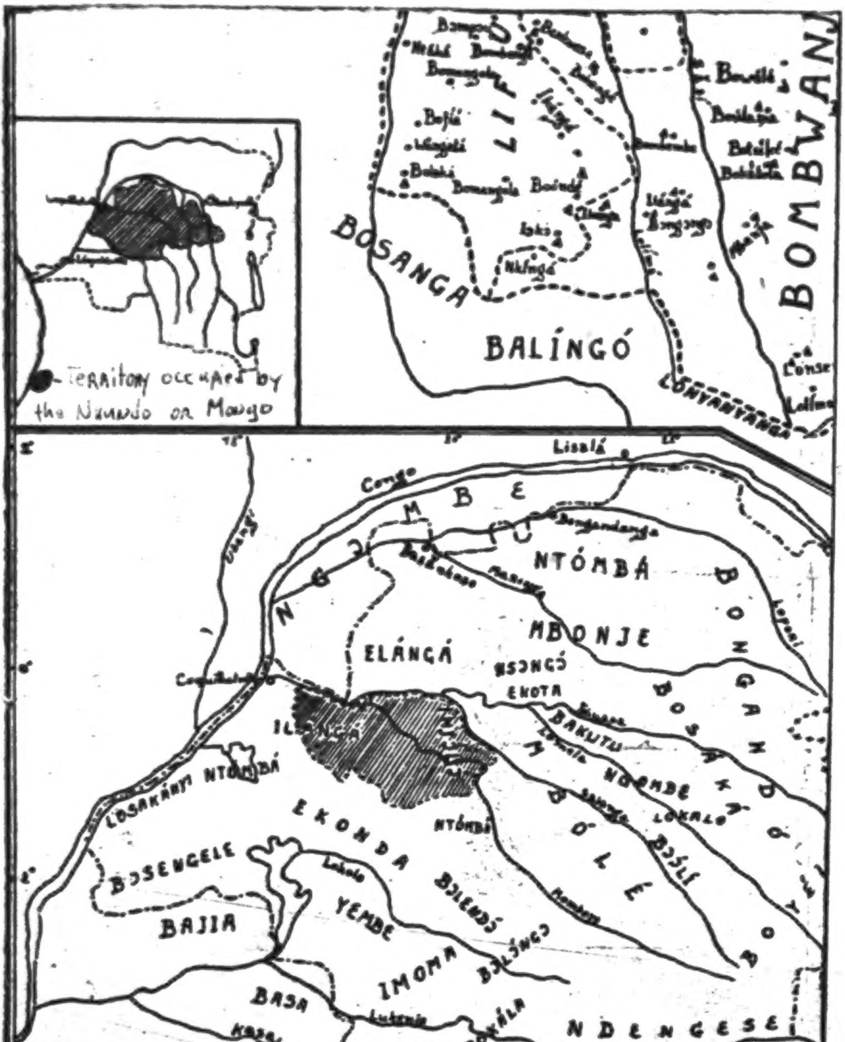
101
131
563
49


Legend
Tribal limits
Baoto Village
Bokele = Elinga Village
Batsua Location
IONDA, name of a tribe
Scale = 1:400,000
BOÓYA
MBÓLÉ
INJƆLƆ
BOÓYA
BÓLÉ
Bombomba
Lokóndola
Mbengi
Mpojulo
Bolíngó
Kóngɔ
Eúngú
Ikengo
Míngɔ
Bofomwá
Nkúsé
Ikela
Bolákówáfumba
Injɔlɔ
Ilángá
Boómba
Lolángonda
Ikengyá
Wãmbá
Isóngo
Eloónda
Bokólongo
Bofanjwa
Bongilá
Salonga
Isaká
Nkúsá
Bongófé
Buya
Bombimbi
Mpíká
Ikólongo
Ifoku
Ilongálóhála
Bofana
Botondó
Bomkomba
Losakó
Ifoku
Bombilenge
Waka
Bongónjó
Beemba
Lwile

[End Map (D)]

2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

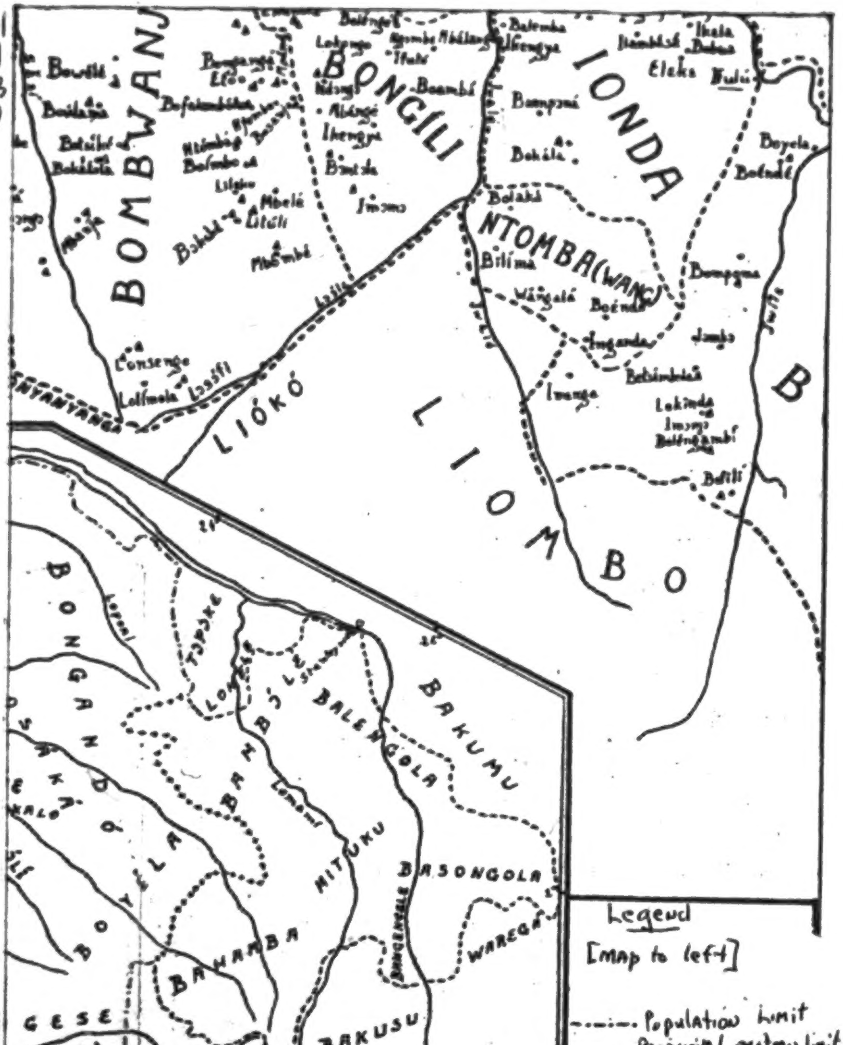
101
131
● 563
619



Territory occupied by the Nkundo or Mongo
LIA
BOSANGA
BALÍNGÓ
BOMBWANJ
Bokíli
Nkóngá
Lisalá
Congo
N G O M B E
NTÓMBÁ
MBONJE
ELÁNGÁ
NSONGÓ
EKOTA
ILANGA
BAKUTU
LOSAKANYI NTÓMBÁ
E K O N D A
NTÓMBÁ
BOSENGELE
BAJIA
YEMBE
BOLENDÓ
IMOMA
BOLÓNGO
BASA
IPANGA
BOKÁLA
N D E N G E S E
(B O S O N G O)
BOLÍÍ
BAKUBA
NGOMBE
LOKALO
BOLÍÍ
M B O L E
B O N G A N D O
B O S A K A
B O Y E L A
Coquilhatville
Lukenie
Kasai
Sankuru

[End Map (E)]

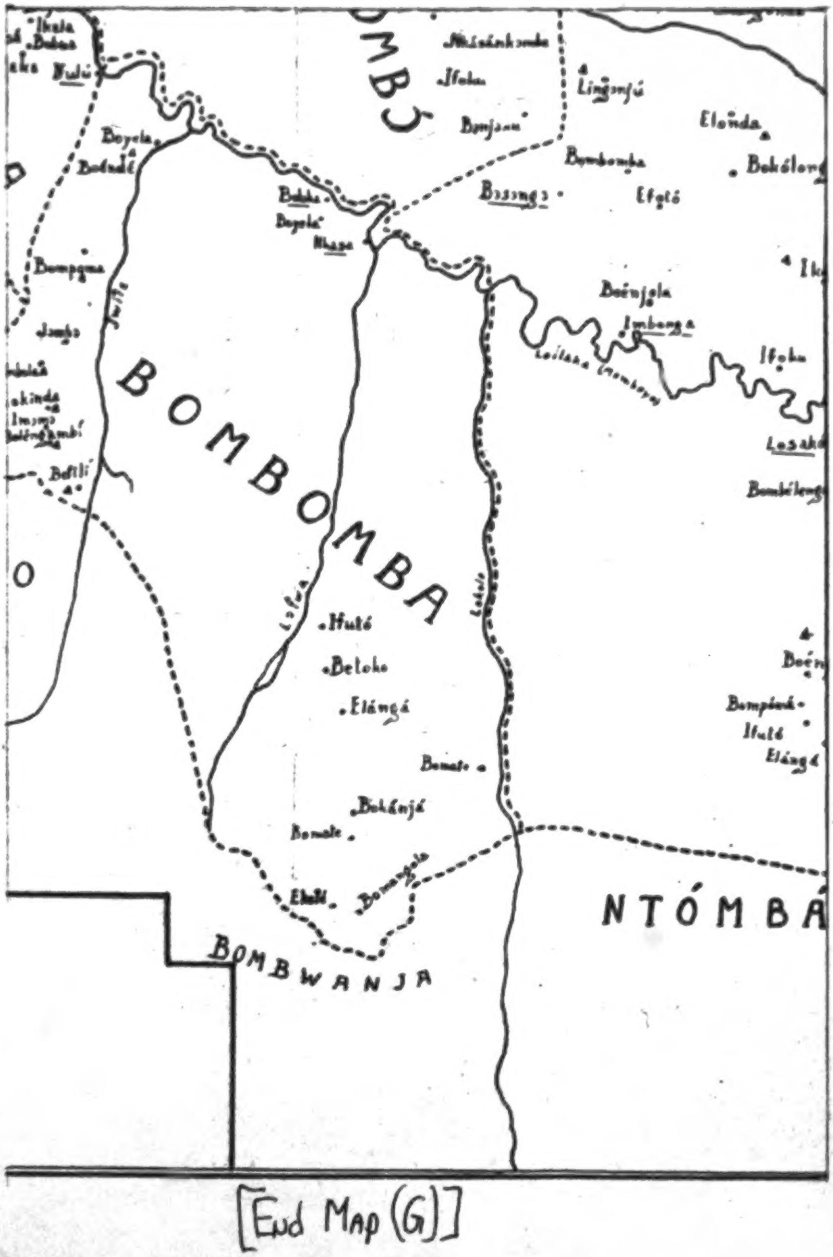
101
131
● 563
619


BOMBWANJ
BONGILI
IONDA
NTOMBA(WANGA)
LIOKO
LIOMBO
B
NYANYANGA
BONGANDO
TOPOKE
LOMELA
BAMBOLE
BALENGOLA
BAKUMU
MITUKU
BOYELA
BASONGOLA
BAHAMBA
WAREGA
BAKUSU
GESE
SONGO)
BATETELA
21°
25°
26°
Legend
[map to left]
Population limit
Provisional eastern limit
probable eastern limit
tribes studied
EKONDA names of the principal tribes
Scale 1:5000000

[End Map (F)]

2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

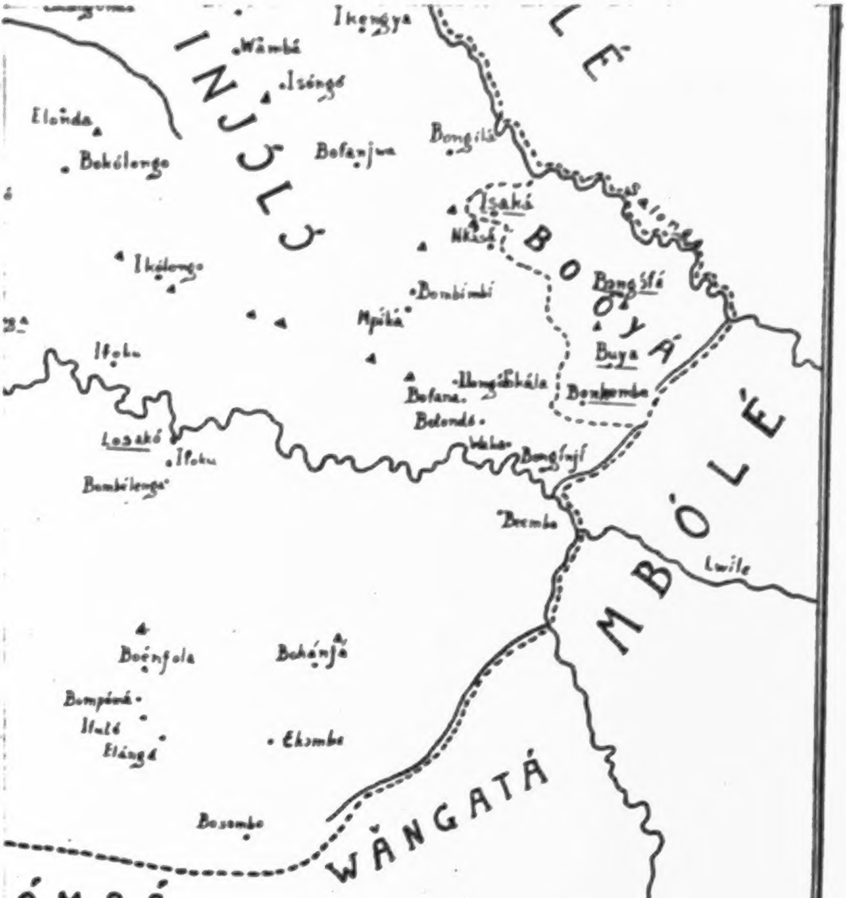
101
131
●563
619


Ikala
Bubua
Nului
Nsisánkonde
Ifoku
Bonjanu
Lingonjú
Elonda
Bokólong
Boyela
Bokuké
Bombomba
Bosongo
Efolo
Bokele
Boyela
Nkasa
Bompona
Juapa
Bóenjola
Imbonga
Jamba
Loilaka (Lomboyo)
Ifoku
Losako
Bombólenge
Bofili
BOMBOMBA
Lofua
Lokolo
Ifuté
Beloko
Elángá
Bomato
Bokánjá
Bomate
Ekoli
Bonsongolo
Boényi
Bompámá
Ifuté
Elángá
NTÓMBA
BOMBWANJA

[End Map (G)]

2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

101
131
●563
619



Ikengya
INJƆLƆ
Wǎmbá
Isóngó
Elónda
Bokólongo
Bofanjwa
Bongilá
LÉ
Isaká
Nkɔ́sá
BOOYÁ
Ikólongo
Bombímbí
Bongólé
Mpíká
Buya
Ilongóbkála
Bonkomba
Bofana
Bolondó
Ifoku
Losakó
Ifoku
Bombílenge
Waka
Bongínjí
Boemba
MBÓLÉ
Lwile
Boɛnfola
Bokánjá
Bompɔ́nɔ́
Ilulé
Elángá
Ekombe
Bosombo
WǍNGATÁ
ÓMBÁ

[End Map(H)]

fear of death would deter him from such baseness. Another sign of the chosen 624 successor is some untoward experience, such, for example, as finding cowrie shells (worn by *nkumu*) in a trap in the forest or a net that had been put out to catch fish.

Nkema Akuke, whether the first of his line or a man succeeding in the office, bears [293] the emblems of his rank. He wears an *ilelembe* (a branch of a special bush) stuck into his belt on the right side and hanging downwards. The special hat, *montolo*, worn [292] by *nkumu* is not yet his to wear, but he wears an ordinary skin hat known as *lopope*, which is the mark of any elder. This hat may be ornamented with feathers if so desired.

When *Nkema Akuke* decides that he has acquired sufficient wealth to enable him properly to claim the right of being made an *nkumu*, he begins his preparatory arrangements. [302] *Mbili*, a mixture of charcoal with some sticky substance, is smeared over his body with plantain leaves. All ornamented clothing is discarded and a single cloth [292] woven from raffia, and known as *molele*, is worn. He refuses to sit on the benches usually used and instead sits on the bare earth. [516] All this is explained as an attempt on the part of the man about to be raised to the office of *nkumu* to be different from others, a man apart, separate, peculiar, not partaking in the ordinary interests and affairs of his fellow men.

Nkema Akuke now leaves his own village accompanied by all his wives and children, [533] and also by a singer, *nyemba*, who is paid to sing his praises, and by several male Batwa (pygmies), [563] up to half a dozen in number, known as *ntotii* because of their duty of blowing gourds and producing sounds which indicate praise of the great 534] man. This party makes the round of villages wherever relatives are found, and the announcement is made that *Nkema Akuke* is about to become an *nkumu*. This 624 pilgrimage accomplished, a 'doctor' (*nkanga*) is visited by the aspirant to office, 791 who seeks by magic to discover whether it is the propitious time for the ceremony of installation. 787 The whole company retires to the private enclosure at the rear of the house belonging to the *nkanga* chosen, this being the place where he performs his wonders. The *nkanga* resorts to *mingo*, that particular branch of magic which has to do with reasons for strange and unaccountable phenomena.[1] *Nkema Akuke* now seeks some sign as confirmation of his determination to claim his office at this time. Some native pepper may be wrapped in a leaf or merely covered by it, and left within sight of all, and upon being opened it may be found to have turned into salt, or perhaps it may be some earth that is thus turned to salt. Or a cock may be placed upon *Nkema Akuke*'s head and covered with a basket and thus left for some time. Upon removing the basket it may be discovered that an egg has been laid. All such tests, 624 if successful, will be regarded as indications that it really is time for *Nkema Akuke* to assume the office of *nkumu*, but if the test fails he will usually go ahead with his plans anyhow, fearing the shame that would come to him should he go back to his home after having made the triumphant round of his relatives' homes. However, should he act thus, and he most certainly will, he knows that his days are numbered,

---

[1] If a man's fields do not produce and he cannot understand why, he will resort to *mingo*. If it is suspected, for example, that the trouble is caused by someone making 'medicine', an arrow shaft is put into a small hole in the ground, and at each name mentioned, the arrow can be pulled out if the person is innocent, but remains stuck fast in the hole at the mention of the guilty name.

624 An *nkumu* can never walk alone, but must always be accompanied by others, and
on no occasion whatsoever may he run. Even though he never washes, if he is out
[481] in the rain and sees everybody else hurrying for shelter, he will not quicken his pace.
[513] His movements must be slow and deliberate. The *nkumu* never sleeps alone; waking
and sleeping he is attended by someone. But apart from this he is free to go where he
wishes. The *nkumu* is not indiscriminate, as others may be, in his private habits, but
[514] must use his own latrine at all times, and if travelling must have his own latrine in
each place where he stays. The inland *nkumu* frequently take advantage of this custom
[556] by hiding their accumulated brass rods at the bottom of a freshly dug latrine. Such
hidden wealth will be acquired by an inheritor at the decease of the *nkumu*.

In speaking of himself the *nkumu* never refers to himself by his title but always by his own name.

624 The couch upon which the *nkumu* sits or reclines during the daytime may not be
shared indiscriminately with others, but those permitted to sit upon it at the same
352 time as the *nkumu* are *maomi*, women, and Batwa. The reservation of this couch for
[562 the use of the *nkumu* is not surprising, but the exceptions are. One explanation given
was that women and Batwa are not *bato ba zee*, persons in particular; they do not
563] count for anything in the social life of the community; they are not really 'people'.
Another explanation was that they do not pay fines, this being tantamount to saying
[672] that they are exempt from laws and therefore cannot break laws even by doing what
would be for others an illegal act. The stool of the *nkumu*, however, has closer
restrictions in the manner of its use. Besides the *nkumu* only two others may sit upon
it, *Nsono* and *Mpenge*. It is always carried by one of his wives, though not necessarily
by any special one.

624 The restrictions concerning the food of the *nkumu* are many. He may eat food
only in his own house, or, if on a journey, in one given over for his use. He may not
262 enter another house to partake of food even if invited to do so. Likewise the *nkumu*
may not eat in the forest, or eat or drink anywhere along the road when on a journey,
but must wait until he arrives at a village and has a house at his disposal in order to
partake of food and drink. He never 'sleeps with hunger'; even if a wife or child
should die causing him great sorrow he must partake of food before going to sleep.
[765] The Bonginda *nkumu* must never go into mourning, and death must be ignored by
them, but the inland *nkumu* are permitted to mourn. All food carried to an *nkumu*
must be covered, this rule even applying to water. Food must not be placed in a
basket with high sides (*eboko*), but in a shallow one (*moyala*), and no food that has
been kept overnight in a pot may be eaten by him: swelling of the abdomen will
result. Various foods are taboo, among these all fast-moving snakes, though slow-
[824] moving ones may be eaten; light-coloured palm-nuts may not be eaten, and a variety
of yam known as *menkiki* is shunned, for it is with the tough stems of the *menkiki*
that the dying body of the *nkumu* will be bound to ensure the sitting posture necessary
for burial.

624 Among regulations roughly classed as social, we have already covered several in
references above, and have referred to the *nkumu* in council. It may be added here that
[623] he is expected to agree with the majority of the councillors and not fall out with them.
The rules affecting the *nongo* of the *nkumu* are accompanied by severe penalties. There
[689] must not be any fighting; if anger is aroused to the point of blows the antagonists

763 literally that the deceased has hanged the heart, the former is used of a tree which leans over and falls from a great cut at its base.

624 766 594 202 On the announcement of the death, an expert drummer drums out the news. There will be at least four drums of the type known as *lokuku*, and a *nungu*.[1] The four drums are called by the names, *Epanda*, having the 'biggest voice', that is a deep bass note, *Mongeye*, having a higher note, *Mongonda*, a high pitched note, and *Monkoto*, having a very high penetrating note. To these four drums others are added; if the *nkumu* himself did not possess sufficient, they would be borrowed from the surrounding villages, and their notes matched with those of the first three drums, being beaten with them in their turn. *Monkoto* is beaten simultaneously with *Epanda*, giving a rhythmic tattoo. When the news of the death has been sent out on *Epanda*, the funeral drumming commences, as follows:

539

Mongonda.	Botianganu w'Amba lokolo,
Mongeye.	Ntsala ikita, otongonoko,
Epanda.	Tokund' ibenge molom' o nyama,
	Ombolekeke mmenge,
	Lobanga lolenda ntondo,
	Bikeku bilenda lobola.
Nungu.	Tobilake nkoi nkonge,
	Tobilake nkoi nkonge, &c.

The English and the interpretation are as follows:

Mongonda. A scattering of Amba, the snail. (The mother of twins, always called Amba, here gives her name to the snail because of her prolific progeny, which, upon being introduced to the world, scatter, while the mother dies. So the death of the *nkumu* will cause a scattering of his many wives and children.)

Mongeye. Feathers fall; pick them up. (That is to say, for your arrow shafts, for if you don't, and come back later, the wind will have scattered them and you won't find them. So while the *nkumu* was alive it was the time for his children to learn his teachings so that when palavers came after his death they would be well acquainted with his wisdom and know how to settle them.)

Epanda. We are burying the *ibenge*, husband of animals, You have just eaten *mmenge*, The chin looks up at the ridge pole, The jaw bones look up at the sky.
[825] (The *ibenge* is an animal much prized for its fat meat; the *nkumu* always gets his share when it is killed, and the skin is made into carrying straps for infants, and into belts.
[563] Batwa are prohibited the use of it for any purpose. It is therefore fitting to liken the *nkumu* to the *ibenge*. *Mmenge* (sing. *lobenge*) is the equivalent of a snack. When a woman brings her cassava from the swamp where it has been soaking for several
[264] days, her husband may be too hungry to wait the long hours required to cook it, so to appease his hunger his wife takes a piece or two of the unprepared root, splits
[252] it in two, places salt between, wraps it in a *lokombe* leaf and roasts it in the hot ashes, where it is quickly cooked. So the *nkumu* just had time to eat a few *mmenge*; he didn't wait for the big cooking; his life was suddenly cut off.)

Nungu. Don't pull out the leopard's eyelashes. (That is, while he is alive; now he is dead one can disregard his power.)

---

[1] A *lokuku* is a slit gong made from a hollowed log. Its two notes are produced by striking the two lips of the slit. A *nungu* is a hollowed log, open at one end, across which is stretched a vellum hide.

no compulsion. If one of the contracting parties fails to fulfil its pledges in this matter 224
of giving part of the kill, or in anything else, the aggrieved party may call the council 624
together. This consists not only of members of the *molombe* and *ekope*, but of all 596
elders of the village or villages connected with this particular one. The party judged 621
in the wrong, whether *ekope* or *molombe*, will be fined, the injured party receiving its share, and both parties will be charged to live together harmoniously and observe their contracts.

The power of the *nkumu* was apparently limited, and did not supersede that of 624
the *momene mokonda*. When trials came up, the aggrieved party might go either to the 695
momene mokonda or to the *nkumu*. If it was necessary to call the village elders together about it, both these authorities were present at the hearing. First the young men of the group were allowed to give their verdict, then the old men, after that *momene mokonda* (or the *molomi o ele*), and finally the *nkumu* was given the privilege of the last word. He would comment on the opinions of each of the judges, criticizing one young man, commending another, and then giving his own verdict, at which the group would assent by saying, 'Even so, grandfather'. The whole group of judges would then fix the fines, a double portion of which went to the *nkumu*.

The actual manual labour which an *nkumu* may do excludes anything endangering 624
life or limb, or requiring agility and speed. He may clear the bush for his gardens: this is a man's work. He may take part in the building of his houses, but may do
no high work, and, among the inland groups, it is the work of the Batwa to put the [563]
roof on for him. The *nkumu* may also prepare pitfalls for catching game, but cannot engage in any other type of hunting or do any fishing. Digging a grave is prohibited, for, as we shall see, everything pertaining to death must be ignored by the *nkumu*.

Other rules affecting the daily life of the *nkumu* may be roughly divided into three: those affecting his person, those having to do with his food, and social regulations.

One of the great points of observance in the first class of regulations is the impor- 624
tance of the *mentolo*. The *nkumu* must on no account be seen during daylight hours 292
with an uncovered head. If he wishes relief from the cumbersome *mentolo* he may take it off in the darkness of his house and put on an ordinary hat made of skins,
and when night falls he may walk where he will bareheaded if he so desires. The
skin hat, known as *lotolo*, may be made from two animals only, in the case of an [824]
nkumu, one being the *nkulepa*, a species of antelope with light-coloured hair, and the other the *iyoko*, an animal resembling a beaver. The skin of the *nkulepa* may be used
by anyone, but the *iyoko* is reserved for the *nkumu* only with one exception. The skin
of the *iyoko* may also be used for the carrying strap for infants known as *nyambe*, [859]
which is worn over one shoulder in bandoleer fashion. For the *nkumu* the skin of the *iyoko* is limited to the informal hat, *lotolo*, and for making into the *lokoto*, a pouch used for carrying small objects and worn like a sporran. As a corollary to the importance of the *mentolo* may be noted the importance attached to the head of the *nkumu*, which must never be seen uncovered in daylight.

The Bonginda *nkumu* never wash in the daytime, but may wash at night with hot 624
water. The inland *nkumu* never wash. Even the Bonginda *nkumu* never wash their 515
heads, and no *nkumu* ever cuts his hair. If the *nkumu* becomes too greatly incon-
venienced, one of his wives may delouse his head, but only within the privacy of the [181]
house, by the light that enters the rear opening.

must go to the *nsakala* for their fight, this being the location of the houses belonging to the sons of the *nkumu*. The penalty for breaking this law is a fine, and if no fine were forthcoming hanging used to be the alternative. If a quarrel arises elsewhere and one party wishes to avoid fighting, he may retire to the *nsago* and thus be safe. No trees in the *nsago* may be climbed. There are, however, privileged classes exempt from all such rules, and these embrace a good many people. Thus, the mother of twins, twins, Batwa, *mami*, and all members of the *molembe* and *ekopo* are exempt from the laws of the *nsago*. If any of these commit acts which are illegal for those coming under the law, they are not held guilty, but their actions will not be condoned; they will be considered breaches of good conduct, and will be dealt with informally; the parties will be quietly reprimanded, and adjured to observe the proprieties of conduct. For outsiders breaking the laws of the *nsago*, what corresponds to a warrant is necessary. It is necessary to catch the culprit in the act and hale him before the *nkumu*. The *nkumu* himself cannot do this, nor can any of the *ekopo*; it must be done by one of the *molembe*, and so if the *nkumu* sees someone infringing the law he will try to get one of the *molembe* on the spot in a hurry in order to catch the offender. 624 689 [645] [672] [626] [696]

In war,[1] it is the *molemi o ele* who is most active in preparations, but the *nkumu* will accompany his party to battle, keeping well in the rear, and surrounded by good fighters. He does not wear his *mentela* but puts on the informal hat. If an *nkumu* were captured, he would never be tortured or killed as were other prisoners, unless he specifically sought such a fate. He could be ransomed, and his captors would beseech him to let his people ransom him, but in many cases an *nkumu* would invite death rather than endure the shame of being yielded up as a prisoner of war. 624 726 [727]

An *nkumu* is always addressed by a double clap of the hands, and will not reply to anyone rude enough to speak to him first. In answer to the clap he replies with a word of wisdom expressed in an aphorism or proverb. Such a reply, however, is common to all elders, who have their favourite aphorisms ready for any who pay them special honour. Anything the *nkumu* says must be answered not by the customary *ako boiko* (even so) which ordinary people use, but with the special word, *bingo*, which is reserved exclusively for replying to an *nkumu*, and means the same thing. 624 576

When the hour of death approaches, an *nkumu* is attended by his Batwa. It is a rule that he must not die a natural death, and near the end, while he is still conscious and can still speak, all 'free men' clear out and leave the Batwa pygmies to their task of tying the *nkumu* very tightly with the fibrous yam vines known as *mokiki*. Often this secure lashing in the sitting posture, known as *ilima*, is sufficient to finish the *nkumu* off, but sometimes the work is expedited by twisting his neck.[2] Then it is announced that he is dead, *ankilwa*, this being in contradistinction to the customary phrase *ankama anileko* used of the death of ordinary people. While the latter means 624 763 [563]

---

[1] Owing to the lack of tribal cohesion, warfare was not on any considerable scale. The method of warfare consisted in sending groups of young men to fight first, the elders only joining in when one side began to get the worst of the fray. Victors and vanquished in such fights were designated 'husband' and 'wife' respectively, and members of the one group were free to come and go in the villages of the other, and even to help themselves to food. In future wars 'husband' and 'wife' were supposed to combine against their common foes.

[2] Besides *nkumu*, elderly and rich men, fathers and mothers of twins, and twins are buried in the *ilima* or sitting posture, in contradistinction to the simple position which is the recumbent one used for ordinary people and slaves. [764]

This funeral drumming is kept up for a long time, off and on for days, and is very stirring in its rhythm. While it is going on, the elders congregate in an *elanga*. They fast and have nothing to do with their wives during this time. The *ekopo* is mourning, and the *molembe* may be likewise mourning, but for the others it is a time of rejoicing, and also of the relaxing of moral restraints. It is an occasion for dancing by both Batwa and 'freemen', the former regarding this as a time for special rejoicing, for the *nkumu* was their master and now he is dead they are no longer under restraint. They are free to take any of their master's goods and even to snatch blankets off the corpse. Men and women do not dance together; the women, taking some of their husbands' weapons, go off in one direction, and the men, arrayed in finery, dance at the other end of the village. 624 766 [533] [535] [563]

While the *nkumu* is still unburied and the drumming is going on, the *molembe* look for a successor among the *ekopo*. Often this man will, as we have seen, have already been designated. The *molembe*, Batwa, and others in the village make up a party, and attired in war finery go off with their weapons as though after a man they wished to kill. As they go they sing:

Nkombe w'eopiko elimbo [539]
Wo olulo wo abo?
Hawk, thou hast destroyed the nest,
Where art thou going to sleep?

Before catching the real successor they catch one or another in fun, singing this song. The man of course refuses to be *nkumu*, and the point of the song is that because of his refusal the *ekopo* no longer fulfils its function of supplying the *molembe* with *nkumu* and therefore ceases to be of any use to them. If this man by refusing thus destroys the family nest, where will they sleep?

Finally, after this fun, the real successor is caught, his face daubed with black, and the group sing: [303]

Bolo bowo-o, bonde ekulu. [539]
The cunning animal is hiding, reveal the tortoise.

Thus the new *nkumu*, like a cunning animal, is hiding, but when discovered, like the tortoise, he will not try to run away. The whole group conducts the new *nkumu* to the *ipomo* and sits all night guarding him. Earlier on the day of the actual interment of the dead *nkumu*, the new one is installed with ceremonies as already described.

On the day the *nkumu* dies his people scatter to other villages to look for slaves for the executions on the day of the burial. Slave-owners or husbands of unwanted wives ask quietly how much money there is for the man or woman, accept the agreed amount, and tell the buyers to go quietly and catch the slave or wife before anything is suspected and an escape is made. In this connexion we may note two classes of wives, *bopiko* and *iboto*. A third class, *bwamba*, acquired by the payment of a very small bride price, was not nearly as common formerly as at present and may be passed by. A *bopiko* was a slave wife acquired by capture in war or stolen. If loved by her husband she will take her place practically on an equality with the members of the village, but she may be killed, for she is her husband's possession, 'his money' is the native expression. An *iboto* is a wife for whom a very high bride price has been paid, obliging her family to give wives to the other family in perpetuity, supplying 766 567 762 562

614 splits up only after the death of the ancestor to whom the new groups can be traced back. The descendants of a patriarch split up into the groups of his sons only when these groups have reached the necessary size. Considering the size of even the smallest Ekonda groups this can occur only after several generations. By this time, however, the common patriarch and his sons, the ancestors of the new subgroups, are dead. Thus, at the present time we find a tendency to split in the Ndong'i-mpinga group; the ancestors of the two groups which are now in the process of forming died about 1920. Most probably these two groups, so far as their age relationship to one another is concerned, will not grade themselves according to the relationship of these "tribal ancestors," but according to the relationship of the "patriarchs" under whom the separation takes place. The exact process of such a split of A-groups cannot be established afterwards through questions; it can only be observed on the spot while it is taking place.

In the following chapters we shall describe the groups of the various ranks and their characteristics.

Groups of Rank A

These groups consist of as many as forty persons. In most 563 cases, a group of Batwá-Pygmoids is part of such a group. Having the function of helots, they belong to the A-group of their masters, and this membership is passed on through the male line in the same manner as among their masters. Excepting Pygmoids, the oldest member of the A group is the *bomélé bokonda*, the "owner of the land"; he is the personification of all authority within the group and its representative in the group's dealings with outsiders. He is the only person who is completely in charge. All members of the group are in a father-son relationship to him [193] even if the younger members -- as counted by generations -- have the rank of father in relation to him. He administers and issues the group's treasury of objects used for buying a bride. He also disposes of the landed property of the group.

Pygmies FO4
Botswa

P
178 doctor who was in charge of the dispensary at Flandria at that time
588 informed me of the case of a Botswa fruit harvester in the service of
563 the H.C.B. who had syphilis of unquestionably sexual origin.
164

M
582 Though a racial difference constitutes an obstacle to marriage, a tribal or ethnic one does not. Where the geographic situation permits, true Nkundó, such as the Elíngá, marry members of neighboring groups such as the Ngombe, the Mbole, or the Ekonda.

Article II. Social Status

M
554
582
[565]
[571] Among the Nkundó a difference in social status is not an obstacle to marriage. They have no social classes strictly speaking. They differentiate between those with authority, those who are inferiors, and the individuals or families who are not entitled to their word in political matters; but these ideas do not come into play in ordinary social relations, [245] and especially not with respect to marriage. A person may belong to a clan which is inferior, subject, dependent, foreign, or descended from a slave; nevertheless he may marry even a member of the group's senior clan. These distinctions are in the realm of politics; a marriage is a matter of law, affection, and good relations based on the payment of a bride price.

M
567
582 Actual slaves are an exception, but here a distinction must be made between the sexes. Unions with slave women were very common, but they were not marriages strictly speaking. Before a real marriage was entered into, the woman was set free. More details on this subject will be given in Chapter VII, Article V. For men the situation is altogether different. The condition of a slave was not only inferior, it was dishonorable, though a bit less so than among the Ancients. It might be overlooked if the love between the pair was unusually ardent, and there are a few clans descended from a "free" woman and a slave man, who were united in a proper and legitimate marriage for which the master paid the bride price.

There is no longer any opposition to the union of a "free" person with the descendant of a mixed marriage. The children may always claim kinship with their maternal ancestors who in these

684 The risk of being wounded, reduced to slavery, or killed, often cools the adulterer's passion. Therefore, the more the husband showed that he was fearless, violent, physically powerful, or of a high social position, the more his wives and their lovers were on their guard. Certain men were so jealous of one of their wives and so determined to take vengeance with extreme severity that the tempters did not even dare to think of approaching her.

2) The payment of an indemnity seems to be the standard sanction. It is the only one that remains legal at the present time; consequently it is coming more and more to the fore.

Any of the types of evidence examined above justify the claim for an indemnity.

The indemnity may be minimal, consisting of 2 to 5 copper rings, or heavy, going up to 20 to 30 rings or a slave. The maximum is always demanded for adultery with a favorite. The size of the payment depends on the persons involved, the relationships that bind them, the frequency of misconduct, and the nature of the action observed. For instance, if the husband catches the couple when arranging a meeting or exchanging gifts, the indemnity will be small; if, on the other hand, he has caught them *in flagrante delicto*, it will be high.

[626] A man who demands a high indemnity must expect to be treated the same way should the occasion arise. The application of the law of retaliation in that case is fully approved by Nkundó opinion.

684
565
[609]
In addition to the situations examined in the preceding article, there exists another which does not result in an indemnity claim. It arises if the culprit belongs to a clan of slaves or is in some other way subject or inferior (*mpámá* or *bowélé*). (1) Even if the husband catches the culprit in the act, he politely asks him to go away and leave his house [321] and his wife: *óntsíkél'îlombe, njóyá é*! Here is true Nkundó courtesy in practice. It might

1. Strangers who are settled with a tribe or group but are in no way related to them.

684 525 certainly happen that a husband who was too jealous or impetuous would wound, kill, or sell his rival. But this was an exception and was always condemned since it was absolutely lacking in chivalry. In any case there can never be any question of demanding an indemnity; such an act would be absolutely shameful.

684 594 The culprit is notified of the demand for an indemnity by the ndonga, who in difficult cases is accompanied by various notables. If the husband foresees strong opposition on the debtor's part, he gives the ndonga a special present of a bunch of bananas and two fish (or a hen) "so that he would not be forced to eat the rival's food."

684 A persistent and categorical refusal to pay the indemnity is unusual. For it can have serious consequences: the taking in custody followed by enslavement because of debts, or [the taking of] compensation in the person of his wife or of a relative, or the retention [by her relatives] of a relative of the creditor who is married into the debtor's clan (ikǎkelo). Since these practices of taking hostages and of bodily constraint have been abolished, there remains the intervention of the courts, seconded by the police.

What is the Nkundó idea of this payment which we have called an indemnity in order to facilitate its description? The question is difficult to answer. Here are the linguistic facts which may provide elements of the solution:

684 172 The payment for adultery is called nyongo, and the word is used together with the verb ka, "to give." The expression is equivalent to the verb lingala fɔ́ta (from which the noun bofɔ́to is derived). It signifies "payment" in the broadest sense and thus also covers our words "pay," "salary," "remuneration." In addition to its application in the case of adultery, it is also used in many other situations, such as remuneration for work, payment for a service, etc. Nyongo does not mean "compensation," which is called lowɛ́ɛla, nor "a payment making amends [322] and apologizing for an offense," which is bɔɔ́ndɔ, nor "indemnification" (mbɛ́laka). What the expression has in common with the last term is the concept of a

589x daughter or ward in marriage without reference to her wishes, money paid for a slave wife," and p. 314, *sóngya*: the same) therefore does not correspond to the sense in which these terms are used by the Nkundó tribes under discussion.

Another term for this payment is *tsinola bonto* (*ilengé*). I know of no other use of the verb *tsinola*.

An expression which brings out the idea of its being a last [192] payment is *kumbola bonto* (*ilengé*). The verb *kumbola* means to strike the last blow in felling a tree. (1)

1. Note that *kumbola* also means "to take in marriage."

Formerly, the payment of a real slave, that is, of a human ●[567] being, was absolutely obligatory. Nowadays, since slavery has been [435] abolished, the worth of a slave in *bakonga* has been substituted; it consists of 25 rings, or of 15 to 20 if they are especially beautiful. (2)

2. In the past, the price of a slave was from 10 to 15 rings.

To distinguish between these forms of the *bosóngo*, the Nkundó say *bont'ǒw 'abwó* (*ilengé y'ǎbwó*), "a slave with hair," therefore a human being, or *bont'ǒw 'akonga* (*ilengé y'ǎkonga*), "slave in copper rings."

583x 563 Batswá, instead of slaves, could be given as *bosóngo*. They were not reduced to slavery, however, but remained in the same position as before, except that they changed masters.

Sometimes a master who wanted to be rid of an incorrigible Botswá gave him away as a real slave in a *bosóngo*; in that case it was as if a slave in the strict sense of the word had been given.

In other instances the master acted with the more or less explicit consent of the Botswá. Those who were thus handed over as a bride-price payment were usually women. [159] Since in matrimonial matters of the Batswá, the Bootó master fulfills the role of "Father," he is entitled to the girls' bride price and has the duty of

583ˣ obtaining wives for the boys. Therefore he can turn a Botswá girl
563 belonging to him over to his father-in-law. The father-in-law never takes this woman as his wife or as a wife for one of his relatives; but he gives her in marriage to one of his own Batswá or to a stranger of that race who pays him a bride price for her. Socially and financially the result is exactly the same as if the son-in-law had made his payment in the form of a slave.

Thus the bride price paid by Lokonda jw'ǐsano y'ânkanja of Ngombe (Bongíli) for Bakutu of the Basɛ́ká Elongama (Besombó, Bombwanja) and used by the latter's cousin, Bofɛ́nda of Ekúkola (Bongíli) to obtain for wife, Iloa of Ndongó (Bongíli), consisted of 60 rings and the woman Ómâmenga (Antonia) of the Mbálanga clan of Botswá. Ómâmenga was later married to Wanja (Pius), a Botswá belonging to her new masters.

● [567] There may be two or more slaves, for the same reasons that determine the size of the walo. The Bombwanja are only exceptionally satisfied with a single one. But all the slaves always comprise a single bosóngo.

583ˣ The bosóngo is not part of the jěngí. The natives say bosóngo ěmí ńk'omóngó, "the bosóngo is entirely separate." Their statements on this subject are markedly categorical.

A characteristic expression which designates the entire bride price is baúmbá la bonto, "rings and a man" (slave). The rings are the jěngí; they are valuables of a purely material nature. The bosóngo is, on the contrary, a human being.

There is no term in Lonkundo which covers both kinds of payments. The whole cannot be expressed precisely in a single word.

583ˣ In the vicinity of Flandria, however, the young people [160]
178 are beginning to confuse the two words jěngí and bosóngo and to use one in place of the other. (1) [Editor's note: The confusion today is

1. The young people from Injóló who are about twenty years of age and whom I have known at Flandria Mission and in their own settlements, do not confuse these terms but distinguish clearly between them.

583 The bosóngo must be handed over under any circumstances, even if divorce or death precede it. If a husband refuses to pay he loses his rights over one of the daughters in his wife's family, whose bride price would compensate with interest for the economic and social loss suffered by the woman's clan. (1)

1. See Chapter VIII, Article IV, and Chapter IX, Article IX, 2.

2. The value and consequences of the bosóngo

How important is the bosóngo today? In answering this question a distinction must be made between two aspects of the problem: the financial aspect and the legal aspect.

1) Financially, the bosóngo, first of all, completes the payment of the bride price and thus produces the highest degree of theoretical stability possible in a Nkundó marriage. That is the meaning of the following expressions: bǒló wǎ liála ńk'onto, "the strength of the marriage (its stability) is to be found in the slave,"; l'osóngo bǒmo to ákólongwa wǎlí, "by means of the bosóngo the woman completely becomes the wife"; or wálí ákólongwa ǒkě, "the wife becomes completely yours." Since, as I have explained, the bosóngo terminates the payment of the bride price [162], the woman's parents no longer have any excuse for taking her away from her husband, and they become even more desirous of maintaining this union in which such great interests are at stake.

589 178 567 Apart from the value of wealth per se, there is also its social influence. In this respect we must make a distinction between the past and the present:

a) At the time when the bosóngo was necessarily a flesh and blood slave rather than a slave in rings, it was naturally valued more than the walo. Twenty-five bakonga (for the walo) and two slaves were preferable to 50 bakonga and one slave even though, if the payments were reduced to the monetary unit in copper, the latter was greater. This fact is easily explained. "In the past," say the old people, "we had very little copper, and the smelting of iron was a

583x 567 178 hard and lengthy task. The walo paid for our mothers was greatly inferior to what we see nowadays. In the majority of cases our fathers paid no more than 15 or 20 rings and iron objects. But they gave a greater number of slaves. It was not unusual to hand over five or even ten slaves for a wife. Consequently, the bosɔ́ngo was a good deal more important than the walo. At the present time the white men have introduced a great deal of copper and brass; and the abundance of these metals is the cause of the increase in the price of the walo. On the other hand, it has become more difficult, and finally altogether impossible, to obtain slaves; that is why the bosɔ́ngo has been lowered. Finally, we have had to substitute rings for persons."

583x 178 b) Nowadays, though the idea of the importance of the bosɔ́ngo to the family is still alive, because it is the last payment and therefore a permanent settlement of the financial question, its monetary importance and therefore, in a certain perspective, its social importance for the receiving clan, has greatly diminished. This has happened because [163], like the payments that precede it, it has become a payment of copper rings. In places where the bride price is paid in money and in valuables introduced by the Europeans, the importance of the bosɔ́ngo quite naturally decreases even more rapidly.

583x 2) From the legal standpoint the question is entirely different. The bosɔ́ngo results in no new relationship between the spouses. The woman's name does not change; she is called wǎlí, as before. The idea that she becomes a wife completely at this time is based, as we have said, only on the fact that the marriage theoretically becomes completely stable. This supposed stability is derived from the handing over of the last payment, which leaves the parents no excuse for taking their daughter away from her husband. It does not come from any new legal act.

That this is so is clearly demonstrated in the following fact: if the woman dies before the bosɔ́ngo, there is no palaver, as there is if she dies before the walo is paid. Her husband is not required to pay an indemnity (mbǎlaka). But he is required to complete the

Pygmies FO4
Botswa

P
178 doctor who was in charge of the dispensary at Flandria at that time
588 informed me of the case of a Botswa fruit harvester in the service of
563
164 the H.C.B. who had syphilis of unquestionably sexual origin.

M Though a racial difference constitutes an obstacle to marriage,
582 a tribal or ethnic one does not. Where the geographic situation permits, true Nkundó, such as the Elingá, marry members of neighboring groups such as the Ngombe, the Mbole, or the Ekonda.

Article II. Social Status

M Among the Nkundó a difference in social status is not an
554 obstacle to marriage. They have no social classes strictly speaking.
582 They differentiate between those with authority, those who are in-
[565] feriors, and the individuals or families who are not entitled to their
[571] word in political matters; but these ideas do not come into play in ordinary social relations, [245] and especially not with respect to marriage. A person may belong to a clan which is inferior, subject, dependent, foreign, or descended from a slave; nevertheless he may marry even a member of the group's senior clan. These distinctions are in the realm of politics; a marriage is a matter of law, affection, and good relations based on the payment of a bride price.

M Actual slaves are an exception, but here a distinction must
● 567 be made between the sexes. Unions with slave women were very
582 common, but they were not marriages strictly speaking. Before a real marriage was entered into, the woman was set free. More details on this subject will be given in Chapter VII, Article V. For men the situation is altogether different. The condition of a slave was not only inferior, it was dishonorable, though a bit less so than among the Ancients. It might be overlooked if the love between the pair was unusually ardent, and there are a few clans descended from a "free" woman and a slave man, who were united in a proper and legitimate marriage for which the master paid the bride price.

There is no longer any opposition to the union of a "free" person with the descendant of a mixed marriage. The children may always claim kinship with their maternal ancestors who in these

582 567 matters are more important than the father's ancestry. (1)

[554] 1. Among the Nkundó no shame is attached to not knowing the family of one's father. But not to be able to name the mother's clan is a great dishonor for it proves that she was a slave.

There is less opposition to the first generation born of a couple who were both slaves than for their parents, and it progressively decreases with each succeeding generation. There is practically no opposition now to the grandsons. The reason seems to be that although receiving a wife from one's master in a regular marriage does not constitute emancipation (nsikó, nsikola) for the slave, it is a kind of adoption (wěmya, -émya). [246] [597]

Article III. Kinship

582 835 Marriage between members of the same kin group (isangano, bosangema, from the verb -sangema, "to be related") is forbidden. But how far does such a kin group extend? It is impossible to give a general rule. On the one hand, it is certain that if two groups are not descended from a common ancestor there is no bond of kinship between them, even if they live side by side. But on the other hand, it is not possible to say that all those who are descended from the same ancestor are relatives and that marriage is forbidden between the various branches of the grouping they comprise. The question therefore amounts to knowing by which ancestor the exogamous grouping is defined. A decision on this point may only be made through the examination of each case individually.

614 It is impossible to deduce anything from the meaning of the term clan, for it is usually defined as "a grouping of families united to one another by kinship." This leaves us back where we started. The characteristics usually given for a clan are: generic name,

595x that no one will see her. She lives in this house in the company
554 of her ebísa, her daughters, some female relatives, or even
another of her husband's wives, who must wait on her, prepare
food for her, etc., and who go out and enter freely. Her husband
also enters at will and spends the usual number of nights with her.
No other man is permitted to enter the enclosure.

During her period of seclusion, the bolɔ́mbɔ́ may not do the slightest work. She does not wash with water, but only with palm oil. She walks only on mats. She is also exempt from mourning for her parents. (Compare with Chapter I, Part 1, Article II.)

When the period of seclusion comes to an end, the husband announces the coming-out feast. There is merrymaking, dancing, and drinking. Mats are spread from the door of [351] the hut of seclusion all the way to the middle of the street. The two men who brought the woman to the hut come again and, taking her by the arms at the entrance to the enclosure, lead her over the mats. The ceremony thus ends without further ado.

The bolɔ́mbɔ́ is henceforth free and acts like any other
woman except for the wearing of furs. She may work, draw
water, cook, travel, visit her parents, etc. But her husband's
[563] honor and his reputation as a rich man require that he give his
[567] bolɔ́mbɔ́ one or several slaves, or Batswa, or -- as is more frequently done -- one or two bibísa, who are supposed to take
[357] care of her housework and thus free the princess.

595x Adultery with her -- after her seclusion -- is more
554 severely punished than misconduct with an ordinary woman as
837 regards the indemnity to be paid. But as a flagrant insult, it is
614 considered very serious indeed, not so much as an infringement
or marital rights as an attack on the honor of the whole clan or group of clans involved. Thus, while adultery with a nkɔ́ndɛ́, for instance, is a private matter, arousing the husband's jealousy and anger, misconduct with a bolɔ́mbɔ́ is a public offense. The whole clan is enraged -- for they believe that their honor has been attacked, and all the members together press for vengeance for

595x from her personally; she attaches herself to her relative and follows her in her marital union."

The name *ebísa*, as well as the functions involved, may be improperly extended to a relative who is fetched by a woman so that she may become the wife not of her husband, but of one of his relatives. Sometimes she is even intended for a man who belongs to another clan, which is related by marriage, but for whom there is prohibition on marriage with the first clan. For instance, Bolűmbű w'ǒfuwa of Eleke (Lokongo) came to fetch her sister Eengé for Bompata w'ìselema, who belonged to the Befősola clan which, like her husband's clan (Bombénga), was part of the village of Besombő.

Article V. Slave Women

595x
567 In times past a polygamist could have one or several slaves in his harem whom he treated as wives. They were war prisoners whom he himself had captured, or had bought from others, or received as [356] *bosőngo.* As a rule no bride price was paid for them, and in leaving, they retained their status of slaves. This fact did not prevent a husband from loving them like real wives. But their rivals respected them less and, especially on the occasion of quarrels and disputes, reminded them of their inferiority.

[177] Since slavery has been abolished by colonization, many former slaves have returned to their respective families. Others, on the contrary, have not wanted to take advantage of the freedom granted them and have preferred to remain faithful. In such cases the husband paid the usual bride price for them with all the appropriate formalities. Only recently (1932) Ifolɛ́, a [583] Belondő man (Bonjoku) thus paid a bride price of 63 *bakonga* to his wife Ǎmbá's family. Ǎmbá was originally from Bokukű (Boángɛ́) but had been abducted at the beginning of the European occupation. Ifolɛ́ had inherited her from Bakőnongo of the Basékǎ Mbangő (Bonkoso) thanks to the intervention of his great-uncle Mpetsɛ́ who had paid 7 rings on his behalf as the customary *bompángá* called *nsǎsangő.*

587 A slave woman may be chosen as a favorite. Since this
595 choice is a matter of preference, there is no reason why not. This is not true of the rank of bolɔ́mbɔ, which can never be attained by a slave, as an examination of this eminent position clearly shows. The following slave women are cited among those who were made nkóndé by their husbands: Bo̱ló̱nge̱ by Bakengó ba Lo̱ko̱lí of Nseké; Bo̱ké̱tu by Ekányaka éy'ondókó of Etóontálé; Ntsimbo by Bo̱mbe̱ngé̱lá of Etóontálé.

When a polygamist felt a very special love for a slave, and had the means to do so, he would enfranchise her and then pay a regular bride price for her. In order for this to happen the woman's family had to intervene, either on its own initiative or by invitation of the husband. Once the ransom was paid, the woman was free. She returned home, and her husband followed her to pay the bride price; thus she became a regular wife on the same basis [357] as any other woman. The procedure was the same whether the slave had been captured personally by the husband or had been bought or acquired as part of a bride price or by some other means.

Such was the case of Bolɔ́mbɔ, daughter of Bo̱ékwá of Boéndé (Bombwanja), who was taken by Esalé of Ekɔ́kola and bought by Efoloko of Lofelí. She was enfranchised at her father's initiative, and he subsequently married her off in a regular fashion. Another case was that of Etáka, daughter of Elongama éa Longómbá of Be̱so̱mbó̱, who was married to Bonyongela of Bowélé. During a war she was taken prisoner by Betɔ́kɔ of Ekɔ́kola, who wanted to marry her properly and therefore contacted Elongama. The latter arranged the matter of the ransom and took his daughter with him. Then Betɔ́kɔ went to Be̱so̱mbó̱ to pay the bride price. (1)

[727] 1. Almost all slave women were reduced to their condition, directly or indirectly, because of a war. If they were already married, their marriages were considered as dissolved. Under the circumstances it

567
595x
727

> could not be otherwise. In such matters each group took care only of its own interests; and none of the procedures usually accompanying the dissolution of a marriage were observed. However, the husband was entitled to an indemnity, in the form of persons or valuables, from the member of his clan who had fomented the [672] war and was held responsible for all its consequences, whatever the way in which he had provoked it. If necessary, this member could be forced to pay. If he did not have the means to pay indemnities, he himself was reduced to slavery, if the influence of the families involved did not prevent this occurrence. When the woman was enfranchised and a new bride price was paid for her, her family was expected to reimburse her former husband.

Since, at present, slavery has been abolished, ransom can no longer be paid. A master who wishes to enfranchise a slave woman who has remained faithful to him, simply gives her family the bride price and then goes with his wife to her home to receive the dowry.

Article VI. Life in a Harem

595x Wives of the same husband address each other among themselves as bakalɛ́ (sing. bokalɛ́). Their husband calls them all baálí, [358] "wives." All except for true slaves are married by means of a bride price. A woman's sons call their mother's bakalɛ́ baálí, "wives," but out of respect toward the older ones

595x 554 In little domestic quarrels, the bomɛ́tsa's children like to take advantage of the top rank occupied by their mother. Later, they will have the right to priority, before their brothers, in matters of inheritance and family authority.

595x ● 567 578 The children of slave women are loved by their father in the same way as their brothers and sisters. However, they are often the object of manifestations of contempt and humiliation on the part of others, especially verbal ones, but only when disputes arise. In particular, they have to submit to the insult of having it said [369] that they are without bonyangɔ́, "a maternal clan." This is one of the most serious insults that can be inflicted by a Nkundɔ́. Nevertheless, their father protects them as much as he can.

[428] The child of a slave woman has no right to an inheritance. Clearly, he lacks for nothing. But he has no political rights, even if he is his father's first-born.

595x 567 The posterity of a slave are not considered as such in matrimonial matters, as we have pointed out in Chapter V, Article II. If the groups descended from free women are extinct, the rights of the clan are inherited by the posterity of a slave, to the exclusion of related clans whose ancestors were entirely free.

595x What is the effect of the system of polygamy on the birth rate? There has been much debate on this question for it is very difficult to answer. Complete statistics well compiled from detailed methodical lists would be necessary. For it is a fact that in many monogamous households the woman is the former wife of a polygamist and for that reason can no longer be counted as a monogamist's wife. In addition it would be necessary to exclude from monogamous households those women who did not marry until an advanced age, after having lived freely for a fairly long time, for example in the centers.

In my opinion the birth rate is endangered above all by the need for individual love and the difference in the ages of the spouses, which is inseparable from the system of polygamy as it now exists. The polygamist's wife instinctively seeks another

586x and this was generally the case -- he did not kill him personally
682 but assigned the task to someone else -- his son, his younger
[563] brother, or nephew, etc. Preferably, he hired a Botswá. The price for this service was 20 copper rings, the sum of the bride price paid
[612] for a Botswá woman. Nkundó law places the entire responsibility for an assassination and all its consequences upon the person who orders it performed. Certain of the Batswa specialized in this field. Among them (of those dependent on the Bombwanja) were Esenge of Bokengé, Mbólókó of Bombembe, Wai w'ìtúmola of Bakoyó; Lǘwá jw'ìtómbengándá (died in 1933) also of Bakoyó; Botómba wá Lokio and Mpótó éy'Ilókó of Mbanja (still alive).

The scorned husband had still other means of taking revenge
586x or obtaining indemnification. He made use of them only if the occasion was favorable or if he was not in a position [382] to go into expensive adventures such as a war or an assassination. They were the following:

3) Ikákelo: (1) A relative of his who was married into the

1. See Chapter III, Article VI.

unfaithful wife's clan could be prevented from returning to her husband.

4) The seizure of one of the wives of his recalcitrant father-in-law, or of one of the latter's relatives. This action is called by the generic term lowáála, which signifies "compensation." (2)

2. The woman who was seized was called nginda and her descendants, if there were any, were known as bonginda.

The prisoner was usually put in an etáka (a wooden fork fastened to the neck) (3) to prevent her flight and hasten the reimbursement of

3. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 4, A, b), (1).

[567] the bride price. If the matter was not settled she became a slave.

586* make it possible for him to recover his claim, he had recourse to the second means:

b) Reducing his wife to slavery (bonvamó, from the verb
586* nyamola). The husband had the right to use this means immediately,
● 587 without having first tried the étaka. But such action was not approved of and was undertaken only if the woman's family were themselves exasperated by the endless suits and the continual shame that their unworthy daughter caused them.

The reduction of a woman to slavery usually caused a war,
[721] for her clan would not put up with such an insult. In some instances they did not seek revenge, however, either out of fear, because they did not feel in a position to resist, or because they recognized that the husband had good reasons for what he did. [384]

The woman's relatives could subsequently buy her back. (1)

[181] 1. If the Nkundó sold an Elinga woman into slavery, her people never troubled them with a war. For they did not know how to attack, were not good at marching, were strangers to the forest, and were inferior in military valor. Therefore they were satisfied with buying back their kinswoman.

In some instances, not wanting to be exposed to further palavers or further shame caused by their daughter's continued misconduct after having bought her back, they left her to her fate. Their love for their child and their desire to preserve their honor and good reputation were in conflict, and which of the two sentiments triumphed depended on circumstances of men and things. In such a situation, as with respect to theft and other habits that brought dishonor, it was not rare (nor is it even today) to find that the desire to preserve honor triumphed over affection or financial interests.

Before reducing a wife to slavery, even more than before
[584] confining her to the etáka, a man was required to communicate his intentions to the ndonga. Otherwise, the latter would declare war

586x on his own authority, for the offense was considered very serious.
[584 We can assume that the reason for this rule was to allow time for
● [567] the woman's family to intervene and keep their daughter from becoming a slave by refunding the bride price paid for her.

c) In exceptional instances an exasperated husband resorted to the immolation of his wife when someone died. People cite the case of Bengóngó of Bongilá (Besombó, Bombwanja), who had his wife, Litúli of Bontole, decapitated at the ikweí at the death of his father, Bengóngó byá Yese.

If the woman had children old enough to intervene on her behalf, her husband could be prevented from carrying out his violent intentions. The proverb says, Mbótsi ntáwáká, "a mother
[599] does not perish." The husband also abstained if the woman had
[595] a co-wife (ebôa) who was her sister or other close relative -- either out of a feeling of shame, [385] or out of fear of undesirable repercussions. Sometimes, when a husband was caught between his wish to use the etáka and his shame or his fear of the ebósa, he hid
[601] the wife who was confined by this fork. Preferably, he asked a brother-in-law to give her hospitality. In that way he got around the difficulty to a great extent, because through the law of exogamy such an arrangement placed the wife in another village, sometimes a considerable distance away. This practice was called isángyá; tómba walí isángyá.

Instead of resorting to the procedures listed, a husband could
586 also place his wife in the hands of the ndonga. However, it was a
584 very unusual thing to do. The natives maintain that such action was due to a lack of affection for the wife, together with the husband's certainty that he could recover his valuables -- either because he was assured that his father-in-law was well disposed toward him (and would reimburse him or provide a replacement), or because he knew he could use the ikákelo.

As we have said, direct repudiation was extremely rare. Here we are not speaking of repudiation caused by a wife's incorrigible misconduct -- which we have just discussed -- but of repudiation against the wife's wishes. If it did occur the husband was expected to hand her over to the ndonga, and the latter, seeing

613 member. In the case of common use or of an exceptionally good
423 yield (large game, a rich haul of fish, large yield from a particular
cultivation of common property, such as palm beer), these are divided
by the clan leader and their respective shares allotted to all members.

613 Personal property consists of the hut and the tools of the man, the
422 furniture of the woman, and the domestic animals. These are movable
and can also go out of the clan through inheritance. Should they leave
their husbands, married women may taken with them whatever they
have received or inherited personally from their wise.

421 In contrast to the economic property of the clan, there is the dotal
or capital property, the marriage settlements, which do not have
613 economic, but only legal value. They represent the rights over people.
583 In the first place we find those persons who themselves are the source
of rights: the marriageable girls (bibunanyi) of the clan /A/ and the
substitutes for women married into the clan /A/—that is, the women
who are married into the allied clan /B/ with the acquired bride price
(nkita). /Ed. Clan A pays bride price for a woman from clan B, the
allied clan. Then clan B uses this acquired bride price to obtain
another woman in marriage, a "substitute." This substitute is nkita to
[567] the original woman./ In addition, there are the slaves who can re-
place a caput. In the second place, there are the titles which represent
421 a caput: the /153/ so-called dotal securities (baumba). These dotal
613 securities or titles are kept by the clan leader and, with the knowledge
of his immediate successor, hidden somewhere in the ground. With
the approval of the clan council, he may also lend them out. These
dotal possessions or rights are also common property of the clan and
are used to procure a wife for the clan members, each in his turn.

The common ownership of the economic property makes possible the difficult sharing of woods and river, prevents the cutting up of the property, hinders the impoverishment and the proletarization of the poor, and insures the livelihood of all of the clan members. This common ownership has nothing more to do with communism than the common ownership of property in our nuclear families.

The dotal or capital property, the bride price titles, which have perhaps aroused the most indignant and lofty compassion of our civilized world, have less to do with buying and selling the wife then our own dowry and class system. They are permanent legal titles of the contract which is made between the clans of the couple on the occasion of the marriage. Our individualistic liberalism and mercantilism have regarded these legal securities only through economic spectacles and

595 wife was called *Lonkata*. This was, however, more a category, for there were sometimes four *Lonkata* in a harem. The rest were ordinary wives. Among the Ekonda, the first wife was called *Nkumokolo*, just like the *Bomatsa*. The second wife was called *Ekila* or *Nkonde*. The remaining wives were the ordinary wives of the harem.

595 484 The first wife, *Bomatsa*, always remained at home and never left the harem. The second, *Ekila* or *Nkonde*, accompanied the polygynist everywhere; she was at his side on all his trips. The *Bolumbu* usually went completely alone to do errands in other villages.

595 These old customs of priority among the wives are now gradually beginning to disappear.

684 It was forbidden under severe penalty to have relations with the first, second, or third wife of the polygynist. The penalties were death, slavery, or a large fine.

This was their law concerning adultery, enforced with severe punishment.

595 837 The ordinary wives of the harem were less strictly guarded. This often depended on the jealousy or indifference of the polygynist. Anyone who had relations with these wives had to pay a fine, or rather, a price of prostitution. Since the wives were almost all in the possession of the polygynists, there were naturally many men without a wife. These, then, often had relations with the ordinary wives of the polygynists. Also, the sons of the polygynist had relations with them; the polygynist himself sometimes even had relations with the ordinary wives of his neighbor. This was the bad consequence and the immorality of polygyny.

595 586 It is easy to understand that the ordinary wives of the polygynist, having relations with others, often left their husband, or rather, their master in order to go to another. The ordinary wives constituted the largest number. It is because of this that one now finds many women who have had three or four, sometimes even seven, different husbands in succession. Among some tribes, [534] the Ekonda among them, they were stricter; a wife who had already left her husband or master two or more times was considered to have little worth.

● 567 595 The female slaves who were taken in war were given by the polygynist to his male slaves as wives. They could also be installed in the harem among the ordinary wives. Their children could have the same rights as the other children of the polygynist

567 Everywhere there were also abducted women and female
439 slaves; these were simply sold. Furthermore women were bought
562 and sold with women [as payment]. Also women who were inherited
and no longer in the hands of their family were sold by their second,
third, or other subsequent husband. In all of these cases, the family
no longer came into consideration for the bride price. One would
have to stretch the point in order to consider the sums paid in these
cases as a bride price, and consequently as a native custom which
one must respect.

562 Or one should have to assume that such a native woman re-
439 mains a "bride" for her whole lifetime. It will be said that the
woman consented to her sale by one man to the other.

Often this was indeed the case, but not always by any means,
558 for children and slaves were also sold. Even the consent of the woman
did not prevent it from being a sale; her consent was rather an extra
transaction that simplified the sale of a human article of trade. It
still remains woman trade.

764 The Inheritance. Upon the death of a polygynist, the burial
ceremony was conducted according to the class and rank of the de-
567 ceased. One or two or several [539] slaves were killed and buried
with the polygynist in the same grave. Sometimes the arms and legs
of those male and female slaves were broken, and then they were
buried alive in the same grave with the body.

When these slaves still had family, it might happen that the
family members, having learned of the unfortunate lot of their rela-
tive, would hasten from faraway districts to buy him or her free if it
was not yet too late. Several Negroes have told us of those heart-
breaking scenes at which they were present as children. The mourn-
765 ing and the lamenting over the dead lasted from a week to a month.

768 The eldest son immediately succeeded his father in position
428 and immediately took one of the wives of his father.

587 The other sons divided among them the lances and knives of
their father.

If the deceased had left no son, or if he was still too young, the oldest brother succeeded the deceased. All of the wives had to remain in their own home, except the wife who was immediately taken by the eldest son. They were obliged to await the day of the distribution. This day was put off for from one to four months.

436 1. Benkata: this was thin iron or copper wire rolled into small rings; the thickness of the wire was about 3 millimeters; the length, 20 to 25 centimeters.

2. Bingetele: iron or copper bars about 8 millimeters thick and 15 centimeters long; these are still in use in Bikoro.

436 301 3. Bekata: copper wire; thickness about 7 or 8 millimeters, and 1 meter or 1.50 meters long; spiral shaped; the women wore these rolled around their legs as copper leggings.

[543] 4. Bakonga: copper rings which served as arm bands and foot bands and also as collars. The size differed for small or large persons; the weight is from one half kilo to 5 kilos.

436 5. Mitako: copper wire about 4 millimeters thick and 25 centimeters long, usually bent like a hairpin. The mitako served as a uniform currency, from which the other values and prices were reckoned, like the franc with us. The value of the mitako was formerly reckoned at five centimes.

583 435 Formerly the bride price, which was paid for a wife in almost all of Equatorial Africa, was from 5 to 20 bakonga. (The value of the bakonga differed greatly according to the weight. The average value, however, is estimated at 2.50 francs.) This payment was further supplemented with slaves or wives. This manner of payment and the bride price still exist in the districts where the natives have not yet, or practically not, come in contact with Europeans. Also, [567] it was sometimes paid with only slaves or women. The price for one female slave was relatively much less than for another woman.

178 583 Through the occupation of the Congo by Europeans, the family life of the natives has necessarily undergone great changes, and their customs and habits as well.

In the first place the natives have found themselves deprived of their wives by the sentinels of the Independent Congo State. [661] These black sentinels, appointed in the villages by the State to supervise the reaping of caoutchouc, assumed an unlimited power. They took as many wives of the natives as they chose and did not pay for a single one.

Next many black soldiers, servant boys, and workmen of the Europeans also took wives everywhere in the beginning, without bothering about the native customs, that is, without paying for those wives; and this often happened under the protective power of their Whites.

624 thus, *Nsomo* is a very prominent figure. Still arrayed as previously described, she sits outside the *songo* near the road on the special stool of the *nkumu*. Nobody may pass her with food, a humane law, considering that she must spend the day fasting. If anyone attempts to do so she catches the unlucky individual, helps herself to as much of his food as she wants, the victim meanwhile begging her to be merciful and leave him a small portion, and the booty is taken into the *ipame*. During this sentinel duty *Nsomo* must still keep the parrot's feather in her mouth and maintain silence, so, in case she catches an unsuspecting bearer of food, the remonstrance and argument are all one-sided.[1] After the first day *Nsomo* no longer sits outside the *songo* but goes from place to place in the village, choosing spots where people may least expect her, hoping thus to reap a bigger harvest for her pains. This is kept up for eight days, which comprise two Tumba ' weeks ' of three days' work and one of rest. The rest-day is appropriately named *boina bo asoo* after the duty of *Nsomo* of sitting doing nothing day by day. The eight days of this ceremony over, *Nsomo* lays aside her gourd and plantain stalk, which are placed at the foot of the first central supporting post [202] of the *ebonga* on entering. She is given a fresh coating of chalk and three coloured stripes are drawn the length of her back and down her arms. She still remains close to the *nkumu*.

● [507] Various personalities are connected with the *songo* of an *nkumu*. The *Bosole* is a male slave, clothed in a skin breech cloth, whose duty it is to receive callers at the *ipame* before admitting them to the presence of the *nkumu*.

624 595 *Mpongo* is the name taken by the wife first married by the *nkumu*. From henceforth she no longer accompanies her husband, and their cohabitation ceases unless the *nkumu* is willing to pay her each time the sum of one hundred rods. But the *nkumu* is obliged to eat all food she cooks for him even though they have a quarrel. *Mpongo* does not honour her husband with the special greeting accorded to *nkumu*, but greets her husband and all other *nkumu* as she would ordinary people.[2] The second wife of an *nkumu* must assume the name of *Ijumbo Angonda*, but no importance attaches to her position.

624 516 Among the Tumba generally, apart from the Bonginda, a woman is chosen from the *mwinde* to bear the title *Bolombo Itina i Ekopo* (*Bolombo*, the ' raison d'être ' of the *ekopo*). She is, it would seem, a symbolical figure, a reminder that the *ekopo* owes its existence to the *mwinde* of which this woman becomes the titular head. While the *nkumu* is still in seclusion the chosen woman is taken to the open space between the *ipame* and the row of sons' houses, known as the *nando*. Here, in the presence of the assembled crowd she is praised by being addressed, '*Bolombo Itina, botato!*' and the crowd exclaims, '*Baso!*'[3] Strips of leopard skin, about eighteen

---

[845] [1] It is interesting to note that there are some exceptions to those who may be caught and robbed by *Nsomo* during her eight days of watching. No member of the *mwinde* may be thus treated, twins and their parents are exempt, and also all children born to the *nkumu* before he attains office, these being termed *nsomo*.

[554 595] [2] Besides *Mpongo*, a mother of twins is also exempt from according *nkumu* special salutations, and among some groups the father of twins is also exempt.

[3] This ceremony gives husbands of any village, whether they are members of the *mwinde* or not, the opportunity to single out a favourite wife for special honour, for at this time any woman may be given the name of *Bolombo*, though not with the significant complement of *Itina i Ekopo*. The ceremony is similar, is performed at the *nando*, but besides receiving the strips of leopard skin, she must be divested of all her clothing, a new *bosaka* and *mpongo* are then placed round her, and the strips of skin then attached to the new belt.

This funeral drumming is kept up for a long time, off and on for days, and is very stirring in its rhythm. While it is going on, the elders congregate in an *ekanga*. They fast and have nothing to do with their wives during this time. The *ekopo* is mourning, and the *ankumbe* may be likewise mourning, but for the others it is a time of rejoicing, and also of the relaxing of moral restraints. It is an occasion for dancing by both Batwa and 'freemen', the former regarding this as a time for special rejoicing, for the *nkumu* was their master and now he is dead they are no longer under restraint. They are free to take any of their master's goods and even to snatch blankets off the corpse. Men and women do not dance together; the women, taking some of their husbands' weapons, go off in one direction, and the men, arrayed in finery, dance at the other end of the village. 624 766 [533] [535] [563]

While the *nkumu* is still unburied and the drumming is going on, the *ankumbe* look for a successor among the *ekopo*. Often this man will, as we have seen, have already been designated. The *ankumbe*, Batwa, and others in the village make up a party, and attired in war finery go off with their weapons as though after a man they wished to kill. As they go they sing:

Nkombe w'anjilite eliombe [539]
We alale we ako?
Hawk, thou hast destroyed the nest,
Where art thou going to sleep?

Before catching the real successor they catch one or another in fun, singing this song. The man of course refuses to be *nkumu*, and the point of the song is that because of his refusal the *ekopo* no longer fulfils its function of supplying the *ankumbe* with *nkumu* and therefore ceases to be of any use to them. If this man by refusing thus destroys the family nest, where will they sleep?

Finally, after this fun, the real successor is caught, his face daubed with black, and the group sing: [303]

Bolo kowo-o, kowlo nkulu. [539]
The cunning animal is hiding, reveal the tortoise.

Thus the new *nkumu*, like a cunning animal, is hiding, but when discovered, like the tortoise, he will not try to run away. The whole group conducts the new *nkumu* to the *ipumu* and sits all night guarding him. Earlier on the day of the actual interment of the dead *nkumu*, the new one is installed with ceremonies as already described.

On the day the *nkumu* dies his people scatter to other villages to look for slaves for the executions on the day of the burial. Slave-owners or husbands of unwanted wives ask quietly how much money there is for the man or woman, accept the agreed amount, and tell the buyers to go quietly and catch the slave or wife before anything is suspected and an escape is made. In this connexion we may note two classes of wives, *bopiko* and *iloto*. A third class, *bosombo*, acquired by the payment of a very small bride price, was not nearly as common formerly as at present and may be passed by. A *bopiko* was a slave wife acquired by capture in war or stolen. If loved by her husband she will take her place practically on an equality with the members of the village, but she may be killed, for she is her husband's possession, 'his money' is the native expression. An *iloto* is a wife for whom a very high bride price has been paid, obliging her family to give wives to the other family in perpetuity, supplying 766 567● 762 562

766 a successor to replace a deceased woman, and thus maintaining the balance between
587 the two families. Such wives were seldom killed, for they had relatives who cared
for them and would object, and who had the power to do so by refusing to
782 fulfil their obligations and by retaining the bride price already received. The group
562 of men and women gathered together for execution thus comprised males and
bopika women from the 'free' group (*baoto*, as applied to all men and women
not Batwa), and Batwa men and women whose owners had consented to their
death. It sometimes happened that a man, seeing a woman among this group who
took his fancy, might obtain her by paying for her in money or substituting one of
his own slaves.

In some cases the executioner, *bomembe*, was chosen from among the family of the
766 dead *nkumu*, in others he was selected from among the whole group of people over
782 which the *nkumu* held sway. The man having been chosen, the knife is brought out
of the house where it has been kept by some elder. This, a blade some sixteen
412 inches in length, two-edged, decorated by alternating longitudinal lines of polished
and blackened steel and inserted in a wooden handle, is sharpened on one edge,
carefully wrapped in a plantain leaf, and laid away for use on the following day.

At dawn the prisoners are taken to the water and washed to clean them, inland towns accomplishing this purpose by dragging them up and down the village in the dew-drenched grass tied by a liana. The prisoners then are arranged in a V shape, the apex nearest the spot where the *nkumu*'s body is sitting in state. Low seats are made by resting a stick in the forks of two perpendicular ones, and this cross bar is straddled by the victim. His hands are tied behind his back and his head tied to a sapling securely fixed at one end in the ground, the other bent down sufficiently to allow for tying the head with considerable tension on the rope. When all is thus arranged an expert drummer begins to pound out a rhythmic beat, and the ceremony of handing over the knife takes place.

The executioner of the day is dressed in finery but no camwood powder is evident,
for it is a time of mourning and not of rejoicing. He wears a hat with many feathers,
a vine encircles his waist, and bracelets of the same his arms. Then the man who last
occupied the position of executioner comes forward. An elder has already brought
the knife wrapped in its leaf and also a heap of ash on a leaf, both of which are placed
on the ground. The old executioner picks up the knife while the new one faces him.
The former demonstrates with gestures how he used to go about his work, the
motions, the attitudes, the fine arts of the task. Even though the executioner of the
day may have had previous experience, this part of the ceremony must be gone
516 through. Then, holding the knife aloft, the instructor raises his right leg at right
angles to his body, bends it at the knee so that the shin hangs perpendicularly, and
the new executioner passes underneath it, returning the same way. He now faces
the old executioner, who lays the knife in his own hands, arms outstretched and
palms open, the handle resting in his right palm, the blade in his left. The new man,
facing his instructor, places his outstretched and open palms on the shoulders of
the other, draws his hands down his arms, finally coming to the knife, which, because
of its position is thus received, handle in the left hand, blade in the right. Releasing
his right-hand grasp of the blade, he stoops, sprinkles the blade with some of the
ash, then rubs his right hand in the dirt to remove all slippery sweat. Then still

766 crypt would then be barred by mats in order to leave it as a hollow chamber, and 782 the hole leading down to it filled in with earth.

For a month or two after the burial the festivities and orgies continued. Women 766 would be hanged to create some diversion, but those hanged were not eaten. Decapi- 782 tations would continue. According to the informants only slaves brought in from a distance would have to be tied to prevent their escape. The slave members of the ● 567 household of the dead *nkumu* would await their turn stoically, content to die that [152] they might accompany their master in his journey to the land of spirits. This may be true but scarcely seems possible. Still another diversion in the funeral orgies was killing in the manner known as *esumbu*. If some man who had a slave did not wish him to be hanged or beheaded, he might give him for this other method. As the weeks slipped by, such a one, his life having apparently been spared, would suppose that all was safe and that there was little chance of his being taken, and, thus emboldened, would, instead of keeping at a safe distance, join the crowd to watch a beheading. His death would be prearranged. At the moment of beheading a victim, someone would drive a spear into the unsuspecting man, the whole crowd then using spears and knives to stab and slash until he fell. Some might be tortured to death by being buried up to the neck and left thus exposed to the hot sun without food or water until death intervened, but this was not a common practice at such funerals.

768 The termination of the dead *nkumu*'s affairs took place when the division of the inheritance was made, a long and complicated process.

178 Such were the old days before European penetration. The advent of the white man half a century ago was the beginning of the end. The ceremonies had to be 624 given up, though reluctantly. Occasionally now goats are beheaded in place of human victims, and many of the younger generation find that, even so, the sight is more than they can endure, and they seek refuge elsewhere. *Nkumu* are not anxious for the honours. They find little or no respect paid to them by the government officials and this is a distinct obstacle to their obtaining honour from their own people. When the *nkumu* resident in the village adjacent to the mission station died, one of the Natives was asked who would be next. The reply was that probably no one would appear as a successor. Asked why, he answered, 'There are too many trousers.' He meant that too many were adopting the ways of the white man to [693] make the inauguration of another *nkumu* a success. In his one useful function, that of judge, the paramount chief now takes his place, cases tried must be recorded by a clerk of the court, and fines paid into the treasury of the chieftaincy. With such a state of affairs the old ways drop into desuetude, and the younger generation grow up knowing less of the ways of their fathers as the years pass.

578 684 834 shame of obscenities. They say: ɔ̌lekɛ́ nsɔ́nvi ɛ́â bitɔ́li ń'kɔ̌moto. Bɔ̌moto ndɛ́ ndota (itúfá) "A woman is a ndota snake. Just as that reptile twists through the grass and rolls up as soon as it sees a man approaching, so a woman finds it difficult to endure any obscenity."

The ideal way to be sure whether an expression is actually considered indecent is to check whether it may be used in the presence of a close relative, for a Nkundɔ́ never utters an obscenity in front of such a person.

195 578 834 Among the Nkundɔ́, as in Europe, certain indelicate exclamations are so deeply rooted that they seem to have lost their original meaning, that is, most of the population no longer thinks of it at all. That a few more serious and modest individuals are still aware of it is apparent from the way they change the pronounciation of the terms in question.

Licentious expressions are never considered indecent and shock no one when they are uttered in a group or during group activities. ●[571] Such activities include communal fishing and hunting expeditions, [61] drinking parties, dances, funerals, and -- at the present time -- communal work on a road, a resthouse, etc.

Thus we see that in these matters there is a remarkable discretion side by side with a certain degree of tolerance, which may be carried quite far. Licentious remarks are not condemned in themselves, but only because of fortuitous circumstances, so we see that the Nkundɔ́ do not consider them from a moral point of view, as we do, but from a social one. But the fact that those are precisely the words which can become indecent and socially bad shows that the native sees in their content something shocking, shameful, some quality likely to give offense. The freedom exercised in certain cases does not alter this general conclusion but simply gives evidence of he inclinations of a passionate nature.

3. Dances

535 Nkundɔ́ dances change periodically, as is the fashion in Europe. Old dances are given up after a time and are replaced by others which are newly invented or recently introduced. The dances fashionable at the present time came from the Besongɔ́, who are by

Pygmies FO4
Botswa

P
178 doctor who was in charge of the dispensary at Flandria at that time
588 informed me of the case of a Botswa fruit harvester in the service of
569
164 the H.C.B. who had syphilis of unquestionably sexual origin.

M Though a racial difference constitutes an obstacle to marriage,
582 a tribal or ethnic one does not. Where the geographic situation permits, true Nkundó, such as the Elingá, marry members of neighboring groups such as the Ngombe, the Mbole, or the Ekonda.

Article II. Social Status

M Among the Nkundó a difference in social status is not an
554 obstacle to marriage. They have no social classes strictly speaking.
582
[565] They differentiate between those with authority, those who are inferiors, and the individuals or families who are not entitled to their
[571] word in political matters; but these ideas do not come into play in ordinary social relations, [245] and especially not with respect to marriage. A person may belong to a clan which is inferior, subject, dependent, foreign, or descended from a slave; nevertheless he may marry even a member of the group's senior clan. These distinctions are in the realm of politics; a marriage is a matter of law, affection, and good relations based on the payment of a bride price.

M Actual slaves are an exception, but here a distinction must
567 be made between the sexes. Unions with slave women were very
582 common, but they were not marriages strictly speaking. Before a real marriage was entered into, the woman was set free. More details on this subject will be given in Chapter VII, Article V. For men the situation is altogether different. The condition of a slave was not only inferior, it was dishonorable, though a bit less so than among the Ancients. It might be overlooked if the love between the pair was unusually ardent, and there are a few clans descended from a "free" woman and a slave man, who were united in a proper and legitimate marriage for which the master paid the bride price.

There is no longer any opposition to the union of a "free" person with the descendant of a mixed marriage. The children may always claim kinship with their maternal ancestors who in these

326 Whereas with us the village inn is the place where the affairs of
521 the week are noisily debated, it is at the smithy where the Mongo
571 Negroes congregate. There the elders gather -- the younger men have no voice here; there the various differences about (or among) wives and the impending taxes are discussed; amidst the billows of smoke -- drawn with deep puffs out of their huge bamboo pipes -- the smith is the only one who works on and earns his living nobly.

326 The smith is the most judicious craftsman among the Mongo
428 Negroes.

His trade is practically the only one which is a family affair and is passed on from father to son. If a smith does not have any children, the business is taken over by his younger brother.

This right of inheritance is by no means general in the other trades; the trade of the smith is inherited while the others are taken up by any Tom, Dick, or Harry who happens to have a liking for them.

325 The smithy where the smith plies his trade is a wide oblong dark
348 hut (about five meters by ten meters) built alongside the public highway. In contrast with the other dwellings of the Negroes, the floors of which are generally built about 20 centimeters above the road, the floor of the smithy is dug out from 30 to 70 centimeters below the level of the road so that one goes down a step from the road into the smithy.

The reason why the floor of the smithy should be dug out in this way is not quite clear to me, but most probably it is to prevent the danger of fire when the storm winds that accompany the heavy tropical rains sweep through the huts. By digging out the floor in this way, an earthen enclosure about half a meter high is formed around the smithy, and this protects the smith from the wind and enables him to continue quietly at work.

325 In spite of the primitiveness of his tools [95] and the primitive manipulation of them, the smith knows how to get what he needs from his implements. The forge (lotulu) is constructed as follows: a block of wood is cut about 60 centimeters long, 40 centimeters wide, and 30 centimeters high, with a hollow pipe, half a meter long, connected to it. This is all formed of one piece. With the aid of a banana stalk, on which the clay is moulded, a smith's pipe is formed. The banana stalk is removed from the clay, and the hollow pipe (boongo) remains. Two, sometimes four, bellows (njasa) are placed on the

601 Bonsonga and etúká are terms used for kinship groups of
621 ranks B, C, and D, but occasionally they may also refer to
614 [192] the groups listed under A and, in addition, to the local groups which in size approximately correspond to the kinship units mentioned above. Etúká is the term used for the oil palm grove and for a certain kind of termite hill; apparently it is used for local groups more frequently than the term bonsonga.

● [571] Another term whose meaning varies is ekíndá. This word
[535] designates, first of all, a dance group, a corps de ballet, and also the social unit which sends such a joint dance troupe to dance festivals.

Esé also has strong local connotations. It is usually identical with what we call a village, but frequently units which are larger or smaller than a village are designated as esé. Very large groups, tribes and even larger units, are called bonanga.

614 As a criterion for placing the individual groups within a certain rank, one or several functions have been chosen in each case. The groups of the individual ranks are described below relative to their functions. On the subject of groups it should be added that in general they do not differ from each other in certain traits. All groups of all ranks are kinship units of patrilineal descent. They consider themselves descendants of one ancestor. No continuous and complete genealogy which can be traced back to the original ancestor is known. The genealogy of the entire group of the Bakonda is shown in Diagram 1.

In Isangi two of the ancestors of the groups of rank D are brothers, the third is the brother of their father. A D-group (Ngelé) includes, in addition, the descendants of an illegitimate child of the paternal sister of the ancestor. These offspring form the C-group, Nsambásálá.

There is a gap between this ancient genealogy and the known ancestors from the recent past. In contrast with that of the neighboring Bokóté [Bokete] (see, for example, Boelaert,
[173] "Les Bongili"), the genealogical memory of the Ekonda is weak. It does not reach back to the ancestor of the group of rank A. In this connection we must take into account the fact that a group

556 562 According to the natives it was a public assertion of the father's high social position and at the same time the greatest token of affection he could bestow on his daughter; the two things were inseparable. Not every native had the right to make his daughter a *bolɔ́mbɔ́*. On the contrary, he had to hold an especially prominent rank, that is to say, he had to be a wealthy, influential, and powerful head of a family. All the ceremonies, practices, and rules involved in this institution point in that direction. A comparison with the *bolɔ́mbɔ́* wife (1) lends additional plausibility to this explanation.

556 562 178 As we have said, this custom is in the process of disappearing completely. In certain tribes such as the Beloko, subtribe of the Lifumba, a substitute has actually been introduced. The favored daughter is dressed and adorned as before, except that European materials have replaced the furs. But the public character of the older institution has disappeared. The occasion is not surrounded with so many ceremonies. Finally, the girl is not called *bolɔ́mbɔ́*, for a new name has been invented; it is *bondelɔ́ɔ́ngola*, "the white man raises (educates) her." [35]

Article III. Friendship

572 Friendship is not unknown to the Nkundɔ́. It is founded on the same basis as in Europe. I have seen more than one instance of true mutual affection between persons who were in no way related. Among the Blacks with whom I have associated there are some whom I personally consider sincere friends and who have shown me real affection, helped me to the full extent of their powers, and shown me complete confidence. There have even been some who have not been afraid to place themselves in serious difficulties and who have gone so far as to incriminate themselves in order to clear me, thereby exposing themselves to troubles and sanctions.

---

1. See Chapter VII, Article III. Unless she is his first wife. See *ibid*, and Article I.

572
[201] Friends seldom or never give signs of their affection, apart from gifts and mutual assistance. Men are seldom seen embracing, although women do so frequently.

The Nkundó are familiar with friendship pacts (called boseka or, among the Bombwanja, likandeko) (1). Two persons of the same sex are bound to one another in friendship (kota boseka or likandeko) [431] in the presence of a witness (ndonga), whose duty it is to deliver the gifts that are exchanged.

The conclusion of a friendship agreement is actually a custom of the women; men -- usually the husbands -- create friendship bonds only secondarily, in imitation of their wives. This pact is not automatically hereditary; the children may continue it -- through the same ndonga as their fathers -- but they are free to let it lapse. (2)

Two elements may be distinguished in the friendship pact: congeniality or affection and mutual assistance. The latter is in itself a sign of friendship, but it is not infrequently the sole reason for the pact among men who seek reciprocal support by this means. [36] As for the women, it may be said, on the contrary, that gifts are considered purely as tokens of affection and their bonds are based exclusively on affection. Often women who are very fond of each other do not bind themselves in a friendship pact but are content to show their affection in all simplicity. Men also may be very good friends without having recourse to a pact. But the conclusion of an agreement makes their relationship public and thus protects it against deleterious influences such as misunderstandings, disagreements, outbursts of anger, etc. One might say that the pact represents the addition of the element of reason to the element of emotion.

---

1. Bofilí among the Ekonda, mbale among the Batswa.

2. See also a special reason for friendship pacts in Chapter IV, Article I.

572 Unlike the affection among relatives, friendships cool and even end. This is especially true for pacts based purely on mutual assistance. Thus, if one of the friends is somewhat too stingy in comparison to the other, a rupture quickly results.

[561] The Nkundó also have especially affectionate feelings for their "age mates" (*bonínga*, pl. *banínga*), that is, for all those who were born the same day, week, month, or period as they. They feel united by special ties. Among themselves age mates consider and treat each other as brothers, help and assist each other, etc.

Their affection is natural; the sort of selfishness that may be found among "friends" is not present among age mates.

Their relationship is so close that if the occasion arises, they lend each other their wives. (1)

---

1. See Chapter VI, Article VIII, 1.

[551] Lastly, individuals bearing the same name (*ndoí*, pl. *bandoí*) show real affection toward each other; they help each other and exchange gifts. They make no pact as do the *boseka*, however.

It should be noted that these various bonds do not exist between persons of opposite sexes, among whom they would be condemned as concubinage. [37]

Article IV. Conjugal Love

593ˣ The question has often been asked: how about love among these peoples? Do husbands and wives really love each other? We are not speaking here of sexual passion, which is generally present in addition to love between man and woman, but which in itself is clearly distinct from it. Love is the result of various emotions -- congeniality, affection, mutual appreciation, admiration, devotion, etc., and we judge the perfection of love according to the presence or absence of any one of these elements and their degree.

The question is by its very nature a very delicate one to answer. Actually, it is difficult to observe and analyze clear and precise facts pertaining to the subject. Our notion of it must of

192 tomba, "to spy"; the former may be an extension of the meaning of 184 the word bokɔ́lo, "promise." (1)

● [572] 1. Note in passing that a ndonga is also necessary for the boseka, or contract of friendship and mutual assistance. (See Chapter I, Part 1, Article III.)

Article III. The Engagement

584 589x 1. The payment of the ikulɛ

The engagement begins with the first bride-price payment, which in former times was an arrow and for that reason is called likulɛ [556] or ilulɛ. If the suitor was very rich, he sometimes gave an ingɔ́ndɛ knife or even an empɔ́te. A poorer one would merely give the shaft of an arrow. Nowadays 1 or 2 copper rings are given. But the original name of this payment has been retained.

Arriving at the home of the father of his intended, [112] the suitor, his father (or a substitute for him), the ndonga(s) and often other relatives as well, sit down on one side of the loɛnjɛ (the court in front of a dwelling), after an exchange of the usual courtesies. The girl and the representatives of her family sit down on the opposite side. As in all matters that a Nkundɔ́ has to settle, the host begins by inquiring into the reason for the visit. The young man's father answers: "We have come to ask for your daughter for our son." "How do you ask for her?" "We ask for her in marriage." These preliminary negotiations are called simply ɛwana nsango, "to ask each other for news."

Then the girl's father asks: "Who will bring the linko (banana) or the bonyɛku (partially ripe banana), that is, the gifts?" Through this figurative expression he asks who has been proposed as ndonga. The young man's father replies: so-and-so, and so-and-so. When they have been accepted, the fiancée's father has bananas, smoked fish, and sometimes hens brought in, and the witness passes them over to the future husband's group.

584
●572 When an engagement is arranged for an expected child, the events may betray the hopes of the parents; and the child for whom the *ikulɛ* has been paid may turn out to be a boy. This mischance is dealt with in the following manner: either the suitor waits for the birth of a girl, or an alliance of friendship and mutual assistance (*boseka*, see Chapter I, Part 1, Article III) is established between him and the newborn child. Such an alliance is called *liɛla jă jwende*, "the marriage of men," (*matrimonium viri*). In no case is restitution made for the *ikulɛ* that has been paid. If the friendship between the two men remains unbroken later, it results in the marriage of the daughter of the man for whom the *ikulɛ* was paid before his birth, to the man who paid it or to his son or grandson. No new *ikulɛ* is paid for such a marriage; the payment of the bride price simply has to be completed in the usual fashion.

584 A man may acquire a young child for himself, or for a son, a younger brother, etc. In the past the former was more frequently the case, for the old men kept the women for themselves and wanted [234] to benefit from having them before leaving them to the youths as inheritance. But the latter situation also arose.

The purpose [of obtaining a young child as wife for a relative] was to prevent inexperienced youths who were not able to defend themselves from being deprived of the means of obtaining a wife should the father die prematurely and the heirs monopolize the harem and bride-price valuables to their own profit, which theoretically they have a right to do. This practice is thus a means of favoring a son or other relative by furnishing him with a wife earlier than is customary. Nowadays this is even a stronger reason [178] than in the past, because boys marry earlier than formerly.

Other reasons for obtaining a child as a wife are involved in the two above-mentioned instances. There is a greater certainty of getting one's money's worth; valuables can disappear for various reasons during long unproductive years.

584
855 But the most fundamental reason, in my opinion, is the one very often invoked by the Nkundó, namely the opportunity of personally attending to the future wife's education. There is no

584 855 question but that it is in the husband's interest to take care of it himself. He can accustom her from childhood on to special circumstances, to the laws of the clan, to the particular habits (virtues, faults, way of living, etc.) of his family, his wives, and, last but not least, himself. He can mold her according to his tastes and desires. Enormous advantages result from his success in doing so. This does not mean that he takes care of her personally, for he knows he is not a born educator. He therefore usually prefers to hand this [593] task over to his mother (or aunt or sister), who enjoys this obligation and likes to help her son and to participate directly and intimately in his household.

584 572 A childhood engagement between their respective offspring often results from an alliance between "friends." If the children later on do not want the marriage, that is all there is to it. Restitution of payments is made, or a substitution is arranged. Such a situation arose while this book was being written. [235] At least twenty years ago, Lokóta of Bolíngo and Inálo of Bonjoku made a bond of friendship (boseka). The former begot a boy (Ituwó), the latter a girl (Lokoku). The parents arranged the engagement of their children by means of the ikulá payment. When Ituwó grew old enough to marry, he had no desire to marry Lokoku, for his heart was taken by another. But he had a younger brother, Itoko, who had affectionate feelings for Lokoku. Ituwó explained the situation to his mother (since his father had died in the interim), and she resumed the relationship with Inálo. They all came to an agreement without difficulty. Itokó therefore married Lokokó in place of his elder brother, after paying the bride price for her.

584 If a little girl is not satisfied with the union that has been arranged she is free, according to the rules of law, to break it -- and not simply by failing to give her consent. Note that in such a case the husband is not entitled to any compensation for having raised this child.

In spite of the advantages involved in childhood unions, they should be rigorously held in check, since the affections often stray from bonds formed at such an early age. More should be done to

137 561 Such is the practice among age mates who maintain good and true relationships. They have free access to each other's wives, and [334] their actions cannot give rise to claims or fines. Nor if one is more "stingy" in the native view than another, can the latter start palavers with him on that account. But such an attitude will result in a cooling of the cordiality of their relationship, and refusals will be reciprocated.

Age mates do not demand indemnities from each other because it is not fitting for one to enrich himself at the other's expense. This rule applies even to "private" relations, to a simple "call," occurring without the lending described above. But if one of them goes too far, that is if he avails himself of another's wife two or three times without the latter doing likewise, a palaver may arise. The husband will believe that he has been wronged and will demand an indemnity. If his companion refuses on the grounds of the relationship which unites them, he may receive a reply such as the following: inɔ́ngɛ ɛ́tswɛ́ngela nkɛ́ baśí ɛ? "Is the age-mate relationship a means for acquiring wives?" A regular battle may follow, and the husband is the one who will win the case before the court.

There are no relations permitted between men and women age mates. Such relations would be considered typical adultery.

The relations between a man and his age-mate's wife are therefore permitted not in themselves, but because of the husband's willingness to have them occur. Furthermore, the husband is not strictly required to yield his wife to him. That he does so is a
● [571] matter of good friendship, harmony, payment for services, and mutual respect and affection. From the purely matrimonial point of view, the terrain is free and neutral since, they say, the relations involved are purely private between them, and each one does what he thinks best.

137 572 In addition to the bonɔ́ngɛ, the Nkundɔ have a relationship called boseka, "friendship," "friend." (It is called bokandeko among the Bombwanja). (1) In contrast to the practices that prevail between

---

1. See Chapter I, Part1, Article III.

837 age mates, the friendship pact has no connection with the wives of
572 the men involved. If [335] there is a very firm friendship between them, one may lend his wife to the other in some situation or other, but this is a fairly rare occurrence. The Nkundô say that the beseka relationship is for mutual assistance only.

If a case of adultery occurs, the husband has every right to demand an indemnity, but as the occurrence is not repeated, he never goes to extremes, and, because of the friendship, he may ask as little as 2 or 3 rings. If the occurrences are repeated without reciprocity, however, the husband often makes a great to-do; he demands a large indemnity and breaks the friendship pact.

Instead of demanding an indemnity some men give their
[579] friend a gift (mpôli) asking him to stop the illicit relations. Often this action is but a subterfuge to relax the other's vigilance so that, feeling freer, he will be more easily apprehended.

Between persons bearing the same name (ndoí, pl. bandoí). (1)
837
837

---

1. See Chapter I, Part 1, Article III.

there is no free access to wives, nor are persons of opposite sexes ever considered ndoí. Such relations would be considered concubinage or pure and simple adultery.

To summarize, a certain freedom of access to each other's
837 wives exists among age mates, but it is subject to the expressed or tacit consent of the respective husbands. These relations are not considered adulterous. Such freedom does not exist with respect to other categories of persons. But these, nevertheless, had to be mentioned here because the similarity among the kinds of relationship discussed might produce errors in the reader's mind, and because in certain parts of the Congo such persons fall into the same category as Nkundô age mates.

2. Concubinage

585 Concubinage (called linámbá among the Bokote, ingbe
837 among the Bombwanja as well as the Ekonda) is a union [335] between

586x The obligation to make restitution of the bride price falls upon the woman's father or the one who has replaced him (father, uncle, son, brother, etc., in accordance with the family hierarchy). He is responsible not only for everything that he received personally, but also for all that was paid to any member of the family. All these payments actually comprise the same single bride price, and all these persons together are represented by him. It is up to him to call them together for the discussion and examination of the payments made. [398] And if disputes arise, it is up to them to iron them out among themselves. The father need not personally have seen or known of the payments; the testimony of the ndonga is sufficient. If one or another of the relatives has acted wrongly by neglecting to make payments known to the person who is responsible, the latter can only place the blame on that relative. In no case can he refuse to make restitution of the valuables. The new husband should not be implicated in any way.

As to the mother's part, she and her clan must make restitution of whatever they have received, and they must do so even if she has broken with her daughter's father. The father summons her and asks her to return the valuables. This arrangement seldom leads to difficulties. In no case can the mother's portion be demanded from the father.

Finally, the Nkundó require that the reimbursement is made totally and all at once. They do not permit installments or intervals between them (as they do for the bride-price payment); they probably wish to avoid further disputes and endless palavers. Exceptionally, the parties come to a friendly agreement and permit a delay needed to collect some item or small portion of the valuables to be restored.

586x
572 As we have seen above, the restitution must be made entirely between the husband and the wife's family. The new husband must not participate. His only duty is to pay a bride price to his parents-in-law. He has no obligations toward the former husband. The latter cannot turn to him to recover his valuables. He can only claim them from the woman's family. Hence the axiom: njéngi la njéngi ntákímánáká, "the two husbands cannot pursue each

551 The etymology of most names is impossible to trace, and they have no meaning. Some are borrowed from the nomenclature of the realms of nature or of things, but no attention is paid to their original meaning, and allusions to it -- sometimes attempted by certain Europeans -- are either not understood or badly received. Other names are dictated by the child's constitution, for example Ókunjolô, "who will be buried even today," or Bâwâôtóí, "one dies only later." (1) Names sometimes also commemorate a special event, such as a great mourning (Bâwâ, "they die"; Bâlela, "people weep"), a rivalry (Bâunela, "they fight for," meaning that two men are rivals for the possession of the mother of the child to whom the name is given). Finally, some names carry the meaning of a saying, such as Bâwake, "all men must die," etc.

1. Both names are intended to prevent allusions to the child's debility and to express the equivalent of the saying: it is but a life of languor.

[572] In closing let us repeat that persons who bear the same name are often bound by a special friendship, give each other presents, and help each other. However, such a relationship does not entitle persons of different sexes to have intimate relations with each other, and if they do so such relations are treated as concubinage or simply adultery.

Article VI. Twins

845 Although for the Nkundô the birth of twins (baûsa, sing. jása), does not have the importance that other peoples attach to it [501], it does have some special features, the chief of which is the absence of the prohibitions and regulations that go with ordinary births. Twins are free from all common prohibitions; they are fulângé. (1) Let is examine the details.

1. This is true even with respect to abstentions during mourning.

M
245 Next to manioc, bananas occupy the first rank among the native crops, at least among the peoples of Lake Leopold II, the [59] lower Lukenie, and the region between the Congo and the Kasai. Among the tribes of the upper Lukenie, cultivation of banana trees is less developed, and in the Bena Dibele-Kole region it is almost completely absent.

The natives prefer to cultivate the large banana. It is less juicy and more floury than the small one and yields larger crops. The banana groves are always set up near the village and most often directly behind the dwellings. It follows that these groves have the general shape of the village and, in a way, frame it.

Banana trees, in order to thrive, must be planted in very fertile soil which has been well cleared and deeply turned. To promote their growth and increase their yield, the natives dump into the banana groves all the waste from the kitchen, ordure, ashes, and sweepings from the regular cleaning of the village and huts. They also go into the groves to answer the calls of nature.

S
[346]

Fig. 39. Hut for the Nkisi of the Hunt and a Banana Tree with Flower and Fruit, Village of Madjuku, Bobaie Tribe.

M
● [514]

M
243 Maize is not cultivated on an important scale. Beyond the post at Tolo, maize seems to be completely unknown. Among

428 This practice of ndálaka likiló is not without disadvantages.
587 It may be feared that the heir deny that the payments were made and refuse to reimburse the man for them. His refusal is facilitated by the fact that the ndonga involved is the same one who participated in arranging the marriage agreement. Thus, there is a tendency to omit the practice.

Note that the expression ndálaka likiló is not applied only to this situation; it is also used in the obvious sense -- for instance, when the man is simply to make the acquaintance of the woman's
[431] family without presenting any payment (though of course it is in-
[578] conceivable that such a visit would be made without bringing presents), or in the case of a man who wants to be united with a relative of the wife of one of his relatives or friends.

4) Any presents given by the woman's family to the common-
[431] law husband, for instance during a visit or for a service rendered, etc., do not belong to him; by right they go to the heirs. If the latter are kindly disposed toward him, they will allow him the usufruct of a portion of these goods, but he has no right to them strictly speaking.

429 5) If the woman breaks this union the verb used is not -kɔ́fa
586 but -kumbwa, "to be taken in [194] marriage." If she returns to a
587 close relative of the deceased, that is, to one of his bankɔ́lɔ́, the Nkundɔ́ say that "she has returned to her husband," aólut'éka bɔ́m'ɔ́kaé. For his part, the man who has taken the woman in common-law marriage may repudiate her at any time. He says to her: kendé éka baóm'ókáé, emí ntsikwéngéki, "go to your husbands; I did not pay your bride price." The valuables he has given as másangɔ́ will be refunded.

6) Lastly, if the woman dies while living with this man, he has to pay an indemnity (-fɔma mbálaka), usually a slave or its equivalent, to the legitimate heirs.

428 Thus the second type of marriage by inheritance has none of
587 the characteristics of a legitimate Nkundɔ́ marriage. The husband has only the enjoyment of the woman. Only the heir of the deceased may truly and legally call her his "wife." Usually a woman involved in such a union is called the heir's "thing" (yǒmba). The heir is called her "owner," her "master," and the term "husband" is reserved for the man who cohabits with her.

593x gravity of the situation. In general, the wife's parents judge im-
586x partially, because they value the stability of the marriage. If the husband feels that he has been wronged, he can always appeal to the ndonga, but ordinarily there is no need to do so and the matter is settled in a friendly fashion and in private. If the woman is found to be in the wrong, her parents scold her and take her to task. Pro-
[431] vided with some gift (two or three bakonga, for example), they return her to her husband, advising her to behave in a more suitable fashion in the future. Should she resist, her parents will not hesitate to use threats and curses, and these seldom fail to have their effect. Nowadays women have become more emancipated, and it does sometimes happen that such a woman will scorn her parents' decision, especially if she has a lover somewhere beyond the reach of family justice. If it is the husband who is in the wrong, his wife will not go back with him until he has begged her to do so by paying a few copper rings or other valuables, the amount depending on the seriousness of the situation. This act on the husband's part is ex-
[576] pressed by the verb bɔ́nda [271] and the noun bɔɔ́ndɔ, terms which do not apply specifically to this case only but are used whenever pardon is asked for a serious offense. This payment is not a fine or indemnity; it is more closely equivalent to the apologies and retractions customary among Europeans.

593x At the present time some women go back to their families
579 for very slight reasons. Freedom and a greater ease of communica-
578 tion, together with a desire for emancipation, which is no longer held back by the rein of ancestral sanctions, are the cause for this state of affairs. They are still held back somewhat by the risk of a rupture of the marriage, a possibility which they generally would rather not see realized, especially if the bride price is quite large.

In the past, if a woman was married a short distance away from her parents, she could always run away to them when there were domestic disputes. Even if the route led through other villages, it
[487] was always possible to take a direct path through the forest, for such paths exist everywhere; they go around the villages in between so that, in case of conflict or danger of assassination, a traveler can go his way without being seen. When a woman was married into a

593 distant village, the situation was different. Not only did she run
574 many grave risks on the way, but it was not easy for her clan to
578 intervene on her behalf and to obtain respect for her rights by means of force. It can be readily understood that if a wife found herself alone and isolated, without effective support from her family, her husband and parents-in-law could feel free to do her many injustices if they were unkindly disposed toward her, unless the ndonga was sufficiently influential to keep them within limits. Hence the proverb
[589] bol'ôsíkɛ, mbila ngɛ likwɛla, "if the native village is far away, peace (in the household) is like slavery." [272]

In the course of domestic quarrels an exasperated husband may shout at his wife: "Go away, go home." Usually she simply goes to the home of some female relative to wait till calm returns. But sometimes she may take his words literally and go home. When her parents are informed of what has happened, they tell their daughter that she is in the wrong. Such a thing cannot be taken tragically. The husband has acted in a moment of bad humor and extreme indignation. He did not really send her away or repudiate her. There is no question of hate or indifference. Thus the matter is not taken seriously, and when the wife calms down, her parents persuade her to go back to her husband. If he likes her enough the matter ends there; it is forgiven and forgotten. Even if, having gone to her family under these circumstances, the woman becomes ill or dies there, she herself is responsible. Thus sending her away in that manner is not in any way taken seriously; it has nothing in common with a repudiation and cannot even be compared with a wife's flight because of bad treatment.

To summarize, if a wife leaves the house in which she lives with her husband, he is obliged to go and fetch her whether she is in the right or in the wrong. On the other hand, parents will send a daughter back to her husband if she is too easily angered and runs away over trifles. The following are generally acknowledged as serious and justifiable reasons for flight: serious failures in fulfilling marital duties, punishments or repressions without just cause, excesses in just punishments.

Article IV

Relations Between the Wife and Her Family

593x
614 Through marriage, a woman does not enter into her husband's family. She continues to belong to her own clan of origin and continues to submit to the special regulations [284] of her family (*bokumo*) (1) The *bokumo* pertaining to parturition is excepted, for because of the child she must observe the *bokumo* of her husband's clan in this realm.

593x
574 Although the wife is completely dependent on her husband for everything else -- work, property, etc. -- she remains bound to her own parents by obligations of respect, love, and assistance. She has to visit them from time to time, but too great a frequency in these visits meets with disapproval. It is impossible to give a rule defining the proper number. The answer must be provided by good sense. Sensible people prefer that the wife not make too many of these trips. Even her own parents want this to be so. For repeated attentions of this sort are considered evidence of a lack of love and attachment for her husband.

[626] Women who very faithfully stay in their homes and only rarely visit their parents, sometimes yield in face of the teasing of their companions. For the Nkundó is very sensitive to spiteful comments of that kind. Among current expressions there is one that has become a popular saying and is sometimes sung during dances:

1. The *bokumo* are special regulations governing a given clan, particularly prohibitions against partaking of certain foods (animal or vegetable) always or only at certain times. The punishment for a transgression is a kind of itching which covers the whole body. One might think this is totemism, but the idea of kinship to the forbidden being is entirely absent.

593^x
● 574 ótswáká liála otswâk'olá, báfókolaka mbók'éy'olá la ngom'a nkolé,
"If you are married go back to your parents, or you will be taught
the way with drums and gongs," that is, "when you are dead." (2)

[164] 2. A woman is buried in her own native clan.
[644] Her corpse is transported there to the accompani-
[534] ment of drums and horns. The lokolé gong an-
nounces her death.

593^x A married woman may not evade the duty of helping her
relatives under special circumstances (pregnancy, illness, serious
602 accidents, death). This obligation [285] is not limited to her
mother and father, but extends to all her relatives; the closer the
degree of kinship, the stricter the obligation.

Besides, love of family is sufficiently developed so that there
is no danger of the woman forgetting herself too much in this realm.
[626] And a husband who would like to prevent her from fulfilling these
elementary duties would be much criticized by all and should ex-
pect a dissolution of the marriage.

593^x It was said above that a husband builds a hut for his wife.
574 His relatives often assist him in this task. But it also happened --
342 in the past, for colonization has removed the possibility of it -- that
596 the woman's father wanted to build his daughter's house himself or
at least to make the pavement out of clay brought from her native land. This act was a demonstration of wealth and politico-social importance as well as proof of fatherly affection. The husband, for his part, was honored to have married the daughter of such an important man and loved her all the more. Thus a number of women say that "they only cooked on ancestral soil." This soil was brought in baskets across distances up to 50 kilometers by Batswa and by men of the woman's clan or village. Her father could do it because of his great influence and regal rewards (bokóndo, verb kónda) were distributed during a feast (ntɛkɛ) given for the workers and their relatives after the task was completed. This was done for Bompeli, daughter of Bokombe of Litéli (Bombwanja) married to Bonyeme w'enyuka of the Baáká Mbangó (Bonkoso); for Beluka, daughter of

593 longo of Bokɔ́kyɔ́ (Boselo, Bombwanja), married to Bokaa is 'Ifonda
594 of Bowɛ́lɛ́; for Mbalaka, daughter of Bolekela wa Imangaiso of the
592 Basɛ́kɔ́ Lokuli (Bongíli), married to Mbuli is'ea Wela of Bombɔ́ngo
556 w'Etefa (Bongale) (1) [286]

[551] 1. She bore the name of Mbɔ́laka (meaning indemnity), because her father had solemnly proclaimed (-bɛ́kya) and publicly promised that he intended, one day, to place himself in the position of having to pay an indemnity because of his daughter, as proof of his love. Indeed [782] when Mbɔ́laka was married, he killed one of his wives, cut her into pieces, and sent the "meat" to his son-in-law as "the first hen" that his wife would prepare for him. But he did not have to pay [682] [684] the indemnity because the victim's clan was too weak to attempt a war; they did not dare to make a claim and, in order to avoid even greater misfortunes, they resigned themselves to this revolting ignominy.

Article V

Relations Between the Husband and His Wife's Family

606 607 As has already been said, kinship by marriage is called likilɔ́, and relatives by marriage are called bokilɔ́, bakilɔ́. Mbɔ́tsolɔ́ is a term of respect for very close relatives by marriage (father-in-law, mother-in-law, sometimes brother-in-law or sister-in-law). When there is a considerable age difference between two affinal relatives, the elder one sometimes calls the younger bokilɔ́walɛ́. This happens most frequently when the son-in-law is so young that he can still be considered a child. This term can even be used by an elder brother

606 607 with reference to the young wife of his junior. (1)

> 1. The second component of this term is used by some Elinga as a synonym of bokilɔ́. It should be related to walɛ́, a term which among the Mbole and the Bakutu denotes a girl who is bolɔ́mbɛ or a woman who has just given birth (the same is true among the Ekonda).

The present practice is to exclude from among the bakilɔ́ these persons with whom marriage is permitted. They are more frequently called "husband" or "wife."

The opposite of bokilɔ́ is bokanga. The bakanga are members of the family that has received the bride price, while the bakilɔ́ are those who have paid it. In common practice the word bokilɔ́ is often used in place of bokanga, but never the reverse. Bokilɔ́ l'okanga is the expression denoting the whole group.

606 1. Father-in-law and mother-in-law

A husband owes respect, love, and assistance to his parents-in-law. This point is vital to harmony in the home. In this sphere a wife is very intolerant [287] of forgetfulness and even more of ill will. Offensive comments, insults pointed at parents-in-law even in their absence result in serious difficulties. Sometimes a husband expresses his bad humor or anger against his spouse in that way. This kind of behavior never wins approval, unless his in-laws first insulted him. The law of retaliation applies fully in this situation. The Nkundɔ́ say: ɔ́tswá mbɔ́ngɔ́ l'ɔ̌ndamba olɔ́ngaka ńk'ɔ̌ndamba, "He who replies to evil comments is in the right, not the one who began." For a fuller discussion of this topic, see above (Article III).

606 574 431 To remain on good terms with his parents-in-law, the husband must visit them from time to time. By the very nature of things, his visits are less frequent than those of his wife. One reason why they cannot be too frequent is that the husband must bring gifts at each visit (belonga). One does not go to one's parents-in-law empty handed.

606 574 431 The extent of the riches brought depends on circumstances. Some greedy persons hope for large gifts if their daughter's marriage proves stable. Others prefer not to receive too much, lest they be required to give back an equal amount and -- if they are not especially wealthy -- thus find themselves one day in great financial difficulties. For the [583] belonga are added to the sum total of the bride price and must therefore be restored, should the occasion arise.

The parents-in-law do not allow their son-in-law to depart without giving him countergifts as a farewell (belingako). These take the form of hens and ducks, and their value is added to the total amount of nkomí.

Neither son-in-law nor parents-in-law like to see the generosity of the other party exceed their own, except in a few unusual cases. As a matter of fact, this is a very intelligent policy; equality is maintained on both sides, so that there can be no reproaches on the grounds of greed or stinginess [288], and if the marriage should be dissolved, it would be easy to re-establish equilibrium.

A son-in-law is expected to help his father-in-law to an extent which varies with the situation and with his means. He may fell the trees of the forest for him or set up a field, he may build him a house or make a hunting enclosure (lokombo), etc. A good son-in-law never fails to fulfill these obligations, and the father-in-law does not let him leave without having given him some present.

It is very important to a wife that her husband acquit himself conscientiously of these duties of visiting and assisting her parents. His failure to do so would lead to serious palavers and their usual consequences.

The father-in-law, for his part, does not fail to help his son-in-law in his various tasks. When the work is completed, the latter gives him a bolingako of a few copper rings, which are included in belonga.

The visits of a woman's parents to their son-in-law are more frequent. It is their way of showing their love for him and their daughter and their interest in the household. The visits can last weeks and months, whether only one or both of the parents come. If they stay too long, they are accepted with less enthusiasm. Gifts (bolingako) must always be brought out when the farewells are said.

606 Even if the parents' union has been dissolved and the mother
574 has remarried, she does not cease to visit her daughter and son-in-law.
586x If her new husband seems not to agree to her going, difficulties result.
593x And if he does not change his attitude, his behavior may cause his
wife to leave him in order to return to her first husband, the girl's
father.

Thus, visits are accompanied by an exchange of gifts which
606 are *belonga* if given by the son-in-law, and part of the *nkęmf* val-
574 uables if given by the father-in-law. Farewell gifts are *belonga* [289]
431 and part of the bride price if given by the son-in-law, part of the
583x *nkęmf* if given by the father-in-law.

These same rules apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to various relatives on each side with respect to visits made, services rendered, and presents given on these occasions.

606 One very strict law regarding relations between son-in-law and parents-in-law should be noted: a man is forbidden to see the face of his wife's mother. This prohibition is scrupulously observed by all. He is allowed to see her face only once, at the beginning of the marriage, "to learn to know her so that they can avoid each other." If, for example, they meet while traveling in the forest, they must turn their backs to each other. Usually the woman turns her face toward the edge of the path to let her son-in-law pass. They greet each other by word of mouth, ask for each other's news, but do not shake hands or look at each other. It is funny for us to see a woman visiting her son-in-law. The two place themselves on each side of a partition or in two corners, and they talk in that way, asking for news, carrying on a discussion, etc., without seeing each other. Sometimes mother-in-law and son-in-law find themselves in each other's presence unexpectedly, in the forest or in the fields, without having seen each other approach or having been warned by anyone. They immediately turn their backs on each other; the man excuses himself and quickly disappears, even if to do so he has to plunge into a dense forest full of prickly and tangled creepers.

This law extends also to the husband's very close relatives, such as his younger brothers (who are also "husbands"), and to all

837 [196] 4) To indicate a tendency toward adultery (especially on the part of women) the Nkundó use the verb fâfoka which literally denotes clothing that is too big and that flies in the wind. The noun loyó or boyó is also used.

The verb used for discovering a case of adultery is tɛmbɔla, the noun is ntɛmbɔ.

Occasional or permanent adultery has always been very common. This fact is undoubtedly due to the relative ease with which it is possible to escape discovery and consequent sanctions. A woman ●[574] going to visit her family cannot possibly be followed or watched by her husband; the distances make such surveillance difficult and, furthermore, it would have disastrous consequences for the stability of the marriage, since neither the woman nor her family would put up with it. Other partial causes are lasciviousness, polygamy, etc., as we will see later in the text.

2. Gifts

837 431 [602] An adulterous man and woman send each other presents; his consist of meat, arrows, etc., hers of food and various small objects. A woman's gifts to her lover are called botúmo (the noun used with the verb tumba, "to make burn" (1). Very young relatives generally serve as intermediaries. Note that a woman rarely sends her son, for she has reason to fear that the gift would not reach its destination; the boy would give himself a treat with it. She can have more confidence in a daughter.

A man's gift is called by the generic term mpató, "a gift that is sent, a dispatch." [313]

In isolated cases (yětsi) a man sends an arrow, some small object, beads, meat, etc. Nowadays money or cloth have been

1. Note that the noun and the verb are not etymologically related. Perhaps botúmo might be related to túma, "to show, to designate." The Ekonda call this gift elika. See Chapter II, Article I.

000 new legislation emanating from the European power, a very slow and complex system (the law against adultery which has been requested for decades is still in the realm of studies and projects), lacking in flexibility and the ability to adapt to the very varied circumstances of the peoples of the Congo. A law is needed only for the persons who do not fall within the jurisdiction of the native courts, in order to preserve harmony and impartiality in the exercise of justice, since native society must of necessity feel its effects.

Article VIII. Relations Permitted to the Wife

837 In this article we will examine the relations a wife may have -- under certain conditions -- with various persons. According to our law, such relations would be adulterous, but Nkundó law does not consider them as such. From this arises the difference between this article and the preceding one. Such relations may be 1) transitory or 2) permanent (concubinage).

1. Transitory relations

837 561 [574] A wife is permitted to have sexual relations with her husband's age mates (baníngɔ, sing. boníngɔ). (1) When one comes to the home of another in the course of travel, the host lends his wives to the visitor, saying: "Here is your house; here are your wives." If he is monogamous he leaves his house and his spouse at the visitor's disposal and goes to bed elsewhere alone. If a woman who is traveling arrives in the village of one of her husband's age mates, the latter -- as soon as he learns of her presence -- invites her to stay in his home for the length of her stay. When they say good-by he gives her a present for her husband" with the boníngɔ's compliments." When one visits another, wives are often exchanged.

---

1. See Chapter I, Part 1, Article III.

521
831
195
which do not shock others at all. (1)

1. These comments are applicable also to peoples in other parts of the world.

[554] The general rule of decorum among the Nkundô permits the use of such terms only among equals. Their use when speaking to inferiors is tolerated but not approved of. The use of obscenities when speaking to any strangers meets with definite disapproval. Among persons of different sexes the prohibition is particularly strict.

Nevertheless, the use of these expressions is judged less severely if they are uttered in a moment of anger or as a reprimand, even in the presence of a member of the opposite sex.

Exclamations of anger, vexation, and sorrow are often nothing but obscenities (2). No one is shocked by them in such situations.

2. See "Les Coutumes Funéraires" [Funeral Customs], No. 1, to be published in Anthropos.

Some elderly or more modest persons do not make use of them, however; if the habit of using a particular expression is thoroughly ingrained, they may make a slight change in its pronounciation (as is common for some of our "swear words").

195
831
514
521
576
To circumvent the difficulties caused by the need to use certain words frequently, [59] euphemisms are coined to take their place. Thus the Nkundô say: ñtswá bokako w'åkusa, "I am going behind the house," to indicate that they are going to urinate, and njɔ̂tsw'ɛ̂sendɔ́, "I am going for small pieces of firewood," or njɔ̂tsw' ɔ̃tɛ́na lokɔ́sɔ́, "I am going to pick a leaf," meaning that they are going to the toilet. On the way they say: ñjɛta felɛ́, "I am leaving the path" or "I am going to the forest." A husband is permitted to use accurate terminology when speaking to his wife, but it is considered very improper for her to do so in speaking to him.

514
576
When someone is satisfying a natural need, others keep a distance away from him; they will not even speak to him. Moreover, the person would not reply even if he were called. A woman will not

574
576 even answer her husband, but he may indicate his presence by coughing lightly.

Any infraction of these rules is considered a grave insult. A
574 person offended in this manner may seek revenge by violent means,
576 either personally or through the medium of his son, brother, etc.
578 According to native justice he will always be in the right, even if
831 the quarrel becomes bloody. The simple act of uttering obscenities
while passing in front of a house in which there is someone who is
entitled to the speaker's respect may result in reprisals by the latter. (1)

---

1. See Jadot, *Blancs et Noirs au Congo belge* [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 90.

578 Crude language is especially reprehensible and wounding if it
894 contains allusions to incest or other reflections on a relative whom
the speaker wants to insult. And it must be admitted that such expressions may go beyond the limits (for example: *coi cum patre, matre, fratre, sorore*, etc.). In connection with this topic it should be noted that reference is always made to a relative of the opposite sex to that of the person who is directly or indirectly being addressed. Furthermore, licentious talk and the use of indecorous language are more severely condemned when they take place in the presence of
[554] women and old people [60] or are said by a slave in front of his
master, by a Botswa in front of a Bootó (1).

---

1. See Introduction, footnote 2, p. 4.

578 If a man catches anyone uttering obscenities in front of his
684 wife, especially if they are addressed to her personally, he can start
894 action in adultery proceedings. If the woman refuses to listen to the
seducer, she will not answer him, or sometimes, annoyed at the insult, she may retort by insulting his mother. She can complain, but generally she does not do so. Is she ashamed, or is she afraid that the tempter might make public some excess in her conduct which he has discovered? In any case a woman is more sensitive than a man to the

592 husband will change to revulsion, and she will leave him to be with her charmer.

Part 3

The Search for a Wife

584 When a young man old enough to marry believes he has the means to do so, he goes out to seek a wife. Naturally, he knows a number of girls, and as a rule he has no trouble finding one who suits him. The courtship is quite simple. As everywhere there are meet- [95] ings, visits, chats, and jokes; but there is no romanticism or sentimentality, for they are absolutely unknown to these peoples. Since they are in a hurry [103] to reach the objective of their relationship, namely conjugal life, -- and their progress toward this goal is facilitated by usages and customs -- there remains little time for poetry.

There is no specific term for courtship itself. The Nkundó simply speak of "talking with a woman," soojа bómoto, "looking for a woman," asa bómoto. The girl who is its object is referred to as bombóyó (or boambá among the Injóló).

First, the young man addresses his proposals to the girl: "ñdanga ñkokolá (ñkokumbóla) la wê!", "I want to take you for wife." She shows her agreement by saying, "ñkolanga wê ng'ókó", "I love you also," or more frequently, "olaká ô wê," "as you wish," jûi ô liké, "It's up to you," or something of this sort. (1)

[95]
[578]

1. Note that for the Nkundó these expressions have quite a different significance than would appear from the words. They express a real agreement and an explicit and personal consent. In fact it is considered improper for a woman to use a more direct expression.

584 The lovers exchange gifts. The girl gives food which her
95 mother has provided, or which she has been able to procure herself.

584 element of the engagement is not the payment of the ikulá but the woman's act of leaving her family and joining the man to whom she is engaged. (1) [117]

1. I am deeply grateful to the attorney general, Mr. A. Sohier, for having drawn my attention to a comparison of these practices with the law and practice of other peoples of the Congo and having made me investigate the legal aspect of this question.

5. The fiancée's arrival at her husband's home

As I have said, the fiancée is welcomed by her husband's clan and enthusiastically acclaimed by the population in general.

According to most cases, her husband-to-be receives her and takes her to his home or to that of his parents. The latter await her arrival, having gathered together their daughters, sisters, and various relatives and associates. The fiancé introduces the woman of his choice to them. She is greeted in the usual fashion: "w'ǒng oókita; oôyě; oôftswa, etc.," depending on the extent of their previous intimacy.

Then gifts are given to the fiancée. First the parents-in-law give her a welcoming gift, called bosambelo, literally translated as "handclasp." It usually consists of a ring or a knife. Then they give her their hands. (1) Following them, all relatives and associates

● [586] 1. The Nkundo clasp hands as a sign of friendship. The gesture is a sort of greeting. They don't press the hand as do Europeans but place the hands lightly over each other and then withdraw them, rubbing gently.

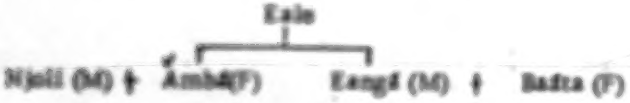
must do the same. The men usually give a ring and the women a knife. These objects are considered as part of the bride price, and the

582
601 The dispensation is given by the ndonga acting with the family council, which often yields before the fact, particularly if the second reason is involved. (1)

> 1. "To give a dispensation" is translated as kilola. A marriage contracted with a legitimate dispensation or one accorded because of the pressure of the accomplished fact is called kilókilóló, or "an affinity which is not maintained according to the regulations."

[67] 2. Contrary to European law, which recognizes only a direct affinity between husband and his wife's family, Nkundó law also recognizes an indirect affinity, so that a person is affinally related even to the spouses of his wife's relatives. That is, each person is affinally related, not only to his spouse's kin, but also to their relatives by marriage. Thus, in the example below, Njoli and Bafta are true relatives by marriage, though indirect ones. (2)

> 2. The Nkundó do not make a terminological distinction between the two types of affinity. We are using the terms "direct" and "indirect" for the sake of convenience and clarity.



There is an important difference between the two types of affinity: direct affinity is a much greater obstacle to marriage than indirect affinity, and exceptions are made only rarely and only for certain degrees of relationship.

582
602
596 3) A distinction must be made between "superior" and "inferior" relatives, that is, between those who have [253] precedence

582 and those who owe submission and respect. The "superior" relatives
602 are the ascendants, uncles, aunts, etc., in short, all those bearing
● [576] the title of "father" or "mother," as well as elder brothers (elder
[601] sisters, elder cousins, etc.), who are batómóló (sing. botómóló).
The "inferiors" are the descendants, those who are called "children" (bāna): sons and daughters, grandsons, nephews, nieces, younger brothers or sisters, and those who are classed with them and called bakíné (sing. bokíné).

[599] 4) Polygamy and the inheritance of widows introduce another
[597] element. We will see that although persons of certain degrees of affinity may not marry, the prohibition is lifted to permit the inheritance of widows.

5) Our term "relatives by marriage" the Nkundó term and bakiló are not synonymous, even with respect to direct affinity. When we use the term "relatives by marriage" here, we are speaking in Nkundó terms. They do not consider certain persons whom we would include in that category as "relations by marriage." Such persons
[601] are included in the group which as a whole is designated as likiló or bakiló, but when properly and accurately referred to they are called bóme, "husband," or wáli, "wife," because they may marry each other and therefore affinity, strictly speaking, cannot be applied to them. In other words, for the Nkundó, affinity is the relationship of a person with (only) those of his spouse's relatives whom he is forbidden to marry. It is well to bear in mind the double meaning of this term.

2. The rules

1. Direct Affinity

582 A. Marriages are prohibited in the direct line. Nevertheless,
603 in accordance with consideration number 4, a son or grandson may
606 inherit or marry the widows of his father or grandfather, but not the reverse. [254]

593 gravity of the situation. In general, the wife's parents judge im-
592 partially, because they value the stability of the marriage. If the husband feels that he has been wronged, he can always appeal to the ndonga, but ordinarily there is no need to do so and the matter is settled in a friendly fashion and in private. If the woman is found to be in the wrong, her parents scold her and take her to task. Pro-
[593] vided with some gift (two or three bakonga, for example), they return her to her husband, advising her to behave in a more suitable fashion in the future. Should she resist, her parents will not hesitate to use threats and curses, and these seldom fail to have their effect. Nowadays women have become more emancipated, and it does sometimes happen that such a woman will scorn her parents' decision, especially if she has a lover somewhere beyond the reach of family justice. If it is the husband who is in the wrong, his wife will not go back with him until he has begged her to do so by paying a few copper rings or other valuables, the amount depending on the seriousness of the situation. This act on the husband's part is ex-
● [576] pressed by the verb bɔ́nda [271] and the noun bɔ́ɔ́ndɔ, terms which do not apply specifically to this case only but are used whenever pardon is asked for a serious offense. This payment is not a fine or indemnity; it is more closely equivalent to the apologies and retractions customary among Europeans.

577 At the present time some women go back to their families
579 for very slight reasons. Freedom and a greater ease of communica-
578 tion, together with a desire for emancipation, which is no longer held back by the rein of ancestral sanctions, are the cause for this state of affairs. They are still held back somewhat by the risk of a rupture of the marriage, a possibility which they generally would rather not see realized, especially if the bride price is quite large.

In the past, if a woman was married a short distance away from her parents, she could always run away to them when there were domestic disputes. Even if the route led through other villages, it
[491] was always possible to take a direct path through the forest, for such paths exist everywhere; they go around the villages in between so that, in case of conflict or danger of assassination, a traveler can go his way without being seen. When a woman was married into a

593ˣ 606 591 We should add that in some households, difficulties arise rather easily during the visits of parents or parents-in-law, because of the sensibilities, incompatibility of character, or discontent of one party who may consider the other guilty of discourtesy, lack of delicacy, disrespect, or stinginess toward the visiting parents. The same is true for the rearing of children. [273]

4. Punishments

593² 578 Nkundó law permits a husband to inflict corporeal punishment (*bikánjwé*, sing. *ekánjwé*) on his wife, its nature varying with the seriousness of the case. Obviously these sanctions, expressly permitted by law, cannot give rise to claims on the woman's part (576) or result in the obligation to pay a *bofándo*. [Editor's note: Unless, of course, the husband -- acting in excess of his rights -- is more violent than the occasion warrants for under such conditions, the wife, supported by her family, attacks the husband, who is then [631] forced to acknowledge the harm he has done and make reparation by means of a *bofándo*.] If she is hurt she may claim a supplementary payment called *lilombo* (from the verb *lomba*) or "bandage" (for the wound); it consists of 5 rings or more, depending on the situation. [102] The loss or breaking of a tooth is considered a serious injury. For this is a real injury to the woman and, in the case of front teeth, to her beauty. (1) Of course, as explained above, the wife will first have run home, and it is there that the dispute is examined.

593ˣ 578 667 For the sake of a clearer understanding, let us go into a few details concerning the penal stipulations of Nkundó law in relation to the life of a married couple.

Usually, in a simple domestic quarrel, the couple does no more than tell each other some home truths, seasoning their speeches

---

[309] 1. Because they are filed, the incisors are much less resistant than normal teeth. Teeth filing is practiced for reasons of beauty.

578 with a few vulgarities. If the woman goes beyond that, her husband
593* gives ~~him~~ a good slap, but he cannot allow himself to exercise his
684 muscles further upon her.

If a woman's tongue is too voluble and she permits herself to deliver gross insults without a suitable reason, her lack of respect is considered punishable. It is not considered proper [578] to right this wrong by means of blows, however, although in practice impetuous young men do not always restrain themselves. The sanction preached by tribal wisdom is the man's abstention from food prepared by the guilty wife, and his refusal to perform the conjugal act. A Nkundó woman is very sensitive to such measures. If she is really recognized to be in the wrong and peace is not promptly re-established, the wife's
[illegible] family will beg the husband to calm down and offer him a *bofodo*, which may be as great as the value of a dog.

In the course of a quarrel a Nkundó woman may resort to a
579* roundabout way of expressing her feelings: instead of cursing her hus-
578 band directly she will address herself to a domestic animal which passes in front of her. The man is naturally not deceived, and the effect is identical.

What we have said applies to ordinary insults such as to wish a person's death, which may be expressed in the following ways: *owé* "drop dead," *nkoi ékokumbé*, "may a leopard get you"; *njwá ékokumbé*, "may a snake bite you"; *ókówé ó?* "aren't you dying?"; *ókone*, "why don't you get sick"; *bókamémbé ndá ngélo*, "may you be carried to the cemetery"; *bókolumbé*, "may you be buried." Invectives based on physical defects or designed to humiliate a man fall in the same category. For instance a woman may call her husband *bololó* or *etula*, "a nobody," or *imemelo*, "idiot," or *inyanyama*, "beast," etc.

If, on the other hand, the woman in her volubility attacks her husband's parents, the matter becomes more serious. The Nkundó react very badly to verbal excesses directed toward them. Whether he is subject to teasing on their account or to insults such as "eat your mother (or father)," or to obscenities in relation to them, or whether the speaker "dishonors" deceased parents in evoking their memory. (1)

[illegible] 1. For the sake of documentation on Nkundó psychology and morals, here is the Latin text

684 movement and therefore serves as the Nkundó prison. But in addition, if it is applied for a long time, it becomes a real torture; the skin becomes painful and comes off, inflammations readily appear, and bugs sometimes lodge there.

As soon as the woman's family hears (through the ndonga) that she is being so tortured, they often come and beg her husband to free her. To pacify and propitiate him, they offer him an ad hoc payment, that is, a bofolo of a few copper rings. Generally, he yields to their entreaties. A good relationship and his respect toward them require that he not remain indifferent to their supplications, especially as he needs them for the stability of the marriage and the good functioning of the household. ●[576]

2) Byongotanyi, or handcuffs, which consist of sticks attached either to the wrists or to the ankles (to prevent walking), or to both arms and feet. Two sticks were used, one above and one below, with the limb placed in between, and they were tied with ropes that were attached and fastened in notches made at [317] each end of the sticks. In rare instances the wrists were bound. To increase the pain and immobility, the ropes were shrunk and hardened by pouring water on them. These handcuffs were generally added to the etíka and were never applied alone.

[illegible] 3) Exposure to the bites of nkonghó ants. In the region under discussion, I have never heard the people speak of exposure to bafumbe (Dorylus), or even to the venomous bendókóme. This fact contrasts with the practice of other Móngo tribes and with the content of certain legends (evolution?).

4) The pouring of water containing pepper into the vagina. Sometimes the genital organs were rubbed with crushed pepper.

5) Exposure of the sex organs to fire. A burning log was held near them.

The last two types of torture were the most dreadful.

We can add one last form of punishment which is derived from the same legal rules, although it is not a torture:

[illegible] 6) Nudity. The husband tears off the guilty woman's garments and thus exposes her to public shame. Even if she resorts to using leaves, no one mistakes the situation, and her shame is only partly reduced.

684 Any of the types of evidence listed above is sufficient to
596 legitimize the application of one or another of these penalties.
596 Nevertheless, the husband is required first to notify the elder mem-
594 bers of his family and the ndonga, who do not permit him to act unless the misdeeds have occurred repeatedly. The readiness to accord the husband permission depends on the temperament of the interested parties and on a great many circumstances, the most important of which is the respective social prominence of the parties involved.

The need to ask permission of the "fathers" and the ndonga, which we have already encountered in reference to other situations (above, Article III, 4), does not weaken the husband's rights [318], but it limits their use. It is not a legal obligation but one that is imposed for family reasons, which are as follows:

1) The respect due to the "fathers" in this as in all important matters;

2) The respect due to the ndonga, who in marital matters is the husband's superior and whose intervention must be called upon in any serious situation;

3) The repercussions of any inconsiderate or rash action on the entire family (enmities, wars, etc.).

If forbearance and patience are fruitless, no one can blame the husband any longer. And when the woman's family compares the censurable conduct of their daughter with the generosity of their son-in-law, they will naturally be inclined to find that he is in the right and so usually will not intervene against him.

Note also that the Nkundô invoke the need to maintain their honor as justification for the obligation to notify the authorities. They must be able to inform the unfaithful woman's clan and thus safeguard their good reputation as defenders of order and public peace.

684 A woman whose husband loved her very much was subjected
593 to the etôka only. He would reprimand her and strike her, and would try to correct her behavior by means of gentleness and leniency.

As we will see suo loco, a husband who is exasperated by the incorrigible infidelity of a wife whose performance of other wifely

764
584 All the payments must pass through the ndonga. He is the one who transmits the desired objects from one group to the other. He intervenes in the disputes that arise in order to settle them and re-establish peace. He explains the various points of view, elucidates some consideration whose significance the other group does not seem to fully comprehend, etc.

As has already been said many times, there can be several ndonga. Legally all of them can intervene personally or through their officially recognized representatives. Thus, several months ago (1933) at Bonjoku, Baémbe, wife of Ikomo of Besombó, was present at a nkunjɛ discussion. No one paid any attention to her. At one point she threw herself into the discussion by reprimanding the chief ndonga and the families involved, asking them on what basis they were excluding her from this affair. Did not her husband have the right to intervene? Was he not also a ndonga? Since he had gone fishing in the Jwalé, it was impossible for him to come. She could therefore legitimately substitute for him. Then why was she being left out? She was quickly pacified, and the persons involved admitted that she was right and apologized for their forgetfulness and negligence. ● [576]

764
584
431 The wives of the deceased's clan place the gifts of food at the ndonga's feet. The bokúné (the youngest) of the clan goes and explains to him what they are and for whom [434] the gifts are intended. (1) One portion goes to the bakalé of the deceased, that is, the bafâfis of the husband's clan; another portion goes to the baóme (the husbands), that is, to the widower and his family; a third part is set aside for kinswomen of the deceased who have come from villages into which they are married in order to be present at the funeral.

764 The clan of the deceased first asks the other clan "for news" (sola nsango). The latter reply that one of their members had

---

1. In the Nkundó hierarchy it is always the youngest who is charged with the execution of all such small tasks, at the behest of the head of the family.

845 parents to the dance, they must go. When the mother passes a
[178] crossroads or the dwelling place of a spirit or an efeno (a place where the Nkundó gather for magical practices, oracles, etc.), she also sings and dances in honor of the spirit, so that he will favor her
845 children. Various songs are popular, such as: Elím'é'Ǎmbá
533 tongólela yelí yeye, "Spirit of Ǎmbá, do not weep: (1) Bokétu la

1. Tongólela is an archaic form still in use among the Ekonda, etc

Mbóy'é'Ambá tofúkáké tonyongáké, tolíké bilingoi yelí yeye, "Ǎmbá's Bokétu and Mbóyó, do not bruise yourself, do not stir, do not eat bilingoi mushrooms"; Bokétu 'a Mbóyó njóátela ngóy' emengo yelí yeye, "Bokétu and Mbóyó, I surround my mother with abundance"; Bokétu'a Mbóyó lá'okono lá'okendo yelí yeye, "I shall fall ill, and yet I will walk (be well)"; Bokétu'a Mbóyó, lióta bokekesano yelí yeye, "difficult childbirth," etc.

Foods forbidden to twins are the mushrooms called bilinggoi
845 (or bilinggondo or bankánkíndá), the mpambí antelope, and the bií
262 yam, which is also forbidden to parents whose child is not yet weaned. (2)

2. This prohibition extends to all food cooked in pots in which such forbidden foods have been prepared. The extension is characteristic of all alimentary prohibitions.

845 When traveling, the parents of twins gird themselves with the
847 creeping plant called boyayenga, or wear it like a strap over the shoulder The mother also attaches a bell to it. Their hair is often
[501] adorned with two feathers from the tail of a gray parrot (nkusu) and two feathers from a white hen. (504)

845 The greeting to parents of twins and their reply must always
516 be double: w'ǒná w'ǒná, the reply em'ǒná em'ǒná; aǒyá, aǒyá, the reply bóka bóka. Note that the last greeting is not replied to differently

576
845 from the others. They thus rank with the great notables of the past. [sic]

845 When the children grow up and become self-sufficient, all the special regulations lose their force and they become like 554 everybody else. Nothing distinguishes them from the rest in marriage, death, etc. No preference is shown for or against them. But their descendants will again produce twins.

Thus the Nkundó consider twins as extraordinary children, 845 but they do not carry this view to extremes. They are pleased to receive two children at a time, although they believe that under such circumstances the pregnancy and delivery are more dangerous for the mother. That is why she is called boyóngwá since, despite the seriousness of the situation, she did not die. This epithet is also applied to the *father* and to the twins, probably for the same reason as well as because of their immunity with respect to prohibitions. If the twins are of different sexes, however, the mother is not as likely to be called boyóngwá, since she is likoka, "harmful." (1)

1. See above, Article II, 3.

845 It is apparent from the above description that twins are 789 considered to be somewhat tainted with magic. The existence of 754 this belief is confirmed by the prohibition against throwing anything (stone, palm kernel, etc.) onto their hut, the same prohibition applying to anyone who possesses a charm or practices sorcery or protective magic. In addition they possess a certain innate ability to cast a spell over the activities (hunting, fishing) of others. That is why persons who are afraid of being harmed by them smear themselves with kaolin in the same way as do such children and their parents. [505]

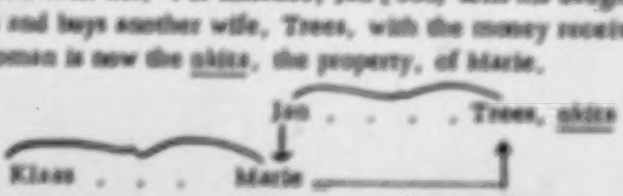
The Nkundó have had cases of triplets, but they are ex- 845 tremely rare. The youngest of the three is called Yéndeombe, or Yéndeonde, or Yélele. The only special practice with reference to the youngest one is that he can never be ordered to do any work, be sent to carry a message, run any errand, etc., êlitswá onémo.

596 583 56 necessary for her father or brother to have brought her to the man and to have received money for her; another member of the family was sufficient. She was sold by her family and accordingly, wherever the money had remained or whoever had received it, she had her rights in the family. Since the family maintained itself through the sale of the children of the female sex, the male children born of them were considered as the masters, the rightful claimants, the fathers. There was no exception to this rule; it was not to be altered, and no one had ever thought of disputing the place of the claimant or of laying claim to his rights. I have only heard of one single case of that sort, namely, at the succession of the Ruki, the younger brother was said to have killed his older brother in order to take over his place. He was said to have made a hole in his brother's prao, so that it sank when it reached the middle of the stream. The matter in itself seems an impossibility; also I consider it a legend, unless an accident might have happened that was interpreted in a mistaken or deliberately false manner.

576 57 The rightful claimant, bona wa nkana, sister's son, might still be a child; nevertheless he was called father and everyone vied with one another in showing him the honor due a father. That was the unbreakable law, not only for the father common to the hamlet, boloi, but also for the father of each individual family.

Nkita

583 602 Nkita is what the woman is called who is bought with the money that the father or brother has received for his daughter or sister on the occasion of her marriage. In reality, however, she is only the nkita, goods or property, of the sold woman. Nkita ekam, "my property," this woman calls her. For instance, Jan [330] sells his daughter, Marie, to Klaas and buys another wife, Trees, with the money received. The latter woman is now the nkita, the property, of Marie.



624

inches long and two inches in width, numbering up to seven are brought and attached to the back of her *lonkoo* by folding them over it.[1] [546]

The first male child which was born to the *nkumu* before he acceded to the office is known as *Iyomi Nkai*. If he has none, then the right to this name passes to the first male child to be born to his younger brothers. Any child born on the day that the *nkumu* is given his *mantolo* is also called *Iyomi*; if a male he will be *Mola Iyomi*, if a female, *Mpembe Iyomi*.[2] These children must not see the *nkumu* until they are old enough to know his name and greet him properly, and so they are taken to some village other than the one in which he has his residence. When such children are considered old enough to take up residence in the village of the *nkumu* it is an occasion for revelry, a big dance, *etoko*, is held, and there is a feast. The child, *Iyomi*, is brought to the village of the *nkumu* with rejoicing, and this is a signal for everybody desiring to do so to help himself to anything belonging to the *nkumu*. Goats and fowls may be killed and eaten, sugar-cane rooted up, bananas, plantains, and other crops growing near by seized for food. Because of this custom the *nkumu* will take precautions and send his livestock, at least, off to some other village in order not to lose more than he can help.[3] 852 624 [551]

The *ayemba*, the singer or singers, and the *atotii*, the praisers already mentioned, remain with the *nkumu* during his period of seclusion. Added to these is *atomba lokombi*, the bearer of the *lokombi*, a stringed instrument played with the fingers, similar to a bass viol in its general appearance. 624 533 534

Inside the *ipama* during the seclusion of the *nkumu*, few people have the right of entrance, but as one enters the *ekenge* where the daylight hours are spent, one finds the couch of the *nkumu* on the left and towards the rear. On the same side and towards the front are seated the *atomba lokombi* and the *ayemba*. *Nsomi*'s couch is to the right of, and parallel to, that of the *nkumu*, but still to the left of the centre posts. To the right of her couch is the fire in the centre, and beyond the fire on the right side is a couch for the *nsomi*, likewise somewhat to the rear, with a space in front for the *atotii*. 624 342 352

The month's seclusion being completed, the *nkumu* prepares to buy the homage of the village. *Nsomi* gets rid of her decorative colours, and assumes ordinary attire, becoming like any other of the wives, and is ready to take up all the usual duties of a wife, whether in the garden or at the house. The people are called to come and render to the *nkumu* their homage and praise. The men come to the *ipama*, are admitted to the presence of their *nkumu* and seat themselves on the bare earth with their legs wide apart and facing him. They then, without uttering a word, greet him in the 624 576

---

[1] The *lonkoo* is a belt which used to be worn by Tumba women encircling the buttocks, and this was used to attach their only garment, the [illegible] among the Bonginda, this being a short bark cloth, or an [illegible] among other groups, this being a woven cloth strip worn between the legs.

[2] When a new *nkumu* assumes office, one already in office will take this opportunity of getting more of his sons named *Iyomi*. He takes them to the [illegible] of the new *nkumu*, and having placed a bundle of [illegible] on the right wrist, and sometimes one on the right ankle, asks the [illegible] of the [illegible] whose right it is to give away the [illegible] to name them sons *Bayomi* (pl. of '*Iyomi*'). This man will then take each a son, and presenting him to the people introduce him by giving him a name, and following with praise as, '*Ose Iyomi Lomo, botoo!*' and the crowd replies with the customary '*Booo!*' [591]

[3] It is well to remember that not every individual bearing names associated with the institution of the *nkumu* is directly connected with it. With the practice of 'resurrecting' dead relatives by naming new-born children after them, such names as these become widespread. [551]

624 customary manner, with a double clap. They are told by the *nkumu* to repeat the salutation, and having done so may be asked to do it a third time. They are then
576 given a few rods in payment. If the *nkumu* sees some member of his own *ekofo* coming to greet him, he gives him special honour by ordering him to lie flat on his back instead of merely sitting, and at the end he gives him a larger gift of rods than the others receive. In this way the *nkumu* may pay out a great many rods to those who thus render him homage. Ordinarily a man will receive five or six, but one
624 specially honoured may be given as many as twenty. From the beginning the *nkumu* has to pay heavily for his honours, and only a wealthy man can hope to attain them.
[556] For this reason a lawful successor, if not wealthy, may be glad to give up his rights to another more fortunate member of the *ekofo*. Homage having been paid, word is sent out that the *nkumu* is about to come forth, and crowds begin to gather. A coat
[302] of red camwood powder mixed with oil is smeared over the *nkumu*, the brass plates are attached to his *mosolo*, and he is attired in all his finery. The crowd outside dances, and when tired sits on the ground to await the rest of the ceremony. Inside,
[533] the *lokombi* begins to play, the *eyembe* to sing, and the Batwa *atoti* to praise the *nkumu* by uttering an ululating sound. Accompanied by *Nsomo*, *Bikopo*, and the *mamoi*, the *nkumu* himself begins to dance. The temporary protecting screen round the *ipomo* is pulled down, and he is seen by all. After his dance he retires again and the crowd disperses.

When *Nkomo Akolo* becomes *nkumu* he changes everything possible so as to
[481] become different from other men. Thus he assumes a different gait, a sort of bow-legged waddle, a different tone of voice, and it seems that under this influence even his facial features undergo a change. Accompanied by his retinue, he visits the various villages where he has friends and relatives in order to greet them. This over, the musicians wish to take their departure and are paid for their services by the *nkumu*.

624 At the conclusion of these ceremonies the *nkumu* with his *ekofo* and the *molendo* negotiate concerning their obligations to one another. If the *nkumu* is the first of his
596 line, he and his *ekofo* are given land to cultivate, while succeeding *nkumu* simply take over the land originally acquired. The *molendo* call their *nkumu* their wife, and they
621 designate themselves husband. They thus reckon the relationship between *molendo* and *ekofo* to be that of husband and wife, and, as in an actual marriage, there must be an interchange of obligations performed in a spirit of harmony. Also, as in marriage a wife may be divorced, so an *nkumu* with his *ekofo* could be sent off to their home and the arrangement terminated. It not infrequently happened that as strangers the *ekofo* fell out with their hosts and if such a disagreement could not be righted they might be refunded the payments with which they had purchased their rights, and sent off home.

Among the reciprocal obligations of *molendo* and *ekofo* are included the sharing
224 of certain animals and birds killed in the hunt, among which are the leopard and
624 elephant. All killed, whether male or female, must be divided. Of certain other
621 animals, including the wild pig, antelope, and buffalo, if a female, no portion is given,
596 if a male, the required portion is presented. These reciprocal obligations are limited strictly to the *ekofo* and *molendo*; if others outside of these groups wish to present the *nkumu* with meat to honour him or to curry favour, they may do so, but they are under

must go to the *mankoko* for their fight, this being the location of the houses belonging to the sons of the *nkumu*. The penalty for breaking this law is a fine, and if no fine were forthcoming hanging used to be the alternative. If a quarrel arises elsewhere and one party wishes to avoid fighting, he may retire to the *nsago* and thus be safe. No trees in the *nsago* may be climbed. There are, however, privileged classes exempt from all such rules, and these embrace a good many people. Thus, the mother of twins, twins, Batwa, *nsomi*, and all members of the *mokonde* and *ekopo* are exempt from the laws of the *nsago*. If any of these commit acts which are illegal for those coming under the law, they are not held guilty, but their actions will not be condoned; they will be considered breaches of good conduct, and will be dealt with informally; the parties will be quietly reprimanded, and adjured to observe the proprieties of conduct. For outsiders breaking the laws of the *nsago*, what corresponds to a warrant is necessary. It is necessary to catch the culprit in the act and hale him before the *nkumu*. The *nkumu* himself cannot do this, nor can any of the *ekopo*; it must be done by one of the *mokonde*, and so if the *nkumu* sees someone infringing the law he will try to get one of the *mokonde* on the spot in a hurry in order to catch the offender. 624 689 [645] [672] [624] [694]

In war,[1] it is the *mokumi a ele* who is most active in preparations, but the *nkumu* will accompany his party to battle, keeping well in the rear, and surrounded by good fighters. He does not wear his *mpatole* but puts on the informal hat. If an *nkumu* were captured, he would never be tortured or killed as were other prisoners, unless he specifically sought such a fate. He could be ransomed, and his captors would beseech him to let his people ransom him, but in many cases an *nkumu* would invite death rather than endure the shame of being yielded up as a prisoner of war. 624 726 [727]

An *nkumu* is always addressed by a double clap of the hands, and will not reply to anyone rude enough to speak to him first. In answer to the clap he replies with a word of wisdom expressed in an aphorism or proverb. Such a reply, however, is common to all elders, who have their favourite aphorisms ready for any who pay them special honour. Anything the *nkumu* says must be answered not by the customary *eko boko* (even so) which ordinary people use, but with the special word, *biango*, which is reserved exclusively for replying to an *nkumu*, and means the same thing. 624 576

When the hour of death approaches, an *nkumu* is attended by his Batwa. It is a rule that he must not die a natural death, and near the end, while he is still conscious and can still speak, all 'free men' clear out and leave the Batwa pygmies to their task of tying the *nkumu* very tightly with the fibrous yam vines known as *mokiki*. Often this secure lashing in the sitting posture, known as *ilima*, is sufficient to finish the *nkumu* off, but sometimes the work is expedited by twisting his neck.[2] Then it is announced that he is dead, *ankilea*, this being in contradistinction to the customary phrase *ankama ankida* used of the death of ordinary people. While the latter means 624 763 [563]

---

[1] Owing to the lack of tribal cohesion, warfare was not on any considerable scale. The method of warfare consisted in sending groups of young men to fight first, the elders only joining in when one side began to get the worst of the fray. Victors and vanquished in such fights were designated 'husband' and 'wife' respectively, and members of the one group were free to come and go in the villages of the other, and even to help themselves to food. In future wars 'husband' and 'wife' were supposed to combine against their common foe.

[2] Besides *nkumu*, elderly and rich men, fathers and mothers of twins, and twins are buried in the *ilima* or sitting posture, in contradistinction to the recumbent position which is the customary one used for ordinary people and slaves. [764]

836 they succumb to any favorable opportunity. The validity of this generalization is not affected by extremely rare exceptions which may be encountered and which are due either to a constitutional abnormality or to an extraordinarily firm Christian conviction. How should
834
178 these observations be reconciled with the statement so often heard from natives that the situation was entirely different before the coming of the white men? It was not unusual to see young women not only abstaining from sexual relations but having such a "fear of men" that they drove away seducers and defended their chastity by hitting them with a stick.

When the woman did not accept the young man's proposition, she considered it a grave insult. The initiator was entitled to no indemnity "for blows and wounds." The woman replied only in violent terms, in word or act. [84] Often she went and insulted the mother of the guilty party. When the latter was told the reason for this behavior, she could only turn on her misbehaving son and usually gave him a good talking to; if he was young enough she gave him a good beating. Thus the girl had every right to defend herself.

If the provocation gave rise to no complications in family or society, the parents paid a lot less attention. But they tried to teach
[864] their children discretion in these dangerous matters, though their instruction primarily took the form of a lesson after an error was committed, or sometimes apropos of an incident that had befallen someone else. Some parents were very severe. These attitudes were based on a vague sense of morality which was not deduced from philosophical reasoning or religious or superstitious ideas but which was innate and instinctive so to speak. In addition, the fear of excesses and eventual social consequences no doubt also played a considerable
● [577] role. Excesses were feared above all, and an isolated occurrence was regarded more or less as a momentary weakness.

To form an accurate picture of the situation that existed in the past, we must not lose sight of the fact that, because of very early marriages, the number of young single women was necessarily limited.

The attitude toward single men was more lenient than toward
562
836 girls, unless their behavior had any consequences and apart from the danger of their actions becoming habitual, leading inevitably to palavers.

Article I. Girls

584 According to Nkundɔ custom it is acceptable for an expected child, not yet born or still very young, to be promised in marriage to X or Y. This practice was formerly very common and is still quite prevalent today. It is called banda bǒna or bǒmoto, literally, "to count a child" or "to count a woman." The ikulɛ is paid at the time of the promise. Later the matter is carried out in the usual fashion; the other parts of the bride price are paid either while the fiancée is young or, preferably, at the time when she goes to her husband.

584 855 Until that time, if one of the girl's relatives is already a wife of a polygamist husband-to-be or of one of his relatives, the child is brought up in her husband's family from a fairly early age, depending on the circumstances. She lives with her relative. She may be barely seven or eight years old, for example. If no one in her husband's clan can take care of her, [232] she spends only one or two weeks there to become acquainted, little by little, with people and places; she repeats the visit from time to time. Her mother accompanies her, for being to young she could not get used to being there alone, without support, without her parents. Therefore it is necessary to wait till she is old enough to be somewhat independent and able to manage by herself. That time usually comes around the [145] beginning of puberty, thus sometime between the ages of twelve and fifteen.

584 853 Like an adult woman, she is already called bompɛka or wɛlɛ, depending on the portion of the bride price that has been paid. She has all the duties and privileges of a wife: sexual relations, food preparation, care of the household, etc. There is no set date or age for the beginning of cohabitation. This matter is settled between the husband and his parents-in-law. The latter do not have the right to [602] delay the time, even if their daughter is still too young, but they can make use of their great influence over their son-in-law. The modern [178] generation is not shocked by sexual relations between an adulterer [sic] [577] and a girl who has not reached puberty. Besides, all is in order from the legal standpoint; since the man has paid the bride price, he is the

Article II. Property

573 x 614 Through marriage, a woman does not become a member of her husband's clan. If for example she is born into the Boféotola clan, she remains all her life bosí Boféotola, "member of the Boféotola clan," [764] and her corpse has to be buried in her native soil. In case of divorce and remarriage, the new husband does not refund the bride price to the former one; he pays the woman's parents, and they reimburse the forsaken husband.

573 x 421 All the wife's activity, however, is directed toward the good of her husband and his family, and this is so from the time of the ikulɛ payment. Her parents have no further rights over their daughter. All the fruits of her labor are her husband's property.

If she finds objects that have no owner, such as, for example, elephant tusks or buried copper rings of which no one claims ownership, they do not belong to her nor to her family, but exclusively to her husband. If he shares with his parents-in-law, he does so out of affection and respect for them. He has no legal obligation to do so, but propriety and cordial relations impose a certain duty on him.

Profits from the sale of the products of her industry (such as foods for market, mats, salt, pots, baskets) belong not to her but to her husband.

Even whatever she acquires during a visit to her parents, everything she finds while she is with her family, the fish she catches, the caterpillars she gathers in the forest there, all that belong exclusively to her husband.

It sometimes happens that a woman infringes on the husband's rights in this respect. If he is kind he will generally let her do as she pleases. ● [571] Severity on his part would be attributed to a lack of affection toward his wife or a lack of delicacy toward his parents-in-law, and he would even be criticized for being stingy (never unjust!), a more serious criticism than the others from the Nkundó point of view. [263] Dishonest conduct on the part of a wife, however, may give rise to incidents, and even to serious ones. That is what happened in the historic case of Efoloko of Ilengya (Bongɛ li), who was married to [576] Mpoko of Imomo. She had gone fishing at home and had given all her fish

M
593 recourse to the assistance of a third party who -- for remuneration,
578 of course -- undertook to carry out his project. This task was usually
P
[679] confided to Batswa, who did not disdain this type of work, which was quite suited to their taste.

The fact that the law gives the husband the right to punish his wife [277] for the type of oratory under discussion meant that a wife had to exercise some discretion in her choice of expressions. Fearing violent reactions, she often spoke the more serious insults softly.

M
178 Since the European penetration women are more daring. For their husbands fear European justice, which follows principles entirely
578 different from their ancestral law. Thus they complain bitterly of
593 the insolence of their wives: "We have become slaves; the women
562 are now all-powerful. They may do as they please, for we can no longer do anything to them." But as soon as native courts are sufficiently educated and are freed from what an eminent colonial jurist has called "the jurisdiction of palavers" (1), they will no doubt effect a salutary change in this situation.

M
562 The emancipation of women is one of the factors that have
586 increased the frequency of divorce. For a man who cannot avenge continuous outrages remains dominated by shame, and the presence of the one who is the cause of it must become unbearable in the long run; whence the indifference, antipathy, hate, and the inevitable results of that permanent confusion in the household.

M
593 Men among whom the feeling of modesty was highly developed hanged themselves out of shame instead of attacking the guilty wife.
762 That is what many natives have maintained in talking with me.
● 577 Nevertheless, I have no knowledge of a present-day example. When
[61] this happened, the wife's family no longer took action against their daughter. Nor were they obliged to pay an indemnity, although their child had brought about the death. They simply had to acquit

---

1. See A. Sohier, Bulletin des Séances de l'Institut Royal Colonial Belge, Vol. 6, 1935, 1, p. 60 and passim.

593 577 762 themselves of the usual and ordinary obligations incumbent upon them on the death of a son-in-law. Should this be taken as a kind of implied condemnation of suicide? [278]

593 578 627 626 The wisdom of the elders recommends to youth that they not let anger lead them to brutal acts even where, legally, it is permissible to use force. They do not act in such a way through a policy of adaptation to the present regime. Even before the arrival of the white men, they gave lessons in calm and self-mastery. For serious blows, wounds, and especially homicide could have deplorable consequences legally and even politically (war). They preferred recourse to punishments, such as abstention from food and the refusal of debitum conjugale, which although less violent, are not without efficacity. In that way they were also spared the vexation of in-laws, whose pity would be aroused by the wounds and bodily suffering of their child or sister.

591 593 One thing that deserves blows or a good whipping because it is considered a serious failure in the fulfillment of the duties of married life is indifference and negligence in housework. A husband may safely deal forcefully with the situation, although he must first inform the qualified authorities. The following are some examples of such faults: the wife does not give the necessary attention to the kitchen, her children, the cleaning of the hut and court; she neglects her crops, does not go fishing, makes no attempt to obtain salt, etc.; in short, she does not give the required time and care to the tasks incumbent upon her. She herself, her children, and her house remain disgustingly filthy, her fields and banana groves are invaded by weeds and her pantry is devoid of utensils and food, while she wastes her time doing nothing or rather spends it running about the village, going to one woman's house, chatting with another, spending the better part of her day gossiping. The Nkundo does not put up with this sort of behavior, and no one can reproach him. Even other men and the woman's companions condemn [278] such conduct. Often the woman is ridiculed, and on occasion she may hear unflattering comments such as [illegible], "a gossip, her cloth is to the side," that is, the interminable chatting

578
593 If a woman injures her husband during a quarrel he may not retaliate, for she is recognized as inferior and weaker than he. The
577 husband's weapon is abstention from any food, drink, baths, etc., that she offers him. To re-establish peace she must pay a [illegible]. Nevertheless, nowadays some impetuous men no longer like to observe these rules; they want to act with violence come what may. But they are strongly reprimanded by the old men, who maintain that it is unworthy of a man to retaliate against a weaker being. This traditional attitude of the Nkundó seems to me to indicate a sort of chivalrous nobility based on two feelings, justice and pride. It becomes more understandable when we know that similar conduct is
[563] expected with regard to Batswa, inferiors, and subjugated clans ([illegible], sing. [illegible]) in their respective spheres. (1) Thus a Botswa may

1. See below, Articles V, VI, and VII.
4, B.

not apply the law of retaliation to a Botswa. Under certain circumstances, a [illegible] clan may, with impunity, take what they please from the banana groves of the master's clan, etc.

Note also that it is very much out of place for a man [202] to strike his wife or punish her in any way in the presence of her parents,
[illegible] brothers, etc. In fact, this is a very grave offense. And, according to the code of honor, the brother (cousin, etc.) must pick up the glove and fight his brother-in-law to avenge the insult. In many cases the matter ends in a divorce. For such conduct takes away the combined feeling of modesty and embarrassment ([illegible]) that the two parties normally feel toward one another.

Finally, we must note that the various payments made as [illegible] are included in the total amount of [illegible] or [illegible], respectively.

In order to more clearly illustrate the Nkundó attitude con-
593 cerning the relationship of husband and wife, it might be of interest to
591 cite a few proverbs pertaining to the subjects discussed above:

1) [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]: [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. "All the others slap their wives (but) [illegible] beats [illegible] with a stick." (This is a reference to a historical fact.)

837 circumstances, the dark of evening provides strong provocation. A noisy crowd of young people is often deliberately aroused for the purpose of hiding such frolics. Women especially are the ones to start the scene (called *iole*). They begin with "games," pinching, etc. Sometimes those who are bolder cry out, *iole o!* by way of a signal. These irregularities are sometimes agreed upon in advance; other times they are provoked without any advance agreement. The husbands intervene, but it is very difficult for them to catch the culprits.

577 837 4) It would seem that according to Nkundó notions, adultery is not a moral fault, even in the broadest sense of the term, and not punishable by a nonearthly power of religion or superstition, which would intervene to re-establish the order that has been disrupted. Rather one has the impression that their law pertaining to it is purely social. Not that I want to say that this law and its sanctions do not, in the last analysis, spring from a moral idea; but if this moral idea exists, it is very vague and confused and is not expressed by our people. In practice all attention is focused on the sanctions because of the injury to property rights. There never seems to be the slightest reference to a moral religious idea. [320]

And this is probably the chief reason for the frequency of adultery in spite of the sanctions, for while these undoubtedly reduce the evil they are powerless to stop it. But this statement does not apply exclusively to our people. Every law is an ideal. Sanctions attempt to ensure that it is observed. But the masses never attain the intended goal. When some individuals are superior to the ideal imposed by law, it is because society falls short in performing its task, as is the case in Europe today. Among the Nkundó, law and society are superior to the morality of individuals. Besides, sanctions though necessary have never sufficed to assure perfect obedience of laws: *nihil leges sine moribus*. Good morals must come from considerations that are superior to particular laws and the basis for them.

Although, as we have seen, the Nkundó do not connect the subject at hand in any way with their religious understanding, how can we explain the praiseworthy conduct of many individuals? In my opinion although the Nkundó are not aware of the relationship between the law and its ultimate legislator, they are not without a certain vague, innate feeling that adultery is immoral, and this is corroborated by

837 their sense of the personal injustice involved. But they do not reason
577 out these feelings; they follow them spontaneously, blindly.

There is a greater awareness of the social evil in adultery. But it is based not on the philosophical considerations of this harm in itself, but on the consequences of individual cases for the proper functioning of society -- palavers, financial difficulties, enmities, quarrels, wars.

This it seems to me is the present state of their ideas. It does not preclude the possibility that the law and sanctions against adultery may rest on an ultimate basis of moral ideas. And more particularly it is quite possible that the moral idea [331] operates only in the form of a feeling of the great principles of fundamental natural law which is innate to all human reason.

837 5) No one will be astonished if we say that colonization, far
177 from reducing the frequency of adultery, actually contributed to its considerable increase. The abolition of native penalties and punishments together with a great freedom of movement could not help but lead, naturally, to this state of affairs. Every informed colonial who is in close contact with the natives is aware of the situation. "The prohibition of corporal punishments which, according to custom, were the sanctions imposed against a woman's adultery have brought about a license whose extent can be measured by the degree to which a group is subject to our occupation. The forgetfulness if not the contempt for the promises of marriage is nowhere carried so far as in places where the customary disciplines have been completely re-
[183] moved." (Maj. Engels, Bulletin Soc. Belge. Et. Col., cited in Congo, 3rd year, Vol. 1, p. 77, April, 1922). That is why various persons have repeatedly called for sanctions against adultery to replace the ancestral means of repression that have been abolished.

But the decrees hoped for have never passed beyond the stage
692 of mere projects. Fortunately, another step, and a fundamental one,
177 has been taken in the meantime through the establishment of native
837 jurisdiction (1926). Under the guidance and control of European authorities, native courts will turn the helm halfway back to the ancient sanctions, adapting these all the while to the new conditions created by colonization and by the introduction of more humanitarian

586 simply said that she has left her husband (alêdîla) and has been taken
583 in marriage by X (alôkimbwa êka Isôngôlô). Having fallen in love
587 with another man's wife [290] and desiring to marry her, a man tries to win her favor. If she consents he collects the valuables necessary for the bride price. He then asks the woman to come to him and pays the bride price as for any marriage.

Instead of going directly to her seducer, the woman may also first go to her parents, especially if they are in favor of her plan. If they are not she would not succeed, because they would prevent her from carrying it out.

Cases of njangô were formerly rare because they were risky.
[721] As a matter of fact, they constituted a casus belli. Anyone who undertook such a venture had to be in a position to take the consequences of his act, especially with respect to the payment of an in-
[676] demnity. Nowadays, on the other hand, these occurrences are much more frequent, even when the new husband does not have the means to pay the bride price at once. Nevertheless, the reversal in government policy is beginning to produce good results. The woman, or her mother, is often imprisoned; rarely the seducer. This penalty is often sufficient to restore order. But to keep from being exposed to further difficulties caused by the woman who no longer loves him, the abandoned husband sometimes refuses to take back his unfaithful wife.

The rarity of cases in former times as well as the fact that
[671] they constituted a legitimate reason for war shows that the njangô did not have the approval of Nkundô law but that it was more or less considered an infraction.

2) Taking refuge. Because of the change in circumstances,
586 the practice of taking refuge is no longer common today. It used
587 to be done as follows: A woman who absolutely wanted to leave her husband and had no means of doing so, since no man had asked for her in marriage and her parents were powerless to help her, went secretly to a rich and influential man whom she would have liked as a husband. She arrived unexpectedly, stood before him, or even threw herself at him, crying, [291] Bojwâ bâlâ! ôsângê.

577

[illegible]: (1) "Your deceased parents! Pay the bride price for me,

1. Or analogous terms.

do not chase me away!" In such circumstances, the insult of invoking a man's deceased parents is like an ultimatum; it imposes an obligation which the person thus addressed cannot escape. (2)

2. See Chapter VI, Article V, 4, Appendix.

Therefore the man in question could not send the woman away; he had to take her under his protection. He called his kin group and explained the situation to them. If his close relatives agreed -- and it was their duty and honor to -- they instructed him to pay the bride price for her. But the abandoned husband intervened to prevent this transaction. Either he declared war, or he begged his rival to return his wife to him. [illegible] If he took the first course, the two adversaries paid indemnities for the warriors fallen in battle on their respective sides after the hostilities were terminated; then when peace was concluded, the matter was settled all the same, and the woman succeeded in her purpose. If the husband took the second alternative, and the man who received the fugitive was disposed to yield to his request, the latter would ask the husband for a payment ([illegible]) that would free him from the obligation imposed on him by the wife's "oath." This payment was a sort of indemnification for the insult and for the blemish on his honor. Therefore the amount was fairly high: 20 to 25 copper rings, equaling the price of a slave.

The woman was surrendered either because the man to whom she had addressed herself did not love her, or because he and his family did not want to get involved in any disputes.

For the husband, war was a bad expedient; he would necessarily lose. The correct and ideal procedure was to try and have his wife returned to him. This fact is an indication that recourse to arms was an infraction of the law rather than a legitimate means. [282]

It could also happen that the man kept the woman but did not immediately pay the bride price. This occurred either if a

586 571 continuous state of enmity existed between his clan and the husband's, or if the husband owed him a substantial debt, one that clearly equaled the woman's bride price. In the first case a new war followed almost inevitably. Later on the woman's family contacted the new son-in-law. The gifts they brought were considered the dowry, and he began to pay the bride price. But there was no question of reimbursing the bride price to the first husband; relations between him and the woman's clan were completely broken. The difference between this situation and the standard procedure described above lies precisely in the fact that there is no restitution. In the case of a debt there was no restitution either. The woman's flight constituted a compensation (lowééla) and was therefore so designated (N. diŋgola ndá lowééla). If the husband lodged a complaint, the judges sent him a piece of bofoló (1) to let him know that they did not want to concern themselves with his case, which he himself knew to have very poor grounds. Even the members of his own clan prevented him from making war; they knew perfectly well that the wrong was entirely on their relative's side.

The practice of taking refuge that we have just described was simply known as bejwá, bômoto âlowá bejwá, because that word was the principal one in the ultimatum.

171 586 571 As we have said above, the custom here described disappeared with colonization. Even though the scope of this study does not extend to the Nkundó who are settled north of the Tshuapa, it [202] may be of interest to note that an evolution of this custom is taking shape in the Losangenya region. If a woman is condemned for leaving the conjugal household and imprisoned, she asks someone to marry her -- if the opportunity presents itself. If the man accepts

---

[202] [628] 1. The bofoló is a piece of dried banana leaf which has been rolled up and tied with two knots (or more, as the case required). To indicate the end of a palaver, the bofoló is cut in two (or more) pieces, with a knot in each piece. One piece is sent to each interested party.

178 586 577 her proposal, he collects the bride price and produces it before the chief. With the consent of this authority, he pays it to the woman's parents, who make restitution to the husband. (1)

1. See also Chapter III, Article VI.

586 727 5) War. The last of the special ways in which a marriage may be broken is the following: If a woman were captured in a war and not freed, thus becoming a slave, by that very fact her marriage was broken. Under the circumstances it could not have been otherwise, since each group was concerned only with its own interests. As we have seen in the preceding chapter, the slave was incorporated into the harem of one of the members of the clan who took her prisoner, or she was sold to some man for this purpose. If her real husband did not have the means to free her -- and we are speaking under that assumption, for if he did the union would not be dissolved -- he was unable to oppose what was done. Nevertheless, he was entitled to indemnification by the member of the clan who was responsible for the war, and he could use force to support his claim. If the woman were freed by her family, and her owner then paid them a bride price in order to contract a regular marriage, the former husband had a right to a return of the bride price paid by him. (See Chapter VII, Article V).

586 6. In concluding this account, we should note that a woman who has left her husband to go to another man may return to the first one [304] after a fairly long time has elapsed. There may be two reasons for such a return:

Either the woman does not find what she was looking for with her new husband and finds her hopes deceived, or in comparing her present situation with the life she had previously led she regrets her action. Knowing the love her former husband always bore her, she risks returning to him, and usually she is not rejected.

Or the new husband finds that after having paid part of the bride price he is unable to fulfill the rest of his obligation. Since a woman does not wish to be a wife without bride price -- outside of modern exceptions -- she turns back.

326 The native smith works not only with iron but also with copper which he melts down in the same manner from copper sticks (longele: mitako) and old, worn copper rings.

[illegible] The copper sticks, that nowadays sell at 20 for a franc, come from
435] Europe; copper ore is unknown here.

The copper objects made by the smith are as follows.

326
301

Bakonga: all that is of copper

1. **Bongombwa**: necklace, often weighing ten kilograms or more; value, 1,000 mitako.
2. **Lokolo**: leg ring, weighing four to six kilograms and more; value, 200 to 500 mitako.
3. **Bolonga**: arm ring, not heavy.
4. **Ingwete**: arm ring, not heavy.
5. **Bongenzo**: leg ring that rattles when the wearer walks.
6. **Bosankere**: leg ring.
7. **Limpala**: great leg rings in spiral form, twined out of thick copper wire, which cover the whole of the lower leg. They [illegible] bear much resemblance to the springs in a mattress. Among the Negroes these have a value of 500 mitako.
8. **Bompulenge**: resembling a small limpala, these were formerly worn on the arms by old people, but they are now out of fashion and no longer made.

326 In the whole district there is only one smith, a certain Elumbe in
55[illegible] the village Lilangi (Bossaloum), who knows how to make copper bells.

This Black is a celebrity to every Mongo Negro.

According to the Negroes, there is a smith, a certain Bokedza from the vicinity of the Ikelemba River, who knew how to put a new rifle together from the parts of old broken ones and did so successfully. According to the Negroes, the government agent, however, took the rifle away from him, but in my opinion, and in that of others, this black [illegible] rifle manufacturer belongs in the realm of fable, the more so as a Negro is not at all afraid of a lie.

Yaelima

411 Yaelima it is sometimes as deep as five centimeters. The bow and arrow of the type we have just described serves both as an offensive and a defensive weapon. Its importance as a weapon must have formerly been greater. In our time wars between
[72] tribes have become almost impossible. Attacks and reprisals by
● 578] individuals, on the other hand, are still rather frequent. This is especially true of the region east of Opombo. Every free Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima owns a bow and arrows and does not hesitate to use them either to defend himself or to attack.

224 Hunting with bow and arrow is done on an individual basis. The game taken in this way belongs wholly to the hunter. [69]

341] Among the Yaelima we found an arrow with a removable head that is notably larger, wider, and stronger, and that is attached to the shaft by thin cords. The natives use these arrows for hunting antelope and buffalo. When the animal is hit, the arrowhead penetrates its body, and the surprised victim flees into the bush or forest. The shaft of the arrow, buffeted by the tall grass or lianas, gradually works itself loose. The head, attached to the shaft by a cord, remains in the wound. With each motion, the animal enlarges its wound. The shaft, sooner or later, is caught in the lianas or grass, with the result that the head is violently jerked from the wound, making it a mortal one. This very dangerous weapon is not widespread, and for good cause. The native can use it effectively only for a point-blank shot. The range of the bow is limited; the arrow with the removable point is heavy; the iron point is very wide and has small barbs. To succeed in planting this arrow in the body of the animal, it is necessary to creep to within several meters of the game, to string the bow without attracting the animal's attention, and to hit it in the belly. The wounded beast may seek its salvation in wild and fatal running, but it sometimes turns against its attacker. In any case, the hunter who uses these arrows cannot do so without risking great [70] danger. Although the native likes to hunt, he also fears the dangers associated with this occupation. The only ones who use these arrows are the intrepid true hunters who have inherited some of the instinct and audacity of the Batua [Twa]. Imana, chief of the Batitu of the Odiwa region, who was audacious to the highest possible degree and feared no animal, obstacle, or danger, asserted to me that he and a few other hunters did not hesitate to attack elephants with this weapon.

152 602 other hand almost always involves reasoning and is founded on a high morality based on religion. Furthermore, the questions (of property, inheritance, etc.) which so often divide relatives from each other do not exist among the Nkundô, whose patrimony is held in common. [23] Among them the members of a family need each other absolutely and constantly; they cannot sustain the struggle for existence unless they remain well united. A man isolated from his kin is a pariah, for in all matters of importance he must count on them for help, protection, and defense. Therefore he is, so to speak, forced to make common cause with the rest of the family and to keep his proper place within it.

This may help us to understand that among these people there are fewer reasons for a cooling of family affections and more reasons for maintaining good relations. But it would be wrong to attribute their love to some kind of egoistic calculation. Their affection is sincere and spontaneous. But the above facts explain why the dis-
● [578] unity and quarrels which are so frequent in Europe are unknown among the Nkundô; they are settled at once and do not have time to become bitter or deeply rooted. A very rare exception does not invalidate this generalization.

1. Parents and children

593* Parents sincerely love their children. Their affection is not lessened with age; there is only a somewhat greater tenderness toward the very young, whom they readily carry and fondle. The indulgence which they show for the faults of their offspring is tempered by anger when they are exasperated by misbehaviour, more often than by a rational concern for the child's training. The spouse who has not suffered from the child's error does not react against him but on the contrary is led by his affection to protect him. Parents instinctively try to excuse and defend their children when they have misbehaved. (1)

1. It should be noted that the same thing may also frequently be done among many Europeans.

Nevertheless, the general good of the clan wins out over affection.

593 everything. But they only succeed if they have no sons old enough
586 to defend their mother. Differences in behavior are due to the character of the persons involved. (1)

1. See Chapter VIII, Article I.

797 Only religion can bring about a radical change in this domain.
593 We are still far from our goal, but a few serious Christians have al-
159 ready begun to adapt to the requirements of a higher morality and to deal with their wives in conformity with the sanctity of marriage though he or she may be ill. Yet it is more difficult for them to do this than for the others, since this same morality forbids [30] polygamy and all other means of satisfying passion.

An admirable case is that of Bekau Marie, daughter of Ewaß D'Ilombo (Bonkoma). Her husband, Bokombemombe Pierre of Mbeli, suffered from leprosy for many years. He could no more perform the sexual act than do any real work. His wife therefore had to support herself with the help of her son. In spite of her freedom, her separation from her native village, and the ill feelings borne her by her husband's family, she did not want to leave him but decided that she would continue to devote herself to him. (1)

1. Her action is due only in part to Christian influence. That is why this case belongs here to the exclusion of some others I could describe, which are due solely to the influence of Christian morality upon the souls of the individuals.

593 If there is a dispute between her family and her husband, it
578 is hard to know in advance which side the wife will take. Similarly, if difficulties arise between the husband's family and his wife, he can take either his wife's side or that of his relatives. It is all a matter of individual temperament. Some people spontaneously lend support to their families; others on the contrary take sides with their wives. A woman or a man who without good reason habitually takes

591 sides with his family against his wife does not hav- the approval of
578 those who judge the conflict simply as neutral spectators. In such a case it is usually felt that the couple do not love each other very much. And often the marriage soon breaks up. But if the union is maintained nevertheless, its continuation is generally attributed to a fear of the consequences of dissolving the marriage, which would be even worse. The same sort of variation among individuals is to be found in the matter of a wife's devotion to the interests of her husband's family.

591 It is not possible to compare a native household to the
594 households of good simple people at home, where [40] the family is composed solely of parents and their children. Here it extends further; the husband's interests are also those of his parents, brothers, uncles, etc. As we will see in connection with marriage by inheritance it is not unusual for a woman to remain attached to her deceased husband's family. Others are more interested in enriching their own families.

591 The following is a historical instance of a wife who was very
[illegible] devoted to her husband's interests, though there seemed to be room
571 in her make-up for pride and personal glory. (1): Bolŝmbé wá

1. According to my estimates, this episode is about a hundred years old. I knew two men who had recollections of it: the eldest (Longwɔkɔ of the Baafiɔ Bongfongɔ, Bongîli) was about twenty years old when it occurred. A greatgranddaughter of Bonyeme (Mpuci Sofie) is now in her forties.

nkɔ́, daughter of Bokomba of Lifeli (Bombwanja), was married to Bonyeme w'Enyoko of Bongandu (Bokone). One day (her father having died in the meantime) she went back to visit her brother, Bompeli w'Ekomba, who had left Lifeli to settle in his maternal village, Ifele of the Bofɔnjɔ. They began to quarrel. Bompeli maintained that Bonyeme wasn't worth much, that his wealth was exaggerated, that it was a mistake to honor him, etc. Bolŝmbé

576 834 are reassured by the fact that they are in a group, so that no one feels singled out by the gaze of the passer-by. Washing away from major streams is always surrounded by more propriety. For this purpose a [515] small enclosure (ikomba) is built behind the hut or among the banana trees, or a small thicket is allowed to grow there. By this means the native is sheltered from indiscreet glances if he wants to take a [757] bath or give himself an enema. As a matter of fact these things are done preferably after dark.

576 152 5) Violent anger or sorrow drown out modesty, just as they momentarily destroy the use of reason and suppress all feelings which are contradictory or simply different. In this situation, too, the man shows himself superior to the woman. He is less impulsive, calmer, less prone to lose control of his actions, to be carried away by his anger. Thus he almost never strips himself bare. The woman, on the other hand, readily strips off all her clothing. This behavior is extremely common; a woman undresses completely whenever she experiences great sorrow or intense anger. Luckily for propriety's sake some friend or relative always hastens to cover at least the essential parts. For a woman who throws off her clothing exposes herself to the mockery and jeers of spectators. (1)

[576] [578] 1. An angry woman may also undress to shame her husband; it is a way of insulting and mocking him.

833 6) The Nkundó practice sexual intercourse only at night. I believe that this custom is due to their sense of propriety, [37] supplemented by a superstitious explanation which will be described in detail in Article V.

593 834 7) The sense of modesty has its fullest expression in relation to parents, brothers, sisters, etc. Thus it is unheard of that a son should see his mother naked: [illegible]. If an adult daughter is ill and requires personal care (such as an enema, for example), the father has to take care of her himself if no other female relative is near by. But their sense of modesty is such that they both shed tears over the event. As a matter of fact this situation

579
576 even answer her husband, but he may indicate his presence by coughing lightly.

Any infraction of these rules is considered a grave insult. A
574 person offended in this manner may seek revenge by violent means,
576 either personally or through the medium of his son, brother, etc.
● 578 According to native justice he will always be in the right, even if
831 the quarrel becomes bloody. The simple act of uttering obscenities while passing in front of a house in which there is someone who is entitled to the speaker's respect may result in reprisals by the latter. (1)

1. See Jadot, Blancs et Noirs au Congo belge [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 90.

578 Crude language is especially reprehensible and wounding if it
837 contains allusions to incest or other reflections on a relative whom the speaker wants to insult. And it must be admitted that such expressions may go beyond the limits (for example: _coi cum patre, matre, fratre, sorore_, etc.). In connection with this topic it should be noted that reference is always made to a relative of the opposite sex to that of the person who is directly or indirectly being addressed. Furthermore, licentious talk and the use of indecorous language are more severely condemned when they take place in the presence of
[574] women and old people [60] or are said by a slave in front of his master, by a Batswa in front of a Baoto (1).

1. See Introduction, footnote 2, p. 4.

578 If a man catches anyone uttering obscenities in front of his
684 wife, especially if they are addressed to her personally, he can start
834 action in adultery proceedings. If the woman refuses to listen to the seducer, she will not answer him, or sometimes, annoyed at the insult, she may retort by insulting his mother. She can complain, but generally she does not do so. Is she ashamed, or is she afraid that the tempter might make public some excess in her conduct which he has discovered? In any case a woman is more sensitive than a man to the

578 shame of obscenities. They say: [illegible] é'ômoto,
614 Bômoto ndé nkota ([illegible]) "A woman is a nkota snake. Just as that
594 reptile twists through the grass and coils up as soon as it sees a man approaching, so a woman finds it difficult to endure any obscenity."

The ideal way to be sure whether an expression is actually considered indecent is to check whether it may be used in the presence of a close relative, for a Nkundó never utters an obscenity in front of such a person.

155
578
614
Among the Nkundó, as in Europe, certain indelicate exclamations are so deeply rooted that they seem to have lost their original meaning, that is, most of the population no longer thinks of it at all. That a few more serious and modest individuals are still aware of it is apparent from the way they change the pronunciation of the terms in question.

Licentious expressions are never considered indecent and shock no one when they are uttered in a group or during group activities.
[571] Such activities include communal fishing and hunting expeditions, [61] drinking parties, dances, funerals, and -- at the present time -- communal work on a road, a resthouse, etc.

Thus we see that in these matters there is a remarkable discretion side by side with a certain degree of tolerance, which may be carried quite far. Licentious remarks are not condemned in themselves, but only because of fortuitous circumstances; so we see that the Nkundó do not consider them from a moral point of view, as we do, but from a social one. But the fact that these are precisely the words which can become indecent and socially bad shows that the native sees in their content something shocking, shameful, some quality likely to give offense. The freedom exercised in certain cases does not alter this general conclusion but simply gives evidence of the inclinations of a passionate nature.

3. Dances

535
Nkundó dances change periodically, as is the fashion in Europe. Old dances are given up after a time and are replaced by others which are newly invented or recently introduced. The dances fashionable at the present time come from the Bosangá, who are by

584 the gravity of this situation. They try to make him change his mind and to dissuade him from accepting the bride price. To that end they try to make him see the consequences of his obstinacy: at the first favorable opportunity the woman will take flight, leading to palavers (and in the past often war), imprisonment, all sorts of [578] troubles, and finally the bride price will have to be returned for the divorce. Sometimes they succeed; other times all their wisdom and eloquence are in vain. Cupidity, the need to obtain the means of a [586] [114] bride price for a wife (for oneself, a son, a brother, etc.) and the profit he reaps from the union silence all other feelings. Here again, everything depends on the character of the individual. Nowadays the greater freedom resulting from colonization has reduced the frequency of such cases. Nevertheless, because of the reasons given, they still occur. But more frequently the ceremony takes place in a normal fashion. As long as it has not taken place, no further bride-price payments are made. This fact is sufficient to show the importance of the ceremony in Nkundó law, and thus the importance of the woman's public and official consent to the marriage proposed, though this consent is not expressed in words but only implied in a special, meaningful act. Cases which seem in contradiction to this statement are clearly breaches of that law.

In normal cases the father accepts the arrow or the rings from his daughter's hands and thus establishes his consent to the engagement and consequently to the marriage.

In other forms of marriage, which we will discuss later on (Chapters III and IV), consent is expressed in an entirely different fashion.

3. Abduction

583 Even before the coming of the Europeans there were instances where lovers persisted in their desire to marry in spite of the opposition of the woman's parents. When the parents refused to accept the [illegible], the engaged pair arranged an opportunity to flee. The woman tried to win her brother over to her cause, and out of brotherly love he usually

4. The amount of the walo

[illegible] Formerly the amount of the walo averaged 20 to 30 bakonga, or their equivalent. The value of any object included in the bride [illegible] price could be calculated in copper, so that the konga was, so to speak, the monetary unit of the Nkundó.

At the present time in the districts near Flandria, the minimum is from 35 to 40 rings. Among the Bofongé and the Injóló the rings [illegible] are noticeably bigger and their weight in copper or brass is greater; there the minimum can be 30 rings. Elsewhere the figure is a good deal higher.

The price of the walo generally exceeds the minimum, which is found rather rarely. The average is about 60 to 80 rings. The number of 100 is reached only in extremely rare cases and it is exceeded even less frequently (see cases given below).

Differences in the amount of the walo are due primarily to the relative wealth of the contracting parties, the husband's valuation of his wife, the greed of the latter's parents, and the size of the bride price demanded for the woman they want to obtain with their daughter's (sister's) bride price. The cases of women who have left their previous husbands also must not be forgotten, for the new bride price must serve to reimburse him.

The amount of the walo may also be increased to satisfy the [illegible] vanity of the woman, who wants to appear superior to her companions, or of the husband, who wants to be recognized as very wealthy. (1)

[illegible] It is not unusual to hear of a woman boasting in the course of a dispute: "I am not a slave; my husband paid so-and-so much for me. [137] But you -- your husband doesn't love you, or else he is poor, for he paid only so much."

---

1. The man who pays a great deal for his wife is given the honorific epithet [illegible], "wells and mushrooms." All can find as much water as they want at wells, and there the mushrooms multiply. Thus many can benefit from the riches brought by the son-in-law.

592
587
588
On the other hand, it also happens sometimes, and even quite often, that although the woman loves her "husband" (in the improper sense) she does not want any change. At heart she remains attached to the kin of her deceased husband, through her love for him or because of her affection for his family, who have always treated her well. It is not unusual for the common-law husband to encounter unalterable opposition to a regular marriage. The woman may [198]
●586) even take such offense at the proposal that she will leave the man for a close relative of the deceased.

In this type of situation another sort of development may also occur, although it is quite rare. For example, there is the case of Lowâka, daughter of [illegible] of [illegible]. After the death of her husband, [illegible] of the [illegible] ([illegible]), she was taken in marriage by one of his relatives, *Nsenge*, who gave the prescribed *[illegible]* to *Imomo* of [illegible], [illegible]'s *[illegible]*. After a certain time *Imomo*, who had had a slight palaver with *Nsenge*, did not want the situation to continue. He demanded a regular marriage so that he could make use of his rights to Lowâka's bride price. *Nsenge* agreed and paid 60 *bakonga* to the woman's parents, who reimbursed *Imomo*. *Imomo* returned the *[illegible]* he had received, and thus Lowâka became the true wife of *Nsenge*.

One can see that the gamut of individual variations comes into play here, depending on the temperament and the feelings of the persons involved. But the most common practice is for the widow to remain attached to the family of the deceased or to remarry in the prescribed fashion.

In the latter case the widow goes to a man who is not related to the deceased, either immediately after mourning or after a period of conjugal life with the heir. The latter is entitled to a reimbursement of the bride price. The new husband must make all the customary payments through the medium of his own *nkonga*, exactly as he would for a first marriage by *nkumbé*. Consequently, this union is not considered a "marriage by inheritance," with which it has nothing in common.

592
587
593
In any marriage by inheritance -- that is, where no bride price payment is involved -- the husband, whether he be the heir or

592 price. The rights of a polygamist's sons over their sisters' bride
591 prices are not absolutely equal [248]. One of them can oppose the decision that one of his brothers, born of a different mother not related to his, should benefit from the bride price paid for his uterine sister. His right will incontestably prevail. But if he has other sisters, it is his duty out of brotherly love to help his less fortunate brother. If both of them have uterine sisters, there may be an exchange of bride-price rights which will hurt no one. Finally, if only the younger brother has a sister, his right to her bride price is precisely defined and personal, and it may therefore happen that he marries before his elder brother. But unless the mother is absolutely opposed to any such arrangement, an attempt is usually made to settle the matter in a friendly fashion by assigning the future bride price of a niece or cousin to the younger brother. The rules as we have explained them hold absolutely only for the present time. They also existed in the past, but the delay in the sons' marriages, as described above, resulted in a transferring of rights which could completely upset this order. Since, in practice, many men began their married lives after the death of their fathers or uncles, thus with inherited wives, the elder brothers benefited from the rules before the younger ones did. (1)

1. See also Chapter II, Article X.

597 b. Lastly, the eldest son may be deprived of his rights for certain reasons, such as a serious failure in his duties of respect and sub-
● 596 mission to his father. To punish him his father may curse him publicly, declare that he has lost his position as eldest son, and forbid him to acquire a wife. This practice is no longer common today; it would have little effect, for the young man would go and seek his fortune elsewhere. But history has left us some examples like that of Ilofofi ya Lonkinja, the first-born son of Ilofofi Ilongoma êã Longolonkoi, the ancestor of the Bombanga w'î Bolondo family (Bonsanda).

Article II. Property

593 614 Through marriage, a woman does not become a member of her husband's clan. If for example she is born into the [illegible] clan, she remains all her life [illegible], "member of the [illegible] clan," and her corpse has to be buried in her native soil. In case of divorce and remarriage, the new husband does not refund the bride price to the former one; he pays the woman's parents, and they reimburse the forsaken husband. [586]

593 421 All the wife's activity, however, is directed toward the good of her husband and his family, and this is so from the time of the [illegible] payment. Her parents have no further rights over their daughter. All the fruits of her labor are her husband's property.

If she finds objects that have no owner, such as, for example, elephant tusks or buried copper rings of which no one claims ownership, they do not belong to her nor to her family, but exclusively to her husband. If he shares with his parents-in-law, he does so out of affection and respect for them. He has no legal obligation to do so, but propriety and cordial relations impose a certain duty on him.

Profits from the sale of the products of her industry (such as foods for market, mats, salt, pots, baskets) belong not to her but to her husband.

Even whatever she acquires during a visit to her parents, everything she finds while she is with her family, the fish she catches, the caterpillars she gathers in the forest there, all that belong exclusively to her husband.

It sometimes happens that a woman infringes on the husband's rights in this respect. If he is kind he will generally let her do as she pleases. Severity on his part would be attributed to a lack of affection toward his wife or a lack of delicacy toward his parents-in-law, and he would even be criticized for being stingy ([illegible]), a more serious criticism than the others from the Nkundó point of view. [577] (261) Dishonest conduct on the part of a wife, however, may give rise to incidents, and even to serious ones. That is what happened in the historic case of [illegible] of [illegible] ([illegible]), who was married to [illegible] of [illegible]. She had gone fishing at home and had given all her fish ●[596]

[illegible] to her brother Bolifondingi. Her husband did not press the point, but at a meeting where much beer was consumed, his companions teased him for his excessive leniency, which they explained as a weakness on his part. Mpaki bonsupu went into a rage, and the result was a bloody war between the two clans.

[illegible] A husband is expected to provide for his wife and to set aside a fair portion of profits gained for her clothes, her utensils, etc.,or quite simply to give her the means to take care of her own needs and those of the house.

Thus, although the husband is the sole legitimate owner of the fruits of his wife's labor, another law requires him to give her the amount she reasonably requires for her maintenance. If the wife appropriates the profits without informing her husband in advance, her action is an infraction of the law. If the husband does not give his wife what is necessary and useful to her to the extent that he is able, his action, too, is an infraction of the law.

Fish caught by the wife are cooked, and those that remain are smoked and thus preserved for the use of the household as a whole. If a husband is not too badly disposed toward his wife, he will let her have a portion for her family.

The fields set up jointly by the couple (the man cuts the forest, the woman burns and cleans the field, plants and cares for the crops) are the husband's property. The fruits of the field are used for their joint maintenance and that of their children. Profits from the sale of a portion of them are for their common use. They settle these matters between themselves as do most European families. Naturally, there are infractions in this respect also, and one spouse or the other sometimes enlarges his share for his own benefit or that of his parents, or disposes of goods without communicating his intention do so to the other in advance. (264) But all decent people disapprove of such behavior. (1)

1. There is a fable which teaches the right attitude to adopt in such situations.

gravity of the situation. In general, the wife's parents judge impartially, because they value the stability of the marriage. If the husband feels that he has been wronged, he can always appeal to the nkanga, but ordinarily there is no need to do so and the matter is settled in a friendly fashion and in private. If the woman is found to be in the wrong, her parents scold her and take her to task. Provided with some gift (two or three bakonga, for example), they return her to her husband, advising her to behave in a more suitable fashion in the future. Should she resist, her parents will not hesitate to use threats and curses, and these seldom fail to have their effect. Nowadays women have become more emancipated, and it does sometimes happen that such a woman will scorn her parents' decision, especially if she has a lover somewhere beyond the reach of family justice. If it is the husband who is in the wrong, his wife will not go back with him until he has begged her to do so by paying a few copper rings or other valuables, the amount depending on the seriousness of the situation. This act on the husband's part is expressed by the verb bɔ́nda [271] and the noun bɔ́ndɔ, terms which do not apply specifically to this case only but are used whenever pardon is asked for a serious offense. This payment is not a fine or indemnity; it is more closely equivalent to the apologies and retractions customary among Europeans.

At the present time some women go back to their families for very slight reasons. Freedom and a greater ease of communication, together with a desire for emancipation, which is no longer held back by the rein of ancestral sanctions, are the cause for this state of affairs. They are still held back somewhat by the risk of a rupture of the marriage, a possibility which they generally would rather not see realized, especially if the bride price is quite large.

In the past, if a woman was married a short distance away from her parents, she could always run away to them when there were domestic disputes. Even if the route led through other villages, it was always possible to take a direct path through the forest, for such paths exist everywhere; they go around the villages in between so that, in case of conflict or danger of assassination, a traveler can go his way without being seen. When a woman was married into a

575 distant village, the situation was different. Not only did she run
579 many grave risks on the way, but it was not easy for her clan to
578 intervene on her behalf and to obtain respect for her rights by means of force. It can be readily understood that if a wife found herself alone and isolated, without effective support from her family, her husband and parents-in-law could feel free to do her many injustices if they were unkindly disposed toward her, unless the ndonga was sufficiently influential to keep them within limits. Hence the proverb
[591] bol ôsíkɛ, mbila ngɛ likwɛla, "If the native village is far away, peace (in the household) is like slavery." [272]

In the course of domestic quarrels an exasperated husband may shout at his wife: "Go away, go home." Usually she simply goes to the home of some female relative to wait till calm returns. But sometimes she may take his words literally and go home. When her parents are informed of what has happened, they tell their daughter that she is in the wrong. Such a thing cannot be taken tragically. The husband has acted in a moment of bad humor and extreme indignation. He did not really send her away or repudiate her. There is no question of hate or indifference. Thus the matter is not taken seriously, and when the wife calms down, her parents persuade her to go back to her husband. If he likes her enough the matter ends there; it is forgiven and forgotten. Even if, having gone to her family under these circumstances, the woman becomes ill or dies there, she herself is responsible. Thus sending her away in that manner is not in any way taken seriously; it has nothing in common with a repudiation and cannot even be compared with a wife's flight because of bad treatment.

To summarize, if a wife leaves the house in which she lives with her husband, he is obliged to go and fetch her whether she is in the right or in the wrong. On the other hand, parents will send a daughter back to her husband if she is too easily angered and runs away over trifles. The following are generally acknowledged as serious and justifiable reasons for flight: serious failures in fulfilling marital duties, punishments or repressions without just cause, excesses in just punishments.

593
606
591 We should add that in some households, difficulties arise rather easily during the visits of parents or parents-in-law, because of the sensibilities, incompatibility of character, or discontent of one party who may consider the other guilty of discourtesy, lack of delicacy, disrespect, or stinginess toward the visiting parents. The same is true for the rearing of children. [273]

4. Punishments

593
578 Nkundó law permits a husband to inflict corporal punishment (bikánjwá, sing. ekánjwá) on his wife, its nature varying with the seriousness of the case. Obviously these sanctions, expressly permitted by law, cannot give rise to claims on the woman's part [576] or result in the obligation to pay a bofúnjá. [Editor's note: Unless, of course, the husband -- acting in excess of his rights -- is more violent than the occasion warrants for under such conditions, the wife, supported by her family, attacks the husband, who is then [629] forced to acknowledge the harm he has done and make reparation by means of a bofúnjá.] If she is hurt she may claim a supplementary payment called liomba (from the verb lomba) or "bandage" (for the wound); it consists of 5 rings or more, depending on the situation. [626] The loss or breaking of a tooth is considered a serious injury. For this is a real injury to the woman and, in the case of front teeth, to her beauty. (1) Of course, as explained above, the wife will first have run home, and it is there that the dispute is examined.

593
578
684 For the sake of a clearer understanding, let us go into a few details concerning the penal stipulations of Nkundó law in relation to the life of a married couple.

Usually, in a simple domestic quarrel, the couple does no more than tell each other some home truths, seasoning their speeches

---

[304] 1. Because they are filed, the incisors are much less resistant than normal teeth. Teeth filing is practiced for reasons of beauty.

578 593* 684 with a few vulgarities. If the woman goes beyond that, her husband gives her a good slap, but he cannot allow himself to exercise his muscles further upon her.

If a woman's tongue is too voluble and she permits herself to deliver gross insults without a suitable reason, her lack of respect is considered punishable. It is not considered proper [576] to right this wrong by means of blows, however, although in practice impetuous young men do not always restrain themselves. The sanction preached by tribal wisdom is the man's abstention from food prepared by the guilty wife, and his refusal to perform the conjugal act. A Nkundó woman is very sensitive to such measures. If she is really recognized to be in the wrong and peace is not promptly re-established, the wife's [572] family will beg the husband to calm down and offer him a *bofofo*, which may be as great as the value of a dog.

593* 578 In the course of a quarrel a Nkundó woman may resort to a roundabout way of expressing her feelings; instead of cursing her husband directly she will address herself to a domestic animal which passes in front of her. The man is naturally not deceived, and the effect is identical.

What we have said applies to ordinary insults such as to wish a person's death, which may be expressed in the following ways: *owé* "drop dead," *nkoi ikokumbé*, "may a leopard get you"; *njwá ikokumbé*, "may a snake bite you"; *ókówé é?* "aren't you dying?"; *ebono*, "why don't you get sick"; *lokundemiké ndá ngilo*, "may you be carried to the cemetery"; *lokolundé*, "may you be buried." Invectives based on physical defects or designed to humiliate a man fall in the same category. For instance a woman may call her husband *bololo* or *etula*, "a nobody," or *imemelo*, "idiot," or *inyanyama*, "beast," etc.

If, on the other hand, the woman in her volubility attacks her husband's parents, the matter becomes more serious. The Nkundó react very badly to verbal excesses directed toward them. Whether he is subject to teasing on their account or to insults such as "eat your mother (or father)," or to obscenities in relation to them, or whether the speaker "disinters" deceased parents in evoking their memory. (1)

[195] 1. For the sake of documentation on Nkundó psychology and morals, here is the Latin text

593*
578
195

> of a few fashionable expressions: vulva matris tuae, comede matrem in clitoride, coi cum matre. The same expressions, mutatis mutandis, are used with reference to a person's father, brother, or sister. The expressions used for "dishonoring" are otumbola ilongo, isè, nyangò, etc., that is, "exhume your family, father, mother, etc., or bejeti bĕlo?, "your corpses," that is, your deceased parents (this last expression especially excites a strong reaction).

578 the effect does not vary greatly. [276] The only difference is in
591* the intensity of rage and of the reactions, which depends on the individual temperaments of the interested parties.

578 A Nkundó is greatly outraged by obscenities hurled at him by
593 his wife, especially if she attacks him in public. His reaction is al-
682 ways violent. Usually it comes to blows, a thrashing, and sometimes the knife. But if the husband wants to remain within the limits of the law, he cannot injure or, more especially, kill his wife on his own authority. Before going any further, he must bring his case before the ndonga. His family is invited to the meeting and, if possible, so is the wife's father. The outraged husband presents his case and warns the persons assembled that one day his exasperation will lead him to take up the knife. Having taken his case before qualified persons, the husband can from then on go ahead and avenge himself for the disgraces his wife may inflict on him; it is lawful for him to do so. If the guilty woman starts again, no one can accuse her husband of wronging her, for she herself is at fault and he has warned her in accordance with all the rules of the law.

593* Modern young people do not always follow this procedure.
578 But their revolutionary spirit often brings them reprimands and often
[178] gets them into great difficulties. The elders jealously guard their authority, and no one may reproach them for doing so. Therefore in a palaver of this sort, a father will sometimes forsake his son.

Since the impetuous youth did not want to observe the ancestral custom and considered his strength superior to the law, his action is not justifiable. We must admire among many of the old natives the sincere feeling of justice and impartiality that makes them disapprove of and condemn their own children. Furthermore, if the passionate avenger of his honor does not change his ways and endeavor to combat the thoughtless violence of his temperament by replacing it with a sense of measure, his marriage will not last. And he will be the one [278] accused of having caused the break. The matter is clear; it is quite true that the woman started it. The husband therefore had all the trumps in his hand. Why, then, did he not use them? If he had followed the procedure required by law he would have gained his case all the way down the line.

The fact that a husband must first inform the *nkonga* and the family authorities does not mean that he has not the right to punish his wife in a violent fashion. This practice is observed to avoid excesses and abuses. The husband is not given the freedom to do as he pleases. Recourse to the representatives of family authority may be considered as a kind of delegation of their power.

These legal provisions of the Nkundo are truly wise. While they give an outraged husband the right to punish his wife and, therefore, to hold her in check, the law imposes a rein on the impetuousness of unthinking anger. Furthermore, by requiring that these matters be made public, they avoid interminable discussions and palavers on the subjects of fines to be paid, etc.

In the past certain men were capable of becoming exasperated by the disgrace to the point where they were no longer able to master their rage. Women were killed for this reason. The Nkundo say that a man would not let himself be carried to this extreme unless driven to it by the great love he bore his wife. This comment has a psychological validity. Nevertheless, such an action was not praised and could even produce a war.

It sometimes happened that an enraged man who wanted to kill his wife under such circumstances was prevented from doing so because he had to abstain from assassination to maintain the efficacy (*nsimbo*) of a practice (*bote*) in his possession. He therefore had

M 593 578 [577] recourse to the assistance of a third party who -- for remuneration, of course -- undertook to carry out his project. This task was usually confided to Batswa, who did not disdain this type of work, which was quite suited to their taste.

The fact that the law gives the husband the right to punish his wife [277] for the type of oratory under discussion meant that a wife had to exercise some discretion in her choice of expressions. Fearing violent reactions, she often spoke the more serious insults softly.

M 176 578 591 562 Since the European penetration women are more daring. For their husbands fear European justice, which follows principles entirely different from their ancestral law. Thus they complain bitterly of the insolence of their wives: "We have become slaves; the women are now all-powerful. They may do as they please, for we can no longer do anything to them." But as soon as native courts are sufficiently educated and are freed from what an eminent colonial jurist has called "the jurisdiction of palaver" (1), they will no doubt effect a salutary change in this situation.

M 562 586 The emancipation of women is one of the factors that have increased the frequency of divorce. For a man who cannot avenge continuous outrages remains dominated by shame, and the presence of the one who is the cause of it must become unbearable in the long run; whence the indifference, antipathy, hate, and the inevitable results of that permanent confusion in the household.

M 593 762 577 [183] Men among whom the feeling of modesty was highly developed hanged themselves out of shame instead of attacking the guilty wife. That is what many natives have maintained in talking with me. Nevertheless, I have no knowledge of a present-day example. When this happened, the wife's family no longer took action against their daughter. Nor were they obliged to pay an indemnity, although their child had brought about the death. They simply had to acquit

---

1. See A. Sohier, *Bulletin des Séances de l'Institut Royal Colonial Belge*, Vol. 6, 1935, 1, p. 60 and *passim*.

593* themselves of the usual and ordinary obligations incumbent upon
571 them on the death of a son-in-law. Should this be taken as a kind
843 of implied condemnation of suicide? [278]

593* The wisdom of the elders recommends to youth that they
● 578 not let anger lead them to brutal acts even where, legally, it is
627 permissible to use force. They do not act in such a way through a
626 policy of adaptation to the present regime. Even before the arrival of the white men, they gave lessons in calm and self-mastery. For serious blows, wounds, and especially homicide could have deplorable consequences legally and even politically (war). They preferred recourse to punishments, such as abstention from food and the refusal of *debitum conjugale*, which although less violent are not without efficacity. In that way they were also spared the vexation of in-laws, whose pity would be aroused by the wounds and bodily suffering of their child or sister.

578 One thing that deserves blows or a good whipping because it
593* is considered a serious failure in the fulfillment of the duties of married life is indifference and negligence in housework. A husband may safely deal forcefully with the situation, although he must first inform the qualified authorities. The following are some examples of such faults: the wife does not give the necessary attention to the kitchen, her children, the cleaning of the hut and court; she neglects her crops, does not go fishing, makes no attempt to obtain salt, etc.; in short, she does not give the required time and care to the tasks incumbent upon her. She herself, her children, and her house remain disgustingly filthy, her fields and banana groves are invaded by weeds and her pantry is devoid of utensils and food, while she wastes her time doing nothing or rather spends it running about the village, going to one woman's house, chatting with another, spending the better part of her day gossiping. The Nkundó does not put up with this sort of behavior, and no one can reproach him. Even other men and the woman's companions condemn [279] such conduct. Often the woman is ridiculed, and on occasion she may
[illegible] hear unflattering comments such as *bómot'ôw'asoló, efufa gingamaka*, "a gossip, her cloth is to the side," that is, the interminable chatting

591 to which she devotes her time, sitting on a couch or a log, so oc-
571 cupies her attention that she is no longer aware that her narrow
614 garment is no longer in its proper modest position, and the gossip is therefore exposed to shame and ridicule.

587 In addition to giving his wife a good whipping, the husband
591 also brings out his vocabulary of invective and sarcasm. The woman does not run the risk of complaining, for she knows in advance that she will be placed in the wrong. Nevertheless, the discreet husband will not go too far. The elders suggest that the young people moderate the violence of their expressions. For, they say, "a woman is more sensitive to it than a man; she might go and hang herself in the forest." Ekinye ifyokoma loo la nsonyi. "Ekinye (the ant) will
[825] hang herself one day out of an excess of shame" (this is a reference to the way this insect bites into a blade of grass or some other object and dies rather than let go). "And above all," they say, "do not extend your insults to your wives' parents, for they could urge their daughters to leave you."

With respect to adultery, the punishments prescribed in Nkundo law will be examined below in Article VIII.

It is apparent from the preceding description that the Nkundo attach relatively little importance to the outpourings of loquacious eloquence characteristic of the weaker sex as long as they do not go beyond limits or degenerate into outrageous and ignominious insults. The elders teach youth to be calm in the face of these demonstrations of the declamatory art at which most Negresses are as adept as our fishwives at home.

[562] They say that a woman is like an elephant: bómoto ale ó njoku. There is nothing to be done about her. It is futile [280] to try and speak gently to her; she does not even listen. To impose silence on her is impossible. To try and calm her, make her listen to reason, is a waste of effort. It is the same with an elephant: He
[575] can perhaps be chased away with cries and noise, but he will destroy the crops nonetheless.

The fact that a woman readily opens her mouth is not considered a sign that she does not love her husband. The Nkundo even

593 dare to maintain that a woman's speaking out about her husband is a
[illegible] sign of affection. On the other hand, a woman who instead bewails her lot softly and quietly saying, *ngóyo fikoto idi l'ôm'omé na?*, ("mother, what shall I do with this husband?"), will not be with him long. Her complaint is chiefly egoistic, while the other seeks the good of her spouse and her household.

As we have already mentioned, the perfect punishment, and one frequently employed in ordinary cases, is a husband's refusal to eat food prepared by his wife or to wash with water she has drawn or boiled. It is a type of reprimand to which she is sensitive. The husband's aversion must not last too long, however, for it could lead to
[837] a breaking up of the marriage, more especially since in the end the woman would begin to suspect infidelities -- which do occur.

The fact that Nkundó law does not allow the husband complete freedom and clearly limits his rights does not in any way exclude the occurrence of infractions. The mass of human beings is always inferior to the moral ideal imposed by legislation. But these provisions of Nkundó law do protect a woman against her husband's excesses. We have already cited the expedients available to her: abandonment of the home shared with her husband; legal apologies (*bofindo*), indemnity for injuries (*likomba*). In addition, a wife who has been wronged will abstain from foods (such as meat or palm nuts) given her by her husband and, even more important, will refuse to have sexual relations with him. And for our people this is a great affront. In order to re-establish a normal and peaceful situation, a husband often has to pacify [281] his spouse by means of a *bofindo*. In addition to the measures mentioned, a wife may of course use insults, of which every native has a rich and varied collection.

No one can condemn or reprimand a woman for abusing a lazy husband. If he does not go to the hunt and bring back game, if he neglects the building or repair of the house, if he is too much of a laggard, if he does not fell the forest to set up food crops, it is clearly he who is in the wrong, and he will find no one who will approve of his conduct and condemn his wife. If he turns out to be incorrigible, it will not be long before the marriage is broken, accord-
[586] ing to the axiom *elóng'ey'ómoto ńk'okáfo*, "the woman's victory is divorce."

*593 594 577 If a woman injures her husband during a quarrel he may not retaliate, for she is recognized as inferior and weaker than he. The husband's weapon is abstention from any food, drink, bath, etc., that she offers him. To re-establish peace she must pay a bokindo. Nevertheless, nowadays some impetuous men no longer like to observe these rules; they want to act with violence come what may. But they are strongly reprimanded by the old men, who maintain that it is unworthy of a man to retaliate against a weaker being. This traditional attitude of the Nkundó seems to me to indicate a sort of chivalrous nobility based on two feelings, justice and pride. It becomes more understandable when we know that similar conduct is [628] expected with regard to Batswa, inferiors, and subjugated clans (bauló, sing. boló) in their respective spheres. (1) Thus a Bonto may not apply the law of retaliation to a Botswa. Under certain circumstances, a boló clan may, with impunity, take what they please from the banana groves of the master's clan, etc.

Note also that it is very much out of place for a man [193] to strike his wife or punish her in any way in the presence of her parents, [627] brothers, etc. In fact, this is a very grave offense. And, according to the code of honor, the brother (cousin, etc.) must pick up the glove and fight his brother-in-law to avenge the insult. In many cases the matter ends in a divorce. For such conduct takes away the combined feeling of modesty and embarrassment (nsɔ́nyi) that the two parties normally feel toward one another.

Finally, we must note that the various payments made as bokindo are included in the total amount of [illegible] or [illegible], respectively.

593A 591 In order to more clearly illustrate the Nkundó attitude concerning the relationship of husband and wife, it might be of interest to cite a few proverbs pertaining to the subjects discussed above:

1) Baningá bakéndaka wɛ́j'â ntaka; Lombómbé abéndaka Nsalé la nganja. "All the others slap their wives (but) Lombómbé beats Nsalé with a stick." (This is a reference to a historical fact.)

---

1. See below, Articles V, VI, and VII, 4, B.

606 women called "mother," such as the mother's sisters and the father's wives. The law does not seem strictly applicable to these persons, but seems to cover them by extension. On the other hand, there is no comparable law with regard to a woman and her father-in-law.

606
578
A violation of this prohibition results in a great palaver, for it is considered a serious lack of respect. It may produce a serious domestic quarrel. [290] A wife will refuse to perform the conjugal act with her husband because he has looked at his mother-in-law. That is why people help each other by warning each other of the "danger" when their respective mothers-in-law arrive.

Compensation for the offense may be made by the payment of a bofunja of several bakonga to the mother-in-law. As long as the payment has not been made, the wife will not fulfill her conjugal duties. After it has been made, everything goes back in order. If it is proved that the situation came about involuntarily, there is no palaver and no payment is required. Nowadays the best Christians tend to give a bofunja once and for all to definitively settle any palaver that may occur in the future and to avoid the obligation of having to submit to this prohibition, since they are beginning to vaguely perceive its uselessness.

[551] A man is even forbidden to pronounce the name of his mother-in-law in her presence, even to address or call another person of the same name. In such a situation he must resort to a surname or paraphrase. Usually he addresses her as mbôtoló. An infraction of this rule results in the same punishment as if a man were to look at his mother-in-law.

606 If we ask the Nkundó to give us the reason for this custom, as it is so strange to our point of view, they reply that they are ashamed or embarrassed to see the women who begot their wives, and that to do so would be a grave offense to her. The custom is a means of expressing the respect a son-in-law owes his mother-in-law, and of avoiding unceremonious behavior or too great a familiarity toward her. That is all the explanation they give. For our philosophical turn of mind, it does not exhaust the subject. We are tempted to look for a connection between the intimate relations of the married couple and

607 declares." There is another, which is cruder: bokiló [illegible];
(57) bafumbe [illegible], "relative by marriage, let us go to the palm grove; the bafumbe ants (Dorylus wilverthii) eat palm nuts; I will eat you." The following saying, applied to someone who is always trying to clear himself, is a more or less involuntary accusation: [illegible], "I do not eat my relative by marriage; on the contrary, I dip (food) in his fat; an in-law's fat is as tasty as a dog's." [230]

Nevertheless, a man never goes so far as to cause the death
602 of his sister's daughter's or other relative's husband. Or, as the
621 Nkundó say, one does not kill a person by whom one has been enriched. What is the reason for this distinction? According to our people it is the affection they feel toward their sister, daughter, etc.; they love them too much to pain them by taking away their husbands.

This treacherous and barbarous conduct is therefore directed by the bokiló toward the bokango, that is, by those who have paid the bride price to those who have received it, but never the reverse.

Appendix

000 This appendix pertains to each of the three preceding articles. Therefore it may reasonably be placed here. It does not deal with any special law nor with a custom that is legal, universal, or common. It is concerned with isolated cases. But it seems to me that the few lines to follow are not without interest, since they give a good indication of the mentality that may be found among these people.

602 It may happen that a woman has a complaint or feels she has
578 come to be dissatisfied with one of her relatives, for example her brother. In her opinion he may not be sufficiently kind and generous toward her, or he may treat her in a manner she considers unfair. In a moment of anger she reveals her feelings to her husband and incites him to avenge her by injuring or even killing the one who has offended her.

That is what happened several decades ago to Bosela w'Ompwengé of Bolénge (Bongili) (who died in 1932, a very old man). His wife Ilumbé was very dissatisfied in that her brother did not give

62
579
her enough gifts. She addressed her husband as follows: [illegible] "Your corpses (deceased parents), kill my brother for me, he always refuses to give me [297] presents. (1) [illegible] took his weapons and went off.

1. This is one of the most serious insults. But a person to whom it is addressed considers it a duty to take up the order or invitation made in these terms. It is a sort of forced oath, and it is called [illegible]. These terms may apply to many other situations, a call for help during a war, assistance in inflicting an ordeal, assistance in the [illegible] (society of those who do not observe funerary abstinence), etc. A person may address himself in this manner, and in that case the expression corresponds to our word "oath," "to take an oath."

Being a good psychologist, he made no mistake about his wife's personal feelings. He knew that he was involved in a dangerous impasse: if he disappointed his wife's expectations, she would be furious; on the other hand, if he took his brother-in-law's life, she would be even angrier. The thing to do was to resort to a trick. When he entered the forest he had the good fortune to come upon a [illegible] antelope, which he slaughtered. He removed the liver and went home carrying this organ, still fresh and warm, in his hand. He presented it to his wife, saying, "Here is the liver of your brother whom you asked me to kill." There followed a violent scene. The woman, beside herself, began to weep for her dead brother, and in her anger she ran off, shouting at her husband: "Oh! You no longer love me, since you have assassinated my brother; you will not see me again." When she arrived at the home of her family, she found everyone going about their usual occupations; there was no sign of death or, more especially, of murder. Her astonishment increased

601 when she found her brother in good health and full of life. She
571 could not believe her eyes. In an instant the whole family was alerted and gathered together. She explained what had happened. They quieted and consoled her; they praised her husband for having behaved so intelligently. She was congratulated. For he could have done what she had told him, so she had reason to rejoice that he loved her so well and wisely. Thus, a few days later, she quietly returned to her husband.

An entirely different course of events, and a fatal one, occurred in the case of [200] Bok'Ekoa of Bompela (Bokifosio) who was married to Elikngé of Bofili (both are still alive). The woman continuously went back to her family. Her husband, exasperated, threatened one day to kill her brother Ealo; when he was gone she would be more inclined to stay home. He actually fulfilled his threat. His wife went into a terrible rage, but she nevertheless remained faithful to her husband. The bow used to shoot the murderous arrow has been preserved by its owner as a souvenir.

Article VI

Relations Between the Wife and Her Husband's Family

602 Naturally, a wife must be on the best of terms with her husband's family, with whom she is in continual contact. She owes respect to his parents and elders. If she does not manage to live in peace with them as well as with her husband's sisters, etc., the marriage will not last. Misunderstandings, disputes, squabbles, and, above all, insults and spiteful comments will force her to leave. Therefore, such contingencies can be put into the category of motives which lead the man's family to interfere in his marriage. There is a constant concern among the Nkundó to avoid the dissolution of the union due to extreme incompatibilities, because any break-up causes enormous difficulties, as we will see suo loco.

It is very hard to discern whether the small services the wife is expected to render her husband's family are legal obligations or simply requirements of social decorum. A momentary omission

587 626 595 597 A. A woman's misconduct with her husband's son does not result in the payment of an indemnity. Nevertheless, the husband who has been wronged takes action; he defends his rights and is enraged, whether the situation is very serious or not, and especially if he is monogamous. If he has several wives, he is more apt to pass over the matter, unless it involves his favorite. Sometimes he takes revenge by striking the guilty son's mother, taking her hoes away from her, etc. But such action may lead to complications: [301] the brother of the woman so treated might intervene, and if the reaction of the husband who has been wronged is too violent or occurs too often, a divorce may result. In any case the father never hurts his heedless son's wife, since he loves her like his own daughter.

The father may apply a direct sanction against the offender by delaying the acquisition of a wife for him and refusing his blessings for his son's travels and undertakings -- still a serious thing in purely native society.

Such relations are always greatly criticized by public opinion, even if relatives intervene on the culprit's behalf. The latter is disgraced as a result; he is marked with the epithet [illegible], to which often is added the explicative phrase [illegible]. [778] [illegible] is derived from [illegible], "masculine clothing" and, figuratively, "virility in the physical sense," and from [illegible], "strength." Thus the epithet implies that the culprit is so virile that he goes so far as to unite even with his brothers' mothers.

597 626 Marriage with the father's widow after his death is legitimate. Nevertheless, if the widow has left children, public opinion does not entirely refrain from judgment and though the severity of the criticism cited above will be attenuated, it may still be heard. Such was the case of Yoka of Bokenyola (Bonjoko), which is well known in this region. He married [illegible], widow of his father [illegible] y'[illegible] and mother of [illegible] Antoine, present chief of the [illegible]. (1).

---

1. With reference to the above-mentioned attitude, an exception must be made with regard to the inheritance of a widow by right

593 to have relations with her. If the woman refuses to have relations
602 with her brother-in-law, the latter often reports her ill will to her
591 husband, who will reprimand her or even strike her because she does not love his own brother, and will accuse her of having lovers: [illegible]. Since there is more affection between brothers born of the same mother, the husband's anger would then be even greater. A lack of affection on the part of his wife arouses her husband's suspicions on the question of her fidelity because Nkundó women are extremely ready to yield to temptation. [illegible] Therefore if she refuses her own brother-in-law-husband, she must be obtaining satisfaction elsewhere. This reasoning may be false, but it is based on a frequency of cases. The husband's attitude does not show a lack of jealousy; on the contrary, it proves its existence.

If the younger brother meets his sister-in-law in the home of her family, they will intervene on his behalf. They will tell her to receive "her husband" well, to prepare food for him, to clean the hut set aside for him. They will even force her to cohabit with him for the entire duration of his stay in their village. By this means they seek to avoid palavers with their son-in-law. If the woman's antipathy toward her brother-in-law is so great that she cannot be made to submit to him, they sometimes give their visitor another of their daughters (or cousins, etc.), younger than his brother's wife, to perform wifely duties for him.

All those designated as bakínó in Nkundó terminology fall into the same category as a younger brother (thus younger male cousins are also included). The seriousness of the conflict that may arise on this question and of its consequences vary in proportion to the degree of kinship between the individuals involved.

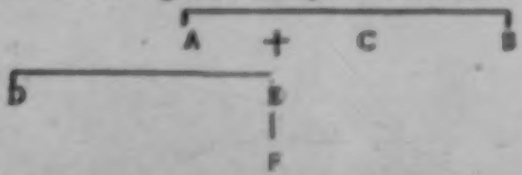
602 C. The position of a nephew (bǒnankáná) in relation to his
591 maternal uncle's wives is to a great extent comparable to that of a
593 son in relation to his father's wives. The fact that marriage is effected
● 583 through the payment of a bride price gives the nephew greater
595 freedom; for the uncle was enriched through the marriage of his

nephew's mother. There is no question of indemnity, except that of "respects," to show the nephew's submission, and it consists of a hen and 296 a bunch of bananas. If the nephew refuses to make this gesture of 297 deference and submission, he is considered in the wrong and the entire family gangs up on him in order to save the authority and hierarchy of the family. "You are offending your uncle," they say, "no doubt you want him to die so that you can take his place and profit from the inheritance." And the offended uncle, after being patient for a few days, may demand a real indemnity. [296] But then other considerations become involved, and a new situation is created.

Actually, the young man's mother often -- though not always -- takes his side and turns on her brother. Two situations may arise:

1) The nephew's mother may not be born of the same mother as the uncle. In that case she seldom refrains from intervening on her son's behalf. She reproaches her brother for his hardness and his lack of affection for her, especially if the adulterous wife is her *ekina*, that is, if she were acquired by means of the bride price paid for her. She will say, "To whom do you owe this wife? And yet you demand riches from my son. Give me back my bride price, so that I may get him a wife." The uncle also gets angry, and sometimes accedes to his indignant sister's request and returns her bride price. If he does so all relationship between brother and sister is broken. But this is an unusual outcome; matters are almost always settled before this extremity is reached.

2) If brother and sister have the same mother, peace is always re-established before this aggravation, and the interchange is limited to a few reproaches and a little momentary anger. For the proverb says, *bǎsangǒ nyangǒ bǎfomb'ilǒngǒ*, "hatred between children of the same mother is but feigned, illusory; it is not true or real."



602 An uncle (see D above) is not entirely free to cure his nephew's
[597] (F) passion unless he is the *[illegible]* of his sister (?), that is, unless the
591 mother (C) of his sister (E) is the *nkita* of his aunt (D),[307] who is the
597 sister of his father (A). Indeed in that case his sister may not complain, for she owes him respect and submission; her subordination to her brother and master is greater than the gratitude he owes her for any riches he may have obtained through her or on her account.

603 D. In the case of the relationship of a grandson (*bonkána*) to
597 his grandfather's wives, his freedom is, in practice, complete. Actually, among the Nkundó the affection of a grandfather (*nkóko*) for his own grandson often exceeds his love for his own son and completely degenerates into weakness. (1) The grandfather puts up with all his grandson's carryings-on, his whims, all his teasing, his insults, etc.

After illicit relations the grandson sometimes carries his insolence so far as to spontaneously send his grandfather a "mock" indemnity in the form of a basket filled with stones in the place of copper rings.

602 Although the grandfather treats his grandson with good humor,
603 public opinion does not favor the latter's conduct, though it is more
597 lenient than in the cases described above. The public reaction, as well as the sending of the "mock" fine, shows that in principle these relations are censurable and condemned. Because of present circum-
[578] stances, particularly marriage at an earlier age than in the past, the age difference between a grandson and his grandfather's wives has increased considerably in the constantly growing number of cases, and their relations have proportionately decreased. (2) [308]

---

(1) As happens very often also in Europe. See Chapter I, Part 1, Article I, 3.

[114] (2) We have seen above that other Nkundó tribes are even less strict in these matters. On the other hand, the Ekonda, a Nkundó group living on Lake Leopold II, have a

684 [721] to a reimbursement of the bride price, any more than if she had died of natural causes. In past times death under these circumstances usually resulted in a war between clans. But this extreme situation actually arose only very rarely, if the man was excessively jealous and had other wives or the means to obtain them, or was embittered by persistent and incorrigible infidelity. Most frequently a husband's foresight of the loss he would sustain, in the last analysis keeps him from such drastic action. He limits himself to beating or injuring the culprit or to applying other forms of chastisement or punishment (see below under b); see above, Article III, 2.

If the husband has sufficient evidence, of the sort described above, but has not caught the culprits in the act, the wife can expect a good whipping, accompanied by a whole string of vulgar expressions [578] and assorted insults (*femina foetidissima, tempore menstruationis putor tuus venit in nares omnium hominum*, etc.) as well as [583] a heap of obscenities pertaining to the female genital organs. The husband who acts in this manner is not reprimanded. On the contrary, he acts thus out of jealousy; our Nkundó say that his anger is an anger of love.

In these punishments the Nkundó above all recognize the exasperation that springs from legitimate jealousy. That is why the husband acts on his own initiative. Besides, when he [316] finds himself confronted with the fact it would be psychologically difficult for him to calm himself first in order to go and inform the *ndonga*.

It was extremely unusual for a man to kill his wife calmly and deliberately. Such a thing happened only if her infidelities were continuous and she had erred in many other ways as well. And even then this conduct was found only in certain extremely cruel families. It was known that Iloko is 'Ôkungû and Bengóngó byǎ Kundû had acted in this fashion; both were members of the Bongilâ (Besombó), a family which, in its songs, boasted of eating their own wives.

b) *Tortures*. The husband may also have recourse to several types of torture. Most important among them are the following:

1) The *etáka*, which is the standard torture so to speak. It is a heavy wooden fork which is attached to the neck. It prevents

[1] [i.e., a husband's killing his wife for adultery.—Analyst]

C. *Against a husband and his accomplice.* There is no
684 specific sanction in Nkundó law against a husband's adultery, [323] but an outraged wife may take revenge on him, as on her rival. Her weapons against her husband include invective, the refusal of food, drink, baths, and finally of *debitum conjugale*. These are appreciable punishments about which the husband can in no way complain, for he would be found entirely in the wrong. The woman's actions stem from a legitimate jealousy. Sometimes her feeling [834] becomes so intense that she tears off her clothing and stands before her husband completely naked; this shames him greatly and constitutes a stinging reproach. Invectives flow out of the wife's mouth in torrents: [578] *ilolɛ́ inɛ, itutula inɛ, inyanyama inɛ́, owá lɔ́í ɔ̂ ndá nyongo, ndá ntɛmbɔ́*, "that imbecile, that good for nothing, that beast, one day you'll die of penalties, of being caught *in flagrante delicto* . . . ." Then there is a whole string of the usual in- [62] sults. Our Nkundó say that the more abundant the insults, the greater is the woman's love. She may carry on like this for days, even for weeks. Her responses to her husband's adultery are thus of the same sort as those she makes use of under other circumstances.

If a jealous wife sets fire to the hut in which her husband yielded to his passion, no one can reproach her. The damage was caused on her husband's account.

Against the woman accomplice, the wife may use more violent means. She may fight her, strike her, even injure her. The rival's husband will demand a *liombo*, or payment "for blows and wounds," which has to be paid not by the wife's family, but by the guilty husband. Thus in the final analysis it is again he who is punished. If the offending woman is killed, it is again the unfaithful husband who is obliged to pay an indemnity to the widower. (See Article II.)

One form of punishment to which a wife likes to have recourse to take revenge on her adulterous husband and his accomplice if she catches them in the act is to pour a pot of hot or boiling water on their bodies. [324]

595x 554 In little domestic quarrels, the bomátsa's children like to take advantage of the top rank occupied by their mother. Later, they will have the right to priority, before their brothers, in matters of inheritance and family authority.

595x 567 ● 578 The children of slave women are loved by their father in the same way as their brothers and sisters. However, they are often the object of manifestations of contempt and humiliation on the part of others, especially verbal ones, but only when disputes arise. In particular, they have to submit to the insult of having it said [369] that they are without bonyangó, "a maternal clan." This is one of the most serious insults that can be inflicted by a Nkundó. Nevertheless, their father protects them as much as he can.

[428] The child of a slave woman has no right to an inheritance. Clearly, he lacks for nothing. But he has no political rights, even if he is his father's first-born.

595x 567 The posterity of a slave are not considered as such in matrimonial matters, as we have pointed out in Chapter V, Article II. If the groups descended from free women are extinct, the rights of the clan are inherited by the posterity of a slave, to the exclusion of related clans whose ancestors were entirely free.

595x What is the effect of the system of polygamy on the birth rate? There has been much debate on this question for it is very difficult to answer. Complete statistics well compiled from detailed methodical lists would be necessary. For it is a fact that in many monogamous households the woman is the former wife of a polygamist and for that reason can no longer be counted as a monogamist's wife. In addition it would be necessary to exclude from monogamous households those women who did not marry until an advanced age, after having lived freely for a fairly long time, for example in the centers.

In my opinion the birth rate is endangered above all by the need for individual love and the difference in the ages of the spouses, which is inseparable from the system of polygamy as it now exists. The polygamist's wife instinctively seeks another

764 When the family of the deceased bars the route to the
578 funeral procession, they are manifesting the anger provoked by the
152 death of one of their members. [428] For they feel anger and
[584] resentment, in spite of the fact that the *ndonga* carries a spear at the head of the procession as a sign that they come as friends, without evil intentions.

This does not mean that the natives attribute the cause of death to the husband and his family. In most cases they are convinced that the latter could not prevent it. Although they express themselves in those terms: *lóótoomela bǒna* (*nkâna*, *eóto*), "you have killed our child (sister, relative)," they do not maintain that the husband's clan has really killed her, but only that she died among them. Under the circumstances do they feign anger to obtain valuables, for example? I do not think so. The Nkundó do not say that they simulate anger; they categorically state that they feel it and that they want to show it in the manner described. We should not be astonished at this since -- as we have noted in the study on the funeral customs of the Nkundó (*Les Coutumes funéraires des Nkundó*), the emotions of anger and sorrow seem to be intimately related among these peoples.

When the funeral procession passes through the last barrier,
764 that which bars the entrance to the village, the husband's clan puts down the body, and it is subsequently lifted up by the family of the deceased, who carry it into the house of the head of the family. They are followed by the *ndonga*, the *bǎnambótswá*, the husband, and his relatives. The family of the deceased wail over her. Her kinswomen (*biúnanyi*) show their sorrow-anger by mistreating the clan wives (*baájâála*), by smearing their bodies with mud, dressing them in *basáki*, and hitting them with stinging plants (*bansǎnsǎ*). For the deceased is the *baájââla*'s "husband," that is, a kinswoman of their husbands. The *baájââla* treat the widower and his relatives in the same way, because "their husband" has died among them.

The corpse is thus deposited in the hut of the head of the family. Each time that kinswomen who are married elsewhere arrive [429] to mourn over the deceased, the *baájââla* forbid them

764 to enter the funeral hut. First they are required to go to the far end of the village, weeping for the deceased, to show their sorrow.

As I have said in the study cited, it often happens that after some time the lamentations slacken and the women keeping watch begin to chat. One day I was present during a quarrel on [578] this subject between the biúnanyí and the baájâála. The former were reproaching the latter for not weeping any longer: "After all it is your husband," they said. The others replied, "It is your kinswoman; therefore it is up to you to weep. Are your eyes so dry that they no longer contain tears?"

Sometimes the husband and his close relatives do not participate in transferring the body, because they have not yet succeeded in collecting the necessary valuables. Actually it is entirely legitimate for them to stay at home in such a case, in order not to be exposed to endless discussions and the ridicule of the entire region. In other instances the husband's family belongs only to a small clan, and therefore they do not dare to appear in the village of the deceased. They are afraid that they will not be able to defend themselves properly against the ill treatment that would be inflicted upon them by the women married into the clan to which they go. For in fact these women would mistreat them by throwing mud at them or smearing them with it, and by striking their bodies with stinging plants called bansǎnsǎ. For they consider that the widower, whom, by extension, they also call their husband, and his close relatives have killed their husbands' kinswoman.

In such cases the corpse is brought by distant relatives of the husband. The ndonga apologizes for the husband to the parents-in-law and tells them that he will come later to settle everything. The clan of the deceased receives the corpse and continues to perform the last tributes to it. If the husband has remained in his own village only out of fear of ill treatment, [430] he often waits only until nightfall and then takes advantage of the darkness to follow his wife's corpse.

The corpse must remain in the head of the family's house for at least one night.

764 married the daughter of the first clan, and she had lived happily with her husband, performed conjugal services for him, and had begotten children for him. Subsequently she fell ill, as they were informed at the time, and now God has taken her away and they have come to bring the corpse back to them. The wife's clan replies: "That is understood, but before we continue to ask each other for news, do accept the present (lionja) which we offer you." Thereupon the ndonga enumerates all that has been collected and passes it to the widower.

764 431 The foods thus given are a friendly welcoming gift; therefore they are not counted as a payment nor, furthermore, as part of the nkomí. Only the domestic animals are considered such. They can be eaten on the spot or kept alive. Since the prepared food is a present, it must be eaten on the spot. Theoretically, none of it may be taken home. If it is taken home for some reason or other, however, it is still forbidden to allow anyone to eat of it who was not present at the funeral gathering. As for the raw food, the recipients are free to carry it away if some is left over.

764 ●578 Disputes may arise on the subject of the dog -- such as one I witnessed one day. The presents offered included the equivalent of the value of a dog in rings rather than a living dog. [435] The head of the widower's family demanded a dog in flesh and blood. The reason he gave was that many of his biúnanyí had come to the funeral and, as an expression of his thanks for their condolences, he wanted to give them a dog. As he would not yield, the wife's family had to replace the two rings with the animal demanded.

Then the ndonga explains to the family of the deceased that he has already brought the nsango, the likongá, and the etóo. Nowadays it happens that the spear and the cloth are not given until this time, especially if the families refrain from erecting barriers and fighting. In such cases the payments of passage are made at the same time. If the two settlements are very near each other, the people are even beginning to omit the sending of the nsango; a bonambótswá goes and confirms the news of the death, which is already expected and which the lokolé will just have announced.

593x 861 Women in particular are very intolerant of having anyone touch their children, even the child's own father. This fact can be attributed in part to a lack of any unity of feeling between the spouses and partly to maternal love, which is purely natural, psycho-physiological, so to speak.

Measures taken against a child who has misbehaved often ● 578 861 result in serious domestic quarrels, sometimes followed by the wife's flight to her family. Such was the case of Bakutu b'Ofóngé (born around 1880). His father, Bolónjó, had forbidden him to peel a piece of sugar cane [513] in a clumsy and wasteful manner. The boy did not want to listen to reason. Next thing you know he had cut a deep wound in his finger. "What did I tell you?" shouted the father. "Now you are punished for your disobedience." Thereupon the mother, Mbélá, flew into a rage. "Oh! You are killing my child!" and so on. She rolled up her mats, took her baskets on her back, and took the path leading to her village.

Nkundó casuistry includes the case -- which seems hypothetical or at least belonging to the past, for I have never known or heard of a real instance -- of a man taking revenge on his wife for having insulted his child. His revenge took the form of ordering the child to go and kill a goat belonging to her mother's clan, thus obliging the child to pay an indemnity to the owner, so that the mother finds herself thus being punished by her family. The father's right to do this is recognized in Nkundó jurisprudence. But from the standpoint of education the solution is far from ideal.

5) The influence of the kin group also plays a great role. 602 861 The Nkundó are very much attached to their families. Their children are at home everywhere in the group. A wife has very close ties to her own family. The father's brothers and sisters are a child's "fathers"; his maternal aunts and uncles are his "mothers." A child's real father does not do much to defend his son against scolding or punishment from his own close kin but does not readily accept the intervention of his wife's family, and vice versa. And again the child can take advantage of such dissension. The situation occurs quite frequently although there are many exceptions.

6) The parent's opposition to reprimands by strangers is
861 even greater as a general rule. They try to cover up and justify
609 the faults of their progeny, whom they will fiercely defend. The
children naturally know all this and take advantage of it.

7) The polygamous household, with all its rivalries among
595-x co-wives, cannot but accentuate all such [514] adverse effects
578 on the children's education. The conflicts, spiteful comments,
861 palavers, etc., are easily extended to the children. And each
wife defends her own.

8) Everything is public; there are no secrets; everything
578 is known, seen, and heard. People do not restrain themselves
861 and the presence of children does not stop the flow of insults and
obscenities which anger provokes. The young people see many
things it would be better for them not to know. They are present
at domestic quarrels and are witnesses to dissensions. All this is
increased by life outdoors, in the street, and by the thinness of
partitions.

9) Another factor is added nowadays: the facility of com-
177 munications and the presence of European stations. Boys can al-
578 ways run away and find shelter with the Whites or their native em-
861 ployees. The girls seek out kinswomen who live at such stations,
even though they must help a little with the housework, in the
hope of later enjoying a greater freedom and living in luxury.
Parental influence and authority are naturally weakened as a result.

10) Finally, Nkundó education lacks any solid basis, any
861 religion or religious morality. Everything is based on natural,
physical fear: the fear of punishments (physical or based on super-
stition), harmful consequences of bad actions (palavers, difficulties,
fines, indemnities, sometimes the shame of being caught -- as in
theft). It is especially this lack of religious motivation that makes
their moral education bear so little fruit. As the Nkundó are
accustomed to this imperfect state, they do not feel the need for
000 such a foundation. That is why it is so difficult to instill any moral
conscience into them. The patient and perservering action of the
great Christian truths with their institutions for moral formation
(uninterrupted preaching, confession, prayer) are needed to endow

Teke F133
Dungese FO16

M 273 [579] ordinarily does not stop until his tenth liter, and he is not the biggest drinker. Very often [149] the celebrations degenerate into bloody brawls. The drunken native flies into a rage over trifles, quarrels, and does not hesitate to use his weapons.

T 273 562 Among certain tribes, notably the Banfumungu, women under no circumstances may be present at important festivities or participate in large-scale drinking. Pokei assures us that they are excluded because of their vindictive temperament. "We men," he said, "sometimes fight during these celebrations, but the next day haven't we forgotten our quarrels? The women would also fight. Do they know how to hold their tongues even when they haven't drunk masanga? The next day they would go on quarrelling. The husbands would step in. A village quarrel would follow every celebration! No, the women may not drink masanga."

It would be a mistake, however, to believe that the women strictly observe this prohibition. Oh no! More than one has her little drop of masanga inside her hut, and on occasion intentionally pours herself a little too much. Masanga is not taboo for them!

M 273 [415] Sugar-cane beer is served in small earthenware cups, pieces of a calabash, or wooden cups.

East of Balesa-Batete territory, masanga seems to be unknown, or at least we did not find any, either among the Ipanga-Batitu or among the Bokala-Yaelima.

M D 273 415 Among the Basongo-Meno and Bankutu of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, the natives chiefly consume palm wine.

They also make very inferior beer from maize or millet.

To make this beer, the native crushes the maize or millet, steeps it in spring water, and lets it ferment in earthenware jars.

M D 415 531 These jars are shaped more or less like the water jug with the spherical body, but have a very broad and higher neck. They are usually quite large. The cups used for palm wine and beer by the Basongo-Meno and Bankutu are always carved out of wood. They are found in all shapes, from a simple, undecorated small keg to a splendidly fashioned human figurine. In certain villages, notably at Tipolo and Bakoba, we found cups made of buffalo horn, decorated [150] with carved designs. Cups shaped like horns are sometimes carved out of wood. These are usually larger and more carefully decorated.

593x 578 sides with his family against his wife does not have the approval of those who judge the conflict simply as neutral spectators. In such a case it is usually felt that the couple do not love each other very much. And often the marriage soon breaks up. But if the union is maintained nevertheless, its continuation is generally attributed to a fear of the consequences of dissolving the marriage, which would be even worse. The same sort of variation among individuals is to be found in the matter of a wife's devotion to the interests of her husband's family.

593x 596 It is not possible to compare a native household to the households of good simple people at home, where [40] the family is composed solely of parents and their children. Here it extends further; the husband's interests are also those of his parents, brothers, uncles, etc. As we will see in connection with marriage by inheritance it is not unusual for a woman to remain attached to her deceased husband's family. Others are more interested in enriching their own families.

593x 159 579 The following is a historical instance of a wife who was very devoted to her husband's interests, though there seemed to be room in her make-up for pride and personal glory. (1): Bolɔ́mbɔ́ wǎ nsánjí, daughter of Bo̱ko̱mbe̱ of Litɔ́li (Bombwanja), was married to Bo̱nye̱me̱ w'ɛ̌nyuká of Bonganda (Bonkoso). One day (her father having died in the meantime) she went back to visit her brother, Bo̱mpe̱lí w'ě̱lo̱mbo̱, who had left Litɔ́li to settle in his maternal village, Etɔ́o of the Boɛ́ndɛ́. They began to quarrel. Bo̱mpe̱lí maintained that Bo̱nye̱me̱ wasn't worth much, that his wealth was exaggerated, that it was a mistake to honor him, etc. Bolɔ́mbɔ́

1. According to my estimates, this episode is about a hundred years old. I knew two men who had recollections of it: the eldest (Longwokɔ́ of the Basɛ́ká Bengɔ́ngɔ́, Bongîli) was about twenty years old when it occurred. A greatgranddaughter of Bo̱nye̱me̱ (Mputɔ́ Sofie) is now in her forties.

593 defended her husband. Finally, since they could not agree, Bompelɛ
159 ordered his sister not to return to her husband, so that she could be
579 married to another man. For he had decided to test the valor of Bonyeme by making war on him, and she could not see her husband taken prisoner by her own brother. Nevertheless, Bolɔmbɔ remained determined and departed in haste. When she reached her husband she told him everything. In the meantime all the Boɛndɛ and other Bombwanja clans were taking up arms. Enyukɛ, for his part, passed the news on to all Bonkoso villages, as well as their relatives by marriage, dependents, and Batswá. The various groups of combatants stationed themselves near the village of Bonganda in what is today the forest of [41] Boóngɔ́njou, between the Lomekɛ and the present location of Besombɔ́, Lofelɛ, and Engɔ́njɔ́. The Boɛndɛ army was taken unawares by the Bonkoso, who attacked and after furious combat routed them, leaving a number of dead on the field. Bonyeme proposed a peace. He took pride in not being surpassed in generosity. With a truly princely munificence he was not satisfied with only paying all the clans who had lost members but in addition sent Bompelɛ all that the latter needed in order to compensate Bombwanja groups for the loss of their members and, on top of this, brought him a whole fortune to complete Bolɔmbɔ's bride price.

589 The Nkundɔ́ are well acquainted with cases of widows who,
587 having reached middle age, take a solemn oath not to remarry or ever go near a man again. Among the stronger sex such cases are almost nonexistent. Cases of women who, when sick and dying wanted to remain near their husbands, cited later (Chap. VI, Art. II, 4) should be noted here, as well as preferences for monogamy (Chap. VII, Art. VI, VII).

581 Bearing in mind the explanation given at the outset, I think I
593 can state that most marriages contracted by the Nkundɔ́ are love matches. Marriage for political reasons or for certain material advantages have certainly existed. And especially at the present time, there are parents who push their children into marriage for the sake of financial or social gains.

Our conclusions may not be accepted by a number of colonials. Yet I feel they are valid in the limited sense indicated here. Arguments

428 He had set his heart on Bolúmbú, daughter of Ntando éy'ilengu of
587 Bofalambóka. Upon the death of Bolúmbú's husband, Esalé éâ
581 Lonkongá, (in 1926), she had been asked for by Bombóngo, a distant relative of Esalé. Proceeding in the customary fashion, Bombóngo had made his request through the medium of his elder brother Engambí and had paid a *bompángá* of 4 *bakonga* and 20 francs. In the meantime, Babolá reached adulthood; he left our school and returned to his native village. Being a true nephew of Esalé éâ Lonkongá, he had a direct right over this woman, who left Bombóngo. Since the latter protested, however, the priest was faced with a moral problem; the question was whether or not there was a real marriage between Bombóngo and Bolúmbú. If there were, there would be no question of a marriage between Babolá and Bolúmbú, since the Church could not break a valid marriage between Christians. I have said above that a union of the sort involved in this case is not, in Nkundo eyes, a typical marriage. However, I wanted to have every assurance and to be as certain as possible. To that end, I went to Bonjoku at the time of the tax collection. I found many men gathered there. I raised the question of marriage by inheritance. The discussion ended on the unanimous expression of the opinion that in the instance involved nothing opposed the new marriage. The men gathered there added that all similar cases are rather a sort of concubinage accepted by ancestral law, but lacking all characteristics of a true marriage.

In order to avoid the many disadvantages inherent in this second form of marriage by inheritance, the husband, if he has any wealth, will do everything he can to collect the valuables needed for the bride price and pay his father-in-law. The latter will use the bride price to reimburse the heir. By making this payment, which is handed over through a new *ndonga* designated by him, the husband obtains complete possession of the woman. The marriage by inheritance than changes into a marriage by *nkumbó*. The *besangójwá* which the husband had previously given the heir must be returned, and the heir's ties with the woman are broken by these formalities.

● [579] It sometimes happens that the heir takes a very dim view of this new payment and takes offense. In the past a war, through illegal, could result -- after which, as always, the matter was settled just the same.

764 to return to join the procession, or may be able to do so only with
[584] difficulty.

The act of carrying a corpse to its native clan is not designated by any specific term. The expression is simply tsíka iláka, "to go and return the corpse."

In one or more places near the entrance to the village, a
764 barrier (bokáko, lokombí, or loálaka) made of posts and palms
431 is set up. There the relatives of the deceased, armed, wait for the procession of the husband's relatives, who are also armed, and forbid them to continue their march. Before passing, the latter must make a payment. The valuables given are called byěko by'ǒkáko or simply bokáko (or loálaka). The family of the deceased calls to the procession, "Halt! You will not pass here." The latter reply, "We come to bring [426] you the corpse of your child; we want to break down the barrier. Let us pass; here are
[584] the gifts." The ndonga hands over a knife, a brass or copper ring, or some equivalent object (for instance, money, nowadays). Thereupon the members of the deceased's clan move away. The bǎnambótswá (persons related to both clans) break down the barrier, and the procession passes, headed by the ndonga and the bǎnambótswá. The husband follows the coffin.

In the past it was almost always necessary to force a passage
764 through the barrier. The wife's family did not want to open and
● 579 the husband's family did not want to pay, and so they came to blows. The group bearing the corpse tried to break down the barrier, while their adversaries tried to prevent them from doing so. The arms used in that struggle were chiefly pointed sticks which the members of the two camps threw at each other; more rarely, arrows were used. The specific name for this sort of brawl is ekòkélá. Certain clans specialize in this sport. Thus between Boímbo and Lileko, there is a regular battle every time. In such serious cases the barrier is heavily fortified; the posts are thick and hard, and intertwined with thorny creepers (bokau, longolí, wanganjála, etc.) and thorny shrubs (wěngé, etc.). A quantity
[825] of venomous biting ants (bafumba, mbómbá, byǒmbo, etc.) are added. If the brawl becomes serious, the ndonga and the other bǎnambótswa intervene and impose peace by requiring the husband's clan to pay.

764 579 Nevertheless, it may happen that the husband's family, while unable to vanquish their adversaries, persist in spite of everything in their desire not to pay. They run away and return home, abandoning the corpse in the hands of the family of the deceased. But this is a very serious offense. It is therefore considered simply as a breaking of the alliance between the two families. The husband need not bring funeral payments, for they will be refused in any case. Henceforth he can no longer [427] present a bride price to obtain a substitute for the deceased. Furthermore, he loses his rights over his children, whose maternal clan he has disowned, and if the matter is not settled in one way or another, he no longer has the right to the bride prices that will be paid for his daughters. And to add to his troubles, he risks being molested by the spirit of the deceased.

When the husband's party succeeds in opening a passage, the opposing clan hastens to defend the succeeding barrier. In fact, if the procession must pass through several clans or groups related to the wife (her mother's clan, grandfather's clan, grandmother's clan, etc.), each group sets up its own barrier,

If there are no more barriers, the struggle is ended. But in any case the husband must pay the valuables demanded for passing through. When the procession arrives at the village, the question of funeral payments is settled, and these "tolls" are included in the accounting.

In the past a brawl was usually inevitable. And even now they occur more frequently than we would suspect. But the violence has been reduced to a few light wounds. Some clans arrange the matter amicably without resorting to action. But only very seldom do they neglect to put up a barrier. Nevertheless, cases do occur here and there under the pressure of chiefs who favor the penetration of European notions of public peace and tranquility. In these instances the parties involved merely pay regular indemnities at the time of the palaver concerning funeral payments. A great friendship between the two clans involved sometimes favors this more humane type of behavior.

2: Hulstaert--483 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

851
593x

A father's rights over his child are not unassailable. He can lose them, especially if he neglects to fulfill certain duties because such conduct is equivalent to disowning. Among the duties whose neglect results in the loss of rights over the children are the following:

1) The completion of the bride price.

2) The fulfillment of funerary duties (burial, payments).

3) The relinquishment of a portion of the bride price to be restituted in case of divorce.

4) The performance of duties toward the child. Only instances of grave negligence, constituting real abandonment, enter into consideration here -- especially an illegitimate refusal to obtain the means for a son to get married. The case cited in Chapter II, Article XI, 3 and similar instances also fall into this category.

Conclusions

58

At the end of this work we shall sum up the conclusions it suggests to us:

1) Among the Nkundó marriage consists of a union between a man and a woman, constituted through the payment of certain valuables. This payment is made by the husband, through the intermediation of one or more official witnesses, to the wife's parents; it is counterbalanced by a payment of valuables on the part of the woman's family to the husband and his family.

2) There are various sorts of conjugal unions which differ somewhat from this standard form: the inheritance of a widow by a distant relative of the husband; the substitution -- during life or after death -- of a kinswoman who continues the union begun by a woman now deceased or divorced; [517] the offer of a wife in exchange for the performance of an important service; a certain kind of exchange and, in some tribes, purchase; and union with a slave.

3) Apart from the question of the Batswa, obstacles to marriage are due to kinship and affinity.

● 58 4) Married life is regulated by rules which are well defined and wise, but infractions are committed. Adultery is condemned and repressed, but the Nkundó concept of it is not the same as ours, and they accept certain exceptions.

5) Polygamy is highly regarded; the practice is governed by definite rules, and the first wife occupies a rank of precedence in the family and in society.

6) Divorce is permitted under fairly strict conditions, and the dissolution of marriage is regulated by suitable laws.

7) Legal stipulations which must be adhered to at the time of death demonstrate the precedence of marriage over blood ties and prove that a wife really belongs to her husband, although she remains a member of her own clan. Furthermore, the husband's death does not break the marriage for the widow.

8) Children belong to the legal father.

On the whole, we can conclude that although the Nkundó's marriage institutions are not without defect from our point of view, they nevertheless appear well organized and in no way "savage." They give an impression of clarity and wisdom, adaptability and flexibility, unity and logic -- wonderful qualities which many European legal systems can envy and which demonstrate the remarkable organization the interesting Nkundó people have been able to attain. [518]

000 themselves a large portion of our joint labor, leaving me with leisure to pursue this work; all the natives who have had confidence in me and have assisted me with their valuable evidence and explanations, among them Bakutu Bonifasi, Ali Ntefeji, Mpetsi, Esal'ey'olaka, [22] Ikanya, Bolongo Lokolo, B. Ekamba, Bosembu, Piosi Isia, and countless others all of whom I cannot mention, for the list would become too long.

I am deeply indebted to the Honorary Attorney General, Mr. A. Sohier. This eminent jurist was kind enough to look over the entire manuscript and to point out obscure or ambiguous passages and indicate places that called for added explanations or revisions in the text. Thus he has made a great contribution toward the final form of this work, and a good part of its merit is due to him. [23]

Chapter I

Preliminaries and Generalities

● 581 Marriage is comprised of a sexual aspect, an element of attachment or affection, and a utilitarian element. Only exceptionally is a union based on but one of these. This is true not only of marital unions, but also of extramarital relationships which are not transitory.

This law, which can be considered general and universal, holds true also for the Nkundó. Before embarking on a detailed study of marriage among these people, it would therefore be useful to see what form these aspects take among them.

Let us begin with the utilitarian aspects, which can be dealt with in brief. From that angle, the Nkundó's wife is to him the person who will attend to the satisfaction of his daily needs with respect to nourishment (cooking and farming) keep his hut clean and orderly, and raise his children. Thus, for him, she is a housewife and mother.

Cases of marriage for political or economic reasons occur, but they are the exceptions, so that we can leave them out of consideration.

581 Moral qualities are often involved in the choice of a wife. But strictly speaking, the marriage is not one of reason; the cause of it is more likely to be affection.

The affective and sexual aspects of the question require longer discussion.

Therefore this chapter is divided into two parts:

I. The emotional life
II. The sexual life of the Nkundó [24]

Part 1

The Emotional Life of the Nkundó

000

[Editor's Note: The Nkundó are capable of real affection. That affection takes varying forms and attains different degrees according to the nature of the persons in question. In successive articles, we will treat:

I. Affection among relatives
II. A special form of the latter: the creation of a Bolúmbó
III. Friendship
IV. Love between husband and wife]

Article I. Affection among Relatives

152
602 The Nkundó feel a deep affection toward members of their kin group. I am of the opinion that they love them as much, if not more, than most Europeans, but are not capable of as great a devotion. To understand this condition, one need only consider that affection is instinctive. Our people say: botéma nd'iko̱ma, "the heart is like a package," that is to say, it does not choose the object of its love, but rather the object presents itself spontaneously. (1) Devotion on the

1. Or lolango ale nae̱mbe̱ éy'otéma, "love is an innate, spontaneous product of the heart."

593x [882] If the whole family [26] suffers through the misbehaviour of adolescents, the latter will not be spared by the father. But the mother will often take their sides for, not belonging to her husband's family, she allows only her heart to speak. The familial-political organization of this people requires that fondness have its limits; otherwise it could lead to disorder and anarchy.

593x 855 It cannot be said of Nkundó parents, as one often reads about other peoples of the Congo, that they do not care for their children, who are self-sufficient and obliged to provide for their own needs from the age of six or seven. Our people are always feeding and even coddling their children; even when the latter are married they are always well received in their parents' home and lavishly treated. It is quite true that the young people spend much time in the forest looking for various kinds of food, but that is part of their games and amusements, a phase of their education, and at the same time their contribution to the maintenance of the household (a contribution which cannot be omitted from any serious education, and it is regrettable that it should be omitted by so many European families. (1)

1. Education will be dealt with more extensively in Chapter X, Article VIII.

593x 581 In the matter of marriage parents generally respect the feelings of their children. A father who is motivated by avarice and, above all, by the need for a certain sum of money or its equivalent, may sometimes let the voice of self-interest predominate over that of the heart.

It goes without saying that one may encounter aberrations of fatherly feeling, but such cases are exceedingly rare. (2)

2. For an example see Chapter II, Article XI, 3, B.

593x Though parents love their children without distinction and without consideration of their faults, vices, etc., they are not exempt from a certain amount of partiality a particular child [27] will

593 defended her husband. Finally, since they could not agree, Bompelɛ́
159 ordered his sister not to return to her husband, so that she could be
579 married to another man. For he had decided to test the valor of Bonyeme by making war on him, and she could not see her husband taken prisoner by her own brother. Nevertheless, Bolɔ́mbɔ́ remained determined and departed in haste. When she reached her husband she told him everything. In the meantime all the Boɛ́ndɛ́ and other Bombwanja clans were taking up arms. Enyuká, for his part, passed the news on to all Bonkoso villages, as well as their relatives by marriage, dependents, and Batswá. The various groups of combatants stationed themselves near the village of Bonganda in what is today the forest of [41] Boɔ́ngɔ́njou, between the Lomekɛ́ and the present location of Besombɔ́, Lofelɛ́, and Engɔ́njɔ́. The Boɛ́ndɛ́ army was taken unawares by the Bonkoso, who attacked and after furious combat routed them, leaving a number of dead on the field. Bonyeme proposed a peace. He took pride in not being surpassed in generosity. With a truly princely munificence he was not satisfied with only paying all the clans who had lost members but in addition sent Bompelɛ́ all that the latter needed in order to compensate Bombwanja groups for the loss of their members and, on top of this, brought him a whole fortune to complete Bolɔ́mbɔ́'s bride price.

589 The Nkundɔ́ are well acquainted with cases of widows who,
587 having reached middle age, take a solemn oath not to remarry or ever go near a man again. Among the stronger sex such cases are almost nonexistent. Cases of women who, when sick and dying wanted to remain near their husbands, cited later (Chap. VI, Art. II, 4) should be noted here, as well as preferences for monogamy (Chap. VII, Art. VI, VII).

581 Bearing in mind the explanation given at the outset, I think I
593 can state that most marriages contracted by the Nkundɔ́ are love matches. Marriage for political reasons or for certain material advantages have certainly existed. And especially at the present time, there are parents who push their children into marriage for the sake of financial or social gains.

Our conclusions may not be accepted by a number of colonials. Yet I feel they are valid in the limited sense indicated here. Arguments

593x against the presence of love are based chiefly on the instability of
● 581 unions, the high frequency of divorce, infidelity, and polygamy --
objections which we shall examine in somewhat greater detail.

593x To judge the situation properly, we must first distinguish
562 between the sexes, which are not at all alike in this respect. Furthermore,
among women [42] we must distinguish between those
who are wives of polygamous men and those who are not.

Let us speak first of all of the men. They seem superior to
the opposite sex in the matter of conjugal love, at least if we base
our conclusions on their greater fidelity. Divorce is almost always
[586] caused by the wife. As a matter of fact, this is quite natural. The
man marries at a fairly mature age and therefore becomes involved
when he is well aware of what he is doing, while the girl most often
becomes engaged before the age of discretion and is thus unable to
choose according to her own heart.

595x On the other hand, the polygamous man's heart must be divided.
As we will see suo loco, he has a special love for one of his wives.
His love for the first one deepens, becomes more rational, more deliberate,
whereas his love for his favorite would seem to be more
a matter of emotion in the strict sense of the word. As to the others,
he has usually chosen them of his own will and perhaps has even
seduced them to the point of making them leave a previous husband.
It would therefore seem unfair to deny the presence of some affection
toward them.

562 But is the term "love" still applicable? According to the
593x European point of view, conjugal love is exclusive. Among the
152 Nkundó this does not seem to be the case. It has often been said
595x that the polygamist considers his wives, with one or two exceptions,
as human capital, so many production machines. I would not deny
that the harem constitutes human capital and a source of wealth, but
in my opinion such a statement is much too extreme and absolute.
In most cases a real affection for his wives must be attributed to the
polygamist. I understand this affection to be a kind of love in
reduced proportions. And I compare this situation -- mutatis mutandis --
to that of someone who loves several friends at the same time. It is

291 184 The *nkásá* is unknown beyond the Jwalé and the Luilaka. In that region the women tie a string (or a belt of beads) around themselves and attach a second piece of cloth to it.

291 Thus the male garment is a rudimentary sort of shorts, open on the sides, while female dress is much more open. In general the *efufa* is an appropriate protection of one's modesty, but it is inadequate in certain positions. (2)

[611] [196] 2. It may be interesting to note that *etóo nsamányá*, or just plain *etóo*, which is the term for a man's garment, also indicates the male line of descent, while the female line is often designated by the term *nkásá* (sometimes by the word *jwǒmoto* derived from *bǒmoto*, "woman"). Let us add that *lonkundó jwá nkásá* means "pure, flawless Lonkundo, not corrupted by foreign influences." This expression should be compared with the following phrases: *langue maternel, moedertaal*, "mother tongue," etc.

291 177 At present the *nkásá* is no longer worn except by a few elderly inhabitants of villages far from the main communication lines. Everywhere else the ancient mode of dress has been replaced by materials imported from Europe. The women wear at least a *sangatómbo*, a kind of short skirt which falls from their loins at least to the middle of their thighs if not further. Middle-aged men in the interior have simply changed the material of their garment but not its form. The younger ones, on the contrary, have frankly adopted the European mode of dress.

● 291 581 [824] [837] A married woman is not allowed to enter the village of her relatives by marriage (*bakiló*) or appear before them [54] without supplementing her usual attire with one or more *beleleke* (banana leaves cut into fringes). The term *bakiló* must be understood as it is meant by the Nkundó; it excludes those with whom the wife may sometimes perform the sexual act and who are called "husbands" broadly speaking.

291 581 speaking. (1) Is this custom in some way related to modesty? The

1. See Chapter VI, Article VI.

[606] same question may be raised with respect to another strict rule of decorum which forbids a man to look his mother-in-law in the face. (2)

2. For details concerning this custom, see Chapter VI, Article V, 1.

It can readily be answered in the affirmative. (3)

3. Nevertheless, see Chapter X, Article II, 3.

784 516 The rule of decorum which forbids a man to sit down on a seat where a woman is seated who is not his wife seems to me also to be dictated by sexual modesty. On the other hand, stepping over the seat under such circumstances has nothing whatever to do with this feeling. The purpose of this practice is to enable the person seated (regardless of sex) to avoid the evil repercussions of a charm or magic spell in his or her possession. (4)

4. Contrary to the explanation given by Jadot in Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge (Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 90.

291 834 Is the native ashamed to show his nakedness? Let us beware of answering this question in general terms. In order to have an idea of the situation which is sufficiently clear and precise, various cases and circumstances must be taken into account.

1) First of all it can be stated that in the normal course of daily living the Nkundó, men as well as women, do all they can to hide their genital organs. That is to say that basically they are

584 431 For his part, the young man gives her some small game animals (especially the big rat called botómba, lemurs of the genus eséndé, etc.) or fish. These gifts have no specific name. The man's gifts are simply called mpató "gift sent"; the woman's are called botúmo, a term used for all presents given by a woman to her lover (see also Chapter VI, Article VII, 2). The verb used with this noun is tumba, "to make burn." Etymologically the two words are in no way related.

Sometimes the sweethearts give each other a secret mutual pledge of their desire to be married. This pledge is called bondengé or bonengé and consists particularly of a necklace of beads called bafomakongo (or, more rarely, bisengé or bisengéla). [103]

581 In choosing their wives, the men allow themselves to be motivated by the various factors which may influence them in this realm, such as physical or moral attractions. Wealth or social rank almost never play a part in determining the choice. Youth is easily carried away by physical attraction and passionate love. Men who are already more settled as well as the more sensible young men pay more attention to moral qualities, such as general conduct, submissiveness, goodness, gentleness, and especially diligence, careful attention to work, etc. In short, we find here the full range of individual variations that are encountered elsewhere, with the exception of marriages motivated by financial or political interests or by the degree of moral elevation that can be aroused by the Christian religion, such as pure devotion.

584 After a few days of courtship the girl lets her suitor know that if he really loves her he had better settle the matter and that consequently he must obtain her parents' consent. Meanwhile they have [836] already had intimate relations several times; therefore the moment of official negotiations should not be delayed.

586× 587 584 Seeking a wife who is already married is in no way different from the procedure we have just described, but a great deal of circumspection must be used so that the husband's suspicions will not be aroused. The exchange of the secret pledge we have mentioned occurs especially in this situation.

Once the divorce is completed, the woman falls in the same category as a single girl since she is free.

Seeking a future wife in an as yet unborn child or one that is very young will be discussed in a special section (Chapter IV, Article I). [105]

Chapter II

The Marriage Agreement

581 The marriage agreement (1) is primarily arranged by means of the payment of certain valuables through the agency (Article II). The first stage is the engagement (Article III). After dealing with it, we will describe the various payments subsequently made to the father, namely the walo (Article IV) and the bosóngo (Article IX), and to the mother (Article V), as well as the gifts (Article VI). Nkundó law also requires that the woman's clan pay certain valuables (Article VII). Finally, we will examine various rules and customs pertaining to the bride price: its acceptance (Article VIII) and the use to which it is ultimately put (Article X). The chapter ends with some general remarks (Article XI) and a few considerations on the attitude adopted toward the bride price (Article XII).

Article I. The Beginning of Negotiations

584 As we have seen at the end of the last chapter, the period of courtship is not long.

---

1. These terms should be understood broadly, rather than in a strictly legal fashion. "The marriage agreement" here does not signify what is called "the marriage contract" in European law. This chapter deals with the various stages through which the condition of marriage is established among the Nkundó, and the various practices connected with this process. I have chosen this title in order to include all the multiplicity of essential and accessory elements comprised in the establishment of a marriage, as well as the various circumstances attendant upon it.

583x payment when all were gathered, the ndonga gave the woman's father 50 bakonga. Isia did not accept them because he did not think that his daughter's union with Eanga promised sufficient [156] stability. Therefore he asked the ndonga to keep the valuables as deposit until the day the union became strong. Events showed that Isia was right. Barely a few months later the pair broke up. The ndonga returned the valuables to Eanga's father, and the marriage never took place. In the native view, the walo had not been paid in this case, since the woman's father had not accepted the valuables. Therefore one could not say it was a real marriage.

583x
● 581 Though such cases are not common, this occurrence is not unique and shows how seriously the natives take the matter of marriage. Their attitude is far removed from the one attributed to them by certain writers. It is only that the freedom resulting from colonization destroys ancestral rules and sanctions without replacing them with at least their equivalent, bringing about a state of moral and social disorder in this sphere and giving free rein to lust.

583x Up to the present we have examined the three payments known as ikulá, ndanga, and walo, as well as the mother's valuables. Together with the beɛ́ngo, they are grouped under the inclusive term jɛ́ngɛ́, which also covers other payments such as gifts of welcome to the fiancée, presents on the occasion of later visits, etc. In practice, therefore, the term includes all the payments except the final one, as yet to be discussed. Strictly speaking, it signifies payments made in order to obtain a wife, exclusive of subsequent payments.

Jɛ́ngɛ́ is derived from the verb root ɛ́ng, which means to make the marriage payments, to acquire a wife by means of them. It is impossible to translate these terms into a French or English equivalent, so we are forced to use expressions which are more or less inappropriate, such as "pay," "obtain," "acquire," "buy," "payment," "purchase," etc., and which have entirely different equivalents in Lonkundo. Therefore, never maintain before a Nkundɔ́ that his people buy [157] their wives; he will express great indignation at such a monstrosity. His word for "buy," is sɔ́mb, and in his mind it has nothing in common with ɛ́ng or sɔ̃ng (see below).

589x
581 2) A woman's family is not permitted to keep a double bride price for her during the lifetime of her husband -- that is, for the same marriage. If she is divorced, and her new husband pays the parents a bride price, they are required to return the bride price paid by the first husband. Thus, only a single bride price remains in their hands. This stipulation is probably intended to avoid a traffic in bride prices, something which is entirely illegal. Moreover, since the bride price constitutes the marriage, a double bride price in the situation indicated would make the woman the wife of two men at the same time, a situation which would be altogether contrary to the native concept of [174] marriage, despite their leniency with respect to certain types of concubinage. (1)

1. These will be discussed below, Chapter VI, Article VIII, 2.

One instance which took place around 1878-80 came close to infringing upon this law, though strictly speaking it did not violate it; it is rather *non contra sed praeter legem*. By his first wife, Wĕtsi de Likoli, Bakutu b'is'éy'olóngó of the Basék Élongama (Besombó) had a son, Bolónjó, and a daughter, Imote. The daughter married Lofalanga of Mpámá (Nkóle), and with her bride price he procured a second wife, Mbélá of the Basékä Nkamba or Bofétola (Bonkoso). His son, Bolónjó, fell in love with her and took her away from his father who had grown fairly old and up to that time had neglected to provide him with a wife. Old Bakutu was furious and went so far as to threaten to kill his son. But the family intervened and judged the father to be in the wrong. The latter submitted to the family decision and finally quieted down. He yielded Mbélá and went even further. In order to spare his son malicious innuendoes and being shamed by comments made by other people, because he possessed a woman obtained in an abnormal fashion, he paid another bride price for Mbélá, consisting of 40 rings and 2 Batswá as *bosóngo*. As a result the Bofétola clan received two bride prices for the same woman, but they came from the same man and were given for a plausible reason. No grievances resulted; on the contrary, the payments had advantages. For both parties were satisfied: the Basékä

583x 581 Nkamba were doubly enriched; their daughter was honored beyond expectations and had acquired two nkita. The Basɛk'Élongama had the expense, but their renown and glory could only increase as a result. Furthermore, Mbɛlɛ's son thus acquired a very strong position in his mother's clan where his power would be greater because of his relationship to the double progeny of two of his mother's nkita.

A true exception to this rule is permitted in the case of [175] marriage by purchase (Chapter II, Article VII) and in case a woman takes refuge from her husband with another man (Chapter VIII, Article II, 3, (2)). But the rule is not the least weakened by these exceptions, for both types of union are entirely outside the usual rules and patterns, and it can even be said that they are not real marriages.

3) Right to the bride price

583x

A. Is the right to a bride price permanent? In other words, is a bride price acquired permently?

To answer this question we must anticipate what will be said later in this work. Therefore we will limit ourselves here to noting the conclusions from data which will be presented later in extenso. (1)

1. See Chapter VIII, Article III, 5, and Chapter IX, Article VII.

583x 586x In case of divorce, restitution of valuables must be made by both sides. On the contrary, if a spouse dies their acquisition remains permanent.

If restitution were not made in case of divorce, the divorcée would be prevented from remarrying. This seems to be a concession to human frailty. That is the only logical explanation I can think of for the existence of these two rules which are diametrically opposed to each other: permanent acquisition and acquisition only for the duration of the marriage. My explanation is supported by all other stipulations of Nkundɔ law which are pertinent to the matter.

Chapter III

The Various Forms of Marriage and Pseudo-marital Unions

581 Various forms of conjugal union exist in Nkundó law and practice, although not all of them reach the same degree of perfection, and certain ones are only known among some of the tribes under discussion.

The word "marriage" is translated into Lonkundo as liála. It is used in the broad and universal sense as well as in the narrow, as is the verb from which it is derived, bál. This verb designates a sexual union per se, even if it is illicit. Thus the Nkundó say íy'áfé bale ô liála, meaning that the relations between two people (adulterers or unmarried persons) are not isolated acts but part of a continuous relationship which takes the form of concubinage and therefore externally resembles marriage.

A man who marries, that is, the husband, is mbáli. But this is a general term, and it is not used to describe his relationship to his spouse; the word for "husband" in this specific sense is bǒme. The person who has paid the bride price is ńjengi (from the root -éng). He may be someone other than the mbáli, as the examination of marriage by inheritance (Article II) will show.

583ˣ After returning briefly to the typical marriage arranged as we have described in the preceding chapter, we shall examine in detail the other forms of marital and pseudo-marital unions found among the Nkundó. As described in the articles to follow, the Nkundó forms of union are:

I. Marriage by Nkumbó
II. Marriage by inheritance
III. The marriage of a Bosóló, which is a special case of II
IV. Replacement
V. The gift of a wife, or Boóngá
VI. Exchange
VII. Purchase

Another form of union is the marriage of a slave, but we will leave its discussion for Chapter VII (Article V).

428 587 ●581 Because of all these obvious differences, the Nkundó tend to consider this second type of union nonmarital. It resembles actual marriage only externally; in the final analysis, the difference is fundamental, since it has none of the specific properties of a marriage. Therefore such a union is not a marriage, but a continuous concubinage.

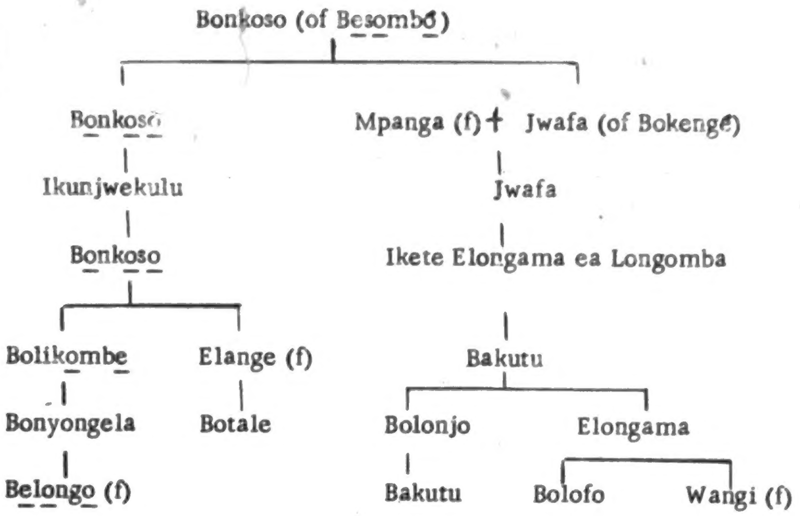
A man who cohabits in this manner with a woman for whom others have paid the bride price is often the object of humiliating allusions. He is treated as nkolasangó, "inheritance taker" (that is, of inherited women). If a woman involved in the type of union described quarrels with one who has been "bought" in the regular manner, the latter will sometimes clap her hands (-foma losǎka) to indicate her superiority. That is why such a woman is sometimes called wǎlɪ ɓâ fomalosǎka in contrast to the other. [195]

Present-day circumstances make all this even more clearly apparent. [797] Nowadays, even pagan natives almost everywhere are aware of the intransigence of the Catholic Church on the question of the indissolubility of a marriage which has been effected through the religious ceremony. For this reason the "masters" of a woman who is legally theirs but who is actually living with another man in the manner described, will not permit her to enter into a religious marriage with this man unless he pays the bride price.

Therefore we may consider the type of union described above a concubinage which does not satisfy the moral conditions for a true marital union. As to the first type of marriage by inheritance, namely a union with a close relative of the deceased, the question is more complicated; but it is my opinion that such a marriage is valid from the moral standpoint. I hope, however, that in order to attain greater certainty on this point, others will re-examine the case in the light of the various aspects of the solution that have been presented.

The following historic case pertaining to individuals whose genealogy appears below will illustrate the preceding discussion:

428
587
● 581


Bonkoso (of Besombó)
Bonkoso
Mpanga (f) + Jwafa (of Bokengé)
Ikunjwekulu
Jwafa
Bonkoso
Ikete Elongama ea Longomba
Bolikombe
Elange (f)
Bakutu
Bonyongela
Botale
Bolonjo
Elongama
Belongo (f)
Bakutu
Bolofo
Wangi (f)

Elongama (the younger) married Ikókó of Bongíli, daughter of Bolékélá wă Nkunja and Tómpénda. After his death, his widow was taken as inheritance [196] by Bonyongela, to whom she gave a daughter, Belóngó. Bakutu (the younger) and his first cousin Bolófo were the ones who disposed of the daughter's bride price and were responsible for the marriage palavers; her father, Bonyongela, (since deceased) and his brother, Bonkoso, were not. Out of kindness, Bonyongela was given 18 rings. Bolófo added the other 30 to his sister Wăngi's bride price to obtain his wife Ióngó (of Likolí, now deceased). After x number of years, Ikókó left Bonyongela for Botálé, a sister's son who, being a close relative, gave no nsănsangó. That which had been paid by Bonyongela was returned to him by Bakutu, since the union was broken. Five years later, Ikókó left Botálé with whom she was dissatisfied because he was lazy and did not bring her enough game, clothing, etc. She went to live with Ilumbé of Ngombe Mbálanga (Bongíli), who was a distant maternal relative and therefore gave the prescribed nsăsangó.

Another instance turned up recently (May, 1933). One of our Christians, Babolá Michel of Ianda (Bonkoso) wanted to take a wife.

428 He had set his heart on Bolúmbú, daughter of Ntando éy'ilengu of 587 Bofalambóka. Upon the death of Bolúmbú's husband, Esalé éâ 581 Lonkongá, (in 1926), she had been asked for by Bombóngo, a distant relative of Esalé. Proceeding in the customary fashion, Bombóngo had made his request through the medium of his elder brother Engambí and had paid a bompángá of 4 bakonga and 20 francs. In the meantime, Babolá reached adulthood; he left our school and returned to his native village. Being a true nephew of Esalé éâ Lonkongá, he had a direct right over this woman, who left Bombóngo. Since the latter protested, however, the priest was faced with a moral problem; the question was whether or not there was a real marriage between Bombóngo and Bolúmbú. If there were, there would be no question of a marriage between Babolá and Bolúmbú, since the Church could not break a valid marriage between Christians. I have said above that a union of the sort involved in this case is not, in Nkundo eyes, a typical marriage. However, I wanted to have every assurance and to be as certain as possible. To that end, I went to Bonjoku at the time of the tax collection. I found many men gathered there. I raised the question of marriage by inheritance. The discussion ended on the unanimous expression of the opinion that in the instance involved nothing opposed the new marriage. The men gathered there added that all similar cases are rather a sort of concubinage accepted by ancestral law, but lacking all characteristics of a true marriage.

In order to avoid the many disadvantages inherent in this second form of marriage by inheritance, the husband, if he has any wealth, will do everything he can to collect the valuables needed for the bride price and pay his father-in-law. The latter will use the bride price to reimburse the heir. By making this payment, which is handed over through a new ndonga designated by him, the husband obtains complete possession of the woman. The marriage by inheritance than changes into a marriage by nkumbó. The besangójwá which the husband had previously given the heir must be returned, and the heir's ties with the woman are broken by these formalities.

[579] It sometimes happens that the heir takes a very dim view of this new payment and takes offense. In the past a war, through illegal, could result -- after which, as always, the matter was settled just the same.

428 587 ●581 On the other hand, it also happens sometimes, and even quite often, that although the woman loves her "husband" (in the improper sense) she does not want any change. At heart she remains attached to the kin of her deceased husband, through her love for him or because of her affection for his family, who have always treated her well. It is not unusual for the common-law husband to encounter unalterable opposition to a regular marriage. The woman may [198] [578] even take such offense at the proposal that she will leave the man for a close relative of the deceased.

In this type of situation another sort of development may also occur, although it is quite rare. For example, there is the case of Lowâka, daughter of Bompɔ́kɛ of Bontole. After the death of her husband, Botɔ́na of the Basɛ́ka Ilɛ́ka (Lofelɛ́), she was taken in marriage by one of his relatives, Nsenge, who gave the prescribed *besangɔ́jwá* to Imomo of Bofalambɔ́ka, Botɔ́na's *bonankáná*. After a certain time Imomo, who had had a slight palaver with Nsenge, did not want the situation to continue. He demanded a regular marriage so that he could make use of his rights to Lowâka's bride price. Nsenge agreed and paid 60 *bakonga* to the woman's parents, who reimbursed Imomo. Imomo returned the *besangɔ́jwá* he had received, and thus Lowâka became the true wife of Nsenge.

One can see that the gamut of individual variations comes into play here, depending on the temperament and the feelings of the persons involved. But the most common practice is for the widow to remain attached to the family of the deceased or to remarry in the prescribed fashion.

In the latter case the widow goes to a man who is not related to the deceased, either immediately after mourning or after a period of conjugal life with the heir. The latter is entitled to a reimbursement of the bride price. The new husband must make all the customary payments through the medium of his own *ndonga*, exactly as he would for a first marriage by *nkumbɔ́*. Consequently, this union is not considered a "marriage by inheritance," with which it has nothing in common.

428 587 431 In any marriage by inheritance -- that is, where no bride price payment is involved -- the husband, whether he be the heir or

583x According to the native view, a man must take this woman
184 home for the sake of his honor. If he did not do so, he would be-
152 come the butt of malicious comments and scorn on the part of all, both men and women. He would be considered a coward, just as in European "cultured" society a man is considered a coward if he does not pick up the glove thrown down by his adversary.

The rejected woman's hatred for her husband is transformed into a love for the man who has been similarly hurt by her rival. The joint misfortune of the pair creates a mutual feeling of affection. The woman is accepted as wife and is thus saved from dishonor. The man, on his part, feels affection for the woman who offers him her heart and preserves his good name. Harmony is at last established among all four of them, the two men arrange the matter of bride price in the way we have described, and then they live in peace without any enmity toward one another.

583x This way of handling the situation is very strange to us, be-
● 581 cause it is indefensible from the point of view of a sound philosophy
184 and of Catholic morality. But it seems normal to the natives. The pagan conscience has no trouble coming to terms with it, since no pagan law explicitly prohibits such behavior. Everyone comes to an agreement in the end, and that is all their conscience requires. Everything considered, there is no infraction of the rights of any individual, and since the native mentality is not concerned with morality as we conceive of it, this solution seems altogether natural to them.

Nevertheless, the ethnic groups who do not practice this true exchange in no way approve of it. Not that they fail to understand the psychology underlying this practice; on the contrary, if the situation arises they accept it. But they condemn [218] the legal procedure. They require that the two marriages be broken in the regular fashion and that two new marriages be contracted. That is, they demand the restitution and payment of the bride prices through the ndonga and through the respective parents of the women. For them therefore an exchange is not a true marriage, but a sort of sale and purchase. Also, from their point of view, the women who have been exchanged are slaves and not wives, because they live with their

583 men although their first marriage has not been broken and no new
581 marriage agreement has been concluded.

184 The data given above provides no confirmation in the
[114] Nkundó tribes under study of the statement made by Engels "Les Wangata [The Wangata]," *Revue congolaise*, 1910, p. 35) that among the Wangata "her husband can exchange her . . . she can make no protest." (1)

1. The Ekonda apply the term *lienjɛ́* only to an exchange of daughters or sisters. They have a specific term: *mpɛ́ngó*. Note, by the way, that certain Mbólɛ́ tribes who practice a true wife exchange designate it by the same name: *impɛ́ngó*.

Article VII. Purchase

432 The purchase of women is not practiced by the Nkundó tribes
562 under discussion here nor even by the Bombwanja. The practice is to
588 be found only among the Elíngɛ́. What is involved is not a marriage by means of a bride price but a real purchase; that is, a man buys a woman from her husband for a certain sum. He does not go through the woman's parents, as in an ordinary marriage by bride-price payment, but addresses himself directly to the husband.

In general it is the woman who makes the proposal that a man buy her in this manner. Sometimes a man wants to take a woman and
[721] first comes to an agreement with her. Before the Europeans arrived such a situation generally led to a war between clans or villages. After an armistice the palaver was settled, and the [219] purchaser paid the husband. Nowadays, since the Nkundó no longer dare to
[177] fight because of the legal sanctions that inevitably follow, when a woman abandons her husband for another man who wants to buy her, the parties involved bring the palaver before the judges. As the woman wants only her new husband, and as, on the other hand, war and the punishment of women have been abolished, the first husband has no

432 583 174 If we examine the data on the geographical distribution of this custom in relation to the ethnic nature of the practicing tribes, we are led to assume that it is not of Nkundó origin. The tribes that do not practice it do not approve of it among their neighbors; rather they hold them in contempt because of it, since for them a purchased woman is a slave. Thus they make fun of them saying, "They sell their women like slaves or goats." Could this be evidence that the Ntómbé-Boléngé are not pure Nkundó, or that they have been subjected to foreign influences? Would the same be true of the riverain tribes who practice the purchase of women?

Article VIII. General Conclusions

581 Having analyzed in detail the various forms of marriage and pseudo-marital unions among the Nkundó, we must now make a synthesis.

Certain kinds of unions are considered legitimate marriages by the Nkundó although they differ to some degree from the standard marriage because they are adapted to special circumstances. Among these are a widow's marriage with the heir of the deceased and a marriage by replacement after a divorce. As for ourselves, we can go along with native opinion, for when these unions are concluded in the normal fashion they involve nothing which is contrary to our conception of a valid marriage. (1)

(1). This is true of a replacement after divorce only when the dissolution of the previous marriage is legitimate and valid in every respect.

Other types of union, on the other hand, are not considered by the Nkundó [223] to correspond, or only very imperfectly, to their idea of a regular marriage. The union of a widow with a distant relative of the deceased is only a sort of legitimate concubinage. The offer of a wife as security, the exchange or purchase of women, are considered as absolutely inferior forms of union. Therefore it is better to designate these by the term "pseudo-marital unions." For although they are accepted as legitimate by the tribes among

58/ which they are practiced, they seem to be tolerated rather than approved.

Thus there is room for action on the part of the native courts against these very inferior forms of union, and in fact such action is favored in the text of the *Recueil à l'usage des Donctionnaires et des Agents du service territorial du Congo belge* [A Collection for the Use of Officials and Agents of the Territorial Service of the Belgian Congo], (1930 edition, p. 375).

In the lines we shall devote to an examination of the nature of Nkundó marriage, we may therefore clearly exclude these pseudo-marital unions.

Article IX. The Nature of Nkundó Marriage

Having come to this point in our study, we must make a synthesis of the principal conclusions provided by our analysis thus far and try to deduce from it an idea of the essence of Nkundó marriage.

In Bantu ethnology marriage is defined more or less as "a bond between two persons of opposite sex which creates a particular social status and economic position for the spouses and gives legitimacy to their progeny." (1) This definition is quite different from the philosophical one, which is narrower in requiring a firm contract between man and wife for a mutual handing over of exclusive rights over the body in relation to the acts of procreation.

In what respects does Nkundó marriage conform to or [224] disagree with these definitions? Or rather, what definition should we

---

1. See *Recommandations pour l'étude de la famille* [Recommendations for the Study of the Family], published by l'Institut international pour l'étude des langues et civilisations africaines [The International Institute for the Study of African Languages and Cultures].

●581 give of Nkundő marriage, and what is its legal nature? First let us briefly recall certain facts essential to the problem by adding some observations which will appear in the pages to follow but which are indispensable here if we are to obtain a picture of the whole. Then we will try to deduce the legal basis of Nkundő marriage.

According to Nkundő law, the indispensable conditions necessary for a legitimate marriage are the following:

1) The payment of a bride price.
2) One or more qualified witnesses who act as intermediaries in this payment.

The stability of the marriage is weakened by the recognition of divorce, which is inevitable in a society like this one. But everything is done to limit its frequency -- the payment of bride price and dowry, opposition on the part of family authorities, etc. (1)

1. See Chapter VIII, Articles I and II.

The extent to which the spouses have exclusive rights to each other's bodies will be examined in Chapter VI. Let us say only that adultery is not considered lawful, although the Nkundő conception of it is quite different from our own that they permit some departures from the principle of fidelity and tolerate certain forms of license.

581/584 A very important question for our purpose is that of consent. But it is very difficult to examine because the natives relegate it to a place of secondary importance, while they stress the factor of the bride price. This should not surprise us because the material and palpable nature of the latter holds their attention more readily. (2)

2. This same observation may be made about impious Europeans with respect to legal questions and other matters.

Note first of all that for the Nkundő [225], a lack of consent never casts doubt on the validity of a marriage. One finds many women who refuse the husband for whom they are intended as replacements by invoking the fact that the bride price was not paid for them,

581 that is, that they did not consider themselves the contracting parties.
584 But to my knowledge, their opposition is not considered to invalidate
the marriage. I say "to my knowledge" because there is much confusion in the native mind on this question, and it is possible that later discoveries will show that the Nkundó attach a greater importance to consent than we perceive at the moment. As a matter of fact, the inclusion of a ceremony expressing consent in a normal marriage is an indication in that direction.

Let us now examine our data on the value of consent and its expression.

Except in an unusual case, which we are justified in leaving out of consideration in this synthesis since it does not influence our conclusions, there is always consent by the spouses in a standard marriage. Such a consent is first attained in private and then revealed to the parents, who give their approval. At the time of the first bride-price payment, the fiancée expresses her consent by a public and official act, while the husband shows his in accompanying his father in all the proceedings and in taking his intended to his home. In the eyes of the Nkundó that is entirely sufficient.

Another question arises in this connection. The consent of the couple is expressed at the time the ikulá is paid. And the real payment of the bride price occurs only later, without a renewal of consent. Can the expression of consent at the beginning, at the time of engagement, be considered sufficient, since it is virtually continuous? In my opinion there is no reason why it should not be.

In the case of a marriage by inheritance, the usual formalities
581 of the expression of consent are omitted, because [226] no new bride
584 price is paid. Nevertheless, we note that the heir must go and fetch
587 the widow from her family and make a special payment. The Nkundó
explain this action as a mark of respect toward the widow's family, but we may interpret it as an expression, adapted to the particular situation, of the new husband's wish to marry this woman. The woman's willingness to accompany the heir is really a manifestation of her consent to the union. This interpretation is confirmed by the legal requirement that another bekooli payment be made by each of the

581 deceased's relatives who wishes to marry the widow, while the bride
584 price contract remains unchanged. This payment, unlike the bride-
587 price agreement, does not come from the family; it is clearly a personal act of the man who wants to take the widow for his wife.

In the case of a replacement after divorce, the external expression of consent is more vague, since it is limited to the husband's overture's to his father-in-law on the one hand, and the fact that the woman goes with the husband, on the other. The same must be said of the inheritance of a bosóló (Chapter III, Article III). It would be contrary to reality, however, to conclude that because the form of the woman's consent is less prominent, such consent does not exist; with respect to these questions, their attitude is entirely different from ours. To be a replacement is considered a duty and accepted as such. Psychologically, the acceptance of this duty often involves consent; it does not exclude the presence of the will any more than the duty to submit to holy commandments, and to religious and civil laws. Even reverent fear, the fear of punishments, etc., does not prevent a free exercise of the will, although they do diminish it. Nevertheless, there are cases where fear or constraint can be so great as to remove freedom completely. [227]

581 With respect to unions before maturity (Chapter IV), the
584 question is even more difficult. Only the engagement is made in early childhood. The husband's consent is expressed in a manner which is entirely adequate. Since the union does not move from a tentative stage to a final one before the girl approaches puberty, she may be considered capable of giving her consent sufficiently to make a valid marriage, and she gives this consent in going to the home of her husband. Nevertheless, if we compare this expression of consent with those we have observed in the other types of union, it seems very much attentuated and greatly inferior to them.

We may therefore assume that in a general way and under ordinary circumstances freedom is safe and consent is expressed in an adequate fashion.

Having recapitulated these facts, let us try to define the legal
581 nature of Nkundó marriage. In ecclesiastic law and in European civil law, a marriage is effected through the official exchange of

mutual consent. For the Nkundó a marriage is effected through the official payment of a bride price, and to this payment is added the consent of the spouses, which is manifested more or less clearly depending on the type of union but which we have recognized as sufficient.

The bride-price and dowry payments comprise a contract between the families of the couple. This agreement between the families is considered by the Nkundó to constitute a marriage. For them the consent of the couple is secondary -- an attitude which is quite natural, considering the limitations of their analysis, as we have already seen. In European civil law, in addition to the legitimate exchange of consent which constitutes the marital union, there exists an explicit or tacit marriage agreement or contract by which financial questions are settled; it is only secondary to the marriage. The attitude expressed by this law is thus the very opposite of that taken by the Nkundó. [228]

Nevertheless, although our natives consider consent as altogether secondary in constituting a marriage, we can examine this question thoroughly and make a legal analysis of it; however, we must base our conclusions solely on facts observed.

The manifestation of the spouses' consent to a marriage is essentially a real contract from the legal standpoint and may be termed a conjugal pact: they express their desire to be united in marriage and do so in the manner prescribed by law. The fact that the Nkundó attribute a secondary importance to this contract does not destroy its reality.

Therefore, whatever the relative importance attached to them by the Nkundó, we can say with certainty that their marital union includes in reality two components: the bride-price agreement and the conjugal pact or expression of consent.

In ethical natural law marriage is a contract between the spouses: their consent is what constitutes the marriage. For the Nkundó, on the contrary -- at least according to their statements, explanations, etc. -- a man and woman become husband and wife through the payment of a certain portion of the bride price. If they

●581 made a thorough analysis of the question, they would find a categorical opposition between their system and the philosophical and legal nature of marriage. But a pact of consent does in fact exist -- though to our people it is secondary -- and it constitutes an integral element in the complex of acts and ceremonies which comprise their marriage agreement. Therefore their marriage conforms to the philosophical definition.

How should we picture the relationship between the conjugal pact and the bride-price agreement? I think that if we go to the legal basis of the matter, we can make the following statement: Nkundó spouses give their [229] consent to a union such as they conceive of it; they want to become husband and wife according to the practices which are prevalent in their community and the rules prescribed by their law. They express their willingness to conform to these rules and practices. In a marriage by nkumbó, the union is first tentative (the engagement) and then, after the payment of the walo, final. It is as if the spouses-to-be said, "We want to be husband and wife, and we will actually become husband and wife as soon as our respective families carry out the essential portion of the bride-price agreement." This agreement is a kind of necessary condition for the marriage contract but, in their limited analysis, the Nkundó explain it as the sole element constituting the marriage. From the legal standpoint the ultimate consent of the engaged pair depends on the subsequent fulfillment of the bride-price agreement. The situation is basically the same with respect to premature unions. For other forms of marriage we can adopt an identical interpretation, mutatis mutandis. Thus in the case of inheritance the heir and the widow add their consent to the pre-existing and continuing bride-price agreement. And the case of a replacement does not differ from the preceding instances.

It is possible to raise the objection that the Nkundó do not consider inheritance and replacement as new marriages, but rather as continuations of a union which persists in spite of a change in the spouses as individuals. The answer to that objection is implicit in the principles stated above. For, because of the obvious inadequacy of their analysis, they do not perceive the existence of a contract of

●581 consent; they do not distinguish between this conjugal pact which changes and the bride-price agreement which alone persists. And since for them the bride-price agreement is essential, while the conjugal pact is secondary, they pay attention only to the former. Thus we can legitimately interpret their statements on the nature of unions by inheritance and by replacement [230] as referring to the bride-price contract. Thus the fact that each relative of the deceased who wishes to marry the widow must make an individual payment (bekooli), while the clan contract continues unchanged demonstrates the effective reality of the distinction between the familial bride-price agreement and the individual conjugal pact.

To summarize all these considerations: we think that we are justified in giving the following definition: Nkundó marriage is a conjugal contract between a man and a woman which is firm in itself and is linked to a bride-price agreement of prescribed nature and formalities between their families.

Therefore we can conclude that the essential nature of Nkundó marriage conforms to the definition of that institution in general as given in ethics and that it fulfills all the necessary conditions. (1)

1. I am very grateful to Attorney General A. Sohier for having, in a very specific way, drawn my attention to the legal aspect of this question and having thus suggested that I make a thorough investigation of it.

[231] Chapter IV. The Age of the Bride and Groom

582 The Nkundó may marry at any age. Their law contains no stipulation on the subject. Nevertheless, it was customary in the past for a girl to be married very young, while the boys could not take a wife until they had reached a really advanced age. Nowadays the time of marriage for the ever increasing number of girls and for the boys has been pushed forward almost universally. Let us examine the situation in detail, distinguishing between the sexes.

684 [887] D. Against the go-between [1] Nkundó law permits all sorts of invective, blows, and a good whipping. Formerly the most serious situation arose if a woman was called directly. In the past, if favored by circumstances (especially the social position of the families involved), certain of the more jealous and bold men caught the go-between and sold him as a slave. This punishment was entirely legitimate, even though the person for whom the go-between acted was the one primarily guilty and therefore the prisoner's family could attack him on that account. People cite the rather recent historic case of Bonkéké is Îloko of Ikengo (Ntómbâ, Wǎngatâ), who sold a Botswa named Bompâte into slavery because the latter had brought a lover's gift to Wǔfya, his favorite.

684 562 581 E. Conclusion. In examining the various sanctions that Nkundó law provides against adulterers and their accomplices, we are struck by a noticeable difference among the cases. Although a wife has certain means to check her husband's misconduct, she is unquestionably less well armed than he. This is a logical consequence of the nature of Nkundó marriage. A husband defends his "property," whereas a wife is not an "owner." Furthermore, in this realm the requirements are stricter for a woman than for a man. Even in Europe the misconduct of a man is judged very differently than a woman's weakness, the latter being considered much more serious and shameful, even though -- in an absolute sense -- the two are equal. Finally, the system of polygamy plays a role, for it tends to weaken a wife's love and consequently her jealousy, so

[1] The Nkundó generally use go-betweens to tender invitations to women; these are frequently children between the ages of six and fourteen. The disastrous effect of such a practice on the bringing up of young people is easily understood. In some groups it has inflicted a real moral evil.

684 that she becomes accustomed to her husband's relations with various
● 581 other women. Consequently, the reaction of the women in general
562 [325] against adultery is much weaker than that of the men. Moreover, because of this same system, a woman is much more exposed to weakness, and stronger sanctions are therefore necessary to insure her fidelity.

Finally, there is one last reason for considering a woman's misconduct as more serious. It is the danger of conception through adultery, with all the attendant consequences: risks for the pregnant woman, forced continence for the husband, etc. (1)

1. See no. 6 below as well as Chapter I, Part 2, Article IV, 3, and Chapter X, Article II, 3.

From the description of sanctions it is apparent that in spite
562
684 of the woman's inferior position, Nkundó law does not leave husbands the full and complete freedom which, according to certain writers, they are accorded among other peoples. Even if the means of repression available to the wife do not incontestably prove that the husband has an obligation of conjugal fidelity -- and the wife's legal status explains a great deal -- the fact remains that the *ndonga* as well as public opinion approve of even her violent reaction, proving that she is right and the husband wrong.

5. Public opinion

626 Public opinion is fairly lenient in relation to isolated in-
837 stances (*yětsi*, *efongo*). It clearly recognizes the error involved in infringing on the conjugal rights of another, but the error is attributed to human weakness. In the case of habit the situation is different; it is criticized frequently and severely. Habitual sinners
[192] are called *efáfóká* (from the verb *fafoka*, literally "to flutter" and figuratively "to flirt"), *ebónga* or *ebábónga* (from the verb *bâbonga*) or *ebábóa* (from *bâboa*) "to flutter, to be flighty and fickle." These epithets are applied primarily to women, who are more subject to this failing than men.

595x Some men are strict on this point, while others are more tolerant.
837 Clearly, the technique of such men is most subtle. The more a
wife's lover is permitted his freedom, the greater is the likelihood
that other women, who prefer a young man passionately enamoured
of them to their husband, will ask the polygamist to marry them. A
[556] man who is sufficiently wealthy and influential can in this manner build
up a harem from which he does not benefit physically but which assures him of a dominant social position.

This practice exists almost exclusively in conjunction with polygamy, but cases do occur among monogamists. And among more "civilized" tribes, such as the riverain people of the Lower Congo, a tendency in that direction is developing.

A request for concubinate made by a relative of the husband cannot be considered in the same category with the situation we have just examined. Such a request is more closely related to the request for an inherited wife (see Chapter III, Article II). The difference is obvious. The only thing the two situations have in common is the fact of legitimate cohabitation with another man's wife. One perceives this immediately upon comparing the two.

Article IX. The Family's Role in Marriage

596 We have found that there are situations in which a woman is
●581 to some extent considered and treated as the wife not only of her
husband, but also of certain of his relatives (Article VI). Moreover, we have seen in Chapter II the big role that the families play in the arrangement and continuation of their children's marriage. In discussing the question of the inheritance of wives, we have seen that the close relatives of the deceased have rights over the widow; one of them may marry her without any obligations toward the chief heir, and the new union is not a new marriage but a continuation of the previous marriage, which is not broken in spite of the first husband's death. A similar observation was made in relation to the practice of wife replacement (Chapter III, Article IV).

All this leads us to raise a question: To what extent does the family have collective rights over the wife? The following answer is

596 the one which seems to me to conform to reality.

581 A wife is acquired by means of a payment of valuables. These valuables belong chiefly and in the first instance to the one who has obtained them, either through the marriage of his daughter or sister or through his own efforts. In the last instance, the husband has more direct and personal rights over his wife. In the first instance, the closer the husband's kinship with the woman who has furnished the bride price through her marriage, the stronger are her rights over the wife. Other members of the family, however, also have secondary rights over her in proportion to their position. For they are bound to the husband by ties of kinship as descendants of the same ancestor and therefore share in varying degrees the duties and rights of the moral entity based on a community of blood. [340]

The family's participation in the husband's rights is based on the one hand on the economic nature of the marriage agreement and, on the other, on the solidarity of clan and family.

That is why a marriage continues despite death. From the personal point of view it is broken -- so that, for example, the woman may subsequently become another person's legitimate wife, which she could not have done during the first marriage, but from the financial and social point of view it continues to exist. The same is true for wife replacement. As to the relations of a younger brother with his elder brother's wife, they are permitted only under certain conditions which are clearly defined and limited. This fact proves that the younger brother may only very inaccurately be termed "husband." The woman does not have two husbands; she has only one: the elder brother. The relations with the younger brother are permitted not as a personal tie, but only because of the community of financial interests between the brothers, and the elder's pity for his unmarried junior.

Everything considered, and despite all, a woman has only one husband. Taking into account the explanations given and the description of the formalities through which certain persons may intervene in their relative's household and the extent to which they may do so, it is apparent that a husband's rights over his wife are basically personal and exclusive in spite of his recognized prerogative to yield these rights to others.

768 legal importance. The solutions given are the same whether the
672 cause of death be organic or criminal. If the latter is the case,
682 however, the murderer must pay an indemnity, which is given to the person who has been wronged, whether it be the woman's husband or her family; in any case he thus satisfies the requirements of justice.

A woman may be murdered while she is visiting one of her husband's kinswomen in accordance with her husband's wishes. In that case the sister-in-law's husband bears the responsibility. He must indemnify the victim's husband, and he himself is entitled to indemnification by the murderer. To simplify this procedure, the murderer can make his payment directly to the widower; justice is still safeguarded. But in no case does the indemnity go to the victim's father, for legally and economically it belongs to the husband, not to the father, who is indemnified through the funeral payments. [461]

Conclusions

1) A marital union is broken by death only for the person who
581 dies. For the one who remains alive, the dissolution is completed
768 only after other procedures. If the husband dies the widow remains the wife of the heirs and is free only after restitution of the bride price has been made. At the death of the wife the husband can marry a substitute.

A widow's remarriage without restitution of the bride price
581 (and therefore without a new bride price), or that of a widower
587 with a substitute, is considered a continuation of a pre-existing
768 union which has not been dissolved. This continuation is not absolute, however, Actually, it is perfect only in the case of the husband's death, in which case his kin group inherits all his rights and therefore also the rights to the wives he has acquired by means of his capital. On the other hand, if a widower is to continue the relationship after his wife's death, he must pay another bride price.

The difference between the two instances is due to the connection of the bride price with the "ownership" of a woman; she remains subject to it and as a result becomes legally the spouse

768 of her husband's heirs after his death. Only her own death takes
581 all power away from the bride price, which then becomes a purely
587 material value.

That is why the Nkundó expression "continuation of marriage" is ambiguous. For a widower the marriage continues from the atandpoint of ties between families. But from the legal point of view there is a new marriage, since he pays a new bride price for the substitute, and there is therefore an entirely new contract. Only for a widow does the marriage really continue, as long as there is no divorce between her and the deceased husband's heirs. The agreement retains all its validity in her person, whereas the husband's obligations are transferred to the heirs. There is only a change of the persons subject to the agreement, which is therefore in no way annulled. The question here is a substitution in the role of husband. [462]

The preceding should be understood as relating to the financial agreement or bride-price contract as we have explained in Chapter III, Article IX. For the conjugal pact or consent agreement is annulled by death, since an heir as well as a widow must interpose new acts in order effectively to become man and wife. What the Nkundó call the continuation of marriage is therefore only the continuation of the bride-price agreement between the families, and not of the conjugal pact between individuals.

It would be desirable to have a moralist thoroughly examine the philosophico-theological validity of the continuation of this marriage after the death of one of the parties. Personally I think that for the widow, and on condition that nothing else opposes it, it is valid. For consent is expressed by the man through the payment of the bekooli and by the woman through the act of accompanying the man as his wife.

2) From the economic standpoint, death does not change
768 the situation that existed during life. The various bride-price valuables remain in the hands of the respective parties. The difference between the consequences of death and those of divorce are therefore very clearly delineated, as was indicated in the Conclusion of Chapter VIII, Article III.

562 clothing and dressed her in valuable furs, especially in part of the
556 pelt of a striped antelope called mpangá. In some villages she was permitted to wear leopardskin in front as well as in back.

Then the father would decree (-bɛ́kya) that since his daughter
[582] had become bolɔ́mbɔ́ she would always wear furs and would stop working, and that she would be given in marriage only to a very rich and influential man, not to the first comer. Therefore, a synonym for bolɔ́mbɔ́ is bɔ̌na ɓâ boɛ́ko, "child of the decree, a child set apart, forbidden."

This ceremony may be held regardless of the child's age, at any time between three years and adolescence.

When the ceremony is ended the girl withdraws (-ulama, transitive -uja) into a hut specially prepared for this occasion, which is called ile̱ke̱. Her seclusion lasts only a few months. When certain natural needs oblige her to leave the house, she goes out the back way through the banana grove and hides as much of herself as possible under a mat. She does not walk on the bare ground; her feet must not
[285] touch the earth. That is why mats are spread everywhere she steps. She does no work; her food is prepared by her mother, sister, aunt, etc., or by a slave. When it comes to her toilette, she washes her hands not in water, but in palm oil. [32] All these practices are marks of respect and honor.

When the period of seclusion is ended, the girl's father gives a second feast, with dances, drinks, etc., and the bolɔ́mbɔ́ comes out walking on mats. But there is no further ceremony. From then on the girl is no different from other girls. But she retains the sign of her distinction, the wearing of furs, and she does no housework.

The marriage of a bolɔ́mbɔ́ always occurred very late, since a
[582] man who wanted to take her for his wife had to collect a good deal of
[558] wealth before he could take the risk of asking for her hand. Should his attempt prove fruitless, he was exposed to ridicule in the whole region.

184 Among the tribes living on the left bank of the Luilaka any
556 man who was rich and of good family could ask for the hand of a
562 bolɔ́mbɔ́ in marriage. Among the Injó̱ló̱, on the other hand, the re-
582 quirements were more complicated. The suitor had to belong to another tribe or group. For instance, a girl who belonged to the

184 556 562 582 Engónjó group would be given only to a man from the Wesé, the Ngombe, or a neighboring tribe, but never to an Engónjó. All the Engónjó considered the bolúmbú their sister. Thus when the future husband went to the family of the bolúmbú to ask for her hand, every village barred his way by means of a fence. All the bride price valuables which he carried with him were taken from him, and an equivalent amount in various kinds of goods, such as hens, ducks, dogs, mats, etc., was substituted for it. That is, he exchanged bride price valuables for nkomi valuables [dowry]. (1) The suitor could pass only when the village that barred his way had nothing left with which to continue the exchange. If he found his riches exhausted, he had to go back home to replenish the supply. Everything he gave in this [33] fashion was counted as bride price, jěngí (1) and everything he received was part of the nkomi [dowry]. (2)

556 562 582 It is understandable that under these conditions asking to marry a bolúmbú was a luxury that the common man could not afford. The suitor had to belong to a rich and influential family all of whose members would assist him.

When the suitor finally succeeded in clearing a passage to the father of the chosen one with sufficient treasures, the latter put no further obstacles in his way. As for the girl, she felt exceedingly honored and delighted that a man loved her so much that he would go to so much trouble and spend such a vast amount out of affection for her.

As for the rest of the proceedings, the bride price payment was made in the same way as for any other marriage. But when the

---

1. See Chapter II, Article VII.

1. See Chapter II, Article VIII.

2. See Chapter II, Article VII.

556 562 582 bride-to-be was introduced to her bridegroom, she walked toward him across a row of mats. A feast was organized to celebrate this important and joyous event. Dances accompanied with a flow of beer went on for weeks, sometimes for a whole month.

[431] The father gave his son-in-law a great many nkomí (3) objects

3. See Chapter II, Article VII.

so that the bolúmbú often became yěngaende or at least lifayǎnjoku. (4)

4. See Chapter VII, Article IV.

He did not allow his daughter to leave without giving her at least one ebísa to wait on her. (5) Thus when Bolángé w'Ioma of Lokóndola

5. See Chapter VII, Article III.

(Injólo, Ngombe) married Bonjéngó, daughter of Ilónjó y'Ôkákema of Bompóma (Injóló, Engónjó) (who died in 1934), the bride received from her father four bibísa to do the work, as well as a young cousin who was to stay with her [34] to bring her firewood. In this way the father made sure that his beloved daughter would retain her honorable position as a great lady.

556 562 The husband, who wanted his wife to retain her superior status, now makes her his bolúmbú as well. (1) The term was: Bǒn'ów'olúmbú

1. See Chapter VII, Article III. That is, unless she is his first wife. See ibid. and Article I.

átswá ô wǎlí ów'olúmbú ék'ǒme. He would say to those assembled: "Her father proclaimed her bolúmbú, and I proclaim her bolúmbú as well (Is'ékáé ôékvákí, emí mpé njôékya â ng' ókó)."

What was the reason for the existence of this custom?

856 864 During a girl's early childhood beginning when she is still nursing, a mother with foresight will work to make her organs as perfect as possible. By applying pressure repeatedly and for long periods, she molds, so to speak, the outside in order to make it narrow, as this quality is greatly valued by our people.

It is the mother, too, who trains the girl in her preparations for married life. She teaches her how to behave toward her future husband, and at the same time instructs her in the duties of a good housewife (see Chapter X, Article VIII).

836 864 Certain forms of behavior, although their relationship to our subject is only superficial and external, must nevertheless be mentioned. An adult man will often take in his arms a little girl who has not yet been weaned, or perhaps only slightly more developed. He considers this child to be his wife. He has paid no bride price for her. But since she is a sister, cousin, or other relative of one of his wives, she is a "wife" from his point of view; that is, not only will it be possible for him to marry her later on, but even without becoming her husband he will enjoy a certain liberty in relation to her. (1) Thus, when such a man takes his young "wife" in his arms, he is enjoying an anticipation of the future and speaks to her [66] in that sense, often accompanying his words with intimate caresses.

The same practice, mutatis mutandis, may be observed on the part of a woman toward a small boy whom she can consider as her "husband."

304 582

● 2. Circumcision

Circumcision is generally practiced. It is usually performed at an early age. Without going into the details at this point (1) or

---

1. See Chapter VI, Article V, 2.

1. They will be found in Chapter X, Article VII.

304 582 wishing to commit myself on the reason for this custom, it is a fact that a Nkundó woman will refuse to marry a man who has not been circumcised. Consequently, all the natives want to undergo this operation. That is the reply given by the natives when we asked about the reason for circumcision. When we pushed the inquiry further, they added that the women abhor the deposits that form under the foreskin. I mention this explanation for what it's worth. Nevertheless, this may really be the reason that impels them.

In any case circumcision would seem to have no religious or initiatory significance.

304
832

3. Tattooing

Two kinds of tattoos exist among the Nkundó: purely ornamental tattoos and sexual tattoos. (2) The latter are to be found only on women. The [67] designs are located on portions of the body surrounding the sex organs and even on the outside of the latter.

---

[619]

2. I will not discuss tribal tattoos because these do not seem to exist among the Nkundó. The reasons for tattooing vary from people to people and from group to group. It is for this reason that they are a distinctive mark. But that does not mean that such is their purpose. The distinctions apparent among the tattoos of various tribes are not an objective but a consequence, as are, for example, the variations among national costumes in Europe. Moreover, the contacts of our people in peace or war have extended by and large only to neighboring clans or tribes, who use the same type of ornamentation as they did. And in these encounters dialect differences serve as a much better means of identification.

548 ornaments or objects for her toilette (hairpins, for example), and it is probable therefore that individual cases of this sort occurred. But it is altogether unlikely that the practice was widespread, as it does not fit in with the economic organization of this people, among whom wealth is more or less collectively owned and, moreover, (as will be shown in Chapter VI, Article II) a woman has no property rights. [72] Therefore we can assume that there were only a few occasional prostitutes.

On the other hand, there have never been any professional prostitutes; that is, Nkundɔ́ women have never made a job out of prostitution, and the same thing may be said of the other forms listed above.

The number of prostitutes was necessarily limited, however, by the fact that the great majority of women were always married young (Chapter IV, Article I), and that adultery was severely punished (Chapter VI, Article VII).

Nevertheless, there is something which superficially resembles prostitution; that is, there is a category of girls and women whom at first glance one would be tempted to call prostitutes. Therefore it would be useful to examine the situation somewhat more closely, for though in itself it is entirely different from prostitution, it could easily lend itself to it.

It sometimes happens that a girl, besides the *bolɔ́mbɔ* (a
548 socio-political institution in no way related to the degeneration of
582 female sexuality), is kept in the home of her parents beyond the cus-
882 tomary age before she is given in marriage. Such a girl is called *ɛ́fɔ́tswâala*, "the one who does not marry." She is not *bolɔ́mbɔ*. Externally or -- to use philosophical terminology -- materially, the two customs resemble each other; but formally they are entirely different. Creating a *bolɔ́mbɔ* involves authority and influence and is thus a public matter. Whether a girl becomes an *ɛ́fɔ́tswâala*, on the other hand, is a private matter between father and daughter. While the creation of a *bolɔ́mbɔ* is accompanied by public feasts and a decree officially proclaimed (*boɛko*) by the father and accepted by the council of family heads [73], the establishment of a *ɛ́fɔ́tswâala* involves no official act or ceremony.

548 The name efɔ́tswâɛla does not mean that the girl will stay
582 single all her life. Her marriage is not permanently excluded; it is
882 only postponed.

As for her behaviour, the efɔ́tswâɛla conducts herself like any Nkundó girl. Nothing distinguishes her from her companions. If a good match is proposed to her, she marries like everyone else.

This custom -- if one can use the term -- therefore has no real connection with prostitution. All that can be said is that the girl who stays single longer and until adulthood, is exposed to more libertinism and a life of debauchery.

586x It also happens that parents who are angry because their daughter has dissolved a marriage to a man they consider a good son-in-law prevent her from remarrying in an effort to make her return to her legitimate husband. If the parents and their child each hold to their viewpoint without yielding, such a situation can go on for many months until the wife is -- practically speaking -- no longer under the authority of her husband. And since the opposition of her parents prevents her from being married by another man, she easily comes to give herself to all. It should be added that at present this case is chiefly hypothetical. Parents no longer have the authority [178] to thwart the desires of an adult daughter in this way; if she is stubborn they have to yield out of fear that she will run far away. And that would be to go from the frying pan into the fire. But in the past the kind of situation I have described was not unusual.

548 The most fertile places for the breeding and development of
369 prostitution are to be sought in the centers. The following principal causes can be given:

1) Female vanity is overexcited by the sight [74] of all the dazzling riches which have been imported by white men and which are such a temptation to Negro women. It requires a considerable income to satisfy this desire to enhance one's native beauty. Ordinary laborers and artisans do not earn enough money to satisfy their wives or daughters in this respect. Mistresses of Europeans or of foreign black men, the wives of "clerks" and other representatives of Negro high society display a degree of luxury startling and striking to the rest.

836
864 prohibition under any circumstances. I have heard these same terms used also by the natives in the vicinity of Coquilhatville.

The body becomes flabby and without strength, and this weakness ends in a fatal paralysis (byongɛ nnyǎnyuka or nkatɛɛnɛ). In addition, the girls feared that their sexual organs, not yet fully formed, would be torn. They were also imbued with a very intense fear: bofolu w'aende, "the fear of males," bofolu w'ǎmato, "the fear of females." They also feared death -- bɛlotɛkɛ iwɛ. The parents added that sexual acts were free from danger only between persons of the requisite age.

836
864
858 This does not mean that children did not commit indecent acts. The game of ioto, in which little girls try to cook (and which is always one of their favorite games (2) as it probably is throughout the world), often gave rise to it. Small boys joined in the game in order to taste the meal. And quite naturally they began to play at "husband and wife," more or less. Often this game involved only innocent imitations, but other times touching and exhibitions occurred between children of the same sex or of opposite sexes. This game is far more dangerous nowadays, [81] because of a change in the attitude of young people toward sexual matters.

2. Some boys imitate this game in order to acquire the habit of preparing their own meals. Later they benefit from it on more than one occasion.

The game of yembankongo, in which boys, imitating monkeys, chase each other through the trees and creepers can -- and does - result in reprehensible scenes.

582
178 In former times most girls were married before puberty. But their husbands did not touch them until they had completed their normal development.

582
835
864 Among some individuals the fear of sexual relations was so deeply rooted that it persisted even beyond the age limit and was

582 conquered only by repeated assaults of passion. Thus it is generally
593 known among the natives that young women used to seek refuge in
864 their mother's house when the husband wanted to begin making use of his rights as a husband. The mother would try to persuade her daughter to submit to the law of life. But sometimes, if her child seemed too resistant, the mother made excuses for her and asked the husband to consider her daughter's youth. The man usually wanted to remain on good terms with his mother-in-law so he did not insist and resigned himself to waiting till nature influenced the spirit and heart of his wife.

Since young people were brought up in deep fear of dangerous relations, it should not surprise us that this feeling became a real habit and did not disappear spontaneously the moment a certain degree of liberty was permitted. As a matter of fact, could we not make similar observations in Europe?

This is the natural explanation for the praiseworthy degree of morality among adolescents in the past.

Nowadays all that has changed. The young people follow
178 where their passions lead them. Not the slightest check is placed on
836 their impulses. Parents pay only slight attention to the conduct of
864 their children. [82] It is better not to inquire into the morality of modern youth. Husbands no longer respect the bodies of their adolescent brides, who are themselves quite used to a sexual life and eagerly look forward to it; and no longer know the feeling of "the fear of men." Should we then be astonished at the frightening de-
[164] crease in the birth rate (1) and the ever increasing spread of venereal diseases, which seem to have been unknown in the past?

The reasons for this change will be investigated further on, under the letter C.

836 B. Between adults. Here the Nkundó are very lenient. There is a difference, however, between the socio-legal and moral viewpoints, although as we shall see the latter is influenced by the former.

[582] A woman is entirely free, legally speaking, as long as the first payment on her bride price has not been made. No man has

---

1. The natives say that in the past young wives quickly became pregnant. And now ...

581 consent; they do not distinguish between this conjugal pact which changes and the bride-price agreement which alone persists. And since for them the bride-price agreement is essential, while the conjugal pact is secondary, they pay attention only to the former. Thus we can legitimately interpret their statements on the nature of unions by inheritance and by replacement [230] as referring to the bride-price contract. Thus the fact that each relative of the deceased who wishes to marry the widow must make an individual payment (bekooli), while the clan contract continues unchanged demonstrates the effective reality of the distinction between the familial bride-price agreement and the individual conjugal pact.

To summarize all these considerations; we think that we are justified in giving the following definition: Nkundó marriage is a conjugal contract between a man and a woman which is firm in itself and is linked to a bride-price agreement of prescribed nature and formalities between their families.

Therefore we can conclude that the essential nature of Nkundó marriage conforms to the definition of that institution in general as given in ethics and that it fulfills all the necessary conditions. (1)

---

1. I am very grateful to Attorney General A. Sohier for having, in a very specific way, drawn my attention to the legal aspect of this question and having thus suggested that I make a thorough investigation of it.

[231] Chapter IV. The Age of the Bride and Groom

582 The Nkundó may marry at any age. Their law contains no stipulation on the subject. Nevertheless, it was customary in the past for a girl to be married very young, while the boys could not take a wife until they had reached a really advanced age. Nowadays the time of marriage for the ever increasing number of girls and for the boys has been pushed forward almost universally. Let us examine the situation in detail, distinguishing between the sexes.

584 safeguard freedom, and the impression should not be given that childhood unions are encouraged -- as it sometimes is -- by the exemption of immature wives of polygamists from a supplementary tax.

There is no law requiring an elder sister to be married before a younger one, but such is the common practice. Exceptions are made only under certain circumstances, and particularly if the younger girl finds a suitor earlier than the older one, a reason which includes and sums up all the others (such as disadvantageous physical and psychological tendencies of the older sister).

178 584 This practice of marrying daughters off before maturity is beginning to change because of the increase in freedom which has been introduced by colonization. Nevertheless, as this change is not especially advantageous [236] its manifestations are still very slight. The Christian education of parents must of necessity delay the time of the daughter's marriage and will do so ipso facto as soon as Christian influence becomes sufficiently strong in the region.

Article II. Boys

● 582 Except in the rare instances of an engagement of two young children, it was formerly the common and normal practice for men to remain bachelors for many years after puberty. The old men tended first to their own wants, and the youths had to wait their turn, like their elders. This was considered entirely natural. Later on they could establish a home and "profit" from life. Meanwhile they found a little compensation with the wives of certain relatives or of others, if the opportunity arose.

582 561 [556] To explain this state of affairs we can invoke the political organization of Nkundó society, which is based on age. It is therefore natural that those possessing authority should have its external signs, and one of the foremost of these is the wealth manifested in the possession of wives. But, as we will point out later, the present situation greatly weakens this explanation.

582 583 It is more natural to consider the delay in the marriage of young men a logical consequence of the marriage of girls at an early age. Suppose that a boy is fifteen years old while his sister,

582 whose bride price will fall to him, is only three. At that age, she
583x is married. The children's father is in a hurry to use the capital he has received, small as it is, rather than to let it lie unproductive and run the risk of losing it one day for some reason or other. Therefore, he uses it to obtain a wife, often a child, for himself or his brother. Thus the boy is deprived of the means which would enable him to establish a home when he attains adulthood. He will have to wait till he can acquire new wealth, either through his own work, or thanks to the assistance of [237] various relatives, or through the death of his father or his uncles, or -- frequently -- from the bride price of a daughter to be born to his sister's *nkita*. In the *last instance, which formerly occurred very often, he was obviously* forced to wait many years. Thus in the example cited in Chapter II, Article X, had the events occurred a few decades earlier, Bakutu would have had to wait for the bride price of his cousin Wǎngi, who was a good twenty-five years younger than he. If he had then been given the first part of the bride price, he would probably still have had to wait over ten years before becoming a husband in the full sense of the word, because the *ikulă* would have been used for an engagement with a very young child. More probably he would have been considered too young; the bride price would have been used for the benefit of another, and he would have had to wait another indeterminate number of years. Once the practice of marrying girls when they are small children is accepted, there is no other way out; everything is linked, and the result is inevitable, given the mentality of this society.

582 The elders' power to act in this way to their own advantage
428 stems from the collective nature of the people's inheritance system
585x (Chapter II, Article X and XI, 3, B). A bride price goes to the family; the right of the individual members is not personal or exclusive but is derived from their position in the hierarchy within the group.

Nevertheless, the fact that a man may claim priority to the bride price of his uterine sister over a brother born of a different mother seems to indicate that he originally held the chief rights to these valuables. The exercise of this right is postponed, and the concomitant transfers result.

● 582 We have spoken of the unproductivity of the bride price.
583x This is a Nkundó notion, and it is accurate only because the old
men want to satisfy themselves before their sons. Actually, they could very easily reconcile their desire that the bride price should be productive with the aspirations of the youths, at least in many instances. All they would need to do would be to use the valuables they have received for their sons' benefit by acquiring girls of the same age for them. The productivity of the valuables would not diminish [238] in the least, of course, since the goods would remain in the family. On the contrary, it would be increased because a
[842] greater number of progeny would probably be born. But our natives
knowledge of physiology does not seem to be sufficiently developed
[181] for them to come to this conclusion. And even more probably their
egoism has greatly clouded their intelligence and silenced the voice of good sense and fatherly love to make it possible for them to multiply the number of their wives and thus increase the easy satisfaction of their sensuality, augment their wealth, and reinforce their social position. It will be their sons' turn after their death.

561 This situation is aggravated by the fact that, except for the
428 bosólo, the brothers, not the sons, of the deceased inherited the
595x widows, who thus remained in the hands of the old men.

582 Because of their attitudes the old men monopolized most of
the women. They established large harems for themselves, so that it was very difficult for the young men to find a woman to marry; they had to consider themselves lucky if their father provided them with a child.

Thus it was unheard of that a young man between twenty and
582 thirty years old should marry, except for a few instances where a
178 man acquired a child who was to become his wife after a number of
years. Men were usually forty years old or older before they married.

Nowadays the situation has changed entirely; the attitude of the old men favors the young much more and has become almost normal. The great majority of fathers, if they have the means, procure a wife for their sons as soon as the latter are old enough to express a desire for one. This improvement is due to the fact that it has become

582 178 much easier to get married. A great number of young men who would still be bachelors had they lived under the old regime now have wives. The young people leave home to go and work for the Whites, and the parents feel sorry for their sons and do not want to see them leave without a wife [239] to take care of them and prepare their food. This feeling has dealt the old custom a severe blow. And even for the young men who stay at home, it is no longer so difficult to obtain a wife. Paternal love has here triumphed over egoism.

Furthermore, the elders have been forced to take a more humanitarian attitude because, since the European occupation has given the young women a new freedom, they have abandoned their husbands and fled to the centers where, under the protection of the Whites, they have joined lovers who are as young as they. Therefore, it was much more intelligent to obtain a wife for their sons in an honest fashion rather than to expose themselves to loud palavers by the abandoned husband.

From all the preceding description it is clear that the man was considerably older than his wife. But because of the inheritance of widows it also happened -- and still happens -- that a man acquired wives who were older than he. When young men marry at the present time, many wives are definitely younger than their husbands; many adolescents have received prepubescent little girls for wives.

As a general rule a Nkundó woman does not like her husband to be much older than she, and she likes it even less if he is younger. Nowadays unions between persons of the same age increase continually. This increase is due more to the remarriage of divorcées, who prefer husbands of their own generation to the old men who first paid for them, than to first marriages between equals. The influence of Christian couples is called upon to play a great educational role in normalizing the situation of the girls.

561/ 582 The boys must marry in turn, according to age, because of the seniority rule which regulates social relations. That is the rule, but it may be mitigated by the application of another rule, namely the one pertaining to the direct or indirect rights to a sister's bride

582 price. The rights of a polygamist's sons over their sisters' bride 561 prices are not absolutely equal [240]. One of them can oppose the decision that one of his brothers, born of a different mother not related to his, should benefit from the bride price paid for his uterine sister. His right will incontestably prevail. But if he has other sisters, it is his duty out of brotherly love to help his less fortunate brother. If both of them have uterine sisters, there may be an exchange of bride-price rights which will hurt no one. Finally, if only the younger brother has a sister, his right to her bride price is precisely defined and personal, and it may therefore happen that he marries before his elder brother. But unless the mother is absolutely opposed to any such arrangement, an attempt is usually made to settle the matter in a friendly fashion by assigning the future bride price of a niece or cousin to the younger brother. The rules as we have explained them hold absolutely only for the present time. They also existed in the past, but the delay in the sons' marriages, as described above, resulted in a transferring of rights which could completely upset this order. Since, in practice, many men began their married lives after the death of their fathers or uncles, thus with inherited wives, the elder brothers benefited from the rules before the younger ones did. (1)

---

1. See also Chapter II, Article X.

593 × 578 Lastly, the eldest son may be deprived of his rights for certain reasons, such as a serious failure in his duties of respect and submission to his father. To punish him his father may curse him publicly, declare that he has lost his position as eldest son, and forbid him to acquire a wife. This practice is no longer common today; it would have little effect, for the young man would go and seek his fortune elsewhere. But history has left us some examples like that of Ikɛ́tɛ́ ya Lonkinja, the first-born son of Ikɛ́tɛ́ Elongama éâ Longɔ́mbá, the ancestor of the Bombɛ́nga wǎ Bokenda family (Besombɔ).

Chapter V. Obstacles to Marriage

M 582 There is no specific term in Lonkundo for an"obstacle to marriage." General terms are used, as in our European languages.

Our people make no distinction between obstacles which nullify a marriage and those which are prohibitive in nature. Therefore, we will simply speak of obstacles without making any distinctions among them.

Article I. "Race"

M P 582 563 The question of a diversity of races can be considered only with reference to the Batswá. Marriages with them are strictly forbidden. Nkundó rules of behavior are very strict with respect to relations between Baotó and Batswá. It is unheard of that opposite sexes of the two races should mingle, even for a simple conversation. There would then obviously be no question of marriage.

M P 563 588 Among the Bilángi, a Batswá tribe of the Injóló of the Salonga-Luilaka (who absolutely refuse to be called Batswá or Balúmbe), there have been two cases of such unions to my knowledge. Two Baotó women were involved, both, by a singular coincidence, from Lotángonda (Injóló, Engónjó). One was Njalí, daughter of Yole and sister of Lomúlú, the other Nsombola, sister of Limpema.

Njalí was taken in marriage by Bakao of Ikindatói. She wanted children desperately and, not having had any by her two successive Nkundó husbands, she ran away to the Bilángi in hopes of having better luck there. [242] She was not disappointed in her expectations. She gave birth to four sons: the eldest, Bonkono, who died some years ago; Bakao (Georges), who died in 1933; two sons, Bonkomí (Louis) and Joke (Henri), who are still alive. In 1933 the descent of the four numbered thirteen sons, six daughters, four grandsons, and one granddaughter. But there was never a legitimate marriage between Bakao and Njalí since no bride price was paid. And the descent have formed a small Bilángi clan, which is dependent on the grandmother's clan (Ilongó of Lotángonda).

P 178 588 563 164 doctor who was in charge of the dispensary at Flandria at that time informed me of the case of a Botswa fruit harvester in the service of the H.C.B. who had syphilis of unquestionably sexual origin.

M ● 582 Though a racial difference constitutes an obstacle to marriage, a tribal or ethnic one does not. Where the geographic situation permits, true Nkundó, such as the Elíngá, marry members of neighboring groups such as the Ngombe, the Mbole, or the Ekonda.

Article II. Social Status

M 554 582 [565] [571] Among the Nkundó a difference in social status is not an obstacle to marriage. They have no social classes strictly speaking. They differentiate between those with authority, those who are inferiors, and the individuals or families who are not entitled to their word in political matters; but these ideas do not come into play in ordinary social relations, [245] and especially not with respect to marriage. A person may belong to a clan which is inferior, subject, dependent, foreign, or descended from a slave; nevertheless he may marry even a member of the group's senior clan. These distinctions are in the realm of politics; a marriage is a matter of law, affection, and good relations based on the payment of a bride price.

M 567 582 Actual slaves are an exception, but here a distinction must be made between the sexes. Unions with slave women were very common, but they were not marriages strictly speaking. Before a real marriage was entered into, the woman was set free. More details on this subject will be given in Chapter VII, Article V. For men the situation is altogether different. The condition of a slave was not only inferior, it was dishonorable, though a bit less so than among the Ancients. It might be overlooked if the love between the pair was unusually ardent, and there are a few clans descended from a "free" woman and a slave man, who were united in a proper and legitimate marriage for which the master paid the bride price.

There is no longer any opposition to the union of a "free" person with the descendant of a mixed marriage. The children may always claim kinship with their maternal ancestors who in these

582
567 matters are more important than the father's ancestry. (1)

[554] 1. Among the Nkundɔ́ no shame is attached to not knowing the family of one's father. But not to be able to name the mother's clan is a great dishonor for it proves that she was a slave.

There is less opposition to the first generation born of a couple who were both slaves than for their parents, and it progressively decreases with each succeeding generation. There is practically no opposition now to the grandsons. The reason seems to be [597] that although receiving a wife from one's master in a regular marriage does not constitute emancipation (*nsikɔ́*, *nsikola*) for the slave, it is a kind of adoption (*wɛ̌mya*, *-ɛ́mya*). [246]

Article III. Kinship

582
835 Marriage between members of the same kin group (*isangano*, *bosangema*, from the verb *-sangema*, "to be related") is forbidden. But how far does such a kin group extend? It is impossible to give a general rule. On the one hand, it is certain that if two groups are not descended from a common ancestor there is no bond of kinship between them, even if they live side by side. But on the other hand, it is not possible to say that all those who are descended from the same ancestor are relatives and that marriage is forbidden between the various branches of the grouping they comprise. The question therefore amounts to knowing by which ancestor the exogamous grouping is defined. A decision on this point may only be made through the examination of each case individually.

614 It is impossible to deduce anything from the meaning of the term clan, for it is usually defined as "a grouping of families united to one another by kinship." This leaves us back where we started. The characteristics usually given for a clan are: generic name,

614
621
The Bongangá are divided as follows:

1) Bongangá, in the narrow sense of the term (Basékà Inanó, B. Bolaká, B. Bongénge, B. Bandúwá, B. Lokókómyá)

2) Bongangá of Bakoyó, or Bolíma

3) Bongangá of Mbómbé or Basékà Botúna

Thus Lotólá, Bakoyó, and Mbómbé each have an Etóo group and a Bongangá group. The Bongangá, in the narrow sense of the term, have in addition a "slave" group named Batsína, a part of which is located with the Bosánjo. A foreign clan is settled with the Etóo of Lotólá; they are the Bofalambóka, descendant of a man named Ekonda (Imbolo) and his sister who was married to Mbete, a slave from Bompángá (Wǎngatá) who was freed by his master.

Many villages have foreign groups living with them such as descendants of slaves (*ekwála*), or others (Ekonda, Bombwanja, groups related by marriage called *likilo*, *mpámá* or *bowélé*, and *mbúsolá*, (1) etc.). [249]

[609]
1. *Mpámá* or *bowélé* are any foreigners who were formerly invited by the group patriarch to remain with him in order to carry out certain tasks, especially metal-working. *Mbúsolá* is the term applied to a child born to a woman out of wedlock (Chapter I, Part 2, Article IV, 3). Such children are also called *nkio y'ǎóme*, "the husband's flying dogs," because they are not his own children but are attached to their mother's husband in the fashion of these animals, who attach themselves to trees when they sleep.
[848]
[825]

614
582
If we add the descendants of relatives who have married into other more or less remote groupings, the prohibition against marriage on account of kinship applies to a good many people. In accordance with the law of exogamy, such a kin group may be widely dispersed geographically, and it is understandable that it is not always easy to

M
614 untangle all the threads. Thus it happens that young people form
582 relationships with the intention of marrying without knowing that they are related; they are warned only by the opposition and ensuing explanations of the elders.

We may conclude that marriage among descendants of a common ancestor is generally prohibited if they live in the same village. It is frequently permitted on the other hand, if they belong to different villages, provided that they are not, at the same time, related to one of the ancestresses.

M
582 Clearly, it is difficult to say what precise degree of kinship formed the basis for the prohibition of or permission for a marriage
835 between descendants of a common ancestor, or what are the boundaries of an exogamous grouping.

M
[611] It is also apparent from the preceding observations -- as from the examination of affinity as an obstacle to marriage -- that the descent from a common mother is a more important factor than descent from the father. This does not give proof of a form of matriarchy, though it could be the remains or the beginning of one, or could provide a partial explanation for one. It stems quite simply
M
[842] from the Nkundó notions concerning procreation, in which they attribute the major role to the mother. There is also the fact that
M
[602] greater shame is attached to being united with a person descended from the same woman, and finally the fact that they feel a stronger
M
[593] affection for the mother than for the father (a sentiment [250] which is accentuated by polygamy). The three causes are closely related.

M
184
582 Finally, it should be noted that there is a group among the Nkundó we are discussing which is less strict than the others in this matter. The relatives among whom marriage is prohibited is definitely more limited; that is, their exogamous groupings are more limited. The people in question are the Bongale (see Introduction), and the same phenomenon may be observed among the Elingá. (1)

P
[582] 1. The Batswá are still more liberal, and in this respect their practices differ very little from ancient European laws and customs.

684 582 There is no sanction against the infraction of the law of exogamy. There is only the opposition of the parents and patriarchs, and a quasi-innate habit.

582 614 Note also that members of certain clans frequently marry members of certain others, among whom they prefer to choose their wives. Therefore a good proportion of the women married into any given family will belong to one particular clan. The Wafé (Bakáala), for instance take a great many of their wives from among the Bongale w'ôtóló.

[174] 582 614 We may reasonably assume that the ancestors of related groups, who now marry among themselves, formerly practiced exogamy. If this assumption is correct, it must be admitted that with the progressive growth of families, this rule has been relaxed in certain respects so that the present situation has resulted. Consequently, it would not be surprising if these legal provisions became even less rigorous in the future. Actually, some young people have begun to [178] violate the rules of exogamy and their example has freed the whole family. (2) Thus the Bokátola maintain that their two groupings, Bompela and Ilóngé, who now intermarry, formerly comprised a [251] single exogamous entity. Contemporary instances appear here and there, but they remain very rare, even between persons who are very distantly related, and much rarer between close kin. (1) For the Nkundó still feel very strongly about this law. The bulk of the people are entirely opposed to any laxity or violations and the patriarchs and notables act against them with all their power. But the strength of

2. See Chapter I, Article VII, 1.

1. A recent case was that of Elímá and Bolúfe, who both belonged to the exogamous group of Bokenyola of the Bonjoku, but one belonged to the Baséká Bokóyó family and the other to the Baséká Njoli.

582 614 their intervention is greatly reduced by the fact that much of their authority has been shifted to the chiefs named by the colonial administration, and also by all the contingencies of modern life. Since on the other hand, the young people are gradually breaking the ancient limits in order to acquire greater freedom, the elders will one day have to yield to them.

Article IV. Affinity

582 602 Affinity among the Nkundó should not be understood to have the meaning given in European civil or ecclesiastic law. Marriage is forbidden with all persons who are bakiló (Sing. bokiló). (2)

Therefore one must know what persons are called bakiló, a fairly complicated problem for us Europeans.

To make the matter more understandable, certain considerations must be developed before giving the general rules.

1. General considerations

1) Affinity is not as great an obstacle to marriage as kinship. It is possible to obtain a sort of "dispensation," and for many degrees of affinity, divorce or death removes the barrier. But there are transgressions [252], and, except for the few indicated above, these do not occur in cases of kinship.

The following legitimate reasons for a "dispensation" are given: a danger that the patrimony will be scattered because of the infidelity of a wife who absolutely refuses to remain with her husband, added to the difficulties of a divorce palaver and the subsequent reimbursements, and -- a reason closely linked to the one just given -- a passionate love between the two people who are relatives by marriage.

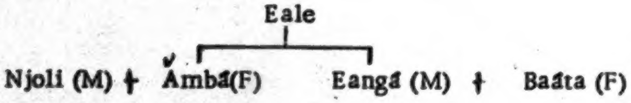
2. Contrary to the statement by Father Kaptein (Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 541).

582 602 The dispensation is given by the ndonga acting with the family council, which often yields before the fact, particularly if the second reason is involved. (1)

> 1. "To give a dispensation" is translated as kilola. A marriage contracted with a legitimate dispensation or one accorded because of the pressure of the accomplished fact is called kilókilólá, or "an affinity which is not maintained according to the regulations."

[671] 2. Contrary to European law, which recognizes only a direct affinity between husband and his wife's family, Nkundó law also recognizes an indirect affinity, so that a person is affinally related even to the spouses of his wife's relatives. That is, each person is affinally related, not only to his spouse's kin, but also to their relatives by marriage. Thus, in the example below, Njoli and Baáta are true relatives by marriage, though indirect ones. (2)

> 2. The Nkundó do not make a terminological distinction between the two types of affinity. We are using the terms "direct" and "indirect" for the sake of convenience and clarity.



There is an important difference between the two types of affinity: direct affinity is a much greater obstacle to marriage than indirect affinity, and exceptions are made only rarely and only for certain degrees of relationship.

582 602 576 3) A distinction must be made between "superior" and "inferior" relatives, that is, between those who have [253] precedence

582 602 [576] and those who owe submission and respect. The "superior" relatives are the ascendants, uncles, aunts, etc., in short, all those bearing the title of "father" or "mother," as well as elder brothers (elder sisters, elder cousins, etc.), who are batómóló (sing. botómóló). [601] The "inferiors" are the descendants, those who are called "children" (bǎna): sons and daughters, grandsons, nephews, nieces, younger brothers or sisters, and those who are classed with them and called bakúné (sing. bokúné).

[595] [587] 4) Polygamy and the inheritance of widows introduce another element. We will see that although persons of certain degrees of affinity may not marry, the prohibition is lifted to permit the inheritance of widows.

5) Our term "relatives by marriage" the Nkundó term and bakiló are not synonymous, even with respect to direct affinity. When we use the term "relatives by marriage" here, we are speaking in Nkundó terms. They do not consider certain persons whom we would include in that category as "relations by marriage." Such persons [601] are included in the group which as a whole is designated as likiló or bakiló, but when properly and accurately referred to they are called bǒme, "husband," or wǎli, "wife," because they may marry each other and therefore affinity, strictly speaking, cannot be applied to them. In other words, for the Nkundó, affinity is the relationship of a person with (only) those of his spouse's relatives whom he is forbidden to marry. It is well to bear in mind the double meaning of this term.

2. The rules

1. Direct Affinity

582 603 606 A. Marriages are prohibited in the direct line. Nevertheless, in accordance with consideration number 4, a son or grandson may inherit or marry the widows of his father or grandfather, but not the reverse. [254]

● 582
606
603

Example 1

Bakando (F)
|
Mbɔ́yɔ́ (M) + Esalɛ́ (F)

Mbɔ́yɔ́ may never marry Bakando.

Example 2

Eale (M) + Boɔ́ná (F)
|
Mbɛ́lá (F)

Eale may never marry Mbɛ́lá.

Example 3

Bombembí (M)
|
Ikɛ́tɛ́ (M) + Basásɔ́ (F)

Bombembí may never marry Basásɛ́. (1)

[681]
[586]

1. If after the death of his son Ikɛ́tɛ́, Bombembí wanted to marry his widow, the mother of the deceased would be so angry and ashamed that she would irrevocably leave him. Such conduct on the part of a father during his son's lifetime would give the son full rights to vengeance (assassination, war with the help of the mother's clan, etc.), for it would be equivalent to a real disavowal of his son. But the case is purely hypothetical.

Example 4

Esalo (M) - Longá (F)
|
Lofɛ́tɛ́ (M)

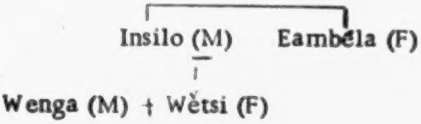
Lofɛ́tɛ́ may marry Longá.

N.B. The same rules apply to grandparents and grandsons.

582
604
B. Members of different generations in the collateral line: Marriage with older, "superior" relatives of the spouse is forbidden. The Injólǒ sometimes make an exception for an aunt of the spouse after the latter's death, but this practice is very much frowned upon.

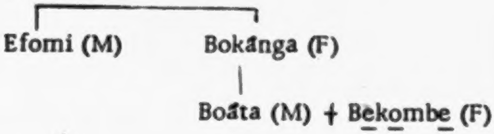
Marriage with the spouse's inferior, younger relatives is permitted.

Example 5


Insilo (M)
Eambela (F)
Wenga (M) + Wětsi (F)

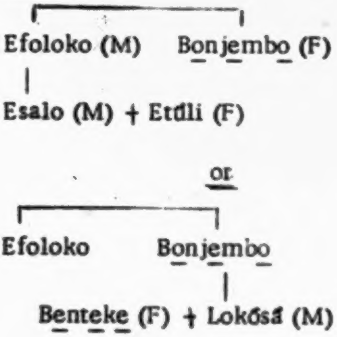
Wenga may not marry Eambela (with the exception noted).

Example 6


Efomi (M)
Bokânga (F)
Boâta (M) + Bekombe (F)

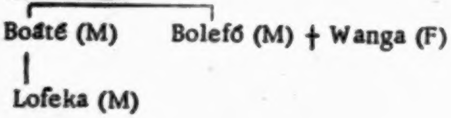
This case is identical with the preceding one.

Example 7


Efoloko (M)
Bonjembo (F)
Esalo (M) + Etûli (F)
or
Efoloko
Bonjembo
Benteke (F) + Lokósâ (M)

Marriage is forbidden in any event [255]

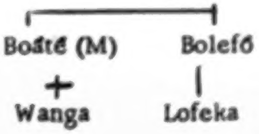
Example 8


Boâté (M)
Bolefó (M) + Wanga (F)
Lofeka (M)

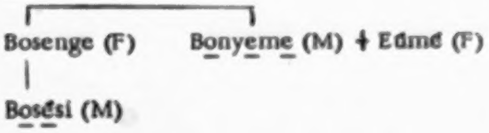
Lofeka may marry Wanga.

582
604
Example 8 (continued)

or


Boåté (M)
Bolefó
+
Wanga
Lofeka

Example 9

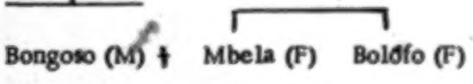

Bosenge (F)
Bonyeme (M) ǂ Eámé (F)
Bosési (M)

Bosési may marry Eámé.

The same rules apply equally to great-uncles and great-aunts, and to cousins who are not equals (related as "father" and "son"; see the table of kinship relations and terminology in the appendix).

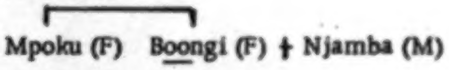
582
607
C. Equals in the collateral line: The degree of relationship is of no importance, for example, marriage with an older sister (or cousin) of the spouse is forbidden; marriage with a younger sister is permitted. The same rule applies to women, but after the husband's death an exception is sometimes made in the elder brother's favor in order to facilitate inheritance arrangements. Only the Boángí -- like [184] the Elángá of Losanganya -- make no distinction between elder and younger siblings and always permit the marriage. They are even beginning to be imitated by the Injóló.

Example 10


Bongoso (M) ǂ
Mbela (F)
Bolófo (F)

Bongoso may marry Bolófo.

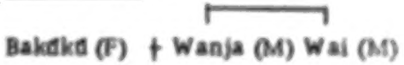
Example 11


Mpoku (F)
Boongi (F) ǂ Njamba (M)

Njamba may not marry Mpoku.

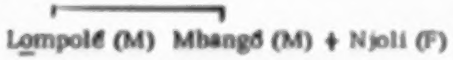
582
607

Example 12


Bakɔkɔ (F)
Wanja (M)
Wai (M)

Wai may always marry Bakɔkɔ [256].

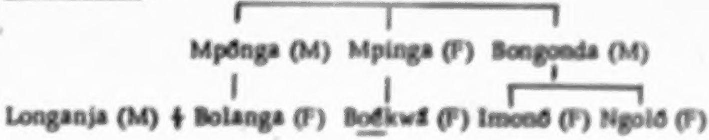
Example 13


Lompolɛ (M)
Mbangɔ (M)
Njoli (F)

Lompole may not marry Njoli. Very rarely an exception is permitted.

Example 14

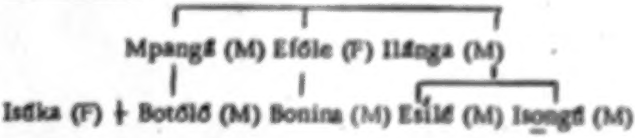
582
605


Mpɔnga (M)
Mpinga (F)
Bongonda (M)
Longanja (M)
Bolanga (F)
Boɛkwɛ (F)
Imonɔ (F)
Ngolɔ (F)

Longanja may not marry his elder cousins, but he may marry the younger ones with the exception of Boɛkwɛ who is bɔ̌nankɛnɛ and has a "father's" rank (see above).

Similarly:

Example 15


Mpangɛ (M)
Efɔle (F)
Ilɛnga (M)
Isɛka (F)
Botɔlɔ (M)
Bonina (M)
Esilɛ (M)
Isongɛ (M)

Only Botɔlɔ's younger cousins may marry Isɛka. Bonina is bɔ̌nankɛnɛ, therefore "father," and consequently included among the uncles (see B, above).

[602] Note, finally, that the more distant the relationship, the less strict the prohibition, that is, dispensations and exceptions are more easily accepted.

2. Indirect Affinity

582
606
604

A. Marriage among those of lineal relationship is forbidden but certain exceptions are permitted. There are two possibilities: with the father's wife (Example 16) and with the son's wife (Example 17).

Example 16

Mbembe (M) ‡ Ekila (F)
|
Itɛ́na (M) ‡ Bokɔ́sa (F)

If Bokɔ́sa dies or is divorced from Itɛ́na, the latter may marry Ekila, but this exception is not often made because they would be very open to unkind criticism. [257]

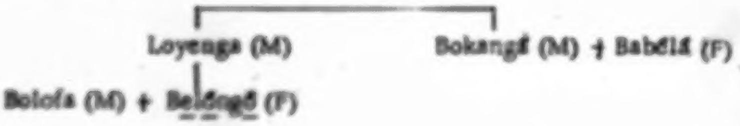
Example 17

Etsíɛ (M) ‡ Bokolí (F)
|
Njoku (M) ‡ Imɛ́ngɛ (F)

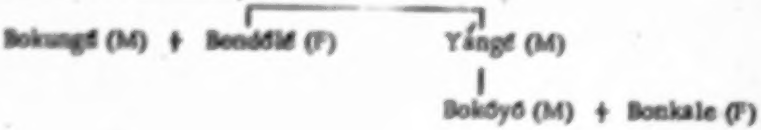
After Bokolí's death Etsíɛ is permitted to marry Imɛ́ngɛ. Such a marriage is more leniently regarded if Etsíɛ himself paid the bride price for Imɛ́ngɛ, for in that case he is preserving his capital in marrying her. This consideration may also apply during Bokolí's lifetime, if Imɛ́ngɛ does not want to remain with Njoku. Under such circumstances, however, Njoku's mother would oppose the marriage with all her power. If Etsíɛ does not listen to reason, he can expect a divorce or even war with Bokolí's clan, to whom he is doing a great injury by taking away his stepson's wife. After divorce Bokolí's kin may refuse to give Etsíɛ her new bride price and may give it directly to Njoku so that he can obtain a wife to replace the one that was taken from him. [584]

582
604 The same rules are applicable to aunts and uncles, but they are less strict:

Example 18 (comparable to Example 16):


Loyenga (M)
Bokangé (M) + Babélé (F)
Bolofa (M) + Belóngó (F)

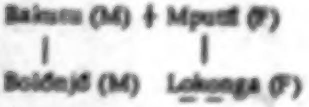
Example 19 (comparable to Example 17):


Bokungé (M) + Bondólé (F)
Yángé (M)
Bokóyó (M) + Bonkale (F)

582
595
605
[602] B. Marriage between affines who are collaterally related through their lineal relatives:

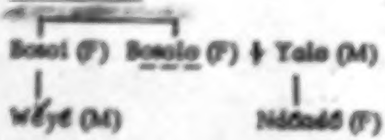
a) Marriage between descendants [of the lineal relatives through whom the affinity is established] is strictly forbidden. Thus, the children of two spouses may not marry each other; they are considered brothers and [258] sisters. The same rule applies to two half-cousins (Example 21).

Example 20:


Bakutu (M) + Mputé (F)
Bolónjó (M)
Lokonga (F)

Marriage between Bolónjó and Lokonga is strictly prohibited.

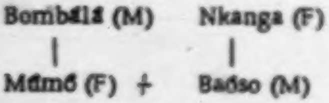
Example 21


Bosoi (F)
Bosolo (F) + Yolo (M)
Wéyé (M)
Nóóndó (F)

Marriage between Wéyé and Nóóndó is prohibited.

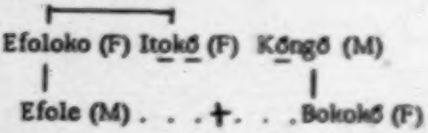
592 b) Marriage between ascendants [of the lineal relatives through
602 whom affinity is established] is forbidden, but an exception is made when the affinity is broken by death.

Example 22:


Bombɛlɛ (M)
Nkanga (F)
Mɛmɔ (F)
Baɔso (M)

Marriage between Bombɛlɛ and Nkanga is forbidden.

Example 23


Efoloko (F)
Itokɔ (F)
Kɔngɔ (M)
Efole (M)
Bokokɔ (F)

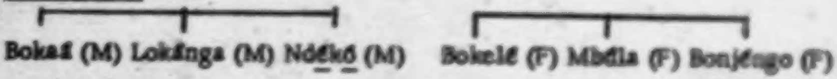
Marriage between Itokɔ and Kɔngɔ is forbidden, but permitted upon the death of either Efole or Bokokɔ.

Dispensations and violations of this rule do occur.

C. Affinity in collateral line arising from a marriage between relatives in collateral line: The rules are the same as for direct affinity in collateral line (see above, no. 1), C.)

Example 24

[607]

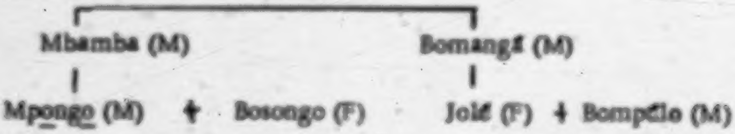

Bokaɛ (M)
Lokɛnga (M)
Ndɛkɔ (M)
Bokelɛ (F)
Mbɛla (F)
Bonjɛngo (F)

Bokaɛ is married to Bonjɛngo. Neither he nor Lokɛnga may marry Bokelɛ, and Ndɛkɔ may not marry Mbɛla [Translator's note: the table shows Ndɛkɔ to be female, but I have corrected the error]. If he had married Bokelɛ, Ndɛkɔ could marry Mbɛla. Furthermore, if Bonjɛngo were Mbɛla's senior, then Lokɛnga could also marry Mbɛla. [259]

592
605

The same rule applies to cousins:

Example 25

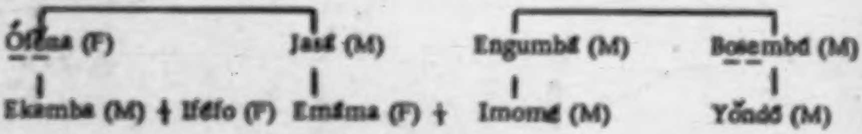

Mbamba (M)
Bomangɛ (M)
Mpongo (M)
Bosongo (F)
Jolɛ (F)
Bompɛlo (M)

Marriage between Bompɛlo and Bosongo is forbidden.

As the degrees of relationship grow more distant, the obstacles increasingly lose their force, so that exceptions are more readily accepted.

One point remains to be noted, although it has already been mentioned several times. Cousins (male or female) who are [601] bɔnankɛnɛ are "fathers" to their cousins according to Nkundɔ́ law; they are therefore treated as aunts or uncles. For them the prohibition is very severe, especially if they are nyangɔ̂kilɔ́, "mother" of a relative by marriage.

Example 26


Ófɛna (F)
Jasɛ (M)
Engumbɛ (M)
Bosembɔ (M)
Ekamba (M)
Ilɛ́fo (F)
Emɛma (F)
Imomɛ (M)
Yɔ̌ndɔ́ (M)

Ekamba is Jasɛ's bɔ̃nankɛnɛ and therefore Emɛma's "father." Ilɛ́fo, his wife, is therefore Emɛma's mother. Emɛma is Yɔ̌ndɔ́'s bokilɔ́. Consequently, Ilɛ́fo is the mother of Yondɔ́'s bokilɔ́ and therefore Yondɔ́'s nyangɔ̂kilɔ́. Marriage between Ilɛ́fo and Yɔ̌ndɔ́ is strictly prohibited, though it is not prohibited between Emɛma and Yɔ̌ndɔ́ (see Example 15).

Adulterous relations among these various persons will be discussed in Chapter VI, Article VI, 2. [260]

602 sufficient dowry at home, then I can always go and appeal to my
613 maternal uncles who are obliged to help me insofar as they are able. I even have the right to the free dowry of one of the children of my mother's nkita. I may always lay out gardens and hunt in the territory of my bonyango, and take part in the court sessions of the maternal clan when they consider the allotment of the free dowries or the division of the inheritance. If, however, I wish to leave my father's clan and establish myself for good in the maternal clan, then I receive priority in everything over my male and female cousins and become heir and clan leader directly after my maternal uncles. This is, thus, a truly princely compensation for the so-called inferiority of the woman in native society: the child of the sister (bonankana) restores her gloriously to the honor and rank which are due her.

8. Related Clan: Likilo

602 Outside my paternal clan and outside my maternal clan, I still
601 have blood relations: namely, the children of my paternal aunt and of my sisters or female cousins, each of whom belongs to the clan of his own father. Just as the children of my mother's brothers are my children, so the children of my father's sister are also my fathers. I am, thus, in the same relationship to the children of my mother's brother as the children of my father's sister are to me.

As far as the children of my sister are concerned, they are also my real banankana and, therefore, the fathers of my own children.

The other members of the related clans (who are thus not blood relations) all share, according to generation, in the classification of immediate relatives: all the "fathers" of the husband are "fathers-in-law"; all the mothers, "mothers-in-law"; etc. There is this single big difference, that the "superiors" of the husband are also your "superiors." According to the opinions of the Nkundo, they are the only real relatives. Those on the husband's side are called bokilo; those on the wife's side, bokanga.

/159/ The "subordinates" of the husband are not real relatives
and rightly call each other "husband" and "wife." In various legally
583 defined circumstances, marriage relations and marriages are permitted
between the latter.

It is unnecessary to repeat that all of the members of the reciprocal clans share in these relationships: the whole generation of a clan

602 601 member is, as it were, identified with that member, so that, for instance, all younger sisters and female cousins of one spouse become "wives" of all the younger brothers and male cousins of the other spouse. One must really have the legal sense and the patience and the capacity for palaver and unravelling of an old Nkundo to make sense out all of these relationships. They themselves compare them, in fact, with the inextricable clew of the intestines of a sort of dwarf crocodile: besofo bya lokekele.

9. Exogamy

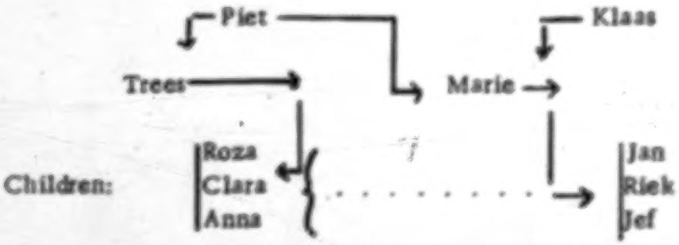
613 582 ● The term, "exogamic clan," often heard or encountered in writings, is also, at least in the Nkundo-Mongo society, very misleading. The group of persons with whom marriage is forbidden does not constitute any common entity; it differs from person to person. Two half brothers can have the same paternal clan but differ in maternal clan; they can have the same maternal clan and different paternal clans. Marriages are forbidden for older brothers and sisters that are permitted for the younger ones. The rules differ from one blood relation to another, from blood relation with relative-by-marriage to blood relation with relative-by-marriage, from relative-by-marriage with relative-by-marriage to relative-by-marriage with relative-by-marriage.

If one still wishes to put the law of exogamy into European terms, then one might say: 1) blood relationship forbids marriage insofar as the blood relationship is recognized. This recognition varies from clan group to clan group. Sometimes in the same legal but extended clan, an exception is made to this recognition; mostly, however, the different autonomous clans which descend from the same distant ancestor are still bound by the law of exogamy. Generally, groups which have the same father but a different mother /160/ separate most quickly. 2) Relationship (other than blood) forbids marriage—insofar as the relationship is recognized between the parents of spouses; it sometimes permits marriage between children of spouses.

613 582 184 Here it should be observed once again, however, that the customs differ from region to region as regards this recognition; that, for instance, the stepson in many regions may marry his stepmother in a regular marriage; and that the violations are less severely judged and punished in proportion to the degree to which the forbidden relationships diverge.

Rights of the Male Children in Relation to the Nkita of Their Mother

596 We have already seen that the right of succession and father-
583 hood passed to the male children of the sister, because she had been
605 sold and had brought money into the family, or rather because she had
a *nkita* there, a sort of guarantee for the money that had been received
for her. *Nkita*-ship brought another right to them, namely, the female
children born of the mother's *nkita* belonged to them; they could sell
them and get themselves other women with the money. They could
[582] not, however, marry them, since they were their cousins, and custom
was opposed to any marriage between relatives. The boys could,
[602] nevertheless, take the *nkita* of their mother as a wife, since the Negroes
have no notion of affinity or relationship by marriage. The male
children were, then, the owners of the female children that the *nkita*
of their mother brought into the world:



These three girls, children of *nkita* Trees, belong to the three sons of Marie. If Marie had only one son, then Piet would have the right to trade the two other girls for money and to buy other wives with this money, either for himself or for his younger brother; but if she [Marie?] brought female children into the world, half of them belong to Marie's son.

583 If the *nkita* gave birth to no children of the female sex, the
604 boys of Marie could resort to the husband of the *nkita* of their mother,
namely, their uncle, *nyangobika*. If, however, he had no fortune,
no money, [337] no wives, no girls to sell . . . or only wives to whom
others could lay claim and had more right, then they were disinherited,
poor devils in society, and it cost them long years of work and much

000 What is one to do if even in such cases it is taught, "One must respect" the native customs?

587 The inheriting of wives existed everywhere; it was, in fact,
428 the only wealth left behind by the native. The details of the distribution
[184] differed according to district or tribe. Thus, for instance,
in some districts it was the eldest son who alone inherited all of the
wives of his father. This was in order to preserve the rank and the
class of the family. Prestige and power actually depended only on
the number of wives that one possessed. In this case, however,
this eldest son had, in place of his father, to provide a wife for his
younger brothers and the sons of his sisters. As far as impediments
[582] to marriage were concerned, generally they strictly observed the
impediment of blood relationship; two blood relatives, even in a
distant degree, should never enter into marriage, [541] with the
exception of the irregularities mentioned above. As for relatives
by marriage, these do not exist for them in any degree. There is,
nevertheless, one case that somewhat resembles relationship by
marriage, namely, the Nkita might never be in the home of a man
together with the woman whose Nkita she was. Thus, the son-in-law
or the brother-in-law might never take the Nkita of his wife into
his home. If, however, the wife had left or died, there was no further
impediment.

587 When, like the inheritance above, the family had returned
428 the bride price and had then married the woman to another man, this
431 second husband also had to give a gift to the one who, according to
the law of inheritance, had the right to the wife. This gift was
called a bampanga.

587 If the wife who was freed by the family had children, only a
428 part of the bride price had to be returned. Sometimes the wife was
freed completely through her children. The children then remained
with the family of the deceased husband, and they then represented
the value of the bride price of their mother. If, however, such a
woman was married again by her family, they demanded a second
bride price for that.

587 Sometimes a single woman was the Nkita of several other
428 women. In the inheritance several people then had a right over
583 her, and everyone demanded his share. For instance, a young man

614 to each other than either of these groups with Nsambásélé (see Diagram 2). It was for this reason that in my dissertation I divided this rank into two different ranks (kinship subgroups I^{0} and II^{0}). (15) Since there are no obvious criteria for the two ranks and since such a division is not possible in the other villages, I no longer make such distinctions.

[582] [835] The groups of rank C are the exogamous units of the future. Although marriage is not permitted between the members of different C-groups, sexual relations between them are permitted. This permission corresponds to the lonkana of the Bokóté (16).

Groups of Rank D

614 582 The groups of this category constitute the truly exogamous units. It is true that marriages between "advanced persons" ["evolués"] take place even within rank D, but this practice is still frowned upon by the old people. In Isangi we also find the special stipulation that members of two D-groups, Ngelé and Nkoto, may intermarry, [195] but they may not enter into marriage with members of the D-group, Bolíma. Since in present-day Isangi, Bolíma is extinct, this stipulation only works to the disadvantage of the emigrants in Bolíma w'ési and of the children of sisters in other villages. The Bolíma group is regarded as the father group of Isangi (see Diagram 1); Ngelé is the group of the older brother, Nkoto that of the younger brother. This serves as an explanation for the special position of Bolíma in the exogamous system. It is said that it would not be right for a "father" to marry one of his "children" even if these children are the offspring of such distant generations that they intermarry.

15. Müller, Fürstentum, p. 125.

16. Hulstaert, "Mariage," p. 97.f.

614 582 The exogamy rules of the Ekonda do not only refer to their own, agnatic group, but also to all cognate groups to whom kinship relations can still be traced back, i.e., a span of about five generations.

Groups of Rank E

614 621 It may be assumed that these groups always extend beyond the confines of a village. Those parts of a group who have settled next to each other have their communal meeting place, but even the dispersed fractions of the group may come there to consult. In former times probably only one such group had a *nkúmú*, a sacred prince who lived in the main village (e.g., Isangi), while the other villages were ruled by the senior. Once the title of *nkúmú* was also bestowed on persons from other villages, the importance of the E-groups almost completely disappeared. Also, in this category the local group plays a much greater role. Occasionally it even includes dependent [609] villages which have not yet been "paternalized," i.e., which are still regarded as alien. In this connection it should be mentioned that probably all larger local groups tend to reconstitute themselves into kinship groups by reinterpreting the genealogy to suit their purposes. It is certain that the "kinship relation" of many "kinship groups" has been created in this manner. We may dismiss the possibility that groups which are divided from one another by the rule of exogamy will invent a kinship relation so close that a previously possible marriage would be outlawed. Also, the combination of other important functions of the lower ranks resulting from the invention of a closer relationship would run counter to the tendency of progressive differentiation (17).

17. We know through statements of the natives that about one hundred years ago the exogamy limit was lowered to the present level. Before that time only the Lonkâna was permitted among the Ngele, Nkoto, and Bolíma.

601 bananankana). As a result, the children are legally identified
602 with their mothers. Thus, my sister's child is a child (bona)
to me, or a sister's child (bonankana), but to my own child
he would be father (ise).

In addition, he has maternal blood relatives, children of my mother's sisters, who are thus his "brothers and sisters," or children of the daughters of his "male mothers." Since these last daughters are his "children," their children would be his "grandchildren." Again, all the members of these clans who are unrelated by blood are his bokanga.

IV. Likilo

601 There are affinal clans which have given wives (wali; pl.,
602 baali) to my clan. This does not, of course, concern my mother's
582 clan, which is a clan related by blood, but rather clans which have
given wives, be it to a classificatory "father," to one of their
sons, or to one of the sons of the latter. The Nkundo calls all
the members of these clans -- with the exception of the woman --
bokilo (pl., bakilo). The Nkundo, merely by marrying a woman,
at the same time marries all her legal younger sisters, that is
to say, all the bakune [Ed., bankana?] and bana of this woman.
Similarly, the woman marries not only a man, but at the same
time all his legal younger brothers, that is, all the bakune and
bana of this man (except the children of their own union).

Just as the clans which have received a wife from my clan thus
601 include bokanga and sisters' sons, so also clans that have given
602 us a wife include bakilo and "wives." Clans which have given
a wife to my bonyango follow the same rules.

Comments

121 In several recent studies, especially in South Africa, four
rules have been defined which govern classificatory terminology.
614 The first rule is that of the "unity of the lineage": The lineage
602 as a whole is classified as belonging to a particular 'generation'

2: Hulstaert
583 -

Mongo FO32

/For information concerning the mode of marriage and bride-price among the Nkundu, see category 116, pp. 81-82, 101-104, 109-172, 175-176, 190, 192-206, 218-220, 270-271, 332-333, 334, 414-415, and 423-424./

843 bokeka. The same is true if the pregnancy is the result of adultery;
837 the natural father must bear all the consequences of his act. The
husband is absolved from them and has no relations with his wife
until the end of this particular pregnancy. The culprit must give
him a pledge by which he publically recognizes his responsibility,
and he is expected to fulfill all the duties of a husband. Therefore
he may have relations with the woman during her entire pregnancy
without paying additional indemnities. If any accident befalls
the mother or the child, he is made to pay a large indemnity.

Note finally that, as we have pointed out in Chapter II,
● [583] Article XI, no bride-price payment can be made from the time
the pregnancy becomes visible until after the end of the period of
seclusion.

843 To facilitate childbirth the previously mentioned concoc-
tion of various leaves mixed with kaolin (isaá) is continuously ap-
844 plied to the abdomen. Medical scarifications on the abdomen are
757 also performed.

Finally, as the time of delivery approaches, special douches
[278] made from a concoction of the bark of the boímbo tree (1) are
administered. All these treatments are called beté byà bosánjá,
that is, medicines (for the purpose) of an easy delivery.

Article III. Birth

844 1. Delivery

A woman remains with her husband for childbirth; she does not go home to her family. Only exceptionally does she give birth elsewhere -- for instance, if she has been sent home for one reason or another, or during a trip, while working in the fields, near a stream, or a spring, etc. Such sudden unexpected deliveries

---

1. Certain douches, especially the one made of boímbo, are also used as abortive agents.

613 member. In the case of common use or of an exceptionally good
423 yield (large game, a rich haul of fish, large yield from a particular
cultivation of common property, such as palm beer), these are divided
by the clan leader and their respective shares allotted to all members.

Personal property consists of the hut and the tools of the man, the
613 furniture of the woman, and the domestic animals. These are movable
422 and can also go out of the clan through inheritance. Should they leave
their husbands, married women may taken with them whatever they
have received or inherited personally from their wise.

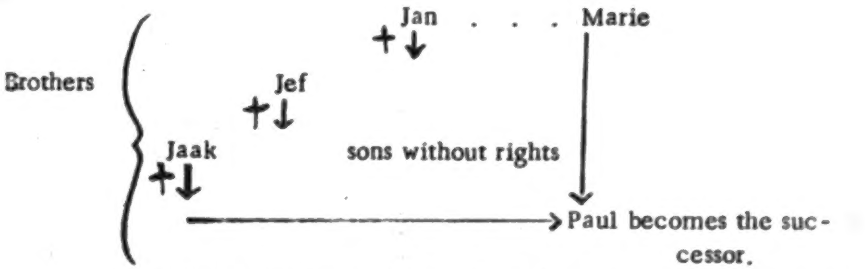
In contrast to the economic property of the clan, there is the dotal
424 or capital property, the marriage settlements, which do not have
613 economic, but only legal value. They represent the rights over people.
583 In the first place we find those persons who themselves are the source
of rights: the marriageable girls (bibunanyi) of the clan /A/ and the
substitutes for women married into the clan /A/—that is, the women
who are married into the allied clan /B/ with the acquired bride price
(nkita). /Ed. Clan A pays bride price for a woman from clan B, the
allied clan. Then clan B uses this acquired bride price to obtain
another woman in marriage, a "substitute." This substitute is nkita to
[567] the original woman./ In addition, there are the slaves who can re-
place a caput. In the second place, there are the titles which represent
421 a caput: the /153/ so-called dotal securities (baumba). These dotal
613 securities or titles are kept by the clan leader and, with the knowledge
of his immediate successor, hidden somewhere in the ground. With
the approval of the clan council, he may also lend them out. These
dotal possessions or rights are also common property of the clan and
are used to procure a wife for the clan members, each in his turn.

The common ownership of the economic property makes possible the difficult sharing of woods and river, prevents the cutting up of the property, hinders the impoverishment and the proletarization of the poor, and insures the livelihood of all of the clan members. This common ownership has nothing more to do with communism than the common ownership of property in our nuclear families.

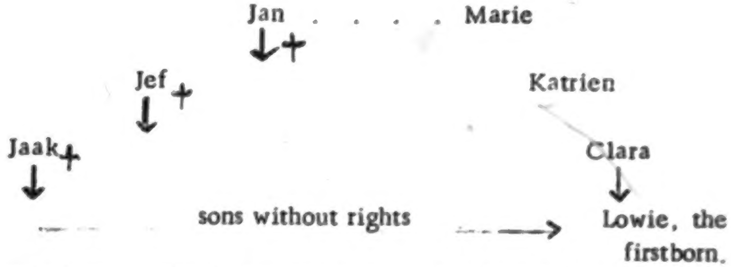
The dotal or capital property, the bride price titles, which have perhaps aroused the most indignant and lofty compassion of our civilized world, have less to do with buying and selling the wife then our own dowry and class system. They are permanent legal titles of the contract which is made between the clans of the couple on the occasion of the marriage. Our individualistic liberalism and mercantilism have regarded these legal securities only through economic spectacles and

596

their sister, bona wa nkana. As an example:


Jan
Marie
Brothers
Jef
Jaak
sons without rights
Paul becomes the successor.

Or if there were more sisters, the rights passed to the firstborn son of those sisters; for instance:


Jan
Marie
Jef
Katrien
Jaak
Clara
sons without rights
Lowie, the firstborn.

He consequently became the father and supreme head of the family upon the death of the three brothers.

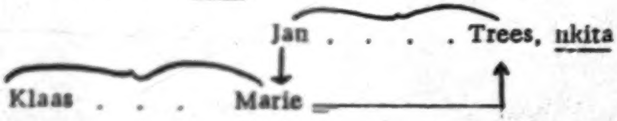
596
583
562
In order to understand this peculiar custom clearly, some explanations should be given. The custom in this country is that the woman is sold; not a single one escaped that general rule in former days. With that money the father or brother bought, or rather, had to buy himself another woman. This wife belonged, however, to the daughter or sister who had been sold; the daughter or sister called her nkita, "goods" or "property." The children born of this nkita called her [the woman sold]: is'e'omoto, "female father." Even if she brought male children into the world, the rights of their mother passed to them, and [334] their mother was called father by the children of the nkita. According to our ideas, they were only nephews. That held even if the woman was still not paid for; it was enough that a ndanga, a security as proof of further payment, had been given. It was also not

596 necessary for her father or brother to have brought her to the man and
583 to have received money for her; another member of the family was
567 sufficient. She was sold by her family and accordingly, wherever the money had remained or whoever had received it, she had her rights in the family. Since the family maintained itself through the sale of the children of the female sex, the male children born of them were considered as the masters, the rightful claimants, the fathers. There was no exception to this rule; it was not to be altered, and no one had ever thought of disputing the place of the claimant or of laying claim to his rights. I have only heard of one single case of that sort, namely, at the succession of the Ruki, the younger brother was said to have killed his older brother in order to take over his place. He was said to have made a hole in his brother's proa, so that it sank when it reached the middle of the stream. The matter in itself seems an impossibility; also I consider it a legend, unless an accident might have happened that was interpreted in a mistaken or deliberately false manner.

The rightful dlaimant, bona wa nkana, sister's son, might
596 still be a child; nevertheless he was called father and everyone vied
576 with one another in showing him the honor due a father. That was the unbreakable law, not only for the father common to the hamlet, boloi, but also for the father of each individual family.

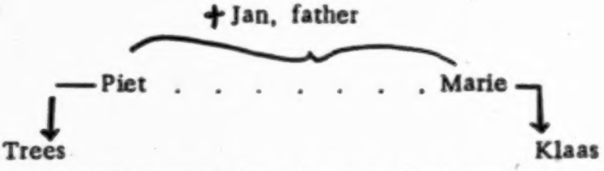
Nkita

583 Nkita is what the woman is called who is bought with the money
602 that the father or brother has received for his daughter or sister on the occasion of her marriage. In reality, however, she is only the nkita, goods or property, of the sold woman. Nkita ekam, "my property," this woman calls her. For instance, Jan [335] sells his daughter, Marie, to Klaas and buys another wife, Trees, with the money received. The latter woman is now the nkita, the property, of Marie.

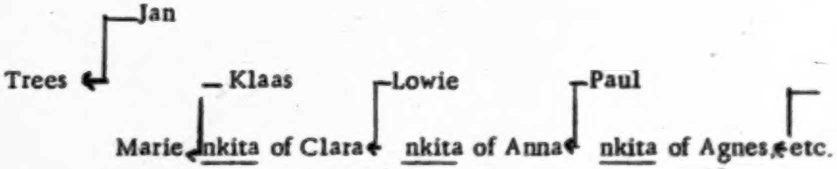


●583
602

Or else, father Jan having died, Piet sold his sister, Marie, to Klaas and buys Trees with the money:



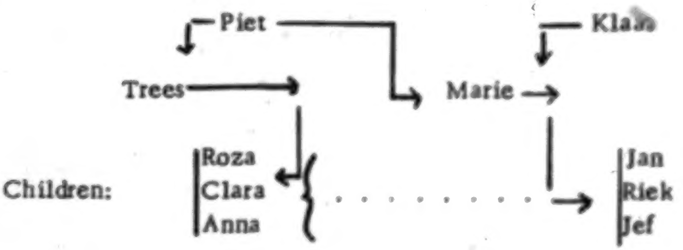
Practically speaking, Marie profited very little from her nkita. She had, it is true, certain rights over her nkita; thus, the latter considered her as her mistress, helped her in sickness and heavy work. Unfortunately for her, what she gained on the one side she lost again on the other side, in that she herself was also the nkita of another woman and consequently had the same obligations to fulfill towards the latter that her own nkita owed her. For example:



Jan, then, sold Marie to Klaas in order to buy Trees; Klaas, however, in order to be able to buy Marie, sold in turn his sister, Clara, to Lowie; Lowie acquired the necessary money to buy Clara by marrying off his sister, Anna. Thus, Trees then became the nkita of Marie, Marie the nkita of Clara, Clara of Anna, Anna of Agnes, etc. In short, every wife had her nkita and was, with few exceptions, the nkita of another wife. I say with few exceptions; for example, the wife was not the nkita of another woman if her husband had bought her with his own earned money. Practically speaking, this changed the matter very little. Also [336] there was no change if the nkita of a woman died; it was only a loss for the buyer or owner of that woman.

Rights of the Male Children in Relation to the Nkita of Their Mother

596 We have already seen that the right of succession and father-
583 hood passed to the male children of the sister, because she had been
605 sold and had brought money into the family, or rather because she had
a nkita there, a sort of guarantee for the money that had been received
for her. Nkita-ship brought another right to them, namely, the female
children born of the mother's nkita belonged to them; they could sell
[582] them and get themselves other women with the money. They could
not, however, marry them, since they were their cousins, and custom
was opposed to any marriage between relatives. The boys could,
[602] nevertheless, take the nkita of their mother as a wife, since the Negroes
have no notion of affinity or relationship by marriage. The male
children were, then, the owners of the female children that the nkita
of their mother brought into the world:

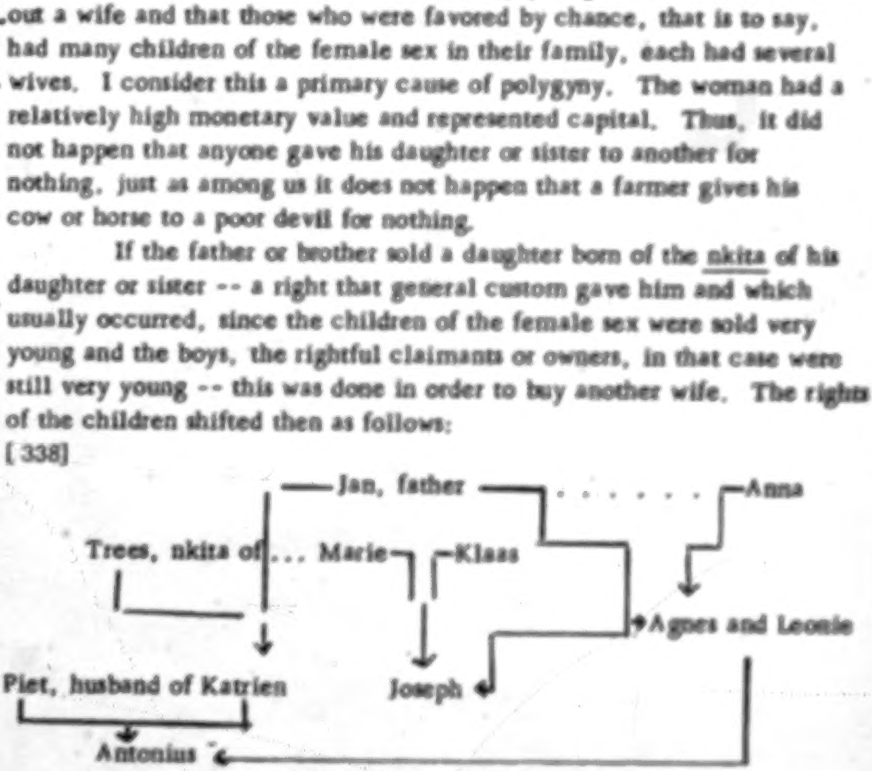


These three girls, children of nkita Trees, belong to the three sons of Marie. If Marie had only one son, then Piet would have the right to trade the two other girls for money and to buy other wives with this money, either for himself or for his younger brother; but if she [Marie?] brought female children into the world, half of them belong to Marie's son.

583
604 If the nkita gave birth to no children of the female sex, the boys of Marie could resort to the husband of the nkita of their mother, namely, their uncle, nyangobika. If, however, he had no fortune, no money, [337] no wives, no girls to sell ... or only wives to whom others could lay claim and had more right, then they were disinherited, poor devils in society, and it cost them long years of work and much

583 searching for old disputes and old arguments about wives to get a wife.
604 And then they were still not always successful; their youth itself was
against them here and robbed them constantly of the little that they
464 had saved for that purpose. The means for getting money, such as
lances, knives, arm and foot bands, were extremely scarce. The
Blacks do not know of workers or servants, and if one of those poor
souls presented himself at the home of one who was better endowed by
fortune and offered to chop wood for him, to lay out a manioc field,
or to build a house for him, to gather straw and bamboo in the forest
for that purpose, then the inborn laziness of the Negro would require
long months to complete that work. As salary, the worker received
only a few bakonga (copper arm of leg bands); these he already owed
to the owner for having shown too much inclination for one or another of
his wives. The result of this was that many young men remained with-
589 out a wife and that those who were favored by chance, that is to say,
595 had many children of the female sex in their family, each had several
562 wives. I consider this a primary cause of polygyny. The woman had a
relatively high monetary value and represented capital. Thus, it did
not happen that anyone gave his daughter or sister to another for
nothing, just as among us it does not happen that a farmer gives his
cow or horse to a poor devil for nothing.

583 If the father or brother sold a daughter born of the nkita of his
604 daughter or sister -- a right that general custom gave him and which
usually occurred, since the children of the female sex were sold very
603 young and the boys, the rightful claimants or owners, in that case were
still very young -- this was done in order to buy another wife. The rights
of the children shifted then as follows:
[338]



583 604 603 Jan, the father, by selling Katrien, the nkita of his daughter Marie, becomes indebted to Joseph, the son of Marie and at the same time his own grandson; and on the other side he becomes the debtor of Antonius, his other grandson, by selling his mother, Katrien.

Anna, whom he bought, was then the nkita of Katrien and the quasi-nkita of Marie. Both sons, Joseph and Antonius, were hard pressed because of Anna, the nkita of both of their mothers. If Anna bore two daughters, as I have indicated, the case was simple: the first daughter belonged to Joseph and the second to Antonius. If, however, she gave birth to only one daughter, then this child belonged to Joseph, and Antonius was left out in the cold. If father Jan had no children of the female sex by Anna, then the matter was extremely thorny for both of them, and if their grandfather or uncle possessed no money, had no more wives by whom he had daughters, there was nothing left for them to do but, at his death, to take the nkita of their mother as a wife. For this reason it happened many times that young men lived with old women, and even though there was then generally no more hope of children, those wives were then still good enough to cook the meals and do the little work that a Negro household requires.

600 I will not digress any further about the method of distribution of women, about the rights over the women which the nkita system brings with it. It would take us too far. Furthermore, not only the present, but also the past and the future are involved in it; so that one would have to be a Negro and raised in these matters to understand them clearly ... and even then they involve numerous palavers (disputes), which continually agitate the families and the villages.

[339]

The Origin of the Nkita?

576 583 562 The sale of the woman and the immediate loss of her freedom must naturally have given her cause for revolt. It has perhaps cost the man a severe struggle to make the woman content with her lot. A compensation or reimbursement had to be given to her, and most certainly the nkita system has its origin there. It was at least a partial compensation that the man gave to the woman. It gave her rights over her nkita

596 and over the children who were born to the latter; even more, it gave
583 her own children rights which exist nowhere else in the world and probably
562 among no other people: they became the superiors, the fathers of the family of their mother. Unfortunately, practically considered, the woman enjoyed very little of the gift which was given her; she remained what she was, slave of money, slave of the man. Even her children, for whom the nkita-ship secured such great advantages in her family, brought them into a false situation, in that it robbed them in the home of their own father of all the advantages that it brought them in the home of their mother's father. It was only the old and well-favored who actually gained advantage from the nkita system and enjoyed them.

1) It relieved them in the first place of all care on behalf of their daughters whom they sold while still children; and if later, after they were grown up, these daughters complained about the injustice done to them, they could answer them, "But, my dear daughter, I have done you no wrong; here in my own house is the woman whom I bought with your money; she belongs to you always, and the children that I have by her are your children; you are both their father and their mother; they will call you is'eomoto (female father), and in that capacity they will honor and serve you; the boys will at the same time be the children of your children, and the girls will be sold to give your sons the opportunity to buy a wife for themselves."

2) It discharged them for the most part from all care of providing a wife for their sons, and it denied the latter the right to make claims to the women whom the father possessed. [340] If the son begged his father for a woman, he could put him off and say to him, "But, my boy, you have the nkita of your mother; the children (girls) who will be born of her are for you. We shall sell them, and with the money we will buy you a wife." Most of those girls, however, were traded by the father for another wife, since his son was still, in that case, small. Almost all the women then ended up in the harem of the father before passing on to the son. Thus, after all, the nkita system only benefited the lust and the lasciviousness of the old Negro and made him the one and only master of the woman. Sons, daughters, wives, and children were, in contrast, the dupes and victims of the nkita-ship.

[531]

FAMILY LIFE AND CUSTOMS AMONG THE NATIVES OF EQUATORIAL AFRICA

583 The so-called marriage, or rather, the acquisition of a wife takes place:

1. Through a bride price to the family of the woman who is given;
2. Through buying, or the payment of an amount for a woman who is no longer in the hands of the family;
3. Through inheritance;
4. Through abduction.

Acquisition by bride price is called enga, njengenga: "the binding or engagement of oneself."

Acquisition by purchase is called somba, masomba: "buying."

When a woman is acquired through inheritance, the designation under which she was first acquired is retained. When the deceased father, uncle, or brother had acquired the woman by bride price or purchase, the heir will say: "I have taken this woman by bride price, purchase, etc."

Acquisition by abduction often occurred formerly in the tribal wars.

In disputes the natives often say: "He stole that woman." This is usually to announce the fact that the woman, according to them, was acquired in a dishonest manner.

The payment of bride price, purchase, etc., is usually made with a combination of money, objects, and male or female slaves.

This combined payment is called songa, masonga: "equalizing, settlement."

When a native is asked in what way he acquired his wife, he will usually say: njoloengaki (I have paid her bride price), because he [532] knows well that this is the most honest way. There are, however, many wives who have been acquired in the other way.

583
584 Acquisition by bride price sometimes begins before the birth of the expected daughter. The man, usually a polygynist, gives something of security to the father of the child. This security

583 584 [836] consists of a beautifully fashioned native knife, or a lance, or mitako [copper wire used as currency]. In some areas, it was the polygynist who attended the mother at the birth of the daughter. He had the wood gathered, water brought, and food prepared. If, then, the expected child was a boy, the security was usually returned, and the contract declared null and void. If, however, the one who had given the security was a village chief or a man of importance, then the father of the child tried to give him another daughter. The father had, for instance, at an earlier time given a daughter to another man of much less importance. In the above-mentioned case, he would give back the bride price received, take his daughter back, and give her to the polygynist from whom he expected a larger bride price.

583 Sometimes too the boy was taken by the polygynist and remained in his family until the father could trade a daughter for him.

583 591 While very young and still a child, the little daughter was installed in the harem of the polygynist. She was brought up there, together with other children of her age and status; or rather, she grew up there in the midst of those heathen customs without any upbringing.

585 The composition of the harem of a polygamist:

The first wife was called the Bomatsa; she preceded all the other wives in rank, and in the absence of the polygynist, she was the mistress of the harem.

The second wife was called Ekila; she was the most loved and preceded all the remaining wives. She was also called Nkonda.

The third wife was called Bolumbu. At the appointment of the nominee, a certain ceremony took place, and the wife was clothed with an animal skin. The Nku, a sort of patriarch and [302] magician, sometimes had three or four Bolumbu who served as messengers to other villages. In this capacity they had special [12] privileges. For instance, to attack a Bolumbu was a reason for declaring war.

[833] The remaining women were simply women of the harem, without distinction.

585 In the area of Monjoku, among the Bokee [Bole], the first wife was called Nkisa, with the same rank as Bomatsa. The second

000 the same rights as the other children of the polygynist.

595 The polygynist always sought to increase the number of his
556 wives, for his prestige rose and his fortune increased in that manner.
593 If anyone in civilized lands seeks to enlarge his fortune, this is
done, people say, in order to insure the future of his children. The
native thinks little about that; his primary idea is to enjoy himself
and to surpass others in prestige and esteem. As far as the future
of his children is concerned, there are polygynists who possess twenty
or thirty wives or even more, and sometimes they have only one or
two children. Also it is little in keeping with their notions to care
for the future; he who is still alive tomorrow must take care of
595 tomorrow then, so they reason. On the contrary, instead of caring
for his children, the polygynist often took great trouble to obtain a
593 wife for his son. The son, however, was not yet the owner of his
584 wife; it was, so to speak, only a loan. Not until after the death of
606 his father did he become owner. In some districts, when the father
had obtained a wife for his son, he first kept this wife for some time
for himself. Only after a few months did he give her to his son. In
595 other districts, when the wife was pregnant by the son, he was obliged
593 to send her for a few days to his father. He was not allowed to bear
606 the honor of fatherhood alone; his father must share that with him.
842 The father reserved for himself the honor of naming all of the children of his children. In some areas of the Congo, morals were so
551
835 low and common that the father even kept his own daughters in his
harem. This did not occur in Equatorial Africa, but there was a
custom that was not much better. The magician was sometimes
583 consulted about the bride price which the father tried to get for his
791 daughter, or the brother for his sister.

The magician then gave them the advice that they themselves should first have relations with their own daughter or sister. This custom existed almost everywhere in Equatorial Africa.

583 [535] Bride Price. In general, the daughter was given in marriage upon payment of a bride price. The father had little choice of the future husband of his daughter. The one who guaranteed the most goods in payment was certain to get her. Since, in most cases, the little daughter had not yet arrived at the years of maturity, there was naturally no question of her consent. The bride price was not paid all at once, but gradually during the years while the daughter grew up. Since the daughter was given without her consent

583 to an old, worn-out, gray-haired man, it naturally often occurred that when she arrived at maturity, she no longer wished to remain with him. She therefore left him and went to another, or back to her family. In the latter case, however, great difficulties arose concerning the return of the bride price. Indeed, with the bride price the father had received for his daughter, he bought himself another wife. This wife was then called the Nkita of the daughter. We could translate *Nkita* in this case as "substitute." The *Nkita* represented the value of the sold or married daughter. Meanwhile, the daughter herself was often the *Nkita* of the daughter or sister of her husband. Thus, many women were the *Nkita* of each other. According to their customs the children (boys) were in theory the heirs of the *Nkita* of their mother. The *Nkita* was, in fact, the value or the bride price of their mother.

One might ask whether the wife was then always content that she was, so to speak, an object of trade. In general, yes, she was satisfied with this. This is how the customs were, and nobody gave a thought to changing them. Usually the wife simply found herself in an arranged situation (*fait accompli*). Gradually a certain sense of honor is coming into being among the Christian wives against these heathen customs.

If the woman desired that a large bride price or purchase price be paid for her, was it also because she wished to care for the future of her children who would be heirs of her bride price? No, they say, not for that reason -- for, they add, what woman knew in advance that she would have children, and moreover boys? There
[163] are, in fact, many women who have no children. Also, [536] only
573 the boys are eligible for the inheritance; the girls are heirs only in
439 name. When it came to the inheritance, the children inherited the
581 *Nkita* of their mother only if there were no more brothers of the
mother or uncles on their father's side. The mightiest always had the greatest right.

Usually a youth had to acquire a wife with the bride price or supplement of the bride price of his sister. The inheritance of the *Nkita* of his mother was only secondary. Still we often see a heathen wife leave her husband in order to go to another, without bothering much about her children who remain with the deserted husband, their father.

● 583 If the wife was content and if she insisted that a large bride price be paid for her, it was out of vanity and also to procure money for her family (father or brothers), and not out of concern for her children.

586 583 Divorce. When the wife left her husband to go back to her family, they had to give back the bride price they had received. In general this was a very difficult business, because the bride price was used by the father or the brother to obtain another wife for himself, the Nkita. Thus, in order to be able to return the bride price, they would have to sell this Nkita or give her back to her family and ask for the return of her bride price. There were few other ways to give back the bride price; all their property consisted of wives. Since the family usually could not or would not return the bride price, the deserted husband then sought to become the master of the mother or a sister of his runaway wife, whom he then kept as a hostage. Among the heathens, this was a commonly used expedient to retrieve the wife or the bride price. When the runaway wife discovered that her mother or sister was a prisoner of her former husband, she often went back out of sympathy for her mother or sister. When the wife had gone not to her family but to another man, which was often the case, the family urged this second husband to give the bride price to the first husband. This was usually the only practical means by which the difficulty was resolved. This second husband then paid the bride price to the first. Since the [537] bride price often had been only paid in part by the first one, he then paid the remaining portion to the family.

Sometimes, if there were no way to return the bride price, the woman was forced to go back to her deserted husband. To avoid unpleasant treatment, she had to feign submissiveness.

586 587 As soon as an agreement was arrived at, either with the family or with the second husband, over the return of the bride price, the first bond was considered broken. If the woman was with her family, she was considered free to enter into a new agreement. If, however, she was with another husband, then after the argument she was considered bound to that second husband. The primary bond of their agreement thus appears to be the bride price.

586 If the wife had children, these remained with their father, and the bride price was only partially returned. The value of the children was, so to speak, subtracted from the bride price.

837 When a wife of a polygynist had illicit relations with another
586 man of the same village, this was called *Bonsamba*. When she had
such relations with a man of another village, this was called *Isoke*.
As we have observed, the ordinary wives of the harem often had such
relations. When the woman eloped with her *bonsamba* or *isoke*, or
with whomever it was, she was pursued by her husband or owner, who
tried to get her back. If the wife refused, negotiations over the bride
price began.

If an agreement was reached or if a pledge was given as guarantee for the payment, the first bond was considered broken, and the woman was considered bound to this second man, even though he had been her *bonsamba* or *isoke*.

It might also happen that the first husband was so jealous that
he did not want to make any agreement; then he attempted to kill
either the guilty wife or her second husband. If the woman became
593 ill at the home of her husband, he went to tell her family and had to
758 give a security to the family.

583 Often the family came to get the wife, in order to be able to care for her better. If, in such a case, the wife [538] died at the home of her family, there were no further difficulties about the bride price, according to their customs. If, however, the bride price had still not been completely paid, the family asked their son-in-law to pay the remainder.

583 In recent times, now that the heathen customs have been
171 undermined by the European occupation, we see that the husbands
whose wives have gone to their family when sick and have died there,
demand the return of the bride price from the family, but this is
completely contrary to their old customs. In one case the husband
could demand the return of the bride price, namely, if the wife
had left while healthy to go to her family and had died there.

562 **Buying or Trading of Women.** The woman was also in many
439 cases an acknowledged object of trade. The great village chiefs,
among others Ibuka and Yoma, of whom we shall speak further,
carried on a sort of woman trade. With European articles and also
native currency, they went to other districts of the Equator [Province]
to buy women with them, just like someone who goes to market, even
though no public markets where women were sold actually existed.

000 What is one to do if even in such cases it is taught, "One must respect" the native customs?

587 The inheriting of wives existed everywhere; it was, in fact,
428 the only wealth left behind by the native. The details of the dis-
[184] tribution differed according to district or tribe. Thus, for instance,
in some districts it was the eldest son who alone inherited all of the
wives of his father. This was in order to preserve the rank and the
class of the family. Prestige and power actually depended only on
the number of wives that one possessed. In this case, however,
this eldest son had, in place of his father, to provide a wife for his
younger brothers and the sons of his sisters. As far as impediments
[582] to marriage were concerned, generally they strictly observed the
impediment of blood relationship; two blood relatives, even in a
distant degree, should never enter into marriage, [541] with the
exception of the irregularities mentioned above. As for relatives
by marriage, these do not exist for them in any degree. There is,
nevertheless, one case that somewhat resembles relationship by
marriage, namely, the Nkita might never be in the home of a man
together with the woman whose Nkita she was. Thus, the son-in-
law or the brother-in-law might never take the Nkita of his wife into
his home. If, however, the wife had left or died, there was no fur-
ther impediment.

587 When, like the inheritance above, the family had returned
428 the bride price and had then married the woman to another man, this
431 second husband also had to give a gift to the one who, according to
the law of inheritance, had the right to the wife. This gift was
called a bampanga.

587 If the wife who was freed by the family had children, only a
428 part of the bride price had to be returned. Sometimes the wife was
freed completely through her children. The children then remained with the family of the deceased husband, and they then represented the value of the bride price of their mother. If, however, such a woman was married again by her family, they demanded a second bride price for that.

587 Sometimes a single woman was the Nkita of several other
428 women. In the inheritance several people then had a right over
573 her, and everyone demanded his share. For instance, a young man

587 428 583 had to acquire a wife with the bride price or with a supplement of the bride price of his sisters. Three of his sisters, for instance, were married, and he needed 3,000 mitako to pay for his intended wife. Now he went with presents to his three brothers-in-law and asked for 1,000 mitako from each of them. The bride price was already paid to the father; the 1,000 mitako that he asks are a supplement of the bride price.

With these 3,000 mitako, our young man pays for his wife. This wife now becomes the Nkita of the three sisters. If this young man dies, his three sisters and his three brothers-in-law all demand their share back from the widow. If she is sold, the price must be divided among the three brothers-in-law. If she remains in the family of her husband, with the uncle or brother, she continues to be the Nkita of her three sisters-in-law.

431 583 [542] There also exists a general rule and custom that the family which has received the bride price regularly give gifts to their daughter and son-in-law or sister and brother-in-law. These gifts consisted of goats, dogs (which also have a rather large value among the natives), ducks, etc., but the gifts never consisted of money. These gifts were in turn given by the son-in-law or brother-in-law to the one who had helped him pay the bride price.

For instance, if the young man of whom we just spoke received gifts from the family of his wife, he would then have given these gifts to his three brothers-in-law. These gifts were often so much that the value of them was almost equal to the bride price that the man had paid for his wife. Custom demanded, in such a case, that the man then pay a supplement to the bride price.

In case the bride price had to be given back, the gifts that the family had already given might be subtracted from the bride price. When such disputes are brought before a European, it is difficult for him to settle them, for the value is tremendously exaggerated by the parties. The husband will demand the return of a much larger bride price than he actually gave, while the family on its side will estimate the gifts that they had given as much higher than the actual value or amount.

436 Something about prices, the bride price for wives, and native money value.

Their first original money was as follows.

436 1. Benkata: this was thin iron or copper wire rolled into small rings; the thickness of the wire was about 3 millimeters; the length, 20 to 25 centimeters.

2. Bingetele: iron or copper bars about 8 millimeters thick and 15 centimeters long; these are still in use in Bikoro.

436 301 3. Bekata: copper wire; thickness about 7 or 8 millimeters, and 1 meter or 1.50 meters long; spiral shaped; the women wore these rolled around their legs as copper leggings.

[543] 4. Bakonga: copper rings which served as arm bands and foot bands and also as collars. The size differed for small or large persons; the weight is from one half kilo to 5 kilos.

436 5. Mitako: copper wire about 4 millimeters thick and 25 centimeters long, usually bent like a hairpin. The mitako served as a uniform currency, from which the other values and prices were reckoned, like the franc with us. The value of the mitako was formerly reckoned at five centimes.

● 583 435 Formerly the bride price, which was paid for a wife in almost all of Equatorial Africa, was from 5 to 20 bakonga. (The value of the bakonga differed greatly according to the weight. The average value, however, is estimated at 2.50 francs.) This payment was further supplemented with slaves or wives. This manner of payment and the bride price still exist in the districts where the natives have not yet, or practically not, come in contact with Europeans. Also, [567] it was sometimes paid with only slaves or women. The price for one female slave was relatively much less than for another woman.

178 583 Through the occupation of the Congo by Europeans, the family life of the natives has necessarily undergone great changes, and their customs and habits as well.

In the first place the natives have found themselves deprived of their wives by the sentinels of the Independent Congo State. [661] These black sentinels, appointed in the villages by the State to supervise the reaping of caoutchouc, assumed an unlimited power. They took as many wives of the natives as they chose and did not pay for a single one.

Next many black soldiers, servant boys, and workmen of the Europeans also took wives everywhere in the beginning, without bothering about the native customs, that is, without paying for those wives; and this often happened under the protective power of their Whites.

178 583 We can add to that also a large number of black women who became the famous "housekeepers" of the Europeans. Although payment for these women was usually given to their owners, they were still withdrawn from the family life and the native customs. Finally, the Christian women, who now live in Christian marriage, must also be mentioned.

In addition, the price of wives and the bride price have [544] undergone great changes, primarily in those districts where the natives came into more immediate contact with Europeans. Before the arrival of the Europeans, their main medium of payment was the woman herself; a woman was paid for with a woman. Now it is forbidden to use women as currency. Therefore the natives have raised the price in the payment of bakonga and mitako.

178 583 435 In some districts close to the European centers, the natives have brought the price for wives and the bride price to a height never before known. For one wife they ask several nkesi.

A nkesi is 10,000 mitako. Such a sum is much too high in relation to their means. In a village there are, for instance, 50 women; for one woman, 40,000 to 50,000 mitako are asked, while at present in the whole village together the sum of 50,000 mitako is no more to be found. Therefore to oblige someone to pay two or three nkesi is usually to make it impossible for him to pay, or rather to make it necessary for him to pay with women, which is nothing else than encouraging woman trade, which then occurs.

802 177 A remark should also be made here about the nomenclature of the numerals. Nkesi is not a word of the Equatorial peoples; it *was brought in from elsewhere with the Europeans.* Their amounts were as follows:

10 was jum or bonkama;
100 was nkoto; and with the arrival of the Whites and foreign population came
1,000 nkesi.

The present numerical value is: 10, jum; 100, bonkama; 1,000, nkoto; and 10,000, nkesi. Some very old Negroes, however, still say bonkama for 10.

[583] This is the probable origin of the great rise in price of wives, especially in the area of Coquilhatville.

178 439 583 When the first Europeans arrived at Leopoldville and Brazzaville, it was not long before European materials and other articles also came to Coquilhatville to the hands of the great village chiefs who carried on trade on the rivers, primarily in slaves and ivory. The village chiefs, Yoma from the village of Boyeka, Ibuka of Boyere, Yamba of [545] Eala, Nkake of Bokele, etc., carried these European articles up the Tshuapa and Ikelemba rivers, and they bought slaves and wives with them.

Returning home again, they bought wives from their own district and paid for them with the slaves and women whom they themselves had bought cheaply with the European articles. For one woman of their district they paid three or four women. [802] The arrival of the Whites and foreign Blacks acquainted them with the number nkesi which, however, in their definition was only 1,000 and which they formerly called 10 nkoto or 10 times 100.

178 583 It was not long before the Europeans had to concern themselves with hearing disputes over the wives. In the Black land such a thing is unavoidable. Whenever the Blacks came to the Whites with their disputes, they dared not or would not say, "I paid for this woman with three women, but they said, "I paid for this woman with three nkesi," that is, 3 times 1,000 mitako. Meanwhile, the nkoto and nkesi acquired their value of 1,000 and 10,000. The statement, however, that a woman was paid for with nkesi was retained, through the error of the Whites or through the greed of the polygynists or both. Indeed, later some women were paid for with nkesi, namely, when the prevalent currency in the Congo was the mitako. It was also no wonder, for the polygynists had a monopoly on the wives, and it was to their advantage to raise the price.

Therefore, if the native of Coquilhatville says now that his father or his uncle paid for that woman with three or four nkesi, this generally means that the wife was paid for with three or four women. The price of the women in Wangata, near Coquilhatville, was formerly no higher than in the other areas. Many women were paid for with only five bakonga, for instance, in Bokala, near Bamania, a village which belonged to the village chief Yoma of Boyeka.

178 583 435 It should also be noted that the nkesi which have been paid in recent years in Wangata have been paid not in mitako or in

178 currency, but in articles on which the natives fix a conventional
●583 price, usually much higher than the actual value. Thus, for in-
435 stance, a pataki, or piston rifle, was always reckoned at 3,000
mitako; it did not matter that it was only worth 1,500. There are, [546] therefore, only very few women who are paid for with nkesi in real currency or mitako.

691 The tragic result of this exaggerated rise in prices is that the
583 mutual debts and difficulties among the natives have been increased,
178 so that they are almost impossible to solve. In the attempt to settle
a dispute, five other disputes come into it, all equally complicated, for the simple reason that the money, the mitako, to be paid does not exist, and it is forbidden to pay with women. To settle a dispute, several months are sometimes necessary, or a whole year. Other disputes never end, but pass on from father to son and are brought by each one in turn before each new District Administrator. In the districts where the bride price has not been raised, the difficulties and disputes are not nearly as numerous and are easy to solve. In the districts where the purchase price and the bride price of the women have become excessively high, the natives themselves admit that their disputes could formerly be solved easily, but that this is at present almost impossible.

It is unnecessary to say that this situation is harmful to the task of civilizing [the country] and to the mutual good relations of the natives. The natives are constantly coming to the District Administrator of the area to lay before him their disputes over women who *have not been paid for. These disputes take up a great deal of* the costly time of the administrator. He must hear and settle these usually very complicated disputes, for often the general peace of a village or district depends on it.

Also the natives themselves spend whole days and weeks doing nothing besides holding meetings to discuss the unpayable debts of bride price and the purchase price of wives, simply because the prices are excessive. For lack of currency, they pay each other with each other's debts, which usually complicates the business even more.

To improve this condition, the price of women and the bride price should be lowered, greatly lowered. We have seen that this was possible and practical when once a District Administrator who knew the native customs very well in the area of Coquilhatville really began to do it.

000 [547] Unfortunately the system was not continued. Also, it must not be said that it would be unjust to lower the price of the women. Rather, injustice would thus be redressed, a degenerate custom be improved. Through the present system, ever more injustice is committed and suffered.

●583 595 A few polygynists would suffer some material loss through the lowering of the price of the women, namely, by receiving less for one woman than they (sometimes) paid for them, for they inherited most of the women. But they are also the ones who are responsible for the irregular situation. In a large part of the district, the polygynists are by far the minority of the population. They are the ones who are hostile to the Colonial Administration. They are in possession of the women and have a monopoly on them. They fix prices which a young man can almost never pay, namely, two nkesi at least.

583 The difficulties for Christian marriages become daily still more difficult. This is true for the marriages already entered into and for the future marriages.

583 428 426 [465 511] The bride price to be paid for the wife ought to be such that every young man can pay that sum with his own money, with the money that he has earned himself by his work. This sum cannot be high, for the ordinary working man in the Congo, who makes up the large part of the population, does not earn much more than what he needs for board and clothing. Therefore to pay an excessively large sum as a bride price forces him to borrow and to run up debts among his relatives and friends. The result of this is that the system of the Nkita goes over unnoticed into the Christian marriages, and the woman remains an object for inheritance. Indeed, when the man dies the creditors will come, namely, those who have loaned him money -- and demand the wife. The disputes over the bride price then begin anew, and they will again give the wife in marriage in return for a new bride price. Thus, there is no end to it. The wife, the mother, will never achieve any rights but will always remain an object of inheritance. There has been talk about declaring the widow free at the death of her husband in order to prevent the inheriting of wives, but how will it be possible to [548] achieve that if the bride price is not lessened, considerably lessened? When a

583 428 426 young man can pay for his wife, or rather pay her bride price with his own earned money, then that wife becomes his property. At his death, no creditors or mortgage holders can come to demand the wife since she will then actually be free. There will also be no difficulty in making her heir to the property of her husband, for herself and her children. The bride price or payment for wives among the civilized Blacks could be very much simplified. To abolish it would not be so easy. Indeed, it seems to be in the customs and the habits of the whole Black race. Then too, with respect to bride price, usually still in entanglements with their heathen relatives.

The bride price, as it exists among the heathens, will always remain a source of difficulties for civilization and a support for polygyny.

000 When the price is lowered, the large number of wives of polygynists will be seen to disperse and go to the men who have no wife. Thus, single marriages will be increased, and the district, whose population is greatly decreased, will become populated again. Lowering the price will also prevent women being paid for with women; and thus the trading of women will be hindered, since then the whole bride price can be paid in currency. It is also anticipated that the woman will become less a material object; and by changing the wife from an object of inheritance to an heiress, her moral value will be raised in her own eyes and in the eyes of the men.

In order to civilize the land, Christian marriages must be established. In order to establish Christian marriages, the impediments that stand in the way must be removed, and everything be put to work to benefit what the good outcome of that can asure.

[549] Family Nomenclature

601

The name of:	is given to:
Ise, father	one's own father brothers of the father sons and grandsons of father's sisters

832 husband will change to revulsion, and she will leave him to be with her charmer.

Part 3

The Search for a Wife

When a young man old enough to marry believes he has the 584 means to do so, he goes out to seek a wife. Naturally, he knows a number of girls, and as a rule he has no trouble finding one who suits him. The courtship is quite simple. As everywhere there are meet- [831] ings, visits, chats, and jokes; but there is no romanticism or sentimentality, for they are absolutely unknown to these peoples. Since they are in a hurry [103] to reach the objective of their relationship, namely conjugal life, -- and their progress toward this goal is facilitated by usages and customs -- there remains little time for poetry.

There is no specific term for courtship itself. The Nkundɔ́ simply speak of "talking with a woman," sooja bǒmoto, "looking for a woman," asa bǒmoto. The gil who is its object is referred to as bombɔ́yɔ́ (or boambá among the Injɔ́lɔ́).

First, the young man addresses his proposals to the girl: "ńdanga ńkokolɛ́ (ńkokumbɔ́le) la wǎlí, "I want to take you for wife." She shows her agreement by saying, "ńkolanga wɛ̌ ng'ɔ́kɔ́, "I love you also," or more frequently, "elaká ô wɛ̌, "as you wish," ǰɔ̌i ó likɛ̌, "it's up to you," or something of this sort. (1)

[195]
[576]

1. Note that for the Nkundɔ́ these expressions have quite a different significance than would appear from the words. They express a real agreement and an explicit and personal consent. In fact it is considered improper for a woman to use a more direct expression.

584
831 The lovers exchange gifts. The girl gives food which her mother has provided, or which she has been able to procure herself.

584 431 For his part, the young man gives her some small game animals (especially the big rat called botɔ́mba, lemurs of the genus esɛ́ndɛ́, etc.) or fish. These gifts have no specific name. The man's gifts are simply called mpatɔ́ "gift sent"; the woman's are called botɔ́mo, a term used for all presents given by a woman to her lover (see also Chapter VI, Article VII, 2). The verb used with this noun is tumba, "to make burn." Etymologically the two words are in no way related.

Sometimes the sweethearts give each other a secret mutual pledge of their desire to be married. This pledge is called bondengɛ́ or bonengɛ́ and consists particularly of a necklace of beads called bafomakɔngɔ (or, more rarely, bisɛngɛ́ or bisɛngɛla). [103]

581 In choosing their wives, the men allow themselves to be motivated by the various factors which may influence them in this realm, such as physical or moral attractions. Wealth or social rank almost never play a part in determining the choice. Youth is easily carried away by physical attraction and passionate love. Men who are already more settled as well as the more sensible young men pay more attention to moral qualities, such as general conduct, submissiveness, goodness, gentleness, and especially diligence, careful attention to work, etc. In short, we find here the full range of individual variations that are encountered elsewhere, with the exception of marriages motivated by financial or political interests or by the degree of moral elevation that can be aroused by the Christian religion, such as pure devotion.

584 After a few days of courtship the girl lets her suitor know that if he really loves her he had better settle the matter and that consequently he must obtain her parents' consent. Meanwhile they have [580 already had intimate relations several times; therefore the moment of official negotiations should not be delayed.

586 587 584 Seeking a wife who is already married is in no way different from the procedure we have just described, but a great deal of circumspection must be used so that the husband's suspicions will not be aroused. The exchange of the secret pledge we have mentioned occurs especially in this situation.

Once the divorce is completed, the woman falls in the same category as a single girl since she is free.

Seeking a future wife in an as yet unborn child or one that is very young will be discussed in a special section (Chapter IV, Article I). [105]

Chapter II

The Marriage Agreement

581 The marriage agreement (1) is primarily arranged by means of the payment of certain valuables through the agency (Article II). The first stage is the engagement (Article III). After dealing with it, we will describe the various payments subsequently made to the father, namely the walo (Article IV) and the bosongo (Article IX), and to the mother (Article V), as well as the gifts (Article VI). Nkundó law also requires that the woman's clan pay certain valuables (Article VII). Finally, we will examine various rules and customs pertaining to the bride price: its acceptance (Article VIII) and the use to which it is ultimately put (Article X). The chapter ends with some general remarks (Article XI) and a few considerations on the attitude adopted toward the bride price (Article XII).

1. These terms should be understood broadly, rather than in a strictly legal fashion. "The marriage agreement" here does not signify what is called "the marriage contract" in European law. This chapter deals with the various stages through which the condition of marriage is established among the Nkundó, and the various practices connected with this process. I have chosen this title in order to include all the multiplicity of essential and accessory elements comprised in the establishment of a marriage, as well as the various circumstances attendant upon it.

Article I. The Beginning of Negotiations

584 As we have seen at the end of the last chapter, the period of courtship is not long.

● 584 The young man informs his own parents of his intentions, and they make certain that this marriage merits [106] consideration and that there are no obstacles or too great difficulties that might cause trouble later on.

For the official negotiations the suitor and his father (or a substitute for the latter) go to the home of the girl's parents, who inquire as to the purpose of their visit, and when they discover that so-and-so would like to marry their daughter, they ask: "How do you want her?" (1). "I want her for my wife," he replies. Whereupon they tell him to make the necessary arrangements to make the first payment on the bride price. When the two parties have come to an agreement the parents of the intended conclude the conversation by saying: "We are not opposed; it is up to you."

[836] 1. That is, do you want her as your legitimate wife, or are you only planning to live with her for a time? In this fashion the parents of the intended assure themselves that the suitor has serious intentions of contracting a real marriage

[586] The formalities of the negotiations in the case of a woman who already has a husband do not differ from those for a girl who is free. Only, in the first instance the proceedings must go on with great circumspection so as not to anger the abandoned husband. In addition the woman's parents inform the suitor and his family of the amount of the bride price they must bring in order to reimburse the first husband. (2)

2. See Chapter VIII, Articles II and III.

In cases of engagement before birth or at a very early age, the same procedures are observed, but they are adapted to the special circumstances of the situation, which will be explained in detail in Chapter IV.

After the negotiations have thus begun, the suitor's father prepares the first payment of the bride price which, accompanied by his son and the ndonga, he delivers to the future wife's family. But let us first explain the ndonga.

Article II. The Ndonga

584 The *ndonga* is the guardian-keeper of the marriage; he is chosen by the parties involved and his participation as intermediary, witness, conciliator, or arbiter is required at every stage of the union. He is an official in the sense that his authority is derived from the very law which governs marriage in Nkundó society.

First of all, the *ndonga* is the indispensible intermediary for the payment of the bride price. Without him there is no legitimate marriage: *Nkó ndonga ôkéka bakímba ô lontulé, bõna ale ô bonto,* "Without a *ndonga* you are throwing your valuables away at a total loss, and your daughter is but a slave," that is, she is not a wife. Legally, only the *ndonga* is qualified to act as witness.

The importance attached by the natives to the *ndonga*'s participation is apparent in every moment of daily life. Thus if a woman has been beaten by her husband, her family can be heard to say: "Our daughter (sister) is no slave; she was paid for through the agency of a *ndonga*," *bõn'ôkiső ěla bokwěla, bowěngěkí ě la ndonga*. Or she herself will retort in this manner, *mutatis mutandis*, to her husband or his family when in her opinion she is not being treated properly.

The absolute necessity for the participation of a qualified *ndonga* is very rarely mentioned by Europeans in the colonial administration. One would say that they are unaware of its importance though it is crucial.

584 178 602 In order to serve as *ndonga* for a particular marriage, a person must be related at the same time to both the future husband and wife or, as they say in Lonkundo, to be *mbéfowě*. Nowadays, because of the migrations of the natives, the *ndonga* who meet this qualification are rare in the centers and often cannot be found at all. Therefore, it has been necessary to adapt the traditional law to the situation. Hence a practice has developed [108] under such critical circumstances which consists in taking as one's *ndonga* a man whose integrity is generally recognized and who has every reason to be impartial and interested in the stability of the marriage. Thus it often happens that chief catechists assume the functions and responsibilities of this role.

584 Formerly, and even today in the interior, when two young people love each other but cannot find anyone qualified to perform the

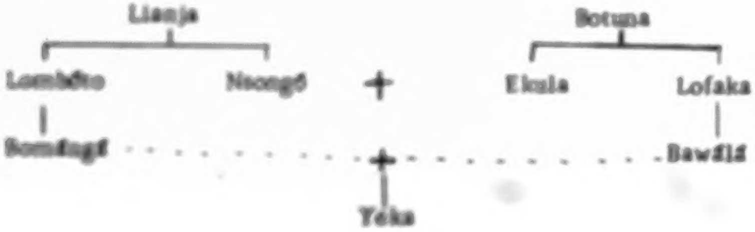
597 function of the ndonga, the parents of the young man oppose the marriage. They said: tôfimɛ́jɛ́ libála líko, tófa l'ɔ̂kofɛ́ndɛ́jɛ́ baémbɛ́, "we do not want this marriage; there is no one to transmit the valuables." Under ordinary circumstances such an occurrence is almost nonexistent.

It is up to the husband to chose the ndonga, who is then accepted by the wife and her parents. If they are opposed to him, the husband replaces another in his stead. Though this situation rarely occurred in the past, it may be encountered under present conditions.

A woman may be ndonga just as well as a man.

Its functions are hereditary. If the ndonga dies, his son, daughter, brother, or even his wife, if she remains in her deceased husband's clan, inherit his duties and prerogatives.

Similarly, if the ndonga is absent or otherwise prevented from fulfilling his functions, members of his family may substitute for him. Thus, for example:



Yoka is a qualified ndonga for the marriage of Ekula and Nsongɔ́. But since he is still too young [109] to perform the functions of this position, his father Bomangɛ́ is entirely entitled to substitute for him for the time being.

There may be several ndonga for a single marriage. All have to fulfill the necessary conditions and have the same rights and duties. It is not necessary, however, that they all be present at each occasion required by law; one of them will suffice, and it does not matter which one. Theoretically, their presence as witnesses is of equal value. Nevertheless, the first one designated is known as ndonga ɛ́á ntsína, or the chief ndonga. If it is possible to find two mbótawɛ́, both should be taken

584 as *ndonga*; if not, the one person that can be found will suffice.

The *ndonga* is entitled to remuneration for his services from each of the contracting parties.

When the *ndanga* is paid (see below), the wife's family gives him [the *ndonga*] a smoked *botómba*, a hen, or a *bokósa* fish. This is a gift with the generic name of *lionja* (verb *bonjela*). It is always obligatory.

Similarly, when the *walo* is paid, the wife's family must first of all give him food of animal origin (*bofambe*), generally a *botómba*, a hen, or a *bokósa*, as well as bananas. This present as a whole is called *botómba l'oanda* (1).

1. *Boanda* is a species of banana, but any kind may be given. As a result, nowadays people begin to speak also of *botómba linkondo* (or *linko*), or of *nsóso la linko* (hen and banana).

Finally after the *walo* is paid, the husband's family gives the *ndonga* 2 copper rings, and the wife's family does the same. If the amount of the bride price is very great, he may be given as many as 5 rings. The latter remuneration is called *bompángé*. This word literally means a domestic animal (a dog or a goat) given as payment. Nowadays its value in copper rings (*konga*, pl. *bakonga*) is given, but the old name has remained. [110]

All these remunerations are given the generic term *lómbela ndonga*, "to prepare for the *ndonga*," and the noun *balómbo* (sing. *lilómbo*), as if there were food involved. This expression fits well with the *botómba* and the bananas, etc. but it is used also for the copper rings. Is this an extension of the meaning? Or should we conclude that in the past the remuneration in question was made only in foods?

If there are several *ndonga*, the remuneration is not therefore increased; it is one and the same, and they have to divide it among themselves.

In practice the heads of the clan or family are also present when the bride price is paid; they are influential men, who have the

584/ power to settle disputes. They claim their share of the remuneration from the ndonga. According to the saying -- in archaic language -- bonɛ́ wâ ndonga nd'â dombɛ́, "the power (literally, "the medicine") of the ndonga resides in the judges." Not that the judges themselves have the right or the power to intervene in matrimonial palavers. But they are that many additional witnesses. If the day comes when there is a dispute on the subject of the bride price, especially at the time of a divorce, the ndonga can call on them to help him refresh his memory and thus avoid difficulties. For it can easily happen that after several years the official witness has only a vague and approximate recollection of what was paid. If the judges do not receive anything at the time of payment, they will refuse to give their assistance at the critical moment. It is therefore an intelligent policy to acquiesce to their desires even though strictly speaking they can invoke no real prerogatives.

178
584
622 At the present time the colonial government, having established districts and named chiefs, the latter have had attributed to them the right to officially act as ndonga in matrimonial matters, or at least they have taken advantage of the powers given them and done so. In general [111] they summon the judges of the district at the same time, and the matter is entered after a fashion in the register of settlements. The chief's presence as a witness may have some value, since he can provide additional testimony and writes down the amount of the bride price. But his presence, on the other hand, has the disadvantage of involving him in matters which all in all are none of his business. We are not speaking here of cases in which he or some relatives of his are interested parties in the palaver. If he would be content to be a passive witness and enter the transactions that take place, the situation would be perfect.

192
194 It is probable that etymologically the word ndonga is derived from the verb root long, intransitive longam, "to be in order, arranged," transitive longy, "to arrange, make as it should be." In addition to the word ndonga, which is used west of the Luilaka, we find the word bokɔ́lo used among the Bodɔngɛ and the Boɔ́yɛ (as well as the Elɔ́ngɛ), and ngombi among the Injɔ́lɔ. The latter term could be the same word as its homonym which means "spy" and is derived from the verb

191 tamba, "to spy": the former may be an extension of the meaning of
164 the word bokifo, "promise." (1)

[572] 1. Note in passing that a ndonga is also necessary for the bosaka, or contract of friendship and mutual assistance. (See Chapter I, Part 1, Article III.)

Article III. The Engagement

584
585 1. The payment of the ikulá

The engagement begins with the first bride-price payment, which in former times was an arrow and for that reason is called likulá
[554] or ikulá. If the suitor was very rich, he sometimes gave an ingfulá knife or even an empifo. A poorer one would merely give the shaft of an arrow. Nowadays 1 or 2 copper rings are given. But the original name of this payment has been retained.

Arriving at the home of the father of his intended, [112] the suitor, his father (or a substitute for him), the ndonga(1) and often other relatives as well, sit down on one side of the lofalá (the court in front of a dwelling), after an exchange of the usual courtesies. The girl and the representatives of her family sit down on the opposite side. As in all matters that a Nkundó has to settle, the host begins by inquiring into the reason for the visit. The young man's father answers: "We have come to ask for your daughter for our son." "How do you ask for her?" "We ask for her in marriage." These preliminary negotiations are called simply fwana mango, "to ask each other for news."

Then the girl's father asks: "Who will bring the liting (banana) or the bonyfio (partially ripe banana), that is, the gifts?" Through this figurative expression he asks who has been proposed as ndonga. The young man's father replies: so-and-so, and so-and-so. When they have been accepted, the fiancée's father has bananas, smoked fish, and sometimes hens brought in, and the witness passes them over to the future husband's group.

584 585 When the presents have been accepted, the ndonga plants the arrow in the ground in front of the wife's parents. Hence the expression -tumya likulá or -lobya likulá, "to plant the arrow," which remains very much the fashion even though nowadays the ndonga deposits rings in its place.

2. Comment

584 Asked by her parents or the ndonga, or on her own initiative, -- depending on her own inclinations, -- the girl pulls up the arrow or picks up the rings and gives them to her father. That is how she expresses her consent to the proposed engagement.

Her promptness, her nonchalance, or even the recalcitrant manner in which she performs this gesture show her [113] feelings. Usually her movements are lively. As we have explained, the union will have been anticipated for some time, and a Nkundó girl glories in being the object of a man's love and in having a husband. Nevertheless there are cases where the girl has to be persuaded to make the decision, especially if she is still young. Within herself she is not enthusiastic about the marriage. But in the end she bows to her father's wish, preferring a union which is contrary to her desires to fairly serious trouble with her family. 584 586

Naturally we find the whole range of variations which depend on individual temperament and on circumstances. A categorical refusal must certainly be very rare. It would be the act of a very strong-willed woman. But the union would have been called off much earlier, so that such an extreme situation would not be allowed to occur.

The case of a woman who submits to the ceremonies with resistance and against her wishes is more frequent. Not only does she have to be urged and persuaded, but her frowning face expresses her discontent. She picks up the objects with an apathetic gesture, turns her back to her father, and drops the valuables behind her without even looking at him. None of the people present misunderstand the meaning of such gestures. Consequently members of the family and the notables who are present never fail to attract the father's attention to 584

584 the gravity of this situation. They try to make him change his mind and to dissuade him from accepting the bride price. To that end they try to make him see the consequences of his obstinacy: at the first favorable opportunity the woman will take flight, leading to palavers (and in the past often war), imprisonment, all sorts of [57] troubles, and finally the bride price will have to be returned for the divorce. Sometimes they succeed; other times all their wisdom and eloquence are in vain. Cupidity, the need to obtain the means of a [58] [114] bride price for a wife (for oneself, a son, a brother, etc.) and the profit he reaps from the union silence all other feelings. Here again, everything depends on the character of the individual. Nowadays the greater freedom resulting from colonization has reduced the frequency of such cases. Nevertheless, because of the reasons given, they still occur. But more frequently the ceremony takes place in a normal fashion. As long as it has not taken place, no further bride-price payments are made. This fact is sufficient to show the importance of the ceremony in Nkundó law, and thus the importance of the woman's public and official consent to the marriage proposed, though this consent is not expressed in words but only implied in a special, meaningful act. Cases which seem in contradiction to this statement are clearly breaches of that law.

In normal cases the father accepts the arrow or the rings from his daughter's hands and thus establishes his consent to the engagement and consequently to the marriage.

In other forms of marriage, which we will discuss later on (Chapters III and IV), consent is expressed in an entirely different fashion.

3. Abduction

583 Even before the coming of the Europeans there were instances where lovers persisted in their desire to marry in spite of the opposition of the woman's parents. When the parents refused to accept the [illegible], the engaged pair arranged an opportunity to flee. The woman tried to win her brother over to her cause, and out of brotherly love he usually

583 *accepted the arrow from the hands of the ndonga. Otherwise the latter secretly planted it in the roof of the parents of the woman who was fleeing. Later, when it was apparent that their daughter's marriage would hold good, and their son-in-law had pacified them by his good conduct towards them (giving them gifts, showing them respect, etc.), the parents no longer refused their consent. Subsequently the payments were made in the usual fashion. [115]

4. The departure of the fiancée

● 584 Through the payment of the ikulé a woman is at least partially bound to her husband (bóme). The maxim cited in the last chapter (Part 2, Article III, 2, B) is applicable here: "Boimbo fruit which is still under the tree belongs to no one." As long as a girl lives in her parents' home she is bound to no man. But as soon as someone has paid the ijulé, she has been "picked" and belongs to a husband.

Therefore, either immediately or within a few days, she leaves her parents and follows her husband. (1) Actually, the father may dismiss his son-in-law and promise to bring his daughter himself, or send her by someone he has delegated. Meanwhile he collects a few small provisions. When the fiancée arrives in the village of her future husband, all the inhabitants gather at the first cries of "bompáka wâ bómpáká ahvé, "X's fiancée has arrived," and acclaim her joyfully.

The term bompáka is not used until that moment. (2) But does

1. As we will see suo loco (Chapters IV and VIII) this was only rarely possible in precolonial times. Nowadays it has become a common practice because of the changes that have taken place, which will be described at the places cited.

2. This word also means "engagement." The Ekonda say esengí or ebengí.

584 not a woman become bompáka through the payment of the ikulá? That is what I had always understood, and it seemed logical to me. But in the course of a discussion on the subject, natives contradicted me and said that I was entirely mistaken. I could not make them accept the idea that although a woman is called bompáka when she arrives in her fiancé's clan, she actually becomes bompáka with the official payment of the ikulá, so that nothing but a manner of speaking is involved. They said, "No, as long as a woman has not gone to her husband she is not bompáka."

"But after all," said I, [116] "a very minor difference is involved; the essential thing is in any case the payment of the ikulá.

"It is true that a woman belongs to her husband from the time the ikulá is paid, but she is nevertheless not called bompáka. She is not given that name until she leaves her parents and goes to her husband's home."

"But why?"

[illegible] "Because otherwise the man runs the risk of being mocked and ridiculed. Suppose that after the ikulá he comes back home alone. His future wife is to join him in a few days. He announces the great news to his friends. Then on the day set she does not appear. What shame for him! On the other hand, if everything is kept secret until the moment when no change is to be feared, there are only cries of joy."

On the other hand, this data should be related to the indisputable fact that the payment of the bride price alone very seldom establishes a marriage according to the laws and customs of the various peoples of the Congo. There is almost always another ceremony which in most cases is the handing over of the woman. Because of these facts we are inclined to consider the explanation of the Nkundó, an explanation of convenience which shows the practical aspect of the rule but does not account for it. It actually does not explain why a woman does not become bompáka from the time of the payment which establishes the engagement. On the other hand, it is undeniable that she is not given that name until she has arrived at the home of her husband. It is possible that the fundamental reason for this phenomenon has been forgotten or lost sight of by the natives. The explanation which fits best with the facts that are certain is that the essential

584 element of the engagement is not the payment of the *ikulá* but the woman's act of leaving her family and joining the man to whom she is engaged. (1) [117]

1. I am deeply grateful to the attorney general, Mr. A. Sohier, for having drawn my attention to a comparison of these practices with the law and practice of other peoples of the Congo and having made me investigate the legal aspect of this question.

5. The fiancée's arrival at her husband's home

As I have said, the fiancée is welcomed by her husband's clan and enthusiastically acclaimed by the population in general.

According to most cases, her husband-to-be receives her and takes her to his home or to that of his parents. The latter await her arrival, having gathered together their daughters, sisters, and various relatives and associates. The fiancé introduces the woman of his choice to them. She is greeted in the usual fashion: "*w'ȏng oȏkita, oȏyȏ; oȏtswa, etc.*," depending on the extent of their previous intimacy.

Then gifts are given to the fiancée. First the parents-in-law give her a welcoming gift, called *bosambelo*, literally translated as "handclasp." It usually consists of a ring or a knife. Then they give her their hands. (1) Following them, all relatives and associates must do the same. The men usually give a ring and the women a knife. These objects are considered as part of the bride price, and the

[585] 1. The Nkundo clasp hands as a sign of friendship. The gesture is a sort of greeting. They don't press the hand as do Europeans but place the hands lightly over each other and then withdraw them, rubbing gently.

584 woman sends them to her family. Distant relatives fulfill their obligations by bringing meat or fish, and nowadays also money or some small present, which is not included in the bride price.

The husband's gifts consist of a small knife and a few (5) arrows (at the time of the Independent State a bundle of copper wires called nggelo or mitako and at the present time 5 or 10 francs, for example). These presents from the husband are not bosambelo, for he does not give his fiancée his hand; they are yěkola (greeting) and are not part of the bride price. The woman sends them to her parents.

591 If the husband does not yet have a house or cultivated fields of his own, [128] as was formerly often the case, (1) the engaged couple live in the hut of the parents for the time being. The woman obtains food from her mother-in-law's fields and prepares it at the hearth of the latter, until the young man has built his hut and established his own fields.

Nowadays it no longer happens that a young man who wants to take a wife still lacks his own house. From the time of puberty on, young men moved by the desire for freedom leave the parental home and build huts for themselves where they can live alone or with some companion or other and enjoy their freedom.

6: The life of the engaged couple

584 The bompaka lives in the home of her husband, goes there to talk to him and to sleep with him. During the first three or four days she does not work, unless she is a very active person. Subsequently she takes care of all the household tasks and prepares meals at the hearth under the supervision of her mother-in-law. Only after a few weeks, when she has become accustomed to her new way of living, is she introduced to the customs of her new family: only

[736] 1. Orphans were almost the only ones who had their own houses and cultivated fields. Of course, we are not speaking of men who were previously married.

584 then does she acquire her own establishment. From that moment on she lives permanently with her husband-to-be.

She has come from her parents' home empty handed, without any utensils whatsoever. In her new dwelling she finds everything. Her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law give her what she needs: baskets, pots, gourds, mats, mortars, pestles, and even chickens.

It will be apparent from the preceding that there are no particular rites or ceremonies nor is any special attire worn.

584/ 595 By this time the bompáka is already considered a wife; [118] she has all the rights and duties of that status: cohabitation, household tasks, etc. Everything she produces or earns belongs to her husband. Her own family no longer has any rights to the fruits of her work. If, after the payment of the ikulá and before any further payment, [684] the husband discovers that there are relations between his fiancée and another man, the latter is considered an adulterer and is liable to the sanctions designed to check such infractions. The older the woman, the greater the indemnity, which may be as high as 5 to 10 rings (see Chapter VI, Article VII).

It is logically consistent with what we have described that the fiancé has no special name. Since he is actually a husband, that is what he is called (bóme).

During this period the engaged pair get to know each other physically and morally (sexual relations, work, temperament, virtues, faults). A figurative expression is used to describe what happens -- bafáfngola mpoké, "they are trying out the pot." The explanation [585] [252] for this saying is that before a new pot (mpoké) is used, it is placed on a shelf above the fire and left there for several days, so that it will harden and become heat resistant. If it cracks it is not suitable for food preparation; if not, one can cook in it without fear. This process is called báfngola mpoké, and the term has been transferred to the trial period of the newlyweds. Thus it is a sort of novitiate, and the English term which can be used to approximate this situation most closely is clearly "engagement," "engaged."

This first period can last several months. Meanwhile the husband seeks the valuables needed for the nkomo payment.

7. The *ndanga*

583ᶜ Originally the *ndanga* for marriage was the payment of a
584 knife (hence it is still called [120] *ifakɛ*, "knife"); it was later replaced by 2 to 5 copper rings, and now by 5 to 10 or even more.

At the present time *ikulɛ* and *ndanga* tend to merge, since both have become payments of rings, and they are often given together at the same time without being distinguished one from the other.

In the main the handing over of the *ndanga* takes place in the same manner as the payment of the *ikulɛ*, but with greater solemnity. The young man and his father (or a substitute for the latter), together with the *ndonga* and a few close relatives, especially the mother, go to the home of the fiancée's parents. They are received with the usual marks of courtesy and affection. They sit down on one side of the *[illegible]*, and the woman's family sits on the opposite side. First of all, the latter ask for news, that is, they inquire into the purpose of the visit. The young man's father answers: "We have come to pay the *ndanga*," *toôy'ôkɛkya ndanga* (or *ifakɛ*) meaning literally, "we have come to hang the *ndanga* (or the knife)." Then the father-in-law gives the *ndonga* a gift of welcome (*lionja*). It is a smoked *[illegible]*, or one or two *[illegible]* fish, or a hen; a bunch of bananas is added.

The fiancé and his family will receive, for example, a goat, a dog, and some hens, which are considered part of the *nkomɛ* (see below, Article VII), as well as meat, smoked fish, and a few bunches of bananas, which he will dispose of with his wife and family and which are not considered part of the *nkomɛ* but are simply a present.

They then proceed to the payment of the *ndanga* valuables. It must be done through the medium of the *ndonga*, who also had to hand over the presents, etc. It is not necessary that the fiancée participate or even that she be present. [121]

Sometimes when the *ndanga* is paid, the woman's family ask for *[illegible]* gifts which should theoretically be made only on the occasion of the next payment, (see below, Article VI). Sometimes the husband satisfies these requirements; other times he gives only a pledge (*[illegible]*). He could also refuse the greedy parents. But he

584 cares too much for his wife, so he acquiesces to their desires without
585 a murmur.

What is the purpose and the significance of the ndanga? The natives reply: the ndanga is given so that the daughter would not burn herself at the fire, bɔ̃n'ɔ̀kɑ̃ɔ́ ɛ́fɔ́y'ɔ́longola tsɪ̃. This is a sign that the man takes responsibility for any accident (represented by the general term "burn") which might befall his fiancée. In the hands of the woman and her family, it constitutes public and official evidence against the husband. (1) Consequently, it is also a guarantee to the parents that the husband will take care of their child and treat her properly.

But what then is the ikulɛ's reason for being? The Nkundɔ́ reply: "The ikulɛ is evidence, a sign that the woman belongs to a particular man."

In practice, then, there is hardly any difference between the purposes of the two payments. Actually they have identical consequences, both with respect to the duties and rights of the engaged couple and to the indemnity to be paid under certain circumstances.

Thus if a woman runs away with her lover and he has not given the ikulɛ, and some accident befalls her, her family can make no claim as they have no evidence against him. In former times this would have been a purely hypothetical situation; nowadays it does occur, but it is quite unusual in the native areas.

Nevertheless, a slight difference may be noted between the explanations for the two payments given by the natives. [122] The ikulɛ is simply proof of the engagement; the ndanga, on the other hand, is the recognition of responsibilities and their acceptance. The fiancé beats his breast, as they say (ɛyakɛ́ndela ntɔ́lɔ́).

We have said that the ikulɛ and the ndanga are in the process
178 of merging. This development is probably due to the fact that both
583
584 payments are made nowadays in the form of brass or copper rings.

---

1. Hence, probably, the origin of the word ndanga. The root is langa, "to love," "to desire," therefore "to accept." In Lokonda, see lolanga.

584, 585 178 But if the indicated difference between them were fundamental, this fact would by no means provide a sufficient explanation. On the other hand, if it were only a slight nuance without practical consequences, it would not, it seems to me, adequately explain the existence of the two payments, especially since in the past quite a long time could elapse between them.

Therefore we can wonder whether the basis of a greater difference might not be found in the hypothesis of its being a primitive custom. 179 583

584 For instance, the *ikulɛ* could have been the payment accompanying a proposal of marriage comparable to our European engagement. Then, when unresolvable palavers developed out of this situation, a system may have been devised which would not prevent disputes from arising but would make possible their resolution according to proper and just legal regulations. This system would have been the payment of a *ndanga*.

While this is a possible explanation, it is not a very plausible one. Native law appears in all domains so reasonable, cautious, and wise, and so well adapted to circumstances, that it would hardly have left a way open to so great a source of difficulties in so important a matter. Such a possibility can hardly be admitted by any one who is even slightly familiar with the mentality of the Nkundɔ. Then, too, the modern blending of the *ikulɛ* and the *ndanga* suggests that one of two is duplicating the function of the other. And the consequence of this development would have been the uniting of the two payments into one, with a single purpose, or more probably, in conformity with the general practice, the transferring of the significance of a pledge, theoretically assigned to the *ndanga*, to the *ikulɛ*. [123] The existence of a single engagement payment would have been much more in accordance with the present hypothesis than the practice of making two distinct payments, which are independent and separated in time. We should add here that the acceptance of a responsibility is always and under all circumstances accompanied by the handing over of a *ndanga*.

We could conceive of a second hypothesis, which seems more in accordance with reality. The *ikulɛ* may originally have been an engagement payment, as in the first hypothesis, only the girl may

174 not have accompanied her husband to his home. She would have re-
● 584 mained with her parents, and her fiancé would probably have had per-
585 mission to visit her and to have sexual relations with her; as we have seen in the preceding chapter, native law does not oppose such relations. Since the mutual desire for cohabitation could not be put off for the period of time -- often long -- required before the bride-price payment itself could be arranged, the girl's parents would have given their child permission to follow her heart's inclinations which -- let us repeat -- could provoke only difficulties of a legal, "civil" nature. And before the fiancé could take his future wife home with him, he had first to reassure the parents and free them from their responsibility by taking it upon himself in an official manner, that is, by giving proof of his willingness to accept all the consequences of his action. In Lonkundo such a pledge is called *ndanga*. Later on, the time of cohabitation may have been begun earlier, by permitting it from the time of the *ikulá*. Thus in practice the reason for the existence of the *ndanga* would have been transferred to the *ikulá*, and the *ndanga* would have been retained simply as a payment imposed by custom, until the day when the overthrow of ancient customs made the Nkundó perceive the logical consequences of the facts, resulting in the merging of the two payments into one. This hypothesis is also confirmed by the fact that the very name *ikulá* is tending to disappear, [124] yielding to the use of the single term *ndanga*. Finally, to align this hypothesis with the facts pertaining to the term *bompáka* presented in number 4, we must assume that in the past the fiancée moved to the home of her husband only after the *ndanga* and consequently became *bompáka* only at that time.

8. The breaking of an engagement

524

The breaking of an engagement does not involve great legal difficulties. Both the man and the woman are free to break it if they find that they are basically incompatible, or that the prospects for happiness are not good, or for any other reason. There are certain practical stipulations, however.

●584 A young man who renounces his fiancée places her in the hands of the *ndonga*, who sends her back to her family.

The woman who does not want to continue their life together leaves her fiancé, perhaps telling him and perhaps not, first goes to the *ndonga* and then returns to her parents (nowadays she sometimes does not see the *ndonga*, although not doing so must be considered an infraction of the rule).

In practice she may also go directly to another man. Formerly it was dangerous to do so, since a war could result, and such an action was considered against the law. At the present time the greater freedom resulting from colonization has eliminated the dangers involved. Thus this lack of proper procedure has become more frequent and is even coming to be recognized as normal.

584
585 In any case, even if the woman has neglected to go to the *ndonga*, the latter is sent by the fiancé to examine the situation and to claim restitution of the payments that have already been made.

Strictly speaking, the breaking of the engagement consists in the restitution of the *ikulé*-*ndonga* through the mediation of the *ndonga*. But, as we will explain more fully in the chapter on divorce, gifts given by the woman's family are deducted. [125] Complete restitution of everything must be made. The woman's family cannot even invoke the work done by their daughter for the husband's benefit.

585
171
584 Nowadays, however, the custom of dividing the amount of the bride price in excess of the *nkomé* (1) is taking hold. The woman's parents demand a certain indemnity because they consider that the husband has lost the right to his valuables; if they do not withhold them altogether, it is because of the respect and embarrassment they feel toward the *ndonga*, who is related to the fiancé as he is to them.

The natives try to explain this change in the ancestral law as follows:

1) An engagement is meant to develop into a regular marriage, and that is its only validity. The fiancé's right to the woman's work

---

1. See below, Article VII.

584 is based solely on the nature of this state, which is a direct prepara-
589 tion for married life. Therefore, if the union is not completed, the
177 fiancé is enriched at the expense of the parents-in-law.

2) When an engagement is broken, the parents lose the legitimate and normal expectation of a full bride price; they consider this loss lucrum cessans.

The natives' justification is not sufficient to explain the origin
584 of the change, however, for:
589
1) It seems likely that the Nkundó have simply imitated the
174 practice of other peoples of the Congo with whom they have become
177 acquainted since colonization, and that their explanation is but an explanation of convenience.

2) The reasons invoked in favor of the change are not new; they were equally valid in the past, and such as they are and in themselves they are therefore insufficient.

3) If we examine the reason concerning the benefit that the fiancé derives from the [128] woman's work, we find that it is based on a fallacious argument. For Nkundó law recognizes, on the one hand, the legitimacy of this gain and, on the other, the right of each party to break the engagement. Simply the breaking of the engagement cannot, therefore, result in the payment of an indemnity, since one cannot possibly be punished for having made use of a right.

4) The above objection is also applicable to the second reason given by the Nkundó: the possibility of the bride price not being paid is inherent in the essence of the engagement, since both parties are free not to go through with the union.

Thus the reasons given as such must be rejected.

Nevertheless, it is possible that modern circumstances have to some extent modified the nature of the problem. Thus:

1) The introduction of European wage labor and trade has given the Blacks a new idea of wealth. Consequently, the benefits reaped from the engagement have become much greater (through the development of trade and the availability of more varied goods and greater riches), and therefore the economic value of a woman has increased in considerable proportions.

Theoretically, these changes might justify some indemnification. In practice, however, economic development has increased the

585 amount of the engagement payment and thus counterbalances the in-
584 crease of the profit brought by a woman.

174 Indemnification for economic reasons would also have one
177 good result, namely that it would prevent a possible skewing of the system into a form of exploitation which would consist of taking fiancées for a time when they are needed for some special work and sending them back when the work is finished. [127]

But it must be noted that though the precaution may be good in itself, it is not called for under present circumstances, for the Nkundó do not even think of such a corruption of engagement customs.

2. Colonization has considerably reinforced -- or perhaps even introduced -- in native thinking the idea that the favors of a woman deserve a salary. I think that these circumstances have contributed much more to the origin of the new practice than economic changes -- or rather, that the justification for it is primarily based on this idea of venal love. And in that case we have before us a *pretium stupri* of a sort that could foster prostitution, and which is therefore in opposition to morality and public order.

Just as we must applaud the normal developments of the custom and its adaptation to the possibilities of social and moral elevation that colonization has created, so we must react against its corruption, aberrations, deviations, and a drift toward the exploitation of faults and vices.

Another objection against the innovation may be made on the grounds of its inconsistency within Nkundó law. Since there is no indemnification in the case of divorce, how is it possible to accept it in the case of the breaking of an engagement, which is a much weaker commitment than marriage itself? It is true that a Nkundó engagement is almost a marriage, since it includes cohabitation, etc.; nevertheless, it is not as tight a bond as a permanent union, from which it is clearly distinguished. The new custom leads logically to the conclusion that it is preferable to complete the union and make it definitive by paying the entire bride price and then to break it by means of a real divorce, which does not involve this financial loss.

Finally, although an indemnity based on the increase in the fiancé's profit from the engagement cannot be [128] condemned as

585 unjust in itself, it certainly becomes so if it is considered a penalty
584 inflicted for the rupture. For the indemnity is restricted to the man,
179 whether or not he is in the wrong. Furthermore, to accept an indemnity
177 even when the engagement is broken because of the woman tends to
favor frauds and real swindles on the part of the woman and her parents,
in short a kind of traffic in women.

It is also evident that the rich (polygamists) suffer much less
[585] from the innovation than do monogamous men, especially those who
[179] adopt monogamy as a principle and more especially the Christians,
who do not condone divorce. Thus I am of the opinion that the desire to defend polygamy against the doctrine of the missionaries is not entirely unrelated to the transformation of this custom.

000 All these considerations show that the question is highly complex and that it would be better if the ancient custom were restored.

If the breaking of the engagement is due to wrongs, the new custom could perhaps be tolerated, though it is not without serious dangers, but the indemnity should be imposed exclusively on the party at fault. Furthermore, the wrongs would have to be serious, and on the other hand, the indemnity would have to be, not in the nature of a forfeit, but of a payment of damages commensurate with the extent of the damage suffered and the seriousness of the wrong. And here those cases should especially be considered where the breaking of the engagement is accompanied by proceedings of a vexatious and insulting nature. And though it is a very delicate task to evaluate all these elements, we must not forget to take them into account.

It seems to me that the ancient law must still be maintained when the engagement is broken simply because of a change of feelings for which neither party is to blame, if such a case occurs. For it is better not to innovate than to innovate too fast. (128)

Article IV. Walo -- Bomboluku

589^4 The walo or bomboluku is the bulk of the bride price paid for a marriage. Between the payment of the ndanga and that of the walo, 53| give of Nkundó marriage, and what is its legal nature? First let us briefly recall certain facts essential to the problem by adding some observations which will appear in the pages to follow but which are indispensable here if we are to obtain a picture of the whole. Then we will try to deduce the legal basis of Nkundó marriage.

According to Nkundó law, the indispensable conditions necessary for a legitimate marriage are the following:

1) The payment of a bride price.
2) One or more qualified witnesses who act as intermediaries in this payment.

The stability of the marriage is weakened by the recognition of divorce, which is inevitable in a society like this one. But everything is done to limit its frequency -- the payment of bride price and dowry, opposition on the part of family authorities, etc. (1)

1. See Chapter VIII, Articles I and II.

The extent to which the spouses have exclusive rights to each other's bodies will be examined in Chapter VI. Let us say only that adultery is not considered lawful, although the Nkundó conception of it is quite different from our own that they permit some departures from the principle of fidelity and tolerate certain forms of license.

A very important question for our purpose is that of consent.
53/ But it is very difficult to examine because the natives relegate it to
54 a place of secondary importance, while they stress the factor of the bride price. This should not surprise us because the material and palpable nature of the latter holds their attention more readily. (2)

2. This same observation may be made about impious Europeans with respect to legal questions and other matters.

Note first of all that for the Nkundó [220], a lack of consent never casts doubt on the validity of a marriage. One finds many women who refuse the husband for whom they are intended as replacements by invoking the fact that the bride price was not paid for them, 581 that is, that they did not consider themselves the contracting parties. 584 But to my knowledge, their opposition is not considered to invalidate the marriage. I say "to my knowledge" because there is much confusion in the native mind on this question, and it is possible that later discoveries will show that the Nkundó attach a greater importance to consent than we perceive at the moment. As a matter of fact, the inclusion of a ceremony expressing consent in a normal marriage is an indication in that direction.

Let us now examine our data on the value of consent and its expression.

Except in an unusual case, which we are justified in leaving out of consideration in this synthesis since it does not influence our conclusions, there is always consent by the spouses in a standard marriage. Such a consent is first attained in private and then revealed to the parents, who give their approval. At the time of the first bride-price payment, the fiancée expresses her consent by a public and official act, while the husband shows his in accompanying his father in all the proceedings and in taking his intended to his home. In the eyes of the Nkundó that is entirely sufficient.

Another question arises in this connection. The consent of the couple is expressed at the time the ikulá is paid. And the real payment of the bride price occurs only later, without a renewal of consent. Can the expression of consent at the beginning, at the time of engagement, be considered sufficient, since it is virtually continuous? In my opinion there is no reason why it should not be.

In the case of a marriage by inheritance, the usual formalities 587 of the expression of consent are omitted, because [226] no new bride 584 price is paid. Nevertheless, we note that the heir must go and fetch 567 the widow from her family and make a special payment. The Nkundó explain this action as a mark of respect toward the widow's family, but we may interpret it as an expression, adapted to the particular situation, of the new husband's wish to marry this woman. The woman's willingness to accompany the heir is really a manifestation of her consent to the union. This interpretation is confirmed by the legal requirement that another bokondi payment be made by each of the

581 deceased's relatives who wishes to marry the widow, while the bride
584 price contract remains unchanged. This payment, unlike the bride-
587 price agreement, does not come from the family; it is clearly a personal act of the man who wants to take the widow for his wife.

In the case of a replacement after divorce, the external expression of consent is more vague, since it is limited to the husband's overture's to his father-in-law on the one hand, and the fact that the woman goes with the husband, on the other. The same must be said of the inheritance of a bandio (Chapter III, Article III). It would be contrary to reality, however, to conclude that because the form of the woman's consent is less prominent, such consent does not exist; with respect to these questions, their attitude is entirely different from ours. To be a replacement is considered a duty and accepted as such. Psychologically, the acceptance of this duty often involves consent; it does not exclude the presence of the will any more than the duty to submit to holy commandments, and to religious and civil laws. Even reverent fear, the fear of punishments, etc., does not prevent a free exercise of the will, although they do diminish it. Nevertheless, there are cases where fear or constraint can be so great as to remove freedom completely. [227]

With respect to unions before maturity (Chapter IV), the
583 question is even more difficult. Only the engagement is made in early
584 childhood. The husband's consent is expressed in a manner which is entirely adequate. Since the union does not move from a tentative stage to a final one before the girl approaches puberty, she may be considered capable of giving her consent sufficiently to make a valid marriage, and she gives this consent in going to the home of her husband. Nevertheless, if we compare this expression of consent with those we have observed in the other types of union, it seems very much attenuated and greatly inferior to them.

We may therefore assume that in a general way and under ordinary circumstances freedom is safe and consent is expressed in an adequate fashion.

Having recapitulated these facts, let us try to define the legal
581 nature of Nkundo marriage. In ecclesiastic law and in European civil law, a marriage is effected through the official exchange of

Article I. Girls *

584 According to Nkundó custom it is acceptable for an expected child, not yet born or still very young, to be promised in marriage to X or Y. This practice was formerly very common and is still quite prevalent today. It is called banda bǒna or bǒmoto, literally, "to count a child" or "to count a woman." The ikulɛ is paid at the time of the promise. Later the matter is carried out in the usual fashion; the other parts of the bride price are paid either while the fiancée is young or, preferably, at the time when she goes to her husband.

584
855 Until that time, if one of the girl's relatives is already a wife of a polygamist husband-to-be or of one of his relatives, the child is brought up in her husband's family from a fairly early age, depending on the circumstances. She lives with her relative. She may be barely seven or eight years old, for example. If no one in her husband's clan can take care of her, [232] she spends only one or two weeks there to become acquainted, little by little, with people and places; she repeats the visit from time to time. Her mother accompanies her, for being so young she could not get used to being there alone, without support, without her parents. Therefore it is necessary to wait till she is old enough to be somewhat independent and able to manage by herself. That time usually comes around the [145] beginning of puberty, thus sometime between the ages of twelve and fifteen.

584
833 Like an adult woman, she is already called bompáka or wǎlɛ, depending on the portion of the bride price that has been paid. She has all the duties and privileges of a wife: sexual relations, food preparation, care of the household, etc. There is no set date or age for the beginning of cohabitation. This matter is settled between the husband and his parents-in-law. The latter do not have the right to [606] delay the time, even if their daughter is still too young, but they can make use of their great influence over their son-in-law. The modern [178] [571] generation is not shocked by sexual relations between an adulterer [sic] and a girl who has not reached puberty. Besides, all is in order from the legal standpoint; since the man has paid the bride price, he is the

[illegible] legitimate husband and is entitled to his wife. Everything depends
593 on his personal attitude, his passion, or his respect for the body of his young wife. If he is reasonable he will be very careful during his relations with her or will abstain altogether, so as not to "damage" her body. But from the legal standpoint he may do as he chooses. Thus there are adults who have regular relations -- one way or another -- with a wife whose breasts are not in the least developed. In such cases marital relations take place before nubility. (1) The consequences with respect to the birth rate may easily be guessed. [233] It may also happen that the husband himself has not reached puberty. This fact presents no obstacle to cohabitation. As soon as he feels that he is a man, he builds his hut and the couple live there together. In all these cases the girl often goes to her parents' home, and sometimes her visits extend for weeks during which she does not see her husband.

Formerly things did not work out in this fashion. The young wife often refused to participate in the sexual act, especially if the husband was considerably older than she. Her reaction was due to her natural modesty and timidity, together with her education. A polygamous husband usually respected her feelings, till she gradually came around. When her normal physiological development was completed and her love reached a sufficient intensity, she would begin to follow her instincts. In the light of what was said in Chapter I, Part 2, Article IV, 2, A, we may readily accept our informants' statements on this score; the situation seems altogether natural.

---

[882] 1. Note that the immature girl is not called filingo in Nkundó, as Engels ("Les Wangata," Revue congolaise, 1910, p. 36) maintains. This word is but the Nkundó transformation of the word virgo. There is no specific term for "prepubescent." A girl who is not yet a woman but is no longer a child is called itembeleke.

584 572 When an engagement is arranged for an expected child, the events may betray the hopes of the parents; and the child for whom the ikulé has been paid may turn out to be a boy. This mischance is dealt with in the following manner: either the suitor waits for the birth of a girl, or an alliance of friendship and mutual assistance (bonsaka, see Chapter I, Part 1, Article III) is established between him and the newborn child. Such an alliance is called libála jă jwende, "the marriage of men," (matrimonium viri). In no case is restitution made for the ikulé that has been paid. If the friendship between the two men remains unbroken later, it results in the marriage of the daughter of the man for whom the ikulé was paid before his birth, to the man who paid it or to his son or grandson. No new ikulé is paid for such a marriage; the payment of the bride price simply has to be completed in the usual fashion.

584 A man may acquire a young child for himself, or for a son, a younger brother, etc. In the past the former was more frequently the case, for the old men kept the women for themselves and wanted [234] to benefit from having them before leaving them to the youths as inheritance. But the latter situation also arose.

The purpose [of obtaining a young child as wife for a relative] was to prevent inexperienced youths who were not able to defend themselves from being deprived of the means of obtaining a wife should the father die prematurely and the heirs monopolize the harem and bride-price valuables to their own profit, which theoretically they have a right to do. This practice is thus a means of favoring a son or other relative by furnishing him with a wife earlier than is customary. Nowadays this is even a stronger reason than in the past, because boys marry earlier than formerly. [178]

Other reasons for obtaining a child as a wife are involved in the two above-mentioned instances. There is a greater certainty of getting one's money's worth; valuables can disappear for various reasons during long unproductive years.

584 855 But the most fundamental reason, in my opinion, is the one very often invoked by the Nkundó, namely the opportunity of personally attending to the future wife's education. There is no

584 855 question lies that it is in the husband's interest to take care of it himself. He can accustom her from childhood on to special circumstances, to the laws of the clan, to the particular habits (virtues, faults, way of living, etc.) of his family, his wives, and, last but not least, himself. He can mold her according to his tastes and desires. Enormous advantages result from his success in doing so. This does not mean that he takes care of her personally, for he knows he is not a born educator. He therefore usually prefers to hand this [593] task over to his mother (or aunt or sister), who enjoys this obligation and likes to help her son and to participate directly and intimately in his household.

584 572 A childhood engagement between their respective offspring often results from an alliance between "friends." If the children later on do not want the marriage, that is all there is to it. Restitution of payments is made, or a substitution is arranged. Such a situation arose while this book was being written. [235] At least twenty years ago, Lokota of Bolingo and Imilo of Bongolo made a bond of friendship (bosoka). The former begot a boy (Itswo), the latter a girl (Lokoko). The parents arranged the engagement of their children by means of the ikula payment. When Itswo grew old enough to marry, he had no desire to marry Lokoko, for his heart was taken by another. But he had a younger brother, Itoko, who had affectionate feelings for Lokoko. Itswo explained the situation to his mother (since his father had died in the interim), and she resumed the relationship with Imilo. They all came to an agreement without difficulty. Itoko therefore married Lokoko in place of his elder brother, after paying the bride price for her.

584 If a little girl is not satisfied with the union that has been arranged she is free, according to the rules of law, to break it -- and not simply by failing to give her consent. Note that in such a case the husband is not entitled to any compensation for having raised this child.

In spite of the advantages involved in childhood unions, they should be rigorously held in check, since the affections often stray from bonds formed at such an early age. More should be done to

584 safeguard freedom, and the impression should not be given that childhood unions are encouraged -- as it sometimes is -- by the exemption of immature wives of polygamists from a supplementary tax.

There is no law requiring an older sister to be married before a younger one, but such is the common practice. Exceptions are made only under certain circumstances, and particularly if the younger girl finds a suitor earlier than the older one, a reason which includes and sums up all the others (such as disadvantageous physical and psychological tendencies of the older sister).

178
584
This practice of marrying daughters off before maturity is beginning to change because of the increase in freedom which has been introduced by colonization. Nevertheless, as this change is not especially advantageous [226] its manifestations are still very slight. The Christian education of parents must of necessity delay the time of the daughter's marriage and will do so ipso facto as soon as Christian influence becomes sufficiently strong in the region.

Article II. Boys

582 Except in the rare instances of an engagement of two young children, it was formerly the common and normal practice for men to remain bachelors for many years after puberty. The old men tended first to their own wants, and the youths had to wait their turn, like their elders. This was considered entirely natural. Later on they could establish a home and "profit" from life. Meanwhile they found a little compensation with the wives of certain relatives or of others, if the opportunity arose.

582
564
[556]
To explain this state of affairs we can invoke the political organization of Nkundó society, which is based on age. It is therefore natural that those possessing authority should have its external signs, and one of the foremost of these is the wealth manifested in the possession of wives. But, as we will point out later, the present situation greatly weakens this explanation.

582
585
It is more natural to consider the delay in the marriage of young men a logical consequence of the marriage of girls at an early age. Suppose that a boy is fifteen years old while his sister,

654 576 576 591 Any of the types of evidence listed above is sufficient to legitimize the application of one or another of these penalties. Nevertheless, the husband is required first to notify the elder members of his family and the ndonga, who do not permit him to act unless the misdeeds have occurred repeatedly. The readiness to accord the husband permission depends on the temperament of the interested parties and on a great many circumstances, the most important of which is the respective social prominence of the parties involved.

The need to ask permission of the "fathers" and the ndonga, which we have already encountered in reference to other situations (above, Article III, 4), does not weaken the husband's rights [318], but it limits their use. It is not a legal obligation but one that is imposed for family reasons, which are as follows:

1) The respect due to the "fathers" in this as in all important matters;

2) The respect due to the ndonga, who in marital matters is the husband's superior and whose intervention must be called upon in any serious situation;

3) The repercussions of any inconsiderate or rash action on the entire family (enmities, wars, etc.).

If forbearance and patience are fruitless, no one can blame the husband any longer. And when the woman's family compares the censurable conduct of their daughter with the generosity of their son-in-law, they will naturally be inclined to find that he is in the right and so usually will not intervene against him.

Note also that the Nkundó invoke the need to maintain their honor as justification for the obligation to notify the authorities. They must be able to inform the unfaithful woman's clan and thus safeguard their good reputation as defenders of order and public peace.

685 595 A woman whose husband loved her very much was subjected to the etóka only. He would reprimand her and strike her, and would try to correct her behavior by means of gentleness and leniency.

As we will see suo loco, a husband who is exasperated by the incorrigible infidelity of a wife whose performance of other wifely

684 578 certainly happen that a husband who was too jealous or impetuous would wound, kill, or sell his rival. But this was an exception and was always condemned since it was absolutely lacking in chivalry. In any case there can never be any question of demanding an indemnity; such an act would be absolutely shameful.

The culprit is notified of the demand for an indemnity by 684 594 the ndonga, who in difficult cases is accompanied by various notables. If the husband foresees strong opposition on the debtor's part, he gives the ndonga a special present of a bunch of bananas and two fish (or a hen) "so that he would not be forced to eat the rival's food."

A persistent and categorical refusal to pay the indemnity is 684 unusual. For it can have serious consequences: the taking in custody followed by enslavement because of debts, or [the taking of] compensation in the person of his wife or of a relative, or the retention [by her relatives] of a relative of the creditor who is married into the debtor's clan (ikɔ́kɔlɔ). Since these practices of taking hostages and of bodily constraint have been abolished, there remains the intervention of the courts, seconded by the police.

What is the Nkundó idea of this payment which we have called an indemnity in order to facilitate its description? The question is difficult to answer. Here are the linguistic facts which may provide elements of the solution:

The payment for adultery is called nyongo, and the word is 684 172 used together with the verb ka, "to give." The expression is equivalent to the verb lingala fɛ́ta (from which the noun bofɛ́to is derived). It signifies "payment" in the broadest sense and thus also covers our words "pay," "salary," "remuneration." In addition to its application in the case of adultery, it is also used in many other situations, such as remuneration for work, payment for a service, etc. Nyongo does not mean "compensation," which is called lowɛ́ɛla, nor "a payment making amends [222] and apologizing for an offense," which is bɔ́ɔndo, nor "indemnification" (mbɛ́laka). What the expression has in common with the last term is the concept of a

586^x One way or the other, the question was thus settled for both sides.

The term universally employed to signify the breaking up of a marriage by the wife is bokilo, derived from the verb kila. This word is not used for a wife's repudiation by her husband. Therefore, its meaning is not equivalent to "divorce"; it means rather "to break the union with the husband." The transitive causative form (kilya) means "to provoke this break." It actually does happen that the woman's family causes the dissolution of a marriage for the sake of a more advantageous union. This should be understood in the context of what we have explained concerning reasons for divorce. Serious failures in the husband's fulfillment of his duties to his parents-in-law are mainly involved here. The [587] remarriage of a divorcée is described by the generic term kumbwa, "to be married to someone."

B. Second hypothesis: a husband wanted to get rid of his wife. Old natives stated very categorically that such behavior on the husband's part was due not to the cooling of his love, but to [202] incorrigible conduct on the wife's part. He was reduced to this extremity by the impossibility of continuing conjugal life with her.

586^x ●684 He did everything in his power to forestall the flight of his wife by making the first move. After having vainly tried to bring her around through the intervention of her parents and especially the ndonga, he had recourse to one of the following means, which he could in fact use successively. But first he was required to inform the witness and to obtain his approval as well as that of the family authorities. The measures were as follows:

a) Submission to the etáka, a heavy wooden fork fastened to [684] the neck. When the husband has placed the etáka on his wife, the ndonga informed her parents of what had happened. They could then come and free their daughter by returning the bride price. If the husband applied the etáka against the wishes of the witness, the latter could release the prisoner. But in so doing he became guarantor of the reimbursement of the bride price; he became personally responsible for it.

586^x The husband was authorized to keep his wife under this form of torture for months. If his parents-in-law would not or could not

586* make it possible for him to recover his claim, he had recourse to the second means:

b) Reducing his wife to slavery (bosoamó, from the verb
586* oyamola). The husband had the right to use this means immediately,
587 without having first tried the étaka. But such action was not approved of and was undertaken only if the woman's family were themselves exasperated by the endless suits and the continual shame that their unworthy daughter caused them.

[721] The reduction of a woman to slavery usually caused a war, for her clan would not put up with such an insult. In some instances they did not seek revenge, however, either out of fear, because they did not feel in a position to resist, or because they recognized that the husband had good reasons for what he did. [204]

The woman's relatives could subsequently buy her back. (1)

> [181] 1. If the Nkundó sold an Elinga woman into slavery, her people never troubled them with a war. For they did not know how to attack, were not good at marching, were strangers to the forest, and were inferior in military valor. Therefore they were satisfied with buying back their kinswoman.

In some instances, not wanting to be exposed to further palavers or further shame caused by their daughter's continued misconduct after having bought her back, they left her to her fate. Their love for their child and their desire to preserve their honor and good reputation were in conflict, and which of the two sentiments triumphed depended on circumstances of men and things. In such a situation, as with respect to theft and other habits that brought dishonor, it was not rare (nor is it even today) to find that the desire to preserve honor triumphed over affection or financial interests.

● [584] Before reducing a wife to slavery, even more than before confining her to the etáka, a man was required to communicate his intentions to the ndonga. Otherwise, the latter would declare war

586 on his own authority, for the offense was considered very serious.
589 We can assume that the reason for this rule was to allow time for
[567] the woman's family to intervene and keep their daughter from becoming a slave by refunding the bride price paid for her.

c) In exceptional instances an exasperated husband resorted to the immolation of his wife when someone died. People cite the case of Bongilongó of Bongili (Bosombé, Bombwanja), who had his wife, Litáli of Bosenjo, decapitated at the ikwei at the death of his father, Bongilongó byá Yese.

If the woman had children old enough to intervene on her behalf, her husband could be prevented from carrying out his violent intentions. The proverb says, bibóni ntáwólá, "a mother
[578] does not perish." The husband also abstained if the woman had
[579] a co-wife (ekíba) who was her sister or other close relative -- either out of a feeling of shame, [282] or out of fear of undesirable repercussions. Sometimes, when a husband was caught between his wish to use the etíka and his shame or his fear of the ekíba, he hid
[607] the wife who was confined by this fork. Preferably, he asked a brother-in-law to give her hospitality. In that way he got around the difficulty to a great extent, because through the law of exogamy such an arrangement placed the wife in another village, sometimes a considerable distance away. This practice was called isingyá; ntumba walí isingyá.

Instead of resorting to the procedures listed, a husband could
586 also place his wife in the hands of the ndonga. However, it was a
589 very unusual thing to do. The natives maintain that such action was due to a lack of affection for the wife, together with the husband's certainty that he could recover his valuables -- either because he was assured that his father-in-law was well disposed toward him (and would reimburse him or provide a replacement), or because he knew he could use the ikfanjo.

As we have said, direct repudiation was extremely rare. Here we are not speaking of repudiation caused by a wife's incorrigible misconduct -- which we have just discussed -- but of repudiation against the wife's wishes. If it did occur the husband was expected to hand her over to the ndonga, and the latter, seeing

that there were no further means for a reconciliation, returned her to her parents. No violence was used against her, nor could the husband demand an immediate and direct reimbursement of the bride price. The husband had to wait until the wife he had repudiated found a new husband and the latter had paid a bride price for her. If the parents-in-law showed ill will toward him, however, [202] they could expect a war.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the preceding data is that although Nkundó law is very severe against the wife who does not acquit herself of her marital obligations, it does not leave the husband entirely free to do as he pleases. Ancestral law demanded grave reasons as the basis for any measures he took against her, [203] and the application of this law was well regulated. The differences between the various situations are an eloquent demonstration of this fact.

As we have seen above, the term bohófo is not applied to repudiation by either party. In the case of the husband the Nkundó say that he atóna, "no longer wants her"; the noun is lotóno. This term does not apply specifically to this situation; it refers to any person or thing one does not want. The special manner in which the wife is sent back by being handed over to the ndonga is also called by a generic term émola, "to cause to start moving, to make go away"; the noun is njémó.

2. At the present time

Considerable changes have been introduced as a result of colonization. Wars, torture, human sacrifice, and slavery have been abolished. The possibilities are now reduced to the woman's flight, with or without notification of the ndonga, or a repudiation pure and simple. The intervention of the ndonga is only rarely omitted; it is still considered important. As a matter of fact, it would be against his financial interests to make an enemy of him. A woman who leaves her husband returns home, goes directly to another man, or lives a debauched life in some center, large or small. There is nothing left but to proceed with the refunding of the bride price. Thus everything is reduced to its simplest form.

A Nkundó woman is held back only by the fear of punishment and other consequences of her action, or by her love for her husband.

178 from more than one native who was clearly and truly wronged
586 by the system. For these reasons, it would not seem impossible that before the native courts were organized, some government agent had spoken and acted in approval of the system in question.

This digression on the subject of the practice to be adopted with reference to the reimbursement of the bride price has become long. But special emphasis is necessary because of the crucial importance of this question in the future development of native society.

3. The formalities of restitution

586 The only formality involved in the restitution of the bride
584 price is the obligation to carry it out through the intervention of the ndonga(s). Since he is the official witness, he is the one who is qualified to say what has been paid. There is no recognized obligation to make restitution of any payment or gift that has not passed through his hands or that he has not seen. Sometimes certain payments actually have been made without his participation, and restitution for them cannot be demanded. The official witness has had no knowledge of them, and he is consequently [406] under no obligation to take them into account. But the possibility of friendly transactions always remains.

Should the ndonga all have died in the interim, the procedure would not be adversely affected, for Nkundó law recognizing the inheritance of that office. The brother, son, or other relative of the deceased can act in his name, and sometimes long before his death he will have given the latter all the necessary and useful explanations. The testimony of the successor is recognized as legal and valid.

Moreover, the ndonga may be assisted by other upright and influential men who were present when the payments were made and who can corroborate or even correct his testimony. It is clear that this practice was established by common law for the sake of obtaining the best possible results in the exercise of justice.

The custom is all the more easily understood since there are many different payments, separated by intervals and made throughout the duration of the marriage. Therefore long arguments and contestations occur.

It is not pointless to draw special attention to the necessity of the ndonga's testimony in the reimbursement of a bride price, for this rule is not always properly observed. For example, I know of the following case: A ship's captain from Upper Ikelemba took a girl from this region as concubine. The absence of a ndonga and the omission of a real bride price showed their desire not to involve themselves in a legitimate marriage. Nevertheless, the man paid valuables (especially money and fabrics) to the woman's parents. By the end of the concubinage, which lasted many years, the sum total of these gifts had risen to a value of more than 1,000 francs. After the separation, the husband demanded the possession of the daughter born from the union. The court charged with examining the case commanded -- with the approval of the administrator and in accordance with customary rules (see the next article) that restitution of the [407] payments made should be carried out and assigned the child to its natural father. The woman's father had a sufficient sense of honesty to return the gifts -- even though, legally, he had no obligation to do so -- but he claimed his daughter's child. However the court was not willing to hear his claim, although according to Nkundó law they should have recognized his right.

Apart from the participation of witnesses, no special formality is involved in the restitution of the bride price. It is carried out in accordance with the rules prescribed by Nkundó customs and conventions, appropriate for any discussion held in a family or clan gathering. When everything is settled, the person entitled to the reimbursement collects his due and takes it with him.

4. Gifts and payments subject to restitution

Restitution must be made of all payments made by both sides; the bride price in all its parts, the mother's portion, gifts, payments at the time of death, etc., made by either side, the dowry (nkomí), and various presents. All these are subject to restitution.

764 for it was necessary first to celebrate the farewell feast, and the widower's family had to gather to discuss the matter and collect the valuables needed for the funeral payment (see the article which follows). Only after all that did the young men belonging to the
[462] husband's family take the mortal remains upon their shoulders -- wrapped in a mat or enclosed in a coffin, depending on the case.

If possible all the husband's relatives take part in the procession. The pallbearers walk at the head. The men are armed with bows and arrows, knives and sticks, seldom with spears. The women accompany them [433], wailing. The husband and, if necessary, a few relatives carry with them the various objects they will need for the payments. Some men have a lonfosi (an
[534] ocarina) (1) or an antelope horn on which they play intermittently. (2)

1. See my "Note sur les Instruments de Musique à l'Equateur (Note on Musical Instruments at the Equator)" in Congo, 1935, Vol. 2, July, p. 187, figs. 1 and 2 (p. 189).

2. Sometimes there is also an accompaniment of drums.

[201] At the time the corpse is lifted and while passing through villages between their own and their destination, the lokolé is struck with regular and equal blows (-kómya) to announce the arrival of the funeral procession.

● 584
764 The chief personage among those who follow the corpse is not the husband, but the ndonga. He may never be absent at that time. Even if the husband is deceased and the procession is that of a widow who has not remarried, the ndonga must always be in the party. The duty of bringing the corpse of a married woman is above all his.

The ndonga may go ahead of the procession to inform the family of the deceased of her death, and if there is a great distance between the wife's village and the husband's, he may not be able

764 [594] to return to join the procession, or may be able to do so only with difficulty.

The act of carrying a corpse to its native clan is not designated by any specific term. The expression is simply mika ilâko, "to go and return the corpse."

764 431 In one or more places near the entrance to the village, a barrier (bokôko, lokombé, or lofíaka) made of posts and palms is set up. There the relations of the deceased, armed, wait for the procession of the husband's relations, who are also armed, and forbid them to continue their march. Before passing, the latter must make a payment. The valuables given are called byêko by'ôkôko or simply bokôko (or lofíaka). The family of the deceased calls to the procession, "Halt! You will not pass here." The latter reply, "We come to bring [426] you the corpse of your child; we want to break down the barrier. Let us pass; here are the gifts." The ndonga hands over a knife, a brass or copper ring, [594] or some equivalent object (for instance, money, nowadays). Thereupon the members of the deceased's clan move away. The bánambótswá (persons related to both clans) break down the barrier, and the procession passes, headed by the ndonga and the bánambótswá. The husband follows the coffin.

764 579 In the past it was almost always necessary to force a passage through the barrier. The wife's family did not want to open and the husband's family did not want to pay, and so they came to blows. The group bearing the corpse tried to break down the barrier, while their adversaries tried to prevent them from doing so. The arms used in that struggle were chiefly pointed sticks which the members of the two camps threw at each other; more rarely, arrows were used. The specific name for this sort of brawl is gbebélá. Certain clans specialize in this sport. Thus between Bofimbo and Lileko, there is a regular battle every time. In such serious cases the barrier is heavily fortified; the posts are thick and hard, and intertwined with thorny creepers (bokau, longolé, wanganjíla, etc.) and thorny shrubs (wéngé, etc.). A quantity [125] of venomous biting ants (bafumba, mbómbá, byémbo, etc.) are added. If the brawl becomes serious, the ndonga and the other bánambótswa intervene and impose peace by requiring the husband's clan to pay.

764 578 152 [84] When the family of the deceased bars the route to the funeral procession, they are manifesting the anger provoked by the death of one of their members. [420] For they feel anger and resentment, in spite of the fact that the _ndonga_ carries a spear at the head of the procession as a sign that they come as friends, without evil intentions.

This does not mean that the natives attribute the cause of death to the husband and his family. In most cases they are convinced that the latter could not prevent it. Although they express themselves in these terms: _Bótomomela wána_ (_nkína_, _eóto_), "you have killed our child (sister, relative)," they do not maintain that the husband's clan has really killed her, but only that she died among them. Under the circumstances do they feign anger to obtain valuables, for example? I do not think so. The Nkundó do not say that they simulate anger; they categorically state that they feel it and that they want to show it in the manner described. We should not be astonished at this since -- as we have noted in the study on the funeral customs of the Nkundó (_Les Coutumes funéraires des Nkundó_), the emotions of anger and sorrow seem to be intimately related among these peoples.

764 When the funeral procession passes through the last barrier, that which bars the entrance to the village, the husband's clan puts down the body, and it is subsequently lifted up by the family of the deceased, who carry it into the house of the head of the family. They are followed by the _ndonga_, the _bánambótswá_, the husband, and his relatives. The family of the deceased wail over her. Her kinswomen (_bóínanyi_) show their sorrow-anger by mistreating the clan wives (_baájââla_), by smearing their bodies with mud, dressing them in _basáki_, and hitting them with stinging plants (_bansǎnsǎ_). For the deceased is the _baájââla_'s "husband," that is, a kinswoman of their husbands. The _baájââla_ treat the widower and his relatives in the same way, because "their husband" has died among them.

The corpse is thus deposited in the hut of the head of the family. Each time that kinswomen who are married elsewhere arrive [422] to mourn over the deceased, the _baájââla_ forbid them

764 Before proceeding with the burial, the two families settle the question of funeral payments, which we are about to examine. A "farewell feast" is given by the clan of the deceased. The interment itself has no special features, so that it will suffice to refer the reader to the study of this subject that has been cited.

766 As we noted in Chapter VII, Article II, a husband can buy the corpse of his favorite. Unless the execution of this intention meets with some obstacle, the corpse is not transported to the favorite's native clan but is buried next to the husband's tomb in his clan cemetery. As a result, all that accompanies the transporting of the corpse is omitted, as is the funeral payment which is compensated for by the purchase of the corpse. The husband or his family only send the wife's relatives the payment that usually accompanies the news of her death.

Article IV. Funeral Payments

764 As we have just said, before the husband proceeds with the transportation of a deceased wife's corpse, he collects the valuables to pay the nkunjí. This is the term (derived from the verb kunda, "to bury") that designates the various payments a widower is required to make to the clan of the deceased.

First of all, as soon as the death is known, the ndonga goes to the parents of the deceased and brings them the nsango (news), which consists of a copper ring or a knife. He presents them with these, saying: "Know that your daughter so-and-so, has just died."

At every barrier the procession must cross to reach the village of the deceased, the husband must make payment of some object [431] (usually a knife or a ring) in order to obtain free passage. [584] The ndonga always serves as intermediary. These payments are called byako by'okáko or simply bokáko, loálaka (barrier), or, among the Bombwanja, ifaká yĭ ekálaki, "knife for felling (the barrier)."

The ndonga walks at the head of the funeral procession; he (or another bonambótswá who takes his place) carries a spear

584 431 [862] These consist of various foods: manioc, bananas, smoked meat or fish, caterpillars, salt, hens, etc., one or several dogs (bompúngá) that are alive (mbwá éá nkunja, "dog with hair") or their value in specie (2 rings or 1 ring and an equivalent knife, which for this purpose is called mbwá éá bokóndé or éá botongo), as well as a knife for killing and cutting up animals called lokóola. The bónanyi and the badjála each brings his part. Note that this gift never includes vegetables (bitumbélé).

584 519 When everything is collected and considered adequate, the ndonga is called, together with the deceased's own sons, so that they can thus give their opinion and later have a good basis for testimony. As remuneration for his services, the ndonga receives a payment (nyongo) of a bokóna fish or a bonsómbe rat, as well as a bunch of bananas (for which a ring is sometimes substituted). With reference to this subject I should like to recount an interesting part of the negotiations at which I was present one day. The ndonga expressed his dissatisfaction with the fact that he was given only a single bokóna. "It is so little," he said, "in comparison with all the trouble I had to take. I had to settle the matter of the bride price; I had to reconcile man and wife when they quarreled; I had to intervene many times; I always had to run between the two clans; for many years I wore myself out without ever having any rest. And for all that trouble I get such small recompense." I was asked my opinion. I could only express approval of the ndonga's view. One of the relatives [433] of the deceased also considered him to be right: "He was always obliged to come and go between the two families; his voice has become hoarse from his endless interventions in palavers and quarrels; he well deserves that another bokóna be added." Everyone sided with our opinion, and the ndonga was satisfied.

After receiving his present, the ndonga detaches himself from the group. Together with the other banambótswá and any intelligent strangers who may be present and might be able to give an opinion to settle an incidental argument, he sits down between the two opposing clans, a slight distance from each.

764 584 All the payments must pass through the ndonga. He is the one who transmits the desired objects from one group to the other. He intervenes in the disputes that arise in order to settle them and re-establish peace. He explains the various points of view, elucidates some consideration whose significance the other group does not seem to fully comprehend, etc.

As has already been said many times, there can be several ndonga. Legally all of them can intervene personally or through their officially recognized representatives. Thus, several months ago (1933) at Bonjoku, Baémbe, wife of Ikomo of Besombó, was present at a nkunjí discussion. No one paid any attention to her. At one point she threw herself into the discussion by reprimanding the chief ndonga and the families involved, asking them on what basis they were excluding her from this affair. Did not her husband have the right to intervene? Was he not also a ndonga? Since he had gone fishing in the Jwalé, it was impossible for him to come. She could therefore legitimately substitute for him. Then why was [576] she being left out? She was quickly pacified, and the persons involved admitted that she was right and apologized for their forgetfulness and negligence.

764 584 431 The wives of the deceased's clan place the gifts of food at the ndonga's feet. The bokúné (the youngest) of the clan goes and explains to him what they are and for whom [434] the gifts are intended. (1) One portion goes to the bakalé of the deceased, that is, the baájâála of the husband's clan; another portion goes to the baóme (the husbands), that is, to the widower and his family; a third part is set aside for kinswomen of the deceased who have come from villages into which they are married in order to be present at the funeral.

764 The clan of the deceased first asks the other clan "for news" (ũola nsango). The latter reply that one of their members had

---

1. In the Nkundó hierarchy it is always the youngest who is charged with the execution of all such small tasks, at the behest of the head of the family.

768 428 men are generous enough to renounce all of it. If the deceased had an *ebísa*, or if the parents-in-law give their son-in-law a substitute, the possessions fall to her. She even inherits the fields [*culture*] that have been set up by her kinswoman, to the extent that they have not been destroyed. Under other circumstances the cultivated lands [*plantations*] are never left to the family of the deceased.

The only items to which a woman is entitled strictly speaking are the various portions of the bride price and similar payments awarded to her by Nkundó law: goats and spiral bands and the mother's gifts as part of the bride price; the cloth and belt given at a funeral. At a wife's death these possessions pass to her clan, if she has not previously given them to her relatives. In no case may they be appropriated by the husband.

Finally, when a wife dies she may leave a tool (knife, hoe, etc.) to her daughter. This custom is observed particularly by very active women in order to inculcate their daughters with the love [523] of work. Such an object often became an heirloom, transmitted from mother to daughter for several generations. It is called *botsíkéjwá* (from *tsíkela*, "to leave to"; see the Latin *reliquiae*) or, among the Bombwanja, *elíli*. These terms are also applied to other objects included in the inheritance when these are considered separately (altogether they are called *lokutu*, "patrimony,""property," or *lisangó*, "inheritance"). Such a *botsíkɛ́jwá* can never be appropriated by a husband. [447]

Article VIII

Death of the Fiancé Before the Payment of the Bride Price

768 584 Here we shall deal with the situation resulting from the death of a husband during the engagement, after the payment of the *ikulá* or the *ndanga* but before the *walo*. The procedure for dissolving an engagement may already lead us to suppose that death also breaks it without any special difficulties. And in fact, if the fiancé dies the woman is free. Therefore she may go home, and the family of the deceased is reimbursed for the payments that have been made.

768 ●584 She can also remain in her fiancé's family and there be taken in marriage by one of his kinsmen. If everything favors the continuation of the union, the new husband-to-be pays the bride price, but he need not repeat the engagement payments, which retain their validity. If he belongs to a distant branch of the family, however, the kin of the deceased will not want to give up their property, and the new fiancé himself will have to acquit himself of all the bride-price obligations, beginning with the ikulá.

[763] Sometimes the dying man, in making his last requests, enjoins his family to maintain the alliance. In that case one of his kinsman must marry the woman. If later on a breakup becomes inevitable, the spouses separate. For that matter, if the woman lacks the inclination to remarry in her fiancé's kin group, she will not be forced to do so.

This practice is based on the stipulation of Nkundó law that engaged persons have all the duties and privileges of married couples.

[587] There is nothing among the Nkundó that resembles a levirate. Even in the case we cited of a last will, the obligation derives solely from the sacred nature of that will. [448]

Article IX

The Death of the Woman Before the Payment of the Bride Price

Two situations must be distinguished: 1) The woman dies during the engagement; 2) she dies before the bosóngo.

1. Before the walo

As has already been said, engaged persons enjoy all the duties and privileges of a married couple. If the girl dies the fiancé must fulfill all obligations toward the deceased and her family (transporting the corpse, sacrifices, nkunjí). But his obligations do not end there.

Through the payment of the ndanga (and, in practice, already through the ikulá) he is considered responsible for any accident that might befall his fiancée in his home; and he has assumed the

obligation of completing the union by subsequent payments.

The consequence of this fact is that if the fiancée dies before he has fulfilled his obligations, he is forced to pay a large indemnity (mbɔ́laka) to his parents-in-law, who have been disappointed and deprived of their rights. The amount of this payment varies. Usually it is about equal to what ordinarily would have been paid as the walo, whence comes the expression used in these cases: énga ilɔ́kɔ́ (ikombe among the Injɔ́lɔ́ and the Boángɛ́), "to pay the bride price for the corpse."

Sometimes the woman's family is less demanding. This is especially true if they are very fond of their son-in-law and know that he is wealthy and generous enough to considerably increase the amount of the nkunjɛ́, the ibɔ́leɔ́ko, and the bride price for a substitute. The principle of the indemnity is secure, but its external form is altered and made less humiliating.

In other cases the woman's family raises the amount to be paid as indemnity, either out of greed or because they are not pleased with the union or even opposed to it (this happened rarely in the past but has become more frequent nowadays). [449] Under such circumstances, up to 100 and 150 rings are demanded, as in the following instance whibh occurred quite recently. Ilumbɛ́ of Mpámá (Boéndé) took Lokokú of Bongíli wǎ Ndongó for his wife. He paid 10 rings as ilmlá-ndanga. When some time later he brought 40 rings for the walo, his father-in-law considered them insufficient (and he was entirely right). The small amount of valuables showed the son-in-law's poverty and foreshadowed his insolvency, so Lokokú's family was not greatly pleased with the marriage. Consequently, they refused to accept the rings, which therefore remained on deposit with the ndonga. After two years of cohabitation, Lokokú died (July 16, 1933). The family of the deceased demanded 100 rings. Ilumbɛ́ could not invoke any excuse or attenuating circumstance. For if he had wanted to fulfill his obligations, he could have done so, as the interval was long enough, and if he knew he did not have the means, he should have given up the woman.

768
584 In the past the widower and his family sometimes refused to pay, with the result that the parties took up arms. The right of war was involved. For when the hostilities ended, the culprit was required to indemnify all the families on his side for any member who was killed or wounded. Therefore he ran the risk of seeing all his property confiscated and being sold as a slave if they did not suffice. He found it was wiser simply to submit to normal sanctions rather than run such serious risks.

The situation with which we are dealing in this article may involve further complications if the woman has been living with her own family, or if she belongs to another man whose bride price has not yet been refunded. But it is preferable to deal with these complications in separate articles.

768 2. Before the *bosóngo*

If the woman dies before the *bosóngo* is paid, the widower is not required to pay an indemnity. However, he must complete the bride price by handing over "the slaves" [450]

If he does not do so: (1) the alliance is broken *ipso facto*, and therefore he cannot bring the *ibóleóko* and does not receive a substitute; 2) the family of the deceased is entitled to one of the daughters if there are any, or to one of the boys if there are none. This is a compensation for the loss of the *bosóngo*.

Naturally, the woman's family can in practice refrain from claiming their rights. Thus, they may do so out of regard for their son-in-law who is influential, generous, and well disposed toward them, in anticipation of greater financial and social benefits. The similar remarks made throughout this study have already
[157] familiarized us with the "broad-mindedness" of these peoples.

It might be observed that this situation is in no way different from the preceding one, since the woman's family is indemnified in either case. But, first of all, if the woman has left no children, the situation is not at all identical. Secondly, even if the financial aspect of the two situations is the same, the legal aspect is entirely different. The taking of a child and the refusal to accept the *ibóleóko* are not considered as compensation. The

[531]

FAMILY LIFE AND CUSTOMS AMONG THE NATIVES OF EQUATORIAL AFRICA

583 The so-called marriage, or rather, the acquisition of a wife takes place:

1. Through a bride price to the family of the woman who is given;
2. Through buying, or the payment of an amount for a woman who is no longer in the hands of the family;
3. Through inheritance;
4. Through abduction.

Acquisition by bride price is called enga, njengenga: "the binding or engagement of oneself."

Acquisition by purchase is called somba, nsasomba: "buying."

When a woman is acquired through inheritance, the designation under which she was first acquired is retained. When the deceased father, uncle, or brother had acquired the woman by bride price or purchase, the heir will say: "I have taken this woman by bride price, purchase, etc."

Acquisition by abduction often occurred formerly in the tribal wars.

In disputes the natives often say: "He stole that woman." This is usually to announce the fact that the woman, according to them, was acquired in a dishonest manner.

The payment of bride price, purchase, etc., is usually made with a combination of money, objects, and male or female slaves.

This combined payment is called songa, nsasonga: "equalizing, settlement."

When a native is asked in what way he acquired his wife, he will usually say: njoloengaki (I have paid her bride price), because he [532] knows well that this is the most honest way. There are, however, many wives who have been acquired in the other way.

583
584 Acquisition by bride price sometimes begins before the birth of the expected daughter. The man, usually a polygynist, gives something of security to the father of the child. This security

583 consists of a beautifully fashioned native knife, or a lance, or
584 mitako [copper wire used as currency]. In some areas, it was the
[436] polygynist who attended the mother at the birth of the daughter. He
had the wood gathered, water brought, and food prepared. If, then, the expected child was a boy, the security was usually returned, and the contract declared null and void. If, however, the one who had given the security was a village chief or a man of importance, then the father of the child tried to give him another daughter. The father had, for instance, at an earlier time given a daughter to another man of much less importance. In the above-mentioned case, he would give back the bride price received, take his daughter back, and give her to the polygynist from whom he expected a larger bride price.

583 Sometimes too the boy was taken by the polygynist and remained in his family until the father could trade a daughter for him.

583 While very young and still a child, the little daughter was
591 installed in the harem of the polygynist. She was brought up there, together with other children of her age and status; or rather, she grew up there in the midst of those heathen customs without any upbringing.

595 The composition of the harem of a polygamist:

The first wife was called the Bomatsa; she preceded all the other wives in rank, and in the absence of the polygynist, she was the mistress of the harem.

The second wife was called Ekila; she was the most loved and preceded all the remaining wives. She was also called Nkonda.

The third wife was called Bolumbu. At the appointment of the Bolumbu, a certain ceremony took place, and the wife was clothed with an animal skin. The Nku, a sort of patriarch and
[202] magician, sometimes had three or four Bolumbu who served as
messengers to other villages. In this capacity they had special
[721] privileges. For instance, to attack a Bolumbu was a reason for declaring war.

[533] The remaining women were simply women of the harem, without distinction.

595 In the area of Monjoku, among the Bolee [Bole], the first wife was called Nkisa, with the same rank as Bomatsa. The second

000 the same rights as the other children of the polygynist.

595 The polygynist always sought to increase the number of his
556 wives, for his prestige rose and his fortune increased in that manner.
593 If anyone in civilized lands seeks to enlarge his fortune, this is
done, people say, in order to insure the future of his children. The
native thinks little about that; his primary idea is to enjoy himself
and to surpass others in prestige and esteem. As far as the future
of his children is concerned, there are polygynists who possess twenty
or thirty wives or even more, and sometimes they have only one or
two children. Also it is little in keeping with their notions to care
for the future; he who is still alive tomorrow must take care of
595 tomorrow then, so they reason. On the contrary, instead of caring
for his children, the polygynist often took great trouble to obtain a
593 wife for his son. The son, however, was not yet the owner of his
● 584 wife; it was, so to speak, only a loan. Not until after the death of
606 his father did he become owner. In some districts, when the father
had obtained a wife for his son, he first kept this wife for some time
for himself. Only after a few months did he give her to his son. In
595 other districts, when the wife was pregnant by the son, he was obliged
593 to send her for a few days to his father. He was not allowed to bear
606 the honor of fatherhood alone; his father must share that with him.
842 The father reserved for himself the honor of naming all of the chil-
551 dren of his children. In some areas of the Congo, morals were so
835 low and common that the father even kept his own daughters in his
harem. This did not occur in Equatorial Africa, but there was a
custom that was not much better. The magician was sometimes
583 consulted about the bride price which the father tried to get for his
791 daughter, or the brother for his sister.

The magician then gave them the advice that they themselves should first have relations with their own daughter or sister. This custom existed almost everywhere in Equatorial Africa.

583 [535] Bride Price. In general, the daughter was given in marriage upon payment of a bride price. The father had little choice of the future husband of his daughter. The one who guaranteed the most goods in payment was certain to get her. Since, in most cases, the little daughter had not yet arrived at the years of maturity, there was naturally no question of her consent. The bride price was not paid all at once, but gradually during the years while the daughter grew up. Since the daughter was given without her consent

548 available to me, the government recognizes the presence of 702 free women out of a population of 8,386 persons who are not permanent residents.

Article IV. Premarital Sexuality

836 Under this heading we will examine:

1. What the Nkundó think about virginity.
2. Relations between single people.
3. The Nkundó's attitude toward births outside of wedlock.

1. Virginity

The word "virginity" has a double meaning. It may signify the presence of the hymen, the wholeness of the body, or it may have the meaning given in the dictionary: "virgin, a girl who has never had intercourse with a man."

Because of the practice described in Article II, 1, Nkundó girls who remain physically virgin until adulthood are extremely rare. Even if a girl does not begin sexual life until after her body has reached maturity -- a situation which occurs rarely today but which was formerly common, (2) [78] she will not give herself up to carnal pleasures until after she has broken her hymen.

● 585
836 What is the Nkundó attitude toward virginity? This question must be divided into two parts:

1) Does the future husband attach any importance to the physical virginity of his fiancée? Evidently not from what we have seen.

2) Does he attach any importance to her moral virginity? That is, is it a matter of indifference to him whether or not he is the first to have intercourse with her?

---

2. See no. 2 of the present article.

● 585 836 To say that it makes absolutely no difference to him might be too extreme a statement. But it is certainly not very important to him, since the primary purpose of his marriage is to obtain progeny and to follow his natural instinct in an honest fashion. This does not mean that he likes to marry a woman of loose morals; quite the contrary.

171 585 836 What is the linguistic data on the subject of virginity? In an interesting paper entitled "The Principles of Bantu Marriage" (*Africa* Vol. 2, No. 3 (1929), p. 255), E. Torday says, "Some of the most competent philologists assure us that in most Bantu languages there is no word for 'virgin'; . . . . The Wachagga, who may be an exception, use the word 'unimpaired,' and it is perhaps in the use of similar expressions, not exclusively applied to physical virginity, that we shall find the explanation of the absence of a specific term."

585 836 192 Thus the Lonkundó have a noun: *ekɔ́tɛ́*. It is derived from the root *kɔ́t* (the verb is *-kɔ́tema*), which means "to be firmly attached, to be tenacious" (e.g., *lokɔ́tɔ́*, "tenacity"). *Ekɔ́tɛ́* designates something which is difficult to open, to separate, to break up, especially fruit with a tough, hard, thick rind. It is applied to the *litɔ́fɛ́*, *lisɛ́njá*, and the *lindongó* when it is impossible to break the shell which contains the edible portion even though the fruit is ripe. [79] This term is used in a figurative sense for a woman who resists seduction, who "does not allow herself to be opened." It is not at all specific and in no way the equivalent of our word "virginity," rather it seems to signify "chastity."

Other Nkundó tribes seem to have a specific word, *bokotó*. I learned this term from natives living between the Ikelemba and the Tshuapa, both east and west of the Julɛ́, as well as from some Basɛ́kɔ́ Bongwalanga from the old Lulonga District. The missionaries of the Apostolic Prefecture of Basankusu use it in their publications to mean "virginity, virgin." I was not able to get an exact idea of its precise meaning, but as far as I was able to make out it is much closer to "virgin chastity" than *ekɔ́tɛ́*. In any case it includes no reference to physical virginity. (1)

000

1. We should not be astonished that "primitive" tribes have no word in their language

000

> which specifically expresses our idea of virginity, nor deduce from its absence that the thing itself is unknown to them. The Greeks and Romans were well acquainted with it, yet they had no precise word for it. Parthenos and Virgo mean simply "unmarried girl." The Germanic words such as Maagd and Jungfrau, which now signify "virgin," originally had the same meaning as the Greek and Latin terms.

585
836
The foregoing does not imply that every Nkundó girl is free to have sexual relations and that public opinion approves of libertinism among single people. We will examine this question in the following paragraphs.

836
164
2. Sexual relations between single people

In dealing with this question we must distinguish between relations between adults and the contacts between nonadults. We will therefore examine the two situations separately so that at the end we can attempt to explain the changes in native attitudes in this realm that have occurred. [80]

A. Before physical maturity. We will first relate what the natives tell about customary practices in the past, and then describe the practices of the present day.

In the past, sexual contacts between young people not yet marriageable were severely punished by their parents. The children were taught that those who were guilty would be struck down by a very serious illness which was inevitably fatal. This illness was called by the generic term ndota (1), and the more specific one, esɛ́mbɛ́ji.

> 1. Ndota is the name of the illness which is the punishment for an infraction of a sexual

562 836 [539] exclusive rights over her. Hence the proverb: Mbímbo ǐle nd'âns ɔ̂imbo ńa la nkɔ́lɔ́, "boimbo fruit found under the tree have no owner; they belong to the first person who gathers them." Thus a girl for whom nothing has been paid belongs to no one. A woman free in this manner does not infringe on the rights of any man in her sexual relations. There are therefore no sanctions against her licentiousness.

836 864 Furthermore, the discovery of her activities gives rise to no shame. At most more serious parents will rebuke children who go too far -- the girls because they abuse the body and reduce their value for a prospective marriage (2), the boys because they [83] run the risk of financial difficulties (the dangers of adultery, indemnity for childbirth with death as a result, etc.).

626 836 Public opinion is even more lenient than the parents. This attitude is easy to understand: strangers need fear no unpleasant consequences. Errors of this sort are generally considered natural weaknesses, provided that they do not occur too frequently. For public opinion is hard on people who run from one to another; they are stigmatized with the name ebábɔ́á, "unfaithful, flighty, without intelligence or reasoning powers," or ebɔ́ngá, a stronger term with the same meaning.

836 From all the foregoing should we deduce that every woman is free to indulge fully in fornication? On the basis of the above considerations we could frankly conclude the affirmative. The behavior that can be observed from day to day fully confirms this answer. Some people stray more or less accidentally, but for others the practice quickly becomes a habit. And it can be said of all of them that

---

● [585] 2. Not that a smaller bride price would be given for them. But a serious man would rather not take a woman for wife who has "run around" a great deal and therefore is more likely to commit adultery, to be unfaithful, and less likely to become the mother of a numerous progeny.

583x In the second register only three out of sixty-eight cases show a payment of over 100 bakonga (no. 24: 131; no. 44: 130; no. 66: 120); there is one Wǎngatɛ-Ntɔ́mbɛ case of a payment of 202 (no. 12). The latter like the Bombomba have raised the amount of the bride price above 200; they imitate the Ekonda, who have really misused the freedom brought by the white men (see Article XI, 3).

5. Paying the walo

589x 585 On the day agreed upon, the young man, his father, and the ndongɛ go to the home of the fiancée's parents. Other close relatives make sure to attend this remarkable event if they are not detained elsewhere. After the usual greetings but before any other step is taken, the woman's family offers the ndonga a dish of bananas and some animal food (often botɔ́mba, hen, or bokɔ́sa fish). Then they give the husband various foods: meat or smoked fish (a basketful, for instance), several bunches of bananas, and then, through the medium of the ndonga, a dog, a goat, and some hens which must be included in the nkɔmɛ (see Article VII).

Then they inquire for news, that is, they begin to explain and discuss the matter of the bride price. If the woman's family is not satisfied, the discussion is prolonged, and the young man adds the supplement required (usually such a possibility is foreseen in advance and some extra valuables are left with a relative or associate). Sometimes certain rings or knives are not considered suitable; then two may be counted as one, for example, or the objects that have been refused are replaced with others of better quality.

The ndonga places the valuables in front of the group of the woman's relatives.

It is not indispensable that the woman and her fiancé be present. Thus it sometimes occurs that one or the other of the pair is absent. But such cases are very rare and usually occur [142] if it is very difficult for the individual to be present because, for example, he or she is in the service of a European, or if they themselves do not want to lose a few days or weeks and are sure that their respective fathers get along very well with each other so that everything will go beautifully. Usually, the couple themselves want to be there as much as their parents want them to be, for this is a very important matter.

583x 587 If the woman has not yet publicly given her consent because -- as may happen in the case of remarriage after a divorce -- *ikulá*, *ndanga*, and *walo* are all being paid at the same time, she now performs that ceremony. We need not describe it again; it is performed as indicated in Article III, 2. But in this instance the woman hands her father one or two rings, or a ring and a knife.

583x ● 585 Subsequently, the *ndonga* conveys the valuables to the woman's parents. He asks the husband: *yɛlá baámba la walo*, "bring the *walo* valuables." The latter replies: "Here they are; hand them over to my father-in-law." The witness takes a few rings and places them in front of the latter, or rather he touches them and makes a gesture of pushing them toward the woman's parents, and they pull them toward themselves.

As soon as the *walo* is paid, the *bompáka* becomes *walí* or "wife." As has already been said, this word has no connection with *walo*, or with the root *bal*, "to marry"; etymologically it is related to analogous terms denoting "wife" and "woman" in other Bantu languages.

Article V. Valuables for the Mother

583x 431 Directly after he has conveyed the *walo* valuables to the woman's father, the *ndonga* asks the husband to pay the valuables for her mother: *vɛlá ntaa la nkando* [143] *yǎ nyang'ɛ́y'ǒna*, "bring the goat and the *nkando* for the child's mother." The following gifts are given:

1) At least one nanny goat and sometimes two or more according to the situation; never a billy-goat.

2) Two *nkando*, which are copper spirals worn on the legs. [301] Formerly, two more for the arms were also required, and old women are still sometimes seen wearing them, but they have become much rarer than the spirals worn on the legs. Instead of *nkando*, the Elíngá, the Wǎngatá, the Bakáala, and the Ionda use the term *nsongá*. (1)

---

1. In Lokonda the term is *njekɛ́*.

301 Among the peoples of Lake Leopold II, hair ornaments are rare. Hairpins seem to be unknown; combs are made of raffia splints. A woman prefers ornaments of metal, iron, brass, or copper, while the chiefs and great dignitaries like to wear belts, necklaces, bracelets, and trimmed with cowries. The necklace of solid brass is very popular. The heavier it is, the more it is liked. We saw women wearing necklaces weighing as much as 25 pounds. These necklaces are riveted around the necks of the favorite wives of great chiefs or wealthy dignitaries. In case of divorce or separation, the owner of the necklaces removes them without regard for the suffering or cries of the victim. The women seem to be in no way inconvenienced by these cumbersome ornaments. On rare instances they wrap cloth around them to keep them from rubbing against the collarbone. [183]

[292
[293]
622]

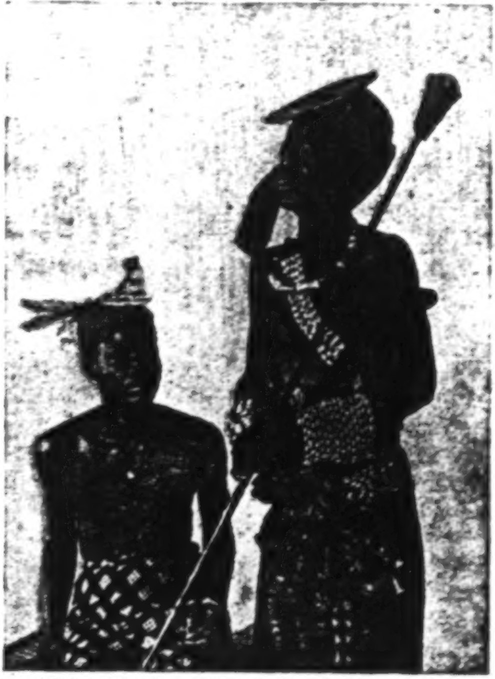


Fig. 104. Native Chief of Lake Leopold II and his Counselor, Highest Dignitary of the Tribe, both in Dress Costume.

●[586]

2: Hulstaert
586
●

Mongo FO32

/For information concerning divorce and termination of marriage among the Nkundu, see category 116, pp. 34-35, 38, 40-42, 56, 66, 67, 94, 96, 130, 160, 168, 172, 178, 189-192, 202-203, 236, 240, 248, 249, 253-254, 260, 271, and 353-390./

589x 43/ [301] 3) In the past the mother was also entitled to a bongembwɛ or bongombwɛ (depending on the dialect) (2) a heavy copper necklace.

2. The Lokonda term is lonkaɛ.

It was worth 5 bakonga. Nowadays this type of adornment has disappeared almost entirely. It is no longer demanded, for the mother prefers more interesting objects (see the following article).

Furthermore, at the present time substitutions for the goat and the nkando are being asked for in the form of shoes, suits, fabrics, etc.

The mother justifies her demands by recalling the suffering she has endured in bringing her daughter into the world and bringing her up. The valuables she receives belong exclusively to her and her family; they never pass into her husband's clan. She wears the nkando herself, or, if she already has some, she gives them to her sister or her brother, who may have need of them for his wife's bride price. The goats she similarly keeps or gives to her family, depending on her own preferences. Upon her death these valuables are inherited by her relatives, never by her husband or even her own children.

Obviously, the mother's clan has exclusive rights over this payment.

[586] [422] The situation does not change if the mother divorces the girl's father and is married to another man. The "mother's" valuables [144] still belong to her. Even if the separation occurs before her daughter's marriage, she retains her rights to nyang'ɛy'ǒna.

If she dies before her daughter's marriage, the valuables to which she would have been entitled are given to the representative of her clan (her father, brother, sister, uncle, etc.)

[illegible] In case of divorce the husband must be reimbursed for these valuables as for all the rest; but the restitution must be made by the mother's clan, who has received them.

If the husband does not have the valuables for the mother on hand, he gives her a pledge for the payment (wěko; verb, ékya), consisting of one or two knives or bakonga. He could never settle

595^x Thus a favorite is in every way the object of her husband's [431] preference. He divides with her all presents he receives, while the other wives are not included in this expression of generosity. [853] But in the matter of sexual relations, apart from his trips, he has obligations to all of them. The most he can do is to add one night to the usual number (see below).

The co-wives adapt fairly well to this preferential system. Nevertheless, there is a good deal of backbiting on account of it. It may also happen that one or another of the wives is jealous to the point of being unable to bear it. [347] The signs of her rancor ●[586] multiply, and a divorce results in the end.

The nkɔ́ndɛ́ does not have to go into mourning for anyone [766] other than her husband. Even then she does not remove her clothing. But she does not have to abide by mourning regulations either for her parents or her own children.

Like the other wives, the favorite is passed on through inheri- [587] tance. But she cannot be taken as a bosɔ́lɔ́ by anyone except an elder brother of the deceased.

595^x Nkɔ́ndɛ́ is the specific term by which a favorite is designated. 192 Its etymology is unknown to me. The word is used everywhere, although the Injɔlɔ́ often say lokílo (whose etymology is equally obscure). Another less common (older?) term known to the Bonkoso, Bongili, Wɛ̌ngatá, and Bakáala is bongilɛ or bongijí (1). In addition

1. The Ekonda call the favorite bokɔ́lo. The Elanga of Losanganya say bofiɛ, a name borne by certain women among the Nkundɔ́ between Jwalɛ́ and Boloko. Might this also be an old name?

to the term ikundaka, already cited, there is also the word ebɛlɛ́kɛ́, a generic term meaning "preference, predilection" or, when applied to a child or a slave, "an object one does not want to dispose of." The favorite is also called ɛ́fɔ́kɛtámɛ́, "untouchable," because other men may not have relations with her.

421 613 have seen them as money transactions. We have obtruded our point of view and destroyed the whole legal system of the natives. It is through our materialization of those securities that we have lowered the native woman to a plaything of money and a piece of merchandise.

586 595 As for the two outgrowths of the native system, divorce and polygamy, neither is inherent in the legal system as such. They are only abuses which have taken root and which clash with the principles of the native law itself. By its nature, native marriage is also indissoluble, and polygamy has only been able to exist through a popular confusion between paternal and marital law.

4. Legal Power in the Clan

613 627 In Nkundo society all individuals do not have equal rights or powers, as in the Napoleonic law books, /154/ but the natural rights concerning people are still completely recognized. All value and power comes from God, through the ancestors. Those who are nearest to God are thus the highest in position, his first representatives. There is no question of absolutism or despotism. Just as the blood is divided among all clan members in a descending line, so also are authority and legal power. They are one as a legal entity in relation to the outside world; nevertheless, each member takes part and has a vote in the internal administration of justice, so that, when clan interests are discussed and dealt with, each member may sit in the place accorded to him and take part in decisions. In a legal sense there is, therefore, no question of a separate family council, which would assist the clan leader, but all decisions are made communally.

594 627 A single exception to this does exist, namely, that which gives the head of the nuclear family legal power over his wife and children, and then only with the acknowledgment and approval of the clan. Differences between autonomous clans are settled by the clans involved, a sort of international court of law where friendly clans may also be brought in as arbiters.

627 Such an arrangement made the court absolutely "paternal." The whole procedure was one of a reconciliatory character, which resorted to coercive measures only when necessary, and did its utmost to save the honor and the welfare of the involved clans, and to compensate for, to restore, and to prevent further offenses.

595 wife was called Lonkata. This was, however, more a category, for there were sometimes four Lonkata in a harem. The rest were ordinary wives. Among the Ekonda, the first wife was called Nkumokolo, just like the Bomatsa. The second wife was called Ekila or Nkonde. The remaining wives were the ordinary wives of the harem.

595 484 The first wife, Bomatsa, always remained at home and never left the harem. The second, Ekila or Nkonde, accompanied the polygynist everywhere; she was at his side on all his trips. The Bolumbu usually went completely alone to do errands in other villages.

595 These old customs of priority among the wives are now gradually beginning to disappear.

684 It was forbidden under severe penalty to have relations with the first, second, or third wife of the polygynist. The penalties were death, slavery, or a large fine.

This was their law concerning adultery, enforced with severe punishment.

595 837 The ordinary wives of the harem were less strictly guarded. This often depended on the jealousy or indifference of the polygynist. Anyone who had relations with these wives had to pay a fine, or rather, a price of prostitution. Since the wives were almost all in the possession of the polygynists, there were naturally many men without a wife. These, then, often had relations with the ordinary wives of the polygynists. Also, the sons of the polygynist had relations with them; the polygynist himself sometimes even had relations with the ordinary wives of his neighbor. This was the bad consequence and the immorality of polygyny.

595 586 It is easy to understand that the ordinary wives of the polygynist, having relations with others, often left their husband, or rather, their master in order to go to another. The ordinary wives constituted the largest number. It is because of this that one now finds many women who have had three or four, sometimes even seven, different husbands in succession. Among some tribes, [534] the Ekonda among them, they were stricter; a wife who had already left her husband or master two or more times was considered to have little worth.

567 595 The female slaves who were taken in war were given by the polygynist to his male slaves as wives. They could also be installed in the harem among the ordinary wives. Their children could have the same rights as the other children of the polygynist

583 If the wife was content and if she insisted that a large bride price be paid for her, it was out of vanity and also to procure money for her family (father or brothers), and not out of concern for her children.

586 *Divorce.* When the wife left her husband to go back to her
583 family, they had to give back the bride price they had received.
In general this was a very difficult business, because the bride price was used by the father or the brother to obtain another wife for himself, the *Nkita.* Thus, in order to be able to return the bride price, they would have to sell this *Nkita* or give her back to her family and ask for the return of her bride price. There were few other ways to give back the bride price; all their property consisted of wives. Since the family usually could not or would not return the bride price, the deserted husband then sought to become the master of the mother or a sister of his runaway wife, whom he then kept as a hostage. Among the heathens, this was a commonly used expedient to retrieve the wife or the bride price. When the runaway wife discovered that her mother or sister was a prisoner of her former husband, she often went back out of sympathy for her mother or sister. When the wife had gone not to her family but to another man, which was often the case, the family urged this second husband to give the bride price to the first husband. This was usually the only practical means by which the difficulty was resolved. This second husband then paid the bride price to the first. Since the [537] bride price often had been only paid in part by the first one, he then paid the remaining portion to the family.

Sometimes, if there were no way to return the bride price, the woman was forced to go back to her deserted husband. To avoid unpleasant treatment, she had to feign submissiveness.

586 As soon as an agreement was arrived at, either with the fam-
587 ily or with the second husband, over the return of the bride price,
the first bond was considered broken. If the woman was with her family, she was considered free to enter into a new agreement. If, however, she was with another husband, then after the argument she was considered bound to that second husband. The primary bond of their agreement thus appears to be the bride price.

586 If the wife had children, these remained with their father, and the bride price was only partially returned. The value of the children was, so to speak, subtracted from the bride price.

837 When a wife of a polygynist had illicit relations with another
586 man of the same village, this was called Bonsamba. When she had
such relations with a man of another village, this was called Isoke.
As we have observed, the ordinary wives of the harem often had such
relations. When the woman eloped with her bonsamba or isoke, or
with whomever it was, she was pursued by her husband or owner, who
tried to get her back. If the wife refused, negotiations over the bride
price began.

If an agreement was reached or if a pledge was given as guarantee for the payment, the first bond was considered broken, and the woman was considered bound to this second man, even though he had been her bonsamba or isoke.

It might also happen that the first husband was so jealous that
he did not want to make any agreement; then he attempted to kill
either the guilty wife or her second husband. If the woman became
593 ill at the home of her husband, he went to tell her family and had to
758 give a security to the family.

583 Often the family came to get the wife, in order to be able to care for her better. If, in such a case, the wife [538] died at the home of her family, there were no further difficulties about the bride price, according to their customs. If, however, the bride price had still not been completely paid, the family asked their son-in-law to pay the remainder.

583 In recent times, now that the heathen customs have been
178 undermined by the European occupation, we see that the husbands
whose wives have gone to their family when sick and have died there,
demand the return of the bride price from the family, but this is
completely contrary to their old customs. In one case the husband
could demand the return of the bride price, namely, if the wife
had left while healthy to go to her family and had died there.

562 Buying or Trading of Women. The woman was also in many
439 cases an acknowledged object of trade. The great village chiefs,
among others Ibuka and Yoma, of whom we shall speak further,
carried on a sort of woman trade. With European articles and also
native currency, they went to other districts of the Equator [Province]
to buy women with them, just like someone who goes to market, even
though no public markets where women were sold actually existed.

593x defended her husband. Finally, since they could not agree, Bompelɛ
159 ordered his sister not to return to her husband, so that she could be
579 married to another man. For he had decided to test the valor of
Bonyeme by making war on him, and she could not see her husband taken prisoner by her own brother. Nevertheless, Bolɔmbɔ remained determined and departed in haste. When she reached her husband she told him everything. In the meantime all the Boɛndɛ and other Bombwanja clans were taking up arms. Enyukɛ, for his part, passed the news on to all Bonkoso villages, as well as their relatives by marriage, dependents, and Batswá. The various groups of combatants stationed themselves near the village of Bonganda in what is today the forest of [41] Boɔngɔnjou, between the Lomekɛ and the present location of Besombɔ, Lofelɛ, and Engɔnjɔ. The Boɛndɛ army was taken unawares by the Bonkoso, who attacked and after furious combat routed them, leaving a number of dead on the field. Bonyeme proposed a peace. He took pride in not being surpassed in generosity. With a truly princely munificence he was not satisfied with only paying all the clans who had lost members but in addition sent Bompelɛ all that the latter needed in order to compensate Bombwanja groups for the loss of their members and, on top of this, brought him a whole fortune to complete Bolɔmbɔ's bride price.

The Nkundɔ are well acquainted with cases of widows who,
589 having reached middle age, take a solemn oath not to remarry or
587 ever go near a man again. Among the stronger sex such cases are almost nonexistent. Cases of women who, when sick and dying wanted to remain near their husbands, cited later (Chap. VI, Art. II, 4) should be noted here, as well as preferences for monogamy (Chap. VII, Art. VI, VII).

Bearing in mind the explanation given at the outset, I think I
581 can state that most marriages contracted by the Nkundɔ are love
593x matches. Marriage for political reasons or for certain material advantages have certainly existed. And especially at the present time, there are parents who push their children into marriage for the sake of financial or social gains.

Our conclusions may not be accepted by a number of colonials. Yet I feel they are valid in the limited sense indicated here. Arguments

584 431 For his part, the young man gives her some small game animals (especially the big rat called botómba, lemurs of the genus eséndé, etc.) or fish. These gifts have no specific name. The man's gifts are simply called mpató "gift sent"; the woman's are called botúmo, a term used for all presents given by a woman to her lover (see also Chapter VI, Article VII, 2). The verb used with this noun is tumba, "to make burn." Etymologically the two words are in no way related.

Sometimes the sweethearts give each other a secret mutual pledge of their desire to be married. This pledge is called bondengé or bonengé and consists particularly of a necklace of beads called bafomakongo (or, more rarely, bisengé or bisengéla). [103]

581 In choosing their wives, the men allow themselves to be motivated by the various factors which may influence them in this realm, such as physical or moral attractions. Wealth or social rank almost never play a part in determining the choice. Youth is easily carried away by physical attraction and passionate love. Men who are already more settled as well as the more sensible young men pay more attention to moral qualities, such as general conduct, submissiveness, goodness, gentleness, and especially diligence, careful attention to work, etc. In short, we find here the full range of individual variations that are encountered elsewhere, with the exception of marriages motivated by financial or political interests or by the degree of moral elevation that can be aroused by the Christian religion, such as pure devotion.

584 After a few days of courtship the girl lets her suitor know that if he really loves her he had better settle the matter and that consequently he must obtain her parents' consent. Meanwhile they have [836] already had intimate relations several times; therefore the moment of official negotiations should not be delayed.

586× 587 584 Seeking a wife who is already married is in no way different from the procedure we have just described, but a great deal of circumspection must be used so that the husband's suspicions will not be aroused. The exchange of the secret pledge we have mentioned occurs especially in this situation.

Once the divorce is completed, the woman falls in the same category as a single girl since she is free.

Seeking a future wife in an as yet unborn child or one that is very young will be discussed in a special section (Chapter IV, Article I). [105]

583x The husband has a second reason for making the walo large: by this means he can bind his wife and his in-laws more closely to him. For the larger the walo, the more difficult it would be to reimburse the husband and therefore to break the marriage. Thus a man will pay a larger amount for a woman he cares for particularly. For their part, his parents-in-law will say: "We must remain on good terms with our son-in-law, for he is generous and wealthy." And if there is a palaver in the household and their daughter wants to leave -- or actually leaves -- her husband, they will be all the more inclined to do everything in their power to smooth out the differences and make her return to her husband's house. They will say, "We have collected so many valuables from him, how would we find the means of reimbursing him?"

583x ●587 If a daughter remarries, her parents can demand not only the amount required to reimburse her first husband, but also a supplement for themselves. It is not considered proper to ask too much, however; 10 or 15 rings are usually enough. It follows that a woman's bride price rises with the number of husbands she has had.

583x The chief reason for the amount of the walo being reduced has always been, and still is, the payment of the bosóngo (see Article IX) at the same time with, or immediately after, the walo. It explains the low walo payments in cases 21, 25, 27 and 38b in the list which follows. Nowadays there may be new reasons. Among Christians; for example, a brother may want to help his widowed sister so that she will not have too long to wait before remarrying; or orphans born somewhere in a distant center may have been more or less abandoned by their families (as in case 17). To give some idea of the walo amounts, 583x 797 I have copies a few cases out of our bride-price records of Flandria Mission. Next to the women's names I have indicated their tribe of origin, then the amount paid for them (in bakonga), and finally the year of marriage. [139] The numbers at the left denote their order in our books. (1)

---

(1) These records are kept because we require that at least the walo be paid before the marriage is celebrated. I should point out that, in an isolated instance, the ikulá-ndanga may

583x 587 ● If the woman has not yet publicly given her consent because -- as may happen in the case of remarriage after a divorce -- ikulá, ndanga, and walo are all being paid at the same time, she now performs that ceremony. We need not describe it again; it is performed as indicated in Article III, 2. But in this instance the woman hands her father one or two rings, or a ring and a knife.

583x 585 Subsequently, the ndonga conveys the valuables to the woman's parents. He asks the husband: yɛ́lá baómba bá walo, "bring the walo valuables." The latter replies: "Here they are; hand them over to my father-in-law." The witness takes a few rings and places them in front of the latter, or rather he touches them and makes a gesture of pushing them toward the woman's parents, and they pull them toward themselves.

As soon as the walo is paid, the bompáka becomes walí or "wife." As has already been said, this word has no connection with walo, or with the root bal, "to marry"; etymologically it is related to analogous terms denoting "wife" and "woman" in other Bantu languages.

Article V. Valuables for the Mother

583x 431 Directly after he has conveyed the walo valuables to the woman's father, the ndonga asks the husband to pay the valuables for her mother: vɛ́lá ntaa la nkando [143] yǎ nyang'ɛ́y'ǒna, "bring the goat and the nkando for the child's mother." The following gifts are given:

1) At least one nanny goat and sometimes two or more according to the situation; never a billy-goat.

[301] 2) Two nkando, which are copper spirals worn on the legs. Formerly, two more for the arms were also required, and old women are still sometimes seen wearing them, but they have become much rarer than the spirals worn on the legs. Instead of nkando, the Elíngá, the Wǎngatá, the Bakáala, and the Ionda use the term nsongá. (1)

---

1. In Lokonda the term is njekɛ́.

Article II. Marriage by Inheritance

587
428 This form of marriage is called liála jǎ lisangó or simply lisangó. The meaning of lisangó is "inheritance," from the verb sangol, "to inherit." The word is used in the broad sense and is applicable to any object.

The death of a husband does not in itself free his widow. She remains bound to the deceased's family.

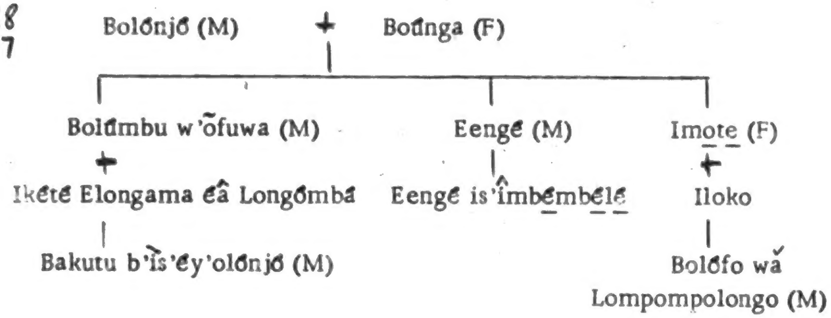
After the celebration of the end of mourning, the widows of the deceased, required to abstain from all sexual relations until that time, go back to their respective families. During the last period of mourning they have already had the opportunity of being courted or of resuming their relationships with their former lovers, whether or not they are relatives of the deceased husband.

A person wishing to marry the widow must address himself to her own family. Therefore, except in the case of the bosóló, to be discussed in the article which follows, the distribution of wives among the heirs cannot be considered as a distribution [189] of persons as such. Rather it is a division based on the valuables which these persons represent. Theoretically, the wives are inherited by the brother of the deceased, but other relatives, especially nephews, may have partial or total rights over one or another among them. (1) These rights are based on the source of the bride prices by means of which the wives were acquired. We have already touched on this subject in the preceding chapter in relation to certain relatives. Still other situations may arise, but instead of going into a long discussion I shall explain them by giving two case histories.

---

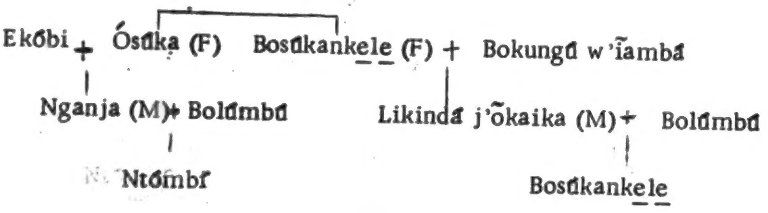
1. See Chapter II, Article IV, 3, as well as Article X.

428
587


Bolónjó (M)
+
Boúnga (F)
Bolúmbu w'õfuwa (M)
Eengé (M)
Imote (F)
+
Ikété Elongama éâ Longómbá
Eengé is'îmbémbélé
+
Iloko
Bakutu b'ĩs'éy'olónjó (M)
Bolófo wǎ
Lompompolongo (M)

Imote of Eleke (Bongíli), one of the Lokongo clans, married Iloko of Imomo (Bongili). With valuables received from his mother's family their son, Bolófo, married three women: Wǎngi, Bosoí, his favorite, and a slave from Bolaká (Wǎngatá). When he died, his widows went to the Eleke clan which was the source of his wealth. [601] Two claimants appeared: Eengé (first cousin of the deceased but in Nkundó terminology his son) and Bakutu of Bokenda (Besombó) also a first cousin, and considered one by the Nkundó. They were to divide the widows. But both of them chose the deceased's favorite and quarreled over her. In the end she was assigned to Bakutu who was the "father" of his rival and the "elder brother" of the deceased. The slave also went to Bakutu, (2) while Eengé had to be satisfied with the first wife. But he and his clan retained a right over these women and their [190] progeny. This is rather an old case; in fact two grandsons of Bakutu and Ikándó respectively, whom I know very well personally, are now between fifty and sixty years old.

The following is a more recent example:


Ekóbi
+
Ósúka (F)
Bosúkankele (F)
+
Bokungú w'ĩambá
Nganja (M)
+
Bolúmbú
Likindá j'õkaika (M)
+
Bolúmbú
Ntómbí
Bosúkankele

2. Who yielded her to Ikándó y'ãngamba of Eleke.

2: Hulstaert--175 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

428 Two sisters, Osɔ́ka and Bosɔ́kankele of Ikengo, Ntɔ́mbá
587 (Wǎngatá), were married respectively to Ekɔ́bɛ́ of Likáala (Besombó, Bombwanja) and Bokungɔ́ of Bombɛ́nga wǎ Ikolɛ́ (Besombɛ́. Nganja married Bolɔ́mbɔ́ of Iámbo (Bonkoso). When Bolɔ́mbɔ́ became a widow she was inherited by Likɔ́ndá, the first cousin of the deceased on his mother's side, so that the patrimony would not be scattered. She gave Likɔ́ndá a daughter, Bosukankele, whose bride price he used to get himself a wife, Bombɔ́la (Teresa), daughter of Ilito of Bolɛ́ngɛ́ (Bongíli). At Likɔ́ndá's death the rights returned to Ntombɛ́ (Joseph) in the person of the widow Bombɔ́la, the nkita of his uterine sister.

587
428
585x If the legitimate heir, or some other close relative of the deceased, wants to marry a widow, he consults the head of the family and then goes to the woman's parents and gives them bekooli (1), which consists of 1 to 3 copper rings, added to the amount of the bride price. This gift shows the suitor's respect for the woman's family. (2) If after a time the woman no longer wants to stay with him, but loves another close relative, the latter also brings his bekooli. This is expected of him even if the woman has not gone home in between, but has gone directly from one man to the other.

[431] [191] The bekooli of the first man are then returned.

If the new husband is only distantly related to the deceased, (1)

[601]

---

1. The plural of the noun derived from the verb koola, "to seek, to take for someone," hence, "objects in order to go and take someone."

2. In addition to this native interpretation another may be given which is more profound and of a legal nature. This will be done further on (Article IX).

1. In that case he is called eɔ́to ɛ́â nsɔ́ngɛ́, literally "relative from the summit," as against eɔ́to ɛ́â ntsína, "relative of the base," therefore a close relative.

428
588x
● 587
431

against eɔ́to ɛ́â ntsína, "relative of the base," therefore a close relative.

he must not only bring bekooli to the woman's parents but also give a bompángá called nsǎsangɔ́ or bosangɔ́jwá a goat, a dog, or 5 to 10 copper rings, depending on the circumstances) to the heir. This is not part of the bride price, which is a payment to the woman's family. It is a gift intended to assuage the feelings of the heir and to secure or strengthen his good will. It is equivalent to a request for permission to cohabit with this woman and to profit by her work.

428
587 Thus we must distinguish between two types of marriage by inheritance:

1) The new husband and heir belongs to the immediate family of the deceased; he is eɔ́to ɛ́â ntsína -- a son, brother, uncle, nephew, or cousin.

2) The new husband and heir is distantly related; he is eɔ́to ɛ́â nsɔ́ngɛ́.

In the first instance the marriage is considered fairly stable and difficult to break, but nevertheless more easily dissolved than a marriage by nkumbɔ́. With how much difficulty it is dissolved depends on the degree of kinship. The reason given by the Nkundɔ́ for the greater ease with which such a marriage is broken is that the heir-husband did not himself pay the bride price; he only received the woman from someone else. Thus, if he no longer wants her, he justifies sending her away by saying, "It was not I personally who paid your bride price." For her part, the woman will invoke the same reason, mutatis mutandis. In all other respects the union is like a marriage by nkumbɔ́. Therefore, [192] when the woman leaves her husband the term kɔ́fa is used here as in the case of a marriage by nkumbɔ́.

428
587
471 The second type of marriage by inheritance is clearly different from the first. The new husband is not a husband from the legal standpoint; he is only a husband in the improper sense, physically. In spite of the nsǎsangɔ́ paid by the common-law husband, the legitimate heirs, hence the close kin of the deceased, especially the relative who was entitled to the woman and to whom she was given when the

471/
● 587 428 inheritance was divided, remain her masters. This is apparent from all the consequences resulting from the situation:

1) Children born of the union belong, not to their natural father, but to the owners of the woman, the bankɔ́lɔ́. They are the ones who will eventually consent to the children's marriages and receive their bride prices. They alone have the right to give the children a name. [553]

2) The man functioning as husband has only partial rights to the results of the woman's activities. Thus, if she finds a treasure buried in her field, captures a fleeing slave, or finds any valuable object that has been abandoned or lost and whose owner is not known, such as, for example, rings, objects of worked metal, elephant tusks, etc., these will not belong to her husband, as they would in a marriage by nkumbɔ́, but to the masters. The latter are also entitled to a part of the fruits of her labor: fish, caterpillars, and even food she has prepared.

3) If, on some occasion or other, the new husband wishes to make a gift or a payment to the woman's family, he has to request the intervention of the husband-owner. He therefore asks the latter to accompany him, saying: ɔ́ndakɛ́ likilɔ́, "make me acquainted with my parents-in-law; introduce me to them." They go there with the ndonga.

428 587 It may even happen that the bosɔ́ngo has not been paid yet and that the common-law husband has the slave [193] or the equivalent valuables needed for the payment. With the permission of the owner and accompanied by the ndonga he may make this payment. Nevertheless, he obtains no additional rights over the woman.

If one day the woman returns to the immediate family of the deceased, who are her "masters," the latter must make restitution to the common-law husband for these supplementary valuables and for all the payments he has made. If any stranger marries her by nkumbɔ́, the entire bride price is returned to the heirs of the deceased, who must reimburse the man who has acted as her husband for all the bride-price payments he has made.

428
587 This practice of ndǎlaka likiló is not without disadvantages. It may be feared that the heir deny that the payments were made and refuse to reimburse the man for them. His refusal is facilitated by the fact that the ndonga involved is the same one who participated in arranging the marriage agreement. Thus, there is a tendency to omit the practice.

Note that the expression ndǎlaka likiló is not applied only to this situation; it is also used in the obvious sense -- for instance, when the man is simply to make the acquaintance of the woman's
[431] family without presenting any payment (though of course it is in-
[574] conceivable that such a visit would be made without bringing presents), or in the case of a man who wants to be united with a relative of the wife of one of his relatives or friends.

4) Any presents given by the woman's family to the common-
[431] law husband, for instance during a visit or for a service rendered, etc., do not belong to him; by right they go to the heirs. If the latter are kindly disposed toward him, they will allow him the usufruct of a portion of these goods, but he has no right to them strictly speaking.

429 5) If the woman breaks this union the verb used is not -kófa
586 but -kumbwa, "to be taken in [194] marriage." If she returns to a
587 close relative of the deceased, that is, to one of his bankóló, the Nkundó say that "she has returned to her husband," aôlut'ěka bǒm'ǒkáé. For his part, the man who has taken the woman in common-law marriage may repudiate her at any time. He says to her: kendá ɛ́ka baóm'ǎkě, emí ntsíkwěngáki, "go to your husbands; I did not pay your bride price." The valuables he has given as nsásangó will be refunded.

6) Lastly, if the woman dies while living with this man, he has to pay an indemnity (-foma mbálaka), usually a slave or its equivalent, to the legitimate heirs.

428 Thus the second type of marriage by inheritance has none of
587 the characteristics of a legitimate Nkundó marriage. The husband has only the enjoyment of the woman. Only the heir of the deceased may truly and legally call her his "wife." Usually a woman involved in such a union is called the heir's "thing" (yǒmba). The heir is called her "owner," her "master," and the term "husband" is reserved for the man who cohabits with her.

428 587 581 Because of all these obvious differences, the Nkundɔ́ tend to consider this second type of union nonmarital. It resembles actual marriage only externally; in the final analysis, the difference is fundamental, since it has none of the specific properties of a marriage. Therefore such a union is not a marriage, but a continuous concubinage.

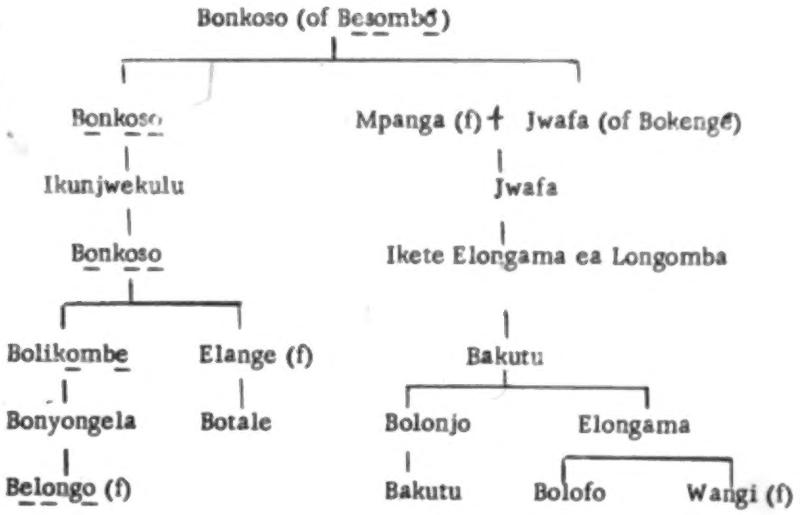
A man who cohabits in this manner with a woman for whom others have paid the bride price is often the object of humiliating allusions. He is treated as nkolasangɔ́, "inheritance taker" (that is, of inherited women). If a woman involved in the type of union described quarrels with one who has been "bought" in the regular manner, the latter will sometimes clap her hands (-foma losáka) to indicate her superiority. That is why such a woman is sometimes called wǎlɪ ɔ́â fomalosáka in contrast to the other. [195]

Present-day circumstances make all this even more clearly [797] apparent. Nowadays, even pagan natives almost everywhere are aware of the intransigence of the Catholic Church on the question of the indissolubility of a marriage which has been effected through the religious ceremony. For this reason the "masters" of a woman who is legally theirs but who is actually living with another man in the manner described, will not permit her to enter into a religious marriage with this man unless he pays the bride price.

Therefore we may consider the type of union described above a concubinage which does not satisfy the moral conditions for a true marital union. As to the first type of marriage by inheritance, namely a union with a close relative of the deceased, the question is more complicated; but it is my opinion that such a marriage is valid from the moral standpoint. I hope, however, that in order to attain greater certainty on this point, others will re-examine the case in the light of the various aspects of the solution that have been presented.

The following historic case pertaining to individuals whose genealogy appears below will illustrate the preceding discussion:

428
●587
581


Bonkoso (of Besombó)
Bonkoso
Mpanga (f) + Jwafa (of Bokengé)
Ikunjwekulu
Jwafa
Bonkoso
Ikete Elongama ea Longomba
Bolikombe
Elange (f)
Bakutu
Bonyongela
Botale
Bolonjo
Elongama
Belongo (f)
Bakutu
Bolofo
Wangi (f)

Elongama (the younger) married Ikókó of Bongíli, daughter of Bolékélá wǎ Nkunja and Tómpénda. After his death, his widow was taken as inheritance [196] by Bonyongela, to whom she gave a daughter, Belóngó. Bakutu (the younger) and his first cousin Bolófo were the ones who disposed of the daughter's bride price and were responsible for the marriage palavers; her father, Bonyongela, (since deceased) and his brother, Bonkoso, were not. Out of kindness, Bonyongela was given 18 rings. Bolófo added the other 30 to his sister Wǎngi's bride price to obtain his wife Ióngó (of Likolí, now deceased). After *x* number of years, Ikókó left Bonyongela for Botálé, a sister's son who, being a close relative, gave no *nsǎnsangó*. That which had been paid by Bonyongela was returned to him by Bakutu, since the union was broken. Five years later, Ikókó left Botálé with whom she was dissatisfied because he was lazy and did not bring her enough game, clothing, etc. She went to live with Ilumbé of Ngombe Mbálanga (Bongíli), who was a distant maternal relative and therefore gave the prescribed *nsǎsangó*.

Another instance turned up recently (May, 1933). One of our Christians, Babolá Michel of Ianda (Bonkoso) wanted to take a wife.

428 He had set his heart on Bolúmbɔ́, daughter of Ntando ɛ́y'ilengu of
●587 Bofalambɔ́ka. Upon the death of Bolúmbɔ́'s husband, Esalɛ́ ɛ́â
581 Lonkongɔ́, (in 1926), she had been asked for by Bombɔ́ngo, a distant relative of Esalɛ́. Proceeding in the customary fashion, Bombɔ́ngo had made his request through the medium of his elder brother Engambɛ́ and had paid a bompɔ́ngɔ́ of 4 bakonga and 20 francs. In the meantime, Babolɔ́ reached adulthood; he left our school and returned to his native village. Being a true nephew of Esalɛ́ ɛ́â Lonkongɔ́, he had a direct right over this woman, who left Bombɔ́ngo. Since the latter protested, however, the priest was faced with a moral problem; the question was whether or not there was a real marriage between Bombɔ́ngo and Bolúmbɔ́. If there were, there would be no question of a marriage between Babolɔ́ and Bolúmbɔ́, since the Church could not break a valid marriage between Christians. I have said above that a union of the sort involved in this case is not, in Nkundo eyes, a typical marriage. However, I wanted to have every assurance and to be as certain as possible. To that end, I went to Bonjoku at the time of the tax collection. I found many men gathered there. I raised the question of marriage by inheritance. The discussion ended on the unanimous expression of the opinion that in the instance involved nothing opposed the new marriage. The men gathered there added that all similar cases are rather a sort of concubinage accepted by ancestral law, but lacking all characteristics of a true marriage.

In order to avoid the many disadvantages inherent in this second form of marriage by inheritance, the husband, if he has any wealth, will do everything he can to collect the valuables needed for the bride price and pay his father-in-law. The latter will use the bride price to reimburse the heir. By making this payment, which is handed over through a new ndonga designated by him, the husband obtains complete possession of the woman. The marriage by inheritance than changes into a marriage by nkumbɔ́. The besangɔ́jwɔ́ which the husband had previously given the heir must be returned, and the heir's ties with the woman are broken by these formalities.

[579] It sometimes happens that the heir takes a very dim view of this new payment and takes offense. In the past a war, through illegal, could result -- after which, as always, the matter was settled just the same.

428 587 581 On the other hand, it also happens sometimes, and even quite often, that although the woman loves her "husband" (in the improper sense) she does not want any change. At heart she remains attached to the kin of her deceased husband, through her love for him or because of her affection for his family, who have always treated her well. It is not unusual for the common-law husband to encounter unalterable opposition to a regular marriage. The woman may [198] [578] even take such offense at the proposal that she will leave the man for a close relative of the deceased.

In this type of situation another sort of development may also occur, although it is quite rare. For example, there is the case of Lowâka, daughter of Bompɛ́kɛ́ of Bontole. After the death of her husband, Botɔ́na of the Basɛ́ka Ilɛ́ka (Lofelí), she was taken in marriage by one of his relatives, Nsenge, who gave the prescribed besangɔ́jwá to Imomo of Bofalambɔ́ka, Botɔ́na's bonankɔ́ná. After a certain time Imomo, who had had a slight palaver with Nsenge, did not want the situation to continue. He demanded a regular marriage so that he could make use of his rights to Lowâka's bride price. Nsenge agreed and paid 60 bakonga to the woman's parents, who reimbursed Imomo. Imomo returned the besangɔ́jwá he had received, and thus Lowâka became the true wife of Nsenge.

One can see that the gamut of individual variations comes into play here, depending on the temperament and the feelings of the persons involved. But the most common practice is for the widow to remain attached to the family of the deceased or to remarry in the prescribed fashion.

In the latter case the widow goes to a man who is not related to the deceased, either immediately after mourning or after a period of conjugal life with the heir. The latter is entitled to a reimbursement of the bride price. The new husband must make all the customary payments through the medium of his own ndonga, exactly as he would for a first marriage by nkumbɔ́. Consequently, this union is not considered a "marriage by inheritance," with which it has nothing in common.

428 587 431 In any marriage by inheritance -- that is, where no bride price payment is involved -- the husband, whether he be the heir or

428
587
431 simply a relative of the deceased, must give the woman a present called isangó, or inheritance gift. The woman either hands this gift over to her family or keeps it for her personal needs. In any case [199] it is not considered a part of the bride price.

Finally, when a widow remarries, either by inheritance or by a new nkumbó, her husband must make her a present of one or two rings or knives of equivalent value before having conjugal relations with her. This present is given either on the same day as the isangó or on another, depending on the circumstances. It is called boɛ́ngɛ́, "couch," or, more commonly, ikondeyantangɛ́ (from -kondeya, "to make someone get on," and ntangɛ́ "bed"). It is a gift of consolation for widowhood. This gift of ikondeyantangɛ́ is probably what Engels referred to in his study on the Wângata we have already cited, when he spoke of "buying off mourning."

428
587 An examination of marriage by inheritance shows that the widow is free to remarry a man of her choice, whether he be the heir or another relative of the deceased or some stranger. The only exception is a woman who has been willed to someone by the deceased. (1)

> 1. The Nkundó scrupulously observe the stipulations of a will (boango or bowâko) because they fear the vengeance of the deceased. When a person expresses his last wishes he usually adds the threat, "If you don't carry out my wishes, you will follow me in death."

If the heir subsequently does not fulfill his obligations toward her, she can react the same way as in a marriage by nkumbó. As for the special case of the bosóló, we will deal with it separately.

Another law may be deduced from the facts observed: as long as no new bride price is paid, the woman continues to belong to the family of the deceased. Only a restitution of the bride price breaks the contract and destroys all its consequences. (2)

> 2. We will come back to these points in Article IX, and in Chapters VIII and IX.

428
587 Lastly, these facts demonstrate collective ownership within the clan or the extended family. When a close relative, such as Bosɛ́lɔ́ for instance, marries a widow, he considers her legally as his legitimate spouse, just as she was the legitimate spouse of the deceased. [200] No new bride-price agreement is necessary, since the preceding one continues to be valid. The only new element introduced is that another person in the family of the deceased enters into a marriage bond with the widow. Whether the person marrying the woman is the legitimate heir or a close relative makes no difference because of the community of interests that exists (the children belong to Bosɛ́lɔ́ as much as to the heir, for example). (1)

1. We will come back to this question further on (see Article IX).

837 Because of the superficial resemblance between different situations, it should be mentioned here that the enjoyment of a woman in a common-law relationship is not asked for exclusively in the case of a widow. Such a request may also be made in connection with the wife of a polygamist while the husband is still living, but this is done only by a close relative and even then is not well regarded. Usually the situation is as follows: a man falls in love with one of the wive's in his relative's harem, and she shares his sentiments. He takes her home with him. There is a palaver. The husband is furious, breaks of all relations with the seducer, and wants no more of his invitations or his gifts, which means the quarrel is serious. Therefore, other relatives intervene to try and reconcile the two adversaries; seeing that there is no way to prevent the cohabitation of the pair or judging that such action would not be expedient, they try to pacify the legitimate husband. Through the agency of his elder brother, the lover sends him a gift in entreaty. The husband, finding no one on his side, bows down before the *fait accompli*, accepts the gift (*bompángɔ́*), and yields the enjoyment of the woman. Instead of going about the matter in this cavalier fashion, the lover may also make his request in the normal manner. If for one reason or another the lovers want to stop living together, they separate without further

837 ceremony. If the husband is kindly disposed toward them, he gives back to his relative the valuables the latter has paid, and the incident is closed. [201]

That is what happened some time ago to Insɛ́lo, of Bokenyola (Bo̱njo̱ku). (1) In the harem of his maternal uncle, E̱fo̱nja Is'Ôfuwa, who was originally from Bo̱njo̱ku but had been integrated into the Bongale, he had noticed a certain Mbilɛ́eyenga, originally from Bosɛ́ɛ́, and "his heart was rent asunder," as the Nkundɔ́ say. Through the agency of his older first cousins Mpe̱tsɛ́ ɛ́â Lingo̱mo̱, ye sent E̱fo̱nja a *bompɛ́ngɛ́* of 6 rings, asking him to be kind enough to allow him to cohabit with this woman. His request was well received. But after a certain number of years their passion cooled, and Insɛ́lo wished to contract a proper marriage to give himself posterity. He therefore parted from Mbilɛ́, who went back to her husband. The latter returned the 6 rings to Insɛ́lo̱, because he did not want to enrich himself at the expense of a relative.

Article III. The *Bosɔ́lɔ́*

428 The marriage of a *bosɔ́lɔ́* is a special form of the inheritance
587 of women.

768 The term *bosɔ́lɔ́* is *used* everywhere. The Injɔ̱́lɔ̱́ also use a synonym, *njɛ́mɔ́*, an incorrect term derived from the verb *ɛ́mola*, "to make [someone] get up." Thus they say *ɛ́moja bǒna njɛ́mɔ́*, "to give the child (son, daughter) a *bosɔ́lɔ́*. (2) Among the Beloko and their Elɛ́ngɛ́ the term *bombɔ́jɛ́* is used as well as *bosɔ́lɔ́*.

On the day when the widows are "lifted from the ground" and

---

1. Now chief of the Bonkoso.

2. The Elanga tribes in the Losanganya region also use this expression.

428 permitted "to return to the bed," (3) all those entitled to the rights of a father -- that is, those who have precedence, whether men or women -- gather with the sister's son to proceed with the ceremony. As always, each person yields his right to speak out of mutual respect. Finally, the eldest again has the floor [202]; it may be the deceased's father, brother, or paternal aunt (*isɔ́moto*). This individual who is in charge, makes a short speech appropriate to the occasion, and then gives one of the widows to the first-born of the children (*nsɔ́mí*). He takes the latter's preferences into account, having made sure of them in advance. The widow is given to him with the statement: "We have wrested for you the *bosɔ́lɔ́* which your father has left you," *tɔ́kokumela bosɔ́lɔ́ bɔ̌kí isɛ́ okotsíkɛ́láká*. The actual meaning of *kumá* is "to seize by pulling toward oneself, to pull up," and includes the idea of strength. The word is primarily used in such expressions as *kuma bafílo*, "to pull up weeds," *kuma nsálá*, "to pull out feathers," etc. But it is also employed whenever anything is taken or pulled forcefully toward oneself, as in *kuma mbombo*, "to pull a *chikwangue* out of a heap."

●587

768

The *bosɔ́lɔ́* is always given to the first-born, regardless of sex, to the exclusion of the other children. If the eldest is a girl, she passes the *bosɔ́lɔ́* on to her brother, first-born among the boys. This is a real seniority right, and it must be bought, or rather paid for, by the brother by giving his sister a present which most frequently consists of hens, money, small useful objects, or often a quantity of beer. The same rule applies if the eldest yields his right to a younger brother because the latter is passionately in love with her or -- nowadays -- because he does not want to take a second wife.

---

3. See "Les Coutumes funeraires des Nkundo" [The Funeral Customs of the Nkundɔ́] (in press, *Anthropos*). The Elíngá perform this ceremony only a few days after the burial; the Boangi do so even before it. The Injolɔ́ are beginning to imitate the Elíngá.

428 In addition a bósoló is also given to the bǒnankáná. Only the
768 eldest son of the sister whose bride price was used by the deceased may
587 claim this right. If the bride price of the nephew's mother was not involved in the establishment of the harem which is to be divided, he is only entitled to a bosóló who is not someone else's nkita, that is, who was acquired by means of riches procured through the deceased's own efforts. If the deceased obtained wives with the bride prices of two sisters, both of whom have left sons, only the eldest son of the eldest sister has this right. (1) [203]

> 1. It may happen that one of the sons of the deceased is disinherited because of the rights of the bǒnankáná. If that happens and the latter at least has a wife or can obtain the necessary valuables in his father's clan, he is supposed to yield the woman to his unfortunate cousin. This is a duty imposed by the love of family (lióta), and he may not evade it.

The practice of handing over a bosóló to relatives other than the son or daughter of the deceased seems to be an extension of a right originally reserved for his child.

The desires of the person entitled to the bosóló are taken into account when she is handed over. However, the eldest son can never obtain his father's favorite; only an elder brother may inherit her.

It is thus possible for a son to receive his own mother as bosóló, but only if there are no other widows and if he has no way of obtaining a wife. Naturally, he may not marry her. She is given to him so that when she remarries he will receive the amount of the bride price which will be repaid.

If the deceased leaves no harem but does leave a good deal of other wealth, the bosóló consists of some object of great value. This practice would seem to indicate that the word bosóló is applied to a woman only by an extension of its basic and original meaning, "inheritance by right of seniority."

428 768 587 As soon as the bosóló is assigned to the person entitled to her, she leaves the group of widows and goes to the home of her new husband. From then on she may cohabit with him, since from that moment the pair are absolved from the observance of the regulations and prohibitions of mourning. Because of her affection for her deceased husband and her sorrow, the woman sometimes begs her new husband to be patient and wait a while. Her wishes are respected, for a refusal to acquiesce would be a very serious offense, which could lead to an immediate rupture of the relationship.

The woman chosen as bosóló may refuse the husband for whom she is intended, though such cases are rare and in the past were even unknown. The following instance [204] goes back to 1932: Mpía of Mbanja "acquired" Bôngongo of Ilángá as wife for his eldest son, Bo̱mpe̱lí. But the young man did not want her. So as not to waste his money, the father incorporated the woman into his harem. When the old man died, Bôngongo was given to this same Bo̱mpe̱lí as a bosóló. This time it was she who did not want him, and, to make matters worse, all the other widows also refused. Subsequently, a second cousin of Bo̱mpe̱lí named Bosénjá wanted to marry Bôngongo. But out of spite, Bo̱mpe̱lí did not want to yield her to him except against the payment of a bride price.

Even if the woman makes no objection -- and she generally does not -- and accepts the new husband without loving him, either out of indifference, or to be able to come out of seclusion, or for any other reason, she may always find a way to leave him, if she wishes, for another close relative whom she prefers. This fact indicates that, although theoretically the union of the bosóló is supposed to be more stable than a simple marriage by inheritance, in practice it is not; and it does not attain the degree of permanence characteristic of a marriage by nkumbó. The reason is probably to be found in the fact that the union with a bosóló and the ordinary form of marriage by inheritance are fundamentally identical, and the rights of the family play a great role in both of them. The following is a recent case history: Ifungá, daughter of Esukúlu of Bongangá (Boéndé) and widow [684] of Bolékélá of Bongíli was assigned as bosóló to her husband's eldest son, named Boongo. Later she claimed that she did not love Boongo but

429 that she wanted to become the wife of his brother Ekamba. Ekamba
768 did not object. But very soon she broke this union as well. This time
587 the chief decided she was going too far and to please Boongo, who
684 had settled with his mother's clan of which he also was a member, he
sentenced her to several weeks in prison. All sensible people approved
of the chief's attitude. In spite of the suppression of such excesses,
a suppression which is necessary, the woman's freedom is protected.

We have already indicated that from a moral point of view the
428 marriage of a bosɔ́lɔ́ may be considered on the same level as the in-
768
587 heritance of any woman if she remains among the close kin of the
deceased. The only difference is that such a union is somewhat more
difficult to break.

Article IV. The Replacement or Substitution

586 When a marriage is broken, instead of completing the divorce
587 by restitution of the bride price, the woman's family often has recourse
to the practice of replacing the divorcée by one of her relatives (such
as a sister, cousin, or niece). The act of replacement, as well as the
woman substituted, is called bankitsá. (1) This name is plural noun derived from kita, "to become," kitana, "to replace, to succeed." The singular would be linkitsá, but it is never applied to this situation.

The substitute usually does not object to the social obligation that falls upon her, unless she feels an unusual repugnance toward the husband. In that case an attempt is made to find someone else in the family. A family may go so far as to take one of its members away from her husband in order to substitute her for the divorcée, especially if no other substitute is to be found and if they care more about the marriage that has been broken than about her union.

The Nkundɔ́ give the following justifications for the practice of substitution:

1. The Ekonda say nkitsá.

586x
587 1) The reference for the continuation of a happy relationship by marriage as against the creation of a new one which has yet to prove itself.

2) The desire to avoid the palavers and troubles involved in the process of restoring the bride price and to hasten in providing the husband with a new wife even if there has been no undue delay in reimbursing him).

3) Concern for the children born of the union which has been broken. [206] This is a very important reason, for it is completely in the children's interest that their stepmother should be a close relative who considers them her own children and who is therefore to be preferred over an entirely strange woman.

583x
586x
587 Just as there is no restitution of the bride price in the case of a replacement, so there is no new bride price to pay. But it is inconceivable that the visits necessary for the negotiations should be made without gifts. Thus a replacement inevitably results in an increase of the bride price, since the new payments made on each occasion are added to the former bride price. The more successive replacements are made, the more the amount of the bride price is likely to increase. Thus I have known instances where a bride price which at the beginning consisted of 100 rings had in the end reached the sum of close to 300 rings.

586x
587 In the opinion of the Nkundɔ́ the handing over of a *bankitsɛ́* constitutes a true and valid marriage. But it is not a new union but simply the transfer to a different person of obligations which have never ceased to exist, which derive from a marriage agreement that has never been annulled. Thus the woman for whom the bride price was paid is known as the one who began, or founded, the marriage, the second woman simply succeeding her in it: X. *ɛ́mangɛ́kí liɛ́la*, Y. *aɔ̂sulungana* (*manga*, "to begin," or *bondola*, "to found," or *mɔ́mola*, "to begin [at the very beginning]"; as against *sulungana*, "to succeed [someone]," *kitana*, "to replace," *mumola*, "to continue"). For them a true succession to a position is involved. The replacement is not simply physical and external; it is fully legal in the same way that an heir apparent succeeds his father as king (there

586ˣ is only one royal power and dignity which continues to exist through the
● 587 various individuals invested with it) or as in law when, in spite of a change in the identity of the debtor, there is no novation. (1) [207]

1. We will return to this question in Article IX.

Because of the way the Nkundó view this substitution, the bankitsá occupies the same rank in the harem as the woman she is replacing, and she is handed over to the husband by the same ndonga who participated in arranging the initial agreement.

What evaluation should be placed on this union by substitution from the standpoint of natural law? Does it bear the taint of a real vice or does it not? The right of civil powers to break a marriage legitimately contracted is debated. (1) Let us assume that this right exists

1. At the present time the affirmative opinion has almost been abandoned by Catholic philosophers, jurists, and moralists.

and, furthermore, that the woman being substituted really consents. Her view, as well as the view of everyone around her, is that this is a matter of submitting to a family duty imposed by the laws which govern her people. One may wonder whether this requirement can be defended before basic principles of the law in general and in the light of morality. In any case the unanimous opinion of the natives that this substitution constitutes the continuation of a marriage through another person is certainly false. It is undoubtedly the result of an insufficient analysis, which leads them to lose sight of the crux of the problem by focusing primarily on the involvement of the clan in the marital union (see Article IX).

Whatever the case may be, it is possible to say without fear that in the great majority of cases a native woman submits to this law because she considers her submission an obligation which, for the good of her family, she is not permitted to escape.

[797] Moreover, the younger generation is beginning to oppose this practice. For example, here with the Sisters there is a young daughter

586x of Boɔ́mbo, named Ngongo, who was given to Bokungɔ́ of Bongíli as a
●587 replacement for her sister Ilumbɛ́ when she was a very small child.
797 Since she was not yet nubile she continued to live with her parents. When they became Christians, Ngongo was also baptized. On the other hand, [208] Longála, a son of Bokungɔ́, had become a catechumen and, after coming to the school, was baptized. His father yielded Ngongo to him as his future wife. Ngongo (who was now about seventeen) wanted nothing to do with this marriage. It was not that she refused to have Longála as her husband; she did not want to be married simply as a *bankitsá*. She insisted on a marriage by bride price, in spite of the difficulties involved in the procedure, which was doubly useless and, for the Nkundɔ́, stupid.

587
583x There is a second form of substitution: *replacement after death*. When a man has lost his wife and both he and the parents of the deceased want to maintain their alliance, he brings them 20 to 25 rings through the medium of the *ndonga* for the purpose of obtaining a new wife. This payment is called *ibɔ́leɔ́ko*, a term derived from *-bɔ́l*, "to beat" (for instance the clay in the ground) and *eɔ́ko*, "the site of a house." The Injɔ́lɔ́ designate it by a different name which however has the same meaning. It is *sangɔ́lɛ́kojí*, "the inheritance of a dwelling site."

The procedure is as follows: When the widower has fulfilled all his funerary obligations and, at the end of his second visit to his parents-in-law, he is about to take leave of them, they ask him:

"Well, you're leaving. What are you planning to do now?"

He answers, "I loved your daughter very much. She is dead, and I have buried her. I have fulfilled all my duties. I have always lived on good terms with you, and I would like to continue our relationship. But first I must consult my family. Then we will see." That is how he expresses his wish to continue being their son-in-law. After asking his relatives' opinion, he returns to his father-in-law with the *ibɔ́leɔ́ko*. "Here, I bring you the *ibɔ́leɔ́ko*; I come to beat the house site; give me a wife." The father-in-law will have already chosen the daughter, sister, or other relative who is to replace the deceased and has already privately mentioned her to his son-in-law.

587 He hands over to him the woman intended for him, saying "Here is
583x your wife." (1)

> 1. Among the Ekonda, the ibóleóko payment has no special name. Moreover, before giving the husband a substitute, the parents require 20 to 30 additional rings which are supposed to pay for the mother's mourning and are therefore called basáki ba nyangó.

For a replacement after death, as for one after a divorce, the parents-in-law will sometimes take a daughter from her legitimate husband so that she may serve as substitute.

The 20 to 25 rings comprising the ibóleóko are only the beginning of the payment. A complete bride price is required, as it is for a marriage by nkúmbó, but the subsequent installments are not as large as for ordinary marriages. Nevertheless, the replacement is thought of as the continuation of a pre-existing union, though this concept is less apparent here than in relation to a substitution due to divorce. Consequently, in a harem the substitute assumes the same rank as was held by the deceased.

The replacement after death is made for the same reason as after a divorce.

Although the two types of replacement resemble each other in that both involve the substitution of one wife for another, there are considerable differences between them.

A substitution of another wife following divorce does not result in the payment of another bride price nor, consequently, in the standard expression of the woman's consent. But on the contrary, the payment of another bride price is required for a replacement after death, and there is a public expression of consent. It occurs when the husband pays the valuables comprising the ibóleóko and is done in the same way as in a direct marriage by nkumbo. These two differences, and especially the second, make the replacement for a deceased wife a standard marriage from the legal standpoint. [210]

581 584 that is, that they did not consider themselves the contracting parties. But to my knowledge, their opposition is not considered to invalidate the marriage. I say "to my knowledge" because there is much confusion in the native mind on this question, and it is possible that later discoveries will show that the Nkundó attach a greater importance to consent than we perceive at the moment. As a matter of fact, the inclusion of a ceremony expressing consent in a normal marriage is an indication in that direction.

Let us now examine our data on the value of consent and its expression.

Except in an unusual case, which we are justified in leaving out of consideration in this synthesis since it does not influence our conclusions, there is always consent by the spouses in a standard marriage. Such a consent is first attained in private and then revealed to the parents, who give their approval. At the time of the first bride-price payment, the fiancée expresses her consent by a public and official act, while the husband shows his in accompanying his father in all the proceedings and in taking his intended to his home. In the eyes of the Nkundó that is entirely sufficient.

Another question arises in this connection. The consent of the couple is expressed at the time the ikulá is paid. And the real payment of the bride price occurs only later, without a renewal of consent. Can the expression of consent at the beginning, at the time of engagement, be considered sufficient, since it is virtually continuous? In my opinion there is no reason why it should not be.

581 584 587 In the case of a marriage by inheritance, the usual formalities of the expression of consent are omitted, because [226] no new bride price is paid. Nevertheless, we note that the heir must go and fetch the widow from her family and make a special payment. The Nkundó explain this action as a mark of respect toward the widow's family, but we may interpret it as an expression, adapted to the particular situation, of the new husband's wish to marry this woman. The woman's willingness to accompany the heir is really a manifestation of her consent to the union. This interpretation is confirmed by the legal requirement that another bekooli payment be made by each of the

581 deceased's relatives who wishes to marry the widow, while the bride
584 price contract remains unchanged. This payment, unlike the bride-
587 price agreement, does not come from the family; it is clearly a personal act of the man who wants to take the widow for his wife.

In the case of a replacement after divorce, the external expression of consent is more vague, since it is limited to the husband's overture's to his father-in-law on the one hand, and the fact that the woman goes with the husband, on the other. The same must be said of the inheritance of a bosóló (Chapter III, Article III). It would be contrary to reality, however, to conclude that because the form of the woman's consent is less prominent, such consent does not exist; with respect to these questions, their attitude is entirely different from ours. To be a replacement is considered a duty and accepted as such. Psychologically, the acceptance of this duty often involves consent; it does not exclude the presence of the will any more than the duty to submit to holy commandments, and to religious and civil laws. Even reverent fear, the fear of punishments, etc., does not prevent a free exercise of the will, although they do diminish it. Nevertheless, there are cases where fear or constraint can be so great as to remove freedom completely. [227]

581 With respect to unions before maturity (Chapter IV), the
584 question is even more difficult. Only the engagement is made in early childhood. The husband's consent is expressed in a manner which is entirely adequate. Since the union does not move from a tentative stage to a final one before the girl approaches puberty, she may be considered capable of giving her consent sufficiently to make a valid marriage, and she gives this consent in going to the home of her husband. Nevertheless, if we compare this expression of consent with those we have observed in the other types of union, it seems very much attentuated and greatly inferior to them.

We may therefore assume that in a general way and under ordinary circumstances freedom is safe and consent is expressed in an adequate fashion.

581 Having recapitulated these facts, let us try to define the legal nature of Nkundó marriage. In ecclesiastic law and in European civil law, a marriage is effected through the official exchange of

582 602 [576] and those who owe submission and respect. The "superior" relatives are the ascendants, uncles, aunts, etc., in short, all those bearing the title of "father" or "mother," as well as elder brothers (elder sisters, elder cousins, etc.), who are batómóló (sing. botómóló). [601] The "inferiors" are the descendants, those who are called "children" (bǎna): sons and daughters, grandsons, nephews, nieces, younger brothers or sisters, and those who are classed with them and called bakúné (sing. bokúné).

[595] [587] 4) Polygamy and the inheritance of widows introduce another element. We will see that although persons of certain degrees of affinity may not marry, the prohibition is lifted to permit the inheritance of widows.

5) Our term "relatives by marriage" the Nkundó term and bakiló are not synonymous, even with respect to direct affinity. When we use the term "relatives by marriage" here, we are speaking in Nkundó terms. They do not consider certain persons whom we would include in that category as "relations by marriage." Such persons [601] are included in the group which as a whole is designated as likiló or bakiló, but when properly and accurately referred to they are called bǒme, "husband," or wǎli, "wife," because they may marry each other and therefore affinity, strictly speaking, cannot be applied to them. In other words, for the Nkundó, affinity is the relationship of a person with (only) those of his spouse's relatives whom he is forbidden to marry. It is well to bear in mind the double meaning of this term.

2. The rules

1. Direct Affinity

582 603 606 A. Marriages are prohibited in the direct line. Nevertheless, in accordance with consideration number 4, a son or grandson may inherit or marry the widows of his father or grandfather, but not the reverse. [254]

606
835 the relations between a wife and her husband's parents are closely connected with the rules pertaining to the prohibition related to affinity and seems to spring from the same source. Therefore it will be useful to have in mind what we have said in the preceding chapter, Article IV.

607 The husband's elder brothers treat his wife as their sister. The wife calls her husband's sisters [300] bakiló, but out of respect she often gives them the title of "mother." (1)

587 After the husband's death, as has been said suo loco, his father or his brother may marry his widow. But this practice is not well regarded and is permitted only rarely, chiefly when the scattering of the family patrimony is feared or if the two interested parties have an unusual love for each other.

837
602 With respect to children or younger brothers and all those who fall into that category, the situation is altogether different. Illicit relations with wives of their father, grandfather, uncle, elder brother, or elder cousin, are judged much less severely. Generally, misconduct does not give rise to claims for payment, or the payment is demanded "for form's sake" and consists of a hen and a bunch of bananas. By means of this payment the guilty one recognizes his error and renders homage to the right of his elder.

[626] In general public opinion condemns these relations and often with great severity. The question of degree of kinship as well as other considerations result in a great diversity among the cases, so we will examine each situation separately and distinguish each time between the husband's reaction and that of public opinion.

---

[601] 1. Among the Elángá the wife also calls her husband's sisters bongíli (pl. bangíli); they call her bǒnongíli (pl. bǎnangíli). A wife often calls her husband's mother nyangôngíli. Bǎnangíli l'ǎnangíli means "the brother's wives and their sisters-in-law."

837 A. A woman's misconduct with her husband's son does not re-
626 sult in the payment of an indemnity. Nevertheless, the husband who
595x has been wronged takes action; he defends his rights and is enraged,
593x whether the situation is very serious or not, and especially if he is
monogamous. If he has several wives, he is more apt to pass over the matter, unless it involves his favorite. Sometimes he takes revenge by striking the guilty son's mother, taking her hens away from her, etc. But such action may lead to complications: [301] the brother of the woman so treated might intervene, and if the reaction of the husband who has been wronged is too violent or recurs too often, a divorce may result. In any case the father never hurts his heedless son's wife, since he loves her like his own daughter.

The father may apply a direct sanction against the offender by delaying the acquisition of a wife for him and refusing his blessings for his son's travels and undertakings -- still a serious thing in purely native society.

Such relations are always greatly criticized by public opinion, even if relatives intervene on the culprit's behalf. The latter is disgraced as a result; he is mocked with the epithet etɔ́onjɔ́lɔ́, to which
[578] often is added the explicative phrase l'ɔ́ála banyangɔ́ b'âningá. Etɔ́onjɔ́lɔ́ is derived from etɔ́o, "masculine clothing" and, figuratively, "virility in the physical sense," and from bɔ́lɔ́, "strength." Thus the epithet implies that the culprit is so virile that he goes so far as to unite even with his brothers' mothers.

● 587 Marriage with the father's widow after his death is legitimate.
626 Nevertheless, if the widow has left children, public opinion does not entirely refrain from judgment, and though the severity of the criticism cited above will be attenuated, it may still be heard. Such was the case of Yoká of Bokenyola (Bonjoku), which is well known in this region. He married Lokokú, widow of his father Insílo y'Ɔkátola and mother of Insílo Antoine, present chief of the Bonkoso. (1).

---

1. With reference to the above-mentioned attitude, an exception must be made with regard to the inheritance of a widow by right

587 626 of seniority (she is then called bosɔ́lɔ́ -- see Chapter III, Article III). The giving of a widow who is in the position described is preferably avoided.

837 626 Illicit relations between a son and his father's wife are judged with especially great severity if the young man's own mother is still alive. He is reproached for his behavior in terms which are clear and crude: Oôy'ɔ̌sanganya mbindo ǐkɛ̌ la mbindo y'îs'â nyangɔ́, "you unite your stains (impurities) with those of your father and [302] mother"; Outɛ́ ńk'eki wɛ̌ wǐmánáká, "you are returning from whence you came." To these expressions is often added ɔ́wa lɔ́í ɛ́! olekí liloka, "you will die because of your too great wickedness." To the [761] Nkundɔ́ this last statement is a kind of curse, and if it is repeated by several persons it will not fail to have its effect. Or, to speak as our people do, if everyone greatly wails over and against this man, he will really die. (1)

1. This attitude of the Nkundɔ́ may be one of the reasons why widows are assigned not to the son of the deceased, but to his brother.

If the son in question is not married, especially if he has already reached a relatively advanced age, and if he approaches the wives of his polygamous father, the matter is considered less serious. The latter cannot be too angry, especially when only isolated instances are involved; for other relatives will allow their affection for this young man to speak, since they are aware of his passion and therefore understand his temptations and follies. They would intervene to pacify the father and urge him to prevent the repetition of such occurrences by obtaining a wife for his son. In exceptional cases the family council may even judge the father to be in the wrong because of his harshness toward his son and may allow the latter to take his father's wife away from him (never, however, the first wife, the favorite, or the bolɔ́mbu); such was the case we described in

595x [431] Thus a favorite is in every way the object of her husband's preference. He divides with her all presents he receives, while the other wives are not included in this expression of generosity. [853] But in the matter of sexual relations, apart from his trips, he has obligations to all of them. The most he can do is to add one night to the usual number (see below).

The co-wives adapt fairly well to this preferential system. Nevertheless, there is a good deal of backbiting on account of it. It may also happen that one or another of the wives is jealous to the point of being unable to bear it. [347] The signs of her rancor [586] multiply, and a divorce results in the end.

The nkɔ́ndɛ́ does not have to go into mourning for anyone [765] other than her husband. Even then she does not remove her clothing. But she does not have to abide by mourning regulations either for her parents or her own children.

Like the other wives, the favorite is passed on through inheri- [587] tance. But she cannot be taken as a bosɔ́lɔ́ by anyone except an elder brother of the deceased.

595x 192 Nkɔ́ndɛ́ is the specific term by which a favorite is designated. Its etymology is unknown to me. The word is used everywhere, although the Injɔ́lɔ́ often say lokílo (whose etymology is equally obscure). Another less common (older?) term known to the Bonkoso, Bongili, Wǎngatá, and Bakáala is bongilɛ́ or bongijí (1). In addition to the term ikundaka, already cited, there is also the word ebɛ́lɛ́kɛ́, a generic term meaning "preference, predilection" or, when applied to a child or a slave, "an object one does not want to dispose of." The favorite is also called áfɔ́kɛ́támɛ́, "untouchable," because other men may not have relations with her.

1. The Ekonda call the favorite bokɔ́lo. The Elanga of Losanganya say bofiɛ́, a name borne by certain women among the Nkundɔ́ between Jwalɛ́ and Boloko. Might this also be an old name?

586x One way or the other, the question was thus settled for both sides.

The term universally employed to signify the breaking up of a marriage by the wife is bokőfo, derived from the verb kőfa. This word is not used for a wife's repudiation by her husband. Therefore, its meaning is not equivalent to "divorce"; it means rather "to break the union with the husband." The transitive causative form (kőfya) means "to provoke this break." It actually does happen that the woman's family causes the dissolution of a marriage for the sake of a more advantageous union. This should be understood in the context of what we have explained concerning reasons for divorce. Serious failures in the husband's fulfillment of his duties to his parents-in-law are mainly involved here. The [587] remarriage of a divorcée is described by the generic term kumbwa, "to be married to someone."

B. Second hypothesis: a husband wanted to get rid of his wife. Old natives stated very categorically that such behavior on the husband's part was due not to the cooling of his love, but to [383] incorrigible conduct on the wife's part. He was reduced to this extremity by the impossibility of continuing conjugal life with her.

586x 584 He did everything in his power to forestall the flight of his wife by making the first move. After having vainly tried to bring her around through the intervention of her parents and especially the ndonga, he had recourse to one of the following means, which he could in fact use successively. But first he was required to inform the witness and to obtain his approval as well as that of the family authorities. The measures were as follows:

a) Submission to the etâka, a heavy wooden fork fastened to [584] the neck. When the husband has placed the etâka on his wife, the ndonga informed her parents of what had happened. They could then come and free their daughter by returning the bride price. If the husband applied the etâka against the wishes of the witness, the latter could release the prisoner. But in so doing he became guarantor of the reimbursement of the bride price; he became personally responsible for it.

586x The husband was authorized to keep his wife under this form of torture for months. If his parents-in-law would not or could not

586^x
178

> of this rule, however, could trouble the religious feelings of native Christians and thus produce an effect that is the reverse of the one desired. A religious marriage is in fact indissoluble, and in such cases the obligation to make restitution would be equivalent to a recognition that a religious union could be dissolved. And not only would the native consider this an opposition between the public authorities and Christian morality, but in addition the stability of marriages in general would greatly suffer.

here it must be noted that certain parents use hypocritical circumventions rather than openly showing their refusal. This is how they go about it: if the woman has really abandoned her husband and he, for good reasons such as those given above, no longer cares for his wife with whom he can no longer live (especially if he is monogamous), the question of reimbursement arises. The woman, in connivance with her parents, who do not want to make restitution of the bride price, publicly and officially declares that she is not leaving her husband and wishes to return to the conjugal household, whereas her only intention is to help her parents avoid paying the bride-price valuables. In time she will manage to get out of it one way or another.

3. Special cases

586x There are some rather special cases in the dissolution of marriage. The first has occurred more frequently since colonization, while the last has practically disappeared.

586x 837 587 1) Njangó. This word is the noun form of the verb angola, "to seduce or lead astray" (another's wife, his laborer, his slave, etc.). Therefore, it is a generic term, but it is primarily applied to the seduction of a married woman in order to make her leave her husband. It therefore denotes a man's act. Of the woman it is

586 simply said that she has left her husband (aòkófa) and has been taken
837 in marriage by X (aòkúmbwa éka Sóngóló). Having fallen in love
587 with another man's wife [390] and desiring to marry her, a man tries to win her favor. If she consents he collects the valuables necessary for the bride price. He then asks the woman to come to him and pays the bride price as for any marriage.

Instead of going directly to her seducer, the woman may also first go to her parents, especially if they are in favor of her plan. If they are not she would not succeed, because they would prevent her from carrying it out.

[721] Cases of njangó were formerly rare because they were risky. As a matter of fact, they constituted a casus belli. Anyone who undertook such a venture had to be in a position to take the conse-
[178] quences of his act, especially with respect to the payment of an indemnity. Nowadays, on the other hand, these occurrences are much more frequent, even when the new husband does not have the means to pay the bride price at once. Nevertheless, the reversal in government policy is beginning to produce good results. The woman, or her mother, is often imprisoned; rarely the seducer. This penalty is often sufficient to restore order. But to keep from being exposed to further difficulties caused by the woman who no longer loves him, the abandoned husband sometimes refuses to take back his unfaithful wife.

The rarity of cases in former times as well as the fact that
[671] they constituted a legitimate reason for war shows that the njangó did not have the approval of Nkundó law but that it was more or less considered an infraction.

586 2) Taking refuge. Because of the change in circumstances,
577 the practice of taking refuge is no longer common today. It used to be done as follows: A woman who absolutely wanted to leave her husband and had no means of doing so, since no man had asked for her in marriage and her parents were powerless to help her, went secretly to a rich and influential man whom she would have liked as a husband. She arrived unexpectedly, stood before him, or even threw herself at him, crying, [391] Bejwó békě! ónjéngé,

586 x In most cases the husband and his parents-in-law try to continue their relationship despite the breakup. If the woman persists in not wanting to go back to her husband despite the pressure, the entreaties, and even the curses of her family, the parents sub-
[587] stitute a sister or relative (*bankitsa*) for her, unless, of course, no relative is available. For in that case they must resign themselves to the restitution of the bride price and a permanent dissolution of the relationship. No new bride-price payment is made for the substitute, as the original bride price is valid for the new union, as we have explained in Chapter III, Article IV.

Finally, there is an exception to the general principle: there is no restitution of the bride price if for some reason there is equivalent compensation of some sort. Nowadays this exception is seldom encountered, as will be apparent from the following details: for example, such an exception occurs if the right of *ikɔ́kelo* has been exercised, or if the wife of one of the relatives-in-law has been seized. Even if the amount of one bride price is larger than the other, the excess is not returned. Nor is there any obligation to restore the bride price if the wife has been reduced to slavery or has been killed. There are also the cases of the dissolution of marriage cited in Chapter V, Article IV, 2, no. 2, example 17, and in Chapter VI, Article V, 4. If the breakup caused
[727] a war and the number killed on each side was considerable (three, five, six corpses), the matter rests there; when the families of those killed have been indemnified, there is no more talk of reimbursement. Occasionally, an influential and rich man who at the same time was spiteful or excessively proud, would take up arms a second time. He claimed that he would not stop until he had the bride-price valuables in his hands. Such behavior met with disapproval everywhere, and even his own family tried to stop him. If the opposing clan was sufficiently strong and stubborn in the struggle, the husband obtained nothing at all. But the desire to
[855] get revenge or to be famous as a warrior sometimes caused a man to scorn financial losses. Finally, according to the notions of our natives, a case of enmity between two clans (which we have cited in relation to a woman's application for refuge) should be included in the category of compensations.

586 x to be touched. Even if the belonga and other payments total less than the bride price, nothing can be subtracted from the bosóngo. It must always be returned in its entirety.

As to slaves or domestic animals, not only are they subject [422] to the reimbursement law, but in addition restitution must be made of all their progeny, even when it includes several generations. This regulation applies to the maternal line (compare it with the ancient Roman adage: partus sequitur ventrem). Hens and ducks are excepted, however.

To indicate that each side must make restitution of absolutely everything that has been paid, the Nkundó use the expression: lâ nsọngi lá lọtéű, "even the needle and the tiny razor."

[409] The reimbursement of the bride price in a case where the woman is returning to her first husband is governed by no special rule. The second husband simply obtains restitution of what is due him. The wife's family often appeals to the first husband's generosity in order to hasten the reimbursement.

If the woman leaves her second husband as well as her first, without the latter having been previously reimbursed, restitution is made to both.

We have seen that the first husband can seize his rival's bride-price valuables as indemnity for the damages the latter has caused him. The woman's family is not required to return those valuables, since they have not received them. This affair therefore does not concern them and involves only the two rivals. In spite of the first husband's every right, such an action often resulted in war. Because of the fear of quarrels and other unpleasant consequences, this custom is no longer practiced. Nevertheless, the idea is not dead as the following case shows. It occurred in 1932.

x Engóngó de Lǒngá (Nkóle) made the acquaintance of Bosénjâ,
586 daughter of Bokelé wǎ Yelemeya of Ntómbâ (Wǎngatâ). She was
● 587 married to a Lǒnga (Ekonda) laborer named Isongű, a native Boángí, but left her husband to follow her new lover. The latter paid the ikulâ-ndanga (9 rings and 35 francs). After a certain number of months, the union broke up. Bosénjâ was found unsuitable as a wife. Among the faults with which she was reproached was a lack of affection for her fiancé's mother and other relatives, and a

586x failure to help or respect them. After the union broke up, Bokelé, 587 the woman's father, refused to make restitution of anything whatsoever. His answer to Engóndó was, "You should have left another man's wife alone."

Yet all this was in flagrant opposition to Nkundó law. 1) Engóndó was wrong to take another man's wife home with him. 2) Isongú could have taken Engóndó's valuables away from him at the time the latter was making the payment; it was his right. But 3) Bokelé was also in the wrong. The question [410] of seduction and adultery was none of his business but Isongú's. If he did not like Engóndó's behavior, he could have handled the situation differently. Now he had valuables to which he no longer had any right; he had to return them.

Conclusion

586x The nature of the reimbursement of marriage payments and the various circumstances under which it is made might suggest the conclusion that these goods are not acquired permanently, but rather that they constitute securities. The few exceptions where there is no reimbursement could not change this view. In fact the reason for them is clear -- compensation for that which is not restituted is made in other ways. (1)

Nevertheless, this conclusion does not hold up if we compare all the foregoing with what occurs when a marriage is broken through death. For in the latter case nothing at all is returned; everything that was given by each party remains permanently theirs. No payment is demanded even for the children (see below).

---

[721] 1. This observation -- like others made earlier -- might lead us to believe that in the mind of the Nkundó war and other bloody practices are only means which have little to recommend them and that basically our people disapprove of them.

152 rough behavior, only strangers married to village men (those known
593x as bɔ́ajɔ̂ɔ́la). This ill treatment is often extended to close relatives of the widower, that is, to those whom the women in ques-
764 tion call bɔ́ome, "potential husbands," never to fathers and higher relatives. (1) The purpose of this practice seems to be to intensify, by physical pain, the sorrow caused by death. In addition, provocatively obscene words, gestures, and movements remind the widower that from then on he must be continent, as described *in extenso* in the study cited above.

765 Afterwards, relatives dress the widower in a lisɔ́ki, a banana leaf which is torn all over horizontally. For all other mourning garments, as well as for all regulations and prohibitions that apply to all cases, see the detailed study.

The ill treatment described is not inflicted on the widow. It is meted out exclusively to men.

The general rules pertaining to seclusion apply to a widower; in fact they are especially severe for a man. His kinswomen prepare his simple meals. However, if his relations with his father-
¶[587] in-law were excellent, the latter sends a woman [420] to him who will attend to his needs. She often becomes his wife when, after the lifting of mourning, he brings the ibɔ́leɔ́ko (Chapter III, Article IV).

During the entire first period of seclusion, he cannot go anywhere, at least ostensibly. If he needs to go out, he must go through the back. If he wants to visit a relative or friend, he must go behind the huts, in the banana grove, even if it is evening. In any case, he may not leave the village. Such was the ancient law, though nowadays it is observed less and less.

Furthermore, he cannot have the slightest contact with any woman who is not a relative. He cannot even shake her hand, greet her out loud, or look at her even in passing.

---

[1] See Chapter V, Article IV, 1, no. 3, and Chapter VI, Article VI.

765 expected to attend. It is usually at this time that the negotiations occur relative to a replacement for the deceased (Chapter III, Article IV).

Article II. Seclusion of Widows

As I have described in the article cited, widows (bituka, sing. etuka, or, among the Bombwanja, besámanyi, sing. bosámanyi) are compelled to remain in seclusion for a long time. Before the ceremony of being lifted from the ground, they are ostensibly not permitted to go out. Later they are allowed more freedom; they can go everywhere to do their work, even to the markets. But they are required to spend their nights in the communal seclusion hut.

[620] A widow who did not conform to these rules would meet with serious criticism. She would be said to have not loved her husband (and consequently suspected of having caused his death by sorcery). Moreover, she would be exposed to the avenging anger of the deceased, who would disturb her sleep, thrash her if she went to the forest alone, [422] or would even come to take her into the next world with him.

Insofar as possible all the widows are brought together in one and the same hut. To complete their separation from the world, the entrance is closed by means of a circle of palms, the same as for the seclusion hut of a nursing woman, a bolúmbú, or a woman possessed by the spirit of bongóli (yebola). This is to prevent widows from having relations with passers-by.

The name of the seclusion hut is lokásá (the same as the word for "leaf."). The Bombwanja use the word lokombí (from komba, "to shut," "to enclose"); the Injóló and the Boángí say lonkíndá. (1)

1. The Ekonda use the word itálé.

765
587 During the last period of seclusion, although the widows may not be visited by lovers who wish to court them with the object of

M 765 marriage after the end of mourning, they have the right to accept
587 various foods and firewood from them. But a rather dim view is taken of these services rendered by strangers, that is, by persons not related to the heirs. For theoretically the widows belong to the heirs and are their wives, since the financial marriage agreement continues. (2) Nevertheless, if these men are not at enmity with the heirs, they encounter no opposition. For once the period of seclusion is terminated, the widows are free to go back to their respective families and be taken in marriage by anyone able to pay the bride price. Nevertheless, suitors are not permitted to enter the seclusion hut even in the last period. They must therefore transmit presents through the agency of the biũnanyí (sing. eũnanyí), that is, the relatives of the deceased.

M 765 This last period begins with the ceremony of being lifted off the ground. The widows are made to get up onto the beóngá --
M [423] bákondeja bituka ndá beóngá. The beóngá consist of split
P branches of the parasol tree, placed on long branches, which are
[352] in turn attached to posts, forming a small primitive bed, which is
[513] the usual bed of the Batswá that is sometimes also used by the Baotó, if the latter have nothing better. From then on the widows can rest on these; they may "rise from the ground." The parasol tree branches are called beóngá (sing. boóngá), "dead, dry wood." The same root is also used with other prefixes: eóngá, pl. bióngá; loóngá, pl. mbóngá. The verbs used are áta, "to split, rend" or fanja, "to cut." Nowadays the severity of this custom is mitigated by the substitution of beánga, transportable wicker beds, for the beóngá.

The ceremony is accompanied by a few dances and a bit of beer. The head of the family addresses the widows as follows: "We have split beóngá for you; climb up on them." Then he presents them with a few hens, given by relatives of the deceased. The widows prepare them and eat them all.

---

2. See Chapter III, Article IX.

In every case at least a few beéngo in addition to the
764 bombémbé and the bọtsá w'îlaká are always claimed. The latter payments can never be omitted. The belt is a payment made exclusively to the mother and by rights it goes to the mother's clan.

764 606 607 The higher the amount of these funeral payments, the more the son-in-law is welcome. The alliance is perfect. Therefore, not only will the wife's family reciprocate his fine feelings by adding a few more dogs, but in addition the son-in-law will be well received and successful in his application when, after the period of mourning, he brings the sum of the ibóleóko in order to obtain a substitute for the deceased. (2) In addition, if the relations with his in-laws have been excellent, he will easily obtain the substitute in advance, so that she can care for him during the entire mourning period.

764 689 There are severe sanctions against the omission of the funeral payments. [439] Neglecting to send the notification gift alone is enough to set these in motion. They are: the breaking off of the affinal relationship; the loss of the children, since the father's offense is equal to a repudiation; and finally molestation of the culprit by the spirit of the deceased. Thus at Bokátola (Bompela) one can find two boys, Botétsí and Ikembá, the children of Bonyongela of Ilángá and Etáka of Bokátola. They have now been incorporated into their mother's clan, because their father did not send a nsango. On stronger grounds the same is true for the whole nkunjí.

Article V. The Social Position of a Widow

768 587 In Chapter III, Articles II and IV, we have already noted that in the eyes of the Nkundó, the death of the husband does not dissolve a marriage. The union continues, and even after mourning it is not broken ipso facto. Even to have the woman taken and treated as a wife by another man is not enough to end it. As

---

2. See Chapter III, Article IV.

768 long as there has been no restitution of the bride price, the widow 587 continues to "belong" to the heirs of the deceased and to be their wife in the sense described in the chapter cited above, Article IX. The various forms in which this marriage can be continued post mortem have been described in Chapter III, Article II.

There we also saw that nothing prevents the widow from remarrying outside the inheriting family and therefore from becoming involved in a really new and different union. On the other hand, nothing obliges her to do so. She is entirely free. The only exception -- if this instance can be called an exception -- is a widow who is the object of a will, and a bosóló (Chapter III, Article II, in fine, and Article III). As to the latter, it is even difficult to consider her remarriage to the eldest son of the deceased as a limitation on her freedom. For although according to law it is obligatory, in practice it is voluntary and accompanied by guarantees of freedom that are adequate for ordinary cases. Indeed, it is known that she agrees [440] to this union. And she can always resort to divorce if later the heir disappoints her or if the continuation of the union becomes morally impossible.

It would be useless and tedious to repeat all that we have said on this subject in Chapter III. Let us simply reiterate that the distribution of widows should not be understood as a distribution of persons, depriving them of the freedom to be directed by their wills and their hearts, but rather as a distribution of the bride-price claims which they represent. The legal freedom to remarry remains as complete as it is when they are unmarried. This freedom may be subject to influences and even to real attacks, whose seriousness varies with the circumstances, but these are matters of fact and not of law.

If the widow considers herself -- or is considered -- too old for remarriage, or even if she desires to remain continent in faithfulness to her deceased husband, she may continue to reside with the clan of the deceased, instead of returning to her own family. The heirs usually do not oppose such an action and respect her wishes. If she has children or grandchildren there is no question about it; they are glad to keep their aged mother or grandmother near them.

768 584 She can also remain in her fiancé's family and there be taken in marriage by one of his kinsmen. If everything favors the continuation of the union, the new husband-to-be pays the bride price, but he need not repeat the engagement payments, which retain their validity. If he belongs to a distant branch of the family, however, the kin of the deceased will not want to give up their property, and the new fiancé himself will have to acquit himself of all the bride-price obligations, beginning with the ikulá.

[763] Sometimes the dying man, in making his last requests, enjoins his family to maintain the alliance. In that case one of his kinsman must marry the woman. If later on a breakup becomes inevitable, the spouses separate. For that matter, if the woman lacks the inclination to remarry in her fiancé's kin group, she will not be forced to do so.

This practice is based on the stipulation of Nkundó law that engaged persons have all the duties and privileges of married couples.

●[587] There is nothing among the Nkundó that resembles a levirate. Even in the case we cited of a last will, the obligation derives solely from the sacred nature of that will. [448]

Article IX

The Death of the Woman Before the Payment of the Bride Price

Two situations must be distinguished: 1) The woman dies during the engagement; 2) she dies before the bọsọ́ngọ.

1. Before the walo

As has already been said, engaged persons enjoy all the duties and privileges of a married couple. If the girl dies the fiancé must fulfill all obligations toward the deceased and her family (transporting the corpse, sacrifices, nkunjí). But his obligations do not end there.

Through the payment of the ndanga (and, in practice, already through the ikulá) he is considered responsible for any accident that might befall his fiancée in his home; and he has assumed the

768 legal importance. The solutions given are the same whether the
672 cause of death be organic or criminal. If the latter is the case,
682 however, the murderer must pay an indemnity, which is given to
the person who has been wronged, whether it be the woman's husband or her family; in any case he thus satisfies the requirements of justice.

A woman may be murdered while she is visiting one of her husband's kinswomen in accordance with her husband's wishes. In that case the sister-in-law's husband bears the responsibility. He must indemnify the victim's husband, and he himself is entitled to indemnification by the murderer. To simplify this procedure, the murderer can make his payment directly to the widower; justice is still safeguarded. But in no case does the indemnity go to the victim's father, for legally and economically it belongs to the husband, not to the father, who is indemnified through the funeral payments. [461]

Conclusions

1) A marital union is broken by death only for the person who
581 dies. For the one who remains alive, the dissolution is completed
768 only after other procedures. If the husband dies the widow remains
the wife of the heirs and is free only after restitution of the bride price has been made. At the death of the wife the husband can marry a substitute.

A widow's remarriage without restitution of the bride price
581 (and therefore without a new bride price), or that of a widower
587 with a substitute, is considered a continuation of a pre-existing
768 union which has not been dissolved. This continuation is not
absolute, however, Actually, it is perfect only in the case of the husband's death, in which case his kin group inherits all his rights and therefore also the rights to the wives he has acquired by means of his capital. On the other hand, if a widower is to continue the relationship after his wife's death, he must pay another bride price.

The difference between the two instances is due to the connection of the bride price with the "ownership" of a woman; she remains subject to it and as a result becomes legally the spouse

768 of her husband's heirs after his death. Only her own death takes
581 all power away from the bride price, which then becomes a purely
587 material value.

That is why the Nkundó expression "continuation of marriage" is ambiguous. For a widower the marriage continues from the standpoint of ties between families. But from the legal point of view there is a new marriage, since he pays a new bride price for the substitute, and there is therefore an entirely new contract. Only for a widow does the marriage really continue, as long as there is no divorce between her and the deceased husband's heirs. The agreement retains all its validity in her person, whereas the husband's obligations are transferred to the heirs. There is only a change of the persons subject to the agreement, which is therefore in no way annulled. The question here is a substitution in the role of husband. [462]

The preceding should be understood as relating to the financial agreement or bride-price contract as we have explained in Chapter III, Article IX. For the conjugal pact or consent agreement is annulled by death, since an heir as well as a widow must interpose new acts in order effectively to become man and wife. What the Nkundó call the continuation of marriage is therefore only the continuation of the bride-price agreement between the families, and not of the conjugal pact between individuals.

It would be desirable to have a moralist thoroughly examine the philosophico-theological validity of the continuation of this marriage after the death of one of the parties. Personally I think that for the widow, and on condition that nothing else opposes it, it is valid. For consent is expressed by the man through the payment of the *bekooli* and by the woman through the act of accompanying the man as his wife.

2) From the economic standpoint, death does not change
768 the situation that existed during life. The various bride-price valuables remain in the hands of the respective parties. The difference between the consequences of death and those of divorce are therefore very clearly delineated, as was indicated in the Conclusion of Chapter VIII, Article III.

583 to an old, worn-out, gray-haired man, it naturally often occurred that when she arrived at maturity, she no longer wished to remain with him. She therefore left him and went to another, or back to her family. In the latter case, however, great difficulties arose concerning the return of the bride price. Indeed, with the bride price the father had received for his daughter, he bought himself another wife. This wife was then called the Nkita of the daughter. We could translate Nkita in this case as "substitute." The Nkita represented the value of the sold or married daughter. Meanwhile, the daughter herself was often the Nkita of the daughter or sister of her husband. Thus, many women were the Nkita of each other. According to their customs, the children (boys) were in theory the *heirs of the Nkita of their* mother. The Nkita was, in fact, the value or the bride price of their mother.

One might ask whether the wife was then always content that she was, so to speak, an object of trade. In general, yes, she was satisfied with this. This is how the customs were, and nobody gave a thought to changing them. Usually the wife simply found herself in an arranged situation (fait accompli). Gradually a certain sense of honor is coming into being among the Christian wives against these heathen customs.

If the woman desired that a large bride price or purchase price be paid for her, was it also because she wished to care for the future of her children who would be heirs of her bride price? No, they say, not for that reason -- for, they add, what woman knew
in advance that she would have children, and moreover boys? There
[163] are, in fact, many women who have no children. Also, [536] only
583 the boys are eligible for the inheritance; the girls are heirs only in
428 name. When it came to the inheritance, the children inherited the
587 Nkita of their mother only if there were no more brothers of the
mother or uncles on their father's side. The mightiest always had
the greatest right.

Usually a youth had to acquire a wife with the bride price or supplement of the bride price of his sister. The inheritance of the Nkita of his mother was only secondary. Still we often see a heathen wife leave her husband in order to go to another, without bothering much about her children who remain with the deserted husband, their father.

583 If the wife was content and if she insisted that a large bride price be paid for her, it was out of vanity and also to procure money for her family (father or brothers), and not out of concern for her children.

586 583 Divorce. When the wife left her husband to go back to her family, they had to give back the bride price they had received. In general this was a very difficult business, because the bride price was used by the father or the brother to obtain another wife for himself, the Nkita. Thus, in order to be able to return the bride price, they would have to sell this Nkita or give her back to her family and ask for the return of her bride price. There were few other ways to give back the bride price; all their property consisted of wives. Since the family usually could not or would not return the bride price, the deserted husband then sought to become the master of the mother or a sister of his runaway wife, whom he then kept as a hostage. Among the heathens, this was a commonly used expedient to retrieve the wife or the bride price. When the runaway wife discovered that her mother or sister was a prisoner of her former husband, she often went back out of sympathy for her mother or sister. When the wife had gone not to her family but to another man, which was often the case, the family urged this second husband to give the bride price to the first husband. This was usually the only practical means by which the difficulty was resolved. This second husband then paid the bride price to the first. Since the [537] bride price often had been only paid in part by the first one, he then paid the remaining portion to the family.

Sometimes, if there were no way to return the bride price, the woman was forced to go back to her deserted husband. To avoid unpleasant treatment, she had to feign submissiveness.

586 ●587 As soon as an agreement was arrived at, either with the family or with the second husband, over the return of the bride price, the first bond was considered broken. If the woman was with her family, she was considered free to enter into a new agreement. If, however, she was with another husband, then after the argument she was considered bound to that second husband. The primary bond of their agreement thus appears to be the bride price.

586 If the wife had children, these remained with their father, and the bride price was only partially returned. The value of the children was, so to speak, subtracted from the bride price.

567 Everywhere there were also abducted women and female
439 slaves; these were simply sold. Furthermore women were bought
562 and sold with women [as payment]. Also women who were inherited
and no longer in the hands of their family were sold by their second, third, or other subsequent husband. In all of these cases, the family no longer came into consideration for the bride price. One would have to stretch the point in order to consider the sums paid in these cases as a bride price, and consequently as a native custom which one must respect.

Or one should have to assume that such a native woman re-
562 mains a "bride" for her whole lifetime. It will be said that the
439 woman consented to her sale by one man to the other.

Often this was indeed the case, but not always by any means,
[858] for children and slaves were also sold. Even the consent of the woman
did not prevent it from being a sale; her consent was rather an extra transaction that simplified the sale of a human article of trade. It still remains woman trade.

764 The Inheritance. Upon the death of a polygynist, the burial
ceremony was conducted according to the class and rank of the de-
567 ceased. One or two or several [539] slaves were killed and buried
with the polygynist in the same grave. Sometimes the arms and legs of those male and female slaves were broken, and then they were buried alive in the same grave with the body.

When these slaves still had family, it might happen that the family members, having learned of the unfortunate lot of their relative, would hasten from faraway districts to buy him or her free if it was not yet too late. Several Negroes have told us of those heart-breaking scenes at which they were present as children. The mourn-
[765] ing and the lamenting over the dead lasted from a week to a month.

768 The eldest son immediately succeeded his father in position
428 and immediately took one of the wives of his father.

The other sons divided among them the lances and knives of
587 their father.

If the deceased had left no son, or if he was still too young, the oldest brother succeeded the deceased. All of the wives had to remain in their own home, except the wife who was immediately taken by the eldest son. They were obliged to await the day of the distribution. This day was put off for from one to four months.

768 Meanwhile, these wives were subjected to a certain discipline. They
428 were called Bituka, which we translate here as "widow." During
587 this time they were allowed to speak with the relatives of the deceased, but they had to remain at home; it was not permitted for anyone to take these wives.

When the time came for the distribution, the one in charge, namely, the son or the brother of the deceased, called together the heirs and parties concerned. On the day of the distribution, in the morning before dawn, the bituka left their dwelling place and went to the man with whom they had already come to an agreement, so that by daybreak all the huts of the bituka stood empty. Each of the wives of the polygynist usually has her own hut. At the appointed hour, the meeting was announced by the usual beating of the tomtom. The wives, the heirs, and all parties concerned then came together.

If there were many wives to distribute, the order of distribution was as follows: in the first place the brothers of the deceased received their share; in the second [540] place came the sons; and in the third place, the grandsons, that is, the sons of the daughters who received their share from the Nkita of their mother. If at this time the wife did not want to go with the man for whom she was designated, she was sold to another. Sometimes the family of the wife was not satisfied with that, and if they could, they gave the bride price back in order thereby to free their daughter or sister. Such a wife then came back to her family, where, however, she was again married in return for another bride price. The family acted thus to prevent its daughter or sister from simply being sold. When the grandsons were still too young, their share of the Nkita of their mother went to their uncle, the son of the deceased. The latter had then to provide a wife for them later, which he usually never did without making a great deal of trouble. If the daughters had no sons who could inherit their Nkita, they received some of the father's personal property as inheritance: goats, dogs, lances, knives, proas, etc. If the deceased had left a daughter but no sons or brothers, the daughter had to supervise the distribution of the inheritance.

Our civilized idea that the wife, the mother of the family, is the first heir, is thus not taken into consideration there. Indeed, the wife, the mother herself, is inherited if she is not too old.

000 What is one to do if even in such cases it is taught, "One must *respect*" the native customs?

587 428 [184] The inheriting of wives existed everywhere; it was, in fact, the only wealth left behind by the native. The details of the distribution differed according to district or tribe. Thus, for instance, in some districts it was the eldest son who alone inherited all of the wives of his father. This was in order to preserve the rank and the class of the family. Prestige and power actually depended only on the number of wives that one possessed. In this case, however, this eldest son had, in place of his father, to provide a wife for his younger brothers and the sons of his sisters. As far as impediments [582] to marriage were concerned, generally they strictly observed the impediment of blood relationship; two blood relatives, even in a distant degree, should never enter into marriage, [541] with the exception of the irregularities mentioned above. As for relatives by marriage, these do not exist for them in any degree. There is, nevertheless, one case that somewhat resembles relationship by marriage, namely, the *Nkita* might never be in the home of a man together with the woman whose *Nkita* she was. Thus, the son-in-law or the brother-in-law might never take the *Nkita* of his wife into his home. If, however, the wife had left or died, there was no further impediment.

587 428 431 When, like the inheritance above, the family had returned the bride price and had then married the woman to another man, this second husband also had to give a gift to the one who, according to the law of inheritance, had the right to the wife. This gift was called a *bampanga*.

587 428 If the wife who was freed by the family had children, only a part of the bride price had to be returned. Sometimes the wife was freed completely through her children. The children then remained with the family of the deceased husband, and they then represented the value of the bride price of their mother. If, however, such a woman was married again by her family, they demanded a second bride price for that.

587 428 583 Sometimes a single woman was the *Nkita* of several other women. In the inheritance several people then had a right over her, and everyone demanded his share. For instance, a young man

587 428 583 had to acquire a wife with the bride price or with a supplement of the bride price of his sisters. Three of his sisters, for instance, were married, and he needed 3,000 mitako to pay for his intended wife. Now he went with presents to his three brothers-in-law and asked for 1,000 mitako from each of them. The bride price was already paid to the father; the 1,000 mitako that he asks are a supplement of the bride price.

With these 3,000 mitako, our young man pays for his wife. This wife now becomes the Nkita of the three sisters. If this young man dies, his three sisters and his three brothers-in-law all demand their share back from the widow. If she is sold, the price must be divided among the three brothers-in-law. If she remains in the family of her husband, with the uncle or brother, she continues to be the Nkita of her three sisters-in-law.

431 583 [542] There also exists a general rule and custom that the family which has received the bride price regularly give gifts to their daughter and son-in-law or sister and brother-in-law. These gifts consisted of goats, dogs (which also have a rather large value among the natives), ducks, etc., but the gifts never consisted of money. These gifts were in turn given by the son-in-law or brother-in-law to the one who had helped him pay the bride price.

For instance, if the young man of whom we just spoke received gifts from the family of his wife, he would then have given these gifts to his three brothers-in-law. These gifts were often so much that the value of them was almost equal to the bride price that the man had paid for his wife. Custom demanded, in such a case, that the man then pay a supplement to the bride price.

In case the bride price had to be given back, the gifts that the family had already given might be subtracted from the bride price. When such disputes are brought before a European, it is difficult for him to settle them, for the value is tremendously exaggerated by the parties. The husband will demand the return of a much larger bride price than he actually gave, while the family on its side will estimate the gifts that they had given as much higher than the actual value or amount.

436 Something about prices, the bride price for wives, and native money value.

Their first original money was as follows.

Chapter V. Obstacles to Marriage

M 582 There is no specific term in Lonkundo for an "obstacle to marriage." General terms are used, as in our European languages.

Our people make no distinction between obstacles which nullify a marriage and those which are prohibitive in nature. Therefore, we will simply speak of obstacles without making any distinctions among them.

Article I. "Race"

M P 582 563 The question of a diversity of races can be considered only with reference to the Batswá. Marriages with them are strictly forbidden. Nkundó rules of behavior are very strict with respect to relations between Baotó and Batswá. It is unheard of that opposite sexes of the two races should mingle, even for a simple conversation. There would then obviously be no question of marriage.

M P 563 588 Among the Bilángi, a Batswá tribe of the Injóló of the Salonga-Luilaka (who absolutely refuse to be called Batswá or Balúmbe), there have been two cases of such unions to my knowledge. Two Baotó women were involved, both, by a singular coincidence, from Lotángonda (Injóló, Engónjó). One was Njalí, daughter of Yole and sister of Lomúlú, the other Nsombola, sister of Limpema.

Njalí was taken in marriage by Bakao of Ikindatói. She wanted children desperately and, not having had any by her two successive Nkundó husbands, she ran away to the Bilángi in hopes of having better luck there. [242] She was not disappointed in her expectations. She gave birth to four sons: the eldest, Bonkono, who died some years ago; Bakao (Georges), who died in 1933; two sons, Bonkorú (Louis) and Joke (Henri), who are still alive. In 1933 the descent of the four numbered thirteen sons, six daughters, four grandsons, and one granddaughter. But there was never a legitimate marriage between Bakao and Njalí since no bride price was paid. And the descent have formed a small Bilángi clan, which is dependent on the grandmother's clan (Ilongó of Lotángonda).

P M 563 598 The second case is somewhat more recent. It occurred at the beginning of the European penetration of the area. During the general upheaval at that time, the natives of Bosáka village (Bilángi of Lingonju) took advantage of the absence of many adult men whom the soldiers had taken on an expedition against the Mbole. They were able to capture a woman named Nsombola and take her home with them. She loved one of the men of Bosáka, and after many years, he "purchased" her for the price of two slaves. She lived there happily until quite recently, when she was overcome with a desire to return to her own race. (She leaves no descendants.)

In this second instance, then, the Nkundó bowed to the woman's wishes and, in accepting a bride price for Nsombola, gave in to the inevitable. This example shows that they can be flexible in their customary requirements if the situation warrants it.

Nevertheless, there have been no admirers or imitators of these exceptional cases, and the opposition against unions between the two races remains firm. Mixtures are not desired. The position P M [851] which the hybrid family of Bakao occupies in the village of Lotángonda is highly significant. For it is an exception to the rule applicable to such cases, namely, that a child who has no legitimate father is incorporated into his mother's clan. The descendants of Bakao and Njalí are dependents of Lotángonda and are a part of it politically, but [243] they are not included in the kin group. For they have inherited a Bilángi nature from their father, and therefore, contrary to the logic usually applied, they have not become relatives of their ancestress. Here, too, the "racial principle" has prevailed against common law.

P M 563 588 595 Nor does one hear of temporary relationships or concubinage between them. I know only of one instance; its outcome was not happy, and it did not invite imitators. It happened around 1913. A certain polygamist, Lokóta of Bokeke (Bombwanja) fell in love with the wife of Bonkíngó, who at the present time is headman of Bosáola (Batswá of Ntómbá, Bombwanja). He became the laughing stock of the entire region, but because of his love, it did not deter him. In his own household, however, the situation was more serious. One of his wives (Ámbánsele) soon left him. The others refused him their bodies

P
m
563
588
[579]

and prepared for divorce. Consequently, Lokóta was obliged to give up his unreasonable love, and in the end everything was set to rights. (1)

1. No children were born as a result of that relationship.

Instances of mixing have occurred because of colonization, outside the usual environment, between Batswá and members of tribes which are not acquainted with this race. At the Bokóma Mission there lives a Botswa woman of the Ekonda who was taken away by foreign soldiers and had two children by a Mbole man. These children are held in contempt by both the Baoto and the Batswá in the vicinity, and they will only be able to marry if they settle in their mother's clan.

In the veterans' village of Ingende there lives a Botswa of Bofilama (Bombwanja) who married an Urundi woman while he was a soldier in the war. She probably did not know her husband's race. They came to this region, and the marriage has proved to be excellent, and the wife has always remained deeply attached to her husband. Their five children are not treated with the slightest contempt. Their situation would undoubtedly [244] be different if they lived in truly native surroundings, where they would certainly be incorporated into the Batswá.

P
178
563
588

The introduction of the Batswá into the economic life of the Europeans and their training in it may favor, and result in, a mixing of the races. The wealth thus placed within their reach may serve to seduce some of the more lascivious or greedy Baoto women, particularly those who always hang about the centers, camps, and markets and in whom vice has extinguished all feelings of propriety and honesty. The danger increases when Batswá bachelors are hired as laborers for some purpose and sent far from home to do their work, especially if the proportion of married men in the group is insufficient.

P
178
164
563
588

This is not a description of an existing situation -- for the barrier between the two races is still impassable -- but of a possibility that is not out of the question, as an occurrence in 1932 would indicate. The

593 defended her husband. Finally, since they could not agree, Bompelɛ́
159 ordered his sister not to return to her husband, so that she could be
579 married to another man. For he had decided to test the valor of Bonyeme by making war on him, and she could not see her husband taken prisoner by her own brother. Nevertheless, Bolɔ́mbɔ́ remained determined and departed in haste. When she reached her husband she told him everything. In the meantime all the Boɛ́ndɛ́ and other Bombwanja clans were taking up arms. Enyukɛ́, for his part, passed the news on to all Bonkoso villages, as well as their relatives by marriage, dependents, and Batswá. The various groups of combatants stationed themselves near the village of Bonganda in what is today the forest of [41] Boóngónjou, between the Lomekɛ́ and the present location of Besombó, Lofelɛ́, and Engónjó. The Boɛ́ndɛ́ army was taken unawares by the Bonkoso, who attacked and after furious combat routed them, leaving a number of dead on the field. Bonyeme proposed a peace. He took pride in not being surpassed in generosity. With a truly princely munificence he was not satisfied with only paying all the clans who had lost members but in addition sent Bompelɛ́ all that the latter needed in order to compensate Bombwanja groups for the loss of their members and, on top of this, brought him a whole fortune to complete Bolɔ́mbɔ́'s bride price.

589 The Nkundó are well acquainted with cases of widows who,
587 having reached middle age, take a solemn oath not to remarry or ever go near a man again. Among the stronger sex such cases are almost nonexistent. Cases of women who, when sick and dying wanted to remain near their husbands, cited later (Chap. VI, Art. II, 4) should be noted here, as well as preferences for monogamy (Chap. VII, Art. VI, VII).

581 Bearing in mind the explanation given at the outset, I think I
595 can state that most marriages contracted by the Nkundó are love matches. Marriage for political reasons or for certain material advantages have certainly existed. And especially at the present time, there are parents who push their children into marriage for the sake of financial or social gains.

Our conclusions may not be accepted by a number of colonials. Yet I feel they are valid in the limited sense indicated here. Arguments

846 ● [590] For a young unmarried mother, the meal is prepared by a girl who has not reached puberty or a woman who is quite old, that is, by someone who does not engage in sexual intercourse.

2) Various regulations. From the time of the preparation of the first meal until the end of the bokeka, that is, until the day the umbilical cord becomes detached, the hearth of the seclusion hut is sacred, so to speak. Apart from the couple and the assistants, no one may enjoy it or profit from it, either to light anything from it or eat anything that has been prepared there. However, some men have a means of lifting the prohibition pertaining to the fire. Upon the hearth and all the hearths of the village or a group of houses, depending on the situation, they let fall a few drops of a special concoction.

It is also forbidden to sweep or pick up the ashes from the fire. Everything must stay put until the umbilical cord of the newborn child becomes detached.

During the entire period of seclusion, the mother is assisted by a kinswoman (or one of her husband's kinswomen; among the Bombwanja there are always two), who is the wujisa, "the one who makes the seclusion" (from the verb uja). The seclusion should not be thought of as that of a hermit; the mother may go out as soon as her condition permits, and the helper goes about her occupations, but she does not do so more than necessary. Rather the hut is a house of prohibitions.

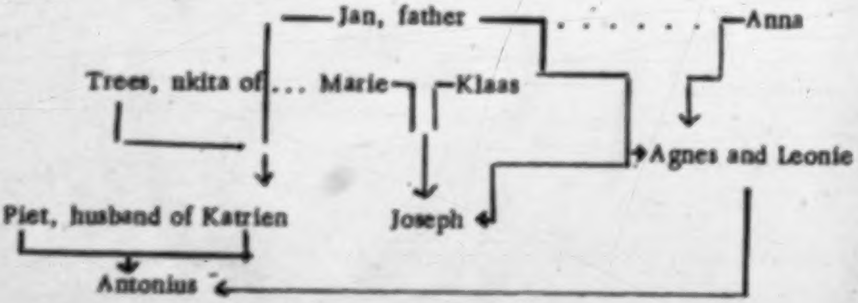
[834] During this period the mother and her helper do not do farm work. In addition they must abstain from carnal relations and from all contacts with the opposite sex, in conformity with the customs explained in Article II, 3, above. The ekelś extends to the husband and to any other person who enters the hut. Any infraction results in the death of the mother or the child in the same manner as in the case of the bokeka (see loc. cit) . [488]

[833] 3) The end of the bokeka. When, at the end of four or five days, the umbilical cord becomes detached, the news is announced to the whole village, so that everyone may go back to their work that has been suspended. The following night the father and mother perform the conjugal act to "destroy the bokeka and

583 searching for old disputes and old arguments about wives to get a wife.
604 And then they were still not always successful; their youth itself was
against them here and robbed them constantly of the little that they
464 had saved for that purpose. The means for getting money, such as
lances, knives, arm and foot bands, were extremely scarce. The
Blacks do not know of workers or servants, and if one of those poor
souls presented himself at the home of one who was better endowed by
fortune and offered to chop wood for him, to lay out a manioc field,
or to build a house for him, to gather straw and bamboo in the forest
for that purpose, then the inborn laziness of the Negro would require
long months to complete that work. As salary, the worker received
only a few bakonga (copper arm of leg bands); these he already owed
to the owner for having shown too much inclination for one or another of
589 his wives. The result of this was that many young men remained with-
out a wife and that those who were favored by chance, that is to say,
595 had many children of the female sex in their family, each had several
562 wives. I consider this a primary cause of polygyny. The woman had a
relatively high monetary value and represented capital. Thus, it did
not happen that anyone gave his daughter or sister to another for
nothing, just as among us it does not happen that a farmer gives his
cow or horse to a poor devil for nothing.

583 If the father or brother sold a daughter born of the nkita of his
604 daughter or sister -- a right that general custom gave him and which
usually occurred, since the children of the female sex were sold very
603 young and the boys, the rightful claimants or owners, in that case were
still very young -- this was done in order to buy another wife. The rights
of the children shifted then as follows:

[338]



584 woman sends them to her family. Distant relatives fulfill their obligations by bringing meat or fish, and nowadays also money or some small present, which is not included in the bride price.

The husband's gifts consist of a small knife and a few (5) arrows (at the time of the Independent State a bundle of copper wires called nngelo or mitako and at the present time 5 or 10 francs, for example). These presents from the husband are not bosambelo, for he does not give his fiancée his hand; they are yékola (greeting) and are not part of the bride price. The woman sends them to her parents.

591 If the husband does not yet have a house or cultivated fields of his own, [138] as was formerly often the case, (1) the engaged couple live in the hut of the parents for the time being. The woman obtains food from her mother-in-law's fields and prepares it at the hearth of the latter, until the young man has built his hut and established his own fields.

Nowadays it no longer happens that a young man who wants to take a wife still lacks his own house. From the time of puberty on, young men moved by the desire for freedom leave the parental home and build huts for themselves where they can live alone or with some companion or other and enjoy their freedom.

6. The life of the engaged couple

584 The bompáka lives in the home of her husband, goes there to talk to him and to sleep with him. During the first three or four days she does not work, unless she is a very active person. Subsequently she takes care of all the household tasks and prepares meals at the hearth under the supervision of her mother-in-law. Only after a few weeks, when she has become accustomed to her new way of living, is she introduced to the customs of her new family; only

---

[736] 1. Orphans were almost the only ones who had their own houses and cultivated fields. Of course, we are not speaking of men who were previously married.

583 584 [336] consists of a beautifully fashioned native knife, or a lance, or mitako [copper wire used as currency]. In some areas, it was the polygynist who attended the mother at the birth of the daughter. He had the wood gathered, water brought, and food prepared. If, then, the expected child was a boy, the security was usually returned, and the contract declared null and void. If, however, the one who had given the security was a village chief or a man of importance, then the father of the child tried to give him another daughter. The father had, for instance, at an earlier time given a daughter to another man of much less importance. In the above-mentioned case, he would give back the bride price received, take his daughter back, and give her to the polygynist from whom he expected a larger bride price.

583 Sometimes too the boy was taken by the polygynist and remained in his family until the father could trade a daughter for him.

583 [illegible] While very young and still a child, the little daughter was installed in the harem of the polygynist. She was brought up there, together with other children of her age and status; or rather, she grew up there in the midst of those heathen customs without any upbringing.

595 The composition of the harem of a polygamist:

The first wife was called the Bomatsa; she preceded all the other wives in rank, and in the absence of the polygynist, she was the mistress of the harem.

The second wife was called Ekila; she was the most loved and preceded all the remaining wives. She was also called Nkonda.

The third wife was called Bolumbu. At the appointment of the Bolumbu, a certain ceremony took place, and the wife was clothed with an animal skin. The Nku, a sort of patriarch and [202] magician, sometimes had three or four Bolumbu who served as messengers to other villages. In this capacity they had special [721] privileges. For instance, to attack a Bolumbu was a reason for declaring war.

[533] The remaining women were simply women of the harem, without distinction.

595 In the area of Monjoku, among the Bolee [Bole], the first wife was called Nkisa, with the same rank as Bomatsa. The second

the main axis [51] of the village. This door is always placed 342
rather high and closes on an inner slide. Since nse-nse and
ndele are lacking in this region, the framework of the huts is
made of stakes and pieces of raffia, and the walls and roof are
covered with raffia leaves plaited flat in the form of a mat.

The huts are built singly, a method which again reminds one of the customs of the Oshwe-Bumbuli region. The native does sometimes cover his hut with grass, but this is very rare.

In this region we also observed that in certain villages the huts 361
were arranged in family groupings and that each group had a spe- 592
cial area clearly set apart from the rest of the village. The 592
various huts of a single group are inside a fairly solid stake fence 351
from one and three-quarters to two meters high and sometimes
covered with mats of raffia leaves. The doors of all the huts
within an enclosure open toward the interior of the courtyard.

Fig. 35. Interior of a Lupango and Drying Peanuts, Bena Dibele-Kole Region.

The whole forms the lupango. By counting the number of huts in 592
a lupango one may determine how many wives the chief or head
of the place has, since each one has her own home. [52] The
lupango are of recent introduction and are derived from Arab in- [177]
fluence. One cannot take them into account in establishing re-
lationships of kinship or ethnic affinity between the different
peoples. There is no connection whatever between the lupango
of the Bena Dibele-Kole region and the familial grouping of huts

●592 among the Banfumu. [Ed., the remainder of the chapter, through page 54, is not translated.]

[55] Chapter 3

The Native's Means of Subsistence

Animal husbandry: chickens, goats, dogs. -- Agriculture: manioc, maize, rice, bananas, peanuts. -- Hunting: weapons, snares, nkisi, individual method, communal hunting. -- Fishing: general method, dams, basket weirs, traps, harpoons, bows and arrows, cord nets, screens.

231 The peoples of the Congo-Kasai-Lake Leopold II region and of the Lukenie do very little animal husbandry. They possess no large animals. At most one may find a few chickens, rare goats, and some hunting dogs in their villages. The dogs get a share of the game and live as best they can the rest of the time.

No care whatever is given to the goats. They wander freely during the day and graze in the forest or plain. Sometimes they venture into the planted fields, from which the hunting dogs chase them at first sight. At night they return to the village and take shelter where they will. During our stay in the village of Toipolo, [485] they even came and disturbed us at night while we were lodged in the hut reserved for strangers.

235 The chickens wander around the village and planted areas during the day and sleep [56] at night in the native's hut, where they have their nest for laying eggs and a place to hatch them.

262 439 435 The native does not eat the eggs. He sells them to agents of the state or of commercial concerns, who collect them for hatching. The chicken itself is rarely eaten by the native. Most often it goes to the kitchens of the Europeans. In 1913-14 the average price of a chicken was half a franc, that of an egg, five centimes, and the price of a goat was from five to 15 francs.

595x The bomátsa takes her task to heart, for her husband's glory is her own as well. The bomátsa is conscious of her role in spite of the presence of a favorite, for it is less that of a wife in the sexual sense of the word than of a wife who is mother of the family. It is of a higher order than the roles of the other wives; it is more serious, more unselfish, and based on a deeper love and a more deliberate will. According to the native point of view, it is rightly the source of a legitimate pride; it is an honor, while the position of the favorite is closer to an object of vanity. Therefore the bomátsa likes to show her importance.

It may seem strange to us that the bomátsa puts her heart into working to increase the number of women in the harem. But this is altogether natural for the Nkundó. The growth of the harem is a source of glory, and she has been brought up to this attitude since her youth. After the first ardor, her affection becomes more serious. She becomes a perfect matron in the Roman manner. Although she continues her relations with her husband and takes care of her children, she is chiefly occupied with her duties as mistress of the whole family. Her husband loves her with a deeper and more reasoned emotion than he shows toward his other wives. Without cease he shows his consideration and attachment for her. If she is sterile it is very likely that he will give her a child belonging to his family or born of a wife who has left him, so that she can bring it up as if it were her own.
[343]

595x The bomátsa's house is located at the right end of the row
● 592 of wive's huts. She deserves this location because of her function as bomóngó loánjá, "owner, mistress of the polygamist's compound. The Nkundó say: ábéla loánjá, "she stretches, or extends, her husband's group of dwellings in order to enlarge it."

595x A polygamous husband undertakes nothing of importance without first consulting the bomátsa (be it the creation of a bolúmbú or a nkóndé, or the acquisition of new wives, etc.). He respects her and treats her with deference, as if she were his mother, our people say.

[789] The bomátsa is the only one of all the polygamist's wives who plays a part in the acceptance of the Nkundó offensive and defensive

595x 789 magic known as yoli. She alone participates in the ceremonies that accompany it; with her husband she eats half of the hen that has been killed for that purpose, and on that night she alone may share his bed. Finally, only with her, to the exclusion of the co-wives, may the husband eat the fish called wengé, and only she may and must burn the leavings. Otherwise the magical practice would turn against its owner.

595x [724] When a piece of game is divided, the bomátsa is entitled to the lintóla (the lower portion of the breast), which would go to the man's mother (or his father's or his elder brother's wife) were he a bachelor.

In the bomátsa's absence, her place is taken by her ebísa (see below, Article IV) or by the wife who follows her in seniority. At her death, the same rules govern her succession.

The name bomátsa is probably derived from the root mátsa, "to begin." She is the one who founds the family. Sometimes she is also called ikókóyõnjemba, literally "bachelor's love." The Bombwanja say itókóyõnjemba (the Ekondà, nkómukolo).

In addition to the bomátsa, reference is sometimes made to [344] bomátsa w'îáli, or "bomátsa of the left." The bomátsa in the strict sense of the term is contrasted to the latter as bomátsa w'îlóme ("of the right"). The bomátsa of the left is a polygamist's second wife. She is given this name because her house is at the left end of ● [592] the loánjá. She has no special rights or duties, however, unless the actual bomátsa delegates to her the task of looking after her end of the compound. If the harem is large, the husband may set aside [224] for her a special portion of the game, called itómbantóta, or nape of the neck. In her absence it goes to the eldest daughter.

Article II. The Favorite

595x 556 All polygamists of any importance have a favorite wife, or nkóndé. But only the rich and the notables have a true nkóndé. The minor polygamists, of course, imitate the others (nkóndé éâ weólí or éâ itsió, "without great importance"), but they do so without

595x at least, they use the name banyangɔ́, "mothers." Daughters use only the second term. (See Chapter VI, Article VI.)

A polygamist may have a house of his own, but he is often 592x 595 satisfied with a shed, where he spends his days when he is not called elsewhere by his pursuits; he eats his meals there, receives his guests, etc. This shed is called ingɔ́mba (or esamba), (1) exceptionally jɔ́já. The last term refers to the location of this "parlor," which is by itself in front of the row of wives' huts, sometimes in the middle of the street; in rare cases it is placed on the opposite side of the street, facing the women's huts.

Each woman has her own hut, consisting of a fairly large area, open in front, which serves as a kitchen, and a smaller room with a bed. Or she may have a kitchen in the form of a shed, and a separate house a slight distance away which serves as a bedroom.

The huts are placed in a row stretching around both sides of the husband's house, if he has one. The nkɔ́nde's house is right next to the husband's or behind his shed. The bomátsa's is at the far left, and so on. The bolɔ́mbɔ has no special place. The ebísa's hut is next to her relative's.

Some polygamists are beginning to build double houses. On each side of a common kitchen there are the bedrooms of two women under the same roof. This has been done by Bokwála, the present chief of the Boángɛ at Bokála (2). In each double hut he has placed one elderly woman and a younger one. Thus, he explained to me [359] one day, the old ones watch over the young ones, and as a result there are fewer instances of adultery.

595x A husband has obligations toward all his wives. He must bring firewood to each and take care that each one has her land to

---

1. Depending on the dialect. For other names, see Chapter VI, Article III, 3, note.

2. Since deceased.

614 He represents the A-group in the council of elders of the village
and of the other large units. Since no members of ~~the~~ group
[672] are considered capable of conducting affairs, all the legal
transactions which they undertake are treated as though they had
been sanctioned by the patriarch. To a large extent the members
of the group may represent one another. In the absence of the
elder, a younger member may act as the representative of the
[623] group at council meetings. When the senior member dies, his
function will be taken over by the next oldest member of the
group.

614 An A-group will split up only through internal conflicts
602 which cannot be bridged or through a large population increase.
The newly-formed A-groups continue to maintain a close relationship which, at first, is much closer than among the B-groups
whose A-groups have split much earlier. In the higher ranks
cohesion after the split diminishes only gradually; thus many
gradations develop in the feeling of cohesion. These gradations
could not be even approximately reproduced in a diagram with
any degree of exactitude. There is no formula by which the
split takes place, as there is, for example, among the Tallensi (13)
where it is determined by a certain number of generations.
614 Theoretically the A-groups are "eternal." The A-groups are
596 subdivided into small families. Within the polygynous families
592 nuclear families [Familienkerne] (14) have a ~~semi-~~independent
position economically. Each wife has her own house. A husband's wives and the wives of his sons have their houses within
the same homestead. As the master of the homestead, the
father has an open shelter where the men spend their time and
[768] hold their meetings. Upon the death of the master of the

---

13. Fortes, The Dynamics of Clanship, p. 34 f.

14. Thurnwald, Menschliche Gesellschaft, Vol. 4, p. 12.

614 596 592 [768] homestead, it is deserted by the inhabitants. On the new dwelling site the sons each build their own shelter. In contrast to the groups of the type A-E, the group living within a homestead is finite: its existence ends with the father's death. Only a man whose father (in the European meaning of the term) has died may have a shelter. Thus the homestead community is interposed between the A-group and the small family.

To sum up the characteristic features of the A-groups:

614 Membership determined by male descent; unity of legal power, especially insofar as landed property and inheritance law is concerned the senior has full power; succession by simple seniority; theoretically unlimited existence of the group. The A-groups consist of small families who live together in homesteads under one father in each case.

Groups of Rank B

614 793 There is usually a friendly, neighborly relationship between the A-groups which form part of a B-group. People assist each other to a large extent, and there is joint consultation on most matters. Group B has only one Nkúmú ilọki, "master of the hidden power," the priest of the kinship group, who is consulted by all the members of the group. He functions during the magical preparations for the hunt; he is consulted before any important undertaking. During the leave-taking ceremony after a burial, he converses with the deceased, and people turn to him when the ancestors have appeared to them in their dreams to transmit their desires, orders, or other information to the living. He protects the people of his group from the ill will, ndọki, of the dead and the living. The priest of the kinship group is used as the criterion [194] to determine which group of homogeneous A-groups represents a B-group. The priest of the kinship group is descended from a certain one of the related A-groups.

614 554 There is a difference in rank among the A-groups of a B-group -- one group will be regarded as older -- but this is

2: Hulstaert
593

Mongo FO32

/For information concerning family relationships among the Nkundu, see category 116, pp. 11, 22-26, 33-39, 51-52, 108, 139, 217, 222, 244-268, 271, 283, 285-289, 297, 299-300, 309, 391-393, 422-423, 424-428, 479-480, and 482-483./

000 the same rights as the other children of the polygynist.

595 The polygynist always sought to increase the number of his
wives, for his prestige rose and his fortune increased in that manner.
556 If anyone in civilized lands seeks to enlarge his fortune, this is
593 done, people say, in order to insure the future of his children. The
native thinks little about that; his primary idea is to enjoy himself
and to surpass others in prestige and esteem. As far as the future
of his children is concerned, there are polygynists who possess twenty
or thirty wives or even more, and sometimes they have only one or
two children. Also it is little in keeping with their notions to care
for the future; he who is still alive tomorrow must take care of
595 tomorrow then, so they reason. On the contrary, instead of caring
for his children, the polygynist often took great trouble to obtain a
593 wife for his son. The son, however, was not yet the owner of his
584 wife; it was, so to speak, only a loan. Not until after the death of
606 his father did he become owner. In some districts, when the father
had obtained a wife for his son, he first kept this wife for some time
for himself. Only after a few months did he give her to his son. In
595 other districts, when the wife was pregnant by the son, he was obliged
593 to send her for a few days to his father. He was not allowed to bear
606 the honor of fatherhood alone; his father must share that with him.
842 The father reserved for himself the honor of naming all of the chil-
551 dren of his children. In some areas of the Congo, morals were so
835 low and common that the father even kept his own daughters in his
harem. This did not occur in Equatorial Africa, but there was a
custom that was not much better. The magician was sometimes
583 consulted about the bride price which the father tried to get for his
791 daughter, or the brother for his sister.

The magician then gave them the advice that they themselves should first have relations with their own daughter or sister. This custom existed almost everywhere in Equatorial Africa.

583 [535] Bride Price. In general, the daughter was given in marriage upon payment of a bride price. The father had little choice of the future husband of his daughter. The one who guaranteed the most goods in payment was certain to get her. Since, in most cases, the little daughter had not yet arrived at the years of maturity, there was naturally no question of her consent. The bride price was not paid all at once, but gradually during the years while the daughter grew up. Since the daughter was given without her consent

837 When a wife of a polygynist had illicit relations with another
586 man of the same village, this was called Bonsamba. When she had such relations with a man of another village, this was called Isoke. As we have observed, the ordinary wives of the harem often had such relations. When the woman eloped with her bonsamba or isoke, or with whomever it was, she was pursued by her husband or owner, who tried to get her back. If the wife refused, negotiations over the bride price began.

If an agreement was reached or if a pledge was given as guarantee for the payment, the first bond was considered broken, and the woman was considered bound to this second man, even though he had been her bonsamba or isoke.

It might also happen that the first husband was so jealous that he did not want to make any agreement; then he attempted to kill either the guilty wife or her second husband. If the woman became
● 593 ill at the home of her husband, he went to tell her family and had to
758 give a security to the family.

583 Often the family came to get the wife, in order to be able to care for her better. If, in such a case, the wife [538] died at the home of her family, there were no further difficulties about the bride price, according to their customs. If, however, the bride price had still not been completely paid, the family asked their son-in-law to pay the remainder.

583 In recent times, now that the heathen customs have been
178 undermined by the European occupation, we see that the husbands whose wives have gone to their family when sick and have died there, demand the return of the bride price from the family, but this is completely contrary to their old customs. In one case the husband could demand the return of the bride price, namely, if the wife had left while healthy to go to her family and had died there.

562 Buying or Trading of Women. The woman was also in many
439 cases an acknowledged object of trade. The great village chiefs, among others Ibuka and Yoma, of whom we shall speak further, carried on a sort of woman trade. With European articles and also native currency, they went to other districts of the Equator [Province] to buy women with them, just like someone who goes to market, even though no public markets where women were sold actually existed.

621 have seen them as money transactions. We have obtruded our point
613 of view and destroyed the whole legal system of the natives. It is through our materialization of those securities that we have lowered the native woman to a plaything of money and a piece of merchandise.

576 As for the two outgrowths of the native system, divorce and polyg-
586 amy, neither is inherent in the legal system as such. They are only abuses which have taken root and which clash with the principles of the native law itself. By its nature, native marriage is also indissoluble, and polygamy has only been able to exist through a popular confusion between paternal and marital law.

4. Legal Power in the Clan

613 In Nkundo society all individuals do not have equal rights or powers,
627 as in the Napoleonic law books, /154/ but the natural rights concerning people are still completely recognized. All value and power comes from God, through the ancestors. Those who are nearest to God are thus the highest in position, his first representatives. There is no question of absolutism or despotism. Just as the blood is divided among all clan members in a descending line, so also are authority and legal power. They are one as a legal entity in relation to the outside world; nevertheless, each member takes part and has a vote in the internal administration of justice, so that, when clan interests are discussed and dealt with, each member may sit in the place accorded to him and take part in decisions. In a legal sense there is, therefore, no question of a separate family council, which would assist the clan leader, but all decisions are made communally.

594 A single exception to this does exist, namely, that which gives the
627 head of the nuclear family legal power over his wife and children, and then only with the acknowledgment and approval of the clan. Differences between autonomous clans are settled by the clans involved, a sort of international court of law where friendly clans may also be brought in as arbiters.

627 Such an arrangement made the court absolutely "paternal." The whole procedure was one of a reconciliatory character, which resorted to coercive measures only when necessary, and did its utmost to save the honor and the welfare of the involved clans, and to compensate for, to restore, and to prevent further offenses.

2: Hulstaert
595
●

Mongo FO32

/For information concerning polygamy among the Nkundu, see category 116, pp. 25, 38-44, 220, 224-225, 235, 241, 252-253, 283, 308-309, 315-318, 320-352, and 481./

583 unjust in itself, it certainly becomes so if it is considered a penalty
584 inflicted for the rupture. For the indemnity is restricted to the man,
174 whether or not he is in the wrong. Furthermore, to accept an indemnity
177 even when the engagement is broken because of the woman tends to favor frauds and real swindles on the part of the woman and her parents, in short a kind of traffic in women.

[585] [174] It is also evident that the rich (polygamists) suffer much less from the innovation than do monogamous men, especially those who adopt monogamy as a principle and more especially the Christians, who do not condone divorce. Thus I am of the opinion that the desire to defend polygamy against the doctrine of the missionaries is not entirely unrelated to the transformation of this custom.

000 All these considerations show that the question is highly complex and that it would be better if the ancient custom were restored.

If the breaking of the engagement is due to wrongs, the new custom could perhaps be tolerated, though it is not without serious dangers, but the indemnity should be imposed exclusively on the party at fault. Furthermore, the wrongs would have to be serious, and on the other hand, the indemnity would have to be, not in the nature of a forfeit, but of a payment of damages commensurate with the extent of the damage suffered and the seriousness of the wrong. And here those cases should especially be considered where the breaking of the engagement is accompanied by proceedings of a vexatious and insulting nature. And though it is a very delicate task to evaluate all these elements, we must not forget to take them into account.

It seems to me that the ancient law must still be maintained when the engagement is broken simply because of a change of feelings for which neither party is to blame, if such a case occurs. For it is better not to innovate than to innovate too fast. [128]

Article IV. Walo -- Bombuluku

583 The walo or bombuluku is the bulk of the bride price paid for a marriage. Between the payment of the ndanga and that of the walo,

583ˣ payment of the bride price with the boséngo as he was committed to do through the payment of the ikulɛ and the ndanga. If he does not, the bond between him and his father-in-law is automatically broken, and consequently he is unable to obtain another wife to replace the deceased, and he loses the rights over one of his own daughters. Actually, we will have to come back to this question in Chapter IX, Article IX, 2.

These rules show how great a difference exists between the walo and the boséngo; in the one case, upon the death of the woman prior to the payment, an indemnity is imposed for a transgression in the eyes of the law; in the other, there is a transaction to stabilize the financial rights of the clans involved.

From all the above considerations we may conclude that because of the special nature of the payment, the boséngo is very important for the stability of the marriage and the social position of the woman's clan. But from a legal point of view it is far less important than the walo, through which a woman becomes truly [164] a wife; for the payment creates no new social relationship either between the spouses or between the husband and his in-laws.

Article X. Purpose of the Bride Price

583ˣ
607 Theoretically, the bride price is meant to procure a wife for one of the members of the family that has received it.

The woman who is married thanks to the bride price paid for another is called the latter's nkita. It seems to me that this word is etymologically related to nkitó, "profit, benefit" (the verb is -kitola). In the final analysis, both words may be derived from the root -kit, "to become."

[164] A synonym of nkita is bongíli (bongíji): it is used primarily by the Injóló but it is also known, though seldom employed, by the other tribes.

The woman whose bride price has served to procure the nkita is the latter's nkóló (literally, "mistress"). The Injóló as well as the

[illegible] Bosángɛ also call her by the more tactful name, nyangóngíji, "mother

583^ of the *bongíji*." (1)
607
●[595]

1. This term also designates the wife of a polygamist who has brought along one of her relatives as co-wife; she is the *nyangôngili* [sic] of the latter. (See Chapter VII, Article IV.)

For "to obtain a *nkita*" the Nkundő say *-umba nkita*, literally, "to fell a *nkita*," as one fells a tree or an adversary. Or they may say *-bɛ̂ta nkita*, "to possess a *nkita*" (*umba* or *bɛ̂ta* so-and-so, *la nkita*). "To become a *nkita*" would be rendered as *-kwɛ nkita*, "to fall into being a *nkita*."

583x
596 The hierarchy of those entitled to the bride price is based on the general hierarchy of family members, which gives precedence to the older generations and, within each generation, to the older members. Consequently, as long as a member of the family having the title of *isɛ* (father) is unmarried (unless he is physically or mentally incompetent), no *bǒna* (son) is entitled to a bride price, even if it is that of his own sister. Within the same generation, the older members have precedence over the [165] younger ones, but boys have priority rights to the bride price of their uterine sisters. (1)

1. For limitations and exceptions to this right, see Chapter IV, Article II.

It occurs quite often, and was even more frequent in the past, that the person entitled to the bride price is still too young to get married, either in reality or in the opinion of his "fathers." (2) The

2. See *ibid*.

bride price is consequently used for the benefit of another member of the family. The creditor reaps the benefits later in the form of inheritance.

[602] Even if the woman or women meant for him should die or be taken in slavery, he can obtain the bride price of a cousin to which

586x on his own authority, for the offense was considered very serious.
[584 We can assume that the reason for this rule was to allow time for
[567] the woman's family to intervene and keep their daughter from becoming a slave by refunding the bride price paid for her.

c) In exceptional instances an exasperated husband resorted to the immolation of his wife when someone died. People cite the case of Bengóngó of Bongilá (Besombó, Bombwanja), who had his wife, Litúli of Bontole, decapitated at the ikweí at the death of his father, Bengóngó byá Yese.

If the woman had children old enough to intervene on her behalf, her husband could be prevented from carrying out his violent intentions. The proverb says, Mbótsi ntáwáká, "a mother
[539] does not perish." The husband also abstained if the woman had
● [595] a co-wife (ebísa) who was her sister or other close relative -- either out of a feeling of shame, [385] or out of fear of undesirable repercussions. Sometimes, when a husband was caught between his wish to use the etáka and his shame or his fear of the ebísa, he hid
[607] the wife who was confined by this fork. Preferably, he asked a brother-in-law to give her hospitality. In that way he got around the difficulty to a great extent, because through the law of exogamy such an arrangement placed the wife in another village, sometimes a considerable distance away. This practice was called isángyá; tómba walí isángyá.

Instead of resorting to the procedures listed, a husband could
586x also place his wife in the hands of the ndonga. However, it was a
584 very unusual thing to do. The natives maintain that such action was due to a lack of affection for the wife, together with the husband's certainty that he could recover his valuables -- either because he was assured that his father-in-law was well disposed toward him (and would reimburse him or provide a replacement), or because he knew he could use the ikákelo.

As we have said, direct repudiation was extremely rare. Here we are not speaking of repudiation caused by a wife's incorrigible misconduct -- which we have just discussed -- but of repudiation against the wife's wishes. If it did occur the husband was expected to hand her over to the ndonga, and the latter, seeing

421 613 have seen them as money transactions. We have obtruded our point of view and destroyed the whole legal system of the natives. It is through our materialization of those securities that we have lowered the native woman to a plaything of money and a piece of merchandise.

586 595 As for the two outgrowths of the native system, divorce and polygamy, neither is inherent in the legal system as such. They are only abuses which have taken root and which clash with the principles of the native law itself. By its nature, native marriage is also indissoluble, and polygamy has only been able to exist through a popular confusion between paternal and marital law.

4. Legal Power in the Clan

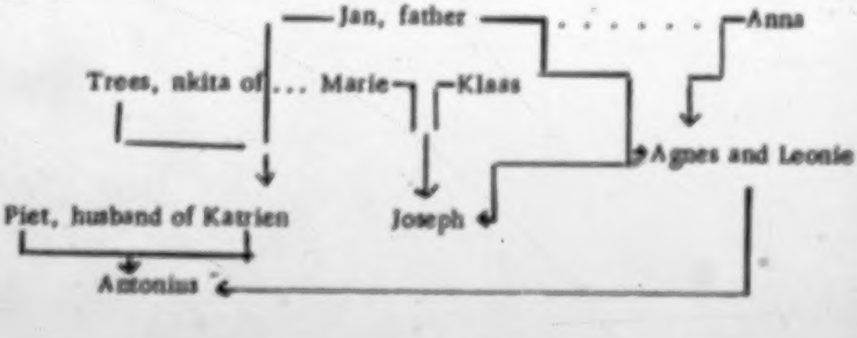
613 627 In Nkundo society all individuals do not have equal rights or powers, as in the Napoleonic law books, /154/ but the natural rights concerning people are still completely recognized. All value and power comes from God, through the ancestors. Those who are nearest to God are thus the highest in position, his first representatives. There is no question of absolutism or despotism. Just as the blood is divided among all clan members in a descending line, so also are authority and legal power. They are one as a legal entity in relation to the outside world; nevertheless, each member takes part and has a vote in the internal administration of justice, so that, when clan interests are discussed and dealt with, each member may sit in the place accorded to him and take part in decisions. In a legal sense there is, therefore, no question of a separate family council, which would assist the clan leader, but all decisions are made communally.

594 627 A single exception to this does exist, namely, that which gives the head of the nuclear family legal power over his wife and children, and then only with the acknowledgment and approval of the clan. Differences between autonomous clans are settled by the clans involved, a sort of international court of law where friendly clans may also be brought in as arbiters.

627 Such an arrangement made the court absolutely "paternal." The whole procedure was one of a reconciliatory character, which resorted to coercive measures only when necessary, and did its utmost to save the honor and the welfare of the involved clans, and to compensate for, to restore, and to prevent further offenses.

583 searching for old disputes and old arguments about wives to get a wife.
604 And then they were still not always successful; their youth itself was
against them here and robbed them constantly of the little that they
464 had saved for that purpose. The means for getting money, such as
lances, knives, arm and foot bands, were extremely scarce. The
Blacks do not know of workers or servants, and if one of those poor
souls presented himself at the home of one who was better endowed by
fortune and offered to chop wood for him, to lay out a manioc field,
or to build a house for him, to gather straw and bamboo in the forest
for that purpose, then the inborn laziness of the Negro would require
long months to complete that work. As salary, the worker received
only a few bakonga (copper arm of leg bands); these he already owed
to the owner for having shown too much inclination for one or another of
his wives. The result of this was that many young men remained with-
589 out a wife and that those who were favored by chance, that is to say,
●595 had many children of the female sex in their family, each had several
562 wives. I consider this a primary cause of polygyny. The woman had a
relatively high monetary value and represented capital. Thus, it did
not happen that anyone gave his daughter or sister to another for
nothing, just as among us it does not happen that a farmer gives his
cow or horse to a poor devil for nothing.

583 If the father or brother sold a daughter born of the nkita of his
604 daughter or sister -- a right that general custom gave him and which
603 usually occurred, since the children of the female sex were sold very
young and the boys, the rightful claimants or owners, in that case were
still very young -- this was done in order to buy another wife. The rights
of the children shifted then as follows:
[338]



583 584 [836] consists of a beautifully fashioned native knife, or a lance, or mitako [copper wire used as currency]. In some areas, it was the polygynist who attended the mother at the birth of the daughter. He had the wood gathered, water brought, and food prepared. If, then, the expected child was a boy, the security was usually returned, and the contract declared null and void. If, however, the one who had given the security was a village chief or a man of importance, then the father of the child tried to give him another daughter. The father had, for instance, at an earlier time given a daughter to another man of much less importance. In the above-mentioned case, he would give back the bride price received, take his daughter back, and give her to the polygynist from whom he expected a larger bride price.

583 Sometimes too the boy was taken by the polygynist and remained in his family until the father could trade a daughter for him.

583 591 While very young and still a child, the little daughter was installed in the harem of the polygynist. She was brought up there, together with other children of her age and status; or rather, she grew up there in the midst of those heathen customs without any upbringing.

●595 The composition of the harem of a polygamist:

The first wife was called the Bomatsa; she preceded all the other wives in rank, and in the absence of the polygynist, she was the mistress of the harem.

The second wife was called Ekila; she was the most loved and preceded all the remaining wives. She was also called Nkonda.

The third wife was called Bolumbu. At the appointment of the Bolumbu, a certain ceremony took place, and the wife was clothed with an animal skin. The Nku, a sort of patriarch and
[202] magician, sometimes had three or four Bolumbu who served as messengers to other villages. In this capacity they had special
[721] privileges. For instance, to attack a Bolumbu was a reason for declaring war.

[533] The remaining women were simply women of the harem, without distinction.

595 In the area of Monjoku, among the Bolee [Bole], the first wife was called Nkisa, with the same rank as Bomatsa. The second

595 wife was called Lonkata. This was, however, more a category, for there were sometimes four Lonkata in a harem. The rest were ordinary wives. Among the Ekonda, the first wife was called Nkumokolo, just like the Bomatsa. The second wife was called Ekila or Nkonde. The remaining wives were the ordinary wives of the harem.

595 484 The first wife, Bomatsa, always remained at home and never left the harem. The second, Ekila or Nkonde, accompanied the polygynist everywhere; she was at his side on all his trips. The Bolumbu usually went completely alone to do errands in other villages.

595 These old customs of priority among the wives are now gradually beginning to disappear.

684 It was forbidden under severe penalty to have relations with the first, second, or third wife of the polygynist. The penalties were death, slavery, or a large fine.

This was their law concerning adultery, enforced with severe punishment.

595 837 The ordinary wives of the harem were less strictly guarded. This often depended on the jealousy or indifference of the polygynist. Anyone who had relations with these wives had to pay a fine, or rather, a price of prostitution. Since the wives were almost all in the possession of the polygynists, there were naturally many men without a wife. These, then, often had relations with the ordinary wives of the polygynists. Also, the sons of the polygynist had relations with them; the polygynit himself sometimes even had relations with the ordinary wives of his neighbor. This was the bad consequence and the immorality of polygyny.

595 586 It is easy to understand that the ordinary wives of the polygynist, having relations with others, often left their husband, or rather, their master in order to go to another. The ordinary wives constituted the largest number. It is because of this that one now finds many women who have had three or four, sometimes even seven, different husbands in succession. Among some tribes, [534] the Ekonda among them, they were stricter: a wife who had already left her husband or master two or more times was considered to have little worth.

567 595 The female slaves who were taken in war were given by the polygynist to his male slaves as wives. They could also be installed in the harem among the ordinary wives. Their children could have the same rights as the other children of the polygynist

000 the same rights as the other children of the polygynist.

● 595 The polygynist always sought to increase the number of his
556 wives, for his prestige rose and his fortune increased in that manner.
593 If anyone in civilized lands seeks to enlarge his fortune, this is
done, people say, in order to insure the future of his children. The
native thinks little about that; his primary idea is to enjoy himself
and to surpass others in prestige and esteem. As far as the future
of his children is concerned, there are polygynists who possess twenty
or thirty wives or even more, and sometimes they have only one or
two children. Also it is little in keeping with their notions to care
for the future; he who is still alive tomorrow must take care of
595 tomorrow then, so they reason. On the contrary, instead of caring
for his children, the polygynist often took great trouble to obtain a
593 wife for his son. The son, however, was not yet the owner of his
584 wife; it was, so to speak, only a loan. Not until after the death of
606 his father did he become owner. In some districts, when the father
had obtained a wife for his son, he first kept this wife for some time
for himself. Only after a few months did he give her to his son. In
595 other districts, when the wife was pregnant by the son, he was obliged
593 to send her for a few days to his father. He was not allowed to bear
606 the honor of fatherhood alone; his father must share that with him.
842 The father reserved for himself the honor of naming all of the chil-
551 dren of his children. In some areas of the Congo, morals were so
835 low and common that the father even kept his own daughters in his
harem. This did not occur in Equatorial Africa, but there was a
custom that was not much better. The magician was sometimes
583 consulted about the bride price which the father tried to get for his
791 daughter, or the brother for his sister.

The magician then gave them the advice that they themselves should first have relations with their own daughter or sister. This custom existed almost everywhere in Equatorial Africa.

[535] Bride Price. In general, the daughter was given in
583 marriage upon payment of a bride price. The father had little
choice of the future husband of his daughter. The one who guaranteed
the most goods in payment was certain to get her. Since, in most
cases, the little daughter had not yet arrived at the years of maturity,
there was naturally no question of her consent. The bride price was
not paid all at once, but gradually during the years while the
daughter grew up. Since the daughter was given without her consent

000 [547] Unfortunately the system was not continued. Also, it must not be said that it would be unjust to lower the price of the women. Rather, injustice would thus be redressed, a degenerate custom be improved. Through the present system, ever more injustice is committed and suffered.

583 595 A few polygynists would suffer some material loss through the lowering of the price of the women, namely, by receiving less for one woman than they (sometimes) paid for them, for they inherited most of the women. But they are also the ones who are responsible for the irregular situation. In a large part of the district, the polygynists are by far the minority of the population. They are the ones who are hostile to the Colonial Administration. They are in possession of the women and have a monopoly on them. They fix prices which a young man can almost never pay, namely, two nkesi at least.

583 The difficulties for Christian marriages become daily still more difficult. This is true for the marriages already entered into and for the future marriages.

583 428 426 [465 511] The bride price to be paid for the wife ought to be such that every young man can pay that sum with his own money, with the money that he has earned himself by his work. This sum cannot be high, for the ordinary working man in the Congo, who makes up the large part of the population, does not earn much more than what he needs for board and clothing. Therefore to pay an excessively large sum as a bride price forces him to borrow and to run up debts among his relatives and friends. The result of this is that the system of the Nkita goes over unnoticed into the Christian marriages, and the woman remains an object for inheritance. Indeed, when the man dies the creditors will come, namely, those who have loaned him money -- and demand the wife. The disputes over the bride price then begin anew, and they will again give the wife in marriage in return for a new bride price. Thus, there is no end to it. The wife, the mother, will never achieve any rights but will always remain an object of inheritance. There has been talk about declaring the widow free at the death of her husband in order to prevent the inheriting of wives, but how will it be possible to [548] achieve that if the bride price is not lessened, considerably lessened? When a

624 thus, *Nsono* is a very prominent figure. Still arrayed as previously described, she sits outside the *nongo* near the road on the special stool of the *nkumu*. Nobody may pass her with food, a humane law, considering that she must spend the day fasting. If anyone attempts to do so she catches the unlucky individual, helps herself to as much of his food as she wants, the victim meanwhile begging her to be merciful and leave him a small portion, and the booty is taken into the *ipana*. During this sentinel duty *Nsono* must still keep the parrot's feather in her mouth and maintain silence, so, in case she catches an unsuspecting bearer of food, the remonstrance and argument are all one-sided.[1] After the first day *Nsono* no longer sits outside the *nongo* but goes from place to place in the village, choosing spots where people may least expect her, hoping thus to reap a bigger harvest for her pains. This is kept up for eight days, which comprise two Tumba 'weeks' of three days' work and one of rest. The rest-day is appropriately named *beina bo nsono* after the duty of *Nsono* of sitting doing nothing day by day. The eight days of this ceremony over, *Nsono* lays aside her gourd and plantain stalk, which are placed at the foot of the first central supporting post [302] of the *ebanga* on entering. She is given a fresh coating of chalk and three coloured stripes are drawn the length of her back and down her arms. She still remains close to the *nkumu*.

[567] Various personalities are connected with the *nongo* of an *nkumu*. The *Basele* is a male slave, clothed in a skin breech cloth, whose duty it is to receive callers at the *ipana* before admitting them to the presence of the *nkumu*.

624 *Mpenge* is the name taken by the wife first married by the *nkumu*. From henceforth she no longer accompanies her husband, and their cohabitation ceases unless the
● 595 *nkumu* is willing to pay her each time the sum of one hundred rods. But the *nkumu* is obliged to eat all food she cooks for him even though they have a quarrel. *Mpenge* does not honour her husband with the special greeting accorded to *nkumu*, but greets her husband and all other *nkumu* as she would ordinary people.[2] The second wife of an *nkumu* must assume the name of *Iyombo Anganda*, but no importance attaches to her position.

624 Among the Tumba generally, apart from the Bonginda, a woman is chosen from
516 the *molembe* to bear the title *Bolumbu Itina i Ekopo* (*Bolumbu*, the 'raison d'être' of the *ekopo*). She is, it would seem, a symbolical figure, a reminder that the *ekopo* owes its existence to the *molembe* of which this woman becomes the titular head. *While the nkumu is still in seclusion the chosen woman is taken to the open space* between the *ipana* and the row of sons' houses, known as the *nsanda*. Here, in the presence of the assembled crowd she is praised by being addressed, '*Bolumbu Itina, bototo!*' and the crowd exclaims, '*Bwoo!*'[3] Strips of leopard skin, about eighteen

---

[845] [1] It is interesting to note that there are some exceptions to those who may be caught and robbed by *Nsono* during her eight days of watching. No member of the *molembe* may be thus treated, twins and their parents are exempt, and also all children born to the *nkumu* before he attains office, these being termed [illegible].

[554 595] [2] Besides *Mpenge*, a mother of twins is also exempt from according *nkumu* special salutations, and among some groups the father of twins is also exempt.

[3] This ceremony gives husbands of any village, whether they are members of the *molembe* or not, the opportunity to single out a favourite wife for special honour, for at this time any woman may be given the name of *Bolumbu*, though not with the significant complement of *Itina i Ekopo*. The ceremony is similar, is performed at the *nsanda*, but besides receiving the strips of leopard skin, she must be divested of all her clothing, a new *lombo* and *mpongo* are then placed round her, and the strips of skin then attached to the new belt.

121 to present anything we have not thoroughly investigated. We have not stepped outside the geographic limits set forth except for a few incidental remarks. Although the cultural uniformity of the Nkundó-Móngo is remarkable it is not, of course, absolute. And if we have used the title Mariage des Nkundó (Marriage among the Nkundu), we have done so because it was difficult to find one which would be more appropriate for the geographic and ethnic limits of [14] this study. It is very likely that in most cases our data are valid beyond the limits we have laid out, but to generalize upon it before making a thorough study of each group would be contrary to all scientific method. The reader is therefore earnestly requested to take these remarks into account and to abstain from giving our conclusions too broad a scope.

Familial institutions in themselves and in their totality are outside the scope of this book. But since they are based on marriage, they have an important place within our framework. We must necessarily touch upon them, but we will limit our excursions into that realm to what is required to make the general description intelligible. On the other hand, the study of marriage throws a good deal of light on familial institutions.

128 596 614 The words "family," "clan," "group," etc. recur frequently. The family is an entity smaller than the clan, and the latter is subordinate to the group. Since it is very difficult to give a precise definition, however, we have taken the trouble to make a clear distinction only when necessary. (1) [Editor's Note: Elsewhere we use them more as generic terms or even as synonyms. In order to make family relationships and the expressions used by the Nkundó to designate them more comprehensible, we are attaching an example of a genealogical table.]

113 I know of the following previous studies on the same subject:

Engels, "Les Wangata," Revue Congolaise, 1910, which also deals with marriage.

G. Kaptein, "Familieleven en -zeden bij de Inboorlingen van den Evenaar," Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 531. [15] This study covers

---

1. See Chapter V, Article III.

593x sides with his family against his wife does not have the approval of
578 those who judge the conflict simply as neutral spectators. In such a case it is usually felt that the couple do not love each other very much. And often the marriage soon breaks up. But if the union is maintained nevertheless, its continuation is generally attributed to a fear of the consequences of dissolving the marriage, which would be even worse. The same sort of variation among individuals is to be found in the matter of a wife's devotion to the interests of her husband's family.

593x It is not possible to compare a native household to the
596 households of good simple people at home, where [40] the family is composed solely of parents and their children. Here it extends further; the husband's interests are also those of his parents, brothers, uncles, etc. As we will see in connection with marriage by inheritance it is not unusual for a woman to remain attached to her deceased husband's family. Others are more interested in enriching their own families.

593x The following is a historical instance of a wife who was very
159 devoted to her husband's interests, though there seemed to be room
579 in her make-up for pride and personal glory. (1): Bolɔ́mbɔ́ wǎ nsánjí, daughter of Bo̲ko̲mbe̲ of Litɔ́li (Bombwanja), was married to Bo̲nye̲me̲ w'ɛ̌nyukɛ́ of Bonganda (Bonkoso). One day (her father having died in the meantime) she went back to visit her brother, Bo̲mpe̲lí w'ě̲lo̲mbo̲, who had left Litɔ́li to settle in his maternal village, Etɔ́o of the Boɛ́ndɛ́. They began to quarrel. Bo̲mpe̲lí maintained that Bo̲nye̲me̲ wasn't worth much, that his wealth was exaggerated, that it was a mistake to honor him, etc. Bolɔ́mbɔ́

1. According to my estimates, this episode is about a hundred years old. I knew two men who had recollections of it: the eldest (Longwokɔ́ of the Basɛ́kɛ́ Bengɔ́ngɔ́, Bongíli) was about twenty years old when it occurred. A greatgranddaughter of Bo̲nye̲me̲ (Mputɔ́ Sofie) is now in her forties.

848 has precedence over them and can become head of the family after his grandfather and uncles. In his natural father's clan, on the other hand, he has nothing to say.

848
596 If a man pays the bride price for a girl who has had a child by him, he asks his father-in-law to let him have his illegitimate child. This wish is almost always granted. The father-in-law well understands his son-in-law's fatherly sentiment of love and considers it quite legitimate and proper that a father should himself possess the
[583] fruit of his own flesh. The only condition laid down is that because of the child the son-in-law must increase the amount of the bride price valuables by an extra slave or his equivalent. (1)

1. This transaction may even take place after the mother's death.

The father is not in a position to invoke any rights strictly speaking. The child is not considered as his because of his physical paternity, but only because of his father-in-law's kindness. If the latter were to refuse the father's request, he would not be acting in violation of justice. But his behavior would be considered as inhumane toward his daughter's husband and his grandson, and it would be criticized.

When a child is adopted by his natural father in this fashion, no one despises him for his illegitimate birth [90]. This procedure may therefore be considered to establish his legitimacy.

848
178 Nowadays, among the Beloko and their Elinga, the practice of "buying" the child has sprung up. That is, if a man does not marry a woman who has had a child by him, he pays her parents a certain amount in order to obtain the child. There does not seem to be much opposition to the introduction of this custom, which springs from an honorable feeling for paternity and its duties. Its only disadvantage is that in such a case the child may never claim any rights in his mother's clan. (1)

1. See Chapter VIII, Article IV.

848
614
585 If a stranger marries an unwed mother, he is never given the child, which remains in the mother's family. This situation is clearly distinguished from those mentioned above.

583x 604 These rights prevail even if the nephew has wealth at home. In that case -- which is extremely rare since ordinarily he prefers to remain with his own clan -- he does not make use of them if his uncle has only two or three wives (whom, however, he can inherit), ●[596] or if other close relatives [136] are in need. For to do so would show a great lack of affection for the family (liɔ́ta), and he would be severely reprimanded.

Because of all that, the nephew (bɔ̌nankɛ́nɛ́, "sister's son") sometimes abuses his rights. That is the basis for the following proverbs: nkoi ɛ́kumb'omɔ́ngɔ́ lokombo, "the leopard takes the owner of the hunting enclosure" (that is to say, the hunter); bɔ̌nankɛ́nɛ́ ɛ́fonola nyangɔ́mpɛ́mɛ́ walí nd'ɛ̀ɔ́ko, "the nephew abducts the uncle's wife even in his own domain"; bɔ̌nankɛ́nɛ́ ale inganja v'åliko, "a nephew is a stick overhead." This last proverb is the Nkundɔ́ version of the sword of Damocles.

In short, a nephew has a right to the assistance of his maternal uncle if he settles with him and is adopted by him. Upon the death of his uncles he becomes heir and head of the family. But his rights are second to those of his uncle's brothers, who are also his "mothers." If he remains in his own clan, he receives help and can even obtain the bride price of one of his female cousins born of his mother's nkita. He may even receive part of the inheritance, if it is large. His rights are based on the fact that his uncle was enriched by the valuables given him by the nephew's clan in payment for his sister's marriage.

589x 556 Finally, if a young man does not even have any close relatives, because all are deceased, and if for some reason he has no patrimony (because of dissipation, debts, exploitation of the weak by the strong), he is forced to procure the bride price through his own labor: carving, hunting, fishing, setting elephant snares, making traps and hunting enclosures, clearing fields, or, nowadays, working in the service of the Whites. In former times there was also the possibility of war or raids by which he could obtain valuables or prisoners to sell as slaves. The wealth which someone acquires by his own work is called baɛ́mbɛ́ (bakonga, etc.) bɛ́ mpambɔ̌gɔ (literally, "by the strength of his arms"). [137]

583x Nkundó often express through the reciprocal form *-ánga*, *bokilé l'okanga bé-ngana*, "father-in-law and son-in-law are acquired through marriage payments." Thus many men try to come as close as possible to the amount of the bride price in the *nkomí* payment, so that there will be a certain balance between the two. Then to keep that balance between the assets, every payment of the bride price is equaled by new *nkomí* valuables. The purpose of this action is to equalize the influence of the two contracting parties lest that of one become excessive and predominant, a development which is not always conducive to the stability of the marriage and harmonious relations.

Article VIII. Acceptance of the Bride Price

583x
•596 When the husband, his family, and the *ndonga* have departed, the valuables brought are collected and placed before the woman's father. In the family hierarchy this task falls to the father's sons and younger brothers. Then the elders deliberate on how to use them. They bend down (*bésunama*), as the Nkundó say in their metaphorical language. Here as in all gatherings of family councils and deliberations of any jury, the father is asked to give his opinion. But without even making a statement, he immediately yields the floor to someone to whom he owes respect -- his elder brother, his nephew (that is, his sister's son), etc. The latter does likewise, yielding to the next person, and so the process continues. Finally, the father is again asked to speak; he asks the others each to take from the heap whatever object he wants whether it be a ring, a knife, or a spear. Together with the family patriarch he decides what to do with the bride price that has been received. They have to act in accordance with the laws of *justice* in protecting the rights of all and of each individual (see below, Article X).

583x What happens if the parents do not accept the bride price placed before them? Such a thing can happen. The following is a recent case: Etanda, daughter of Isia of *Ekalakolél* (Boléngé, Bakâala) was engaged to Ilonga of Bofaka l'Asomba (Wângatá), who had paid the *ikulá* and the *ndonga* for her. At the time of the *walo*

585^ 607 [595] of the bongíjí." (1)

1. This term also designates the wife of a polygamist who has brought along one of her relatives as co-wife; she is the nyangôngili [sic] of the latter. (See Chapter VII, Article IV.)

For "to obtain a nkita" the Nkundó say -umba nkita, literally, "to fell a nkita," as one fells a tree or an adversary. Or they may say -bɔ́ta nkita, "to possess a nkita" (umba or bɔ́ta so-and-so, la nkita). "To become a nkita" would be rendered as -kwɛ nkita, "to fall into being a nkita."

585x 596 The hierarchy of those entitled to the bride price is based on the general hierarchy of family members, which gives precedence to the older generations and, within each generation, to the older members. Consequently, as long as a member of the family having the title of isɛ́ (father) is unmarried (unless he is physically or mentally incompetent), no bɔ̂na (son) is entitled to a bride price, even if it is that of his own sister. Within the same generation, the older members have precedence over the [165] younger ones, but boys have priority rights to the bride price of their uterine sisters. (1)

1. For limitations and exceptions to this right, see Chapter IV, Article II.

It occurs quite often, and was even more frequent in the past, that the person entitled to the bride price is still too young to get married, either in reality or in the opinion of his "fathers." (2) The

2. See ibid.

bride price is consequently used for the benefit of another member of the family. The creditor reaps the benefits later in the form of inheritance.

[602] Even if the woman or women meant for him should die or be taken in slavery, he can obtain the bride price of a cousin to which

585x 596 602 no one has direct rights (for instance, if she is an only child) or that of his mother's nkita's daughter, as we will see below.

In these instances there is a temporary suspension of rights or rather a change in the individual entitled to them. These adjustments are made very frequently and can affect several people. Bride prices may even fall to fairly distant relatives, even in the maternal line. The transactions are performed by the patriarchs for the greatest good of the family as a whole. New rights benefiting the person originally entitled to the bride price are being created, and
585x 607 the woman married by its means has become the equivalent of a nkita in relation to him -- as is the following instance:

Bakutu b'Ōfóngé (Boniface) of Bombéngá w'Ōkenda (Besombó, Bombwanja) has a sister Wétsi, whose bride price serves to provide his paternal uncle, Elongama éy'itsuta, with a wife, Ikɔ́kɔ́ of Ndongó-Bongíli. Bakutu's rights over his niece, Bakutu, daughter of Bolófo, are transferred to Bofénda d'Ekɔ́kola, son of his paternal great-aunt Etáka and therefore, in Nkundó terminology, to his father. As a result he obtains the rights over the bride price of Wángi, the daughter of his uncle [166] and Ikɔ́kɔ́. At the same time he acquires a certain authority over Bofénda, the beneficiary of the bride price that was originally intended for him, and over the latter's children.

When the bride price is meant to procure a nkita, there is nothing to prevent the remainder, should there be any, from being used to pay a debt, a fine, etc., or, more especially, from being given to a relative so that he can procure a wife for himself.

If, in an exceptional case, the bride price is not used for its
[684] original purpose, this deviation constitutes an infraction of the law, because it is a violation of the rights of the girl for whom the bride price was paid, for she is thus deprived of her nkita and consequently of certain advantages. It may happen, however, that there is a conflict between this law and some other. In such cases of circumstances beyond one's control, it is up to the legal authorities to determine which of the two has priority.

Such was the case of Bolɛ́i, daughter of Ifolí y'Engámá, of the Basɛ́kɛ Longwâne of Bonjoku (Bonkoso). She was married to Bombɛ́lenga

B. Those who are entitled to the bride price

583x
586 It is apparent from everything we have said that the bride price is placed in the possession of the father of the woman for whom it has been paid. In his absence it goes to his eldest brother or, if his bǒnankɔ́nɔ has settled there and inherited the father's authority, he is the one to receive the bride price of his niece (cousin in our terms). Otherwise it goes to the eldest son. In short, the rights to a bride price are passed down in the order of the family hierarchy.

The mother's clan receives the copper spirals, the goat, and certain of the befɔ́ngɔ. [176]

There are circumstances, however, under which this order can be destroyed so that the father's clan does not get the slightest portion of the bride price. This happens if the daughter who is to be married has left her father's clan for a sufficiently good reason and has been adopted by her mother's family. The following is a historic example of such a case:

583x
586
671 The events took place at Bompɔ́ma (Injɔlɔ) between 1890 and 1900. One of the inhabitants, Ilɔ́njɔ yà Hɔmbɔla had had two children by his wife, Eale of Bokɔ́ndela (Bofangi): a boy, Mpulɔ́ɔnɔ and a girl, Embɔ́mbi. The girl was abducted by one of the black soldiers who had come to occupy the region and was taken by him to his native village, somewhere near Coq. The wife of another man from Bompɔ́ma, named Inɛ́ntulu, was carried off and taken away by another soldier. Ilɔ́njɔ owed Inɛ́ntulu a dog. The latter took advantage of the disorder caused by the beginning of the occupation to demand his due with violent threats. Ilɔ́njɔ, having no dog and probably frightened, handed his son over to his creditor. Inɛ́ntulu hastened to find the soldier who had taken his wife and offered to give the latter the slave boy in exchange for her. The pair came to an agreement, and the soldier took away the boy, who died in his master's hands in a manner unknown to me.

Still during the time of the Independent State, Embɔ́mbi was able to make her way back to her country. Passing her mother's village, she heard how her father had acted toward her brother Mpulɔ́ɔnɔ. Indignant, she decided not to continue on her way; she

595 596 601 declared that she was breaking with her father and wished instead to live at the home of her maternal uncle Isɛla. After a time, a certain Belekɔ came to ask for her in marriage and paid the bride price to Isɛla.

In 1922, Ilɔnjɔ went to Bokɛndela and presented a complaint to Chief Efɛle against Isɛla, because the latter had taken his daughter's bride price. Efɛle, assisted by the messenger Bongimɔ and by notables, decided in favor of the accused; Since the plaintiff had gravely offended his daughter by delivering her brother into [177] slavery, which resulted in his death, he first had to be reconciled with her. If she accepted his apologies, the father would receive her bride price. They agreed on the nature of the reconciliation gift (bɔsɔndo): Ilɔnjɔ would pay a goat. Since he did not have it with him he handed over his knife as a pledge (wɛkɔ). Iomɛ, the bɔnanikɔnɔ of Isɛla (who by then had died), promised to make restitution of the bride price and in anticipation paid 12 rings and 3 knives. Ilɔnjɔ went back home. They awaited him in vain; they did not see him again -- neither him nor his goat.

Act three: February, 1933. Efɛle, Bongimɔ, and the rest had been removed as a result of a reorganization of districts. Bokwɛla had been made chief of the Bofɛngɛ. The district tribunal began to function again, and our Ilɔnjɔ took advantage of the situation and recommenced his attack. He brought complaint against Iomɛ and against Isɛla's brother, Engongolo, who was not there in 1922 but who now had returned home. On March 6, 1933 the palaver was settled. Naturally, the men who newly held their authority found this a good opportunity to strengthen their position and did the exact opposite of their predecessors. They condemned Iomɛ and Engongolo and decided in favor of Ilɔnjɔ.

Here we see a real abuse of power. For according to Nkundɔ law, only Ilɔnjɔ was in the wrong. He had conducted himself badly all the way down the line. His daughter had no obligation to recognize him as father, since he had virtually disowned her in the first place. And her mother's clan could have, even should have, received the bride price (see also the case described in Chapter IX, Article IV).

583 Which of these payments is the essential component of the bride price? The ikulá and the ndanga can unquestionably be excluded. The nature, purpose, and names of these payments as well as the title accorded to the woman after they have been handed over show that they are simply engagement payments. Of the other two payments, we can conclude that the walo is the essential one. For the bosongo adds nothing legally to the marriage, and its significance lies only in secondary matters which need not be repeated here.

6. The role of the family

584
● 596 As we have seen, it is always the father or his successor, who arranges everything, who takes care of everything, who plays the leading role. A marriage cannot be arranged in the absence of the head of either the husband's or the wife's family.

As this book is being written, a young man, Ilotomo of Bongíli (Lófóé, Ekanda), who is in possession of the valuables necessary for the bride price of his intended, Etéli, daughter of Mpokâ of Lofalé (Bongíli), has for many months been awaiting the arrival of his uncle Ekamba, who is head of the family [183] and who has been detained by his duties as catechist of the Protestant mission at Longa.

Although the mother receives a certain portion of the bride price, she has no right to intervene in establishing and arranging her child's marriage. Her husband informs her of everything and even pays more or less serious attention to her views, opinions, and wishes; but he does so solely out of the spirit of harmony and conjugal love, not because she has the slightest rights, legally speaking.

This would be the place to make a synthesis of what we have seen up to now and to try and deduce from it the legal concept of Nkundó marriage. But since some very important questions still remain to be studied, this synthesis must be put off till the end of Chapter III. [186]

684
576
578
593

Any of the types of evidence listed above is sufficient to legitimize the application of one or another of these penalties. Nevertheless, the husband is required first to notify the elder members of his family and the ndonga, who do not permit him to act unless the misdeeds have occurred repeatedly. The readiness to accord the husband permission depends on the temperament of the interested parties and on a great many circumstances, the most important of which is the respective social prominence of the parties involved.

The need to ask permission of the "fathers" and the ndonga, which we have already encountered in reference to other situations (above, Article III, 4), does not weaken the husband's rights [318], but it limits their use. It is not a legal obligation but one that is imposed for family reasons, which are as follows:

1) The respect due to the "fathers" in this as in all important matters;

2) The respect due to the ndonga, who in marital matters is the husband's superior and whose intervention must be called upon in any serious situation;

3) The repercussions of any inconsiderate or rash action on the entire family (enmities, wars, etc.).

If forbearance and patience are fruitless, no one can blame the husband any longer. And when the woman's family compares the censurable conduct of their daughter with the generosity of their son-in-law, they will naturally be inclined to find that he is in the right and so usually will not intervene against him.

Note also that the Nkundó invoke the need to maintain their honor as justification for the obligation to notify the authorities. They must be able to inform the unfaithful woman's clan and thus safeguard their good reputation as defenders of order and public peace.

[illegible]

A woman whose husband loved her very much was subjected to the etika only. He would reprimand her and strike her, and would try to correct her behavior by means of gentleness and leniency.

As we will see see later, a husband who is exasperated by the incorrigible infidelity of a wife whose performance of other wifely

684 duties is also unsatisfactory, may sometimes resort to divorce or to
586 selling her into slavery, but rarely to killing.

Colonization has abolished torture, slavery, killing, and the
684 legitimacy of assassination. A husband has no other sanction against
671 an unfaithful wife than to insult and beat her. And even there European law forces him to restrain himself lest he commit excesses which [319] involve him in a trial before the white man's court. Fortunately for marital fidelity, a reaction in favor of the repression of adultery has recently begun, following the official establishment of native jurisdiction. In the not too distant future, this reaction will culminate in a return to ancestral law in a form adapted to present circumstances.

8. Against the accomplice, the injured husband has the right
684 to make use of two sanctions: violence and the payment of an
596 "indemnity."

1) If the husband catches the accomplice in the act, he always has the right to wound him, or even to kill him, or reduce him to slavery. The last two forms of vengeance were not practiced unless the respective villages of the husband and the culprit were fairly distant from each other and not bound to each other by any special ties (friendship, mutual assistance, or affinity). This reservation existed because of consideration for the offender's relatives, the desire not to bring them excessive sorrow. Another cause for caution and calm is the economic or military inferiority of the husband's clan, or the fearlessness, the valor in battle, in a word, the strength of the culprit's family. A special case which makes all other considerations disappear is adultery with a favorite, whose husband's love for her is especially passionate and jealous.

If the offender's adultery was not limited to a few isolated acts but was becoming a real habit, or if he had already seduced many women, resulting in many palavers for his family, the husband could be bolder. For the rake's close kin would finally be exasperated with his incorrigible and disastrous misconduct and would rather be rid of him. (1) [320]

---

1. See also Chapter VIII, Article II, 2, A.

595* 837 Some men are strict on this point, while others are more tolerant. Clearly, the technique of such men is most subtle. The more a wife's lover is permitted his freedom, the greater is the likelihood that other women, who prefer a young man passionately enamoured of them to their husband, will ask the polygamist to marry them. A [59] man who is sufficiently wealthy and influential can in this manner build up a harem from which he does not benefit physically but which assures him of a dominant social position.

This practice exists almost exclusively in conjunction with polygamy, but cases do occur among monogamists. And among more "civilized" tribes, such as the riverain people of the Lower Congo, a tendency in that direction is developing.

A request for concubinate made by a relative of the husband cannot be considered in the same category with the situation we have just examined. Such a request is more closely related to the request for an inherited wife (see Chapter III, Article II). The difference is obvious. The only thing the two situations have in common is the fact of legitimate cohabitation with another man's wife. One perceives this immediately upon comparing the two.

Article IX. The Family's Role in Marriage

● 596 591 We have found that there are situations in which a woman is to some extent considered and treated as the wife not only of her husband, but also of certain of his relatives (Article VI). Moreover, we have seen in Chapter II the big role that the families play in the arrangement and continuation of their children's marriage. In discussing the question of the inheritance of wives, we have seen that the close relatives of the deceased have rights over the widow; one of them may marry her without any obligations toward the chief heir, and the new union is not a new marriage but a continuation of the previous marriage, which is not broken in spite of the first husband's death. A similar observation was made in relation to the practice of wife replacement (Chapter III, Article IV).

All this leads us to raise a question: To what extent does the family have collective rights over the wife? The following answer is

576 the one which seems to me to conform to reality.

591 A wife is acquired by means of a payment of valuables. These valuables belong chiefly and in the first instance to the one who has obtained them, either through the marriage of his daughter or sister or through his own efforts. In the last instance, the husband has more direct and personal rights over his wife. In the first instance, the closer the husband's kinship with the woman who has furnished the bride price through her marriage, the stronger are her rights over the wife. Other members of the family, however, also have secondary rights over her in proportion to their position. For they are bound to the husband by ties of kinship as descendants of the same ancestor and therefore share in varying degrees the duties and rights of the moral entity based on a community of blood. [340]

The family's participation in the husband's rights is based on the one hand on the economic nature of the marriage agreement and, on the other, on the solidarity of clan and family.

That is why a marriage continues despite death. From the personal point of view it is broken -- so that, for example, the woman may subsequently become another person's legitimate wife, which she could not have done during the first marriage, but from the financial and social point of view it continues to exist. The same is true for wife replacement. As to the relations of a younger brother with his elder brother's wife, they are permitted only under certain conditions which are clearly defined and limited. This fact proves that the younger brother may only very inaccurately be termed "husband." The woman does not have two husbands; she has only one: the elder brother. The relations with the younger brother are permitted not as a personal tie, but only because of the community of financial interests between the brothers, and the elder's pity for his unmarried junior.

Everything considered, and despite all, a woman has only one husband. Taking into account the explanations given and the description of the formalities through which certain persons may intervene in their relative's household and the extent to which they may do so, it is apparent that a husband's rights over his wife are basically personal and exclusive in spite of his recognized prerogative to yield these rights to others.

586 unproductive. Nowadays, they occur somewhat more frequently.
[582] A feeling of generosity has developed toward sons and younger brothers, and the valuables are often set aside for their use.

If the bride price has already been transferred, the solution [400] is less clear cut. Under the old regime the matter was fairly clear, which is no longer true at present. But let us proceed by stages.

In the past the question was as follows: Theoretically it was assumed that the woman's family was not in a position to make restitution. In practice, however, they managed to do so, either by substituting another woman, or by borrowing the needed valuables, or by giving the husband a bride price received by one of the divorcée's relatives. The husband had certain means of forcing his father-in-law to pay (see above). Other times the notables of the clan were moved by a threat of war. They unceasingly urged restitution, and unless the debtor himself was the most influential member of the group and of an unyielding nature, he gave in to their entreaties. If, on the other hand, the husband did not have recourse to the means mentioned, he simply had to wait until his father-in-law received a new bride price.

178, 586 Nowadays the ancient customs have been abolished, and the whole question has changed as a result. Nevertheless, in spite of the external changes, the colonial administration wishes to act in the spirit of ancient native law;

By establishing regular native courts and giving them the right to judge in accordance with the laws of the tribes themselves, adapted to changed circumstances, the decree of April 15, 1926 has armed these courts with the means of working for this adaptation. But in practice it has not yet been accomplished. This fact must be attributed to the difficulties of finding a solution which would, on the one hand, perpetuate the spirit of the ancient system and, on the other, satisfy legitimate aspirations toward better regulations, aspirations which as a matter of fact are favored by the colonizing power. In this connection one must think especially of the gradual abandonment of polygamy.

The European authorities do not seem to have come to a clear decision as yet with respect to what method of restitution

[332]

THE FAMILY HEAD AMONG THE NKUNDO NEGROES

5%

The family among the Negroes is organised in a patriarchal fashion. The father is lord and master, not only over his children, but also over all of his descendants. The power over his daughters and daughters' children, however, escapes him through his selling them.

All important things were dealt with and settled by him. Thus, for instance, to speak of only the most important, if one of his sons or grandsons had to be helped to get a wife, then it was for him to decide whether or not it was time for that. It was he who negotiated over that transaction and finally decided about the purchase of the wife. If one of his children or grandchildren shot an animal, then it was brought to him, and the distribution was made according to his decision and under his supervision. If one of his children had difficulties with his wife, the matter was judged by him. If one of the wives of his children say away, he went to look for her if the matter was of a serious nature. If he was not able to settle the matter, then it was up to him to decide if the return of the money must be demanded or whether the matter must be decided by means of arms.

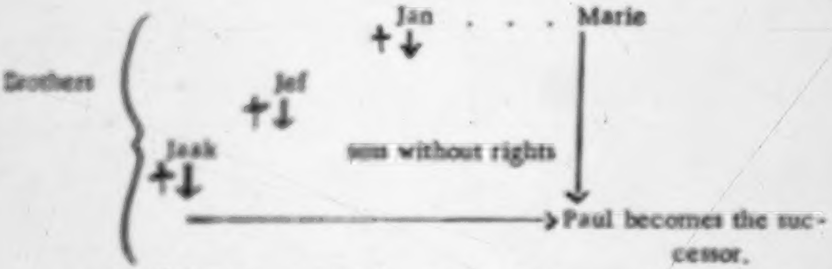
To the end of his days, sickness and insanity notwithstanding, he remained the only lord and master, and nothing was dealt with without his knowledge and approval. He was honored and respected up to his last breath.

Law of Succession

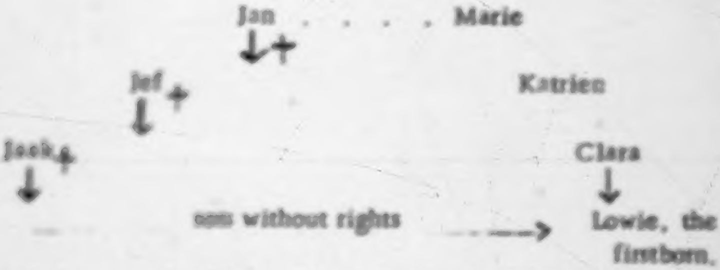
The law of succession is very much askew in relation to the patriarchal fatherhood mentioned in our history. Here it was not, it is still not today, the oldest son who was considered, even when he was of age. At the death of the father, these full powers passed to his brother. The children [333] female as well as male -- of the deceased brother, even though they were older in years, called him father and also showed him all the honor attached to the title of father. All their disputes and matters of importance were brought to him and settled by him. At his death the powers of family government passed again to his younger brother, and so on until all of the brothers had died. At the death of the last one, all rights passed, not to the oldest, second, or third brother [among his sons?], but to the oldest son of

596

their sister, bona wa nkano. As an example:


Jan . . . Marie
Brothers
Jef
Jaak
son without rights
Paul becomes the successor.

Or if there were more sisters, the rights passed to the firstborn son of these sisters; for instance:


Jan . . . . Marie
Jef
Katrien
Jaak
Clara
son without rights
Lowie, the firstborn.

He consequently became the father and supreme head of the family upon the death of the three brothers.

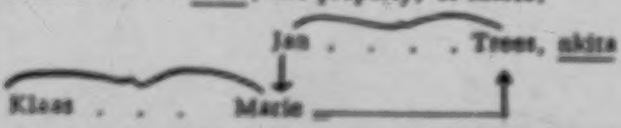
596
593
562
In order to understand this peculiar custom clearly, some explanations should be given. The custom in this country is that the woman is sold; not a single one escaped that general rule in former days. With that money the father or brother bought, or rather, had to buy himself another woman. This wife belonged, however, to the daughter or sister who had been sold; the daughter or sister called her nkita, "goods" or "property." The children born of this nkita called her [the woman sold]: is'e'omoto, "female father." Even if she brought male children into the world, the rights of their mother passed to them, and [334] their mother was called father by the children of the nkita. According to our ideas, they were only nephews. That held even if the woman was still not paid for; it was enough that a ndonga, a security as proof of further payment, had been given. It was also not

596 necessary for her father or brother to have brought her to the man and
583 to have received money for her; another member of the family was
56 sufficient. She was sold by her family and accordingly, wherever the money had remained or whoever had received it, she had her rights in the family. Since the family maintained itself through the sale of the children of the female sex, the male children born of them were considered as the masters, the rightful claimants, the fathers. There was no exception to this rule; it was not to be altered, and no one had ever thought of disputing the place of the claimant or of laying claim to his rights. I have only heard of one single case of that sort, namely, at the succession of the Ruki, the younger brother was said to have killed his older brother in order to take over his place. He was said to have made a hole in his brother's prow, so that it sank when it reached the middle of the stream. The matter in itself seems an impossibility; also I consider it a legend, unless an accident might have happened that was interpreted in a mistaken or deliberately false manner.

The rightful claimant, bona wa nkana, sister's son, might
576 still be a child; nevertheless he was called father and everyone vied
57 with one another in showing him the honor due a father. That was the unbreakable law, not only for the father common to the hamlet, boloi, but also for the father of each individual family.

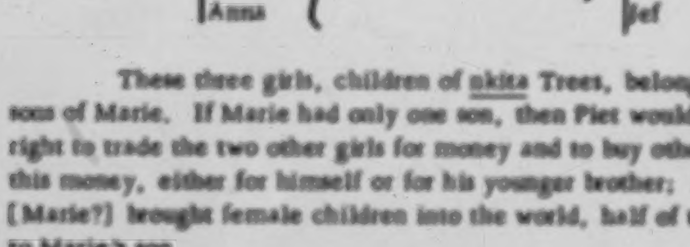
Nkita

583 Nkita is what the woman is called who is bought with the money
602 that the father or brother has received for his daughter or sister on the occasion of her marriage. In reality, however, she is only the nkita, goods or property, of the sold woman. Nkita ekam, "my property," this woman calls her. For instance, Jan [335] sells his daughter, Marie, to Klaas and buys another wife, Trees, with the money received. The latter woman is now the nkita, the property, of Marie.



Rights of the Male Children in Relation to the Nkita of Their Mother

596
583
605 We have already seen that the right of succession and fatherhood passed to the male children of the sister, because she had been sold and had brought money into the family, or rather because she had a *nkita* there, a sort of guarantee for the money that had been received for her. *Nkita*-ship brought another right to them, namely, the female children born of the mother's *nkita* belonged to them; they could sell them and get themselves other women with the money. [582] They could not, however, marry them, since they were their cousins, and custom was opposed to any marriage between relatives. [602] The boys could, nevertheless, take the *nkita* of their mother as a wife, since the Negroes have no notion of affinity or relationship by marriage. The male children were, then, the owners of the female children that the *nkita* of their mother brought into the world:



These three girls, children of *nkita* Trees, belong to the three sons of Marie. If Marie had only one son, then Piet would have the right to trade the two other girls for money and to buy other wives with this money, either for himself or for his younger brother; but if she [Marie?] brought female children into the world, half of them belong to Marie's son.

583
604 If the *nkita* gave birth to no children of the female sex, the boys of Marie could resort to the husband of the *nkita* of their mother, namely, their uncle, *nyangobika*. If, however, he had no fortune, no money, [337] no wives, no girls to sell ... or only wives to whom others could lay claim and had more right, then they were disinherited, poor devils in society, and it cost them long years of work and much

583
604
603 Jan, the father, by selling Katrien, the nkita of his daughter Marie, becomes indebted to Joseph, the son of Marie and at the same time his own grandson; and on the other side he becomes the debtor of Antonius, his other grandson, by selling his mother, Katrien.

Anna, whom he bought, was then the nkita of Katrien and the quasi-nkita of Marie. Both sons, Joseph and Antonius, were hard pressed because of Anna, the nkita of both of their mothers. If Anna bore two daughters, as I have indicated, the case was simple: the first daughter belonged to Joseph and the second to Antonius. If, however, she gave birth to only one daughter, then this child belonged to Joseph, and Antonius was left out in the cold. If father Jan had no children of the female sex by Anna, then the matter was extremely thorny for both of them, and if their grandfather or uncle possessed no money, had no more wives by whom he had daughters, there was nothing left for them to do but, at his death, to take the nkita of their mother as a wife. For this reason it happened many times that young men lived with old women, and even though there was then generally no more hope of children, those wives were then still good enough to cook the meals and do the little work that a Negro household requires.

600 I will not digress any further about the method of distribution of women, about the rights over the women which the nkita system brings with it. It would take us too far. Furthermore, not only the present, but also the past and the future are involved in it; so that one would have to be a Negro and raised in those matters to understand them clearly . . . and even then they involve numerous palavers (disputes), which continually agitate the families and the villages.

[330]

The Origin of the Nkita?

576
583
562 The sale of the woman and the immediate loss of her freedom must naturally have given her cause for revolt. It has perhaps cost the man a severe struggle to make the woman content with her lot. A compensation or reimbursement had to be given to her, and most certainly the nkita system has its origin there. It was at least a partial compensation that the man gave to the woman. It gave her rights over her nkita

596 and over the children who were born to the latter; even more, it gave
583 her own children rights which exist nowhere else in the world and prob-
562 ably among no other people: they became the superiors, the fathers of the family of their mother. Unfortunately, practically considered, the women enjoyed very little of the gift which was given her; she remained what she was, slave of money, slave of the man. Even her children, for whom the nkita-ship secured such great advantages in her family, brought them into a false situation, in that it robbed them in the home of their own father of all the advantages that it brought them in the home of their mother's father. It was only the old and well-favored who actually gained advantage from the nkita system and enjoyed them.

1) It relieved them in the first place of all care on behalf of their daughters whom they sold while still children; and if later, after they were grown up, these daughters complained about the injustice done to them, they could answer them, "But, my dear daughter, I have done you no wrong; here in my own house is the woman whom I bought with your money; she belongs to you always, and the children that I have by her are your children; you are both their father and their mother; they will call you is'womoto (female father), and in that capacity they will honor and serve you; the boys will at the same time be the children of your children, and the girls will be sold to give your sons the opportunity to buy a wife for themselves."

2) It discharged them for the most part from all care of providing a wife for their sons, and it denied the latter the right to make claims to the women whom the father possessed. [340] If the son begged his father for a woman, he could put him off and say to him, "But, my boy, you have the nkita of your mother; the children (girls) who will be born of her are for you. We shall sell them, and with the money we will buy you a wife." Most of these girls, however, were traded by the father for another wife, since his son was still, in that case, small. Almost all the women then ended up in the harem of the father before passing on to the son. Thus, after all, the nkita system only benefited the lust and the lasciviousness of the old Negro and made him the one and only master of the women. Sons, daughters, wives, and children were, in contrast, the dupes and victims of the nkita-ship.

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

THE *NKUMU* OF THE TUMBA

RITUAL CHIEFTAINSHIP ON THE MIDDLE CONGO

H. D. BROWN

[10] [133] [747] [771] THE tribes living round Lake Tumba, a lake some thirty-five miles long by twelve wide lying north of Lake Leopold II (approximately 0° 50' south latitude, and 18° east longitude) and draining into the Congo River at the confluence of the Ubangi, lack cohesion and show a considerable variety of custom and language. But they are known collectively as Tumba, the Government adaptation of the Native term *Ntomba*. Most of them are found to the east of the lake, the whole group numbering perhaps little more than forty to fifty thousand at the present time, though there is evidence that the last twenty years have seen a great decrease in population. European occupation of this area goes back barely fifty years, Protestant missions having been established for about the same length of time. The first mission post was established at Ikoko on the north-east shore of the lake, one of the villages of a group known as Bongindo. In pursuing this investigation particular attention has been given to the practices of this group, but mention is occasionally made where considerable differences have been found elsewhere.

105 13 The Tumba are agricultural, hunting, and fishing people. Their country is flat and swampy with dense forests, and there are many watercourses flowing into Lake Tumba. There are occasional small, low swampy plains, and one such area, more open, with quite wide stretches of prairie, is a haunt of buffalo. The forests are fairly well supplied with game, and the swamps, streams, and lakes with fish. A heavy rainfall and no distinct dry season make agriculture reasonably easy and famine unknown. Every family has its plantation of manioc, the staple diet, which is supplemented by plantains and bananas. The people make their own tools, formerly smelting their own iron for this purpose, are fairly skilled at making dug-out canoes, engage in weaving raffia and making mats out of split cane, and are efficient at pottery production.

624 401 178 The role of the *nkumu* in the socio-religious activities of the community is one of the most interesting features of Tumba life. As a result of European contact the ceremonies connected with the *nkumu* are rapidly disappearing, but it has been possible to collect considerable information from the older men and women among whom the details are still vividly remembered.[1] The following report refers to the period previous to European occupation and control, a time within the memory of a large number of people, but already sufficiently remote to become a matter of hearsay before the lapse of many more years.

[illegible] [775] An understanding of the place of the *nkumu* among the Tumba requires a glance at the tribal organization. According to the people themselves, they migrated westward, and coming into these parts chose land for themselves. Among the several

---

[1] In *My Children of the Forest*, New York, 1924, pp. 48-55, Andrew F. Hensey has briefly outlined some of the forms of [illegible] observed among the *nkumu* of the district adjacent to that of the present study. These more detailed notes are, however, timely if a record is to be preserved that approximates to accuracy.

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

596 invading groups of kinsfolk there was always one who was considered as the family head, and this man could claim the title of *monene mokonda*, the owner of the land. Round this man the rest of the members of the family group clustered, and he had the general direction of their affairs. He could scarcely be termed a chief, having a paternal oversight rather than exercising any wide authority demanding organizing ability and political astuteness. The succession of *monene mokonda* runs collaterally through younger brothers in the first place; hence if a first-born male happens to hold that position, the succession among his younger brothers is in the order of their birth. When these have all died the succession passes to the next generation. If all the males of a group die, it is possible for a daughter's son to leave his father's side in order to assume the position of *monene mokonda* on his mother's side.

A *monene mokonda* can delegate his duties as head to another member of the family, who is then termed *mobomi e ele*, the husband of the settlement. For such a privilege payment is generally made to the *monene mokonda*. Round these *monene mokonda* and their immediate kinsmen others gathered, forming, it may be, another section of the same settlement, known then as an *etuka*, or, if numerous, another settlement.[1]

624 [593] The *monene mokonda* (or *mobomi e ele*) hears and judges cases that come to him, aided always by a group of elders, and directs the activities of the settlement. However, this does not entirely satisfy the Tumba; they want an *nkumu* also. The *nkumu* is chosen, not by the whole settlement, but by a single village, or it may be even one *etuka* of a village. If the villages of a settlement were without an *nkumu* it would generally, but not necessarily, be the *etuka* of the *monene mokonda* which would lead off by seeking one out. The group desiring an *nkumu* are known as the *mokonda*, and they look about for a man of the same tribe but not of the same settlement or village, an outsider. He must be a man of some wealth, for actually he will buy his right of authority and pay heavily for it. If the man who is approached accepts, he is known from then on until his accession as *Nkomo Akalo*, the term *nkumu* not being used until he is finally invested with the insignia of office, the *mantole*, or hat of special design. *Nkomo Akalo*'s family is known as the *elepa*, or *mange*. This man, [556] once having accepted the invitation to become *nkumu*, sets about amassing wealth in the form of wives and brass rods. He may be years about it, but he does not thereby forfeit his right to the office, nor apparently weary those who extended the invitation. Should *Nkomo Akalo* die before he is installed as *nkumu*, or should he wish to withdraw from the honour bestowed upon him, the succession passes to another member of his *elepa*. The succession would normally pass to the eldest male of the *elepa*, [787] but many circumstances may interfere to give it to another member of the family. A dream dreamed by a male of the *elepa* to the effect that he should be the *nkumu* is sufficient to give him the right of succession over the eldest male. When asked [689] whether it was common to lie about such a dream having occurred, in order to gain the right of succession, those questioned received the suggestion with emphatic negatives, for this is no time to lie; any man so doing would be sure to die, and the fear of death would drive him back, [illegible].

---

[1] Where practical, the invested chiefs set up by the Belgian Colonial Government are men chosen because of their right to be known as *monene mokonda* or *mobomi e ele*. Often, however, the settlements are so small and lacking in cohesion that it has been necessary to set up chiefs arbitrarily over chiefdoms very much larger than were their own hereditary spheres of influence.

624 tion, *Nsoso* is a very prominent figure. Still arrayed as previously described, she sits outside the *nsaga* near the road on the special stool of the *nkumu*. Nobody may pass her with food, a humane law, considering that she must spend the day fasting. If anyone attempts to do so she catches the unlucky individual, helps herself to as much of his food as she wants, the victim meanwhile begging her to be merciful and leave him a small portion, and the booty is taken into the *ilomo*. During this sentinel duty *Nsoso* must still keep the parrot's feather in her mouth and maintain silence, so, in case she catches an unsuspecting bearer of food, the remonstrance and argument are all one-sided.[1] After the first day *Nsoso* no longer sits outside the *nsaga* but goes from place to place in the village, choosing spots where people may least expect her, hoping thus to reap a bigger harvest for her pains. This is kept up for eight days, which comprise two Tumba 'weeks' of three days' work and one of rest. The rest-day is appropriately named *bzina la nsoso* after the duty of *Nsoso* of sitting doing nothing day by day. The eight days of this ceremony over, *Nsoso* lays aside her gourd and plantain stalk, which are placed at the foot of the first central supporting post of the *ekepe* on entering. She is given a fresh coating of chalk and three coloured [302] stripes are drawn the length of her back and down her arms. She still remains close to the *nkumu*.

[50] Various personalities are connected with the *nsaga* of an *nkumu*. The *Bonko* is a male slave, clothed in a skin loincloth, whose duty it is to receive callers at the *ilomo* before admitting them to the presence of the *nkumu*.

624 585 *Mpaay* is the name taken by the wife first married by the *nkumu*. From henceforth she no longer accompanies her husband, and their cohabitation ceases unless the *nkumu* is willing to pay her each time the sum of one hundred rods. But the *nkumu* is obliged to eat all food she cooks for him even though they have a quarrel. *Mpaay* does not honour her husband with the special greeting accorded to *nkumu*, but greets her husband and all other *nkumu* as she would ordinary people.[2] The second wife of an *nkumu* must assume the name of *Ipembe Angenda*, but no importance attaches to her position.

629 586 Among the Tumba generally, apart from the Bongindu, a woman is chosen from the [illegible] to bear the title *Bolumbo Itina i Ekepe* (*Bolumbo*, the '*raison d'être*' of the *ekepe*). She is, it would seem, a symbolical figure, a reminder that the *ekepe* owes its existence to the [illegible] of which this woman becomes the titular head. While the *nkumu* is still in seclusion the chosen woman is taken to the open space between the *ilomo* and the row of wives' houses, known as the [illegible]. Here, in the presence of the assembled crowd she is praised by being addressed, '*Bolumbo Itina, [illegible]*!' and the crowd exclaims, '*Boo*!'[3] Strips of leopard skin, about eighteen

---

[875] [1] It is interesting to note that there are some exceptions to those who may be caught and robbed by *Nsoso* during her eight days of wandering. No member of the [illegible] may be thus treated, twins and their parents are exempt, and also all children born to the *nkumu* before he attains office, these being counted *nkumu*.

[594 595] [2] Besides *Mpaay*, a mother of twins is also exempt from according *nkumu* special salutations, and among some groups the father of twins is also exempt.

[3] This ceremony gives husbands of any village, whether they are members of the [illegible] or not, the opportunity to single out a favourite wife for special honour, for at this time any woman may be given the name of *Bolumbo*, though not with the significant complement of *Itina i Ekepe*. The ceremony is similar, is performed at the [illegible], but besides receiving the strips of leopard skin, she must be divested of all her clothing, a new loincloth and [illegible] are then placed round her, and the strips of skin then attached to the new belt.

624

inches long and two inches in width, numbering up to seven are brought and attached to the back of her *lombe* by folding them over it.[5] [562]

The first male child which was born to the *nkumu* before he acceded to the office is known as *Ijomi Nkoi*. If he has none, then the right to this name passes to the first male child to be born to his younger brothers. Any child born on the day that the *nkumu* is given his *mantele* is also called *Ijomi*; if a male he will be *Mole Ijomi*, if a female, *Mpembe Ijomi*.[6] These children must not see the *nkumu* until they are old enough to know his name and greet him properly, and so they are taken to some village other than the one in which he has his residence. When such children are considered old enough to take up residence in the village of the *nkumu* it is an occasion for revelry, a big dance, *etoko*, is held, and there is a feast. The child, *Ijomi*, is brought to the village of the *nkumu* with rejoicing, and this is a signal for everybody desiring to do so to help himself to anything belonging to the *nkumu*. Goats and fowls may be killed and eaten, sugar-cane rooted up, bananas, plantains, and other crops growing near by seized for food. Because of this custom the *nkumu* will take precautions and send his livestock, at least, off to some other village in order not to lose more than he can help.[7] 152 624 [559]

The *eyembe*, the singer or singers, and the *nsoti*, the jesters already mentioned, remain with the *nkumu* during his period of seclusion. Added to these is *atando lokombi*, the bearer of the *lokombi*, a stringed instrument played with the fingers, similar to a bass viol in its general appearance. 624 533 539

Inside the *ilomo* during the seclusion of the *nkumu*, few people have the right of entrance, but as one enters the *ekongo* where the daylight hours are spent, one finds the couch of the *nkumu* on the left and towards the rear. On the same side and towards the front are seated the *atando lokombi* and the *eyembe*. *Nkasa*'s couch is to the right of, and parallel to, that of the *nkumu*, but still to the left of the centre posts. To the right of her couch is the fire in the centre, and beyond the fire on the right side is a couch for the *nsomi*, likewise somewhat to the rear, with a space in front for the *nsoti*. 624 342 352

The month's seclusion being completed, the *nkumu* prepares to buy the homage of the village. *Nkasa* gets rid of her decorative colours, and assumes ordinary attire, becoming like any other of the wives, and is ready to take up all the usual duties of a wife, whether in the garden or at the house. The people are called to come and render to the *nkumu* their homage and praise. The men come to the *ilomo*, are admitted to the presence of their *nkumu* and seat themselves on the bare earth with their legs wide apart and facing him. They then, without uttering a word, greet him in the 624 576

---

[5] The *lombe* is a belt which used to be worn by Tumba women encircling the buttocks, and this was used to attach their only garment, the *alone* among the Bongandu, this being a short bast cloth, or an apron among other groups, this being a narrow cloth strip worn between the legs.

[6] When a new *nkumu* assumes office, one already in office will take this opportunity of getting more of his own named *Ijomi*. He takes them to the enclosure of the new *nkumu*, and having placed a bracelet of cowrie shells on the right wrist, and sometimes one on the right ankle, asks the member of the enclosure whose right it is to give away the *mantele* to name these new *Ikomi* (pl. of "*Ijomi*"). This man will then take such a one, and presenting him to the people introduce him by giving him a name, and following with praise as, "The *Ijomi Lokoma*, *Botela*!" and the crowd replies with the customary "*Boo*!" [591]

[7] It is well to remember that not every individual bearing names associated with the institution of the *nkumu* is directly connected with it. With the practice of "resurrecting" dead relatives by naming new-born children after them, such names as these become widespread. [559]

7.Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

624 customary manner, with a double clap. They are told by the *nkumu* to repeat the salutation, and having done so may be asked to do it a third time. They are then
576 given a few rods in payment. If the *nkumu* sees some member of his own *elojo* coming to greet him, he gives him special honour by ordering him to lie flat on his back instead of merely sitting, and at the end he gives him a larger gift of rods than the others receive. In this way the *nkumu* may pay out a great many rods to those who thus render him homage. Ordinarily a man will receive five or six, but one
624 specially honoured may be given as many as twenty. From the beginning the *nkumu* has to pay heavily for his honours, and only a wealthy man can hope to attain them.
[554] For this reason a lawful successor, if not wealthy, may be glad to give up his rights to another more fortunate member of the *elojo*. Homage having been paid, word is sent out that the *nkumu* is about to come forth, and crowds begin to gather. A coat
[303] of red camwood powder mixed with oil is smeared over the *nkumu*, the brass plates are attached to his [illegible], and he is attired in all his finery. The crowd outside cheers, and when tired sits on the ground to await the rest of the ceremony. Inside,
[533] the *lokombi* begins to play, the [illegible] to sing, and the Batwa start to praise the *nkumu* by uttering an ululating sound. Accompanied by *[illegible]*, *[illegible]*, and the [illegible], the *nkumu* himself begins to dance. The temporary protecting screen around the [illegible] is pulled down, and he is seen by all. After his dance he retires again and the crowd disperses.

When *[illegible]* becomes *nkumu* he changes everything possible so as to
[98] become different from other men. Thus he assumes a different gait, a sort of bow-legged waddle, a different tone of voice, and it seems that under this influence even his facial features undergo a change. Accompanied by his retinue, he visits the various villages where he has friends and relatives in order to greet them. This over, the musicians wish to take their departure and are paid for their services by the *nkumu*.

626 At the conclusion of these ceremonies the *nkumu* with his *elojo* and the *[illegible]* negotiate concerning their obligations to one another. If the *nkumu* is the first of his
591 line, he and his *elojo* are given land to cultivate, while succeeding *nkumu* simply take over the land originally [illegible]. The *[illegible]* call their *nkumu* their wife, and they
631 designate themselves husband. They thus reckon the relationship between *[illegible]* and *elojo* to be that of husband and wife, and, as in an actual marriage, there must be an interchange of obligations performed in a spirit of harmony. Also, as in marriage a wife may be divorced, so an *nkumu* with his *elojo* could be sent off to their home and the arrangement terminated. It not infrequently happened that as strangers the *elojo* fell out with their hosts and if such a disagreement could not be righted they might be refunded the payments with which they had purchased their rights, and sent off home.

224 Among the reciprocal obligations of *[illegible]* and *elojo* are included the sharing of certain animals and birds killed in the hunt, among which are the leopard and
626 elephant. All killed, whether male or female, must be divided. Of certain other
631 animals, including the wild pig, antelope, and buffalo, if a female, no portion is given; if a male, the required portion is presented. These reciprocal obligations are limited
596 entirely to the *elojo* and *[illegible]*; if others outside of these groups wish to present the *nkumu* with [illegible] to honour him or to curry favour, they may do so, but they are under

no compulsion. If one of the contracting parties fails to fulfil its pledges in this matter of giving part of the kill, or in anything else, the aggrieved party may call the council together. This consists not only of members of the *mokonda* and *elopo*, but of all elders of the village or villages connected with this particular one. The party judged in the wrong, whether *elopo* or *mokonda*, will be fined, the injured party receiving its share, and both parties will be charged to live together harmoniously and observe their contracts. 224 624 596 621

The power of the *nkumu* was apparently limited, and did not supersede that of the *mosuse nsikindo*. When trials came up, the aggrieved party might go either to the *mosuse nsikindo* or to the *nkumu*. If it was necessary to call the village elders together about it, both these authorities were present at the hearing. First the young men of the group were allowed to give their verdict, then the old men, after that *mosuse nsikindo* (or the *mokuni o ele*), and finally the *nkumu* was given the privilege of the last word. He would comment on the opinions of each of the judges, criticizing one young man, commending another, and then giving his own verdict, at which the group would assent by saying, 'Even so, grandfather'. The whole group of judges would then fix the fine, a double portion of which went to the *nkumu*. 624 695

The actual manual labour which an *nkumu* may do excludes anything endangering life or limb, or requiring agility and speed. He may clear the bush for his gardens: this is a man's work. He may take part in the building of his houses, but may do no high work, and, among the inland groups, it is the work of the Batwa to put the roof on for him. The *nkumu* may also prepare pitfalls for catching game, but cannot engage in any other type of hunting or do any fishing. Digging a grave is prohibited, for, as we shall see, everything pertaining to death must be ignored by the *nkumu*. 624 [563]

Other rules affecting the daily life of the *nkumu* may be roughly divided into three: those affecting his person, those having to do with his food, and social regulations.

One of the great points of observance in the first class of regulations is the importance of the *nsamba*. The *nkumu* must on no account be seen during daylight hours with an uncovered head. If he wishes relief from the cumbersome *nsamba* he may take it off in the darkness of his house and put on an ordinary hat made of skins, and when night falls he may walk where he will bareheaded if he so desires. The skin hat, known as *loolo*, may be made from two animals only, in the case of an *nkumu*, one being the *mbuluku*, a species of antelope with light-coloured hair, and the other the *jsolo*, an animal resembling a beaver. The skin of the *mbuluku* may be used by anyone, but the *jsolo* is reserved for the *nkumu* only with one exception. The skin of the *jsolo* may also be used for the carrying strap for infants known as *mpambo*, which is worn over one shoulder in bandolier fashion. For the *nkumu* the skin of the *jsolo* is limited to the informal hat, *loolo*, and for making into the *loboto*, a pouch used for carrying small objects and worn like a sporran. As a corollary to the importance of the *nsamba* may be noted the importance attached to the head of the *nkumu*, which must never be seen uncovered in daylight. 624 292 [524] [859]

The Bongindo *nkumu* never wash in the daytime, but may wash at night with hot water. The inland *nkumu* never wash. Even the Bongindo *nkumu* never wash their heads, and no *nkumu* ever cuts his hair. If the *nkumu* becomes too greatly incommoded, one of his wives may delouse his head, but only within the privacy of the house, by the light that enters the rear opening. 624 515 [181]

614 He represents the A-group in the council of elders of the village and of the other large units. Since no members of the group [672] are considered capable of conducting affairs, all the legal transactions which they undertake are treated as though they had been sanctioned by the patriarch. To a large extent the members of the group may represent one another. In the absence of the elder, a younger member may act as the representative of the [623] group at council meetings. When the senior member dies, his function will be taken over by the next oldest member of the group.

614 602 An A-group will split up only through internal conflicts which cannot be bridged or through a large population increase. The newly-formed A-groups continue to maintain a close relationship which, at first, is much closer than among the B-groups whose A-groups have split much earlier. In the higher ranks cohesion after the split diminishes only gradually; thus many gradations develop in the feeling of cohesion. These gradations could not be even approximately reproduced in a diagram with any degree of exactitude. There is no formula by which the split takes place, as there is, for example, among the Tallensi (13) where it is determined by a certain number of generations. 614 Theoretically the A-groups are "eternal." The A-groups are ● 596 subdivided into small families. Within the polygynous families 592 nuclear families [Familienkerne] (14) have a semi-independent position economically. Each wife has her own house. A husband's wives and the wives of his sons have their houses within the same homestead. As the master of the homestead, the father has an open shelter where the men spend their time and [768] hold their meetings. Upon the death of the master of the

---

13. Fortes, The Dynamics of Clanship, p. 34 f.

14. Thurnwald, Menschliche Gesellschaft, Vol. 4, p. 12.

614 596 592 [768] homestead, it is deserted by the inhabitants. On the new dwelling site the sons each build their own shelter. In contrast to the groups of the type A-E, the group living within a homestead is finite: its existence ends with the father's death. Only a man whose father (in the European meaning of the term) has died may have a shelter. Thus the homestead community is interposed between the A-group and the small family.

614 To sum up the characteristic features of the A-groups: Membership determined by male descent; unity of legal power, especially insofar as landed property and inheritance law is concerned the senior has full power; succession by simple seniority; theoretically unlimited existence of the group. The A-groups consist of small families who live together in homesteads under one father in each case.

Groups of Rank B

614 593 There is usually a friendly, neighborly relationship between the A-groups which form part of a B-group. People assist each other to a large extent, and there is joint consultation on most matters. Group B has only one Nkúmú iloki, "master of the hidden power," the priest of the kinship group, who is consulted by all the members of the group. He functions during the magical preparations for the hunt; he is consulted before any important undertaking. During the leave-taking ceremony after a burial, he converses with the deceased, and people turn to him when the ancestors have appeared to them in their dreams to transmit their desires, orders, or other information to the living. He protects the people of his group from the ill will, ndoki, of the dead and the living. The priest of the kinship group is used as the criterion [194] to determine which group of homogeneous A-groups represents a B-group. The priest of the kinship group is descended from a certain one of the related A-groups.

614 554 There is a difference in rank among the A-groups of a B-group -- one group will be regarded as older -- but this is

618 621 In general one may assume that local groups will postulate only that kind of kinship relationship which does not necessitate a substantial functional reintegration. For this reason, units above the exogamy limit will easily tend to construe a genealogy which "proves" a kinship relationship. Groups of that type are functionally weak. One can observe processes of this kind both among the group of the Bakonda and among the neighboring E-group, Lonyanyanga. The institution of the nkúmú (see above, p. 14) also appears to have a leveling influence. The privileges of the oldest (and free) group diminish in importance and fall behind the office of nkúmú. The new office is also open to younger and dependent groups.

Sociological Terminology for Kinship Groups

128 Before dealing with the units which are to be regarded as settlement groups, we shall compare the kinship groups of the Ekonda with the sociological ideal types. Keeping in mind the authors mentioned at the beginning, I shall now discuss the various terms used for groups which are applicable to conditions found among the Ekonda. [196]

Family

121 596 The small family is of no importance in the organizational system of the Ekonda. Nevertheless it is very important as the smallest unit of economic life. Each small family is potentially polygynous, but monogynous marriages are more numerous at the present time, especially among the younger generation. In view of this difference between potential and practiced polygyny, it seems advisable to follow Thurnwald in classing the polygamous forms together with the small family and to differentiate its nuclear families (18). In my opinion this approach

18. Vol. 4, p. 12 f.

seems to correspond more closely to its functional importance than Murdock's view, according to which the polygamous family

121 596 together with the large family [Grossfamilie] is put into the category of "composite forms of family" (19). In Thurnwald's "Technical Terms" there are two passages dealing with the large family, one under the heading "Family," p. 12 f., the other under "Large Family," p. 14. Under "Family" Thurnwald writes:

> "...The 'large family' differs from the family in that in the former several generations with a common grandfather live together in the same homestead or even under the same roof. The nuclear families, and the men forming part of them, remain relatively independent. Naturally, even in this unit relatives lacking any protection may be taken into the group. The large family differs from the kinship group (q. v.) in that in the former all its members live in the same dwelling site, and the degree of kinship between the members is mainly seen in a line descending from the head; in addition, it forms an economic unit. A further characteristic feature of the large family lies in the fact that it resembles any family in being tied to the life of the persons who constitute it and that it becomes extinct with them, while a kinship group renews itself automatically. It is, in a manner of speaking, 'eternal'."

Under the heading "Large Family," he writes only: "... The phenomenon of at least three generations descended from one another living together under a common head (grandfather with children and children's children) is defined as 'large family' (see Family, Kinship Group)." There is a discrepancy between these two definitions. If, according to the first definition, a group dissolves upon the death of the persons constituting it, i.e., the oldest generation, the phrase "at least" may be valid for the norm, but not for the specific case. Thurnwald defines the family in the same manner in Lehrbuch der Völkerkunde [Textbook of Ethnology] (20). If we accept Thurnwald's definition --

---

19. Murdock, Social Structure, p. 23.

20. Thurnwald in: Preuss (Ed.), Lehrbuch, p. 259.

[2] the material collected by Kirchhoff (21) and the ancient Roman
596

21. Kirchhoff, Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, Vol. 63, p. 88 ff.; p. 96 ff.

familia would serve as good examples -- a patrilateral large family could be described as a kinship group, living, working, and maintaining a household together, consisting of a husband, his wives, and all his offspring, and splitting into the large families of his sons upon the death of the father.

Kirchhoff defines the large family in the same fashion, yet he takes care to point out that here, in contrast to a kinship group, persons who have married into the group are part of it (22).

22. Kirchhoff, Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, Vol. 63, p. 90.

Murdock's conception of the "extended family" is identical with this interpretation (23).

23. Murdock, Social Structure, p. 24.

On the other hand, in Vol. 2 (p. 22) Thurnwald regards the large family as a unilateral kinship group with persons who have married into it. This group lives in the same place and is governed by a common chief from whom all the members are supposedly descended. The kinship group, in contrast to the large family, may be scattered. [197] Thus, Thurnwald at this point puts other characteristics in the foreground, but the text allows the conclusion that for Thurnwald the dependence on the life of the head of the families and its temporary nature are the essential characteristics of a large family.

596
614
In this sense none of the units described under A-E[1/A] is a large family. The wives who have married into the group belong to the group of the husband, but they always remain part of their father's group; in case of divorce they return to the

[1/A] [pages 9-15, category 116.-Analyst]

596 latter group. Another factor which reminds us of the wife's con-
614 tinuing membership in her original group is the connection, never completely severed, between the groups related by marriage, illustrated by the practice of gifts and counter-gifts which are all part of the bride price and the dowry. When she dies, the
[764] wife is buried in the soil of her group. In addition, the group membership of the wife is transferred to the children, although this does not have the same effects in economic and political terms.
[611] Matrilineal descent is important in relation to marriage restrictions, certain avoidance practices which are passed on through the wives, and also certain privileges. Quite a large number of persons has settled permanently in the group of their mother or that of their grandmothers.

The decisive factor that makes the term "large family" unsuitable is the "eternal" character of the A-E groups of the Ekonda. However, the subdivisions of the A-groups which live together in a common homestead (see p. 10) may be regarded as large families in the sense used by Thurnwald, Kirchhoff, and Murdock.

Kinship Group

614 In the definitions of the term "family" quoted above,
[2] we already learned something about Thurnwald's concept of a kinship group, but there is an additional reference to the technical term "kinship group" ["Sippe"]" (p. 17 f.) (24):

24. Menschliche Gesellschaft, Vol. 4.

"...A kinship group is defined as a clan (q. v.) which is not politically independent. Usually the loss of independence is caused by the distribution of the people of the clan among the various settlements. A kinship group is held together by the consciousness of being descended from the same ancestors and by their common cult of the ancestors. The kinship group is of special importance for the regulation of marriage (q. v.). -- A kinship group may be divided into kinship subgroups (large

592
567 matters are more important than the father's ancestry. (1)

[559]

> 1. Among the Nkundó no shame is attached to not knowing the family of one's father. But not to be able to name the mother's clan is a great dishonor for it proves that she was a slave.

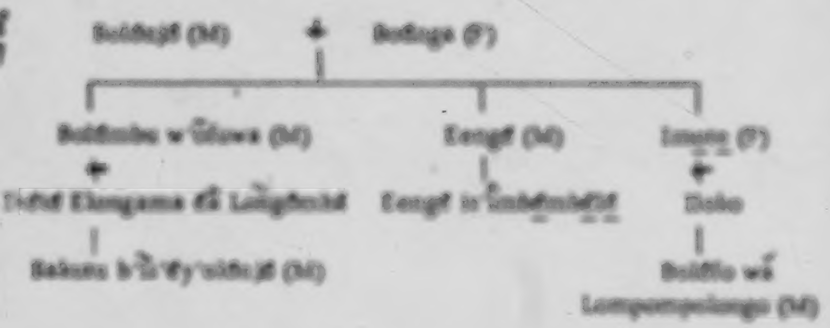
There is less opposition to the first generation born of a couple who were both slaves than for their parents, and it progressively decreases with each succeeding generation. There is practically no opposition now to the grandsons. The reason seems to be that although receiving a wife from one's master in a regular marriage does not constitute emancipation (wikó, mikola) for the slave, it is a kind of adoption (wémya, -émya). [246] [571]

Article III. Kinship

592
855 Marriage between members of the same kin group (isangano, bosangema, from the verb -sangema, "to be related") is forbidden. But how far does such a kin group extend? It is impossible to give a general rule. On the one hand, it is certain that if two groups are not descended from a common ancestor there is no bond of kinship between them, even if they live side by side. But on the other hand, it is not possible to say that all those who are descended from the same ancestor are relatives and that marriage is forbidden between the various branches of the grouping they comprise. The question therefore amounts to knowing by which ancestor the exogamous grouping is defined. A decision on this point may only be made through the examination of each case individually.

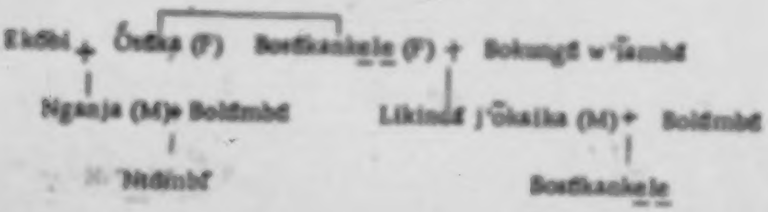
614 It is impossible to deduce anything from the meaning of the term clan, for it is usually defined as "a grouping of families united to one another by kinship." This leaves us back where we started. The characteristics usually given for a clan are: generic name,

926
587


Boliñoji (M)
Bofingo (F)
Bolímbo w'Ilowa (M)
Eongé (M)
Imana (F)
Ilifoló Elangama ea Longombolá
Eongé to Ilolombolá
Ilolo
Bakutu b'Ilo Wy'Ilifoló (M)
Bolifio wá
Lompempelongo (M)

Imana of Elaka (Bongili), one of the Lobengo clan, married Ilolo of Imama (Bongili). With valuables received from his mother's family their son, Bolifo, married three women: Wángi, Bonsi, his favorite, and a slave from Bolaká (Wángatá). When he died, his widows went to the Elaka clan which was the source of his wealth. Two claimants appeared: Eongé (first cousin of the deceased but in [40] Nkundó terminology his son) and Bakutu of Bokenda (Bosomba) also a first cousin, and considered one by the Nkundó. They were to divide the widows. But both of them chose the deceased's favorite and quarreled over her. In the end she was assigned to Bakutu who was the "father" of his rival and the "elder brother" of the deceased. The slave also went to Bakutu, (2) while Eongé had to be satisfied with the first wife. But he and his clan retained a right over these women and their [190] progeny. This is rather an old case; in fact two grandsons of Bakutu and Ilifoló respectively, whom I know very well personally, are now between fifty and sixty years old.

The following is a more recent example:


Ekóbi
Ósáka (F)
Bosékanjele (F)
Bokungú w'Iambá
Nganja (M)
Bolómbá
Likinda j'Óhaika (M)
Bolómbá
N. 'Ndóimbé
Bosékanjele

2. Who yielded her to Ilifoló y'Engamba of Elaka.

928
587 Two sisters, Onfika and Bosikaninkele of Ilenge, Ntomba (w'Ingende), were married respectively to Ekombe of Likoala (Besombo, Bombwanja) and Bokongo of Bombisuge wa Ikolo (Besombo). Ngaoja married Bolomba of Ikoka (Bokone). When Bolomba became a widow she was inherited by Likfodi, the first cousin of the deceased on his mother's side, so that the patrimony would not be scattered. She gave Likfodi a daughter, Bosikaninkele, whose bride price he used to get himself a wife, Bomifila (Teresa), daughter of Ilito of Bolingo (Bongili). At Likfodi's death the rights returned to Ntomba (Joseph) in the person of the widow Bombola, the nkita of his uterine sister.

587
928
587 If the legitimate heir, or some other close relative of the deceased, wants to marry a widow, he consults the head of the family and then goes to the woman's parents and gives them bekooli (1), which consists of 1 to 3 copper rings, added to the amount of the bride price. This gift shows the suitor's respect for the woman's family. (2) If after a time the woman no longer wants to stay with him, but loves another close relative, the latter also brings his bekooli. This is expected of him even if the woman has not gone home in between, but has gone directly from one man to the other. [191] [191] The bekooli of the first man are then returned.

1. The plural of the noun derived from the verb koola, "to seek, to take for someone," hence, "objects in order to go and take someone."

2. In addition to this native interpretation another may be given which is more profound and of a legal nature. This will be done further on (Article IX).

If the new husband is only distantly related to the deceased, (1)

[101]

1. In that case he is called edto eâ nsônge, literally "relative from the summit," as against edto ea nkina, "relative of the base," therefore a close relative.

572 and those who owe submission and respect. The "superior" relatives
602 are the ascendants, uncles, aunts, etc., in short, all those bearing
[576] the title of "father" or "mother," as well as elder brothers (older
sisters, elder cousins, etc.), who are [illegible] (sing. [illegible]).
● [602] The "inferiors" are the descendants, those who are called "children"
(bána): sons and daughters, grandsons, nephews, nieces, younger
brothers or sisters, and those who are classed with them and called
[illegible] (sing. [illegible]).

[596] [597] 4) Polygamy and the inheritance of widows introduce another element. We will see that although persons of certain degrees of affinity may not marry, the prohibition is lifted to permit the inheritance of widows.

5) Our term "relatives by marriage" the Nkundó term and bakiló are not synonymous, even with respect to direct affinity. When we use the term "relatives by marriage" here, we are speaking in Nkundó terms. They do not consider certain persons whom we would include in that category as "relations by marriage." Such persons
[601] are included in the group which as a whole is designated as likiló
or bakiló, but when properly and accurately referred to they are called bóme, "husband," or wáli, "wife," because they may marry each other and therefore affinity, strictly speaking, cannot be applied to them. In other words, for the Nkundó, affinity is the relationship of a person with (only) those of his spouse's relatives whom he is forbidden to marry. It is well to bear in mind the double meaning of this term.

2. The rules

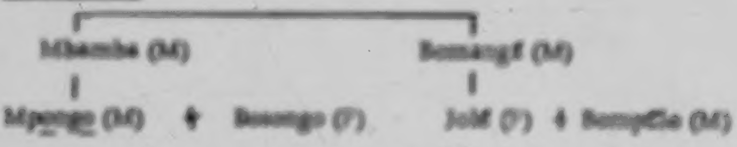
1. Direct Affinity

582 A. Marriages are prohibited in the direct line. Nevertheless,
603 in accordance with consideration number 4, a son or grandson may
606 inherit or marry the widows of his father or grandfather, but not the
reverse. [254]

The same rule applies to cousins:

572
605

Example 25

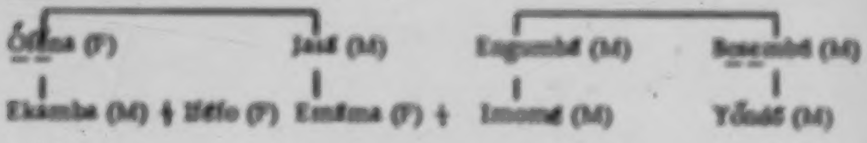

Mbamba (M)
Bomangɛ (M)
Mpongo (M) ǂ Bosongo (F)
Jolɛ (F) ǂ Bompɛlo (M)

Marriage between Bompɛlo and Bosongo is forbidden.

As the degrees of relationship grow more distant, the obstacles increasingly lose their force, so that exceptions are more readily accepted.

One point remains to be noted, although it has already been mentioned several times. Cousins (male or female) who are bɔ̃nankána are "fathers" to their cousins according to Nkundɔ law; they are therefore treated as aunts or uncles. For them the prohibition is very severe, especially if they are nyangɔ̀bikilɔ, "mother" of a relative by marriage. [60]

Example 26


Ɔ́tɛma (F)
Jasɛ (M)
Engombɛ (M)
Bosombɛ (M)
Ekámba (M) ǂ Ifɛlo (F)
Emɛ́ma (F) ǂ
Imomɛ (M)
Yɔ́ndɔ (M)

Ekamba is Jasɛ's bɔ̃nankána and therefore Emɛ́ma's "father." Ifɛlo, his wife, is therefore Emɛ́ma's mother. Emɛ́ma is Yɔ́ndɔ's bokilɔ. Consequently, Ifɛlo is the mother of Yondɔ's bokilɔ and therefore Yondɔ's nyangɔ̀bikilɔ. Marriage between Ifɛlo and Yɔ́ndɔ is strictly prohibited, though it is not prohibited between Emɛ́ma and Yɔ́ndɔ (see Example 15).

Adulterous relations among these various persons will be discussed in Chapter VI, Article VI, 2. [260]

602 brings forth reprimands on the part of the husband and his parents which obviously can easily degenerate into quarrels. If the omissions are so frequent and of such a nature that they can no longer be explained as simply forgetting, a whim, or a fit of peevishness, but [299] are taken to indicate spitefulness or vulgarity, the matter is [657] brought before the nkonga (who is often assisted by the family tribunal) or brought before the authority constituted by the woman's kin. If in spite of everything the expected improvement does not take place, the break-up is inevitable.

606 The husband's father and mother extend the same affection to their son's wife as they feel toward him. They consider her their own child, and it is not unusual to find that their love for the wife equals their feeling for their own son. She is only a relative by marriage, but out of affection for her they call her their child. She, for [609] her part, does not use toward them the term bokango (or bokilo) but out of filial respect calls them "father" and "mother." Exceptions to this practice may be found, however.

606 224 If the father (and those who fall in the same category such as uncles, elder brothers, etc.) kills a large game animal, he is expected to give his son's (or brother's, etc.) wife a piece of meat, whose size depends on the number of daughters-in-law he has and which consists of one or several chops (bokaloko) (1) and the piece at

1. Called liato among the Bolenge and the tribes of the Losanganya.

the nape of the neck (botombyá).

606 835 Illicit relations between the husband's father and his daughter-in-law would be an unheard of crime. The same would be true with respect to any of the "superior" relatives. (2) The laws regulating

[178] [184] 2. Only the Boangi -- like the Elángá of the Losanganya -- allow relations between a brother and the wife of his junior; and they are already beginning to find imitators among their neighbors to the southeast, the Injolo.

606 115 the relations between a wife and her husband's parents are closely connected with the rules pertaining to the prohibition related to affinity and seems to spring from the same source. Therefore it will be useful to have in mind what we have said in the preceding chapter, Article IV.

607 The husband's elder brothers treat his wife as their sister. The wife calls her husband's sisters [300] bokilo, but out of respect she often gives them the title of "mother." (1)

[609] 1. Among the Elinga the wife also calls her husband's sisters bongili (pl. bangili); they call her bonangili (pl. banangili). A wife often calls her husband's mother nyangobangili. Bonangili l'ibangili means "the brother's wives and their sisters-in-law."

587 After the husband's death, as has been said see here, his father or his brother may marry his widow. But this practice is not well regarded and is permitted only rarely, chiefly when the scattering of the family patrimony is feared or if the two interested parties have an unusual love for each other.

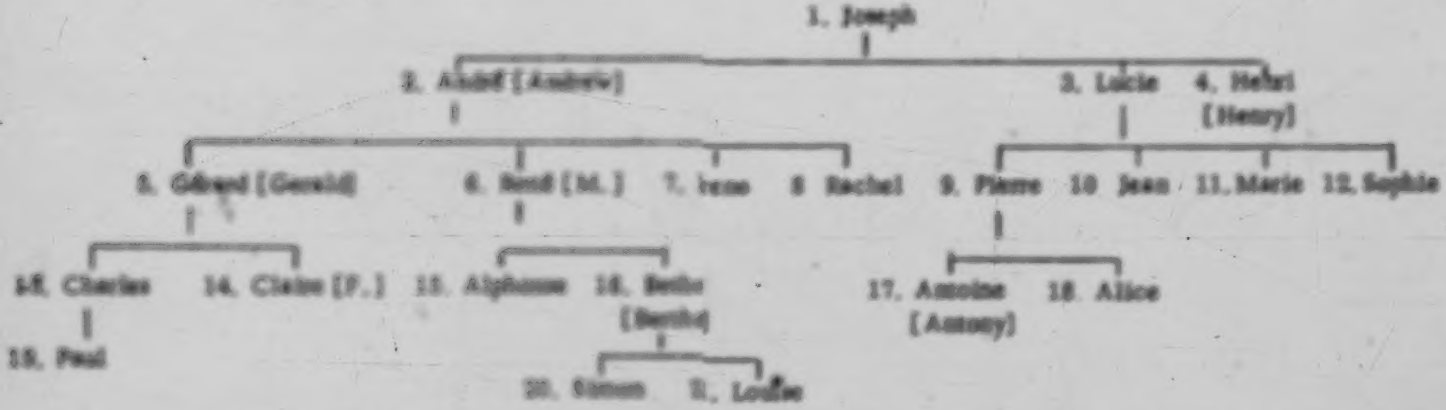
837 602 With respect to children or younger brothers and all those who fall into that category, the situation is altogether different. Illicit relations with wives of their father, grandfather, uncle, elder brother, or elder cousin, are judged much less severely. Generally, misconduct does not give rise to claims for payment, or the payment is demanded "for form's sake" and consists of a hen and a bunch of bananas. By means of this payment the guilty one recognizes his error and renders homage to the right of his elder.

[626] In general public opinion condemns these relations and often with great severity. The question of degree of kinship as well as other considerations result in a great diversity among the cases, so we will examine each situation separately and distinguish each time between the husband's reaction and that of public opinion.

Appendix

Kinship Terminology: Genealogical Table

(N. B. To facilitate a clear indication of sexes, we are using European names [for the same purpose, English names are in brackets where they differ from the French.])


1. Joseph
2. André [Andrew]
3. Lucie
4. Henri [Henry]
5. Gérard [Gerald]
6. René [Id.]
7. Irene
8 Rachel
9. Pierre
10 Jean
11. Marie
12. Sophie
13. Charles
14. Claire [F.]
15. Alphonse
16. Berthe [Bertha]
17. Antoine [Antony]
18. Alice
19. Paul
20. Simon
21. Louise

2: Hulstaert--436 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundo

601

1. For 1 – 13 and 14 are bonkóonde, pl. bankóonde.
   For 13 and 14 – 1 is nkókonjo, pl. bankókonjo.
2. For 2, 3, and 4 – 13 and 14 are bonkóno, pl. bankóno.
   For 13 and 14 – 2, 3, and 4 are nkóko (nyangó), pl. bankóko (nyangó).
3. For 1 – 2, 3, and 4 are bɔ́na, pl. bǎna.
   For 2, 3, and 4 – 1 is isé, pl. baisé (relative to the first person, fafá, pl. bafafá).
4. For 3 – 9, 10, etc., are bɔ́na, pl. bána.
   For 9, 10, etc., – 3 is nyangó, pl. banyangó (relative to the first person, ngóya, bangóya).
5. For 5 – 6 is bokíló, pl. bakíló.
   For 7 – 8 is bokíló, pl. bakíló.
   For 6 – 5 is bonómolé, pl. banómolé (relative to the first person; mɔ̂lé, bamɔ̂lé).
   For 8 – 7 is bonómolé, pl. banómolé (relative to the first person; mɔ̂lé, bamɔ̂lé).
6. For 5 and 6 – 7 and 8 are nkîna, pl. bankîna.
   For 7 and 8 – 5 and 6 are nkîna, pl. bankîna.
7. For 5, 6, 7, and 8 – 3 is isómoto, pl. baisómoto (for the first person; fasómoto, pl. bafasómoto).
   For 3 – 5, 6, 7, and 8 are bɔ́naankíné, pl. banáankíné.
8. For 9, 10, 11 and 12 – 2 and 4 are nyangômpámé, pl. banyangômpámé (or nyangóbika) (for the first person; ngômpámé, bangômpámé).
   For 2 and 4 – 9, 10, 11, and 12 are bɔ́naankíné, pl. bánaankíné.
9. For 13 and 14 – 6 is isé (ôy'ôngo).
   For 6 – 13 and 14 are bǎna.
10. For 15 and 16 – 5 is isé (éǎ mpaka).
    For 5 – 15 and 16 are bǎna.
11. For 13, 14, 15, and 16 – 5, 6, 7, and 8.
12. For 14 – 20 and 21 are bǎna.
    For 20 and 21 – 14 is nyangó.
13. For 13 – 20 and 21 are bǎnaankíné.
    For 20 and 21 – 13 is nyangômpámé.

2: Hulstaert--487 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

● 601

14. For 9, 10, 11, and 12 – 5, 6, 7, and 8 are bǎna.
For 5, 6, 7, and 8 – 9, 10, 11, and 12 are baisé.
15. For 9, 10, etc. – 13, 14, 15, and 16 are bankǎna.
For 13, 14, 15, and 16 – 9, 10, 11, and 12 are bankó̱ko̱.
16. For 5, 6, 7, and 8– 17 and 18 are brothers and sisters, and vice versa.
17. For 13, 14, 15, and 16 – 17 and 18 are baisé.
For 17 and 18 – 13, 14, 15, and 16 are bàna.
18. For 19, 20, and 21 – 4 is nkó̱ko̱ò̱lo̱.
For 4 – 19, 20, and 21 are bankǎnola.
19. For 19 – 15 is isé.
For 15 – 19 is bǒ̱na.
20. For 19 – 14 and 16 are baisómoto.
For 14 and 16 – 19 is bǒ̱na.
21. For 19 – 20 and 21 are baisómoto.
For 20 and 21 – 19 is bǒ̱na.

613 they always refer to their descent from the ancestor-founder: "We are baseka Ngoi (descendants of Ngoi; we belong to the clan of Ngoi)."

Naturally the Nkundo-Mongo know very well that all the Mongo clans are descended from a common ancestor. They even believe in the common descent of all people. However, in clan unity they only go back to that ancestor who made their group legally autonomous, who made himself independent.

To that group belong, thus, all the children of that founder, all of the children of his sons, all of the children of his grandsons and great-grandsons; thus, all those who keep the same family name in our society.

The Nkundo-Mongo call the clan from the father's side their wise, from ise (father). The children of the lawfully married daughters belong to another wise, since they go back on their father's side to another ancestor. However, children of an unmarried daughter of the [848] clan continue to bear their mother's name, and thus belong to the wise of the mother, just as, in our society, they take on the family name of the mother.

Married women, however, continue ethnically to belong to their own paternal clan and do not form part of the wise of their husband.

2. Kinship Terms in the Paternal Clan

601 613 All of the living members of the paternal clan constitute one extended family. In the bosom of that one family, all members of the same /151/ generation also bear the same title. All of the members of the grandfather's generation are grandfathers. All the members of the father's generation are fathers, also including the female members. Thus, the sisters and female cousins of the father who belong to the wise are all called "female fathers": isomoto or faomoto (from ise or fafa, father, and bomoto, woman). All of the older brothers and male cousins of the wise are batomolo; all younger brothers or male cousins of the wise are bakune; all sisters or female cousins of the wise are nkana. All of the children of brothers and male cousins, and also all of the children of sisters and female cousins who remain in the wise, are bana (children).

601 561 613 Such terms are to us, of course, a never ending source of mistakes complications, and ridicule. The native cannot possible understand this and underneath takes it very much amiss. Socially, legally, and

601 politically, his whole society is, in fact, based on those relationships
561 which are incomprehensible to us. Indeed, the order of duty and re-
613 sponsibility, of authority and honor, are socially, legally, and politi-
cally determined by the order of birth. That order is determined by
generation, and within the generation, by age: from the oldest father
down the whole line of fathers to the oldest "child" in the whole row
of children. The children of your older brother, even if they are
younger in years, go before your own children. As we shall see later,
the female members of the family, who practically fall outside this
order, recover their place of honor through their sons.

613 From this short description of the paternal clan, it is immediately
apparent that the clan is not a geographical concept among the K
Nkundo. Wherever the daughter may marry, wherever the son may
wander in service to the Whites, that person always and everywhere
continues by law to belong to his wise, and he remains bound to all
the rights and duties of his place in that community.

602 It also appears that clan and blood relationship do not come any-
613 where near to blanketing each other. Each "blood relationship" of the
Nkundo extends itself over various paternal clans, since the blood re-
lations of the mother, as well as the descendants of all the other women
of my wise who are lawfully married out of the clan, belong to another
wise.

/152/ 3. Inheritance in the Clan

613 Each clan has possessions that constitute the inheritance or patrimony
421 of the members, the domain of the family. These goods are of two
kinds: economic and dotal. The former are subdivided into real
property, or inalienable property, and personal property.

The real property of the clan consists of land and waters. The land
613 is divided into: arable land, land for gardens, and hunting areas.
423 These constitute common property, whose cultivation or usufruct is di-
vided among the members of the clan: each one receives his garden
land and hunting ground to clear; as soon as the user leaves it, that
ground is free again for the community. Palm groves, of course, also
remain common property of the members. A similar arrangement
applies to water rights. Larger fishing areas remain common property
and are, under the leadership of the clan head, communally exploited.
Smaller fishing grounds, creeks, ponds, etc., are allotted to each

613 authority (mpifo). Each clan can, however, also take in other persons
614 who fall outside the order of authority, but who legally belong to the
608 clan. Along with the real descendants, they make up the legal clan.

These are, in the first place, the wives who have married into the clan, the children brought with them (mbusola), and the lawful housekeepers. In addition, there are the clients who have been taken in; then the war prisoners and slaves; and finally the Pygmies. The women married into the clan are naturally separate, as are also the Pygmies who form a completely separate community. The others are gradually treated as children, receive their part in the general responsibility and protection, their place in the court session, etc. Depending on the degree to which they develop in the bosom of the clan which has taken them in, they can constitute a separate group in it, which becomes more and more independent.

7. The Maternal Clan

602 Each Nkundo has a double "fatherland": his wise and his bonyango.
613 The bonyango is the paternal clan of his mother. His mother gave birth to him there; her blood relations live there and receive him with motherly love and will protect him against all difficulties; he has often passed a large part of his happiest childhood years there; and there he can always find a safe shelter when, for one reason or another, he might lose the paternal clan.

The structure of the maternal clan naturally resembles that of the paternal clan in every way. If we treat it specially here, it is not in order to speak of the form, but only to point out the specific rights that each person has in his maternal clan.

● 601 Just as all of the brothers and sisters of my father are my "fathers,"
602 so all of the brothers and sisters of my mother are my "mothers."
613 Mother's brother, that is, my maternal uncle, I call ngompame, nyangompame. All the nephews and nieces on the mother's side are my "children." A special tie binds me to the children of the nkita of my mother, that is, to the children of the women who was acquired by the maternal clan with the bride price /158/ that had been paid for my mother by my wise. Mother is, thus, the nkolo, the woman or mistress, of those children who call me their father.

602 As long as I continue to live in my own paternal clan, I have the
613 right to special care and love from the maternal clan. If I cannot find

602 613 sufficient dowry at home, then I can always go and appeal to my maternal uncles who are obliged to help me insofar as they are able. I even have the right to the free dowry of one of the children of my mother's nkita. I may always lay out gardens and hunt in the territory of my bonyango, and take part in the court sessions of the maternal clan when they consider the allotment of the free dowries or the division of the inheritance. If, however, I wish to leave my father's clan and establish myself for good in the maternal clan, then I receive priority in everything over my male and female cousins and become heir and clan leader directly after my maternal uncles. This is, thus, a truly princely compensation for the so-called inferiority of the woman in native society: the child of the sister (bonankana) restores her gloriously to the honor and rank which are due her.

8. Related Clan: Likilo

602 601 Outside my paternal clan and outside my maternal clan, I still have blood relations: namely, the children of my paternal aunt and of my sisters or female cousins, each of whom belongs to the clan of his own father. Just as the children of my mother's brothers are my children, so the children of my father's sister are also my fathers. I am, thus, in the same relationship to the children of my mother's brother as the children of my father's sister are to me.

As far as the children of my sister are concerned, they are also my real banankana and, therefore, the fathers of my own children.

The other members of the related clans (who are thus not blood relations) all share, according to generation, in the classification of immediate relatives: all the "fathers" of the husband are "fathers-in-law"; all the mothers, "mothers-in-law"; etc. There is this single big difference, that the "superiors" of the husband are also your "superiors." According to the opinions of the Nkundo, they are the only real relatives. Those on the husband's side are called bokilo; those on the wife's side, bokanga.

/159/ The "subordinates" of the husband are not real relatives
and rightly call each other "husband" and "wife." In various legally
[582] defined circumstances, marriage relations and marriages are permitted
between the latter.

It is unnecessary to repeat that all of the members of the reciprocal clans share in these relationships: the whole generation of a clan

602 601 member is, as it were, identified with that member, so that, for instance, all younger sisters and female cousins of one spouse become "wives" of all the younger brothers and male cousins of the other spouse. One must really have the legal sense and the patience and the capacity for palaver and unravelling of an old Nkundo to make sense out all of these relationships. They themselves compare them, in fact, with the inextricable clew of the intestines of a sort of dwarf crocodile: besofo bya lokekele.

9. Exogamy

613 582 The term, "exogamic clan," often heard or encountered in writings, is also, at least in the Nkundo-Mongo society, very misleading. The group of persons with whom marriage is forbidden does not constitute any common entity; it differs from person to person. Two half brothers can have the same paternal clan but differ in maternal clan; they can have the same maternal clan and different paternal clans. Marriages are forbidden for older brothers and sisters that are permitted for the younger ones. The rules differ from one blood relation to another, from blood relation with relative-by-marriage to blood relation with relative-by-marriage, from relative-by-marriage with relative-by-marriage to relative-by-marriage with relative-by-marriage.

If one still wishes to put the law of exogamy into European terms, then one might say: 1) blood relationship forbids marriage insofar as the blood relationship is recognized. This recognition varies from clan group to clan group. Sometimes in the same legal but extended clan, an exception is made to this recognition; mostly, however, the different autonomous clans which descend from the same distant ancestor are still bound by the law of exogamy. Generally, groups which have the same father but a different mother /160/ separate most quickly. 2) Relationship (other than blood) forbids marriage—insofar as the relationship is recognized between the parents of spouses; it sometimes permits marriage between children of spouses.

613 582 184 Here it should be observed once again, however, that the customs differ from region to region as regards this recognition; that, for instance, the stepson in many regions may marry his stepmother in a regular marriage; and that the violations are less severely judged and punished in proportion to the degree to which the forbidden relationships diverge.

583 428 426 young man can pay for his wife, or rather pay her bride price with his own earned money, then that wife becomes his property. At his death, no creditors or mortgage holders can come to demand the wife since she will then actually be free. There will also be no difficulty in making her heir to the property of her husband, for herself and her children. The bride price or payment for wives among the civilized Blacks could be very much simplified. To abolish it would not be so easy. Indeed, it seems to be in the customs and the habits of the whole Black race. Then too, with respect to bride price, usually still in entanglements with their heathen relatives.

The bride price, as it exists among the heathens, will always remain a source of difficulties for civilization and a support for polygyny.

000 When the price is lowered, the large number of wives of polygynists will be seen to disperse and go to the men who have no wife. Thus, single marriages will be increased, and the district, whose population is greatly decreased, will become populated again. Lowering the price will also prevent women being paid for with women; and thus the trading of women will be hindered, since then the whole bride price can be paid in currency. It is also anticipated that the woman will become less a material object; and by changing the wife from an object of inheritance to an heiress, her moral value will be raised in her own eyes and in the eyes of the men.

In order to civilize the land, Christian marriages must be established. In order to establish Christian marriages, the impediments that stand in the way must be removed, and everything be put to work to benefit what the good outcome of that can assure.

[549] Family Nomenclature

601

The name of:	is given to:
Ise, father	one's own father brothers of the father sons and grandsons of father's sisters

The name of:	is given to:	
Ngoya Nyango mother	one's own mother sisters of the mother	
Bana, children	one's own children children of brothers or sisters children of mother's brothers grandchildren of mother's brothers	
Nkoko-nyango, grand-parent	grandfather and grandmother brothers and sisters of grandfather and grandmother children and grandchildren of grandfather's sisters	
Nkan'ea jenda, brother Nkan'ey'omoto, sister	by natural brothers and sisters to: the children of two brothers the children of two sisters	
Nkana l'ontamba	an expression for "one's own brother and sister	
Botomolo Bokune	older brother or sister younger brother or sister	also used for older or younger contemporaries)
Nyang-obika(1), uncle Ngompame	the brothers of mother	

1. We could translate Nyangobika as male mother.

6: Kaptein--19 M-5 (no date) 1922 FO32 Mongo FO32

601

The name of:	is given to:
Ise-omoto (2), aunt	the sisters of father the daughters of father's sisters the granddaughters of father's sisters
Bokilo	son-in-law, brother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law
Nkita, substitute	by the daughter to: the extra wife of her father, bought with her bride price her sister-in-law or extra wife of her brother, bought with her bride price

2. We could translate Iseomoto as female father.

61
602 another group. According to their relationship to others, groups may be designated as:

- brother, younger or older;
- brother or half brother (descended from various wives of the polygynous ancestor);
- [848] Illegitimate child of the sister which, legally, as the child of the oldest brother or of the father of his mother, belongs to the group of the mother's relatives;
- child of a boy who together with his sister has moved to the unit of his brothers-in-law and has settled there permanently;
- son of a sister, who for some reason has separated from his paternal relatives and has moved in with the group of his mother or of one of his grandmothers.

● 601 Present-day social relationships are influenced by this variety of kinship relations. The kinship terms which refer to the relationships of the genuine or assumed ancestors to each other are occasionally transferred to the groups.

614
602
621 In this paper we shall describe the Isangi group (12) as an

12. Müller, Fürstentum [Kingdom], pp. 68 ff., 125, 128 ff.

[101] example of hierarchical kinship structure. Isangi is a local group of the type described above (p. 1). Following the custom of the region, I shall refer to it as a "village." Until we have decided which terms are applicable to the various groups, I shall use the letters A to E for the individual ranks of the hierarchical structure. Within this system A shall stand for the smallest and E for the largest units (see Diagram 2).[1]

In addition to the three ranks of Group D in Isangi, there are others in the daughter villages (see Diagram 1). These may also include foreign groups, as, for example, the "Nkundó" group, Liimbu, in Wengá.

[1] [See page 6, category 116.—Analyst]

● 601 621 614 Bonsonga and etúká are terms used for kinship groups of ranks B, C, and D, but occasionally they may also refer to [192] the groups listed under A and, in addition, to the local groups which in size approximately correspond to the kinship units mentioned above. Etúká is the term used for the oil palm grove and for a certain kind of termite hill; apparently it is used for local groups more frequently than the term bonsonga.

[571] [535] Another term whose meaning varies is ekíndá. This word designates, first of all, a dance group, a corps de ballet, and also the social unit which sends such a joint dance troupe to dance festivals.

Esé also has strong local connotations. It is usually identical with what we call a village, but frequently units which are larger or smaller than a village are designated as esé. Very large groups, tribes and even larger units, are called bonanga.

614 As a criterion for placing the individual groups within a certain rank, one or several functions have been chosen in each case. The groups of the individual ranks are described below relative to their functions. On the subject of groups it should be added that in general they do not differ from each other in certain traits. All groups of all ranks are kinship units of patrilineal descent. They consider themselves descendants of one ancestor. No continuous and complete genealogy which can be traced back to the original ancestor is known. The genealogy of the entire group of the Bakonda is shown in Diagram 1.

In Isangi two of the ancestors of the groups of rank D are brothers, the third is the brother of their father. A D-group (Ngelé) includes, in addition, the descendants of an illegitimate child of the paternal sister of the ancestor. These offspring form the C-group, Nsambásálá.

There is a gap between this ancient genealogy and the known ancestors from the recent past. In contrast with that of the neighboring Bokóté [Bokete] (see, for example, Boelaert, [173] "Les Bongili"), the genealogical memory of the Ekonda is weak. It does not reach back to the ancestor of the group of rank A. In this connection we must take into account the fact that a group

101 114 [218] The Nkundo [Nkundu], or Mongo, are an important ethnic group of the central basin of the Belgian Congo. They are patriarchal (1). I lived among their west-central tribes for 20 years.

614 We call a clan, in the ethnic sense, the group of paternal blood relatives who have an autonomous territory in common. This resembles closely what Anglo-Saxon researchers like to call a "lineage" (2).

I. Wise

601 614 A Nkundo calls his own clan his wise, from the word ise which means "father." My wise thus includes:

1. My paternal grandfather and his brothers and sisters who are called nkoko (pl., bankoko), "grandfather, grandmother."

2. The sons of my male bankoko, including my own father, all of whom are my "fathers" (ise; pl., baise).

The sisters of my "fathers" are my "female fathers" (isomoto, composed of isé and bomoto, "woman").

3. The sons of my "fathers" are my older brothers (botomolo; pl., batomolo) and younger brothers (bokune; pl., bakune). The daughters of my "fathers" are my sisters (nkâna; pl., bankâna).

---

1. The rules and many details of the classificatory system of the Nkundo have already been set forth in Le Mariage des Nkundo by Father G. Hulstaert (Belgian Royal Colonial Institute, 1938).

2. The quotations in this article are from The Pattern of Hera Kinship, by J. F. Holleman (Capetown University Press, for Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1949).

601
614 The children of my "female fathers" do not belong to my clan.

4. Like my children, the children of my older and younger brothers are my "children" (bona; pl., bana). The Nkundo does not have any special terms for "son" and "daughter." He simply says "male child" and "female child."

5. The children of my "sons" are my grandchildren (bonkana; pl., bankana).

6. The children of these male grandchildren are my great grandchildren (bonkanola; pl., bankanola).

II. Bonyango

The mother's clan is called bonyango, from the word nyango, "mother," and includes:

1. The mother's father and his brothers, who are also nkoko.
2. Their daughters, including my own mother, who are "mothers" (nyango; pl., banyango). The brothers of my "mothers" are my "male mothers" (nyangompame; pl., ba-).
3. The sons and daughters of my "male mothers," who are thus of my generation in our sense but who, to the Nkundo, are my "children," since to them I am legally identified with my mother and therefore I am their "male mother." This explains [602] the unusual and privileged position which I hold in my mother's clan.
4. The children of my "children" are my "grandchildren."

[219] [Table 1 appears here.] [220]

III. Bokanga and Bananakana

601
602 A Nkundo has other blood relatives scattered among the clans who have married a woman of his own clan, be it a "female father," a sister, or a daughter. A Nkundo calls all the unrelated members of these clans bokanga. The related members, including children born to the women of his clan, he calls impersonally sisters' children, "children of a sister of the clan" (bonankana; pl.,

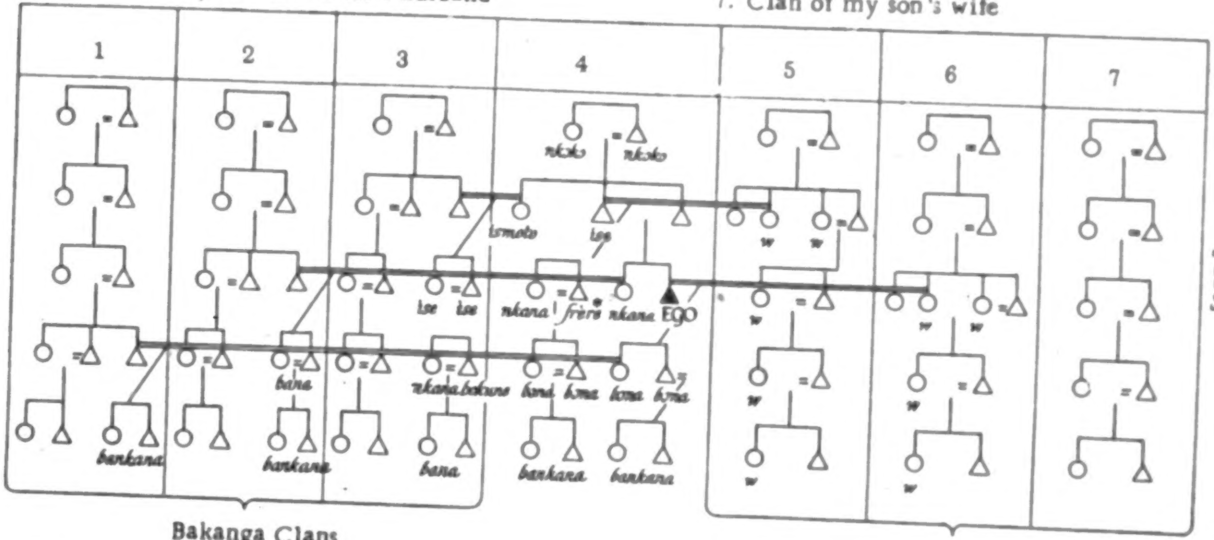
[text continues on page 4]

601
602
614

Table 1

Relatives and Affinals through the Paternal Clan

1. Clan of my daughter's husband
2. Clan of my sister's husband
3. Clan of my father's sister's husband
4. My own clan
5. Clan of my father's brother's wife
6. Clan of my wife
7. Clan of my son's wife


1
2
3
4
5
6
7
nkɔkɔ
nkɔkɔ
isomoto
ise
ise
ise
nkana
frère*
nkana
EGO
bana
nkana bokune
bona
bona
bona
bona
bankana
bankana
bana
bankana
bankana
w
w
w
w
w
w
w
w
w
w

Bakanga Clans
All those undesignated = bakanga

[*frère = brother in French]

Bakilɔ́ Clans
All those undesignated = bakilɔ́

w = wali (wife)

● 601 602 bananankana). As a result, the children are legally identified with their mothers. Thus, my sister's child is a child (bona) to me, or a sister's child (bonankana), but to my own child he would be father (ise).

In addition, he has maternal blood relatives, children of my mother's sisters, who are thus his "brothers and sisters," or children of the daughters of his "male mothers." Since these last daughters are his "children," their children would be his "grandchildren." Again, all the members of these clans who are unrelated by blood are his bokanga.

IV. Likilo

601 602 582 There are affinal clans which have given wives (wali; pl., baali) to my clan. This does not, of course, concern my mother's clan, which is a clan related by blood, but rather clans which have given wives, be it to a classificatory "father," to one of their sons, or to one of the sons of the latter. The Nkundo calls all the members of these clans -- with the exception of the woman -- bokilo (pl., bakilo). The Nkundo, merely by marrying a woman, at the same time marries all her legal younger sisters, that is to say, all the bakune [Ed., bankana?] and bana of this woman. Similarly, the woman marries not only a man, but at the same time all his legal younger brothers, that is, all the bakune and bana of this man (except the children of their own union).

601 602 Just as the clans which have received a wife from my clan thus include bokanga and sisters' sons, so also clans that have given us a wife include bakilo and "wives." Clans which have given a wife to my bonyango follow the same rules.

Comments

121 614 602 In several recent studies, especially in South Africa, four rules have been defined which govern classificatory terminology.

The first rule is that of the "unity of the lineage": The lineage as a whole is classified as belonging to a particular 'generation'

121 614 602 in its relations to another lineage as a whole" (Holleman, op. cit., p. 9). The author adds, "the unity of the lineage may be broken by a division into affines and cognatic, each with their distinctive terminology, in which the cognatic section is one 'generation' lower than the affinal section" (p. 5.).

121 614 602 601 Just as we speak of a mother society or a sister society, so the Nkundo can also consider an affinal clan as a moral person and speak of his mother's clan as of his mother, of a bokanga clan, of a bokilo clan. I do not think that the term bokanga or bokilo implies an idea of generation when it is applied to an individual, any more than does the French term "parent-in-law," or member of my family-in-law. The Nkundo would certainly not admit what the author cited here writes [221] [Table 2 appears here.] [222] about the Hera: "in inter-lineage relations, . . . once the relationship between Ego and any cognatic relative is determined, all the cognates of the same lineage as that relative will bear the same degree of kinship as himself to Ego, regardless of the differences in generation . . . between themselves or as compared with Ego" (p. 5.).

The second rule would be that the clan which provides us a wife (bokilo clan of the Nkundo) is considered our "father," and thus the clan which receives a wife from our clan would be considered a "son." Moreover, among the Nkundo is understood: "We have given you our daughter as a wife, so you are our son." But also implied is: "We have enriched you by our marriage payment, and our children are your "fathers." These ideas, however, are not reflected in the terminology between affinals. Moreover, the fact that the Nkundo readily uses the term bokilo for his bokanga is significant.

Third rule: In lineages directly related to Ego's lineage, "the female line seems to be potentially one 'generation' lower than the agnatic male line" (p. 11). The author tells us that: "This duality is even revealed in agnatic relations . . . Ego calls his . . . father's sister either vatete (father's sister) or hanzwadzi (sister)." Thus, the women of directly related clans would be considered to belong to a lower generation than the men.

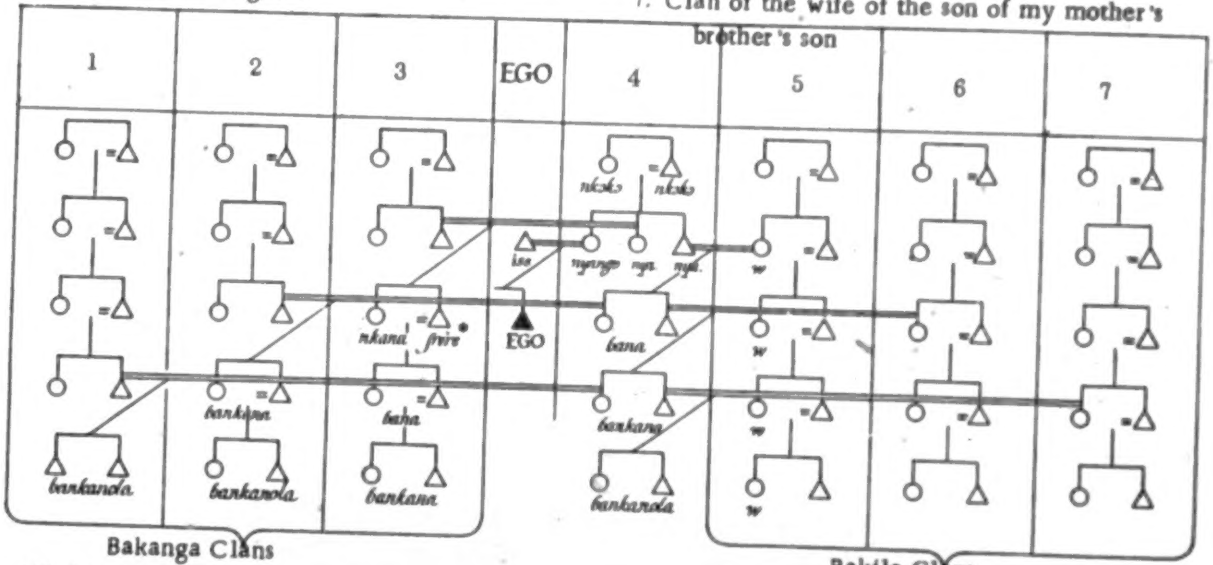
[Text continues on page 7]

601
602
614

Table 2

Relatives and Affinals through the Paternal Clan

1. Clan of the husband of the daughter of my mother's brother's son
2. Clan of the husband of my mother's brother's daughter
3. Clan of my mother's sister's husband
4. My mother's clan
5. Clan of my mother's brother's wife
6. Clan of the wife of my mother's brother's son
7. Clan of the wife of the son of my mother's brother's son


1
2
3
EGO
4
5
6
7
nkɔkɔ
nkɔkɔ
ise
nyango
nya.
nya.
w
nkana
frère*
EGO
bana
w
bankana
bana
bankana
w
bankanda
bankanda
bankana
bankanda
w

Bakanga Clans
All those undesignated = bakanga
[*frère = brother in French]

Bakilo Clans
All those undesignated = bakilô
w = wali (wife)

121 602 614 601 It must be stated that the tables of the *bakanga* clans presented by the author do not reflect this rule, since all members of these clans not related by blood, males as well as females, are designated as *vakwasha* = children-in-law. In the *bakilo* clans the rule seems to be founded on the Hera idea (according to the interpretation of the author) that all the women of my wife's clan are my "wives," no matter what their generation or age. This rule is not applicable to the Nkundo either in ideas or terminology.

There is still the fourth rule which the author quoted here uses often but does not interpret in his tables where it is completely opposed to the second rule: the child is legally identified with its mother. According to the second rule, the child of my father's sister would be my grandchild, and at the same time, according to the fourth rule, it would be my "father."

For the Nkundo, the fourth rule explains how this child is my "father," while the child of my mother's brother is my "child."

One may thus conclude that two rules explain the details of the classificatory system of the Nkundo:

1. In clans which have given a wife to our clan, all the women who are legally younger sisters of this wife, exclusively, are "wives" of all the men, exclusively, who are legally younger brothers of the husband.

2. In clans which have received a wife from our clan, the children born of this wife are identified with their mother by the children of this wife's brothers.

581 Moral qualities are often involved in the choice of a wife. But strictly speaking, the marriage is not one of reason; the cause of it is more likely to be affection.

The affective and sexual aspects of the question require longer discussion.

Therefore this chapter is divided into two parts:

I. The emotional life
II. The sexual life of the Nkundó [24]

Part 1

The Emotional Life of the Nkundó

000

[Editor's Note: The Nkundó are capable of real affection. That affection takes varying forms and attains different degrees according to the nature of the persons in question. In successive articles, we will treat:

I. Affection among relatives
II. A special form of the latter: the creation of a Bolúmbú
III. Friendship
IV. Love between husband and wife]

Article I. Affection among Relatives

152
602 The Nkundó feel a deep affection toward members of their kin group. I am of the opinion that they love them as much, if not more, than most Europeans, but are not capable of as great a devotion. To understand this condition, one need only consider that affection is instinctive. Our people say: botéma nd'iko̱ma, "the heart is like a package," that is to say, it does not choose the object of its love, but rather the object presents itself spontaneously. (1) Devotion on the

---

1. Or lolango ale nse̱mbe̱ éy'otéma, "love is an innate, spontaneous product of the heart."

152
602
other hand almost always involves reasoning and is founded on a high morality based on religion. Furthermore, the questions (of property, inheritance, etc.) which so often divide relatives from each other do not exist among the Nkundô, whose patrimony is held in common. [25] Among them the members of a family need each other absolutely and constantly; they cannot sustain the struggle for existence unless they remain well united. A man isolated from his kin is a pariah, for in all matters of importance he must count on them for help, protection, and defense. Therefore he is, so to speak, forced to make common cause with the rest of the family and to keep his proper place within it.

This may help us to understand that among these people there are fewer reasons for a cooling of family affections and more reasons for maintaining good relations. But it would be wrong to attribute their love to some kind of egoistic calculation. Their affection is sincere and spontaneous. But the above facts explain why the dis-
[578] unity and quarrels which are so frequent in Europe are unknown among the Nkundô; they are settled at once and do not have time to become bitter or deeply rooted. A very rare exception does not invalidate this generalization.

1. Parents and children

593ˣ Parents sincerely love their children. Their affection is not lessened with age; there is only a somewhat greater tenderness toward the very young, whom they readily carry and fondle. The indulgence which they show for the faults of their offspring is tempered by anger when they are exasperated by misbehaviour, more often than by a rational concern for the child's training. The spouse who has not suffered from the child's error does not react against him but on the contrary is led by his affection to protect him. Parents insistently try to excuse and defend their children when they have misbehaved. (1)

1. It should be noted that the same thing may also frequently be done among many Europeans.

Nevertheless, the general good of the clan wins out over affection.

593 152 × With reference to signs of affection, grief at the time of death, etc., the observations made for parent-child relationships hold true here -- *mutatis mutandis*.

3. Various relatives

● 602 The Nkundo's affection extends toward all members of his family, that is, all those with whom he feels linked by blood and common origin. These relatives are much greater in number than in Europe, because Nkundó kinship includes many more generations. The intensity of affection decreases with the distance of the degree of kinship. But the Nkundó knows and feels that he belongs to a large family, and he remains attached to all its members. He can find a home with any of them. This accounts for the fact that in the centers, men from the same village will look for each other and consider [621] each other "brothers." Actually, that is what they are, since in general each village consists of only a single kin group.

Although here, as in the case of brothers and sisters, common interests play a part in maintaining bonds between family members, the feelings of affection are not based on selfish considerations. The latter only reinforce these feelings, which are truly innate among the Nkundó. Among the various relatives the strongest attachments are developed between grandparents and grandchildren, uncles and aunts and nephews and nieces, male cousins and female cousins, etc.

603 Among the Nkundó as among Europeans there is a very strong affection between grandparents and grandsons, even greater, one might say, than between parents and children (the expression is: *bŏna* [30] *l'onkánâ, ndekí nd'ônkánâ*). But the relationship degenerates into compliance and weakness on one side, and into disrespectful carelessness on the other.

604 A Nkundó loves his paternal uncles and aunts and treats them like "fathers," and his maternal uncles and aunts like "mothers." Naturally, his feelings toward them are not as affectionate as for his parents, but they are an extension of these in an attenuated form.

605 The same situation holds true for the bonds which link him to his cousins, whom he calls "brothers" and "sisters." The children of his paternal aunt are his "fathers," however.

Article II. The Bolɔ́mbɔ́

562 556 178 In the old days, if an extremely rich man wanted to show his affection for one of his daughters and show off his wealth, he made that daughter bolɔ́mbɔ́. Today this custom has almost completely disappeared. (1) It has been almost impossible to maintain the

> 1. On the left bank of the Luilaka it disappeared a good many years ago. The Injóló still followed it until quite recently.

practice because of a greater distribution of wealth and the reduction of leisure due to the work imposed by the white man. This work has been imposed directly in the form of forced labor, labor on roads, economic projects, etc., or indirectly because a sum had to be raised for the payment of taxes. All this has made it more difficult to bring large numbers of people together for ceremonies lasting days and weeks. (2) Nevertheless, the custom must be described here.

> 2. One might suppose that the new uses of wealth made possible by economic development would have contributed to the disappearance of this custom. Theoretically such might have been the case, but in fact these developments were not involved in the change that has been noted.

562 556 [602] When a native wanted his favorite daughter to become bolɔ́mbɔ́, he had first to obtain the consent and financial support of all his kin. Then enormous preparations were made, for everything had to be special -- beverages, various foods, dances. On the date which had been set and made known through messengers to the entire region, an enormous crowd gathered at his house. Public festivities went on day after day. In an address suited to the occasion, he announced to those assembled his intention to set his daughter up as a bolɔ́mbɔ́. Two relatives or two of the father's wives then stripped off the girl's

Article II. The *Ndonga*

584 The *ndonga* is the guardian-keeper of the marriage; he is chosen by the parties involved and his participation as intermediary, witness, conciliator, or arbiter is required at every stage of the union. He is an official in the sense that his authority is derived from the very law which governs marriage in Nkundó society.

First of all, the *ndonga* is the indispensible intermediary for the payment of the bride price. Without him there is no legitimate marriage: *Nkó ndonga óbóka baúmba ô lontubú, bǒna ale ô bonto*, "Without a *ndonga* you are throwing your valuables away at a total loss, and your daughter is but a slave," that is, she is not a wife. Legally, only the *ndonga* is qualified to act as witness.

The importance attached by the natives to the *ndonga's* participation is apparent in every moment of daily life. Thus if a woman has been beaten by her husband, her family can be heard to say: "Our daughter (sister) is no slave; she was paid for through the agency of a *ndonga*," *bǒn'ǒkisó áfa bokwála, bowéngákí é la ndonga*. Or she herself will retort in this manner, *mutatis mutandis*, to her husband or his family when in her opinion she is not being treated properly.

The absolute necessity for the participation of a qualified *ndonga* is very rarely mentioned by Europeans in the colonial administration. One would say that they are unaware of its importance though it is crucial.

584
178
602 In order to serve as *ndonga* for a particular marriage, a person must be related at the same time to both the future husband and wife or, as they say in Lonkundo, to be *mbótswá*. Nowadays, because of the migrations of the natives, the *ndonga* who meet this qualification are rare in the centers and often cannot be found at all. Therefore, it has been necessary to adapt the traditional law to the situation. Hence a practice has developed [108] under such critical circumstances which consists in taking as one's *ndonga* a man whose integrity is generally recognized and who has every reason to be impartial and interested in the stability of the marriage. Thus it often happens that chief catechists assume the functions and responsibilities of this role.

584 Formerly, and even today in the interior, when two young people love each other but cannot find anyone qualified to perform the

583ˣ received as bride price for a sister, aunt, niece, cousin, etc.

If he has no female relatives (eánanyɛ́, bomena), or if no bride price to which he is entitled remains, he may receive a part or all of the needed capital from his father. The various members of his family each obtain either 2, 5, or from 10 to 20 rings for him [454] that they have been able to save from bride prices they have received or which they have acquired as belonga (see Chapter VI, Article V, 1), as any kind of remuneration (for work, for judging in a palaver, for mediation as ndonga, etc.), the sale price for animals, streams, or ponds, or as damages or settlement of some debt.

583ˣ ●602 Indeed the worst mischance that may befall a man in love is not to have a bride price readily available and to have to set out in search of the necessary valuables anywhere he can find them. These trips take a good deal of time. For these things are not done with the great speed of nervous Europeans. He cannot simply send a message [133] to uncle X or to the husband of aunt Y, or even go to them and explain the purpose of the visit, and expect to be able to leave at once with a present. His hosts keep him for days and weeks. "Wait a bit, I will find some for you; stay a while longer, then we'll see; it's been so long since we've seen you, you can't leave so fast," etc. Quite often in fact it is entirely in the young man's interest not to leave in a hurry; he must sometimes perform a great many small services for them to win their good will, and it is even expected that he will perform larger tasks such as helping with clearing, building a hut, hunting, etc. A European would need the patience of an angel. But even the young natives, who are sometimes relatively nervous and excited, especially because they want to conclude the matter of the bride price, and who in any case do not as yet possess the calm of the older people to whom they go, must be capable of resignation and perseverance. Hence the proverbs: lokámo ntákundóláká bakonga ndá [539] lifaya, "haste will not dig up rings in foreign territory" (bakonga are often buried in the ground for better safekeeping -- a useful precaution particularly in the past, when there were brawls between villages, and raids), and bomwa w'inkíné ntásingóláká bakonga ndá lokendo, "a child's mouth does not unroll rings in the course of travels" ("unroll" -- that is, from the feet of the wife of the relative being visited).

583x ● 602 Thus there is no special family treasure upon which the various members can draw to obtain wives. But since bride prices paid out generally come from bride prices received, and all the wealth which comes to the family as such (that is, which is not the result of purely individual and personal work by one member) is to some extent owned by the members in common, it may be said in a sense that all the members of a family share rights in the wealth of the group. However, their rights exist only to the [134] extent of their kinship and as regulated by the family council.

Even members of the family who are not legally required to do so are not unwilling to give to a relative whatever portion they can save for him. Nevertheless, I know of isolated instances where assistance was refused, either out of avarice or of opposition to the proposed marriage. But such a refusal is a neglect of the duties of kinship, and its gravity depends on the relationship between the individuals involved. (1) A refusal on the part of the mother's family almost never occurs. For they have been enriched by the bride price received for the young man's mother, and consequently he is always entitled to the bride price paid for one of the daughters of his mother's nkita (a nkita is a woman obtained by means of the bride price that has been paid).

583x 604 Therefore he goes to his maternal uncle (nyangó-mpámé (2) or nya-ngóbika among the Wăngatá, Bakáala, and Lifumba). This uncle always helps him, whether his means are great or small. Under certain conditions the nephew may even claim rights over his uncle's harem. But here we must distinguish between different cases. (Let us

---

1. Remember what has already been said, namely that we must always clearly distinguish among duties imposed by law and those imposed by kinship, friendship, decorum, courtesy, and social proprieties.

2. Literally, "male mother."

583^ 607 [595] of the bongíji." (1)

1. This term also designates the wife of a polygamist who has brought along one of her relatives as co-wife; she is the nyangôngili [sic] of the latter. (See Chapter VII, Article IV.)

For "to obtain a nkita" the Nkundó say -umba nkita, literally, "to fell a nkita," as one fells a tree or an adversary. Or they may say -bâta nkita, "to possess a nkita" (umba or bâta so-and-so, la nkita). "To become a nkita" would be rendered as -kwɛ́ nkita, "to fall into being a nkita."

583× 596 The hierarchy of those entitled to the bride price is based on the general hierarchy of family members, which gives precedence to the older generations and, within each generation, to the older members. Consequently, as long as a member of the family having the title of isɛ́ (father) is unmarried (unless he is physically or mentally incompetent), no bɔ̌na (son) is entitled to a bride price, even if it is that of his own sister. Within the same generation, the older members have precedence over the [165] younger ones, but boys have priority rights to the bride price of their uterine sisters. (1)

1. For limitations and exceptions to this right, see Chapter IV, Article II.

It occurs quite often, and was even more frequent in the past, that the person entitled to the bride price is still too young to get married, either in reality or in the opinion of his "fathers." (2) The bride price is consequently used for the benefit of another member of the family. The creditor reaps the benefits later in the form of inheritance.

2. See ibid.

●[602] Even if the woman or women meant for him should die or be taken in slavery, he can obtain the bride price of a cousin to which

583x 576 no one has direct rights (for instance, if she is an only child) or that of his mother's *nkita's* daughter, as we will see below.

●602 In these instances there is a temporary suspension of rights or rather a change in the individual entitled to them. These adjustments are made very frequently and can affect several people. Bride prices may even fall to fairly distant relatives, even in the maternal line. The transactions are performed by the patriarchs for the greatest good of the family as a whole. New rights benefiting the person originally entitled to the bride price are being created, and 583x 607 the woman married by its means has become the equivalent of a *nkita* in relation to him -- as is the following instance:

Bakutu b'Ŏfóngé (Boniface) of Bombénga w'ŏkenda (Besombó, Bombwanja) has a sister Wétsi, whose bride price serves to provide his paternal uncle, Elongama éy'ituta, with a wife, Ikókó of Ndongó-Bongílí. Bakutu's rights over his niece, Bakutu, daughter of Bolófo, are transferred to Boféndá d'Ekákola, son of his paternal great-aunt Etáka and therefore, in Nkundó terminology, to his father. As a result he obtains the rights over the bride price of Wăngi, the daughter of his uncle [166] and Ikókó. At the same time he acquires a certain authority over Boféndá, the beneficiary of the bride price that was originally intended for him, and over the latter's children.

When the bride price is meant to procure a *nkita*, there is nothing to prevent the remainder, should there be any, from being used to pay a debt, a fine, etc., or, more especially, from being given to a relative so that he can procure a wife for himself.

If, in an exceptional case, the bride price is not used for its [684] original purpose, this deviation constitutes an infraction of the law, because it is a violation of the rights of the girl for whom the bride price was paid, for she is thus deprived of her *nkita* and consequently of certain advantages. It may happen, however, that there is a conflict between this law and some other. In such cases of circumstances beyond one's control, it is up to the legal authorities to determine which of the two has priority.

Such was the case of Boléi, daughter of Ĭfolí y'Ŏngámá, of the Baséká Longwâne of Bonjoku (Bonkoso). She was married to Bombélenga

583x 607 of Likolí. The bride price went to her uncle Botóló, because her father had been taken prisoner of war by the Bongale. The family council decided to free Ǐfolí before contemplating the acquisition of a wife. Botóló therefore paid his brother's ransom. Naturally, Boléi was greatly annoyed to have to submit to this decision but, taking everything into consideration, she too thought that the liberation of her father had priority over her right to a nkita, of whom she was now deprived. For although the Bongale were able to obtain a wife thanks to the ransom, the wife was not Boléi's nkita, since each family takes only its own members into consideration.

583x ● 602 607 As we have already implied, the nkóló derives certain advantages from "possessing" a nkita. Her superior position, from the Nkundó point of view, entitles her to respect and to some assistance. An even greater advantage is her right to the dowry. As we have [167] seen, a husband keeps a small part of the dowry for household necessities; the greater part of it goes to the nkóló. Finally, the son of the nkóló has the right to his say in his mother's clan, because it has been enriched by means of valuables paid by his father's clan. He also has the right to cultivate land belonging to his mother's clan and to settle on it. Furthermore, when a member of his mother's clan is enabled to obtain a wife by means of these valuables, he has certain rights over the children of his mother's nkita, and even over the nkita herself. (1)

In relation to the children of his mother's nkita -- whom he calls his bekwá (2) or his mother's benkita (benkita bĕkámí bĕkí ngóya) -- the nkóló's son has the following rights: ✓

1) The right to respect and assistance.

2) The right to sit on the family council which decides on the division of the inheritance (so that the deceased's own son cannot have

---

1. See above, Article IV, 3, and Chapter III, Article II.

2. Singular bokwá. The term is derived from the verb -kwá or -kwé, "to fall" (see above).

583 a share of his father's goods without the consent of his nkóló) or the
602 use of the bride prices received for the daughters.

607 3) If he cannot obtain a wife through his own clan, he is entitled to the bride price of one of his bekwá if it is not first needed by one of her own uncles or brothers. The rights of the latter have priority over that of the nkóló, unless he settles in his mother's clan. For in that case his rights have precedence over those of the brothers (though never those of an uncle), and he is next in line, after his uncles, to become head of the family. Since he is sister's son, the uncle's children call him "father" just as they call his mother, their paternal aunt, by the name of isómoto ("female father"). He himself calls his first cousins bǎna, "children," and thus has precedence over them. [168]

Thus the rights to authority over the daughters of the nkita on the part of the nkóló's son are limited by the rights of the uncles and, to a certain degree, of the brothers. (1) But in the inheritance of widows the rights of the nkóló's son operate fully, and he may claim the one acquired by means of his bokwá's bride price, who in a way is his nkita (when she is assigned to him they say balá ékě nkita, "here is your nkita").

These rules can result in multiple transactions and in a repeated transferring of rights from one of the two clans to the other as well as within the same clan.

The nkóló's grandsons call the nkita's grandsons nkwá y'ǎǔmbá, "the excrements of valuables" (an expression which is not at all disrespectful or shocking) because the rights derived from the relationship of nkóló and nkita are almost without force. In favorable circumstances they are limited to a little respect and assistance. And if the nkóló's grandsons have no other kinship tie with the paternal clan of their second cousins, they cannot even call them by that name.

---

[114]

1. In his study "Het Familiehoofd bij de Nkundo-Negers" [The Family Head among the Nkundó Negroes], Congo, 1930, Vol. 2, p. 332, Father Brepoels somewhat exaggerates the rights of the nkóló's son.

583x 602 607 Thus the person who is herself the object of a bride price is the nkita. The first generation born of the nkóló calls her bonkita. In the third generation the term nkwá y áũmbá is applied to the relationship.

For example:

mother	Lokónjó	nkita of Bekombe
son	Imana	bonkita of Ifangá
mother	Lokónjó	nkita of Bekombe
son	Imana	. . . . bonkita of Ifangá
grandson . .	Etsíha	
mother	Lokónjó	nkita of Bekombe
son	Imana	bonkita of Ifangá
grandson . . .	Etsíha	nkwá y'áũmbá of Litáola

[603] [169] The bonds between the nkóló's grandsons and the nkita's grandsons are loosened because respect and authority between grandparents and grandsons are more or less nominal; in practice they no longer exist. (1)

1. See Chapter VI, Article VI.

If the nkóló leaves no descendants, the nkita's sons are freed from any obligation. Just as the Nkundó like to be able to call someone their nkita or their bokwá so, too, they take pride in not belonging to a nkóló.

583x 607 Men who bear the title of nkóló may, under given circumstances, have duties towards their benkita, especially the obligation of taking active part in getting together the amount of a bride price. If the nkóló has provided his bonkita with a wife, the latter must treat him like his father (giving him assistance, the father's portion of the meat of a game animal, etc.).

M
614 untangle all the threads. Thus it happens that young people form
582 relationships with the intention of marrying without knowing that
they are related; they are warned only by the opposition and ensuing
explanations of the elders.

We may conclude that marriage among descendants of a common ancestor is generally prohibited if they live in the same village. It is frequently permitted on the other hand, if they belong to different villages, provided that they are not, at the same time, related to one of the ancestresses.

M
Clearly, it is difficult to say what precise degree of kinship
582 formed the basis for the prohibition of or permission for a marriage
835 between descendants of a common ancestor, or what are the boundaries of an exogamous grouping.

It is also apparent from the preceding observations -- as
M
[611] from the examination of affinity as an obstacle to marriage -- that
the descent from a common mother is a more important factor than
descent from the father. This does not give proof of a form of
matriarchy, though it could be the remains or the beginning of one,
or could provide a partial explanation for one. It stems quite simply
M
[842] from the Nkundó notions concerning procreation, in which they
M
attribute the major role to the mother. There is also the fact that
● [602] greater shame is attached to being united with a person descended
M
from the same woman, and finally the fact that they feel a stronger
[593] affection for the mother than for the father (a sentiment [250] which
is accentuated by polygamy). The three causes are closely related.

M
Finally, it should be noted that there is a group among the
184 Nkundó we are discussing which is less strict than the others in this
582 matter. The relatives among whom marriage is prohibited is
definitely more limited; that is, their exogamous groupings are more
limited. The people in question are the Bongale (see Introduction),
and the same phenomenon may be observed among the Elíngá. (1)

P
[582] 1. The Batswá are still more liberal, and in this respect their practices differ very little from ancient European laws and customs.

582 614 their intervention is greatly reduced by the fact that much of their authority has been shifted to the chiefs named by the colonial administration, and also by all the contingencies of modern life. Since on the other hand, the young people are gradually breaking the ancient limits in order to acquire greater freedom, the elders will one day have to yield to them.

Article IV. Affinity

582 602 Affinity among the Nkundó should not be understood to have the meaning given in European civil or ecclesiastic law. Marriage is forbidden with all persons who are *bakiló* (Sing. *bokiló*). (2)

2. Contrary to the statement by Father Kaptein (*Congo*, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 541).

Therefore one must know what persons are called *bakiló*, a fairly complicated problem for us Europeans.

To make the matter more understandable, certain considerations must be developed before giving the general rules.

1. General considerations

1) Affinity is not as great an obstacle to marriage as kinship. It is possible to obtain a sort of "dispensation," and for many degrees of affinity, divorce or death removes the barrier. But there are transgressions [252], and, except for the few indicated above, these do not occur in cases of kinship.

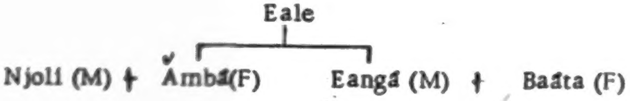
The following legitimate reasons for a "dispensation" are given: a danger that the patrimony will be scattered because of the infidelity of a wife who absolutely refuses to remain with her husband, added to the difficulties of a divorce palaver and the subsequent reimbursements, and -- a reason closely linked to the one just given -- a passionate love between the two people who are relatives by marriage.

582 602 The dispensation is given by the ndonga acting with the family council, which often yields before the fact, particularly if the second reason is involved. (1)

> 1. "To give a dispensation" is translated as kilola. A marriage contracted with a legitimate dispensation or one accorded because of the pressure of the accomplished fact is called kilókilólá, or "an affinity which is not maintained according to the regulations."

[671] 2. Contrary to European law, which recognizes only a direct affinity between husband and his wife's family, Nkundó law also recognizes an indirect affinity, so that a person is affinally related even to the spouses of his wife's relatives. That is, each person is affinally related, not only to his spouse's kin, but also to their relatives by marriage. Thus, in the example below, Njoli and Baáta are true relatives by marriage, though indirect ones. (2)

> 2. The Nkundó do not make a terminological distinction between the two types of affinity. We are using the terms "direct" and "indirect" for the sake of convenience and clarity.



There is an important difference between the two types of affinity: direct affinity is a much greater obstacle to marriage than indirect affinity, and exceptions are made only rarely and only for certain degrees of relationship.

582 602 576 3) A distinction must be made between "superior" and "inferior" relatives, that is, between those who have [253] precedence

582 602 [576] and those who owe submission and respect. The "superior" relatives are the ascendants, uncles, aunts, etc., in short, all those bearing the title of "father" or "mother," as well as elder brothers (elder sisters, elder cousins, etc.), who are batɔ́mɔ́lɔ́ (sing. botɔ́mɔ́lɔ́). [601] The "inferiors" are the descendants, those who are called "children" (bǎna): sons and daughters, grandsons, nephews, nieces, younger brothers or sisters, and those who are classed with them and called bakúnɛ́ (sing. bokúnɛ́).

[595] [587] 4) Polygamy and the inheritance of widows introduce another element. We will see that although persons of certain degrees of affinity may not marry, the prohibition is lifted to permit the inheritance of widows.

5) Our term "relatives by marriage" the Nkundɔ́ term and bakilɔ́ are not synonymous, even with respect to direct affinity. When we use the term "relatives by marriage" here, we are speaking in Nkundɔ́ terms. They do not consider certain persons whom we would include in that category as "relations by marriage." Such persons [601] are included in the group which as a whole is designated as likilɔ́ or bakilɔ́, but when properly and accurately referred to they are called bǒme, "husband," or wǎli, "wife," because they may marry each other and therefore affinity, strictly speaking, cannot be applied to them. In other words, for the Nkundɔ́, affinity is the relationship of a person with (only) those of his spouse's relatives whom he is forbidden to marry. It is well to bear in mind the double meaning of this term.

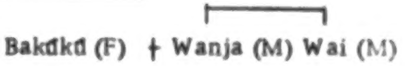
2. The rules

1. Direct Affinity

582 603 606 A. Marriages are prohibited in the direct line. Nevertheless, in accordance with consideration number 4, a son or grandson may inherit or marry the widows of his father or grandfather, but not the reverse. [254]

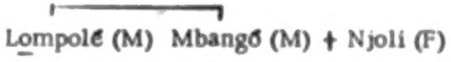
582
607

Example 12


Bakɔ́kɔ́ (F)
Wanja (M)
Wai (M)

Wai may always marry Bakɔ́kɔ́ [256].

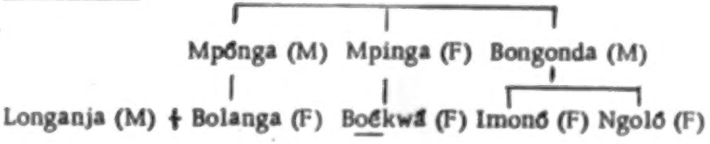
Example 13


Lompolé (M)
Mbangó (M)
Njoli (F)

Lompole may not marry Njoli. Very rarely an exception is permitted.

582
605

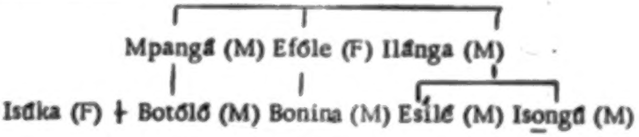
Example 14


Mpónga (M)
Mpinga (F)
Bongonda (M)
Longanja (M)
Bolanga (F)
Boékwá (F)
Imonó (F)
Ngoló (F)

Longanja may not marry his elder cousins, but he may marry the younger ones with the exception of Boékwá who is bǒnankáná and has a "father's" rank (see above).

Similarly:

Example 15

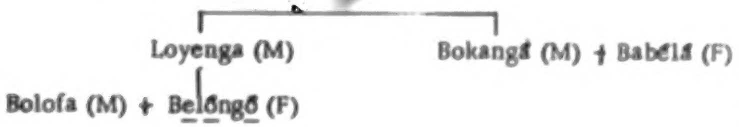

Mpangá (M)
Efóle (F)
Ilánga (M)
Isɔ́ka (F)
Botóló (M)
Bonina (M)
Esílé (M)
Isongɔ́ (M)

Only Botóló's younger cousins may marry Isɔ́ka. Bonina is bǒnankáná, therefore "father," and consequently included among the uncles (see B, above).

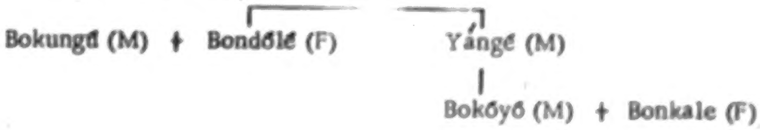
[602] Note, finally, that the more distant the relationship, the less strict the prohibition, that is, dispensations and exceptions are more easily accepted.

582
604 The same rules are applicable to aunts and uncles, but they are less strict:

Example 18 (comparable to Example 16):


Loyenga (M)
Bokangá (M) + Babélá (F)
Bolofa (M) + Belóngó (F)

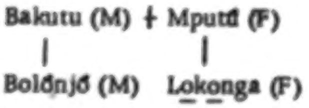
Example 19 (comparable to Example 17):


Bokungá (M) + Bondólé (F)
Yángé (M)
Bokóyó (M) + Bonkale (F)

582
595
605
[602] B. Marriage between affines who are collaterally related through their lineal relatives:

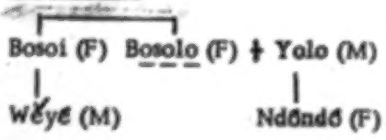
a) Marriage between descendants [of the lineal relatives through whom the affinity is established] is strictly forbidden. Thus, the children of two spouses may not marry each other; they are considered brothers and [258] sisters. The same rule applies to two half-cousins (Example 21).

Example 20:


Bakutu (M) + Mputá (F)
Bolónjó (M)
Lokonga (F)

Marriage between Bolónjó and Lokonga is strictly prohibited.

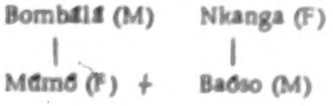
Example 21


Bosoi (F)
Bosolo (F) + Yolo (M)
Wěyé (M)
Ndóndó (F)

Marriage between Wěyé and Ndóndó is prohibited.

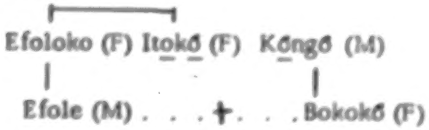
572
602 b) Marriage between ascendants [of the lineal relatives through whom affinity is established] is forbidden, but an exception is made when the affinity is broken by death.

Example 22:


Bombɛ́lɛ́ (M)
Nkanga (F)
Mɔ́mɔ́ (F)
+
Baɔ́so (M)

Marriage between Bombɛ́lɛ́ and Nkanga is forbidden.

Example 23


Efoloko (F)
Itokɔ́ (F)
Kɔ́ngɔ́ (M)
Efole (M)
+
Bokokɔ́ (F)

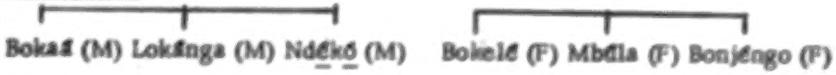
Marriage between Itokɔ́ and Kɔ́ngɔ́ is forbidden, but permitted upon the death of either Efole or Bokokɔ́.

Dispensations and violations of this rule do occur.

C. Affinity in collateral line arising from a marriage between relatives in collateral line: The rules are the same as for direct affinity in collateral line (see above, no. 1), C.)

Example 24

[607]


Bokaɛ́ (M)
Lokɛ́nga (M)
Ndɛ́kɔ́ (M)
Bokelɛ́ (F)
Mbɔ́la (F)
Bonjɛ́ngo (F)

Bokaɛ́ is married to Bonjɛ́ngo. Neither he nor Lokɛ́nga may marry Bokelɛ́, and Ndɛ́kɔ́ may not marry Mbɔ́la [Translator's note: the table shows Ndɛ́kɔ́ to be female, but I have corrected the error]. If he had married Bokelɛ́, Ndɛ́kɔ́ could marry Mbɔ́la. Furthermore, if Bonjɛ́ngo were Mbɔ́la's senior, then Lokɛ́nga could also marry Mbɔ́la. [259]

593ˣ 574 ótswɛ́kɛ́ liɛ́la otswɛ̂k'olɛ́, bɛ́fɔ́kolaka mbɔ́k'ɛ́y'olɛ́ la ngom'a nkolɛ́, "If you are married go back to your parents, or you will be taught the way with drums and gongs," that is, "when you are dead." (2)

[764] [604] [534] 2. A woman is buried in her own native clan. Her corpse is transported there to the accompaniment of drums and horns. The lokolɛ́ gong announces her death.

593ˣ ● 602 A married woman may not evade the duty of helping her relatives under special circumstances (pregnancy, illness, serious accidents, death). This obligation [285] is not limited to her mother and father, but extends to all her relatives; the closer the degree of kinship, the stricter the obligation.

[626] Besides, love of family is sufficiently developed so that there is no danger of the woman forgetting herself too much in this realm. And a husband who would like to prevent her from fulfilling these elementary duties would be much criticized by all and should expect a dissolution of the marriage.

593ˣ 574 342 556 It was said above that a husband builds a hut for his wife. His relatives often assist him in this task. But it also happened -- in the past, for colonization has removed the possibility of it -- that the woman's father wanted to build his daughter's house himself or at least to make the pavement out of clay brought from her native land. This act was a demonstration of wealth and politico-social importance as well as proof of fatherly affection. The husband, for his part, was honored to have married the daughter of such an important man and loved her all the more. Thus a number of women say that "they only cooked on ancestral soil." This soil was brought in baskets across distances up to 50 kilometers by Batswa and by men of the woman's clan or village. Her father could do it because of his great influence and regal rewards (bokɔ́ndo, verb kɔ́nda) were distributed during a feast (ntɛkɛ) given for the workers and their relatives after the task was completed. This was done for Bompeli, daughter of Bokombe of Litóli (Bombwanja) married to Bony[illegible] w'enyuka of the Basɛ́kɛ́ Mbangó (Bonkoso); for Beluka, daughter of

4. Treason

628
602 Treachery and treason between relatives by marriage were not unusual. The proverb says bomóng'ósulu nd'ókiló, "treason exists [294] chiefly on the part of relative by marriage." Not that this happened through any fundamental maliciousness apart from perhaps some rare exception. But in case of a war or particularly of a vendetta, relative by marriage did not hesitate to betray his in-law and thus send him to his death.

We shall limit ourselves to giving two case histories which are well known to the current generation. (1)

> 1. I do not know exactly when these events occurred. In any case they date back to the time of the Independent State and to the beginning of the occupation.

At the time when the Ingende post was occupied by the white "Itumbambile" and that of Ikɛ́ngɛ́ by "Bosɛ́njɛ́," some men from [266] Boɛ́lɛ́ (Ikɛ́kema y'ɔ̂selo, Bombwanja) surprised an inhabitant of Bokukɔ́ (Wɛ̌ngatɛ́), killed him, and ate him. Shortly thereafter Lokwa jw'ɔ̌yelɛ́, a man from Boɛ́lɛ́, went to visit his sister Eámɛ́, who was married to Imbilɛ́ is'ɛ̂y'osola of Ikonjɛ́. It happened that the latter was a maternal uncle of the victim of the Boɛ́lɛ́ men. Was Lokwa unaware of this relationship? Or did he trust his brother-in-law? Whatever the case he was well received. Nevertheless, Imbilɛ́ had not forgotten his nephew's assassination and went to inform his close kin of this good opportunity to avenge the murder. One evening they broke into the hut that had been placed at the visitor's disposal and found him there with his sister Eámɛ́ and his wife Lompoko. The [266] two women managed to escape, but Lokwa was taken, killed, and eaten. Naturally, his sister Eámɛ́ did not return to her husband, and there was no question of a restitution of the bride price.

The second case dates from the same period. Two Batswa of [266] Mbɛ́langa (Etɔ́ontɛ́le, Bongili), Bokɔ́ngo and Bolɛ́yengɛ́, surprised Mboko Ilombɛ́ of Boɛ́lɛ́ in the forest, killed him, and ate him.

628 602 Some time thereafter, a man named Bengóngó from the Ndongó village of the Bongíli went to Boálá to visit his sister Boáka, who was married to Eale éâ Bofeké. The latter told him that the village was enraged because of the assassination of one of their people by the Batswa of the Bongíli. He advised him to go [295] and hide in the fallow ground lest excited men come upon him and revenge themselves on him. He led his brother-in-law there himself. Therefore he knew the exact location of his hiding place and ran to betray him to the others. [266] They encircled the fallow ground and easily found poor Bengóngó, who was pitilessly massacred and eaten. His sister Boáka never knew of her husband's treachery; she thought that despite all his precautions, the other inhabitants had discovered her brother's hiding place. (1)

[649] 1. We should not be too astonished that during that period the Europeans did not intervene in these wars, vendettas, massacres, and acts of cannibalism. They let the natives do as they pleased among themselves and demanded only that they leave them alone and render them services and tribute. They had other things to do in those times. The white men Ǎmbá and Baisǎnkoi, of whom the natives still speak with respectful fear, were the first to begin punishing acts of barbarism in this region.

602 This hypocrisy on the part of the husband toward his wife and brother-in-law is due to the presence of two opposing feelings within him -- on the one hand, the love of his family and the feeling of solidarity which engenders hate and the desire for vengeance; on the other, love for his spouse. As these feelings are in complete contradiction with each other, he cannot reconcile them. But at least he can preserve appearances.

[539] This situation is referred to in the following proverb: bokiló ákwǐsáká, wěngoyak'eyalo, "if your bokiló has hidden you, change

602 539 shelters." There is another, which is cruder: *bokiló tőtswe nkélé: bafumba báleke mbá, emí ńkoléké wě*, "relative by marriage, let us go to the palm grove; the bafumba ants (*Dorylus wilverthii*) eat palm nuts; I will eat you." The following saying, applied to someone who is always trying to clear himself, is a more or less involuntary accusation: *mpǫ́l'ǒkiló, ńtúfa é mpǫ́ngo; mpǫ́ngo y'ǒkiló nsako ngá mbwá*, "I do not eat my relative by marriage; on the contrary, I dip (food) in his fat; an in-law's fat is as tasty as a dog's." [296]

Nevertheless, a man never goes so far as to cause the death 602 628 of his sister's daughter's or other relative's husband. Or, as the Nkumdó say, one does not kill a person by whom one has been enriched. What is the reason for this distinction? According to our people it is the affection they feel toward their sister, daughter, etc.; they love them too much to pain them by taking away their husbands.

This treacherous and barbarous conduct is therefore directed by the *bokiló* toward the *bokanga*, that is, by those who have paid the bride price to those who have received it, but never the reverse.

Appendix

000 This appendix pertains to each of the three preceding articles. Therefore it may reasonably be placed here. It does not deal with any special law nor with a custom that is legal, universal, or common. It is concerned with isolated cases. But it seems to me that the few lines to follow are not without interest, since they give a good indication of the mentality that may be found among these people.

602 578 It may happen that a woman has a complaint or feels she has cause to be dissatisfied with one of her relatives, for example her brother. In her opinion he may not be sufficiently kind and generous toward her, or he may treat her in a manner she considers unfair. In a moment of anger she reveals her feelings to her husband and incites him to avenge her by injuring or even killing the one who has offended her.

That is what happened several decades ago to Bosela w'ǒmpwengé of Bolénge (Bongíli) (who died in 1932, a very old man). His wife Ilumbé was very dissatisfied in that her brother did not give

602 578 her enough gifts. She addressed her husband as follows: bejwɔ́ bɛ́kɛ̌ ɔ́momɛ́lɛ́ nkâna, alekɛ́ ompímaka tɔ̌ma, "Your corpses (deceased parents), kill my brother for me, he always refuses to give me [297] presents. (1) Whereupon Bosela took his weapons and went off.

> 1. This is one of the most serious insults. But a person to whom it is addressed considers it a duty to take up the order or invitation made in those terms. It is a sort of forced oath, and it is called tɛ́na ndaɛ́, afeya (tɛ́nela) X ndaɛ́. These terms may apply to many other situations: a call for help during a war, assistance in inflicting an ordeal, assistance in the iloɛ (society of those who do not observe funerary abstinence), etc. A person may address himself in this manner, and in that case the expression corresponds to our word "oath," "to take an oath."

Being a good psychologist, he made no mistake about his wife's personal feelings. He knew that he was involved in a dangerous impasse: if he disappointed his wife's expectations, she would be furious; on the other hand, if he took his brother-in-law's life, she would be even angrier. The thing to do was to resort to a trick. When he entered the forest he had the good fortune to come upon a boende antelope, which he slaughtered. He removed the liver and went home carrying this organ, still fresh and warm, in his hand. He presented it to his wife, saying, "Here is the liver of your brother whom you asked me to kill." There followed a violent scene. The woman, beside herself, began to weep for her dead brother, and in her anger she ran off, shouting at her husband: "Oh! You no longer love me, since you have assassinated my brother; you will not see me again." When she arrived at the home of her family, she found everyone going about their usual occupations; there was no sign of death or, more especially, of murder. Her astonishment increased

602 578 when she found her brother in good health and full of life. She could not believe her eyes. In an instant the whole family was alerted and gathered together. She explained what had happened. They quieted and consoled her; they praised her husband for having behaved so intelligently. She was congratulated. For he could have done what she had told him, so she had reason to rejoice that he loved her so well and wisely. Thus, a few days later, she quietly returned to her husband.

An entirely different course of events, and a fatal one, occurred in the case of [298] Bukɛ́fea of Bompela (Bokɔ́tola) who was married to Elɔ́ngɛ́ of Boɔ́lɔ́ (both are still alive). The woman continuously went back to her family. Her husband, exasperated, threatened one day to kill her brother Eale; when he was gone she would be more inclined to stay home. He actually fulfilled his threat. His wife went into a terrible rage, but she nevertheless remained faithful to her husband. The bow used to shoot the murderous arrow has been preserved by its owner as a souvenir.

Article VI

Relations Between the Wife and Her Husband's Family

602 Naturally, a wife must be on the best of terms with her husband's family, with whom she is in continual contact. She owes respect to his parents and elders. If she does not manage to live in peace with them as well as with her husband's sisters, etc., the marriage will not last. Misunderstandings, disputes, squabbles, and, above all, insults and spiteful comments will force her to leave. Therefore, such contingencies can be put into the category of motives which lead the man's family to interfere in his marriage. There is a constant concern among the Nkundó to avoid the dissolution of the union due to extreme incompatibilities, because any break-up causes enormous difficulties, as we will see suo loco.

It is very hard to discern whether the small services the wife is expected to render her husband's family are legal obligations or simply requirements of social decorum. A momentary omission

602 brings forth reprimands on the part of the husband and his parents which obviously can easily degenerate into quarrels. If the omissions are so frequent and of such a nature that they can no longer be explained as simply forgetting, a whim, or a fit of peevishness, but [299] are taken to indicate spitefulness or vulgarity, the matter is [621] brought before the ndonga (who is often assisted by the family tribunal) or brought before the authority constituted by the woman's kin. If in spite of everything the expected improvement does not take place, the break-up is inevitable.

606 The husband's father and mother extend the same affection to their son's wife as they feel toward him. They consider her their own child, and it is not unusual to find that their love for the wife equals their feeling for their own son. She is only a relative by marriage, but out of affection for her they call her their child. She, for [601] her part, does not use toward them the term bakanga (or bakilő) but out of filial respect calls them "father" and "mother." Exceptions to this practice may be found, however.

606
224 If the father (and those who fall in the same category such as uncles, elder brothers, etc.) kills a large game animal, he is expected to give his son's (or brother's, etc.) wife a piece of meat, whose size depends on the number of daughters-in-law he has and which consists of one or several chops (bokálako) (1) and the piece at the nape of the neck (botómbyá).

606
835 Illicit relations between the husband's father and his daughter-in-law would be an unheard of crime. The same would be true with respect to any of the "superior" relatives. (2) The laws regulating

---

1. Called lieto among the Bolengé and the tribes of the Losanganya.

[178]
[184] 2. Only the Boángi -- like the Elángá of the Losanganya - allow relations between a brother and the wife of his junior; and they are already beginning to find imitators among their neighbors to the southeast, the Injóló.

606
835 the relations between a wife and her husband's parents are closely connected with the rules pertaining to the prohibition related to affinity and seems to spring from the same source. Therefore it will be useful to have in mind what we have said in the preceding chapter, Article IV.

607 The husband's elder brothers treat his wife as their sister. The wife calls her husband's sisters [300] *bakilǒ*, but out of respect she often gives them the title of "mother." (1)

[601] 1. Among the Elǎngǎ the wife also calls her husband's sisters *bongíli* (pl. *bangíli*); they call her *bǒnongíli* (pl. *bǎnangíli*). A wife often calls her husband's mother *nyangôngíli*. *Bǎnangíli l'ǎnangíli* means "the brother's wives and their sisters-in-law."

587 After the husband's death, as has been said *suo loco*, his father or his brother may marry his widow. But this practice is not well regarded and is permitted only rarely, chiefly when the scattering of the family patrimony is feared or if the two interested parties have an unusual love for each other.

837
● 602 With respect to children or younger brothers and all those who fall into that category, the situation is altogether different. Illicit relations with wives of their father, grandfather, uncle, elder brother, or elder cousin, are judged much less severely. Generally, misconduct does not give rise to claims for payment, or the payment is demanded "for form's sake" and consists of a hen and a bunch of bananas. By means of this payment the guilty one recognizes his error and renders homage to the right of his elder.

[626] In general public opinion condemns these relations and often with great severity. The question of degree of kinship as well as other considerations result in a great diversity among the cases, so we will examine each situation separately and distinguish each time between the husband's reaction and that of public opinion.

837 626 Chapter II, Article XI, 2. But such a situation is far from ideal in Nkundó eyes and is permitted only if, on the one hand, the son ardently loves the woman and, on the other, if the father is too slow in obtaining a wife for him.

837 602 Here then we observe a conflict between two feelings: a husband's jealousy and the affection of a father and various relatives. That is why it is difficult -- as in many situations -- to draw the line between what is permitted and what is forbidden. From what has preceded and from the general explanations given by natives, we can conclude, however, that: [303] 1) relations between a woman and her husband's son are forbidden and severely judged, but with much more leniency than in the case of "superior" relatives; 2) the [593x] father may not go to extremes in repressing misconduct nor ask his own son to pay an indemnity, since to do so would be to enrich himself through his child's misbehaviour, and the latter would have no means of paying him except through him or his mother's clan -- and it would be very unjust and inappropriate to force him to have recourse to the latter.

593x 837 607 B. A younger brother calls his elder brother's wife wǎlí, or wife, and she calls him bǒme, or husband, because they may marry one another. Therefore adulterous relations may also be found among them. But in practice some distinctions must be made.

If the younger brother is not married and the elder one has a harem, -- a state of affairs which was very common in the past but today is very rare -- the situation is analogous to the one described above in relation to a father's wife except that there is greater indulgence toward the culprit.

If the elder brother is monogamous and the younger brother a bachelor, relations of the latter with the former's wife when the husband is present are forbidden. If the younger brother nevertheless yields to the temptation, he is condemnable. The husband may not claim an indemnity. But in revenge he may procure for himself a "make-believe indemnity" (nyongo éâ bolâlambo) by felling one of the culprit's banana trees, taking away his chickens, moving his hut, taking some other similar action. The purpose of these acts, according

603 837 626 184

> higher morality -- in our terms. Among them the question of relations between a woman and her husband's son, younger brother, etc., does not even arise. Have they been influenced by some neighboring tribe? Or must we attribute the inferior morality of some of the tribes in this respect to decadence.

837 602

The following conclusions emerge from this long description:

1) Relations between a man and the wife of his son, younger brother, etc., in short of anyone inferior to him in the family hierarchy, are always strictly prohibited and never occur.

2) They do occur on the other hand between an inferior and the wife of his senior and superior. The degree of kinship between the husband and the culprit plays a considerable role in determining the seriousness or triviality of an infraction, the sanctions applied, and the various consequences. Some relations are accepted, others are censured with varying degrees of leniency, still others are pitilessly criticized.

3) In these matters a distinction may be made between two aspects:

a) the husband's reaction and the repression of the illicit relations;
b) the judgment of public opinion;

or:

a) the financial aspect;
b) the moral aspect -- to use that term for want of a better one.

Sometimes a third element comes into play, namely the intervention of the family on the side of the culprit against the injured husband who, for one reason or another, is in the wrong himself.

602 837 684

a) The usual sanction for adultery is, for the man, an indemnity to pay. But such a payment cannot be made since no financial transaction -- strictly speaking at least -- may be made

602 within a group of close kin, seeing that, from a certain standpoint,
837 property belongs to all the members, each sooner or later receiving
684 or inheriting from the other. But in cases where other sanctions can
be imposed, they are considered legitimate. [309]

b) Except in the case of relations between brother and sister-
626 in-law -- within the limits described above -- public opinion is
837 severe in its judgment, even more severe than for ordinary cases of
602 adultery, although because of the more tangible nature of the sanctions imposed against the latter, these seem on the surface to be considered more serious; many natives even have that impression. Or at least that is the first impression that spontaneously comes from their explanations; currently, they stress the indemnity, and in their accounts of ancient proceedings and violent sanctions, they forget the other aspect. Others do not distinguish between the two sides of the problem, or distinguish between them only very poorly. Only in going to the bottom of things do they -- like ourselves -- become aware of the two aspects and the importance of not confusing them.

The leniency we observe in certain cases on the part of the interested parties who have been wronged, and sometimes on the part of public opinion, does not seem to us to have been explained as a leniency based on principle nor as a legitimation of these relations (except in the case of brothers within the limits indicated). They seem rather to spring from the affection they have for the culprit, their sympathy for his condition as a bachelor, a certain community of interests, and finally from an evaluation of certain other elements that may be involved (such as a fundamental jealousy in the case of brothers).

The great distinction made by the Nkundó in this realm as
602
181 in others between inferior and superior relatives is based on their
conception of authority, which is patriarchal, therefore paternal. What is involved is not so much a fear of power as a reverent awe -- although the first should not be excluded. In their eyes an inferior does not exist for the benefit and advantage of the superior, but the reverse; authority exists for the good of the inferior, who to preserve hierarchy and order must submit to the [310] superior. The superior's duty to help his inferior (in his difficulties, his palavers, his poverty),

602 181 to be liberal and generous toward him and therefore to make goods available to him, to be lenient in matters concerning justice and property and obliging in conjugal matters -- as long as the principle of authority remains secure is based on the same idea. The exploitation of an inferior by his superior is entirely contrary to the basic nature of Nkundó authority, while the reverse is entirely in conformity with it. (1)

> 1. This attitude may account -- at least to some extent -- for the liberties that the natives readily take with the European, their superior or master, such as domestic thefts, inappropriate requests, the kind of begging and lack of respect for authority that we are accustomed to seeing, etc.

Article VII. Adultery

837 For the Nkundó, adultery is an illicit union between a man and a married woman. From the moment the ikulá is paid for a woman, any relations with her by a man other than the husband-to-be are considered adulterous.

1. Terminology

There is no exclusive or specific term in Lonkundo by which our word "adultery" may be translated. There are a number of words in the language which are only partially equivalent to it.

1) First of all, the Nkundó speak of bongombe, a term denoting steady and continuous relations with a woman who is a complete stranger, that is, who is not related in any way. The word designates the relationship as well as the persons involved. This type of adultery is also called a wǐsamaka or linsámba jǎ njísámá (from the verb ísama) -- that is, a secret, as against a true linsámbá (which will be

837 [196] 4) To indicate a tendency toward adultery (especially on the part of women) the Nkundó use the verb fâfoka which literally denotes clothing that is too big and that flies in the wind. The noun loyǒ or boyǒ is also used.

The verb used for discovering a case of adultery is tẹmbọla, the noun is ntẹmbọ́.

Occasional or permanent adultery has always been very common. This fact is undoubtedly due to the relative ease with which it is possible to escape discovery and consequent sanctions. A woman [574] going to visit her family cannot possibly be followed or watched by her husband; the distances make such surveillance difficult and, furthermore, it would have disastrous consequences for the stability of the marriage, since neither the woman nor her family would put up with it. Other partial causes are lasciviousness, polygamy, etc., as we will see later in the text.

2. Gifts

837 431 [602] An adulterous man and woman send each other presents; his consist of meat, arrows, etc., hers of food and various small objects. A woman's gifts to her lover are called botúmo (the noun used with the verb tumba, "to make burn" (1). Very young relatives generally serve as intermediaries. Note that a woman rarely sends her son, for she has reason to fear that the gift would not reach its destination; the boy would give himself a treat with it. She can have more confidence in a daughter.

A man's gift is called by the generic term mpató, "a gift that is sent, a dispatch." [313]

In isolated cases (yětsi) a man sends an arrow, some small object, beads, meat, etc. Nowadays money or cloth have been

---

1. Note that the noun and the verb are not etymologically related. Perhaps botúmo might be related to túma, "to show, to designate." The Ekonda call this gift elika. See Chapter II, Article I.

2: Hulstaert--480 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

593x Women in particular are very intolerant of having anyone touch
861 their children, even the child's own father. This fact can be attributed in part to a lack of any unity of feeling between the spouses and partly to maternal love, which is purely natural, psycho-physiological, so to speak.

Measures taken against a child who has misbehaved often
578 result in serious domestic quarrels, sometimes followed by the
861 wife's flight to her family. Such was the case of Bakutu b'Ôfóngé (born around 1880). His father, Bolónjó, had forbidden him to peel a piece of sugar cane [513] in a clumsy and wasteful manner. The boy did not want to listen to reason. Next thing you know he had cut a deep wound in his finger. "What did I tell you?" shouted the father. "Now you are punished for your disobedience." Thereupon the mother, Mbélá, flew into a rage. "Oh! You are killing my child!" and so on. She rolled up her mats, took her baskets on her back, and took the path leading to her village.

Nkundó casuistry includes the case -- which seems hypothetical or at least belonging to the past, for I have never known or heard of a real instance -- of a man taking revenge on his wife for having insulted his child. His revenge took the form of ordering the child to go and kill a goat belonging to her mother's clan, thus obliging the child to pay an indemnity to the owner, so that the mother finds herself thus being punished by her family. The father's right to do this is recognized in Nkundó jurisprudence. But from the standpoint of education the solution is far from ideal.

5) The influence of the kin group also plays a great role.
● 602 The Nkundó are very much attached to their families. Their chil-
861 dren are at home everywhere in the group. A wife has very close ties to her own family. The father's brothers and sisters are a child's "fathers"; his maternal aunts and uncles are his "mothers." A child's real father does not do much to defend his son against scolding or punishment from his own close kin but does not readily accept the intervention of his wife's family, and vice versa. And again the child can take advantage of such dissension. The situation occurs quite frequently although there are many exceptions.

601 politically, his whole society is, in fact, based on those relationships
561 which are incomprehensible to us. Indeed, the order of duty and re-
613 sponsibility, of authority and honor, are socially, legally, and politically determined by the order of birth. That order is determined by generation, and within the generation, by age: from the oldest father down the whole line of fathers to the oldest "child" in the whole row of children. The children of your older brother, even if they are younger in years, go before your own children. As we shall see later, the female members of the family, who practically fall outside this order, recover their place of honor through their sons.

613 From this short description of the paternal clan, it is immediately apparent that the clan is not a geographical concept among the K Nkundo. Wherever the daughter may marry, wherever the son may wander in service to the Whites, that person always and everywhere continues by law to belong to his wise, and he remains bound to all the rights and duties of his place in that community.

602 It also appears that clan and blood relationship do not come any-
613 where near to blanketing each other. Each "blood relationship" of the Nkundo extends itself over various paternal clans, since the blood relations of the mother, as well as the descendants of all the other women of my wise who are lawfully married out of the clan, belong to another wise.

/152/ 3. Inheritance in the Clan

613 Each clan has possessions that constitute the inheritance or patrimony
421 of the members, the domain of the family. These goods are of two kinds: economic and dotal. The former are subdivided into real property, or inalienable property, and personal property.

The real property of the clan consists of land and waters. The land
613 is divided into: arable land, land for gardens, and hunting areas.
423 These constitute common property, whose cultivation or usufruct is divided among the members of the clan: each one receives his garden land and hunting ground to clear; as soon as the user leaves it, that ground is free again for the community. Palm groves, of course, also remain common property of the members. A similar arrangement applies to water rights. Larger fishing areas remain common property and are, under the leadership of the clan head, communally exploited. Smaller fishing grounds, creeks, ponds, etc., are allotted to each

177 Although even St. Thomas teaches that the only natural authority is that of the head of the family, European legislation has, through ignorance, completely abolished the rights of the native family head; the wife is freed from all ties and is thus abandoned to licentiousness. Through a legal fiction, clan law has gone over into the hands of the "recognized native courts of justice," which, however, have just as much to do with the clan court as a policeman with a father. The communization of trade, education, and the rearing of the young, as is demonstrated to us by Russia, would revolutionize our society far less than our installation of these so-called native courts of justice has done in the Congo. Education and correction have been replaced by punishment. Politics, which have begun to play such an all-important
602 role in our society, had /155/ almost no importance in Nkundo society.
613 The neighboring clans were all connected with each other through blood relationship, intermarriage, or friendship ties. Only when there was a struggle against a foreign and common enemy did politics have a role to fulfill. And then the same order of rank was observed among the clans as was already indicated for the members of a single clan.

177
728
622 Here also, biased or romantic products of our ideas about barbarism have adapted these so-called intertribal wars to the need that we felt, to civilize the natives at any cost. These wars were not to be compared with our European wars, in which a mass of people are slaughtered. In the Congo, no sooner had wounded or dead fallen on both sides than the chiefs were already congregated to conclude a peace treaty. Here again, we meant to respect the political organization of the natives by the creation of chieftainships and native chiefs, who were to form the political-administrative link between the native clans and the European higher administration. Such chiefs were totally unknown in native society. Together with the establishment of the native courts, the establishment of chieftainships gave the death blow to the actual social organization of the Nkundo-Mongo. The very fact that these institutions are territorial demonstrates clearly that here no ordinary shifting of power has taken place, but simply an elimination of the traditional power in favor of a new colonial power.

177
622 Indeed, where formerly the "customary rightful chief" was sought out, even though it was sometimes only a formality, the new formula of the "sectors" has relieved the higher administration from this care too. And it is only to be hoped that this new formula will at least do away with the legal fiction that the "chiefs" are actually "something native," so that they may be classified for once and for all in the

613 authority (mpifo). Each clan can, however, also take in other persons
614 who fall outside the order of authority, but who legally belong to the
608 clan. Along with the real descendants, they make up the legal clan.

These are, in the first place, the wives who have married into the clan, the children brought with them (mbusola), and the lawful house-keepers. In addition, there are the clients who have been taken in; then the war prisoners and slaves; and finally the Pygmies. The women married into the clan are naturally separate, as are also the Pygmies who form a completely separate community. The others are gradually treated as children, receive their part in the general responsibility and protection, their place in the court session, etc. Depending on the degree to which they develop in the bosom of the clan which has taken them in, they can constitute a separate group in it, which becomes more and more independent.

7. The Maternal Clan

602 Each Nkundo has a double "fatherland": his wise and his bonyango.
613 The bonyango is the paternal clan of his mother. His mother gave birth to him there; her blood relations live there and receive him with motherly love and will protect him against all difficulties; he has often passed a large part of his happiest childhood years there; and there he can always find a safe shelter when, for one reason or another, he might lose the paternal clan.

The structure of the maternal clan naturally resembles that of the paternal clan in every way. If we treat it specially here, it is not in order to speak of the form, but only to point out the specific rights that each person has in his maternal clan.

601 Just as all of the brothers and sisters of my father are my "fathers,"
602 so all of the brothers and sisters of my mother are my "mothers."
613 Mother's brother, that is, my maternal uncle, I call ngompame,
nyangompame. All the nephews and nieces on the mother's side are my "children." A special tie binds me to the children of the nkita of my mother, that is, to the children of the women who was acquired by the maternal clan with the bride price /158/ that had been paid for my mother by my wise. Mother is, thus, the nkolo, the woman or mistress, of those children who call me their father.

602 As long as I continue to live in my own paternal clan, I have the
613 right to special care and love from the maternal clan. If I cannot find

602 sufficient dowry at home, then I can always go and appeal to my
613 maternal uncles who are obliged to help me insofar as they are able.
I even have the right to the free dowry of one of the children of my mother's nkita. I may always lay out gardens and hunt in the territory of my bonyango, and take part in the court sessions of the maternal clan when they consider the allotment of the free dowries or the division of the inheritance. If, however, I wish to leave my father's clan and establish myself for good in the maternal clan, then I receive priority in everything over my male and female cousins and become heir and clan leader directly after my maternal uncles. This is, thus, a truly princely compensation for the so-called inferiority of the woman in native society: the child of the sister (bonankana) restores her gloriously to the honor and rank which are due her.

8. Related Clan: Likilo

602 Outside my paternal clan and outside my maternal clan, I still
601 have blood relations: namely, the children of my paternal aunt and of my sisters or female cousins, each of whom belongs to the clan of his own father. Just as the children of my mother's brothers are my children, so the children of my father's sister are also my fathers. I am, thus, in the same relationship to the children of my mother's brother as the children of my father's sister are to me.

As far as the children of my sister are concerned, they are also my real banankana and, therefore, the fathers of my own children.

The other members of the related clans (who are thus not blood relations) all share, according to generation, in the classification of immediate relatives: all the "fathers" of the husband are "fathers-in-law"; all the mothers, "mothers-in-law"; etc. There is this single big difference, that the "superiors" of the husband are also your "superiors." According to the opinions of the Nkundo, they are the only real relatives. Those on the husband's side are called bokilo; those on the wife's side, bokanga.

/159/ The "subordinates" of the husband are not real relatives and rightly call each other "husband" and "wife." In various legally
[582] defined circumstances, marriage relations and marriages are permitted between the latter.

It is unnecessary to repeat that all of the members of the reciprocal clans share in these relationships: the whole generation of a clan

602 601 member is, as it were, identified with that member, so that, for instance, all younger sisters and female cousins of one spouse become "wives" of all the younger brothers and male cousins of the other spouse. One must really have the legal sense and the patience and the capacity for palaver and unravelling of an old Nkundo to make sense out all of these relationships. They themselves compare them, in fact, with the inextricable clew of the intestines of a sort of dwarf crocodile: besofo bya lokekele.

9. Exogamy

613 582 The term, "exogamic clan," often heard or encountered in writings, is also, at least in the Nkundo-Mongo society, very misleading. The group of persons with whom marriage is forbidden does not constitute any common entity; it differs from person to person. Two half brothers can have the same paternal clan but differ in maternal clan; they can have the same maternal clan and different paternal clans. Marriages are forbidden for older brothers and sisters that are permitted for the younger ones. The rules differ from one blood relation to another, from blood relation with relative-by-marriage to blood relation with relative-by-marriage, from relative-by-marriage with relative-by-marriage to relative-by-marriage with relative-by-marriage.

If one still wishes to put the law of exogamy into European terms, then one might say: 1) blood relationship forbids marriage insofar as the blood relationship is recognized. This recognition varies from clan group to clan group. Sometimes in the same legal but extended clan, an exception is made to this recognition; mostly, however, the different autonomous clans which descend from the same distant ancestor are still bound by the law of exogamy. Generally, groups which have the same father but a different mother /160/ separate most quickly. 2) Relationship (other than blood) forbids marriage—insofar as the relationship is recognized between the parents of spouses; it sometimes permits marriage between children of spouses.

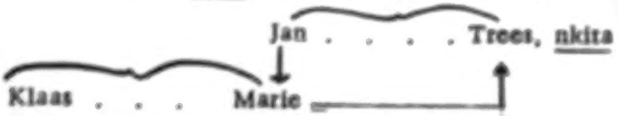
613 582 184 Here it should be observed once again, however, that the customs differ from region to region as regards this recognition; that, for instance, the stepson in many regions may marry his stepmother in a regular marriage; and that the violations are less severely judged and punished in proportion to the degree to which the forbidden relationships diverge.

596 583 567 necessary for her father or brother to have brought her to the man and to have received money for her; another member of the family was sufficient. She was sold by her family and accordingly, wherever the money had remained or whoever had received it, she had her rights in the family. Since the family maintained itself through the sale of the children of the female sex, the male children born of them were considered as the masters, the rightful claimants, the fathers. There was no exception to this rule; it was not to be altered, and no one had ever thought of disputing the place of the claimant or of laying claim to his rights. I have only heard of one single case of that sort, namely, at the succession of the Ruki, the younger brother was said to have killed his older brother in order to take over his place. He was said to have made a hole in his brother's proa, so that it sank when it reached the middle of the stream. The matter in itself seems an impossibility; also I consider it a legend, unless an accident might have happened that was interpreted in a mistaken or deliberately false manner.

596 576 The rightful claimant, bona wa nkana, sister's son, might still be a child; nevertheless he was called father and everyone vied with one another in showing him the honor due a father. That was the unbreakable law, not only for the father common to the hamlet, boloi, but also for the father of each individual family.

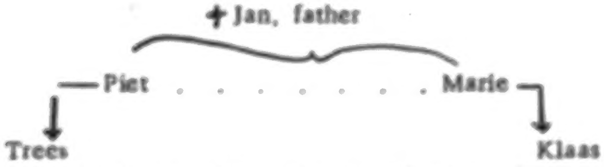
Nkita

583 602 Nkita is what the woman is called who is bought with the money that the father or brother has received for his daughter or sister on the occasion of her marriage. In reality, however, she is only the nkita, goods or property, of the sold woman. Nkita ekam, "my property," this woman calls her. For instance, Jan [335] sells his daughter, Marie, to Klaas and buys another wife, Trees, with the money received. The latter woman is now the nkita, the property, of Marie.

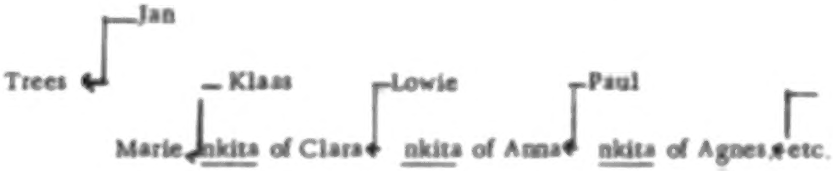


583
602

Or else, father Jan having died, Piet sold his sister, Marie, to Klaas and buys Trees with the money:



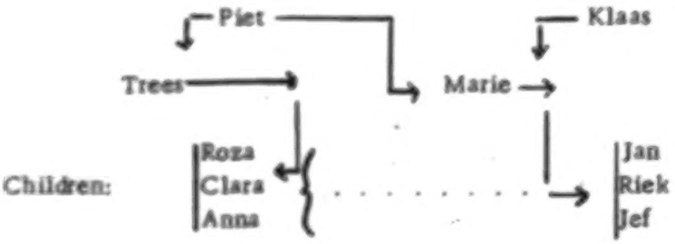
Practically speaking, Marie profited very little from her nkita. She had, it is true, certain rights over her nkita; thus, the latter considered her as her mistress, helped her in sickness and heavy work. Unfortunately for her, what she gained on the one side she lost again on the other side, in that she herself was also the nkita of another woman and consequently had the same obligations to fulfill towards the latter that her own nkita owed her. For example:



Jan, then, sold Marie to Klaas in order to buy Trees; Klaas, however, in order to be able to buy Marie, sold in turn his sister, Clara, to Lowie; Lowie acquired the necessary money to buy Clara by marrying off his sister, Anna. Thus, Trees then became the nkita of Marie, Marie the nkita of Clara, Clara of Anna, Anna of Agnes, etc. In short, every wife had her nkita and was, with few exceptions, the nkita of another wife. I say with few exceptions; for example, the wife was not the nkita of another woman if her husband had bought her with his own earned money. Practically speaking, this changed the matter very little. Also [336] there was no change if the nkita of a woman died; it was only a loss for the buyer or owner of that woman.

Rights of the Male Children in Relation to the Nkita of Their Mother

596 We have already seen that the right of succession and father-
583 hood passed to the male children of the sister, because she had been
605 sold and had brought money into the family, or rather because she had
a *nkita* there, a sort of guarantee for the money that had been received
for her. *Nkita*-ship brought another right to them, namely, the female
children born of the mother's *nkita* belonged to them; they could sell
them and get themselves other women with the money. They could
[582] not, however, marry them, since they were their cousins, and custom
was opposed to any marriage between relatives. The boys could,
[602] nevertheless, take the *nkita* of their mother as a wife, since the Negroes
have no notion of affinity or relationship by marriage. The male
children were, then, the owners of the female children that the *nkita*
of their mother brought into the world:



These three girls, children of *nkita* Trees, belong to the three sons of Marie. If Marie had only one son, then Piet would have the right to trade the two other girls for money and to buy other wives with this money, either for himself or for his younger brother; but if she [Marie?] brought female children into the world, half of them belong to Marie's son.

583 If the *nkita* gave birth to no children of the female sex, the
604 boys of Marie could resort to the husband of the *nkita* of their mother,
namely, their uncle, *nyangobika*. If, however, he had no fortune,
no money, [337] no wives, no girls to sell ... or only wives to whom
others could lay claim and had more right, then they were disinherited,
poor devils in society, and it cost them long years of work and much

121 It was said before that kinship and local groups are to be discussed. This statement needs clarification. When speaking of local groups in the present study, we do not intend to refer to groups which consist of non-related subgroups. It is to be clearly understood that the residence pattern will be used as the decisive criterion for subdividing the groups. Thus, closely related groups may be excluded, more distantly related groups may be included. Occasionally such local units also include groups which are not related to each other. [189]

Also, among those groups which I have called kinship groups in this study, a biological or genealogical connection which can be proved and expressed in juridical terms is quite doubtful. We shall not concern ourselves, however, with this lack of precision; rather, we shall regard as related those persons or groups of persons whom the Ekonda themselves consider as related. In my opinion there is no justification for disregarding the attitude of the natives since it is their attitude which determines the character and function of the groups. Murdock (10) uses this approach to the kinship group, while using the term "lineage" for persons who can prove their relationship. We hasten to point out that also the local groups have a tendency toward "paternalization" (11), to construe a closer relationship.

10. Social Structure, p. 47.

11. Boelaert, "Clan équivoque," p. 17.

The Kinship Structure of the Ekonda

61 602 Among the Ekonda we find a system of groups which are ordered according to degrees of real or assumed kinship. This system is subdivided into a hierarchical structure of many ranks. Larger groups consist of between one to four groups of the next order. The relationships between the groups correspond to the relationships between their founding ancestors. In this fashion certain groups are described as the older or younger brother of

61 602 another group. According to their relationship to others, groups may be designated as:

- brother, younger or older;
- brother or half brother (descended from various wives of the polygynous ancestor);
- [848] Illegitimate child of the sister which, legally, as the child of the oldest brother or of the father of his mother, belongs to the group of the mother's relatives;
- child of a boy who together with his sister has moved to the unit of his brothers-in-law and has settled there permanently;
- son of a sister, who for some reason has separated from his paternal relatives and has moved in with the group of his mother or of one of his grandmothers.

601 Present-day social relationships are influenced by this variety of kinship relations. The kinship terms which refer to the relationships of the genuine or assumed ancestors to each other are occasionally transferred to the groups.

614 602 621 In this paper we shall describe the Isangi group (12) as an [101] example of hierarchical kinship structure. Isangi is a local group of the type described above (p. 1). Following the custom of the region, I shall refer to it as a "village." Until we have decided which terms are applicable to the various groups, I shall use the letters A to E for the individual ranks of the hierarchical structure. Within this system A shall stand for the smallest and E for the largest units (see Diagram 2).[1]

In addition to the three ranks of Group D in Isangi, there are others in the daughter villages (see Diagram 1). These may also include foreign groups, as, for example, the "Nkundó" group, Liimbu, in Wengé.

---

12. Müller, Fürstentum [Kingdom], pp. 68 ff., 125, 128 ff.

[1] [See page 6, category 116.—Analyst]

● 602
614
621
[552]
All the groups represented on the diagram (Diagram 2) are known by their names to the adults of Isangi. In addition to their regular name, all these groups also have a "drum" name and an "honorary" name. Only the three Boyeke groups of rank B have different drum names but no individual group names. The arrangement of groups as found on the diagram does not represent a genealogy. It is based simply on the characteristics and functions of the individual groups [190] which in each case are equal to each other on one rank. Thus, we have here an organizational diagram, not a genealogical table. [Diagrams 1 and 2 appear here.]

The people of Isangi are also well aware of the relationships between the individual groups, but they are not as clearly conscious of the system as it appears in our diagram. They are able to describe the kinship relations between the groups and they can point out which functions are assigned to the individual groups without, however, regarding the groups as equal to one another because they have like functions and without seeing them as part of a system as we do. Thus, our diagram represents a systematization which, by its very nature, does not wholly do justice to reality. Correspondingly, therefore, there is no satisfactory Ekonda social terminology.

[191] [Diagram 3 appears here.] Just as in nonscientific European usage, the terms lack sufficient precision. Furthermore, in principle the nature of the groups between rank A to E and of the still larger units is similar, and as a result all the terms are used almost indiscriminately for large and small units alike.

601
621
614
Usually, the word ikundɛ (literally, "lap") refers to small units, approximately those of ranks A and B, but it is also used for larger and large units if their relatively close degree of kinship is to be stressed. Thus it approximately corresponds to the meaning of the word "family" as used in nonscientific language. The word ilongo refers both to what in European usage is described as the small family [Kleinfamilie] and also to groups of ranks A and B.

614 He represents the A-group in the council of elders of the village and of the other large units. Since no members of the group [672] are considered capable of conducting affairs, all the legal transactions which they undertake are treated as though they had been sanctioned by the patriarch. To a large extent the members of the group may represent one another. In the absence of the elder, a younger member may act as the representative of the [623] group at council meetings. When the senior member dies, his function will be taken over by the next oldest member of the group.

An A-group will split up only through internal conflicts 614 which cannot be bridged or through a large population increase. 602 The newly-formed A-groups continue to maintain a close relationship which, at first, is much closer than among the B-groups whose A-groups have split much earlier. In the higher ranks cohesion after the split diminishes only gradually; thus many gradations develop in the feeling of cohesion. These gradations could not be even approximately reproduced in a diagram with any degree of exactitude. There is no formula by which the split takes place, as there is, for example, among the Tallensi (13) where it is determined by a certain number of generations. 614 Theoretically the A-groups are "eternal." The A-groups are 596 subdivided into small families. Within the polygynous families 592 nuclear families [Familienkerne] (14) have a semi-independent position economically. Each wife has her own house. A husband's wives and the wives of his sons have their houses within the same homestead. As the master of the homestead, the father has an open shelter where the men spend their time and [768] hold their meetings. Upon the death of the master of the

13. Fortes, The Dynamics of Clanship, p. 34 f.

14. Thurnwald, Menschliche Gesellschaft, Vol. 4, p. 12.

601 The children of my "female fathers" do not belong to my
614 clan.

4. Like my children, the children of my older and younger brothers are my "children" (*bona*; pl., *bana*). The Nkundo does not have any special terms for "son" and "daughter." He simply says "male child" and "female child."

5. The children of my "sons" are my grandchildren (*bonkana*; pl., *bankana*).

6. The children of these male grandchildren are my great grandchildren (*bonkanola*; pl., *bankanola*).

II. *Bonyango*

The mother's clan is called *bonyango*, from the word *nyango*, "mother," and includes:

1. The mother's father and his brothers, who are also *nkoko*.

2. Their daughters, including my own mother, who are "mothers" (*nyango*; pl., *banyango*). The brothers of my "mothers" are my "male mothers" (*nyangompame*; pl., *ba*-).

3. The sons and daughters of my "male mothers," who are thus of my generation in our sense but who, to the Nkundo, are my "children," since to them I am legally identified with my mother and therefore I am their "male mother." This explains
[602] the unusual and privileged position which I hold in my mother's clan.

4. The children of my "children" are my "grandchildren." [219] [Table 1 appears here.] [220]

III. *Bokanga* and *Banankana*

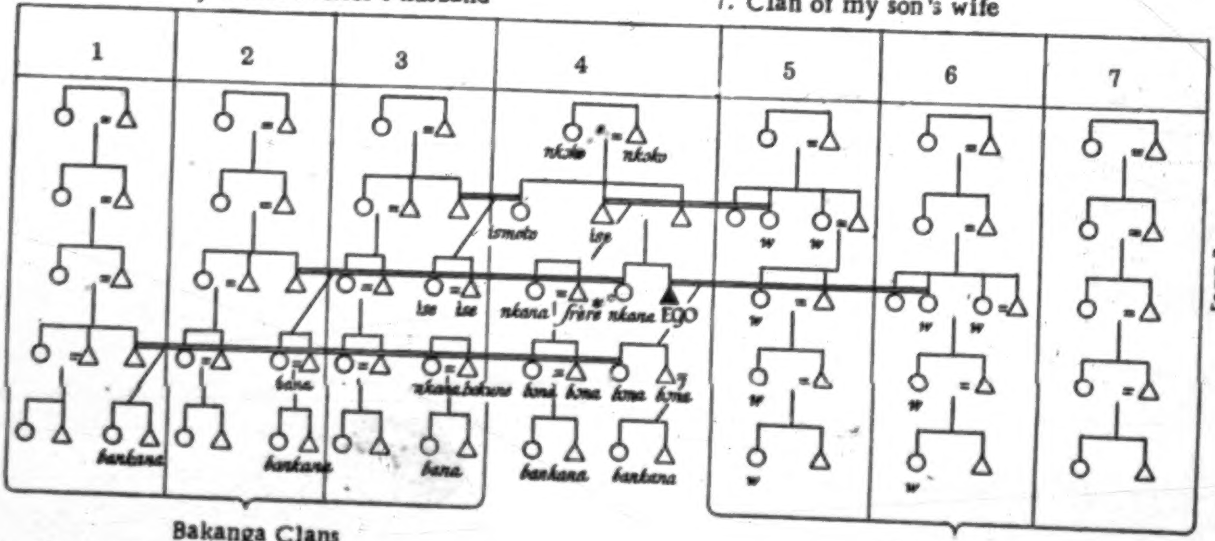
601 A Nkundo has other blood relatives scattered among the clans
602 who have married a woman of his own clan, be it a "female father," a sister, or a daughter. A Nkundo calls all the unrelated members of these clans *bokanga*. The related members, including children born to the women of his clan, he calls impersonally sisters' children, "children of a sister of the clan" (*bonankana*; pl.,

[text continues on page 4]

Table 1

Relatives and Affinals through the Paternal Clan

1. Clan of my daughter's husband
2. Clan of my sister's husband
3. Clan of my father's sister's husband
4. My own clan
5. Clan of my father's brother's wife
6. Clan of my wife
7. Clan of my son's wife


1
2
3
4
5
6
7
nkoko
*
nkoko
ismoto
ise
ise
ise
nkana
frère*
nkana
EGO
w
w
w
w
w
w
w
w
w
w
bana
nkana bokune
bóna
bóna
bóna
bóna
bankana
bankana
bana
bankana
bankana
Bakanga Clans
Bakiló Clans

All those undesignated = bakanga

[*frère = brother in French]

All those undesignated = bakiló

w = wali (wife)

9: Boelaert--3 E.M.-5 (ca. 1945) 1951 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

[219]

601
602
614

601 banankana). As a result, the children are legally identified
602 with their mothers. Thus, my sister's child is a child (bona) to me, or a sister's child (bonankana), but to my own child he would be father (ise).

In addition, he has maternal blood relatives, children of my mother's sisters, who are thus his "brothers and sisters," or children of the daughters of his "male mothers." Since these last daughters are his "children," their children would be his "grandchildren." Again, all the members of these clans who are unrelated by blood are his bokanga.

IV. Likilo

601
602
582 There are affinal clans which have given wives (wali; pl., baali) to my clan. This does not, of course, concern my mother's clan, which is a clan related by blood, but rather clans which have given wives, be it to a classificatory "father," to one of their sons, or to one of the sons of the latter. The Nkundo calls all the members of these clans -- with the exception of the woman -- bokilo (pl., bakilo). The Nkundo, merely by marrying a woman, at the same time marries all her legal younger sisters, that is to say, all the bakune [Ed., bankana?] and bana of this woman. Similarly, the woman marries not only a man, but at the same time all his legal younger brothers, that is, all the bakune and bana of this man (except the children of their own union).

601
602 Just as the clans which have received a wife from my clan thus include bokanga and sisters' sons, so also clans that have given us a wife include bakilo and "wives." Clans which have given a wife to my bonyango follow the same rules.

Comments

121
614
602 In several recent studies, especially in South Africa, four rules have been defined which govern classificatory terminology.

The first rule is that of the "unity of the lineage": The lineage as a whole is classified as belonging to a particular 'generation'

121 614 ●602 in its relations to another lineage as a whole" (Holleman, op. cit., p. 9). The author adds, "the unity of the lineage may be broken by a division into affines and cognatic, each with their distinctive terminology, in which the cognatic section is one 'generation' lower than the affinal section" (p. 5.).

121 614 602 601 Just as we speak of a mother society or a sister society, so the Nkundo can also consider an affinal clan as a moral person and speak of his mother's clan as of his mother, of a bokanga clan, of a bokilo clan. I do not think that the term bokanga or bokilo implies an idea of generation when it is applied to an individual, any more than does the French term "parent-in-law," or member of my family-in-law. The Nkundo would certainly not admit what the author cited here writes [221] [Table 2 appears here.] [222] about the Hera: "in inter-lineage relations, ... once the relationship between Ego and any cognatic relative is determined, all the cognates of the same lineage as that relative will bear the same degree of kinship as himself to Ego, regardless of the differences in generation . . . between themselves or as compared with Ego" (p. 5.).

The second rule would be that the clan which provides us a wife (bokilo clan of the Nkundo) is considered our "father," and thus the clan which receives a wife from our clan would be considered a "son." Moreover, among the Nkundo is understood: "We have given you our daughter as a wife, so you are our son." But also implied is: "We have enriched you by our marriage payment, and our children are your "fathers." These ideas, however, are not reflected in the terminology between affinals. Moreover, the fact that the Nkundo readily uses the term bokilo for his bokanga is significant.

Third rule: In lineages directly related to Ego's lineage, "the female line seems to be potentially one 'generation' lower than the agnatic male line" (p. 11). The author tells us that: "This duality is even revealed in agnatic relations . . . Ego calls his . . . father's sister either vatete (father's sister) or hanzwadzi (sister)." Thus, the women of directly related clans would be considered to belong to a lower generation than the men.

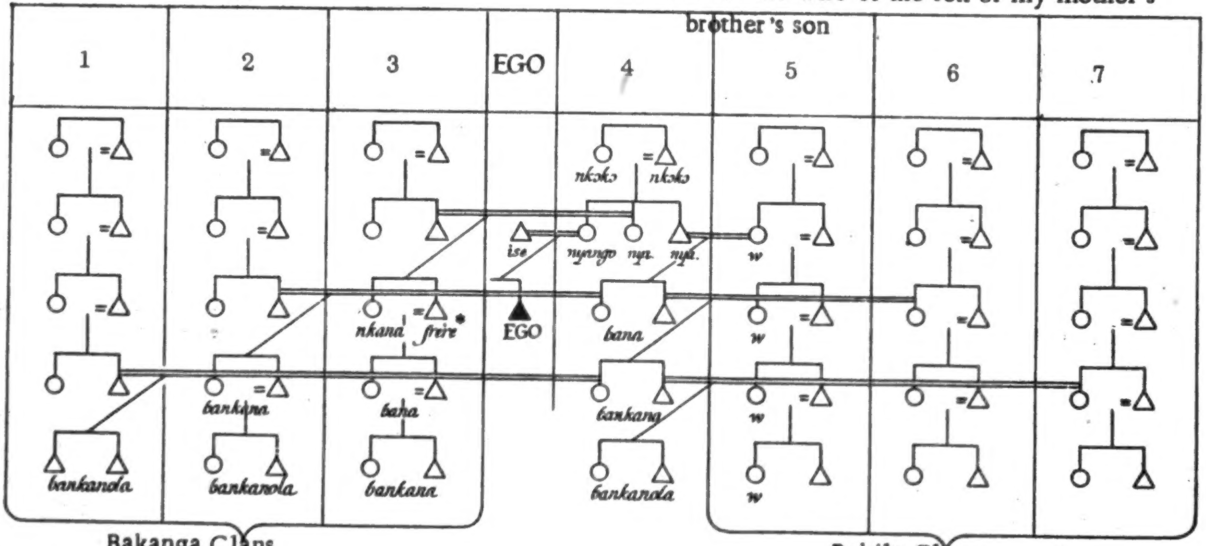
[Text continues on page 7]

601
602
614

Table 2

Relatives and Affinals through the Paternal Clan

1. Clan of the husband of the daughter of my mother's brother's son
2. Clan of the husband of my mother's brother's daughter
3. Clan of my mother's sister's husband
4. My mother's clan
5. Clan of my mother's brother's wife
6. Clan of the wife of my mother's brother's son
7. Clan of the wife of the son of my mother's brother's son


1
2
3
EGO
4
5
6
7
nkoko
nkoko
ise
nyango
nya.
nya.
w
nkana
frère*
EGO
bana
w
bankana
baha
bankang
w
bankanola
bankanola
bankana
bankanola
w

Bakanga Clans
All those undesignated = bakanga

[*frère = brother in French]

Bakilo Clans
All those undesignated = bakiló

w = wali (wife)

121
602
614
601
It must be stated that the tables of the bakanga clans presented by the author do not reflect this rule, since all members of these clans not related by blood, males as well as females, are designated as vakwasha= children-in-law. In the bakilo clans the rule seems to be founded on the Hera idea (according to the interpretation of the author) that all the women of my wife's clan are my "wives," no matter what their generation or age. This rule is not applicable to the Nkundo either in ideas or terminology.

There is still the fourth rule which the author quoted here uses often but does not interpret in his tables where it is completely opposed to the second rule: the child is legally identified with its mother. According to the second rule, the child of my father's sister would be my grandchild, and at the same time, according to the fourth rule, it would be my "father."

For the Nkundo, the fourth rule explains how this child is my "father," while the child of my mother's brother is my "child."

One may thus conclude that two rules explain the details of the classificatory system of the Nkundo:

1. In clans which have given a wife to our clan, all the women who are legally younger sisters of this wife, exclusively, are "wives" of all the men, exclusively, who are legally younger brothers of the husband.

2. In clans which have received a wife from our clan, the children born of this wife are identified with their mother by the children of this wife's brothers.

593ˣ 152 With reference to signs of affection, grief at the time of death, etc., the observations made for parent-child relationships hold true here -- *mutatis mutandis.*

3. Various relatives

602 The Nkundo's affection extends toward all members of his family, that is, all those with whom he feels linked by blood and common origin. These relatives are much greater in number than in Europe, because Nkundó kinship includes many more generations. The intensity of affection decreases with the distance of the degree of kinship. But the Nkundó knows and feels that he belongs to a large family, and he remains attached to all its members. He can find a home with any of them. This accounts for the fact that in the centers, men from the same village will look for each other and consider each other "brothers." Actually, that is what they are, since in general each village consists of only a single kin group. [621]

Although here, as in the case of brothers and sisters, common interests play a part in maintaining bonds between family members, the feelings of affection are not based on selfish considerations. The latter only reinforce these feelings, which are truly innate among the Nkundó. Among the various relatives the strongest attachments are developed between grandparents and grandchildren, uncles and aunts and nephews and nieces, male cousins and female cousins, etc.

603 Among the Nkundó as among Europeans there is a very strong affection between grandparents and grandsons, even greater, one might say, than between parents and children (the expression is: *bǒna* [30] *l'onkánɛ́, ndekɛ́ nd'ȏnkánɛ́*). But the relationship degenerates into compliance and weakness on one side, and into disrespectful carelessness on the other.

604 A Nkundó loves his paternal uncles and aunts and treats them like "fathers," and his maternal uncles and aunts like "mothers." Naturally, his feelings toward them are not as affectionate as for his parents, but they are an extension of these in an attenuated form.

605 The same situation holds true for the bonds which link him to his cousins, whom he calls "brothers" and "sisters." The children of his paternal aunt are his "fathers," however.

583x 602 607 Thus the person who is herself the object of a bride price is the nkita. The first generation born of the nkóló calls her bonkita. In the third generation the term nkwá y áómbá is applied to the relationship.

For example:

mother	Lokónjó	nkita of Bekombe
son	Imana	bonkita of Ifangá
mother	Lokónjó	nkita of Bekombe
son	Imana	benkita of Ifangá
grandson . .	Etsíha	
mother	Lokónjó	nkita of Bekombe
son	Imana	bonkita of Ifangá
grandson . . .	Etsíha	nkwá y'áómbá of Litáola

● [603] [169] The bonds between the nkóló's grandsons and the nkita's grandsons are loosened because respect and authority between grandparents and grandsons are more or less nominal; in practice they no longer exist. (1)

1. See Chapter VI, Article VI.

If the nkóló leaves no descendants, the nkita's sons are freed from any obligation. Just as the Nkundó like to be able to call someone their nkita or their bokwá so, too, they take pride in not belonging to a nkóló.

583x 607 Men who bear the title of nkóló may, under given circumstances, have duties towards their benkita, especially the obligation of taking active part in getting together the amount of a bride price. If the nkóló has provided his bonkita with a wife, the latter must treat him like his father (giving him assistance, the father's portion of the meat of a game animal, etc.).

582 and those who owe submission and respect. The "superior" relatives 602 [576] are the ascendants, uncles, aunts, etc., in short, all those bearing the title of "father" or "mother," as well as elder brothers (elder [601] sisters, elder cousins, etc.), who are *batómóló* (sing. *botómóló*). The "inferiors" are the descendants, those who are called "children" (*bǎna*): sons and daughters, grandsons, nephews, nieces, younger brothers or sisters, and those who are classed with them and called *bakűné* (sing. *bokűné*).

[599] [587] 4) Polygamy and the inheritance of widows introduce another element. We will see that although persons of certain degrees of affinity may not marry, the prohibition is lifted to permit the inheritance of widows.

5) Our term "relatives by marriage" the Nkundó term and *bakiló* are not synonymous, even with respect to direct affinity. When we use the term "relatives by marriage" here, we are speaking in Nkundó terms. They do not consider certain persons whom we would include in that category as "relations by marriage." Such persons [601] are included in the group which as a whole is designated as *likiló* or *bakiló*, but when properly and accurately referred to they are called *bǒme*, "husband," or *wǎli*, "wife," because they may marry each other and therefore affinity, strictly speaking, cannot be applied to them. In other words, for the Nkundó, affinity is the relationship of a person with (only) those of his spouse's relatives whom he is forbidden to marry. It is well to bear in mind the double meaning of this term.

2. The rules

1. Direct Affinity

582 603 606 A. Marriages are prohibited in the direct line. Nevertheless, in accordance with consideration number 4, a son or grandson may inherit or marry the widows of his father or grandfather, but not the reverse. [254]

2: Hulstaert--236 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

582
606
603

Example 1

Bakando (F)
|
Mbɔ́yɔ́ (M) + Esalɛ́ (F)

Mbɔ́yɔ́ may never marry Bakando.

Example 2

Eale (M) + Boɔ́ná (F)
|
Mbɛ́lá (F)

Eale may never marry Mbɛ́lá.

Example 3

Bombembí (M)
|
Ikɛ́tɛ́ (M) + Basásɔ́ (F)

Bombembí may never marry Basásɛ́. (1)

[691]
[586]

1. If after the death of his son Ikɛ́tɛ́, Bombembí wanted to marry his widow, the mother of the deceased would be so angry and ashamed that she would irrevocably leave him. Such conduct on the part of a father during his son's lifetime would give the son full rights to vengeance (assassination, war with the help of the mother's clan, etc.), for it would be equivalent to a real disavowal of his son. But the case is purely hypothetical.

Example 4

Esalo (M) - Longá (F)
|
Lofɛ́tɛ́ (M)

Lofɛ́tɛ́ may marry Longá.

N. B. The same rules apply to grandparents and grandsons.

604 An uncle (see D above) is not entirely free to cure his nephew's
837 (F) passion unless he is the nkólố of his sister (E), that is, unless the
578 mother (C) of his sister (E) is the nkita of his aunt (B), [307] who is the
575 sister of his father (A). Indeed in that case his sister may not complain, for she owes him respect and submission; her subordination to her brother and master is greater than the gratitude he owes her for any riches he may have obtained through her or on her account.

D. In the case of the relationship of a grandson (bonkáná) to
● 603 his grandfather's wives, his freedom is, in practice, complete. Actu-
837 ally, among the Nkundó the affection of a grandfather (nkóko) for his own grandson often exceeds his love for his own son and completely degenerates into weakness. (1) The grandfather puts up with all his grandson's carryings-on, his whims, all his teasing, his insults, etc.

After illicit relations the grandson sometimes carries his insolence so far as to spontaneously send his grandfather a "mock" indemnity in the form of a basket filled with stones in the place of copper rings.

626 Although the grandfather treats his grandson with good humor,
603 public opinion does not favor the latter's conduct, though it is more
837 lenient than in the cases described above. The public reaction, as well as the sending of the "mock" fine, shows that in principle these relations are censurable and condemned. Because of present circum-
[illegible] stances, particularly marriage at an earlier age than in the past, the age difference between a grandson and his grandfather's wives has increased considerably in the constantly growing number of cases, and their relations have proportionately decreased. (2) [308]

1. As happens very often also in Europe.
See Chapter I, Part 1, Article I, 3.

[illegible] 2. We have seen above that other Nkundó tribes are even less strict in these matters. On the other hand, the Ekonda, a Nkundó group living on Lake Leopold II, have a

603
837
626
184

> higher morality -- in our terms. Among them the question of relations between a woman and her husband's son, younger brother, etc., does not even arise. Have they been influenced by some neighboring tribe? Or must we attribute the inferior morality of some of the tribes in this respect to decadence.

837
602

The following conclusions emerge from this long description:

1) Relations between a man and the wife of his son, younger brother, etc., in short of anyone inferior to him in the family hierarchy, are always strictly prohibited and never occur.

2) They do occur on the other hand between an inferior and the wife of his senior and superior. The degree of kinship between the husband and the culprit plays a considerable role in determining the seriousness or triviality of an infraction, the sanctions applied, and the various consequences. Some relations are accepted, others are censured with varying degrees of leniency, still others are pitilessly criticized.

3) In these matters a distinction may be made between two aspects:

a) the husband's reaction and the repression of the illicit relations;

b) the judgment of public opinion;

or:

a) the financial aspect;

b) the moral aspect -- to use that term for want of a better one.

Sometimes a third element comes into play, namely the intervention of the family on the side of the culprit against the injured husband who, for one reason or another, is in the wrong himself.

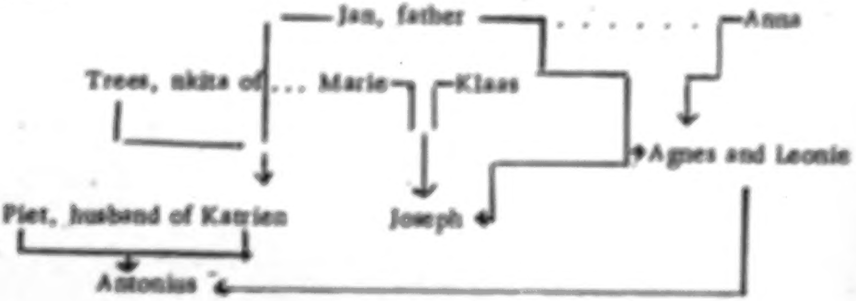
602
837
684

a) The usual sanction for adultery is, for the man, an indemnity to pay. But such a payment cannot be made since no financial transaction -- strictly speaking at least -- may be made

583 searching for old disputes and old arguments about wives to get a wife.
604 And then they were still not always successful; their youth itself was
against them here and robbed them constantly of the little that they
464 had saved for that purpose. The means for getting money, such as
lances, knives, arm and foot bands, were extremely scarce. The
Blacks do not know of workers or servants, and if one of those poor
souls presented himself at the home of one who was better endowed by
fortune and offered to chop wood for him, to lay out a manioc field,
or to build a house for him, to gather straw and bamboo in the forest
for that purpose, then the inborn laziness of the Negro would require
long months to complete that work. As salary, the worker received
only a few bakonga (copper arm of leg bands); these he already owed
to the owner for having shown too much inclination for one or another of
his wives. The result of this was that many young men remained with-
589 out a wife and that those who were favored by chance, that is to say,
595 had many children of the female sex in their family, each had several
562 wives. I consider this a primary cause of polygyny. The woman had a
relatively high monetary value and represented capital. Thus, it did
not happen that anyone gave his daughter or sister to another for
nothing, just as among us it does not happen that a farmer gives his
cow or horse to a poor devil for nothing.

583 If the father or brother sold a daughter born of the nkita of his
604 daughter or sister -- a right that general custom gave him and which
usually occurred, since the children of the female sex were sold very
683 young and the boys, the rightful claimants or owners, in that case were
still very young -- this was done in order to buy another wife. The rights
of the children shifted then as follows:

[338]



583 Jan, the father, by selling Katrien, the nkita of his daughter
604 Marie, becomes indebted to Joseph, the son of Marie and at the same
603 time his own grandson; and on the other side he becomes the debtor of
Antonius, his other grandson, by selling his mother, Katrien.

Anna, whom he bought, was then the nkita of Katrien and the quasi-nkita of Marie. Both sons, Joseph and Antonius, were hard pressed because of Anna, the nkita of both of their mothers. If Anna bore two daughters, as I have indicated, the case was simple: the first daughter belonged to Joseph and the second to Antonius. If, however, she gave birth to only one daughter, then this child belonged to Joseph, and Antonius was left out in the cold. If father Jan had no children of the female sex by Anna, then the matter was extremely thorny for both of them, and if their grandfather or uncle possessed no money, had no more wives by whom he had daughters, there was nothing left for them to do but, at his death, to take the nkita of their mother as a wife. For this reason it happened many times that young men lived with old women, and even though there was then generally no more hope of children, those wives were then still good enough to cook the meals and do the little work that a Negro household requires.

000 I will not digress any further about the method of distribution of women, about the rights over the women which the nkita system brings with it. It would take us too far. Furthermore, not only the present, but also the past and the future are involved in it; so that one would have to be a Negro and raised in those matters to understand them clearly ... and even then they involve numerous palavers (disputes), which continually agitate the families and the villages.

[339]

The Origin of the Nkita?

576 The sale of the woman and the immediate loss of her freedom
583 must naturally have given her cause for revolt. It has perhaps cost the
562 man a severe struggle to make the woman content with her lot. A compensation or reimbursement had to be given to her, and most certainly the nkita system has its origin there. It was at least a partial compensation that the man gave to the woman. It gave her rights over her nkita

593 152 x With reference to signs of affection, grief at the time of death, etc., the observations made for parent-child relationships hold true here -- mutatis mutandis.

3. Various relatives

602 The Nkundo's affection extends toward all members of his family, that is, all those with whom he feels linked by blood and common origin. These relatives are much greater in number than in Europe, because Nkundô kinship includes many more generations. The intensity of affection decreases with the distance of the degree of kinship. But the Nkundô knows and feels that he belongs to a large family, and he remains attached to all its members. He can find a home with any of them. This accounts for the fact that in the centers, men from the same village will look for each other and consider [621] each other "brothers." Actually, that is what they are, since in general each village consists of only a single kin group.

Although here, as in the case of brothers and sisters, common interests play a part in maintaining bonds between family members, the feelings of affection are not based on selfish considerations. The latter only reinforce these feelings, which are truly innate among the Nkundô. Among the various relatives the strongest attachments are developed between grandparents and grandchildren, uncles and aunts and nephews and nieces, male cousins and female cousins, etc.

603 Among the Nkundô as among Europeans there is a very strong affection between grandparents and grandsons, even greater, one might say, than between parents and children (the expression is: bɔ̃na [30] l'onkɛ́nɛ́, ndekɛ́ nd'ɔ̂nkɛ́nɛ́). But the relationship degenerates into compliance and weakness on one side, and into disrespectful carelessness on the other.

604 A Nkundô loves his paternal uncles and aunts and treats them like "fathers," and his maternal uncles and aunts like "mothers." Naturally, his feelings toward them are not as affectionate as for his parents, but they are an extension of these in an attenuated form.

605 The same situation holds true for the bonds which link him to his cousins, whom he calls "brothers" and "sisters." The children of his paternal aunt are his "fathers," however.

583^x 602 Thus there is no special family treasure upon which the various members can draw to obtain wives. But since bride prices paid out generally come from bride prices received, and all the wealth which comes to the family as such (that is, which is not the result of purely individual and personal work by one member) is to some extent owned by the members in common, it may be said in a sense that all the members of a family share rights in the wealth of the group. However, their rights exist only to the [134] extent of their kinship and as regulated by the family council.

Even members of the family who are not legally required to do so are not unwilling to give to a relative whatever portion they can save for him. Nevertheless, I know of isolated instances where assistance was refused, either out of avarice or of opposition to the proposed marriage. But such a refusal is a neglect of the duties of kinship, and its gravity depends on the relationship between the individuals involved. (1) A refusal on the part of the mother's family almost never occurs. For they have been enriched by the bride price received for the young man's mother, and consequently he is always entitled to the bride price paid for one of the daughters of his mother's nkita (a nkita is a woman obtained by means of the bride price that has been paid).

583^x 604 Therefore he goes to his maternal uncle (nyangɔ́-mpámɛ́ (2) or nya-ngɔ́bika among the Wángatɛ́, Bakɔ́ala, and Lifumba). This uncle always helps him, whether his means are great or small. Under certain conditions the nephew may even claim rights over his uncle's harem. But here we must distinguish between different cases. (Let us

---

1. Remember what has already been said, namely that we must always clearly distinguish among duties imposed by law and those imposed by kinship, friendship, decorum, courtesy, and social proprieties.

2. Literally, "male mother."

585x not forget that we are speaking of a young man who has not yet re-
604 ceived a wife in his own clan.)

1) The uncle has priority rights if he has only one wife, even if she is the nkita of the nephew's mother. If that wife cannot live in peace with her husband, however, and if she is always trying to break up the marriage and go to another man, the husband's family can itself intervene and assign the wife to the nephew, if the couple love each other. By this means they try to prevent her from going elsewhere; it is preferable that she remain within the kin group. For if the marriage is broken and she leaves them, the family becomes involved in a long restitution process, [135] giving rise to numerous difficulties and to an end of revenue -- if that expression can be used -- from bride-price valuables.

2) If his uncle has two wives, the nephew can claim rights only over the one acquired by means of his own mother's bride price. The exception cited under item 1) holds even more true in this case.

In the two situations cited above, however, the family tries to appease the nephew by assigning to him the expected bride price of a female cousin. They do not yield to his demands unless no other solution is available.

3) If his uncle has several wives (four, five, or more), the nephew has the right to take one of them, if none of them were acquired by means of the bride price paid for the uncle's sister, that is, the nephew's mother.

585x If any of these eventualities materialize, the nephew is re-
604 quired to leave his father's clan (wisé) and to enter his mother's family
428 (bonyangó). Actually, he is not averse to doing so. For we may suppose that in his father's kin group he has neither wealth nor future, while in that of his uncle he finds all he needs. He is considered his uncle's own child, and even has seniority over his cousins. He is their father (isé) and consequently has precedence over them; and he can succeed his uncle as family patriarch. Moreover, upon his uncle's death he always inherits one of his widows and becomes the first -- and often the only -- successor after the brothers of the deceased. (1)

1. This inheritance right is valid even if he continues to live in his own clan, in which case, however, it is impossible for him to become the chief or only heir.

589x These rights prevail even if the nephew has wealth at home. ●604 In that case -- which is extremely rare since ordinarily he prefers to remain with his own clan -- he does not make use of them if his uncle has only two or three wives (whom, however, he can inherit), [596] or if other close relatives [136] are in need. For to do so would show a great lack of affection for the family (lifɛta), and he would be severely reprimanded.

Because of all that, the nephew (bɔ́nankáná, "sister's son") sometimes abuses his rights. That is the basis for the following proverbs: nkoi ɛ́kumb'omɔ́ngɔ́ lokombo, "the leopard takes the owner of the hunting enclosure" (that is to say, the hunter); bɔ́nankáná ɛ́fonola nyangómpámá walí nd'ɛ́ɛ́ko, "the nephew abducts the uncle's wife even in his own domain"; bɔ́nankáná ale inganja v'åliko, "a nephew is a stick overhead." This last proverb is the Nkundó version of the sword of Damocles.

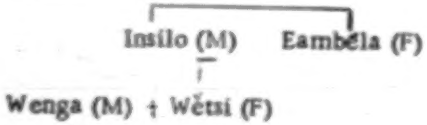
In short, a nephew has a right to the assistance of his maternal uncle if he settles with him and is adopted by him. Upon the death of his uncles he becomes heir and head of the family. But his rights are second to those of his uncle's brothers, who are also his "mothers." If he remains in his own clan, he receives help and can even obtain the bride price of one of his female cousins born of his mother's nkita. He may even receive part of the inheritance, if it is large. His rights are based on the fact that his uncle was enriched by the valuables given him by the nephew's clan in payment for his sister's marriage.

Finally, if a young man does not even have any close relatives, 589x because all are deceased, and if for some reason he has no patrimony 556 (because of dissipation, debts, exploitation of the weak by the strong), he is forced to procure the bride price through his own labor: carving, hunting, fishing, setting elephant snares, making traps and hunting enclosures, clearing fields, or, nowadays, working in the service of the Whites. In former times there was also the possibility of war or raids by which he could obtain valuables or prisoners to sell as slaves. The wealth which someone acquires by his own work is called bafɛ́mbɛ́ (bakonga, etc.) lá mpambɔ̂kɛ (literally, "by the strength of his arms"). [137]

582 604 B. Members of different generations in the collateral line: Marriage with older, "superior" relatives of the spouse is forbidden. The Injôlô sometimes make an exception for an aunt of the spouse after the latter's death, but this practice is very much frowned upon.

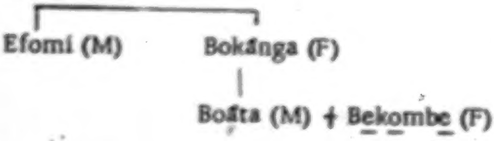
Marriage with the spouse's inferior, younger relatives is permitted.

Example 5


Insilo (M)
Eambêla (F)
Wenga (M) † Wĕtsi (F)

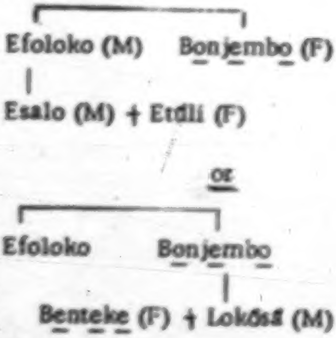
Wenga may not marry Eambela (with the exception noted).

Example 6


Efomi (M)
Bokânga (F)
Boâta (M) † Bekombe (F)

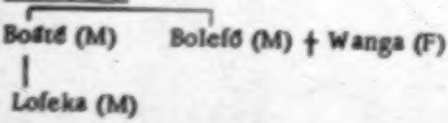
This case is identical with the preceding one.

Example 7


Efoloko (M)
Bonjembo (F)
Esalo (M) † Etôli (F)
or
Efoloko
Bonjembo
Benteke (F) † Lokôsâ (M)

Marriage is forbidden in any event [255]

Example 8

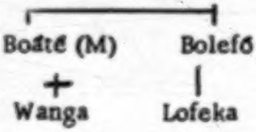

Boâtê (M)
Bolefô (M) † Wanga (F)
Lofeka (M)

Lofeka may marry Wanga.

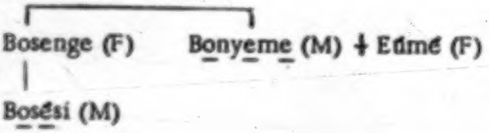
582
604

Example 8 (continued)

or


Boátɛ́ (M)
Bolefɔ́
Wanga
Lofeka

Example 9


Bosenge (F)
Bonyeme (M)
Eámɛ́ (F)
Bosɛ́si (M)

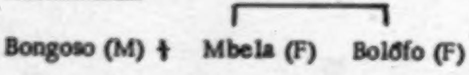
Bosɛ́si may marry Eámɛ́.

The same rules apply equally to great-uncles and great-aunts, and to cousins who are not equals (related as "father" and "son"; see the table of kinship relations and terminology in the appendix).

582
607

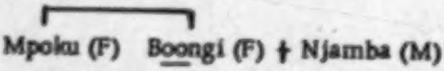
C. Equals in the collateral line: The degree of relationship is of no importance, for example, marriage with an older sister (or cousin) of the spouse is forbidden; marriage with a younger sister is permitted. The same rule applies to women, but after the husband's death an exception is sometimes made in the elder brother's favor in order to facilitate inheritance arrangements. [184] Only the Boángɛ́ -- like the Elángá of Losanganya -- make no distinction between elder and younger siblings and always permit the marriage. They are even beginning to be imitated by the Injɔ́lɔ́.

Example 10


Bongoso (M)
Mbela (F)
Bolɔ́fo (F)

Bongoso may marry Bolɔ́fo.

Example 11

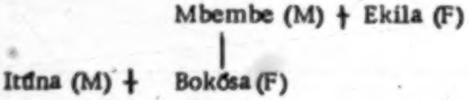

Mpoku (F)
Boongi (F)
Njamba (M)

Njamba may not marry Mpoku.

2. Indirect Affinity

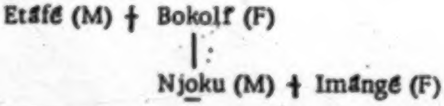
582
606
604
A. Marriage among those of lineal relationship is forbidden but certain exceptions are permitted. There are two possibilities: with the father's wife (Example 16) and with the son's wife (Example 17).

Example 16



If Bokɔ́sa dies or is divorced from Itɔ́na, the latter may marry Ekila, but this exception is not often made because they would be very open to unkind criticism. [257]

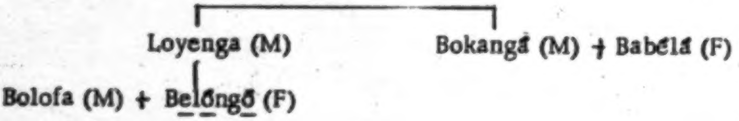
Example 17



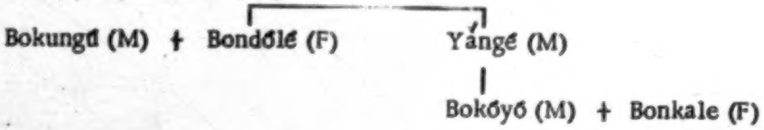
After Bokolí's death Etáfɛ́ is permitted to marry Imángɛ́. Such a marriage is more leniently regarded if Etáfɛ́ himself paid the bride price for Imángɛ́, for in that case he is preserving his capital in marrying her. This consideration may also apply during Bokolí's lifetime, if Imángɛ́ does not want to remain with Njoku. Under such circumstances, however, Njoku's mother would oppose the marriage with all her power. If Etáfɛ́ does not listen to reason, he can expect [586] a divorce or even war with Bokolí's clan, to whom he is doing a great injury by taking away his stepson's wife. After divorce Bokolí's kin may refuse to give Etáfɛ́ her new bride price and may give it directly to Njoku so that he can obtain a wife to replace the one that was taken from him.

582 The same rules are applicable to aunts and uncles, but they
604 are less strict:

Example 18 (comparable to Example 16):

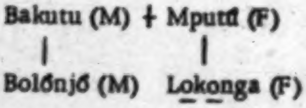

Loyenga (M)
Bokangá (M) + Babĕlá (F)
Bolofa (M) + Belóngó (F)

Example 19 (comparable to Example 17):


Bokungú (M) + Bondólé (F)
Yángé (M)
Bokóyó (M) + Bonkale (F)

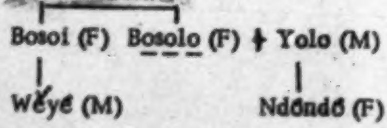
582 B. Marriage between affines who are collaterally related through their
595x lineal relatives:
605 a) Marriage between descendants [of the lineal relatives through
[602] whom the affinity is established] is strictly forbidden. Thus, the children of two spouses may not marry each other; they are considered brothers and [258] sisters. The same rule applies to two half-cousins (Example 21).

Example 20:


Bakutu (M) + Mputú (F)
Bolónjó (M)
Lokonga (F)

Marriage between
Bolónjó and Lokonga
is strictly prohibited.

Example 21


Bosoi (F)
Bosolo (F) + Yolo (M)
Wĕyé (M)
Ndóndó (F)

Marriage between Wĕyé
and Ndóndó is prohibited.

593x to have relations with her. If the woman refuses to have relations
607 with her brother-in-law, the latter often reports her ill will to her
837 husband, who will reprimand her or even strike her because she does not love his own brother, and will accuse her of having lovers: ótóna bǒn'ǒâ ngóya, ólangakě ńk'aend'ǎnkíná. Since there is more affection between brothers born of the same mother, the husband's anger would then be even greater. A lack of affection on the part of his wife arouses her husband's suspicions on the question of her fidelity because Nkundó women are extremely ready to yield to temptation. [305] Therefore if she refuses her own brother-in-law-husband, she must be obtaining satisfaction elsewhere. This reasoning may be false, but it is based on a frequency of cases. The husband's attitude does not show a lack of jealousy; on the contrary, it proves its existence.

If the younger brother meets his sister-in-law in the home of her family, they will intervene on his behalf. They will tell her to receive "her husband" well, to prepare food for him, to clean the hut set aside for him. They will even force her to cohabit with him for the entire duration of his stay in their village. By this means they seek to avoid palavers with their son-in-law. If the woman's antipathy toward her brother-in-law is so great that she cannot be made to submit to him, they sometimes give their visitor another of their daughters (or cousins, etc.), younger than his brother's wife, to perform wifely duties for him.

All those designated as bakíné in Nkundó terminology fall into the same category as a younger brother (thus younger male cousins are also included). The seriousness of the conflict that may arise on this question and of its consequences vary in proportion to the degree of kinship between the individuals involved.

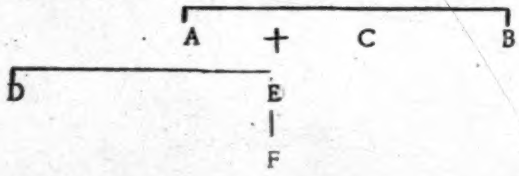
604 C. The position of a nephew (bǒnankáná) in relation to his
437 maternal uncle's wives is to a great extent comparable to that of a
578 son in relation to his father's wives. The fact that marriage is effected
593x through the payment of a bride price gives the nephew greater freedom; for the uncle was enriched through the marriage of his

● 604 nephew's mother. There is no question of indemnity, except that of
837 "respects," to show the nephew's submission, and it consists of a hen and
578 a bunch of bananas. If the nephew refuses to make this gesture of
593x deference and submission, he is considered in the wrong and the entire family gangs up on him in order to save the authority and hierarchy of the family. "You are offending your uncle," they say, "no doubt you want him to die so that you can take his place and profit from the inheritance." And the offended uncle, after being patient for a few days, may demand a real indemnity. [306] But then other considerations become involved, and a new situation is created.

Actually, the young man's mother often -- though not always -- takes his side and turns on her brother. Two situations may arise:

1) The nephew's mother may not be born of the same mother as the uncle. In that case she seldom refrains from intervening on her son's behalf. She reproaches her brother for his hardness and his lack of affection for her, especially if the adulterous wife is her *nkita*, that is, if she were acquired by means of the bride price paid for her. She will say, "To whom do you owe this wife? And yet you demand riches from my son. Give me back my bride price, so that I may get him a wife." The uncle also gets angry, and sometimes accedes to his indignant sister's request and returns her bride price. If he does so all relationship between brother and sister is broken. But this is an unusual outcome; matters are almost always settled before this extremity is reached.

2) If brother and sister have the same mother, peace is always re-established before this aggravation, and the interchange is limited to a few reproaches and a little momentary anger. For the proverb says, *bǎsangí nyangó báfomb'ilángá*, "hatred between children of the same mother is but feigned, illusory; it is not true or real."



604 An uncle (see D above) is not entirely free to cure his nephew's
837 (F) passion unless he is the nkóló of his sister (E), that is, unless the
578 mother (C) of his sister (E) is the nkita of his aunt (B), [307] who is the
579 sister of his father (A). Indeed in that case his sister may not complain, for she owes him respect and submission; her subordination to her brother and master is greater than the gratitude he owes her for any riches he may have obtained through her or on her account.

D. In the case of the relationship of a grandson (bonkáná) to
603 837 his grandfather's wives, his freedom is, in practice, complete. Actually, among the Nkundó the affection of a grandfather (nkóko) for his own grandson often exceeds his love for his own son and completely degenerates into weakness. (1) The grandfather puts up with all his grandson's carryings-on, his whims, all his teasing, his insults, etc.

After illicit relations the grandson sometimes carries his insolence so far as to spontaneously send his grandfather a "mock" indemnity in the form of a basket filled with stones in the place of copper rings.

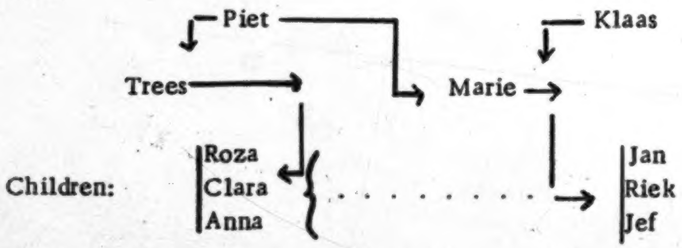
626 Although the grandfather treats his grandson with good humor,
603 public opinion does not favor the latter's conduct, though it is more
837 lenient than in the cases described above. The public reaction, as well as the sending of the "mock" fine, shows that in principle these relations are censurable and condemned. Because of present circum-
[178] stances, particularly marriage at an earlier age than in the past, the age difference between a grandson and his grandfather's wives has increased considerably in the constantly growing number of cases, and their relations have proportionately decreased. (2) [308]

1. As happens very often also in Europe. See Chapter I, Part 1, Article I, 3.

[184] 2. We have seen above that other Nkundó tribes are even less strict in these matters. On the other hand, the Ekonda, a Nkundó group living on Lake Leopold II, have a

Rights of the Male Children in Relation to the Nkita of Their Mother

596 We have already seen that the right of succession and father-
583 hood passed to the male children of the sister, because she had been
605 sold and had brought money into the family, or rather because she had
a nkita there, a sort of guarantee for the money that had been received
for her. Nkita-ship brought another right to them, namely, the female
children born of the mother's nkita belonged to them; they could sell
them and get themselves other women with the money. They could
[582] not, however, marry them, since they were their cousins, and custom
was opposed to any marriage between relatives. The boys could,
[602] nevertheless, take the nkita of their mother as a wife, since the Negroes
have no notion of affinity or relationship by marriage. The male
children were, then, the owners of the female children that the nkita
of their mother brought into the world:

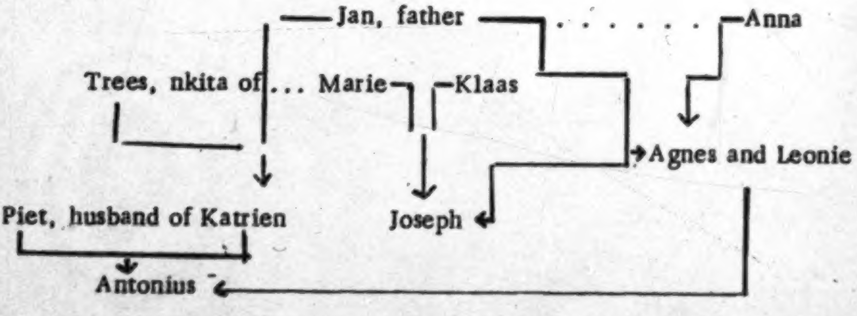


These three girls, children of nkita Trees, belong to the three sons of Marie. If Marie had only one son, then Piet would have the right to trade the two other girls for money and to buy other wives with this money, either for himself or for his younger brother; but if she [Marie?] brought female children into the world, half of them belong to Marie's son.

583 If the nkita gave birth to no children of the female sex, the
604 boys of Marie could resort to the husband of the nkita of their mother,
namely, their uncle, nyangobika. If, however, he had no fortune,
no money, [337] no wives, no girls to sell ... or only wives to whom
others could lay claim and had more right, then they were disinherited,
poor devils in society, and it cost them long years of work and much

583 searching for old disputes and old arguments about wives to get a wife.
604 And then they were still not always successful; their youth itself was
against them here and robbed them constantly of the little that they
464 had saved for that purpose. The means for getting money, such as
lances, knives, arm and foot bands, were extremely scarce. The
Blacks do not know of workers or servants, and if one of those poor
souls presented himself at the home of one who was better endowed by
fortune and offered to chop wood for him, to lay out a manioc field,
or to build a house for him, to gather straw and bamboo in the forest
for that purpose, then the inborn laziness of the Negro would require
long months to complete that work. As salary, the worker received
only a few bakonga (copper arm of leg bands); these he already owed
to the owner for having shown too much inclination for one or another of
589 his wives. The result of this was that many young men remained with-
out a wife and that those who were favored by chance, that is to say,
595 had many children of the female sex in their family, each had several
562 wives. I consider this a primary cause of polygyny. The woman had a
relatively high monetary value and represented capital. Thus, it did
not happen that anyone gave his daughter or sister to another for
nothing, just as among us it does not happen that a farmer gives his
cow or horse to a poor devil for nothing.

583 If the father or brother sold a daughter born of the nkita of his
604 daughter or sister -- a right that general custom gave him and which
usually occurred, since the children of the female sex were sold very
603 young and the boys, the rightful claimants or owners, in that case were
still very young -- this was done in order to buy another wife. The rights
of the children shifted then as follows:
[338]



583
604
603 Jan, the father, by selling Katrien, the nkita of his daughter Marie, becomes indebted to Joseph, the son of Marie and at the same time his own grandson; and on the other side he becomes the debtor of Antonius, his other grandson, by selling his mother, Katrien.

Anna, whom he bought, was then the nkita of Katrien and the quasi-nkita of Marie. Both sons, Joseph and Antonius, were hard pressed because of Anna, the nkita of both of their mothers. If Anna bore two daughters, as I have indicated, the case was simple: the first daughter belonged to Joseph and the second to Antonius. If, however, she gave birth to only one daughter, then this child belonged to Joseph, and Antonius was left out in the cold. If father Jan had no children of the female sex by Anna, then the matter was extremely thorny for both of them, and if their grandfather or uncle possessed no money, had no more wives by whom he had daughters, there was nothing left for them to do but, at his death, to take the nkita of their mother as a wife. For this reason it happened many times that young men lived with old women, and even though there was then generally no more hope of children, those wives were then still good enough to cook the meals and do the little work that a Negro household requires.

000 I will not digress any further about the method of distribution of women, about the rights over the women which the nkita system brings with it. It would take us too far. Furthermore, not only the present, but also the past and the future are involved in it; so that one would have to be a Negro and raised in those matters to understand them clearly . . . and even then they involve numerous palavers (disputes), which continually agitate the families and the villages.

[339] The Origin of the Nkita?

596
583
562 The sale of the woman and the immediate loss of her freedom must naturally have given her cause for revolt. It has perhaps cost the man a severe struggle to make the woman content with her lot. A compensation or reimbursement had to be given to her, and most certainly the nkita system has its origin there. It was at least a partial compensation that the man gave to the woman. It gave her rights over her nkita

2: Hulstaert--26   M-5   (ca. 1930) 1938   FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

593 ˣ
152 With reference to signs of affection, grief at the time of death, etc., the observations made for parent-child relationships hold true here -- *mutatis mutandis*.

3. Various relatives

602 The Nkundo's affection extends toward all members of his family, that is, all those with whom he feels linked by blood and common origin. These relatives are much greater in number than in Europe, because Nkundó kinship includes many more generations. The intensity of affection decreases with the distance of the degree of kinship. But the Nkundó knows and feels that he belongs to a large family, and he remains attached to all its members. He can find a home with any of them. This accounts for the fact that in the centers, men from the same village will look for each other and consider [621] each other "brothers." Actually, that is what they are, since in general each village consists of only a single kin group.

Although here, as in the case of brothers and sisters, common interests play a part in maintaining bonds between family members, the feelings of affection are not based on selfish considerations. The latter only reinforce these feelings, which are truly innate among the Nkundó. Among the various relatives the strongest attachments are developed between grandparents and grandchildren, uncles and aunts and nephews and nieces, male cousins and female cousins, etc.

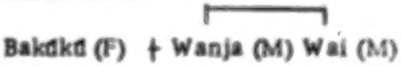
603 Among the Nkundó as among Europeans there is a very strong affection between grandparents and grandsons, even greater, one might say, than between parents and children (the expression is: *bőna* [30] *l'onkáná, ndekɛ́ nd'ônkáná*). But the relationship degenerates into compliance and weakness on one side, and into disrespectful carelessness on the other.

604 A Nkundó loves his paternal uncles and aunts and treats them like "fathers," and his maternal uncles and aunts like "mothers." Naturally, his feelings toward them are not as affectionate as for his parents, but they are an extension of these in an attenuated form.

● 605 The same situation holds true for the bonds which link him to his cousins, whom he calls "brothers" and "sisters." The children of his paternal aunt are his "fathers," however.

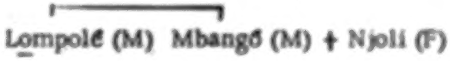
582
607

Example 12


Bakɔkɔ (F)
ǂ
Wanja (M)
Wai (M)

Wai may always marry Bakɔkɔ [256].

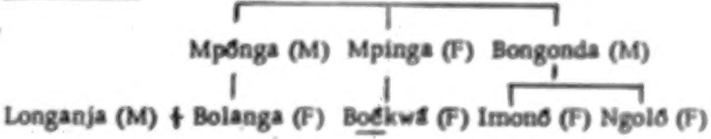
Example 13


Lompolɛ (M)
Mbangɔ́ (M)
ǂ
Njoli (F)

Lompole may not marry Njoli. Very rarely an exception is permitted.

Example 14

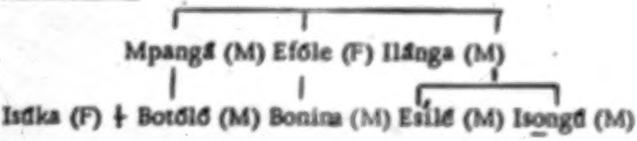
582
605


Mpɔ́nga (M)
Mpinga (F)
Bongonda (M)
Longanja (M)
ǂ
Bolanga (F)
Boɛ́kwɛ́ (F)
Imonɔ́ (F)
Ngolɔ́ (F)

Longanja may not marry his elder cousins, but he may marry the younger ones with the exception of Boɛ́kwɛ́ who is bɔ̌nankɛ́nɛ́ and has a "father's" rank (see above).

Similarly:

Example 15


Mpangɛ́ (M)
Efɔ́le (F)
Ilɔ́nga (M)
Isɔ́ka (F)
ǂ
Botɔ́lɔ́ (M)
Bonina (M)
Esílɛ́ (M)
Isongɔ (M)

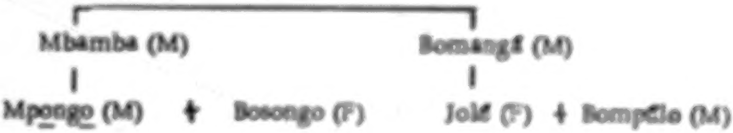
Only Botɔ́lɔ́'s younger cousins may marry Isɔ́ka. Bonina is bɔ̌nankɛ́nɛ́, therefore "father," and consequently included among the uncles (see B, above).

[602] Note, finally, that the more distant the relationship, the less strict the prohibition, that is, dispensations and exceptions are more easily accepted.

582
605

The same rule applies to cousins:

Example 25

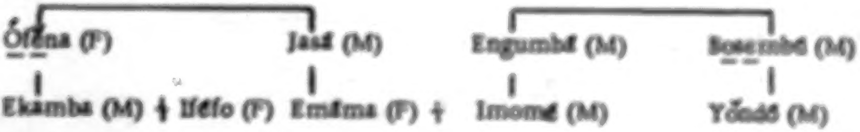

Mbamba (M)
Bomangɛ́ (M)
Mpongo (M)
Bosongo (F)
Jolɛ́ (F)
Bompɛ́lo (M)

Marriage between Bompɛ́lo and Bosongo is forbidden.

As the degrees of relationship grow more distant, the obstacles increasingly lose their force, so that exceptions are more readily accepted.

One point remains to be noted, although it has already been mentioned several times. Cousins (male or female) who are [601] bɔ̌nankɛ́nɛ́ are "fathers" to their cousins according to Nkundɔ́ law; they are therefore treated as aunts or uncles. For them the prohibition is very severe, especially if they are nyangɔ̂kilɔ́, "mother" of a relative by marriage.

Example 26

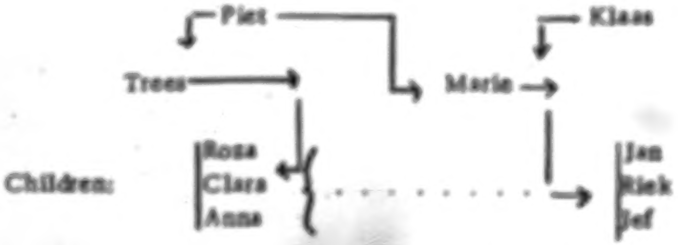

Ɔ́fɛ́na (F)
Jasɛ́ (M)
Engumbɛ́ (M)
Bosɛmbɔ́ (M)
Ekamba (M)
Ilɛ́fo (F)
Emɛ́ma (F)
Imomɛ́ (M)
Yɔ̌ndɔ́ (M)

Ekamba is Jasɛ́'s bɔ̌nankɛ́nɛ́ and therefore Emɛ́ma's "father." Ilɛ́fo, his wife, is therefore Emɛ́ma's mother. Emɛ́ma is Yɔ̌ndɔ́'s bokilɔ́. Consequently, Ilɛ́fo is the mother of Yondɔ́'s bokilɔ́ and therefore Yondɔ́'s nyangɔ̂kilɔ́. Marriage between Ilɛ́fo and Yɔ̌ndɔ́ is strictly prohibited, though it is not prohibited between Emɛ́ma and Yɔ̌ndɔ́ (see Example 15).

Adulterous relations among these various persons will be discussed in Chapter VI, Article VI, 2. [260]

Rights of the Male Children in Relation to the Nkita of Their Mother

596 We have already seen that the right of succession and father-
583 hood passed to the male children of the sister, because she had been
605 sold and had brought money into the family, or rather because she had
a *nkita* there, a sort of guarantee for the money that had been received
for her. *Nkita*-ship brought another right to them, namely, the female
children born of the mother's *nkita* belonged to them; they could sell
them and get themselves other women with the money. They could
[582] not, however, marry them, since they were their cousins, and custom
was opposed to any marriage between relatives. The boys could,
[602] nevertheless, take the *nkita* of their mother as a wife, since the Negroes
have no notion of affinity or relationship by marriage. The male
children were, then, the owners of the female children that the *nkita*
of their mother brought into the world:



These three girls, children of *nkita* Trees, belong to the three sons of Marie. If Marie had only one son, then Piet would have the right to trade the two other girls for money and to buy other wives with this money, either for himself or for his younger brother; but if she (Marie?) brought female children into the world, half of them belong to Marie's son.

583
604 If the *nkita* gave birth to no children of the female sex, the boys of Marie could resort to the husband of the *nkita* of their mother, namely, their uncle, *nyangobika*. If, however, he had no fortune, no money, [337] no wives, no girls to sell ... or only wives to whom others could lay claim and had more right, then they were disinherited, poor devils in society, and it cost them long years of work and much

291 581 speaking. (1) Is this custom in some way related to modesty? The

1. See Chapter VI, Article VI.

● [606] same question may be raised with respect to another strict rule of decorum which forbids a man to look his mother-in-law in the face. (2)

2. For details concerning this custom, see Chapter VI, Article V, 1.

It can readily be answered in the affirmative. (3)

3. Nevertheless, see Chapter X, Article II, 3.

784 516 The rule of decorum which forbids a man to sit down on a seat where a woman is seated who is not his wife seems to me also to be dictated by sexual modesty. On the other hand, stepping over the seat under such circumstances has nothing whatever to do with this feeling. The purpose of this practice is to enable the person seated (regardless of sex) to avoid the evil repercussions of a charm or magic spell in his or her possession. (4)

4. Contrary to the explanation given by Jadot in Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge (Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. [illegible].

291 894 Is the native ashamed to show his nakedness? Let us beware of answering this question in general terms. In order to have an idea of the situation which is sufficiently clear and precise, various cases and circumstances must be taken into account.

1) First of all it can be stated that in the normal course of daily living the Nkundó, men as well as women, do all they can to hide their genital organs. That is to say that basically they are

Article I. Girls

584 According to Nkundó custom it is acceptable for an expected child, not yet born or still very young, to be promised in marriage to X or Y. This practice was formerly very common and is still quite prevalent today. It is called banda bǒna or bǒmoto, literally, "to count a child" or "to count a woman." The ikulě is paid at the time of the promise. Later the matter is carried out in the usual fashion; the other parts of the bride price are paid either while the fiancée is young or, preferably, at the time when she goes to her husband.

584
855 Until that time, if one of the girl's relatives is already a wife of a polygamist husband-to-be or of one of his relatives, the child is brought up in her husband's family from a fairly early age, depending on the circumstances. She lives with her relative. She may be barely seven or eight years old, for example. If no one in her husband's clan can take care of her, [232] she spends only one or two weeks there to become acquainted, little by little, with people and places; she repeats the visit from time to time. Her mother accompanies her, for being so young she could not get used to being there alone, without support, without her parents. Therefore it is necessary to wait till she is old enough to be somewhat independent and able to manage by herself. That time usually comes around the [145] beginning of puberty, thus sometime between the ages of twelve and fifteen.

584
593 Like an adult woman, she is already called bompěka or wělf, depending on the portion of the bride price that has been paid. She has all the *duties and privileges of a wife: sexual relations, food* preparation, care of the household, etc. There is no set date or age for the beginning of cohabitation. This matter is settled between the husband and his parents-in-law. The latter do not have the right to [illegible] delay the time, even if their daughter is still too young, but they can make use of their great influence over their son-in-law. The modern [illegible] [577] generation is not shocked by sexual relations between an adulterer (sic) and a girl who has not reached puberty. Besides, all is in order from the legal standpoint; since the man has paid the bride price, he is the

592 602 [576] and those who owe submission and respect. The "superior" relatives are the ascendants, uncles, aunts, etc., in short, all those bearing the title of "father" or "mother," as well as elder brothers (elder [601] sisters, elder cousins, etc.), who are batómóló (sing. botómóló). The "inferiors" are the descendants, those who are called "children" (bána): sons and daughters, grandsons, nephews, nieces, younger brothers or sisters, and those who are classed with them and called bakéné (sing. bokéné).

[595] [587] 4) Polygamy and the inheritance of widows introduce another element. We will see that although persons of certain degrees of affinity may not marry, the prohibition is lifted to permit the inheritance of widows.

5) Our term "relatives by marriage" the Nkundó term and bakiló are not synonymous, even with respect to direct affinity. When we use the term "relatives by marriage" here, we are speaking in Nkundó terms. They do not consider certain persons whom we would include in that category as "relations by marriage." Such persons [601] are included in the group which as a whole is designated as likiló or bakiló, but when properly and accurately referred to they are called bóme, "husband," or wáli, "wife," because they may marry each other and therefore affinity, strictly speaking, cannot be applied to them. In other words, for the Nkundó, affinity is the relationship of a person with (only) those of his spouse's relatives whom he is forbidden to marry. It is well to bear in mind the double meaning of this term.

2. The rules

1. Direct Affinity

592 603 606 A. Marriages are prohibited in the direct line. Nevertheless, in accordance with consideration number 4, a son or grandson may inherit or marry the widows of his father or grandfather, but not the reverse. [254]

582
606
603

Example 1

Bakando (F)
|
Mbóyó (M) + Esalé (F)

Mbóyó may never marry Bakando.

Example 2

Eale (M) + Bofiné (F)
|
Mbélé (F)

Eale may never marry Mbélé.

Example 3

Bombembí (M)
|
Ikété (M) + Basáfó (F)

Bombembí may never marry Basáfó. (1)

[601]
[580]

1. If after the death of his son Ikété, Bombembí wanted to marry his widow, the mother of the deceased would be so angry and ashamed that she would irrevocably leave him. Such conduct on the part of a father during his son's lifetime would give the son full rights to vengeance (assassination, war with the help of the mother's clan, etc.), for it would be equivalent to a real disavowal of his son. But the case is purely hypothetical.

Example 4

Esalo (M) - Longé (F).
|
Lofété (M)

Lofété may marry Longé.

N.B. The same rules apply to grandparents and grandsons.

2. Indirect Affinity

582
●606
604

A. Marriage among those of lineal relationship is forbidden but certain exceptions are permitted. There are two possibilities: with the father's wife (Example 16) and with the son's wife (Example 17).

Example 16

Mbembe (M) ǂ Ekila (F)
|
Itɛ́na (M) ǂ Bokɛ́na (F)

If Bokɛ́na dies or is divorced from Itɛ́na, the latter may marry Ekila, but this exception is not often made because they would be very open to unkind criticism. [237]

Example 17

Etɛ́lɛ́ (M) ǂ Bokolí (F)
|
Njoku (M) ǂ Imɛ́ngɛ́ (F)

After Bokolí's death Etɛ́lɛ́ is permitted to marry Imɛ́ngɛ́. Such a marriage is more leniently regarded if Etɛ́lɛ́ himself paid the bride price for Imɛ́ngɛ́, for in that case he is preserving his capital in marrying her. This consideration may also apply during Bokolí's lifetime, if Imɛ́ngɛ́ does not want to remain with Njoku. Under such circumstances, however, Njoku's mother would oppose the marriage with all her power. If Etɛ́lɛ́ does not listen to reason, he can expect a divorce or even war with Bokolí's clan, to whom he is doing a great injury by taking away his stepson's wife. After divorce Bokolí's kin may refuse to give Etɛ́lɛ́ her new bride price and may give it directly to Njoku so that he can obtain a wife to replace the one that was taken from him. [586]

593x We should add that in some households, difficulties arise
● 606 rather easily during the visits of parents or parents-in-law, because
578 of the sensibilities, incompatibility of character, or discontent of
one party who may consider the other guilty of discourtesy, lack of
delicacy, disrespect, or stinginess toward the visiting parents. The
same is true for the rearing of children. [273]

4. Punishments

593x Nkundô law permits a husband to inflict corporeal punish-
578 ment (*bikɔ́njwɛ̂*, sing. *ekɔ́njwɛ̂*) on his wife, its nature varying with
the seriousness of the case. Obviously these sanctions, expressly
[576] permitted by law, cannot give rise to claims on the woman's part
or result in the obligation to pay a *boɓndo*. [Editor's note: Unless,
of course, the husband -- acting in excess of his rights -- is more
violent than the occasion warrants for under such conditions, the
[684] wife, supported by her family, attacks the husband, who is then
forced to acknowledge the harm he has done and make reparation by
means of a *boɓndo*.] If she is hurt she may claim a supplementary
payment called *liombo* (from the verb *bomba*) or "bandage" (for the
wound); it consists of 5 rings or more, depending on the situation.
[826] The loss or breaking of a tooth is considered a serious injury. For
this is a real injury to the woman and, in the case of front teeth, to
her beauty. (1) Of course, as explained above, the wife will first have
run home, and it is there that the dispute is examined.

593x For the sake of a clearer understanding, let us go into a few
578 details concerning the penal stipulations of Nkundô law in relation
684 to the life of a married couple.

Usually, in a simple domestic quarrel, the couple does no
more than tell each other some home truths, seasoning their speeches

---

[304] 1: Because they are filed, the incisors are much less resistant than normal teeth. Teeth filing is practiced for reasons of beauty.

593 longo of Bokɛ́kyɛ́ (Boselo, Bombwanja), married to Bokaa is 'Ifonda
594 of Bowɛ́lɛ́; for Mbalaka, daughter of Bolekela wa Imangaiso of the
342 Basɛ́kɛ́ Lokuli (Bongíli), married to Mbuli is'ea Wela of Bombóngo
556 w'Etefa (Bongale) (1) [286]

[551] 1. She bore the name of Mbɛ́laka (meaning indemnity), because her father had solemnly proclaimed (-bɛ́kya) and publicly promised that he intended, one day, to place himself in the position of having to pay an indemnity because of his daughter, as proof of his love. Indeed [782] when Mbɛ́laka was married, he killed one of his wives, cut her into pieces, and sent the "meat" to his son-in-law as "the first hen" that his wife would prepare for him. But he did not have to pay [602] [604] the indemnity because the victim's clan was too weak to attempt a war; they did not dare to make a claim and, in order to avoid even greater misfortunes, they resigned themselves to this revolting ignominy.

Article V

Relations Between the Husband and His Wife's Family

606 607 As has already been said, kinship by marriage is called likiló, and relatives by marriage are called bokiló, bakiló. Mbótsoló is a term of respect for very close relatives by marriage (father-in-law, mother-in-law, sometimes brother-in-law or sister-in-law). When there is a considerable age difference between two affinal relatives, the elder one sometimes calls the younger bokilówalɛ́. This happens most frequently when the son-in-law is so young that he can still be considered a child. This term can even be used by an elder brother

606
607 with reference to the young wife of his junior. (1)

> 1. The second component of this term is used by some Elinga as a synonym of bokiló. It should be related to walé, a term which among the Mbole and the Bakutu denotes a girl who is bolómbɛ or a woman who has just given birth (the same is true among the Ekonda).

The present practice is to exclude from among the bakiló these persons with whom marriage is permitted. They are more frequently called "husband" or "wife."

The opposite of bokiló is bokanga. The bakanga are members of the family that has received the bride price, while the bakiló are those who have paid it. In common practice the word bokiló is often used in place of bokanga, but never the reverse. Bokiló l'okanga is the expression denoting the whole group.

606 1. Father-in-law and mother-in-law

A husband owes respect, love, and assistance to his parents-in-law. This point is vital to harmony in the home. In this sphere a wife is very intolerant [287] of forgetfulness and even more of ill will. Offensive comments, insults pointed at parents-in-law even in their absence result in serious difficulties. Sometimes a husband expresses his bad humor or anger against his spouse in that way. This kind of behavior never wins approval, unless his in-laws first insulted him. The law of retaliation applies fully in this situation. The Nkundó say: ótswá mbóngó l'ǒndamba olóngaka ńk'ǒndamba, "He who replies to evil comments is in the right, not the one who began." For a fuller discussion of this topic, see above (Article III).

606
579
431 To remain on good terms with his parents-in-law, the husband must visit them from time to time. By the very nature of things, his visits are less frequent than those of his wife. One reason why they cannot be too frequent is that the husband must bring gifts at each visit (belonga). One does not go to one's parents-in-law empty handed.

606
574
431 The extent of the riches brought depends on circumstances. Some greedy persons hope for large gifts if their daughter's marriage proves stable. Others prefer not to receive too much, lest they be required to give back an equal amount and -- if they are not especially wealthy -- thus find themselves one day in great financial difficulties. For the [585] belonga are added to the sum total of the bride price and must therefore be restored, should the occasion arise.

The parents-in-law do not allow their son-in-law to depart without giving him countergifts as a farewell (belingako). These take the form of hens and ducks, and their value is added to the total amount of nkomí.

Neither son-in-law nor parents-in-law like to see the generosity of the other party exceed their own, except in a few unusual cases. As a matter of fact, this is a very intelligent policy; equality is maintained on both sides, so that there can be no reproaches on the grounds of greed or stinginess [288], and if the marriage should be dissolved, it would be easy to re-establish equilibrium.

A son-in-law is expected to help his father-in-law to an extent which varies with the situation and with his means. He may fell the trees of the forest for him or set up a field, he may build him a house or make a hunting enclosure (lokombo), etc. A good son-in-law never fails to fulfill these obligations, and the father-in-law does not let him leave without having given him some present.

It is very important to a wife that her husband acquit himself conscientiously of these duties of visiting and assisting her parents. His failure to do so would lead to serious palavers and their usual consequences.

The father-in-law, for his part, does not fail to help his son-in-law in his various tasks. When the work is completed, the latter gives him a bolingako of a few copper rings, which are included in belonga.

The visits of a woman's parents to their son-in-law are more frequent. It is their way of showing their love for him and their daughter and their interest in the household. The visits can last weeks and months, whether only one or both of the parents come. If they stay too long, they are accepted with less enthusiasm. Gifts (bolingako) must always be brought out when the farewells are said.

606 Even if the parents' union has been dissolved and the mother
574x has remarried, she does not cease to visit her daughter and son-in-law.
586 If her new husband seems not to agree to her going, difficulties result.
593x And if he does not change his attitude, his behavior may cause his
wife to leave him in order to return to her first husband, the girl's
father.

Thus, visits are accompanied by an exchange of gifts which
606 are belonga if given by the son-in-law, and part of the nkɛmɛ val-
574 uables if given by the father-in-law. Farewell gifts are belonga [289]
431 and part of the bride price if given by the son-in-law, part of the
585x nkɛmɛ if given by the father-in-law.

These same rules apply, mutatis mutandis, to various relatives on each side with respect to visits made, services rendered, and presents given on these occasions.

606 One very strict law regarding relations between son-in-law and parents-in-law should be noted: a man is forbidden to see the face of his wife's mother. This prohibition is scrupulously observed by all. He is allowed to see her face only once, at the beginning of the marriage, "to learn to know her so that they can avoid each other." If, for example, they meet while traveling in the forest, they must turn their backs to each other. Usually the woman turns her face toward the edge of the path to let her son-in-law pass. They greet each other by word of mouth, ask for each other's news, but do not shake hands or look at each other. It is funny for us to see a woman visiting her son-in-law. The two place themselves on each side of a partition or in two corners, and they talk in that way, asking for news, carrying on a discussion, etc., without seeing each other. Sometimes mother-in-law and son-in-law find themselves in each other's presence unexpectedly, in the forest or in the fields, without having seen each other approach or having been warned by anyone. They immediately turn their backs on each other; the man excuses himself and quickly disappears, even if to do so he has to plunge into a dense forest full of prickly and tangled creepers.

This law extends also to the husband's very close relatives, such as his younger brothers (who are also "husbands"), and to all

606 women called "mother," such as the mother's sisters and the father's wives. The law does not seem strictly applicable to these persons, but seems to cover them by extension. On the other hand, there is no comparable law with regard to a woman and her father-in-law.

606
578
A violation of this prohibition results in a great palaver, for it is considered a serious lack of respect. It may produce a serious domestic quarrel. [290] A wife will refuse to perform the conjugal act with her husband because he has looked at his mother-in-law. That is why people help each other by warning each other of the "danger" when their respective mothers-in-law arrive.

Compensation for the offense may be made by the payment of a boɔ́ndo of several bakonga to the mother-in-law. As long as the payment has not been made, the wife will not fulfill her conjugal duties. After it has been made, everything goes back in order. If it is proved that the situation came about involuntarily, there is no palaver and no payment is required. Nowadays the best Christians tend to give a boɔ́ndo once and for all to definitively settle any palaver that may occur in the future and to avoid the obligation of having to submit to this prohibition, since they are beginning to vaguely perceive its uselessness.

[551] A man is even forbidden to pronounce the name of his mother-in-law in her presence, even to address or call another person of the same name. In such a situation he must resort to a surname or paraphrase. Usually he addresses her as mbɔ́tsolɔ́. An infraction of this rule results in the same punishment as if a man were to look at his mother-in-law.

606 If we ask the Nkundɔ́ to give us the reason for this custom, as it is so strange to our point of view, they reply that they are ashamed or embarrassed to see the women who begot their wives, and that to do so would be a grave offense to her. The custom is a means of expressing the respect a son-in-law owes his mother-in-law, and of avoiding unceremonious behavior or too great a familiarity toward her. That is all the explanation they give. For our philosophical turn of mind, it does not exhaust the subject. We are tempted to look for a connection between the intimate relations of the married couple and

606 the act of procreation on the part of one of them. Perhaps this idea is latent in the native mind, or at least is at the basis of this rule. The fact that this hypothesis applies only to the wife's mother-in-law [mother?] does not weaken it; for in native eyes [291] the other instances are entirely without importance. (1)

1. See, for example, Chapter II, Article X, and Chapter V, Articles II and III.

606 292 Another regulation pertaining to the mother-in-law requires that she -- and all the women who are given the same title in current usage -- may appear in her son-in-law's village only when dressed in a boleleke. A boleleke is a banana leaf, either green or dried, which has been torn in several places perpendicularly to the large [765] central rib, and constitutes the first and principal sign of mourning. Moreover, Batswa women must also dress in this manner before entering a Baotó settlement. The following reason is given for the rule in the second instance: a Botswá woman's dress consists of a lolímba, a belt of small braided ropes about 10 centimeters long. Although in ordinary positions the lolímba provides fairly good protection, it is not considered adequate to really stop all indiscreet looks. And it is popularly believed that if a Bootó sees a Botswá woman's genital organs, she will die. Might we conclude from this last explanation that there is a fundamental connection between the reasons that necessitate the wearing of a boleleke in these three instances? Or is the mother-in-law to imitate a Botswá woman and thus show a certain subordination to her son-in-law?

2. Female relatives

607 837 As long as they are free, that is, as long as no bride-price payment has been made for them, a woman's sisters or cousins are considered by her husband as his wives, and he calls them so (baálí). This term is applied only to relatives of a generation below that of the true wife or to members of the same generation who are younger than she and with whom marriage [292] is permitted. It is therefore never

607 extended to relatives with whom marriage prohibited, such as nieces
837 who are *banankáná*, who are his wife's "mothers." (1)

1. See Chapter V, Article IV and the examples cited there (for instance, examples 25, 26, 17).

When such relatives of the wife marry, the situation changes. They belong to another man, and a continuation of the same practice as when they are single produces very serious cases of adultery. There are differences depending on the degree of affinity, however. In addition to the usual sanctions against adultery, other measures may be taken, especially the dissolution of the marriage. An especially serious case, but one which is more or less hypothetical, would be adultery between a man and his father-in-law's wife; a special feeling of shame is connected with it, and our Nkundó say that the two persons are like a Botswá and his master. Misconduct with the wife of a brother-in-law (or cousin-in-law) is also a very serious matter. The latter may take his sister (or cousin) away from the guilty husband and thus break the marriage. The same applies to adultery with a *nyangôkiló*.(1)

1. See Chapter V, Article IV and the examples given there (for instance, examples 25, 26, 17).

3. Legal matters

606
685 Here we must examine the manner in which breaches of the law are settled between parents-in-law and son-in-law. It is known that among these peoples justice, in the strict sense of the word, is one of the most prominent aspects of social legislation. Theft is one of the principal causes for shame and was formerly severely punished. The thief, especially if he continued to repeat his offence, could be sold as a slave.

606
685 If one of the wife's relatives were found guilty of stealing from his (or her) relative by marriage, or even from one of the latter's relatives, the family tribunal was assembled. Out of consideration for the ties of kinship between the thief and the wife and in order not to sadden her and her family, the guilty person was not sold as a slave. He was simply turned over to the woman [293] and her family, and they were told: "Here he is; he has been found guilty of theft and should have been reduced to slavery. Out of respect for you, however, we are not selling him; we are rolling (-kilimola) him toward you. Take him as bride price and add him to the sum of the bọsóngọ." Thus the matter was settled in a friendly fashion. If subsequently there was a divorce, the wife's family had to restore not only the bride price that had been paid but also an additional slave for the member of their group that the husband had yielded in this fashion. Thus, the transaction was not at all a fictional one.

Conversely, the same procedure was adopted in relation to a relative of the husband who had violated the rules of justice to the detriment of a member of the family related by marriage. But in that case the extradition of the guilty party was considered as the addition of a slave to the amount of the nkọmɛ.

[539] Hence the saying: bokiló ntɛ́wɛ́kɛ́ ndɛ́ ngond'ɛ̌y'okanga, "a parent-in-law cannot die in the forest of his relatives by marriage."

The situation is no different nowadays. The only change is that, instead *of giving back a slave if a dissolution of the* marriage occurs, the equivalent value is paid in copper rings, etc.

727
606 The same customs governed conduct toward prisoners of war. For instance, in the course of a war Eale became the master of Bombolo, whose cousin is married to Iloko, a close relative of Eale. Iloko interceded with Eale in order to obtain Bombolo's freedom, and Bombolo was sent home but was to be considered as bọsóngọ. The liberated prisoner thus was classed as a slave given as part of the bride price, as in the preceding case, and all the appropriate rules were followed.

602 brings forth reprimands on the part of the husband and his parents
which obviously can easily degenerate into quarrels. If the omissions
are so frequent and of such a nature that they can no longer be explained as simply forgetting, a whim, or a fit of peevishness, but
[299] are taken to indicate spitefulness or vulgarity, the matter is
[621] brought before the ndonga (who is often assisted by the family tribunal)
or brought before the authority constituted by the woman's kin. If
in spite of everything the expected improvement does not take place,
the break-up is inevitable.

606 The husband's father and mother extend the same affection to
their son's wife as they feel toward him. They consider her their
own child, and it is not unusual to find that their love for the wife
equals their feeling for their own son. She is only a relative by marriage, but out of affection for her they call her their child. She, for
[601] her part, does not use toward them the term bakanga (or bakilò) but
out of filial respect calls them "father" and "mother." Exceptions
to this practice may be found, however.

606 If the father (and those who fall in the same category such as
224 uncles, elder brothers, etc.) kills a large game animal, he is expected to give his son's (or brother's, etc.) wife a piece of meat,
whose size depends on the number of daughters-in-law he has and
which consists of one or several chops (bokalako) (1) and the piece at
the nape of the neck (botombyá).

606 Illicit relations between the husband's father and his daughter-
835 in-law would be an unheard of crime. The same would be true with
respect to any of the "superior" relatives. (2) The laws regulating

---

1. Called lieto among the Bolenge and the tribes of the Losanganya.

[178] [194] 2. Only the Boangi -- like the Elangá of the Losanganya -- allow relations between a brother and the wife of his junior; and they are already beginning to find imitators among their neighbors to the southeast, the Injolo.

606 the relations between a wife and her husband's parents are closely
856 connected with the rules pertaining to the prohibition related to affinity and seems to spring from the same source. Therefore it will be useful to have in mind what we have said in the preceding chapter, Article IV.

607 The husband's elder brothers treat his wife as their sister. The wife calls her husband's sisters [300] bakilő, but out of respect she often gives them the title of "mother." (1)

[601] 1. Among the Elángă the wife also calls her husband's sisters bongíli (pl. bangílí); they call her bǒnongíli (pl. bǎnangílí). A wife often calls her husband's mother nyangôngíli. Bǎnangíli l'ǎnangíli means "the brother's wives and their sisters-in-law."

587 After the husband's death, as has been said suo loco, his father or his brother may marry his widow. But this practice is not well regarded and is permitted only rarely, chiefly when the scattering of the family patrimony is feared or if the two interested parties have an unusual love for each other.

897
602 With respect to children or younger brothers and all those who fall into that category, the situation is altogether different. Illicit relations with wives of their father, grandfather, uncle, elder brother, or elder cousin, are judged much less severely. Generally, misconduct does not give rise to claims for payment, or the payment is demanded "for form's sake" and consists of a hen and a bunch of bananas. By means of this payment the guilty one recognizes his error and renders homage to the right of his elder.

[628] In general public opinion condemns these relations and often with great severity. The question of degree of kinship as well as other considerations result in a great diversity among the cases, so we will examine each situation separately and distinguish each time between the husband's reaction and that of public opinion.

837 431 substituted for all these items. As a rule the woman demands some remuneration although there are exceptions, which may be frequent or rare, depending on the region and on the nature of the persons involved. They are due to extraordinary passion or to the woman's love for her lover. (1)

1. See Chapter I, Part 1, Article IV.

3. Evidence of adultery

837 684 The strength of the evidence may vary.

1) The strongest evidence is finding the couple in flagrante delicto. No objection will hold up against it, and it constitutes for the application of the severest sanctions. The act must be observed by the husband. The testimony of a third party is never introduced. If another person discovers the adultery and favors the husband, that person will inform the latter so that he can take precautions in order to catch the culprits personally. If it is discovered by the woman's father or other close relative who favors the husband, [606] he informs the latter and, if possible, calls him to witness the infraction himself. If he does so, the husband must give the indemnity to his father-in-law. This is not a legal obligation but one imposed by good relations and decorum, since the father-in-law has shown good will and affection toward his son-in-law.

2) A wife's admission is almost as important and always decisive. Such a confession mitigates her husband's anger toward her and directs it chiefly toward her accomplice. Therefore most women do not hesitate to denounce their paramours if they feel somewhat cornered. (On the other hand, women never denounce each other.) [314]

3) A third form of evidence can be obtained by surprising the lovers while they are planning a meeting. The husband can accuse them on the spot and try to extract a complete confession from his wife on the subject of the past or the future. If possible he assures himself of the co-operation of witnesses. If he foresees a denial on his wife's part, he lets the occasion pass and looks for a good opportunity to surprise the culprits in the act. Regardless of the

In every case at least a few beéngo in addition to the
764 bombémbé and the botsá w'ilaká are always claimed. The latter payments can never be omitted. The belt is a payment made exclusively to the mother and by rights it goes to the mother's clan.

764 The higher the amount of these funeral payments, the more the son-in-law is welcome. The alliance is perfect. Therefore,
●606
607 not only will the wife's family reciprocate his fine feelings by adding a few more dogs, but in addition the son-in-law will be well received and successful in his application when, after the period of mourning, he brings the sum of the ibóleóko in order to obtain a substitute for the deceased. (2) In addition, if the relations with his in-laws have been excellent, he will easily obtain the substitute in advance, so that she can care for him during the entire mourning period.

764
609 There are severe sanctions against the omission of the funeral payments. [439] Neglecting to send the notification gift alone is enough to set these in motion. They are: the breaking off of the affinal relationship; the loss of the children, since the father's offense is equal to a repudiation; and finally molestation of the culprit by the spirit of the deceased. Thus at Bokátola (Bompela) one can find two boys, Botúsí and Ikembá, the children of Bonyongela of Ilángá and Etáka of Bokátola. They have now been incorporated into their mother's clan, because their father did not send a nsango. On stronger grounds the same is true for the whole nkunjí.

Article V. The Social Position of a Widow

768
587 In Chapter III, Articles II and IV, we have already noted that in the eyes of the Nkundó, the death of the husband does not dissolve a marriage. The union continues, and even after mourning it is not broken ipso facto. Even to have the woman taken and treated as a wife by another man is not enough to end it. As

---

2. See Chapter III, Article IV.

000 the same rights as the other children of the polygynist.

595 The polygynist always sought to increase the number of his
wives, for his prestige rose and his fortune increased in that manner.
556 If anyone in civilized lands seeks to enlarge his fortune, this is
593 done, people say, in order to insure the future of his children. The
native thinks little about that; his primary idea is to enjoy himself
and to surpass others in prestige and esteem. As far as the future
of his children is concerned, there are polygynists who possess twenty
or thirty wives or even more, and sometimes they have only one or
two children. Also it is little in keeping with their notions to care
for the future; he who is still alive tomorrow must take care of
595 tomorrow then, so they reason. On the contrary, instead of caring
for his children, the polygynist often took great trouble to obtain a
593 wife for his son. The son, however, was not yet the owner of his
584 wife; it was, so to speak, only a loan. Not until after the death of
606 his father did he become owner. In some districts, when the father
had obtained a wife for his son, he first kept this wife for some time
for himself. Only after a few months did he give her to his son. In
595 other districts, when the wife was pregnant by the son, he was obliged
593 to send her for a few days to his father. He was not allowed to bear
606 the honor of fatherhood alone; his father must share that with him.
842 The father reserved for himself the honor of naming all of the chil-
551 dren of his children. In some areas of the Congo, morals were so
835 low and common that the father even kept his own daughters in his
harem. This did not occur in Equatorial Africa, but there was a
custom that was not much better. The magician was sometimes
583 consulted about the bride price which the father tried to get for his
791 daughter, or the brother for his sister.

The magician then gave them the advice that they them-
selves should first have relations with their own daughter or sister.
This custom existed almost everywhere in Equatorial Africa.

[538] Bride Price. In general, the daughter was given in
583 marriage upon payment of a bride price. The father had little
choice of the future husband of his daughter. The one who guaranteed
the most goods in payment was certain to get her. Since, in most
cases, the little daughter had not yet arrived at the years of maturity,
there was naturally no question of her consent. The bride price was
not paid all at once, but gradually during the years while the
daughter grew up. Since the daughter was given without her consent

583 payment of the bride price with the bosɔngɔ as he was committed to do through the payment of the ikulɛ and the ndanga. If he does not, the bond between him and his father-in-law is automatically broken, and consequently he is unable to obtain another wife to replace the deceased, and he loses the rights over one of his own daughters. Actually, we will have to come back to this question in Chapter IX, Article IX, 2.

These rules show how great a difference exists between the walo and the bosɔngɔ; in the one case, upon the death of the woman prior to the payment, an indemnity is imposed for a transgression in the eyes of the law; in the other, there is a transaction to stabilize the financial rights of the clans involved.

From all the above considerations we may conclude that because of the special nature of the payment, the bosɔngɔ is very important for the stability of the marriage and the social position of the woman's clan. But from a legal point of view it is far less important than the walo, through which a woman becomes truly [164] a wife; for the payment creates no new social relationship either between the spouses or between the husband and his in-laws.

Article X. Purpose of the Bride Price

593 607 Theoretically, the bride price is meant to procure a wife for one of the members of the family that has received it.

The woman who is married thanks to the bride price paid for another is called the latter's nkita. It seems to me that this word is etymologically related to nkitɔ, "profit, benefit" (the verb is -kitola). In the final analysis, both words may be derived from the root -kit, "to become."

[186] A synonym of nkita is bongíli (bongíji): it is used primarily by the Injɔlɔ but it is also known, though seldom employed, by the other tribes.

[602] [575] The woman whose bride price has served to procure the nkita is the latter's nkɔlɔ (literally, "mistress"). The Injɔlɔ as well as the Bɔngɛ also call her by the more tactful name, nyangɔngíji, "mother

585 of the *bongíli*." (1)
607
[595]

1. This term also designates the wife of a polygamist who has brought along one of her relatives as co-wife; she is the *nyangôngili* [sic] of the latter. (See Chapter VII, Article IV.)

For "to obtain a *nkita*" the Nkundó say *-umba nkita*, literally, "to fell a *nkita*," as one fells a tree or an adversary. Or they may say *-bɔ́ta nkita*, "to possess a *nkita*" (*umba* or *bɔ́ta* so-and-so, *la nkita*). "To become a *nkita*" would be rendered as *-kwɛ́ nkita*, "to fall into being a *nkita*."

585 596 The hierarchy of those entitled to the bride price is based on the general hierarchy of family members, which gives precedence to the older generations and, within each generation, to the older members. Consequently, as long as a member of the family having the title of *isɛ́* (father) is unmarried (unless he is physically or mentally incompetent), no *bɔ́na* (son) is entitled to a bride price, even if it is that of his own sister. Within the same generation, the older members have precedence over the [165] younger ones, but boys have priority rights to the bride price of their uterine sisters. (1)

1. For limitations and exceptions to this right, see Chapter IV, Article II.

It occurs quite often, and was even more frequent in the past, that the person entitled to the bride price is still too young to get married, either in reality or in the opinion of his "fathers." (2) The

2. See *ibid.*

bride price is consequently used for the benefit of another member of the family. The creditor reaps the benefits later in the form of inheritance.

[602] Even if the woman or women meant for him should die or be taken in slavery, he can obtain the bride price of a cousin to which

583 592 602 no one has direct rights (for instance, if she is an only child) or that of his mother's nkita's daughter, as we will see below.

In these instances there is a temporary suspension of rights or rather a change in the individual entitled to them. These adjustments are made very frequently and can affect several people. Bride prices may even fall to fairly distant relatives, even in the maternal line. The transactions are performed by the patriarchs for the greatest good of the family as a whole. New rights benefiting the person originally entitled to the bride price are being created, and 583 the woman married by its means has become the equivalent of a nkita 601 in relation to him -- as is the following instance:

Bakutu b'Ôlóngɛ́ (Boniface) of Bombɛ́nga w'Ôhenda (Besomb́ɔ́, Bombwanja) has a sister Wɛ́mi, whose bride price serves to provide his paternal uncle, Elongama ɛ́y'imta, with a wife, Ikɔ́kɔ́ of Ndongɔ́-Bongîli. Bakutu's rights over his niece, Bakutu, daughter of Bolɔ́fio, are transferred to Bofɛ́nda d'Ekɔ́kola, son of his paternal great-aunt Etɛ́ka and therefore, in Nkundó terminology, to his father. As a result he obtains the rights over the bride price of Wângi, the daughter of his uncle [166] and Ikɔ́kɔ́. At the same time he acquires a certain authority over Bofɛ́nda, the beneficiary of the bride price that was originally intended for him, and over the latter's children.

When the bride price is meant to procure a nkita, there is nothing to prevent the remainder, should there be any, from being used to pay a debt, a fine, etc., or, more especially, from being given to a relative so that he can procure a wife for himself.

If, in an exceptional case, the bride price is not used for its [684] original purpose, this deviation constitutes an infraction of the law, because it is a violation of the rights of the girl for whom the bride price was paid, for she is thus deprived of her nkita and consequently of certain advantages. It may happen, however, that there is a conflict between this law and some other. In such cases of circumstances beyond one's control, it is up to the legal authorities to determine which of the two has priority.

Such was the case of Bolɛ́i, daughter of Ilolɛ́ y'Ôngɛ́mɛ́, of the Baafɛ́kɛ́ Longwâne of Bonjoku (Bothono). She was married to Bombɛ́longa

583 601 of Likolɛ. The bride price went to her uncle Botɛ́lɔ, because her father had been taken prisoner of war by the Bongale. The family council decided to free Ifolí before contemplating the acquisition of a wife. Botɛ́lɔ therefore paid his brother's ransom. Naturally, Bolɛ́i was greatly annoyed to have to submit to this decision but, taking everything into consideration, she too thought that the liberation of her father had priority over her right to a nkita, of whom she was now deprived. For although the Bongale were able to obtain a wife thanks to the ransom, the wife was not Bolɛ́i's nkita, since each family takes only its own members into consideration.

583 602 607 As we have already implied, the nkɔ́lɔ derives certain advantages from "possessing" a nkita. Her superior position, from the Nkundó point of view, entitles her to respect and to some assistance. An even greater advantage is her right to the dowry. As we have [167] seen, a husband keeps a small part of the dowry for household necessities; the greater part of it goes to the nkɔ́lɔ. Finally, the son of the nkɔ́lɔ has the right to his say in his mother's clan, because it has been enriched by means of valuables paid by his father's clan. He also has the right to cultivate land belonging to his mother's clan and to settle on it. Furthermore, when a member of his mother's clan is enabled to obtain a wife by means of these valuables, he has certain rights over the children of his mother's nkita, and even over the nkita herself. (1)

1. See above, Article IV, 3, and Chapter III, Article II.

In relation to the children of his mother's nkita -- whom he calls his bakwɛ (2) or his mother's benkita (benkita bɛ́fafɛ bɛ́ɛ́ ngɔ́ya) --

2. Singular bɔkwɛ́. The term is derived from the verb -kwɛ or -kwɛ́, "to fall" (see above).

the nkɔ́lɔ's son has the following rights:

1) The right to respect and assistance.

2) The right to sit on the family council which decides on the division of the inheritance (so that the deceased's own son cannot have

593* a share of his father's goods without the consent of his *nkɔ́lɔ́*) or the
602 use of the bride prices received for the daughters.
607 2) If he cannot obtain a wife through his own clan, he is entitled to the bride price of one of his *bokwɛ* if it is not first needed by one of her own uncles or brothers. The rights of the latter have priority over that of the *nkɔ́lɔ́*, unless he settles in his mother's clan. For in that case his rights have precedence over those of the brothers (though never those of an uncle), and he is next in line, after his uncles, to become head of the family. Since he is sister's son, the uncle's children call him "father" just as they call his mother, their paternal aunt, by the name of *isómoto* ("female father"). He himself calls his first cousins *bána*, "children," and thus has precedence over them. [168]

Thus the rights to authority over the daughters of the *nkita* on the part of the *nkɔ́lɔ́*'s son are limited by the rights of the uncles and, to a certain degree, of the brothers. (1) But in the inheritance of widows the rights of the *nkɔ́lɔ́*'s son operate fully, and he may claim the one acquired by means of his *bokwɛ*'s bride price, who in a way is his *nkita* (when she is assigned to him they say *baló ɛ́nɔ́ nkita*, "here is your *nkita*").

These rules can result in multiple transactions and in a repeated transferring of rights from one of the two clans to the other as well as within the same clan.

The *nkɔ́lɔ́*'s grandsons call the *nkita*'s grandsons *nkɛ́ y'ɛ́mbɔ́lɔ́*, "the excrements of valuables" (an expression which is not at all disrespectful or shocking) because the rights derived from the relationship of *nkɔ́lɔ́* and *nkita* are almost without force. In favorable circumstances they are limited to a little respect and assistance. And if the *nkɔ́lɔ́*'s grandsons have no other kinship tie with the paternal clan of their second cousins, they cannot even call them by that name.

---

[169] 1. In his study "Het Familiehoofd bij de Nkundo-Negers" [The Family Head among the Nkundó Negroes], *Congo*, 1930, Vol. 2, p. 332, Father Brepoels somewhat exaggerates the rights of the *nkɔ́lɔ́*'s son.

583a 602 607 Thus the person who is herself the object of a bride price is the nkita. The first generation born of the nkfilɔ calls her bonkita. In the third generation the term nkwɛ y ɛ̂mbɛlɛ is applied to the relationship.

For example:

mother	Lokónjɔ	nkita of Bokombe
son	Imana	bonkita of Ilangɔ
mother	Lokónjɔ	nkita of Bokombe
son	Imana	
grandson . .	Efofa	. . . . bonkita of Ilangɔ
mother	Lokónjɔ	nkita of Bokombe
son	Imana	bonkita of Ilangɔ
grandson . . .	Efofa	nkwɛ y'ɛ̂mbɛlɛ of Lifɔla

[608] [188] The bonds between the nkfilɔ's grandsons and the nkita's grandsons are loosened because respect and authority between grandparents and grandsons are more or less nominal; in practice they no longer exist. (1)

1. See Chapter VI, Article VI.

If the nkfilɔ leaves no descendants, the nkita's sons are freed from any obligation. Just as the Nkundɔ like to be able to call someone their nkita or their bokwɛ so, too, they take pride in not belonging to a nkfilɔ.

583a 607 Men who bear the title of nkfilɔ may, under given circumstances, have duties towards their bonkita, especially the obligation of taking active part in getting together the amount of a bride price. If the nkfilɔ has provided his bonkita with a wife, the latter must treat him like his father (giving him assistance, the father's portion of the meat of a game animal, etc.).

583^x 607 The mutuality of the rights of nkóló and nkita is well expressed in the saying, ómbété ékóété wě, "possess me so that I may possess you." It is like do ut des.

583^x 607 182 [611] It is possible to judge from the preceding descriptions that the bride price has a considerable influence on family relations. Although the Nkundó system is clearly and manifestly patriarchal, the custom of the bride price and its logical consequences give it certain features which make one think of a matriarchy. This situation comes about quite naturally. Since the bride price is wealth it represents power in society. Through marriage this power is transferred from the husband's clan to the wife's, which is enriched in goods and persons by the bride price that has been received. In a sense, the husband is the provider of his wife's clan. And the child can truthfully maintain that his clan was enriched thanks to his father. As a matter of fact, for the Nkundó, this consideration above all others is the basis for their demands of whatever rights they possess in the mother's clan. [170] The relationship between a woman and her nkita and between their respective children is founded solely on the bride-price system of marriage and has nothing to do with matriarchy. (1)

1. But the above considerations may furnish one source of explanation for the origin of that family system.

Consequently, it is unnecessary to erect complicated theories or engage in tortuous speculations in order to explain the creation of this system or to justify it. It is quite simply the outcome of the payment of a bride price in valuables that are of no use except in connection with a similar purpose.

Nevertheless, although the system of the nkita is a natural and logical consequence of marriage by means of a bride price, it is not a necessary consequence. The bride price exists in all the tribes of the Congo, but it does not seem to have resulted everywhere in the institution of the nkita. 583^x

174 114 607 What has given rise to this institution among the Nkundó? Father Brepoels (loc. cit., p. 330) gives the following explanation:

174 583^a 184 607 "The sale (sic) of the woman and her loss of liberty must naturally have aroused her indignation. The man probably had a great deal of difficulty in persuading her to resign herself to it. It was necessary to arrange for some compensation and that is how the system of the nkita originated. That is how the woman acquired rights over her nkita and how nonexistent prerogatives were attributed to her children: they became the superiors, the "fathers" of the mothers' family . . . . The elders, the wealthy, profited from this system, which released them from any concern for their daughters: the girls could be sold while they were still very young and then if, later, they complained of the injustice that had been done them, the elders consoled them by reminding them of their rights and those of their sons over the nkita and her offspring . . . moreover, this system released the elders from their duty of obtaining wives for their sons and removed any reason for the latter to claim their father's wives."

This explanation for the origin of the nkita system is unthinkable, for it is entirely contrary to everything [171] we know about the nature of Nkundó marriage. But it seems plausible that the fact that the old father benefited from this institution helped it to flower and spread. Native greed also may have played a role.

583^a 174 607a Nevertheless, we must seek beyond the operation of causes which have contributed to the spread and retention of the system in Nkundó society for those that led to its origin.

Need we invent complicated hypotheses for this purpose? It seems to me that we need not; we can be satisfied with the native explanation: the nkíló's rights over the nkita spring naturally from her dominance over the latter, for the nkita's marriage was made possible by the valuables paid for the nkíló; whereas the rights of the nkíló's sons over the nkita's children are derived from the fact that in the Nkundó hierarchy the relationship of the latter to the former is that of "son" to "father."

The secondary causes mentioned above, together with the necessity of reconciling the interests of the various members of the family, subsequently amplified the system.

583^a 607 Exceptionally it may happen that a mother becomes her daughter's nkita. Such was the historic case of Bekombe of Belondó (Bonjolu) and her daughter, Mbíla. The daughter's bride price was

585a used by her father, Nkamba ɛy'ontole of Bolɛtola (Bonjolu), to pay a
607 supplement for his wife Bekombe. On this account the latter became her daughter's nkita. The double bride price served to obtain the wife Lintamba for Ifoli y'onguma, Bekombe's brother and Mbɛlɛ's uncle, and Lintamba thus belonged to both mother and daughter, but the two did not fight about the matter.

One person can have two or more nkita, especially if her bride price is so large that it can be used to obtain several wives. Such is the case of Mputɛ (Sofia) of the Bosfikɛ Mbɛngɔ of Bongandu (Boshoso). Her first husband, Mpɛnda of Lofolɛ, paid 40 rings and a slave. With this sum Mputɛ's uncle, [172] Mbɛngɔ ɛy'akoso (who had settled with the Elɛngɛ l'Imomo, his mother's clan), paid the bride price for Bonjɛlɔ of Nkɛlengo. (1) In the meantime, Mpɛnda was killed in a fight with his brother, Iloko. Mputɛ married Elɛngola, Mpɛnda's nephew, but then he died after two or three years of marriage. She was then married to Lokonga of Lɔngɛ (Nkɛle), whose life was not much longer, and finally to Bakutu (Boniface) of Bombɛnga w'Ekonda (Besombɛ, Bombwanja), who paid a considerable bride price. A part of this bride price was a compensation to the family of the last husband, and another portion was used by Mbɛngɔ to acquire as wife, Bangolɛ of Ekɛkola. By means of the bride price paid by Lokonga, Mbɛngɔ (Joseph), a first cousin of Mputɛ, obtained the wife Bolɛjɛ (who came from the Ionda). Lastly, Bakutu gave Bonjɛhyɛ (Christophe) of Loɛlinga, a distant cousin of Mputɛ, the necessary bride price to marry Embongɛmbembe of Lɔngɛ, who on this account also became the nkita of Mputɛ, though not in the strict sense of the term. Mputɛ thus has four nkita, although not all of them are living.

---

[782]
[727]

1. During a war against the Nkɛlengo, this woman had been captured by the Elɛngɛ, who wanted to sacrifice her to the ilengɛ at a feast which terminated the mourning. But Mbɛngɔ begged the notables to let her live because he loved her very much and wanted to marry her.

593x 607 On the other hand, as we have seen, two women may have one *nkita* in common, especially if their combined bride prices have been used to obtain a single wife. In such a case the two *bankɔ́lɔ́* and their descendants share their duties and prerogatives. In practice this situation arises only if the two *bankɔ́lɔ́* are uterine sisters, but seldom in the case of other relatives. It does occur occasionally, however, as for instance in the case of Bolɔ́fo w'ímeka and Bolɛ́mbɛ́ w'ikofo. Both were daughters of Bakutu b'is'ɛ́y'olɔ́njɔ́ of Bokenda (Besombo), but they had different mothers (Mbɛ́lɛ́ and Wĩngi, respectively). Their joint bride prices were used for the marriage of Bolɔ́fo wĩ Ekɛ́kɛ́lɛ́ Bonkɔ́lo w'Ĩmɛ́ (son of Bakutu and Wĩngi) to Bokungɔ́ of Engɔ́njɔ́ (Bonkoso). [173]

Article XI
General Remarks on the Payment of the Bride Price

585 843 A few general comments should be added to all the foregoing ideas and rules concerning bride price.

1) *During a woman's pregnancy* no payment of any kind may be made. This principle is stated by the Nkundɔ́, and they strictly adhere to it. Pregnancy, however, must be understood as a pregnancy which is clearly visible to everyone, that is, the period of *bolɛka*, and not that of the beginning, *bofɔ́wa*, (1) during which payments may still be made.

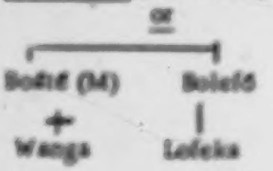
If one inquires into the reason for this prohibition, one receives the reply that if payments were made during the *bolɛka* the woman would have great difficulties in delivery and would stand very little chance of escaping death. (Pregnancy is considered a dangerous condition. Of a pregnant woman, the Nkundɔ́ say: *ekɛ́kĩ la lɔ́fa*, "she is blocked by the sun," or "the sun stands across her path," that is, she is between life and death.) That is the only explanation given for the prohibition. Is it perhaps connected in some way with the belief in the *elímɔ́*? (See Chapter X, Article II, 1).

---

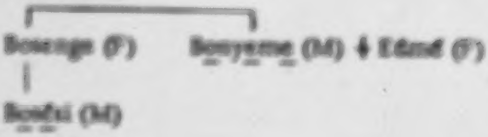
1. See Chapter X, Article II, 3 and 4.

582
604

Example 8 (continued)


or
Bofiɛ (M)
Bolefó
Wanga
Lofeka

Example 9


Bosenge (F)
Bonyeme (M)
Efomé (F)
Bonfai (M)

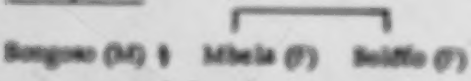
Bonfai may marry Efomé.

The same rules apply equally to great-uncles and great-aunts, and to cousins who are not equals (related as "father" and "son"; see the table of kinship relations and terminology in the appendix).

582
607

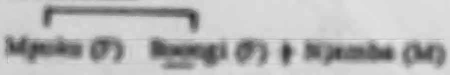
C. Equals in the collateral line: The degree of relationship is of no importance, for example, marriage with an older sister (or cousin) of the spouse is forbidden; marriage with a younger sister is permitted. The same rule applies to women, but after the husband's death an exception is sometimes made in the older brother's favor in order to facilitate inheritance arrangements. Only the Bofingɛ -- like the Elingá of Losanganya -- make no distinction between older and younger siblings and always permit the marriage. They are even beginning to be imitated by the Injɔlɔ.

Example 10


Bongoso (M)
Mbela (F)
Bolifo (F)

Bongoso may marry Bolifo.

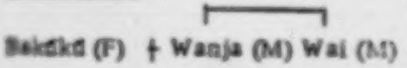
Example 11


Mpoku (F)
Bongi (F)
Njamba (M)

Njamba may not marry Mpoku.

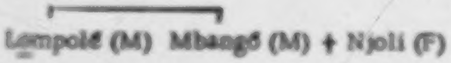
82
607

Example 12


Bakɔ́kɔ (F)
ǂ
Wanja (M)
Wai (M)

Wai may always marry Bakɔ́kɔ [256].

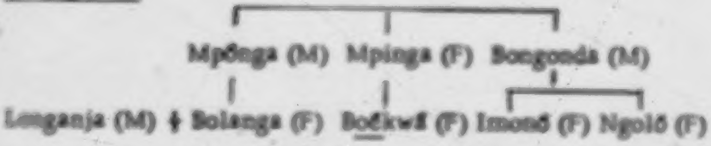
Example 13


Lompolɛ (M)
Mbangɔ (M)
ǂ
Njoli (F)

Lompole may not marry Njoli. Very rarely an exception is permitted.

82
605

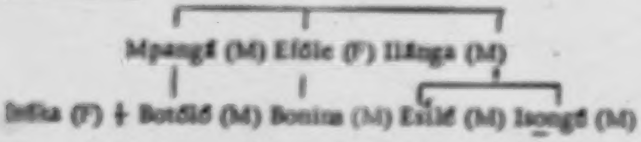
Example 14


Mpɔ́nga (M)
Mpinga (F)
Bongonda (M)
Longanja (M)
ǂ
Bolanga (F)
Boɛ́kwɛ (F)
Imonɔ́ (F)
Ngolɔ́ (F)

Longanja may not marry his elder cousins, but he may marry the younger ones with the exception of Boɛ́kwɛ who is bɔ́nankɛ́nɛ and has a "father's" rank (see above).

Similarly:

Example 15


Mpangɛ (M)
Efɔ̃le (F)
Ilɔ̃nga (M)
Infka (F)
ǂ
Botɔlɔ (M)
Bonina (M)
Esilɛ (M)
Isongɛ (M)

Only Botɔlɔ's younger cousins may marry Infka. Bonina is bɔ́nankɛ́nɛ, therefore "father," and consequently included among the uncles (see B, above).

[82] Note, finally, that the more distant the relationship, the less strict the prohibition, that is, dispensations and exceptions are more easily accepted.

572
602 b) Marriage between ascendants [of the lineal relatives through whom affinity is established] is forbidden, but an exception is made when the affinity is broken by death.

Example 22:

Bombɛlɛ (M) Nkanga (F)
| |
Mɛ́mɔ́ (F) + Baɔ́so (M)

Marriage between Bombɛlɛ and Nkanga is forbidden.

Example 23

Efoloko (F) Ito̱kɔ̱́ (F) Kɔ̱́ngɔ́ (M)
| |
Efole (M) . . . + . . . Bokokɔ́ (F)

Marriage between Ito̱kɔ̱́ and Kɔ̱́ngɔ̱́ is forbidden, but permitted upon the death of either Efole or Bokokɔ́.

Dispensations and violations of this rule do occur.

C. Affinity in collateral line arising from a marriage between relatives in collateral line: The rules are the same as for direct affinity in collateral line (see above, no. 1), C.)

Example 24

[60] Bokaɛ (M) Lokɛ́nga (M) Ndɛ̱́kɔ̱́ (M) Bokelɛ́ (F) Mbɛ́la (F) Bonjɛ́ngo (F)

Bokaɛ is married to Bonjɛ́ngo. Neither he nor Lokɛ́nga may marry Bokelɛ́, and Ndɛ̱́kɔ̱́ may not marry Mbɛ́la [Translator's note: the table shows Ndɛ̱́kɔ̱́ to be female, but I have corrected the error]. If he had married Bokelɛ́, Ndɛ̱́kɔ̱́ could marry Mbɛ́la. Furthermore, if Bonjɛ́ngo were Mbɛ́la's senior, then Lokɛ́nga could also marry Mbɛ́la. [258]

578, 595, 577 If a woman injures her husband during a quarrel he may not retaliate, for she is recognized as inferior and weaker than he. The husband's weapon is abstention from any food, drink, baths, etc., that she offers him. To re-establish peace she must pay a boŋóndo. Nevertheless, nowadays some impetuous men no longer like to observe these rules; they want to act with violence come what may. But they are strongly reprimanded by the old men, who maintain that it is unworthy of a man to retaliate against a weaker being. This traditional attitude of the Nkundó seems to me to indicate a sort of chivalrous nobility based on two feelings, justice and pride. It becomes more understandable when we know that similar conduct is [563] expected with regard to Batswa, inferiors, and subjugated clans (bauló, sing. juló) in their respective spheres. (1) Thus a Booto may

1. See below, Articles V, VI, and VII, 4, B.

not apply the law of retaliation to a Botswa. Under certain circumstances, a juló clan may, with impunity, take what they please from the banana groves of the master's clan, etc.

Note also that it is very much out of place for a man [282] to strike his wife or punish her in any way in the presence of her parents, ● [607] brothers, etc. In fact, this is a very grave offense. And, according to the code of honor, the brother (cousin, etc.) must pick up the glove and fight his brother-in-law to avenge the insult. In many cases the matter ends in a divorce. For such conduct takes away the combined feeling of modesty and embarrassment (nsɔ́nyi) that the two parties normally feel toward one another.

Finally, we must note that the various payments made as boŋóndo are included in the total amount of jíngi or nkomí, respectively.

593, 599 In order to more clearly illustrate the Nkundó attitude concerning the relationship of husband and wife, it might be of interest to cite a few proverbs pertaining to the subjects discussed above:

1) Baningó bakôndaka wǎj'ǎmaka; Lombômbó afôtoda Ntolɛ́ la nganja, "All the others slap their wives (but) Lombômbó beats Ntolɛ́ with a stick." (This is a reference to a historical fact.)

573 longo of Bokɛ́kyɛ́ (Boselo, Bombwanja), married to Bokaa is 'Ifonda
574 of Bowɛ́lɛ́; for Mbalaka, daughter of Bolekela wa Imangaiso of the
592 Baɛ́kɛ́ Lokuli (Bongíli), married to Mbuli is'ea Wela of Bombóngo
552 w'Etefa (Bongale) (1) [286]

[551] 1. She bore the name of Mbɛ́laka (meaning indemnity), because her father had solemnly proclaimed (-bɛ́kya) and publicly promised that he intended, one day, to place himself in the position of having to pay an indemnity because of his daughter, as proof of his love. Indeed
[782] when Mbɛ́laka was married, he killed one of his wives, cut her into pieces, and sent the "meat" to his son-in-law as "the first hen" that his wife would prepare for him. But he did not have to pay
[682] [684] the indemnity because the victim's clan was too weak to attempt a war; they did not dare to make a claim and, in order to avoid even greater misfortunes, they resigned themselves to this revolting ignominy.

Article V

Relations Between the Husband and His Wife's Family

606 As has already been said, kinship by marriage is called likilɔ́,
607 and relatives by marriage are called bokilɔ́, bakilɔ́. Mbɔ́molɔ́ is a term of respect for very close relatives by marriage (father-in-law, mother-in-law, sometimes brother-in-law or sister-in-law). When there is a considerable age difference between two affinal relatives, the elder one sometimes calls the younger bokilɔ́walɔ́. This happens most frequently when the son-in-law is so young that he can still be considered a child. This term can even be used by an elder brother

606
607
with reference to the young wife of his junior. (1)

> 1. The second component of this term is used by some Elinga as a synonym of bokiló. It should be related to walé, a term which among the Mbole and the Bakutu denotes a girl who is beldfmic or a woman who has just given birth (the same is true among the Ekonda).

The present practice is to exclude from among the bakiló those persons with whom marriage is permitted. They are more frequently called "husband" or "wife."

The opposite of bokiló is bokanga. The bakanga are members of the family that has received the bride price, while the bakiló are those who have paid it. In common practice the word bokiló is often used in place of bokanga, but never the reverse. Bokiló l'okanga is the expression denoting the whole group.

606
1. Father-in-law and mother-in-law

A husband owes respect, love, and assistance to his parents-in-law. This point is vital to harmony in the home. In this sphere a wife is very intolerant [287] of forgetfulness and even more of ill will. Offensive comments, insults pointed at parents-in-law even in their absence result in serious difficulties. Sometimes a husband expresses his bad humor or anger against his spouse in that way. This kind of behavior never wins approval, unless his in-laws first insulted him. The law of retaliation applies fully in this situation. The Nkundó say: ǒowá mbéngé l'ǒolamba ófengaka ńk'ǒolamba, "He who replies to evil comments is in the right, not the one who began." For a fuller discussion of this topic, see above (Article III).

606
574
431
To remain on good terms with his parents-in-law, the husband must visit them from time to time. By the very nature of things, his visits are less frequent than those of his wife. One reason why they cannot be too frequent is that the husband must bring gifts at each visit (belonga). One does not go to one's parents-in-law empty handed.

606 the act of procreation on the part of one of them. Perhaps this idea is latent in the native mind, or at least is at the basis of this rule. The fact that this hypothesis applies only to the wife's mother-in-law [mother?] does not weaken it; for in native eyes [291] the other instances are entirely without importance. (1)

1. See, for example, Chapter II, Article X, and Chapter V, Articles II and III.

606
292 Another regulation pertaining to the mother-in-law requires that she -- and all the women who are given the same title in current usage -- may appear in her son-in-law's village only when dressed in a bolelekę. A bolelekę is a banana leaf, either green or dried, which has been torn in several places perpendicularly to the large [765] central rib, and constitutes the first and principal sign of mourning. Moreover, Batswa women must also dress in this manner before entering a Booto settlement. The following reason is given for the rule in the second instance: a Botswá woman's dress consists of a lolímbe, a belt of small braided ropes about 10 centimeters long. Although in ordinary positions the lolímbe provides fairly good protection, it is not considered adequate to really stop all indiscreet looks. And it is popularly believed that if a Booto sees a Botswá woman's genital organs, she will die. Might we conclude from this last explanation that there is a fundamental connection between the reasons that necessitate the wearing of a bolelekę in these three instances? Or is the mother-in-law to imitate a Botswá woman and thus show a certain subordination to her son-in-law?

2. Female relatives

● 607
587 As long as they are free, that is, as long as no bride-price payment has been made for them, a woman's sisters or cousins are considered by her husband as his wives, and he calls them so (baali). This term is applied only to relatives of a generation below that of the true wife or to members of the same generation who are younger than she and with whom marriage [292] is permitted. It is therefore never

607 extended to relatives with whom marriage prohibited, such as nieces
837 who are banankfnd, who are his wife's "mothers." (1)

1. See Chapter V, Article IV and the examples cited there (for instance, examples 25, 26, 17).

When such relatives of the wife marry, the situation changes. They belong to another man, and a continuation of the same practice as when they are single produces very serious cases of adultery. There are differences depending on the degree of affinity, however. In addition to the usual sanctions against adultery, other measures may be taken, especially the dissolution of the marriage. An especially serious case, but one which is more or less hypothetical, would be adultery between a man and his father-in-law's wife; a special feeling of shame is connected with it, and our Nkundó say that the two persons are like a botswá and his master. Misconduct with the wife of a brother-in-law (or cousin-in-law) is also a very serious matter. The latter may take his sister (or cousin) away from the guilty husband and thus break the marriage. The same applies to adultery with a nyangóalé.(1)

1. See Chapter V, Article IV and the examples given there (for instance, examples 25, 26, 17).

3. Legal matters

626
685 Here we must examine the manner in which breaches of the law are settled between parents-in-law and son-in-law. It is known that among these peoples justice, in the strict sense of the word, is one of the most prominent aspects of social legislation. Theft is one of the principal causes for shame and was formerly severely punished. The thief, especially if he continued to repeat his offence, could be sold as a slave.

606 the relations between a wife and her husband's parents are closely
125 connected with the rules pertaining to the prohibition related to affinity and seems to spring from the same source. Therefore it will be useful to have in mind what we have said in the preceding chapter, Article IV.

The husband's elder brothers treat his wife as their sister.
●607 The wife calls her husband's sisters [300] bakilɔ, but out of respect she often gives them the title of "mother." (1)

[601] 1. Among the Elinga the wife also calls her husband's sisters bongili (pl. bangili); they call her bɔnongili (pl. bɛnangili). A wife often calls her husband's mother nyangongili. Bɛnangili l'ɛnangili means "the brother's wives and their sisters-in-law."

After the husband's death, as has been said sup. loco, his father
587 or his brother may marry his widow. But this practice is not well regarded and is permitted only rarely, chiefly when the scattering of the family patrimony is feared or if the two interested parties have an unusual love for each other.

With respect to children or younger brothers and all those who
587 fall into that category, the situation is altogether different. Illicit
602 relations with wives of their father, grandfather, uncle, elder brother, or elder cousin, are judged much less severely. Generally, misconduct does not give rise to claims for payment, or the payment is demanded "for form's sake" and consists of a hen and a bunch of bananas. By means of this payment the guilty one recognizes his error and renders homage to the right of his elder.

In general public opinion condemns these relations and often
[602] with great severity. The question of degree of kinship as well as other considerations result in a great diversity among the cases, so we will examine each situation separately and distinguish each time between the husband's reaction and that of public opinion.

587 Chapter II, Article XI, 2. But such a situation is far from ideal in
626 Nkundó eyes and is permitted only if, on the one hand, the son ardently loves the woman and, on the other, if the father is too slow in obtaining a wife for him.

587 Here then we observe a conflict between two feelings: a hus-
602 band's jealousy and the affection of a father and various relatives. That is why it is difficult -- as in many situations -- to draw the line between what is permitted and what is forbidden. From what has preceded and from the general explanations given by natives, we can conclude, however, that: [302] 1) relations between a woman and her husband's son are forbidden and severely judged, but with much more leniency than in the case of "superior" relatives; 2) the
[illegible] father may not go to extremes in repressing misconduct nor ask his own son to pay an indemnity, since to do so would be to enrich himself through his child's misbehaviour, and the latter would have no means of paying him except through him or his mother's clan -- and it would be very unjust and inappropriate to force him to have recourse to the latter.

3. A younger brother calls his elder brother's wife wālí, or
593 wife, and she calls him bóme, or husband, because they may marry
587 one another. Therefore adulterous relations may also be found
607 among them. But in practice some distinctions must be made.

If the younger brother is not married and the elder one has a harem, -- a state of affairs which was very common in the past but today is very rare -- the situation is analogous to the one described above in relation to a father's wife except that there is greater indulgence toward the culprit.

If the elder brother is monogamous and the younger brother a bachelor, relations of the latter with the former's wife when the husband is present are forbidden. If the younger brother nevertheless yields to the temptation, he is condemnable. The husband may not claim an indemnity. But in revenge he may procure for himself a "make-believe indemnity" (byongo ă bolĭlanda) by felling one of the culprit's banana trees, taking away his chickens, moving his hut, taking some other similar action. The purpose of these acts, according

595
[illegible]
587

to our people, is to inspire the young man with a little more respect for his elder. The latter may not go to extremes, however, (as for example by fighting his younger brother), for fear of being censured for a lack of brotherly love. (1) Besides, the valuables with which he

1. A slight brotherly punishment is not taken seriously, particularly if the younger brother is considerably his junior; it is permitted, especially where the younger brother has erred repeatedly.

obtained his wife [304] belong in one sense to both brothers. If the two brothers have different mothers, the elder has many more trumps in his hand. And if in addition his mother's clan has provided the entire bride price or a major part of it, he would win his case entirely as regards the indemnity, although the duty of brotherly love, and therefore of leniency, would still remain. In the case of isolated misdeeds there must always be this leniency. But if the misconduct is frequently repeated, the culprit's excuses no longer carry much weight.

If the younger brother, too, is married, the matter takes on a totally different aspect. Since he has a wife of his own, he no longer has any excuse for satisfying his passions by adulterous means. It is true that the injured husband is still obliged to modulate his anger and its manifestations, but he can obtain more financial satisfaction. The indemnity he claims, however, must be added to the guilty wife's bride price; for it is inconceivable that he enrich himself at his brother's expense. If he himself obtained his brother's wife for him, he may take her away and give her to another brother, cousin, etc., or even take her for himself, in spite of the impediment of affinity. However this is an exceptional case and only applied if the misconduct has been serious and repeated and the culprit has taken an insolent attitude.

If the husband is not present, because he is on a trip or the younger brother has met his sister-in-law while she is staying with her family or traveling elsewhere, the younger brother is entirely free

595 to have relations with her. If the woman refuses to have relations
● 607 with her brother-in-law, the latter often reports her ill will to her
837 husband, who will reprimand her or even strike her because she does not love his own brother, and will accuse her of having lovers: ötöna böŋɔ'öä ngöya, ölangaké ök'aend'ônkinɛ. Since there is more affection between brothers born of the same mother, the husband's anger would then be even greater. A lack of affection on the part of his wife arouses her husband's suspicions on the question of her fidelity because Nkundó women are extremely ready to yield to temptation. [205] Therefore if she refuses her own brother-in-law-husband, she must be obtaining satisfaction elsewhere. This reasoning may be false, but it is based on a frequency of cases. The husband's attitude does not show a lack of jealousy; on the contrary, it proves its existence.

If the younger brother meets his sister-in-law in the home of her family, they will intervene on his behalf. They will tell her to receive "her husband" well, to prepare food for him, to clean the hut set aside for him. They will even force her to cohabit with him for the entire duration of his stay in their village. By this means they seek to avoid palavers with their son-in-law. If the woman's antipathy toward her brother-in-law is so great that she cannot be made to submit to him, they sometimes give their visitor another of their daughters (or cousins, etc.), younger than his brother's wife, to perform wifely duties for him.

All those designated as bakínɛ in Nkundó terminology fall into the same category as a younger brother (thus younger male cousins are also included). The seriousness of the conflict that may arise on this question and of its consequences vary in proportion to the degree of kinship between the individuals involved.

604 C. The position of a nephew (bɔ́nankínɛ) in relation to his
597 maternal uncle's wives is to a great extent comparable to that of a
583 son in relation to his father's wives. The fact that marriage is effected
595 through the payment of a bride price gives the nephew greater freedom; for the uncle was enriched through the marriage of his

586x on his own authority, for the offense was considered very serious. 584 We can assume that the reason for this rule was to allow time for [567] the woman's family to intervene and keep their daughter from becoming a slave by refunding the bride price paid for her.

c) In exceptional instances an exasperated husband resorted to the immolation of his wife when someone died. People cite the case of Bengóngó of Bongilá (Besombó, Bombwanja), who had his wife, Litíli of Bontole, decapitated at the ikweí at the death of his father, Bengóngó byá Yese.

If the woman had children old enough to intervene on her behalf, her husband could be prevented from carrying out his violent intentions. The proverb says, Mbóni ntáwáká, "a mother [599] does not perish." The husband also abstained if the woman had [595] a co-wife (ebíia) who was her sister or other close relative -- either out of a feeling of shame, [385] or out of fear of undesirable repercussions. Sometimes, when a husband was caught between his wish to use the etíka and his shame or his fear of the ebíia, he hid the wife who was confined by this fork. Preferably, he asked a brother- ●[601] in-law to give her hospitality. In that way he got around the difficulty to a great extent, because through the law of exogamy such an arrangement placed the wife in another village, sometimes a considerable distance away. This practice was called isángyá; tómba walí isángyá.

Instead of resorting to the procedures listed, a husband could 586x also place his wife in the hands of the ndonga. However, it was a 584 very unusual thing to do. The natives maintain that such action was due to a lack of affection for the wife, together with the husband's certainty that he could recover his valuables -- either because he was assured that his father-in-law was well disposed toward him (and would reimburse him or provide a replacement), or because he knew he could use the ikíkelo.

As we have said, direct repudiation was extremely rare. Here we are not speaking of repudiation caused by a wife's incorrigible misconduct -- which we have just discussed -- but of repudiation against the wife's wishes. If it did occur the husband was expected to hand her over to the ndonga, and the latter, seeing

764 In every case at least a few *befngo* in addition to the *bombɛ́mbɛ́* and the *bɔsɛ́ w'ilakɛ́* are always claimed. The latter payments can never be omitted. The belt is a payment made exclusively to the mother and by rights it goes to the mother's clan.

767 606 607 The higher the amount of these funeral payments, the more the son-in-law is welcome. The alliance is perfect. Therefore, not only will the wife's family reciprocate his fine feelings by adding a few more dogs, but in addition the son-in-law will be well received and successful in his application when, after the period of mourning, he brings the sum of the *ihɔ́lɛ́ko* in order to obtain a substitute for the deceased. (2) In addition, if the relations with his in-laws have been excellent, he will easily obtain the substitute in advance, so that she can care for him during the entire mourning period.

764 689 There are severe sanctions against the omission of the funeral payments. [438] Neglecting to send the notification gift alone is enough to set these in motion. They are: the breaking off of the affinal relationship; the loss of the children, since the father's offense is equal to a repudiation; and finally molestation of the culprit by the spirit of the deceased. Thus at Bokɛ́tola (Bompela) one can find two boys, *Botɛ́tsí* and Ikembɛ́, the children of Bonyongela of Ilɔ́ngɛ́ and *Etɛ́ka* of Bokɛ́tola. They have now been incorporated into their mother's clan, because their father did not send a *nsango*. On stronger grounds the same is true for the whole *nkumjɛ́*.

Article V. The Social Position of a Widow

768 587 In Chapter III, Articles II and IV, we have already noted that in the eyes of the Nkundó, the death of the husband does not dissolve a marriage. The union continues, and even after mourning it is not broken *ipso facto*. Even to have the woman taken and treated as a wife by another man is not enough to end it. As

---

2. See Chapter III, Article IV.

177 category of civil servants. In this manner they would fall under the
623 written law and could be obliged to practice monogamy, whereas now nearly all of the "native chiefs" are precisely the maintainers and promoters of polygamy. If this had /156/ been enforced from the start, then polygamy, instead of spreading, would have virtually disappeared from the native society.

5. Splitting of the Clan

613 After all that has been said before, it must be rather apparent how an autonomous clan can split up and, thereby, form two autonomous clans.

When a clan has expanded too far, its leaders cross over the boundaries of blood relationship, and offenses against the law of exogamy occur. When such offenses are multiplied, further separation is gradually aimed at to make marriages possible. Such a situation between two parts of the same clan, who are striving for "legal autonomy," is called lonkana, a term that signifies that unlawful relations exist between the two. It generally occurs between member groups that have the same male ancestor, but not the same female ancestor—that is, they are issue from different wives of the same founder.

Another cause of splitting is the voluntary or obligatory withdrawal of one of the members. When he establishes himself outside, begets a sizeable progeny, and acquires a patrimony of his own, the relations with his own clan become less frequent; and the separated fraction gradually begins to settle smaller lawsuits, to maintain its own graveyard, to bury the umbilical cords of its children in its own territory, to take on its own name, and to refer to its own founder.

Often also at the source of this estrangement lies the refusal of a certain fraction of the clan to submit to the authority of the clan members.

6. Legal Dependents

613
614 Until now we have spoken only of the ethnic clan: of the members
608 who belong to it through descent. They /157/ are the sole bearers of

613 authority (mpifo). Each clan can, however, also take in other persons
614 who fall outside the order of authority, but who legally belong to the
608 clan. Along with the real descendants, they make up the legal clan.

These are, in the first place, the wives who have married into the clan, the children brought with them (mbuncia), and the lawful housekeepers. In addition, there are the clients who have been taken in; then the war prisoners and slaves; and finally the Pygmies. The women married into the clan are naturally separate, as are also the Pygmies who form a completely separate community. The others are gradually treated as children, receive their part in the general responsibility and protection, their place in the court session, etc. Depending on the degree to which they develop in the bosom of the clan which has taken them in, they can constitute a separate group in it, which becomes more and more independent.

7. The Maternal Clan

602 Each Nkundo has a double "fatherland": his wise and his bonyango.
613 The bonyango is the paternal clan of his mother. His mother gave birth to him there; her blood relations live there and receive him with motherly love and will protect him against all difficulties; he has often passed a large part of his happiest childhood years there; and there he can always find a safe shelter when, for one reason or another, he might lose the paternal clan.

The structure of the maternal clan naturally resembles that of the paternal clan in every way. If we treat it specially here, it is not in order to speak of the form, but only to point out the specific rights that each person has in his maternal clan.

601 Just as all of the brothers and sisters of my father are my "fathers,"
602 so all of the brothers and sisters of my mother are my "mothers."
613 Mother's brother, that is, my maternal uncle, I call ngompame, nyangompame. All the nephews and nieces on the mother's side are my "children." A special tie binds me to the children of the nkita of my mother, that is, to the children of the woman who was acquired by the maternal clan with the bride price /158/ that had been paid for my mother by my wise. Mother is, thus, the nkolo, the woman or mistress, of those children who call me their father.

602 As long as I continue to live in my own paternal clan, I have the
613 right to special care and love from the maternal clan. If I cannot find

[5] Chapter 1

The Land and Its Inhabitants

The appearance of the land. -- Location of the tribes. -- General characteristics of the natives. -- Maternal feelings. -- The fetisher. -- Religious beliefs. -- Cult of the dead. -- The Mfumu. -- Medicine.

[3] The area between the Congo, the Kasai, and the Kwango is covered with tall grass interspersed with stunted trees and a few small forests whose verdant canopy rises majestically over a boundless plain. A curtain of trees stretches along the rivers and gradually thins out as one penetrates into the interior. The path [illegible] beaten by the regular passage of endless columns of natives, walking Indian file, winds sadly and monotonously across these lightly rolling plains. During the rainy season the grass, whose stems grow as high as two or two and a half meters, obstructs the view. During the dry season, destroyed by brush fires, it has given way to a blackish-yellow plain from which all life seems to have been [361] banished. From time to [6] time, at distances of 20 and sometimes 40 kilometers apart, we find groupings of huts, surrounded by a few manioc fields, [Fig. 1 appears here] banana groves, and sometimes small plots of maize and peanuts. Upon our arrival, [illegible] the men look at us without concern, the mistrustful women hide [Fig. 2 appears here] in their huts or take refuge in the forest and fields, and the less timid children stare at us with the insouciance characteristic of their age. [7]

Beyond the Kasai, in the region of the Fimi, around Lake Leopold II, and along the Lukenie, the bush gives way to the forest, damp, swampy, dark, and mysterious.

[3] 361 At the confluence of the Fimi and the Kasai, a vast swampy area stretches as far as the eye can see, bare of all arborescent vegetation, crossed by innumerable channels which are narrow and shallow during the dry season and wide to the point of covering practically the whole region during the rainy season.

[text continues on p. 3]

614
621
The Bongangɔ are divided as follows:

1) Bongangɔ, in the narrow sense of the term (Bosɛkɛ Izandɔ, B. Bolakɔ, B. Bongɛngɛ, B. Bendɛwɛ, B. Lokɔlɔnyɔ)

2) Bongangɔ of Bakoyɔ, or Bolima

3) Bongangɔ of Mbɔmbɔ or Bosɛkɛ Bofina

Thus Lotɔlɔ, Bakoyɔ, and Mbɔmbɔ each have an Etɔo group and a Bongangɔ group. The Bongangɔ, in the narrow sense of the term, have in addition a "slave" group named Batsina, a part of which is located with the Bosɛnjo. A foreign clan is settled with the Etɔo of Lotɔlɔ; they are the Bofalambɔka, descendant of a man named Ekonda (Imbolo) and his sister who was married to Mbete, a slave from Bompɔngɔ (Wɔngatɔ) who was freed by his master.

Many villages have foreign groups living with them such as descendants of slaves (nkwɛla), or others (Ekonda, Bombwanja, groups related by marriage called likilo, mpɔmɔ or bowɛlɔ, and mbɔsolɔ, (1) etc.). [249]

[609] 1. Mpɔmɔ or bowɛlɔ are any foreigners who were formerly invited by the group patriarch to remain with him in order to carry out certain tasks, especially metal-working. Mbɔsolɔ is the term applied to a child born to a woman out of wedlock (Chapter I, Part 2, Article IV, 3). Such children are also called nkio y'ɔ̃ome, "the husband's flying dogs," because they are not his own children but are attached to their mother's husband in the fashion of these animals, who attach themselves to trees when they sleep. [598] [825]

614
592
If we add the descendants of relatives who have married into other more or less remote groupings, the prohibition against marriage on account of kinship applies to a good many people. In accordance with the law of exogamy, such a kin group may be widely dispersed geographically, and it is understandable that it is not always easy to

[illegible] The risk of being wounded, reduced to slavery, or killed, often cools the adulterer's passion. Therefore, the more the husband showed that he was fearless, violent, physically powerful, or of a high social position, the more his wives and their lovers were on their guard. Certain men were so jealous of one of their wives and so determined to take vengeance with extreme severity that the tempters did not even dare to think of approaching her.

2) The payment of an indemnity seems to be the standard sanction. It is the only one that remains legal at the present time; consequently it is coming more and more to the fore.

Any of the types of evidence examined above justify the claim for an indemnity.

The indemnity may be minimal, consisting of 2 to 5 copper rings, or heavy, going up to 20 to 30 rings or a slave. The maximum is always demanded for adultery with a favorite. The size of the payment depends on the persons involved, the relationships that bind them, the frequency of misconduct, and the nature of the action observed. For instance, if the husband catches the couple when arranging a meeting or exchanging gifts, the indemnity will be small; if, on the other hand, he has caught them in flagrante delicto, it will be high.

[illegible] A man who demands a high indemnity must expect to be treated the same way should the occasion arise. The application of the law of retaliation in that case is fully approved by Nkundó opinion.

[illegible] In addition to the situations examined in the preceding article, there exists another which does not result in an indemnity claim. It arises if the culprit belongs to a clan of slaves or is in some other way subject or inferior (mpámá or bowélé). (1) Even

1. Strangers who are settled with a tribe or group but are in no way related to them.

If the husband catches the culprit in the act, he politely asks him to go away and leave his house [321] and his wife: ôntsíkélé ilombe, njóyé é! Here is true Nkundó courtesy in practice. It might

595* On the day set aside for establishing the position of the
[illegible] bolɛ́mbɛ́, there is a great feast. All the clans and neighboring villages that have been invited gather at the home of the polygamist in question. He presents the woman to them and addresses the gathering. "Here is the woman whom I want to make my bolɛ́mbɛ́, as I have already announced to you. Today I am making public the decision I already made a long time ago. Be it known to all that no man may touch her, or he will be severely punished." Then two women (in rare instances, two men) hold the woman, and the husband unfastens her belt and rips off all her clothing. Then the assistants tie a rope or a belt of mpangɛ́ (striped antelope) skin around her, and to it they attach various furs. From that day
[579] until her death she may no longer wear the clothing (bitoko) of other women; she must always [260] be dressed in furs. Hence her name, bolɛ́mbɛ́ wa bikófo, "bolɛ́mbɛ́ with furs." Then her husband gives her pots of palm oil with which she will have to cover herself. Two men approach her; they are chosen among the handsomest in the village (1) (married or single) and are

● [illegible] 1. They are then (sic) relatives of the husband. Nkundó law dictates that no stranger shall perform a function of the slightest importance -- not even that of silencing a gathering. According to their saying, bofaya afɔtɛla lokɔ́nga, "a stranger does not cut up a guinea hen."

[301] richly adorned with furs, belts of mpangɛ́, beads, raffia fabrics
with jagged edges, copper rings on their ankles, etc. Stepping
[illegible] in rhythm, they lead her to the house intended for her which is
[illegible] surrounded by a fence of bofeko posts (Ricinodendron africanum) held together with palms. This hut with its fence is called liko.

There the bolɛ́mbɛ́ will reside for months and years (up to three or more, they say). She is secluded there, so to speak,
[579] and may not go out. If she needs to go to the banana groves for her personal needs, she covers and surrounds herself with a mat so that no one will see her.

591 [591] fact, women who do not wish to become Catholic take the paths described in 2) and 3).

5) There are even women who prevent their husbands from becoming polygamous. If he loves them a great deal, he will yield in the end, even if personally he would very much like to build a harem for himself. This was done by Mputɔ̃ (recently deceased, February 3, 1932), wife of Bofɛ́nda, chief of Ekɔ́kola. Bofɛ́nda was rich and tried more than once to acquire other wives. He even took them home and paid the bride prices -- for example, for Iloa of Bongíli. But Mputɔ̃ made life unbearable for them and thus forced them to leave. She absolutely wanted to keep her husband, [366] to whom she had given two boys and three girls, for herself alone.

We can therefore conclude that among a minority of Nkundó women there exists a real preference for monogamy, even if we leave out of consideration all those who may be impelled by religious reasons. But most of them are in no way opposed to polygamy.

2. A preference for polygamy

Most Nkundó women like polygamy and prefer it to monogamy. They make fun of a impɔ́mbonjemba and are proud of the large number of wives in their husbands' harems.

Their indifference or aversion to monogamy can be explained on the basis of habit or atavism. But what is the basis for their marked preference for polygamy despite all its disadvantages? I asked this question of a number of polygamists' wives. Naturally, they first invoked the custom, (1) except for those who had known me for a long time. But the serious reason they gave was the greater comfort of life in a harem.

---

[601] 1. This is the standard explanation a native hands out to a foreigner or to someone he does not know or by whom he thinks he is unknown.

6) The parent's opposition to reprimands by strangers is
861 even greater as a general rule. They try to cover up and justify
609 the faults of their progeny, whom they will fiercely defend. The
children naturally know all this and take advantage of it.

7) The polygamous household, with all its rivalries among
595 co-wives, cannot but accentuate all such [514] adverse effects
578 on the children's education. The conflicts, spiteful comments,
861 palavers, etc., are easily extended to the children. And each
wife defends her own.

8) Everything is public; there are no secrets; everything
578 is known, seen, and heard. People do not restrain themselves
861 and the presence of children does not stop the flow of insults and
obscenities which anger provokes. The young people see many
things it would be better for them not to know. They are present
at domestic quarrels and are witnesses to dissensions. All this is
increased by life outdoors, in the street, and by the thinness of
partitions.

9) Another factor is added nowadays: the facility of com-
177 munications and the presence of European stations. Boys can al-
578 ways run away and find shelter with the Whites or their native em-
861 ployees. The girls seek out kinswomen who live at such stations,
even though they must help a little with the housework, in the
hope of later enjoying a greater freedom and living in luxury.
Parental influence and authority are naturally weakened as a result.

10) Finally, Nkundó education lacks any solid basis, any
861 religion or religious morality. Everything is based on natural,
physical fear: the fear of punishments (physical or based on super-
stition), harmful consequences of bad actions (palavers, difficulties,
fines, indemnities, sometimes the shame of being caught -- as in
theft). It is especially this lack of religious motivation that makes
their moral education bear so little fruit. As the Nkundó are
accustomed to this imperfect state, they do not feel the need for
000 such a foundation. That is why it is so difficult to instill any moral
conscience into them. The patient and perservering action of the
great Christian truths with their institutions for moral formation
(uninterrupted preaching, confession, prayer) are needed to endow

614
582 The exogamy rules of the Ekonda do not only refer to their own, agnatic group, but also to all cognate groups to whom kinship relations can still be traced back, i.e., a span of about five generations.

Groups of Rank E

614
621 It may be assumed that these groups always extend beyond the confines of a village. Those parts of a group who have settled next to each other have their communal meeting place, but even the dispersed fractions of the group may come there to consult. In former times probably only one such group had a nkúmú, a sacred prince who lived in the main village (e.g., Isangi), while the other villages were ruled by the senior. Once the title of nkúmú was also bestowed on persons from other villages, the importance of the E-groups almost completely disappeared. Also, in this category the local group plays a much greater role. Occasionally it even includes dependent ● [609] villages which have not yet been "paternalized," i.e., which are still regarded as alien. In this connection it should be mentioned that probably all larger local groups tend to reconstitute themselves into kinship groups by reinterpreting the genealogy to suit their purposes. It is certain that the "kinship relation" of many "kinship groups" has been created in this manner. We may dismiss the possibility that groups which are divided from one another by the rule of exogamy will invent a kinship relation so close that a previously possible marriage would be outlawed. Also, the combination of other important functions of the lower ranks resulting from the invention of a closer relationship would run counter to the tendency of progressive differentiation (17).

17. We know through statements of the natives that about one hundred years ago the exogamy limit was lowered to the present level. Before that time only the Lonkâna was permitted among the Ngele, Nkoto, and Bolíma.

12| It was said before that kinship and local groups are to be opposed. This statement needs clarification. When speaking of local groups in the present study, we do not intend to refer to groups which consist of non-related subgroups. It is to be clearly understood that the residence pattern will be used as the decisive criterion for subdividing the groups. Thus, closely related groups may be excluded, more distantly related groups may be included. Occasionally such local units also include groups which are not related to each other. [188]

Also, among those groups which I have called kinship groups in this study, a biological or genealogical connection which can be proved and expressed in juridical terms is quite doubtful. We shall not concern ourselves, however, with this lack of precision; rather, we shall regard as related those persons or groups of persons whom the Ekonda themselves consider as related. In my opinion there is no justification for disregarding the attitude of the natives since it is their attitude which determines the character and function of the groups. Murdock (10)

10. Social Structure, p. 47.

uses this approach to the kinship group, while using the term "lineage" for persons who can prove their relationship. We hasten to point out that also the local groups have a tendency toward "paternalization" (11), to construct a closer relationship.

11. Boelaert, "Clan équivoque," p. 17.

The Kinship Structure of the Ekonda

61
602 Among the Ekonda we find a system of groups which are ordered according to degrees of real or assumed kinship. This system is subdivided into a hierarchical structure of many ranks. Larger groups consist of between one to four groups of the next order. The relationships between the groups correspond to the relationships between their founding ancestors. In this fashion certain groups are described as the older or younger brother of

61 602 another group. According to their relationship to others, groups may be designated as:

brothers, younger or older;

brother or half brother (descended from various wives of the polygynous ancestor);

[591] illegitimate child of the sister which, legally, as the child of the oldest brother or of the father of his mother, belongs to the group of the mother's relatives;

child of a boy who together with his sister has moved to the unit of his brothers-in-law and has settled there permanently;

son of a sister, who for some reason has separated from his paternal relatives and has moved in with the group of his mother or of one of his grandmothers.

601 Present-day social relationships are influenced by this variety of kinship relations. The kinship terms which refer to the relationships of the genuine or assumed ancestors to each other are occasionally transferred to the groups.

619 602 621 In this paper we shall describe the Isangi group (12) as an [101] example of hierarchical kinship structure. Isangi is a local group of the type described above (p. 1). Following the custom of the region, I shall refer to it as a "village." Until we have decided which terms are applicable to the various groups, I shall use the letters A to E for the individual ranks of the hierarchical structure. Within this system A shall stand for the smallest and E for the largest units (see Diagram 2).[1]

In addition to the three ranks of Group D in Isangi, there are others in the daughter villages (see Diagram 1). These may also include foreign groups, as, for example, the "Nkundó" group, Liimbu, in Wengé.

---

12. Müller, Fürstentum [Kingdom], pp. 68 ff., 125, 128 ff.

[1] [See page 6, category 116.—Analyst]

29| 59 The nkɔ́tɔ́ is unknown beyond the Jwafɛ and the Loilaka. In that region the women tie a string (or a belt of beads) around themselves and attach a second piece of cloth to it.

29| Thus the male garment is a rudimentary sort of shorts, open on the sides, while female dress is much more open. In general the efofo is an appropriate protection of one's modesty, but it is inadequate in certain positions. (2)

(611) (196) 2. It may be interesting to note that efofo mamfoyɛ, or just plain efofo, which is the term for a man's garment, also indicates the male line of descent, while the female line is often designated by the term nkɔ́tɔ́ (sometimes by the word jwɛ́mato derived from bɔ́mato, "woman"). Let us add that lonkundó jwâ nkɔ́tɔ́ means "pure, flawless Lonkundo, not corrupted by foreign influences." This expression should be compared with the following phrases: langue maternel, moedertaal, "mother tongue," etc.

29| (77) At present the nkɔ́tɔ́ is no longer worn except by a few elderly inhabitants of villages far from the main communication lines. Everywhere else the ancient mode of dress has been replaced by materials imported from Europe. The women wear at least a sangɛfimbo, a kind of short skirt which falls from their loins at least to the middle of their thighs if not further. Middle-aged men in the interior have simply changed the material of their garment but not its form. The younger ones, on the contrary, have frankly adopted the European mode of dress.

29| 591 (124) (831) A married woman is not allowed to enter the village of her relatives by marriage (bakiló) or appear before them [54] without supplementing her usual attire with one or more belelake (banana leaves cut into fringes). The term bakiló must be understood as it is meant by the Nkundó; it excludes those with whom the wife may sometimes perform the sexual act and who are called "husbands" broadly speaking.

583x 607 The mutuality of the rights of *nkólό* and *nkita* is well expressed in the saying, *ómbâté ñkoâté wě*, "possess me so that I may possess you." It is like *do ut des*.

583x 607 182 ●[611] It is possible to judge from the preceding descriptions that the bride price has a considerable influence on family relations. Although the Nkundó system is clearly and manifestly patriarchal, the custom of the bride price and its logical consequences give it certain features which make one think of a matriarchy. This situation comes about quite naturally. Since the bride price is wealth it represents power in society. Through marriage this power is transferred from the husband's clan to the wife's, which is enriched in goods and persons by the bride price that has been received. In a sense, the husband is the provider of his wife's clan. And the child can truthfully maintain that his clan was enriched thanks to his father. As a matter of fact, for the Nkundó, this consideration above all others is the basis for their demands of whatever rights they possess in the mother's clan. [170] The relationship between a woman and her *nkita* and between their respective children is founded solely on the bride-price system of marriage and has nothing to do with matriarchy. (1)

1. But the above considerations may furnish one source of explanation for the origin of that family system.

Consequently, it is unnecessary to erect complicated theories or engage in tortuous speculations in order to explain the creation of this system or to justify it. It is quite simply the outcome of the payment of a bride price in valuables that are of no use except in connection with a similar purpose.

Nevertheless, although the system of the *nkita* is a natural and logical consequence of marriage by means of a bride price, it is not a necessary consequence. The bride price exists in all the tribes of the Congo, but it does not seem to have resulted everywhere in the institution of the *nkita*.

583x 174 114 607 What has given rise to this institution among the Nkundó? Father Brepoels (*loc. cit.*, p. 339) gives the following explanation:

M 614 582 untangle all the threads. Thus it happens that young people form relationships with the intention of marrying without knowing that they are related; they are warned only by the opposition and ensuing explanations of the elders.

We may conclude that marriage among descendants of a common ancestor is generally prohibited if they live in the same village. It is frequently permitted on the other hand, if they belong to different villages, provided that they are not, at the same time, related to one of the ancestresses.

M 582 835 Clearly, it is difficult to say what precise degree of kinship formed the basis for the prohibition of or permission for a marriage between descendants of a common ancestor, or what are the boundaries of an exogamous grouping.

It is also apparent from the preceding observations -- as M [611] from the examination of affinity as an obstacle to marriage -- that the descent from a common mother is a more important factor than descent from the father. This does not give proof of a form of matriarchy, though it could be the remains or the beginning of one, or could provide a partial explanation for one. It stems quite simply M [842] from the Nkundó notions concerning procreation, in which they attribute the major role to the mother. There is also the fact that M [602] greater shame is attached to being united with a person descended from the same woman, and finally the fact that they feel a stronger M [593] affection for the mother than for the father (a sentiment [250] which is accentuated by polygamy). The three causes are closely related.

M 184 582 Finally, it should be noted that there is a group among the Nkundó we are discussing which is less strict than the others in this matter. The relatives among whom marriage is prohibited is definitely more limited; that is, their exogamous groupings are more limited. The people in question are the Bongale (see Introduction), and the same phenomenon may be observed among the Elingá. (1)

P [582] 1. The Batswá are still more liberal, and in this respect their practices differ very little from ancient European laws and customs.

596
614 latter group. Another factor which reminds us of the wife's continuing membership in her original group is the connection, never completely severed, between the groups related by marriage, illustrated by the practice of gifts and counter-gifts which are all part of the bride price and the dowry. [764] When she dies, the wife is buried in the soil of her group. In addition, the group membership of the wife is transferred to the children, although this does not have the same effects in economic and political terms. [611] Matrilineal descent is important in relation to marriage restrictions, certain avoidance practices which are passed on through the wives, and also certain privileges. Quite a large number of persons has settled permanently in the group of their mother or that of their grandmothers.

The decisive factor that makes the term "large family" unsuitable is the "eternal" character of the A-E groups of the Ekonda. However, the subdivisions of the A-groups which live together in a common homestead (see p. 10) may be regarded as large families in the sense used by Thurnwald, Kirchhoff, and Murdock.

Kinship Group

614
121 In the definitions of the term "family" quoted above, we already learned something about Thurnwald's concept of a kinship group, but there is an additional reference to the technical term "kinship group" ["Sippe"]" (p. 17 f.) (24):

24. Menschliche Gesellschaft, Vol. 4.

"...A kinship group is defined as a clan (q. v.) which is not politically independent. Usually the loss of independence is caused by the distribution of the people of the clan among the various settlements. A kinship group is held together by the consciousness of being descended from the same ancestors and by their common cult of the ancestors. The kinship group is of special importance for the regulation of marriage (q. v.). -- A kinship group may be divided into kinship subgroups (large

Nkundu

121 The question about the real structure of the native society begins to be asked only now that it has been brought completely to the tottering point. The question as to whether that society is, in its foundations or basic elements, really in conflict with natural law, the general welfare of mankind, and faith -- the question, thus, of the right of that society to exist -- is still shoved aside in favor of the supposed duty of the moment: to make that society like ours.

In this article, I have tried to outline the social order of the Nkundo [Nkundu] -Mongo as clearly as possible, in order to find an answer to the last question.

1. The Ethnic Clan

When we keep saying that the family is the nucleus of the community, we are ultimately merely clutching a legal fiction, or rather, we say what it ought to be. In fact, the family is, among us, only the producer of individuals who play their role in the community. The family, as such, is neither socially nor legally nor politically an intermediary, a mediator, between the individuals and the higher organs of the society.

613 Second, the nuclear family has, in our society, developed into a completely separate conception, compared to the extended family. The patriarchal household, the model of which Le Play portrayed, or the extended family, has completely disappeared. Among the Nkundo-Mongo, on the contrary, it is precisely the patriarchal family which, in the most absolute sense, is still the nucleus of the community and the foremost independent organ of that community.

Most often, this extended family is designated by the term "clan," to which vaguely different characteristics are attached: [150] blood relationship, totemism, exogamy, community of property, and others. One speaks of ethnic (patriarchal or matriarchal), legal, exogamic, and political clans, without further giving a clear description of these concepts.

The ethnic clan includes all of the persons who are descended in the male line from a particular ancestor. It is his descent in the male line from that particular ancestor which ties each Nkundo to that clan. Each ethnic clan has its own name, which is indicated in our society by the family name. When the Nkundo wish, however, to indicate that name,

613 they always refer to their descent from the ancestor-founder: "We are baseka Ngoi (descendants of Ngoi; we belong to the clan of Ngoi)."

Naturally the Nkundo-Mongo know very well that all the Mongo clans are descended from a common ancestor. They even believe in the common descent of all people. However, in clan unity they only go back to that ancestor who made their group legally autonomous, who made himself independent.

To that group belong, thus, all the children of that founder, all of the children of his sons, all of the children of his grandsons and great-grandsons; thus, all those who keep the same family name in our society.

The Nkundo-Mongo call the clan from the father's side their wise, from ise (father). The children of the lawfully married daughters belong to another wise, since they go back on their father's side to another ancestor. However, children of an unmarried daughter of the clan continue to bear their mother's name, and thus belong to the wise of the mother, just as, in our society, they take on the family name of the mother. 848

Married women, however, continue ethnically to belong to their own paternal clan and do not form part of the wise of their husband.

2. Kinship Terms in the Paternal Clan

601 613 All of the living members of the paternal clan constitute one extended family. In the bosom of that one family, all members of the same /151/ generation also bear the same title. All of the members of the grandfather's generation are grandfathers. All the members of the father's generation are fathers, also including the female members. Thus, the sisters and female cousins of the father who belong to the wise are all called "female fathers": isomoto or faomoto (from ise or fafa, father, and bomoto, woman). All of the older brothers and male cousins of the wise are batomolo; all younger brothers or male cousins of the wise are bakune; all sisters or female cousins of the wise are nkana. All of the children of brothers and male cousins, and also all of the children of sisters and female cousins who remain in the wise, are bana (children).

601 561 613 Such terms are to us, of course, a never ending source of mistakes, complications, and ridicule. The native cannot possible understand this and underneath takes it very much amiss. Socially, legally, and

Nkundu

601 561 613 politically, his whole society is, in fact, based on those relationships which are incomprehensible to us. Indeed, the order of duty and responsibility, of authority and honor, are socially, legally, and politically determined by the order of birth. That order is determined by generation, and within the generation, by age: from the oldest father down the whole line of fathers to the oldest "child" in the whole row of children. The children of your older brother, even if they are younger in years, go before your own children. As we shall see later, the female members of the family, who practically fall outside this order, recover their place of honor through their sons.

613 From this short description of the paternal clan, it is immediately apparent that the clan is not a geographical concept among the Nkundo. Wherever the daughter may marry, wherever the son may wander in service to the Whites, that person always and everywhere continues by law to belong to his wise, and he remains bound to all the rights and duties of his place in that community.

602 613 It also appears that clan and blood relationship do not come anywhere near to blanketing each other. Each "blood relationship" of the Nkundo extends itself over various paternal clans, since the blood relations of the mother, as well as the descendants of all the other women of my wise who are lawfully married out of the clan, belong to another wise.

/152/ 3. Inheritance in the Clan

613 421 Each clan has possessions that constitute the inheritance or patrimony of the members, the domain of the family. These goods are of two kinds: economic and dotal. The former are subdivided into real property, or inalienable property, and personal property.

613 423 The real property of the clan consists of land and waters. The land is divided into: arable land, land for gardens, and hunting areas. These constitute common property, whose cultivation or usufruct is divided among the members of the clan: each one receives his garden land and hunting ground to clear; as soon as the user leaves it, that ground is free again for the community. Palm groves, of course, also remain common property of the members. A similar arrangement applies to water rights. Larger fishing areas remain common property and are, under the leadership of the clan head, communally exploited. Smaller fishing grounds, creeks, ponds, etc., are allotted to each

Nkundu

613 member. In the case of common use or of an exceptionally good
423 yield (large game, a rich haul of fish, large yield from a particular
cultivation of common property, such as palm beer), these are divided
by the clan leader and their respective shares allotted to all members.

613 Personal property consists of the hut and the tools of the man, the
422 furniture of the woman, and the domestic animals. These are movable
and can also go out of the clan through inheritance. Should they leave
their husbands, married women may taken with them whatever they
have received or inherited personally from their *wise*.

421 In contrast to the economic property of the clan, there is the dotal
or capital property, the marriage settlements, which do not have
613 economic, but only legal value. They represent the rights over people.
583 In the first place we find those persons who themselves are the source
of rights: the marriageable girls (*bibunanyi*) of the clan /A/ and the
substitutes for women married into the clan /A/—that is, the women
who are married into the allied clan /B/ with the acquired bride price
(*nkita*). /Ed. Clan A pays bride price for a woman from clan B, the
allied clan. Then clan B uses this acquired bride price to obtain
another woman in marriage, a "substitute." This substitute is *nkita* to
[567] the original woman./ In addition, there are the slaves who can re-
place a *caput*. In the second place, there are the titles which represent
421 a *caput*: the /153/ so-called dotal securities (*baumba*). These dotal
613 securities or titles are kept by the clan leader and, with the knowledge
of his immediate successor, hidden somewhere in the ground. With
the approval of the clan council, he may also lend them out. These
dotal possessions or rights are also common property of the clan and
are used to procure a wife for the clan members, each in his turn.

The common ownership of the economic property makes possible the difficult sharing of woods and river, prevents the cutting up of the property, hinders the impoverishment and the proletarization of the poor, and insures the livelihood of all of the clan members. This common ownership has nothing more to do with communism than the common ownership of property in our nuclear families.

The dotal or capital property, the bride price titles, which have perhaps aroused the most indignant and lofty compassion of our civilized world, have less to do with buying and selling the wife then our own dowry and class system. They are permanent legal titles of the contract which is made between the clans of the couple on the occasion of the marriage. Our individualistic liberalism and mercantilism have regarded these legal securities only through economic spectacles and

421 613 have seen them as money transactions. We have obtruded our point of view and destroyed the whole legal system of the natives. It is through our materialization of those securities that we have lowered the native woman to a plaything of money and a piece of merchandise.

586 595 As for the two outgrowths of the native system, divorce and polygamy, neither is inherent in the legal system as such. They are only abuses which have taken root and which clash with the principles of the native law itself. By its nature, native marriage is also indissoluble, and polygamy has only been able to exist through a popular confusion between paternal and marital law.

4. Legal Power in the Clan

613 627 In Nkundo society all individuals do not have equal rights or powers, as in the Napoleonic law books, /154/ but the natural rights concerning people are still completely recognized. All value and power comes from God, through the ancestors. Those who are nearest to God are thus the highest in position, his first representatives. There is no question of absolutism or despotism. Just as the blood is divided among all clan members in a descending line, so also are authority and legal power. They are one as a legal entity in relation to the outside world; nevertheless, each member takes part and has a vote in the internal administration of justice, so that, when clan interests are discussed and dealt with, each member may sit in the place accorded to him and take part in decisions. In a legal sense there is, therefore, no question of a separate family council, which would assist the clan leader, but all decisions are made communally.

594 627 A single exception to this does exist, namely, that which gives the head of the nuclear family legal power over his wife and children, and then only with the acknowledgment and approval of the clan. Differences between autonomous clans are settled by the clans involved, a sort of international court of law where friendly clans may also be brought in as arbiters.

627 Such an arrangement made the court absolutely "paternal." The whole procedure was one of a reconciliatory character, which resorted to coercive measures only when necessary, and did its utmost to save the honor and the welfare of the involved clans, and to compensate for, to restore, and to prevent further offenses.

177 Although even St. Thomas teaches that the only natural authority
is that of the head of the family, European legislation has, through
ignorance, completely abolished the rights of the native family head;
the wife is freed from all ties and is thus abandoned to licentiousness.
Through a legal fiction, clan law has gone over into the hands of the
"recognized native courts of justice, " which, however, have just as
much to do with the clan court as a policeman with a father. The
communization of trade, education, and the rearing of the young, as
is demonstrated to us by Russia, would revolutionize our society far
less than our installation of these so-called native courts of justice has
done in the Congo. Education and correction have been replaced by
punishment. Politics, which have begun to play such an all-important
602 role in our society, had /155/ almost no importance in Nkundo society.
613 The neighboring clans were all connected with each other through
blood relationship, intermarriage, or friendship ties. Only when there
was a struggle against a foreign and common enemy did politics have
a role to fulfill. And then the same order of rank was observed among
the clans as was already indicated for the members of a single clan.

177 Here also, biased or romantic products of our ideas about barbarism
have adapted these so-called intertribal wars to the need that we felt,
728 to civilize the natives at any cost. These wars were not to be compared
622 with our European wars, in which a mass of people are slaughtered.
In the Congo, no sooner had wounded or dead fallen on both sides than
the chiefs were already congregated to conclude a peace treaty.
Here again, we meant to respect the political organization of the
natives by the creation of chieftainships and native chiefs, who were
to form the political-administrative link between the native clans and
the European higher administration. Such chiefs were totally unknown
in native society. Together with the establishment of the native courts,
the establishment of chieftainships gave the death blow to the actual
social organization of the Nkundo-Mongo. The very fact that these
institutions are territorial demonstrates clearly that here no ordinary
shifting of power has taken place, but simply an elimination of the
traditional power in favor of a new colonial power.

177 Indeed, where formerly the "customary rightful chief" was sought
out, even though it was sometimes only a formality, the new formula
622 of the "sectors" has relieved the higher administration from this care
too. And it is only to be hoped that this new formula will at least do
away with the legal fiction that the "chiefs" are actually "something
native, " so that they may be classified for once and for all in the

Nkundu

177 622 category of civil servants. In this manner they would fall under the written law and could be obliged to practice monogamy, whereas now nearly all of the "native chiefs" are precisely the maintainers and promoters of polygamy. If this had /156/ been enforced from the start, then polygamy, instead of spreading, would have virtually disappeared from the native society.

5. Splitting of the Clan

613 After all that has been said before, it must be rather apparent how an autonomous clan can split up and, thereby, form two autonomous clans.

When a clan has expanded too far, its leaders cross over the boundaries of blood relationship, and offenses against the law of exogamy occur. When such offenses are multiplied, further separation is gradually aimed at to make marriages possible. Such a situation between two parts of the same clan, who are striving for "legal autonomy," is called lonkana, a term that signifies that unlawful relations exist between the two. It generally occurs between member groups that have the same male ancestor, but not the same female ancestor—that is, they are issue from different wives of the same founder.

Another cause of splitting is the voluntary or obligatory withdrawal of one of the members. When he establishes himself outside, begets a sizeable progeny, and acquires a patrimony of his own, the relations with his own clan become less frequent; and the separated fraction gradually begins to settle smaller lawsuits, to maintain its own graveyard, to bury the umbilical cords of its children in its own territory, to take on its own name, and to refer to its own founder.

Often also at the source of this estrangement lies the refusal of a certain fraction of the clan to submit to the authority of the clan members.

6. Legal Dependents

613 614 608 Until now we have spoken only of the ethnic clan: of the members who belong to it through descent. They /157/ are the sole bearers of

613 authority (mpifo). Each clan can, however, also take in other persons
614 who fall outside the order of authority, but who legally belong to the
608 clan. Along with the real descendants, they make up the legal clan.

These are, in the first place, the wives who have married into the clan, the children brought with them (mbusola), and the lawful housekeepers. In addition, there are the clients who have been taken in; then the war prisoners and slaves; and finally the Pygmies. The women married into the clan are naturally separate, as are also the Pygmies who form a completely separate community. The others are gradually treated as children, receive their part in the general responsibility and protection, their place in the court session, etc. Depending on the degree to which they develop in the bosom of the clan which has taken them in, they can constitute a separate group in it, which becomes more and more independent.

7. The Maternal Clan

602 Each Nkundo has a double "fatherland": his wise and his bonyango.
613 The bonyango is the paternal clan of his mother. His mother gave birth to him there; her blood relations live there and receive him with motherly love and will protect him against all difficulties; he has often passed a large part of his happiest childhood years there; and there he can always find a safe shelter when, for one reason or another, he might lose the paternal clan.

The structure of the maternal clan naturally resembles that of the paternal clan in every way. If we treat it specially here, it is not in order to speak of the form, but only to point out the specific rights that each person has in his maternal clan.

601 Just as all of the brothers and sisters of my father are my "fathers,"
602 so all of the brothers and sisters of my mother are my "mothers."
613 Mother's brother, that is, my maternal uncle, I call ngompame, nyangompame. All the nephews and nieces on the mother's side are my "children." A special tie binds me to the children of the nkita of my mother, that is, to the children of the women who was acquired by the maternal clan with the bride price /158/ that had been paid for my mother by my wise. Mother is, thus, the nkolo, the woman or mistress, of those children who call me their father.

602 As long as I continue to live in my own paternal clan, I have the
613 right to special care and love from the maternal clan. If I cannot find

602 613 sufficient dowry at home, then I can always go and appeal to my maternal uncles who are obliged to help me insofar as they are able. I even have the right to the free dowry of one of the children of my mother's nkita. I may always lay out gardens and hunt in the territory of my bonyango, and take part in the court sessions of the maternal clan when they consider the allotment of the free dowries or the division of the inheritance. If, however, I wish to leave my father's clan and establish myself for good in the maternal clan, then I receive priority in everything over my male and female cousins and become heir and clan leader directly after my maternal uncles. This is, thus, a truly princely compensation for the so-called inferiority of the woman in native society: the child of the sister (bonankana) restores her gloriously to the honor and rank which are due her.

8. Related Clan: Likilo

602 601 Outside my paternal clan and outside my maternal clan, I still have blood relations: namely, the children of my paternal aunt and of my sisters or female cousins, each of whom belongs to the clan of his own father. Just as the children of my mother's brothers are my children, so the children of my father's sister are also my fathers. I am, thus, in the same relationship to the children of my mother's brother as the children of my father's sister are to me.

As far as the children of my sister are concerned, they are also my real banankana and, therefore, the fathers of my own children.

The other members of the related clans (who are thus not blood relations) all share, according to generation, in the classification of immediate relatives: all the "fathers" of the husband are "fathers-in-law"; all the mothers, "mothers-in-law"; etc. There is this single big difference, that the "superiors" of the husband are also your "superiors." According to the opinions of the Nkundo, they are the only real relatives. Those on the husband's side are called bokilo; those on the wife's side, bokanga.

/159/ The "subordinates" of the husband are not real relatives and rightly call each other "husband" and "wife." In various legally [582] defined circumstances, marriage relations and marriages are permitted between the latter.

It is unnecessary to repeat that all of the members of the reciprocal clans share in these relationships: the whole generation of a clan

602 601 member is, as it were, identified with that member, so that, for instance, all younger sisters and female cousins of one spouse become "wives" of all the younger brothers and male cousins of the other spouse. One must really have the legal sense and the patience and the capacity for palaver and unravelling of an old Nkundo to make sense out all of these relationships. They themselves compare them, in fact, with the inextricable clew of the intestines of a sort of dwarf crocodile: besofo bya lokekele.

9. Exogamy

● 613 582 The term, "exogamic clan," often heard or encountered in writings, is also, at least in the Nkundo-Mongo society, very misleading. The group of persons with whom marriage is forbidden does not constitute any common entity; it differs from person to person. Two half brothers can have the same paternal clan but differ in maternal clan; they can have the same maternal clan and different paternal clans. Marriages are forbidden for older brothers and sisters that are permitted for the younger ones. The rules differ from one blood relation to another, from blood relation with relative-by-marriage to blood relation with relative-by-marriage, from relative-by-marriage with relative-by-marriage to relative-by-marriage with relative-by-marriage.

If one still wishes to put the law of exogamy into European terms, then one might say: 1) blood relationship forbids marriage insofar as the blood relationship is recognized. This recognition varies from clan group to clan group. Sometimes in the same legal but extended clan, an exception is made to this recognition; mostly, however, the different autonomous clans which descend from the same distant ancestor are still bound by the law of exogamy. Generally, groups which have the same father but a different mother /160/ separate most quickly. 2) Relationship (other than blood) forbids marriage—insofar as the relationship is recognized between the parents of spouses; it sometimes permits marriage between children of spouses.

613 582 184 Here it should be observed once again, however, that the customs differ from region to region as regards this recognition; that, for instance, the stepson in many regions may marry his stepmother in a regular marriage; and that the violations are less severely judged and punished in proportion to the degree to which the forbidden relationships diverge.

121 to present anything we have not thoroughly investigated. We have not stepped outside the geographic limits set forth except for a few incidental remarks. Although the cultural uniformity of the Nkundó-Móngo is remarkable it is not, of course, absolute. And if we have used the title Mariage des Nkundó (Marriage among the Nkundu), we have done so because it was difficult to find one which would be more appropriate for the geographic and ethnic limits of [14] this study. It is very likely that in most cases our data are valid beyond the limits we have laid out, but to generalize upon it before making a thorough study of each group would be contrary to all scientific method. The reader is therefore earnestly requested to take these remarks into account and to abstain from giving our conclusions too broad a scope.

Familial institutions in themselves and in their totality are outside the scope of this book. But since they are based on marriage, they have an important place within our framework. We must necessarily touch upon them, but we will limit our excursions into that realm to what is required to make the general description intelligible. On the other hand, the study of marriage throws a good deal of light on familial institutions.

128
596
614
The words "family," "clan," "group," etc. recur frequently. The family is an entity smaller than the clan, and the latter is subordinate to the group. Since it is very difficult to give a precise definition, however, we have taken the trouble to make a clear distinction only when necessary. (1) [Editor's Note: Elsewhere we use them more as generic terms or even as synonyms. In order to make family relationships and the expressions used by the Nkundó to designate them more comprehensible, we are attaching an example of a genealogical table.]

113 I know of the following previous studies on the same subject:

Engels, "Les Wangata," Revue Congolaise, 1910, which also deals with marriage.

G. Kaptein, "Familieleven en -zeden bij de Inboorlingen van den Evenaar," Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 531. [15] This study covers

---

1. See Chapter V, Article III.

174 836 on the other hand, is extremely repugnant by nature, especially for the Nkundó. It is a vice which comes about only as a result of special beliefs or through a fundamental degeneration of sexuality.

The breaking up of the framework of traditional organization may furnish a partial explanation in this realm as in many others. In the case of sexual relations between single adults, it might even be deemed sufficient. As much may be said about greed, vanity, the desire for ostentation and display. These are very natural sentiments in a woman, and they were greatly stimulated by the dazzling riches imported from Europe. But these facts are not sufficient in themselves to account for everything. They are especially and entirely inadequate in explaining the considerable changes in the relations between immature children, and we are thus forced to accept the explanation given by serious natives.

3. Children born out of wedlock

848 Among the Nkundó, giving birth to a child outside of wedlock has never from time immemorial been considered a grave misdemeanor. It is not considered criminal, as ethnographers say it is among many other African peoples.

Furthermore, this attitude logically follows from the liberty permitted to adolescents, as described above. Neither the woman nor her lover are harassed or punished as a result. On the contrary, the grandparents joyfully receive the child, who adds to the size, power, and wealth of the clan. [88] For an illegitimate child (entombó) (1) does not belong to its natural father. It is incorporated into the mother's family. It is said that he is born without a father. His

848 614

1. Such a child is also known as bona ɓa wanɛ́, "child of the sunlight," or bona ɓa bombamboka, "child of the highway" or "of a girl of the streets." Among the Bombomba the term bokelankólo is also heard.

848 posterity constitute a separate family in the clan of his maternal
614 ancestors; it is called jwǒmoto or etɔ́o ɛ́y'ǒnankáná (that is, the patrilineal posterity of the sister's son). Families and clans that have originated in this manner are not particularly rare in this region. One may even find an entire village born in this manner. Thus, Mbelɛ́ of the Bombwanja-Boɛndɛ́ is the etɔ́o ɛ́y'ǒnankáná of Lileko. A more striking example is that of the Injɔ́lɔ́ tribe, descended from the sister of Nsimba and Eanga, who are respectively the ancestors of the Ntɔ́mbá and the Bolɛ́ngɛ́. Since the male ancestor is unknown, it is assumed that their origin is due to an extramarital conception by the mother, and that her son, Nkɔ́lɔ́bisɛ́, had no father. The same is true of the Wesɛ́ subtribe, bǒnankáná of the eldest subtribe Engɔ́njɔ́, as well as of the Ngombe subtribe, which is bǒnankáná of the Wesɛ́.

It would be incorrect, however, to attribute the origin of all the "jwǒmoto" clans to illegitimate children, for they may have come into existence for other reasons. Thus it is known that the ancestors of certain clans were born of a legitimate union, but the bride price payment had not yet been completed. Then, as some sort of obstacle intervened, the relationship by marriage was broken, and the child was incorporated into the mother's clan. The obstacle which interrupts the bride price payment may be a disharmony between the engaged couple or their families, as in the case of the Basɛ́ká Etáfɛ́ngela of the Bakáala; but it is more likely to be war or the migrations of the tribes at certain periods of their history. The latter reason may have separated more than one husband from a wife for whom he had only made an initial payment at the time her child was born.

848 The fact then that many "female" clans exist in a [89] region does not prove that illicit relationships between single people were common in the past -- especially if one also takes into account that pregnancies were formerly much more frequent than they are nowadays. It merely shows that such relationships did occur.

An illegitimate child is considered and treated by the maternal grandfather as if it were his own. No distinction is made between him and the legitimate children. He is in no way despised. He has a voice in family councils and deliberations. And since according to Nkundɔ́ notions his relationship to his first cousins is that of father to son, he

848 has precedence over them and can become head of the family after his grandfather and uncles. In his natural father's clan, on the other hand, he has nothing to say.

848 596 If a man pays the bride price for a girl who has had a child by him, he asks his father-in-law to let him have his illegitimate child. This wish is almost always granted. The father-in-law well understands his son-in-law's fatherly sentiment of love and considers it quite legitimate and proper that a father should himself possess the [583]x fruit of his own flesh. The only condition laid down is that because of the child the son-in-law must increase the amount of the bride price valuables by an extra slave or his equivalent. (1)

1. This transaction may even take place after the mother's death.

The father is not in a position to invoke any rights strictly speaking. The child is not considered as his because of his physical paternity, but only because of his father-in-law's kindness. If the latter were to refuse the father's request, he would not be acting in violation of justice. But his behavior would be considered as inhumane toward his daughter's husband and his grandson, and it would be criticized.

When a child is adopted by his natural father in this fashion, no one despises him for his illegitimate birth [90]. This procedure may therefore be considered to establish his legitimacy.

848 178 Nowadays, among the Beloko and their Elinga, the practice of "buying" the child has sprung up. That is, if a man does not marry a woman who has had a child by him, he pays her parents a certain amount in order to obtain the child. There does not seem to be much opposition to the introduction of this custom, which springs from an honorable feeling for paternity and its duties. Its only disadvantage is that in such a case the child may never claim any rights in his mother's clan. (1)

1. See Chapter VIII, Article IV.

848 614 583x If a stranger marries an unwed mother, he is never given the child, which remains in the mother's family. This situation is clearly distinguished from those mentioned above.

848
614
593 What happens is that when such a woman goes to live with her husband and her child is too young to remain with his grandparents, she takes him along. Later when the boy reaches adulthood, he sometimes settles with the clan of his mother's husband and produces a posterity. But he is more or less discredited by the adopting clan (and by the others). He has no political rights there, no mpifo. His posterity is called mbɔ́solɛ́ (from mbɔ́sa, "behind" and bolɛ́, "clan of origin"). (2) Its members may marry members of the adopting clan, excepting of course the descendants of their common mother. They also have their own cemetery. They thus form a separate clan within the village.

The practice of "bringing a child in the sling" seems to be disappearing at the present time, because everyone wants to remain in his own clan. Government policy deprives natives who do not live with their own families of almost all their rights. Moreover, [91] today it is much easier than in the past to procure the means for establishing a home. This last problem was certainly an important reason why a man would settle with the clan of his mother's husband.

848
684 The preceding clearly shows that a lover by whom an unmarried girl has a child incurs no blame, penalty, or fine. He has no obligation to care either for the mother or the child. Neither justice nor propriety requires him to marry the unwed mother. No indemnity is exacted.

There is only one exception: that is, if the mother dies as a result of the pregnancy or the delivery, or if the child is stillborn or born sickly, deformed, or crippled. In such cases the lover has to pay a heavy indemnity (mbɛ́laka) (1) That is why an unmarried woman who is pregnant is pressed into giving the name of her accomplice as

---

2. They also say "he was brought in the sling," bôyɛ́lɛ́kɛ ndɛ́ lɔmbɛ́.

1. For the child, the indemnity goes up to 50 rings; for the mother, 50 rings and a slave (or his equivalent in currency), or 75 to 100 rings.

4. Onanism [coitus interruptus]

893 Onanism also seems to be unknown. No doubt many women have learned this vice through their concubinage with Europeans, but they have not spread it. The same may be said of involuntary onanism. For the native does not look for sensual refinements; rather he follows his natural impulse. (1)

1. The practice described in Chapter X, Article III, 3, may be slightly tainted with onanism; it could certainly lead to such a practice, but it is not caused by perversion.

Article VII. Incest

895
644 We here must distinguish between 1) sexual relations between distantly related kin and 2) between close kin.

1. Among distant relatives

Incest among distant relatives (in the Nkundó sense of the word) has existed since time immemorial. It is called lonkâna (bombakɛ among the Bombwanja). Lonkâna is derived from nkâna, "brother, sister." The expression liála j'ōlóló, "sexual union in the village," is also used. The term lonkâna is applied to relations between members of families which are only very distantly related (not at all related, according to our notions) but between whom marriage is not permitted. Thus one hears that such and such kin groups do not marry each other (bāfóyakumbólé) but they commit lonkâna. Two kin groups of this sort may be considered closely related clans. The groups between whom lonkâna is practiced each has its own cemetery, while those between whom it is absolutely forbidden share a common cemetery. Thus, to cite an example, the "village" [98] of Elángá l'Imomo l'Ontole (Bongíli) is composed of three kin groups, as the name indicates. The Imomo settlement is partially located in the

835 allied district of the Bombomba). The same is true of the Bontole. 614 Elángá and Imomo, together with Eleke (Lokongo), comprise the posterity of the son of Ambá, who was the sister of Iloko, Eángá, and Bokungó, the latter being the ancestor of the Bontole. The three groups do not intermarry. Between the Elángá and the Imomo, lonkâna relations are also not permitted, but they are practiced with the Bontole. Note that the term lonkâna is never applied to relations between truly separate clans, that is, between exogamous entities.

To define the precise limits of this practice we would have to examine each kin group separately, and this would lead us too far afield.

It should also be noted that lonkâna may be limited to an isolated act, or it can become an intermittent concubinage. The name of the practice does not change when it involves a married woman who is visiting her family. Sanctions against adultery are applicable to such a case, however, as to all others. (1) Although the relatives of the woman are more lenient than if the adulterous relations had occurred with a different lover, the husband whose rights have been infringed on makes no such distinction.

835 614 174 The custom of lonkâna seems rather strange. After all, if sexual relations between these clans are not reprehensible, why is marriage between them forbidden? This is an apparent contradiction which merits attention. Should not this practice be viewed as a relaxation of the law of exogamy? In past times all sexual relations between members of the clans under discussion would have been forbidden, a very natural phenomenon when the families originated. [99] Later the young people would have succumbed to the temptation, and little by little infractions would even have multiplied. For as the clans became increasingly extended, the temptations became more and more numerous and the rule, now detached from its natural significance because very distant kinship was involved, came to seem more or less arbitrary to the interested parties. It was supported by no sanction or

---

1. See Chapter VI, Article VIII.

835 614 174 fear. (1) Thus the very number of violations would have gradually made the practice customary. Powerless to stop it, the persons in authority, guardians of traditional morality, would have contented themselves with channeling the development and restricting it to a minimum by being lenient on the subject of extramarital relations in order to save the principle of exogamy. This explanatory hypothesis can find a little confirmation in the fact that at the very beginning of colonization when European influence was not felt as yet, there were isolated and very rare cases of marriage in opposition to the law of exogamy between members of groups which were only very distantly related but already practiced lonkâna. The exception then became the rule; and from then on the two groupings in question intermarried regularly and without hindrance, while other families remained under the ancient law. Thus there is the known case of Boyela village (Bakɛ́ala), which includes the Bokambɛ́, Bembakɔ́, Besɔ́lɔ́, and Bekɔ́lama (extinct), all descendants of Ngonde and one wife; his union with another spouse gave rise to the Lilekɛ́ and the Likongo, to whom Bongilɛ́, a group related through marriage (likilo), is attached. These two groups of families could not intermarry, but they did engage in lonkâna. Around the time of the first arrival of the Whites, a member of the Bembakɔ́ [100] family a certain Bonjɔ́mbɔ́ was impelled by an excessive love to violate the law of exogamy by taking Bolondɔ́ of Lilekɛ́ for his wife. As his love did not cool and the marriage proved stable, it was recognized and accepted as legitimate. Since then the two groups in question have each become exogamous.

835 754 2. Between close relatives

Incest between close relatives has no special name of its own. As a matter of fact, it never occurs as an outgrowth of passion. We

1. Actually, no sanction is provided against marriages within an exogamous entity; everything lies in the opposition of parents and elders and in a habit which is almost innate.

582
567 matters are more important than the father's ancestry. (1)

[554] 1. Among the Nkundó no shame is attached to not knowing the family of one's father. But not to be able to name the mother's clan is a great dishonor for it proves that she was a slave.

There is less opposition to the first generation born of a couple who were both slaves than for their parents, and it progressively decreases with each succeeding generation. There is practically no opposition now to the grandsons. The reason seems to be
[597] that although receiving a wife from one's master in a regular marriage does not constitute emancipation (nsikó, nsikola) for the slave, it is a kind of adoption (wɛ̌mya, -ɛ́mya). [246]

Article III. Kinship

582
835 Marriage between members of the same kin group (isangano, bosangema, from the verb -sangema, "to be related") is forbidden. But how far does such a kin group extend? It is impossible to give a general rule. On the one hand, it is certain that if two groups are not descended from a common ancestor there is no bond of kinship between them, even if they live side by side. But on the other hand, it is not possible to say that all those who are descended from the same ancestor are relatives and that marriage is forbidden between the various branches of the grouping they comprise. The question therefore amounts to knowing by which ancestor the exogamous grouping is defined. A decision on this point may only be made through the examination of each case individually.

● 614 It is impossible to deduce anything from the meaning of the term clan, for it is usually defined as "a grouping of families united to one another by kinship." This leaves us back where we started. The characteristics usually given for a clan are: generic name, totemic bond (1), collective responsibility, and exogamy, and do not provide a solution either. For the elements of this definition must be complementary to one another to provide an adequate intension, and it is impossible to determine the limits within which they operate among the Nkundɔ́.

Thus we would have to make a list of all the groupings of these people and examine them in order to find out which ones correspond to the idea of an exogamous clan. And this is not feasible. Nevertheless, for the sake of illustration, here is the genealogy of the Bongíli:

Their ancestor Tɔ́lenjou had two sons, Iloko and Bokungɔ́, and a daughter, Ǎmbɛ́, by one wife. By two other wives he had Eɛ́ngɛ́, father of the Ikengya, and Efoloko, father of the [247] Bolɛ́ngɛ́. Iloko's progeny gave rise to the villages of Ifutɔ́, Mbɛ́ngɛ́, and Lofelí; Bokungɔ́'s progeny to Boambɛ́ (and Ifoku), Ndɔngɔ́, Bolongwankoi, Etoɔ́ntɛ́lɛ́, Bontɛ́lɛ́, Lokɔ́nola (part of Imomo), and Betolɔ́ l'Ibela (whose people live with the Boambɛ́). Through Ǎmbɛ́ there originated the villages of Elɛ́ngɛ́, Imomo, and Eleke (the latter together with Bolongwankoi from the village of Lonkongo).

Tɔ́lenjou
|
Bokungɔ́
|
Bengɔ́ngɔ́
|
Enkɛ́kɛ́
|
Longwokɔ́
(died at a very old age in 1933)

---

1. Totemism does not seem to exist among the Nkundɔ́. In any case it is not apparent here as it is elsewhere.

●614 Thus we have five groups which are exogamous; marriage is forbidden within each group, but not with members of the other groups. The little genealogy above gives some idea of the antiquity of the line and of the distance which separates its present members from the founding ancestor of the tribe. It should be noted that each exogamous group is subdivided into several villages, clans, and families. The same limits appear to be set with respect to the maternal line; marriage with the descendants of brothers and sisters of the ancestress, wife of the ancestor of the exogamous grouping, is forbidden. (1)

> 1. Note that *lonkâna* relations are practiced within each of the five exogamous groups, but not between the descendants of the same ancestress, wife of one of the ancestors, and of her *bibísa*. See Chapter I, Article VII, 1.

In investigating this subject the family of the ancestress must be taken into account as well as the paternal line.

In order to be able to define an exogamous group precisely, it is therefore necessary to study not only several villages, but also various tribes. For a single group may be composed of several families who live far from each [248] other and have sometimes become attached to groupings of people who are only very distantly related or even complete strangers. In such a case therefore a single village may include several exogamous groups.

614
621 Such is the case of the Bɔ́endɛ́, descended from the ancestor Ilumbɛ́ yǎ Mpumo. From his first wife, Eámɛ́, arose the Etɔ́o groups, from his other wives, the Bongangá groups. They do not marry among themselves but are a good example of a complex composition.

The Etɔ́o are dispersed in four villages:

1) Etɔ́o of Lotɔ́lá
2) Etɔ́o of Bako̱vɔ̱́ or Mbálanɛ̱́ne̱, both Basɛ́ká Bombɔ́ngo
3) Etɔ́o of Mbɛ́mbɛ́ or Basɛ́ká Bofiíyolo
4) Etɔ́o of Bosánjo or Basɛ́ká Eɔ́ngo

614 621 The Bongangá are divided as follows:

1) Bongangá, in the narrow sense of the term (Basɛ́ká Inanó, B. Bolaká, B. Bongɛ́ngɛ́, B. Bandúwá, B. Lokókómyá)

2) Bongangá of Bakoyó, or Bolíma

3) Bongangá of Mbómbɛ́ or Basɛ́ká Botúna

Thus Lotólá, Bakoyó, and Mbómbɛ́ each have an Etóo group and a Bongangá group. The Bongangá, in the narrow sense of the term, have in addition a "slave" group named Batsína, a part of which is located with the Bosánjo. A foreign clan is settled with the Etóo of Lotólá; they are the Bofalambóka, descendant of a man named Ekonda (Imbolo) and his sister who was married to Mbete, a slave from Bompángá (Wǎngatá) who was freed by his master.

Many villages have foreign groups living with them such as descendants of slaves (ekwála), or others (Ekonda, Bombwanja, groups related by marriage called likilo, mpámá or bowɛ́lɛ́, and mbúsolá, (1) etc.). [249]

[609] 1. Mpámá or bowɛ́lɛ́ are any foreigners who were formerly invited by the group patriarch to remain with him in order to carry out certain tasks, especially metal-working. Mbúsolá is the term applied to a child born to a woman out of wedlock

[848] [825] (Chapter I, Part 2, Article IV, 3). Such children are also called nkio y'ǎóme, "the husband's flying dogs," because they are not his own children but are attached to their mother's husband in the fashion of these animals, who attach themselves to trees when they sleep.

614 582 If we add the descendants of relatives who have married into other more or less remote groupings, the prohibition against marriage on account of kinship applies to a good many people. In accordance with the law of exogamy, such a kin group may be widely dispersed geographically, and it is understandable that it is not always easy to

M 614 582 untangle all the threads. Thus it happens that young people form relationships with the intention of marrying without knowing that they are related; they are warned only by the opposition and ensuing explanations of the elders.

We may conclude that marriage among descendants of a common ancestor is generally prohibited if they live in the same village. It is frequently permitted on the other hand, if they belong to different villages, provided that they are not, at the same time, related to one of the ancestresses.

M 582 835 Clearly, it is difficult to say what precise degree of kinship formed the basis for the prohibition of or permission for a marriage between descendants of a common ancestor, or what are the boundaries of an exogamous grouping.

It is also apparent from the preceding observations -- as M [611] from the examination of affinity as an obstacle to marriage -- that the descent from a common mother is a more important factor than descent from the father. This does not give proof of a form of matriarchy, though it could be the remains or the beginning of one, or could provide a partial explanation for one. It stems quite simply M [842] from the Nkundó notions concerning procreation, in which they attribute the major role to the mother. There is also the fact that M [602] greater shame is attached to being united with a person descended from the same woman, and finally the fact that they feel a stronger M [593] affection for the mother than for the father (a sentiment [250] which is accentuated by polygamy). The three causes are closely related.

M 184 582 Finally, it should be noted that there is a group among the Nkundó we are discussing which is less strict than the others in this matter. The relatives among whom marriage is prohibited is definitely more limited; that is, their exogamous groupings are more limited. The people in question are the Bongale (see Introduction), and the same phenomenon may be observed among the Elingá. (1)

P [582] 1. The Batswá are still more liberal, and in this respect their practices differ very little from ancient European laws and customs.

684 582 There is no sanction against the infraction of the law of exogamy. There is only the opposition of the parents and patriarchs, and a quasi-innate habit.

582 614 Note also that members of certain clans frequently marry members of certain others, among whom they prefer to choose their wives. Therefore a good proportion of the women married into any given family will belong to one particular clan. The Wafé (Bakáala), for instance take a great many of their wives from among the Bongale w'ôtóló.

[174] 582 614 We may reasonably assume that the ancestors of related groups, who now marry among themselves, formerly practiced exogamy. If this assumption is correct, it must be admitted that with the progressive growth of families, this rule has been relaxed in certain respects so that the present situation has resulted. Consequently, it would not be surprising if these legal provisions became even less rigorous in the future. Actually, some young people have begun to [178] violate the rules of exogamy and their example has freed the whole family. (2) Thus the Bokátola maintain that their two groupings, Bompela and Iló̲ngé̲, who now intermarry, formerly comprised a [251] single exogamous entity. Contemporary instances appear here and there, but they remain very rare, even between persons who are very distantly related, and much rarer between close kin. (1) For the Nkundó still feel very strongly about this law. The bulk of the people are entirely opposed to any laxity or violations and the patriarchs and notables act against them with all their power. But the strength of

---

2. See Chapter I, Article VII, 1.

1. A recent case was that of Elímá and Bolúfe̲, who both belonged to the exogamous group of Bokenyola of the Bo̲njo̲ku, but one belonged to the Baséká Bo̲kó̲yó̲ family and the other to the Baséká Njoli.

582 614 their intervention is greatly reduced by the fact that much of their authority has been shifted to the chiefs named by the colonial administration, and also by all the contingencies of modern life. Since on the other hand, the young people are gradually breaking the ancient limits in order to acquire greater freedom, the elders will one day have to yield to them.

Article IV. Affinity

582 602 Affinity among the Nkundó should not be understood to have the meaning given in European civil or ecclesiastic law. Marriage is forbidden with all persons who are bakiló (Sing. bokiló). (2)

2. Contrary to the statement by Father Kaptein (Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 541).

Therefore one must know what persons are called bakiló, a fairly complicated problem for us Europeans.

To make the matter more understandable, certain considerations must be developed before giving the general rules.

1. General considerations

1) Affinity is not as great an obstacle to marriage as kinship. It is possible to obtain a sort of "dispensation," and for many degrees of affinity, divorce or death removes the barrier. But there are transgressions [252], and, except for the few indicated above, these do not occur in cases of kinship.

The following legitimate reasons for a "dispensation" are given: a danger that the patrimony will be scattered because of the infidelity of a wife who absolutely refuses to remain with her husband, added to the difficulties of a divorce palaver and the subsequent reimbursements, and -- a reason closely linked to the one just given -- a passionate love between the two people who are relatives by marriage.

Article II. Property

593x Through marriage, a woman does not become a member of
● 614 her husband's clan. If for example she is born into the Bofétola
clan, she remains all her life bosí Bofétola, "member of the Bofétola
[764] clan," and her corpse has to be buried in her native soil. In case of
divorce and remarriage, the new husband does not refund the bride
price to the former one; he pays the woman's parents, and they re-
imburse the forsaken husband.

593x All the wife's activity, however, is directed toward the good
421 of her husband and his family, and this is so from the time of the
ikulá payment. Her parents have no further rights over their daughter.
All the fruits of her labor are her husband's property.

If she finds objects that have no owner, such as, for example, elephant tusks or buried copper rings of which no one claims ownership, they do not belong to her nor to her family, but exclusively to her husband. If he shares with his parents-in-law, he does so out of affection and respect for them. He has no legal obligation to do so, but propriety and cordial relations impose a certain duty on him.

Profits from the sale of the products of her industry (such as foods for market, mats, salt, pots, baskets) belong not to her but to her husband.

Even whatever she acquires during a visit to her parents, everything she finds while she is with her family, the fish she catches, the caterpillars she gathers in the forest there, all that belong exclusively to her husband.

It sometimes happens that a woman infringes on the husband's
rights in this respect. If he is kind he will generally let her do as she
[577] pleases. Severity on his part would be attributed to a lack of affec-
tion toward his wife or a lack of delicacy toward his parents-in-law,
and he would even be criticized for being stingy (never unjust!), a
more serious criticism than the others from the Nkundó point of view.
[263] Dishonest conduct on the part of a wife, however, may give
rise to incidents, and even to serious ones. That is what happened in
the historic case of Efoloko of Ikengya (Bongíli), who was married to
[578] Mpokú of Imomo. She had gone fishing at home and had given all her fish

Article IV

Relations Between the Wife and Her Family

593x 614 Through marriage, a woman does not enter into her husband's family. She continues to belong to her own clan of origin and continues to submit to the special regulations [284] of her family (bokumo) (1) The bokumo pertaining to parturition is excepted, for because of the child she must observe the bokumo of her husband's clan in this realm.

1. The bokumo are special regulations governing a given clan, particularly prohibitions against partaking of certain foods (animal or vegetable) always or only at certain times. The punishment for a transgression is a kind of itching which covers the whole body. One might think this is totemism, but the idea of kinship to the forbidden being is entirely absent.

593x 574 Although the wife is completely dependent on her husband for everything else -- work, property, etc. -- she remains bound to her own parents by obligations of respect, love, and assistance. She has to visit them from time to time, but too great a frequency in these visits meets with disapproval. It is impossible to give a rule defining the proper number. The answer must be provided by good sense. Sensible people prefer that the wife not make too many of these trips. Even her own parents want this to be so. For repeated attentions of this sort are considered evidence of a lack of love and attachment for her husband.

Women who very faithfully stay in their homes and only rarely visit their parents, sometimes yield in face of the teasing of [626] their companions. For the Nkundɔ́ is very sensitive to spiteful comments of that kind. Among current expressions there is one that has become a popular saying and is sometimes sung during dances:

593x 574 óttswákā liála otswâk'olá, bāfókolaka mbók'ěy'olá la ngom'a nkolé, "If you are married go back to your parents, or you will be taught the way with drums and gongs," that is, "when you are dead." (2)

[764] [644] [534] 2. A woman is buried in her own native clan. Her corpse is transported there to the accompaniment of drums and horns. The lokolé gong announces her death.

593x 602 A married woman may not evade the duty of helping her relatives under special circumstances (pregnancy, illness, serious accidents, death). This obligation [285] is not limited to her mother and father, but extends to all her relatives; the closer the degree of kinship, the stricter the obligation.

Besides, love of family is sufficiently developed so that there is no danger of the woman forgetting herself too much in this realm. [626] And a husband who would like to prevent her from fulfilling these elementary duties would be much criticized by all and should expect a dissolution of the marriage.

593x 574 342 536 It was said above that a husband builds a hut for his wife. His relatives often assist him in this task. But it also happened -- in the past, for colonization has removed the possibility of it -- that the woman's father wanted to build his daughter's house himself or at least to make the pavement out of clay brought from her native land. This act was a demonstration of wealth and politico-social importance as well as proof of fatherly affection. The husband, for his part, was honored to have married the daughter of such an important man and loved her all the more. Thus a number of women say that "they only cooked on ancestral soil." This soil was brought in baskets across distances up to 50 kilometers by Batswa and by men of the woman's clan or village. Her father could do it because of his great influence and regal rewards (bokóndo, verb kónda) were distributed during a feast (nteke) given for the workers and their relatives after the task was completed. This was done for Bompeli, daughter of Bokombe of Litúli (Bombwanja) married to Bonyeme w'enyuka of the Basékā Mbangó (Bonkoso); for Beluka, daughter of

593* Iongo of Bokákyá (Boselo, Bombwanja), married to Bokaa is 'Ifonda
574 of Bowélé; for Mbalaka, daughter of Bolekela wa Imangaiso of the
342 Basékâ Lokuli (Bongílí), married to Mbuli is'ea Wela of Bombóngo
556 w Etefa (Bongale) (1) [286]

[551] 1. She bore the name of Mbálaka (meaning indemnity), because her father had solemnly proclaimed (-békya) and publicly promised that he intended, one day, to place himself in the position of having to pay an indemnity because of his daughter, as proof of his love. Indeed [782] when Mbálaka was married, he killed one of his wives, cut her into pieces, and sent the "meat" to his son-in-law as "the first hen" that his wife would prepare for him. But he did not have to pay [682] the indemnity because the victim's clan ● [614] was too weak to attempt a war; they did not dare to make a claim and, in order to avoid even greater misfortunes, they resigned themselves to this revolting ignominy.

Article V

Relations Between the Husband and His Wife's Family

606 As has already been said, kinship by marriage is called likiló,
607 and relatives by marriage are called bokiló, bakiló. Mbótsoló is a term of respect for very close relatives by marriage (father-in-law, mother-in-law, sometimes brother-in-law or sister-in-law). When there is a considerable age difference between two affinal relatives, the elder one sometimes calls the younger bokilówalé. This happens most frequently when the son-in-law is so young that he can still be considered a child. This term can even be used by an elder brother

595x
192 Qualifying expressions are sometimes added to the name *nkónde*: *éâ boánga*, referring to the *boánga* on which the favorite is seated during the ceremony in which her position is established, and *eâ konjo*, "true." The two terms are used as opposed to a *nkóndé éâ weólí*, whose position is established without any special ceremony, in imitation of a true, officially recognized favorite.

The expression for "making a *nkóndé*" is *ója nkóndé*, "to make a *nkóndé* come out," because she is proclaimed as such before the public gathering. Nowadays one often hears the expression *ténа nkóndé*, a term which is very probably transferred from the *bolúmbú*. (See the next article.) [348]

Article III. The *Bolúmbú*

595x
554 The polygamist who by birth or influence is recognized as the *primus inter pares* of a group of clans and who, to use the Nkundó term, is *joko j'ésé* (1) has the exclusive right to make one of his wives a *bolúmbú*. Therefore, doing so was not, as with a favorite, a matter of wealth and preference, but rather a mark of influence and authority.

In relation to this subject, here is a historical incident showing how an attack on this law resulted in a mysterious punishment, interpreted by the natives as an intervention from beyond the grave for the protection of the ancestral order. The events occurred at Besombó (Bombwanja), in the Bongilá family. Bonkoso w'Ílumwa had married Eyeke of Bokúma and by her had his eldest son

---

● [614] 1. Nowadays one would call him the chief. But actually he was not a chief; he was simply the most respected and influential member of the oligarchy of clan patriarchs. This oligarchy constituted the political administration of the Nkundó, and from time to time an eminent personality gained recognition within it.

595ˣ that no one will see her. She lives in this house in the company
554 of her ebísa, her daughters, some female relatives, or even
another of her husband's wives, who must wait on her, prepare
food for her, etc., and who go out and enter freely. Her husband
also enters at will and spends the usual number of nights with her.
No other man is permitted to enter the enclosure.

During her period of seclusion, the bolɔ́mbɔ́ may not do the slightest work. She does not wash with water, but only with palm oil. She walks only on mats. She is also exempt from mourning for her parents. (Compare with Chapter I, Part 1, Article II.)

When the period of seclusion comes to an end, the husband announces the coming-out feast. There is merrymaking, dancing, and drinking. Mats are spread from the door of [351] the hut of seclusion all the way to the middle of the street. The two men who brought the woman to the hut come again and, taking her by the arms at the entrance to the enclosure, lead her over the mats. The ceremony thus ends without further ado.

The bolɔ́mbɔ́ is henceforth free and acts like any other
woman except for the wearing of furs. She may work, draw
water, cook, travel, visit her parents, etc. But her husband's
[563] honor and his reputation as a rich man require that he give his
[567] bolɔ́mbɔ́ one or several slaves, or Batswa, or -- as is more fre-
quently done -- one or two bibísa, who are supposed to take
[357] care of her housework and thus free the princess.

595ˣ Adultery with her -- after her seclusion -- is more
554 severely punished than misconduct with an ordinary woman as
837 regards the indemnity to be paid. But as a flagrant insult, it is
● 614 considered very serious indeed, not so much as an infringement
or marital rights as an attack on the honor of the whole clan or
group of clans involved. Thus, while adultery with a nkɔ́ndɛ́,
for instance, is a private matter, arousing the husband's jealousy
and anger, misconduct with a bolɔ́mbɔ́ is a public offense. The
whole clan is enraged -- for they believe that their honor has been
attacked, and all the members together press for vengeance for

595x 554 this outrage (nkɛlɛ eleki ɛ́y'olɔ́mbɔ́). It is a kind of national dis-
837 honor. This observation also clearly pinpoints the great differ-
● 614 ence between the favorite and the bolɔ́mbɔ́.

The following custom should be mentioned in this con-
595x nection: if any man, even a stranger or one who comes from a
721 great distance, comes and -- over the fence -- strikes the roof
554 of a bolɔ́mbɔ́'s ilɛkɛ of seclusion with his elefɔ́ (1) as a call to war, the whole village is obliged to take up arms to defend him. All the men [352] accompany him and unite with his family against the enemy clan, whatever the distance may be. The Nkundɔ́ say that the act of touching the bolɔ́mbɔ́'s hut infuriates the entire clan and makes them take up arms without hesitation. (1)

595x 554 One last indication of the social nature of this institution is the fact that the bolɔ́mbɔ́ has the right to sit beside her husband at public gatherings and feasts, a prerogative which she alone of all women possesses. With her is a boy or girl who serves as her "boy" and carries the seat (boánga) on which she sits.

When a bolɔ́mbɔ́ dies her husband may put another in her place. To do so he repeats the ceremony described above. It is called sangoja bolɔ́mbɔ́, "to make succeed to the title of bolɔ́mbɔ́."

As we saw in Chapter I, Part 1, Article II, a man may even make his daughter a bolɔ́mbɔ́.

---

[594] 1. A wooden bell (see Congo, 1935, Vol. 2, p. 366, figs. 4 and 5).

1. Compare the result of a serious offense, whose effect is entirely in the offender's favor, to analogous cases described previously, for example in Chapter III, Article VII; Chapter VI, Article V, 4, Appendix; and below in Chapter VIII, Article II, 3, (2).

846 to be able to nurse the child together." This does not mean that
833 from then on they may have regular sexual relations, for these are not permitted until after the end of seclusion. But if they were to omit the act at this time, they would have to abstain from it until the child is weaned. The Nkundó say that the act is performed "only a little." For many it becomes masturbation; others withdraw before obtaining the effect of the act. In no case may the act reach its natural climax. The reason for this practice is unknown to me. Perhaps it is done in order not to molest the woman while she is in a painful condition.

The next day the ashes in the hearth of the seclusion hut
846 are swept out, and the fire becomes "ordinary"; anyone may use it and eat food prepared on it.

4) The umbilical cord is dried on the bolíkó (a tray or shelf) and then buried at the foot of a young banana tree planted for that purpose, preferably under a bọnkọḿ tree if possible. The ashes and sweepings from the seclusion hut are thrown there. The banana tree is called nkíndá. (1) Its fruit may be eaten only by the child's

[824] 1. This is a generic term used for any banana tree planted for a special purpose (a magical practice, a game, etc.).

[153] grandfather and grandmother. If another person eats it, he will be punished with a headache of a nervous type.

The umbilical cord is always buried in the father's native
846 soil. People who are far from home (laborers for the Whites, etc.)
● 614 preserve the umbilical cords of their children with great care in order to take them back [489] when they return to their village, or send them back when a favorable opportunity arises. The Nkundó hold to this usage tenaciously, because a person whose umbilical cord is not buried in the lands of his paternal clan has no authority in the group. The person involved would meet with the following objection: ntákokúndela lokolɛ́, ntákokundela lọkọkí, óyakúmya ngámo? ɔlɛ̌ nk'eyâya, "The lokolɛ́ was not beaten for you, your

846 umbilical cord was not buried; how dare you boast? You are but a
614 stranger." Therefore this custom constitutes a sort of matriculation
into the family. If anyone wants to be entirely certain of a Nkundó's
clan, he has only to look for the place where his umbilical cord was
buried.

5) The end of seclusion is marked by a few ceremonies.

846 A. A meal. Early in the morning of the day set, the hus-
302 band goes and cuts a bunch of fruit of the palm tree, and the helper
goes and picks manioc leaves (nowadays leaves and fruit collected
the day before are sometimes used). The helper crushes all of this
to make a dish of food. While she cooks it over the fire, she shaves
a little hair off the mother, plucks out one eyebrow, and cuts one
of her nails. Then she does the same to the child. The helper
moves away, and the father comes in. His wife subjects him to
the same treatment, and he reciprocates, doing the same to the
child. The rubbish is simply thrown away without any ceremony.
This practice has no special name; the Nkundó say: báyatɛ́na
bekengo, báyakenga, "They shave each other's heads."

When the vegetables are ready, all the women of the vil-
846 lage are gathered together. A little pit is dug in front of the hut.
A large leaf is placed in it to serve as a dish, and the vegetables
are poured into it. The mother, the helper, and all those assem-
bled eat. Except for a few small boys no representatives of the
stronger sex are present. When the meal is completed, [490] the
leaf that served as a plate and those that served as spoons are buried
in the pit. Today the more advanced of the population use a European
plate and spoons. The meal and the vegetables eaten are called
losanganya, "reunion," because the entire village is united in par-
taking of them, or lofanjola, "dispersion," because it is the prelude
to the end of the bokeka.

B. Then follows the ceremony of separation (-téna bofofó,
or, among the Injóló, bokɛ́kɛ́lɛ́kɛ́. (1) The bofofó is the mid-rib

[796]

---

1. The expression and the ceremony designated by it are used whenever an important matter, such as a trial, etc., is to be terminated.

177 622 category of civil servants. In this manner they would fall under the written law and could be obliged to practice monogamy, whereas now nearly all of the "native chiefs" are precisely the maintainers and promoters of polygamy. If this had /156/ been enforced from the start, then polygamy, instead of spreading, would have virtually disappeared from the native society.

5. Splitting of the Clan

613 After all that has been said before, it must be rather apparent how an autonomous clan can split up and, thereby, form two autonomous clans.

When a clan has expanded too far, its leaders cross over the boundaries of blood relationship, and offenses against the law of exogamy occur. When such offenses are multiplied, further separation is gradually aimed at to make marriages possible. Such a situation between two parts of the same clan, who are striving for "legal autonomy," is called lonkana, a term that signifies that unlawful relations exist between the two. It generally occurs between member groups that have the same male ancestor, but not the same female ancestor—that is, they are issue from different wives of the same founder.

Another cause of splitting is the voluntary or obligatory withdrawal of one of the members. When he establishes himself outside, begets a sizeable progeny, and acquires a patrimony of his own, the relations with his own clan become less frequent; and the separated fraction gradually begins to settle smaller lawsuits, to maintain its own graveyard, to bury the umbilical cords of its children in its own territory, to take on its own name, and to refer to its own founder.

Often also at the source of this estrangement lies the refusal of a certain fraction of the clan to submit to the authority of the clan members.

6. Legal Dependents

613 614 608 Until now we have spoken only of the ethnic clan: of the members who belong to it through descent. They /157/ are the sole bearers of

613 authority (*mpifo*). Each clan can, however, also take in other persons
614 who fall outside the order of authority, but who legally belong to the
608 clan. Along with the real descendants, they make up the legal clan.

These are, in the first place, the wives who have married into the clan, the children brought with them (*mbusola*), and the lawful housekeepers. In addition, there are the clients who have been taken in; then the war prisoners and slaves; and finally the Pygmies. The women married into the clan are naturally separate, as are also the Pygmies who form a completely separate community. The others are gradually treated as children, receive their part in the general responsibility and protection, their place in the court session, etc. Depending on the degree to which they develop in the bosom of the clan which has taken them in, they can constitute a separate group in it, which becomes more and more independent.

7. The Maternal Clan

602 Each Nkundo has a double "fatherland": his *wise* and his *bonyango*.
613 The *bonyango* is the paternal clan of his mother. His mother gave
birth to him there; her blood relations live there and receive him with motherly love and will protect him against all difficulties; he has often passed a large part of his happiest childhood years there; and there he can always find a safe shelter when, for one reason or another, he might lose the paternal clan.

The structure of the maternal clan naturally resembles that of the paternal clan in every way. If we treat it specially here, it is not in order to speak of the form, but only to point out the specific rights that each person has in his maternal clan.

601 Just as all of the brothers and sisters of my father are my "fathers,"
602 so all of the brothers and sisters of my mother are my "mothers."
613 Mother's brother, that is, my maternal uncle, I call *ngompame*,
nyangompame. All the nephews and nieces on the mother's side are my "children." A special tie binds me to the children of the *nkita* of my mother, that is, to the children of the women who was acquired by the maternal clan with the bride price /158/ that had been paid for my mother by my *wise*. Mother is, thus, the *nkolo*, the woman or mistress, of those children who call me their father.

602 As long as I continue to live in my own paternal clan, I have the
613 right to special care and love from the maternal clan. If I cannot find

61 602 another group. According to their relationship to others, groups may be designated as:

- brother, younger or older;
- brother or half brother (descended from various wives of the polygynous ancestor);
- [848] Illegitimate child of the sister which, legally, as the child of the oldest brother or of the father of his mother, belongs to the group of the mother's relatives;
- child of a boy who together with his sister has moved to the unit of his brothers-in-law and has settled there permanently;
- son of a sister, who for some reason has separated from his paternal relatives and has moved in with the group of his mother or of one of his grandmothers.

601 Present-day social relationships are influenced by this variety of kinship relations. The kinship terms which refer to the relationships of the genuine or assumed ancestors to each other are occasionally transferred to the groups.

614 602 621 In this paper we shall describe the Isangi group (12) as an [101] example of hierarchical kinship structure. Isangi is a local group of the type described above (p. 1). Following the custom of the region, I shall refer to it as a "village." Until we have decided which terms are applicable to the various groups, I shall use the letters A to E for the individual ranks of the hierarchical structure. Within this system A shall stand for the smallest and E for the largest units (see Diagram 2).[1]

In addition to the three ranks of Group D in Isangi, there are others in the daughter villages (see Diagram 1). These may also include foreign groups, as, for example, the "Nkundó" group, Liimbu, in Wengá.

12. Müller, Fürstentum [Kingdom], pp. 68 ff., 125, 128 ff.

[1] [See page 6, category 116.—Analyst]

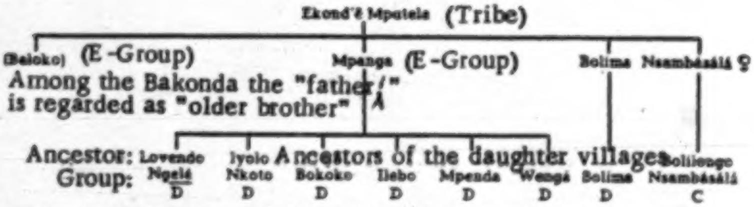
602 All the groups represented on the diagram (Diagram 2)
614 are known by their names to the adults of Isangi. In addition to
621 their regular name, all these groups also have a "drum" name
[552] and an "honorary" name. Only the three Boyeke groups of rank
B have different drum names but no individual group names. The arrangement of groups as found on the diagram does not represent a genealogy. It is based simply on the characteristics and functions of the individual groups [190] which in each case are equal to each other on one rank. Thus, we have here an organizational diagram, not a genealogical table. [Diagrams 1 and 2 appear here.]

The people of Isangi are also well aware of the relationships between the individual groups, but they are not as clearly conscious of the system as it appears in our diagram. They are able to describe the kinship relations between the groups and they can point out which functions are assigned to the individual groups without, however, regarding the groups as equal to one another because they have like functions and without seeing them as part of a system as we do. Thus, our diagram represents a systematization which, by its very nature, does not wholly do justice to reality. Correspondingly, therefore, there is no satisfactory Ekonda social terminology.

[191] [Diagram 3 appears here.] Just as in nonscientific European usage, the terms lack sufficient precision. Furthermore, in principle the nature of the groups between rank A to E and of the still larger units is similar, and as a result all the terms are used almost indiscriminately for large and small units alike.

Usually, the word ikundf (literally, "lap") refers to small
601 units, approximately those of ranks A and B, but it is also used
621 for larger and large units if their relatively close degree of
614 kinship is to be stressed. Thus it approximately corresponds to the meaning of the word "family" as used in nonscientific language. The word ilongo refers both to what in European usage is described as the small family [Kleinfamilie] and also to groups of ranks A and B.

614
621


Ekond'é Mpulela (Tribe)
(Baloko) (E-Group)
Mpanga (E-Group)
Bolima
Nsambásálá ♀
Ancestor: Lovendo Iyolo Ancestors of the daughter villages Bolilongo
Group: Ngelé Nkoto Bokoko Ilebo Mpenda Wengá Bolima Nsambásálá
D D D D D D D C

Among the Bakonda the "father/" is regarded as "older brother" λ

Diagram 1. Genealogy of the Bakonda. Letters below the group names refer to the rank of the respective groups (see Diagram 2).

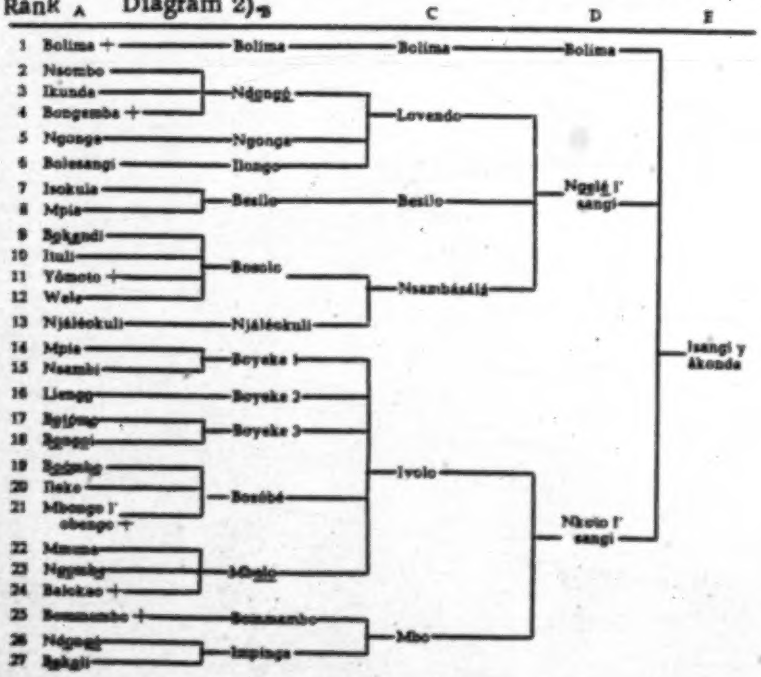

Rank A
B
C
D
E
1 Bolima +
2 Nsombo
3 Ikunda
4 Bongemba +
5 Ngonge
6 Bolesangi
7 Isokula
8 Mpia
9 Bokendi
10 Ituli
11 Yómoto +
12 Wale
13 Njáléokuli
14 Mpia
15 Nsambi
16 Liengo
17 Bojómo
18 Bongoi
19 Bolembo
20 Ileko
21 Mbongo l' obongo +
22 Mmuma
23 Ngombo
24 Balokao +
25 Bommambo +
26 Ndgogi
27 Bakgli
Bolima
Ndgngo
Ngonge
Ilongo
Besilo
Bosolo
Njáléokuli
Boyeka 1
Boyeka 2
Boyeka 3
Bosábá
Mbalo
Bommambo
Impinga
Bolima
Lovendo
Besilo
Nsambásálá
Ivolo
Mbo
Bolima
Ngelé l' sangi
Nkoto l' sangi
Isangi y ákonda

Diagram 2. Kinship Structure of Isangi.

1-27 = Numbering of the A-Groups shown in Diagram 3.

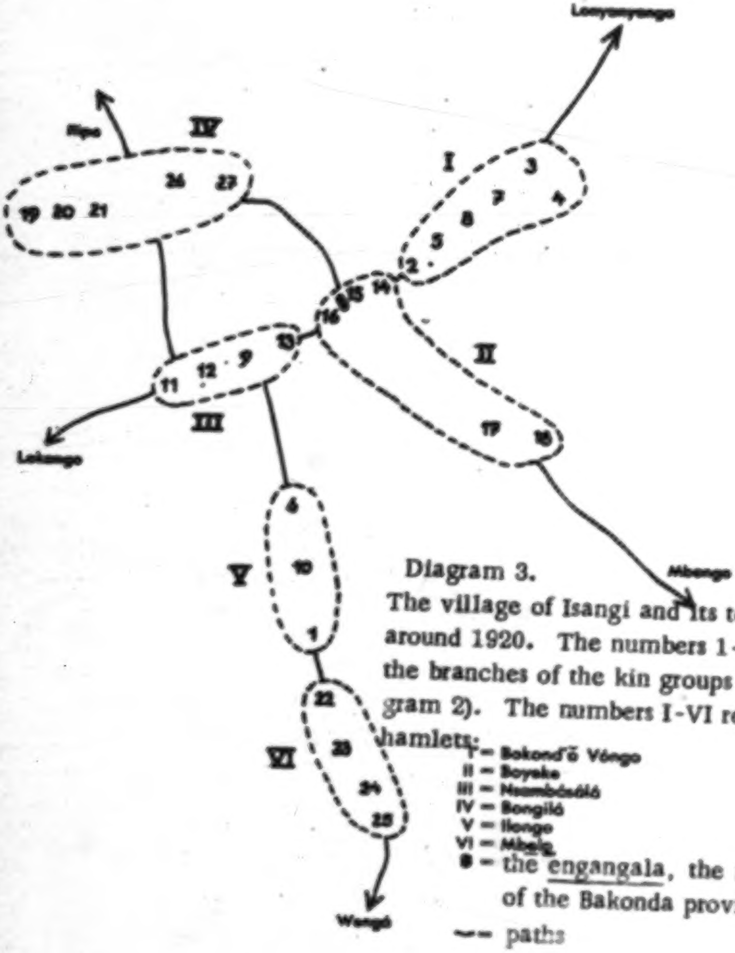
+ = extinct group.

λ[tr. of LONYANYAUGA, L.]

8: Müller--7 E-5 (1951-1954) 1956 FO32 Mongo FO32

Ekonda

621
361
614●



Lonyanyango
Ilipo
IV
I
26 27
19 20 21
3 7 4 8 5 2
16 15 14
13 9 12 11
II
III
17 18
Lokango
6 10 1
V
Mbongo
22 23 24 25
VI
Wangó

Diagram 3.
The village of Isangi and its territory around 1920. The numbers 1-27 denote the branches of the kin groups (see Diagram 2). The numbers I-VI refer to the hamlets:

I = Bokond'ó Vóngo
II = Boyeke
III = Nsambósóló
IV = Bongiló
V = Ilongo
VI = Mbelo
● = the engangala, the meeting place of the Bakonda province
—— paths

601 621 614 Bonsonga and etúká are terms used for kinship groups of ranks B, C, and D, but occasionally they may also refer to [192] the groups listed under A and, in addition, to the local groups which in size approximately correspond to the kinship units mentioned above. Etúká is the term used for the oil palm grove and for a certain kind of termite hill; apparently it is used for local groups more frequently than the term bonsonga.

[571] [535] Another term whose meaning varies is ekíndá. This word designates, first of all, a dance group, a corps de ballet, and also the social unit which sends such a joint dance troupe to dance festivals.

Esɛ́ also has strong local connotations. It is usually identical with what we call a village, but frequently units which are larger or smaller than a village are designated as esɛ́. Very large groups, tribes and even larger units, are called bonanga.

614 As a criterion for placing the individual groups within a certain rank, one or several functions have been chosen in each case. The groups of the individual ranks are described below relative to their functions. On the subject of groups it should be added that in general they do not differ from each other in certain traits. All groups of all ranks are kinship units of patrilineal descent. They consider themselves descendants of one ancestor. No continuous and complete genealogy which can be traced back to the original ancestor is known. The genealogy of the entire group of the Bakonda is shown in Diagram 1.

In Isangi two of the ancestors of the groups of rank D are brothers, the third is the brother of their father. A D-group (Ngelɛ́) includes, in addition, the descendants of an illegitimate child of the paternal sister of the ancestor. These offspring form the C-group, Nsambáálɛ́.

There is a gap between this ancient genealogy and the known ancestors from the recent past. In contrast with that of the neighboring Bokótɛ́ [Bokete] (see, for example, Boelaert, "Les Bongili"), the genealogical memory of the Ekonda is weak. [173] It does not reach back to the ancestor of the group of rank A. In this connection we must take into account the fact that a group

614 splits up only after the death of the ancestor to whom the new groups can be traced back. The descendants of a patriarch split up into the groups of his sons only when these groups have reached the necessary size. Considering the size of even the smallest Ekonda groups this can occur only after several generations. By this time, however, the common patriarch and his sons, the ancestors of the new subgroups, are dead. Thus, at the present time we find a tendency to split in the Ndong'i-mpinga group; the ancestors of the two groups which are now in the process of forming died about 1920. Most probably these two groups, so far as their age relationship to one another is concerned, will not grade themselves according to the relationship of these "tribal ancestors," but according to the relationship of the "patriarchs" under whom the separation takes place. The exact process of such a split of A-groups cannot be established afterwards through questions; it can only be observed on the spot while it is taking place.

In the following chapters we shall describe the groups of the various ranks and their characteristics.

Groups of Rank A

These groups consist of as many as forty persons. In most 563 cases, a group of Batwá-Pygmoids is part of such a group. Having the function of helots, they belong to the A-group of their masters, and this membership is passed on through the male line in the same manner as among their masters. Excepting Pygmoids, the oldest member of the A group is the bomélé bokonda, the "owner of the land"; he is the personification of all authority within the group and its representative in the group's dealings with outsiders. He is the only person who is completely in charge. All members of the group are in a father-son relationship to him [193] even if the younger members -- as counted by generations -- have the rank of father in relation to him. He administers and issues the group's treasury of objects used for buying a bride. He also disposes of the landed property of the group.

614 He represents the A-group in the council of elders of the village
and of the other large units. Since no members of the group
[672] are considered capable of conducting affairs, all the legal
transactions which they undertake are treated as though they had
been sanctioned by the patriarch. To a large extent the members
of the group may represent one another. In the absence of the
elder, a younger member may act as the representative of the
[623] group at council meetings. When the senior member dies, his
function will be taken over by the next oldest member of the
group.

An A-group will split up only through internal conflicts
614 which cannot be bridged or through a large population increase.
602 The newly-formed A-groups continue to maintain a close relationship which, at first, is much closer than among the B-groups
whose A-groups have split much earlier. In the higher ranks
cohesion after the split diminishes only gradually; thus many
gradations develop in the feeling of cohesion. These gradations
could not be even approximately reproduced in a diagram with
any degree of exactitude. There is no formula by which the
split takes place, as there is, for example, among the Tallensi (13)
where it is determined by a certain number of generations.
614 Theoretically the A-groups are "eternal." The A-groups are
596 subdivided into small families. Within the polygynous families
592 nuclear families [Familienkerne] (14) have a semi-independent
position economically. Each wife has her own house. A husband's wives and the wives of his sons have their houses within
the same homestead. As the master of the homestead, the
father has an open shelter where the men spend their time and
[768] hold their meetings. Upon the death of the master of the

---

13. Fortes, The Dynamics of Clanship,
p. 34 f.

14. Thurnwald, Menschliche Gesellschaft,
Vol. 4, p. 12.

614 596 592 [768] homestead, it is deserted by the inhabitants. On the new dwelling site the sons each build their own shelter. In contrast to the groups of the type A-E, the group living within a homestead is finite: its existence ends with the father's death. Only a man whose father (in the European meaning of the term) has died may have a shelter. Thus the homestead community is interposed between the A-group and the small family.

614 To sum up the characteristic features of the A-groups:

Membership determined by male descent; unity of legal power, especially insofar as landed property and inheritance law is concerned the senior has full power; succession by simple seniority; theoretically unlimited existence of the group. The A-groups consist of small families who live together in homesteads under one father in each case.

Groups of Rank B

614 793 There is usually a friendly, neighborly relationship between the A-groups which form part of a B-group. People assist each other to a large extent, and there is joint consultation on most matters. Group B has only one Nkúmú iloki, "master of the hidden power," the priest of the kinship group, who is consulted by all the members of the group. He functions during the magical preparations for the hunt; he is consulted before any important undertaking. During the leave-taking ceremony after a burial, he converses with the deceased, and people turn to him when the ancestors have appeared to them in their dreams to transmit their desires, orders, or other information to the living. He protects the people of his group from the ill will, ndoki, of the dead and the living. The priest of the kinship group is used as the criterion [194] to determine which group of homogeneous A-groups represents a B-group. The priest of the kinship group is descended from a certain one of the related A-groups.

614 554 There is a difference in rank among the A-groups of a B-group -- one group will be regarded as older -- but this is

614 554 only of lesser importance (see below, under local groups). The headman of the B-group is the oldest of the seniors of the related A-groups, that is, the senior of the B-group. He is not, however, fully in charge of affairs like the elder of the A-group; he should rather be seen as princeps inter pares. This, of course, does not affect his position as senior of his own A-group.

614 423 Within a B-group landed property is often still regarded as belonging together, even though fixed boundaries between the territories of the constituent groups may already exist. In general, however, it may be assumed that the other elders will not object if a hunting expedition is extended to their territory, if, under certain circumstances, the soil of their district is used for planting, or if certain wild plants are taken from there for building a house or as raw material for a craftsman. Membership in a B-group is determined by membership in an A-group.

614 885 At this point we shall not enter into a discussion of the genealogical peculiarities which result from the significance of the bride price. We learned of one case of incest which occurred between members of two A-groups which formed a B-group, but we have not heard of anything like that occurring within an A-group. In this connection, however, we do not refer to those acts of incest which are required to make a particularly powerful charm become effective.

Summing up all that is characteristic of B-groups:

614 There is only one priest of the kinship group; cohesion within a B-group is very close, people cooperate extensively, all important matters are decided by the group, even those which, strictly speaking, concern only the constituent A-groups; in this connection, the oldest of the seniors has a somewhat privileged position.

Groups of Rank C

The cohesion within a group of this category is considerably looser, although on this level particularly one can find great differences among the individual groups. For example, the groups Lovendo and Besilo consider themselves much closer

614 to each other than either of these groups with Nsambásɛ́lɛ́ (see Diagram 2). It was for this reason that in my dissertation I divided this rank into two different ranks (kinship subgroups I^o and II^o). (15) Since there are no obvious criteria for the two

15. Müller, Fürstentum, p. 125.

ranks and since such a division is not possible in the other villages, I no longer make such distinctions.

[582] [835] The groups of rank C are the exogamous units of the future. Although marriage is not permitted between the members of different C-groups, sexual relations between them are permitted. This permission corresponds to the lonkana of the Bokótɛ́ (16).

16. Hulstaert, "Mariage," p. 97. f.

Groups of Rank D

614 582 The groups of this category constitute the truly exogamous units. It is true that marriages between "advanced persons" ["evolués"] take place even within rank D, but this practice is still frowned upon by the old people. In Isangi we also find the special stipulation that members of two D-groups, Ngelé and Nkoto, may intermarry, [195] but they may not enter into marriage with members of the D-group, Bolíma. Since in present-day Isangi, Bolíma is extinct, this stipulation only works to the disadvantage of the emigrants in Bolíma w'ási and of the children of sisters in other villages. The Bolíma group is regarded as the father group of Isangi (see Diagram 1); Ngelé is the group of the older brother, Nkoto that of the younger brother. This serves as an explanation for the special position of Bolíma in the exogamous system. It is said that it would not be right for a "father" to marry one of his "children" even if these children are the offspring of such distant generations that they intermarry.

614 582 The exogamy rules of the Ekonda do not only refer to their own, agnatic group, but also to all cognate groups to whom kinship relations can still be traced back, i.e., a span of about five generations.

Groups of Rank E

614 621 It may be assumed that these groups always extend beyond the confines of a village. Those parts of a group who have settled next to each other have their communal meeting place, but even the dispersed fractions of the group may come there to consult. In former times probably only one such group had a nkúmú, a sacred prince who lived in the main village (e.g., Isangi), while the other villages were ruled by the senior. Once the title of nkúmú was also bestowed on persons from other villages, the importance of the E-groups almost completely disappeared. Also, in this category the local group plays a much greater role. Occasionally it even includes dependent [609] villages which have not yet been "paternalized," i.e., which are still regarded as alien. In this connection it should be mentioned that probably all larger local groups tend to reconstitute themselves into kinship groups by reinterpreting the genealogy to suit their purposes. It is certain that the "kinship relation" of many "kinship groups" has been created in this manner. We may dismiss the possibility that groups which are divided from one another by the rule of exogamy will invent a kinship relation so close that a previously possible marriage would be outlawed. Also, the combination of other important functions of the lower ranks resulting from the invention of a closer relationship would run counter to the tendency of progressive differentiation (17).

17. We know through statements of the natives that about one hundred years ago the exogamy limit was lowered to the present level. Before that time only the Lonkâna was permitted among the Ngele, Nkoto, and Bolíma.

●614
621 In general one may assume that local groups will postulate only that kind of kinship relationship which does not necessitate a substantial functional reintegration. For this reason, units above the exogamy limit will easily tend to construe a genealogy which "proves" a kinship relationship. Groups of that type are functionally weak. One can observe processes of this kind both among the group of the Bakonda and among the neighboring E-group, Lonyanyanga. The institution of the nkúmú (see above, p. 14) also appears to have a leveling influence. The privileges of the oldest (and free) group diminish in importance and fall behind the office of nkúmú. The new office is also open to younger and dependent groups.

Sociological Terminology for Kinship Groups

128 Before dealing with the units which are to be regarded as settlement groups, we shall compare the kinship groups of the Ekonda with the sociological ideal types. Keeping in mind the authors mentioned at the beginning, I shall now discuss the various terms used for groups which are applicable to conditions found among the Ekonda. [196]

Family

121
596 The small family is of no importance in the organizational system of the Ekonda. Nevertheless it is very important as the smallest unit of economic life. Each small family is potentially polygynous, but monogynous marriages are more numerous at the present time, especially among the younger generation. In view of this difference between potential and practiced polygyny, it seems advisable to follow Thurnwald in classing the polygamous forms together with the small family and to differentiate its nuclear families (18). In my opinion this approach

18. Vol. 4, p. 12 f.

seems to correspond more closely to its functional importance than Murdock's view, according to which the polygamous family

121
596
the material collected by Kirchhoff (21) and the ancient Roman

21. Kirchhoff, Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, Vol. 63, p. 88 ff., p. 96 ff.

familia would serve as good examples -- a patrilineal large family could be described as a kinship group, living, working, and maintaining a household together, consisting of a husband, his wives, and all his offspring, and splitting into the large families of his sons upon the death of the father.

Kirchhoff defines the large family in the same fashion, yet he takes care to point out that here, in constrast to a kinship group, persons who have married into the group are part of it (22).

22. Kirchhoff, Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, Vol. 63, p. 90.

Murdock's conception of the "extended family" is identical with this interpretation (23).

23. Murdock, Social Structure, p. 24.

On the other hand, in Vol. 2 (p. 22) Thurnwald regards the large family as a unilateral kinship group with persons who have married into it. This group lives in the same place and is governed by a common chief from whom all the members are supposedly descended. The kinship group, in contrast to the large family, may be scattered. [197] Thus, Thurnwald at this point puts other characteristics in the foreground, but the text allows the conclusion that for Thurnwald the dependence on the life of the head of the families and its temporary nature are the essential characteristics of a large family.

596
614
In this sense none of the units described under A-E[1] is a large family. The wives who have married into the group belong to the group of the husband, but they always remain part of their father's group; in case of divorce they return to the

[1] [pages 9-15, category 116.-Analyst]

596 latter group. Another factor which reminds us of the wife's con-
614 tinuing membership in her original group is the connection, never completely severed, between the groups related by marriage, illustrated by the practice of gifts and counter-gifts which are all part of the bride price and the dowry. When she dies, the
[764] wife is buried in the soil of her group. In addition, the group membership of the wife is transferred to the children, although this does not have the same effects in economic and political terms. Matrilineal descent is important in relation to marriage
[611] restrictions, certain avoidance practices which are passed on through the wives, and also certain privileges. Quite a large number of persons has settled permanently in the group of their mother or that of their grandmothers.

The decisive factor that makes the term "large family" unsuitable is the "eternal" character of the A-E groups of the Ekonda. However, the subdivisions of the A-groups which live together in a common homestead (see p. 10) may be regarded as large families in the sense used by Thurnwald, Kirchhoff, and Murdock.

Kinship Group

614 In the definitions of the term "family" quoted above,
121 we already learned something about Thurnwald's concept of a kinship group, but there is an additional reference to the technical term "kinship group" ["Sippe"]" (p. 17 f.) (24):

24. Menschliche Gesellschaft, Vol. 4.

"...A kinship group is defined as a clan (q. v.) which is not politically independent. Usually the loss of independence is caused by the distribution of the people of the clan among the various settlements. A kinship group is held together by the consciousness of being descended from the same ancestors and by their common cult of the ancestors. The kinship group is of special importance for the regulation of marriage (q. v.). -- A kinship group may be divided into kinship subgroups (large

121 kinship group [Grosssippe], small kinship group [Kleinsippe]),
614 or it may have a tendency to split in half. A kinship group or a kinship subgroup may at times have a chief, at times not."

On the term "clan" Thurnwald writes (p. 16) (24):

24. Menschliche Gesellschaft, Vol. 4.

"The word is of Old Irish origin, where it refers to children of common descent, approximately in the sense of a 'large family' (q. v.). We now use it for family agglomerations (see Horde) who have become stabilized, who have a religious substructure through their belief in common ancestors, and who support each other economically and politically. It is advisable to make a distinction between the 'clan' which settles exclusively within one region and which claims this region for itself, thus forming a politically sovereign community, and the splinters of a clan scattered among communities which are independent in their own right, which we designate as 'kinship groups' (q. v.) and which usually are not tied to each other by any organizational framework; their cohesion is simply the result of the ceremonial-religious cult of the ancestors and a certain degree of solidarity. The origin of the clan and kinship group is closely related to the cult of the ancestors which symbolizes descent lines. Membership in a clan or in a kinship group may be reckoned in the male or female lines. Frequently one of the living family heads represents this family agglomeration which is, so to speak, [198] 'crystallized.' In this respect it differs from familial structures which become extinct upon the death of the persons by whom they were founded. In a clan or a kinship group the families succeeding each other are permanently represented (see Family, Caste, State)."

We may state that a common feature of both forms is that we are dealing here with purely unilateral units which are tied to each other by ancestor worship (this ancestor worship may be -- in many cases, it will be -- absent in the large family as described above). If we disregard the attempt inherent in both

121 definitions to present a theory of development, the differentia-
114 tion between the two terms appeas to me to be very useful, and this seems particularly true if we accept the first definition of clan given by Thurnwald and regard the second as completely irrelevant for our present purposes.

It is true that our A-group lives in a certain district
● 614 which it claims for itself as its own "province," but it is never-
621 theless difficult to describe this district as a politically sovereign community. A political nature could rather be attributed to those groups which, up to now, we have not described at all, i.e., the settlement communities. Proceeding further, the A-group is integrated into the B-group, the B-group into the C-group, thus forming an endless chain; among those tribes who have a greater degree of genealogical consciousness than the Ekonda -- for example, the neighboring Bongili (25) -- the hierarchy of groups ends with mankind, the hierarchy of ancestors with God.

Thurnwald emphasizes this ranked structure, especially
121 in discussing the kinship group. Kirchhoff, however, fails to
614 deal with the problem of the kinship group in a manner which would be of value to us in differentiating between kinship group and clan. Dealing with the organizational structure of the peoples he discussed, he naturally was more interested in defining the border between large family and kinship group. Lowie (26) only discusses the kinship group, "sib," calling it the "'clan' of British anthropologists", (p. 105) or "clans," if patrilineal, and "gentes," if matrilineal, "of most American anthropologists." The "ad infinitum" (p. 106) is also stressed by him in relation to the kinship group. Lowie also admits the possibility of subdivision with respect to his "sib," and consequently he even includes in the kinship group such forms as the "moieties," which according to Thurnwald's definition are still part of it, but which in his view

---

25. Boelaert, "Les Bongili."

26. Primitive Society.

614 121 and in general ethnological usage are units of a special type. Thus Lowie's and Thurnwald's views correspond to a large extent.

Murdock (27) clearly differentiates between a kinship group and a "lineage." In his view a lineage consists of a group of individuals who are able to trace their descent to a common ancestor, which for him in the majority of cases is only the unilateral "stem" [Stamm] of a large family, excluding those who have married into the group, but including the members who have married out.

Murdock's and Thurnwald's concepts of the kinship group are identical. On the other hand, Murdock differs in his definition of the clan (28).

Clan

618 614 121 Murdock regards the patrilineal clan as a local group which consists of the stem of a kinship group and which incorporates the wives of its members but excludes daughters who marry. As an example he mentioned the "groups" which in our society are connected by the same family name. If the group of persons bearing the birth-name "Wolf" in common functioned as a group of relatives, it would [199] be a Wolf kinship group, but those persons who actually call themselves "Wolf," i.e., the Messrs. Wolf with their wives, sons, unmarried sisters, and daughters, would constitute a Wolf clan (assuming, of course, that this group really functions). This concept of a clan is new. Even Murdock does not consider this definition very satisfactory and invites better suggestions. According to Murdock, the clan is a unit of eminent importance; terminologically it has not been possible so far to differentiate it from the kinship group. It is irrelevant in this connection whether the term clan is applicable to this

---

27. Social Structure, p. 45 ff.

28. Social Structure, p. 65 ff., especially p. 69 f.

614 618 121 social group. It is true that the "Murdock clan" also exists among the Ekonda on all the lower ranks, but only as a functional unit which, like the large family and small family, is not really regarded as a group by the Ekonda. Among the Ekonda the feeling of cohesion between the indigenous group and those who have married into it has its basis not so much in the groups of relatives as described above, but rather in the local group of the type discussed further below.

614 The units which we described in the first part of this study correspond neither to the definition of Thurnwald nor to that of Murdock as regards the term clan. Our groups differ from the clan as described by Thurnwald by their hierarchical structure over which functions of authority are distributed. An added factor is that Thurnwald in the Lehrbuch (29) wants to define the difference between clan and kinship group by size and by ascribing to the former the element of political power. The only kinship group of the Ekonda which possesses strong authority, however, is the smallest, the one of rank A. If we let ourselves be guided by the criterion of authority, we would have to regard the smallest group (rank A) as a clan. Using the criterion of size, however, we would have to regard one of the groups of ranks D or E as a clan. Hence this term is unsuitable.

For the above reasons I have used the term "kinship group" [Sippe] for the groups of all ranks. With respect to the E-groups one might even speak of a subtribe [Unterstamm], but it should be pointed out that as far as the Ekonda are concerned all the groups mentioned above, including the tribes [Stämme] are groups or relatives of the same type, i.e., are "kinship groups."

For the purpose of differentiating between the kinship groups of the various ranks I have used the terms:

nuclear kinship group [Kernsippe] for groups of rank A;
small kinship group [Kleinsippe] for groups of rank B;

---

29. Thurnwald: in Preuss, Lehrbuch, p. 259 f.

614 kinship subgroup [Untersippe] for groups of rank C;
kinship group [Sippe] for groups of rank D (the exogamous units);
large kinship group [Grossippe] for groups of rank E.

Local Organization

361 621 178 The second diagram[1] shows the settlement pattern of the Isangi group in its old settlement area up to 1949. At this time Isangi was relocated near the highway. Only two of the nuclear kinship groups of Isangi can lay claim to territory reaching far enough toward the east as to extend beyond the new highway. Thus, the resettlement process has led to a complete change of the settlement pattern. However, the functions of the settlement communities have not yet been adapted to the new settlement. At present the inhabitants are still so engaged in speculation about the possibility of a return to their own old territory that they have not yet reformed their village organization.

621 614 We observe that the village is divided into six settlement communities (30), each of which consists only of the members of one of the two kinship groups of Isangi. [200] We find that only the group of the father, which formerly was a kinship group in its own right, is attached to one settlement community of the kinship group Ngelé. Incidentally, we might point out that the names of the two kinship groups, Ngelé and Nkoto, mean "down the river" and "up the river." The older group is called "down the river" since in ngelé the river is large and wide. We come across this honorary term for the older group in some other villages although there is not always an "up-river" group. No corresponding settlement pattern can be found.

614 621 202 624 The degree of cohesion among the constituent kinship groups in settlement community I is so strong that the entire community has a communal bokendi, a communal messenger.

30. See Diagram 3.

[1] [page 7, category 116.—Analyst]

614
621 It is the task of the messengers to transmit all important mes-
202 sages to the other groups in accordance with a precise plan;
624 this is particularly true regarding the invitations to the meetings
of the village council with the nkúmú. At the same time they
inform the other groups as to the program of the meeting. The
first messenger calls on the messenger of the other community;
the old men are gathered at the latter's house in order to re-
ceive and to discuss the message. The messenger of this com-
munity, in turn, departs for the next in line. As a result of
this practice the messenger and his home became one of the
centers of social life.

621 The same uniformity is found in community II. Here
614 we can also see the engangala, the meeting place of the village
361 Isangi and of its branch villages. The meeting place is an open
623 space in which stands a short tree with a broad crown. The rep-
resentatives of the several villages gather in the shade of this
tree since one of the open men's houses could not accommodate
all of them. The senior of the nuclear kinship groups Mpia
(No. 14), Nsambi (No. 15), and Liengo (No. 16) has his house
on this spot which is situated on the border of the territory be-
longing to these three groups. The elder of Mpia, however, is
the messenger for the hamlet of Boyeke; he may of course be
identical with the "elder on the engangala."

614 Cohesion within the third settlement community was also
621 so strong that it employs only one messenger. The kinship sub-
group Nsambɔ́sɔ́lɔ́ which is concentrated in this hamlet is said to
consist of the descendants of an illegitimate child of the daughter
of the village founder (see Diagram 1). As is the case in many
[782] other villages, it is therefore entrusted with the office of the
[624] botɛ́ni, who carries out the sacrifice of human beings and ani-
mals on the proper occasions.

The three communities just described are relatively
614 homogeneous groups; the three following ones are quite hetero-
621 geneous. The two groups of hamlet IV belong to the kinship sub-
624 groups Iyolo and Mbo. In contrast to the kinship subgroups Lovendo
202 and Besilo, they regard themselves as sufficiently different from

614 621 624 202 each other to employ their own messengers. When the messenger of settlement II arrives here, he first calls on the messenger of the nuclear kinship group Bosɔ́bɛ́ (No. 19) and then to Impínga (No. 26). The messenger from Bosɔ́bɛ́ calls on his relatives in settlement VI, who are the nuclear kinship group Mbelo-Mmuna (No. 22), while the messenger from Impínga-Ndongɔ̃ formerly had to call on the group Bommambo which is now extinct.

Settlement V consisted of three different groups. Bolíma, the group of the father, had its own messenger; however, he only received the messages without having to pass them on, which is also the case with all these last groups of the village. Both neighbors had their own messenger. The messenger from settlement I called on the nuclear kinship group Bolesangi, his relatives; the messenger from settlement III went to his relatives of the nuclear kinship group Ituli.

There were also two messengers in the last hamlet, but reports on this subject are insufficient since the nuclear kinship group Bommambo has been extinct for a long time.

178 614 621 535 [161] All the settlements just mentioned have a common characteristic: formerly, at important dance festivals, their young men performed together in one joint *corps de ballet*. The population was decimated as a result of the rigors of [201] the occupation period and also as a result of the population movement into the cities. Consequently, there are not enough young people any more, and I with II, III with IV, and V with VI act together. Thus, in each case we find Ngelɛ́ and Nkoto united in one ballet. Although these groups have also been scattered [361] as a result of the new settlement pattern (next to the highway), the old organizational structure has been preserved, and the young people do not hesitate to walk the long distance to the practice field every day so they can dance in the old groupings.

621 624 622 All of Isangi, all three kinship groups, have one common village chief, the Nkúmũ, with an *iyolo nsíka* who gets the meetings started, and a village court with its judges. There are other groups which correspond to Isangi (31), but have more than one

---

31. See Müller, *Fürstentum*, pp. 73 ff., 76 ff., 133 f.

621 nkúmú. They, too, however, have only one man who opens a
624 meeting and one investigating judge. Only one of the nkúmú
622 has the function of judge. Consequently, we may say that even
if the office is divided, the group still forms a unit as far as
jurisdiction and political organization are concerned.

● 614 Among these groups we usually can observe a balanced
system of distribution as far as titles and offices are concerned.
621 It may either be predominantly democratic, as in Isangi, so
622 that all groups may lay claim to titles and offices, or it may be
624 oligarchic, as in Mbanga, where all power is vested in the oldest group of sons. In most cases, oligarchical groups tend to disintegrate; the younger groups attempt to free themselves from the rule. Democratic villages usually have a greater degree of cohesion.

In Isangi the small kinship groups of Ndongó (Nos. 2-4), Ngonga (No. 5), and Boyeke (Nos. 14-18) formerly had the privilege of furnishing the nkúmú. This practice has been discarded, and the honor is now rotated among the six local groups of the village. Only the small kinship groups of the Bolíma, Besilo, and Njálóokuli are excluded.

The six settlement communities of Isangi and similar
621 groupings found in other villages are parts of a village which
614 in my opinion are best described by the term hamlet [Weiler].

These are units which are predominantly intentional in nature. In spite of their functional weakness, they have survived even in the new settlement although they may not dwell together in a block. As a result of reintegration, they have lost their function as conscription district for the dancing groups in Isangi (see p. 29), but even at the present time they still represent the most important grouping in Isangi; we were aware of it before identifying any of the kinship groups. It is expected that they will lose their importance if Isangi does not return to its original site. By nature less closely connected with the or-
[562] ganization of the village of their husbands, the women have become the point of departure for the new order of things (e.g., for dance groups) which fulfills the requirements of the new settlement conditions.

614 Each hamlet includes one or several message districts.
621 Even at the time of the old settlement pattern the messenger
624 system was determined by the hierarchical structure and not
[202] at all by considerations of what was most practical (for example, the shortest route). Consequently this conservative institution of the conservative old men has not been affected at all by the relocation.

The villages are the communities of jurisdiction and of political life. Usually a nkúmú, presides over the meetings. If a village has several nkúmú, one of whom may be the judge or all may preside together, I have used the term "part of a village" [Dorfteil] for the district from which each nkúmú originates.

Those areas which have a special meeting place are here
361 referred to as a "province" [Gau]. The meeting place lies
621 within the territory of the oldest or second-oldest kinship group.
178 The practical importance of this institution for the entire province is minimal, but the two meeting places [202] which we discovered still constituted, until a short time ago, important social centers for the duplicate villages forming the administrative centers of the respective provinces. As a result of the relocation, the meeting places have now lost their function completely.

000 I hope that this paper has added new material to the discussion on the subject of ethno-sociological terminology, and that it will stimulate criticism and a new discussion of this important subject.

101
114
[218] The Nkundo [Nkundu], or Mongo, are an important ethnic group of the central basin of the Belgian Congo. They are patriarchal (1). I lived among their west-central tribes for 20 years.

614
● We call a clan, in the ethnic sense, the group of paternal blood relatives who have an autonomous territory in common. This resembles closely what Anglo-Saxon researchers like to call a "lineage" (2).

I. Wise

601
614
A Nkundo calls his own clan his wise, from the word ise which means "father." My wise thus includes:

1. My paternal grandfather and his brothers and sisters who are called nkoko (pl., bankoko), "grandfather, grandmother."
2. The sons of my male bankoko, including my own father, all of whom are my "fathers" (ise; pl., baise).

The sisters of my "fathers" are my "female fathers" (isomoto, composed of isé and bomoto, "woman").

3. The sons of my "fathers" are my older brothers (botomolo; pl., batomolo) and younger brothers (bokune; pl., bakune). The daughters of my "fathers" are my sisters (nkâna; pl., bankâna).

---

1. The rules and many details of the classificatory system of the Nkundo have already been set forth in Le Mariage des Nkundo by Father G. Hulstaert (Belgian Royal Colonial Institute, 1938).

2. The quotations in this article are from The Pattern of Hera Kinship, by J. F. Holleman (Capetown University Press, for Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1949).

601 614 The children of my "female fathers" do not belong to my clan.

4. Like my children, the children of my older and younger brothers are my "children" (bona; pl., bana). The Nkundo does not have any special terms for "son" and "daughter." He simply says "male child" and "female child."

5. The children of my "sons" are my grandchildren (bonkana; pl., bankana).

6. The children of these male grandchildren are my great grandchildren (bonkanola; pl., bankanola).

II. Bonyango

The mother's clan is called bonyango, from the word nyango, "mother," and includes:

1. The mother's father and his brothers, who are also nkoko.

2. Their daughters, including my own mother, who are "mothers" (nyango; pl., banyango). The brothers of my "mothers" are my "male mothers" (nyangompame; pl., ba-).

3. The sons and daughters of my "male mothers," who are thus of my generation in our sense but who, to the Nkundo, are my "children," since to them I am legally identified with my mother and therefore I am their "male mother." This explains [602] the unusual and privileged position which I hold in my mother's clan.

4. The children of my "children" are my "grandchildren." [219] [Table 1 appears here.] [220]

III. Bokanga and Banankana

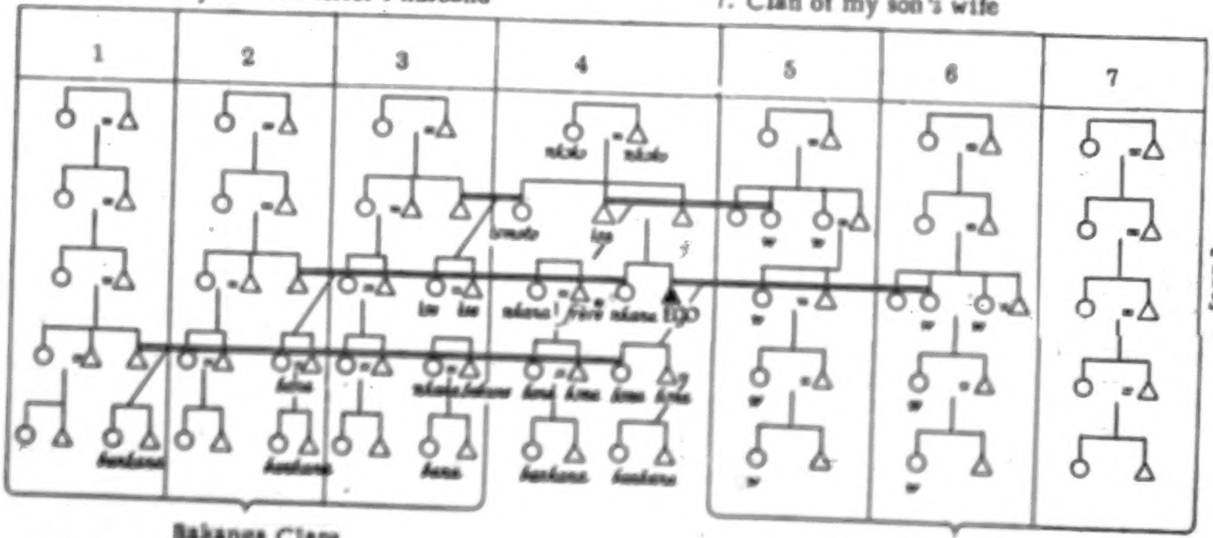
601 602 A Nkundo has other blood relatives scattered among the clans who have married a woman of his own clan, be it a "female father," a sister, or a daughter. A Nkundo calls all the unrelated members of these clans bokanga. The related members, including children born to the women of his clan, he calls impersonally sisters' children, "children of a sister of the clan" (bonankana; pl.,

[text continues on page 4]

Table 1

Relatives and Affinals through the Paternal Clan

1. Clan of my daughter's husband
2. Clan of my sister's husband
3. Clan of my father's sister's husband
4. My own clan
5. Clan of my father's brother's wife
6. Clan of my wife
7. Clan of my son's wife



Bakanga Clan
All those undesignated = bakanga

[*frère = brother in French]

Bakiló Clan
All those undesignated = bakiló

w = wali (wife)

121 614 602 in its relations to another lineage as a whole" (Holleman, op. cit., p. 9). The author adds, "the unity of the lineage may be broken by a division into affines and cognatic, each with their distinctive terminology, in which the cognatic section is one 'generation' lower than the affinal section" (p. 5.).

121 614 602 601 Just as we speak of a mother society or a sister society, so the Nkundo can also consider an affinal clan as a moral person and speak of his mother's clan as of his mother, of a bokanga clan, of a bokilo clan. I do not think that the term bokanga or bokilo implies an idea of generation when it is applied to an individual, any more than does the French term "parent-in-law," or member of my family-in-law. The Nkundo would certainly not admit what the author cited here writes [221] [Table 2 appears here.] [222] about the Hera: "in inter-lineage relations, ... once the relationship between Ego and any cognatic relative is determined, all the cognates of the same lineage as that relative will bear the same degree of kinship as himself to Ego, regardless of the differences in generation . . . between themselves or as compared with Ego" (p. 5.).

The second rule would be that the clan which provides us a wife (bokilo clan of the Nkundo) is considered our "father," and thus the clan which receives a wife from our clan would be considered a "son." Moreover, among the Nkundo is understood: "We have given you our daughter as a wife, so you are our son." But also implied is: "We have enriched you by our marriage payment, and our children are your "fathers." These ideas, however, are not reflected in the terminology between affinals. Moreover, the fact that the Nkundo readily uses the term bokilo for his bokanga is significant.

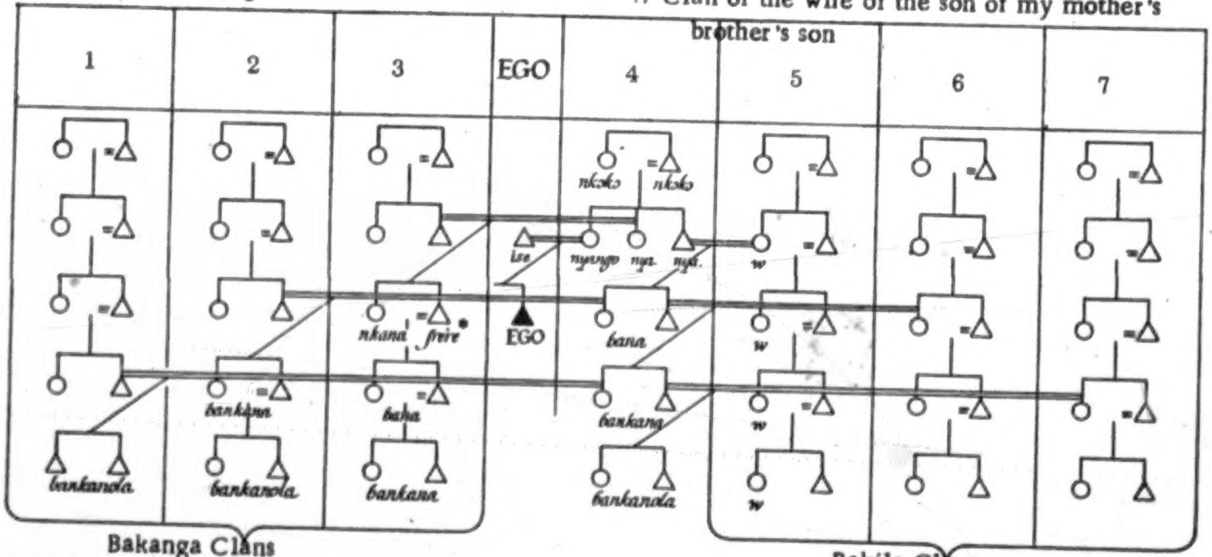
Third rule: In lineages directly related to Ego's lineage, "the female line seems to be potentially one 'generation' lower than the agnatic male line" (p. 11). The author tells us that: "This duality is even revealed in agnatic relations . . . Ego calls his . . . father's sister either vatete (father's sister) or hanzwadzi (sister)." Thus, the women of directly related clans would be considered to belong to a lower generation than the men.

[Text continues on page 7]

Table 2

Relatives and Affinals through the Paternal Clan

1. Clan of the husband of the daughter of my mother's brother's son
2. Clan of the husband of my mother's brother's daughter
3. Clan of my mother's sister's husband
4. My mother's clan
5. Clan of my mother's brother's wife
6. Clan of the wife of my mother's brother's son
7. Clan of the wife of the son of my mother's brother's son


1
2
3
EGO
4
5
6
7
nkɔkɔ
nkɔkɔ
ise
nyango
nya.
nya.
w
nkana
frère*
EGO
bana
w
bankana
baha
bankana
w
bankanola
bankanola
bankana
bankanda
w

Bakanga Clans
All those undesignated = bakanga

[*frère = brother in French]

Bakilo Clans
All those undesignated = bakiló

w = wali (wife)

121 It must be stated that the tables of the bakanga clans pre-
602 sented by the author do not reflect this rule, since all members
614 of these clans not related by blood, males as well as females,
601 are designated as vakwasha = children-in-law. In the bakilo
clans the rule seems to be founded on the Hera idea (according
to the interpretation of the author) that all the women of my
wife's clan are my "wives," no matter what their generation
or age. This rule is not applicable to the Nkundo either in ideas
or terminology.

There is still the fourth rule which the author quoted here uses often but does not interpret in his tables where it is completely opposed to the second rule: the child is legally identified with its mother. According to the second rule, the child of my father's sister would be my grandchild, and at the same time, according to the fourth rule, it would be my "father."

For the Nkundo, the fourth rule explains how this child is my "father," while the child of my mother's brother is my "child."

One may thus conclude that two rules explain the details of the classificatory system of the Nkundo:

1. In clans which have given a wife to our clan, all the women who are legally younger sisters of this wife, exclusively, are "wives" of all the men, exclusively, who are legally younger brothers of the husband.

2. In clans which have received a wife from our clan, the children born of this wife are identified with their mother by the children of this wife's brothers.

614 121 and in general ethnological usage are units of a special type. Thus Lowie's and Thurnwald's views correspond to a large extent.

Murdock (27) clearly differentiates between a kinship group and a "lineage." In his view a lineage consists of a group of individuals who are able to trace their descent to a common ancestor, which for him in the majority of cases is only the unilateral "stem" [Stamm] of a large family, excluding those who have married into the group, but including the members who have married out.

Murdock's and Thurnwald's concepts of the kinship group are identical. On the other hand, Murdock differs in his definition of the clan (28).

Clan

● 618 614 121 Murdock regards the patrilineal clan as a local group which consists of the stem of a kinship group and which incorporates the wives of its members but excludes daughters who marry. As an example he mentioned the "groups" which in our society are connected by the same family name. If the group of persons bearing the birth-name "Wolf" in common functioned as a group of relatives, it would [199] be a Wolf kinship group, but those persons who actually call themselves "Wolf," i.e., the Messrs. Wolf with their wives, sons, unmarried sisters, and daughters, would constitute a Wolf clan (assuming, of course, that this group really functions). This concept of a clan is new. Even Murdock does not consider this definition very satisfactory and invites better suggestions. According to Murdock, the clan is a unit of eminent importance; terminologically it has not been possible so far to differentiate it from the kinship group. It is irrelevant in this connection whether the term clan is applicable to this

27. Social Structure, p. 45 ff.

28. Social Structure, p. 65 ff., especially p. 69 f.

614 618 121 social group. It is true that the "Murdock clan" also exists among the Ekonda on all the lower ranks, but only as a functional unit which, like the large family and small family, is not really regarded as a group by the Ekonda. Among the Ekonda the feeling of cohesion between the indigenous group and those who have married into it has its basis not so much in the groups of relatives as described above, but rather in the local group of the type discussed further below.

614 The units which we described in the first part of this study correspond neither to the definition of Thurnwald nor to that of Murdock as regards the term clan. Our groups differ from the clan as described by Thurnwald by their hierarchical structure over which functions of authority are distributed. An added factor is that Thurnwald in the Lehrbuch (29) wants to define the difference between clan and kinship group by size and by ascribing to the former the element of political power. The only kinship group of the Ekonda which possesses strong authority, however, is the smallest, the one of rank A. If we let ourselves be guided by the criterion of authority, we would have to regard the smallest group (rank A) as a clan. Using the criterion of size, however, we would have to regard one of the groups of ranks D or E as a clan. Hence this term is unsuitable.

For the above reasons I have used the term "kinship group" [Sippe] for the groups of all ranks. With respect to the E-groups one might even speak of a subtribe [Unterstamm], but it should be pointed out that as far as the Ekonda are concerned all the groups mentioned above, including the tribes [Stämme] are groups or relatives of the same type, i.e., are "kinship groups."

For the purpose of differentiating between the kinship groups of the various ranks I have used the terms:

nuclear kinship group [Kernsippe] for groups of rank A;
small kinship group [Kleinsippe] for groups of rank B;

---

29. Thurnwald: in Preuss, Lehrbuch, p. 259 f.

101
563
among the Elángá beyond the Tshuapa. All of them are beyond the scope of this study. The Bombwanja are divided into Basuné and Bonkoso, and the Boeńdé are considered their bónankáná (sister's son).

Bombwanja were originally Mbólé, for certain words and idioms in their dialect are reminiscent of the Lombólé.

Let us briefly enumerate the other tribes -- "pure" Nkundó -- who form the subject of this study:

101
619
1. The Injóló, "sister's son" (bonankáná) of the Ntómbá and the Bolénge who live beyond the Boloko. They are divided into three groups [9] -- Engónjó, Wesé, and Ngombe, (1) each of which comprises a subdistrict [sous-chefferie] for administrative purposes. A small segment is to be found outside the area under discussion, between the Boloko and Coq. (2)

1. West of their territory are to be found the remains of a group of former inhabitants of the area, whom the present inhabitants call Tompoko (or Basékà Bofáka l'Eléké) but who are completely unknown to me.

2. The southern Injóló are often called Imoma.

2. The Boángí (and their subgroup, the Besombó), related to the Bokála of the Losanganya region. (3)

[114]
3. On the ethnographic map of the Belgian Congo prepared and published by Dr. J. Maes, the territory of the Boangi is marked with the name "Bokuala." There is no tribe or village by that name. Unless an insulting and humiliating nickname (bokwala, "slave") is involved, the name may result from an erroneous use of the name of the present chief of the Boangi, Bokwála.

101
619

3. The Ionda, related to the Bonyanga living north of the Tshuapa.

4. The Wǎngatá-Ntómbá, of whom one group is settled near Igende at the junction of the Tshuapa and the Momboyo, and another on the Jwalé. Other parts of this tribe may be found near Coquilhatville (district [chefferie] of the "Tumba"), near Bokote (Ike̱ngo̱ district), and at the middle section of the Luilaka, between Waka and Bonkoto (Nkundê̱ngo̱lo̱, or Wafanya and "Tumba"). (4)

> 4. At the present time it is impossible to determine the exact relationship between the Ntómbá and the Wǎngatá. In general the latter are treated as a subdivision of the Ntómbá, together with the Inganda and the Ike̱ngo̱. Moreover, we do not know yet whether these Ntómbá are related to other tribes bearing the same name which are frequently encountered (on the Lopori, in the vicinity of Lake Tumba, and Lake Leopold II, among the Bakutu, etc.), or whether these are no more than groups bearing the same name. It should be noted that on the map previously mentioned, the Wǎngatá are placed much too far north; actually they are all to be found south of the Ruki.

5. The Bakáala, who seem to be more or less related to the Wǎngatá.

6. The Bonkoso.

7. The three sister tribes of the Bongíli, the Bombomba, and the Lifumba (the Beloko are a subtribe of the latter). [10]

8. The village of Bomángola, wedged in among the Lifumda. This village contains no more than thirty taxpayers but since it belongs to the Nso̱ngó̱, the oldest of all Nkundó-Mó̱ngo̱ groups, it is considered as a separate district. (1)

> 1. Their primacy has always been recognized and respected by the Lifumba.

101
619 9. The Bongale. Three large villages belonging to this group are to be found in the territory under discussion. In order of their size they are: Bongale wǎ Botɔ́lɔ́ (among the Lifumba, between the Bonsɔ́mbɛ́, Lolɛ́ma and Saási rivers), Bongale wǎ Ilinga (among the Bakáalá, near Ikɛ́ngɛ́), and Bongale wǎ Bosongɔ́ (among the Bonkoso, [569] near Bempumba). The difference between their rules of exogamy and those of the other tribes confirms the view that the Bongale are not true Nkundɔ́. (2)

2. See Chapter V, Article III. There are several other small Bongale groups, but I do not know whether they are related to those mentioned above. Among them are those living near Bonyeka (Busira) among the Boángi (Bokála, Boɛ́njola). They may be descended from different ancestors who all bore the name Ngale. The same name may indicate an identical origin, but it may also be derived from different individuals whose names were the same. This statement is generally applicable.

The tribes living between the Jwalɛ́ and the Boloko, with whom the Bolɛ́ngɛ́ and the Ntɔ́mbá between the Congo and the Boloko are sometimes classified, are grouped under the general name of Ilángá by the Boángí, Injɔlɔ́, and Elángá. (3)

[114] 3. The Bokele tribe listed on the above-mentioned map does not exist. Could this error be due to an incorrect extension of the name of a Boloki village near Bokúma which is called Bokɛ́lɛ́?

The Nkundɔ́-Mɔngo came from the north or the northeast. (4)

[825] 4. The following note may be of interest: The stories and songs of the Nkundɔ́ indicate a

101
619
[825] recollection of an animal of the leopard family which they call *bokonga*. Their description of it corresponds to the lion. Some soldiers and other expatriates, who were also young people, shown representations of a lion immediately identified it with their *bokonga*.

The groups under discussion here lived for a time on the banks of the Luwo (Maringa) and the [11] upper Ikelemba, (1) then under pressure from other Móngo tribes, they crossed the Tshuapa-Ruki. They evicted the Ekonda and settled in their present location. This exodus must have taken place a fairly long time ago; it is impossible to determine the date and difficult to make any estimates. In any case it must have occurred 150 to 200 years ago.

241 These peoples are primarily farmers; they grow chiefly bananas, manioc, yams, *colocasia* [taro], sweet potatoes, sugar cane, and various vegetables and condiments. The food crops they grow, together with what they gather and the Elaeis palm trees provide them with a continuous and abundant food supply, as long as elephants do [231] not interfere. Their domestic animals include chickens, goats, and 224 dogs. (2) Hunting is a pleasant change of activity rather than an

[173] 1. It appears that between the Ikelemba and its tributary the Losɛ́lifa, there is still a *bonkom* tree called w'āmenga (of bald heads) under which, according to tradition, the ancestors held their councils. Nearby there is a *bosɛ́ɛ́* whose fruits never ripen.

[177] 2. Ducks have been introduced fairly recently, but they were known long before colonial times. They came from the south. Sheep have been introduced only in the last few decades, and they are found only in a few villages on the river banks in the lowlands.

304
582 wishing to commit myself on the reason for this custom, it is a fact that a Nkundó woman will refuse to marry a man who has not been circumcised. Consequently, all the natives want to undergo this operation. That is the reply given by the natives when we asked about the reason for circumcision. When we pushed the inquiry further, they added that the women abhor the deposits that form under the foreskin. I mention this explanation for what it's worth. Nevertheless, this may really be the reason that impels them.

In any case circumcision would seem to have no religious or initiatory significance.

304
832

3. Tattooing

Two kinds of tattoos exist among the Nkundó: purely ornamental tattoos and sexual tattoos. (2) The latter are to be found only on women. The [67] designs are located on portions of the body surrounding the sex organs and even on the outside of the latter.

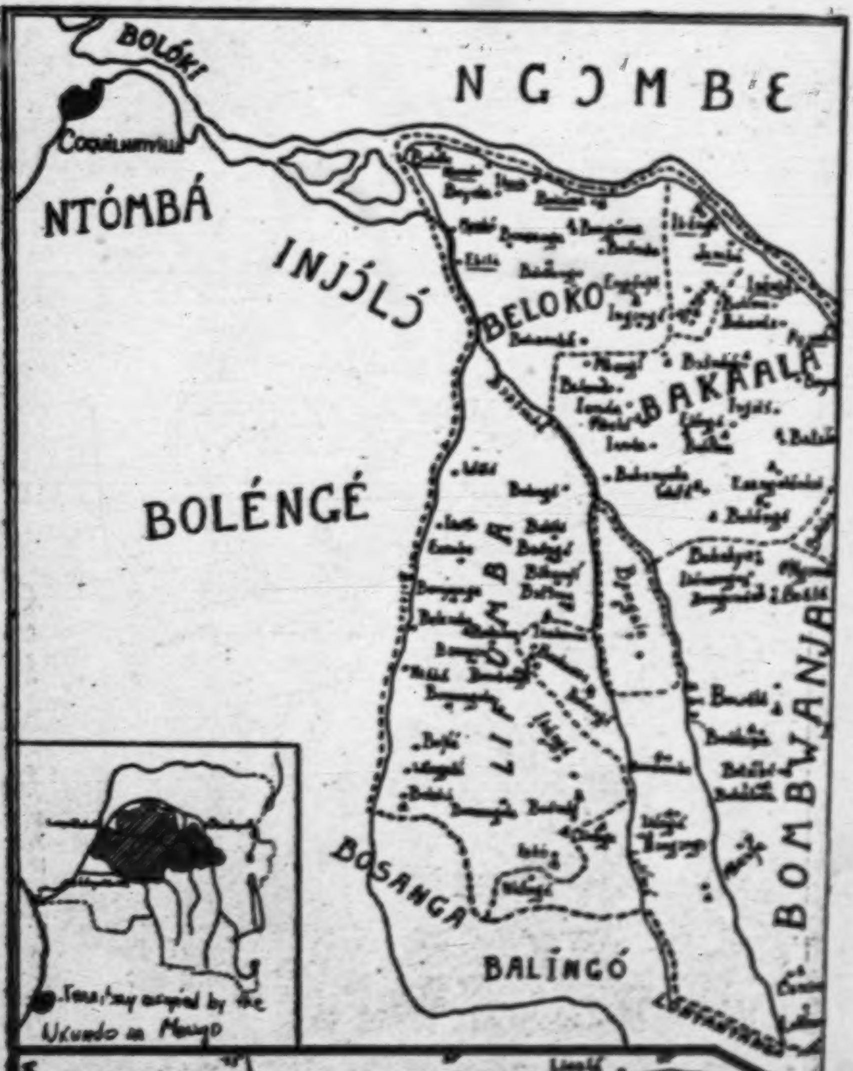
● [619] 2. I will not discuss tribal tattoos because these do not seem to exist among the Nkundó. The reasons for tattooing vary from people to people and from group to group. It is for this reason that they are a distinctive mark. But that does not mean that such is their purpose. The distinctions apparent among the tattoos of various tribes are not an objective but a consequence, as are, for example, the variations among national costumes in Europe. Moreover, the contacts of our people in peace or war have extended by and large only to neighboring clans or tribes, who use the same type of ornamentation as they did. And in these encounters dialect differences serve as a much better means of identification.

2: Hulstaert Mongo FO32
101, 131, 563, 619

/The division of sections in the end map is as follows:/

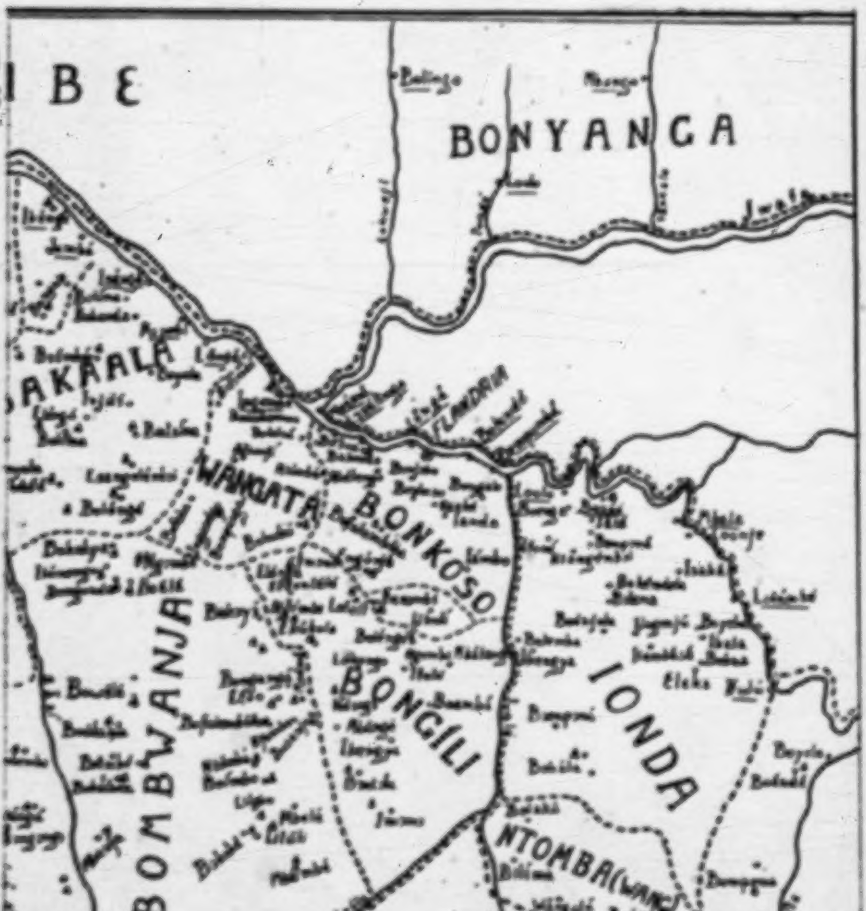
A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H

101
131
563
619


BOLÓKI
COQUILHATVILLE
NGƆMBƐ
NTÓMBÁ
INJƆ́LƆ́
BELOKO
BAKAALA
BOLÉNGÉ
BOSANGA
BALINGÓ
BOMBWANJA
Congo
NTÓMBA
Territory occupied by the Nkundo or Mongo

[End Map (A)]

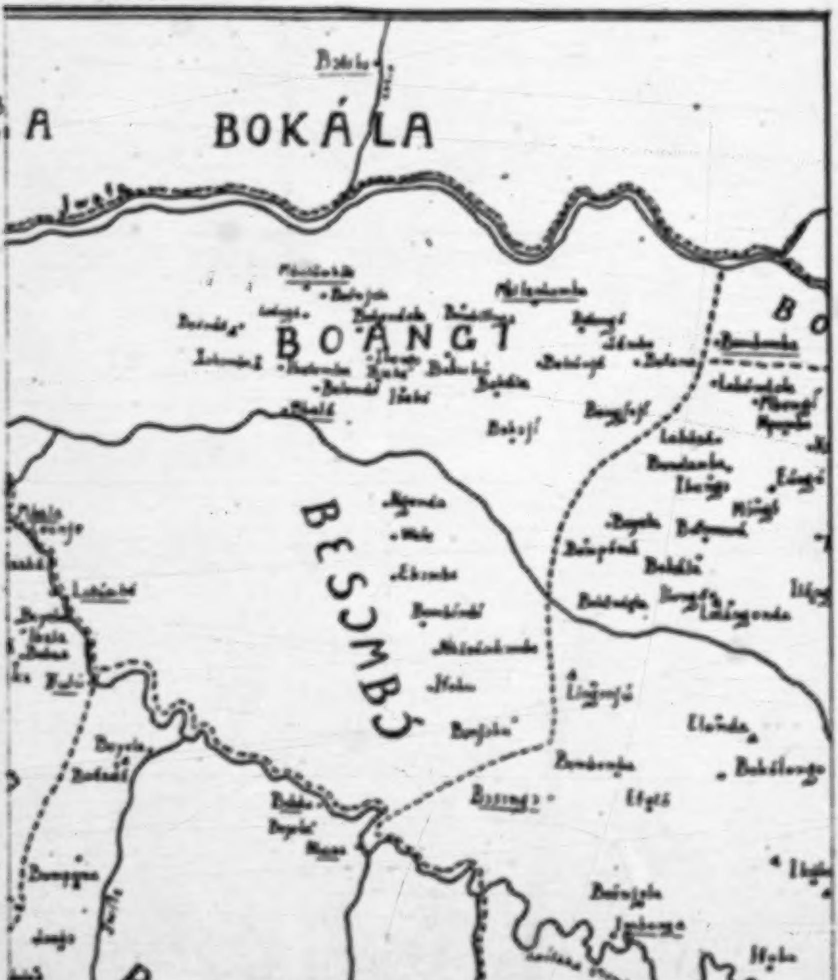
101
131
563
619


IBE
BONYANGA
AKAALA
WANGATA
BONKOSO
BOMBWANJA
BONGILI
IONDA
NTOMBA
LIOKO
LIOMBO
BO

[End Map (B)]

2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

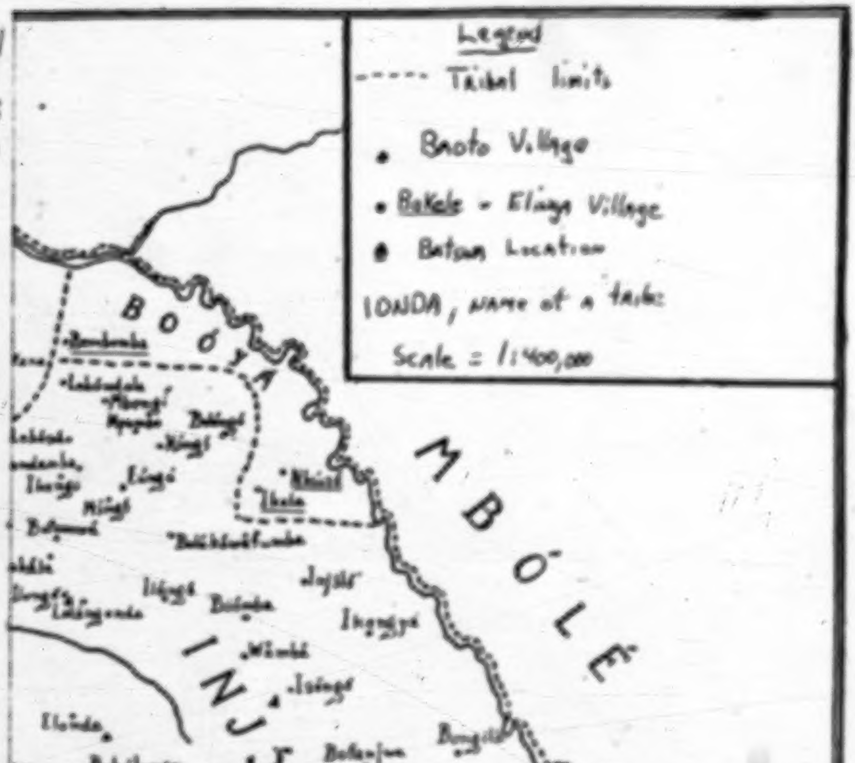
101
131
563
619


A
BOKÁLA
BOANGI
BO
BƐSƆMBƆ
BOMBOMB

[End Map (C)]

2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

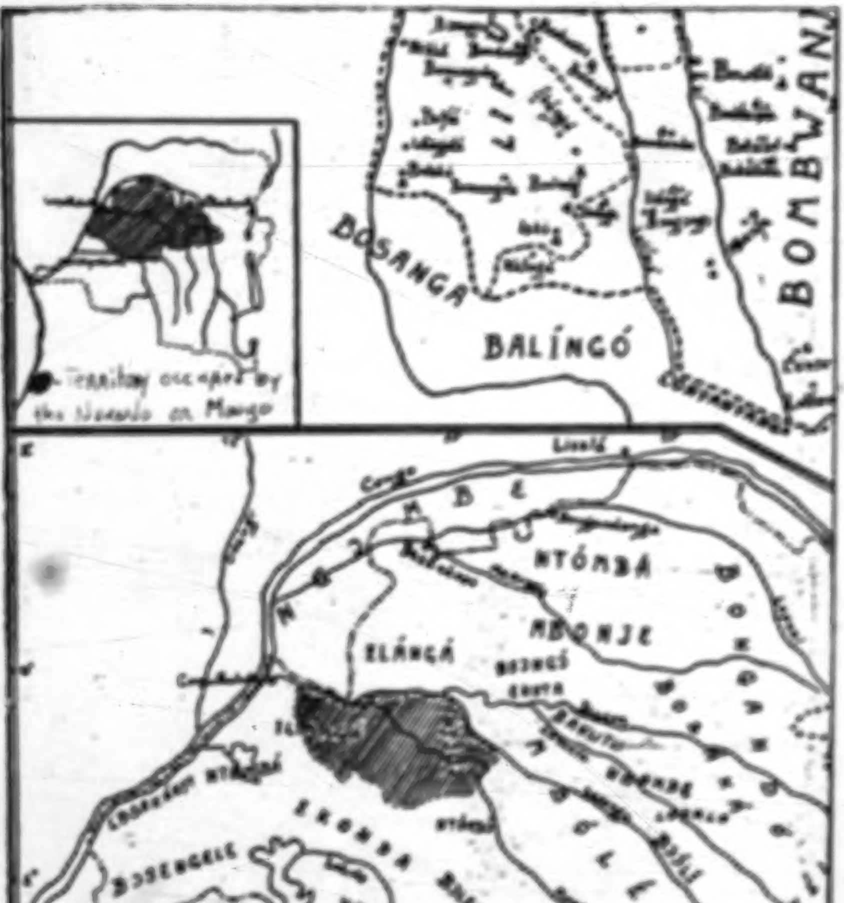
101
131
563
619


Legend
---- Tribal limits
• Baoto Village
• Bakela - Elinga Village
• Batwa Location
IONDA, name of a tribe
Scale = 1:400,000
BOÓYA
MBÓLE
INJƆLƆ
BOÓYA
BÓLE
Bongila
Bolenjwa
Ingongo
Ilonda
Bokolongo

[End Map(D)]

2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

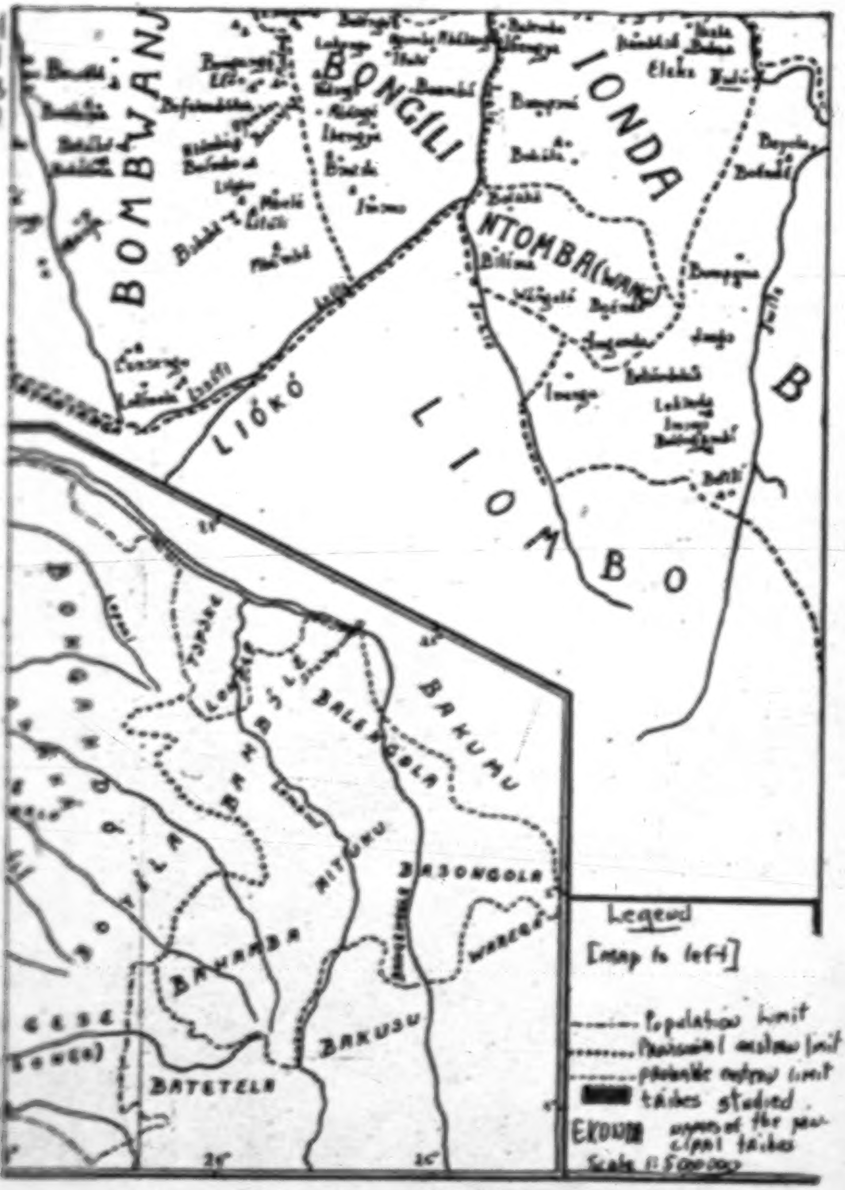
101
131
563
619



● - Territory occupied by the Nkundo or Mongo
BOMBWAN
BOSANGA
BALÍNGÓ
Congo
Lisala
NTÓMBA
MBONJE
ELÁNGÁ
EKONDA
BOSENGELE
BAJIA
YEMBE
IMOMA
BASA
EPANGA
NDENGESE
(BOSONGO)
BOKUBA

[End Map (E)]

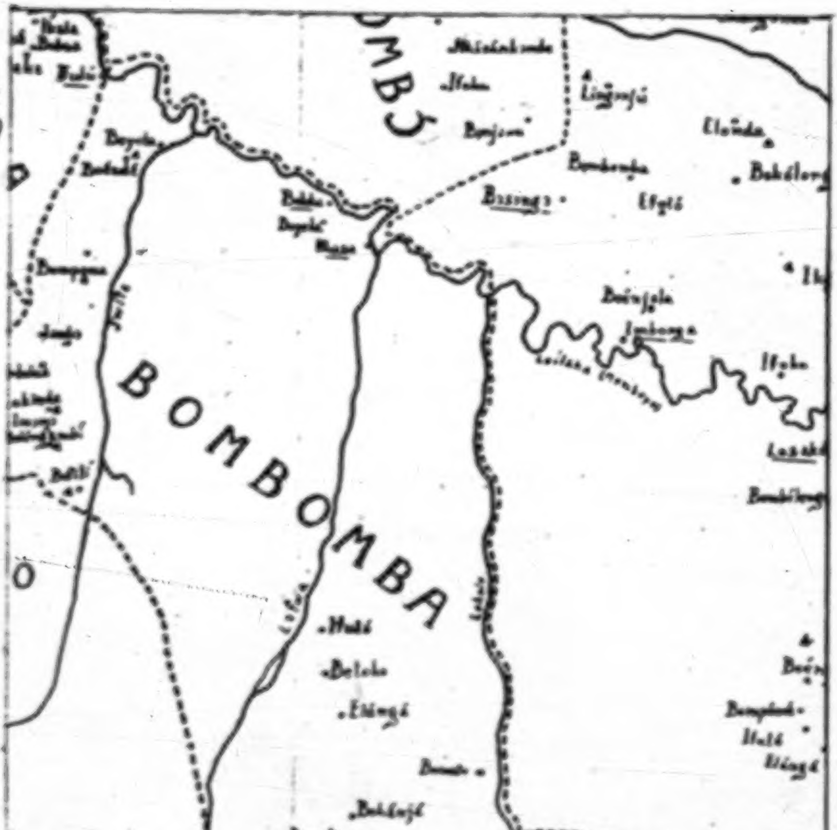
101
131
563
619


BOMBWANJ
BONGILI
IONDA
NTOMBA
LIÓKÓ
L I O M B O
B
BAKUMU
BALENGOLA
BASONGOLA
BAKUSU
BATETELA
WAREGA
25°
Legend
[map to left]
Population limit
Provisional enclave limit
probable enclave limit
tribes studied
EKONDA names of the principal tribes
Scale 1:5000000

[End Map (F)]

2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

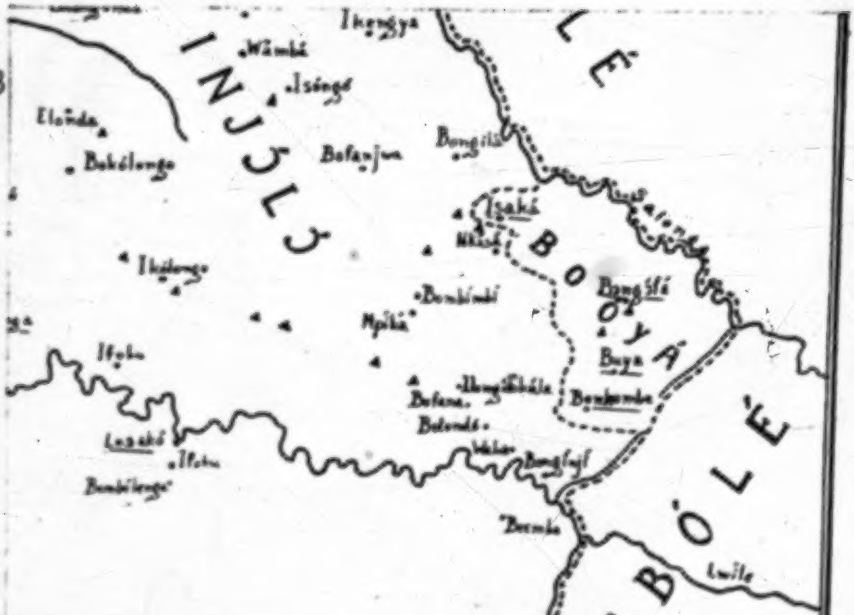
101
131
563
619


BOMBOMBA
NTÓMBA
BOMBWANJA
Lingonjú
Eloónda
Bokólongo
Bombomba
Bosingi
Boónjola
Imbonga
Ifoku
Lusaka
Bombólongo
Ikalé
Bolobo
Elánga
Bakónjó
Boende
Bompolo
Bompónjú
Loilaka
Lolongo

[End Map (G)]

2:Hulstaert M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

101
131
563
● 619


INJƆLƆ
LĔ
Ikengya
Wămbá
Isóngé
Elonda
Bokólongo
Bolanjwa
Bongili
Isaká
Nkoé
BOOYÁ
Ikólongo
Bombímbí
Bongilí
Mpika
Buya
Ifeka
Ikongóbóla
Bokambe
Bofana
Bolondé
Lonsakó
Ifeka
Bombílongo
Wŏlo
Bongíji
Bombo
MBÓLĔ
Lwile
Boénjola
Bokónjá
Bompóná
Ilolé
Ilóngá
Ekombe
Bosongo
WĂNGATÁ
ÓMBÁ

[End Map(H)]

2: Hulstaert--26 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

593 × 152 With reference to signs of affection, grief at the time of death, etc., the observations made for parent-child relationships hold true here -- *mutatis mutandis.*

3. Various relatives

602 The Nkundo's affection extends toward all members of his family, that is, all those with whom he feels linked by blood and common origin. These relatives are much greater in number than in Europe, because Nkundǒ kinship includes many more generations. The intensity of affection decreases with the distance of the degree of kinship. But the Nkundǒ knows and feels that he belongs to a large family, and he remains attached to all its members. He can find a home with any of them. This accounts for the fact that in the centers, men from the same village will look for each other and consider each other "brothers." Actually, that is what they are, since in general each village consists of only a single kin group. ● [621]

Although here, as in the case of brothers and sisters, common interests play a part in maintaining bonds between family members, the feelings of affection are not based on selfish considerations. The latter only reinforce these feelings, which are truly innate among the Nkundǒ. Among the various relatives the strongest attachments are developed between grandparents and grandchildren, uncles and aunts and nephews and nieces, male cousins and female cousins, etc.

603 Among the Nkundǒ as among Europeans there is a very strong affection between grandparents and grandsons, even greater, one might say, than between parents and children (the expression is: *bǒna* [30] *l'onkɛ́nɛ́, ndekɛ́ nd'ǒnkɛ́nɛ́*). But the relationship degenerates into compliance and weakness on one side, and into disrespectful carelessness on the other.

604 A Nkundǒ loves his paternal uncles and aunts and treats them like "fathers," and his maternal uncles and aunts like "mothers." Naturally, his feelings toward them are not as affectionate as for his parents, but they are an extension of these in an attenuated form.

605 The same situation holds true for the bonds which link him to his cousins, whom he calls "brothers" and "sisters." The children of his paternal aunt are his "fathers," however.

583 431 end in his hand and offers the other to the husband, saying, "Take-it." The husband naturally refuses and extricates himself by means of a knife or a piece of copper. [149]

11) *Boɛ́ngo w'ɛ̌yau*, or "weeds." These are demanded by some clans because the husband's clan scoffs at them on account of the number of weeds and chaff they allow to grow in their village instead of keeping it clean. One or two rings are given.

12) *Engumbá*: known in some groups, such as the Bakáala, where it is the last one demanded. It is a *boɛ́ngo* of authority. (1)

[621] 1. An *engumbá* is a temporary hut in a newly settled village. The family patriarchs are the first who must go and live there in order to urge the others to follow and to exorcise all the evil of possible magic spells.

claimed by the patriarchs of the families belonging to the grouping from which the woman has come. Formerly, the amount went as high as 3 to 5 *bakonga*, depending on the number of families, groups of families, or clans related through marriage that were living in the [177] same village. Now the payment is made primarily in European currency, and the amount may be 50 francs, for example. This *boɛ́ngo* is later divided among the various kin groupings related to the wife's family.

Various male and female relatives of the woman ask for assorted small objects, such as a small knife (*ifɛ́eka*), a native razor (*lotɛ́ɛ́*), a pin for braiding hair (*bosɔ́ngɔ́*), a needle (*nsongí*), a necklace of blue beads (*bisɛngɛ́la*), etc.

Nowadays many other objects are also demanded: clothing, dishes, etc. Thus, one day on the occasion of a single bride-price payment, I heard demands for the following objects:

For the father, a pair of trousers and a jacket, because when the woman was a young child she soiled his clothing without troubling herself about the matter.

For the mother, a bed, because worries about her daughter often kept her from resting.

614 Thus we have five groups which are exogamous; marriage is forbidden within each group, but not with members of the other groups. The little genealogy above gives some idea of the antiquity of the line and of the distance which separates its present members from the founding ancestor of the tribe. It should be noted that each exogamous group is subdivided into several villages, clans, and families. The same limits appear to be set with respect to the maternal line; marriage with the descendants of brothers and sisters of the ancestress, wife of the ancestor of the exogamous grouping, is forbidden. (1)

> 1. Note that lonkâna relations are practiced within each of the five exogamous groups, but not between the descendants of the same ancestress, wife of one of the ancestors, and of her bibísa. See Chapter I, Article VII, 1.

In investigating this subject the family of the ancestress must be taken into account as well as the paternal line.

In order to be able to define an exogamous group precisely, it is therefore necessary to study not only several villages, but also various tribes. For a single group may be composed of several families who live far from each [248] other and have sometimes become attached to groupings of people who are only very distantly related or even complete strangers. In such a case therefore a single village may include several exogamous groups.

614 621 Such is the case of the Bóendé, descended from the ancestor Ilumbé yǎ Mpumo. From his first wife, Eámé, arose the Etóo groups, from his other wives, the Bongangá groups. They do not marry among themselves but are a good example of a complex composition.

The Etóo are dispersed in four villages:

1) Etóo of Lotólá
2) Etóo of Bakovó or Mbólanéne, both Basékâ Bombóngo
3) Etóo of Mbémbé or Basékâ Bofiíyolo
4) Etóo of Bosánjo or Basékâ Eóngo

614
621

The Bongangá are divided as follows:

1) Bongangá, in the narrow sense of the term (Baséká Inanó, B. Bolaká, B. Bongéngé, B. Bandúwá, B. Lokókómyá)

2) Bongangá of Bakoyó, or Bolíma

3) Bongangá of Mbómbé or Baséká Botúna

Thus Lotólá, Bakoyó, and Mbómbé each have an Etóo group and a Bongangá group. The Bongangá, in the narrow sense of the term, have in addition a "slave" group named Batsína, a part of which is located with the Bosánjo. A foreign clan is settled with the Etóo of Lotólá; they are the Bofalambóka, descendant of a man named Ekonda (Imbolo) and his sister who was married to Mbete, a slave from Bompángá (Wǎngatá) who was freed by his master.

Many villages have foreign groups living with them such as descendants of slaves (*ekwála*), or others (Ekonda, Bombwanja, groups related by marriage called *likilo*, *mpámá* or *bowélé*, and *mbúsolá*, (1) etc.). [249]

[609]

1. *Mpámá* or *bowélé* are any foreigners who were formerly invited by the group patriarch to remain with him in order to carry out certain tasks, especially metal-working. *Mbúsolá* is the term applied to a child born to a woman out of wedlock (Chapter I, Part 2, Article IV, 3). Such children are also called *nkio y'ǎóme*, "the husband's flying dogs," because they are not his own children but are attached to their mother's husband in the fashion of these animals, who attach themselves to trees when they sleep.

[848]
[825]

614
582

If we add the descendants of relatives who have married into other more or less remote groupings, the prohibition against marriage on account of kinship applies to a good many people. In accordance with the law of exogamy, such a kin group may be widely dispersed geographically, and it is understandable that it is not always easy to

624 customary manner, with a double clap. They are told by the *nkumu* to repeat the
salutation, and having done so may be asked to do it a third time. They are then
576 given a few rods in payment. If the *nkumu* sees some member of his own *ekopo*
coming to greet him, he gives him special honour by ordering him to lie flat on his
back instead of merely sitting, and at the end he gives him a larger gift of rods than
the others receive. In this way the *nkumu* may pay out a great many rods to those
who thus render him homage. Ordinarily a man will receive five or six, but one
624 specially honoured may be given as many as twenty. From the beginning the *nkumu*
has to pay heavily for his honours, and only a wealthy man can hope to attain them.
[556] For this reason a lawful successor, if not wealthy, may be glad to give up his rights
to another more fortunate member of the *ekopo*. Homage having been paid, word is
sent out that the *nkumu* is about to come forth, and crowds begin to gather. A coat
[302] of red camwood powder mixed with oil is smeared over the *nkumu*, the brass plates
are attached to his *montolo*, and he is attired in all his finery. The crowd outside
dances, and when tired sits on the ground to await the rest of the ceremony. Inside,
[533] the *lokombi* begins to play, the *nyemba* to sing, and the Batwa *ntotii* to praise the
nkumu by uttering an ululating sound. Accompanied by *Nsono*, *Bilepo*, and the
maomi, the *nkumu* himself begins to dance. The temporary protecting screen round
the *ipana* is pulled down, and he is seen by all. After his dance he retires again and
the crowd disperses.

When *Nkema Akuke* becomes *nkumu* he changes everything possible so as to
[481] become different from other men. Thus he assumes a different gait, a sort of bow-legged waddle, a different tone of voice, and it seems that under this influence even
his facial features undergo a change. Accompanied by his retinue, he visits the
various villages where he has friends and relatives in order to greet them. This over,
the musicians wish to take their departure and are paid for their services by
the *nkumu*.

624 At the conclusion of these ceremonies the *nkumu* with his *ekopo* and the *molembe*
negotiate concerning their obligations to one another. If the *nkumu* is the first of his
596 line, he and his *ekopo* are given land to cultivate, while succeeding *nkumu* simply take
over the land originally accorded. The *molembe* call their *nkumu* their wife, and they
621 designate themselves husband. They thus reckon the relationship between *molembe*
and *ekopo* to be that of husband and wife, and, as in an actual marriage, there must
be an interchange of obligations performed in a spirit of harmony. Also, as in
marriage a wife may be divorced, so an *nkumu* with his *ekopo* could be sent off to their
home and the arrangement terminated. It not infrequently happened that as strangers
the *ekopo* fell out with their hosts and if such a disagreement could not be righted
they might be refunded the payments with which they had purchased their rights,
and sent off home.

224 Among the reciprocal obligations of *molembe* and *ekopo* are included the sharing
of certain animals and birds killed in the hunt, among which are the leopard and
624 elephant. All killed, whether male or female, must be divided. Of certain other
animals, including the wild pig, antelope, and buffalo, if a female, no portion is given,
621 if a male, the required portion is presented. These reciprocal obligations are limited
596 strictly to the *ekopo* and *molembe*; if others outside of these groups wish to present the
nkumu with meat to honour him or to curry favour, they may do so, but they are under

no compulsion. If one of the contracting parties fails to fulfil its pledges in this matter 224
of giving part of the kill, or in anything else, the aggrieved party may call the council
together. This consists not only of members of the *molembe* and *ekopo*, but of all 624
elders of the village or villages connected with this particular one. The party judged 596
in the wrong, whether *ekopo* or *molembe*, will be fined, the injured party receiving its 621
share, and both parties will be charged to live together harmoniously and observe
their contracts.

The power of the *nkumu* was apparently limited, and did not supersede that of 624
the *momene mokonda*. When trials came up, the aggrieved party might go either to the
momene mokonda or to the *nkumu*. If it was necessary to call the village elders together 695
about it, both these authorities were present at the hearing. First the young men of
the group were allowed to give their verdict, then the old men, after that *momene*
mokonda (or the *molomi o ehe*), and finally the *nkumu* was given the privilege of the
last word. He would comment on the opinions of each of the judges, criticizing one
young man, commending another, and then giving his own verdict, at which the
group would assent by saying, ' Even so, grandfather '. The whole group of judges
would then fix the fines, a double portion of which went to the *nkumu*.

The actual manual labour which an *nkumu* may do excludes anything endangering 624
life or limb, or requiring agility and speed. He may clear the bush for his gardens:
this is a man's work. He may take part in the building of his houses, but may do
no high work, and, among the inland groups, it is the work of the Batwa to put the [563]
roof on for him. The *nkumu* may also prepare pitfalls for catching game, but cannot
engage in any other type of hunting or do any fishing. Digging a grave is prohibited,
for, as we shall see, everything pertaining to death must be ignored by the *nkumu*.

Other rules affecting the daily life of the *nkumu* may be roughly divided into three: those affecting his person, those having to do with his food, and social regulations.

One of the great points of observance in the first class of regulations is the impor- 624
tance of the *montolo*. The *nkumu* must on no account be seen during daylight hours
with an uncovered head. If he wishes relief from the cumbersome *montolo* he may 292
take it off in the darkness of his house and put on an ordinary hat made of skins,
and when night falls he may walk where he will bareheaded if he so desires. The
skin hat, known as *louku*, may be made from two animals only, in the case of an [824]
nkumu, one being the *nkulupa*, a species of antelope with light-coloured hair, and the
other the *iyoko*, an animal resembling a beaver. The skin of the *nkulupa* may be used
by anyone, but the *iyoko* is reserved for the *nkumu* only with one exception. The skin
of the *iyoko* may also be used for the carrying strap for infants known as *nyamba*, [854]
which is worn over one shoulder in bandoleer fashion. For the *nkumu* the skin of
the *iyoko* is limited to the informal hat, *louku*, and for making into the *lokoto*, a pouch
used for carrying small objects and worn like a sporran. As a corollary to the impor-
tance of the *montolo* may be noted the importance attached to the head of the *nkumu*,
which must never be seen uncovered in daylight.

The Bonginda *nkumu* never wash in the daytime, but may wash at night with hot 624
water. The inland *nkumu* never wash. Even the Bonginda *nkumu* never wash their
heads, and no *nkumu* ever cuts his hair. If the *nkumu* becomes too greatly incon- 515
venienced, one of his wives may delouse his head, but only within the privacy of the [184]
house, by the light that enters the rear opening.

61 another group. According to their relationship to others, groups
602 may be designated as:

brother, younger or older;
brother or half brother (descended from various wives of the polygynous ancestor);
[848] Illegitimate child of the sister which, legally, as the child of the oldest brother or of the father of his mother, belongs to the group of the mother's relatives;
child of a boy who together with his sister has moved to the unit of his brothers-in-law and has settled there permanently;
son of a sister, who for some reason has separated from his paternal relatives and has moved in with the group of his mother or of one of his grandmothers.

601 Present-day social relationships are influenced by this variety of kinship relations. The kinship terms which refer to the relationships of the genuine or assumed ancestors to each other are occasionally transferred to the groups.

614
602
●621 In this paper we shall describe the Isangi group (12) as an [101] example of hierarchical kinship structure. Isangi is a local group of the type described above (p. 1). Following the custom of the region, I shall refer to it as a "village." Until we have decided which terms are applicable to the various groups, I shall use the letters A to E for the individual ranks of the hierarchical structure. Within this system A shall stand for the smallest and E for the largest units (see Diagram 2).[1]

In addition to the three ranks of Group D in Isangi, there are others in the daughter villages (see Diagram 1). These may also include foreign groups, as, for example, the "Nkundó" group, Liimbu, in Wengí.

---

12. Müller, Fürstentum [Kingdom], pp. 68 ff., 125, 128 ff.

[1] [See page 6, category 116.—Analyst]

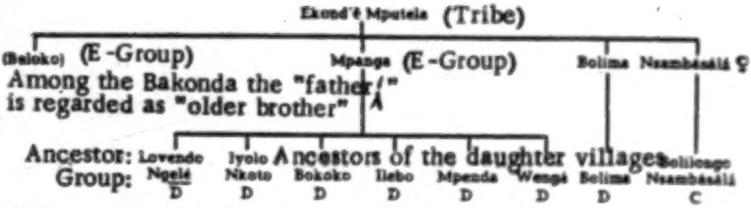
602 All the groups represented on the diagram (Diagram 2)
614 are known by their names to the adults of Isangi. In addition to
●621 their regular name, all these groups also have a "drum" name
[552] and an "honorary" name. Only the three Boyeke groups of rank
B have different drum names but no individual group names. The arrangement of groups as found on the diagram does not represent a genealogy. It is based simply on the characteristics and functions of the individual groups [190] which in each case are equal to each other on one rank. Thus, we have here an organizational diagram, not a genealogical table. [Diagrams 1 and 2 appear here.]

The people of Isangi are also well aware of the relationships between the individual groups, but they are not as clearly conscious of the system as it appears in our diagram. They are able to describe the kinship relations between the groups and they can point out which functions are assigned to the individual groups without, however, regarding the groups as equal to one another because they have like functions and without seeing them as part of a system as we do. Thus, our diagram represents a systematization which, by its very nature, does not wholly do justice to reality. Correspondingly, therefore, there is no satisfactory Ekonda social terminology.

[191] [Diagram 3 appears here.] Just as in nonscientific European usage, the terms lack sufficient precision. Furthermore, in principle the nature of the groups between rank A to E and of the still larger units is similar, and as a result all the terms are used almost indiscriminately for large and small units alike.

Usually, the word ikundɛ (literally, "lap") refers to small
601 units, approximately those of ranks A and B, but it is also used
621 for larger and large units if their relatively close degree of
614 kinship is to be stressed. Thus it approximately corresponds to the meaning of the word "family" as used in nonscientific language. The word ilongo refers both to what in European usage is described as the small family [Kleinfamilie] and also to groups of ranks A and B.

614
621


Ekond'ě Mputela (Tribe)
(Baloko) (Œ-Group)
Mpanga (Œ-Group)
Bolima
Nsambásálá ♀
Ancestor: Lovendo Iyolo Ancestors of the daughter villages Bolilongo
Group: Ngelé Nkoto Bokoko Ilebo Mpenda Wengá Bolima Nsambásálá
D D D D D D D C

Among the Bakonda the "father^" is regarded as "older brother"

Diagram 1. Genealogy of the Bakonda. Letters below the group names refer to the rank of the respective groups (see Diagram 2).

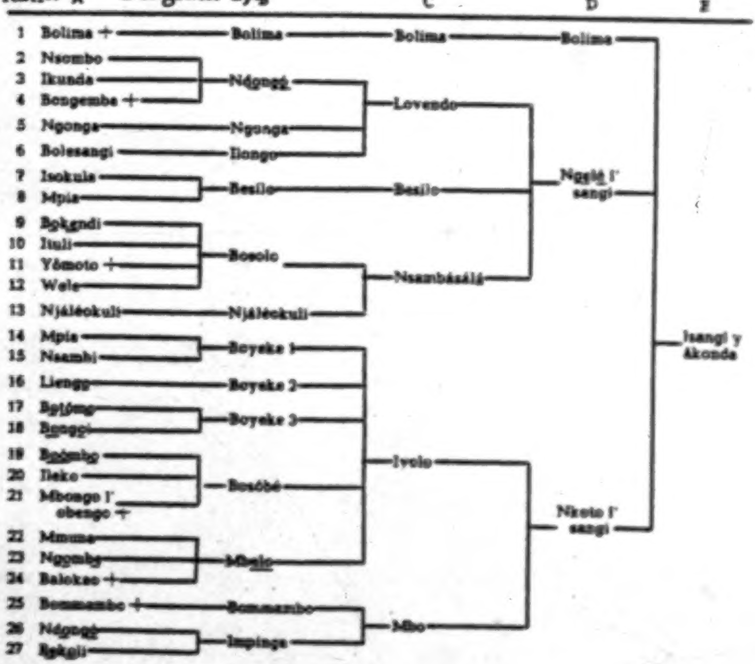

Rank A B C D E
1 Bolima +
2 Nsombo
3 Ikunda
4 Bongemba +
5 Ngonga
6 Bolesangi
7 Isokula
8 Mpia
9 Bokendi
10 Ituli
11 Yŏmoto +
12 Wele
13 Njáléokuli
14 Mpia
15 Nsambi
16 Liengo
17 Botómo
18 Bonggi
19 Boómbo
20 Ileko
21 Mbongo l' obengo +
22 Mmuna
23 Ngombo
24 Balokso +
25 Bommambo +
26 Ndgngé
27 Bokoli
Bolima
Ndongé
Ngunga
Ilongo
Besilo
Bosolo
Njáléokuli
Boyeke 1
Boyeke 2
Boyeke 3
Bosóbé
Mbalo
Bommambo
Impinga
Bolima
Lovendo
Besilo
Nsambásálá
Ivolo
Mbo
Bolima
Ngelé l' sangi
Nkoto l' sangi
Isangi y ákonda

Diagram 2. Kinship Structure of Isangi.

1-27 = Numbering of the A-Groups shown in Diagram 3.

+ = extinct group.

^[tr. of LONYANYANGA, L.]

8: Müller--7 E-5 (1951-1954) 1956

FO32 Mongo FO32
Ekonda

621 ●
361
614

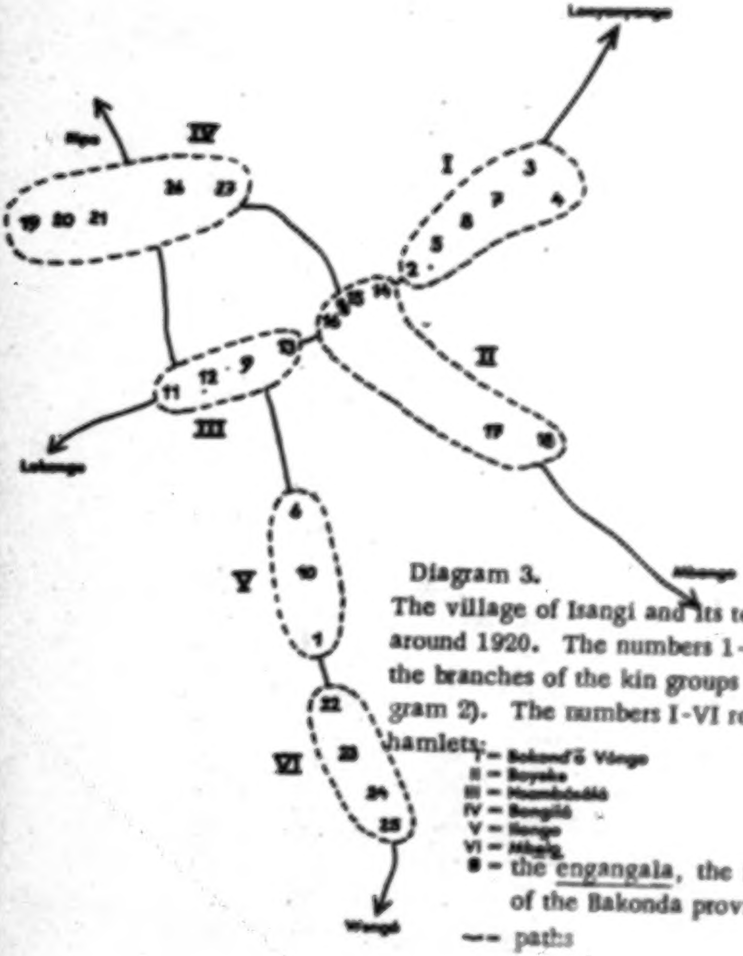

I
II
III
IV
V
VI
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27

Diagram 3.

The village of Isangi and its territory around 1920. The numbers 1-27 denote the branches of the kin groups (see Diagram 2). The numbers I-VI refer to the hamlets:

I = Bokond'ö Vónga
II = [illegible]
III = [illegible]
IV = [illegible]
V = [illegible]
VI = [illegible]
● = the engangala, the meeting place of the Bakonda province
--- paths

601 621 614 Bonsonga and etúká are terms used for kinship groups of ranks B, C, and D, but occasionally they may also refer to [192] the groups listed under A and, in addition, to the local groups which in size approximately correspond to the kinship units mentioned above. Etúká is the term used for the oil palm grove and for a certain kind of termite hill; apparently it is used for local groups more frequently than the term bonsonga.

[571] [595] Another term whose meaning varies is ekíndá. This word designates, first of all, a dance group, a corps de ballet, and also the social unit which sends such a joint dance troupe to dance festivals.

Eló also has strong local connotations. It is usually identical with what we call a village, but frequently units which are larger or smaller than a village are designated as eló. Very large groups, tribes and even larger units, are called bonanga.

614 As a criterion for placing the individual groups within a certain rank, one or several functions have been chosen in each case. The groups of the individual ranks are described below relative to their functions. On the subject of groups it should be added that in general they do not differ from each other in certain traits. All groups of all ranks are kinship units of patrilineal descent. They consider themselves descendants of one ancestor. No continuous and complete genealogy which can be traced back to the original ancestor is known. The genealogy of the entire group of the Bakonda is shown in Diagram 1.

In Isangi two of the ancestors of the groups of rank D are brothers, the third is the brother of their father. A D-group (Ngelé) includes, in addition, the descendants of an illegitimate child of the paternal sister of the ancestor. These offspring form the C-group, Nsambásálé.

There is a gap between this ancient genealogy and the known ancestors from the recent past. In contrast with that of the neighboring Bokété [Bokete] (see, for example, Boelaert, "Les Bongili"), the genealogical memory of the Ekonda is weak. [173] It does not reach back to the ancestor of the group of rank A. In this connection we must take into account the fact that a group

614 592 The exogamy rules of the Ekonda do not only refer to their own, agnatic group, but also to all cognate groups to whom kinship relations can still be traced back, i.e., a span of about five generations.

Groups of Rank E

614 621 It may be assumed that these groups always extend beyond the confines of a village. Those parts of a group who have settled next to each other have their communal meeting place, but even the dispersed fractions of the group may come there to consult. In former times probably only one such group had a nkúmú, a sacred prince who lived in the main village (e.g., Isangi), while the other villages were ruled by the senior. Once the title of nkúmú was also bestowed on persons from other villages, the importance of the E-groups almost completely disappeared. Also, in this category the local group plays a much greater role. Occasionally it even includes dependent [609] villages which have not yet been "paternalized," i.e., which are still regarded as alien. In this connection it should be mentioned that probably all larger local groups tend to reconstitute themselves into kinship groups by reinterpreting the genealogy to suit their purposes. It is certain that the "kinship relation" of many "kinship groups" has been created in this manner. We may dismiss the possibility that groups which are divided from one another by the rule of exogamy will invent a kinship relation so close that a previously possible marriage would be outlawed. Also, the combination of other important functions of the lower ranks resulting from the invention of a closer relationship would run counter to the tendency of progressive differentiation (17).

17. We know through statements of the natives that about one hundred years ago the exogamy limit was lowered to the present level. Before that time only the Lonkûsa was permitted among the Ngele, Nkoto, and Bolfima.

614 621 In general one may assume that local groups will postulate only that kind of kinship relationship which does not necessitate a substantial functional reintegration. For this reason, units above the exogamy limit will easily tend to construe a genealogy which "proves" a kinship relationship. Groups of that type are functionally weak. One can observe processes of this kind both among the group of the Bakonda and among the neighboring E-group, Lonyanyanga. The institution of the nkúmú (see above, p. 14) also appears to have a leveling influence. The privileges of the oldest (and free) group diminish in importance and fall behind the office of nkúmú. The new office is also open to younger and dependent groups.

Sociological Terminology for Kinship Groups

128 Before dealing with the units which are to be regarded as settlement groups, we shall compare the kinship groups of the Ekonda with the sociological ideal types. Keeping in mind the authors mentioned at the beginning, I shall now discuss the various terms used for groups which are applicable to conditions found among the Ekonda. [196]

Family

121 596 The small family is of no importance in the organizational system of the Ekonda. Nevertheless it is very important as the smallest unit of economic life. Each small family is potentially polygynous, but monogynous marriages are more numerous at the present time, especially among the younger generation. In view of this difference between potential and practiced polygyny, it seems advisable to follow Thurnwald in classing the polygamous forms together with the small family and to differentiate its nuclear families (18). In my opinion this approach seems to correspond more closely to its functional importance than Murdock's view, according to which the polygamous family

---

18. Vol. 4, p. 12 f.

121 definitions to present a theory of development, the differentia-
114 tion between the two terms appeas to me to be very useful, and
this seems particularly true if we accept the first definition of clan given by Thurnwald and regard the second as completely irrelevant for our present purposes.

It is true that our A-group lives in a certain district
614 which it claims for itself as its own "province," but it is never-
621 theless difficult to describe this district as a politically sovereign community. A political nature could rather be attributed to those groups which, up to now, we have not described at all, i.e., the settlement communities. Proceeding further, the A-group is integrated into the B-group, the B-group into the C-group, thus forming an endless chain; among those tribes who have a greater degree of genealogical consciousness than the Ekonda -- for example, the neighboring Bongili (25) -- the hierarchy of groups ends with mankind, the hierarchy of ancestors with God.

25. Boelaert, "Les Bongili."

Thurnwald emphasizes this ranked structure, especially
121 in discussing the kinship group. Kirchhoff, however, fails to
614 deal with the problem of the kinship group in a manner which
would be of value to us in differentiating between kinship group and clan. Dealing with the organizational structure of the peoples he discussed, he naturally was more interested in defining the border between large family and kinship group. Lowie (26) only discusses the kinship group, "sib," calling it the "'clan' of British anthropologists", (p. 105) or "clans," if patrilineal, and "gentes," if matrilineal, "of most American anthropologists." The "ad infinitum" (p. 106) is also stressed by him in relation to the kinship group. Lowie also admits the possibility of subdivision with respect to his "sib," and consequently he even includes in the kinship group such forms as the "moieties," which according to Thurnwald's definition are still part of it, but which in his view

26. Primitive Society.

614 kinship subgroup [*Untersippe*] for groups of rank C;
kinship group [*Sippe*] for groups of rank D (the exogamous units);
large kinship group [*Grosssippe*] for groups of rank E.

Local Organization

364 The second diagram[1] shows the settlement pattern of the
621 Isangi group in its old settlement area up to 1949. At this time
178 Isangi was relocated near the highway. Only two of the nuclear kinship groups of Isangi can lay claim to territory reaching far enough toward the east as to extend beyond the new highway. Thus, the resettlement process has led to a complete change of the settlement pattern. However, the functions of the settlement communities have not yet been adapted to the new settlement. At present the inhabitants are still so engaged in speculation about the possibility of a return to their own old territory that they have not yet reformed their village organization.

621 We observe that the village is divided into six settlement
614 communities (30), each of which consists only of the members of one of the two kinship groups of Isangi. [200] We find that only the group of the father, which formerly was a kinship group in its own right, is attached to one settlement community of the kinship group *Ngelé*. Incidentally, we might point out that the names of the two kinship groups, *Ngelé* and Nkoto, mean "down the river" and "up the river." The older group is called "down the river" since in *ngelé* the river is large and wide. We come across this honorary term for the older group in some other villages although there is not always an "up-river" group. No corresponding settlement pattern can be found.

614 The degree of cohesion among the constituent kinship
621 groups in settlement community I is so strong that the entire
202 community has a communal *bokendi*, a communal messenger.
624

---

30. See Diagram 3.

[1] [page 7, category 116.—Analyst]

614 It is the task of the messengers to transmit all important mes-
● 621 sages to the other groups in accordance with a precise plan;
202 this is particularly true regarding the invitations to the meetings
624 of the village council with the nkúmú. At the same time they inform the other groups as to the program of the meeting. The first messenger calls on the messenger of the other community; the old men are gathered at the latter's house in order to receive and to discuss the message. The messenger of this community, in turn, departs for the next in line. As a result of this practice the messenger and his home became one of the centers of social life.

621 The same uniformity is found in community II. Here
614 we can also see the engangala, the meeting place of the village
361 Isangi and of its branch villages. The meeting place is an open
623 space in which stands a short tree with a broad crown. The representatives of the several villages gather in the shade of this tree since one of the open men's houses could not accommodate all of them. The senior of the nuclear kinship groups Mpia (No. 14), Nsambi (No. 15), and Liengo (No. 16) has his house on this spot which is situated on the border of the territory belonging to these three groups. The elder of Mpia, however, is the messenger for the hamlet of Boyeke; he may of course be identical with the "elder on the engangala."

614 Cohesion within the third settlement community was also
621 so strong that it employs only one messenger. The kinship subgroup Nsambóafílé which is concentrated in this hamlet is said to consist of the descendants of an illegitimate child of the daughter of the village founder (see Diagram 1). As is the case in many
[782] other villages, it is therefore entrusted with the office of the
[624] bosfai, who carries out the sacrifice of human beings and animals on the proper occasions.

614 The three communities just described are relatively
621 homogeneous groups; the three following ones are quite hetero-
624 geneous. The two groups of hamlet IV belong to the kinship sub-
202 groups Iyolo and Mbo. In contrast to the kinship subgroups Lovendo and Besilo, they regard themselves as sufficiently different from

614 each other to employ their own messengers. When the messenger
621 of settlement II arrives here, he first calls on the messenger of
624 the nuclear kinship group Boaŝbé (No. 18) and then to Impfúga
202 (No. 26). The messenger from Boaŝbé calls on his relatives in settlement VI, who are the nuclear kinship group Mbelo-Mmuna (No. 22), while the messenger from Impfúga-*ńsongõ* formerly had to call on the group Bommambo which is now extinct.

Settlement V consisted of three different groups. Bolima, the group of the father, had its own messenger; however, he only received the messages without having to pass them on, which is also the case with all these last groups of the village. Both neighbors had their own messenger. The messenger from settlement I called on the nuclear kinship group Bolesangi, his relatives; the messenger from settlement III went to his relatives of the nuclear kinship group Iruli.

There were also two messengers in the last hamlet, but reports on this subject are insufficient since the nuclear kinship group Bommambo has been extinct for a long time.

178 All the settlements just mentioned have a common
614 characteristic: formerly, at important dance festivals, their
621 young men performed together in one joint corps de ballet. The
595 population was decimated as a result of the rigors of [201] the
occupation period and also as a result of the population move-
[161] ment into the cities. Consequently, there are not enough young people any more, and I with II, III with IV, and V with VI act together. Thus, in each case we find Ngelé and Nkoto united in one ballet. Although these groups have also been scattered
[561] as a result of the new settlement pattern (next to the highway), the old organizational structure has been preserved, and the young people do not hesitate to walk the long distance to the practice field every day so they can dance in the old groupings.

All of Isangi, all those kinship groups, have one common
621 village chief, the Nkúmú, with an iyolo nafka who gets the meet-
626 ings started, and a village court with its judges. There are other
622 groups which correspond to Isangi (31), but have more than one

---

31. See Müller, [illegible], pp. 73 ff., 76 ff., 133 f.

● 621 nkfimű. They, too, however, have only one man who opens a
624 meeting and one investigating judge. Only one of the nkfimű
622 has the function of judge. Consequently, we may say that even
if the office is divided, the group still forms a unit as far as
jurisdiction and political organization are concerned.

Among these groups we usually can observe a balanced
614 system of distribution as far as titles and offices are concerned.
621 It may either be predominantly democratic, as in Isangi, so
622 that all groups may lay claim to titles and offices, or it may be
624 oligarchic, as in Mbanga, where all power is vested in the oldest
group of sons. In most cases, oligarchical groups tend to
disintegrate; the younger groups attempt to free themselves from
the rule. Democratic villages usually have a greater degree of
cohesion.

In Isangi the small kinship groups of Ndongő (Nos. 2-4), Ngonga (No. 5), and Boyeke (Nos. 14-18) formerly had the privilege of furnishing the nkfimű. This practice has been discarded, and the honor is now rotated among the six local groups of the village. Only the small kinship groups of the Bolfma, Besilo, and Njflőokuli are excluded.

The six settlement communities of Isangi and similar
621 groupings found in other villages are parts of a village which
614 in my opinion are best described by the term hamlet [Weiler].

These are units which are predominantly intentional in
nature. In spite of their functional weakness, they have survived
even in the new settlement although they may not dwell
together in a block. As a result of reintegration, they have lost
their function as conscription district for the dancing groups in
Isangi (see p. 28), but even at the present time they still
represent the most important grouping in Isangi; we were aware
of it before identifying any of the kinship groups. It is expected
that they will lose their importance if Isangi does not return to
its original site. By nature less closely connected with the organization
[562] of the village of their husbands, the women have
become the point of departure for the new order of things (e.g.,
for dance groups) which fulfills the requirements of the new
settlement conditions.

614 Each hamlet includes one or several message districts.
621 Even at the time of the old settlement pattern the messenger
624 system was determined by the hierarchical structure and not
[202] at all by considerations of what was most practical (for example,
the shortest route). Consequently this conservative institution
of the conservative old men has not been affected at all by the
relocation.

The villages are the communities of jurisdiction and of political life. Usually a nkúmú, presides over the meetings. If a village has several nkúmú, one of whom may be the judge or all may preside together, I have used the term "part of a village" [Dorfteil] for the district from which each nkúmú originates.

Those areas which have a special meeting place are here
361 referred to as a "province" [Gau]. The meeting place lies
621 within the territory of the oldest or second-oldest kinship group.
178 The practical importance of this institution for the entire province is minimal, but the two meeting places [202] which we discovered still constituted, until a short time ago, important social centers for the duplicate villages forming the administrative centers of the respective provinces. As a result of the relocation, the meeting places have now lost their function completely.

000 I hope that this paper has added new material to the discussion on the subject of ethno-sociological terminology, and that it will stimulate criticism and a new discussion of this important subject.

Yaelima

224 778 plant and one of the stakes. The customs and ceremonies observed before leaving for the communal hunt are identical to those we have just described.

224 As to the relations between the fetisher, the hunting fetish, and the individual hunter, we will ignore them, having been unable to obtain any information on this subject in these regions.

Throughout the region we visited, large-scale hunting is done communally. As a rule, all the men participate, including young men from the age of 15. [Ed., the text is not translated from the last paragraph, page 81, to the second paragraph, page 83.]

[83] The catch of the communal hunt is shared among all the families in the village, with the chief and the dignitaries having special rights.

224 ● 622 Individual hunting does not entail any distribution, except when a buffalo, leopard, or elephant is involved. [293] The tail of the buffalo goes to the native chief, who uses it as a fly-chaser and a badge of rank. [281] The skin of the leopard is reserved for the chief, who makes it into a skirt which he displays ostentatiously at important festivities and public dances. The trunk and tusks of the elephant go to the chief, while the bristles go in part to the hunters and [84] in part to the local dignitaries, who use them to make necklaces. [301]

[778] Fig. 51. Yaelima Fetish, Nkisi of the Hunt.

SM 251 The average height is 1.25 meters, the width 2.50 meters, and the length five to ten meters. The women maintain a fire under this smoking-drying apparatus night and day. It is fed with grass and other rubbish, which are not very dry so that a great deal of smoke will be produced. All the fish are turned over twice a day. After eight to ten days the operation is finished. The dried, smoked fish are carefully wrapped after being sorted and graded according to size. Part of the fish will make up the family reserve, and the rest will be used as trade goods. When the grid is almost empty, the men go up the river and start fishing again.

SM [226 285]

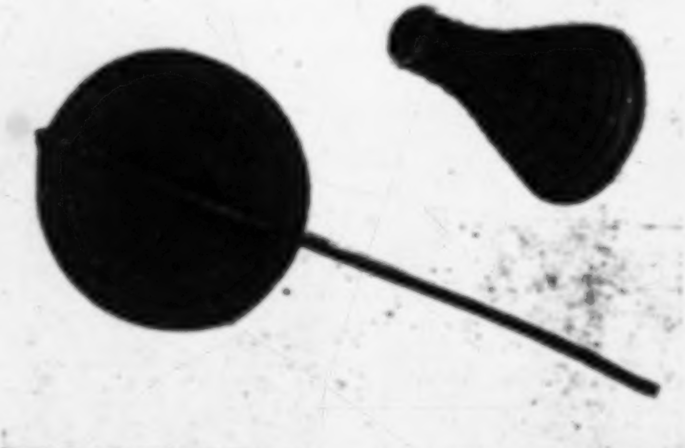


Fig. 57. Baskets for Fishing, Lake Leopold II.

SM 226 It is difficult to realize the magnitude of this industry and the unbelievable quantities of fish caught by the natives during their sojourn in the region of the salt grass. We watched one of these miraculous hauls one day, organized through the kind cooperation of Mr. Molin. The river had been dammed for only one night, the natives went up it only 150 [97] meters, this in the middle of the dry season, and yet they brought back four large baskets full of fish.

S [illegible] The catch from communal fishing is shared at the end of the season. A part is reserved for the chief, the owners of the screens receive a special share, and the rest is divided among all the members of the group participating in the enterprise. [Ed., a

001

Yaelima

264 The natives eat three meals a day, in the morning, toward noon, and at night after sunset.

The wife is never allowed to eat with her husband or to eat in the same group as he does.

[622] A chief always eats alone, far from the eyes of the common herd. [143]

Leftovers from the meals are ordinarily given to the women and children.

264 415 We did not find tables, spoons, or forks among any of the tribes we visited.

The food is put in small baskets of rattan or raffia splints, plaited in openwork and lined with leaves on the bottom. Sometimes the plate is made of wood or baked clay.

[252]

Fig. 82. Native Outdoor Kitchen, Ipanga-Batitu Tribe.

Among the Bateke-Banfumungu, we collected some earthenware plates which look a great deal like European soup plates, but are less symmetrical in shape and deeper. Among the Baboma-Wadia-Basete, on the other hand, the plates look more like our flat plates. Among the Ipanga-Yaelima, basketwork plates are chiefly used, while in the Bena Dibele-Kole region one finds the pottery plate again, a sort of broadly flared,

301 Among the peoples of Lake Leopold II, hair ornaments are rare. Hairpins seem to be unknown; combs are made of raffia splints. A woman prefers ornaments of metal, iron, brass, or copper, while the chiefs and great dignitaries like to wear belts, necklaces, bracelets, and trimmed with cowries. The necklace of solid brass is very popular. The heavier it is, the more it is liked. We saw women wearing necklaces weighing as much as 25 pounds. These necklaces are riveted around the necks of the favorite wives of great chiefs or wealthy dignitaries. In case of divorce or separation, the owner of the necklaces removes them without regard for the suffering or cries of the victim. The women seem to be in no way inconvenienced by these cumbersome ornaments. On rare instances they wrap cloth around them to keep them from rubbing against the collarbone. [183]

[292
[293]
622]

[586]

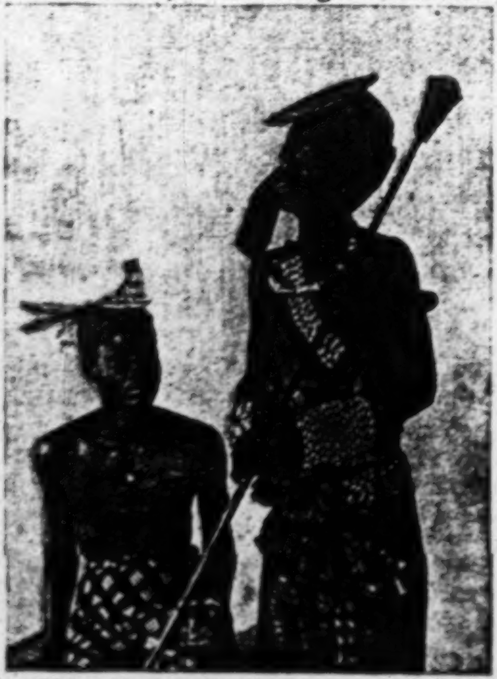


Fig. 104. Native Chief of Lake Leopold II and his Counselor, Highest Dignitary of the Tribe, both in Dress Costume.

Yaelima

304

bent, running from the top of the breastbone to the navel. To the left and right of this main line, we see a double row of small oblique lines separated from each other by a space from one to three centimeters wide. The facial tatto consists of a double or triple row of oblique lines, arranged in such a way that they look like palm leaves, and a small crest formed by short, curved incisions at the root of the nose. According to a photograph sent by Mr. Timmermans, this same type of tattoo is also found among

[622● 142]

Fig. 118. Inunu, the Young and Excellently Endowed Batitu Chief of the Oshwe Region.

the Yaelima. We ought to note in this connection that in the course of our journey [194] through this region we did not observe this anywhere, despite numerous investigations. We therefore believe that an error was made in transmitting the information. The persons involved were probably Ipanga-Batitu who happened to be in the Yaelima region.

584 power to settle disputes. They claim their share of the remuneration from the ndonga. According to the saying -- in archaic language -- botɛ́ wǎ ndonga nd'â dombɛ́, "the power (literally, "the medicine") of the ndonga resides in the judges." Not that the judges themselves have the right or the power to intervene in matrimonial palavers. But they are that many additional witnesses. If the day comes when there is a dispute on the subject of the bride price, especially at the time of a divorce, the ndonga can call on them to help him refresh his memory and thus avoid difficulties. For it can easily happen that after several years the official witness has only a vague and approximate recollection of what was paid. If the judges do not receive anything at the time of payment, they will refuse to give their assistance at the critical moment. It is therefore an intelligent policy to acquiesce to their desires even though strictly speaking they can invoke no real prerogatives.

178
584
● 622 At the present time the colonial government, having established districts and named chiefs, the latter have had attributed to them the right to officially act as ndonga in matrimonial matters, or at least they have taken advantage of the powers given them and done so. In general [111] they summon the judges of the district at the same time, and the matter is entered after a fashion in the register of settlements. The chief's presence as a witness may have some value, since he can provide additional testimony and writes down the amount of the bride price. But his presence, on the other hand, has the disadvantage of involving him in matters which all in all are none of his business. We are not speaking here of cases in which he or some relatives of his are interested parties in the palaver. If he would be content to be a passive witness and enter the transactions that take place, the situation would be perfect.

192
184 It is probable that etymologically the word ndonga is derived from the verb root long, intransitive longam, "to be in order, arranged," transitive longy, "to arrange, make as it should be." In addition to the word ndonga, which is used west of the Luilaka, we find the word bokɔ́lo used among the Boángí and the Boóyá (as well as the Elíngá), and ntombi among the Injɔ́lɔ́. The latter term could be the same word as its homonym which means "spy" and is derived from the verb

583ˣ 431 One must be careful not to confuse this boengo with byiko byǎ nyang'ɛ́y'ɔ̌na, an expression frequently heard. The latter includes any payment to the mother and includes the goat and the nkando as well as the boɛ́ngo discussed above and others. The word used in this case is not byǐkɔ́, singular ǐkɔ́, "porcupine," but rather byiko, singular wiko, "price, value" and derived from the verb -ika, "to set a price."

3) Lokolɛ́: a brother or a cousin of the wife asks for a konga. He beats the gong (lokolɛ́) in order to make noise and thus force the husband to satisfy him. That is how this boɛ́ngo seems to have originated. In practice people simply demand a [147] present. The racket can sometimes last for quite a while. But the elders do not allow the gathering to be disrupted if the husband does not have precisely the gift that would give satisfaction.

4) Bakulá, or botúwá: the woman's brothers stick a piece of the trunk of a banana tree (botúwá) into the ground, so that young relatives of the husband may shoot arrows (bakulá) at it. These are then removed by young members of the wife's family who, at the present time, are sometimes given money -- 5 francs, for instance.

[283] [727] 5) Wambá: prisoner's rope, that is, a rope to which war prisoners were formerly tied, two by two (a system now imitated for prisoners of the colonial law enforcement agencies and administration). In the past the patriarch, or head of the family, demanded a konga or *a knife as indemnity against the possibility that he or members of his* family might be imprisoned as a result of a war caused by the woman [177] [692] being married. Nowadays the chiefs set up by the administration and given the rights of family heads by the European authority have also claimed rights to this boɛ́ngo whose significance, purpose, and even name have completely changed as a result. It is now called bonyogɔ́la w'ɔ̂nkonji, "the chief's chain." It is clear that this payment has become something which it was not meant to be.

6) Etáka: a heavy wooden fork, fastened to the neck. This is a present claimed by the mother, by one of the father's other wives, or by a wife of the woman's brother, against the possibility that they may have to undergo torture by means of the fork because of the women whose bride price is being paid. This could happen if she were

Nkundu

177 Although even St. Thomas teaches that the only natural authority
is that of the head of the family, European legislation has, through
ignorance, completely abolished the rights of the native family head;
the wife is freed from all ties and is thus abandoned to licentiousness.
Through a legal fiction, clan law has gone over into the hands of the
"recognized native courts of justice," which, however, have just as
much to do with the clan court as a policeman with a father. The
communization of trade, education, and the rearing of the young, as
is demonstrated to us by Russia, would revolutionize our society far
less than our installation of these so-called native courts of justice has
done in the Congo. Education and correction have been replaced by
punishment. Politics, which have begun to play such an all-important
602 role in our society, had /155/ almost no importance in Nkundo society.
613 The neighboring clans were all connected with each other through
blood relationship, intermarriage, or friendship ties. Only when there
was a struggle against a foreign and common enemy did politics have
a role to fulfill. And then the same order of rank was observed among
the clans as was already indicated for the members of a single clan.

Here also, biased or romantic products of our ideas about barbarism
177 have adapted these so-called intertribal wars to the need that we felt,
728 to civilize the natives at any cost. These wars were not to be com-
622 pared with our European wars, in which a mass of people are slaughtered.
In the Congo, no sooner had wounded or dead fallen on both sides than
the chiefs were already congregated to conclude a peace treaty.
Here again, we meant to respect the political organization of the
natives by the creation of chieftainships and native chiefs, who were
to form the political-administrative link between the native clans and
the European higher administration. Such chiefs were totally unknown
in native society. Together with the establishment of the native courts,
the establishment of chieftainships gave the death blow to the actual
social organization of the Nkundo-Mongo. The very fact that these
institutions are territorial demonstrates clearly that here no ordinary
shifting of power has taken place, but simply an elimination of the
traditional power in favor of a new colonial power.

Indeed, where formerly the "customary rightful chief" was sought
177 out, even though it was sometimes only a formality, the new formula
622 of the "sectors" has relieved the higher administration from this care
too. And it is only to be hoped that this new formula will at least do
away with the legal fiction that the "chiefs" are actually "something
native," so that they may be classified for once and for all in the

177 622 category of civil servants. In this manner they would fall under the written law and could be obliged to practice monogamy, whereas now nearly all of the "native chiefs" are precisely the maintainers and promoters of polygamy. If this had /156/ been enforced from the start, then polygamy, instead of spreading, would have virtually disappeared from the native society.

5. Splitting of the Clan

613 After all that has been said before, it must be rather apparent how an autonomous clan can split up and, thereby, form two autonomous clans.

When a clan has expanded too far, its leaders cross over the boundaries of blood relationship, and offenses against the law of exogamy occur. When such offenses are multiplied, further separation is gradually aimed at to make marriages possible. Such a situation between two parts of the same clan, who are striving for "legal autonomy," is called lonkana, a term that signifies that unlawful relations exist between the two. It generally occurs between member groups that have the same male ancestor, but not the same female ancestor—that is, they are issue from different wives of the same founder.

Another cause of splitting is the voluntary or obligatory withdrawal of one of the members. When he establishes himself outside, begets a sizeable progeny, and acquires a patrimony of his own, the relations with his own clan become less frequent; and the separated fraction gradually begins to settle smaller lawsuits, to maintain its own graveyard, to bury the umbilical cords of its children in its own territory, to take on its own name, and to refer to its own founder.

Often also at the source of this estrangement lies the refusal of a certain fraction of the clan to submit to the authority of the clan members.

6. Legal Dependents

613 614 608 Until now we have spoken only of the ethnic clan: of the members who belong to it through descent. They /157/ are the sole bearers of

614 each other to employ their own messengers. When the messenger
621 of settlement II arrives here, he first calls on the messenger of
624 the nuclear kinship group Bosɔ́bɛ́ (No. 19) and then to Impínga
202 (No. 26). The messenger from Bosɔ́bɛ́ calls on his relatives in
settlement VI, who are the nuclear kinship group Mbelo-Mmuna
(No. 22), while the messenger from Impínga-Ndongɔ́ formerly
had to call on the group Bommambo which is now extinct.

Settlement V consisted of three different groups. Bolíma, the group of the father, had its own messenger; however, he only received the messages without having to pass them on, which is also the case with all these last groups of the village. Both neighbors had their own messenger. The messenger from settlement I called on the nuclear kinship group Bolesangi, his relatives; the messenger from settlement III went to his relatives of the nuclear kinship group Ituli.

There were also two messengers in the last hamlet, but reports on this subject are insufficient since the nuclear kinship group Bommambo has been extinct for a long time.

178 All the settlements just mentioned have a common
614 characteristic: formerly, at important dance festivals, their
621 young men performed together in one joint *corps de ballet*. The
595 population was decimated as a result of the rigors of [201] the
[161] occupation period and also as a result of the population move-
ment into the cities. Consequently, there are not enough young
people any more, and I with II, III with IV, and V with VI act
together. Thus, in each case we find Ngelé and Nkoto united
in one ballet. Although these groups have also been scattered
[361] as a result of the new settlement pattern (next to the highway),
the old organizational structure has been preserved, and the
young people do not hesitate to walk the long distance to the
practice field every day so they can dance in the old groupings.

621 All of Isangi, all three kinship groups, have one common
624 village chief, the Nkúmû, with an *iyolo nsáka* who gets the meet-
622 ings started, and a village court with its judges. There are other
groups which correspond to Isangi (31), but have more than one

---

31. See Müller, *Fürstentum*, pp. 73 ff., 76 ff., 133 f.

621 nkúmú. They, too, however, have only one man who opens a
624 meeting and one investigating judge. Only one of the nkúmú
622 has the function of judge. Consequently, we may say that even
if the office is divided, the group still forms a unit as far as
jurisdiction and political organization are concerned.

Among these groups we usually can observe a balanced
614 system of distribution as far as titles and offices are concerned.
621 It may either be predominantly democratic, as in Isangi, so
622 that all groups may lay claim to titles and offices, or it may be
624 oligarchic, as in Mbanga, where all power is vested in the old-
est group of sons. In most cases, oligarchical groups tend to
disintegrate; the younger groups attempt to free themselves from
the rule. Democratic villages usually have a greater degree of
cohesion.

In Isangi the small kinship groups of Ndongó (Nos. 2-4), Ngonga (No. 5), and Boyeke (Nos. 14-18) formerly had the privilege of furnishing the nkúmú. This practice has been discarded, and the honor is now rotated among the six local groups of the village. Only the small kinship groups of the Bolíma, Besilo, and Njúmokuli are excluded.

The six settlement communities of Isangi and similar
621 groupings found in other villages are parts of a village which
614 in my opinion are best described by the term hamlet [Weiler].

These are units which are predominantly intentional in nature. In spite of their functional weakness, they have survived even in the new settlement although they may not dwell together in a block. As a result of reintegration, they have lost their function as conscription district for the dancing groups in Isangi (see p. 23), but even at the present time they still represent the most important grouping in Isangi; we were aware of it before identifying any of the kinship groups. It is expected that they will lose their importance if Isangi does not return to
its original site. By nature less closely connected with the or-
[622] ganization of the village of their husbands, the women have
become the point of departure for the new order of things (e.g.,
for dance groups) which fulfills the requirements of the new
settlement conditions.

624 781 513 An *nkumu* can never walk alone, but must always be accompanied by others, and on no occasion whatsoever may he run. Even though he never washes, if he is out in the rain and sees everybody else hurrying for shelter, he will not quicken his pace. His movements must be slow and deliberate. The *nkumu* never sleeps alone; waking and sleeping he is attended by someone. But apart from this he is free to go where he wishes. 514 516 The *nkumu* is not indiscriminate, as others may be, in his private habits, but must use his own latrine at all times, and if travelling must have his own latrine in each place where he stays. The inland *nkumu* frequently take advantage of this custom by hiding their accumulated brass rods at the bottom of a freshly dug latrine. Such hidden wealth will be acquired by an inheritor at the decease of the *nkumu*.

In speaking of himself the *nkumu* never refers to himself by his title but always by his own name.

624 392 562 565 572 The couch upon which the *nkumu* sits or reclines during the daytime may not be shared indiscriminately with others, but those permitted to sit upon it at the same time as the *nkumu* are *nsami*, women, and Batwa. The reservation of this couch for the use of the *nkumu* is not surprising, but the exceptions are. One explanation given was that women and Batwa are not *bato ba ase*, persons in particular; they do not count for anything in the social life of the community; they are not really 'people'. Another explanation was that they do not pay fines, this being tantamount to saying that they are exempt from laws and therefore cannot break laws even by doing what would be for others an illegal act. The stool of the *nkumu*, however, has closer restrictions in the manner of its use. Besides the *nkumu* only two others may sit upon it, *Nsese* and *Mponge*. It is always carried by one of his wives, though not necessarily by any special one.

624 262 763 264 The restrictions concerning the food of the *nkumu* are many. He may eat food only in his own house, or, if on a journey, in one given over for his use. He may not enter another house to partake of food even if invited to do so. Likewise the *nkumu* may not eat in the forest, or eat or drink anywhere along the road when on a journey, but must wait until he arrives at a village and has a house at his disposal in order to partake of food and drink. He never 'sleeps with hunger'; even if a wife or child should die causing him great sorrow he must partake of food before going to sleep. The Bongindu *nkumu* must never go into mourning, and death must be ignored by them, but the inland *nkumu* are permitted to mourn. All food carried to an *nkumu* must be covered, this rule even applying to water. Food must not be placed in a basket with high sides (*ekoko*), but in a shallow one (*enyelo*), and no food that has been kept overnight in a pot may be eaten by him: swelling of the abdomen will result. Various foods are taboo, among these all fast-moving snakes, though slow-moving ones may be eaten; light-coloured palm-nuts may not be eaten, and a variety of yam known as *nsaliki* is shunned, for it is with the tough stems of the *nsaliki* that the dying body of the *nkumu* will be bound to ensure the sitting posture necessary for burial.

624 623 628 Among regulations roughly classed as social, we have already covered several in references above, and have referred to the *nkumu* in council. It may be added here that he is expected to agree with the majority of the councillors and not fall out with them. The rules affecting the court of the *nkumu* are accompanied by severe penalties. There must not be any fighting; if anger is aroused to the point of blows the antagonists

614 He represents the A-group in the council of elders of the village
and of the other large units. Since no members of the group
[672] are considered capable of conducting affairs, all the legal
transactions which they undertake are treated as though they had
been sanctioned by the patriarch. To a large extent the members
of the group may represent one another. In the absence of the
elder, a younger member may act as the representative of the
● [623] group at council meetings. When the senior member dies, his
function will be taken over by the next oldest member of the
group.

An A-group will split up only through internal conflicts
614 which cannot be bridged or through a large population increase.
602 The newly-formed A-groups continue to maintain a close rela-
tionship which, at first, is much closer than among the B-groups
whose A-groups have split much earlier. In the higher ranks
cohesion after the split diminishes only gradually; thus many
gradations develop in the feeling of cohesion. These gradations
could not be even approximately reproduced in a diagram with
any degree of exactitude. There is no formula by which the
split takes place, as there is, for example, among the Tallensi (13)

13. Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship*,
p. 34 f.

where it is determined by a certain number of generations.
614 Theoretically the A-groups are "eternal." The A-groups are
596 subdivided into small families. Within the polygynous families
592 nuclear families [*Familienkerne*] (14) have a semi-independent

14. Thurnwald, *Menschliche Gesellschaft*,
Vol. 4, p. 12.

position economically. Each wife has her own house. A husband's wives and the wives of his sons have their houses within
the same homestead. As the master of the homestead, the
father has an open shelter where the men spend their time and
[768] hold their meetings. Upon the death of the master of the

614 It is the task of the messengers to transmit all important mes-
621 sages to the other groups in accordance with a precise plan;
202 this is particularly true regarding the invitations to the meetings
624 of the village council with the nkúmú. At the same time they
inform the other groups as to the program of the meeting. The
first messenger calls on the messenger of the other community;
the old men are gathered at the latter's house in order to re-
ceive and to discuss the message. The messenger of this com-
munity, in turn, departs for the next in line. As a result of
this practice the messenger and his home became one of the
centers of social life.

621 The same uniformity is found in community II. Here
614 we can also see the engangala, the meeting place of the village
361 Isangi and of its branch villages. The meeting place is an open
623 space in which stands a short tree with a broad crown. The rep-
resentatives of the several villages gather in the shade of this
tree since one of the open men's houses could not accommodate
all of them. The senior of the nuclear kinship groups Mpia
(No. 14), Nsambi (No. 15), and Liengo (No. 16) has his house
on this spot which is situated on the border of the territory be-
longing to these three groups. The elder of Mpia, however, is
the messenger for the hamlet of Boyeke; he may of course be
identical with the "elder on the engangala."

614 Cohesion within the third settlement community was also
621 so strong that it employs only one messenger. The kinship sub-
group Nsambdafili which is concentrated in this hamlet is said to
consist of the descendants of an illegitimate child of the daughter
of the village founder (see Diagram 1). As is the case in many
[782 other villages, it is therefore entrusted with the office of the
624] bosáai, who carries out the sacrifice of human beings and ani-
mals on the proper occasions.

614 The three communities just described are relatively
621 homogeneous groups; the three following ones are quite hetero-
624 geneous. The two groups of hamlet IV belong to the kinship sub-
202 groups Iyolo and Mbo. In contrast to the kinship subgroups Lovendo
and Basilo, they regard themselves as sufficiently different from

THE *NKUMU* OF THE TUMBA

RITUAL CHIEFTAINSHIP ON THE MIDDLE CONGO

H. D. BROWN

10| THE tribes living round Lake Tumba, a lake some thirty-five miles long by twelve wide lying north of Lake Leopold II (approximately 0° 50′ south latitude, [133] and 18° east longitude) and draining into the Congo River at the confluence of the Ubangi, lack cohesion and show a considerable variety of custom and language. But they are known collectively as Tumba, the Government adaptation of the Native term *Ntomba*. Most of them are found to the east of the lake, the whole group numbering perhaps little more than forty to fifty thousand at the present time, though [747] there is evidence that the last twenty years have seen a great decrease in population. European occupation of this area goes back barely fifty years, Protestant missions having been established for about the same length of time. The first mission post [77] was established at Ikoko on the north-east shore of the lake, one of the villages of a group known as Bonginda. In pursuing this investigation particular attention has been given to the practices of this group, but mention is occasionally made where considerable differences have been found elsewhere.

105 13 The Tumba are agricultural, hunting, and fishing people. Their country is flat and swampy with dense forests, and there are many watercourses flowing into Lake Tumba. There are occasional small, but swampy plains, and one such area, more open, with quite wide stretches of prairie, is a haunt of buffalo. The forests are fairly well supplied with game, and the swamps, streams, and lakes with fish. A heavy rainfall and no distinct dry season make agriculture reasonably easy and famine unknown. Every family has its plantation of manioc, the staple diet, which is supplemented by plantains and bananas. The people make their own tools, formerly smelting their own iron for this purpose, are fairly skilful at making dug-out canoes, engage in weaving raffia and making mats out of split cane, and are efficient at pottery production.

624 10| 178 The role of the *nkumu* in the socio-religious activities of the community is one of the most interesting features of Tumba life. As a result of European contact the ceremonies connected with the *nkumu* are rapidly disappearing, but it has been possible to collect considerable information from the older men and women among whom the details are still vividly remembered.[1] The following report refers to the period previous to European occupation and control, a time within the memory of a large number of people, but already sufficiently remote to become a matter of hearsay before the lapse of many more years.

696 [773] An understanding of the place of the *nkumu* among the Tumba requires a glance at the tribal organization. According to the people themselves, they migrated westward, and coming into these parts chose land for themselves. Among the several

---

[1] In *My Children of the Forest*, New York, 1924, pp. [illegible], Andrew F. Hensey has briefly outlined some of the items of interest observed among the *nkumu* of the district adjacent to that of the present study. These more detailed notes are, however, timely if a record is to be preserved that approaches to accuracy.

516 invading groups of kinsfolk there was always one who was considered as the family head, and this man could claim the title of *[illegible]*, the owner of the land. Round this man the rest of the members of the family group clustered, and he had the general direction of their affairs. He could scarcely be termed a chief, having a paternal oversight rather than exercising any wide authority demanding organizing ability and political astuteness. The succession of *[illegible]* runs collaterally through younger brothers in the first place; hence if a first-born male happens to hold that position, the succession among his younger brothers is in the order of their birth. When these have all died the succession passes to the next generation. If all the males of a group die, it is possible for a daughter's son to leave his father's side in order to assume the position of *[illegible]* on his mother's side.

A *[illegible]* can delegate his duties as head to another member of the family, who is then termed *[illegible]*, the husband of the settlement. For such a privilege payment is generally made to the *[illegible]*. Round these *[illegible]* and their immediate kinsmen others gathered, forming, it may be, another section of the same settlement, known then as an *[illegible]*, or, if numerous, another settlement.[1]

624 The *[illegible]* (or *[illegible]*) hears and judges cases that come to him, aided [593] always by a group of elders, and directs the activities of the settlement. However, this does not entirely satisfy the Tumba; they want an *nkumu* also. The *nkumu* is chosen, not by the whole settlement, but by a single village, or it may be even one *[illegible]* of a village. If the villages of a settlement were without an *nkumu* it would generally, but not necessarily, be the *[illegible]* of the *[illegible]* which would lead off by seeking one out. The group desiring an *nkumu* are known as the *[illegible]*, and they look about for a man of the same tribe but not of the same settlement or village, an outsider. He must be a man of some wealth, for actually he will buy his right of authority and pay heavily for it. If the man who is approached accepts, he is known from then on until his accession as *Nkumu Abale*, the term *nkumu* not being used until he is finally invested with the insignia of office, the *[illegible]*, or hat of special design. *Nkumu Abale's* family is known as the *[illegible]*, or *[illegible]*. This man, [556] once having accepted the invitation to become *nkumu*, sets about amassing wealth in the form of wives and brass rods. He may be years about it, but he does not thereby forfeit his right to the office, nor apparently worry those who extended the invitation. Should *Nkumu Abale* die before he is installed as *nkumu*, or should he wish to withdraw from the honour bestowed upon him, the succession passes to another member of his *[illegible]*. The succession would normally pass to the eldest male of the *[illegible]*, [781] but many circumstances may intervene to give it to another member of the family. A dream dreamed by a male of the *[illegible]* to the effect that he should be the *nkumu* is sufficient to give him the right of succession over the eldest male. When asked [681] whether it was common to lie about such a dream having occurred, in order to gain the right of succession, those questioned received the suggestion with emphatic negatives, for this is no time to lie; any man so doing would be sure to die, and the fear of death would deter him from such practice.

---

[1] Where practical, the territorial chiefs set up by the Belgian Colonial Government are men chosen because of their right to be known as *[illegible]* or *[illegible]*. Often, however, the settlements are so small and lacking in cohesion that it has been necessary to set up chiefs arbitrarily over chiefdoms very much larger than were their own hereditary spheres of influence.

fear of death would deter him from such baseness. Another sign of the chosen 624 ●
successor is some untoward experience, such, for example, as finding cowrie shells
(worn by *nkumu*) in a trap in the forest or a net that had been put out to catch
fish.

Nkumu Akulu, whether the first of his line or a man succeeding in the office, bears [293]
the emblems of his rank. He wears an *[illegible]* (a branch of a special bush) stuck into
his belt on the right side and hanging downwards. The special hat, *[illegible]*, worn [292]
by *nkumu* is not yet his to wear, but he wears an ordinary skin hat known as *[illegible]*,
which is the mark of any elder. This hat may be ornamented with feathers if so
desired.

When *Nkumu Akulu* decides that he has acquired sufficient wealth to enable him
properly to claim the right of being made an *nkumu*, he begins his preparatory arrangements. [302]
[illegible], a mixture of charcoal with some sticky substance, is smeared over his
body with plantain leaves. All ornamented clothing is discarded and a single cloth [292]
woven from raffia, and known as *[illegible]*, is worn. He refuses to sit on the benches usually
used and instead sits on the bare earth. All this is explained as an attempt on the [516]
part of the man about to be raised to the office of *nkumu* to be different from others,
a man apart, separate, peculiar, not partaking in the ordinary interests and affairs of
his fellow men.

Nkumu Akulu now leaves his own village accompanied by all his wives and [533
children, and also by a singer, *[illegible]*, who is paid to sing his praises, and by several
male Batwa (pygmies), up to half a dozen in number, known as *[illegible]* because of their 563
duty of blowing gourds and producing sounds which indicate praise of the great 534]
man. This party makes the round of villages wherever relatives are found, and the
announcement is made that *Nkumu Akulu* is about to become an *nkumu*. This 624
pilgrimage accomplished, a 'doctor' (*nkanga*) is visited by the aspirant to office, 741
who seeks by magic to discover whether it is the propitious time for the ceremony of
installation. The whole company retires to the private enclosure at the rear of the 787
house belonging to the *nkanga* chosen, this being the place where he performs his
wonders. The *nkanga* resorts to *[illegible]*, that particular branch of magic which has to
do with reasons for strange and unaccountable phenomena.[1] *Nkumu Akulu* now
seeks some sign as confirmation of his determination to claim his office at this time.
Some native pepper may be wrapped in a leaf or merely covered by it, and left within
sight of all, and upon being opened it may be found to have turned into salt, or perhaps
it may be some earth that is thus turned to salt. Or a cock may be placed upon
Nkumu Akulu's head and covered with a basket and thus left for some time. Upon
removing the basket it may be discovered that an egg has been laid. All such tests, 624
if successful, will be regarded as indications that it really is time for *Nkumu Akulu*
to assume the office of *nkumu*, but if the test fails he will usually go ahead with his
plans anyhow, fearing the shame that would come to him should he go back to his
home after having made the triumphant round of his relatives' houses. However,
should he act thus, and he most certainly will, he knows that his days are numbered,

---

[1] If a man's fields do not produce and he cannot understand why, he will resort to *[illegible]*. If it is suspected, for example, that the trouble is caused by someone making 'medicine', an arrow shaft is put into a small hole in the ground, and as each name is mentioned, the arrow can be pulled out if the person is innocent, but remains stuck fast in the hole at the mention of the guilty name.

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

624 and that he may have no more than a month or perhaps a year in which to live and will surely die speedily.

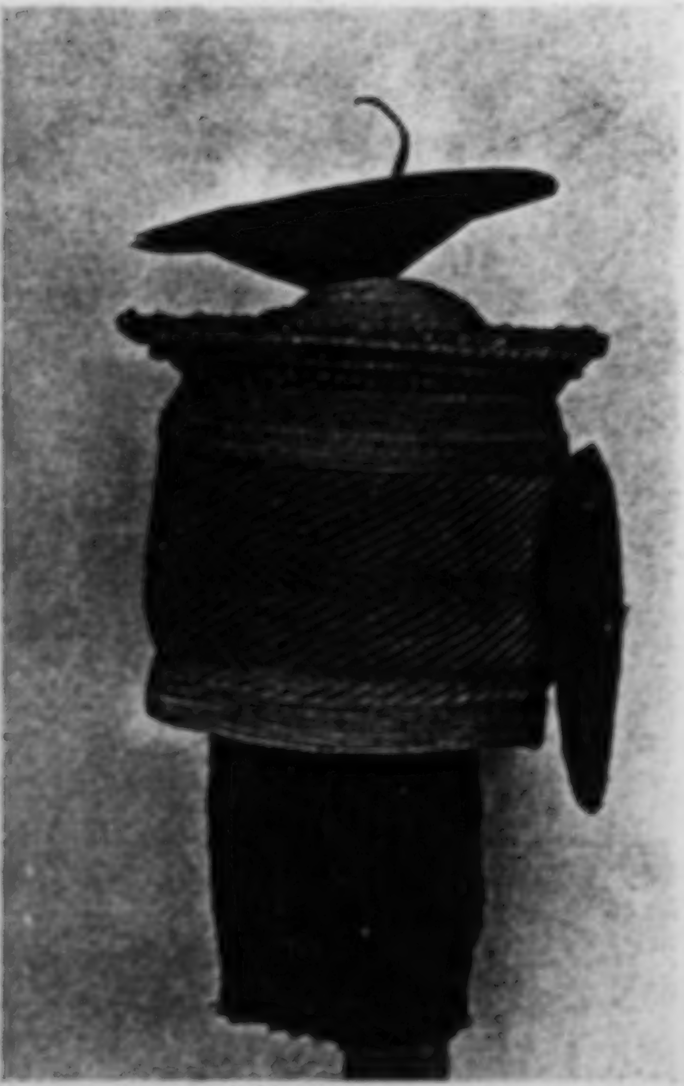
The special objects attaching to the office of *nkumu*, among these the hat, *mpoto*, and stool, *ebata*, are at the same time subject to similar magical acts to determine whether they may be produced for the new *nkumu*'s use. They are not present, being in the possession of the *mulonde* which will appoint him, but are mentioned by name. Apart from the *mpoto*, no further ceremony is required to identify these objects with their future owner.

[302] The *msingo* ended, the *Nkomo Akolo* smears black *mbili* all over his body again, 624 before the rites begin to determine which of his wives is to be known as *Nsomi*, 787 the one who will be closest to her husband throughout his days. For this, magic formulae (*bienzalo*, sing. *enzalo*) are used. All the wives sit round in a circle and the *ekanga* places some irritant such as ground pepper in the eyes of all the women. The wife whose eyes stream most and whose discomfort is also accompanied by a violent shaking of the body is known to be *Nsomi*. Here again, lying is believed to be out [827] of the question, for the shaking of the body is something that is supposed to be impossible of simulation, the real being easily distinguished by all from the false. *Nsomi* is now stripped of all clothing and her body smeared by the *ekanga* with yellow clay on one side, and with white on the other. A belt of leaves is put round her waist 624 and a small bit of cloth between the legs with each end attached to the belt. Near by 784 a gourd with 'medicine' in it has been standing ready for the next step in the ceremonies, and this is now smeared with white clay, a parrot's feather stuck in the neck, and handed to *Nsomi*, who receives it in one hand. Into the other hand is put a section of plantain stalk, into one end of which has been stuck a parrot's feather. A third feather is placed in her mouth so that she cannot speak, greet anyone, or eat. She is now tied with a cord which is held by one of the young men attending *Nkomo Akolo*. At this point of the procedure the *ekanga* states his price [79] for his work, which will be in the neighbourhood of one hundred brass rods, worth 435 to-day about fifty francs, but formerly double that amount. The future *nkumu*, accompanied as before, leaves for the village of the *mulonde*. *Nsomi* starts off at a tremendous pace, for she is now imbued with a sort of frenzied strength, and for this reason has been tied up and put in charge of a strong young man, otherwise she would be off so fast that no one could catch her, and would go into the forest, where she would live for days unseen.

624 In the village of the *mulonde* the party all sit in an *elanga* belonging to one of the elders. This is the place where the Tumba men really live—their houses are just [343] sleeping and cooking establishments, but the *elanga*, having a roof for shade and no walls, is the place where the men congregate and spend their leisure time. It is also 342 the site of the village smithy, which takes up one end. Here, then, *Nkomo Akolo* and his party sit for a day and a night, and neither he nor *Nsomi* may eat food or drink [562] wine during this period. Games are played by the *mulonde*—mock battles, dances, and [577] songs chiefly of battle, and before the first streaks of dawn appear the group in the *elanga* begins to march up and down the village singing.

At dawn the whole party, accompanied by a large crowd, make their way to a place in the bush where there is an elevation of some sort. Here *Nkomo Akolo* climbs up and takes his stand, accompanied by *Nsomi*. Now the *mulonde* choose the *Bilaja*

624
282
285



[illegible], the hat worn by the nkumu as the symbol of his office

[facing page 454]

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

Now the molembe choose the Bilonga

● 624 [535] *Ododo*, a young woman of their own number, who will thereafter be known by this name. She is an official cymbalist and must always begin beating before others may join in. In reality the members of the *molendo* have decided beforehand who shall be chosen for this position, and the woman of their choice now takes her stand on the elevation together with *Nkumu Akolo* and his wife, *Nkum*.

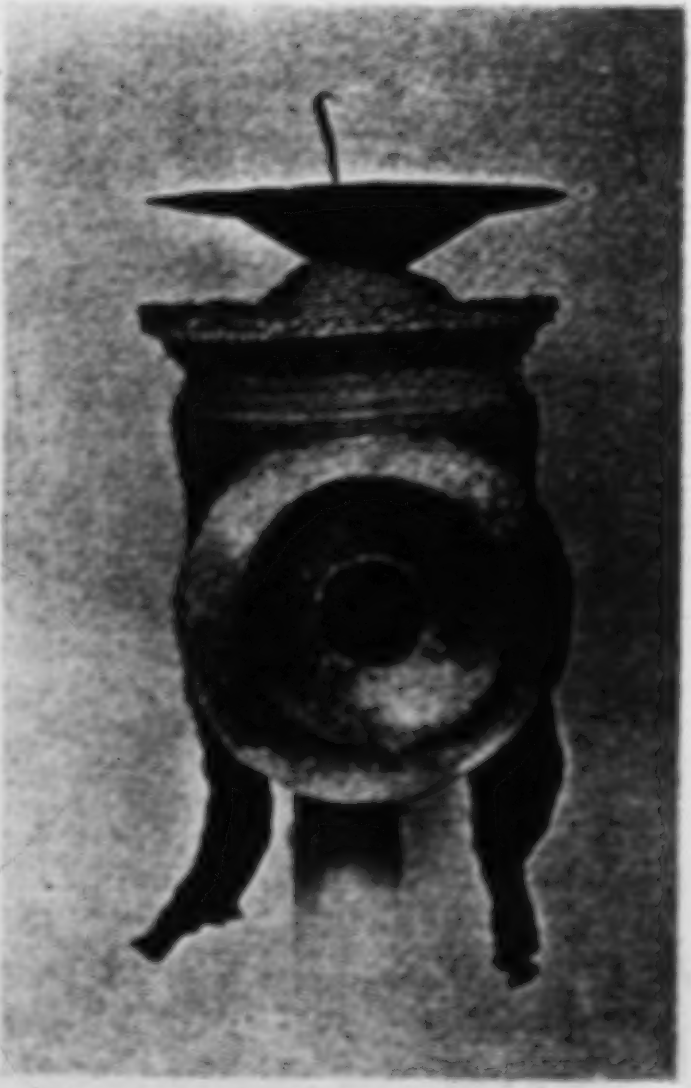
624 282 The member of the *molendo* whose right it is by inheritance to place the *[illegible]* (see Plates) upon the head of the *nkumu* now comes forward with it. This hat, about twelve inches in height, is woven of raffia and cylindrical in shape, but the brim, instead of being at the base, encircles the top of the crown. It is usually decorated with a burnished brass plate attached to the front, and perhaps a second one behind, and in these modern days it is quite in style to hang a row of safety pins from the 'brim' or 'halo' encircling the crown. When the *nkumu* is the first of his line, the *[illegible]* is purchased by him, but in the case of succession it is that used by the deceased predecessor, and has been kept by the *molendo* until this time. It is his badge of office and sign of authority. The bringing out of the *[illegible]* is an occasion for 624 merriment. *Nkumu Akolo* calls for his *[illegible]*, but the *molendo* tease and tantalize him and ask for money. The amount is a fixed sum, but *Nkumu Akolo* pays out at first but a few rods, is teased for more, and so on until he has provided the total amount, usually about one hundred. The member of the *molendo* whose duty it is to place the *[illegible]* on the head of the *nkumu* begins to tease the crowd. He chooses various names by which the *nkumu* might be called, everybody knowing all the time what his name must be. He asks the people, 'Shall we call him so-and-so?' 'We refuse', reply the people. 'Or so-and-so?' 'We refuse.' And each time names whereby *nkumu* are known are repeated. Finally the correct name is given, as, 'Shall we call him *Nkumu Lokombo?*' and the crowd roars its approval, 'Ooooo!' The *[illegible]* then being placed on *Nkumu Akolo*'s head he now becomes *Nkumu* and leaps down among the crowd, who bear him off to their village with rejoicing. In the choice of names, the first *nkumu* in a village is known as *Nkumu Lokombo*. If there is another section of the village with an *nkumu* of its own, he must take another name, such as *Nkumu Ijali Bolanga*. Successors must always take the names of their predecessors whatever their own personal names may be. An *nkumu* chosen by a *molendo* [553] which is also the *[illegible] molendo*, the hereditary owner of the land, is known as *Nkumu e Bitlad* (*Nkumu* of the lands), for he occupies a more important position than his fellows, and is thus the support which holds up the whole group of *nkumu* chosen by other *molendo*.

624 392 The *nkumu* is borne off to his *esaga*, his residence, which in this case is temporary, to be replaced later by a permanent one. The *esaga* comprises the whole unit of buildings for the *nkumu*, including his own sleeping quarters, the houses for his wives, the *ebanga* where he spends the daylight hours, and a row of houses for his children. His *ebanga* and his own sleeping quarters are screened from the public gaze, making [351] a place known as *ipaso*. In the case of a new *nkumu* the screen is temporary, but when the permanent *esaga* is built, a permanent *ipaso* is made by planting umbrella trees (*[illegible]*, sing. *[illegible]*) in a rectangular or circular fashion. Here, sheltered 624 from intrusion, the *nkumu* remains in retirement (*andi*) for a month.* While he remains

---

* *Andi* refers to the sitting of a hen on eggs, the seclusion of a woman after childbirth, or of the *nkumu* at this juncture of the ceremonies.

624
292
285



[illegible], the hat worn by the [illegible] as the symbol of his office

[facing page 435]

7: Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

624 them, *Nsese* is a very prominent figure. Still arrayed as previously described, she sits outside the *nsengo* near the road on the special stool of the *nkumu*. Nobody may pass her with food, a humane law, considering that she must spend the day fasting. If anyone attempts to do so she catches the unlucky individual, helps herself to as much of his food as she wants, the victim meanwhile begging her to be merciful and leave him a small portion, and the booty is taken into the *ipama*. During this sentinel duty *Nsese* must still keep the parrot's feather in her mouth and maintain silence, so, in case she catches an unsuspecting bearer of food, the remonstrance and argument are all one-sided.[1] After the first day *Nsese* no longer sits outside the *nsengo* but goes from place to place in the village, choosing spots where people may least expect her, hoping thus to reap a bigger harvest for her pains. This is kept up for eight days, which comprise two Tumba 'weeks' of three days' work and one of rest. The rest-day is appropriately named *bsime bo nsese* after the duty of *Nsese* of sitting doing nothing day by day. The eight days of this ceremony over, *Nsese* lays aside her gourd and plantain stalk, which are placed at the foot of the first central supporting post of the *ekongo* on entering. She is given a fresh coating of chalk and three coloured [554] stripes are drawn the length of her back and down her arms. She still remains close to the *nkumu*.

[566] Various personalities are connected with the *nsengo* of an *nkumu*. The *Bomb* is a male slave, clothed in a skin breech cloth, whose duty it is to receive callers at the *ipama* before admitting them to the presence of the *nkumu*.

624 *Mpanga* is the name taken by the wife first married by the *nkumu*. From henceforth she no longer accompanies her husband, and their cohabitation ceases unless the 595 *nkumu* is willing to pay her each time the sum of one hundred rods. But the *nkumu* is obliged to eat all food she cooks for him even though they have a quarrel. *Mpanga* does not honour her husband with the special greeting accorded to *nkumu*, but greets her husband and all other *nkumu* as she would ordinary people.[2] The second wife of an *nkumu* must assume the name of *Iyomba Angamba*, but no importance attaches to her position.

629 Among the Tumba generally, apart from the Bonginda, a woman is chosen from the *nsanda* to bear the title *Balamba Itima i Ekope* (*Balamba*, the 'raison d'être' of 516 the *ekope*). She is, it would seem, a symbolical figure, a reminder that the *ekope* owes its existence to the *nsanda* of which this woman becomes the titular head. While the *nkumu* is still in seclusion the chosen woman is taken to the open space between the *ipama* and the row of sons' houses, known as the *nsela*. Here, in the presence of the assembled crowd she is praised by being addressed, '*Balamba Itima, bosso!*' and the crowd exclaims, '*Bosso!*'[3] Strips of leopard skin, about eighteen

---

[843] [1] It is interesting to note that there are some exceptions to those who may be caught and robbed by *Nsese* during her eight days of watching. No member of the *nsanda* may be thus treated, twins and their parents are exempt, and also all children born to the *nkumu* before he attains office, these being named *nsese*.

[595 545] [2] Besides *Mpanga*, a mother of twins is also exempt from according these special salutations, and among some groups the father of twins is also exempt.

[3] This ceremony gives husbands of any village, whether they are members of the *nsanda* or not, the opportunity to single out a favourite wife for special honour, for at this time any woman may be given the name of *Balamba*, though not with the significant complement of *Itima i Ekope*. The ceremony is similar, is performed at the *nsela*, but besides receiving the strips of leopard skin, she must be divested of all her clothing, a new *loinlet* and *mpanga* are then placed round her, and the strips of skin then attached to the new belt.

624

inches long and two inches in width, numbering up to seven are brought and attached to the back of her *lombo* by folding them over it.[1] [596]

The first male child which was born to the *nkumu* before he acceded to the office is known as *Iyomi Nkoi*. If he has none, then the right to this name passes to the first male child to be born to his younger brothers. Any child born on the day that the *nkumu* is given his *nsombo* is also called *Iyomi*; if a male he will be *Mole Iyomi*, if a female, *Mpamba Iyomi*.[2] These children must not see the *nkumu* until they are old enough to know his name and greet him properly, and so they are taken to some village other than the one in which he has his residence. When such children are considered old enough to take up residence in the village of the *nkumu* it is an occasion for revelry, a big dance, *ebale*, is held, and there is a feast. The child, *Iyomi*, is brought to the village of the *nkumu* with rejoicing, and this is a signal for everybody desiring to do so to help himself to anything belonging to the *nkumu*. Goats and fowls may be killed and eaten, sugar-cane rooted up, bananas, plantains, and other crops growing near by seized for food. Because of this custom the *nkumu* will take precautions and send his livestock, at least, off to some other village in order not to lose more than he can help.[3] 852 624 [551]

The *eyembe*, the singer or singers, and the *atoti*, the praisers already mentioned, remain with the *nkumu* during his period of seclusion. Added to these is *atembe lokombi*, the bearer of the *lokombi*, a stringed instrument played with the fingers, similar to a bass viol in its general appearance. 624 533 534

Inside the *ijumu* during the seclusion of the *nkumu*, few people have the right of entrance, but as one enters the *elongo* where the daylight hours are spent, one finds the couch of the *nkumu* on the left and towards the rear. On the same side and towards the front are seated the *atembe lokombi* and the *eyembe*. *Nome's* couch is to the right of, and parallel to, that of the *nkumu*, but still to the left of the centre posts. To the right of her couch is the fire in the centre, and beyond the fire on the right side is a couch for the *mamwi*, likewise somewhat to the rear, with a space in front for the *atoti*. 624 342 352

The month's seclusion being completed, the *nkumu* prepares to buy the homage of the village. *Nome* gets rid of her decorative colours, and assumes ordinary attire, becoming like any other of the wives, and is ready to take up all the usual duties of a wife, whether in the garden or at the house. The people are called to come and render to the *nkumu* their homage and praise. The men come to the *ijumu*, are admitted to the presence of their *nkumu* and seat themselves on the bare earth with their legs wide apart and facing him. They then, without uttering a word, greet him in the 624 576

---

[1] The *lombo* is a belt which used to be worn by Tumba women encircling the buttocks, and this was used to attach their only garment, the *ekoto* among the [illegible], this being a short loin cloth, or an *ampaga* among other groups, this being a woven cloth only worn between the legs.

[2] When a new *nkumu* assumes office, one already in office will take this opportunity of getting more of his sons named *Iyomi*. He takes them to the outside of the new *nkumu*, and having placed a bracelet of cowrie shells on the right wrist, and sometimes one on the right ankle, asks the member of the *nkumu* whose right it is to give away the *nsombo* to name them now *Bayomi* (pl. of '*Iyomi*'). This man will then take each a son, and presenting him to the people introduce him by giving him a name, and following with praise as, '*Oto Iyomi Lomen, botoo*' and the crowd replies with the customary '*Boo*'. [591]

[3] It is well to remember that not every individual bearing names associated with the institution of the *nkumu* is directly concerned with it. With the practice of 'resurrecting' dead relatives by naming new-born children after them, such names as these become widespread. [551]

624 customary manner, with a double clap. They are told by the *nkumu* to repeat the salutation, and having done so may be asked to do it a third time. They are then
576 given a few rods in payment. If the *nkumu* sees some member of his own *ekopo* coming to greet him, he gives him special honour by ordering him to lie flat on his back instead of merely sitting, and at the end he gives him a larger gift of rods than the others receive. In this way the *nkumu* may pay out a great many rods to those who thus render him homage. Ordinarily a man will receive five or six, but one
624 specially honoured may be given as many as twenty. From the beginning the *nkumu*
[556] has to pay heavily for his honours, and only a wealthy man can hope to attain them. For this reason a lawful successor, if not wealthy, may be glad to give up his rights to another more fortunate member of the *ekopo*. Homage having been paid, word is sent out that the *nkumu* is about to come forth, and crowds begin to gather. A coat
[302] of red camwood powder mixed with oil is smeared over the *nkumu*, the brass plates are attached to his *montole*, and he is attired in all his finery. The crowd outside
[533] dances, and when tired sits on the ground to await the rest of the ceremony. Inside, the *lokole* begins to play, the *eyembe* to sing, and the Batwa *[illegible]* to praise the *nkumu* by uttering an ululating sound. Accompanied by *Nsese*, *Bikpe*, and the *nsomi*, the *nkumu* himself begins to dance. The temporary protecting screen round the *ijemo* is pulled down, and he is seen by all. After his dance he retires again and the crowd disperses.

When *Nkoma Akala* becomes *nkumu* he changes everything possible so as to
[481] become different from other men. Thus he assumes a different gait, a sort of bow-legged waddle, a different tone of voice, and it seems that under this influence even his facial features undergo a change. Accompanied by his retinue, he visits the various villages where he has friends and relatives in order to greet them. This over, the musicians wish to take their departure and are paid for their services by the *nkumu*.

624 At the conclusion of these ceremonies the *nkumu* with his *ekopo* and the *mokonde* negotiate concerning their obligations to one another. If the *nkumu* is the first of his
596 line, he and his *ekopo* are given land to cultivate, while succeeding *nkumu* simply take over the land originally assigned. The *mokonde* call their *nkumu* their wife, and they
621 designate themselves husband. They thus reckon the relationship between *mokonde* and *ekopo* to be that of husband and wife, and, as in an actual marriage, there must be an interchange of obligations performed in a spirit of harmony. Also, as in marriage a wife may be divorced, so an *nkumu* with his *ekopo* could be sent off to their home and the arrangement terminated. It not infrequently happened that as strangers the *ekopo* fell out with their hosts and if such a disagreement could not be righted they might be refunded the payments with which they had purchased their rights, and sent off home.

224 Among the reciprocal obligations of *mokonde* and *ekopo* are included the sharing of certain animals and birds killed in the hunt, among which are the leopard and
624 elephant. All killed, whether male or female, must be divided. Of certain other
621 animals, including the wild pig, antelope, and buffalo, if a female, no portion is given, if a male, the required portion is presented. These reciprocal obligations are limited
546 strictly to the *ekopo* and *mokonde*; if others outside of these groups wish to present the *nkumu* with meat to honour him or to curry favour, they may do so, but they are under

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

no compulsion. If one of the contracting parties fails to fulfil its pledges in this matter 224
of giving part of the kill, or in anything else, the aggrieved party may call the council 624
together. This consists not only of members of the *mokonde* and *ekope*, but of all 596
elders of the village or villages connected with this particular one. The party judged
in the wrong, whether *ekope* or *mokonde*, will be fined, the injured party receiving its 621
share, and both parties will be charged to live together harmoniously and observe
their contracts.

The power of the *nkumu* was apparently limited, and did not supersede that of 624
the *nsomo mokonde*. When trials came up, the aggrieved party might go either to the 695
nsomo mokonde or to the *nkumu*. If it was necessary to call the village elders together
about it, both these authorities were present at the hearing. First the young men of
the group were allowed to give their verdict, then the old men, after that *nsomo*
mokonde (or the *mokonzi a ele*), and finally the *nkumu* was given the privilege of the
last word. He would comment on the opinions of each of the judges, criticizing one
young man, commending another, and then giving his own verdict, at which the
group would assent by saying, 'Even so, grandfather'. The whole group of judges
would then fix the fines, a double portion of which went to the *nkumu*.

The actual manual labour which an *nkumu* may do excludes anything endangering 624
life or limb, or requiring agility and speed. He may clear the bush for his gardens:
this is a man's work. He may take part in the building of his houses, but may do
no high work, and, among the inland groups, it is the work of the Batwa to put the [563]
roof on for him. The *nkumu* may also prepare pitfalls for catching game, but cannot
engage in any other type of hunting or do any fishing. Digging a grave is prohibited,
for, as we shall see, everything pertaining to death must be ignored by the *nkumu*.

Other rules affecting the daily life of the *nkumu* may be roughly divided into three:
those affecting his person, those having to do with his food, and social regulations.

One of the great points of observance in the first class of regulations is the impor- 624
tance of the *mamba*. The *nkumu* must on no account be seen during daylight hours 242
with an uncovered head. If he wishes relief from the cumbersome *mamba* he may
take it off in the darkness of his house and put on an ordinary hat made of skins,
and when night falls he may walk where he will bareheaded if he so desires. The
skin hat, known as *losio*, may be made from two animals only, in the case of an [824]
nkumu, one being the *ekalaje*, a species of antelope with light-coloured hair, and the
other the *jado*, an animal resembling a beaver. The skin of the *ekalaje* may be used
by anyone, but the *jado* is reserved for the *nkumu* only with one exception. The skin [859]
of the *jado* may also be used for the carrying strap for infants known as *quamba*,
which is worn over one shoulder in bandolier fashion. For the *nkumu* the skin of
the *jado* is limited to the informal hat, *losio*, and for making into the *ekete*, a pouch
used for carrying small objects and worn like a sporran. As a corollary to the impor-
tance of the *mamba* may be noted the importance attached to the head of the *nkumu*,
which must never be seen uncovered in daylight.

The Bonginda *nkumu* never wash in the daytime, but may wash at night with hot 624
water. The inland *nkumu* never wash. Even the Bonginda *nkumu* never wash their 515
heads, and no *nkumu* ever cuts his hair. If the *nkumu* becomes too greatly incon- [184]
venienced, one of his wives may delouse his head, but only within the privacy of the
house, by the light that enters the one opening.

624 [781] [513] An *nkumu* can never walk alone, but must always be accompanied by others, and on no occasion whatsoever may he run. Even though he never washes, if he is out in the rain and sees everybody else hurrying for shelter, he will not quicken his pace. His movements must be slow and deliberate. The *nkumu* never sleeps alone; waking and sleeping he is attended by someone. But apart from this he is free to go where he wishes. [514] [558] The *nkumu* is not indiscriminate, as others may be, in his private habits, but must use his own latrine at all times, and if travelling must have his own latrine in each place where he stays. The inland *nkumu* frequently take advantage of this custom by hiding their accumulated brass rods at the bottom of a freshly dug latrine. Such hidden wealth will be acquired by an inheritor at the decease of the *nkumu*.

In speaking of himself the *nkumu* never refers to himself by his title but always by his own name.

624 352 [562 565] [572] The couch upon which the *nkumu* sits or reclines during the daytime may not be shared indiscriminately with others, but those permitted to sit upon it at the same time as the *nkumu* are *nkumu*, women, and Batwa. The reservation of this couch for the use of the *nkumu* is not surprising, but the exceptions are. One explanation given was that women and Batwa are not *bato ba ntu*, persons in particular; they do not count for anything in the social life of the community; they are not really "people". Another explanation was that they do not pay fines, this being tantamount to saying that they are exempt from laws and therefore cannot break laws even by doing what would be for others an illegal act. The stool of the *nkumu*, however, has closer restrictions in the manner of its use. Besides the *nkumu* only two others may sit upon it, *Nsese* and *Mpenge*. It is always carried by one of his wives, though not necessarily by any special one.

624 262 [768] [824] The restrictions concerning the food of the *nkumu* are many. He may eat food only in his own house, or, if on a journey, in one given over for his use. He may not enter another house to partake of food even if invited to do so. Likewise the *nkumu* may not eat in the forest, or eat or drink anywhere along the road when on a journey, but must wait until he arrives at a village and has a house at his disposal in order to partake of food and drink. He never "sleeps with hunger"; even if a wife or child should die causing him great sorrow he must partake of food before going to sleep. The Bongindo *nkumu* must never go into mourning, and death must be ignored by them, but the inland *nkumu* are permitted to mourn. All food carried to an *nkumu* must be covered, this rule even applying to water. Food must not be placed in a basket with high sides (*ekoko*), but in a shallow one (*nsanda*), and no food that has been kept overnight in a pot may be eaten by him: swelling of the abdomen will result. Various foods are taboo, among these all fast-moving snakes, though slow-moving ones may be eaten; light-coloured palm-nuts may not be eaten, and a variety of yam known as *nsoko* is shunned, for it is with the tough stems of the *nsoko* that the dying body of the *nkumu* will be bound to ensure the sitting posture necessary for burial.

624 [623] [627] Among regulations roughly classed as social, we have already covered several in references above, and have referred to the *nkumu* in council. It may be added here that he is expected to agree with the majority of the councillors and not fall out with them. The rules affecting the anger of the *nkumu* are accompanied by severe penalties. There must not be any fighting; if anger is aroused to the point of blows the antagonists

must go to the *nsakala* for their fight, this being the location of the houses belong- 624
ing to the sons of the *nkumu*. The penalty for breaking this law is a fine, and if no 689
fine were forthcoming hanging used to be the alternative. If a quarrel arises else-
where and one party wishes to avoid fighting, he may retire to the *nsaga* and thus be
safe. No trees in the *nsaga* may be climbed. There are, however, privileged classes
exempt from all such rules, and these embrace a good many people. Thus, the mother [845]
of twins, twins, Batwa, *nsoni*, and all members of the *ntolende* and *elope* are exempt
from the laws of the *nsaga*. If any of these commit acts which are illegal for those [672]
coming under the law, they are not held guilty, but their actions will not be condoned;
they will be considered breaches of good conduct, and will be dealt with informally; [622]
the parties will be quietly reprimanded, and advised to observe the proprieties of
conduct. For outsiders breaking the laws of the *nsaga*, what corresponds to a warrant
is necessary. It is necessary to catch the culprit in the act and hale him before the [694]
nkumu. The *nkumu* himself cannot do this, nor can any of the *elope*; it must be done
by one of the *ntolende*, and so if the *nkumu* sees someone infringing the law he will
try to get one of the *ntolende* on the spot in a hurry in order to catch the offender.

In war,[7] it is the *ntolwi e ele* who is most active in preparations, but the *nkumu* 624
will accompany his party to battle, keeping well in the rear, and surrounded by good
fighters. He does not wear his *nsambo* but puts on the informal hat. If an *nkumu* were 726
captured, he would never be tortured or killed as were other prisoners, unless he
specifically sought such a fate. He could be ransomed, and his captors would [72]
beseech him to let his people ransom him, but in many cases an *nkumu* would invite
death rather than endure the shame of being yielded up as a prisoner of war.

An *nkumu* is always addressed by a double clap of the hands, and will not reply to 624
anyone rude enough to speak to him first. In answer to the clap he replies with a
word of wisdom expressed in an aphorism or proverb. Such a reply, however, is 576
common to all elders, who have their favourite aphorisms ready for any who pay
them special honour. Anything the *nkumu* says must be answered not by the
customary *ale baile* (even so) which ordinary people use, but with the special word,
biaga, which is reserved exclusively for replying to an *nkumu*, and means the same
thing.

When the hour of death approaches, an *nkumu* is attended by his Batwa. It is a 624
rule that he must not die a natural death, and near the end, while he is still conscious
and can still speak, all "free men" clear out and leave the Batwa to proceed to their 763
task of tying the *nkumu* very tightly with the fibrous yam vines known as *nsaki*. [563]
Often this severe lashing in the sitting posture, known as *iloma*, is sufficient to finish
the *nkumu* off, but sometimes the work is expedited by twisting his neck.[8] Then it
is announced that he is dead, *asikiso*, this being in contradistinction to the customary
phrase *ankwa asaki* used of the death of ordinary people. While the latter means

---

[7] Owing to the lack of tribal cohesion, warfare was not on any considerable scale. The method of warfare consisted in sending groups of young men to fight first, the elders only joining in when one side began to get the worst of the fray. Victors and vanquished in such fights were designated "husband" and "wife" respectively, and members of the one group were free to come and go in the villages of the other, and even to help themselves to food. In former times "husband" and "wife" were supposed to combine against their common foe.

[8] Besides *nkumu*, elderly and rich men, fathers and mothers of twins, and twins are bound in the dead or sitting posture, in contradistinction to the recumbent position which is the one used for ordinary people and slaves. [76]

639

625 literally that the deceased has hanged the heart, the former is used of a tree which leans over and falls from a great cut at its base.

On the announcement of the death, an expert drummer drums out the news.
629 There will be at least four drums of the type known as *lokole*, and a *nsaye*.[1] The four
716 drums are called by the names, *Ejande*, having the 'biggest voice', that is a deep
594 bass note, *Mongye*, having a higher note, *Mongende*, a high pitched note, and *Mankoto*,
202 having a very high penetrating note. To these four drums others are added; if the *nkumu* himself did not possess sufficient, they would be borrowed from the surrounding villages, and their notes matched with those of the first three drums, being beaten with them in their turn. *Mankoto* is beaten simultaneously with *Ejande*, giving a rhythmic tattoo. When the news of the death has been sent out on *Ejande*, the funeral drumming commences, as follows:

539

Mongende.	Botiangana w'Ambe lokolo,
Mongye.	Nsala ikita, otangoanko,
Ejande.	Tokund' ilonga mokoni' a nyama,
	Ombolokoko mosenge,
	Lobanga lolenda moolo,
	Bikoko bilenda loolo.
Nsaye.	Tokilake nkoi nkonge,
	Tokilake nkoi nkonge, &c.

The English and the interpretation are as follows:

Mongende. A scattering of Ambe, the snail. (The mother of twins, always called Ambe, here gives her name to the snail because of her prolific progeny, which, upon being introduced to the world, scatter, while the mother dies. So the death of the *nkumu* will cause a scattering of his many wives and children.)

Mongye. Feathers fall; pick them up. (That is to say, for your arrow shafts, for if you don't, and come back later, the wind will have scattered them and you won't find them. So while the *nkumu* was alive it was the time for his children to learn his teachings so that when palavers came after his death they would be well acquainted with his wisdom and know how to settle them.)

Ejande. We are burying the *ilonga*, husband of animals, You have just eaten *nsenge*, The chin looks up at the ridge pole, The jaw bones look up at the sky.
825 (The *ilonga* is an animal much prized for its fat meat; the *nkumu* always gets his share when it is killed, and the skin is made into carrying straps for infants, and into belts.
563 Batwa are prohibited the use of it for any purpose. It is therefore fitting to liken the *nkumu* to the *ilonga*. *Nsenge* (sing. *losenge*) is the equivalent of a snack. When a woman brings her cassava from the swamp where it has been soaking for several
364 days, her husband may be too hungry to wait the long hours required to cook it,
262 so to appease his hunger his wife takes a piece or two of the unprepared root, splits it in two, places salt between, wraps it in a *lokembe* leaf and roasts it in the hot ashes, where it is quickly cooked. So the *nkumu* just had time to eat a few *nsenge*; he didn't wait for the big cooking; his life was suddenly cut off.)

Nsaye. Don't pull out the leopard's eyelashes. (That is, while he is alive; now he is dead one can disregard his power.)

---

[1] A *lokole* is a slit-gong made from a hollowed log; the two notes are produced by striking the two lips of the slit. A *nsaye* is a hollowed log, open at one end, across which is stretched a [illegible] hide.

This funeral drumming is kept up for a long time, off and on for days, and is very stirring in its rhythm. While it is going on, the elders congregate in an *ebanga*. They fast and have nothing to do with their wives during this time. The *elaja* is mourning, and the *notables* may be likewise mourning, but for the others it is a time of rejoicing, and also of the relaxing of moral restraints. It is an occasion for dancing by both Batwa and 'freemen', the former regarding this as a time for special rejoicing, for the *nkumu* was their master and now he is dead they are no longer under restraint. They are free to take any of their master's goods and even to snatch blankets off the corpse. Men and women do not dance together; the women, taking some of their husbands' weapons, go off in one direction, and the men, arrayed in finery, dance at the other end of the village. 624 766 [533] [535] [563]

While the *nkumu* is still unburied and the drumming is going on, the *notables* look for a successor among the *elaja*. Often this man will, as we have seen, have already been designated. The *notables*, Batwa, and others in the village make up a party, and attired in war finery go off with their weapons as though after a man they wished to kill. As they go they sing:

Nkombe a'mpiike nkolo
We okik mo oko?
Hawk, thou hast destroyed the nest,
Where art thou going to sleep? [539]

Before catching the real successor they catch one or another in fun, singing this song. The man of course refuses to be *nkumu*, and the point of the song is that because of his refusal the *elaja* no longer fulfils its function of supplying the *notables* with *nkumu* and therefore ceases to be of any use to them. If this man by refusing thus destroys the family nest, where will they sleep?

Finally, after this fun, the real successor is caught, his face daubed with black, and the group sing: [307] [539]

Bolo lowe-a, losolo nkulo.
The cunning animal is hiding, reveal the tortoise.

Thus the new *nkumu*, like a cunning animal, is hiding, but when discovered, like the tortoise, he will not try to run away. The whole group conducts the new *nkumu* to the *ifuma* and sits all night guarding him. Earlier on the day of the actual interment of the dead *nkumu*, the new one is installed with ceremonies as already described.

On the day the *nkumu* dies his people scatter to other villages to look for slaves for the executions on the day of the burial. Slave-owners or husbands of unwanted wives ask quietly how much money there is for the man or woman, accept the agreed amount, and tell the buyers to go quietly and catch the slave or wife before anything is suspected and an escape is made. In this connexion we may note two classes of wives, *bojiko* and *iboto*. A third class, *bosoko*, acquired by the payment of a very small bride price, was not nearly so common formerly as at present and may be passed by. A *bojiko* was a slave wife acquired by capture in war or stolen. If loved by her husband she will take her place practically on an equality with the members of the village, but she may be killed, for she is her husband's possession, 'his money' is the native expression. An *iboto* is a wife for whom a very high bride price has been paid, obliging her family to give wives to the other family in perpetuity, supplying 766 567 762 582

766 crypt would then be lowered by men in order to leave it as a hollow chamber, and
764 the hole leading down to it filled in with earth.

For a month or two after the burial the festivities and orgies continued. Women
766 would be hanged to create some diversion, but those hanged were not eaten. Decapi-
762 tations would continue. According to the informants only slaves brought in from
a distance would have to be tied to prevent their escape. The slave members of the
567 household of the dead *nkumu* would await their turn stoically, content to die that
[152] they might accompany their master in his journey to the land of spirits. This may
be true but scarcely seems possible. Still another diversion in the funeral orgies was killing in the manner known as [illegible]. If some man who had a slave did not wish him to be hanged or beheaded, he might give him for this other method. As the weeks slipped by, such a one, his life having apparently been spared, would suppose that all was safe and that there was little chance of his being taken, and, thus emboldened, would, instead of keeping at a safe distance, join the crowd to watch a beheading. His death would be prearranged. At the moment of beheading a victim, someone would drive a spear into the unsuspecting man, the whole crowd then using spears and knives to stab and slash until he fell. Some might be tortured to death by being buried up to the neck and left thus exposed to the hot sun without food or water until death intervened, but this was not a common practice at such funerals.

768 The termination of the dead *nkumu's* affairs took place when the division of the inheritance was made, a long and complicated process.

178 Such were the old days before European penetration. The advent of the white
654 man half a century ago was the beginning of the end. The ceremonies had to be given up, though reluctantly. Occasionally now goats are beheaded in place of human victims, and many of the younger generation find that, even so, the sight is more than they can endure, and they seek refuge elsewhere. *Nkumu* are not anxious for the honours. They find little or no respect paid to them by the government officials and this is a distinct obstacle to their obtaining honour from their own people. When the *nkumu* resident in the village adjacent to the mission station died, one of the Natives was asked who would be next. The reply was that probably no one would appear as a successor. Asked why, he answered, 'There are too many trousers.' He meant that too many were adopting the ways of the white man to
[643] make the inauguration of another *nkumu* a success. In his one useful function, that
of judge, the paramount chief now takes his place, cases tried must be recorded by a clerk of the court, and fines paid into the treasury of the chieftaincy. With such a state of affairs the old ways drop into desuetude, and the younger generation grow up knowing less of the ways of their fathers as the years pass.

614 kinship subgroup (Untersippe) for groups of rank C;
kinship group (Sippe) for groups of rank D (the exogamous units);
large kinship group (Grossippe) for groups of rank E.

Local Organization

361 621 178 The second diagram[1a] shows the settlement pattern of the Isangi group in its old settlement area up to 1949. At this time Isangi was relocated near the highway. Only two of the nuclear kinship groups of Isangi can lay claim to territory reaching far enough toward the east as to extend beyond the new highway. Thus, the resettlement process has led to a complete change of the settlement pattern. However, the functions of the settlement communities have not yet been adapted to the new settlement. At present the inhabitants are still so engaged in speculation about the possibility of a return to their own old territory that they have not yet reformed their village organization.

621 614 We observe that the village is divided into six settlement communities (30), each of which consists only of the members

30. See Diagram 2.

of one of the two kinship groups of Isangi. (301) We find that only the group of the father, which formerly was a kinship group in its own right, is attached to one settlement community of the kinship group Ngele. Incidentally, we might point out that the names of the two kinship groups, Ngele and Nkoto, mean "down the river" and "up the river." The older group is called "down the river" since in ngele the river is large and wide. We come across this honorary term for the older group in some other villages although there is not always an "up-river" group. No corresponding settlement pattern can be found.

[illegible] 621 [illegible] [illegible] The degree of cohesion among the constituent kinship groups in settlement community I is so strong that the entire community has a communal bokendi, a communal messenger.

[1a] [page 7, Category 116.—Analyst]

624
621
102
624
It is the task of the messengers to transmit all important messages to the other groups in accordance with a precise plan; this is particularly true regarding the invitations to the meetings of the village council with the nkúmú. At the same time they inform the other groups as to the program of the meeting. The first messenger calls on the messenger of the other community; the old men are gathered at the latter's house in order to receive and to discuss the message. The messenger of this community, in turn, departs for the next in line. As a result of this practice the messenger and his home became one of the centers of social life.

621
624
361
623
The same uniformity is found in community II. Here we can also see the engangela, the meeting place of the village Isangi and of its branch villages. The meeting place is an open space in which stands a short tree with a broad crown. The representatives of the several villages gather in the shade of this tree since one of the open men's houses could not accommodate all of them. The senior of the nuclear kinship groups Mpia (No. 14), Nsambi (No. 15), and Liengo (No. 16) has his house on this spot which is situated on the border of the territory belonging to these three groups. The elder of Mpia, however, is the messenger for the hamlet of Boyeke; he may of course be identical with the "elder on the engangela."

624
621
Cohesion within the third settlement community was also so strong that it employs only one messenger. The kinship subgroup Nsambiafafé which is concentrated in this hamlet is said to consist of the descendants of an illegitimate child of the daughter of the village founder (see Diagram 1). As is the case in many

[793]
[792]
[624]
other villages, it is therefore entrusted with the office of the bonfai, who carries out the sacrifice of human beings and animals on the proper occasions.

624
621
626
701
The three communities just described are relatively homogeneous groups; the three following ones are quite heterogeneous. The two groups of hamlet IV belong to the kinship subgroups Iyolo and Mbo. In contrast to the kinship subgroups Lovendo and Besilo, they regard themselves as sufficiently different from

614 each other to employ their own messengers. When the messenger
● 621 of settlement II arrives here, he first calls on the messenger of
624 the nuclear kinship group Boaóbé (No. 19) and then to Impónga
202 (No. 26). The messenger from Boaóbé calls on his relatives in settlement VI, who are the nuclear kinship group Mbelo-Mmuna (No. 22), while the messenger from Impónga-Ndongó formerly had to call on the group Bommambo which is now extinct.

Settlement V consisted of three different groups. Bolíma, the group of the father, had its own messenger; however, he only received the messages without having to pass them on, which is also the case with all these last groups of the village. Both neighbors had their own messenger. The messenger from settlement I called on the nuclear kinship group Bolesangi, his relatives; the messenger from settlement III went to his relatives of the nuclear kinship group Ituli.

There were also two messengers in the last hamlet, but reports on this subject are insufficient since the nuclear kinship group Bommambo has been extinct for a long time.

178 All the settlements just mentioned have a common
614 characteristic: formerly, at important dance festivals, their
621 young men performed together in one joint *corps de ballet*. The
595 population was decimated as a result of the rigors of [201] the occupation period and also as a result of the population move-
[161] ment into the cities. Consequently, there are not enough young people any more, and I with II, III with IV, and V with VI act together. Thus, in each case we find Ngelé and Nkoto united in one ballet. Although these groups have also been scattered
[361] as a result of the new settlement pattern (next to the highway), the old organizational structure has been preserved, and the young people do not hesitate to walk the long distance to the practice field every day so they can dance in the old groupings.

All of Isangi, all three kinship groups, have one common
621 village chief, the Nkúmú, with an *iyolo nsáka* who gets the meet-
624 ings started, and a village court with its judges. There are other
622 groups which correspond to Isangi (31), but have more than one

---

31. See Müller, *Fürstentum*, pp. 73 ff., 76 ff., 133 f.

621 nkúmú. They, too, however, have only one man who opens a
● 624 meeting and one investigating judge. Only one of the nkúmú
622 has the function of judge. Consequently, we may say that even
if the office is divided, the group still forms a unit as far as
jurisdiction and political organization are concerned.

Among these groups we usually can observe a balanced
614 system of distribution as far as titles and offices are concerned.
621 It may either be predominantly democratic, as in Isangi, so
622 that all groups may lay claim to titles and offices, or it may be
624 oligarchic, as in Mbanga, where all power is vested in the oldest group of sons. In most cases, oligarchical groups tend to disintegrate; the younger groups attempt to free themselves from the rule. Democratic villages usually have a greater degree of cohesion.

In Isangi the small kinship groups of Ndongó (Nos. 2-4), Ngonga (No. 5), and Boyeke (Nos. 14-18) formerly had the privilege of furnishing the nkúmú. This practice has been discarded, and the honor is now rotated among the six local groups of the village. Only the small kinship groups of the Bolíma, Besilo, and Njiléokuli are excluded.

The six settlement communities of Isangi and similar
621 groupings found in other villages are parts of a village which
614 in my opinion are best described by the term hamlet [Weiler].

These are units which are predominantly intentional in nature. In spite of their functional weakness, they have survived even in the new settlement although they may not dwell together in a block. As a result of reintegration, they have lost their function as conscription district for the dancing groups in Isangi (see p. 29). but even at the present time they still represent the most important grouping in Isangi; we were aware of it before identifying any of the kinship groups. It is expected that they will lose their importance if Isangi does not return to
its original site. By nature less closely connected with the or-
[562] ganization of the village of their husbands, the women have become the point of departure for the new order of things (e.g., for dance groups) which fulfills the requirements of the new settlement conditions.

619 Each hamlet includes one or several message districts.
621 Even at the time of the old settlement pattern the messenger
● 624 system was determined by the hierarchical structure and not
[202] at all by considerations of what was most practical (for example, the shortest route). Consequently this conservative institution of the conservative old men has not been affected at all by the relocation.

The villages are the communities of jurisdiction and of political life. Usually a nkúmú, presides over the meetings. If a village has several nkúmú, one of whom may be the judge or all may preside together, I have used the term "part of a village" [Dorfteil] for the district from which each nkúmú originates.

361 Those areas which have a special meeting place are here
621 referred to as a "province" [Gau]. The meeting place lies
178 within the territory of the oldest or second-oldest kinship group. The practical importance of this institution for the entire province is minimal, but the two meeting places (202) which we discovered still constituted, until a short time ago, important social centers for the duplicate villages forming the administrative centers of the respective provinces. As a result of the relocation, the meeting places have now lost their function completely.

000 I hope that this paper has added new material to the discussion on the subject of ethno-sociological terminology, and that it will stimulate criticism and a new discussion of this important subject.

582 exclusive rights over her. Hence the proverb: Mbímbo ĩle nd'ése bímbo
836 ífa la nkóló, "bímbo fruit found under the tree have no owner; they
[59] belong to the first person who gathers them." Thus a girl for whom nothing has been paid belongs to no one. A woman free in this manner does not infringe on the rights of any man in her sexual relations. There are therefore no sanctions against her licentiousness.

836
867 Furthermore, the discovery of her activities gives rise to no shame. At most more serious parents will rebuke children who go too far -- the girls because they abuse the body and reduce their value for a prospective marriage (2), the boys because they [83] run the risk of financial difficulties (the dangers of adultery, indemnity for childbirth with death as a result, etc.).

● 626
836 Public opinion is even more lenient than the parents. This attitude is easy to understand: strangers need fear no unpleasant consequences. Errors of this sort are generally considered natural weaknesses, provided that they do not occur too frequently. For public opinion is hard on people who run from one to another; they are stigmatized with the name ebébólé, "unfaithful, flighty, without intelligence or reasoning powers," or ebéngé, a stronger term with the same meaning.

836 From all the foregoing should we deduce that every woman is free to indulge fully in fornication? On the basis of the above considerations we could frankly conclude the affirmative. The behavior that can be observed from day to day fully confirms this answer. Some people stray more or less accidentally, but for others the practice quickly becomes a habit. And it can be said of all of them that

---

[516] 2. Not that a smaller bride price would be given for them. But a serious man would rather not take a woman for wife who has "run around" a great deal and therefore is more likely to commit adultery, to be unfaithful, and less likely to become the mother of a numerous progeny.

584 not a woman become bompāka through the payment of the ikulā? That is what I had always understood, and it seemed logical to me. But in the course of a discussion on the subject, natives contradicted me and said that I was entirely mistaken. I could not make them accept the idea that although a woman is called bompāka when she arrives in her fiancé's clan, she actually becomes bompāka with the official payment of the ikulā, so that nothing but a manner of speaking is involved. They said, "No, as long as a woman has not gone to her husband she is not bompāka."

"But after all," said I, [116] "a very minor difference is involved; the essential thing is in any case the payment of the ikulā.

"It is true that a woman belongs to her husband from the time the ikulā is paid, but she is nevertheless not called bompāka. She is not given that name until she leaves her parents and goes to her husband's home."

"But why?"

[illegible] "Because otherwise the man runs the risk of being mocked and ridiculed. Suppose that after the ikulā he comes back home alone. His future wife is to join him in a few days. He announces the great news to his friends. Then on the day set she does not appear. What shame for him! On the other hand, if everything is kept secret until the moment when no change is to be feared, there are only cries of joy."

On the other hand, this data should be related to the indisputable fact that the payment of the bride price alone very seldom establishes a marriage according to the laws and customs of the various peoples of the Congo. There is almost always another ceremony which in most cases is the handing over of the woman. Because of these facts we are inclined to consider the explanation of the Nkundô, an explanation of convenience which shows the practical aspect of the rule but does not account for it. It actually does not explain why a woman does not become bompāka from the time of the payment which establishes the engagement. On the other hand, it is undeniable that she is not given that name until she has arrived at the home of her husband. It is possible that the fundamental reason for this phenomenon has been forgotten or lost sight of by the natives. The explanation which fits best with the facts that are certain is that the essential

582 constitutes a bride price, it does not bear that name because its legal 562 significance is not the same. The specific name for this particular 583 payment is *isongyambóka*, from *-songya*, "to add something new" and *mbóka*, "path." Thus the new husband adds a new alliance. The verb *songa* or *songya* is also used under other circumstances: for a new tile or leaf that is added on to a damaged spot on a roof, for a patch on a piece of clothing, or for something that has been newly introduced. The term therefore seems to indicate that what is involved is not a new marriage but rather a modification grafted on to the old one. Furthermore, the term is often used pejoratively. One may thus suppose that this custom is not very ancient, but of course the evidence is not sufficient.

583 432 It is apparent from the above that the purchase of a woman is a difficult and expensive operation. A kind of second bride price (*isongyambóka*) and a second wife (*inukambónga*) cost quite a fortune. In the past the purchaser also had to pay indemnities to the families of men killed in combat (he might have had to pay as much as 100 rings, for the price of one "corpse" was 15 to 20 *bakonga*, the monetary value of a man) (1). One gets the impression that, though for reasons un- [726]

[727] 1. Five dead were an enormous number in this sort of "war."

known to us the tribes in question permitted the exchange of women in their laws and customs, they did so unwillingly, and that the persons in authority increased the difficulties, so to speak, in order to frighten the amateurs and to reduce the number of cases to an inescapable minimum.

One might wonder why men do not hesitate in the face of such great financial difficulties. Psychologically, it seems entirely plausible that a man who is in love with another's wife and has the necessary wealth would in his passion throw himself into such an adventure. Probably that is how the practice originated. But this likelihood does not explain the existence of a purchase, since the breaking of the first marriage and the committment to a new one could just as well be

432 583 carried out by the ordinary means of the payment and restitution of a bride price.

At the present time cases of purchase are becoming increasingly rare. This change is probably due to a wider distribution of wealth which has produced a second change, namely that the man makes the initial proposal rather than the woman, who did so according to the ancient custom. 432 583 612

The woman's invitation is public. The man must reply for the sake of his honor. As in the case of an exchange among the Bofyɛ́, he can only escape mockery by following through. If he did not, he would be considered a coward. He would be treated as a pariah; his wife (wives) would leave him, and he would no longer be included in the company of his fellows or at their meals.

Although strictly speaking the matter is outside the limits of this study, it seems to me that it is not irrelevant to mention, for the sake of comparison, that wife purchase is also practiced among the Ntómbá (Waŋgatá, Ibengo) and the Bolóngɛ́ (or Bofiji) between the Congo and the Boloko. They call it by the same name -- *isómba*, "purchase," and the man who buys in *bosómbi*, "purchaser." The woman always invites the man by sending him a piece of the ribs of a banana leaf, called a *bonengɛ́*. She does this publicly; she hands the *bonengɛ́* to a relative or friend and says to him out loud and in front of everyone, "Take this *bonengɛ́* to so-and-so for me, so that he will come and buy me."

[71] The same custom still exists in certain Ekonda settlements under the jurisdiction of the Bikoro station, such as the Lonyanyanga, Bosango, Balíngo, Babonja, etc., but not in the others, which are within the territory of the Kiri (Buli) station. It is called *ehómbaka* or *esómbaka* (the root and [222] the meaning are the same as those of *lisómbɛ́* and *isómba*). Since these peoples are neighbors of the above-mentioned Ntómbá and of other Ntómbá living near the lake which bears their name (in a distorted form) and since, on the other hand, the rest of the Ekonda do not know this custom, we may assume that it was introduced to them by their neighbors to the north and to the west.

592[6] Polygamists as well as some monogamists have a kind of shed where
345 they receive their friends, take care of their affairs, eat their meals, etc. (1)

1. Such a shed is called esamba by the Bombwanja, ingómbe by the other tribes. The Boloko, like the Ntómbá and Bolíngɔ located between the Congo and the Boloko, say bongómbe. The Ekonda say ewánga.

[656] A man who is frequently found in the kitchen or who likes to rest there is the butt of ridicule by both men and women. He is called ilómbelinga (derived from belinga, "smoke," and lómba, "to dodge; to turn the head away in order to protect the eyes against smoke").

2. Illness

593[3] A wife is required to nurse her husband if he is ill, together
758 with his other wives if he is polygamous and, in case of serious illness, with the aid of his female relatives (mother, sisters). Even if they are married and living at a distance, they come to take care of a brother or son; it behooves their husbands to be reasonable and not to try and forbid their absence or prevent this exercise of their duty, for otherwise a man runs a great risk of seeing his wife leave him for good, outraged by this demonstration of his lack of affection for her family.

Together the wives and relatives seek medications and prepare the appropriate potions.

When a wife is ill the husband's female relatives usually come to see her, console her, and administer what care they are capable of giving; as a rule they are well disposed toward the wife of their son, brother, etc. The husband, for his part, must seek medications and help his sick wife. I recall a great palaver apropos of this question. During the illness of his wife Efotɛ, a certain Bokangɛ continuously had relations in his hut with another woman. The matter became public. The guilty husband was

593* 571 763 themselves of the usual and ordinary obligations incumbent upon them on the death of a son-in-law. Should this be taken as a kind of implied condemnation of suicide? [278]

593* 578 627 626 The wisdom of the elders recommends to youth that they not let anger lead them to brutal acts even where, legally, it is permissible to use force. They do not act in such a way through a policy of adaptation to the present regime. Even before the arrival of the white man, they gave lessons in calm and self-mastery. For serious blows, wounds, and especially homicide could have deplorable consequences legally and even politically (war). They preferred recourse to punishments, such as abstention from food and the refusal of debitum conjugale, which although less violent, are not without efficacity. In that way they were also spared the vexation of in-laws, whose pity would be aroused by the wounds and bodily suffering of their child or sister.

578 593* One thing that deserves blows or a good whipping because it is considered a serious failure in the fulfillment of the duties of married life is indifference and negligence in housework. A husband may safely deal forcefully with the situation, although he must first inform the qualified authorities. The following are some examples of such faults: the wife does not give the necessary attention to the kitchen, her children, the cleaning of the hut and court; she neglects her crops, does not go fishing, makes no attempt to obtain salt, etc.; in short, she does not give the required time and care to the tasks incumbent upon her. She herself, her children, and her house remain disgustingly filthy, her fields and banana groves are invaded by weeds and her pantry is devoid of utensils and food, while she wastes her time doing nothing or rather spends it running about the village, going to one woman's house, chatting with another, spending the better part of her day gossiping. The Nkundó does not put up with this sort of behavior, and no one can reproach him. Even other men and the woman's companions condemn [278] such conduct. Often the woman is ridiculed, and on occasion she may [534] hear unflattering comments such as bómot'ów 'asoló, efufa gùŋgamaka, "a gossip, her cloth is to the side," that is, the interminable chatting

Article IV

Relations Between the Wife and Her Family

588^A 614 Through marriage, a woman does not enter into her husband's family. She continues to belong to her own clan of origin and continues to submit to the special regulations [284] of her family (bokumo) (1) The bokumo pertaining to parturition is excepted, for because of the child she must observe the bokumo of her husband's clan in this realm.

593^A 594 Although the wife is completely dependent on her husband for everything else -- work, property, etc. -- she remains bound to her own parents by obligations of respect, love, and assistance. She has to visit them from time to time, but too great a frequency in these visits meets with disapproval. It is impossible to give a rule defining the proper number. The answer must be provided by good sense. Sensible people prefer that the wife not make too many of these trips. Even her own parents want this to be so. For repeated attentions of this sort are considered evidence of a lack of love and attachment for her husband.

[626] Women who very faithfully stay in their homes and only rarely visit their parents, sometimes yield in face of the teasing of their companions. For the Nkundó is very sensitive to spiteful comments of that kind. Among current expressions there is one that has become a popular saying and is sometimes sung during dances:

1. The bokumo are special regulations governing a given clan, particularly prohibitions against partaking of certain foods (animal or vegetable) always or only at certain times. The punishment for a transgression is a kind of itching which covers the whole body. One might think this is totemism, but the idea of kinship to the forbidden being is entirely absent.

593⁰ 579 Ôtswɛ́ki lifla otswɛ́k'olá, bɛ́fɛ́kolaka mbɛ́k'ɛ́y'olá la ngomɔ'a nkolé, "If you are married go back to your parents, or you will be taught the way with drums and gongs," that is, "when you are dead." (2)

[764] [767] 579 2. A woman is buried in her own native clan. Her corpse is transported there to the accompaniment of drums and horns. The lokolé gong announces her death.

593³ 602 A married woman may not evade the duty of helping her relatives under special circumstances (pregnancy, illness, serious accidents, death). This obligation [205] is not limited to her mother and father, but extends to all her relatives; the closer the degree of kinship, the stricter the obligation.

Besides, love of family is sufficiently developed so that there is no danger of the woman forgetting herself too much in this realm. ●[626] And a husband who would like to prevent her from fulfilling these elementary duties would be much criticized by all and should expect a dissolution of the marriage.

593⁴ 574 358 592 It was said above that a husband builds a hut for his wife. His relatives often assist him in this task. But it also happened -- in the past, for colonization has removed the possibility of it -- that the woman's father wanted to build his daughter's house himself or at least to make the pavement out of clay brought from her native land. This act was a demonstration of wealth and politico-social importance as well as proof of fatherly affection. The husband, for his part, was honored to have married the daughter of such an important man and loved her all the more. Thus a number of women say that "they only cooked on ancestral soil." This soil was brought in baskets across distances up to 50 kilometers by Batswa and by men of the woman's clan or village. Her father could do it because of his great influence and regal rewards (bokɔ́ndo, verb kɔ́nda) were distributed during a feast (ntɔkɔ) given for the workers and their relatives after the task was completed. This was done for Bompeli, daughter of Bokombe of Litɛ́li (Bombwanja) married to Bonyeme w'enyuka of the Basɛ́kɛ́ Mbangó (Bonkoso); for Beluka, daughter of

606 the relations between a wife and her husband's parents are closely connected with the rules pertaining to the prohibition related to affinity and seems to spring from the same source. Therefore it will be useful to have in mind what we have said in the preceding chapter, Article IV.

607 The husband's elder brothers treat his wife as their sister. The wife calls her husband's sisters [300] bakilé, but out of respect she often gives them the title of "mother." (1)

[609] 1. Among the Elinga the wife also calls her husband's sisters bongíli (pl. bangíli); they call her bónangíli (pl. bánangíli). A wife often calls her husband's mother nyangóngíli. Bánangíli l'ánangíli means "the brother's wives and their sisters-in-law."

587 After the husband's death, as has been said suo loco, his father or his brother may marry his widow. But this practice is not well regarded and is permitted only rarely, chiefly when the scattering of the family patrimony is feared or if the two interested parties have an unusual love for each other.

857 602 With respect to children or younger brothers and all those who fall into that category, the situation is altogether different. Illicit relations with wives of their father, grandfather, uncle, elder brother, or elder cousin, are judged much less severely. Generally, misconduct does not give rise to claims for payment, or the payment is demanded "for form's sake" and consists of a hen and a bunch of bananas. By means of this payment the guilty one recognizes his error and renders homage to the right of his elder.

[626] In general public opinion condemns these relations and often with great severity. The question of degree of kinship as well as other considerations result in a great diversity among the cases, so we will examine each situation separately and distinguish each time between the husband's reaction and that of public opinion.

587 626 595 593 A. A woman's misconduct with her husband's son does not result in the payment of an indemnity. Nevertheless, the husband who has been wronged takes action; he defends his rights and is enraged, whether the situation is very serious or not, and especially if he is monogamous. If he has several wives, he is more apt to pass over the matter, unless it involves his favorite. Sometimes he takes revenge by striking the guilty son's mother, taking her hens away from her, etc. But such action may lead to complications: [301] the brother of the woman so treated might intervene, and if the reaction of the husband who has been wronged is too violent or recurs too often, a divorce may result. In any case the father never harms his heedless son's wife, since he loves her like his own daughter.

The father may apply a direct sanction against the offender by delaying the acquisition of a wife for him and refusing his blessings for his son's travels and undertakings -- still a serious thing in purely native society.

Such relations are always greatly criticized by public opinion, even if relatives intervene on the culprit's behalf. The latter is disgraced as a result; he is marked with the epithet etsɔnjɛ́lɔ́, to which [578] often is added the explicative phrase l'ɔ́ɔ́la benyangɛ́ b'ɔ́àngɛ́. Etsɔnjɛ́lɔ́ is derived from etsɔ́, "masculine clothing" and, figuratively, "virility in the physical sense," and from bɛ́lɔ́, "strength." Thus the epithet implies that the culprit is so virile that he goes so far as to unite even with his brothers' mothers.

587 626 Marriage with the father's widow after his death is legitimate. Nevertheless, if the widow has left children, public opinion does not entirely refrain from judgment and though the severity of the criticism cited above will be attenuated, it may still be heard. Such was the case of Yokâ of Bokenyola (Bonjolo), which is well known in this region. He married Lokoké, widow of his father Insilo y Okâtola and mother of Insilo Antoine, present chief of the Bonkoso. (1).

1. With reference to the above-mentioned attitude, an exception must be made with regard to the inheritance of a widow by right

577
626 of seniority (she is then called bonkúfú -- see Chapter III, Article III). The giving of a widow who is in the position described is preferably avoided.

577
626 Illicit relations between a son and his father's wife are judged with especially great severity if the young man's own mother is still alive. He is reproached for his behavior in terms which are clear and crude: Oósangenya mbindo ilí la mbindo y'ísé ó nyangó, "you unite your stains (impurities) with those of your father and [his] mother"; Ouné ńs'úkí wá wómbúfúé, "you are returning from whence you came." To these expressions is often added ówa lá é olakí likako, "you will die because of your too great wickedness." To the

[761] Nkundó this last statement is a kind of curse, and if it is repeated by several persons it will not fail to have its effect. Or, to speak as our people do, if everyone greatly wails over and against this man, he will really die. (1)

1. This attitude of the Nkundó may be one of the reasons why widows are assigned not to the son of the deceased, but to his brother.

If the son in question is not married, especially if he has already reached a relatively advanced age, and if he approaches the wives of his polygamous father, the matter is considered less serious. The latter cannot be too angry, especially when only isolated instances are involved; for other relatives will allow their affection for this young man to speak, since they are aware of his passion and therefore understand his temptations and follies. They would intervene to pacify the father and urge him to prevent the repetition of such occurrences by obtaining a wife for his son. In exceptional cases the family council may even judge the father to be in the wrong because of his harshness toward his son and may allow the latter to take his father's wife away from him (never, however, the first wife, the favorite, or the bolómbu); such was the case we described in

837 626 Chapter II, Article XI, 2. But such a situation is far from ideal in Nkundó eyes and is permitted only if, on the one hand, the son ardently loves the woman and, on the other, if the father is too slow in obtaining a wife for him.

837 682 Here then we observe a conflict between two feelings: a husband's jealousy and the affection of a father and various relatives. That is why it is difficult -- as in many situations -- to draw the line between what is permitted and what is forbidden. From what has preceded and from the general explanations given by natives, we can conclude, however, that: [303] 1) relations between a woman and her husband's son are forbidden and severely judged, but with much more leniency than in the case of "superior" relatives; 2) the [587] father may not go to extremes in repressing misconduct nor ask his own son to pay an indemnity, since to do so would be to enrich himself through his child's misbehaviour, and the latter would have no means of paying him except through him or his mother's clan -- and it would be very unjust and inappropriate to force him to have recourse to the latter.

587 837 607 B. A younger brother calls his elder brother's wife wălí, or wife, and she calls him bóme, or husband, because they may marry one another. Therefore adulterous relations may also be found among them. But in practice some distinctions must be made.

If the younger brother is not married and the elder one has a harem, -- a state of affairs which was very common in the past but today is very rare -- the situation is analogous to the one described above in relation to a father's wife except that there is greater indulgence toward the culprit.

If the elder brother is monogamous and the younger brother a bachelor, relations of the latter with the former's wife when the husband is present are forbidden. If the younger brother nevertheless yields to the temptation, he is condemnable. The husband may not claim an indemnity. But in revenge he may procure for himself a "make-believe indemnity" (nyongo ea boilíamba) by felling one of the culprit's banana trees, taking away his chickens, moving his hut, taking some other similar action. The purpose of these acts, according

604 An uncle (see D above) is not entirely free to cure his nephew's
597 (F) passion unless he is the nkóló of his sister (F), that is, unless the
578 mother (C) of his sister (E) is the nkita of his aunt (B),[297] who is the
579 sister of his father (A). Indeed in that case his sister may not complain, for she owes him respect and submission; her subordination to her brother and master is greater than the gratitude he owes her for any riches he may have obtained through her or on her account.

603 597 D. In the case of the relationship of a grandson (bonkána) to his grandfather's wives, his freedom is, in practice, complete. Actually, among the Nkundó the affection of a grandfather (nkóko) for his own grandson often exceeds his love for his own son and completely degenerates into weakness. (1) The grandfather puts up with all his

1. As happens very often also in Europe.
See Chapter I, Part 1, Article I, 3.

grandson's carryings-on, his whims, all his teasing, his insults, etc.

After illicit relations the grandson sometimes carries his insolence so far as to spontaneously send his grandfather a "mock" indemnity in the form of a basket filled with stones in the place of copper rings.

● 626 Although the grandfather treats his grandson with good humor,
603 public opinion does not favor the latter's conduct, though it is more
597 lenient than in the cases described above. The public reaction, as well as the sending of the "mock" fine, shows that in principle these relations are censurable and condemned. Because of present circum-
[118] stances, particularly marriage at an earlier age than in the past, the age difference between a grandson and his grandfather's wives has increased considerably in the constantly growing number of cases, and their relations have proportionately decreased. (2) [298]

[118] 2. We have seen above that other Nkundó tribes are even less strict in these matters. On the other hand, the Ekonda, a Nkundó group living on Lake Leopold II, have a

608
837
626
154

> higher morality -- in our terms. Among them the question of relations between a woman and her husband's son, younger brother, etc., does not even arise. Have they been influenced by some neighboring tribe? Or must we attribute the inferior morality of some of the tribes in this respect to decadence.

837
602

The following conclusions emerge from this long description:

1) Relations between a man and the wife of his son, younger brother, etc., in short of anyone inferior to him in the family hierarchy, are always strictly prohibited and never occur.

2) They do occur on the other hand between an inferior and the wife of his senior and superior. The degree of kinship between the husband and the culprit plays a considerable role in determining the seriousness or triviality of an infraction, the sanctions applied, and the various consequences. Some relations are accepted, others are censured with varying degrees of leniency, still others are pitilessly criticized.

3) In these matters a distinction may be made between two aspects:

- a) the husband's reaction and the repression of the illicit relations;
- b) the judgment of public opinion;

or:

- a) the financial aspect;
- b) the moral aspect -- to use that term for want of a better one.

Sometimes a third element comes into play, namely the intervention of the family on the side of the culprit against the injured husband who, for one reason or another, is in the wrong himself.

602
837
684

a) The usual sanction for adultery is, for the man, an indemnity to pay. But such a payment cannot be made since no financial transaction -- strictly speaking at least -- may be made

602 within a group of close kin, seeing that, from a certain standpoint,
837 property belongs to all the members, each sooner or later receiving
684 or inheriting from the other. But in cases where other sanctions can
be imposed, they are considered legitimate. [309]

b) Except in the case of relations between brother and sister-
626 in-law -- within the limits described above -- public opinion is
837 severe in its judgment, even more severe than for ordinary cases of
602 adultery, although because of the more tangible nature of the sanctions imposed against the latter, these seem on the surface to be considered more serious; many natives even have that impression. Or at least that is the first impression that spontaneously comes from their explanations; currently, they stress the indemnity, and in their accounts of ancient proceedings and violent sanctions, they forget the other aspect. Others do not distinguish between the two sides of the problem, or distinguish between them only very poorly. Only in going to the bottom of things do they -- like ourselves -- become aware of the two aspects and the importance of not confusing them.

The leniency we observe in certain cases on the part of the interested parties who have been wronged, and sometimes on the part of public opinion, does not seem to us to have been explained as a leniency based on principle nor as a legitimation of these relations (except in the case of brothers within the limits indicated). They seem rather to spring from the affection they have for the culprit, their sympathy for his condition as a bachelor, a certain community of interests, and finally from an evaluation of certain other elements that may be involved (such as a fundamental jealousy in the case of brothers).

602 The great distinction made by the Nkundó in this realm as
181 in others between inferior and superior relatives is based on their
conception of authority, which is patriarchal, therefore paternal. What is involved is not so much a fear of power as a reverent awe -- although the first should not be excluded. In their eyes an inferior does not exist for the benefit and advantage of the superior, but the reverse; authority exists for the good of the inferior, who to preserve hierarchy and order must submit to the [310] superior. The superior's duty to help his inferior (in his difficulties, his palavers, his poverty),

684 The risk of being wounded, reduced to slavery, or killed, often cools the adulterer's passion. Therefore, the more the husband showed that he was fearless, violent, physically powerful, or of a high social position, the more his wives and their lovers were on their guard. Certain men were so jealous of one of their wives and so determined to take vengeance with extreme severity that the tempters did not even dare to think of approaching her.

2) The payment of an indemnity seems to be the standard sanction. It is the only one that remains legal at the present time; consequently it is coming more and more to the fore.

Any of the types of evidence examined above justify the claim for an indemnity.

The indemnity may be minimal, consisting of 2 to 5 copper rings, or heavy, going up to 20 to 30 rings or a slave. The maximum is always demanded for adultery with a favorite. The size of the payment depends on the persons involved, the relationships that bind them, the frequency of misconduct, and the nature of the action observed. For instance, if the husband catches the couple when arranging a meeting or exchanging gifts, the indemnity will be small; if, on the other hand, he has caught them *in flagrante delicto*, it will be high.

[626] A man who demands a high indemnity must expect to be treated the same way should the occasion arise. The application of the law of retaliation in that case is fully approved by Nkundó opinion.

684 585 [609] In addition to the situations examined in the preceding article, there exists another which does not result in an indemnity claim. It arises if the culprit belongs to a clan of slaves or is in some other way subject or inferior (*mpámá* or *bowɛ́lɛ́*). (1) Even

1. Strangers who are settled with a tribe or group but are in no way related to them.

if the husband catches the culprit in the act, he politely asks him to go away and leave his house [321] and his wife: *óntsíkɛ́l'ílombe, njóyá ɛ́!* Here is true Nkundó courtesy in practice. It might

684 that she becomes accustomed to her husband's relations with various
581 other women. Consequently, the reaction of the women in general
562 [325] against adultery is much weaker than that of the men. Moreover, because of this same system, a woman is much more exposed to weakness, and stronger sanctions are therefore necessary to insure her fidelity.

Finally, there is one last reason for considering a woman's misconduct as more serious. It is the danger of conception through adultery, with all the attendant consequences: risks for the pregnant woman, forced continence for the husband, etc. (1)

---

1. See no. 6 below as well as Chapter I, Part 2, Article IV, 3, and Chapter X, Article II, 3.

From the description of sanctions it is apparent that in spite
562 of the woman's inferior position, Nkundó law does not leave husbands
684 the full and complete freedom which, according to certain writers, they are accorded among other peoples. Even if the means of repression available to the wife do not incontestably prove that the husband has an obligation of conjugal fidelity -- and the wife's legal status explains a great deal -- the fact remains that the ndonga as well as public opinion approve of even her violent reaction, proving that she is right and the husband wrong.

5. Public opinion

626 Public opinion is fairly lenient in relation to isolated in-
837 stances (yětsi, efongo). It clearly recognizes the error involved in infringing on the conjugal rights of another, but the error is attributed to human weakness. In the case of habit the situation is different; it is criticized frequently and severely. Habitual sinners
[192] are called efáfóká (from the verb fafoka, literally "to flutter" and figuratively "to flirt"), ebóngá or ebábóngá (from the verb bâbonga) or ebáboá (from bâboa) "to flutter, to be flighty and fickle." These epithets are applied primarily to women, who are more subject to this failing than men.

626 The shame attached to the discovery of this sort of miscon-
837 duct in the better circles in Europe is unknown among the Nkundó.
This is natural since isolated instances are readily excused. As to
[152] the habitual offenders, they are sensitive [326] to the above-men-
tioned epithets but will not correct their ways on this account any
more than people in other parts of the world.

An adulterous husband is criticized as much as an adulterous
837 wife in spite of the difference in the means of repression which
626 684 Nkundó law provides for their respective misconduct.

Public opinion therefore corroborates the conclusion toward which our examination of sanctions has pointed, namely that adultery is condemned by the Nkundó. Opinion is not based on the existence of the sanction but seems to spring from their innate mentality, which makes them perceive adultery as a disorder.

6. Aggravating circumstances

837 If a case of adultery is followed by conception, it becomes
842 especially serious, and for the husband as much as for the natural
672 father. Indeed the latter must assume all the consequences. When
circumstances permit the husband makes his wife denounce her accomplice, and she does not refuse to do so. The husband then calls a meeting and demands a pledge (ndanga) from the culprit, who in that way acknowledges that he is at fault and shows his willingness to assume all responsibility. If there is a miscarriage or the child dies during delivery, the natural father must pay the legal father an indemnity of "a slave" or more (sometimes 50 rings); a smaller indemnity is required for a child who is only deformed or sickly. If the mother dies the indemnity consists of a slave and 50 rings, and it may go as high as 100 rings.

In the interim the husband no longer goes near his wife. He leaves her to her lover, who must "preserve the foetus" and observe all the rites and practices associated with pregnancy and childbirth, since, physically, he is the father. (1) [327]

1. For fuller details see Chapter X,
Article II, 3. For analogous practices

595 587 a man and another's wife which is legitimate, regulated, officially acknowledged, and accepted. It is not a marriage; there is no bride price nor are there witnesses other than the woman herself; the wife does not belong to the secondary husband, and in case of a rupture of relations, there is no restitution of valuables however numerous they may be. A man who in this manner purchases the right to cohabit with the wife of another does so because of poverty; he does not have the means to pay a bride price for this woman or ● [626] any other. Therefore he is disdained and scorned by his fellows. To a certain extent the husband and the lover share a common life: they give each other presents and food, help each other, eat together, and call each other bakalé, the same name by which wives of a polygamist address each other.

Such a concubinage can last fairly long. It is usually difficult to break, for the legitimate husband takes such a breaking up badly and considers it an injustice. If the husband is rich and influential, it is dangerous for the partner to dissolve the relationship for he will have to count on the husband's wrath. Thus in the past such a union could continue for many years (in that case it was called ekókó) until the lover (bonsámbá, pl. bansámbá) was rich enough to free himself. Often it continued for an entire lifetime, and the partner settled in the loánjá (a place occupied by a man and his wives) of the husband (linsámbá jǎ njeléngwá, enjwáki); he thus became like the husband's child. Nowadays this custom has become much less common because of the freedom resulting from colonization as well as the greater possibility of acquiring wealth. This diminution shows that the practice is not ideal, even in native eyes, and is only a last resort resulting from the state of the distribution of wealth.

A man who desires to live in concubinage with another man's wife has some relations with her in secret and then makes the matter public. For that purpose he gives the woman a knife or a few bakonga to take to her [337] husband. Or he may even call a meeting of the patriarchs and pay the husband in front of them. To make a concubinage public in this way is called ója linsámbá, "to make

765 expected to attend. It is usually at this time that the negotiations occur relative to a replacement for the deceased (Chapter III, Article IV).

Article II. Seclusion of Widows

As I have described in the article cited, widows (bituka, sing. etuka, or, among the Bombwanja, besámanyi, sing. bosámanyi) are compelled to remain in seclusion for a long time. Before the ceremony of being lifted from the ground, they are ostensibly not permitted to go out. Later they are allowed more freedom; they can go everywhere to do their work, even to the markets. But they are required to spend their nights in the communal seclusion hut.

A widow who did not conform to these rules would meet
● [624] with serious criticism. She would be said to have not loved her husband (and consequently suspected of having caused his death by sorcery). Moreover, she would be exposed to the avenging anger of the deceased, who would disturb her sleep, thrash her if she went to the forest alone, [422] or would even come to take her into the next world with him.

Insofar as possible all the widows are brought together in one and the same hut. To complete their separation from the world, the entrance is closed by means of a circle of palms, the same as for the seclusion hut of a nursing woman, a bolúmbú, or a woman possessed by the spirit of bongóli (yebola). This is to prevent widows from having relations with passers-by.

The name of the seclusion hut is lokásá (the same as the word for "leaf."). The Bombwanja use the word lokombí (from komba, "to shut," "to enclose"); the Injóló and the Boángí say lonkíndá. (1)

1. The Ekonda use the word itálé.

765
587 During the last period of seclusion, although the widows may not be visited by lovers who wish to court them with the object of

must go to the *monkeke* for their fight, this being the location of the houses belonging to the sons of the *nkumu*. 624 The penalty for breaking this law is a fine, and if no 689 fine were forthcoming hanging used to be the alternative. If a quarrel arises elsewhere and one party wishes to avoid fighting, he may retire to the *nongo* and thus be safe. No trees in the *mongo* may be climbed. There are, however, privileged classes exempt from all such rules, and these embrace a good many people. [845] Thus, the mother of twins, twins, Batwa, *maomi*, and all members of the *molembe* and *ekopo* are exempt from the laws of the *mongo*. [672] If any of these commit acts which are illegal for those coming under the law, they are not held guilty, but their actions will not be condoned; they will be considered breaches of good conduct, and will be dealt with informally; [626] the parties will be quietly reprimanded, and adjured to observe the proprieties of conduct. For outsiders breaking the laws of the *nongo*, what corresponds to a warrant is necessary. It is necessary to catch the culprit in the act and hale him before the [696] *nkumu*. The *nkumu* himself cannot do this, nor can any of the *ekopo*; it must be done by one of the *molembe*, and so if the *nkumu* sees someone infringing the law he will try to get one of the *molembe* on the spot in a hurry in order to catch the offender.

In war,[1] it is the *molomi o ehe* who is most active in preparations, but the *nkumu* 624 will accompany his party to battle, keeping well in the rear, and surrounded by good 726 fighters. He does not wear his *montolo* but puts on the informal hat. If an *nkumu* were captured, he would never be tortured or killed as were other prisoners, unless he [727] specifically sought such a fate. He could be ransomed, and his captors would beseech him to let his people ransom him, but in many cases an *nkumu* would invite death rather than endure the shame of being yielded up as a prisoner of war.

An *nkumu* is always addressed by a double clap of the hands, and will not reply to 624 anyone rude enough to speak to him first. In answer to the clap he replies with a 576 word of wisdom expressed in an aphorism or proverb. Such a reply, however, is common to all elders, who have their favourite aphorisms ready for any who pay them special honour. Anything the *nkumu* says must be answered not by the customary *nko boiko* (even so) which ordinary people use, but with the special word, *bionga*, which is reserved exclusively for replying to an *nkumu*, and means the same thing.

When the hour of death approaches, an *nkumu* is attended by his Batwa. It is a 624 rule that he must not die a natural death, and near the end, while he is still conscious 763 and can still speak, all 'free men' clear out and leave the Batwa pygmies to their task of tying the *nkumu* very tightly with the fibrous yam vines known as *menkiki*. [563] Often this secure lashing in the sitting posture, known as *ilima*, is sufficient to finish the *nkumu* off, but sometimes the work is expedited by twisting his neck.[2] Then it is announced that he is dead, *aokilwa*, this being in contradistinction to the customary phrase *aokoma moloko* used of the death of ordinary people. While the latter means

---

[1] Owing to the lack of tribal cohesion, warfare was not on any considerable scale. The method of warfare consisted in sending groups of young men to fight first, the elders only joining in when one side began to get the worst of the fray. Victors and vanquished in such fights were designated 'husband' and 'wife' respectively, and members of the one group were free to come and go in the villages of the other, and even to help themselves to food. In future wars 'husband' and 'wife' were supposed to combine against their common foes.

[2] Besides *nkumu*, elderly and rich men, fathers and mothers of twins, and twins are buried in the *ilima* or sitting posture, in contradistinction to the *monrepa* position which is the recumbent one used for ordinary people and slaves. [764]

> 593x of a few fashionable expressions: *vulva*
> 578 *matris tuae, comede matrem in clitoride*,
> 195 *coi cum matre*. The same expressions, *mutatis mutandis*, are used with reference to a person's father, brother, or sister. The expressions used for "disinterring" are *okundola ilongo, isé, nyangó*, etc., that is, "exhume your family, father, mother, etc., or *bejwó běkě*, "your corpses," that is, your deceased parents (this last expression especially excites a strong reaction).

578 the effect does not vary greatly. [275] The only difference is in
593x the intensity of rage and of the reactions, which depends on the individual temperaments of the interested parties.

578 A Nkundó is greatly outraged by obscenities hurled at him by
593x his wife, especially if she attacks him in public. His reaction is al-
● 627 ways violent. Usually it comes to blows, a thrashing, and sometimes the knife. But if the husband wants to remain within the limits of the law, he cannot injure or, more especially, kill his wife on his own authority. Before going any further, he must bring his case before the *ndonga*. His family is invited to the meeting and, if possible, so is the wife's father. The outraged husband presents his case and warns the persons assembled that one day his exasperation will lead him to take up the knife. Having taken his case before qualified persons, the husband can from then on go ahead and avenge himself for the disgraces his wife may inflict on him; it is lawful for him to do so. If the guilty woman starts again, no one can accuse her husband of wronging her, for she herself is at fault and he has warned her in accordance with all the rules of the law.

593x Modern young people do not always follow this procedure.
578 But their revolutionary spirit often brings them reprimands and often
[178] gets them into great difficulties. The elders jealously guard their authority, and no one may reproach them for doing so. Therefore in a palaver of this sort, a father will sometimes foresake his son.

602 brings forth reprimands on the part of the husband and his parents which obviously can easily degenerate into quarrels. If the omissions are so frequent and of such a nature that they can no longer be explained as simply forgetting, a whim, or a fit of peevishness, but [299] are taken to indicate spitefulness or vulgarity, the matter is [627] brought before the ndonga (who is often assisted by the family tribunal) or brought before the authority constituted by the woman's kin. If in spite of everything the expected improvement does not take place, the break-up is inevitable.

606 The husband's father and mother extend the same affection to their son's wife as they feel toward him. They consider her their own child, and it is not unusual to find that their love for the wife equals their feeling for their own son. She is only a relative by marriage, but out of affection for her they call her their child. She, for [601] her part, does not use toward them the term bakanga (or bakiló) but out of filial respect calls them "father" and "mother." Exceptions to this practice may be found, however.

606 224 If the father (and those who fall in the same category such as uncles, elder brothers, etc.) kills a large game animal, he is expected to give his son's (or brother's, etc.) wife a piece of meat, whose size depends on the number of daughters-in-law he has and which consists of one or several chops (bokálako) (1) and the piece at the nape of the neck (botómbyá).

606 835 Illicit relations between the husband's father and his daughter-in-law would be an unheard of crime. The same would be true with respect to any of the "superior" relatives. (2) The laws regulating

---

1. Called lieto among the Bolengé and the tribes of the Losanganya.

[178] [184] 2. Only the Boangi -- like the Elángá of the Losanganya - allow relations between a brother and the wife of his junior; and they are already beginning to find imitators among their neighbors to the southeast, the Injolo.

421 613 have seen them as money transactions. We have obtruded our point of view and destroyed the whole legal system of the natives. It is through our materialization of those securities that we have lowered the native woman to a plaything of money and a piece of merchandise.

586 595 As for the two outgrowths of the native system, divorce and polygamy, neither is inherent in the legal system as such. They are only abuses which have taken root and which clash with the principles of the native law itself. By its nature, native marriage is also indissoluble, and polygamy has only been able to exist through a popular confusion between paternal and marital law.

4. Legal Power in the Clan

613 627 In Nkundo society all individuals do not have equal rights or powers, as in the Napoleonic law books, /154/ but the natural rights concerning people are still completely recognized. All value and power comes from God, through the ancestors. Those who are nearest to God are thus the highest in position, his first representatives. There is no question of absolutism or despotism. Just as the blood is divided among all clan members in a descending line, so also are authority and legal power. They are one as a legal entity in relation to the outside world; nevertheless, each member takes part and has a vote in the internal administration of justice, so that, when clan interests are discussed and dealt with, each member may sit in the place accorded to him and take part in decisions. In a legal sense there is, therefore, no question of a separate family council, which would assist the clan leader, but all decisions are made communally.

594 627 A single exception to this does exist, namely, that which gives the head of the nuclear family legal power over his wife and children, and then only with the acknowledgment and approval of the clan. Differences between autonomous clans are settled by the clans involved, a sort of international court of law where friendly clans may also be brought in as arbiters.

627 Such an arrangement made the court absolutely "paternal." The whole procedure was one of a reconciliatory character, which resorted to coercive measures only when necessary, and did its utmost to save the honor and the welfare of the involved clans, and to compensate for, to restore, and to prevent further offenses.

4. Treason

● 628 602 Treachery and treason between relatives by marriage were not unusual. The proverb says bomóng'ôsulu nd'ôkiló, "treason exists [294] chiefly on the part of relative by marriage." Not that this happened through any fundamental maliciousness apart from perhaps some rare exception. But in case of a war or particularly of a vendetta, relative by marriage did not hesitate to betray his in-law and thus send him to his death.

We shall limit ourselves to giving two case histories which are well known to the current generation. (1)

1. I do not know exactly when these events occurred. In any case they date back to the time of the Independent State and to the beginning of the occupation.

At the time when the Ingende post was occupied by the white "Itumbambíle" and that of Ikéngé by "Bosénjá," some men from [266] Boálá (Ikákema y'ôselo, Bombwanja) surprised an inhabitant of Bokukó (Wǎngatá), killed him, and ate him. Shortly thereafter Lokwa jw'ǒyelé, a man from Boálá, went to visit his sister Eúmé, who was married to Imbilé is'éy'osola of Ikonjí. It happened that the latter was a maternal uncle of the victim of the Boálá men. Was Lokwa unaware of this relationship? Or did he trust his brother-in-law? Whatever the case he was well received. Nevertheless, Imbilé had not forgotten his nephew's assassination and went to inform his close kin of this good opportunity to avenge the murder. One evening they broke into the hut that had been placed at the visitor's disposal and found him there with his sister Eúmé and his wife Lompoko. The [266] two women managed to escape, but Lokwa was taken, killed, and eaten. Naturally, his sister Eúmé did not return to her husband, and there was no question of a restitution of the bride price.

The second case dates from the same period. Two Batswa of [266] Mbálanga (Etóontále, Bongili), Bokéngo and Boláyengé, surprised Mboko Ilombá of Boálá in the forest, killed him, and ate him.

628 602 Some time thereafter, a man named Bengɔ́ngɔ́ from the Ndongɔ́ village of the Bongíli went to Boɛ́lɛ́ to visit his sister Bosɛ́ka, who was married to Eale ɛ̂a Bofekɛ́. The latter told him that the village was enraged because of the assassination of one of their people by the Batswa of the Bongíli. He advised him to go [295] and hide in the fallow ground lest excited men come upon him and revenge themselves on him. He led his brother-in-law there himself: Therefore he knew the exact location of his hiding place and ran to betray him to the others. They encircled the fallow ground and easily found poor Bengɔ́ngɔ́, who was pitilessly massacred and eaten. His sister Bosɛ́ka never knew of her husband's treachery; she thought that despite all his precautions, the other inhabitants had discovered her brother's hiding place. (1) [266]

[649] 1. We should not be too astonished that during that period the Europeans did not intervene in these wars, vendettas, massacres, and acts of cannibalism. They let the natives do as they pleased among themselves and demanded only that they leave them alone and render them services and tribute. They had other things to do in those times. The white men Ǎmbɛ́ and Baisǎnkoi, of whom the natives still speak with respectful fear, were the first to begin punishing acts of barbarism in this region.

602 This hypocrisy on the part of the husband toward his wife and brother-in-law is due to the presence of two opposing feelings within him -- on the one hand, the love of his family and the feeling of solidarity which engenders hate and the desire for vengeance; on the other, love for his spouse. As these feelings are in complete contradiction with each other, he cannot reconcile them. But at least he can preserve appearances.

[539] This situation is referred to in the following proverb: bokilɔ́ ɛ́kwǐsɛ́kɛ́, wɛ̌ngoyak'eyalo, "if your bokilɔ́ has hidden you, change

602 539 shelters." There is another, which is cruder: bokiló tótswe nkɛ́lɛ́: bafumba bálɛkɛ mbá, emí ńkɔlɛ́kɛ wɛ̌. "relative by marriage, let us go to the palm grove; the bafumba ants (Dorylus wilverthii) eat palm nuts; I will eat you." The following saying, applied to someone who is always trying to clear himself, is a more or less involuntary accusation: mpɔ̂l 'ɔ̌kiló, ńtúfa é mpɔ́ngɔ; mpɔ́ngɔ y'ɔ̌kiló nsako ngá mbwá, "I do not eat my relative by marriage; on the contrary, I dip (food) in his fat; an in-law's fat is as tasty as a dog's." [296]

602 528 Nevertheless, a man never goes so far as to cause the death of his sister's daughter's or other relative's husband. Or, as the Nkundó say, one does not kill a person by whom one has been enriched. What is the reason for this distinction? According to our people it is the affection they feel toward their sister, daughter, etc.; they love them too much to pain them by taking away their husbands.

This treacherous and barbarous conduct is therefore directed by the bokiló toward the bokanga, that is, by those who have paid the bride price to those who have received it, but never the reverse.

Appendix

000 This appendix pertains to each of the three preceding articles. Therefore it may reasonably be placed here. It does not deal with any special law nor with a custom that is legal, universal, or common. It is concerned with isolated cases. But it seems to me that the few lines to follow are not without interest, since they give a good indication of the mentality that may be found among these people.

602 578 It may happen that a woman has a complaint or feels she has cause to be dissatisfied with one of her relatives, for example her brother. In her opinion he may not be sufficiently kind and generous toward her, or he may treat her in a manner she considers unfair. In a moment of anger she reveals her feelings to her husband and incites him to avenge her by injuring or even killing the one who has offended her.

That is what happened several decades ago to Bosela w'ɔ̌mpwengɛ́ of Bolɛ́nge (Bongíli) (who died in 1932, a very old man). His wife Ilumbɛ́ was very dissatisfied in that her brother did not give

586* 577 continuous state of enmity existed between his clan and the husband's, or if the husband owed him a substantial debt, one that clearly equaled the woman's bride price. In the first case a new war followed almost inevitably. Later on the woman's family contacted the new son-in-law. The gifts they brought were considered the dowry, and he began to pay the bride price. But there was no question of reimbursing the bride price to the first husband; relations between him and the woman's clan were completely broken. The difference between this situation and the standard procedure described above lies precisely in the fact that there is no restitution. In the case of a debt there was no restitution either. The woman's flight constituted a compensation (*lowáála*) and was therefore so designated (N. *aȯkenda ndá lowáála*). If the husband lodged a complaint, the judges sent him a piece of *bofofó* (1) to let him know that they did not want to concern themselves with his case, which he himself knew to have very poor grounds. Even the members of his own clan prevented him from making war; they knew perfectly well that the wrong was entirely on their relative's side.

The practice of taking refuge that we have just described was simply known as *bejwó*, *bǒmoto áótswá bejwó*, because that word was the principal one in the ultimatum.

As we have said above, the custom here described disappeared 178 586* 577 with colonization. Even though the scope of this study does not extend to the Nkundó who are settled north of the Tshuapa, it [393] may be of interest to note that an evolution of this custom is taking shape in the Losanganya region. If a woman is condemned for leaving the conjugal household and imprisoned, she asks someone to marry her -- if the opportunity presents itself. If the man accepts

---

[202] [628] 1. The *bofofó* is a piece of dried banana leaf which has been rolled up and tied with two knots (or more, as the case required). To indicate the end of a palaver, the *bofofó* is cut in two (or more) pieces, with a knot in each piece. One piece is sent to each interested party.

Before we proceed

M 361 342 643 to the study of dwellings in that region, it is well to note that among all the western populations, the hut of the great chief, that is to say, the "chief of the [46] earth," Mfumu na Tse, is built separately, a little apart from the general alignment or facing the principal street. This hut is surrounded by a fence, and the enclosure contains the royal hut, the reception palace, and the huts of the chief's wives.

M 644 Entry into the chief's courtyard is forbidden to his subjects. Only the dignitaries are admitted there when royal audiences are held, and to receive them the chief holds court in the hut that serves as a reception building. All around the enclosure, the "chief of the earth" has special trees of the cactus family planted. This, we were assured by the future successor of the Mosengere chief of Penge, is a royal prerogative very strictly observed. The existence of this enclosure around the royal dwelling recalls the custom in Banfumu villages of arranging the huts in family groups, and it seems to indicate a certain affinity between these different tribes.

S 342 415

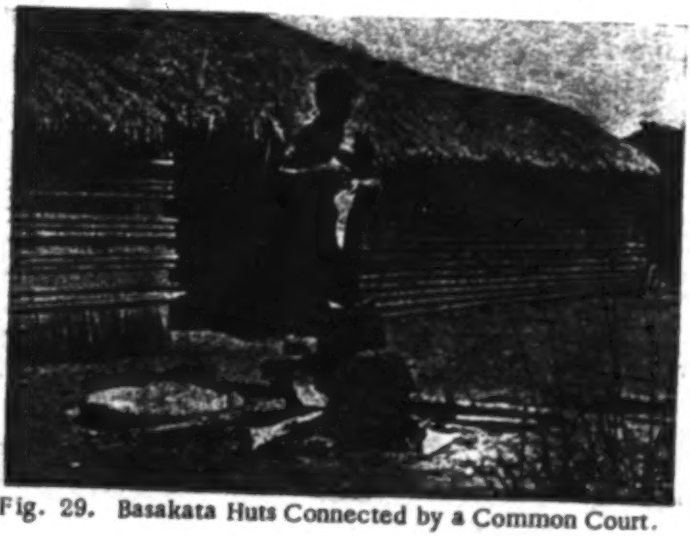


Fig. 29. Basakata Huts Connected by a Common Court.

M 342 In the region of the Ipanga-Batitu, besides the small hut whose roof has the oblique double slope and horizontal ridge and is covered with vegetal tiles, which serves as a secondary, temporary

M 301 We have already given a description of the dress costume of Natali, chief of the Banfumu of Kapanda.

S 643 301 293 302 For important ceremonies Chief Etoti, an old and unsociable Wadia, wore a hairdo of small braids adorned with three brass disks. He also wore a necklace made of hair from an elephant's tail, from which hung a triangular apron embellished with eight brass disks, signs of his great power and of his title as the oldest and greatest Mfumu na Tse in the whole Lake Leopold II region. His face was smeared with ngula, his eyes encircled with mpembe, and there was a long white line on each arm. In one hand he held the royal fly-chaser, and in the other, two chief's staffs.

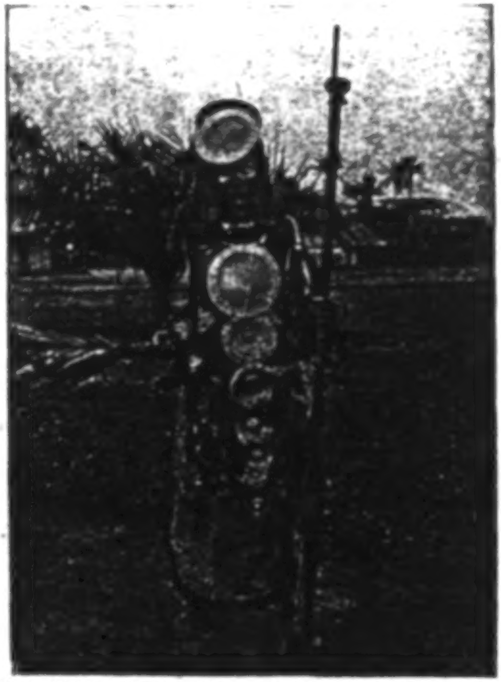
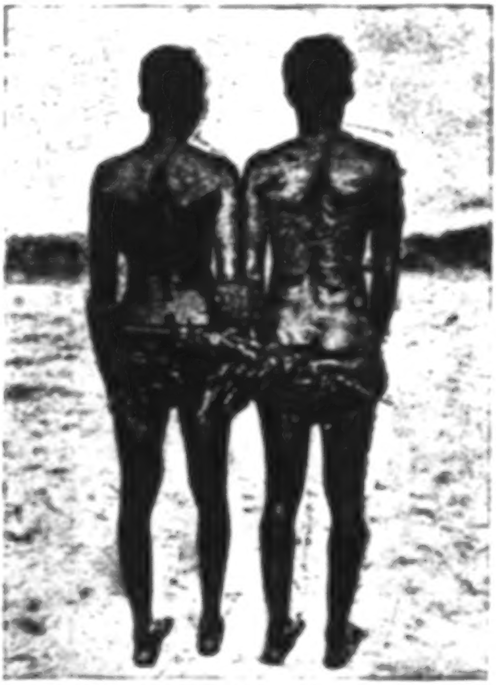


Fig. 108. Etoti, Unsociable Old Chief of the Wadia, in Full Regalia.

M 643 293 301 Kakua, the deposed Batitu chief, at all times wore his hairdo of small braids adorned with a large brass disk. His belt was decorated with a leopard skin and two iron bells, prerogatives

Yaelima

reserved to the Mfumu. The large royal knife, encased in a sheath, hung from a brass chain worn diagonally over the shoulder, and Kakua [187] never parted with his great bow and his quiver of arrows with large iron heads. 643 293 301



[304 301 535]

Fig. 109. Dancing Costume of the Yaelima-Bokala of the Wumbuli Region. Tattooing on the Back.

During dances and ceremonies the women attach the most unusual objects around their waists, often large bushy branches. Among the Ipanga and Batitu, as well as in the region of Wumbuli and Dekese, betrothal and wedding dances are executed in special attire, heavily bedecked with beads and cowries. 292 301 535

These ornaments are not at all consistent. They vary according to taste and the whims and means of the natives, but certain parts of the dress costume worn by the betrothed couple at the dances celebrating the engagement seem to have a special meaning, to which we shall return later.

Before we proceed

M
361
342
643
to the study of dwellings in that region, it is well to note that among all the western populations, the hut of the great chief, that is to say, the "chief of the [46] earth," Mfumu na Tse, is built separately, a little apart from the general alignment or facing the principal street. This hut is surrounded by a fence, and the enclosure contains the royal hut, the reception palace, and the huts of the chief's wives.

M
● 644
Entry into the chief's courtyard is forbidden to his subjects. Only the dignitaries are admitted there when royal audiences are held, and to receive them the chief holds court in the hut that serves as a reception building. All around the enclosure, the "chief of the earth" has special trees of the cactus family planted. This, we were assured by the future successor of the Mosengere chief of Penge, is a royal prerogative very strictly observed. The existence of this enclosure around the royal dwelling recalls the custom in Banfumu villages of arranging the huts in family groups, and it seems to indicate a certain affinity between these different tribes.

S
[342]
[415]

Fig. 29. Basakata Huts Connected by a Common Court.

M
342
In the region of the Ipanga-Batitu, besides the small hut whose roof has the oblique double slope and horizontal ridge and is covered with vegetal tiles, which serves as a secondary, temporary

Article XII. The Attitude Toward the Bride Price

583x
562 1. What is the woman's attitude toward the bride price?

Only we Europeans can ask such a question. To the Nkundó mind it is superfluous -- in fact it is really stupid. The bride-price system is the normal system [178] of marriage. The Nkundó do not conceive of marriage in any other way. Without the payment of a bride price there is no marriage; the woman is not considered to be a wife, she is simply a slave. This notion is a necessary consequence of the bride-price system. Thus it is not surprising that the woman is very much attached to this system, and that under normal conditions -- that is, when there is no European influence -- she does not want any union without a bride price, for she would then be a slave. This is obvious. All these ideas are held together like the links of a chain.

2. Our attitude toward the bride price

589x
648 At the beginning of colonization the Europeans, government agents as well as missionaries, viewed with repugnance a marriage system based on the payment of a bride price. In their eyes it was neither more nor less than the sale of women and therefore a form of slavery. They felt they should counteract it by abolishing the bride price and introducing marriage in the European manner, which seemed more consistent with man's free nature. Many Blacks employed by the Whites as soldiers, laborers, etc., were thus married without bride price. Nevertheless, no direct action was taken against the system. Later it became apparent that it would be harmful to abolish this ancestral custom before it was possible to replace it with a better system. (1) In the end it was realized that the payment

---

1. It is not even enough to substitute a better system; those who are to benefit from it must understand it and be convinced that it is better.

583x 648 of a bride price was not at all a purchase. (2) [179]

2. One reason why Europeans were so slow in getting a realistic picture of the nature of the bride price was undoubtedly their lack of linguistic knowledge. The natives did not know the Lobangi language spoken to them first nor the Lingala used later, and so perforce in these languages they used (and still use) terms whose meaning is vague and broad. Thus they said -- and still often say -- the word sɔ́mba, "to buy," for "marriage," although their own language contains terms which are very precise.

Having gradually become informed as to the true nature of the bride price, a number of Europeans began to favor a return to the old system. Some took a radical and intransigent stand on the matters; others approached the question in a more reasonable manner, taking into account the changes that had resulted from colonization. It was perceived that the natives were not yet ready for the abolition of their ancestral laws and that marriages without a bride price rarely lasted, in part because the old sanctions had not been replaced with new measures adapted to the circumstances. Finally the government as well as the missions more or less strictly required that the matter of the bride price be settled before a "civil" or a "religious" marriage ceremony.

583x 182 Many Europeans wish for the abolition of the bride-price system because it seems inferior to them. And actually in the present circumstances of time and place, it does constitute an obstacle to the evolution of the natives toward a better social and moral condition. (1)

1. This is especially true of the consequences of the nkita system.

But such an abolition is neither practicable nor expedient. This system penetrates and molds, so to speak, the whole familial and social life

628
602 Some time thereafter, a man named Bengɔ́ngɔ́ from the Ndo̲ngɔ̲́ village of the Bongíli went to Boɛ́lɛ́ to visit his sister Bosɛ́ka, who was married to Eale ɛ́â Bofekɛ́. The latter told him that the village was enraged because of the assassination of one of their people by the Batswa of the Bongíli. He advised him to go [295] and hide in the fallow ground lest excited men come upon him and revenge themselves on him. He led his brother-in-law there himself. Therefore he knew the exact location of his hiding place and ran to betray him to the others. They encircled the fallow ground and easily found [266] poor Bengɔ́ngɔ́, who was pitilessly massacred and eaten. His sister Bosɛ́ka never knew of her husband's treachery; she thought that despite all his precautions, the other inhabitants had discovered her brother's hiding place. (1)

● [649] 1. We should not be too astonished that during that period the Europeans did not intervene in these wars, vendettas, massacres, and acts of cannibalism. They let the natives do as they pleased among themselves and demanded only that they leave them alone and render them services and tribute. They had other things to do in those times. The white men Ǎmbɛ́ and Baisǎnko̲i, of whom the natives still speak with respectful fear, were the first to begin punishing acts of barbarism in this region.

602 This hypocrisy on the part of the husband toward his wife and brother-in-law is due to the presence of two opposing feelings within him -- on the one hand, the love of his family and the feeling of solidarity which engenders hate and the desire for vengeance; on the other, love for his spouse. As these feelings are in complete contradiction with each other, he cannot reconcile them. But at least he can preserve appearances.

[539] This situation is referred to in the following proverb: bokilɔ́ ɛkwǐsɛ́kɛ́, wɛ̌ngoyak'eyalo, "if your bokilɔ́ has hidden you, change

595 831 x And it is not difficult to understand this fact. For indeed polygamy constitutes a legitimate and easy means by which a man may enjoy several women without being bothered by palavers, difficulties, etc. The mentality of many men who care little about moral laws as well as the tendency of a disordered instinct to multiply its objects only confirm this observation. Often one sees men who were monogamists at first begin by taking a second wife out of passion. Then gradually their passion becomes greater rather than appeased, and so a harem is built up progressively.

595 178 x The changes introduced by colonization in the economic life of this people have not resulted in a decrease of polygamy. In the absence of exact figures we must be satisfied with simple visual observations, but in certain regions one has the impression that the harems have become smaller but, on the other hand, that the number of polygamists has increased, and therefore [375] the desire for polygamy, that is, its affective cause, has [651] not diminished. Nor does the extra tax frighten or stop the polygamists. The great means for changing the Nkundó attitude in this realm will always be the action of the missions and the penetration of Christian ethics, seconded by a government attitude favoring monogamy. (1)

[177] Another means, undoubtedly secondary but still important, is the example of European couples. The Blacks are imitative, and native women envy the lot of the white woman, so that European households are propaganda for monogamy when they behave well.

● [648] 1. The favorable attitude of the colonial government toward monogamy is expressed chiefly in the permission given to a polygamist's extra wives to abandon their husband in order to contract a monogamous union, preferably in a mission, under the supervision of missionaries.

548 In a center like Coquilhatville there are loose women who live in concubinage, first with one man and then another, a few days or weeks with this one, then the same length of time with that one; they are paid by each man but refuse to give up their freedom permanently. It is true that this city is outside the geographical limits of our study, but since it is located close to Nkundó territory and is important to them, I have touched on it briefly. No brothels are to be found there, and one does not encounter professional streetwalkers except for a few women who solicit among ship's crews. Most of the prostitutes in Coquilhatville are single girls or divorcées (legally or in fact). This disguised form of prostitution is not regulated here as it is in Leopoldville. (1) Nevertheless, the [77] government recognizes, at least in practice, the existence of a class of "free women" present in considerable numbers. Their way of life is contagious to such a degree that -- to an extent which varies greatly -- a noticeable number of girls who live with their parents but aspire to luxury have been seduced by it. (1)

● [651] 1. In the capital all native women who are adult and able bodied and who theoretically are living alone are taxed 50 francs (the certificates of payment show, in addition to other information, the number, name and address of the person taxed). This tax is not the equivalent of a permit to engage in licentious behavior or libertinism. It is not called a "prostitution tax" or any equivalent name, but some Europeans call it that because it has that appearance.

In addition there is a real regulation concerning prostitution; it is the Governor General's order of November 5, 1913, which establishes cards and periodical sanitary examinations for prostitutes. It would seem to be applied in Matadi, Leopoldville, and Elisabethville.

1. According to the latest figures

595x 831 And it is not difficult to understand this fact. For indeed polygamy constitutes a legitimate and easy means by which a man may enjoy several women without being bothered by palavers, difficulties, etc. The mentality of many men who care little about moral laws as well as the tendency of a disordered instinct to multiply its objects only confirm this observation. Often one sees men who were monogamists at first begin by taking a second wife out of passion. Then gradually their passion becomes greater rather than appeased, and so a harem is built up progressively.

595x 178 The changes introduced by colonization in the economic life of this people have not resulted in a decrease of polygamy. In the absence of exact figures we must be satisfied with simple visual observations, but in certain regions one has the impression that the harems have become smaller but, on the other hand, that the number of polygamists has increased, and therefore [375] the desire for polygamy, that is, its affective cause, has ● [651] not diminished. Nor does the extra tax frighten or stop the polygamists. The great means for changing the Nkundó attitude in this realm will always be the action of the missions and the penetration of Christian ethics, seconded by a government attitude favoring monogamy. (1)

[648] 1. The favorable attitude of the colonial government toward monogamy is expressed chiefly in the permission given to a polygamist's extra wives to abandon their husband in order to contract a monogamous union, preferably in a mission, under the supervision of missionaries.

[177] Another means, undoubtedly secondary but still important, is the example of European couples. The Blacks are imitative, and native women envy the lot of the white woman, so that European households are propaganda for monogamy when they behave well.

M 342 with rattan thongs. These walls are very strong and durable. The roof is usually covered with thatch, but it frequently happens that the native also uses panels of nse-nse to cover his hut. [43]

M 361 Among the peoples who live west of the lake, the huts are grouped in clusters of two or three and placed in two parallel lines. The free space between the clusters is very limited, so much so that at first sight all the huts seem to be continuous. The doors always open on the large street.

M 342 177 ● 656 We also visited a number of villages where earthen dwellings, built by administrative order, stretched out the whole length of the village. As a rule, however, these huts, which we regard as an improvement from the standpoint of hygiene and comfort, were not favored by the natives. The Negro had carried out the task imposed upon him, but he refused to enjoy it. His primitive hut, which was better adapted to the necessities of his life, retained its appeal and its occupants.

M 361 342 Among the Tumba of the east shore of the lake, we observed that the hut tends to present certain characteristics relating it to the type of hut with an arched roof found among the Buli [Oli] and farther north. The ridge, instead of being straight, extends beyond the ends of the hut and dips down, giving the whole structure the appearance of a bow bent [44] chiefly at the two ends. In certain dwellings the doors are placed in the side wall facing the main thoroughfare, and the huts are built in groups standing more or less close together. In other huts, on the other hand, the door is located in the gable wall and opens on a small veranda formed by the projecting roof front. The huts built this way are placed in a line, but are separated, and although the space between the two lines forms the chief thoroughfare of the village, each hut nevertheless boasts a small individual courtyard in front of the veranda. As to the method of construction, it is identical to those we noted in the region west of the lake.

M S 361 342 Among the peoples of the lower Lukenie, the huts are also built by the same method and with identical materials. The door, however, is nearly always in the gable wall, at the end where the roof projects, slightly curved, to form the veranda. When the huts are separated, one notices again a tendency toward an arc in the

436 1. Benkata: this was thin iron or copper wire rolled into small rings; the thickness of the wire was about 3 millimeters; the length, 20 to 25 centimeters.

2. Bingetele: iron or copper bars about 8 millimeters thick and 15 centimeters long; these are still in use in Bikoro.

436 3. Bekata: copper wire; thickness about 7 or 8 millimeters, and
301 1 meter or 1.50 meters long; spiral shaped; the women wore these rolled around their legs as copper leggings.

[543] 4. Bakonga: copper rings which served as arm bands and foot bands and also as collars. The size differed for small or large persons; the weight is from one half kilo to 5 kilos.

436 5. Mitako: copper wire about 4 millimeters thick and 25 centimeters long, usually bent like a hairpin. The mitako served as a uniform currency, from which the other values and prices were reckoned, like the franc with us. The value of the mitako was formerly reckoned at five centimes.

583 Formerly the bride price, which was paid for a wife in al-
435 most all of Equatorial Africa, was from 5 to 20 bakonga. (The value of the bakonga differed greatly according to the weight. The average value, however, is estimated at 2.50 francs.) This payment was further supplemented with slaves or wives. This manner of payment and the bride price still exist in the districts where the natives have not yet, or practically not, come in contact with Europeans. Also,
[567] it was sometimes paid with only slaves or women. The price for one female slave was relatively much less than for another woman.

178 Through the occupation of the Congo by Europeans, the
583 family life of the natives has necessarily undergone great changes, and their customs and habits as well.

In the first place the natives have found themselves deprived of their wives by the sentinels of the Independent Congo State.
[661] These black sentinels, appointed in the villages by the State to supervise the reaping of caoutchouc, assumed an unlimited power. They took as many wives of the natives as they chose and did not pay for a single one.

Next many black soldiers, servant boys, and workmen of the Europeans also took wives everywhere in the beginning, without bothering about the native customs, that is, without paying for those wives; and this often happened under the protective power of their Whites.

121
69
all fulfilled in one person. But such individuals do exist, if in the person of the investigator they find sympathy, broad ideas, a lack of all European racism, understanding, a knowledge of their language, and a benevolent devotion to their interests, individually and as a group.

121
124
Even if one has the good fortune to find a native who, after much experience, reaches the point where he will say spontaneously: "This is done often, but it is against the law; the law says thus and so; this decision of the tribunal was partial for such or such reason," -- an infinitely valuable situation, but one which arises very rarely -- one is not thereby absolved of the need to check his statements. But the further one goes, the more it is possible to be aware of the reality and to appraise the informant's value in this sphere and the usefulness of his statements.

121
183
● 671
These considerations are particularly valuable in making the distinction between obligations and social decorum or good manners, between legal obligations and obligations of kinship and mutual assistance. In current practice the Nkundó make no clear lines of demarcation between these categories, since they have never codified their law or attempted to set up a clear and precise classification. They feel no more need for this than, for instance, they or even we "civilized" people bother about setting up a grammar for our native tongue, which we speak correctly and without the slightest difficulty, purely out of habit.

[124]
An investigation in the legal domain is made [18] very difficult by the patriarchal and feudal character of these peoples, added to the lack of writing. Not only is there an adaptation to circumstances -- the felicitous flexibility of native laws -- in which jurisprudence plays a great role, but the Nkundó, while knowing well what is lawful and what is not, generally does not clearly understand the nature of an obligation, and above all he does not know its source.

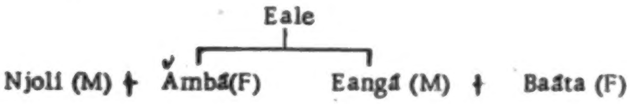
121
124
One's chances of obtaining good results in the inquiry are greatly increased by the use of hypothetical cases, presented to the individuals one knows best and whom one knows to be in no way involved. It is always worthwhile to use this method as a means of completing and perhaps correcting conclusions based on the examination

582
602 The dispensation is given by the ndonga acting with the family council, which often yields before the fact, particularly if the second reason is involved. (1)

> 1. "To give a dispensation" is translated as kilola. A marriage contracted with a legitimate dispensation or one accorded because of the pressure of the accomplished fact is called kilókilólá, or "an affinity which is not maintained according to the regulations."

●[671] 2. Contrary to European law, which recognizes only a direct affinity between husband and his wife's family, Nkundó law also recognizes an indirect affinity, so that a person is affinally related even to the spouses of his wife's relatives. That is, each person is affinally related, not only to his spouse's kin, but also to their relatives by marriage. Thus, in the example below, Njoli and Baáta are true relatives by marriage, though indirect ones. (2)

> 2. The Nkundó do not make a terminological distinction between the two types of affinity. We are using the terms "direct" and "indirect" for the sake of convenience and clarity.



There is an important difference between the two types of affinity: direct affinity is a much greater obstacle to marriage than indirect affinity, and exceptions are made only rarely and only for certain degrees of relationship.

582
602
576 3) A distinction must be made between "superior" and "inferior" relatives, that is, between those who have [253] precedence

586 simply said that she has left her husband (aɔ̂kɔ́fa) and has been taken
837 in marriage by X (aɔ̂kúmbwa ɛ́ka Sóngɔ́ló). Having fallen in love
587 with another man's wife [390] and desiring to marry her, a man tries to win her favor. If she consents he collects the valuables necessary for the bride price. He then asks the woman to come to him and pays the bride price as for any marriage.

Instead of going directly to her seducer, the woman may also first go to her parents, especially if they are in favor of her plan. If they are not she would not succeed, because they would prevent her from carrying it out.

Cases of njangó were formerly rare because they were risky.
[721] As a matter of fact, they constituted a casus belli. Anyone who undertook such a venture had to be in a position to take the conse-
[178] quences of his act, especially with respect to the payment of an indemnity. Nowadays, on the other hand, these occurrences are much more frequent, even when the new husband does not have the means to pay the bride price at once. Nevertheless, the reversal in government policy is beginning to produce good results. The woman, or her mother, is often imprisoned; rarely the seducer. This penalty is often sufficient to restore order. But to keep from being exposed to further difficulties caused by the woman who no longer loves him, the abandoned husband sometimes refuses to take back his unfaithful wife.

The rarity of cases in former times as well as the fact that
● [671] they constituted a legitimate reason for war shows that the njangó did not have the approval of Nkundɔ́ law but that it was more or less considered an infraction.

2) Taking refuge. Because of the change in circumstances,
586 the practice of taking refuge is no longer common today. It used
577 to be done as follows: A woman who absolutely wanted to leave her husband and had no means of doing so, since no man had asked for her in marriage and her parents were powerless to help her, went secretly to a rich and influential man whom she would have liked as a husband. She arrived unexpectedly, stood before him, or even threw herself at him, crying, [391] Bejwɔ́ bɛ̌kɛ̌! ónjéngé,

Ntomba

224 of the two arches, and the other one is held in place by a mobile stick (D) placed transversally between the tips of the arches in such a fashion as to bar the mouth of the hole. In leaving or returning, the rodent sticks its head through the noose, and being impeded by the transverse stick (D), it pushes the stick aside with its paws, releasing the trigger stick (C) and the bent branch (E) which snaps up. The rodent is automatically caught in the noose, pulled up, and strangled. This snare is remarkably sensitive, and the rodent who tackles it is invariably caught.

The natives also set up snares for antelope. Being very observant, they quickly discover the place where an antelope passes regularly, as well as the size of the animal. They place a rattan noose at this spot and carefully hide it in the grass and leaves. The animal sticks its head through the noose in passing and is trapped. The more the animal struggles, the tighter the noose is drawn.

The native sets traps for the large flesh-eaters, hyenas, leopards, and large wild cats. [Ed., the text is not translated from the third paragraph, page 62, to the second paragraph, page 64.]

[64] Hunting the elephant and the hippopotamus involves traps, pitfalls, the spear, and the harpoon.

The pitfalls consist of large holes dug along the paths frequented by the pachyderms. These holes are three to four meters long, two meters wide, and four to five meters deep. At the bottom, the native plants wooden stakes whose ends, carved to a point, are hardened by fire. The opening is hidden by a mat of tree branches and roughly plaited creepers, covered with leaves and grass. These traps are a real danger to travelers in the country, and therefore the native is required to indicate their presence by a conventional sign prominently displayed. I first noticed these signposts between the Mosengere villages of Lokila and Gomo Erenge: a strong stake perpendicular to the ground, on top of which the native fastens a hoop and a stick. The latter is fixed obliquely to the ground in the direction of a straight line from the post to the trap. If a native neglects to place the signpost, he [672] loses his right to the game caught in the trap, and he is held responsible for any accidents that might result from his negligence.

593x If one day the marriage is dissolved, the wife may no longer
421 claim any right to the fields, utensils, clothing, etc. She does not
[586] inherit from her husband. When she herself dies, her family has no right to anything she may have left except, of course, to valuables she has received on the occasion of the marriage of one of her daughters. (2)

2. See Chapter II, Article V. For fuller details, see Chapter VIII, Article V, and Chapter IX, Articles IV and VII.

593x The woman's position with respect to property has yet another
672 consequence; a husband is responsible for damage caused by his wife.
421 He is the one who must pay the indemnity. The same is true for any debts she may have contracted. If she has borrowed, her creditor claims his due not from the woman nor her family, but from her husband. He alone is recognized as legally responsible, since he alone has the rights to his wife's economic activity, and profits as well as losses from it. Afterward he has the right to scold and even beat his wife for causing him this financial injury. However, an exception is made in cases where the woman's family officially acknowledges, by publicly paying a ndanga before witnesses, that she is at fault and thus frees the husband of any responsibility.

We may thus draw the following conclusions:

1) A woman is not an owner.

2) However she has the right to a reasonable amount for her various needs. This right is not a true property right (jus in re); it is a right to what is necessary for subsistence (jus ad rem).

3) Thus it is not possible for a woman's parents to inherit the goods which her husband has placed at her disposal [265].

4) A wife never acts in her own name but as her husband's agent; therefore he is legally responsible.

593 required to re-establish peace and harmony by means of a considerable
758 boɔ́ndo, for having failed to take care of his wife and for having
shown complete thoughtlessness and indifference.

If the illness becomes prolonged or serious, neither the hus-
593 band nor his relatives have the leisure to nurse or take care of her.
758 To remedy this situation and at the same time give the woman's
672 parents the satisfaction of being able to help their daughter themselves, the husband sends her to them. He takes her there himself or calls them to come and get her. He communicates the news by sending his ndonga who bears a token payment (ndanga, loákako) such as a knife, a copper ring, etc. This ndanga is a pledge, evidence for the family that their daughter was ill on arrival and did not acquire her infirmity while with them. Without this pledge they would not want to take her; they would prefer to treat her in her husband's home. Or if the husband were to send her home without a ndanga, they would call the ndonga to witness this infraction of the rules. Or the fact that the husband has done this might be considered as a repudiation of his wife, pure and simple. In any case the husband would be in the wrong, and under these conditions the legal responsibility for his wife's death would fall entirely on him (see Chapter IX, Article X).

593 When the wife is cured, her parents send a message to their
758 son-in-law to urge him to come and take his wife back.

Even if they have not been invited by the husband, the wife's parents come to see their daughter when they hear of her illness [268] in order to take her away with them and care for her. She usually follows them, but she is not required to do so since she belongs to her husband. People even cite the names of women who despite the insistence of their families did not want to be cared for at home, but have preferred to die in their husband's arms, so to speak. Among them were Bolɔ́mbɔ́ w'Ikofo of Bombɛ́nga w'Ɔ̂kenda (Besombɔ́) married to Iembe y'Ilongo of Engɔ́njɔ́; Baleko of Nsekɛ́ married to Eanga ɛá Jatá of Nkɛ́lengo; Iombe of Bosáá married to Bokɔ́lɔ́mbwá of Iálá; Balengola of Ntɔ́mbá (Bombwanja) married to Lompoko of Mbelɛ́; Mpɛ́mbɛ́ of Bonganda (Bonkoso) married to Imbamba of Bonjoku;

593* Efala of Longa married to Ìfolí of Bokɛ́nyola (Bonjoku); Basɛ́sɛ́ of
758 Mbelɛ́ married to Nkengo of Litɔ́li.

If the woman went to her family in good health and contracted an infirmity there, her parents are responsible for it. They are obliged to nurse her and to assume all the expenses due to her treatment. After she is cured they send her back with a quantity of nkomɛ́ for her husband. Usually the matter ends there. If relations between the two families are not very good, however, the husband will claim an indemnity, which varies with the situation and to which he is entitled even if he does not claim it.

This stipulation of the law holds even if the woman has gone to see her mother, father, etc., at the time of an illness or for any other reason.

It does not hold, on the other hand, if the wife has been ordered to go to her parents by her husband, or if she has fled the home shared with her husband because of ill treatment or of serious failings on his part; this point will be explained below in number 3. In such cases the husband is legally responsible for the illness.

Certain situations may arise which are intermediate to the ones discussed. Thus, for example, a wife may make a visit on her own initiative [269] but for her husband's good. Theoretically, he should win the case. Note, finally, that a stay of only twenty-four hours is not considered sufficient to make responsibility for an illness fall on the wife's family.

Colonization has produced an entirely new situation.
178 Colonial law has given the extra wives of polygamists the freedom
595* to go to a mission in order to be instructed in the Christian religion
758 and to contract a monogamous marriage (provided the customary
● 672 rules governing the dissolution of marriages are observed). Such a
797 woman may fall ill at the mission. If her illness has no troublesome consequences, it does not result in a dispute. But if the illness becomes chronic and in some way detrimental to the abandoned spouse, it may do so.

The polygamists declare that they are free of any responsibility, which they place on the woman's family. But the family has

178 nothing to do with it; it is unjust to bring them into the matter.
595x Since this legislation is intended to combat polygamy, it is natural
758 that the polygamous husband be the one who suffers from it.

●672 The following is a recent example of this situation: Mbőyő
797 Julienne, sister of Botűna Jean of Balondő, married to a polygamist by the name of Insílo of Bokenyola (Bonjoku), went to Bokuma Mission, where she contracted an incurable illness. (1) Because of her illness she found it impossible to remarry. She therefore left the mission but was no longer accepted by the husband she had lived with so that she had to live in her brother's home. Insílo insisted that her brother reimburse him for the bride price, maintaining that in going to the mission, the woman had divorced him; his real reason, however, [270] was that she had become unfit to fulfill the duties of a wife. Since Mbőyő did not fall ill in his home, he held her family responsible.

593x 3. Abandonment of the home shared by the couple

586x In the case of serious failings on the part of a husband, a woman's usual weapon is to leave their common home and return to her father's house. If the reason for her flight is serious, it is up to the husband to go and bring her back. She will not return on her own initiative. If he refuses to make the first step, he will be accused as much by public opinion as by his parents-in-law of not loving his wife, and a rupture will become inevitable. It is therefore his duty to go to his wife's parents. They will ask him to explain the situation. The wife, too, will say what she thinks. The parents will settle their difference. Whether or not the ndonga is present will depend on the

---

1. It was a sort of illness with nervous symptoms. From a scientific viewpoint, it is more than likely that she had this illness before her arrival at the mission, although it was only manifested there. But the natives do not make this distinction, so it is not relevant to our topic.

626 The shame attached to the discovery of this sort of misconduct in the better circles in Europe is unknown among the Nkundó. 837 This is natural since isolated instances are readily excused. As to [152] the habitual offenders, they are sensitive [326] to the above-mentioned epithets but will not correct their ways on this account any more than people in other parts of the world.

837 626 684 An adulterous husband is criticized as much as an adulterous wife in spite of the difference in the means of repression which Nkundó law provides for their respective misconduct.

Public opinion therefore corroborates the conclusion toward which our examination of sanctions has pointed, namely that adultery is condemned by the Nkundó. Opinion is not based on the existence of the sanction but seems to spring from their innate mentality, which makes them perceive adultery as a disorder.

6. Aggravating circumstances

837 842 672 If a case of adultery is followed by conception, it becomes especially serious, and for the husband as much as for the natural father. Indeed the latter must assume all the consequences. When circumstances permit the husband makes his wife denounce her accomplice, and she does not refuse to do so. The husband then calls a meeting and demands a pledge (ndanga) from the culprit, who in that way acknowledges that he is at fault and shows his willingness to assume all responsibility. If there is a miscarriage or the child dies during delivery, the natural father must pay the legal father an indemnity of "a slave" or more (sometimes 50 rings); a smaller indemnity is required for a child who is only deformed or sickly. If the mother dies the indemnity consists of a slave and 50 rings, and it may go as high as 100 rings.

In the interim the husband no longer goes near his wife. He leaves her to her lover, who must "preserve the foetus" and observe all the rites and practices associated with pregnancy and childbirth, since, physically, he is the father. (1) [327]

1. For fuller details see Chapter X, Article II, 3. For analogous practices

672
837
[842] in the case of an unmarried mother, see Chapter I, Part 1, Article III, 3.

[843] Adultery also becomes especially serious during the period preceding childbirth when there is a special prohibition against it, as endangering the lives of both mother and child, as we will explain in Chapter X, Article III.

7. Remarks and general conclusions

837
[721] 1) In former times the offense of adultery, even in its mildest form, that is, an isolated act, was one of the chief causes of "wars" between villages. Sometimes both sides called on their relatives by marriage to assist them, and the result was a general upheaval.

837
595* 2) As a rule a husband wants his wife to be faithful. Doubtless there are exceptions. Most if not all of them were formerly found among the old polygamists. At their age they were disgusted with continual palavers, and their experience as men had taught them that they often became angry and uselessly complicated their little lives. They preferred to close their eyes, like good old Bo̲no̲f w'ĩko̲lo̲ngó̲ of Ite̲ko̲ (the Bombwanja clan of the Boóyá). He came to see me in the Christian village of Bombomba through which I was passing at the beginning of March, 1933. I asked him why he was adorned with so many bells, and he answered naively, "I always wear them. That way my wives know of my coming already from a distance. It gives them time to stop slandering me and to send their lovers away." When I expressed my surprise that he did not want to catch them in the act in order to punish them and end their infidelities, he answered me with a smile, "No, Father, jealousy . . . is for the young. As for me, I have seen so much of it that I no longer have any desire to get angry and make palavers for these trivialities."

548
837
595 Since the coming of the Europeans some unscrupulous men -- especially polygamists -- have been engaging in [328] a kind of procuring. They send their wives to commit adultery in order to be able to catch them in the act and thus enrich themselves. Or else they lend their wives for one night or more to laborers or soldiers who are

567
595ˣ
727

could not be otherwise. In such matters each group took care only of its own interests; and none of the procedures usually accompanying the dissolution of a marriage were observed. However, the husband was entitled to an indemnity, in the form of persons or valuables, from the member of his clan who had fomented the war and was held responsible for all its consequences, whatever the way in which he had provoked it. If necessary, this member could be forced to pay. If he did not have the means to pay indemnities, he himself was reduced to slavery, if the influence of the families involved did not prevent this occurrence. When the woman was enfranchised and a new bride price was paid for her, her family was expected to reimburse her former husband.

● [672]

Since, at present, slavery has been abolished, ransom can no longer be paid. A master who wishes to enfranchise a slave woman who has remained faithful to him, simply gives her family the bride price and then goes with his wife to her home to receive the dowry.

Article VI. Life in a Harem

595ˣ Wives of the same husband address each other among themselves as bakalé (sing. bokalé). Their husband calls them all baálí, [358] "wives." All except for true slaves are married by means of a bride price. A woman's sons call their mother's bakalé baálí, "wives," but out of respect toward the older ones

586x 672 If the wife is ill she may have become ill at her husband's home or elsewhere and these two possible situations must be considered separately. In the first instance there is no cause for divorce, since responsibility for her illness rests entirely with the husband. On the other hand, if the wife contracted her illness while staying with her family, the family must shoulder the responsibility, and if her illness is incurable, the husband can have recourse to divorce. But this is not so if the wife has gone to her parents' home in response to her husband's express order, or if she ran away from the husband's for reasons which are just and reasonable. Some situations may give rise to violent disputes. Such is the case, for example, of an illness during a visit undertaken at the wife's own initiative but for the good of the husband. Theoretically, he should win the case. Also, a stay of twenty-four hours is not considered sufficient to place the responsibility for the illness on the wife's family. (1)

1. For details see Chapter VI, Article III, 3 and 4. See also Chapter IX, Article X.

586x The difference between the consequences of the husband's illness and his wife's is of a practical nature. A husband who suffers from an incurable illness or one that takes too long to cure is usually (though not always) abandoned by his wife. If no other man pays a bride price for her, the marriage continues. If the woman finds a lover, he pays the bride price, which is turned over to the first husband, completing the divorce. But it is not possible to say that the man's illness per se is a cause of divorce, for the wife is under an obligation to take care of a sick husband. [378] But in practice neither of the two families involved demand the application of this law. All yield to the wishes of the woman, who will refuse to continue a union that has so little attraction for her.

Thus illness is not a legally valid reason for divorce. But in practice it is recognized as a situation that can result in the dissolution of a marriage.

[842] Although the Nkundó ardently desire children, sterility

586x and this was generally the case -- he did not kill him personally
682 but assigned the task to someone else -- his son, his younger
[563] brother, or nephew, etc. Preferably, he hired a Botswá. The price
for this service was 20 copper rings, the sum of the bride price paid
[612] for a Botswá woman. Nkundó law places the entire responsibility
for an assassination and all its consequences upon the person who
orders it performed. Certain of the Batswa specialized in this field.
Among them (of those dependent on the Bombwanja) were Esenge
of Bokengé, Mbólókó of Bombembe, Wai w'ìtúmola of Bakoyó;
Lǔwá jw'ìtómbengándá (died in 1933) also of Bakoyó; Botómba wá
Lokio and Mpótó éy'Ilókó of Mbanja (still alive).

The scorned husband had still other means of taking revenge
586x or obtaining indemnification. He made use of them only if the
occasion was favorable or if he was not in a position [382] to go
into expensive adventures such as a war or an assassination. They
were the following:

3) *Ikákelo*: (1) A relative of his who was married into the unfaithful wife's clan could be prevented from returning to her husband.

4) *The seizure of one of the wives of his recalcitrant father-in-law*, or of one of the latter's relatives. This action is called by the generic term *lowáála*, which signifies "compensation." (2)

The prisoner was usually put in an *etáka* (a wooden fork fastened to the neck) (3) to prevent her flight and hasten the reimbursement of
[567] the bride price. If the matter was not settled she became a slave.

---

1. See Chapter III, Article VI.

2. The woman who was seized was called *nginda* and her descendants, if there were any, were known as *bonginda*.

3. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 4, A, b), (1).

586 other." (1)
[672]

1. Except, of course, if the new husband puts himself in the wrong by taking the woman home with him before the divorce is completed (see above).

The term for making restitution of the bride price is [192] úndoja (baúmbá, jengí, etc.); [399] its intransitive form is úndola ("to recover the cost of the bride price," and the passive is únjwa, "to be restituted." The noun is njúndó or wúndó ("restitution," "reimbursement").

2. Methods of making restitution

The woman's father can pay back the bride price in two ways:

1) By means of valuables received from the new husband. In this case the more the latter hastens his payment, the sooner the new union will be made final.

2) By means of his own wealth, lontumú or bokakata (ekakata), an intensitive derived from likata, "hand." This method of payment settles the matter more quickly and avoids complaints lodged by the former husband. Sometimes restitution is made in this manner to show wealth and generosity.

In such a case the father acts spontaneously of his own free will. But can he be required to thus make restitution with his own wealth?

Yes. If the bride price is still in the hands of the woman's family, it must be returned immediately. This rule is easily understood, for under these circumstances no practical difficulty stands in the way of reimbursement.

Although as a rule the bride-price valuables will already have been spent for the acquisition of another wife (the nkita), this is not always the case. For example, only a very short time may have elapsed between the conclusion of the marriage and the divorce. But such a case was and is rare. Instances where the bride price was still in the family's possession were even rarer in the past, for people did not want bride-price wealth to remain

768 Nkundó categorically state that the situation now under discussion does not result in the payment of an indemnity.

This observation again brings out the basic difference between jengí and bosóngo, which we have already discussed in Chapter II, Article IX, 2 and Article XII, 5, and suggests that the walo constitutes the marriage agreement, whereas the bosóngo is the substitution of a person for the one that is lost to the clan through the marriage of one of their members.

Article X

A Woman's Death at the Home of Her Own Family

768 593 672 We have already drawn the reader's attention several times to the fact that a husband is responsible for his wife because, in accordance with the clan agreement between the families, she "belongs" to him. [451] The consequence of this stipulation of Nkundó law is that the husband assumes all risks relating to the wife; hence he must take upon himself all the damages resulting from her death. There are exceptions to this general rule, however, under the following two circumstances:

1) If the wife dies while at the home of her own family.

2) If the wife dies after having left her own husband for another.

In this article we will examine the first of these two possible situations, leaving the second one for the next article.

If a wife dies while at her own family's home, an exception is made if certain conditions are fulfilled. There are several situations possible:

1) The wife returns to her family because she is exasperated with the unfair treatment she receives from her husband. He may not be fulfilling his duties toward her, may be mistreating her unjustly, etc., as we have seen in Chapter VI, Article III. The situation becomes unbearable. In that case the husband is clearly in the wrong, and the wife has the right to seek a little peace in her parents' home. Under such conditions, if she dies before the

768 husband has come to take her back through arranging a palaver by
●672 means of a boóndo, he has no right to complain. He himself
593x brought on such difficulties by his unfair way of behaving. He is obliged to make the funeral payments. Because of the strained relations between him and his father-in-law, the affinal relationship is broken. That is why he will ordinarily refuse to pay the nkunjí, at least when he has had no children by this woman. If he omits the payment even though there are progeny, the children are taken from him by their mother's family.

This situation seldom arose in the past. Young and impetuous husbands were almost nonexistent. The old men kept the women for themselves. Age and experience with life had made them more settled, calmer, more reasonable, so they did not throw themselves into adventures [452] whose outcome were necessarily to their disadvantage. Since today men marry considerably younger, such situations can arise more easily; although, on the other hand, a permanent dissolution of the marriage occurs most frequently before the possible development described.

2) The wife leaves her husband without just reason and, having returned to her family, dies there. In the past such a situation was quite rare (Chapter VIII, Article II, 1, A). If no war occurred before the death of the fugitive (a war automatically terminated the affair), the husband had every right to reimbursement or to a substitution of another wife for the deceased. The situation is therefore identical to the one that follows. But there is no longer any question of sending back the corpse, and if the husband wants to break the alliance permanently he does not even need to pay the nkunjí.

Nowadays this situation has become far more common. It presents no special difficulty; the ancient custom continues to be observed.

It is almost trifling to mention that the matter of total or
768 partial reimbusement of the bride price can be handled through
593x friendly transactions between the husband and his parents-in-law. The following case is typical: Bonjeló of Iámbo (Bonkoso) inherited Boélé, daughter of Lokálámbá is Ibele of Bonganda. After some years she left her husband, returned home, and died. Her father

768 sent the notification gift and even added dogs to it, because he
583x was interested in keeping the affinal relationship. The corpse
was not sent since the woman had died of an infectious disease and the body was decomposing rapidly so that contagion was feared. Lokálámbá presented the widower with his youngest daughter Mbangó as a substitute. But since she was quite young, *Bonjeló* did not want her. He was satisfied with an indemnity because -- after all -- he too wanted to remain on good terms with his father-in-law. The latter sent him 22 rings as an *ilengé* (slave), and thus the matter was closed. [453]

3) The wife has returned to her family on her own initiative
768 in order to visit her parents, nurse them, or to participate in her
●672 family's communal fishing, to get her supply of edible caterpillars,
593x or for any other reason. In such a case the responsibility passes
from the husband to the parents. The family must notify the husband of the death (always, of course, through the *ndonga*). When the husband receives the news he accuses his parents-in-law, saying: *lóómbomela walí*, "You have killed my wife." He demands that the corpse be sent to him so that he can wash it, adorn it in an appropriate manner, and mourn for the deceased. Subsequently he sends the corpse back with the *ndonga* and demands that another wife be substituted for the deceased or, if none is available, that the bride price be returned to him. As long as his father-in-law does not fulfill his obligations, the husband will not bring the funeral payments. Moreover, if the family of the deceased is recalcitrant or too slow, he will practice *ikákelo*, that is, he will hold one of his kinswomen who is married into the clan of the deceased in order to obtain her bride price. In this way he will obtain the valuables to which he is entitled; the two bride prices balance one another and the matter is settled permanently. In that case he naturally retains all his rights over his children.

This solution applies on even stronger grounds if the wife's family themselves have called her home.

If the wife falls ill in her parents' home, it may happen that her husband wants to care for her himself. He will demand

768 a pledge (ndanga) from his father-in-law to the effect that the
●672 illness started in his home. If he neglects to take this precaution
593x and his wife dies, he has no legal means to claim indemnification.

4) A solution identical to the one described above is applied even if a wife goes to her parents for her husband's personal benefit in order to get him something he needs, such as beer for a [454] feast, valuables with which to settle a palaver, etc. It holds true even if the husband has sent her expressly for this purpose.

This situation easily gives rise to violent disputes, however. The wife's family tries to reject the husband's claims by objecting that it is he himself who sent his wife, or at least that she came to them solely for his sake. Nevertheless, in the end the husband is the one who is right and who wins the case. (1)

1. A stay of twenty-four hours is not considered sufficient to place the civil responsibility for an illness, nor therefore for death, on the wife's family.

5) The wife goes home ill. As we have seen in Chapter VI, Article III, 2, the parents are not willing to nurse their daughter unless their son-in-law -- always through the ndonga -- gives them a ndanga in testimony of the fact that she was ill when she left him. The husband thus recognizes his responsibility for all possible consequences of the illness. Consequently, he can make no claims in case of death.

Since the civil responsibility for the death falls to the husband, the latter is notified by the ndonga, but the family does not send him a notification ring. The ndanga for the illness takes the place of this payment. The widower asks that the corpse be brought to him so that he can perform the last rites, and this request is always granted. There is nothing special about the rest of the procedure; everything takes place as if the wife had died in her husband's home.

6) The wife is repudiated by her husband. In the past this happened only if the woman behaved very badly and showed herself to be incorrigible. As we have seen in Chapter VIII, Article II, 1, no. 2, the husband did not send her back to her family; he

768 ●672 593x fastened her to a fork (etáka) until he was reimbursed. Sometimes the ndonga intervened to free her, but by doing so he took upon himself the responsibility of making restitution of the bride price. In this last [465] instance, if the wife died in the home of her family, the husband was entitled to reimbursement just as he would be in case of a divorce. Thus we come back to the situation described under 2) and 3), the forms varying according to whether or not the widower wanted to continue the affinal relationship.

[178] Nowadays the situation has changed entirely. The colonial administration no longer permits the use of the etáka. Consequently, a man who wants to get rid of his incorrigible wife acts in such a way that she will leave him of her own free will. And the situation is again that described in 2).

If the husband has sent his wife away himself by placing her in the hands of the ndonga, his parents-in-law will refuse him an indemnity or any restitution of the bride price and often will not even accept the nkunjí. They answer his demands by telling him that he should not have repudiated the wife whom he freely chose for himself. Thus most men resort to the procedure described in the next paragraph. There are circumstances, however, under which this mode of action is more difficult; this is so especially in the case of monogamists, since its execution requires several weeks, sometimes several months. In the interim the wife does as she pleases and neglects her husband, so that the latter practically finds himself a bachelor.

797 768 672 593x Evangelization has added a second difficulty. Catholic marriage is indissoluble. Catechumens and Christians who wish to marry must therefore be careful. Before admitting them to religious marriage, we require that at least the walo be paid. But the young men know the temperament and value of their fiancées only through experience. In almost every case therefore they have this experience at home before the walo, in accordance with their ancestral custom. Then, if one of the two parties is pagan (which happens very often), the disciplinary rules of the Catholic missions in the Congo require that they spend a minimum of six months

797 preparing at a mission station or catechumenate [456]. During
768 the experimental period, the engaged pair sometimes find faults
672 in each other which lead them to foresee a married life filled with
593x difficulties and resulting in a breakup. Therefore it is preferable that they carry out the required measures before marriage. The woman is usually the source of the difficulties. The female sex has hardly been touched by evangelization, chiefly because pagan parents, who do not oppose the Christianization and education of their boys, take their revenge on the girls. What they fear particularly is the girls' opposition to premature marriages or their flight to the centers. For those people, therefore, it is almost impossible to get round the difficulty in such a way. As the situation is not provided for in traditional law and, furthermore, most of the natives who hold power are clearly indifferent, if not hostile, to evangelization and the stability of Christian marriage, these special circumstances are not taken into account in any way, to the great detriment of the young people who are thus caught between their consciences and their temporal interests (which in this instance have strong repercussions on their moral life). The attitude of almost all the chiefs and judges in this matter is not contrary to ancestral law -- since the situation was unknown -- but it is certainly opposed to the spirit of that law.

7) The couple go to the home of the wife's family together.
672 Illness and death that come unexpectedly during such a visit are
768 imputed solely to the husband, who retains all the risks except,
593x of course, if the husband returns home but his wife does not follow him, remaining with her parents. Indeed in such a case we fall back on the solution described in 2).

8) Here we come back to the possibility indicated at the end of Article IX, 1, namely that of the wife who dies in her [457] family's home before the walo is paid. If the husband is in the wrong (see under 1), 5), and 7), the solution given in the article in question retains all its validity; the husband's "responsibility" remains intact. In the other instances it is reduced but not taken away. Actually, two laws are in conflict. On the one hand, there is the "responsibility" of the husband who has not fully acquitted

768 672 593x himself of his obligations, and, on the other, the "responsibility" of the woman who did not remain with her husband. To draw a comparison from the realm of accounting, there are two sides, debit and credit. But the latter lies chiefly on the side of the woman's family, for at the time of death the woman is not yet a wife in the full sense of the word. Consequently, the husband must pay an indemnity. But the fact that his fiancée died at home with her family is for him an extenuating circumstance as a result of which the indemnity is reduced, so that he need only pay about a half, that is, around 25 to 35 rings.

Conclusions

The explanations given may seem a little wordy. Nevertheless, it was useful to indicate all the diversity of possible situations in order to deduce the rule and to grasp the basis of the system from actual facts. Everything considered, it would thus appear that the husband assumes all risks with regard to his wife, and that he must bear all the damages resulting from her loss. She really belongs to him and not to her family in spite of any impression one may have that on the contrary the woman belongs more to her parents than to her husband. For even in the instances where she dies in her parents' home, having gone there for a justifiable reason, her death is considered an injustice toward her husband, since a wife's place is in the conjugal home. Such is the general rule. Exceptionally, in special instances defined by law, a woman's parents reassume the risks for her, that is, they again become responsible for her. [458]

Article XI

A Wife's Death in the Home of Another Man

768 672 Here we will consider what happens if a woman who has left her husband and gone to another man dies in the home of the latter before the restitution of the bride price to the former. Two situations may arise:

768 672 1) The walo may have been paid by the second husband, but restitution to the first husband may not yet have been made. The latter is entitled to reimbursement of the bride price just as he would be if the woman had not died (Chapter VIII, Article III), whereas the rules given in the preceding article are applicable to the new husband.

2) The walo may not yet have been paid; in that case the second husband must conform to the rules given in Article IV, 1 and Article X, 8). The first husband must recover the valuables to which he is entitled in accordance with the rules indicated in Chapter VIII, Article III.

Here are two recent instances:

Ifomí yǎ Lokombe, daughter of Ikotama of Bontole wá Yǔyokonda (Bongíli), was married to Baleka of Nkílenjóló (Losenge, Bombwanja). One day she went to Bempumbá to be baptized by the Protestant missionary. On her way back she was delayed by Ilumbé of Iámbo (Bonkoso), who wanted to marry her. He gave Ikotama an ikulá. Shortly thereafter Ifomí died. Ilumbé was obliged to pay a large indemnity, equaling the entire bride price, to Ifomí's father, who in turn had to reimburse Baleka.

Âmbá, daughter of Nkálanga of Ifutó (Bongíli) was married to Yônjwa of Boímbo. She left him for Bengóngó of Boambá, who paid the ikulá. One day when Bengóngó was returning from a trip, Âmbá ran to meet him in order to bid him welcome. But in her haste she struck the root of a shrub, stumbled, and fell. Her fall must have caused internal injuries, for she was forced to remain in bed and died shortly thereafter. Bengóngó was obliged [459] to pay an indemnity of 30 rings plus two slaves, or a total of 80 rings, to Nkálanga, who in turn reimbursed the first husband.

The case is comparable to that of a wife's death which occurs in her husband's home but is caused by another man -- who either had daily relations with her or caused a pregnancy which resulted in her death. The responsibility in either case falls upon the lover, who must indemnify the husband. The indemnity is always very large, equaling the amount of a bride price or more. (1)

---

1. See Chapter I, Part II, Article V, 1, and Chapter VI, Article VII, 6.

768 672 178 Colonization has given rise to a new legal situation which is not provided for in Nkundó traditional law. If a woman takes advantage of the freedom permitted her by colonial legislation and goes to a mission to obtain instruction and make a monogamous marriage, and then contracts an illness from which she dies (at the mission, in the hospital, or even in the home of her family -- a question of place which has no legal importance), we find ourselves confronted by an entirely new situation. The husband no longer considers the woman his wife since she has left him, even though theoretically she continues to retain that status. On the other hand, she has not gone back to her family or gone to live with another man.

Polygamous husbands want to throw the "responsibility" back upon the woman's parents. But actually they have no part in the events, and it is unfair to involve them in the situation.

They do not bring the mission into the matter. As a matter [197] of fact, the mission performs a service to the woman and to society as a whole in trying to elevate it morally and culturally.

What should one think of this situation? In the preceding article we have seen that the husband assumes all risks in relation to the wife. Certain exceptions to this rule [460], which we have explained, have been formulated in Nkundó law; but outside of them, the law retains its dominion, since the exceptions are narrowly defined. Thus it applies to the situation with which we are dealing, and consequently the damages must remain on the husband's account.

Moreover, this interpretation is to be encouraged for the following reason:

The purpose of the legislation involved is to protect freedom in this matter of capital importance and to favor monogamy and the gradual abandonment of polygamy. Polygamists -- as a group -- must perforce suffer from it in one way or another. It is inconceivable that a struggle against an abuse would not affect the persons guilty of it.

Such cases are still very rare, but their frequency may increase with the progress of evangelization. 768

672 682 In terminating this duscussion we must make one point that is related to both of the last two articles. The cause of death has no

768 legal importance. The solutions given are the same whether the
672 cause of death be organic or criminal. If the latter is the case,
682 however, the murderer must pay an indemnity, which is given to the person who has been wronged, whether it be the woman's husband or her family; in any case he thus satisfies the requirements of justice.

A woman may be murdered while she is visiting one of her husband's kinswomen in accordance with her husband's wishes. In that case the sister-in-law's husband bears the responsibility. He must indemnify the victim's husband, and he himself is entitled to indemnification by the murderer. To simplify this procedure, the murderer can make his payment directly to the widower; justice is still safeguarded. But in no case does the indemnity go to the victim's father, for legally and economically it belongs to the husband, not to the father, who is indemnified through the funeral payments. [461]

Conclusions

1) A marital union is broken by death only for the person who
581 dies. For the one who remains alive, the dissolution is completed
768 only after other procedures. If the husband dies the widow remains the wife of the heirs and is free only after restitution of the bride price has been made. At the death of the wife the husband can marry a substitute.

A widow's remarriage without restitution of the bride price
581 (and therefore without a new bride price), or that of a widower
587 with a substitute, is considered a continuation of a pre-existing
768 union which has not been dissolved. This continuation is not absolute, however. Actually, it is perfect only in the case of the husband's death, in which case his kin group inherits all his rights and therefore also the rights to the wives he has acquired by means of his capital. On the other hand, if a widower is to continue the relationship after his wife's death, he must pay another bride price.

The difference between the two instances is due to the connection of the bride price with the "ownership" of a woman; she remains subject to it and as a result becomes legally the spouse

853 The child is given to a wet nurse (a kinswoman, a stranger, a Botswa woman, depending on who is available).

847 If the mother's body shows no signs of evil-doing or of
845 "the hatred of others," it is thought that her death was caused
843 by evil spells on the part of the child. Thereupon some kill the child to prevent it from doing harm during its whole life; others, on the contrary, spare it despite everything.

843 If the husband (for it is he above all who is involved, since he is most exposed to possible lapses) has unfortunately been guilty
837 of misconduct, his wife has only a slim chance [478] of salvation. Nevertheless, it is still possible for her to be saved, on condition that from then on her husband abstain from any sexual act and from all the accidental gestures and actions described above. The least he can do under these circumstances is to inform his wife of his indiscretion so that she can take precautions. If he wants to
[672] ward off any possibility of causing his wife's certain death, he sends her home and gives his father-in-law a pledge (ndanga) through which he recognizes his guilt and shows his intention to assume the entire responsibility for his misdeed. An upright man prefers to act in this fashion, for he never knows whether one day he will not inadvertently violate one of the prohibitions.

B. The child's death is the result of the putrefaction of
853 the mother's milk, the mother being thus incapable of nursing.
837 As in the preceding case, the offense is a priori imputed to the husband -- iaś aboma bǒna la ndota. (1) Since he has wronged no one but himself, no palaver ensues; the "natural" punishment is sufficient. This does not mean that he is not the object of evil tongues; people point at him and at times remind him of his misdeed. To remove the blame from himself, he can resort to

---

[753] 1. Ndota is an illness caused by the violation of prescriptions of a sexual nature (See Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 2, A).

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

624 An *nkumu* can never walk alone, but must always be accompanied by others, and on no occasion whatsoever may he run. Even though he never washes, if he is out
[781] in the rain and sees everybody else hurrying for shelter, he will not quicken his pace.
[513] His movements must be slow and deliberate. The *nkumu* never sleeps alone; waking and sleeping he is attended by someone. But apart from this he is free to go where he wishes. The *nkumu* is not indiscriminate, as others may be, in his private habits, but
[514] must use his own latrine at all times, and if travelling must have his own latrine in each place where he stays. The inland *nkumu* frequently take advantage of this custom
[556] by hiding their accumulated brass rods at the bottom of a freshly dug latrine. Such hidden wealth will be acquired by an inheritor at the decease of the *nkumu*.

In speaking of himself the *nkumu* never refers to himself by his title but always by his own name.

624 The couch upon which the *nkumu* sits or reclines during the daytime may not be shared indiscriminately with others, but those permitted to sit upon it at the same
352 time as the *nkumu* are *nsomi*, women, and Batwa. The reservation of this couch for
[562 the use of the *nkumu* is not surprising, but the exceptions are. One explanation given
565] was that women and Batwa are not *bato ba sai*, persons in particular; they do not count for anything in the social life of the community; they are not really 'people'. Another explanation was that they do not pay fines, this being tantamount to saying
[672] that they are exempt from laws and therefore cannot break laws even by doing what would be for others an illegal act. The stool of the *nkumu*, however, has closer restrictions in the manner of its use. Besides the *nkumu* only two others may sit upon it, *Nsese* and *Mpenge*. It is always carried by one of his wives, though not necessarily by any special one.

624 The restrictions concerning the food of the *nkumu* are many. He may eat food only in his own house, or, if on a journey, in one given over for his use. He may not
262 enter another house to partake of food even if invited to do so. Likewise the *nkumu* may not eat in the forest, or eat or drink anywhere along the road when on a journey, but must wait until he arrives at a village and has a house at his disposal in order to partake of food and drink. He never 'sleeps with hunger'; even if a wife or child should die causing him great sorrow he must partake of food before going to sleep.
[765] The Bonginda *nkumu* must never go into mourning, and death must be ignored by them, but the inland *nkumu* are permitted to mourn. All food carried to an *nkumu* must be covered, this rule even applying to water. Food must not be placed in a basket with high sides (*ekolo*), but in a shallow one (*mpale*), and no food that has been kept overnight in a pot may be eaten by him: swelling of the abdomen will result. Various foods are taboo, among these all fast-moving snakes, though slow-
[828] moving ones may be eaten; light-coloured palm-nuts may not be eaten, and a variety of yam known as *mokiki* is shunned, for it is with the tough stems of the *mokiki* that the dying body of the *nkumu* will be bound to ensure the sitting posture necessary for burial.

624 Among regulations roughly classed as social, we have already covered several in references above, and have referred to the *nkumu* in council. It may be added here that
[623] he is expected to agree with the majority of the councillors and not fall out with them. The rules affecting the usage of the *nkumu* are accompanied by severe penalties. There
[681] must not be any fighting; if anger is aroused to the point of blows the antagonists

must go to the *monkeke* for their fight, this being the location of the houses belonging to the sons of the *nkumu*. The penalty for breaking this law is a fine, and if no fine were forthcoming hanging used to be the alternative. If a quarrel arises elsewhere and one party wishes to avoid fighting, he may retire to the *songo* and thus be safe. No trees in the *songo* may be climbed. There are, however, privileged classes exempt from all such rules, and these embrace a good many people. Thus, the mother of twins, twins, Batwa, *maomi*, and all members of the *molembe* and *ekopo* are exempt from the laws of the *songo*. If any of these commit acts which are illegal for those coming under the law, they are not held guilty, but their actions will not be condoned; they will be considered breaches of good conduct, and will be dealt with informally; the parties will be quietly reprimanded, and adjured to observe the proprieties of conduct. For outsiders breaking the laws of the *songo*, what corresponds to a warrant is necessary. It is necessary to catch the culprit in the act and hale him before the *nkumu*. The *nkumu* himself cannot do this, nor can any of the *ekopo*; it must be done by one of the *molembe*, and so if the *nkumu* sees someone infringing the law he will try to get one of the *molembe* on the spot in a hurry in order to catch the offender. 624 689 [845] [672] [626] [696]

In war,[1] it is the *molomi o eke* who is most active in preparations, but the *nkumu* will accompany his party to battle, keeping well in the rear, and surrounded by good fighters. He does not wear his *montolo* but puts on the informal hat. If an *nkumu* were captured, he would never be tortured or killed as were other prisoners, unless he specifically sought such a fate. He could be ransomed, and his captors would beseech him to let his people ransom him, but in many cases an *nkumu* would invite death rather than endure the shame of being yielded up as a prisoner of war. 624 726 [727]

An *nkumu* is always addressed by a double clap of the hands, and will not reply to anyone rude enough to speak to him first. In answer to the clap he replies with a word of wisdom expressed in an aphorism or proverb. Such a reply, however, is common to all elders, who have their favourite aphorisms ready for any who pay them special honour. Anything the *nkumu* says must be answered not by the customary *ako boiko* (even so) which ordinary people use, but with the special word, *bienge*, which is reserved exclusively for replying to an *nkumu*, and means the same thing. 624 576

When the hour of death approaches, an *nkumu* is attended by his Batwa. It is a rule that he must not die a natural death, and near the end, while he is still conscious and can still speak, all 'free men' clear out and leave the Batwa pygmies to their task of tying the *nkumu* very tightly with the fibrous yam vines known as *monkiki*. Often this secure lashing in the sitting posture, known as *ilima*, is sufficient to finish the *nkumu* off, but sometimes the work is expedited by twisting his neck.[2] Then it is announced that he is dead, *aokilwa*, this being in contradistinction to the customary phrase *ankema aoleke* used of the death of ordinary people. While the latter means 624 763 [563]

---

[1] Owing to the lack of tribal cohesion, warfare was not on any considerable scale. The method of warfare consisted in sending groups of young men to fight first, the elders only joining in when one side began to get the worst of the fray. Victors and vanquished in such fights were designated 'husband' and 'wife' respectively, and members of the one group were free to come and go in the villages of the other, and even to help themselves to food. In future wars 'husband' and 'wife' were supposed to combine against their common foes.

[2] Besides *nkumu*, elderly and rich men, fathers and mothers of twins, and twins are buried in the *ilima* or sitting posture, in contradistinction to the [illegible] position which is the recumbent one used for ordinary people and slaves. [764]

614 He represents the A-group in the council of elders of the village
and of the other large units. Since no members of the group
[672] are considered capable of conducting affairs, all the legal
transactions which they undertake are treated as though they had
been sanctioned by the patriarch. To a large extent the members
of the group may represent one another. In the absence of the
elder, a younger member may act as the representative of the
[623] group at council meetings. When the senior member dies, his
function will be taken over by the next oldest member of the
group.

An A-group will split up only through internal conflicts
614 which cannot be bridged or through a large population increase.
602 The newly-formed A-groups continue to maintain a close relationship
which, at first, is much closer than among the B-groups
whose A-groups have split much earlier. In the higher ranks
cohesion after the split diminishes only gradually; thus many
gradations develop in the feeling of cohesion. These gradations
could not be even approximately reproduced in a diagram with
any degree of exactitude. There is no formula by which the
split takes place, as there is, for example, among the Tallensi (13)
where it is determined by a certain number of generations.
614 Theoretically the A-groups are "eternal." The A-groups are
596 subdivided into small families. Within the polygynous families
592 nuclear families [Familienkerne] (14) have a semi-independent
position economically. Each wife has her own house. A husband's
wives and the wives of his sons have their houses within
the same homestead. As the master of the homestead, the
father has an open shelter where the men spend their time and
[769] hold their meetings. Upon the death of the master of the

---

13. Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship*,
p. 34 f.

14. Thurnwald, *Menschliche Gesellschaft*,
Vol. 4, p. 12.

589 on the husband's wealth). Theoretically, the knife should be an *efamba*.
431 In practice it is sometimes possible to substitute an *empɔ̂te* in an
[412] attractive wooden sheath amply adorned with "copper-plated nails."
At other times the knife and spears may be replaced by their corre-
sponding value in *bakonga*. This is considered the most important
● [675] *boɛ́ngo*, and therefore no one gives up his claim to it. If the son-in-
law cannot present it to his father-in-law immediately, he promises
to do so later, and his father-in-law does not fail to make use of any
opportunity to remind him of his promise. Some men insist on a
wɛ̌ko as pledge. Others are satisfied with a piece of *loasi* or a
bosɔ́ngɔ́ (splinter or part of the trunk of a palm tree), which the hus-
band gives to the *ndonga* as a token of acknowledgement of his debt
and as evidence of his willingness to pay it as soon as he has the means.
Some men, however, insist so strongly on the *boɛ́ngo* that they will
not accept the *walo* [146] before they have received it. Thus, one
day recently, Lomanga d'Ifutɔ́ (Bongîli) refused to accept the *walo*
for his daughter Ekofo, engaged to Bokungɔ́ w'akɛyɛ (of Bongíli,
Ndongɔ́). He insisted that the father of the latter, Bokungɔ́ w'is'ɛ́y' -
Ingilɛ first go back to get his *boɛ́ngo*. Since he was unable to find
five spears, he substituted for them a second knife and a copper ring;
these were accepted by old Lomanga. Shortly thereafter the same
thing happened to Bokungɔ́ of Bontole (Bongíli), who wanted to pay the
walo for his fiancée Ngelɛ́ of Boɔ̃mbo (Bombwanja), the sister of
Bongondɛ́, clerk of the Bombwanja. The woman's family refused to
take the bride price before receiving the *ifakɛ l'akongɛ b'is'ɛ́y'ɔ̌na
boɛ́ngo*.

2) *Byĭkɔ́ byɛ̌ nyang'ey'ɔ̌na*, "porcupines for the mother."
[251] This present consists of two or three fresh or smoked porcupine.
Bɛ́tomba, *baatɛ* birds, or *bekɔ́sa* fish may be substituted for them.
The substitution of hens is not well regarded, because they are within
the realm of the *nkomí*. If someone does not have the means to satisfy
this requirement, he gives the mother two copper rings saying *mɛkɛ
bakonga bɛ́fɛ́ yɔ́sombe byĭkɔ́ bikɛ̌*, "here are two copper rings; go and
buy yourself some porcupines." Fabrics are sometimes substituted
nowadays.

426 585 Another expression used is foma losɛ́ka, fomela N. losɛ́ka, "to strike a losaka," that is, a clapping of the hands. The idea involved is the same as above: a man who sees no way out of his difficulties is represented as clapping his hands to attract the attention of someone who can help him. His action is a call for help. Therefore the term losɛ́ka is sometimes used to designate the woman, through the same type of analogy that leads to the use of the word bodɔ́ngɛ́.

Although the husband has full conjugal rights over the bodɔ́ngɛ́, and her activities, she is not strictly speaking his wife. It may simply be said that she belongs to him, and the fact that she belongs to him gives him the rights of a so-called husband. He has no obligations toward her, as he would have in an ordinary marriage. Thus in the example given above, if the woman dies while living with Ekamba, her father has no claim, even if no bride-price payment has been made; because he gave his daughter to Ekamba on his own initiative. If the bodɔ́ngɛ́ runs away from her owner he is entitled to a normal reimbursement of the valuables lent by him and to an additional 10 to 20 rings (or more, in proportion to the size of the loan) as damages for his loss. This supplement is due him even if he has paid a bride price to the woman's father for a legitimate marriage.

For if he loves this woman there is no reason why he cannot marry her properly. He will be especially willing to do so because as long as she remains simply a security, she is viewed with contempt and mocked by her fellows. They say, "You are not a wife, you are only a bodɔ́ngɛ́; there is no difference between you and a slave, for your husband has not paid a bride price for you."

Once the bride price is paid the bodɔ́ngɛ́ becomes a real wife, and all the rules of law are applicable to this [212] union, which from then on is a normal marriage in every way comparable to a marriage by nkumbɔ́. As to the loan, it is then included in the total amount of the bride price.

426 585 675 The pawning of a woman is also carried out through the mediation of a ndonga who, however, bears a special name, ndonga éá ntsíkɔɔ́nda, which is literally translated as "witness of I have not asked you." He is thus contrasted with a ndonga in the usual sense for the

426 following reason: a true ndonga is designated by the husband while,
583 in this instance, on the contrary, the intervention is requested by
625 the girl's father. Consequently, a man who takes a boɔ́ngɛ́ as security
against a loan is not obliged to recognize him as a proper official witness. This witness is not a ndonga of a marriage, but he must bear witness to the security agreement.

When a woman given as boɔ́ngɛ́ ran away from her owner, the latter attacked the ndonga and, if he found an opportunity, made him prisoner. If the matter were not settled, he could reduce the ndonga to slavery. But if he did so, he had to expect vengeance on part of the ndonga's family, although, according to the usual and legitimate norm, their vengeance should rather be directed against the man who asked for their relative's intervention. For it is he who is responsible for everything and who rightly should bear all the consequences. The exception, which sometimes really occurred, was due to the idea that "might is right" which, here as in "civilized" countries, is often true. (1)

1. This situation is not the only one in which a ndonga ɛ́â ntsikoońda participates. The intervention of such a person may also be required under other circumstances. For example, Esalɛ́ of Bonkoso was taken prisoner by Isia of Bongíli. Mpetsí was related to Esalɛ́ and bound by friendship to Isia. He begged the latter to give Esalɛ́ back his freedom and guaranteed the payment of the ransom; he thus became a ndonga ɛ́â ntsikoońnd. If the payment is delayed too long, Isia will take vengeance upon Mpetsí and even has the right to abduct his wife as compensation.

When a man who has received a boɔ́ngɛ́ wants to marry her properly he designates his own ndonga, who must fulfill [213] all the conditions required. Thus the ndonga who participates in the pawning is not the ndonga of the marriage. However, since the former has

426 589x 675 participated in handing over the boɔ́ngɛ, he is usually allowed the honor of being a supplementary witness to the chief ndonga.

Everything that has been said shows clearly that the offer of a boɔ́ngɛ may in no way be considered a marriage, even though it has some of the external characteristics of a marital union.

A very similar practice but one which now belongs to the past is that of offering a woman in begging for peace (boɔ́ndo). The following is an example from history: (1) At the time when the peoples now living in this area were still settled near the sources of the Ikelemba, there was a war between the families of Mpumo, ancestor of the Boɛndɛ, and Lonyango, ancestor of the Bonkoso. The latter, defeated, called for help from the family of Bokungɔ, their bonankɛnɛ and one of the ancestors of the Bongíli. Bokungɔ's family inflicted a stinging defeat on Mpumo.

Mpumo was frightened and begged for peace, offering Bokungɔ his sister Mbɛlaka. Bokungɔ accepted. But since he liked this woman, he wanted to contract a regular marriage with her. Therefore he paid a high bride price. But as Mbɛlaka was of a good family, she declared that she did not want to go to her husband alone and insisted that her father send an ebísa with her. (2) Her relative Wela of Ngombe (Boímbo) was assigned to her. But the old father, wanting to show off his wealth, went even further and added a second ebísa, namely Ɛúmɛ, daughter of Bokelɛ of Bokɛtola, his maternal uncle. Finally, to complete this already ample dowry, Mpumo gave his daughter several men who were Mpɛmɛ (dependents) "to work the bellows in Bokungɔ's iron foundry." [214] Among them, according to the story, were Bokuka, Líkitɛ, Engota, Lofalanga, and others.

---

1. We are giving this story in detail because it is a living illustration of certain manifestations of Nkundɔ social life.

2. See Chapter VII, Article IV.

426 Similarly, Mpumo received Lifomɛ, daughter of Ikɔ́lɛ́ as a
583x *boɔ́ndo*. Her brother, Ndyɛ̂ntíkala, ancestor of the Mbɛ́ngɛ (Liɔ́ko,
● 675 Ekonda), offered her to Mpumo in asking for peace. Mpumo married her in the regular manner. In his fight against the Ekonda this same Mpumo in the same manner obtained Boɔ́ngɔ́, the sister of Bangɔ́ndɔ́ of Mpɛnjwɛ (Wɛ̂yɛ).

Since the victor in war usually wanted to marry the woman in the proper fashion by paying a bride price, the handing over of a relative as *boɔ́ndo* may be compared to the practice common in Europe in the Middle Ages, when a prince would marry his daughter or sister off to a competitor or an adversary to seal the peace between them. In both cases, therefore, a kind of political marriage is involved.

Article VI. Exchange

583x When they speak of the exchange of women (*yenjɛ*, from the
187 verb *enja*, "to exchange" in general), the tribes under discussion do not all refer to the same thing. According to the situation, several types of exchange may be distinguished.

1) The pure Nkundɔ́ have a practice of exchanging daughters, sisters, relatives. This exchange is always carried out through the payment of bride price and the agency of a *ndonga*. Thus two regular marriages by *nkumbɔ́* are involved, and the term "exchange" is only very inappropriately applied to them. The two men who give each other their sisters in marriage are each contracting an ordinary marriage according to the usual norms.

2) Sometimes the term "exchange" is applied to the practice of *ikɛkelo*, which is better explained through an example than by a long discussion. Suppose that Eale marries the woman Ambɛ. Lokio, Eale's sister, [215] is married to Isia. Ambɛ leaves her husband for one of Isia's relatives. At the first opportunity Eale detains his sister Lokio at his home, thus taking her from her husband, and since his wife Ambɛ does not return to him, he hands his sister Lokio over to another man in marriage. Or suppose that Eale has married one of Isia's relatives, and Isia has married a relative of Eale. If one of the wives leaves her

582
606
603

Example 1

Bakando (F)
|
Mbɔ́yɔ́ (M) + Esalɛ́ (F)

Mbɔ́yɔ́ may never marry Bakando.

Example 2

Eale (M) + Boɔ́ná (F)
|
Mbɛlá (F)

Eale may never marry Mbɛlá.

Example 3

Bombembí (M)
|
Ikɛ́tɛ́ (M) + Basásɔ́ (F)

Bombembí may never marry Basásɛ́. (1)

●[691]
[586]

1. If after the death of his son Ikɛ́tɛ́, Bombembí wanted to marry his widow, the mother of the deceased would be so angry and ashamed that she would irrevocably leave him. Such conduct on the part of a father during his son's lifetime would give the son full rights to vengeance (assassination, war with the help of the mother's clan, etc.), for it would be equivalent to a real disavowal of his son. But the case is purely hypothetical.

Example 4

Esalo (M) - Longá (F)
|
Lofɛ́tɛ́ (M)

Lofɛ́tɛ́ may marry Longá.

N. B. The same rules apply to grandparents and grandsons.

593 Iongo of Bokákyá (Boselo, Bombwanja), married to Bokaa is 'Ifonda
574 of Bowɛ́lɛ́; for Mbalaka, daughter of Bolekela wa Imangaiso of the
342 Basɛ́ká Lokuli (Bongíli), married to Mbuli is'ea Wela of Bombóngo
556 w Ɛtefa (Bongale) (1) [286]

[551] 1. She bore the name of Mbálaka (meaning indemnity), because her father had solemnly proclaimed (*-bɛ́kya*) and publicly promised that he intended, one day, to place himself in the position of having to pay an indemnity because of his daughter, as proof of his love. Indeed [782] when Mbálaka was married, he killed one of his wives, cut her into pieces, and sent the "meat" to his son-in-law as "the first hen" that his wife would prepare for him. But he did not have to pay ● [682] [614] the indemnity because the victim's clan was too weak to attempt a war; they did not dare to make a claim and, in order to avoid even greater misfortunes, they resigned themselves to this revolting ignominy.

Article V

Relations Between the Husband and His Wife's Family

606 As has already been said, kinship by marriage is called *likiló*,
607 and relatives by marriage are called *bokiló*, *bakiló*. *Mbótsoló* is a term of respect for very close relatives by marriage (father-in-law, mother-in-law, sometimes brother-in-law or sister-in-law). When there is a considerable age difference between two affinal relatives, the elder one sometimes calls the younger *bokilówalɛ́*. This happens most frequently when the son-in-law is so young that he can still be considered a child. This term can even be used by an elder brother

586ˣ
178

> for this right was recognized by the written laws which have assigned the functions formerly exercised by the "fathers" of families to them. But they are required to act in conformity with the common law, and therefore to listen to the ndonga and report to him.

Before colonization the Nkundó often used other means.

586ˣ Before exploring the question of bride-price reimbursement, we will examine these various actions. For greater clarity we will distinguish between the customs of the pre-European regime and actual practice. Two specific cases will be described at the end.

1. In the past

Let us again make a distinction between two situations:

A. First hypothesis: a wife left her husband. She ran away to her family, first informing the ndonga. If she did not go to him but went straight home instead, the ndonga felt that he had been disregarded, and serious consequences followed, for he inevitably found her in the wrong. That is why this situation very seldom arose. [381] The woman explained her conduct to the ndonga. It was his duty to reconcile her and her husband. A divorce never took place without many interventions on the part of the ndonga.

[721] 1) If in spite of all attempts the woman was absolutely unwilling to stay with her husband and definitely left him, the result in most cases was war, unless, of course, the husband also did not care to continue the unhappy union. In such a case he was satisfied with claiming a reimbursement of the bride price. The war, like all others, ended in peace and indemnification; nothing further was discussed. The war was fought against the woman's clan if restitution of the bride price was delayed or not made. However, if the woman went to another man without first going to her family, the abandoned husband declared war on his rival and left his parents-in-law in peace.

586ˣ
682 2) Sometimes the abandoned husband took revenge on his rival by assassinating him. If the possibility was open to him --

586* and this was generally the case -- he did not kill him personally
682 but assigned the task to someone else -- his son, his younger
[563] brother, or nephew, etc. Preferably, he hired a Botswá. The price for this service was 20 copper rings, the sum of the bride price paid
[672] for a Botswá woman. Nkundó law places the entire responsibility for an assassination and all its consequences upon the person who orders it performed. Certain of the Batswa specialized in this field. Among them (of those dependent on the Bombwanja) were Esenge of Bokengé, Mbólókó of Bombembe, Wai w'ìtúmola of Bakoyó; Lúwá jw'ìtómbengándá (died in 1933) also of Bakoyó; Botómba wá Lokio and Mpótó éy'Ilókó of Mbanja (still alive).

The scorned husband had still other means of taking revenge
586* or obtaining indemnification. He made use of them only if the occasion was favorable or if he was not in a position [382] to go into expensive adventures such as a war or an assassination. They were the following:

3) Ikákelo: (1) A relative of his who was married into the unfaithful wife's clan could be prevented from returning to her husband.

4) The seizure of one of the wives of his recalcitrant father-in-law, or of one of the latter's relatives. This action is called by the generic term lowáála, which signifies "compensation." (2)

The prisoner was usually put in an etáka (a wooden fork fastened to the neck) (3) to prevent her flight and hasten the reimbursement of
[567] the bride price. If the matter was not settled she became a slave.

---

1. See Chapter III, Article VI.

2. The woman who was seized was called nginda and her descendants, if there were any, were known as bonginda.

3. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 4, A, b), (1).

768 infraction to follow him in death. It is obeyed even if [445] it is
428 manifestly unfair. They fear reprisal by the deceased, such as that
178 which is thought to have happened after the death of Iloko is Efekele
of Lofelí. He had killed his own brother, Mpénda éâ nkotonkale,
● [682] because the latter had tasted freshly brewed beer instead of leaving
that honor to him -- an action which constituted an extremely serious offense. But since the punishment was out of all proportion to the act, the whole family united against the murderer, who was obliged to flee. At his death he disinherited all his brothers in favor of his sons. This will, considered unreasonable and unfair, was not respected; Iloko's only brother, Bondélé wǎ Wǐlima, took Bonyengú, the favorite, for himself. But he soon died, and his death was attributed to Iloko's vengeance. Several years ago the family met to finally settle the matter of the inheritance. The largest portion was set aside for Iloko's sons, but one part was awarded to other relatives who were not named in the excluding clause, which referred only to the Baséká Banângâ, that is, to Iloko's own brothers.

Sons are never disinherited. If one of them behaves very badly toward his father, when the latter dies he refuses him his benediction (bokako w'ôlótsi) and curses him bokako wǎ tu yo).

3. Inheritance from the wife

768 As we have seen in Chapter VI, Article II, a wife has no
428 rights of ownership over the fruits of her own labors or of the couple's joint efforts. Consequently, her family can make no claims as regards inheritance; there is nothing to inherit.

Although all the fruits of the wife's activities belong to the husband, most men do not require that their rights be rigidly respected. They leave a part, or the whole, to the family of the [446] deceased, as is done in the case of a widow. (1) After the feast at the end of mourning, the two clans make an inventory of the property in question. Usually whatever products of her work the woman has left are divided equally between the two clans. Some

---

1. See the previous article.

768 Colonization has given rise to a new legal situation which is
672 not provided for in Nkundó traditional law. If a woman takes ad-
178 vantage of the freedom permitted her by colonial legislation and goes to a mission to obtain instruction and make a monogamous marriage, and then contracts an illness from which she dies (at the mission, in the hospital, or even in the home of her family -- a question of place which has no legal importance), we find ourselves confronted by an entirely new situation. The husband no longer considers the woman his wife since she has left him, even though theoretically she continues to retain that status. On the other hand, she has not gone back to her family or gone to live with another man.

Polygamous husbands want to throw the "responsibility" back upon the woman's parents. But actually they have no part in the events, and it is unfair to involve them in the situation.

They do not bring the mission into the matter. As a matter
[797] of fact, the mission performs a service to the woman and to society as a whole in trying to elevate it morally and culturally.

What should one think of this situation? In the preceding article we have seen that the husband assumes all risks in relation to the wife. Certain exceptions to this rule [460], which we have explained, have been formulated in Nkundó law; but outside of them, the law retains its dominion, since the exceptions are narrowly defined. Thus it applies to the situation with which we are dealing, and consequently the damages must remain on the husband's account.

Moreover, this interpretation is to be encouraged for the following reason:

The purpose of the legislation involved is to protect freedom in this matter of capital importance and to favor monogamy and the gradual abandonment of polygamy. Polygamists -- as a group -- must perforce suffer from it in one way or another. It is inconceivable that a struggle against an abuse would not affect the persons guilty of it.

Such cases are still very rare, but their frequency may in-
768 crease with the progress of evangelization.

672 In terminating this duscussion we must make one point that
●682 is related to both of the last two articles. The cause of death has no

768 legal importance. The solutions given are the same whether the
672 cause of death be organic or criminal. If the latter is the case,
● 682 however, the murderer must pay an indemnity, which is given to
the person who has been wronged, whether it be the woman's husband or her family; in any case he thus satisfies the requirements of justice.

A woman may be murdered while she is visiting one of her husband's kinswomen in accordance with her husband's wishes. In that case the sister-in-law's husband bears the responsibility. He must indemnify the victim's husband, and he himself is entitled to indemnification by the murderer. To simplify this procedure, the murderer can make his payment directly to the widower; justice is still safeguarded. But in no case does the indemnity go to the victim's father, for legally and economically it belongs to the husband, not to the father, who is indemnified through the funeral payments. [461]

Conclusions

1) A marital union is broken by death only for the person who
581 dies. For the one who remains alive, the dissolution is completed
768 only after other procedures. If the husband dies the widow remains
the wife of the heirs and is free only after restitution of the bride price has been made. At the death of the wife the husband can marry a substitute.

A widow's remarriage without restitution of the bride price
581 (and therefore without a new bride price), or that of a widower
587 with a substitute, is considered a continuation of a pre-existing
768 union which has not been dissolved. This continuation is not
absolute, however, Actually, it is perfect only in the case of the husband's death, in which case his kin group inherits all his rights and therefore also the rights to the wives he has acquired by means of his capital. On the other hand, if a widower is to continue the relationship after his wife's death, he must pay another bride price.

The difference between the two instances is due to the connection of the bride price with the "ownership" of a woman; she remains subject to it and as a result becomes legally the spouse

847 they could count. Nevertheless, if it happens to a young unmarried mother, little or no fuss is made over it because no one can feel wronged; at most the culprit is scolded. For a married woman, on the other hand, it is one of the most serious infractions. Her husband has an immediate right to the fetus that would have become his child. He cannot beat or mistreat the offender in punishment, for her condition will not permit violence, but he can abandon her to her fate by refusing her all assistance, in particular by refusing to bring her firewood, the heat of which she greatly needs under such circumstances. For she has done him an enormous wrong and has acted with real malice (*aônjokel'inkúnyɛ́*, he says), since he married her chiefly so that she would give him descendants. If she dies it is her own fault. Even her family will not support her, for
● [682] they would be accused of being involved in the crime; inevitably they would lose the case and be condemned to indemnify the husband.

843 An abortion which is ascertained to be involuntary [i.e., a miscarriage] is treated like an accident or an illness and the appropriate legal stipulations are applied to it. Thus if it happens while the woman is at her parents' home, the responsibility for it falls on them. Usually the palaver is settled in a friendly manner; the family makes a few *nkɔmɛ* payments, and the question is closed. If relations between the husband and his son-in-law are somewhat strained, the dispute may be drawn out and may result in the breaking up of the marriage. If the woman dies from the accident, the rules given in Article X of the preceding chapter come into play. [469]

Article II. Conception and Pregnancy

842
833 The Nkundó have only a partial notion of the phenomena of conception. They are well aware of which acts cause the procreation of children. They have a perfect knowledge of anatomy and a rich vocabulary pertaining to sexual life. But they know only as much about physiological processes as experience can teach them. Furthermore, they believe that the act of procreation must be repeated several times in order to produce its natural result. Note,

Teke F133

Ntomba

M 778 of the most disparate and incongruous objects, [22] white, black, or red clay, ngula /Ed., redwood powder/, chicken feet, heads, beaks, claws, and feathers, shells, palm nuts, etc., all mixed together in a large pot or in an old worn basket. It is from this magic treasure that the fetisher takes a pinch or two which he wraps carefully in a little bag and hands over to those who resort to him. [T 771] As for the human figurines so often found in the huts of the Bateke and Banfumu, we do not believe that they are fetishes. In our opinion, they are guardian figurines for children, carved before their birth and preserved until they reach marriageable age.

M 791 824 Some fetishers manage to gain quite a reputation, and their services are purchased for a very high fee. They are familiar with the properties of certain plants, and they keep this knowledge secret and exploit it as much as possible. It would be wrong to believe that the fetisher's practices are all based on mystification.

M 278 695 Ebandia, the high chief of the Mosengere, knew the secret of certain poisons. He knew effective remedies for certain kinds of festering wounds; he proportioned the quantity of poison at ordeals so as to make its action violent or slow, and he was familiar with an antidote which cancelled out the effects of the poison.

M 278 695 684 A few hours before our arrival at Penge, Ebandia had subjected [23] one of his wives to trial by poison, on the mere suspicion that she might have gone too far with a native during a slightly prolonged stay in the forest. Ebandia accused her of adultery, prepared the beverage, and compelled the poor woman to prove her innocence by taking the poison. The unfortunate creature rebelled. A quarrel arose, and the village natives, when informed of the matter, protested against it, to no avail, however. The old tyrant carried out the ordeal. He had been notified of our impending arrival, and after allowing the unfortunate woman to suffer horribly for nearly two hours, he gave her the antidote. Five hours later, all the effects of the poison were gone. [Ed., the text is not translated from the last paragraph, page 23, to the second paragraph, page 26.]

T 764 [26] In general the natives have a kind of cult of the dead. In the Bateke-Banfumu region, the corpse is wrapped in fabrics. The more important the deceased person is, the larger the bundle. His whole wealth in fabrics goes with him to the grave. Prior

574
576 even answer her husband, but he may indicate his presence by coughing lightly.

Any infraction of these rules is considered a grave insult. A
574 person offended in this manner may seek revenge by violent means,
576 either personally or through the medium of his son, brother, etc.
578 According to native justice he will always be in the right, even if
831 the quarrel becomes bloody. The simple act of uttering obscenities while passing in front of a house in which there is someone who is entitled to the speaker's respect may result in reprisals by the latter. (1)

1. See Jadot, Blancs et Noirs au Congo belge [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 90.

578 Crude language is especially reprehensible and wounding if it
834 contains allusions to incest or other reflections on a relative whom the speaker wants to insult. And it must be admitted that such expressions may go beyond the limits (for example: coi cum patre, matre, fratre, sorore, etc.). In connection with this topic it should be noted that reference is always made to a relative of the opposite sex to that of the person who is directly or indirectly being addressed. Furthermore, licentious talk and the use of indecorous language are more severely condemned when they take place in the presence of
[554] women and old people [60] or are said by a slave in front of his master, by a Bo̱twa in front of a Booto (1).

1. See Introduction, footnote 2, p. 4.

578 If a man catches anyone uttering obscenities in front of his
● 684 wife, especially if they are addressed to her personally, he can start
834 action in adultery proceedings. If the woman refuses to listen to the seducer, she will not answer him, or sometimes, annoyed at the insult, she may retort by insulting his mother. She can complain, but generally she does not do so. Is she ashamed, or is she afraid that the tempter might make public some excess in her conduct which he has discovered? In any case a woman is more sensitive than a man to the

578 shame of obscenities. They say: blekɛ nsɔ́nvi ɛ́à bitɔ́li ñ'kɔ́moto.
684 Bɔ́moto ndɛ́ ndota (itɔ́fɛ́) "A woman is a ndota snake. Just as that
834 reptile twists through the grass and rolls up as soon as it sees a man approaching, so a woman finds it difficult to endure any obscenity."

The ideal way to be sure whether an expression is actually considered indecent is to check whether it may be used in the presence of a close relative, for a Nkundó never utters an obscenity in front of such a person.

195 578 834 Among the Nkundó, as in Europe, certain indelicate exclamations are so deeply rooted that they seem to have lost their original meaning, that is, most of the population no longer thinks of it at all. That a few more serious and modest individuals are still aware of it is apparent from the way they change the pronounciation of the terms in question.

Licentious expressions are never considered indecent and shock no one when they are uttered in a group or during group activities.
[571] Such activities include communal fishing and hunting expeditions, [61] drinking parties, dances, funerals, and -- at the present time -- communal work on a road, a resthouse, etc.

Thus we see that in these matters there is a remarkable discretion side by side with a certain degree of tolerance, which may be carried quite far. Licentious remarks are not condemned in themselves, but only because of fortuitous circumstances, so we see that the Nkundó do not consider them from a moral point of view, as we do, but from a social one. But the fact that those are precisely the words which can become indecent and socially bad shows that the native sees in their content something shocking, shameful, some quality likely to give offense. The freedom exercised in certain cases does not alter this general conclusion but simply gives evidence of he inclinations of a passionate nature.

3. Dances

535

Nkundó dances change periodically, as is the fashion in Europe. Old dances are given up after a time and are replaced by others which are newly invented or recently introduced. The dances fashionable at the present time came from the Besongó, who are by

369 548 2) There is a considerable excess of bachelors over eligible women.

[694] 3) The freedom to commit adultery: no sanctions were provided.[1]

[586] 4) The difficulty of finding a suitable husband experienced by many girls born in the centers. Marriages between individuals belonging to different groups (especially certain ones) seldom last. And since inhabitants of the centers have no fixed or stable residence, they intend sooner or later to go back to their tribe of origin. Serious-minded parents therefore discourage and thwart these "mixed" marriages. (1)

1. On this subject, read Jadot's fine page in Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 132, beginning: "La prostitution devait inevitablement . . . (Prostitution was inevitably . . .).

[361] In the region under discussion there are only a few lightly populated centers: plantations, government or business stations, and small commercial centers. From time to time the bachelors there satisfy their desires with the wives of their fellow workers, and especially with women who come from the interior to sell their products at market. But they do not avoid one of the consequences of prostitution, namely the spreading of venereal diseases.

It is possible to conclude that in the past prostitution existed only in a very broad sense [75] and there was very little of it. [114] In Engel's article, "Les Wangata" op. cit., he writes that among the Wangata "prostitution no longer exists." If the eminent author is using the term according to the meaning in the dictionary, we may ask on what basis he is implicitly stating that this institution existed in the past. If prostitution is broadly defined, then the facts contradict his remark, for actually it has not ceased to develop among the tribes he discussed, who are located very close to the city of Coquilhatville and its various suburbs.

[1] [i.e., in the centers.—Analyst]

848 614 593 What happens is that when such a woman goes to live with her husband and her child is too young to remain with his grandparents, she takes him along. Later when the boy reaches adulthood, he sometimes settles with the clan of his mother's husband and produces a posterity. But he is more or less discredited by the adopting clan (and by the others). He has no political rights there, no mpifo. His posterity is called mbɔ́solɛ́ (from mbɔ́sa, "behind" and bolɛ́, "clan of origin"). (2) Its members may marry members of the adopting clan, excepting of course the descendants of their common mother. They also have their own cemetery. They thus form a separate clan within the village.

The practice of "bringing a child in the sling" seems to be disappearing at the present time, because everyone wants to remain in his own clan. Government policy deprives natives who do not live with their own families of almost all their rights. Moreover, [91] today it is much easier than in the past to procure the means for establishing a home. This last problem was certainly an important reason why a man would settle with the clan of his mother's husband.

848 684 The preceding clearly shows that a lover by whom an unmarried girl has a child incurs no blame, penalty, or fine. He has no obligation to care either for the mother or the child. Neither justice nor propriety requires him to marry the unwed mother. No indemnity is exacted.

There is only one exception: that is, if the mother dies as a result of the pregnancy or the delivery, or if the child is stillborn or born sickly, deformed, or crippled. In such cases the lover has to pay a heavy indemnity (mbɛ́laka) (1) That is why an unmarried woman who is pregnant is pressed into giving the name of her accomplice as

---

2. They also say "he was brought in the sling," bɔ̂yɛ́lákɛ́ ndá lɔmbɛ́.

1. For the child, the indemnity goes up to 50 rings; for the mother, 50 rings and a slave (or his equivalent in currency), or 75 to 100 rings.

849 soon as her family becomes aware of her condition. The accomplice
684 is made officially responsible and is required to accept this responsi-
ble and is required to accept this responsibility by publicly pledging
his willingness to take all consequences upon himself. This pledge
like all pledges is called ndanga. It consists of a knife, a ring of
copper or brass, a spear, or similar objects. (2)

2. The same custom is practiced in the case of pregnancy resulting from adultery.

Article V. Sexual Intercourse

833 Although this subject is extremely delicate and therefore difficult to investigate and describe, it does not seem pointless to note here a few details with which I have become acquainted. We will discuss in succession a few circumstances relative to the act, then rape, and finally what are called incomplete acts. [92]

1. Circumstances relative to the act

The Nkundô have intercourse lying on their sides. Nowadays,
[illegible] natives who have had frequent contacts with Whites are beginning to
abandon the old manner for that of the Europeans. The spirit of imitation probably plays some part in the transformation which is beginning, but the gradual spread of the knowledge that the European system makes conception more likely is also a factor.

Even for illicit relations our natives seldom choose the forest or near-by palm or banana groves. Usually they prefer an isolated hut, or they take advantage of the absence of witnesses who might intrude on them. At night they are generally afraid of anything that stirs in the forest.

833 The Nkundô have sexual relations only during the night. To
753 do so in the daytime would be to risk being striken by a mortal illness
684 called bombilɛ (derived from mbilɛ "noon;" by extension, "day").

833 753 684 which has a strong resemblance to sleeping sickness. (1) One of its

1. It is not sleeping sickness itself, however, for that disease seems formerly to have been unknown in this area.

symptoms is a weakness of the lower limbs. Instances are cited of individuals who were unable to resist their passions and were punished in this manner. Apparently only the woman dies. As soon as her family discovers that she is stricken, the guilty woman denounces her accomplice. The latter is held responsible and is required to pay a heavy indemnity, which may amount to several dozen copper rings.

833 751 Here as in many other situations the Nkundó have found a way to avoid the danger. There is an antidote (mengó), and it is water (bási bale mengó éá bombilé). Thus those who are unable to control their aroused passions during the day, satisfy it in a shallow stream.

833 753 The fear of bombilé has been greatly shaken [93] by colonization. If we are to believe the natives, foreign soldiers are responsible for this change also. But the behavior of the latter could not completely destroy the ancient feeling, probably due to a natural shame which makes them seek darkness and privacy for acts of this sort.

833 [575] [842] After intercourse a native woman usually gives herself a douche. She does so for the sake of cleanliness. It often happens, however, that she does not wait long enough before doing so, and thus she neutralizes the effect of the intercourse. This is chiefly a matter of carelessness. Nevertheless, under certain circumstances she may use this means to prevent conception. (1)

1. See Chapter X, Article I, 2.

833 826 According to my informants, some women have constitutional abnormalities which repel men. As everything readily becomes public, such flaws are quickly known after marriage, though not quite as readily beforehand. Actually love can -- and often does -- cause them to be overlooked. But after the first ardor has cooled, such a situation may become a threat to the stability of a marriage. When quarrels

584 then does she acquire her own establishment. From that moment on she lives permanently with her husband-to-be.

She has come from her parents' home empty handed, without any utensils whatsoever. In her new dwelling she finds everything. Her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law give her what she needs: baskets, pots, gourds, mats, mortars, pestles, and even chickens.

It will be apparent from the preceding that there are no particular rites or ceremonies nor is any special attire worn.

By this time the *bompɛka* is already considered a wife; [119]
584 595 she has all the rights and duties of that status: cohabitation, household tasks, etc. Everything she produces or earns belongs to her husband. Her own family no longer has any rights to the fruits of her work. If, after the payment of the *ikulɛ* and before any further payment,
● [586] the husband discovers that there are relations between his fiancée and another man, the latter is considered an adulterer and is liable to the sanctions designed to check such infractions. The older the woman, the greater the indemnity, which may be as high as 5 to 10 rings (see Chapter VI, Article VII).

It is logically consistent with what we have described that the fiancé has no special name. Since he is actually a husband, that is what he is called (*bǒme*).

During this period the engaged pair get to know each other physically and morally (sexual relations, work, temperament, virtues, faults). A figurative expression is used to describe what happens -- *bakɛngola mpokɛ*, "they are trying out the pot." The explanation
[585] for this saying is that before a new pot (*mpokɛ*) is used, it is placed on
[252] a shelf above the fire and left there for several days, so that it will harden and become heat resistant. If it cracks it is not suitable for food preparation; if not, one can cook in it without fear. This process is called *kɛngola mpokɛ*, and the term has been transferred to the trial period of the newlyweds. Thus it is a sort of novitiate, and the English term which can be used to approximate this situation most closely is clearly "engagement," "engaged."

This first period can last several months.. Meanwhile the husband seeks the valuables needed for the *ndanga* payment.

585 576 602 no one has direct rights (for instance, if she is an only child) or that of his mother's nkita's daughter, as we will see below.

In these instances there is a temporary suspension of rights or rather a change in the individual entitled to them. These adjustments are made very frequently and can affect several people. Bride prices may even fall to fairly distant relatives, even in the maternal line. The transactions are performed by the patriarchs for the greatest good of the family as a whole. New rights benefiting the person originally entitled to the bride price are being created, and 585 607 the woman married by its means has become the equivalent of a nkita in relation to him -- as is the following instance:

Bakutu b'Ôfóngé (Boniface) of Bombénga w'Ôkenda (Besombó, Bombwanja) has a sister Wétsi, whose bride price serves to provide his paternal uncle, Elongama éy'ituta, with a wife, Ikóko of Ndongó-Bongíli. Bakutu's rights over his niece, Bakutu, daughter of Bolófo, are transferred to Bofénda d'Ekókola, son of his paternal great-aunt Etáka and therefore, in Nkundó terminology, to his father. As a result he obtains the rights over the bride price of Wángi, the daughter of his uncle [166] and Ikókó. At the same time he acquires a certain authority over Bofénda, the beneficiary of the bride price that was originally intended for him, and over the latter's children.

When the bride price is meant to procure a nkita, there is nothing to prevent the remainder, should there be any, from being used to pay a debt, a fine, etc., or, more especially, from being given to a relative so that he can procure a wife for himself.

If, in an exceptional case, the bride price is not used for its ●[684] original purpose, this deviation constitutes an infraction of the law, because it is a violation of the rights of the girl for whom the bride price was paid, for she is thus deprived of her nkita and consequently of certain advantages. It may happen, however, that there is a conflict between this law and some other. In such cases of circumstances beyond one's control, it is up to the legal authorities to determine which of the two has priority.

Such was the case of Boléi, daughter of Ifolé y'Ôngámá, of the Baséká Longwâne of Bonjoku (Botikoso). She was married to Bombélenga

426 As soon as the bosɔ́lɔ́ is assigned to the person entitled to her, 764 she leaves the group of widows and goes to the home of her new hus- 587 band. From then on she may cohabit with him, since from that moment the pair are absolved from the observance of the regulations and prohibitions of mourning. Because of her affection for her deceased husband and her sorrow, the woman sometimes begs her new husband to be patient and wait a while. Her wishes are respected, for a refusal to acquiesce would be a very serious offense, which could lead to an immediate rupture of the relationship.

The woman chosen as bosɔ́lɔ́ may refuse the husband for whom she is intended, though such cases are rare and in the past were even unknown. The following instance [204] goes back to 1932: Mpia of Mbanja "acquired" Bɔ̂ngongo of Ilángɛ as wife for his eldest son, Bompelɛ. But the young man did not want her. So as not to waste his money, the father incorporated the woman into his harem. When the old man died, Bɔ̂ngongo was given to this same Bompelɛ as a bosɔ́lɔ́. This time it was she who did not want him, and, to make matters worse, all the other widows also refused. Subsequently, a second cousin of Bompelɛ named Bosɛnjɛ wanted to marry Bɔ̂ngongo. But out of spite, Bompelɛ did not want to yield her to him except against the payment of a bride price.

Even if the woman makes no objection -- and she generally does not -- and accepts the new husband without loving him, either out of indifference, or to be able to come out of seclusion, or for any other reason, she may always find a way to leave him, if she wishes, for another close relative whom she prefers. This fact indicates that, although theoretically the union of the bosɔ́lɔ́ is supposed to be more stable than a simple marriage by inheritance, in practice it is not; and it does not attain the degree of permanence characteristic of a marriage by nkumbɔ́. The reason is probably to be found in the fact that the union with a bosɔ́lɔ́ and the ordinary form of marriage by inheritance are fundamentally identical, and the rights of the family play a great role in both of them. The following is a recent case history: Ifungɛ, daughter of Esukɛlu of Bongangɛ (Boɛndɛ) and widow [illegible] of Bolɛkɛlɛ of Bongíli was assigned as bosɔ́lɔ́ to her husband's eldest son, named Boongo. Later she claimed that she did not love Boongo but

429 768 587 689 that she wanted to become the wife of his brother Ekamba. Ekamba did not object. But very soon she broke this union as well. This time the chief decided she was going too far and to please Boongo, who had settled with his mother's clan of which he also was a member, he sentenced her to several weeks in prison. All sensible people approved of the chief's attitude. In spite of the suppression of such excesses, a suppression which is necessary, the woman's freedom is protected.

428 768 587 We have already indicated that from a moral point of view the marriage of a *bosóló* may be considered on the same level as the inheritance of any woman if she remains among the close kin of the deceased. The only difference is that such a union is somewhat more difficult to break.

Article IV. The Replacement or Substitution

586 587 When a marriage is broken, instead of completing the divorce by restitution of the bride price, the woman's family often has recourse to the practice of replacing the divorcée by one of her relatives (such as a sister, cousin, or niece). The act of replacement, as well as the woman substituted, is called *bankitsɛ́*. (1) This name is plural noun derived from *kita*, "to become," *kitana*, "to replace, to succeed." The singular would be *linkitsɛ́*, but it is never applied to this situation.

The substitute usually does not object to the social obligation that falls upon her, unless she feels an unusual repugnance toward the husband. In that case an attempt is made to find someone else in the family. A family may go so far as to take one of its members away from her husband in order to substitute her for the divorcée, especially if no other substitute is to be found and if they care more about the marriage that has been broken than about her union.

The Nkundó give the following justifications for the practice of substitution:

---

1. The Ekonda say *nkitsɛ́*.

684 582 There is no sanction against the infraction of the law of exogamy. There is only the opposition of the parents and patriarchs, and a quasi-innate habit.

582 614 Note also that members of certain clans frequently marry members of certain others, among whom they prefer to choose their wives. Therefore a good proportion of the women married into any given family will belong to one particular clan. The Wafɛ (Bakɛala), for instance take a great many of their wives from among the Bongale w'ɔtɔlɔ.

[174] 582 614 We may reasonably assume that the ancestors of related groups, who now marry among themselves, formerly practiced exogamy. If this assumption is correct, it must be admitted that with the progressive growth of families, this rule has been relaxed in certain respects so that the present situation has resulted. Consequently, it would not be surprising if these legal provisions became even less rigorous in the future. Actually, some young people have begun to [178] violate the rules of exogamy and their example has freed the whole family. (2) Thus the Bokɛtola maintain that their two groupings, Bompela and Ilɔngɛ, who now intermarry, formerly comprised a [251] single exogamous entity. Contemporary instances appear here and there, but they remain very rare, even between persons who are very distantly related, and much rarer between close kin. (1) For the Nkundɔ still feel very strongly about this law. The bulk of the people are entirely opposed to any laxity or violations and the patriarchs and notables act against them with all their power. But the strength of

2. See Chapter I, Article VII, 1.

1. A recent case was that of Elimá and Bolɛfe, who both belonged to the exogamous group of Bokenyola of the Bonjoku, but one belonged to the Baɛkɛ Bokɔyɔ family and the other to the Baɛkɛ Njoli.

593x We should add that in some households, difficulties arise
606 rather easily during the visits of parents or parents-in-law, because
578 of the sensibilities, incompatibility of character, or discontent of
one party who may consider the other guilty of discourtesy, lack of
delicacy, disrespect, or stinginess toward the visiting parents. The
same is true for the rearing of children. [273]

4. Punishments

593x Nkundɔ́ law permits a husband to inflict corporeal punish-
578 ment (bikɔ́njwá, sing. ekɔ́njwá) on his wife, its nature varying with
the seriousness of the case. Obviously these sanctions, expressly
[576] permitted by law, cannot give rise to claims on the woman's part
or result in the obligation to pay a boɔ́ndo. [Editor's note: Unless,
of course, the husband -- acting in excess of his rights -- is more
violent than the occasion warrants for under such conditions, the
wife, supported by her family, attacks the husband, who is then
● [634] forced to acknowledge the harm he has done and make reparation by
means of a boɔ́ndo.] If she is hurt she may claim a supplementary
payment called liombo (from the verb bomba) or "bandage" (for the
wound); it consists of 5 rings or more, depending on the situation.
[826] The loss or breaking of a tooth is considered a serious injury. For
this is a real injury to the woman and, in the case of front teeth, to
her beauty. (1) Of course, as explained above, the wife will first have
run home, and it is there that the dispute is examined.

593x For the sake of a clearer understanding, let us go into a few
578 details concerning the penal stipulations of Nkundɔ́ law in relation
644 to the life of a married couple.

Usually, in a simple domestic quarrel, the couple does no
more than tell each other some home truths, seasoning their speeches

[304] 1. Because they are filed, the incisors are much less resistant than normal teeth. Teeth filing is practiced for reasons of beauty.

578 with a few vulgarities. If the woman goes beyond that, her husband
593x gives her a good slap, but he cannot allow himself to exercise his
684 muscles further upon her.

If a woman's tongue is too voluble and she permits herself to deliver gross insults without a suitable reason, her lack of respect is considered punishable. It is not considered proper [274] to right this wrong by means of blows, however, although in practice impetuous young men do not always restrain themselves. The sanction preached by tribal wisdom is the man's abstention from food prepared by the guilty wife, and his refusal to perform the conjugal act. A Nkundó woman is very sensitive to such measures. If she is really recognized to be in the wrong and peace is not promptly re-established, the wife's
[576] family will beg the husband to calm down and offer him a *boóndo*, which may be as great as the value of a dog.

593x
578
In the course of a quarrel a Nkundó woman may resort to a roundabout way of expressing her feelings; instead of cursing her husband directly she will address herself to a domestic animal which passes in front of her. The man is naturally not deceived, and the effect is identical.

What we have said applies to ordinary insults such as to wish a person's death, which may be expressed in the following ways: *owá* "drop dead," *nkoi ákokumbé*, "may a leopard get you"; *njwá ákokoté*, "may a snake bite you": *ófówé é*? "aren't you dying?"; *okona*, "why don't you get sick"; *bákotómbé ndá ngélo*, "may you be carried to the cemetery"; *bákokundé*, "may you be buried." Invectives based on physical defects or designed to humiliate a man fall in the same category. For instance a woman may call her husband *bololé* or *etula*, "a nobody," or *imemelo*, "idiot," or *inyanyama*, "beast," etc.

If, on the other hand, the woman in her volubility attacks her husband's parents, the matter becomes more serious. The Nkundó react very badly to verbal excesses directed toward them. Whether he is subject to teasing on their account or to insults such as "eat your mother (or father)," or to obscenities in relation to them, or whether the speaker "disinters" deceased parents in evoking their memory, (1)

---

[195] 1. For the sake of documentation on Nkundó psychology and morals, here is the Latin text

> 603 higher morality -- in our terms. Among
> 837 them the question of relations between a
> 626 woman and her husband's son, younger
> 184 brother, etc., does not even arise. Have
> they been influenced by some neighboring
> tribe? Or must we attribute the inferior
> morality of some of the tribes in this re-
> spect to decadence.

837 The following conclusions emerge from this long description:

602 1) Relations between a man and the wife of his son, younger brother, etc., in short of anyone inferior to him in the family hierarchy, are always strictly prohibited and never occur.

2) They do occur on the other hand between an inferior and the wife of his senior and superior. The degree of kinship between the husband and the culprit plays a considerable role in determining the seriousness or triviality of an infraction, the sanctions applied, and the various consequences. Some relations are accepted, others are censured with varying degrees of leniency, still others are pitilessly criticized.

3) In these matters a distinction may be made between two aspects:

a) the husband's reaction and the repression of the illicit relations;

b) the judgment of public opinion;

or:

a) the financial aspect;

b) the moral aspect -- to use that term for want of a better one.

Sometimes a third element comes into play, namely the intervention of the family on the side of the culprit against the injured husband who, for one reason or another, is in the wrong himself.

602 a) The usual sanction for adultery is, for the man, an
837 indemnity to pay. But such a payment cannot be made since no
684 financial transaction -- strictly speaking at least -- may be made

602 within a group of close kin, seeing that, from a certain standpoint,
837 property belongs to all the members, each sooner or later receiving
684 or inheriting from the other. But in cases where other sanctions can
be imposed, they are considered legitimate. [309]

b) Except in the case of relations between brother and sister-
626 in-law -- within the limits described above -- public opinion is
837 severe in its judgment, even more severe than for ordinary cases of
602 adultery, although because of the more tangible nature of the sanctions imposed against the latter, these seem on the surface to be considered more serious; many natives even have that impression. Or at least that is the first impression that spontaneously comes from their explanations; currently, they stress the indemnity, and in their accounts of ancient proceedings and violent sanctions, they forget the other aspect. Others do not distinguish between the two sides of the problem, or distinguish between them only very poorly. Only in going to the bottom of things do they -- like ourselves -- become aware of the two aspects and the importance of not confusing them.

The leniency we observe in certain cases on the part of the interested parties who have been wronged, and sometimes on the part of public opinion, does not seem to us to have been explained as a leniency based on principle nor as a legitimation of these relations (except in the case of brothers within the limits indicated). They seem rather to spring from the affection they have for the culprit, their sympathy for his condition as a bachelor, a certain community of interests, and finally from an evaluation of certain other elements that may be involved (such as a fundamental jealousy in the case of brothers).

602 The great distinction made by the Nkundó in this realm as
181 in others between inferior and superior relatives is based on their conception of authority, which is patriarchal, therefore paternal. What is involved is not so much a fear of power as a reverent awe -- although the first should not be excluded. In their eyes an inferior does not exist for the benefit and advantage of the superior, but the reverse; authority exists for the good of the inferior, who to preserve hierarchy and order must submit to the [310] superior. The superior's duty to help his inferior (in his difficulties, his palavers, his poverty),

837 431 substituted for all these items. As a rule the woman demands some remuneration although there are exceptions, which may be frequent or rare, depending on the region and on the nature of the persons involved. They are due to extraordinary passion or to the woman's love for her lover. (1)

1. See Chapter I, Part 1, Article IV.

3. Evidence of adultery

837 684 The strength of the evidence may vary.

● 1) The strongest evidence is finding the couple in flagrante delicto. No objection will hold up against it, and it constitutes for the application of the severest sanctions. The act must be observed by the husband. The testimony of a third party is never introduced. If another person discovers the adultery and favors the husband, that person will inform the latter so that he can take precautions in order to catch the culprits personally. If it is discovered by the woman's father or other close relative who favors the husband, [606] he informs the latter and, if possible, calls him to witness the infraction himself. If he does so, the husband must give the indemnity to his father-in-law. This is not a legal obligation but one imposed by good relations and decorum, since the father-in-law has shown good will and affection toward his son-in-law.

2) A wife's admission is almost as important and always decisive. Such a confession mitigates her husband's anger toward her and directs it chiefly toward her accomplice. Therefore most women do not hesitate to denounce their paramours if they feel somewhat cornered. (On the other hand, women never denounce each other.) [314]

3) A third form of evidence can be obtained by surprising the lovers while they are planning a meeting. The husband can accuse them on the spot and try to extract a complete confession from his wife on the subject of the past or the future. If possible he assures himself of the co-operation of witnesses. If he foresees a denial on his wife's part, he lets the occasion pass and looks for a good opportunity to surprise the culprits in the act. Regardless of the

937 684 wife's inclinations, a husband often will not intervene at once; he will give no sign of what he has observed but will skillfully seek an opportunity to observe the pair in flagrante delicto, so that he can take more violent action. This approach is absolutely necessary if he has nothing but suspicions, even if they are well founded. To act otherwise would not have great results and would show a lack of judgment -- often true of young, inexperienced husbands or ones with too irascible a temperament. An intercepted message bearing an invitation or an acceptance has the same practical value.

This form of evidence is weaker than the two preceding ones -- unless these are added -- and justifies only certain sanctions.

4) The sight of lovers giving gifts, either from hand to hand or through an intermediary (" with so-and-so's compliments") also has its value as evidence. But here again the best approach is to use this evidence as a means of obtaining the wife's confession. That is the only practical value of discovering gifts in the wife's possession. If a wife finds no explanations that will pacify the husband, she is forced to admit the act and denounce her accomplice.

4. Sanctions

684 Nkundó law includes several sanctions against adultery some of which are applicable to the spouse, some to the accomplice, and some to an intermediary (ekímɔ). There are differences [315] in the application of these sanctions depending on the gravity of the case (for instance, repetition of an offence or a habitual offence), the inclinations or temperaments of the persons involved, and the value of the evidence. Although the sanctions are legitimated by law, most of them are applied at the spouse's initiative; but in some instances the authority of the family as well as that of the ndonga have to be involved. Therefore the following varied situations should be pointed out:

A. A husband's sanctions against an adulterous wife.

a) In the case of a delicto flagrante, the husband may beat his wife, wound her, and even kill her. Neither she nor her family have the right to complain. If he kills her he is no longer entitled

● 684 to a reimbursement of the bride price, any more than if she had
[721] died of natural causes. In past times death under these circumstances usually resulted in a war between clans. But this extreme situation actually arose only very rarely, if the man was excessively jealous and had other wives or the means to obtain them, or was embittered by persistent and incorrigible infidelity. Most frequently a husband's foresight of the loss he would sustain, in the last analysis keeps him from such drastic action. He limits himself to beating or injuring the culprit or to applying other forms of chastisement or punishment (see below under b); see above, Article III, 2.

If the husband has sufficient evidence, of the sort described above, but has not caught the culprits in the act, the wife can expect a good whipping, accompanied by a whole string of vulgar ex-
[578] pressions and assorted insults (*femina foetidissima, tempore menstruationis putor tuus venit in nares omnium hominum*, etc.) as well as
[583] a heap of obscenities pertaining to the female genital organs. The husband who acts in this manner is not reprimanded. On the contrary, he acts thus out of jealousy; our Nkundó say that his anger is an anger of love.

In these punishments the Nkundó above all recognize the exasperation that springs from legitimate jealousy. That is why the husband acts on his own initiative. Besides, when he [316] finds himself confronted with the fact it would be psychologically difficult for him to calm himself first in order to go and inform the *ndonga*.

It was extremely unusual for a man to kill his wife calmly and deliberately. Such a thing happened only if her infidelities were continuous and she had erred in many other ways as well. And even then this conduct was found only in certain extremely cruel families. It was known that Iloko is 'Ôkungú and Bengóngó byǎ Kundú had acted in this fashion; both were members of the Bongilá (*Besombó*), a family which, in its songs, boasted of eating their own wives.

b) *Tortures*. The husband may also have recourse to several types of torture. Most important among them are the following:

1) The *etáka*, which is the standard torture so to speak. It is a heavy wooden fork which is attached to the neck. It prevents

[1] [i.e., a husband's killing his wife for adultery.—Analyst]

684 movement and therefore serves as the Nkundő prison. But in addition, if it is applied for a long time, it becomes a real torture; the skin becomes painful and comes off, inflammations readily appear, and bugs sometimes lodge there.

As soon as the woman's family hears (through the *ndonga*) that she is being so tortured, they often come and beg her husband to [576] free her. To pacify and propitiate him, they offer him an *ad hoc* payment, that is, a *boőndo* of a few copper rings. Generally, he yields to their entreaties. A good relationship and his respect toward them require that he not remain indifferent to their supplications, especially as he needs them for the stability of the marriage and the good functioning of the household.

2) *Byę́ngętanyi*, or handcuffs, which consist of sticks attached either to the wrists or to the ankles (to prevent walking), or to both arms and feet. Two sticks were used, one above and one below, with the limb placed in between, and they were tied with ropes that were attached and fastened in notches made at [317] each end of the sticks. In rare instances the wrists were bound. To increase the pain and immobility, the ropes were shrunk and hardened by pouring water on them. These handcuffs were generally added to the *etɛ́ka* and were never applied alone.

3) *Exposure to the bites of nkongồtő ants*. In the region under [184] discussion, I have never heard the people speak of exposure to *bafumba* (*Dorylus*), or even to the venomous *benkǒnkőme*. This fact contrasts with the practice of other Mőngo tribes and with the content of certain legends (evolution?).

4) *The pouring of water containing pepper* into the vagina. Sometimes the genital organs were rubbed with crushed pepper.

5) *Exposure of the sex organs to fire*. A burning log was held near them.

The last two types of torture were the most dreadful.

We can add one last form of punishment which is derived from the same legal rules, although it is not a torture:

[834] 6) *Nudity*. The husband tears off the guilty woman's garments and thus exposes her to public shame. Even if she resorts to using leaves, no one mistakes the situation, and her shame is only partly reduced.

684 Any of the types of evidence listed above is sufficient to
596 legitimize the application of one or another of these penalties.
576 Nevertheless, the husband is required first to notify the elder mem-
584 bers of his family and the *ndonga*, who do not permit him to act unless the misdeeds have occurred repeatedly. The readiness to accord the husband permission depends on the temperament of the interested parties and on a great many circumstances, the most important of which is the respective social prominence of the parties involved.

The need to ask permission of the "fathers" and the *ndonga*, which we have already encountered in reference to other situations (above, Article III, 4), does not weaken the husband's rights [318], but it limits their use. It is not a legal obligation but one that is imposed for family reasons, which are as follows:

1) The respect due to the "fathers" in this as in all important matters;

2) The respect due to the *ndonga*, who in marital matters is the husband's superior and whose intervention must be called upon in any serious situation;

3) The repercussions of any inconsiderate or rash action on the entire family (enmities, wars, etc.).

If forbearance and patience are fruitless, no one can blame the husband any longer. And when the woman's family compares the censurable conduct of their daughter with the generosity of their son-in-law, they will naturally be inclined to find that he is in the right and so usually will not intervene against him.

Note also that the Nkundó invoke the need to maintain their honor as justification for the obligation to notify the authorities. They must be able to inform the unfaithful woman's clan and thus safeguard their good reputation as defenders of order and public peace.

684 A woman whose husband loved her very much was subjected
593 to the *etáka* only. He would reprimand her and strike her, and would try to correct her behavior by means of gentleness and leniency.

As we will see *suo loco*, a husband who is exasperated by the incorrigible infidelity of a wife whose performance of other wifely

684 duties is also unsatisfactory, may sometimes resort to divorce or to
593 selling her into slavery, but rarely to killing.

Colonization has abolished torture, slavery, killing, and the
684 legitimacy of assassination. A husband has no other sanction against
178 an unfaithful wife than to insult and beat her. And even there European law forces him to restrain himself lest he commit excesses which [319] involve him in a trial before the white man's court. Fortunately for marital fidelity, a reaction in favor of the repression of adultery has recently begun, following the official establishment of native jurisdiction. In the not too distant future, this reaction will culminate in a return to ancestral law in a form adapted to present circumstances.

B. Against the accomplice, the injured husband has the right
684 to make use of two sanctions: violence and the payment of an
596 "indemnity."

1) If the husband catches the accomplice in the act, he always has the right to wound him, or even to kill him, or reduce him to slavery. The last two forms of vengeance were not practiced unless the respective villages of the husband and the culprit were fairly distant from each other and not bound to each other by any special ties (friendship, mutual assistance, or affinity). This reservation existed because of consideration for the offender's relatives, the desire not to bring them excessive sorrow. Another cause for caution and calm is the economic or military inferiority of the husband's clan, or the fearlessness, the valor in battle, in a word, the strength of the culprit's family. A special case which makes all other considerations disappear is adultery with a favorite, whose husband's love for her is especially passionate and jealous.

If the offender's adultery was not limited to a few isolated acts but was becoming a real habit, or if he had already seduced many women, resulting in many palavers for his family, the husband could be bolder. For the rake's close kin would finally be exasperated with his incorrigible and disastrous misconduct and would rather be rid of him. (1) [320]

---

1. See also Chapter VIII, Article II, 2, A.

684 The risk of being wounded, reduced to slavery, or killed, often cools the adulterer's passion. Therefore, the more the husband showed that he was fearless, violent, physically powerful, or of a high social position, the more his wives and their lovers were on their guard. Certain men were so jealous of one of their wives and so determined to take vengeance with extreme severity that the tempters did not even dare to think of approaching her.

9) The payment of an indemnity seems to be the standard sanction. It is the only one that remains legal at the present time; consequently it is coming more and more to the fore.

Any of the types of evidence examined above justify the claim for an indemnity.

The indemnity may be minimal, consisting of 2 to 5 copper rings, or heavy, going up to 20 to 30 rings or a slave. The maximum is always demanded for adultery with a favorite. The size of the payment depends on the persons involved, the relationships that bind them, the frequency of misconduct, and the nature of the action observed. For instance, if the husband catches the couple when arranging a meeting or exchanging gifts, the indemnity will be small; if, on the other hand, he has caught them _in flagrante delicto_, it will be high.

[626] A man who demands a high indemnity must expect to be treated the same way should the occasion arise. The application of the law of retaliation in that case is fully approved by Nkundó opinion.

684 565 [629] In addition to the situations examined in the preceding article, there exists another which does not result in an indemnity claim. It arises if the culprit belongs to a clan of slaves or is in some other way subject or inferior (_mpámá_ or _bowɛ́lɛ́_). (1) Even

1. Strangers who are settled with a tribe or group but are in no way related to them.

If the husband catches the culprit in the act, he politely asks him to go away and leave his house [321] and his wife: _dumíkɛ́lí 'îlombe, ntsyá ɛ́!_ Here is true Nkundó courtesy in practice. It might

684 525 certainly happen that a husband who was too jealous or impetuous would wound, kill, or sell his rival. But this was an exception and was always condemned since it was absolutely lacking in chivalry. In any case there can never be any question of demanding an indemnity; such an act would be absolutely shameful.

The culprit is notified of the demand for an indemnity by 684 574 the ndonga, who in difficult cases is accompanied by various notables. If the husband foresees strong opposition on the debtor's part, he gives the ndonga a special present of a bunch of bananas and two fish (or a hen) "so that he would not be forced to eat the rival's food."

A persistent and categorical refusal to pay the indemnity is 684 unusual. For it can have serious consequences: the taking in custody followed by enslavement because of debts, or [the taking of] compensation in the person of his wife or of a relative, or the retention [by her relatives] of a relative of the creditor who is married into the debtor's clan (ikɔ́kelo). Since these practices of taking hostages and of bodily constraint have been abolished, there remains the intervention of the courts, seconded by the police.

What is the Nkundó idea of this payment which we have called an indemnity in order to facilitate its description? The question is difficult to answer. Here are the linguistic facts which may provide elements of the solution:

The payment for adultery is called nyongo, and the word is 684 172 used together with the verb ka, "to give." The expression is equivalent to the verb lingala fɔ́ta (from which the noun bofɔ́to is derived). It signifies "payment" in the broadest sense and thus also covers our words "pay," "salary," "remuneration." In addition to its application in the case of adultery, it is also used in many other situations, such as remuneration for work, payment for a service, etc. Nyongo does not mean "compensation," which is called lowɛ́ɛla, nor "a payment making amends [322] and apologizing for an offense," which is bododo, nor "indemnification" (mbɛ́laka). What the expression has in common with the last term is the concept of a

684 [592] a payment rightly owed, and in the absence of an adequate translation, "indemnity" is still the least inaccurate. (1)

[625] 1. The words used for "reward" are bokondo, which is a reward for an unusual service, like the capture of a leopard or another "royal" animal (nyam ɛ'ekofo, such as a python, an eagle, etc.) or a beautiful dance, and mbuteji, which is a reward for small services.

One point remains to be noted. The two forms of punishment, violence and indemnity, may not be combined, and this principle is applied in all situations (2). Should this prohibition be

2. For example, see also Chapter VIII, Article III, 1.

construed as an implicit condemnation of violent measures? Or have we here the use of a system of settlement? It is difficult to settle this question, and actually the two explanations overlap at least in part.

684 562 It is not without interest to note that, in order to justify sanctions against the accomplice, the Nkundó invoke his frequently dominant role in adultery. Actually they reason that a woman is weak by nature; her emotions predominate, she is easily led and resists enticement only with difficulty. A man on the other hand is more reasonable, better able to control himself. Sanctions enacted and applied against the wife alone would not only leave out the punishment of one of the two culprits,but they would also be inadequate for the preservation of social order, since the woman remains exposed to succumbing out of weakness in spite of the penalties. The severity of Nkundó law with regard to the corporal punishment of the wife, which exists in spite of these considerations, are explained in terms of the woman's sensitive nature and of the power her husband has over her which he lacks in relation to her accomplice.

C. Against a husband and his accomplice. There is no
684 specific sanction in Nkundó law against a husband's adultery, [323] but an outraged wife may take revenge on him, as on her rival. Her weapons against her husband include invective, the refusal of food, drink, baths, and finally of debitum conjugale. These are appreciable punishments about which the husband can in no way complain, for he would be found entirely in the wrong. The woman's actions stem from a legitimate jealousy. Sometimes her feeling
[534] becomes so intense that she tears off her clothing and stands before her husband completely naked; this shames him greatly and constitutes a stinging reproach. Invectives flow out of the wife's mouth
[578] in torrents: ilolé ingé, itutula ingé, inyanyama ingé, owé lóí ô ndé nyongo, ndé ntémbé, "that imbecile, that good for nothing, that beast, one day you'll die of penalties, of being caught in flagrante delicto . . . ." Then there is a whole string of the usual in-
[152] sults. Our Nkundó say that the more abundant the insults, the greater is the woman's love. She may carry on like this for days, even for weeks. Her responses to her husband's adultery are thus of the same sort as those she makes use of under other circumstances.

If a jealous wife sets fire to the hut in which her husband yielded to his passion, no one can reproach her. The damage was caused on her husband's account.

Against the woman accomplice, the wife may use more violent means. She may fight her, strike her, even injure her. The rival's husband will demand a liombo, or payment "for blows and wounds," which has to be paid not by the wife's family, but by the guilty husband. Thus in the final analysis it is again he who is punished. If the offending woman is killed, it is again the unfaithful husband who is obliged to pay an indemnity to the widower. (See Article II.)

One form of punishment to which a wife likes to have recourse to take revenge on her adulterous husband and his accomplice if she catches them in the act is to pour a pot of hot or boiling water on their bodies. [324]

•684
[87]

D. Against the go-between (1) Nkundó law permits all sorts of invective, blows, and a good whipping. Formerly the most serious situation arose if a woman was called directly. In the past, if favored by circumstances (especially the social position of the families involved), certain of the more jealous and bold men caught the go-between and sold him as a slave. This punishment was entirely legitimate, even though the person for whom the go-between acted was the one primarily guilty and therefore the prisoner's family could attack him on that account. People cite the rather recent historic case of Bonkáfɛ́ is Ilóko of Ilenge (Ntɔ́mbá, Wángatá), who sold a Botswa named Bompáte into slavery because the latter had brought a lover's gift to Wáfya, his favorite.

1. The Nkundó generally use go-betweens to tender invitations to women; these are frequently children between the ages of six and fourteen. The disastrous effect of such a practice on the bringing up of young people is easily understood. In some groups it has inflicted a real moral evil.

684
582
581

E. Conclusion. In examining the various sanctions that Nkundó law provides against adulterers and their accomplices, we are struck by a noticeable difference among the cases. Although a wife has certain means to check her husband's misconduct, she is unquestionably less well armed than he. This is a logical consequence of the nature of Nkundó marriage. A husband defends his "property," whereas a wife is not an "owner." Furthermore, in this realm the requirements are stricter for a woman than for a man. Even in Europe the misconduct of a man is judged very differently than a woman's weakness, the latter being considered much more serious and shameful, even though -- in an absolute sense -- the two are equal. Finally, the system of polygamy plays a role, for it tends to weaken a wife's love and consequently her jealousy, so

684 581 562 that she becomes accustomed to her husband's relations with various other women. Consequently, the reaction of the women in general [325] against adultery is much weaker than that of the men. Moreover, because of this same system, a woman is much more exposed to weakness, and stronger sanctions are therefore necessary to insure her fidelity.

Finally, there is one last reason for considering a woman's misconduct as more serious. It is the danger of conception through adultery, with all the attendant consequences: risks for the pregnant woman, forced continence for the husband, etc. (1)

1. See no. 6 below as well as Chapter I, Part 2, Article IV, 3, and Chapter X, Article II, 3.

562 684 From the description of sanctions it is apparent that in spite of the woman's inferior position, Nkundó law does not leave husbands the full and complete freedom which, according to certain writers, they are accorded among other peoples. Even if the means of repression available to the wife do not incontestably prove that the husband has an obligation of conjugal fidelity -- and the wife's legal status explains a great deal -- the fact remains that the nkonga as well as public opinion approve of even her violent reaction, proving that she is right and the husband wrong.

5. Public opinion

626 637 Public opinion is fairly lenient in relation to isolated instances (yĕsi, efongo). It clearly recognizes the error involved in infringing on the conjugal rights of another, but the error is attributed to human weakness. In the case of habit the situation is different; it is criticized frequently and severely. Habitual sinners [illegible] are called elɔ́fɔ́kɔ́ (from the verb lofoka, literally "to flutter" and figuratively "to flirt"), elɔ́ngɛ or elɔ́lɔ́ngɛ (from the verb lɔ̂longa) or elɔ́lɔ́ɔ́ (from lɔ̂loa) "to flutter, to be flighty and fickle." These epithets are applied primarily to women, who are more subject to this failing than men.

626 The shame attached to the discovery of this sort of miscon-
[837] duct in the better circles in Europe is unknown among the Nkundó.
This is natural since isolated instances are readily excused. As to
[152] the habitual offenders, they are sensitive [326] to the above-mentioned epithets but will not correct their ways on this account any more than people in other parts of the world.

[57] An adulterous husband is criticized as much as an adulterous wife in spite of the difference in the means of repression which
626 Nkundó law provides for their respective misconduct.
684

Public opinion therefore corroborates the conclusion toward which our examination of sanctions has pointed, namely that adultery is condemned by the Nkundó. Opinion is not based on the existence of the sanction but seems to spring from their innate mentality, which makes them perceive adultery as a disorder.

6. Aggravating circumstances

[837] If a case of adultery is followed by conception, it becomes
842 especially serious, and for the husband as much as for the natural
672 father. Indeed the latter must assume all the consequences. When circumstances permit the husband makes his wife denounce her accomplice, and she does not refuse to do so. The husband then calls a meeting and demands a pledge (ndanga) from the culprit, who in that way acknowledges that he is at fault and shows his willingness to assume all responsibility. If there is a miscarriage or the child dies during delivery, the natural father must pay the legal father an indemnity of "a slave" or more (sometimes 50 rings); a smaller indemnity is required for a child who is only deformed or sickly. If the mother dies the indemnity consists of a slave and 50 rings, and it may go as high as 100 rings.

In the interim the husband no longer goes near his wife. He leaves her to her lover, who must "preserve the foetus" and observe all the rites and practices associated with pregnancy and childbirth, since, physically, he is the father. (1) [327]

1. For fuller details see Chapter X, Article II, 3. For analogous practices

595 great ceremonies because they lack the necessary wealth.

596 The bomɛ́tsa is never nkɔ́ndɛ́. But before he makes one of his wives a nkɔ́ndɛ́ a husband must ask the advice and approval of the [591] bomɛ́tsa. For that purpose he presents her with a bompɛ́ngɛ́ (a dog, a goat, some rings), which expresses his recognition of her right and authority and at the same time is intended to secure a favorable response. If the bomɛ́tsa does not agree, the matter is not followed through. But that situation is only hypothetical. In practice the bomɛ́tsa yields to her husband's preferences, since he has recognized her rights in the proper fashion.

When a husband wants to create a nkɔ́ndɛ́, he first makes all the preparations, brews the sugar-cane beer and collects all the riches that are to be distributed. Then he invites the neighboring villages and calls together his relatives. On the assigned day, the assembly having gathered, the chosen wife puts on her most beautiful garments and adorns herself with her richest ornaments. She [592] seats herself on a magnificent bosɛ́nga [345] (a portable couch) (1) in front of the audience. Her husband then announces to those assembled that henceforth this woman is to be his favorite; woe unto the man who has the temerity to seduce her or even show affection toward her -- he will be a dead man (or he will have to pay an ● [684] enormous indemnity of 25 to 50 bakonga). In the past it often happened that a seducer was killed or reduced to slavery without further ado. When the husband has paid 25 rings or more to the wife's family and gifts have been distributed to the assembled patriarchs, his words are ratified by the assembly, and henceforth the contract between them and the husband is sealed. Dances, song, and drink follow.

[292] The favorite wears no special garb. She wears the same clothing as all the other women and wears furs only for dances.

---

1. See the excellent drawing in Engels, Les Wangata [The Wangata], (Revue Congolaise, Vol. 1, no. 4, p. 483, 1910).

586x One way or the other, the question was thus settled for both sides.

The term universally employed to signify the breaking up of a marriage by the wife is bokôfo, derived from the verb kôfa. This word is not used for a wife's repudiation by her husband. Therefore, its meaning is not equivalent to "divorce"; it means rather "to break the union with the husband." The transitive causative form (kôfya) means "to provoke this break." It actually does happen that the woman's family causes the dissolution of a marriage for the sake of a more advantageous union. This should be understood in the context of what we have explained concerning reasons for divorce. Serious failures in the husband's fulfillment of his duties to his parents-in-law are mainly involved here. The [587] remarriage of a divorcée is described by the generic term kumbwa, "to be married to someone."

B. Second hypothesis: a husband wanted to get rid of his wife. Old natives stated very categorically that such behavior on the husband's part was due not to the cooling of his love, but to [383] incorrigible conduct on the wife's part. He was reduced to this extremity by the impossibility of continuing conjugal life with her.

586 584 He did everything in his power to forestall the flight of his wife by making the first move. After having vainly tried to bring her around through the intervention of her parents and especially the ndonga, he had recourse to one of the following means, which he could in fact use successively. But first he was required to inform the witness and to obtain his approval as well as that of the family authorities. The measures were as follows:

[illegible] a) Submission to the etâka, a heavy wooden fork fastened to the neck. When the husband has placed the etâka on his wife, the ndonga informed her parents of what had happened. They could then come and free their daughter by returning the bride price. If the husband applied the etâka against the wishes of the witness, the latter could release the prisoner. But in so doing he became guarantor of the reimbursement of the bride price; he became personally responsible for it.

[illegible] The husband was authorized to keep his wife under this form of torture for months. If his parents-in-law would not or could not

586 husband's knowledge, or taking refuge) and did so, her remarriage was illegal. Before the law the new husband was simply a thief, since he held a person near him over whom he had no rights. For this reason the husband could declare war on him, which he was not permitted to do in the other case, the question of his marriage being a matter between him and his wife's family.

Another consequence of that legal ruling is the following: If the woman who has left her legitimate husband wishes to return to him, she can advise him of her intention by a secret message. She asks him to come and get her at the moment when her lover is to pay the bride price (ndanga or walo, depending on the instance). She urges the latter to meet his financial obligations. On the day set the legitimate husband, accompanied by his ndonga, goes and hides near the place where the payment is to be made. At an opportune moment he comes out of his hiding place ● [591] and seizes the valuables that have been set out, saying to his rival: "I have caught you in adultery with my wife; these valuables belong to me as indemnity." [396] The woman's family takes his side, and the husband who has seduced her finds himself at a disadvantage and is sent away empty handed, for he is clearly entirely in the wrong.

If the legitimate husband belonged to an influential family he might risk the assassination of his rival if he saw a possibility. But then the situation was complicated by a war.

Furthermore, if the fugitive becomes pregnant as a result of her relations with her lover before the procedure of bride-price payment and reimbursement has been carried out, the child belongs, not to the natural father, but to the abandoned husband, who remains its legal father.

178 586 Nowadays everything has changed. A woman who leaves her husband cannot legitimately cohabit with another man. But during the past years no sanction remained. The imprisonment of the divorcing woman (mentioned above) could revive the ancient law while adapting it to circumstances. Furthermore, since the marriage is not dissolved, the alleged second husband could be condemned by the native courts for complicity in adultery.

853 an ordeal or ask a magician's judgment or a magical practice to
857 reveal the culprit. The culprit who is discovered is not subject to any social sanction; he is punished by the ordeal itself or the spell cast against him.

●[684] If the mother's adultery is proven through her having been caught in the act, her seducer is considered guilty. He must pay the death indemnity (20 to 30 copper rings). The woman is not at all involved as far as society is concerned; it is a matter between her and her husband.

751 In order to prevent any harmful effect on the child, the
854 Nkundó resort to a potion called bondandota, which will be explained in [478] the next article, 3. "Medication" by scarification might also be mentioned. This therapy is applied to the parents as well as to the child. If the father is wealthy, he invites the wife's family to come and perform the operation themselves. As in all comparable situations, the invitation is accompanied by the handing over of a pledge, and farewell presents (belingako) are given at the end of the visit. In addition the wife very often goes to live with her parents for some time after her seclusion in order to increase the efficacy of the treatment.

843 The sanction incurred for a violation of the secondary
[684] stipulations is less serious. For instance, the pregnant woman suffers from violent migraines, which often cause fainting and sometimes make delivery very difficult; thus they can even cause death. The husband is seldom bothered by these headaches. But he takes great pains to faithfully observe the law in order to spare his wife such painful consequences and to avoid the death of the child being born.

Apart from sexual abstention and the rules connected with it, the couple are also subject to various prohibitions which are clearly based on superstitious ideas. Thus:

1) They must neither go down into a well nor dig in the earth. The woman would die, for it is as if they were digging her grave.

2) They must not carry anything together with another person, for that is how corpses are carried, and such carrying would be the cause of death, through imitation of the woman's funeral procession.

853 the sap, which she then mixes with water. The resulting liquid is
857 oily and foams like soap. She places a few drops on a piece of
banana leaf and makes a sachet of it. She holds this against the
breast for a certain time until the boil, similar to a blood clot or a
piece of liver, leaves the breast and enters the sachet. She then
shows it to those present. From then on the mother can nurse her
child without fear; her milk has become healthy and normal.

2) The mother's public confession must include the names
837 of all the men with whom she has had carnal relations since the
853 child's conception. Other groups, such as the Injóló ; extend this
● 684 obligation even to instances preceding that moment but which
783 have not been declared at a previous occasion. The confession is
public. The masseuse related to the husband begins to crush the
leaves to be used in rubbing the breast; as she moves the pestle
and says to the mother, "Name a man." The mother replies
by giving a name. The masseuse says nyongo, "indemnity."
Then all those present say yengô, yengô, yengô, "absolved ".
Then it is the other masseuse's turn, and she interrogates the
mother in the same way. The process continues till all the names
have been cited. If [496] the mother cites the name of a man
who is a close relative of her husband and who therefore does not
need to pay an indemnity, the masseuse does not reply nyongo. Instead a member of the husband's clan makes the gesture signifying
[20] exemption: he holds the kernel of a palm nut (lolikɔ) in his left
hand and throws it by means of a small board which he holds in his
right. Among the Injóló the man takes two kernels and strikes them
against each other and then throws them away. Were the woman
to suppress a name the child would die. If she has no admission to
make, she replies, "No one besides my husband."

The indemnity that must be paid by those who are obligated
to do so consists of a hen and a bunch of bananas (or their cash
value) which are to be given to the masseuses, who will then divide
them. Were the accused to refuse, the husband would demand a
regular indemnity from him after the end of the seclusion.

The Bombwanja have this confession at the time of the
[illegible] fastening of the fetus. A few old women married into the clan
carry out the interrogation. The kernel of the fruit of the palm is
thrown by means of a knife.

595 wife was called Lonkata. This was, however, more a category, for there were sometimes four Lonkata in a harem. The rest were ordinary wives. Among the Ekonda, the first wife was called Nkumokolo, just like the Bomatsa. The second wife was called Ekila or Nkonde. The remaining wives were the ordinary wives of the harem.

595 484 The first wife, Bomatsa, always remained at home and never left the harem. The second, Ekila or Nkonde, accompanied the polygynist everywhere; she was at his side on all his trips. The Bolumbu usually went completely alone to do errands in other villages.

595 These old customs of priority among the wives are now gradually beginning to disappear.

684 It was forbidden under severe penalty to have relations with the first, second, or third wife of the polygynist. The penalties were death, slavery, or a large fine.

This was their law concerning adultery, enforced with severe punishment.

595 837 The ordinary wives of the harem were less strictly guarded. This often depended on the jealousy or indifference of the polygynist. Anyone who had relations with these wives had to pay a fine, or rather, a price of prostitution. Since the wives were almost all in the possession of the polygynists, there were naturally many men without a wife. These, then, often had relations with the ordinary wives of the polygynists. Also, the sons of the polygynist had relations with them; the polygynist himself sometimes even had relations with the ordinary wives of his neighbor. This was the bad consequence and the immorality of polygyny.

595 586 It is easy to understand that the ordinary wives of the polygynist, having relations with others, often left their husband, or rather, their master in order to go to another. The ordinary wives constituted the largest number. It is because of this that one now finds many women who have had three or four, sometimes even seven, different husbands in succession. Among some tribes, [534] the Ekonda among them, they were stricter; a wife who had already left her husband or master two or more times was considered to have little worth.

567 595 The female slaves who were taken in war were given by the polygynist to his male slaves as wives. They could also be installed in the harem among the ordinary wives. Their children could have the same rights as the other children of the polygynist

M 226 285 the bar of the trapeze, and the point (B) is caught behind the mobile crossbar (C). To the latter the native ties a rattan splint, at the end of which he fastens the bait. This consists of a palm nut still covered with pulp. To reach the bait, the fish enters the trap; it takes the bait, pulls on it, and dislodges the triggering crossbar (C). The catches (A) and (B) are freed, the rattan spring is released, and the lid closes, trapping the fish. [93]

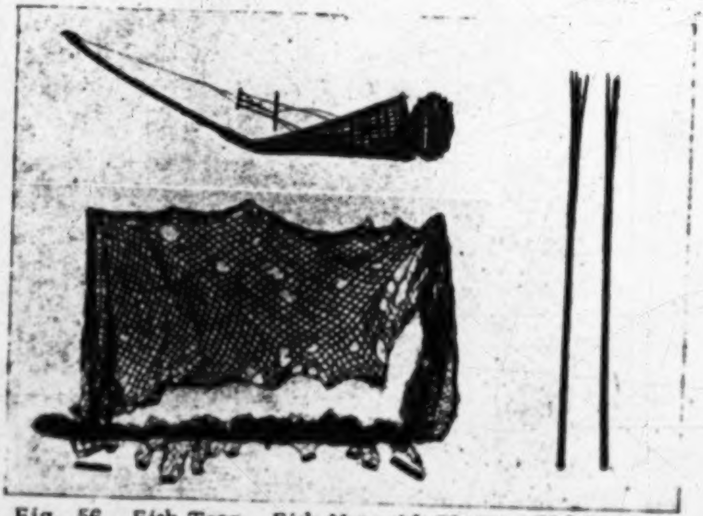


Fig. 56. Fish Trap. Fish Net with Floats. Fishing Harpoons from Lake Leopold II.

M 226 685 In individual fishing, the fish belong to the owner of the trap or to the person who set it. The native respects this right, and, moreover, custom punishes offenses very severely. Native law is rigorous to the point that a man caught red-handed in theft is liable to be driven from the community.

M 226 The yield from individual fishing is of hardly any importance. This kind of fishing is practiced only to vary the diet a little, and it is successful only because of the tremendous abundance of fish in these rivers.

M S 226 Communal fishing is much more productive. Certain tribes, or to be more exact, certain families among the peoples of the Fimi, Lake Leopold II, and the lower Lukenie make a veritable

607 extended to relatives with whom marriage prohibited, such as nieces
837 who are banankɔ́nɔ́, who are his wife's "mothers." (1)

1. See Chapter V, Article IV and the examples cited there (for instance, examples 25, 26, 17).

When such relatives of the wife marry, the situation changes. They belong to another man, and a continuation of the same practice as when they are single produces very serious cases of adultery. There are differences depending on the degree of affinity, however. In addition to the usual sanctions against adultery, other measures may be taken, especially the dissolution of the marriage. An especially serious case, but one which is more or less hypothetical, would be adultery between a man and his father-in-law's wife; a special feeling of shame is connected with it, and our Nkundó say that the two persons are like a Botswá and his master. Misconduct with the wife of a brother-in-law (or cousin-in-law) is also a very serious matter. The latter may take his sister (or cousin) away from the guilty husband and thus break the marriage. The same applies to adultery with a nyangɔ̂kilɔ́. (1)

1. See Chapter V, Article IV and the examples given there (for instance, examples 25, 26, 17).

3. Legal matters

606
615 Here we must examine the manner in which breaches of the law are settled between parents-in-law and son-in-law. It is known that among these peoples justice, in the strict sense of the word, is one of the most prominent aspects of social legislation. Theft is one of the principal causes for shame and was formerly severely punished. The thief, especially if he continued to repeat his offence, could be sold as a slave.

606
685
If one of the wife's relatives were found guilty of stealing from his (or her) relative by marriage, or even from one of the latter's relatives, the family tribunal was assembled. Out of consideration for the ties of kinship between the thief and the wife and in order not to sadden her and her family, the guilty person was not sold as a slave. He was simply turned over to the woman [293] and her family, and they were told: "Here he is; he has been found guilty of theft and should have been reduced to slavery. Out of respect for you, however, we are not selling him; we are rolling (-kilimola) him toward you. Take him as bride price and add him to the sum of the bosóngo." Thus the matter was settled in a friendly fashion. If subsequently there was a divorce, the wife's family had to restore not only the bride price that had been paid but also an additional slave for the member of their group that the husband had yielded in this fashion. Thus, the transaction was not at all a fictional one.

Conversely, the same procedure was adopted in relation to a relative of the husband who had violated the rules of justice to the detriment of a member of the family related by marriage. But in that case the extradition of the guilty party was considered as the addition of a slave to the amount of the nkɔmɛ.

[539] Hence the saying: bokiló ntɛ́wɛ́kɛ́ ndá ngonda ɛy'okanga, "a parent-in-law cannot die in the forest of his relatives by marriage."

The situation is no different nowadays. The only change is that, instead of giving back a slave if a dissolution of the marriage occurs, the equivalent value is paid in copper rings, etc.

[72]
60
The same customs governed conduct toward prisoners of war. For instance, in the course of a war Eale became the master of Bombolo, whose cousin is married to Iloko, a close relative of Eale. Iloko interceded with Eale in order to obtain Bombolo's freedom, and Bombolo was sent home but was to be considered as bosóngo. The liberated prisoner thus was classed as a slave given as part of the bride price, as in the preceding case, and all the appropriate rules were followed.

In every case at least a few beéngo in addition to the
764 bombémbé and the botsá w'îlaká are always claimed. The latter payments can never be omitted. The belt is a payment made exclusively to the mother and by rights it goes to the mother's clan.

The higher the amount of these funeral payments, the more
764 the son-in-law is welcome. The alliance is perfect. Therefore,
606 not only will the wife's family reciprocate his fine feelings by adding
607 a few more dogs, but in addition the son-in-law will be well received and successful in his application when, after the period of mourning, he brings the sum of the ibóloóko in order to obtain a substitute for the deceased. (2) In addition, if the relations with his in-laws have been excellent, he will easily obtain the substitute in advance, so that she can care for him during the entire mourning period.

There are severe sanctions against the omission of the
764 funeral payments. [439] Neglecting to send the notification gift
609 alone is enough to set these in motion. They are: the breaking off of the affinal relationship; the loss of the children, since the father's offense is equal to a repudiation; and finally molestation of the culprit by the spirit of the deceased. Thus at Bokátola (Bompela) one can find two boys, Botéfuí and Ikembá, the children of Bonyongela of Ilángá and Etáka of Bokátola. They have now been incorporated into their mother's clan, because their father did not send a nsango. On stronger grounds the same is true for the whole nkunjí.

Article V. The Social Position of a Widow

In Chapter III, Articles II and IV, we have already noted
768 that in the eyes of the Nkundó, the death of the husband does
587 not dissolve a marriage. The union continues, and even after mourning it is not broken ipso facto. Even to have the woman taken and treated as a wife by another man is not enough to end it. As

---

2. See Chapter III, Article IV.

596 invading groups of kinsfolk there was always one who was considered as the family head, and this man could claim the title of *mwene mokonda*, the owner of the land. Round this man the rest of the members of the family group clustered, and he had the general direction of their affairs. He could scarcely be termed a chief, having a paternal oversight rather than exercising any wide authority demanding organizing ability and political astuteness. The succession of *mwene mokonda* runs collaterally through younger brothers in the first place; hence if a first-born male happens to hold that position, the succession among his younger brothers is in the order of their birth. When these have all died the succession passes to the next generation. If all the males of a group die, it is possible for a daughter's son to leave his father's side in order to assume the position of *mwene mokonda* on his mother's side.

A *mwene mokonda* can delegate his duties as head to another member of the family, who is then termed *mobali e ele*, the husband of the settlement. For such a privilege payment is generally made to the *mwene mokonda*. Round these *mwene mokonda* and their immediate kinsmen others gathered, forming, it may be, another section of the same settlement, known then as an *etuka*, or, if numerous, another settlement.[1]

624 [593] The *mwene mokonda* (or *mobali e ele*) hears and judges cases that come to him, aided always by a group of elders, and directs the activities of the settlement. However, this does not entirely satisfy the Tumba; they want an *nkumu* also. The *nkumu* is chosen, not by the whole settlement, but by a single village, or it may be even one *etuka* of a village. If the villages of a settlement were without an *nkumu* it would generally, but not necessarily, be the *etuka* of the *mwene mokonda* which would lead off by seeking one out. The group desiring an *nkumu* are known as the *mokonda*, and they look about for a man of the same tribe but not of the same settlement or village, an outsider. He must be a man of some wealth, for actually he will buy his right of authority and pay heavily for it. If the man who is approached accepts, he is known from then on until his accession as *Nkomo Akolo*, the term *nkumu* not being used until he is finally invested with the insignia of office, the *mosola*, or hat of special design. *Nkomo Akolo's* family is known as the *ekoja*, or *mango*. This man, [556] once having accepted the invitation to become *nkumu*, sets about amassing wealth in the form of wives and brass rods. He may be years about it, but he does not thereby forfeit his right to the office, nor apparently weary those who extended the invitation. Should *Nkomo Akolo* die before he is installed as *nkumu*, or should he wish to withdraw from the honour bestowed upon him, the succession passes to another member of his *ekoja*. The succession would normally pass to the eldest male of the *ekoja*, [787] but many circumstances may interfere to give it to another member of the family. A dream dreamed by a male of the *ekoja* to the effect that he should be the *nkumu* is sufficient to give him the right of succession over the eldest male. When asked whether it was common to lie about such a dream having occurred, in order to gain [681] the right of succession, those questioned received the suggestion with emphatic negatives, for this is no time to lie; any man so doing would be sure to die, and the fear of death would deter him from such presumption.

---

[1] Where possible, the invested chiefs set up by the Belgian Colonial Government are those chosen because of their right to be known as *mwene mokonda* or *mobali e ele*. Often, however, the settlements are so small and lacking in cohesion that it has been necessary to set up chiefs arbitrarily over chieftaincies very much larger than were their own hereditary spheres of influence.

624 [781] [513] An *nkumu* can never walk alone, but must always be accompanied by others, and on no occasion whatsoever may he run. Even though he never washes, if he is out in the rain and sees everybody else hurrying for shelter, he will not quicken his pace. His movements must be slow and deliberate. The *nkumu* never sleeps alone; waking and sleeping he is attended by someone. But apart from this he is free to go where he wishes. The *nkumu* is not indiscriminate, as others may be, in his private habits, but must use his own latrine at all times, and if travelling must have his own latrine in each place where he stays. The inland *nkumu* frequently take advantage of this custom by hiding their accumulated brass rods at the bottom of a freshly dug latrine. Such hidden wealth will be acquired by an inheritor at the decease of the *nkumu*.

In speaking of himself the *nkumu* never refers to himself by his title but always by his own name.

624 352 [562 825] [572] The couch upon which the *nkumu* sits or reclines during the daytime may not be shared indiscriminately with others, but those permitted to sit upon it at the same time as the *nkumu* are *nsami*, women, and Batwa. The reservation of this couch for the use of the *nkumu* is not surprising, but the exceptions are. One explanation given was that women and Batwa are not *bato ba ne*, persons in particular; they do not count for anything in the social life of the community; they are not really 'people'. Another explanation was that they do not pay fines, this being tantamount to saying that they are exempt from laws and therefore cannot break laws even by doing what would be for others an illegal act. The stool of the *nkumu*, however, has closer restrictions in the manner of its use. Besides the *nkumu* only two others may sit upon it, *Nome* and *Mpanga*. It is always carried by one of his wives, though not necessarily by any special one.

624 262 The restrictions concerning the food of the *nkumu* are many. He may eat food only in his own house, or, if on a journey, in one given over for his use. He may not enter another house to partake of food even if invited to do so. Likewise the *nkumu* may not eat in the forest, or eat or drink anywhere along the road when on a journey, but must wait until he arrives at a village and has a house at his disposal in order to partake of food and drink. He never 'sleeps with hunger'; even if a wife or child should die causing him great sorrow he must partake of food before going to sleep. The Bonginda *nkumu* must never go into mourning, and death must be ignored by them, but the inland *nkumu* are permitted to mourn. All food carried to an *nkumu* must be covered, this rule even applying to water. Food must not be placed in a basket with high sides (*ntele*), but in a shallow one (*mpete*), and no food that has been kept overnight in a pot may be eaten by him: swelling of the abdomen will result. Various foods are taboo, among these all fast-moving snakes, though slow-moving ones may be eaten; light-coloured palm-nuts may not be eaten, and a variety of yam known as *nsolo* is shunned, for it is with the tough stems of the *nsolo* that the dying body of the *nkumu* will be bound to ensure the sitting posture necessary for burial.

624 Among regulations roughly classed as social, we have already covered several in references above, and have referred to the *nkumu* in council. It may be added here that he is expected to agree with the majority of the councillors and not fall out with them. The rules affecting the anger of the *nkumu* are accompanied by severe penalties. There must not be any fighting; if anger is aroused to the point of blows the antagonists

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

must go to the *nsekele* for their fight, this being the location of the houses belong- 624
ing to the sons of the *nkumu*. The penalty for breaking this law is a fine, and if no 689
fine were forthcoming hanging used to be the alternative. If a quarrel arises else-
where and one party wishes to avoid fighting, he may retire to the *nsange* and thus be
safe. No trees in the *nsange* may be climbed. There are, however, privileged classes
exempt from all such rules, and these embrace a good many people. Thus, the mother [645]
of twins, twins, Batwa, *nsona*, and all members of the *mokonda* and *elonja* are exempt
from the laws of the *nsange*. If any of these commit acts which are illegal for those [672]
coming under the law, they are not held guilty, but their actions will not be condoned;
they will be considered breaches of good conduct, and will be dealt with informally; [624]
the parties will be quietly reprimanded, and adjured to observe the proprieties of
conduct. For outsiders breaking the laws of the *nsange*, what corresponds to a warrant
is necessary. It is necessary to catch the culprit in the act and hale him before the [694]
nkumu. The *nkumu* himself cannot do this, nor can any of the *elonja*; it must be done
by one of the *mokonda*, and so if the *nkumu* sees someone infringing the law he will
try to get one of the *mokonda* on the spot in a hurry in order to catch the offender.

In war,[1] it is the *nkumu e ale* who is most active in preparations, but the *nkumu* 624
will accompany his party to battle, keeping well in the rear, and surrounded by good
fighters. He does not wear his *nsambi* but puts on the informal hat. If an *nkumu* were 726
captured, he would never be tortured or killed as were other prisoners, unless he
specifically sought such a fate. He could be ransomed, and his captors would [727]
beseech him to let his people ransom him, but in many cases an *nkumu* would invite
death rather than endure the shame of being yielded up as a prisoner of war.

An *nkumu* is always addressed by a double clap of the hands, and will not reply to 624
anyone rude enough to speak to him first. In answer to the clap he replies with a
word of wisdom expressed in an aphorism or proverb. Such a reply, however, is 576
common to all elders, who have their favourite aphorisms ready for any who pay
them special honour. Anything the *nkumu* says must be answered not by the
customary *ale bolo* (even so) which ordinary people use, but with the special word,
biongo, which is reserved exclusively for replying to an *nkumu*, and means the same
thing.

When the hour of death approaches, an *nkumu* is attended by his Batwa. It is a 624
rule that he must not die a natural death, and near the end, while he is still conscious 763
and can still speak, all "free men" clear out and leave the Batwa pygmies to their
task of tying the *nkumu* very tightly with the fibrous yam vines known as *ntsidiki*. [563]
Often this secure lashing in the sitting posture, known as *ilimo*, is sufficient to finish
the *nkumu* off, but sometimes the work is expedited by twisting his neck.[2] Then it
is announced that he is dead, *asililoa*, this being in contradistinction to the customary
phrase *ankwa awiiki* used of the death of ordinary people. While the latter means

---

[1] Owing to the lack of tribal cohesion, warfare was not on any considerable scale. The method of warfare consisted in sending groups of young men to fight first, the elders only joining in when one side began to get the worst of the fray. Victors and vanquished in such fights were designated "husband" and "wife" respectively, and members of the one group were free to come and go in the villages of the other, and even to help themselves to food. In future wars "husband" and "wife" were supposed to combine against their common foe.

[2] Besides *nkumu*, elderly and rich men, fathers and mothers of twins, and twins are buried in the *ilimo* or sitting posture, in contradistinction to the *mlongo* position which is the recumbent one used for ordinary people and slaves. [762]

113 more ground than ours, since it even includes a discussion of the Mbole.

H. Brepoels, "Het Familiehoofd bij de Nkundó-Negers," Congo, 1930, Vol. 2, p. 322.

124 We have tried to make our data as complete as possible. We have given here not only the major trends and basic principles, but also the particulars, even those that seem most insignificant. They are always interesting, and sometimes more so than one may have suspected at first. All the material has been discussed over and over again, in private and in public, with very varied people at different times and places, and the points that presented the greatest difficulty were gone over countless times.

121 In general we have preferred to use the descriptive and analytic method. We have drawn conclusions and principles from the data. Although case histories naturally lengthened the text of this work, we have not hesitated to insert them at various points. They are the best means of bringing out certain rules or customs and bringing to life the psychology of our people.

121 69 In this respect a remark should be made whose importance deserves our attention for a moment. The examination of judicial cases of which we have been direct or indirect witnesses does not provide a scientific certainty about the laws -- or "the customs," to use the term so frequently applied (1). For not all [16] that is done

---

1. It is unfortunate that this term has become so fashionable, for it lacks precision. Indeed, it may mean simply "practice, usage," or it may be used in the legal sense of "a practice having the force of a law." Often a confusion between the two meanings is created, and all customs are considered to be legally obligatory, when actually, some practices are outside common law, and others are in opposition to it. For the sake of precision in ethnographic and ethnological works, it would be well to use this ambiguous term as little as possible and to distinguish clearly among legal procedures, the laws and custom or usage.

121 is in accordance with justice. The observation that the natives behave in one fashion or another, and that this or that palaver is often
69 settled in a particular way, is not a sufficient basis for concluding that such is the law.

Infractions of the rules of social justice are more frequent than one would suspect. The principles are good, but often passions prevent their application, and frequently there are neither sanctions to support a weakness of will nor rewards to stimulate loyal adherence.

Furthermore, one should not invoke the variability and con-
121 tinuous transformation of native law (as does Dr. T. Seitz, for ex-
119
69 ample, in Africa, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 89) without first establishing whether the judgments rendered have been in conformity with the law. The remark made by this eminent author further on in his article, "Welche Rolle dabei das Machtmoment," etc. . . . weakens his first statement and shows precisely that an accurate knowledge of legal prescriptions cannot be attained solely on the basis of the verdicts of tribunals, and that partiality often plays a considerable part. The observation made by the former governor of the Cameroons may be applied to the Belgian Congo and often to "civilized" countries as well -- partially and the abuse of power are nowhere unknown.

We must also take into account the possibility of the judges'
121 ignorance, as well as our own difficulty in understanding their sentences,
69 since important points of fact and law are sometimes left unmentioned, and yet are implied.

It is not surprising that there are complicated cases where it is very difficult for the natives, however intelligent and impartial, to settle the dispute and provide a fair and legitimate solution. The law cannot foresee for every case the infinite variety of personal, local, and modal circumstances that may occur.

Only the analysis and comparison of diverse cases, [17] their solutions, sanctions, and consequences, together with discussions with discreet and impartial natives who are knowing and skillful and who have learned to know us and to understand what we want to learn from them, and who are sincerely disposed to help us at the same time, can produce a rational and reasoned certainty which conforms to reality. These conditions are numerous, and it is difficult to find them

121 all fulfilled in one person. But such individuals do exist, if in the
69 person of the investigator they find sympathy, broad ideas, a lack of
all European racism, understanding, a knowledge of their language,
and a benevolent devotion to their interests, individually and as a
group.

Even if one has the good fortune to find a native who, after
121 much experience, reaches the point where he will say spontaneously:
124 "This is done often, but it is against the law; the law says thus and
so; this decision of the tribunal was partial for such or such reason," --
an infinitely valuable situation, but one which arises very rarely --
one is not thereby absolved of the need to check his statements. But
the further one goes, the more it is possible to be aware of the reality
and to appraise the informant's value in this sphere and the usefulness
of his statements.

These considerations are particularly valuable in making the
121 distinction between obligations and social decorum or good manners,
183 between legal obligations and obligations of kinship and mutual
671 assistance. In current practice the Nkundó make no clear lines of
demarcation between these categories, since they have never codified
their law or attempted to set up a clear and precise classification.
They feel no more need for this than, for instance, they or even we
"civilized" people bother about setting up a grammar for our native
tongue, which we speak correctly and without the slightest difficulty,
purely out of habit.

An investigation in the legal domain is made [18] very diffi-
[124] cult by the patriarchal and feudal character of these peoples, added
to the lack of writing. Not only is there an adaptation to circumstances --
the felicitous flexibility of native laws -- in which jurisprudence plays
a great role, but the Nkundó, while knowing well what is lawful and
what is not, generally does not clearly understand the nature of an
obligation, and above all he does not know its source.

One's chances of obtaining good results in the inquiry are
121 greatly increased by the use of hypothetical cases, presented to the
124 individuals one knows best and whom one knows to be in no way
involved. It is always worthwhile to use this method as a means of
completing and perhaps correcting conclusions based on the examination

8. Those who are entitled to the bride price

583⁴
596
It is apparent from everything we have said that the bride price is placed in the possession of the father of the woman for whom it has been paid. In his absence it goes to his eldest brother or, if his [illegible] has settled there and inherited the father's authority, he is the one to receive the bride price of his niece (cousin in our terms). Otherwise it goes to the eldest son. In short, the rights to a bride price are passed down in the order of the family hierarchy.

The mother's clan receives the copper spirals, the goat, and certain of the beɔ́ngo. [176]

There are circumstances, however, under which this order can be destroyed so that the father's clan does not get the slightest portion of the bride price. This happens if the daughter who is to be married has left her father's clan for a sufficiently good reason and has been adopted by her mother's family. The following is a historic example of such a case:

573⁶
597
671
The events took place at Bompɔ́ma (Injɔ́lɔ́) between 1890 and 1900. One of the inhabitants, Ilɔ́njɔ́ yă Ngombɔla had had two children by his wife, Eale of Bokɔ́ndela (Bɔ́ngɔ́): a boy, Mpulɛ́ɛfɛ́se and a girl, Embɔ́ɔmbi. The girl was abducted by one of the black soldiers who had come to occupy the region and was taken by him to his native village, somewhere near Coq. The wife of another man from Bompɔ́ma, named Iɛ̂ntulu, was carried off and taken away by another soldier. Ilɔ́njɔ́ owed Iɛ̂ntulu a dog. The latter took advantage of the disorder caused by the beginning of the occupation to demand his due with violent threats. Ilɔ́njɔ́, having no dog and probably frightened, handed his son over to his creditor. Iɛ̂ntulu hastened to find the soldier who had taken his wife and offered to give the latter the slave boy in exchange for her. The pair came to an agreement, and the soldier took away the boy, who died in his master's hands in a manner unknown to me.

Still during the time of the Independent State, Embɔ́ɔmbi was able to make her way back to her country. Passing her mother's village, she heard how her father had acted toward her brother Mpulɛ́ɛfɛ́se. Indignant, she decided not to continue on her way: she

585 declared that she was breaking with her father and wished instead to
596 live at the home of her maternal uncle Isɛla. After a time, a cer-
●691/ tain Belekɔ came to ask for her in marriage and paid the bride price
to Isɛla.

In 1922, Ilɔnjɔ went to Boɛndela and presented a complaint to Chief Efɔle against Isɛla, because the latter had taken his daughter's bride price. Efɔle, assisted by the messenger Bongimɛ and by notables, decided in favor of the accused; Since the plaintiff had gravely offended his daughter by delivering her brother into [177] slavery, which resulted in his death, he first had to be reconciled with her. If she accepted his apologies, the father would receive her bride price. They agreed on the nature of the reconciliation gift (bɔfɔdɔ): Ilɔnjɔ would pay a goat. Since he did not have it with him he handed over his knife as a pledge (wɛ̌kɔ). Iomɛ, the bɔnanikɔnɛ of Isɛla (who by then had died), promised to make restitution of the bride price and in anticipation paid 12 rings and 3 knives. Ilɔnjɔ went back home. They awaited him in vain; they did not see him again -- neither him nor his goat.

Act three: February, 1933. Efɔle, Bongimɛ, and the rest had been removed as a result of a reorganization of districts. Bokwɛla had been made chief of the Boɛngɛ. The district tribunal began to function again, and our Ilɔnjɔ took advantage of the situation and recommenced his attack. He brought complaint against Iomɛ and against Isɛla's brother, Engongolo, who was not there in 1922 but who now had returned home. On March 6, 1933 the palaver was settled. Naturally, the men who newly held their authority found this a good opportunity to strengthen their position and did the exact opposite of their predecessors. They condemned Iomɛ and Engongolo and decided in favor of Ilɔnjɔ.

Here we see a real abuse of power. For according to Nkundɔ law, only Ilɔnjɔ was in the wrong. He had conducted himself badly all the way down the line. His daughter had no obligation to recognize him as father, since he had virtually disowned her in the first place. And her mother's clan could have, even should have, received the bride price (see also the case described in Chapter IX, Article IV).

178 currency, but in articles on which the natives fix a conventional 583 price, usually much higher than the actual value. Thus, for in- 435 stance, a pataki, or piston rifle, was always reckoned at 3,000 mitako; it did not matter that it was only worth 1, 500. There are, [546] therefore, only very few women who are paid for with nkesi in real currency or mitako.

691 583 178 The tragic result of this exaggerated rise in prices is that the mutual debts and difficulties among the natives have been increased, so that they are almost impossible to solve. In the attempt to settle a dispute, five other disputes come into it, all equally complicated, for the simple reason that the money, the mitako, to be paid does not exist, and it is forbidden to pay with women. To settle a dispute, several months are sometimes necessary, or a whole year. Other disputes never end, but pass on from father to son and are brought by each one in turn before each new District Administrator. In the districts where the bride price has not been raised, the difficulties and disputes are not nearly as numerous and are easy to solve. In the districts where the purchase price and the bride price of the women have become excessively high, the natives themselves admit that their disputes could formerly be solved easily, but that this is at present almost impossible.

It is unnecessary to say that this situation is harmful to the task of civilizing [the country] and to the mutual good relations of the natives. The natives are constantly coming to the District Administrator of the area to lay before him their disputes over women who have not been paid for. These disputes take up a great deal of the costly time of the administrator. He must hear and settle these usually very complicated disputes, for often the general peace of a village or district depends on it.

Also the natives themselves spend whole days and weeks doing nothing besides holding meetings to discuss the unpayable debts of bride price and the purchase price of wives, simply because the prices are excessive. For lack of currency, they pay each other with each other's debts, which usually complicates the business even more.

To improve this condition, the price of women and the bride price should be lowered, greatly lowered. We have seen that this was possible and practical when once a District Administrator who knew the native customs very well in the area of Coquilhatville really began to do it.

837 577 their sense of the personal injustice involved. But they do not reason out these feelings; they follow them spontaneously, blindly.

There is a greater awareness of the social evil in adultery. But it is based not on the philosophical considerations of this harm in itself, but on the consequences of individual cases for the proper functioning of society -- palavers, financial difficulties, enmities, quarrels, wars.

This it seems to me is the present state of their ideas. It does not preclude the possibility that the law and sanctions against adultery may rest on an ultimate basis of moral ideas. And more particularly it is quite possible that the moral idea [331] operates only in the form of a feeling of the great principles of fundamental natural law which is innate to all human reason.

837 177 5) No one will be astonished if we say that colonization, far from reducing the frequency of adultery, actually contributed to its considerable increase. The abolition of native penalties and punishments together with a great freedom of movement could not help but lead, naturally, to this state of affairs. Every informed colonial who is in close contact with the natives is aware of the situation. "The prohibition of corporal punishments which, according to custom, were the sanctions imposed against a woman's adultery have brought about a license whose extent can be measured by the degree to which a group is subject to our occupation. The forgetfulness if not the contempt for the promises of marriage is nowhere carried so far as in places where the customary disciplines have been completely removed." [837] (Maj. Engels, Bulletin Soc. Belge. Et. Col., cited in Congo, 3rd year, Vol. 1; p. 77, April, 1922). That is why various persons have repeatedly called for sanctions against adultery to replace the ancestral means of repression that have been abolished.

● 692 177 837 But the decrees hoped for have never passed beyond the stage of mere projects. Fortunately, another step, and a fundamental one, has been taken in the meantime through the establishment of native jurisdiction (1926). Under the guidance and control of European authorities, native courts will turn the helm halfway back to the ancient sanctions, adapting these all the while to the new conditions created by colonization and by the introduction of more humanitarian

627 ideas. Nevertheless, great care must be exercised not to go to ex-
681 tremes in introducing these ideas to the point where a society only
671 just beginning to emerge from a pagan barbarism because of the presence of a civilization based on Christianity, is treated as an equal of European communities. Native society must evolve gradually and harmoniously. Rushing is often synonymous with breaking, and it is always a [312] great mistake. And in the matters under discussion, the abolition of sanctions which, in spite of their imperfection and their inadequacy for fulfilling the whole task, have been shown to have a real efficacy, has removed all the coercive power of Nkundó law. A sentimental and excessive humanitarianism must yield before the native society's right to respect for its vital institutions -- unless these are entirely to be condemned -- and therefore before the necessity for severe punishments which it cannot do without for the moment. For our natives are not yet ready for a complete abolition of their customary sanctions, since they still lack a new foundation that would replace their fear of the ancient penalties. Let us therefore take care not to take all means of punishment away from husbands and wives, even if they seem somewhat violent from our viewpoint. Finally, there is no sense in overstressing a respect for members of the weaker sex, who by their very nature sometimes need punishment for the greater good of the whole community. Moreover, as for this respect, our Nkundó do not understand it at all; the way we conceive of it is entirely opposed to their mentality and their laws. Therefore, everything will work out more easily if the native courts are given sufficient latitude to act in the spirit of their ancestral law and if their activity is guided by a constant, informed, and sympathetic control whose sole aim is the healthy evolution of native society.

620 If it is applied within these limits and under these conditions, Nkundó law can redress many wrongs and help to save native society from the abyss into which it is in danger of falling. In spite of its faults and imperfections, it is preferable not only to the system of freedom (or license) which has reigned for many years, but also to

586ᵃ In spite of the opposition of several old-fashioned chiefs,
692 [388] the native courts that were recognized or established by the decree of 1926 have begun to make use of the powers the govern-
178 ment has assigned to them. They are called upon to play a great role in setting matters right, especially if their work is closely supervised and regularly checked. To accomplish this end, these courts must continue to act in the spirit of the ancient laws, taking into account only the change in circumstances (1).

1. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 7.

586ᵇ The chief measure for the restoration of order advocated
178 by the natives is the imprisonment of the wife who attempts a divorce. This practice would be a continuation of the custom of applying the etâka and an adaptation of it to present circumstances. Like the former practice, it would have a double effect: it would restrain flightiness and license, on the one hand, and, on the other, it would ensure the reimbursement of the bride price in cases where no reconciliation is possible. But its execution would be taken out of the husband's hands and handed over to the chief. Europeans who are in contact with the natives and concerned about the social order also favor this evolution of the common law.

Another way of combating such a situation would be the use of pressure against the guilty woman's parents, chiefly through the imprisonment of her mother. This measure has no basis in ancient law, except for war -- which did not touch the mother and actually was only moderately useful -- and the system of compensation (lowâfia) -- which depended on the availability of opportunities and was used through the husband's own initiative. This practice therefore cannot be approved as such, but it might be acceptable in cases where the parents are really at fault. For instance, they may have in one way or another incited their daughter to break her marriage although she had no acceptable reason for doing so, or, although a legitimate declaration [389] of divorce has been made, they might refuse to make restitution of the bride price. (1) And

1. A drastic and indiscreet application

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

596 invading groups of kinsfolk there was always one who was considered as the family head, and this man could claim the title of *mwene mokonda*, the owner of the land. Round this man the rest of the members of the family group clustered, and he had the general direction of their affairs. He could scarcely be termed a chief, having a paternal overlight rather than exercising any wide authority demanding organizing ability and political acumen. The succession of *mwene mokonda* runs collaterally through younger brothers in the first place; hence if a first-born male happens to hold that position, the succession among his younger brothers is in the order of their birth. When these have all died the succession passes to the next generation. If all the males of a group die, it is possible for a daughter's son to leave his father's side in order to assume the position of *mwene mokonda* on his mother's side.

A *mwene mokonda* can delegate his duties as head to another member of the family, who is then termed *moloni e ele*, the husband of the settlement. For such a privilege payment is generally made to the *mwene mokonda*. Round these *mwene mokonda* and their immediate kinsmen others gathered, forming, it may be, another section of the same settlement, known then as an *etuka*, or, if numerous, another settlement.[1]

624 The *mwene mokonda* (or *moloni e ele*) hears and judges cases that come to him, aided always by a group of elders, and directs the activities of the settlement. However, [593] this does not entirely satisfy the Tumba; they want an *nkumu* also. The *nkumu* is chosen, not by the whole settlement, but by a single village, or it may be even one *etuka* of a village. If the villages of a settlement were without an *nkumu* it would generally, but not necessarily, be the *etuka* of the *mwene mokonda* which would lead off by seeking one out. The group desiring an *nkumu* are known as the *mokonda*, and they look about for a man of the same tribe but not of the same settlement or village, an outsider. He must be a man of some wealth, for actually he will buy his right of authority and pay heavily for it. If the man who is approached accepts, he is known from then on until his accession as *Nkoma Abale*, the term *nkumu* not being used until he is finally invested with the insignia of office, the [illegible], or hat of special design. *Nkoma Abale*'s family is known as the *ekoja*, or [illegible]. This man, [556] once having accepted the invitation to become *nkumu*, sets about amassing wealth in the form of wives and brass rods. He may be years about it, but he does not thereby forfeit his right to the office, nor apparently weary those who extended the invitation. Should *Nkoma Abale* die before he is installed as *nkumu*, or should he wish to withdraw from the honour bestowed upon him, the succession passes to another member of his *ekoja*. The succession would normally pass to the eldest male of the *ekoja*, [787] but many circumstances may interfere to give it to another member of the family. A dream dreamed by a male of the *ekoja* to the effect that he should be the *nkumu* is sufficient to give him the right of succession over the eldest male. When asked [681] whether it was common to lie about such a dream having occurred, in order to gain the right of succession, those questioned received the suggestion with emphatic negatives, for this is no time to lie; any man so doing would be sure to die, and the force of death would drive him from such [illegible].

---

[1] Where practical, the invested chiefs set up by the Belgian Colonial Government are men chosen because of their right to be known as *mwene mokonda* or *moloni e ele*. Often, however, the settlements are so small and lacking in cohesion that it has been necessary to set up chiefs arbitrarily over chieftaincies very much larger than were their own hereditary spheres of influence.

764 crypt would then be barred by mats in order to leave it as a hollow chamber, and
762 the hole leading down to it filled in with earth.

For a month or two after the burial the festivities and orgies continued. Women
764 would be hanged to create some diversion, but those hanged were not eaten. Decapi-
762 tations would continue. According to the informants only slaves brought in from
a distance would have to be tied to prevent their escape. The slave members of the
567 household of the dead *nkumu* would await their turn stoically, content to die that
[652] they might accompany their master in his journey to the land of spirits. This may
be true but scarcely seems possible. Still another diversion in the funeral orgies was killing in the manner known as *[illegible]*. If some man who had a slave did not wish him to be hanged or beheaded, he might give him for this other method. As the weeks slipped by, such a one, his life having apparently been spared, would suppose that all was safe and that there was little chance of his being taken, and, thus emboldened, would, instead of keeping at a safe distance, join the crowd to watch a beheading. His death would be prearranged. At the moment of beheading a victim, someone would drive a spear into the unsuspecting man, the whole crowd then using spears and knives to stab and slash until he fell. Some might be tortured to death by being buried up to the neck and left thus exposed to the hot sun without food or water until death intervened, but this was not a common practice at such funerals.

768 The termination of the dead *nkumu*'s affairs took place when the division of the inheritance was made, a long and complicated process.

178 Such were the old days before European penetration. The advent of the white
624 man half a century ago was the beginning of the end. The ceremonies had to be given up, though reluctantly. Occasionally now goats are beheaded in place of human victims, and many of the younger generation find that, even so, the sight is more than they can endure, and they seek refuge elsewhere. *Nkumu* are not anxious for the honours. They find little or no respect paid to them by the government officials and this is a distinct obstacle to their obtaining honour from their own people. When the *nkumu* resident in the village adjacent to the mission station died, one of the Natives was asked who would be next. The reply was that probably no one would appear as a successor. Asked why, he answered, "There are too many trousers." He meant that too many were adopting the ways of the white man to
[653] make the inauguration of another *nkumu* a success. In his one useful function, that of judge, the paramount chief now takes his place, cases tried must be recorded by a clerk of the court, and fines paid into the treasury of the chieftaincy. With such a state of affairs the old ways drop into desuetude, and the younger generation grow up knowing less of the ways of their fathers as the years pass.

Tela F133

Ntumba

M 778 of the most disparate and incongruous objects, [22] white, black, or red clay, ngula /Ed., redwood powder/, chicken feet, heads, beaks, claws, and feathers, shells, palm nuts, etc., all mixed together in a large pot or in an old worn basket. It is from this magic treasure that the fetisher takes a pinch or two which he wraps carefully in a little bag and hands over to those who resort [T 778] to him. As for the human figurines so often found in the huts of the Bateke and Banfumu, we do not believe that they are fetishes. In our opinion, they are guardian figurines for children, carved before their birth and preserved until they reach marriageable age.

M 781 824 Some fetishers manage to gain quite a reputation, and their services are purchased for a very high fee. They are familiar with the properties of certain plants, and they keep this knowledge secret and exploit it as much as possible. It would be wrong to believe that the fetisher's practices are all based on mystification.

M 278 ●695 Ebandia, the high chief of the Mosengere, knew the secret of certain poisons. He knew effective remedies for certain kinds of festering wounds; he proportioned the quantity of poison at ordeals so as to make its action violent or slow, and he was familiar with an antidote which cancelled out the effects of the poison.

M 278 695 684 A few hours before our arrival at Penge, Ebandia had subjected [23] one of his wives to trial by poison, on the mere suspicion that she might have gone too far with a native during a slightly prolonged stay in the forest. Ebandia accused her of adultery, prepared the beverage, and compelled the poor woman to prove her innocence by taking the poison. The unfortunate creature rebelled. A quarrel arose, and the village natives, when informed of the matter, protested against it, to no avail, however. The old tyrant carried out the ordeal. He had been notified of our impending arrival, and after allowing the unfortunate woman to suffer horribly for nearly two hours, he gave her the antidote. Five hours later, all the effects of the poison were gone. [Ed., the text is not translated from the last paragraph, page 23, to the second paragraph, page 26.]

T 764 [26] In general the natives have a kind of cult of the dead. In the Bateke-Banfumu region, the corpse is wrapped in fabrics. The more important the deceased person is, the larger the bundle. His whole wealth in fabrics goes with him to the grave. Prior

no compulsion. If one of the contracting parties fails to fulfil its pledges in this matter of giving part of the kill, or in anything else, the aggrieved party may call the council together. This consists not only of members of the *ndonde* and *ekopo*, but of all elders of the village or villages connected with this particular one. The party judged in the wrong, whether *ekopo* or *ndonde*, will be fined, the injured party receiving its share, and both parties will be charged to live together harmoniously and observe their contracts. 224 624 596 621

The power of the *nkumu* was apparently limited, and did not supersede that of the *mwene ndonde*. When trials came up, the aggrieved party might go either to the *mwene ndonde* or to the *nkumu*. If it was necessary to call the village elders together about it, both these authorities were present at the hearing. First the young men of the group were allowed to give their verdict, then the old men, after that *mwene ndonde* (or the *ndonei e ole*), and finally the *nkumu* was given the privilege of the last word. He would comment on the opinions of each of the judges, criticising one young man, commending another, and then giving his own verdict, at which the group would assent by saying, 'Even so, grandfather'. The whole group of judges would then fix the fines, a double portion of which went to the *nkumu*. 624 695

The actual manual labour which an *nkumu* may do excludes anything endangering life or limb, or requiring agility and speed. He may clear the bush for his gardens: this is a man's work. He may take part in the building of his houses, but may do no high work, and, among the inland groups, it is the work of the Batwa to put the roof on for him. The *nkumu* may also prepare pitfalls for catching game, but cannot engage in any other type of hunting or do any fishing. Digging a grave is prohibited, for, as we shall see, everything pertaining to death must be ignored by the *nkumu*. 624 [563]

Other rules affecting the daily life of the *nkumu* may be roughly divided into three: those affecting his person, those having to do with his food, and social regulations.

One of the great points of observance in the first class of regulations is the importance of the *mosisi*. The *nkumu* must on no account be seen during daylight hours with an uncovered head. If he wishes relief from the cumbersome *mosisi* he may take it off in the darkness of his house and put on an ordinary hat made of skin, and when night falls he may walk where he will bareheaded if he so desires. The skin hat, known as *botolo*, may be made from two animals only, in the case of an *nkumu*, one being the *ndekpe*, a species of antelope with light-coloured hair, and the other the *jada*, an animal resembling a beaver. The skin of the *ndekpe* may be used by anyone, but the *jada* is reserved for the *nkumu* only with one exception. The skin of the *jada* may also be used for the carrying strap for infants known as *ejamba*, which is worn over one shoulder in bandolier fashion. For the *nkumu* the skin of the *jada* is limited to the informal hat, *botolo*, and for making into the *ndoto*, a pouch used for carrying small objects and worn like a sporran. As a corollary to the importance of the *mosisi* may be noted the importance attached to the head of the *nkumu*, which must never be seen uncovered in daylight. 624 292 [524] [859]

The Bongindu *nkumu* never wash in the daytime, but may wash at night with hot water. The inland *nkumu* never wash. Even the Bongindu *nkumu* never wash their heads, and no *nkumu* ever cuts his hair. If the *nkumu* becomes too greatly inconvenienced, one of his wives may delouse his head, but only within the privacy of the house, by the light that enters the one opening. 624 515 [181] must go to the *mbokolo* for their fight, this being the location of the houses belonging to the wives of the *nkumu*. The penalty for breaking this law is a fine, and if no fine were forthcoming hanging used to be the alternative. If a quarrel arises elsewhere and one party wishes to avoid fighting, he may retire to the *nsanga* and thus be safe. No trees in the *nsanga* may be climbed. There are, however, privileged classes exempt from all such rules, and these embrace a good many people. Thus, the mother of twins, twins, Batwa, *mwani*, and all members of the *mokondo* and *elenja* are exempt from the laws of the *nsanga*. If any of these commit acts which are illegal for those coming under the law, they are not held guilty, but their actions will not be condoned; they will be considered breaches of good conduct, and will be dealt with informally; the parties will be quietly reprimanded, and adjured to observe the proprieties of conduct. For outsiders breaking the laws of the *nsanga*, what corresponds to a warrant is necessary. It is necessary to catch the culprit in the act and hale him before the *nkumu*. The *nkumu* himself cannot do this, nor can any of the *elenja*; it must be done by one of the *mokondo*, and so if the *nkumu* sees someone infringing the law he will try to get one of the *mokondo* on the spot in a hurry in order to catch the offender. 624 681 [609] [673] [624] [629]

In war,[1] it is the *mokonzi a ele* who is most active in preparations, but the *nkumu* will accompany his party to battle, keeping well in the rear, and surrounded by good fighters. He does not wear his *mantsh* but puts on the informal hat. If an *nkumu* were captured, he would never be tortured or killed as were other prisoners, unless he specifically sought such a fate. He could be ransomed, and his captors would beseech him to let his people ransom him, but in many cases an *nkumu* would invite death rather than endure the shame of being yielded up as a prisoner of war. 681 726 [72]

An *nkumu* is always addressed by a double clap of the hands, and will not reply to anyone rude enough to speak to him first. In answer to the clap he replies with a word of wisdom expressed in an aphorism or proverb. Such a reply, however, is common to all elders, who have their favourite aphorisms ready for any who pay them special honour. Anything the *nkumu* says must be answered not by the customary *ndo boko* (yes sir) which ordinary people use, but with the special word, *bonge*, which is reserved exclusively for replying to an *nkumu*, and means the same thing. 624 578

When the hour of death approaches, an *nkumu* is attended by his Batwa. It is a rule that he must not die a natural death, and near the end, while he is still conscious and can still speak, all 'free men' clear out and leave the Batwa pygmies to their task of tying the *nkumu* very tightly with the fibrous yam vines known as *nkoko*. Often this severe lashing in the sitting posture, known as *iloku*, is sufficient to finish the *nkumu* off, but sometimes the work is expedited by twisting his neck.[2] Then it is announced that he is dead, *asiki*, this being in contradistinction to the customary phrase *ankumu asiko* used of the death of ordinary people. While the latter means 624 763 [563]

---

[1] Owing to the lack of tribal cohesion, warfare was not on any considerable scale. The method of warfare consisted in sending groups of young men to fight first, the elders only joining in when one side began to get the worst of the fray. Victors and vanquished in such fights were designated 'husband' and 'wife' respectively, and members of the one group were free to come and go in the villages of the other, and even to help themselves to food. In future wars 'husband' and 'wife' were supposed to combine against their common foe.

[2] Besides *nkumu*, elderly and old men, Batwa and mothers of twins, and twins are buried in the *iloku* or sitting posture, in contradistinction to the average position which is the recumbent one used for ordinary people and slaves. [762]

Yaelima

411 Yaelima it is sometimes as deep as five centimeters. The bow and arrow of the type we have just described serves both as an offensive and a defensive weapon. Its importance as a weapon must have formerly been greater. In our time wars between tribes have become almost impossible. Attacks and reprisals by individuals, on the other hand, are still rather frequent. This is especially true of the region east of Opombo. Every free Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima owns a bow and arrows and does not hesitate to use them either to defend himself or to attack. [721 578]

224 Hunting with bow and arrow is done on an individual basis. The game taken in this way belongs wholly to the hunter. [69]

[341] Among the Yaelima we found an arrow with a removable head that is notably larger, wider, and stronger, and that is attached to the shaft by thin cords. The natives use these arrows for hunting antelope and buffalo. When the animal is hit, the arrowhead penetrates its body, and the surprised victim flees into the bush or forest. The shaft of the arrow, buffeted by the tall grass or lianas, gradually works itself loose. The head, attached to the shaft by a cord, remains in the wound. With each motion, the animal enlarges its wound. The shaft, sooner or later, is caught in the lianas or grass, with the result that the head is violently jerked from the wound, making it a mortal one. This very dangerous weapon is not widespread, and for good cause. The native can use it effectively only for a point-blank shot. The range of the bow is limited; the arrow with the removable point is heavy; the iron point is very wide and has small barbs. To succeed in planting this arrow in the body of the animal, it is necessary to creep to within several meters of the game, to string the bow without attracting the animal's attention, and to hit it in the belly. The wounded beast may seek its salvation in wild and fatal running, but it sometimes turns against its attacker. In any case, the hunter who uses these arrows cannot do so without risking great [70] danger. Although the native likes to hunt, he also fears the dangers associated with this occupation. The only ones who use these arrows are the intrepid true hunters who have inherited some of the instinct and audacity of the Batua [Twa]. Inunu, chief of the Batitu of the Oshwe region, who was audacious to the highest possible degree and feared no animal, obstacle, or danger, asserted to me that he and a few other hunters did not hesitate to attack elephants with this weapon.

583 men although their first marriage has not been broken and no new
581 marriage agreement has been concluded.
164 The data given above provides no confirmation in the
[114] Nkundó tribes under study of the statement made by Engels "Les Wangata [The Wangata]," Revue congolaise, 1910, p. 35) that among the Wangata "her husband can exchange her . . . she can make no protest." (1)

1. The Ekonda apply the term lienjɛ only to an exchange of daughters or sisters. They have a specific term: mpɛ́ngɔ́. Note, by the way, that certain Mbólɛ tribes who practice a true wife exchange designate it by the same name: impɛ́ngɔ́.

Article VII. Purchase

432 The purchase of women is not practiced by the Nkundó tribes
562 under discussion here nor even by the Bombwanja. The practice is to
58 be found only among the Elingɛ. What is involved is not a marriage by means of a bride price but a real purchase; that is, a man buys a woman from her husband for a certain sum. He does not go through the woman's parents, as in an ordinary marriage by bride-price payment, but addresses himself directly to the husband.

In general it is the woman who makes the proposal that a man buy her in this manner. Sometimes a man wants to take a woman and
[721] first comes to an agreement with her. Before the Europeans arrived such a situation generally led to a war between clans or villages. After an armistice the palaver was settled, and the [219] purchaser paid the husband. Nowadays, since the Nkundó no longer dare to
[117] fight because of the legal sanctions that inevitably follow, when a woman abandons her husband for another man who wants to buy her, the parties involved bring the palaver before the judges. As the woman wants only her new husband, and as, on the other hand, war and the punishment of women have been abolished, the first husband has no

684 to a reimbursement of the bride price, any more than if she had [illegible] died of natural causes. In past times death under these circumstances[1] usually resulted in a war between clans. But this extreme situation actually arose only very rarely, if the man was excessively jealous and had other wives or the means to obtain them, or was embittered by persistent and incorrigible infidelity. Most frequently a husband's foresight of the loss he would sustain, in the last analysis keeps him from such drastic action. He limits himself to beating or injuring the culprit or to applying other forms of chastisement or punishment (see below under b); see above, Article III, 9.

If the husband has sufficient evidence, of the sort described above, but has not caught the culprits in the act, the wife can expect a good whipping, accompanied by a whole string of vulgar expressions and assorted insults [576] (femina foetidissima, tempore menstruationis putor tuus venit in nares omnium hominum, etc.) as well as a heap of obscenities pertaining to the female genital organs. [illegible] The husband who acts in this manner is not reprimanded. On the contrary, he acts thus out of jealousy: our Nkundô say that his anger is an anger of love.

In these punishments the Nkundô above all recognize the exasperation that springs from legitimate jealousy. That is why the husband acts on his own initiative. Besides, when he [316] finds himself confronted with the fact it would be psychologically difficult for him to calm himself first in order to go and inform the ndonga.

It was extremely unusual for a man to kill his wife calmly and deliberately. Such a thing happened only if her infidelities were continuous and she had erred in many other ways as well. And even then this conduct was found only in certain extremely cruel families. It was known that Iloko is 'Ôkungô and Bengóngó byâ Kundô had acted in this fashion; both were members of the Bongilâ (Besombô), a family which, in its songs, boasted of eating their own wives.

b) Tortures. The husband may also have recourse to several types of torture. Most important among them are the following:

1) The etéka, which is the standard torture so to speak. It is a heavy wooden fork which is attached to the neck. It prevents

---

[1] [i.e., a husband's killing his wife for adultery.—Analyst]

672
837
(843)

In the case of an unmarried mother, see
Chapter I, Part 1, Article III, 3.

[843] Adultery also becomes especially serious during the period preceding childbirth when there is a special prohibition against it, as endangering the lives of both mother and child, as we will explain in Chapter X, Article III.

7. Remarks and general conclusions

837 [726] 1) In former times the offense of adultery, even in its mildest form, that is, an isolated act, was one of the chief causes of "wars" between villages. Sometimes both sides called on their relatives by marriage to assist them, and the result was a general upheaval.

837 595 2) As a rule a husband wants his wife to be faithful. Doubtless there are exceptions. Most if not all of them were formerly found among the old polygamists. At their age they were disgusted with continual palavers, and their experience as men had taught them that they often became angry and uselessly complicated their little lives. They preferred to close their eyes, like good old Bonsof w'Ilolongo of Ituko (the Bombwanja clan of the Bofiji). He came to see me in the Christian village of Bombomba through which I was passing at the beginning of March, 1933. I asked him why he was adorned with so many bells, and he answered naively, "I always wear them. That way my wives know of my coming already from a distance. It gives them time to stop slandering me and to send their lovers away." When I expressed my surprise that he did not want to catch them in the act in order to punish them and end their infidelities, he answered me with a smile, "No, Father, jealousy . . . is for the young. As for me, I have seen so much of it that I no longer have any desire to get angry and make palavers for these trivialities."

558 837 595 Since the coming of the Europeans some unscrupulous men -- especially polygamists -- have been engaging in [328] a kind of procuring. They send their wives to commit adultery in order to be able to catch them in the act and thus enrich themselves. Or else they lend their wives for one night or more to laborers or soldiers who are

this outrage ([illegible]). It is a kind of national dishonor. This observation also clearly pinpoints the great difference between the favorite and the bolímbé.

The following custom should be mentioned in this connection: if any man, even a stranger or one who comes from a great distance, comes and -- over the fence -- strikes the roof of a bolímbé's [illegible] of seclusion with his [illegible] (1) as a call to war, the whole village is obliged to take up arms to defend him. All the men [302] accompany him and unite with his family against the enemy clan, whatever the distance may be. The Nkundó say that the act of touching the bolímbé's hut infuriates the entire clan and makes them take up arms without hesitation. (1)

One last indication of the social nature of this institution is the fact that the bolímbé has the right to sit beside her husband at public gatherings and feasts, a prerogative which she alone of all women possesses. With her is a boy or girl who serves as her "boy" and carries the seat (bofoya) on which she sits.

When a bolímbé dies her husband may put another in her place. To do so he repeats the ceremony described above. It is called sangoja bolímbé, "to make succeed to the title of bolímbé."

As we saw in Chapter I, Part 1, Article II, a man may even make his daughter a bolímbé.

1. A wooden bell (see Congo, 1935, Vol. 2, p. 366, figs. 4 and 5).

1. Compare the result of a serious offense, whose effect is entirely in the offender's favor, to analogous cases described previously, for example in Chapter III, Article VII; Chapter VI, Article V, 4, Appendix; and below in Chapter VIII, Article II, 3, (B).

586
178 for this right was recognized by the written laws which have assigned the functions formerly exercised by the "fathers" of families to them. But they are required to act in conformity with the common law, and therefore to listen to the *ndonga* and report to him.

Before colonization the Nkundó often used other means.

586 Before exploring the question of bride-price reimbursement, we will examine these various actions. For greater clarity we will distinguish between the customs of the pre-European regime and actual practice. Two specific cases will be described at the end.

1. In the past

Let us again make a distinction between two situations:

A. First hypothesis: a wife left her husband. She ran away, to her family, first informing the *ndonga*. If she did not go to him but went straight home instead, the *ndonga* felt that he had been disregarded, and serious consequences followed, for he inevitably found her in the wrong. That is why this situation very seldom arose. [201] The woman explained her conduct to the *ndonga*. It was his duty to reconcile her and her husband. A divorce never took place without many interventions on the part of the *ndonga*.

1) If in spite of all attempts the woman was absolutely un-
[72] willing to stay with her husband and definitely left him, the result in most cases was war, unless, of course, the husband also did not care to continue the unhappy union. In such a case he was satisfied with claiming a reimbursement of the bride price. The war, like all others, ended in peace and indemnification; nothing further was discussed. The war was fought against the woman's clan if restitution of the bride price was delayed or not made. However, if the woman went to another man without first going to her family, the abandoned husband declared war on his rival and left his parents-in-law in peace.

586
682 2) Sometimes the abandoned husband took revenge on his rival by *assassinating* him. If the possibility was open to him --

586° make it possible for him to recover his claim, he had recourse to the second means:

586° b) Reducing his wife to slavery (bonyamó, from the verb
681 nyamola). The husband had the right to use this means immediately, without having first tried the étaka. But such action was not approved of and was undertaken only if the woman's family were themselves exasperated by the endless suits and the continual shame that their unworthy daughter caused them.

● [721] The reduction of a woman to slavery usually caused a war, for her clan would not put up with such an insult. In some instances they did not seek revenge, however, either out of fear, because they did not feel in a position to resist, or because they recognized that the husband had good reasons for what he did. [304]

The woman's relatives could subsequently buy her back. (1)

[181] 1. If the Nkundó sold an Elinga woman into slavery, her people never troubled them with a war. For they did not know how to attack, were not good at marching, were strangers to the forest, and were inferior in military valor. Therefore they were satisfied with buying back their kinswoman.

In some instances, not wanting to be exposed to further palavers or further shame caused by their daughter's continued misconduct after having bought her back, they left her to her fate. Their love for their child and their desire to preserve their honor and good reputation were in conflict, and which of the two sentiments triumphed depended on circumstances of men and things. In such a situation, as with respect to theft and other habits that brought dishonor, it was not rare (nor is it even today) to find that the desire to preserve honor triumphed over affection or financial interests.

[584] Before reducing a wife to slavery, even more than before confining her to the etâka, a man was required to communicate his intentions to the ndonga. Otherwise, the latter would declare war

that there were no further means for a reconciliation, returned her to her parents. No violence was used against her, nor could the husband demand an immediate and direct reimbursement of the bride price. The husband had to wait until the wife he had repudiated found a new husband and the latter had paid a bride price for her. If the parents-in-law showed ill will toward him, however, [72] they could expect a war.

The *conclusion* that can be drawn from the preceding data is that although Nkundó law is very severe against the wife who does not acquit herself of her marital obligations, it does not leave the husband entirely free to do as he pleases. Ancestral law demanded grave reasons as the basis for any measures he took against her, [204] and the application of this law was well regulated. The differences between the various situations are an eloquent demonstration of this fact.

As we have seen above, the term *bokáfo* is not applied to repudiation by either party. In the case of the husband the Nkundó say that he *asóna*, "no longer wants her"; the noun is *lotóno*. This term does not apply specifically to this situation; it refers to any person or thing one does not want. The special manner in which the wife is sent back by being handed over to the *ndonga* is also called by a generic term *ómola*, "to cause to start moving, to make go away"; the noun is *njómó*.

2. At the present time

Considerable changes have been introduced as a result of colonization. Wars, torture, human sacrifice, and slavery have been abolished. The possibilities are now reduced to the woman's flight, with or without notification of the *ndonga*, or a repudiation pure and simple. The intervention of the *ndonga* is only rarely omitted; it is still considered important. As a matter of fact, it would be against his financial interests to make an enemy of him. A woman who leaves her husband returns home, goes directly to another man, or lives a debauched life in some center, large or small. There is nothing left but to proceed with the refunding of the bride price. Thus everything is reduced to its simplest form.

A Nkundó woman is held back only by the fear of punishment and other consequences of her action, or by her love for her husband,

586 simply said that she has left her husband (ankodia) and has been taken
583 in marriage by X (añkómbwa éka bingéli). Having fallen in love
587 with another man's wife [390] and desiring to marry her, a man tries to win her favor. If she consents he collects the valuables necessary for the bride price. He then asks the woman to come to him and pays the bride price as for any marriage.

Instead of going directly to her seducer, the woman may also first go to her parents, especially if they are in favor of her plan. If they are not she would not succeed, because they would prevent her from carrying it out.

● [721] Cases of njangó were formerly rare because they were risky. As a matter of fact, they constituted a casus belli. Anyone who undertook such a venture had to be in a position to take the consequences of his act, especially with respect to the payment of an indemnity. [178] Nowadays, on the other hand, these occurrences are much more frequent, even when the new husband does not have the means to pay the bride price at once. Nevertheless, the reversal in government policy is beginning to produce good results. The woman, or her mother, is often imprisoned; rarely the seducer. This penalty is often sufficient to restore order. But to keep from being exposed to further difficulties caused by the woman who no longer loves him, the abandoned husband sometimes refuses to take back his unfaithful wife.

The rarity of cases in former times as well as the fact that [671] they constituted a legitimate reason for war shows that the njangó did not have the approval of Nkundó law but that it was more or less considered an infraction.

586 3) Taking refuge. Because of the change in circumstances,
577 the practice of taking refuge is no longer common today. It used to be done as follows: A woman who absolutely wanted to leave her husband and had no means of doing so, since no man had asked for her in marriage and her parents were powerless to help her, went secretly to a rich and influential man whom she would have liked as a husband. She arrived unexpectedly, stood before him, or even threw herself at him, crying, [391] Bejwó běkě! ònjéngé.

586 587 failure to help or respect them. After the union broke up, Bokeló, the woman's father, refused to make restitution of anything whatsoever. His answer to Engfandó was, "You should have left another man's wife alone."

Yet all this was in flagrant opposition to Nkundó law. 1) Engfandó was wrong to take another man's wife home with him. 2) Iengó could have taken Engfandó's valuables away from him at the time the latter was making the payment; it was his right. But 3) Bokeló was also in the wrong. The question [410] of seduction and adultery was none of his business but Iengó's. If he did not like Engfandó's behavior, he could have handled the situation differently. Now he had valuables to which he no longer had any rights; he had to return them.

Conclusion

586 The nature of the reimbursement of marriage payments and the various circumstances under which it is made might suggest the conclusion that these goods are not acquired permanently, but rather that they constitute securities. The few exceptions where there is no reimbursement could not change this view. In fact the reason for them is clear -- compensation for that which is not restituted is made in other ways. (1)

● [721] 1. This observation -- like others made earlier -- might lead us to believe that in the mind of the Nkundó war and other bloody practices are only means which have little to recommend them and that basically our people disapprove of them.

Nevertheless, this conclusion does not hold up if we compare all the foregoing with what occurs when a marriage is broken through death. For in the latter case nothing at all is returned; everything that was given by each party remains permanently theirs. No payment is demanded even for the children (see below).

573 [illegible] consists of a beautifully fashioned native knife, or a lance, or mitako [copper wire used as currency]. In some areas, it was the polygynist who attended the mother at the birth of the daughter. He had the wood gathered, water brought, and food prepared. If, then, the expected child was a boy, the security was usually returned, and the contract declared null and void. If, however, the one who had given the security was a village chief or a man of importance, then the father of the child tried to give him another daughter. The father had, for instance, at an earlier time given a daughter to another man of much less importance. In the above-mentioned case, he would give back the bride price received, take his daughter back, and give her to the polygynist from whom he expected a larger bride price.

573 Sometimes too the boy was taken by the polygynist and remained in his family until the father could trade a daughter for him.

573 591 While very young and still a child, the little daughter was installed in the harem of the polygynist. She was brought up there, together with other children of her age and status; or rather, she grew up there in the midst of those heathen customs without any upbringing.

595 The composition of the harem of a polygamist:

The first wife was called the Bomatsa; she preceded all the other wives in rank, and in the absence of the polygynist, she was the mistress of the harem.

The second wife was called Ekila; she was the most loved and preceded all the remaining wives. She was also called Nkonda.

The third wife was called Bolumbu. At the appointment of the Bolumbu, a certain ceremony took place, and the wife was clothed with an animal skin. The Nku, a sort of patriarch and magician, sometimes had three or four Bolumbu who served as messengers to other villages. In this capacity they had special privileges. For instance, to attack a Bolumbu was a reason for declaring war. [361] [721]

[533] The remaining women were simply women of the harem, without distinction.

595 In the area of Monjoku, among the Bolee [Bole], the first wife was called Nkisa, with the same rank as Bomatsa. The second

202 198 The White hears only the difference in tempo, nothing more. The Negro miles away understands what is being telephoned.

The *lokole* language consists chiefly of metaphors and is thus not intelligible to any White in the whole of the Congo. The Negroes are proud of their invention and also pleased that the White, who otherwise can do everything, is not able to understand their *lokole*.

Every man has his own name (*nkombo*) on the *lokole* with which he makes himself known. Because such a name often covers several lines of script, chiefly expressed in metaphors giving facts of the public life of the Negro concerned, it would be a physical impossibility for a White to master the *lokole* language in the way a Negro does. Actually, not even all Negroes understand the art of beating the *lokole*.

[562] The women have a general name; beating the *lokole* is only for the men, and no woman understands the art. The women understand what is being broadcast when the *lokole* is beaten, but they cannot beat it themselves. Moreover, they would be ashamed to attempt it; this is no task for a woman, and they would be laughed at. The *lokole* name, or *nkombo*, of the women is as follows:

Bali la tolombo besaleki lisala, besaleki tombokoko, tond' al' isuso, befambe eka lisala.

"Women in numbers, worked the garden, prepared much to eat, consisting of bananas, to eat out of the garden."

A White, personally, has no *nkombo* of his own on the *lokole*, but to announce the arrival of a White in a village, the following is spread around far and wide:

Lolema ja lifeka feka, esongo etenaka nkola.

"The bat flies about everywhere, the pin wounds the nails of the feet."

With "the bat flies about everywhere" is to be understood the government agent who goes from village to village collecting the taxes. "The pin wounds the nails of the feet" means that, just as [726] the Negroes go on the warpath with sharp pointed sticks dipped in poison to wound the enemies' feet, the government agent is always on his rounds with his rifle, ready for the fray.

The *nkombo* of the Catholic missionary is as follows: [102]

(1) *Bansele nsele ba nkanga*; (2) *bofala boki ndaki lisako nda lokombo*; (3) *etafe bolo*; (4) *benanga bekendaka la mperu*.

must go to the *nsakala* for their fight, this being the location of the houses belonging to the sons of the *nkumu*. The penalty for breaking this law is a fine, and if no fine were forthcoming hanging used to be the alternative. If a quarrel arises elsewhere and one party wishes to avoid fighting, he may retire to the *nsaga* and thus be safe. No trees in the *nsaga* may be climbed. There are, however, privileged classes exempt from all such rules, and these embrace a good many people. Thus, the mother of twins, twins, Batwa, *mwasi*, and all members of the *ntolende* and *elenge* are exempt from the laws of the *nsaga*. If any of these commit acts which are illegal for those coming under the law, they are not held guilty, but their actions will not be condoned; they will be considered breaches of good conduct, and will be dealt with informally; the parties will be quietly reprimanded, and adjured to observe the proprieties of conduct. For outsiders breaking the laws of the *nsaga*, what corresponds to a warrant is necessary. It is necessary to catch the culprit in the act and hale him before the *nkumu*. The *nkumu* himself cannot do this, nor can any of the *elenge*; it must be done by one of the *ntolende*, and so if the *nkumu* sees someone infringing the law he will try to get one of the *ntolende* on the spot in a hurry in order to catch the offender. 628 628 [648] [672] [632] [624]

In war,[7] it is the *nsalami a ole* who is most active in preparations, but the *nkumu* will accompany his party to battle, keeping well in the rear, and surrounded by good fighters. He does not wear his *nsasala* but puts on the informal hat. If an *nkumu* were captured, he would never be tortured or killed as were other prisoners, unless he specifically sought such a fate. He could be ransomed, and his captors would beseech him to let his people ransom him, but in many cases an *nkumu* would invite death rather than endure the shame of being yielded up as a prisoner of war. 624 726 ● [726]

An *nkumu* is always addressed by a double clap of the hands, and will not reply to anyone rude enough to speak to him first. In answer to the clap he replies with a word of wisdom expressed in an aphorism or proverb. Such a reply, however, is common to all elders, who have their favourite aphorisms ready for any who pay them special honour. Anything the *nkumu* says must be answered not by the customary *ale bolo* (even so) which ordinary people use, but with the special word, *binga*, which is reserved exclusively for replying to an *nkumu*, and means the same thing. 624 578

When the hour of death approaches, an *nkumu* is attended by his Batwa. It is a rule that he must not die a natural death, and near the end, while he is still conscious and can still speak, all 'free men' clear out and leave the Batwa pygmies to their task of tying the *nkumu* very tightly with the *lianas* yam vines known as *nsolola*. Often this secure lashing in the sitting posture, known as *ilesa*, is sufficient to finish the *nkumu* off, but sometimes the work is expedited by twisting his neck.[8] Then it is announced that he is dead, *asilibe*, this being in contradistinction to the customary phrase *aolamo ankele* used of the death of ordinary people. While the latter means 624 763 [563]

---

[7] Owing to the lack of tribal cohesion, warfare was not on any considerable scale. The method of warfare consisted in sending groups of young men to fight first, the elders only joining in when one side began to get the worst of the fray. Victors and vanquished in such fights were designated 'husband' and 'wife' respectively, and members of the one group were free to come and go in the villages of the other, and even to help themselves to food. In future wars 'husband' and 'wife' were supposed to combine against their common foes.

[8] Besides *nkumu*, elderly and rich men, fathers and mothers of twins, and twins are buried in the *ilesa* or sitting posture, in contradistinction to the extended position which is the customary one used for ordinary people and slaves. [764]

[illegible] One must be careful not to confuse this bosongo with byiko byă oyeng'ëty'ëna, an expression frequently heard. The latter includes any payment to the mother and includes the goat and the nkundo as well as the bosongo discussed above and others. The word used in this case is not byĭkó, singular ĭkó, "porcupine," but rather byiko, singular wiko, "price, value" and derived from the verb -ika, "to set a price."

3) Lokolé: a brother or a cousin of the wife asks for a konga. He beats the gong (lokolé) in order to make noise and thus force the husband to satisfy him. That is how this bosongo seems to have originated. In practice people simply demand a [147] present. The racket can sometimes last for quite a while. But the elders do not allow the gathering to be disrupted if the husband does not have precisely the gift that would give satisfaction.

4) Bekulé, or bokfwá: the woman's brothers stick a piece of the trunk of a banana tree (bokfwá) into the ground, so that young relatives of the husband may shoot arrows (bekulé) at it. These are then removed by young members of the wife's family who, at the present time, are sometimes given money -- 5 francs, for instance.

[illegible] [721] 5) Wambá: prisoner's rope, that is, a rope to which war prisoners were formerly tied, two by two (a system now imitated for prisoners of the colonial law enforcement agencies and administration). In the past the patriarch, or head of the family, demanded a konga or a knife as indemnity against the possibility that he or members of his family might be imprisoned as a result of a war caused by the woman being married. Nowadays the chiefs set up by the administration and given the rights of family heads by the European authority have also claimed rights to this bosongo whose significance, purpose, and even name have completely changed as a result. It is now called bonyodia w'ĕkanji, "the chief's chain." It is clear that this payment has become something which it was not meant to be. [illegible]

6) Etúka: a heavy wooden fork, fastened to the neck. This is a present claimed by the mother, by one of the father's other wives, or by a wife of the woman's brother, against the possibility that they may have to undergo torture by means of the fork because of the woman whose bride price is being paid. This could happen if she were

585* used by her father, Nkambe ɛy'ɔmɔla of Bolɛ́fɔla (Bonjɔbu), to pay a 607 supplement for his wife Bekombe. On this account the latter became her daughter's *nkita*. The double bride price served to obtain the wife Lintambe for Ilɔ́tɔ y'ɔnguma, Bekombe's brother and Mbɛlɛ's uncle, and Lintambe thus belonged to both mother and daughter, but the two did not fight about the matter.

One person can have two or more *nkita*, especially if her bride price is so large that it can be used to obtain several wives. Such is the case of Mputɛ (Sofia) of the Baɛfɛ Mbangɔ of Bongando (Bonkoso). Her first husband, Mpɛ́nda of Lofelɛ, paid 40 rings and a slave. With this sum Mputɛ's uncle, [172] Mbangɔ ɛy'akoso (who had settled with the Elɔ́ngɔ l'Iɔmɔma, his mother's clan), paid the bride price for Bonjɛ́lɛ of Nkɛlongo. (1) In the meantime, Mpɛ́nda was killed in a fight with his brother, Iloko. Mputɛ married Elɔ́ngola, Mpɛ́nda's nephew, but then he died after two or three years of marriage. She was then married to Lokonga of Lɔ́ngɛ (Nkɔle), whose life was not much longer, and finally to Bakutu (Boniface) of Bombɛ́nga w'ɔ̃kenda (Besombɔ, Bombwanja), who paid a considerable bride price. A part of this bride price was a compensation to the family of the last husband, and another portion was used by Mbangɔ to acquire as wife, Bengelɛ of Ekɛkola. By means of the bride price paid by Lokonga, Mbangɔ (Joseph), a first cousin of Mputɛ, obtained the wife Bolɛ́jɛ (who came from the Ionda). Lastly, Bakutu gave Bonjɛ́kyɛ (Christophe) of Losɛlinga, a distant cousin of Mputɛ, the necessary bride price to marry Embongɛmbembe of Lɔ́ngɛ, who on this account also became the *nkita* of Mputɛ, though not in the strict sense of the term. Mputɛ thus has four *nkita*, although not all of them are living.

[782]
[727]
1. During a war against the Nkɛlongo, this woman had been captured by the Elɔ́ngɛ, who wanted to sacrifice her to the *ikwɛ* at a feast which terminated the mourning. But Mbangɔ begged the notables to let her live because he loved her very much and wanted to marry her.

612
562
583 constitutes a bride price, it does not bear that name because its legal significance is not the same. The specific name for this particular payment is *isongyambóka*, from *-songya*, "to add something new" and *mbóka*, "path." Thus the new husband adds a new alliance. The verb *songa* or *songya* is also used under other circumstances: for a new tile or leaf that is added on to a damaged spot on a roof, for a patch on a piece of clothing, or for something that has been newly introduced. The term therefore seems to indicate that what is involved is not a new marriage but rather a modification grafted on to the old one. Furthermore, the term is often used pejoratively. One may thus suppose that this custom is not very ancient, but of course the evidence is not sufficient.

583²
432 It is apparent from the above that the purchase of a woman is a difficult and expensive operation. A kind of second bride price (*isongyambóka*) and a second wife (*inukamiéfoga*) cost quite a fortune. In the past the purchaser also had to pay indemnities to the families of men killed in combat (he might have had to pay as much as 100 rings, for the price of one "corpse" was 15 to 20 *bakonga*, the monetary value of a man) (1). One gets the impression that, though for reasons un- [626] known to us the tribes in question permitted the exchange of women in their laws and customs, they did so unwillingly, and that the persons in authority increased the difficulties, so to speak, in order to frighten the amateurs and to reduce the number of cases to an inescapable minimum.

One might wonder why men do not hesitate in the face of such great financial difficulties. Psychologically, it seems entirely plausible that a man who is in love with another's wife and has the necessary wealth would in his passion throw himself into such an adventure. Probably that is how the practice originated. But this likelihood does not explain the existence of a purchase, since the breaking of the first marriage and the committment to a new one could just as well be

---

[727] 1. Five dead were an enormous number in this sort of "war."

606 685 If one of the wife's relatives were found guilty of stealing from his (or her) relative by marriage, or even from one of the latter's relatives, the family tribunal was assembled. Out of consideration for the ties of kinship between the thief and the wife and in order not to sadden her and her family, the guilty person was not sold as a slave. He was simply turned over to the woman [293] and her family, and they were told: "Here he is; he has been found guilty of theft and should have been reduced to slavery. Out of respect for you, however, we are not selling him; we are rolling (-kilimola) him toward you. Take him as bride price and add him to the sum of the bosɔ́ngo." Thus the matter was settled in a friendly fashion. If subsequently there was a divorce, the wife's family had to restore not only the bride price that had been paid but also an additional slave for the member of their group that the husband had yielded in this fashion. Thus, the transaction was not at all a fictional one.

Conversely, the same procedure was adopted in relation to a relative of the husband who had violated the rules of justice to the detriment of a member of the family related by marriage. But in that case the extradition of the guilty party was considered as the addition of a slave to the amount of the nkɔmɛ.

[539] Hence the saying: bokiló ntɛ́wɛ́kɛ́ ndɛ́ ngond'ɛ̌y'okanga, "a parent-in-law cannot die in the forest of his relatives by marriage."

The situation is no different nowadays. The only change is that, instead of giving back a slave if a dissolution of the marriage occurs, the equivalent value is paid in copper rings, etc.

The same customs governed conduct toward prisoners of war. ● 727 606 For instance, in the course of a war Eale became the master of Bombolo, whose cousin is married to Iloko, a close relative of Eale. Iloko interceded with Eale in order to obtain Bombolo's freedom, and Bombolo was sent home but was to be considered as bosɔ́ngo. The liberated prisoner thus was classed as a slave given as part of the bride price, as in the preceding case, and all the appropriate rules were followed.

587
595 A slave woman may be chosen as a favorite. Since this choice is a matter of preference, there is no reason why not. This is not true of the rank of bolɔ́mbɔ́, which can never be attained by a slave, as an examination of this eminent position clearly shows. The following slave women are cited among those who were made nkɔ́ndɛ́ by their husbands: Bolɔ́nge by Bakengɔ́ ba Lokolí of Nsekɛ́; Bokɛ́tu by Ekányaka ɛ́y'ondɔ́kɔ́ of Etɔ́ontálɛ́; Ntsimbo by Bombengɛ́lá of Etɔ́ontálɛ́.

When a polygamist felt a very special love for a slave, and had the means to do so, he would enfranchise her and then pay a regular bride price for her. In order for this to happen the woman's family had to intervene, either on its own initiative or by invitation of the husband. Once the ransom was paid, the woman was free. She returned home, and her husband followed her to pay the bride price; thus she became a regular wife on the same basis [357] as any other woman. The procedure was the same whether the slave had been captured personally by the husband or had been bought or acquired as part of a bride price or by some other means.

Such was the case of Bolɔ́mbɔ́, daughter of Boɛ́kwá of Boɛ́ndɛ́ (Bombwanja), who was taken by Esalɛ́ of Ekɔ́kola and bought by Efoloko of Lofelí. She was enfranchised at her father's initiative, and he subsequently married her off in a regular fashion. Another case was that of Etáka, daughter of Elongama ɛ́a Longɔ́mbá of Besombɔ́, who was married to Bonyongela of Bowɛ́lɛ́. During a war she was taken prisoner by Betɔ́kɔ́ of Ekɔ́kola, who wanted to marry her properly and therefore contacted Elongama. The latter arranged the matter of the ransom and took his daughter with him. Then Betɔ́kɔ́ went to Besombɔ́ to pay the bride price. (1)

●[721] 1. Almost all slave women were reduced to their condition, directly or indirectly, because of a war. If they were already married, their marriages were considered as dissolved. Under the circumstances it

567
595x
● 727

> could not be otherwise. In such matters each group took care only of its own interests; and none of the procedures usually accompanying the dissolution of a marriage were observed. However, the husband was entitled to an indemnity, in the form of persons or valuables, from the member of his clan who had fomented the war and was held responsible for all its consequences, whatever the way in which he had provoked it. If necessary, this member could be forced to pay. If he did not have the means to pay indemnities, he himself was reduced to slavery, if the influence of the families involved did not prevent this occurrence. When the woman was enfranchised and a new bride price was paid for her, her family was expected to reimburse her former husband.

[672]

Since, at present, slavery has been abolished, ransom can no longer be paid. A master who wishes to enfranchise a slave woman who has remained faithful to him, simply gives her family the bride price and then goes with his wife to her home to receive the dowry.

Article VI. Life in a Harem

595x Wives of the same husband address each other among themselves as bakalɛ (sing. bokalɛ). Their husband calls them all baálí, [358] "wives." All except for true slaves are married by means of a bride price. A woman's sons call their mother's bakalɛ baálí, "wives," but out of respect toward the older ones

586 577 tonjójákɛ́! (1) "Your deceased parents! Pay the bride price for me,

1. Or analogous terms.

do not chase me away!" In such circumstances, the insult of invoking a man's deceased parents is like an ultimatum; it imposes an obligation which the person thus addressed cannot escape. (2)

2. See Chapter VI, Article V, 4, Appendix.

Therefore the man in question could not send the woman away; he had to take her under his protection. He called his kin group and explained the situation to them. If his close relatives agreed -- and it was their duty and honor to -- they instructed him to pay the bride price for her. But the abandoned husband intervened to prevent this transaction. Either he declared war, or he begged his rival to return his wife to him. If he took the first course, the two ●[127] adversaries paid indemnities for the warriors fallen in battle on their respective sides after the hostilities were terminated; then when peace was concluded, the matter was settled all the same, and the woman succeeded in her purpose. If the husband took the second alternative, and the man who received the fugitive was disposed to yield to his request, the latter would ask the husband for a payment (nyongo) that would free him from the obligation imposed on him by the wife's "oath." This payment was a sort of indemnification for the insult and for the blemish on his honor. Therefore the amount was fairly high: 20 to 25 copper rings, equaling the price of a slave.

The woman was surrendered either because the man to whom she had addressed herself did not love her, or because he and his family did not want to get involved in any disputes.

For the husband, war was a bad expedient; he would necessarily lose. The correct and ideal procedure was to try and have his wife returned to him. This fact is an indication that recourse to arms was an infraction of the law rather than a legitimate means. [392]

It could also happen that the man kept the woman but did not immediately pay the bride price. This occurred either if a

178 586x 577 her proposal, he collects the bride price and produces it before the chief. With the consent of this authority, he pays it to the woman's parents, who make restitution to the husband. (1)

1. See also Chapter III, Article VI.

586x ●727 3) War. The last of the special ways in which a marriage may be broken is the following: If a woman were captured in a war and not freed, thus becoming a slave, by that very fact her marriage was broken. Under the circumstances it could not have been otherwise, since each group was concerned only with its own interests. As we have seen in the preceding chapter, the slave was incorporated into the harem of one of the members of the clan who took her prisoner, or she was sold to some man for this purpose. If her real husband did not have the means to free her -- and we are speaking under that assumption, for if he did the union would not be dissolved -- he was unable to oppose what was done. Nevertheless, he was entitled to indemnification by the member of the clan who was responsible for the war, and he could use force to support his claim. If the woman were freed by her family, and her owner then paid them a bride price in order to contract a regular marriage, the former husband had a right to a return of the bride price paid by him. (See Chapter VII, Article V).

586x In concluding this account, we should note that a woman who has left her husband to go to another man may return to the first one [394] after a fairly long time has elapsed. There may be two reasons for such a return:

Either the woman does not find what she was looking for with her new husband and finds her hopes deceived, or in comparing her present situation with the life she had previously led she regrets her action. Knowing the love her former husband always bore her, she risks returning to him, and usually she is not rejected.

Or the new husband finds that after having paid part of the bride price he is unable to fulfill the rest of his obligation. Since a woman does not wish to be a wife without bride price -- outside of modern exceptions -- she turns back.

586 x In most cases the husband and his parents-in-law try to continue their relationship despite the breakup. If the woman persists in not wanting to go back to her husband despite the pressure, the entreaties, and even the curses of her family, the parents sub- [587] stitute a sister or relative (bankitsa) for her, unless, of course, no relative is available. For in that case they must resign themselves to the restitution of the bride price and a permanent dissolution of the relationship. No new bride-price payment is made for the substitute, as the original bride price is valid for the new union, as we have explained in Chapter III, Article IV.

Finally, there is an exception to the general principle: there is no restitution of the bride price if for some reason there is equivalent compensation of some sort. Nowadays this exception is seldom encountered, as will be apparent from the following details: for example, such an exception occurs if the right of ikɔ́kelo has been exercised, or if the wife of one of the relatives-in-law has been seized. Even if the amount of one bride price is larger than the other, the excess is not returned. Nor is there any obligation to restore the bride price if the wife has been reduced to slavery or has been killed. There are also the cases of the dissolution of marriage cited in Chapter V, Article IV, 2, no. 2, example 17, and in Chapter VI, Article V, 4. If the breakup caused ●[127] a war and the number killed on each side was considerable (three, five, six corpses), the matter rests there; when the families of those killed have been indemnified, there is no more talk of reimbursement. Occasionally, an influential and rich man who at the same time was spiteful or excessively proud, would take up arms a second time. He claimed that he would not stop until he had the bride-price valuables in his hands. Such behavior met with disapproval everywhere, and even his own family tried to stop him. If the opposing clan was sufficiently strong and stubborn in the struggle, the husband obtained nothing at all. But the desire to [555] get revenge or to be famous as a warrior sometimes caused a man to scorn financial losses. Finally, according to the notions of our natives, a case of enmity between two clans (which we have cited in relation to a woman's application for refuge) should be included in the category of compensations.

must go to the *monkeke* for their fight, this being the location of the houses belonging 624
to the sons of the *nkumu*. The penalty for breaking this law is a fine, and if no 689
fine were forthcoming hanging used to be the alternative. If a quarrel arises elsewhere
and one party wishes to avoid fighting, he may retire to the *mongo* and thus be
safe. No trees in the *mongo* may be climbed. There are, however, privileged classes
exempt from all such rules, and these embrace a good many people. Thus, the mother [845]
of twins, twins, Batwa, *maomi*, and all members of the *molembe* and *ekopo* are exempt
from the laws of the *mongo*. If any of these commit acts which are illegal for those [672]
coming under the law, they are not held guilty, but their actions will not be condoned;
they will be considered breaches of good conduct, and will be dealt with informally; [626]
the parties will be quietly reprimanded, and adjured to observe the proprieties of
conduct. For outsiders breaking the laws of the *mongo*, what corresponds to a warrant
is necessary. It is necessary to catch the culprit in the act and hale him before the [696]
nkumu. The *nkumu* himself cannot do this, nor can any of the *ekopo*; it must be done
by one of the *molembe*, and so if the *nkumu* sees someone infringing the law he will
try to get one of the *molembe* on the spot in a hurry in order to catch the offender.

In war,[1] it is the *molomi o ehe* who is most active in preparations, but the *nkumu* 624
will accompany his party to battle, keeping well in the rear, and surrounded by good
fighters. He does not wear his *montolo* but puts on the informal hat. If an *nkumu* were 726
captured, he would never be tortured or killed as were other prisoners, unless he
specifically sought such a fate. He could be ransomed, and his captors would [727]
beseech him to let his people ransom him, but in many cases an *nkumu* would invite
death rather than endure the shame of being yielded up as a prisoner of war.

An *nkumu* is always addressed by a double clap of the hands, and will not reply to 624
anyone rude enough to speak to him first. In answer to the clap he replies with a
word of wisdom expressed in an aphorism or proverb. Such a reply, however, is 576
common to all elders, who have their favourite aphorisms ready for any who pay
them special honour. Anything the *nkumu* says must be answered not by the
customary *nko baiko* (even so) which ordinary people use, but with the special word,
biongo, which is reserved exclusively for replying to an *nkumu*, and means the same
thing.

When the hour of death approaches, an *nkumu* is attended by his Batwa. It is a 624
rule that he must not die a natural death, and near the end, while he is still conscious
and can still speak, all 'free men' clear out and leave the Batwa pygmies to their 763
task of tying the *nkumu* very tightly with the fibrous yam vines known as *menkiki*. [563]
Often this secure lashing in the sitting posture, known as *ilima*, is sufficient to finish
the *nkumu* off, but sometimes the work is expedited by twisting his neck.[2] Then it
is announced that he is dead, *aokilwa*, this being in contradistinction to the customary
phrase *aokoma moloko* used of the death of ordinary people. While the latter means

---

[1] Owing to the lack of tribal cohesion, warfare was not on any considerable scale. The method of warfare consisted in sending groups of young men to fight first, the elders only joining in when one side began to get the worst of the fray. Victors and vanquished in such fights were designated 'husband' and 'wife' respectively, and members of the one group were free to come and go in the villages of the other, and even to help themselves to food. In future wars 'husband' and 'wife' were supposed to combine against their common foes.

[2] Besides *nkumu*, elderly and rich men, fathers and mothers of twins, and twins are buried in the *ilima* or sitting posture, in contradistinction to the *monsepo* position which is the recumbent one used for ordinary people and slaves. [764]

171 they distinguish very clearly between the bolɔ́mbɔ and the
595x favorite. They even added that the nkɔ́mɔ enjoy no privileges
554 in this realm. (1)

> 1. The institution of the nkɔ́mɔ is not very widespread among the tribes treated in our study. (See "Les Coutumes funéraires des Nkundó [Funeral customs of the Nkundo]," in Anthropos) (in press).

In the course of a visit I myself made to the western Bolɛ́ngɛ (in September, 1933), I learned that a man who had a special position could have two belɔ́mbɔ; the bomɛtsa proposed her ebísa as candidate, and the second wife did the same for hers. Thus there was a bolɔ́mbɛ w'ìlɔ́me and a bolɔ́mbɛ w'ìɛli (the latter more especially called ekila. I also observed that they made a very clear distinction between bolɔ́mbɔ and [354] nkɔ́ndɛ, just like the peoples treated in this study.

As to the function of messenger, which is attributed to the bolɔ́mbɔ by Engels (as well as by Father Kaptein, in Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 532), it is not performed more by her than by any other woman in the harem. Any of them, without distinction based on rank or date of marriage, may be charged with a mission. The only custom of this sort which involves such a distinction is found among the Bolɛ́ngɛ-Ntɔ́mbɔ living between the Congo and the Boloko. It is as follows: an influential
[128] man sometimes sent his belɔ́mbɔ (one or two) to stop a quarrel, or even a battle between two villages. When she intervened, the opposing parties made a truce, pending the arrival and the decision of her husband in person.

Article IV. The Ebísa

595x An ebísa is a woman taken as wife by the husband of one
583x of her relatives -- a sister, aunt, or older cousin. The relative

177 Although even St. Thomas teaches that the only natural authority
is that of the head of the family, European legislation has, through
ignorance, completely abolished the rights of the native family head;
the wife is freed from all ties and is thus abandoned to licentiousness.
Through a legal fiction, clan law has gone over into the hands of the
"recognized native courts of justice," which, however, have just as
much to do with the clan court as a policeman with a father. The
communization of trade, education, and the rearing of the young, as
is demonstrated to us by Russia, would revolutionize our society far
less than our installation of these so-called native courts of justice has
done in the Congo. Education and correction have been replaced by
punishment. Politics, which have begun to play such an all-important
602 role in our society, had /155/ almost no importance in Nkundo society.
613 The neighboring clans were all connected with each other through
blood relationship, intermarriage, or friendship ties. Only when there
was a struggle against a foreign and common enemy did politics have
a role to fulfill. And then the same order of rank was observed among
the clans as was already indicated for the members of a single clan.

Here also, biased or romantic products of our ideas about barbarism
177 have adapted these so-called intertribal wars to the need that we felt,
728 to civilize the natives at any cost. These wars were not to be compared
622 with our European wars, in which a mass of people are slaughtered.
In the Congo, no sooner had wounded or dead fallen on both sides than
the chiefs were already congregated to conclude a peace treaty.
Here again, we meant to respect the political organization of the
natives by the creation of chieftainships and native chiefs, who were
to form the political-administrative link between the native clans and
the European higher administration. Such chiefs were totally unknown
in native society. Together with the establishment of the native courts,
the establishment of chieftainships gave the death blow to the actual
social organization of the Nkundo-Mongo. The very fact that these
institutions are territorial demonstrates clearly that here no ordinary
shifting of power has taken place, but simply an elimination of the
traditional power in favor of a new colonial power.

Indeed, where formerly the "customary rightful chief" was sought
177 out, even though it was sometimes only a formality, the new formula
622 of the "sectors" has relieved the higher administration from this care
too. And it is only to be hoped that this new formula will at least do
away with the legal fiction that the "chiefs" are actually "something
native," so that they may be classified for once and for all in the

Teke F133

young man! [Ed., the text is not translated from mid-page 17 to the second paragraph, page 19.] M 764 761

[19] Since the chief goal of our expedition was to study the practices and customs connected with the material and everyday life of the native, as well as to gather objects for our collection, our stay among the various tribes was too M 121

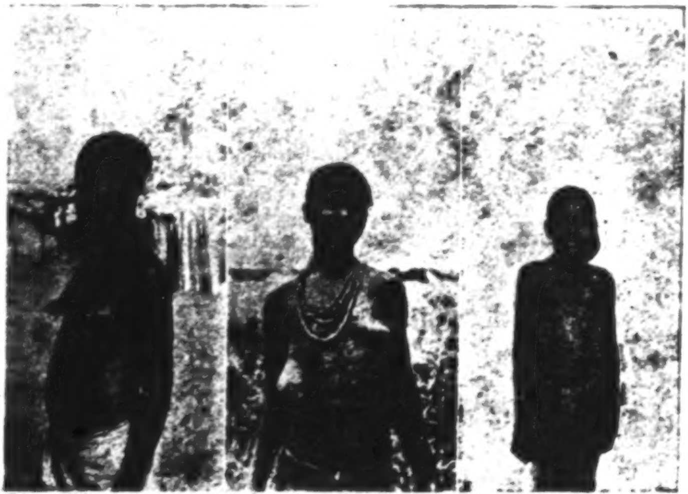


Fig. 14. Natural Deformations among the Natives.
(1) Bankutu woman; (2) Barakata woman; (3) Bankutu child.

M [732]

short to permit a thorough study of their religious life and its attendant customs.

We ascertained that the native, as a rule, acknowledges the existence of a higher spirit. During my stay in the village of Kapanda, Banfumungu tribe, I had the opportunity to question a chief on the subject. M T 776

"Who causes the sun and the moon to rise? Who gave you the fish of the river and the animals of the plain, Matali?"

The chief looked at me for an instant, dumbfounded, and then replied, "Nzambi ve Mundele?" "Was it not Nzambi, White man?"

"Why, then, do you not call upon Nzambi to protect your crops, favor your fishing, and grant you success in hunting, Matali?" [20]

584 woman sends them to her family. Distant relatives fulfill their obligations by bringing meat or fish, and nowadays also money or some small present, which is not included in the bride price.

The husband's gifts consist of a small knife and a few (5) arrows (at the time of the Independent State a bundle of copper wires called nngelo or mitako and at the present time 5 or 10 francs, for example). These presents from the husband are not bosambelo, for he does not give his fiancée his hand; they are yěkola (greeting) and are not part of the bride price. The woman sends them to her parents.

If the husband does not yet have a house or cultivated fields of 591 his own, [138] as was formerly often the case, (1) the engaged couple live in the hut of the parents for the time being. The woman obtains food from her mother-in-law's fields and prepares it at the hearth of the latter, until the young man has built his hut and established his own fields.

[736] 1. Orphans were almost the only ones who had their own houses and cultivated fields. Of course, we are not speaking of men who were previously married.

Nowadays it no longer happens that a young man who wants to take a wife still lacks his own house. From the time of puberty on, young men moved by the desire for freedom leave the parental home and build huts for themselves where they can live alone or with some companion or other and enjoy their freedom.

6. The life of the engaged couple

584 The bompaka lives in the home of her husband, goes there to talk to him and to sleep with him. During the first three or four days she does not work, unless she is a very active person. Subsequently she takes care of all the household tasks and prepares meals at the hearth under the supervision of her mother-in-law. Only after a few weeks, when she has become accustomed to her new way of living, is she introduced to the customs of her new family; only

Article VI. The Economic Position of a Widow

736 768 As long as her seclusion lasts, a widow continues to live with the family of her deceased husband. She supplies herself with food from the crops she has grown. The tools her husband has given her remain in her hands, and she makes use of them as soon as she can. As to the various utensils which must be destroyed, they are replaced by others lent her by the family of the deceased, for she may no longer use those which served her in her husband's lifetime.

In order to better express the magnitude of their mourning, the Nkundó often refrain [441] from using the products of the farms established by the deceased. Therefore, instead of continuing to cultivate the existing crops of manioc and vegetables, the widow prefers to seek provisions in the fields of the close relatives of the deceased. Or a man who has already chosen her may place his fields at her disposal. If neither of these sources is available and she wishes to observe the rule rigorously, she must purchase what she needs in this realm.

736 768 421 As we have seen in Chapter VI, Article II, a widow has no claim to the fruits of her labors. Neither the money she has earned and which is intended for the common needs of the household, nor the crops she has set up, nor the fish she has caught, nor the caterpillars she has gathered in the forest belong to her. Everything goes to the heirs. Her property is limited to objects she may have received as her personal share in her daughter's bride price, or as some other payment belonging exclusively to the mother.

If the widow remains in the family of the deceased, however, her fields, tools, etc., are left to her, for under those conditions there is no reason to take them away from her. But if she [787] remarries elsewhere, the heirs are pitiless. A Nkundó does not want the family wealth to be scattered or squandered in any way. The law says lokutu lǒkísó lőfótsw'înyamő, "our patrimony can not be alienated."

736 768 In point of fact the widow is treated more favorably, at least in the best instances. If her relations with the family have been good, they will not refuse her some small object that she

736 may wish to keep. In exemplary unions she is allowed to keep
768 the mats she has woven with her own hands, and the goods she received from her husband -- fabrics, beads, hens, even goats and dogs, and even sometimes what she has acquired through joint efforts with her husband (crops, livestock) -- are divided equally. The division is usually carried out with a generous attitude toward the widow, and if there is only one object of a kind the tendency is to let her have it. [442] Such conduct springs from pure generosity, for -- as has already been said -- the woman has absolutely no claim. In the past it followed only upon extraordinarily happy unions, and particularly in consideration of the relationship between the two families and the affection of one of the immediate heirs for the widow.

At the present time the influence of the missions is increasing
736 the number of instances of generosity toward the widow and starting
768 an inclination to make it a general rule. Thus good Christian
797 families -- if they are not thwarted by their pagan relatives -- leave the widow those objects she personally used, such as clothing, utensils, a trunk, and even a sewing machine.

Article VII. Economic Effects of Death

1. Bride price and dowry

768 The death of one of the spouses dissolves a marriage only
583x from a certain point of view and only as a union between two specific individuals. A marriage is absolutely broken only by the death of both spouses (or by divorce).

Unlike divorce death does not bring about any repayment either of the bride price or of the dowry (nkǫmí). When the wife dies, all these payments remain in the hands of the respective parties. When a husband dies, the widow continues to belong to the heirs; she is part of the inheritance. The children belong to the father and his family; no new payment for them is necessary.

833 753 684 which has a strong resemblance to sleeping sickness. (1) One of its symptoms is a weakness of the lower limbs. Instances are cited of individuals who were unable to resist their passions and were punished in this manner. Apparently only the woman dies. As soon as her family discovers that she is stricken, the guilty woman denounces her accomplice. The latter is held responsible and is required to pay a heavy indemnity, which may amount to several dozen copper rings.

833 [751] Here as in many other situations the Nkundó have found a way to avoid the danger. There is an antidote (nsengó), and it is water (basi bale nsengó éâ bombilé). Thus those who are unable to control their aroused passions during the day, satisfy it in a shallow stream.

833 753 The fear of bombilé has been greatly shaken [93] by colonization. If we are to believe the natives, foreign soldiers are responsible for this change also. But the behavior of the latter could not completely destroy the ancient feeling, probably due to a natural shame which makes them seek darkness and privacy for acts of this sort.

833 [515] [842] After intercourse a native woman usually gives herself a douche. She does so for the sake of cleanliness. It often happens, however, that she does not wait long enough before doing so, and thus she neutralizes the effect of the intercourse. This is chiefly a matter of carelessness. Nevertheless, under certain circumstances she may use this means to prevent conception. (1)

833 826 According to my informants, some women have constitutional abnormalities which repel men. As everything readily becomes public, such flaws are quickly known after marriage, though not quite as readily beforehand. Actually love can -- and often does -- cause them to be overlooked. But after the first ardor has cooled, such a situation may become a threat to the stability of a marriage. When quarrels

---

1. It is not sleeping sickness itself, however, for that disease seems formerly to have been unknown in this area.

1. See Chapter X, Article I, 2.

776
842
[781] women receive other signs: an unexpected obstacle in the form of a stone, a stump, a root, the capture of a tree frog which comes and jumps onto the shoulder, etc

A spirit loves and protects only a child he himself has given. He abhors and hates to the death the living gifts of his fellow spirits. If there are several bilímá in the vicinity of a single village, however, the Nkundó explain the absence of the usual rivalries by considering them as related; one is the husband, another the wife, others the children; that is why they do not oppose each other.

Thus an elímá is hostile to any fetus not of his creation.
776
843 Nevertheless, his spiteful action only begins at the end of several weeks, and even then the pregnancy must have gone far enough to be visible (jěmi jôkela isómbá) Does it take time for him to obtain evidence that the fruit in question is undoubtedly his own gift?

In any case the consequence of this belief is that a woman who has been pregnant for several months cannot long [472] reside in foreign parts, and one who, after conception, has accompanied a husband who has gone to work elsewhere, returns to her village to complete the last period of pregnancy and to deliver.

However, there is an antidote (nsengó) against this murderous action of the spirits. [751] It may be obtained from a person who knows the recipe (this person is not the nkanga or "doctor"). The protective compound is wrapped in a bit of cloth and, by means of a thread of fibers from the lokósá creeper, is tied in the middle of a rope braided with the fibers of the ikuluyaéndé bush, which the threatened woman ties around her hips. (1)

[114]
[115]

1. These data on the subject of the elímá is diametrically opposed to the ideas of Father Schebesta (Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge, p. 241, and W. Schmidt, Der Ursprung der Gottesidee, Vol. 4, p. 322), based on the word of his interpreter, Bern. Bongonga of Boúlama (Bombwanja) (now deceased), who was

853 an ordeal or ask a magician's judgment or a magical practice to
857 reveal the culprit. The culprit who is discovered is not subject to
any social sanction; he is punished by the ordeal itself or the spell
cast against him.

If the mother's adultery is proven through her having been
[684] caught in the act, her seducer is considered guilty. He must pay
the death indemnity (20 to 30 copper rings). The woman is not
at all involved as far as society is concerned; it is a matter between her and her husband.

In order to prevent any harmful effect on the child, the
● 757 Nkundó resort to a potion called bondandota, which will be ex-
854 plained in [479] the next article, 3. "Medication" by scarfication might also be mentioned. This therapy is applied to the parents as well as to the child. If the father is wealthy, he invites the wife's family to come and perform the operation themselves. As in all comparable situations, the invitation is accompanied by the handing over of a pledge, and farewell presents (belingako) are given at the end of the visit. In addition the wife very often goes to live with her parents for some time after her seclusion in order to increase the efficacy of the treatment.

The sanction incurred for a violation of the secondary
843 stipulations is less serious. For instance, the pregnant woman suffers
[684] from violent migraines, which often cause fainting and sometimes
make delivery very difficult; thus they can even cause death. The husband is seldom bothered by these headaches. But he takes great pains to faithfully observe the law in order to spare his wife such painful consequences and to avoid the death of the child being born.

Apart from sexual abstention and the rules connected with it, the couple are also subject to various prohibitions which are clearly based on superstitious ideas. Thus:

1) They must neither go down into a well nor dig [illegible] the earth. The woman would die, for it is as if they were digging her grave.

2) They must not carry anything together with another person, for that is how corpses are carried, and such carrying would be the cause of death, through imitation of the woman's funeral procession.

862 does not really stop nursing till it is about two years old, and sometimes two and a half if it has a weak constitution.

Weaning is not accompanied by any ceremony or feast. In order to break the child's habit, the mother smears her nipples [824] with the sap of the lifété fruit (a kind of small sweet pimento or eggplant) or with a pimento-pepper extract (imbénga). Sometimes she leaves the child with some relative (daughter, sister, etc.) for a time [498] while she lives elsewhere.

As we have seen above, after weaning, the ekelé-bokeka period comes to an end for the mother, and her infidelities no longer have repercussions on the life of her child.

[653] 8) If the mother dies while the infant is still being nursed, [583] the task of nursing is turned over to some woman who is disposed to undertake it even a Botswa, and there always is one. After the child is weaned the woman is suitably recompensed. The use of [235] goat's milk is unknown.

854/ 751/ [553] 9) Young children frequently suffer convulsions. This illness is thought to be caused by hawks, and for that reason it is called mpulú (bird). The Nkundó try to prevent it by hanging an amulet around children's necks; it is usually the clavicular triangle of a hen's carcass. In addition they know a remedy whose purpose is to strengthen the nerves: the child is laid on a mat stretched out anywhere on the roof of the hut. An eyewash (bolóí) is prepared from the sap of leaves from the litóyansombo bush and extract of mbólé (fruit of the bosoombó). Using a leaf shaped into a horn, a few drops are put into the child's eyes. Then the father or some other relative pulls out the mat from under the child and lifts it several times, shouting: tá tá tá.

856 10) No special importance is attached to teething. But a child whose upper teeth come in before the lower ones (a defect called ingondo) is considered abnormal. Therefore he is forbidden to eat the first fruits of hunting or fishing in an enclosure (mpao), lest the latter lose their productivity.

845 [202] The event is announced by the usual signal, but the signal is doubled or, if the children are of different sexes, the signal for each sex is given once. It is followed by the dance beat: two [535] or three long and two short.

845 778 The next day the father's relatives go outside the village, preferably to a crossroads. On each side they plant a stalk of *lokókólókó*. All around the stalk they spread a little heap of small branches and various leaves called *jǔké*. It is a sign and a place of benediction and good fortune. Each passer-by stops, picks two leaves, places one on each pile, spits on it, and says *swá*.(2) Then they clap hands and twice sing out, *yelí yeye*. Such behavior brings the benediction of the twins upon a person's journey, his undertakings, his marriage. The umbilical cord as well as the placenta and membrane are buried under the heap.

845 362 [386] Every morning the mother and father draw two stripes with kaolin on the middle of their foreheads and on their arms, above and below the elbow. They do the same to the twins. (3) They continue doing so until the child is weaned. If after that time one of the children falls ill, they begin again treating him in this manner until he is cured, taking care not to omit his brother, lest he too fall ill. For while these designs are signs of joy, they are ●[751] above all a prophylactic measure against children's fever (*ikútswáki*), [502] called *wǎsanyi* when it occurs in twins or in a child following them, and manifests itself chiefly by tumors of the head and face.

845 551 Twins are invariably called Mbóyó and Bokétu, names given to the first born and the second respectively, whatever their sex. The Bombwanja (like the Ekonda) use the names Mbóó and Mpia, respectively. The mother takes the name of Ǎmbá.

---

2. Onomatopoeia for "spit."

3. Sometimes a double stripe is added at the temples The kaolin may be used pure or mixed with the red paint called *ngóla*.

843 777 The Nkundó know an antidote (nsengó or losenjó), however, a means of getting rid of such annoying obstacles. Of the three known processes the last is especially common at present.

[625] 1) The husband (or any person to whom the weká is attached and who wants to be rid of it) picks up a nkôngolí chilopod, naturally by means of a leaf, encloses it in a large leaf which he binds with a thin creeper, and makes a small package of it, as one makes a package of meat, fish, etc. He gives this package to his wife, who thinks it contains food and opens it without any suspicion. But when she sees the detested arthropod, she throws it far from her with cries of disgust, while her husband says to her, "You are the one who remains with the wěká." As a result he himself is freed from it.

2) A second means is to take the pregnant woman by the nose when an opportunity presents itself and to say to her: "May the wěká remain attached to you."

[252] [264] 3) The woman prepares some imbóndó (manioc leaves [474] salted and dipped in palm oil). The two spouses eat it together contrary to the usual practice. But the husband arranges matters in such a way that his wife gets the last mouthful and keeps the leaf which serves as a plate and represents the wěká. Then the husband says to her, "Keep the wěká for yourself."

The wěká cannot be detached from the woman, for she is the bomóngo wěká, "the owner of the wěká," the one who is the basis for it. For her it continues until the child is on the point of being born (elaká ó jěmi jǒtúnda, literally "he has come to the end of his growth," or jǒkékama, "has turned to one side"), and thus, in practice, until the birth of the child.

● [152] If a first wife dies at the beginning of her first pregnancy, a cesarian operation must be performed on her. The fetus is removed (it is still no more than an embryo -- iléngélá or bokelé, literally "an egg," or ilóngó, literally "blood") so that it can be buried behind the hut. An omission of this practice would result in the death through pregnancy of the deceased's husband's other wives or of the women he will subsequently marry.

848 soon as her family becomes aware of her condition. The accomplice
684 is made officially responsible and is required to accept this responsible and is required to accept this responsibility by publicly pledging his willingness to take all consequences upon himself. This pledge like all pledges is called ndanga. It consists of a knife, a ring of copper or brass, a spear, or similar objects. (2)

2. The same custom is practiced in the case of pregnancy resulting from adultery.

Article V. Sexual Intercourse

833 Although this subject is extremely delicate and therefore difficult to investigate and describe, it does not seem pointless to note here a few details with which I have become acquainted. We will discuss in succession a few circumstances relative to the act, then rape, and finally what are called incomplete acts. [92]

1. Circumstances relative to the act

[177] The Nkundɔ́ have intercourse lying on their sides. Nowadays, natives who have had frequent contacts with Whites are beginning to abandon the old manner for that of the Europeans. The spirit of imitation probably plays some part in the transformation which is beginning, but the gradual spread of the knowledge that the European system makes conception more likely is also a factor.

Even for illicit relations our natives seldom choose the forest or near-by palm or banana groves. Usually they prefer an isolated hut, or they take advantage of the absence of witnesses who might intrude on them. At night they are generally afraid of anything that stirs in the forest.

833 The Nkundɔ́ have sexual relations only during the night. To
753 do so in the daytime would be to risk being striken by a mortal illness
684 called bombilɛ́ (derived from mbilɛ́ "noon," by extension, "day"),

833 753 684 which has a strong resemblance to sleeping sickness. (1) One of its symptoms is a weakness of the lower limbs. Instances are cited of individuals who were unable to resist their passions and were punished in this manner. Apparently only the woman dies. As soon as her family discovers that she is stricken, the guilty woman denounces her accomplice. The latter is held responsible and is required to pay a heavy indemnity, which may amount to several dozen copper rings.

[1] It is not sleeping sickness itself, however, for that disease seems formerly to have been unknown in this area.

833 751 Here as in many other situations the Nkundɔ́ have found a way to avoid the danger. There is an antidote (nsengɔ́), and it is water (bàsi bale nsengɔ́ ɛ́â bombilɛ́). Thus those who are unable to control their aroused passions during the day, satisfy it in a shallow stream.

833 753 The fear of bombilɛ́ has been greatly shaken [93] by colonization. If we are to believe the natives, foreign soldiers are responsible for this change also. But the behavior of the latter could not completely destroy the ancient feeling, probably due to a natural shame which makes them seek darkness and privacy for acts of this sort.

833 [515] [842] After intercourse a native woman usually gives herself a douche. She does so for the sake of cleanliness. It often happens, however, that she does not wait long enough before doing so, and thus she neutralizes the effect of the intercourse. This is chiefly a matter of carelessness. Nevertheless, under certain circumstances she may use this means to prevent conception. (1)

[1] See Chapter X, Article I, 2.

833 826 According to my informants, some women have constitutional abnormalities which repel men. As everything readily becomes public, such flaws are quickly known after marriage, though not quite as readily beforehand. Actually love can -- and often does -- cause them to be overlooked. But after the first ardor has cooled, such a situation may become a threat to the stability of a marriage. When quarrels

853 The child is given to a wet nurse (a kinswoman, a stranger, a Bo̱tswa woman, depending on who is available).

847 If the mother's body shows no signs of evil-doing or of
845 "the hatred of others," it is thought that her death was caused
843 by evil spells on the part of the child. Thereupon some kill the child to prevent it from doing harm during its whole life; others, on the contrary, spare it despite everything.

If the husband (for it is he above all who is involved, since
843 he is most exposed to possible lapses) has unfortunately been guilty
837 of misconduct, his wife has only a slim chance [478] of salvation. Nevertheless, it is still possible for her to be saved, on condition that from then on her husband abstain from any sexual act and from all the accidental gestures and actions described above. The least he can do under these circumstances is to inform his wife of his indiscretion so that she can take precautions. If he wants to
[672] ward off any possibility of causing his wife's certain death, he sends her home and gives his father-in-law a pledge (ndanga) through which he recognizes his guilt and shows his intention to assume the entire responsibility for his misdeed. An upright man prefers to act in this fashion, for he never knows whether one day he will not inadvertently violate one of the prohibitions.

B. The child's death is the result of the putrefaction of
853 the mother's milk, the mother being thus incapable of nursing.
837 As in the preceding case, the offense is a priori imputed to the husband -- isé aɓoma bǒ̱na la ndota. (1) Since he has wronged no one but himself, no palaver ensues; the "natural" punishment is sufficient. This does not mean that he is not the object of evil tongues; people point at him and at times remind him of his misdeed. To remove the blame from himself, he can resort to

---

● [153] 1. Ndota is an illness caused by the violation of prescriptions of a sexual nature (See Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 2, A).

843 3) They must not climb up on the roof (they are not forbidden to climb a palm tree in order to cut off nuts)

4) They must not eat animals killed by a carnivore (leopard,
843 crocodile, etc.), or the child would die a sudden and unnatural
262 death like the victims of such wild beasts. [480]
825

5) They must abstain from animals such as porcupines, anteaters, certain birds, crocodiles, and gavials, (1) who are in the habit of living in the hollows of trees or in dens. The delivery would be very painful if they ate them, for the child would roll up and crouch in the mother's womb. Fish that find shelter in passageways do not produce such consequences and are therefore eaten.

6) They must not eat turtles (2). A very difficult birth is feared, for the turtle withdraws into its shell and encloses its anal extremities as in a vise, and the child would do the same.

7) They must not eat the head of a monkey. The child would be born with deep-set eyes resembling the monkey's.

8) They must not eat the large antelope known as mbuli, because it has a long neck and flabby flesh, and the child would acquire the same defects.

● [753] 9) They must not eat the lioóló fish, which would cause migraines, since it swims fiercely without direction.

The results of bokeka and the obligations resulting from it
843 are connected with natural paternity. Thus, if a woman becomes
437 pregnant as a result of relations with a regular, recognized lover, the latter must assume all responsibility. He is required to "fasten the fetus" and to observe all the regulations pertaining to the

1. In this region women never eat snakes or bats (loléma, bọnkọ́ḿ, ffukyá).

2. In some tribes (Bongili, Bonkoso) women always abstain from eating such reptiles.

846 to be able to nurse the child together." This does not mean that
833 from then on they may have regular sexual relations, for these are
not permitted until after the end of seclusion. But if they were
to omit the act at this time, they would have to abstain from it
until the child is weaned. The Nkundó say that the act is performed "only a little." For many it becomes masturbation;
others withdraw before obtaining the effect of the act. In no case
may the act reach its natural climax. The reason for this practice
is unknown to me. Perhaps it is done in order not to molest the
woman while she is in a painful condition.

The next day the ashes in the hearth of the seclusion hut
846 are swept out, and the fire becomes "ordinary"; anyone may use
it and eat food prepared on it.

4) The umbilical cord is dried on the bolíkó (a tray or shelf)
and then buried at the foot of a young banana tree planted for that
purpose, preferably under a bọnkọḿ tree if possible. The ashes
and sweepings from the seclusion hut are thrown there. The banana
tree is called nkíndá. (1) Its fruit may be eaten only by the child's
● [153] grandfather and grandmother. If another person eats it, he will be
punished with a headache of a nervous type.

The umbilical cord is always buried in the father's native
846 soil. People who are far from home (laborers for the Whites, etc.)
614 preserve the umbilical cords of their children with great care in
order to take them back [489] when they return to their village, or
send them back when a favorable opportunity arises. The Nkundó
hold to this usage tenaciously, because a person whose umbilical
cord is not buried in the lands of his paternal clan has no authority
in the group. The person involved would meet with the following
objection: ntákokúndela lokolé, ntákokundela lọkọkí, óyakúmya
ngámo? olě nk'eyâya, "The lokolé was not beaten for you, your

---

[824] 1. This is a generic term used for any
banana tree planted for a special purpose (a magical practice, a game, etc.).

846 taking the child would cause the child's death. The same precau-
789 tion is also in order if the husband goes on a trip before the child's
birth and does not return till after the delivery

We have just seen that the harmful effects of the father's
846 misconduct on his child's life is effectuated through the father's
837 act of taking the child on his knees. Thus the Nkundó speak of
baóngó b'âbé, "a father's bad knees," to indicate his reprehensible
[826] conduct, and they say that the bondandota potion is administered
to the child so that it will not die because of the father's bad
knees. (1)

When a child has painful and persistent diarrhea, it is often
753 interpreted as the effect of the father's infidelity. As soon as they
854 become aware of it, the couple separate for some time, and the
father no longer touches the child. [492]

Contrary to what one reads on this subject about other peo-
837 ples of the Congo, Nkundó couples do not have to remain continent
834 beyond the period of seclusion. The separation ceremony gives the
789 husband back the freedom of action he had before his wife's preg-
nancy. For the wife the bokeka remains strict with respect to illicit
relations until the child is weaned. However she, too, may regain
her freedom by having recourse to an antidote, the ingredients of
which she purchases from a person who holds the secret. The in-
gredients are placed in a small antelope horn which is then stopped
[824] up by means of bolaká (resin from the Symphonia gabonensis). The
interested party wears it about her loins on a string or a bead belt
or, preferably, on a special creeper. This amulet protects the
child's life from the harmful influence of the mother's acts of
adultery, but it does so only on condition that she does not separate
herself from the child, as we will explain further on. This procedure

---

1. The expression baóngó b'âbé is also used when an undertaking which requires continence is unsuccessful. (See Article II, 3).

862 does not really stop nursing till it is about two years old, and sometimes two and a half if it has a weak constitution.

Weaning is not accompanied by any ceremony or feast. In
order to break the child's habit, the mother smears her nipples
[824] with the sap of the lifété fruit (a kind of small sweet pimento or
eggplant) or with a pimento-pepper extract (imbénga). Sometimes
she leaves the child with some relative (daughter, sister, etc.) for
a time [498] while she lives elsewhere.

As we have seen above, after weaning, the ekelé-bokeka period comes to an end for the mother, and her infidelities no longer have repercussions on the life of her child.

[853] 8) If the mother dies while the infant is still being nursed,
[563] the task of nursing is turned over to some woman who is disposed to
undertake it even a Botswa, and there always is one. After the
child is weaned the woman is suitably recompensed. The use of
[235] goat's milk is unknown.

854 9) Young children frequently suffer convulsions. This illness
751 is thought to be caused by hawks, and for that reason it is called
[153] mpulú (bird). The Nkundó try to prevent it by hanging an amulet
around children's necks; it is usually the clavicular triangle of a
hen's carcass. In addition they know a remedy whose purpose is to
strengthen the nerves: the child is laid on a mat stretched out anywhere on the roof of the hut. An eyewash (bolóí) is prepared from
the sap of leaves from the litóyansombo bush and extract of mbólé
(fruit of the bosoombó). Using a leaf shaped into a horn, a few
drops are put into the child's eyes. Then the father or some other
relative pulls out the mat from under the child and lifts it several
times, shouting: tá tá tá.

856 10) No special importance is attached to teething. But a child whose upper teeth come in before the lower ones (a defect called ingondo) is considered abnormal. Therefore he is forbidden to eat the first fruits of hunting or fishing in an enclosure (mpao), lest the latter lose their productivity.

835
614
174

fear. (1) Thus the very number of violations would have gradually made the practice customary. Powerless to stop it, the persons in authority, guardians of traditional morality, would have contented themselves with channeling the development and restricting it to a minimum by being lenient on the subject of extramarital relations in order to save the principle of exogamy. This explanatory hypothesis can find a little confirmation in the fact that at the very beginning of colonization when European influence was not felt as yet, there were isolated and very rare cases of marriage in opposition to the law of exogamy between members of groups which were only very distantly related but already practiced lonkâna. The exception then became the rule, and from then on the two groupings in question intermarried regularly and without hindrance, while other families remained under the ancient law. Thus there is the known case of Boyela village (Bakɛala), which includes the Bokambɛ, Bembakɔ, Besɔlɔ, and Bekɔlama (extinct), all descendants of Ngonde and one wife; his union with another spouse gave rise to the Lilekɛ and the Likongo, to whom Bongilɛ, a group related through marriage (likilo), is attached. These two groups of families could not intermarry, but they did engage in lonkâna. Around the time of the first arrival of the Whites, a member of the Bembakɔ [100] family a certain Bonjɔmbɔ was impelled by an excessive love to violate the law of exogamy by taking Bolondɔ of Lilekɛ for his wife. As his love did not cool and the marriage proved stable, it was recognized and accepted as legitimate. Since then the two groups in question have each become exogamous.

835
754

2. Between close relatives

Incest between close relatives has no special name of its own. As a matter of fact, it never occurs as an outgrowth of passion. We

1. Actually, no sanction is provided against marriages within an exogamous entity; everything lies in the opposition of parents and elders and in a habit which is almost innate.

835 754 encounter it only in connection with magical practices and sorcery (botɛ, plural betɛ), for which it is the nsimbo, that is, the condition without which the betɛ would lack efficacy. If the nsimbo is not observed, the botɛ turns against its owner and, by a reversal of its effect (bosesengano), brings death to the latter. Therefore the interested parties submit to these degrading requirements despite their natural repugnance. Depending on the case, incest with the mother, the daughter, or the sister is required. The first of these eventualities is the most repugnant to our natives. Though it goes altogether against the grain to do so, the mother submits to this ignominy to save the life of her foolhardy and greedy son.

The nsimbo of incest does not exist in all botɛ. [184] It even seems to have been absent from the betɛ which are ancient and purely Nkundó. It is found primarily in the big modern betɛ, which have been imported from other peoples or invented on the spot since colonization. (1)

---

1. See Kaptein, in Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 534.

Article VIII. Love Philters

832 The Nkundó are familiar with two love philters, the efóndɛ and the bontálá. Other modern betɛ may produce the same effect in part or secondarily. Here [101] we will only deal with the first two, which are "pure" and ancient love philters.

The love philters (botɛ w'ělangyá) serve to gain the heart of a young girl as much as to entice a married woman away from her husband.

1. Efóndɛ

Efónde (1) is a common charm. Anyone can procure it from the maker in consideration of the appropriate payment, of course. Various kinds of efóndɛ exist, differing as to the ingredients used, the manner

---

1. Efónde is often used as a synonym of elangyá in its sexual meaning.

586* 789 especially very early in the morning at the crowing of the cock. (1)

> 1. The natives also use this means to call their children who long ago left for the "lowlands" and whose return they ardently desire.

If the one who is called does not return, the charm will take revenge either on her or on her lover, depending on the desire of the person operating it. Another intervention on his part is then required, however, and it varies according to the form used. Note that according to the native view it is impossible for the wife not to hear the call, no matter how far away she may be. If she does not return, it is because she is being obstinate and deserves to be punished.

The spirit of vengeance alone is involved in:

586* 754 [237] 2) The ngondé. This charm comes from the Coquilhatville region or even further away. The word ngondé is the Lolíngá form of the Lonkundó word nkondé, which means "gavial." The teeth of this reptile actually play a part in its composition. It is used to punish any thief by death. Therefore it has been declared effective against anyone who tries to seduce the wife of another. It will cause the culprit's feet to swell and to open with pus. Like the above practices, this one has not yet crossed Momboyo.

832 177 Such usages like many others have therefore been recently introduced. Before the arrival of Europeans in these parts, only love philters were known. However, it is easily understandable that the Nkundó gladly and confidently received these new practices which are so useful -- in their opinion -- and operate in a domain of capital importance for which colonization has deprived them of their ancient sanctions and means of prevention. [417]

843 837 This law requiring a most strict fidelity lasts until the end of the bokeka for the husband, but until the weaning of the child for the wife. It is especially strict for the period of seclusion (see below, Article III, 3).

The violation of the essential stipulation of this interdict (-fénda bokeka) results either in the death of the woman during pregnancy and especially during seclusion or in the death of the child later on. [477]

A. If the woman dies during this period, the suspicion is placed a priori on her husband. The Nkundő say ab̂fénda wǎlɪ́, "he has transgressed against his wife." Unless he can prove his innocence through public actions, the judgment of a magician, or autopsy[sic].

If the woman has been the victim of a seducer, he is held responsible and must pay a large indemnity equivalent to the bride price that was paid for the deceased. If no other man is involved, the affair has no consequences.

843 163 754 845 853 In the past the combined autopsy and Caesarian section was always performed. It had a dual purpose: to remove the child and to examine the mother. If the operation revealed the existence of a "stomach" (likundű), the deceased was of a noxious (lilọka) nature or constitution and therefore caused the death of her child. If the child remained alive, it proved that he was of a magically superior nature and was able to resist the natural evil spells of his mother, which thus turned against their unwitting author. (1)

---

1. The Nkundő believe that only animals have a "stomach" (likundű). If a human being has one, that is, if his viscera are large, curved, in compartments, in a word, abnormal, that person is an evildoer. He commits evil acts voluntarily or, most frequently, unknowingly. Some men with a likundű can be recognized by the fact that they eat their nails, hair, etc. The Nkundő must certainly have observed relationships between this habit and a deformity of the stomach.

576
845 from the others. They thus rank with the great notables of the past. [sic]

845 When the children grow up and become self-sufficient, all the special regulations lose their force and they become like
554 everybody else. Nothing distinguishes them from the rest in marriage, death, etc No preference is shown for or against them. But their descendants will again produce twins.

Thus the Nkundó consider twins as extraordinary children,
845 but they do not carry this view to extremes. They are pleased to receive two children at a time, although they believe that under such circumstances the pregnancy and delivery are more dangerous for the mother. That is why she is called boyé̱ngwá since, despite the seriousness of the situation, she did not die This epithet is also applied to the father and to the twins, probably for the same reason as well as because of their immunity with respect to prohibitions. If the twins are of different sexes, however, the mother is not as likely to be called boyé̱ngwá, since she is liko̱ka, "harmful." (1)

1. See above, Article II, 3.

945 It is apparent from the above description that twins are
789 considered to be somewhat tainted with magic. The existence of
754 this belief is confirmed by the prohibition against throwing anything (stone, palm kernel, etc.) onto their hut, the same prohibition applying to anyone who possesses a charm or practices sorcery or protective magic. In addition they possess a certain innate ability to cast a spell over the activities (hunting, fishing) of others. That is why persons who are afraid of being harmed by them smear themselves with kaolin in the same way as do such children and their parents. [505]

The Nkundó have had cases of triplets, but they are ex-
845 tremely rare. The youngest of the three is called Yé̱nde̱mbe̱, or Yé̱nde̱nde̱, or Yé̱le̱le̱. The only special practice with reference to the youngest one is that he can never be ordered to do any work, be sent to carry a message, run any errand, etc., áfótswé ntómo.

845 puberty, by his father. The performance of this role entails continence (*bokeka*) for the person who undertakes it, even with respect to the spouse. A violation of this rule prevents healing of the wound or at least makes the process very long and difficult. (1)

[755] 1. A similar *bokeka* applies to anyone nursing a large gangrenous ulcer (*wǎlé*).

The foreskin that has been cut off is dried on the *bolíkó* (tray or shelf). Then no one bothers with it any longer, and it usually remains there, dusty and dirty, for an indefinite period of time if the rats leave it alone.

[177] In the centers the young people are beginning to neglect the native skilled in circumcising and resort instead to European surgeons.

[556] Circumcision is not an occasion for feasts or ceremonies. Sometimes a man who is rich and vain will give a feast, but this is not at all a common practice

The term "to circumcise" is translated in Lonkundo as *téna bonsé*, "to cut off the foreskin." The less vulgar term and one used much more frequently is *téna nsóngé*, "to cut off the tip." A much too decent circumlocution is *téna batói*, "to cut off the ears."

The reason for this custom has already been given in Chapter I, Part II, Article II, 2.

Article VIII. Education

868
857 From an early age a Nkundó child must perform various small services for his parents, especially in the household; he is asked to draw water, fetch firewood, take care of a little brother or sister, etc. The demands for such services are addressed chiefly to girls, but boys are not at all exempt. By the very nature of things, however, the latter are less frequently asked to help.

Quite early a boy may accompany his father on trips, at meetings, legal debates, etc The father makes a bow and arrows for him and teaches him the art of using them. The great pastime

844 are not too rare. (2)

> 2. Ease in delivery is called bosánjá;
> difficulty is called bonsombo.

A husband asks his mother-in-law to come and help her daughter. Other kinswomen of the husband or the wife do not refuse [482] their services either. Among them there is always one who is more expert in these matters and who acts as a midwife (mbótsi).

The delivery takes place in the banana grove behind the hut; there is light and air there. In the house it would be more difficult.

The husband cannot be present at this event. His presence would make it difficult and painful. The further away he is, the better. The prohibition is not rigid, however; if there is no one to help his wife (as in the case of an unexpected delivery in the forest, etc.), he will have no hesitation whatsoever in helping her with all the power and skill at his command.

To facilitate the arrival of the child, the midwife gives the wife a potion to drink "in order to make slippery" (boté wǎ [278] boséli), and administers a douche containing bofímo bark.

If the pains continue for several days and all medication is 845 without results, it is assumed that some evil spell (liloka) is at work. To neutralize it the woman in labor is "blessed" (-saka). For that purpose her family and that of her husband each bring a stalk of the bokaakó plant (bosáánga). Two kinswomen, each with the stalk of her respective clan, squeeze out the sap with which they smear the woman's abdomen. After that the delivery takes place in a normal fashion.

845 The nkanga (doctor-magician) only intervenes when a woman
756 has already had several miscarriages or when all her children die.
769 If he is consulted he invariably attributes such misfortunes to the action of spirits of the deceased, who may be appeased by offerings and the promise that a manifestation of their will be heeded with respect to the naming of the child. Usually he adds that a few alimentary prohibitions must be observed until the child is weaned.

515 834 are reassured by the fact that they are in a group, so that no one feels singled out by the gaze of the passer-by. Washing away from major streams is always surrounded by more propriety. For this purpose a [343] small enclosure (ikomba) is built behind the hut or among the banana trees, or a small thicket is allowed to grow there. By this means the native is sheltered from indiscreet glances if he wants to take a ● [757] bath or give himself an enema. As a matter of fact these things are done preferably after dark.

834 152 5) Violent anger or sorrow drown out modesty, just as they momentarily destroy the use of reason and suppress all feelings which are contradictory or simply different. In this situation, too, the man shows himself superior to the woman. He is less impulsive, calmer, less prone to lose control of his actions, to be carried away by his anger. Thus he almost never strips himself bare. The woman, on the other hand, readily strips off all her clothing. This behavior is extremely common; a woman undresses completely whenever she experiences great sorrow or intense anger. Luckily for propriety's sake some friend or relative always hastens to cover at least the essential parts. For a woman who throws off her clothing exposes herself to the mockery and jeers of spectators. (1)

[593]x
[578]

1. An angry woman may also undress to shame her husband; it is a way of insulting and mocking him.

833 6) The Nkundó practice sexual intercourse only at night. I believe that this custom is due to their sense of propriety, [57] supplemented by a superstitious explanation which will be described in detail in Article V.

593x 834 7) The sense of modesty has its fullest expression in relation to parents, brothers, sisters, etc. Thus it is unheard of that a son should see his mother naked: bɔ̌na ɛ́tɛ̃nɛ́kɛ́ ɛ̌sunvɛ́ nvangɔ́. If an adult daughter is ill and requires personal care (such as an enema, for example), the father has to take care of her himself if no other female relative is near by. But their sense of modesty is such that they both shed tears over the event. As a matter of fact this situation

843 bokeka. The same is true if the pregnancy is the result of adultery; 837 the natural father must bear all the consequences of his act. The husband is absolved from them and has no relations with his wife until the end of this particular pregnancy. The culprit must give him a pledge by which he publically recognizes his responsibility, and he is expected to fulfill all the duties of a husband. Therefore he may have relations with the woman during her entire pregnancy without paying additional indemnities. If any accident befalls the mother or the child, he is made to pay a large indemnity.

Note finally that, as we have pointed out in Chapter II, [583] Article XI, no bride-price payment can be made from the time the pregnancy becomes visible until after the end of the period of seclusion.

843 844 ● 757 To facilitate childbirth the previously mentioned concoction of various leaves mixed with kaolin (isaɔ́) is continuously applied to the abdomen. Medical scarifications on the abdomen are also performed.

Finally, as the time of delivery approaches, special douches [278] made from a concoction of the bark of the boſmbo tree (1) are administered. All these treatments are called betɛ́ byá bosánjɔ́, that is, medicines (for the purpose) of an easy delivery.

Article III. Birth

844 1. Delivery

A woman remains with her husband for childbirth; she does not go home to her family. Only exceptionally does she give birth elsewhere -- for instance, if she has been sent home for one reason or another, or during a trip, while working in the fields, near a stream, or a spring, etc. Such sudden unexpected deliveries

1. Certain douches, especially the one made of boſmbo, are also used as abortive agents.

837 is not morally condoned, and a woman who resorts to it does not
834 escape criticism. She is compared to a goat, who does not have
789 a regular and steady husband: álómya bóna lontaa, "she nurses her child as a goat does." (1)

1. The opposite of lómya lontaa, -- if it is used to show the contrast -- is lómya lontómbá.

When the separation ceremony is ended, the mother is
846 adorned with all her ornaments and goes out to walk in a procession through the village. The child is carried by an older sister, a niece, etc. He is taken around the village, bánangya bǒna l'olóló Small presents are offered him everywhere -- an arrow, a small knife, a hairpin, etc There is no feast, however; if that honor were accorded him he would die of it (for when someone dies, there is always a feast of farewell in his honor). [493]

Article IV. Nursing

853 During the first few days after birth an infant does not suck the milk of its mother, since it is "too hot." He is fed by a third person, preferably a relative.

On the third day the following occurs:

953 1) The mother's breasts are massaged (-kulola baéle). For
757 this purpose the Nkundó use leaves of the bǒte creeper and the lilongyá plant (Adenostemma viscosum Forst.), a green leaf from a banana tree called nselenge, several pieces of peeled sugar cane, the tips of the dried leaves of any banana tree, and sometimes other plants are added as well. All the ingredients are crushed, then boiled, and white sand and a bit of red paint are mixed in with them. The mixture is called ndengó. It is prepared by the women who are in charge of massaging the breasts. The bǒte leaves, however, must be picked by the father. He goes to the forest early in the morning and first shakes the creeper so that all leaves that are not firmly attached will fall off. Then he climbs it and picks the desired

853 quantity of leaves, which he puts in his little basket called ilámbá.
● 757 If a leaf falls in the course of this operation, he must stop and throw away all that he has picked up to that point. The massage cannot take place on that day for it would cause the child to die falling and withering like a leaf. The father must start all over again the next day.

There are always two masseuses: one of the husband's kinswoman and one of the wife's. (1) They crush the leaves in

1. The Injóló sometimes permit a man to perform the massage.

[783] the same single mortar (eoka). The mother meanwhile must make her public confession, of which we will speak again in a moment. When the substances intended for rubbing have been prepared, the two masseuses begin their operation, which must be quite painful. The husband's relative takes care of the right breast, the wife's concentrates on [494] the left. (1)

1. This is a natural arrangement for our people; the term used to indicate "husband" (bóme) is undoubtedly etymologically related to the one denoting "the right" (elóme), and there is some likelihood that the same is true for wǎlɛ́ (wife) and iáli (left).

They energetically massage the breasts from the top to the bottom with the mixture. After a few minutes they test the milk by letting a few drops run out onto a burning fragment of pottery. If the reaction is normal the mother begins to nurse. If on the other hand, the milk curdles and solidifies (baɛ́le báonda) like rubber, it is a sign that it is of bad quality because of the presence of an internal boil in the breast, called ǐtsɛ́. In that case the knowledge and skill of a woman expert is called upon. The latter rubs the leaves of a creeper between her hands in order to extract

853 the sap, which she then mixes with water. The resulting liquid is
751 oily and foams like soap. She places a few drops on a piece of
banana leaf and makes a sachet of it. She holds this against the
breast for a certain time until the boil, similar to a blood clot or a
piece of liver, leaves the breast and enters the sachet. She then
shows it to those present. From then on the mother can nurse her
child without fear; her milk has become healthy and normal.

2) The mother's public confession must include the names
837 of all the men with whom she has had carnal relations since the
853 child's conception. Other groups, such as the Injóló, extend this
684 obligation even to instances preceding that moment but which
783 have not been declared at a previous occasion. The confession is
public. The masseuse related to the husband begins to crush the
leaves to be used in rubbing the breast; as she moves the pestle
and says to the mother, "Name a man." The mother replies
by giving a name. The masseuse says nyongo, "indemnity."
Then all those present say yengô, yengô, yengô, "absolved"
Then it is the other masseuse's turn, and she interrogates the
mother in the same way. The process continues till all the names
have been cited. If [495] the mother cites the name of a man
who is a close relative of her husband and who therefore does not
need to pay an indemnity, the masseuse does not reply nyongo. Instead
a member of the husband's clan makes the gesture signifying
[201] exemption: he holds the kernel of a palm nut (lolikâ) in his left
hand and throws it by means of a small board which he holds in his
right. Among the Injóló the man takes two kernels and strikes them
against each other and then throws them away. Were the woman
to suppress a name the child would die. If she has no admission to
make, she replies, "No one besides my husband."

The indemnity that must be paid by those who are obligated
to do so consists of a hen and a bunch of bananas (or their cash
value) which are to be given to the masseuses, who will then divide
them. Were the accused to refuse, the husband would demand a
regular indemnity from him after the end of the seclusion.

The Bombwanja have this confession at the time of the
[184] fastening of the fetus. A few old women married into the clan
carry out the interrogation. The kernel of the fruit of the palm is
thrown by means of a knife.

837 Note, finally, that the confession is restricted to married
783 women. It is never expected of a young unmarried mother. There-
fore it would seem to be a practice connected with marriage (a
853 social institution) and not with childbirth (a physiological phenomenon).

This confession is called etato or lotato, from the verb
[192] -tata, "to confess," (for which the generic term, sanga, "to say," is sometimes substituted).

I was unable to find any reason for this practice other than that of avoiding the death of the child. It is evident, however, that this explanation does not exhaust the question, although it is entirely possible that the original and deeper meaning has been lost without leaving any trace in the minds of the present generation. [496]

3) During the entire duration of nursing, the mother must
853 not be separated from her child. For the usual circumstances of
933 daily life, this rule is broadly interpreted; but during sexual relations it is strict, and no exceptions or excuses are permitted. Negligence under these circumstances would inevitably bring about the death of the child by ndota as soon as the mother took it back. This rule holds for legitimate relations as much as for illicit ones. Therefore the mother must always keep her child at her breast.

4) If at some point during nursing, the milk no longer flows
953 in sufficient quantity, the mother is given a potion consisting of
●[757] the extract of the bark of the bolóngé tree (which has a fruit con-
[278] taining a very sweet milky sap). Then she eats vegetables called lotélé. (1)

1. The leaves of this plant are also ordinarily eaten as vegetables, but they are consumed especially by those who possess the modern magical practice known as boyaóli.

5) An accident to which the Nkundó attach great importance
[262] is the rejection or vomiting of milk into the mouth of an adult, even if the person affected is the infant's mother. Such a person

598^x 343 Polygamists as well as some monogamists have a kind of shed where they receive their friends, take care of their affairs, eat their meals, etc. (1)

1. Such a shed is called esamba by the Bombwanja, ingɔ́mba by the other tribes. The Beloko, like the Ntɔ́mbɛ́ and Bolɛ́ngɛ́ located between the Congo and the Boloko, say bongɔ́mbo. The Ekonda say ewánga.

[626] A man who is frequently found in the kitchen or who likes to rest there is the butt of ridicule by both men and women. He is called ikɔ́mbelinga (derived from bolinga, "smoke," and kɔ́mba, "to dodge; to turn the head away in order to protect the eyes against smoke").

2. Illness

593^x ●758 A wife is required to nurse her husband if he is ill, together with his other wives if he is polygamous and, in case of serious illness, with the aid of his female relatives (mother, sisters). Even if they are married and living at a distance, they come to take care of a brother or son; it behooves their husbands to be reasonable and not to try and forbid their absence or prevent this exercise of their duty, for otherwise a man runs a great risk of seeing his wife leave him for good, outraged by this demonstration of his lack of affection for her family.

Together the wives and relatives seek medications and prepare the appropriate potions.

When a wife is ill the husband's female relatives usually come to see her, console her, and administer what care they are capable of giving; as a rule they are well disposed toward the wife of their son, brother, etc. The husband, for his part, must seek medications and help his sick wife. I recall a great palaver apropos of this question. During the illness of his wife Efetsɛ́, a certain Bokangɛ́ continuously had relations in his hut with another woman. The matter became public. The guilty husband was

593 required to re-establish peace and harmony by means of a considerable
758 boóndo, for having failed to take care of his wife and for having
shown complete thoughtlessness and indifference.

If the illness becomes prolonged or serious, neither the hus-
593 band nor his relatives have the leisure to nurse or take care of her.
758 To remedy this situation and at the same time give the woman's
672 parents the satisfaction of being able to help their daughter themselves, the husband sends her to them. He takes her there himself or calls them to come and get her. He communicates the news by sending his ndonga who bears a token payment (ndanga, loákako) such as a knife, a copper ring, etc. This ndanga is a pledge, evidence for the family that their daughter was ill on arrival and did not acquire her infirmity while with them. Without this pledge they would not want to take her; they would prefer to treat her in her husband's home. Or if the husband were to send her home without a ndanga, they would call the ndonga to witness this infraction of the rules. Or the fact that the husband has done this might be considered as a repudiation of his wife, pure and simple. In any case the husband would be in the wrong, and under these conditions the legal responsibility for his wife's death would fall entirely on him (see Chapter IX, Article X).

593 When the wife is cured, her parents send a message to their
758 son-in-law to urge him to come and take his wife back.

Even if they have not been invited by the husband, the wife's parents come to see their daughter when they hear of her illness [268] in order to take her away with them and care for her. She usually follows them, but she is not required to do so since she belongs to her husband. People even cite the names of women who despite the insistence of their families did not want to be cared for at home, but have preferred to die in their husband's arms, so to speak. Among them were Bolűmbű w'îkofo of Bombénga w'ôkenda (Besombó) married to Iembe y'ilongo of Engónjó; Baleko of Nseké married to Eanga éâ Jatá of Nkélengo; Iombe of Bosáá married to Bokűlűmbwá of Iálá; Balengola of Ntómbá (Bombwanja) married to Lompoko of Mbelé; Mpémbé of Bonganda (Bonkoso) married to Imbamba of Bonjoku;

593x Efala of Longa married to Ìfolí of Bokɛ́nyola (Bo̲njo̲ku); Basásɛ of
758 Mbelɛ married to Nke̲ngo̲ of Litɔli.

If the woman went to her family in good health and contracted an infirmity there, her parents are responsible for it. They are obliged to nurse her and to assume all the expenses due to her treatment. After she is cured they send her back with a quantity of nko̲mí for her husband. Usually the matter ends there. If relations between the two families are not very good, however, the husband will claim an indemnity, which varies with the situation and to which he is entitled even if he does not claim it.

This stipulation of the law holds even if the woman has gone to see her mother, father, etc., at the time of an illness or for any other reason.

It does not hold, on the other hand, if the wife has been ordered to go to her parents by her husband, or if she has fled the home shared with her husband because of ill treatment or of serious failings on his part; this point will be explained below in number 3. In such cases the husband is legally responsible for the illness.

Certain situations may arise which are intermediate to the ones discussed. Thus, for example, a wife may make a visit on her own initiative [269] but for her husband's good. Theoretically, he should win the case. Note, finally, that a stay of only twenty-four hours is not considered sufficient to make responsibility for an illness fall on the wife's family.

Colonization has produced an entirely new situation.
178 Colonial law has given the extra wives of polygamists the freedom
595x to go to a mission in order to be instructed in the Christian religion
758 and to contract a monogamous marriage (provided the customary
672 rules governing the dissolution of marriages are observed). Such a
797 woman may fall ill at the mission. If her illness has no troublesome consequences, it does not result in a dispute. But if the illness becomes chronic and in some way detrimental to the abandoned spouse, it may do so.

The polygamists declare that they are free of any responsibility, which they place on the woman's family. But the family has

178 nothing to do with it; it is unjust to bring them into the matter.
595x Since this legislation is intended to combat polygamy, it is natural
● 758 that the polygamous husband be the one who suffers from it.

672 The following is a recent example of this situation: Mbɔ́yɔ́
797 Julienne, sister of Botúna Jean of Balondɔ́, married to a polygamist
by the name of Insílo of Bokenyola (Bonjoku), went to Bokuma Mission, where she contracted an incurable illness. (1) Because of her illness she found it impossible to remarry. She therefore left the mission but was no longer accepted by the husband she had lived with so that she had to live in her brother's home. Insílo insisted that her brother reimburse him for the bride price, maintaining that in going to the mission, the woman had divorced him; his real reason, however, [270] was that she had become unfit to fulfill the duties of a wife. Since Mbɔ́yɔ́ did not fall ill in his home, he held her family responsible.

593x 3. Abandonment of the home shared by the couple

586x In the case of serious failings on the part of a husband, a woman's usual weapon is to leave their common home and return to her father's house. If the reason for her flight is serious, it is up to the husband to go and bring her back. She will not return on her own initiative. If he refuses to make the first step, he will be accused as much by public opinion as by his parents-in-law of not loving his wife, and a rupture will become inevitable. It is therefore his duty to go to his wife's parents. They will ask him to explain the situation. The wife, too, will say what she thinks. The parents will settle their difference. Whether or not the ndonga is present will depend on the

---

1. It was a sort of illness with nervous symptoms. From a scientific viewpoint, it is more than likely that she had this illness before her arrival at the mission, although it was only manifested there. But the natives do not make this distinction, so it is not relevant to our topic.

837 586 When a wife of a polygynist had illicit relations with another man of the same village, this was called Bonsamba. When she had such relations with a man of another village, this was called Isoke. As we have observed, the ordinary wives of the harem often had such relations. When the woman eloped with her bonsamba or isoke, or with whomever it was, she was pursued by her husband or owner, who tried to get her back. If the wife refused, negotiations over the bride price began.

If an agreement was reached or if a pledge was given as guarantee for the payment, the first bond was considered broken, and the woman was considered bound to this second man, even though he had been her bonsamba or isoke.

It might also happen that the first husband was so jealous that he did not want to make any agreement; then he attempted to kill either the guilty wife or her second husband. If the woman became 593 ill at the home of her husband, he went to tell her family and had to 758 give a security to the family.

583 Often the family came to get the wife, in order to be able to care for her better. If, in such a case, the wife [538] died at the home of her family, there were no further difficulties about the bride price, according to their customs. If, however, the bride price had still not been completely paid, the family asked their son-in-law to pay the remainder.

583 178 In recent times, now that the heathen customs have been undermined by the European occupation, we see that the husbands whose wives have gone to their family when sick and have died there, demand the return of the bride price from the family, but this is completely contrary to their old customs. In one case the husband could demand the return of the bride price, namely, if the wife had left while healthy to go to her family and had died there.

562 439 Buying or Trading of Women. The woman was also in many cases an acknowledged object of trade. The great village chiefs, among others Ibuka and Yoma, of whom we shall speak further, carried on a sort of woman trade. With European articles and also native currency, they went to other districts of the Equator [Province] to buy women with them, just like someone who goes to market, even though no public markets where women were sold actually existed.

Yaelima

764 At the village of Tik-ke-Tik in Yaelima territory, we witnessed a similar scene following the death of a young man.

[742] At nightfall his body was wrapped in mats or rattan splints, solidly plaited, tied up, and completely sealed. At dawn the mortuary bundle, attached to a strong branch, was lifted by two men. Instead of taking the village lane, they carried the corpse behind the hut and then through the bush. A few men walking Indian file made up the procession, at the end of which was the mother of the deceased in mourning costume. The path they followed was quite irregular. Largely avoiding the trodden paths, the bearers often retraced their steps and took almost two hours to reach the cemetery, four kilometers from the village.

[742
291
301
516]

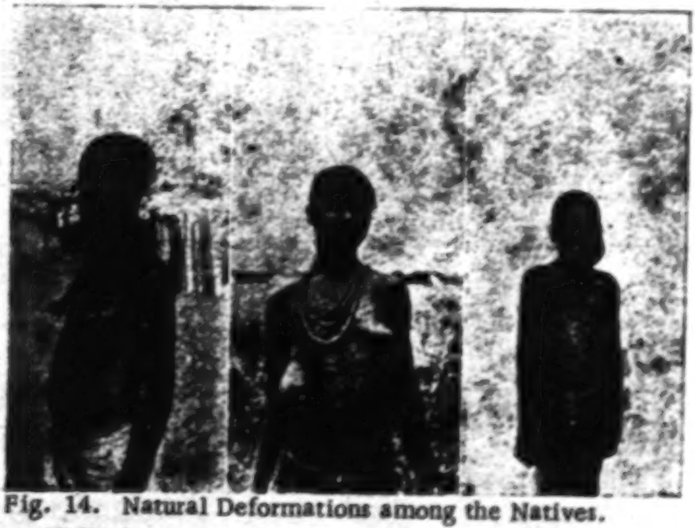
Fig. 12. Mother and Child, Bankutshu Tribe.

764
761 On the way back, the natives explained to me that the numerous turns and the walk through untrodden bush were meant to lead astray the evil spirit who had entered the village and killed the

Take F133

young man! [Ed., the text is not translated from mid-page 17 to the second paragraph, page 19.] M 764 761

[19] Since the chief goal of our expedition was to study the practices and customs connected with the material and everyday life of the native, as well as to gather objects for our collection, our stay among the various tribes was too M 121



M [732]

Fig. 14. Natural Deformations among the Natives.
(1) Bankutu woman; (2) Barakata woman; (3) Bankutu child.

short to permit a thorough study of their religious life and its attendant customs.

We ascertained that the native, as a rule, acknowledges the existence of a higher spirit. During my stay in the village of Kapanda, Banfumungu tribe, I had the opportunity to question a chief on the subject. M I 776

"Who causes the sun and the moon to rise? Who gave you the fish of the river and the animals of the plain, Matali?"

The chief looked at me for an instant, dumbfounded, and then replied, "Nzambi ve Mundele?" "Was it not Nzambi, White man?"

"Why, then, do you not call upon Nzambi to protect your crops, favor your fishing, and grant you success in hunting, Matali?" [20]

517
626

of seniority (she is then called bosɔ́lɔ́ -- see Chapter III, Article III). The giving of a widow who is in the position described is preferably avoided.

837
626 Illicit relations between a son and his father's wife are judged with especially great severity if the young man's own mother is still alive. He is reproached for his behavior in terms which are clear and crude: Oôy'ôsanganya mbindo ǐkɛ́ la mbindo y'ǐsâ nyangó, "you unite your stains (impurities) with those of your father and [302] mother"; Outɛ ńk'eki wɛ̌ wǐmáńáká, "you are returning from whence you came." To these expressions is often added ówa lɔ́í ɛ́í olekí liloka, "you will die because of your too great wickedness." To the ●[761] Nkundó this last statement is a kind of curse, and if it is repeated by several persons it will not fail to have its effect. Or, to speak as our people do, if everyone greatly wails over and against this man, he will really die. (1)

1. This attitude of the Nkundó may be one of the reasons why widows are assigned not to the son of the deceased, but to his brother.

If the son in question is not married, especially if he has already reached a relatively advanced age, and if he approaches the wives of his polygamous father, the matter is considered less serious. The latter cannot be too angry, especially when only isolated instances are involved; for other relatives will allow their affection for this young man to speak, since they are aware of his passion and therefore understand his temptations and follies. They would intervene to pacify the father and urge him to prevent the repetition of such occurrences by obtaining a wife for his son. In exceptional cases the family council may even judge the father to be in the wrong because of his harshness toward his son and may allow the latter to take his father's wife away from him (never, however, the first wife, the favorite, or the bolímbu); such was the case we described in

Chapter IX

Death

Since the subject of our study is only Nkundó marriage, we
152 will examine matters relating to death only from this limited stand-
595 point. As to the general aspects of the question, the reader will
● 761 find them in our article on the funeral customs of the Nkundó,
about to be published in Anthropos.

Article I. Sorrow and Mourning

In the study cited above, a word was said concerning the varying degrees of intensity that may be reached in the sorrow caused by the death of a cherished being.

Of course the suffering does not always exclude a mixture of egoistic elements, such as regret of the financial loss involved in the death of a wife and the obligation of continence and various other prohibitions of widowhood. This is rather natural and does not merit discussion. On the other hand, it would be unjust and contrary to the truth to attribute all the sadness to those base feelings. In general, this sorrow must also be taken as evidence of a true love which is often its primary cause. Exceptions do occur, however, for instance in the case of an old woman who has been inherited by a polygamist.

When we compare the various manifestations of sorrow at the death of a spouse with those observed at the death of a relative, we note certain practices specific to the former case. One might say that at the death of a spouse, the signs of sorrow reach a culminating point [418], as if native law wished to underline the predominance of the relationship created by marriage over the bonds of kinship and thus manifest its agreement with divine law.

Nevertheless it is clear that practice does not always correspond to theory, here any more than elsewhere. We should not be astonished in not finding among the natives a perfect and ideal love

152 ● 761 593 free of all egoism. When even among peoples universally recognized as superior, self-pity during the pain felt on the death of someone beloved is neither rare nor reprehensible, can we be shocked that our natives experience similar regrets? Do we condemn a young widow who, although sincerely and intensely regretting the husband she loved tenderly and whom death has just removed from her affection, thinks at the same time of the unhappy situation in which she and her small children find themselves as a result? And is not the reasonable hope of finding someone who will take care of her and the orphans an effective and legitimate consolation that will help her to endure the trial?

All things considered, it is therefore not at all surprising that our Blacks react that way. And it is quite natural that, in practice, they should suffer more from the death of a father and especially a mother or a child than from the loss of a husband or wife. The situation here is entirely different from that in Europe. And the system of polygamy, with all its consequences, is not exactly discouraging to egoism and favorable to an ascension toward the ideal of a more sublime love.

Therefore we should not be surprised that a wife at the death of her husband laments: ngóy'ǒm ǒkámá óye! ("Mother, my husband, ah!"); but at the death of a child or a mother or father she wails: ngóya ŋǒlélengana óye! ("Mother, I am bereft, ah!"), thus expressing a more intense sorrow. For a father or a mother cannot be replaced, but she will always find someone who will want to marry her. As to a child, between it and its parents there is more of a life in common [419] than between spouses under the system of polygamy. More marks of tenderness are also exchanged between mother and child than between native couples.

764 152 593 Immediately after his wife's death, a husband is surrounded by all the women of the village who come and mistreat him. They vie with each other in smearing him with charcoal smut, soil, and mud, and in rubbing him with the plant called limánsá, which causes a stinging rash comparable to that caused by nettles in Europe. There are no relatives among the women who engage in this

M
98 recourse to the assistance of a third party who -- for remuneration,
578 of course -- undertook to carry out his project. This task was usually
P
[679] confided to Batswa, who did not disdain this type of work, which
was quite suited to their taste.

The fact that the law gives the husband the right to punish his wife [277] for the type of oratory under discussion meant that a wife had to exercise some discretion in her choice of expressions. Fearing violent reactions, she often spoke the more serious insults softly.

M
Since the European penetration women are more daring. For
178 their husbands fear European justice, which follows principles entirely
578 different from their ancestral law. Thus they complain bitterly of
593 the insolence of their wives: "We have become slaves; the women
562 are now all-powerful. They may do as they please, for we can no
longer do anything to them." But as soon as native courts are sufficiently educated and are freed from what an eminent colonial jurist has called "the jurisdiction of palavers" (1), they will no doubt effect a salutary change in this situation.

M
The emancipation of women is one of the factors that have
562 increased the frequency of divorce. For a man who cannot avenge
586 continuous outrages remains dominated by shame, and the presence
of the one who is the cause of it must become unbearable in the long run; whence the indifference, antipathy, hate, and the inevitable results of that permanent confusion in the household.

M
Men among whom the feeling of modesty was highly developed
593 hanged themselves out of shame instead of attacking the guilty wife.
● 762 That is what many natives have maintained in talking with me.
577 Nevertheless, I have no knowledge of a present-day example. When
[683] this happened, the wife's family no longer took action against their
daughter. Nor were they obliged to pay an indemnity, although their child had brought about the death. They simply had to acquit

(1) See A. Sohier, Bulletin des Séances de l'Institut Royal Colonial Belge, Vol. 6, 1935, 1, p. 60 and passim.

593x themselves of the usual and ordinary obligations incumbent upon 577 them on the death of a son-in-law. Should this be taken as a kind ●762 of implied condemnation of suicide? [278]

593^ The wisdom of the elders recommends to youth that they not let anger lead them to brutal acts even where, legally, it is 578 permissible to use force. They do not act in such a way through a 587 policy of adaptation to the present regime. 626 Even before the arrival of the white men, they gave lessons in calm and self-mastery. For serious blows, wounds, and especially homicide could have deplorable consequences legally and even politically (war). They preferred recourse to punishments, such as abstention from food and the refusal of debitum conjugale, which although less violent are not without efficacity. In that way they were also spared the vexation of in-laws, whose pity would be aroused by the wounds and bodily suffering of their child or sister.

578 593x One thing that deserves blows or a good whipping because it is considered a serious failure in the fulfillment of the duties of married life is indifference and negligence in housework. A husband may safely deal forcefully with the situation, although he must first inform the qualified authorities. The following are some examples of such faults: the wife does not give the necessary attention to the kitchen, her children, the cleaning of the hut and court; she neglects her crops, does not go fishing, makes no attempt to obtain salt, etc.; in short, she does not give the required time and care to the tasks incumbent upon her. She herself, her children, and her house remain disgustingly filthy, her fields and banana groves are invaded by weeds and her pantry is devoid of utensils and food, while she wastes her time doing nothing or rather spends it running about the village, going to one woman's house, chatting with another, spending the better part of her day gossiping. The Nkundó does not put up with this sort of behavior, and no one can reproach him. Even other men and the woman's companions condemn [279] such conduct. Often the woman is ridiculed, and on occasion she may [[illegible]] hear unflattering comments such as *bŏmot'ŏw'asolŏ, efufa gtɛ́ngamaka*, "a gossip, her cloth is to the side," that is, the interminable chatting

769 584 She can also remain in her fiancé's family and there be taken in marriage by one of his kinsmen. If everything favors the continuation of the union, the new husband-to-be pays the bride price, but he need not repeat the engagement payments, which retain their validity. If he belongs to a distant branch of the family, however, the kin of the deceased will not want to give up their property, and the new fiancé himself will have to acquit himself of all the bride-price obligations, beginning with the ikulá.

[763] Sometimes the dying man, in making his last requests, enjoins his family to maintain the alliance. In that case one of his kinsman must marry the woman. If later on a breakup becomes inevitable, the spouses separate. For that matter, if the woman lacks the inclination to remarry in her fiancé's kin group, she will not be forced to do so.

This practice is based on the stipulation of Nkundó law that engaged persons have all the duties and privileges of married couples.

[587] There is nothing among the Nkundó that resembles a levirate. Even in the case we cited of a last will, the obligation derives solely from the sacred nature of that will. [448]

Article IX

The Death of the Woman Before the Payment of the Bride Price

Two situations must be distinguished: 1) The woman dies during the engagement; 2) she dies before the bosongo.

1. Before the walo

As has already been said, engaged persons enjoy all the duties and privileges of a married couple. If the girl dies the fiancé must fulfill all obligations toward the deceased and her family (transporting the corpse, sacrifices, nkumjí). But his obligations do not end there.

Through the payment of the ndanga (and, in practice, already through the ikulá) he is considered responsible for any accident that might befall his fiancée in his home; and he has assumed the

843 837 This law requiring a most strict fidelity lasts until the end of the bokeka for the husband, but until the weaning of the child for the wife. It is especially strict for the period of seclusion (see below, Article III, 3).

The violation of the essential stipulation of this interdict (-fénda bokeka) results either in the death of the woman during pregnancy and especially during seclusion or in the death of the child later on. [477]

A. If the woman dies during this period, the suspicion is placed a priori on her husband. The Nkundó say abfénda wǎlí, "he has transgressed against his wife." Unless he can prove his innocence through public actions, the judgment of a magician, or autopsy[sic].

If the woman has been the victim of a seducer, he is held responsible and must pay a large indemnity equivalent to the bride price that was paid for the deceased. If no other man is involved, the affair has no consequences.

843 163 754 845 853 In the past the combined autopsy and Caesarian section was always performed. It had a dual purpose: to remove the child and to examine the mother. If the operation revealed the existence of a "stomach" (likundó), the deceased was of a noxious (liloka) nature or constitution and therefore caused the death of her child. If the child remained alive, it proved that he was of a magically superior nature and was able to resist the natural evil spells of his mother, which thus turned against their unwitting author. (1)

1. The Nkundó believe that only animals have a "stomach" (likundó). If a human being has one, that is, if his viscera are large, curved, in compartments, in a word, abnormal, that person is an evildoer. He commits evil acts voluntarily or, most frequently, unknowingly. Some men with a likundó can be recognized by the fact that they eat their nails, hair, etc. The Nkundó must certainly have observed relationships between this habit and a deformity of the stomach.

must go to the *monkoko* for their fight, this being the location of the houses belong- 624
ing to the sons of the *nkumu*. The penalty for breaking this law is a fine, and if no 689
fine were forthcoming hanging used to be the alternative. If a quarrel arises else-
where and one party wishes to avoid fighting, he may retire to the *mongo* and thus be
safe. No trees in the *mongo* may be climbed. There are, however, privileged classes
exempt from all such rules, and these embrace a good many people. Thus, the mother [845]
of twins, twins, Batwa, *mamni*, and all members of the *molembe* and *ekopo* are exempt
from the laws of the *mongo*. If any of these commit acts which are illegal for those [672]
coming under the law, they are not held guilty, but their actions will not be condoned; [626]
they will be considered breaches of good conduct, and will be dealt with informally;
the parties will be quietly reprimanded, and adjured to observe the proprieties of
conduct. For outsiders breaking the laws of the *mongo*, what corresponds to a warrant
is necessary. It is necessary to catch the culprit in the act and hale him before the [696]
nkumu. The *nkumu* himself cannot do this, nor can any of the *ekopo*; it must be done
by one of the *molembe*, and so if the *nkumu* sees someone infringing the law he will
try to get one of the *molembe* on the spot in a hurry in order to catch the offender.

In war,[1] it is the *molemi e ale* who is most active in preparations, but the *nkumu* 624
will accompany his party to battle, keeping well in the rear, and surrounded by good
fighters. He does not wear his *mantolo* but puts on the informal hat. If an *nkumu* were 726
captured, he would never be tortured or killed as were other prisoners, unless he
specifically sought such a fate. He could be ransomed, and his captors would [727]
beseech him to let his people ransom him, but in many cases an *nkumu* would invite
death rather than endure the shame of being yielded up as a prisoner of war.

An *nkumu* is always addressed by a double clap of the hands, and will not reply to 624
anyone rude enough to speak to him first. In answer to the clap he replies with a
word of wisdom expressed in an aphorism or proverb. Such a reply, however, is 576
common to all elders, who have their favourite aphorisms ready for any who pay
them special honour. Anything the *nkumu* says must be answered not by the
customary *ale boike* (even so) which ordinary people use, but with the special word,
bingo, which is reserved exclusively for replying to an *nkumu*, and means the same
thing.

When the hour of death approaches, an *nkumu* is attended by his Batwa. It is a 624
rule that he must not die a natural death, and near the end, while he is still conscious 763
and can still speak, all 'free men' clear out and leave the Batwa pygmies to their
task of tying the *nkumu* very tightly with the fibrous yam vines known as *monkiki*. [563]
Often this secure lashing in the sitting posture, known as *ilima*, is sufficient to finish
the *nkumu* off, but sometimes the work is expedited by twisting his neck.[2] Then it
is announced that he is dead, *ankiba*, this being in contradistinction to the customary
phrase *ankama awiko* used of the death of ordinary people. While the latter means

[1] Owing to the lack of tribal cohesion, warfare was not on any considerable scale. The method of warfare consisted in sending groups of young men to fight first, the elders only joining in when one side began to get the worst of the fray. Victors and vanquished in such fights were designated 'husband' and 'wife' respectively, and members of the one group were free to come and go in the villages of the other, and even to help themselves to food. In future wars 'husband' and 'wife' were supposed to combine against their common foes.

[2] Besides *nkumu*, elderly and rich men, fathers and mothers of twins, and twins are buried in the *ilima* or sitting posture, in contradistinction to the normal position which is the recumbent one used for ordinary people and slaves. [769]

763 literally that the deceased has hanged the heart, the former is used of a tree which leans over and falls from a great cut at its base.

624 On the announcement of the death, an expert drummer drums out the news. There will be at least four drums of the type known as *lokuku*, and a *nkuge*.[1] The four 766 drums are called by the names, *Epanda*, having the 'biggest voice', that is a deep 594 bass note, *Mongoye*, having a higher note, *Mongonda*, a high pitched note, and *Monkoto*, 202 having a very high penetrating note. To these four drums others are added; if the *nkumu* himself did not possess sufficient, they would be borrowed from the surrounding villages, and their notes matched with those of the first three drums, being beaten with them in their turn. *Monkoto* is beaten simultaneously with *Epanda*, giving a rhythmic tattoo. When the news of the death has been sent out on *Epanda*, the funeral drumming commences, as follows:

539

Mongonda.	Botianganu w'Amba lokolo,
Mongoye.	Ntsala ikita, otongonoko,
Epanda.	Tokund' ilenge molom' o nyama, Ombolekeke mmenge, Lobanga lolenda ntondo, Bikeku bilenda lobola.
Nkuge.	Tobilake nkoi nkonge, Tobilake nkoi nkonge, &c.

The English and the interpretation are as follows:

Mongonda. A scattering of Amba, the snail. (The mother of twins, always called Amba, here gives her name to the snail because of her prolific progeny, which, upon being introduced to the world, scatter, while the mother dies. So the death of the *nkumu* will cause a scattering of his many wives and children.)

Mongoye. Feathers fall; pick them up. (That is to say, for your arrow shafts, for if you don't, and come back later, the wind will have scattered them and you won't find them. So while the *nkumu* was alive it was the time for his children to learn his teachings so that when palavers came after his death they would be well acquainted with his wisdom and know how to settle them.)

Epanda. We are burying the *ilenge*, husband of animals, You have just eaten *mmenge*, The chin looks up at the ridge pole, The jaw bones look up at the sky. [825] (The *ilenge* is an animal much prized for its fat meat; the *nkumu* always gets his share when it is killed, and the skin is made into carrying straps for infants, and into belts. [568] Batwa are prohibited the use of it for any purpose. It is therefore fitting to liken the *nkumu* to the *ilenge*. *Mmenge* (sing. *lobenge*) is the equivalent of a snack. When a woman brings her cassava from the swamp where it has been soaking for several [264] days, her husband may be too hungry to wait the long hours required to cook it, so to appease his hunger his wife takes a piece or two of the unprepared root, splits [252] it in two, places salt between, wraps it in a *lokombe* leaf and roasts it in the hot ashes, where it is quickly cooked. So the *nkumu* just had time to eat a few *mmenge*; he didn't wait for the big cooking; his life was suddenly cut off.)

Nkuge. Don't pull out the leopard's eyelashes. (That is, while he is alive; now he is dead one can disregard his power.)

---

[1] A *lokuku* is a slit gong made from a hollowed log. Its two notes are produced by striking the two lips of the slit. A *nkuge* is a hollowed log, open at one end, across which is stretched a vellum hide.

Yaelima

764 At the village of Tik-ke-Tik in Yaelima territory, we witnessed a similar scene following the death of a young man.

At nightfall his body was wrapped in mats or rattan splints, solidly plaited, tied up, and completely sealed. At dawn the [482] mortuary bundle, attached to a strong branch, was lifted by two men. Instead of taking the village lane, they carried the corpse behind the hut and then through the bush. A few men walking Indian file made up the procession, at the end of which was the mother of the deceased in mourning costume. The path they followed was quite irregular. Largely avoiding the trodden paths, the bearers often retraced their steps and took almost two hours to reach the cemetery, four kilometers from the village.

[142
291
301
516]

Fig. 12. Mother and Child, Bankutshu Tribe.

764 764 On the way back, the natives explained to me that the numerous turns and the walk through untrodden bush were meant to lead astray the evil spirit who had entered the village and killed the

Take F133

M 744 761

young man! [Ed., the text is not translated from mid-page 17 to the second paragraph, page 19.]

M 121

[19] Since the chief goal of our expedition was to study the practices and customs connected with the material and everyday life of the native, as well as to gather objects for our collection, our stay among the various tribes was too short to permit a thorough study of their religious life and its attendant customs.

M [732]

Fig. 14. Natural Deformations among the Natives.
(1) Bankutu woman; (2) Barakata woman; (3) Bankutu child.

M I 116

We ascertained that the native, as a rule, acknowledges the existence of a higher spirit. During my stay in the village of Kapanda, Banfumungu tribe, I had the opportunity to question a chief on the subject.

"Who causes the sun and the moon to rise? Who gave you the fish of the river and the animals of the plain, Matali?"

The chief looked at me for an instant, dumbfounded, and then replied, "*Nzambi ve Mundele*?" "Was it not Nzambi, White man?"

"Why, then, do you not call upon Nzambi to protect your crops, favor your fishing, and grant you success in hunting, Matali?" [20]

Take F133
Sakata FO43

to burial, the deceased is laid out in the mortuary hut. Relatives, friends, and acquaintances sit up with the body in turn. Night and day, plaintive and monotonous chants commemorate the high deeds of the deceased, his glory, his qualities, his wealth, his power, his whole life. The burial is carried out with great pomp and ends with a general consumption of the whole supply of palm wine, malafu, and masanga [Ed., sugar-cane beer]. T 764 T [273]

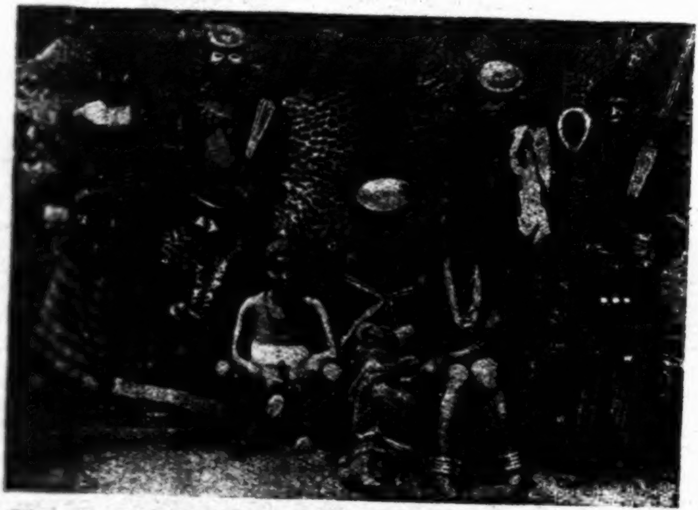


Fig. 16. Ebandia, Chief of the Mosengere, Two Favorite Wives, and Principal Dignitaries.

M 292 516 411

The peoples of Lake Leopold II place the corpse in a wooden coffin. Those of the Lukenie region wrap it in mats. Both groups bury the deceased the day after death. M 764

The cemeteries are located outside the village. The relatives lay out a few broken utensils on the grave. If the deceased was a hunter of repute, they plant a long staff upon the grave, and the skull of some animal killed by the dead man is attached at the top of it. [27]

During my stay in the territory of the Baboma-Banfumu of Bokala, I was struck by the presence of a tiny hut in the center of Chief Pokei's village. It was about 60 centimeters high, 30 centimeters wide, and 50 centimeters long. I thought at first S 766 845 761

Article II. Property

593x 614 [764] Through marriage, a woman does not become a member of her husband's clan. If for example she is born into the Bofétola clan, she remains all her life bosí Bofétola, "member of the Bofétola clan," and her corpse has to be buried in her native soil. In case of divorce and remarriage, the new husband does not refund the bride price to the former one; he pays the woman's parents, and they reimburse the forsaken husband.

593x 421 All the wife's activity, however, is directed toward the good of her husband and his family, and this is so from the time of the ikulá payment. Her parents have no further rights over their daughter. All the fruits of her labor are her husband's property.

If she finds objects that have no owner, such as, for example, elephant tusks or buried copper rings of which no one claims ownership, they do not belong to her nor to her family, but exclusively to her husband. If he shares with his parents-in-law, he does so out of affection and respect for them. He has no legal obligation to do so, but propriety and cordial relations impose a certain duty on him.

Profits from the sale of the products of her industry (such as foods for market, mats, salt, pots, baskets) belong not to her but to her husband.

Even whatever she acquires during a visit to her parents, everything she finds while she is with her family, the fish she catches, the caterpillars she gathers in the forest there, all that belong exclusively to her husband.

It sometimes happens that a woman infringes on the husband's rights in this respect. If he is kind he will generally let her do as she [577] pleases. Severity on his part would be attributed to a lack of affection toward his wife or a lack of delicacy toward his parents-in-law, and he would even be criticized for being stingy (never unjust!), a more serious criticism than the others from the Nkundó point of view. [263] Dishonest conduct on the part of a wife, however, may give rise to incidents, and even to serious ones. That is what happened in the historic case of Efoloko of Ikengya (Bongíli), who was married to [578] Mpokú of Imomo. She had gone fishing at home and had given all her fish

593x 574 ótswáká liála otswâk'olá, báfókolaka mbók'ɛ̌y'olá la ngom'a nkolé, "If you are married go back to your parents, or you will be taught the way with drums and gongs," that is, "when you are dead." (2)

●[164] [614] [534] 2. A woman is buried in her own native clan. Her corpse is transported there to the accompaniment of drums and horns. The lokolé gong announces her death.

593x 602 A married woman may not evade the duty of helping her relatives under special circumstances (pregnancy, illness, serious accidents, death). This obligation [285] is not limited to her mother and father, but extends to all her relatives; the closer the degree of kinship, the stricter the obligation.

Besides, love of family is sufficiently developed so that there is no danger of the woman forgetting herself too much in this realm. [626] And a husband who would like to prevent her from fulfilling these elementary duties would be much criticized by all and should expect a dissolution of the marriage.

593x 574 342 556 It was said above that a husband builds a hut for his wife. His relatives often assist him in this task. But it also happened -- in the past, for colonization has removed the possibility of it -- that the woman's father wanted to build his daughter's house himself or at least to make the pavement out of clay brought from her native land. This act was a demonstration of wealth and politico-social importance as well as proof of fatherly affection. The husband, for his part, was honored to have married the daughter of such an important man and loved her all the more. Thus a number of women say that "they only cooked on ancestral soil." This soil was brought in baskets across distances up to 50 kilometers by Batswa and by men of the woman's clan or village. Her father could do it because of his great influence and regal rewards (bokóndo, verb kónda) were distributed during a feast (nteke) given for the workers and their relatives after the task was completed. This was done for Bompeli, daughter of Bokombe of Litáli (Bombwanja) married to Bonyeme w'enyuka of the Baséká Mbangó (Bonkoso); for Beluka, daughter of

152 free of all egoism. When even among peoples universally recog-
761 nized as superior, self-pity during the pain felt on the death of
593 x someone beloved is neither rare nor reprehensible, can we be shocked that our natives experience similar regrets? Do we condemn a young widow who, although sincerely and intensely regretting the husband she loved tenderly and whom death has just removed from her affection, thinks at the same time of the unhappy situation in which she and her small children find themselves as a result? And is not the reasonable hope of finding someone who will take care of her and the orphans an effective and legitimate consolation that will help her to endure the trial?

All things considered, it is therefore not at all surprising that our Blacks react that way. And it is quite natural that, in practice, they should suffer more from the death of a father and especially a mother or a child than from the loss of a husband or wife. The situation here is entirely different from that in Europe. And the system of polygamy, with all its consequences, is not exactly discouraging to egoism and favorable to an ascension toward the ideal of a more sublime love.

Therefore we should not be surprised that a wife at the death of her husband laments: ngóy'ɔ́m 'ɔ̌kámí óye! ("Mother, my husband, ah!"); but at the death of a child or a mother or father she wails: ngóya njɔ̂lélengana óye! ("Mother, I am bereft, ah!"), thus expressing a more intense sorrow. For a father or a mother cannot be replaced, but she will always find someone who will want to marry her. As to a child, between it and its parents there is more of a life in common [419] than between spouses under the system of polygamy. More marks of tenderness are also exchanged between mother and child than between native couples.

• 764 Immediately after his wife's death, a husband is surrounded
by all the women of the village who come and mistreat him. They
152 x vie with each other in smearing him with charcoal smut, soil, and
593 mud, and in rubbing him with the plant called linsánsá, which causes a stinging rash comparable to that caused by nettles in Europe. There are no relatives among the women who engage in this

152 rough behavior, only strangers married to village men (those known 593x as *báajâála*). This ill treatment is often extended to close relatives of the widower, that is, to those whom the women in ●764 question call *bɔ́ome*, "potential husbands," never to fathers and higher relatives. (1) The purpose of this practice seems to be to intensify, by physical pain, the sorrow caused by death. In addition, provocatively obscene words, gestures, and movements remind the widower that from then on he must be continent, as described *in extenso* in the study cited above.

765 Afterwards, relatives dress the widower in a *lisɔ́ki*, a banana leaf which is torn all over horizontally. For all other mourning garments, as well as for all regulations and prohibitions that apply to all cases, see the detailed study.

The ill treatment described is not inflicted on the widow. It is meted out exclusively to men.

The general rules pertaining to *seclusion* apply to a widower; in fact they are especially severe for a man. His kinswomen prepare his simple meals. However, if his relations with his father-[587] in-law were excellent, the latter sends a woman [420] to him who will attend to his needs. She often becomes his wife when, after the lifting of mourning, he brings the *ibóleóko* (Chapter III, Article IV).

During the entire first period of seclusion, he cannot go anywhere, at least ostensibly. If he needs to go out, he must go through the back. If he wants to visit a relative or friend, he must go behind the huts, in the banana grove, even if it is evening. In any case, he may not leave the village. Such was the ancient law, though nowadays it is observed less and less.

Furthermore, he cannot have the slightest contact with any woman who is not a relative. He cannot even shake her hand, greet her out loud, or look at her even in passing.

---

1. See Chapter V, Article IV, 1, no. 3, and Chapter VI, Article VI.

765 On that occasion the head of the family hands over to the first born of the deceased the bosólό to which he is entitled. As described in Chapter III, Article III, he thus receives one of the widows as his wife. She immediately leaves the group of widows; from then on she is no longer bound by any mourning obligation and goes to live with her new husband. If she loved the deceased very much, however, she asks the heir to leave her alone for a time; and her wishes are always respected.

The seclusion ends in a great feast that closes the period of mourning. It is during this feast that the inheritance, of which the widows also form a part, is divided. We will deal with it in Article V. [424]

Article III. The Burial

● 764 The husband's burial involves no ceremony or special rules differing in any way from those for any other person. However, his kinswomen must "buy the tomb," that is, they must pay a few rings to the women married into the family to obtain permission for the interment. This payment should be compared with those made to obtain dispensations from alimentary prohibitions.

The people buried simultaneously and in the same grave as the body of an influential man are never his widows, but solely his slaves. (1)

---

1. See Coutumes funeraires (Funeral Customs), Vol. 5, no. 2.

A Nkundό must be buried in the land of his ancestors in the clan cemetery. Since these people operate under a system of exogamy, the corpse of a married woman is naturally transported to the village of her birth in order to be buried there.

Before it is transported the corpse receives the usual care with the accompanying sacrifices. It must be kept in the husband's house for at least one night. And this custom is still observed at present. In the past the corpse remained there for days on end,

764 for it was necessary first to celebrate the farewell feast, and the widower's family had to gather to discuss the matter and collect the valuables needed for the funeral payment (see the article which follows). Only after all that did the young men belonging to the [482] husband's family take the mortal remains upon their shoulders -- wrapped in a mat or enclosed in a coffin, depending on the case.

If possible all the husband's relatives take part in the procession. The pallbearers walk at the head. The men are armed with bows and arrows, knives and sticks, seldom with spears. The women accompany them [425], wailing. The husband and, if necessary, a few relatives carry with them the various objects they will need for the payments. Some men have a lotótsi (an [534] ocarina) (1) or an antelope horn on which they play intermittently. (2)

[201] At the time the corpse is lifted and while passing through villages between their own and their destination, the lokolé is struck with regular and equal blows (-kémya) to announce the arrival of the funeral procession.

The chief personage among those who follow the corpse is 584 not the husband, but the ndonga. He may never be absent at that 764 time. Even if the husband is deceased and the procession is that of a widow who has not remarried, the ndonga must always be in the party. The duty of bringing the corpse of a married woman is above all his.

The ndonga may go ahead of the procession to inform the family of the deceased of her death, and if there is a great distance between the wife's village and the husband's, he may not be able

---

1. See my "Note sur les Instruments de Musique à l'Equateur (Note on Musical Instruments at the Equator)" in Congo, 1935, Vol. 2, July, p. 187, figs. 1 and 2 (p. 199).

2. Sometimes there is also an accompaniment of drums.

● 764 [584] to return to join the procession, or may be able to do so only with difficulty.

The act of carrying a corpse to its native clan is not designated by any specific term. The expression is simply tsɔ́ka ilɔ́ka, "to go and return the corpse."

764 431 In one or more places near the entrance to the village, a barrier (bokɔ́ko, lokombɛ́, or loɔ́laka) made of posts and palms is set up. There the relatives of the deceased, armed, wait for the procession of the husband's relatives, who are also armed, and forbid them to continue their march. Before passing, the latter must make a payment. The valuables given are called byɛ̌ko by'ǒkɔ́ko or simply bokɔ́ko (or loɔ́laka). The family of the deceased calls to the procession, "Halt! You will not pass here." The latter reply, "We come to bring [426] you the corpse of your child; we want to break down the barrier. Let us pass; here are [584] the gifts." The ndonga hands over a knife, a brass or copper ring, or some equivalent object (for instance, money, nowadays). Thereupon the members of the deceased's clan move away. The bǎnambɔ́tswá (persons related to both clans) break down the barrier, and the procession passes, headed by the ndonga and the bǎnambɔ́tswá. The husband follows the coffin.

764 579 In the past it was almost always necessary to force a passage through the barrier. The wife's family did not want to open and the husband's family did not want to pay, and so they came to blows. The group bearing the corpse tried to break down the barrier, while their adversaries tried to prevent them from doing so. The arms used in that struggle were chiefly pointed sticks which the members of the two camps threw at each other; more rarely, arrows were used. The specific name for this sort of brawl is ɛkɔ̀bɛ́lá. Certain clans specialize in this sport. Thus between Bofímbo and Lileko, there is a regular battle every time. In such serious cases the barrier is heavily fortified; the posts are thick and hard, and intertwined with thorny creepers (bokau, longolí, wanganjɛ́la, etc.) and thorny shrubs (wɛ̌ngɛ́, etc.). A quantity [125] of venomous biting ants (bafumba, mbɔ́mbá, byɛ̌mbo, etc.) are added. If the brawl becomes serious, the ndonga and the other bǎnambɔ́tswa intervene and impose peace by requiring the husband's clan to pay.

● 764
579

Nevertheless, it may happen that the husband's family, while unable to vanquish their adversaries, persist in spite of everything in their desire not to pay. They run away and return home, abandoning the corpse in the hands of the family of the deceased. But this is a very serious offense. It is therefore considered simply as a breaking of the alliance between the two families. The husband need not bring funeral payments, for they will be refused in any case. Henceforth he can no longer [427] present a bride price to obtain a substitute for the deceased. Furthermore, he loses his rights over his children, whose maternal clan he has disowned, and if the matter is not settled in one way or another, he no longer has the right to the bride prices that will be paid for his daughters. And to add to his troubles, he risks being molested by the spirit of the deceased.

When the husband's party succeeds in opening a passage, the opposing clan hastens to defend the succeeding barrier. In fact, if the procession must pass through several clans or groups related to the wife (her mother's clan, grandfather's clan, grandmother's clan, etc.), each group sets up its own barrier.

If there are no more barriers, the struggle is ended. But in any case the husband must pay the valuables demanded for passing through. When the procession arrives at the village, the question of funeral payments is settled, and these "tolls" are included in the accounting.

In the past a brawl was usually inevitable. And even now they occur more frequently than we would suspect. But the violence has been reduced to a few light wounds. Some clans arrange the matter amicably without resorting to action. But only very seldom do they neglect to put up a barrier. Nevertheless, cases do occur here and there under the pressure of chiefs who favor the penetration of European notions of public peace and tranquility. In these instances the parties involved merely pay regular indemnities at the time of the palaver concerning funeral payments. A great friendship between the two clans involved sometimes favors this more humane type of behavior.

764
578
152
[584] When the family of the deceased bars the route to the funeral procession, they are manifesting the anger provoked by the death of one of their members. [428] For they feel anger and resentment, in spite of the fact that the ndonga carries a spear at the head of the procession as a sign that they come as friends, without evil intentions.

This does not mean that the natives attribute the cause of death to the husband and his family. In most cases they are convinced that the latter could not prevent it. Although they express themselves in those terms: lóóomela bǒna (nkǐna, eôto), "you have killed our child (sister, relative)," they do not maintain that the husband's clan has really killed her, but only that she died among them. Under the circumstances do they feign anger to obtain valuables, for example? I do not think so. The Nkundó do not say that they simulate anger; they categorically state that they feel it and that they want to show it in the manner described. We should not be astonished at this since -- as we have noted in the study on the funeral customs of the Nkundó (Les Coutumes funéraires des Nkundó), the emotions of anger and sorrow seem to be intimately related among these peoples.

764 When the funeral procession passes through the last barrier, that which bars the entrance to the village, the husband's clan puts down the body, and it is subsequently lifted up by the family of the deceased, who carry it into the house of the head of the family. They are followed by the ndonga, the bánambótswǎ, the husband, and his relatives. The family of the deceased wail over her. Her kinswomen (bánanyi) show their sorrow-anger by mistreating the clan wives (baǎjǎǎla), by smearing their bodies with mud, dressing them in basáki, and hitting them with stinging plants (bensěnsě). For the deceased is the baǎjǎǎla's "husband," that is, a kinswoman of their husbands. The baǎjǎǎla treat the widower and his relatives in the same way, because "their husband" has died among them.

The corpse is thus deposited in the hut of the head of the family. Each time that kinswomen who are married elsewhere arrive [428] to mourn over the deceased, the baǎjǎǎla forbid them

764 to enter the funeral hut. First they are required to go to the far end of the village, weeping for the deceased, to show their sorrow.

As I have said in the study cited, it often happens that after some time the lamentations slacken and the women keeping watch begin to chat. One day I was present during a quarrel on [578] this subject between the *bidnanyí* and the *baáfáála*. The former were reproaching the latter for not weeping any longer: "After all it is your husband," they said. The others replied, "It is your kinswoman; therefore it is up to you to weep. Are your eyes so dry that they no longer contain tears?"

Sometimes the husband and his close relatives do not participate in transferring the body, because they have not yet succeeded in collecting the necessary valuables. Actually it is entirely legitimate for them to stay at home in such a case, in order not to be exposed to endless discussions and the ridicule of the entire region. In other instances the husband's family belongs only to a small clan, and therefore they do not dare to appear in the village of the deceased. They are afraid that they will not be able to defend themselves properly against the ill treatment that would be inflicted upon them by the women married into the clan to which they go. For in fact these women would mistreat them by throwing mud at them or smearing them with it, and by striking their bodies with stinging plants called *bandánâ*. For they consider that the widower, whom, by extension, they also call their husband, and his close relatives have killed their husbands' kinswoman.

In such cases the corpse is brought by distant relatives of the husband. The *nkonga* apologizes for the husband to the parents-in-law and tells them that he will come later to settle everything. The clan of the deceased receives the corpse and continues to perform the last tributes to it. If the husband has remained in his own village only out of fear of ill treatment, [430] he often waits only until nightfall and then takes advantage of the darkness to follow his wife's corpse.

The corpse must remain in the head of the family's house for at least one night.

764 Before proceeding with the burial, the two families settle the question of funeral payments, which we are about to examine. A "farewell feast" is given by the clan of the deceased. The interment itself has no special features, so that it will suffice to refer the reader to the study of this subject that has been cited.

766 As we noted in Chapter VII, Article II, a husband can buy the corpse of his favorite. Unless the execution of this intention meets with some obstacle, the corpse is not transported to the favorite's native clan but is buried next to the husband's tomb in his clan cemetery. As a result, all that accompanies the transporting of the corpse is omitted, as is the funeral payment which is compensated for by the purchase of the corpse. The husband or his family only send the wife's relatives the payment that usually accompanies the news of her death.

Article IV. Funeral Payments

764 As we have just said, before the husband proceeds with the transportation of a deceased wife's corpse, he collects the valuables to pay the nkunji. This is the term (derived from the verb kunda, "to bury") that designates the various payments a widower is required to make to the clan of the deceased.

First of all, as soon as the death is known, the ndonga goes to the parents of the deceased and brings them the nsango (news), which consists of a copper ring or a knife. He presents them with these, saying: "Know that your daughter so-and-so has just died."

At every barrier the procession must cross to reach the village of the deceased, the husband must make payment of some object [431] (usually a knife or a ring) in order to obtain free passage. [584] The ndonga always serves as intermediary. These payments are called byɛ̂kɔ by'okâko or simply bokâko, loâlaka (barrier), or, among the Bombwanja, ifakâ yâ ekâlaki, "knife for felling (the barrier)."

The ndonga walks at the head of the funeral procession; he (or another bonambótswâ who takes his place) carries a spear

764 to which a piece of raffia cloth is tied. When the procession has crossed the last barrier, the official witness goes ahead and plants the spear in the roof of the head of the family's hut. Hence the name applied specifically to this spear: itúwansambá (from túwa, "to pierce," and nsambá "roof"). The spear signifies that the widower's family is not coming with evil intentions, but that they are moved by feelings of the greatest friendship -- wɛ̂ka te tɔ́fɔ́yé l'etumba; toɔ̂yá ndé ólotsíhela iláká y'ɔ̌na.

The piece of cloth is a sign of respect for the mother of the deceased, in memory of the pain she suffered in giving birth to her daughter and the care she exercised in her upbringing, and as consolation for the terrible blow that has come to her in the death of her child. She will wear this cloth after the end of mourning. If the mother has died before her daughter, this cloth goes to one of the mother's sisters, aunts, or other relatives, who is in some sense her substitute. It is therefore a payment to the mother's clan.

The spear and the cloth are usually designated by the common name likɔngɔ́ l'etóo, "spear and cloth." A knife, particularly an ingóndá, can be substituted for the cloth, but the name etóo is retained. Nowadays the cloth is no longer given, but a knife which is given the name etóo is always substituted for it. (1) Nevertheless, in memory of [432] the ancient custom, a piece of European cloth is often attached to the end of the spear.

When the corpse has been deposited in the head of the family's hut, the two clans greet each other in the usual fashion. The women continue to weep for some time. The husband's clan [262] go and sit at a little distance. Then the relatives of the deceased [431] instruct their wives to collect the presents to give the widower.

[286] 1. The reason for this substitution is, first of all, the greater value of the knife and, second, the near impossibility of obtaining raffia cloth (see Introduction).

764 These consist of various foods: manioc, bananas, smoked meat
431 or fish, caterpillars, salt, hens, etc., one or several dogs
[262] (bompángá) that are alive (mbwá éâ nkunja, "dog with hair") or
their value in specie (2 rings or 1 ring and an equivalent knife,
which for this purpose is called mbwá éâ baúmbá or éâ bakonga),
as well as a knife for killing and cutting up animals called loólola.
The biúnanyi and the baájâála each brings his part. Note that this
gift never includes vegetables (bimukɛ́lá).

When everything is collected and considered adequate, the
764 ndonga is called, together with the deceased's own sons, so that
584 they can thus give their opinion and later have a good basis for testimony. As remuneration for his services, the ndonga receives a payment (nyongo) of a bokósa fish or a botómba rat, as well as a bunch of bananas (for which a ring is sometimes substituted). With reference to this subject I should like to recount an interesting part of the negotiations at which I was present one day. The ndonga expressed his dissatisfaction with the fact that he was given only a single bokósa. "It is so little," he said, "in comparison with all the trouble I had to take. I had to settle the matter of the bride price; I had to reconcile man and wife when they quarreled; I had to intervene many times; I always had to run between the two clans; for many years I wore myself out without ever having any rest. And for all that trouble I get such small recompense." I was asked my opinion. I could only express approval of the ndonga's view. One of the relatives [433] of the deceased also considered him to be right: "He was always obliged to come and go between the two families; his voice has become hoarse from his endless interventions in palavers and quarrels; he well deserves that another bokósa be added." Everyone sided with our opinion, and the ndonga was satisfied.

After receiving his present, the ndonga detaches himself from the group. Together with the other banambótswá and any intelligent strangers who may be present and might be able to give an opinion to settle an incidental argument, he sits down between the two opposing clans, a slight distance from each.

764 584 All the payments must pass through the ndonga. He is the one who transmits the desired objects from one group to the other. He intervenes in the disputes that arise in order to settle them and re-establish peace. He explains the various points of view, elucidates some consideration whose significance the other group does not seem to fully comprehend, etc.

As has already been said many times, there can be several ndonga. Legally all of them can intervene personally or through their officially recognized representatives. Thus, several months ago (1933) at Bonjoku, Baémbe, wife of Ikomo of Besombó, was present at a nkunjí discussion. No one paid any attention to her. At one point she threw herself into the discussion by reprimanding the chief ndonga and the families involved, asking them on what basis they were excluding her from this affair. Did not her husband have the right to intervene? Was he not also a ndonga? Since he had gone fishing in the Jwalé, it was impossible for him to come. She could therefore legitimately substitute for him. Then why was [576] she being left out? She was quickly pacified, and the persons involved admitted that she was right and apologized for their forgetfulness and negligence.

764 584 431 The wives of the deceased's clan place the gifts of food at the ndonga's feet. The bokéné (the youngest) of the clan goes and explains to him what they are and for whom [434] the gifts are intended. (1) One portion goes to the bakalé of the deceased, that is, the baśjáála of the husband's clan; another portion goes to the baóme (the husbands), that is, to the widower and his family; a third part is set aside for kinswomen of the deceased who have come from villages into which they are married in order to be present at the funeral.

764 The clan of the deceased first asks the other clan "for news" (ßola sango). The latter reply that one of their members had

---

1. In the Nkundó hierarchy it is always the youngest who is charged with the execution of all such small tasks, at the behest of the head of the family.

764 married the daughter of the first clan, and she had lived happily with her husband, performed conjugal services for him, and had begotten children for him. Subsequently she fell ill, as they were informed at the time, and now God has taken her away and they have come to bring the corpse back to them. The wife's clan replies: "That is understood, but before we continue to ask each other for news, do accept the present (*lionja*) which we offer you." Thereupon the *ndonga* enumerates all that has been collected and passes it to the widower.

The foods thus given are a friendly welcoming gift, therefore they are not counted as a payment nor, furthermore, as part of the *nkomí*. Only the domestic animals are considered such. They can be eaten on the spot or kept alive. Since the prepared food is a present, it must be eaten on the spot. Theoretically, none of it may be taken home. If it is taken home for some reason or other, however, it is still forbidden to allow anyone to eat of it who was not present at the funeral gathering. As for the raw food, the recipients are free to carry it away if some is left over. 764 431

Disputes may arise on the subject of the dog -- such as one I witnessed one day. The presents offered included the equivalent of the value of a dog in rings rather than a living dog. [435] The head of the widower's family demanded a dog in flesh and blood. The reason he gave was that many of his *bánanyí* had come to the funeral and, as an expression of his thanks for their condolences, he wanted to give them a dog. As he would not yield, the wife's family had to replace the two rings with the animal demanded. 764 578

Then the *ndonga* explains to the family of the deceased that he has already brought the *nsango*, the *lilongâ*, and the *etóo*. Nowadays it happens that the spear and the cloth are not given until this time, especially if the families refrain from erecting barriers and fighting. In such cases the payments of passage are made at the same time. If the two settlements are very near each other, the people are even beginning to omit the sending of the *nsango*; a *bosambótswâ* goes and confirms the news of the death, which is already expected and which the *lokolé* will just have announced.

● 764 Then the members of the wife's family, one by one, demand various payments. Every request arouses discussion, for it is fashionable to prolong these palavers. One side and then the other examines the pros and cons. The widower's family acts as if they needed a little urging, for if they did not, the ceremony would no longer resemble a palaver (which it really is) but would seem like a simple payment of no importance.

When the wife's family has enumerated the presents of food that have been offered and accepted and the payments that have already been made, they begin to ask that the other nkunjí valuables be brought. The widower's clan explain their point of view, and a member of the wife's clan immediately begins to beat the gong (lokolé), which is nearby. It is no longer possible to understand a word of what the husband's spokesman is saying. Full of fortitude and an African's patience, the latter continues his discourse. But finally he realizes that he has to stop. He therefore asks that the lokolé be silenced. Naturally, he has no success. The wife's clan dryly replies: "If you want us to stop, bring us a ring." [436] Thus the husband is forced to pay, and when he does the noise of the lokolé stops at once, and the discussion can continue. For this reason that first payment is called lokolé. (1)

1. The pressure exercised to obtain it is called isesenganya yá lokolé. It should be compared with the identical practice at the time of the payment of the bride price (Chapter II, Article V, 3).

Then a young and vigorous relative of the deceased leaves his group. He acts angry, strikes his hands, and defies the widower's clan: "Send one of your men to fight me, for I am furious that you have allowed my kinswoman to die of starvation." He is answered with many protestations: "We are friends; we have no hostile feelings. It is not our fault that our wife is dead." The first speaker repeats his statement and his challenge, and continues to reproach them with the death until he is given a ring called bonkɔ́ta, meaning "starvation."

● 264 Another young member of the clan of the deceased seats himself midway between the two groups. An etáka (a wooden fork) is placed on his neck, and he says: "This is how you would have treated me if my sister had left you. I ran the risk of having to suffer because of her and you. Compensate me for that." And he does not go away until he has received a ring, which for that reason is called etáka. (2)

> 2. This representation only approximates reality, for the young man would not have been treated thus. The wife herself is the one who would be placed under the etáka. But the young man represents the entire clan as a whole.

Subsequently, various payments each consisting of a ring or a knife are demanded with many imitative and symbolic gestures (in the manner described for the two above). They are:

ikɛmɔ (besɔ́ɔnga l'ikɛmɔ), because of the potions that the deceased prepared for her husband.

bantsingɔ́ -- the packages of food that she cooked in ashes for him. [437]

baónda -- the pieces of palm nut she prepared for him. (These pieces are represented by a few little lumps of earth placed on leaves.)

nkɔ́ngi -- the eyelashes she plucked out for him.

bɔkɛngɔ -- because she cut his hair (-kɛnga).

nsili -- the lice she removed from his head. (Note that this payment can be combined with the preceding one and can then consist of a single kɔnga for both.)

bompilo -- the hot baths she heated for him.

mouka -- baskets of fish, because she went fishing for him.

beóngɔ́ -- the litter on which the corpse was transported.

bekɔmbɔ -- the creepers with which the corpse was tied.

betówa (itówɛ́) -- the banana tree trunks on which the corpse rested. (The corpse, in a mat or coffin, is set on two banana tree trunks placed crosswise.)

●364 *bikofo* -- the heavy branches upon which lay the bed in which the woman died.

lŏngo -- a hoe (real or replaced by a ring) to dig the grave.

ifaká -- a knife (ditto) to dig the grave.

yĕndá -- an axe (ditto) to cut the roots that would be found at the site of the grave. (1)

[781] 1, One day I saw the iron bar given as *yĕndá* refused by the wife's family because it was the same one they themselves had given to help the husband pay the *nkanga* (doctor-sorcerer) for his divination (*bolíngó*) during the wife's illness.

bombémbé wă nyang'éy'ŏna -- a belt for the mother of the deceased, so that she can wear it during mourning.

bosá w'îlɔ́ká -- the head of the corpse, in honor of those who wail over the deceased while sitting near her head, that is, [438] to say, the very close relatives. This is the last and largest payment, consisting of 3 to 5 rings.

All these payments together comprise the *nkunji* and, with the exception of the *nsango*, the *likangá l'etóo*, and the *byŏko by'ŏkáko*, they are a kind of *beóngo*. (1) Not all the *beóngo* are equally large. Therefore, all of them are not always claimed. The smallest ones -- *bakamo*, *bamtsingá*, *bafodo*, *nkóngi*, *bokongo*, *mili*, *bompólo*, *mpaka* -- are often omitted.

Even some of the others may be left out. The matter depends not only on the friendliness of feeling between the two groups, but chiefly on the number of children to which the woman in question has given birth. If the woman was sterile, her family is less demanding. But if the deceased had several children, they do not yield, arguing that their daughter was a source of great profit to her husband's clan.

1. See Chapter II, Article V.

In every case at least a few befógo in addition to the
764 bombémbé and the botsá w'ĩlaká are always claimed. The latter payments can never be omitted. The belt is a payment made exclusively to the mother and by rights it goes to the mother's clan.

The higher the amount of these funeral payments, the more
769 the son-in-law is welcome. The alliance is perfect. Therefore,
606 607 not only will the wife's family reciprocate his fine feelings by adding a few more dogs, but in addition the son-in-law will be well received and successful in his application when, after the period of mourning, he brings the sum of the ibólełko in order to obtain a substitute for the deceased. (2) In addition, if the relations with his in-laws have been excellent, he will easily obtain the substitute in advance, so that she can care for him during the entire mourning period.

---

2. See Chapter III, Article IV.

There are severe sanctions against the omission of the
769 689 funeral payments. [439] Neglecting to send the notification gift alone is enough to set these in motion. They are: the breaking off of the affinal relationship; the loss of the children, since the father's offense is equal to a repudiation; and finally molestation of the culprit by the spirit of the deceased. Thus at Bokátola (Bompela) one can find two boys, Botétsí and Ikembá, the children of Bonyongela of Ilángá and Etáka of Bokátola. They have now been incorporated into their mother's clan, because their father did not send a nsango. On stronger grounds the same is true for the whole nkunjí.

Article V. The Social Position of a Widow

In Chapter III, Articles II and IV, we have already noted
768 587 that in the eyes of the Nkundó, the death of the husband does not dissolve a marriage. The union continues, and even after mourning it is not broken ipso facto. Even to have the woman taken and treated as a wife by another man is not enough to end it. As

567 Everywhere there were also abducted women and female
439 slaves; these were simply sold. Furthermore women were bought
562 and sold with women [as payment]. Also women who were inherited
and no longer in the hands of their family were sold by their second,
third, or other subsequent husband. In all of these cases, the family
no longer came into consideration for the bride price. One would
have to stretch the point in order to consider the sums paid in these
cases as a bride price, and consequently as a native custom which
one must respect.

562 Or one should have to assume that such a native woman re-
439 mains a "bride" for her whole lifetime. It will be said that the
woman consented to her sale by one man to the other.

Often this was indeed the case, but not always by any means,
[858] for children and slaves were also sold. Even the consent of the woman
did not prevent it from being a sale; her consent was rather an extra
transaction that simplified the sale of a human article of trade. It
still remains woman trade.

•764 The Inheritance. Upon the death of a polygynist, the burial
ceremony was conducted according to the class and rank of the de-
567 ceased. One or two or several [538] slaves were killed and buried
with the polygynist in the same grave. Sometimes the arms and legs
of those male and female slaves were broken, and then they were
buried alive in the same grave with the body.

When these slaves still had family, it might happen that the
family members, having learned of the unfortunate lot of their rela-
tive, would hasten from faraway districts to buy him or her free if it
was not yet too late. Several Negroes have told us of those heart-
breaking scenes at which they were present as children. The mourn-
[765] ing and the lamenting over the dead lasted from a week to a month.

768 The eldest son immediately succeeded his father in position
428 and immediately took one of the wives of his father.

587 The other sons divided among them the lances and knives of
their father.

If the deceased had left no son, or if he was still too young,
the oldest brother succeeded the deceased. All of the wives had
to remain in their own home, except the wife who was immediately
taken by the eldest son. They were obliged to await the day of the
distribution. This day was put off for from one to four months.

596 614 latter group. Another factor which reminds us of the wife's continuing membership in her original group is the connection, never completely severed, between the groups related by marriage, illustrated by the practice of gifts and counter-gifts which are all part of the bride price and the dowry. [764] When she dies, the wife is buried in the soil of her group. In addition, the group membership of the wife is transferred to the children, although this does not have the same effects in economic and political terms. [611] Matrilineal descent is important in relation to marriage restrictions, certain avoidance practices which are passed on through the wives, and also certain privileges. Quite a large number of persons has settled permanently in the group of their mother or that of their grandmothers.

The decisive factor that makes the term "large family" unsuitable is the "eternal" character of the A-E groups of the Ekonda. However, the subdivisions of the A-groups which live together in a common homestead (see p. 10) may be regarded as large families in the sense used by Thurnwald, Kirchhoff, and Murdock.

Kinship Group

614 121 In the definitions of the term "family" quoted above, we already learned something about Thurnwald's concept of a kinship group, but there is an additional reference to the technical term "kinship group" ["Sippe"]" (p. 17 f.) (24):

24. Menschliche Gesellschaft, Vol. 4.

"...A kinship group is defined as a clan (q. v.) which is not politically independent. Usually the loss of independence is caused by the distribution of the people of the clan among the various settlements. A kinship group is held together by the conciousness of being descended from the same ancestors and by their common cult of the ancestors. The kinship group is of special importance for the regulation of marriage (q. v.). -- A kinship group may be divided into kinship subgroups (large

M
303 sides of this square and held in place by a binding of twisted
285 raffia fibers. The sides are then plaited by the simplest method,
that is, with the horizontal band weaving in and out of the vertical
thongs. As all of these molds always have approximately the
M same height and diameter, the ngula cones are both similar in
303 shape and quite constant in weight. The natives use them a great
deal as trade goods. In some regions the ngula cone has become
[436] a veritable currency, with a standard value from one tribe to
M another. [170] A market is organized regularly when steamers
[439] call at Mushie, and there the people of the interior exchange the
products of their industries for the imported objects brought by the
Blacks who work for the Whites. Ngula cones are among the principal
items of trade and bring a very high price. In the Oshwe
region, the old chief Kua Kua was a great ngula trader. He
came by regularly with four or five of his wives, bringing various
products from the region between the Kasai and the Lukenie to
exchange for the ngula made in the Lokoro region.

D Throughout the central Congo regions, the ngula used for
303 trade has the shape of an elongated truncated cone. Among the
Basongo-Meno and farther east, on the other hand, ngula most
often is shaped in a ball. The native of these regions often uses
it to decorate his pottery and wooden objects and to dye the
fibers of cloth used for decoration. He keeps it in cosmetic boxes
carved from takula wood and usually decorated with very artistic
designs. He also uses it to color his hair. [Ed., a passage from
the middle of page 170 to the last paragraph, page 171, is
omitted.]

M
[171] Aside from ngula, the native sometimes smears his
302 body with a type of white clay quite frequently found in the river
789 beds. [172] The native calls it mpembe. Its use is far from
being as widespread as that of ngula, and we believe that the
native associates it with magic power rather than ornamentation.
Mpembe is used chiefly by the peoples of the Congo-Kasai, Lake
Leopold II, and Lukenie regions, up to the region of the Batitu.

M We never saw a native smear his whole body with it. The
[765] few women in mourning that we saw were covered with a grayish-yellow
mud and not with mpembe. We believe, moreover, that
the use of mpembe is reserved to the chief, his wives, and perhaps

606 the act of procreation on the part of one of them. Perhaps this idea is latent in the native mind, or at least is at the basis of this rule. The fact that this hypothesis applies only to the wife's mother-in-law [mother?] does not weaken it; for in native eyes [291] the other instances are entirely without importance. (1)

1. See, for example, Chapter II, Article X, and Chapter V, Articles II and III.

606 292 Another regulation pertaining to the mother-in-law requires that she -- and all the women who are given the same title in current usage -- may appear in her son-in-law's village only when dressed in a *boleleke*. A *boleleke* is a banana leaf, either green or dried, which has been torn in several places perpendicularly to the large ● [765] central rib, and constitutes the first and principal sign of mourning. Moreover, Batswa women must also dress in this manner before entering a Baotó settlement. The following reason is given for the rule in the second instance: a Botswá woman's dress consists of a *lolímba*, a belt of small braided ropes about 10 centimeters long. Although in ordinary positions the *lolímba* provides fairly good protection, it is not considered adequate to really stop all indiscreet looks. And it is popularly believed that if a Bootó sees a Botswá woman's genital organs, she will die. Might we conclude from this last explanation that there is a fundamental connection between the reasons that necessitate the wearing of a *boleleke* in these three instances? Or is the mother-in-law to imitate a Botswá woman and thus show a certain subordination to her son-in-law?

2. Female relatives

607 837 As long as they are free, that is, as long as no bride-price payment has been made for them, a woman's sisters or cousins are considered by her husband as his wives, and he calls them so (*baálí*). This term is applied only to relatives of a generation below that of the true wife or to members of the same generation who are younger than she and with whom marriage [292] is permitted. It is therefore never

595x Thus a favorite is in every way the object of her husband's [431] preference. He divides with her all presents he receives, while the other wives are not included in this expression of generosity. [853] But in the matter of sexual relations, apart from his trips, he has obligations to all of them. The most he can do is to add one night to the usual number (see below).

The co-wives adapt fairly well to this preferential system. Nevertheless, there is a good deal of backbiting on account of it. It may also happen that one or another of the wives is jealous to the point of being unable to bear it. [347] The signs of her rancor [546] multiply, and a divorce results in the end.

The nkɔ́ndɛ́ does not have to go into mourning for anyone ● [765] other than her husband. Even then she does not remove her clothing. But she does not have to abide by mourning regulations either for her parents or her own children.

Like the other wives, the favorite is passed on through inheri- [587] tance. But she cannot be taken as a bosɔ́lɔ́ by anyone except an elder brother of the deceased.

595x 192 Nkɔ́ndɛ́ is the specific term by which a favorite is designated. Its etymology is unknown to me. The word is used everywhere, although the Injɔ́lɔ́ often say lokílo (whose etymology is equally obscure). Another less common (older?) term known to the Bonkoso, Bongili, Wángatá, and Bakáala is bongilí or bongijí (1). In addition to the term ikundaka, already cited, there is also the word ebɛ́lɛ́kɛ́, a generic term meaning "preference, predilection" or, when applied to a child or a slave, "an object one does not want to dispose of." The favorite is also called ɛ́fɔ́kɛ́tɛ́mɛ́, "untouchable," because other men may not have relations with her.

---

1. The Ekonda call the favorite bokɔ́lo. The Elanga of Losanganya say bofilí, a name borne by certain women among the Nkundɔ́ between Jwalɛ́ and Boloko. Might this also be an old name?

152 593x 764 rough behavior, only strangers married to village men (those known as bɔ́afɔ̂ɔ́la). This ill treatment is often extended to close relatives of the widower, that is, to those whom the women in question call bɔ́ome, "potential husbands," never to fathers and higher relatives. (1) The purpose of this practice seems to be to intensify, by physical pain, the sorrow caused by death. In addition, provocatively obscene words, gestures, and movements remind the widower that from then on he must be continent, as described *in extenso* in the study cited above.

● 765 Afterwards, relatives dress the widower in a lisɔ́ki, a banana leaf which is torn all over horizontally. For all other mourning garments, as well as for all regulations and prohibitions that apply to all cases, see the detailed study.

The ill treatment described is not inflicted on the widow. It is meted out exclusively to men.

The general rules pertaining to seclusion apply to a widower; in fact they are especially severe for a man. His kinswomen prepare his simple meals. However, if his relations with his father-in-law were excellent, the latter sends a woman [420] to him [587] who will attend to his needs. She often becomes his wife when, after the lifting of mourning, he brings the ibɔ́leɔ́ko (Chapter III, Article IV).

During the entire first period of seclusion, he cannot go anywhere, at least ostensibly. If he needs to go out, he must go through the back. If he wants to visit a relative or friend, he must go behind the huts, in the banana grove, even if it is evening. In any case, he may not leave the village. Such was the ancient law, though nowadays it is observed less and less.

Furthermore, he cannot have the slightest contact with any woman who is not a relative. He cannot even shake her hand, greet her out loud, or look at her even in passing.

---

1. See Chapter V, Article IV, 1, no. 3, and Chapter VI, Article VI.

595x She does no work in the farm or kitchen. She always has an ebísa to wait on her. If her family has no member they can let her have, she will borrow an ebísa from a distant relative or a friend.

A nkɔ́ndɛ́ does not travel on foot; she is carried in a hammock [412] (hunting net). Her husband accompanies her on foot, however. But [558] this was done only for a true nkɔ́ndɛ́ of a rich man, and the custom is disappearing today.

A favorite may not leave her husband, even to go and see her parents. In the past some men were so jealous of their favorites [574] that they would not allow them to satisfy even their most private needs unless they themselves or some sentinel (usually a botswá) stood watch. A man could not even go into the vicinity of her hut, which is built just behind the husband's shed. For although the husband is sometimes tolerant of the passions of his other wives, he always shows [152] an intransigeant jealousy [346] in relation to his favorite. He never travels without having her accompany him.

The favorite has the honor of performing small personal serv- [585] ices for her husband; she cuts his hair, helps him in the removal of body hair, scratches his pustules from ringworm or prickly heat, anoints him with oil, paints him with ngóla, and, in a word, performs all the tasks connected with his appearance and hygiene.

595x Out of love for his favorite, her husband can buy her corpse •766 for the price of a slave (in kind or in money). By doing so he obtains the right to have it buried beside his own while those of the other wives must be buried with their native clans. That is why in some regions a husband calls his favorite his ikundaka (from kunda "to bury"). Nevertheless, if her husband dies before she does, his heirs may not trouble themselves about his wishes and no longer require that the favorite be buried in their cemetery. That is what happened to Bongóla of Bongíli, whose husband Ikilinganya of Bongangɛ́ (Boóndé) had paid the price of two slaves for this right. When the husband has [224] killed large game, the favorite, like the bomátsa, has the right to receive her personal predetermined portion (boando). Her part is the neck or a chop, which in her absence, goes to the sons or their wives. The other wives do not have the same right; each one obtains only an ordinary piece (liondo).

Before proceeding with the burial, the two families settle 764 the question of funeral payments, which we are about to examine. A "farewell feast" is given by the clan of the deceased. The interment itself has no special features, so that it will suffice to refer the reader to the study of this subject that has been cited.

As we noted in Chapter VII, Article II, a husband can 766 buy the corpse of his favorite. Unless the execution of this intention meets with some obstacle, the corpse is not transported to the favorite's native clan but is buried next to the husband's tomb in his clan cemetery. As a result, all that accompanies the transporting of the corpse is omitted, as is the funeral payment which is compensated for by the purchase of the corpse. The husband or his family only send the wife's relatives the payment that usually accompanies the news of her death.

Article IV. Funeral Payments

764 As we have just said, before the husband proceeds with the transportation of a deceased wife's corpse, he collects the valuables to pay the *nkunjí*. This is the term (derived from the verb *kunda*, "to bury") that designates the various payments a widower is required to make to the clan of the deceased.

First of all, as soon as the death is known, the *ndonga* goes to the parents of the deceased and brings them the *nsango* (news), which consists of a copper ring or a knife. He presents them with these, saying: "Know that your daughter so-and-so, has just died."

At every barrier the procession must cross to reach the village of the deceased, the husband must make payment of some object [431] (usually a knife or a ring) in order to obtain free passage. [594] The *ndonga* always serves as intermediary. These payments are called *byföŋ by'ökáko* or simply *lokáko*, *lokiaka* (barrier), or, among the Bombwanja, *ifaká yí ekálaki*, "knife for felling (the barrier)."

The *ndonga* walks at the head of the funeral procession; he (or another *bonambótswá* who takes his place) carries a spear

847
[84]

already more "civilized," such as the neighborhood of Coquilhatville and the Losangenya region.

847
848
Attention should be drawn to the danger of an increase in abortions for a new reason, namely the shame of giving birth outside of wedlock. As we have seen in Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 3, premarital pregnancies have existed since time immemorial without resulting either in remorse or in palavers. Through the teaching of Christian morality, the feeling of shame must sooner or later be extended to this phenomenon. In explaining the evil of fornication, care should therefore be taken to insist on the fact that transgressing the Fifth Commandment by abortion is a far greater evil.

847
845
Voluntary abortion is not considered a moral error by the Nkundó. (2) In their eyes an imperfectly formed fetus, not viable,

2. An attitude which also exists in Europe at the present time, according to Haesecour in Kultuurleven, Vol. 6, no. 1, p. 21 (1935), and the brochure by Prof. D. Schoeckaert quoted there.

847
[764]
[776]
is not yet a man. It is only a human being in the process of formation, in potentia. Hence the custom of burying the aborted child in the [468] hut or quite near it. Thus the spirit responsible for the pregnancy will see that it is respected and repeat its benevolent action. (1)

1. Others explain this custom by saying that the fetus already has a soul which remains near the tiny body and will take the first opportunity to re-enter the mother's body.

But if it is voluntary an abortion is always a wrong against family and society, for it deprives the family of a member on whom

must go to the *mwdale* for their fight, this being the location of the houses belonging to the sons of the *nkumu*. The penalty for breaking this law is a fine, and if no fine were forthcoming hanging used to be the alternative. If a quarrel arises elsewhere and one party wishes to avoid fighting, he may retire to the *nsaga* and thus be safe. No trees in the *nsaga* may be climbed. There are, however, privileged classes exempt from all such rules, and these embrace a good many people. Thus, the mother of twins, twins, Batwa, *nsami*, and all members of the *mokonda* and *elopo* are exempt from the laws of the *nsaga*. If any of these commit acts which are illegal for those coming under the law, they are not held guilty, but their actions will not be condoned; they will be considered breaches of good conduct, and will be dealt with informally; the parties will be quietly reprimanded, and adjured to observe the proprieties of conduct. For outsiders breaking the laws of the *nsaga*, what corresponds to a warrant is necessary. It is necessary to catch the culprit in the act and hale him before the *nkumu*. The *nkumu* himself cannot do this, nor can any of the *elopo*; it must be done by one of the *mokonda*, and so if the *nkumu* sees someone infringing the law he will try to get one of the *mokonda* on the spot in a hurry in order to catch the offender. 624 689 [645] [672] [624] [694]

In war,[1] it is the *nsiosi e ole* who is most active in preparations, but the *nkumu* will accompany his party to battle, keeping well in the rear, and surrounded by good fighters. He does not wear his *nsanda* but puts on the informal hat. If an *nkumu* were captured, he would never be tortured or killed as were other prisoners, unless he specifically sought such a fate. He could be ransomed, and his captors would beseech him to let his people ransom him, but in many cases an *nkumu* would invite death rather than endure the shame of being yielded up as a prisoner of war. 624 726 [727]

An *nkumu* is always addressed by a double clap of the hands, and will not reply to anyone rude enough to speak to him first. In answer to the clap he replies with a word of wisdom expressed in an aphorism or proverb. Such a reply, however, is common to all elders, who have their favourite aphorisms ready for any who pay them special honour. Anything the *nkumu* says must be answered not by the customary *ale bolo* (even so) which ordinary people use, but with the special word, *binga*, which is reserved exclusively for replying to an *nkumu*, and means the same thing. 624 576

When the hour of death approaches, an *nkumu* is attended by his Batwa. It is a rule that he must not die a natural death, and near the end, while he is still conscious and can still speak, all 'free men' clear out and leave the Batwa pygmies to their task of tying the *nkumu* very tightly with the fibrous yam vines known as *nsekiki*. Often this severe lashing in the sitting posture, known as *iliau*, is sufficient to finish the *nkumu* off, but sometimes the work is expedited by twisting his neck.[2] Then it is announced that he is dead, *asiliea*, this being in contradistinction to the customary phrase *awkwa ankulo* used of the death of ordinary people. While the latter means 624 763 [563]

---

[1] Owing to the lack of tribal cohesion, warfare was not on any considerable scale. The method of warfare consisted in sending groups of young men to fight first, the elders only joining in when one side began to get the worst of the fray. Victors and vanquished in such fights were designated 'husband' and 'wife' respectively, and members of the one group were free to come and go in the villages of the other, and even to help themselves to food. In future wars 'husband' and 'wife' were supposed to combine against their common foe.

[2] Besides *nkumu*, elderly and rich men, fathers and mothers of twins, and twins are buried in the *iliau* or sitting posture, in contradistinction to the recumbent position which is the customary one used for ordinary people and slaves. [764]

825 literally that the deceased has hanged the heart, the former is used of a tree which leans over and falls from a great cut at its base.

629 On the announcement of the death, an expert drummer drums out the news. 766 There will be at least four drums of the type known as *lokole*, and a *nsogo*.[1] The four 594 drums are called by the names, *Ejende*, having the 'biggest voice', that is a deep 202 bass note, *Mongye*, having a higher note, *Mongende*, a high pitched note, and *Mandate*, having a very high penetrating note. To these four drums others are added; if the *nkumu* himself did not possess sufficient, they would be borrowed from the surrounding villages, and their notes matched with those of the first three drums, being beaten with them in their turn. *Mandate* is beaten simultaneously with *Ejende*, giving a rhythmic tattoo. When the news of the death has been sent out on *Ejende*, the funeral drumming commences, as follows:

539

Mongende.	Botiangama w'Amba lokolo,
Mongye.	Nsala ikim, onsngonoko,
Ejende.	Tokund' *ilenge* mokom' o nyama,
	Ondodokoko amange,
	Lobanga lokenda mondo,
	Bikeko lokenda lokolo.
Nsogo.	Tokilako nkoi nkonge,
	Tokilako nkoi nkonge, &c.

The English and the interpretation are as follows:

Mongende. A scattering of Amba, the snail. (The mother of twins, always called Amba, here gives her name to the snail because of her prolific progeny, which, upon being introduced to the world, scatter, while the mother dies. So the death of the *nkumu* will cause a scattering of his many wives and children.)

Mongye. Feathers fall; pick them up. (That is to say, for your arrow shafts, for if you don't, and come back later, the wind will have scattered them and you won't find them. So while the *nkumu* was alive it was the time for his children to learn his teachings so that when palavers came after his death they would be well acquainted with his wisdom and know how to settle them.)

Ejende. We are burying the *ilenge*, husband of animals, You have just eaten *amange*, The chin looks up at the ridge pole, The jaw bones look up at the sky. [825] (The *ilenge* is an animal much prized for its fat meat; the *nkumu* always gets his share when it is killed, and the skin is made into carrying straps for infants, and into belts. [563] Batwa are prohibited the use of it for any purpose. It is therefore fitting to liken the *nkumu* to the *ilenge*. *Amange* (sing. *lilange*) is the equivalent of a snack. When a woman brings her cassava from the swamp where it has been soaking for several [264] days, her husband may be too hungry to wait the long hours required to cook it, [252] so to appease his hunger his wife takes a piece or two of the unprepared root, splits it in two, places salt between, wraps it in a *lolondo* leaf and roasts it in the hot ashes, where it is quickly cooked. So the *nkumu* just had time to eat a few *amange*; he didn't wait for the big cooking; his life was suddenly cut off.)

Nsogo. Don't pull out the leopard's eyelashes. (That is, while he is alive; now he is dead one can disregard his power.)

---

[1] A *lokole* is a slit gong made from a hollowed log; its two notes are produced by striking the two lips of the slit. A *nsogo* is a hollowed log, open at one end, across which is stretched a [illegible] hide.

This funeral drumming is kept up for a long time, off and on for days, and is very 624
stirring in its rhythm. While it is going on, the elders congregate in an *elonga*. They 766
fast and have nothing to do with their wives during this time. The *elaje* is mourning,
and the [illegible] may be likewise mourning, but for the others it is a time of rejoicing, [533]
and also of the relaxing of moral restraints. It is an occasion for dancing by both
Batwa and 'freemen', the former regarding this as a time for special rejoicing, [535]
for the *nkumu* was their master and now he is dead they are no longer under restraint.
They are free to take any of their master's goods and even to snatch blankets off the [563]
corpse. Men and women do not dance together; the women, taking some of their
husbands' weapons, go off in one direction, and the men, arrayed in finery, dance
at the other end of the village.

While the *nkumu* is still unburied and the drumming is going on, the [illegible] look for a successor among the *elaje*. Often this man will, as we have seen, have already been designated. The [illegible], Batwa, and others in the village make up a party, and attired in war finery go off with their weapons as though after a man they wished to kill. As they go they sing:

[illegible] [539]
[illegible]
Hawk, thou hast destroyed the nest,
Where art thou going to sleep?

Before catching the real successor they catch one or another in fun, singing this song. The man of course refuses to be *nkumu*, and the point of the song is that because of his refusal the *elaje* no longer fulfils its function of supplying the [illegible] with *nkumu* and therefore ceases to be of any use to them. If this man by refusing thus destroys the family nest, where will they sleep?

Finally, after this fun, the real successor is caught, his face daubed with black, and [307]
the group sing:

[illegible] [539]
The cunning animal is hiding, reveal the tortoise.

Thus the new *nkumu*, like a cunning animal, is hiding, but when discovered, like the tortoise, he will not try to run away. The whole group conducts the new *nkumu* to the *[illegible]* and sits all night guarding him. Earlier on the day of the actual interment of the dead *nkumu*, the new one is installed with ceremonies as already described.

On the day the *nkumu* dies his people scatter to other villages to look for slaves 766
for the executions on the day of the burial. Slave-owners or husbands of unwanted
wives ask quietly how much money there is for the man or woman, accept the agreed 567
amount, and tell the buyers to go quietly and catch the slave or wife before anything 762
is suspected and an escape is made. In this connection we may note two classes of 582
wives, *bojiko* and *[illegible]*. A third class, *[illegible]*, acquired by the payment of a very
small bride price, was not nearly as common formerly as at present and may be passed
by. A *bojiko* was a slave wife acquired by capture in war or stolen. If loved by her
husband she will take her place practically on an equality with the members of the
village, but she may be killed, for she is her husband's possession, 'his money' is
the native expression. An *[illegible]* is a wife for whom a very high bride price has been
paid, obliging her family to give wives to the other family in perpetuity, supplying

766 a successor to replace a deceased woman, and thus maintaining the balance between 587 the two families. Such wives were seldom killed, for they had relatives who cared for them and would object, and who had the power to do so by refusing to 782 fulfil their obligations and by retaining the bride price already received. The group 562 of men and women gathered together for execution thus comprised males and *bapika* women from the 'free' group (*bato*, as applied to all men and women not Batwa), and Batwa men and women whose owners had consented to their death. It sometimes happened that a man, seeing a woman among this group who took his fancy, might obtain her by paying for her in money or substituting one of his own slaves.

In some cases the executioner, *bonsala*, was chosen from among the family of the 766 dead *nkumu*, in others he was selected from among the whole group of people over 782 which the *nkumu* held sway. The man having been chosen, the knife is brought out of the house where it has been kept by some elder. This, a blade some sixteen [412] inches in length, two-edged, decorated by alternating longitudinal lines of polished and blackened steel and inserted in a wooden handle, is sharpened on one edge, carefully wrapped in a plantain leaf, and laid away for use on the following day.

At dawn the prisoners are taken to the water and washed to clean them, inland towns accomplishing this purpose by dragging them up and down the village in the dew-drenched grass tied by a liana. The prisoners then are arranged in a V shape, the open end nearest the spot where the *nkumu's* body is sitting in state. Low seats are made by resting a stick in the forks of two perpendicular ones, and this cross bar is straddled by the victim. His hands are tied behind his back and his head tied to a sapling securely fixed at one end in the ground, the other bent down sufficiently to allow for tying the head with considerable tension on the rope. When all is thus arranged an expert drummer begins to pound out a rhythmic beat, and the ceremony of handing over the knife takes place.

The executioner of the day is dressed in finery but no camwood powder is evident, for it is a time of mourning and not of rejoicing. He wears a hat with many feathers, a vine encircles his waist, and bracelets of the same his arms. Then the man who last occupied the position of executioner comes forward. An elder has already brought the knife wrapped in its leaf and also a heap of ash on a leaf, both of which are placed on the ground. The old executioner picks up the knife while the new one faces him. The former demonstrates with gestures how he used to go about his work, the motions, the attitudes, the fine arts of the task. Even though the executioner of the day may have had previous experience, this part of the ceremony must be gone [516] through. Then, holding the knife aloft, the instructor raises his right leg at right angles to his body, bends it at the knee so that the shin hangs perpendicularly, and the new executioner passes underneath it, returning the same way. He now faces the old executioner, who lays the knife in his own hands, arms outstretched and palms open, the handle resting in his right palm, the blade in his left. The new man, facing his instructor, places his outstretched and open palms on the shoulders of the other, draws his hands down his arms, finally coming to the knife, which, because of its position is thus received, handle in the left hand, blade in the right. Releasing his right-hand grasp of the blade, he stoops, sprinkles the blade with some of the ash, then rubs his right hand in the dirt to remove all slippery sweat. Then still

782
766

grasping the knife with his left hand, with his free right hand he drains a gourd of palm wine to gain courage, hits the nearest victim on the head with the empty gourd, then transfers the knife to his right hand. He is now ready for his work which he proceeds to do methodically, sustained by the heady wine and the rhythm of the drum. When he had finished one of the lines, a pause would be made to bring out the body for burial. Just before this is done an armed band rushes down the path, returns, goes up in the other direction, then returns; this is said by some to ward off any spirits which might be about. The *nkumu* is now brought out by the Batwa slaves.[1] His grave, a circular hole with a crypt in one side of it, its entrance facing west, had been previously prepared. Few people in the Bongindo villages knew or had seen the actual burying place of an *nkumu*. While the corpse was carried to the grave followed by a crowd, the executioner finished his work. Those who stayed behind took the bodies of the decapitated men and women and divided them among all the participants of the funeral who would subsequently devour everything. [illegible]

Accompanying the funeral procession to the grave were the *ndil*, one or more men or women who were destined to accompany the *nkumu* to his grave and to the other world beyond. At the burial of an *nkumu* witnessed in 1930 at which the semblances of some of the old rites were carried out, a party of armed men contested the right of the procession to approach the grave, there was a mock battle for a few minutes between two bands of the funeral party, and then the procession gained right of way. At the grave-side the legs and sometimes the arms of one *ndil* were broken by heavy clubs to prevent him from escaping. Then seated on the ground the body of the *nkumu* would be placed on the knees of this one, whose arms would be placed round the *nkumu* and securely fastened by driving a peg right through both wrists. Sometimes two *ndil* were thus used. If the number of victims was sufficient, others would be buried alive too, being placed in the grave in the recumbent supine position, with the corpse on top of them, its weight being sufficient, with the earth filling in the grave, to prevent escape. [illegible] The *nkumu* was now ready for burial and was placed in the crypt, facing west.[2] The relations of the *nkumu* approach, they pluck the leaves and stem of a juicy bush known as [illegible] and chewing it, expectorate ceremonially on the body while they address it in language somewhat as follows: [illegible] 'You are going to leave us now, we are mourning, for you were a good and wise man, your discernment in matters of justice was without parallel, &c. . . . we wish that you may be happy where you go, have many wives, beget many children, lack not for meat. But don't take with you our power to beget children, leave us also some of this wisdom of yours, for what you were, we would be.' This prayer over, the [illegible] would be slipped off the head of the corpse and replaced by the informal hat, all done so dexterously that the bare head was not seen. The entrance to the [illegible]

---

[1] The body was supposed to have remained in state for seven to nine days, but actually it was buried privately soon after death, a dummy being set up with the [illegible] on its head, and the succeeding ceremonies being conducted with only the dummy in the place of the actual body. The inland villages however did allow the body to remain unburied for the long period, the widows being forced to keep watch in the same house. The Bongindo buried their *nkumu* generally in their houses or the spot where they had been enthroned to rest, burying the dummy at some other spot farther off.

[illegible]

[2] All burials have particular regard to this east-west position, those buried in the recumbent position having the feet to the west. The native explanation is that this allows the spirit of the departed to follow the path of the sinking sun.

764 crypt would then be braced by stakes in order to leave it as a hollow chamber, and
764 the hole leading down to it filled in with earth.

For a month or two after the burial the festivities and orgies continued. Women
764 would be hanged to create some diversion, but those hanged were not eaten. Decapi-
762 tations would continue. According to the informants only slaves brought in from
a distance would have to be tied to prevent their escape. The slave members of the
567 household of the dead *nkumu* would await their turn stoically, content to die that
[152] they might accompany their master in his journey to the land of spirits. This may
be true but scarcely seems possible. Still another diversion in the funeral orgies was killing in the manner known as [illegible]. If some man who had a slave did not wish him to be hanged or beheaded, he might give him for this other method. As the weeks slipped by, such a one, his life having apparently been spared, would suppose that all was safe and that there was little chance of his being taken, and, thus emboldened, would, instead of keeping at a safe distance, join the crowd to watch a beheading. His death would be prearranged. At the moment of beheading a victim, someone would drive a spear into the unsuspecting man, the whole crowd then using spears and knives to stab and slash until he fell. Some might be tortured to death by being buried up to the neck and left thus exposed to the hot sun without food or water until death intervened, but this was not a common practice at such funerals.

768 The termination of the dead *nkumu's* affairs took place when the division of the inheritance was made, a long and complicated process.

178 Such were the old days before European penetration. The advent of the white
man half a century ago was the beginning of the end. The ceremonies had to be
624 given up, though reluctantly. Occasionally now goats are beheaded in place of human victims, and many of the younger generation find that, even so, the sight is more than they can endure, and they seek refuge elsewhere. *Nkumu* are not anxious for the honours. They find little or no respect paid to them by the government officials and this is a distinct obstacle to their obtaining honours from their own people. When the *nkumu* resident in the village adjacent to the mission station died, one of the Natives was asked who would be next. The reply was that probably no one would appear as a successor. Asked why, he answered, 'There are too many trousers.' He meant that too many were adopting the ways of the white man to
[623] make the inauguration of another *nkumu* a success. In his one useful function, that
of judge, the paramount chief now takes his place, cases tried must be recorded by a clerk of the court, and fines paid into the treasury of the chieftaincy. With such a state of affairs the old ways drop into desuetude, and the younger generation grow up knowing less of the ways of their fathers as the years pass.

837 ceremony. If the husband is kindly disposed toward them, he gives back to his relative the valuables the latter has paid, and the incident is closed. [201]

That is what happened some time ago to Imfio, of Bokenyola (Bonjoku). (1) In the harem of his maternal uncle, Efonja Is'Ôfuwa,

1. Now chief of the Bonkoso.

who was originally from Bonjoku but had been integrated into the Bongale, he had noticed a certain Mbilifeyenga, originally from Bosfe, and "his heart was rent asunder," as the Nkundó say. Through the agency of his older first cousins Mpetsf éâ Lingomo, ye sent Efonja a bompfogé of 6 rings, asking him to be kind enough to allow him to cohabit with this woman. His request was well received. But after a certain number of years their passion cooled, and Imfio wished to contract a proper marriage to give himself posterity. He therefore parted from Mbilé, who went back to her husband. The latter returned the 6 rings to Imfio, because he did not want to enrich himself at the expense of a relative.

Article III. The bosfió

428
587 The marriage of a bosfió is a special form of the inheritance of women.

760 The term bosfió is used everywhere. The Injóló also use a synonym, njémó, an incorrect term derived from the verb émola, "to make [someone] get up." Thus they say émoja bóna njémó, "to give the child (son, daughter) a bosfió. (2) Among the Boloko and their

2. The Elanga tribes in the Losanganya region also use this expression.

Elingé the term bomiọf is used as well as bosfió.

On the day when the widows are "lifted from the ground" and

428 permitted "to return to the bed," (3) all those entitled to the rights
587
768

of a father -- that is, those who have precedence, whether men or women -- gather with the sister's son to proceed with the ceremony. As always, each person yields his right to speak out of mutual respect. Finally, the eldest again has the floor [302]; it may be the deceased's father, brother, or paternal aunt (isfmoto). This individual who is in charge, makes a short speech appropriate to the occasion, and then gives one of the widows to the first-born of the children (nafonf). He takes the latter's preferences into account, having made sure of them in advance. The widow is given to him with the statement: "We have wrested for you the bośfló which your father has left you," tôkokumela bośfló bĺkf inê okotsfsfĺfsá. The actual meaning of kuma is "to seize by pulling toward oneself, to pull up," and includes the idea of strength. The word is primarily used in such expressions as kuma bafio, "to pull up weeds," kuma nsálá, "to pull out feathers," etc. But it is also employed whenever anything is taken or pulled forcefully toward oneself, as in kuma mbgembo, "to pull a chikwangue out of a heap."

The bośfló is always given to the first-born, regardless of sex, to the exclusion of the other children. If the eldest is a girl, she passes the bośfló on to her brother, first-born among the boys. This is a real seniority right, and it must be bought, or rather paid for, by the brother by giving his sister a present which most frequently consists of hens, money, small useful objects, or often a quantity of beer. The same rule applies if the eldest yields his right to a younger brother because the latter is passionately in love with her or -- nowadays -- because he does not want to take a second wife.

---

3. See "Les Coutumes funeraires des Nkundo" [The Funeral Customs of the Nkundó] (in press, Anthropos). The Elíngá perform this ceremony only a few days after the burial; the Boangi do so even before it. The Injoló are beginning to imitate the Elíngá.

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

In addition a bosólɔ́ is also given to the bɔ́nankána. Only the eldest son of the sister whose bride price was used by the deceased may claim this right. If the bride price of the nephew's mother was not involved in the establishment of the harem which is to be divided, he is only entitled to a bosólɔ́ who is not someone else's nkita, that is, who was acquired by means of riches procured through the deceased's own efforts. If the deceased obtained wives with the bride prices of two sisters, both of whom have left sons, only the eldest son of the eldest sister has this right. (1) [203]

> 1. It may happen that one of the sons of the deceased is disinherited because of the rights of the bɔ́nankána. If that happens and the latter at least has a wife or can obtain the necessary valuables in his father's clan, he is supposed to yield the woman to his unfortunate cousin. This is a duty imposed by the love of family (lifóka), and he may not evade it.

The practice of handing over a bosólɔ́ to relatives other than the son or daughter of the deceased seems to be an extension of a right originally reserved for his child.

The desires of the person entitled to the bosólɔ́ are taken into account when she is handed over. However, the eldest son can never obtain his father's favorite; only an elder brother may inherit her.

It is thus possible for a son to receive his own mother as bosólɔ́, but only if there are no other widows and if he has no way of obtaining a wife. Naturally, he may not marry her. She is given to him so that when she remarries he will receive the amount of the bride price which will be repaid.

If the deceased leaves no harem but does leave a good deal of other wealth, the bosólɔ́ consists of some object of great value. This practice would seem to indicate that the word bosólɔ́ is applied to a woman only by an extension of its basic and original meaning, "inheritance by right of seniority."

586
764
587 As soon as the bonfíló is assigned to the person entitled to her, she leaves the group of widows and goes to the home of her new husband. From then on she may cohabit with him, since from that moment the pair are absolved from the observance of the regulations and prohibitions of mourning. Because of her affection for her deceased husband and her sorrow, the woman sometimes begs her new husband to be patient and wait a while. Her wishes are respected, for a refusal to acquiesce would be a very serious offense, which could lead to an immediate rupture of the relationship.

The woman chosen as bonfíló may refuse the husband for whom she is intended, though such cases are rare and in the past were even unknown. The following instance [204] goes back to 1922: Mpia of Mbenja "acquired" Bóngongo of Ilóngó as wife for his eldest son, Bompelé. But the young man did not want her. So as not to waste his money, the father incorporated the woman into his harem. When the old man died, Bóngongo was given to this same Bompelé as a bonfíló. This time it was she who did not want him, and, to make matters worse, all the other widows also refused. Subsequently, a second cousin of Bompelé named Bosáfijó wanted to marry Bóngongo. But out of spite, Bompelé did not want to yield her to him except against the payment of a bride price.

Even if the woman makes no objection -- and she generally does not -- and accepts the new husband without loving him, either out of indifference, or to be able to come out of seclusion, or for any other reason, she may always find a way to leave him, if she wishes, for another close relative whom she prefers. This fact indicates that, although theoretically the union of the bonfíló is supposed to be more stable than a simple marriage by inheritance, in practice it is not; and it does not attain the degree of permanence characteristic of a marriage by nkomiló. The reason is probably to be found in the fact that the union with a bonfíló and the ordinary form of marriage by inheritance are fundamentally identical, and the rights of the family play a great role in both of them. The following is a recent case history: Ilongó, daughter of Itsiáfio of Bonganga (Bokoté) and widow
[illegible] of Bolifiafia of Bongili was assigned as bonfíló to her husband's eldest son, named Boonge. Later she claimed that she did not love Boonge but

[illegible] that she wanted to become the wife of his brother Ekamba. Ekamba
584 did not object. But very soon she broke this union as well. This time
586 the chief decided she was going too far and to please Boongo, who
601 had settled with his mother's clan of which he also was a member, he
sentenced her to several weeks in prison. All sensible people approved
of the chief's attitude. In spite of the suppression of such excesses,
a suppression which is necessary, the woman's freedom is protected.

[illegible] We have already indicated that from a moral point of view the
584 marriage of a bosóló may be considered on the same level as the in-
587 heritance of any woman if she remains among the close kin of the
deceased. The only difference is that such a union is somewhat more
difficult to break.

Article IV. The Replacement or Substitution

586 When a marriage is broken, instead of completing the divorce
587 by restitution of the bride price, the woman's family often has recourse
to the practice of replacing the divorcée by one of her relatives (such
as a sister, cousin, or niece). The act of replacement, as well as the
woman substituted, is called bankitsɛ. (1) This name is plural noun derived from kita, "to become," kitana, "to replace, to succeed." The
singular would be linkitsɛ, but it is never applied to this situation.

The substitute usually does not object to the social obligation that falls upon her, unless she feels an unusual repugnance toward the husband. In that case an attempt is made to find someone else in the family. A family may go so far as to take one of its members away from her husband in order to substitute her for the divorcée, especially if no other substitute is to be found and if they care more about the marriage that has been broken than about her union.

The Nkundó give the following justifications for the practice of substitution:

1. The Ekonda say nkitsɛ.

Chapter VIII

Divorce

586x In Nkundó law there are two ways of breaking up a marriage, divorce and death. We will discuss these in two separate chapters.

In divorce a marriage is dissolved either through a reimbursement of the bride price or the substitution of another wife.

●[86] In the case of death, on the other hand, there is no bride price reimbursement; the wife's death ipso facto dissolves the marriage. The husband's death, on the contrary, does not dissolve it; it is continued with the widow until her own death or until divorce. (1)

(1) This statement is to be understood in accordance with the explanation given in Chapter III, Article IX.

Article I. Reasons for Divorce

The Nkundó believe that a marriage can be dissolved. This cannot be done freely at the desire of the contracting parties but must conform to a procedure an essential component of which is the participation of the ndonga. It cannot be dissolved because of trivialities, but only for serious reasons, or at least reasons that appear serious to the natives.

The valid reasons for divorce can be reduced to the practical impossibility of the couple's continuing to live together, such as, 1) serious and repeated failures to fulfill conjugal duties, and especially any incorrigible tendency to adultery; 2) an incompatibility of temperaments which results in disputes, quarrels, and rows; 3) a grave and incurable illness. /377/

The first two causes inevitably lead to divorce. In the case of the third, a distinction must be made between a husband's illness and his wife's.

If the husband is ill and his wife abandons him for that reason, the divorce becomes complete when she remarries.

In every case at least a few beéngo in addition to the
764 bombémbé and the botsá w'îlaká are always claimed. The latter payments can never be omitted. The belt is a payment made exclusively to the mother and by rights it goes to the mother's clan.

764 606 607 The higher the amount of these funeral payments, the more the son-in-law is welcome. The alliance is perfect. Therefore, not only will the wife's family reciprocate his fine feelings by adding a few more dogs, but in addition the son-in-law will be well received and successful in his application when, after the period of mourning, he brings the sum of the ibóleóko in order to obtain a substitute for the deceased. (2) In addition, if the relations with his in-laws have been excellent, he will easily obtain the substitute in advance, so that she can care for him during the entire mourning period.

764 689 There are severe sanctions against the omission of the funeral payments. [439] Neglecting to send the notification gift alone is enough to set these in motion. They are: the breaking off of the affinal relationship; the loss of the children, since the father's offense is equal to a repudiation; and finally molestation of the culprit by the spirit of the deceased. Thus at Bokátola (Bompela) one can find two boys, Botétsí and Ikembá, the children of Bonyongela of Ilángá and Etáka of Bokátola. They have now been incorporated into their mother's clan, because their father did not send a nsango. On stronger grounds the same is true for the whole nkunjí.

Article V. The Social Position of a Widow

768 587 In Chapter III, Articles II and IV, we have already noted that in the eyes of the Nkundó, the death of the husband does not disolve a marriage. The union continues, and even after mourning it is not broken ipso facto. Even to have the woman taken and treated as a wife by another man is not enough to end it. As

---

2. See Chapter III, Article IV.

768 long as there has been no restitution of the bride price, the widow
587 continues to "belong" to the heirs of the deceased and to be their wife in the sense described in the chapter cited above, Article IX. The various forms in which this marriage can be continued post mortem have been described in Chapter III, Article II.

There we also saw that nothing prevents the widow from remarrying outside the inheriting family and therefore from becoming involved in a really new and different union. On the other hand, nothing obliges her to do so. She is entirely free. The only exception -- if this instance can be called an exception -- is a widow who is the object of a will, and a bosóló (Chapter III, Article II, in fine, and Article III). As to the latter, it is even difficult to consider her remarriage to the eldest son of the deceased as a limitation on her freedom. For although according to law it is obligatory, in practice it is voluntary and accompanied by guarantees of freedom that are adequate for ordinary cases. Indeed, it is known that she agrees [440] to this union. And she can always resort to divorce if later the heir disappoints her or if the continuation of the union becomes morally impossible.

It would be useless and tedious to repeat all that we have said on this subject in Chapter III. Let us simply reiterate that the distribution of widows should not be understood as a distribution of persons, depriving them of the freedom to be directed by their wills and their hearts, but rather as a distribution of the bride-price claims which they represent. The legal freedom to remarry remains as complete as it is when they are unmarried. This freedom may be subject to influences and even to real attacks, whose seriousness varies with the circumstances, but these are matters of fact and not of law.

If the widow considers herself -- or is considered -- too old for remarriage, or even if she desires to remain continent in faithfulness to her deceased husband, she may continue to reside with the clan of the deceased, instead of returning to her own family. The heirs usually do not oppose such an action and respect her wishes. If she has children or grandchildren there is no question about it; they are glad to keep their aged mother or grandmother near them.

Article VI. The Economic Position of a Widow

As long as her seclusion lasts, a widow continues to live
736 with the family of her deceased husband. She supplies herself with
768 food from the crops she has grown. The tools her husband has given
her remain in her hands, and she makes use of them as soon as she
can. As to the various utensils which must be destroyed, they
are replaced by others lent her by the family of the deceased, for
she may no longer use those which served her in her husband's
lifetime.

In order to better express the magnitude of their mourning, the Nkundó often refrain [441] from using the products of the farms established by the deceased. Therefore, instead of continuing to cultivate the existing crops of manioc and vegetables, the widow prefers to seek provisions in the fields of the close relatives of the deceased. Or a man who has already chosen her may place his fields at her disposal. If neither of these sources is available and she wishes to observe the rule rigorously, she must purchase what she needs in this realm.

As we have seen in Chapter VI, Article II, a widow has no
736 claim to the fruits of her labors. Neither the money she has earned
768 and which is intended for the common needs of the household, nor
421 the crops she has set up, nor the fish she has caught, nor the caterpillars she has gathered in the forest belong to her. Everything goes to the heirs. Her property is limited to objects she may have received as her personal share in her daughter's bride price, or as some other payment belonging exclusively to the mother.

If the widow remains in the family of the deceased, however, her fields, tools, etc., are left to her, for under those conditions there is no reason to take them away from her. But if she
[781] remarries elsewhere, the heirs are pitiless. A Nkundó does not want the family wealth to be scattered or squandered in any way. The law says lokutu líkéfó lóólsw înyemó, "our patrimony can not be alienated."

In point of fact the widow is treated more favorably, at
736 least in the best instances. If her relations with the family have
781 been good, they will not refuse her some small object that she

736 may wish to keep. In exemplary unions she is allowed to keep
● 768 the mats she has woven with her own hands, and the goods she received from her husband -- fabrics, beads, hens, even goats and dogs, and even sometimes what she has acquired through joint efforts with her husband (crops, livestock) -- are divided equally. The division is usually carried out with a generous attitude toward the widow, and if there is only one object of a kind the tendency is to let her have it. [442] Such conduct springs from pure generosity, for -- as has already been said -- the woman has absolutely no claim. In the past it followed only upon extraordinarily happy unions, and particularly in consideration of the relationship between the two families and the affection of one of the immediate heirs for the widow.

At the present time the influence of the missions is increasing
736 the number of instances of generosity toward the widow and starting
768 an inclination to make it a general rule. Thus good Christian
797 families -- if they are not thwarted by their pagan relatives -- leave the widow those objects she personally used, such as clothing, utensils, a trunk, and even a sewing machine.

Article VII. Economic Effects of Death

1. Bride price and dowry

768 The death of one of the spouses dissolves a marriage only
586 from a certain point of view and only as a union between two specific individuals. A marriage is absolutely broken only by the death of both spouses (or by divorce).

Unlike divorce death does not bring about any repayment either of the bride price or of the dowry (nkgmf). When the wife dies, all these payments remain in the hands of the respective parties. When a husband dies, the widow continues to belong to the heirs; she is part of the inheritance. The children belong to the father and his family; no new payment for them is necessary.

● 768 583x Therefore there is a very great difference between the consequences of divorce and of death. In divorce the bride price must be considered more or less like a deposit. In case of death, on the contrary, it remains permanently in the hands of those who have acquired it. This difference weakens the theory that maintains that the bride price is only a guarantee; rather, it tends to favor the theory that it is a compensation for the loss experienced by a clan when it gives one of its members in marriage. In case of divorce the clan's loss [443] is nullified, since the woman returns to her family or -- as is the usual outcome -- remarries and becomes the object of a new bride-price payment. The death of a woman, on the other hand, makes the clan's loss permanent rather than bringing an end to it. This does not mean that the bride price does not constitute a guarantee; in reality it is one. But this guarantee is an effect of the bride price, not the reason for its existence -- which is something altogether different.

2. Inheritance from the husband

768 428 178 Since we are not dealing with Nkundó property laws, the question of inheritance is not, strictly speaking, within the realm of our study. Nevertheless, we cannot refrain from saying a word about it, since the study of marriage must naturally contain a chapter on children. Thus we shall examine the question from that particular angle. What interests us here is knowing what rights children have over their father's inheritance. We have already dealt with the position of the widow in the preceding article.

The inheritance from the deceased includes three parts:

1) The bride-price valuables, that is, everything that is used chiefly to obtain a wife: copper and brass rings, iron objects, widows and daughters insofar as they represent bride-price valuables.

2) Domestic animals: goats, dogs, hens, ducks.

3) Real property: fruit trees, fields and crops, hunting enclosures, fishing places; and personal property: nets, hunting snares, bows and arrows, shields.

The bride-price valuables become the common property of the close relatives. Each one receives his share of the inheritance.

168 The widows are awarded to the brothers, uncles, and nephews
421 (bánankáná) of the deceased, in accordance with their position in
17 the group hierarchy and their respective rights, [444] which may derive from financial assistance lent to the deceased so that he could obtain one of his wives, or from the application of the nkita system. Rings (bakonga) and iron objects (bifeko) are distributed in the same manner. Similarly, unmarried daughters are assigned to various relatives -- that is, the "fathers" who preside at the division of the inheritance discuss and specify which persons have the right to receive the bride-prices that will later be paid for them. Of the sons only the eldest receives a wife or a certain amount of bride-price valuables as bonálo. (1)

1. Chapter III, Article III.

That is the traditional rule. Nowadays a far-reaching change has already taken place. The sons of the deceased are no longer excluded from the distribution. They are given either a wife, or a sufficient quantity of rings, or the right to the bride price of a sister or a cousin, if it is possible. For the rest see Chapter II, Article IV, 3 and Article XI, 3, 13, and Chapter IV, Article II.

The domestic animals go to the bánanyí, who take them home to their husbands and they are thus included in the amount of the dowry. A few goats, however, might be given to one of the men in the kin group who needs them to complete the payment of a bride price.

As to the other property (real or personal), they pass directly to the sons. The first born receives the lion's share and the most precious items, but the younger sons are not excluded in the distribution.

It should be noted that a will may affect this distribution by assigning a specific object to a given son, or by excluding one of the heirs with whom the deceased has had a serious quarrel. Such a will is always executed, because the Nkundó fear the vengeance of the deceased, who causes anyone guilty of an

76f 42f 77f infraction to follow him in death. It is obeyed even if [443] it is manifestly unfair. They fear reprisal by the deceased, such as that which is thought to have happened after the death of Iloko is'Ekekele of Lofelf. He had killed his own brother, Mpfinda éâ ekonzakele, [682] because the latter had tasted freshly brewed beer instead of leaving that honor to him -- an action which constituted an extremely serious offense. But since the punishment was out of all proportion to the act, the whole family united against the murderer, who was obliged to flee. At his death he disinherited all his brothers in favor of his sons. This will, considered unreasonable and unfair, was not respected; Iloko's only brother, Bendélé wâ Wilima, took Bonyengô, the favorite, for himself. But he soon died, and his death was attributed to Iloko's vengeance. Several years ago the family met to finally settle the matter of the inheritance. The largest portion was set aside for Iloko's sons, but one part was awarded to other relatives who were not named in the excluding clause, which referred only to the Bandélé Bandengâ, that is, to Iloko's own brothers.

Sons are never disinherited. If one of them behaves very badly toward his father, when the latter dies he refuses him his benediction (bekako w'ôlôsâ) and curses him bekako wâ ta yo).

3. Inheritance from the wife

58f 42f As we have seen in Chapter VI, Article II, a wife has no rights of ownership over the fruits of her own labors or of the couple's joint efforts. Consequently, her family can make no claims as regards inheritance; there is nothing to inherit.

Although all the fruits of the wife's activities belong to the husband, most men do not require that their rights be rigidly respected. They leave a part, or the whole, to the family of the [444] deceased, as is done in the case of a widow. (1) After the

1. See the previous article.

feast at the end of mourning, the two clans make an inventory of the property in question. Usually whatever products of her work the woman has left are divided equally between the two clans. Some [illegible] men are generous enough to renounce all of it. If the deceased had an *[illegible]*, or if the parents-in-law give their son-in-law a substitute, the possessions fall to her. She even inherits the fields (*cultures*) that have been set up by her kinswoman, to the extent that they have not been destroyed. Under other circumstances the cultivated lands (*plantations*) are never left to the family of the deceased.

The only items to which a woman is entitled strictly speaking are the various portions of the bride price and similar payments awarded to her by Nkundó law: goats and spiral beads and the mother's gifts as part of the bride price; the cloth and belt given at a funeral. At a wife's death these possessions pass to her clan, if she has not previously given them to her relatives. In no case may they be appropriated by the husband.

Finally, when a wife dies she may leave a tool (knife, hoe, etc.) to her daughter. This custom is observed particularly by very active women in order to inculcate their daughters with the love [illegible] of work. Such an object often becomes an heirloom, transmitted from mother to daughter for several generations. It is called *[illegible]* (from *[illegible]*, "to leave to"; see the Latin *relinquere*) or, among the Bombwanja, *[illegible]*. These terms are also applied to other objects included in the inheritance when these are considered separately (altogether they are called *[illegible]*, "patrimony," "property," or *[illegible]*, "inheritance"). Such a *[illegible]* can never be appropriated by a husband. (461)

Article VIII

Death of the Fiancé Before the Payment of the Bride Price

[illegible] Here we shall deal with the situation resulting from the death of a husband during the engagement, after the payment of the *[illegible]* or the *[illegible]* but before the *walo*. The procedure for dissolving an engagement may already lead us to suppose that death also breaks it without any special difficulties. And in fact, if the fiancé dies the woman is free. Therefore she may go home, and the family of the deceased is reimbursed for the payments that have been made.

763 589 She can also remain in her fiancé's family and there be taken in marriage by one of his kinsmen. If everything favors the continuation of the union, the new husband-to-be pays the bride price, but he need not repeat the engagement payments, which retain their validity. If he belongs to a distant branch of the family, however, the kin of the deceased will not want to give up their property, and the new fiancé himself will have to acquit himself of all the bride-price obligations, beginning with the ikulɔ́.

[762] Sometimes the dying man, in making his last requests, enjoins his family to maintain the alliance. In that case one of his kinsmen must marry the woman. If later on a breakup becomes inevitable, the spouses separate. For that matter, if the woman lacks the inclination to remarry in her fiancé's kin group, she will not be forced to do so.

This practice is based on the stipulation of Nkundó law that engaged persons have all the duties and privileges of married couples.

[589] There is nothing among the Nkundó that resembles a levirate. Even in the case we cited of a last will, the obligation derives solely from the sacred nature of that will. [448]

Article IX

The Death of the Woman Before the Payment of the Bride Price

Two situations must be distinguished: 1) The woman dies during the engagement; 2) she dies before the bosóngo.

1. Before the walo

As has already been said, engaged persons enjoy all the duties and privileges of a married couple. If the girl dies the fiancé must fulfill all obligations toward the deceased and her family (transporting the corpse, sacrifices, nkunjí). But his obligations do not end there.

Through the payment of the nkanga (and, in practice, already through the ikulɔ́) he is considered responsible for any accident that might befall his fiancée in his home; and he has assumed the

168
584 obligation of completing the union by subsequent payments.

The consequence of this fact is that if the fiancée dies before he has fulfilled his obligations, he is forced to pay a large indemnity (mbɛ́laka) to his parents-in-law, who have been disappointed and deprived of their rights. The amount of this payment varies. Usually it is about equal to what ordinarily would have been paid as the walo, whence comes the expression used in these cases: ónga ilɛ́kɔ́ (ikɔmbɛ among the Injɔ́lɔ́ and the Boángɛ́). "to pay the bride price for the corpse."

Sometimes the woman's family is less demanding. This is especially true if they are very fond of their son-in-law and know that he is wealthy and generous enough to considerably increase the amount of the nkunjɛ́, the ibóledko, and the bride price for a substitute. The principle of the indemnity is secure, but its external form is altered and made less humiliating.

In other cases the woman's family raises the amount to be paid as indemnity, either out of greed or because they are not pleased with the union or even opposed to it (this happened rarely in the past but has become more frequent nowadays). [448] Under such circumstances, up to 100 and 150 rings are demanded, as in the following instance which occurred quite recently. Ilumbé of Mpámá (Bofodé) took Lokoká of Bongíli wă Ndongó for his wife. He paid 10 rings as ilalá-ndanga. When some time later he brought 40 rings for the walo, his father-in-law considered them insufficient (and he was entirely right). The small amount of valuables showed the son-in-law's poverty and foreshadowed his insolvency, so Lokoká's family was not greatly pleased with the marriage. Consequently, they refused to accept the rings, which therefore remained on deposit with the ndonga. After two years of cohabitation, Lokoká died (July 16, 1933). The family of the deceased demanded 100 rings. Ilumbé could not invoke any excuse or attenuating circumstance. For if he had wanted to fulfill his obligations, he could have done so, as the interval was long enough, and if he knew he did not have the means, he should have given up the woman.

586
594
In the past the widower and his family sometimes refused to pay, with the result that the parties took up arms. The right of war was involved. For when the hostilities ended, the culprit was required to indemnify all the families on his side for any member who was killed or wounded. Therefore he ran the risk of seeing all his property confiscated and being sold as a slave if they did not suffice. He found it was wiser simply to submit to normal sanctions rather than run such serious risks.

The situation with which we are dealing in this article may involve further complications if the woman has been living with her own family, or if she belongs to another man whose bride price has not yet been refunded. But it is preferable to deal with these complications in separate articles.

586 3. Before the *bonkoko*

If the woman dies before the *bonkoko* is paid, the widower is not required to pay an indemnity. However, he must complete the bride price by handing over "the slave." [430]

If he does not do so: (1) the alliance is broken *ipso facto*, and therefore he cannot bring the *ilifiedjo* and does not receive a substitute; 2) the family of the deceased is entitled to one of the daughters if there are any, or to one of the boys if there are none. This is a compensation for the loss of the *bonkoko*.

Naturally, the woman's family can in practice refrain from claiming their rights. Thus, they may do so out of regard for their son-in-law who is influential, generous, and well disposed toward them, in anticipation of greater financial and social benefits. The similar remarks made throughout this study have already
[571] familiarized us with the "broad-mindedness" of these peoples.

It might be observed that this situation is in no way different from the preceding one, since the woman's family is indemnified in either case. But, first of all, if the woman has left no children, the situation is not at all identical. Secondly, even if the financial aspect of the two situations is the same, the legal aspect is entirely different. The taking of a child and the refusal to accept the *ilifiedjo* are not considered as compensation. The

● [illegible] Nkundó categorically state that the situation now under discussion does not result in the payment of an indemnity.

This observation again brings out the basic difference between jesaf and bonkogo, which we have already discussed in Chapter II, Article IX, 2 and Article XII, 5, and suggests that the walo constitutes the marriage agreement, whereas the bonkogo is the substitution of a person for the one that is lost to the clan through the marriage of one of their members.

Article X

A Woman's Death at the Home of Her Own Family

761 591 672 We have already drawn the reader's attention several times to the fact that a husband is responsible for his wife because, in accordance with the clan agreement between the families, she "belongs" to him. [451] The consequence of this stipulation of Nkundó law is that the husband assumes all risks relating to the wife; hence he must take upon himself all the damages resulting from her death. There are exceptions to this general rule, however, under the following two circumstances:

1) If the wife dies while at the home of her own family.

2) If the wife dies after having left her own husband for another.

In this article we will examine the first of these two possible situations, leaving the second one for the next article.

If a wife dies while at her own family's home, an exception is made if certain conditions are fulfilled. There are several situations possible:

1) The wife returns to her family because she is exasperated with the unfair treatment she receives from her husband. He may not be fulfilling his duties toward her, may be mistreating her unjustly, etc., as we have seen in Chapter VI, Article III. The situation becomes unbearable. In that case the husband is clearly in the wrong, and the wife has the right to seek a little peace in her parents' home. Under such conditions, if she dies before the

[illegible] husband has come to take her back through arranging a palaver by
672 means of a [illegible], he has no right to complain. He himself
593 brought on such difficulties by his unfair way of behaving. He is obliged to make the funeral payments. Because of the strained relations between him and his father-in-law, the affinal relationship is broken. That is why he will ordinarily refuse to pay the [illegible], at least when he has had no children by this woman. If he omits the payment even though there are progeny, the children are taken from him by their mother's family.

This situation seldom arose in the past. Young and impetuous husbands were almost nonexistent. The old men kept the women for themselves. Age and experience with life had made them more settled, calmer, more reasonable, so they did not throw themselves into adventures [432] whose outcome were necessarily to their disadvantage. Since today men marry considerably younger, such situations can arise more easily; although, on the other hand, a permanent dissolution of the marriage occurs most frequently before the possible development described.

D) The wife leaves her husband without just reason and, having returned to her family, dies there. In the past such a situation was quite rare (Chapter VIII, Article II, 1, A). If no war occurred before the death of the fugitive (a war automatically terminated the affair), the husband had every right to reimbursement or to a substitution of another wife for the deceased. The situation is therefore identical to the case that follows. But there is no longer any question of sending back the corpse, and if the husband wants to break the alliance permanently he does not even need to pay the [illegible].

Nowadays this situation has become far more common. It presents no special difficulty; the ancient custom continues to be observed.

It is almost trifling to mention that the matter of total or
[illegible] partial reimbursement of the bride price can be handled through
[illegible] friendly transactions between the husband and his parents-in-law. The following case is typical: [illegible] of [illegible] ([illegible]) inherited [illegible], daughter of [illegible] in [illegible] of [illegible]. After some years she left her husband, returned home, and died. Her father

sent the notification gift and even added dogs to it, because he was interested in keeping the affinal relationship. The corpse was not sent since the woman had died of an infectious disease and the body was decomposing rapidly so that contagion was feared. [illegible] presented the widower with his youngest daughter [illegible] as a substitute. But since she was quite young, [illegible] did not want her. He was satisfied with an indemnity because -- after all -- he too wanted to remain on good terms with his father-in-law. The latter sent him 20 rings as an [illegible] (slave), and thus the matter was closed. [453]

3) The wife has returned to her family on her own initiative in order to visit her parents, nurse them, or to participate in her family's communal fishing, to get her supply of edible caterpillars, or for any other reason. In such a case the responsibility passes from the husband to the parents. The family must notify the husband of the death (always, of course, through the [illegible]). When the husband receives the news he accuses his parents-in-law, saying: [illegible] [illegible], "You have killed my wife." He demands that the corpse be sent to him so that he can wash it, adorn it in an appropriate manner, and mourn for the deceased. Subsequently he sends the corpse back with the [illegible] and demands that another wife be substituted for the deceased or, if none is available, that the bride price be returned to him. As long as his father-in-law does not fulfill his obligations, the husband will not bring the funeral payments. Moreover, if the family of the deceased is recalcitrant or too slow, he will practice [illegible], that is, he will hold one of his kinswomen who is married into the clan of the deceased in order to obtain her bride price. In this way he will obtain the valuables to which he is entitled, the two bride prices balance one another and the matter is settled permanently. In that case he naturally retains all his rights over his children.

This solution applies on even stronger grounds if the wife's family themselves have called her home.

If the wife falls ill in her parents' home, it may happen that her husband wants to care for her himself. He will demand

761 a pledge (ndanga) from his father-in-law to the effect that the
672 illness started in his home. If he neglects to take this precaution
595 and his wife dies, he has no legal means to claim indemnification.

4) A solution identical to the one described above is applied even if a wife goes to her parents for her husband's personal benefit in order to get him something he needs, such as beer for a [434] feast, valuables with which to settle a palaver, etc. It holds true even if the husband has sent her expressly for this purpose.

This situation easily gives rise to violent disputes, however. The wife's family tries to reject the husband's claims by objecting that it is he himself who sent his wife, or at least that she came to them solely for his sake. Nevertheless, in the end the husband is the one who is right and who wins the case. (1)

1. A stay of twenty-four hours is not considered sufficient to place the civil responsibility for an illness, nor therefore for death, on the wife's family.

5) The wife goes home ill. As we have seen in Chapter VI, Article III, 2, the parents are not willing to nurse their daughter unless their son-in-law -- always through the ndanga -- gives them a ndanga in testimony of the fact that she was ill when she left him. The husband thus recognizes his responsibility for all possible consequences of the illness. Consequently, he can make no claims in case of death.

Since the civil responsibility for the death falls to the husband, the latter is notified by the ndanga, but the family does not send him a notification ring. The ndanga for the illness takes the place of this payment. The widower asks that the corpse be brought to him so that he can perform the last rites, and this request is always granted. There is nothing special about the rest of the procedure; everything takes place as if the wife had died in her husband's home.

6) The wife is repudiated by her husband. In the past this happened only if the woman behaved very badly and showed herself to be incorrigible. As we have seen in Chapter VIII, Article II, 1, no. 2, the husband did not send her back to her family'; he

586 fastened her to a fork (etôka) until he was reimbursed. Sometimes
672 the ndonga intervened to free her, but by doing so he took upon
595 himself the responsibility of making restitution of the bride price. In this last [443] instance, if the wife died in the home of her family, the husband was entitled to reimbursement just as he would be in case of a divorce. Thus we come back to the situation described under 2) and 3), the forms varying according to whether or not the widower wanted to continue the affinal relationship.

[illegible] Nowadays the situation has changed entirely. The colonial administration no longer permits the use of the etôka. Consequently, a man who wants to get rid of his incorrigible wife acts in such a way that she will leave him of her own free will. And the situation is again that described in 2).

If the husband has sent his wife away himself by placing her in the hands of the ndonga, his parents-in-law will refuse him an indemnity or any restitution of the bride price and often will not even accept the nkunɛ. They answer his demands by telling him that he should not have repudiated the wife whom he freely chose for himself. Thus most men resort to the procedure described in the next paragraph. There are circumstances, however, under which this mode of action is more difficult; this is so especially in the case of monogamists, since its execution requires several weeks, sometimes several months. In the interim the wife does as she pleases and neglects her husband, so that the latter practically finds himself a bachelor.

781 Evangelization has added a second difficulty. Catholic
586 marriage is indissoluble. Catechumens and Christians who wish to
672 marry must therefore be careful. Before admitting them to re-
595 ligious marriage, we require that at least the walo be paid. But the young men know the temperament and value of their fiancées only through experience. In almost every case therefore they have this experience at home before the walo, in accordance with their ancestral custom. Then, if one of the two parties is pagan (which happens very often), the disciplinary rules of the Catholic missions in the Congo require that they spend a minimum of six months

797 preparing at a mission station or catechumenate [456]. During
584 the experimental period, the engaged pair sometimes find faults
672 in each other which lead them to foresee a married life filled with
586 difficulties and resulting in a breakup. Therefore it is preferable that they carry out the required measures before marriage. The woman is usually the source of the difficulties. The female sex has hardly been touched by evangelization, chiefly because pagan parents, who do not oppose the Christianization and education of their boys, take their revenge on the girls. What they fear particularly is the girls' opposition to premature marriages or their flight to the centers. For those people, therefore, it is almost impossible to get round the difficulty in such a way. As the situation is not provided for in traditional law and, furthermore, most of the natives who hold power are clearly indifferent, if not hostile, to evangelization and the stability of Christian marriage, these special circumstances are not taken into account in any way, to the great detriment of the young people who are thus caught between their consciences and their temporal interests (which in this instance have strong repercussions on their moral life). The attitude of almost all the chiefs and judges in this matter is not contrary to ancestral law -- since the situation was unknown -- but it is certainly opposed to the spirit of that law.

7) The couple go to the home of the wife's family together.
672 Illness and death that come unexpectedly during such a visit are
584 imputed solely to the husband, who retains all the risks except,
586 of course, if the husband returns home but his wife does not follow him, remaining with her parents. Indeed in such a case we fall back on the solution described in 2).

8) Here we come back to the possibility indicated at the end of Article IX, 1, namely that of the wife who dies in her [457] family's home before the *walo* is paid. If the husband is in the wrong (see under 1), 5), and 7)), the solution given in the article in question retains all its validity; the husband's "responsibility" remains intact. In the other instances it is reduced but not taken away. Actually, two laws are in conflict. On the one hand, there is the "responsibility" of the husband who has not fully acquired

f.

586
672
595
himself of his obligations, and, on the other, the "responsibility" of the woman who did not remain with her husband. To draw a comparison from the realm of accounting, there are two sides, debit and credit. But the latter lies chiefly on the side of the woman's family, for at the time of death the woman is not yet a wife in the full sense of the word. Consequently, the husband must pay an indemnity. But the fact that his fiancée died at home with her family is for him an extenuating circumstance as a result of which the indemnity is reduced, so that he need only pay about a half, that is, around 25 to 35 rings.

Conclusions

The explanations given may seem a little wordy. Nevertheless, it was useful to indicate all the diversity of possible situations in order to deduce the rule and to grasp the basis of the system from actual facts. Everything considered, it would thus appear that the husband assumes all risks with regard to his wife, and that he must bear all the damages resulting from her loss. She really belongs to him and not to her family in spite of any impression one may have that on the contrary the woman belongs more to her parents than to her husband. For even in the instances where she dies in her parents' home, having gone there for a justifiable reason, her death is considered an injustice toward her husband, since a wife's place is in the conjugal home. Such is the general rule. Exceptionally, in special instances defined by law, a woman's parents reassume the risks for her, that is, they again become responsible for her. [454]

Article XI

A Wife's Death in the Home of Another Man

586
672
Here we will consider what happens if a woman who has left her husband and gone to another man dies in the home of the latter before the restitution of the bride price to the former. Two situations may arise:

● 761
672

1) The walo may have been paid by the second husband, but restitution to the first husband may not yet have been made. The latter is entitled to reimbursement of the bride price just as he would be if the woman had not died (Chapter VIII, Article III), whereas the rules given in the preceding article are applicable to the new husband.

2) The walo may not yet have been paid; in that case the second husband must conform to the rules given in Article IV, 1 and Article X, 6). The first husband must recover the valuables to which he is entitled in accordance with the rules indicated in Chapter VIII, Article III.

Here are two recent instances.

[illegible] yā [illegible], daughter of [illegible] of [illegible] of [illegible] ([illegible]), was married to [illegible] of [illegible] ([illegible], [illegible]). One day she went to [illegible] to be baptized by the Protestant missionary. On her way back she was detained by [illegible] of [illegible] ([illegible]), who wanted to marry her. He gave [illegible] an [illegible]. Shortly thereafter [illegible] died. [illegible] was obliged to pay a large indemnity, equalling the entire bride price, to [illegible]'s father, who in turn had to reimburse [illegible].

[illegible], daughter of [illegible] of [illegible] ([illegible]) was married to [illegible] of [illegible]. She left him for [illegible] of [illegible], who paid the [illegible]. One day when [illegible] was returning from a trip, [illegible] ran to meet him in order to bid him welcome. But in her haste she struck the root of a shrub, stumbled, and fell. Her fall must have caused internal injuries, for she was forced to remain in bed and died shortly thereafter. [illegible] was obliged [650] to pay an indemnity of 30 rings plus two slaves, or a total of 80 rings, to [illegible], who in turn reimbursed the first husband.

This case is comparable to that of a wife's death which occurs in her husband's home but is caused by another man -- who either had daily relations with her or caused a pregnancy which resulted in her death. The responsibility in either case falls upon the lover, who must indemnify the husband. The indemnity is always very large, equalling the amount of a bride price or more. (1)

---

1. See Chapter I, Part II, Article V, 1, and Chapter VI, Article VII, 4.

586 672 178 Colonization has given rise to a new legal situation which is not provided for in Nkundó traditional law. If a woman takes advantage of the freedom permitted her by colonial legislation and goes to a mission to obtain instruction and make a monogamous marriage, and then contracts an illness from which she dies (at the mission, in the hospital, or even in the home of her family -- a question of place which has no legal importance), we find ourselves confronted by an entirely new situation. The husband no longer considers the woman his wife since she has left him, even though theoretically she continues to retain that status. On the other hand, she has not gone back to her family or gone to live with another man.

Polygamous husbands want to throw the "responsibility" back upon the woman's parents. But actually they have no part in the events, and it is unfair to involve them in the situation.

[797] They do not bring the mission into the matter. As a matter of fact, the mission performs a service to the woman and to society as a whole in trying to elevate it morally and culturally.

What should one think of this situation? In the preceding article we have seen that the husband assumes all risks in relation to the wife. Certain exceptions to this rule [460], which we have explained, have been formulated in Nkundó law; but outside of them, the law retains its dominion, since the exceptions are narrowly defined. Thus it applies to the situation with which we are dealing, and consequently the damages must remain on the husband's account.

Moreover, this interpretation is to be encouraged for the following reason:

The purpose of the legislation involved is to protect freedom in this matter of capital importance and to favor monogamy and the gradual abandonment of polygamy. Polygamists -- as a group -- must perforce suffer from it in one way or another. It is inconceivable that a struggle against an abuse would not affect the persons guilty of it.

Such cases are still very rare, but their frequency may increase with the progress of evangelization.

586 673 682 In terminating this discussion we must make one point that is related to both of the last two articles. The cause of death has no

768 672 682 legal importance. The solutions given are the same whether the cause of death be organic or criminal. If the latter is the case, however, the murderer must pay an indemnity, which is given to the person who has been wronged, whether it be the woman's husband or her family; in any case he thus satisfies the requirements of justice.

A woman may be murdered while she is visiting one of her husband's kinswomen in accordance with her husband's wishes. In that case the sister-in-law's husband bears the responsibility. He must indemnify the victim's husband, and he himself is entitled to indemnification by the murderer. To simplify this procedure, the murderer can make his payment directly to the widower; justice is still safeguarded. But in no case does the indemnity go to the victim's father, for legally and economically it belongs to the husband, not to the father, who is indemnified through the funeral payments. [461]

Conclusions

586 768 1) A marital union is broken by death only for the person who dies. For the one who remains alive, the dissolution is completed only after other procedures. If the husband dies the widow remains the wife of the heirs and is free only after restitution of the bride price has been made. At the death of the wife the husband can marry a substitute.

586 587 768 A widow's remarriage without restitution of the bride price (and therefore without a new bride price), or that of a widower with a substitute, is considered a continuation of a pre-existing union which has not been dissolved. This continuation is not absolute, however. Actually, it is perfect only in the case of the husband's death, in which case his kin group inherits all his rights and therefore also the rights to the wives he has acquired by means of his capital. On the other hand, if a widower is to continue the relationship after his wife's death, he must pay another bride price.

The difference between the two instances is due to the connection of the bride price with the "ownership" of a woman; she remains subject to it and as a result becomes legally the spouse

768 of her husband's heirs after his death. Only her own death takes
581 all power away from the bride price, which then becomes a purely
587 material value.

That is why the Nkundó expression "continuation of marriage" is ambiguous. For a widower the marriage continues from the standpoint of ties between families. But from the legal point of view there is a new marriage, since he pays a new bride price for the substitute, and there is therefore an entirely new contract. Only for a widow does the marriage really continue, as long as there is no divorce between her and the deceased husband's heirs. The agreement retains all its validity in her person, whereas the husband's obligations are transferred to the heirs. There is only a change of the persons subject to the agreement, which is therefore in no way annulled. The question here is a substitution in the role of husband. [462]

The preceding should be understood as relating to the financial agreement or bride-price contract as we have explained in Chapter III, Article IX. For the conjugal pact or consent agreement is annulled by death, since an heir as well as a widow must interpose new acts in order effectively to become man and wife. What the Nkundó call the continuation of marriage is therefore only the continuation of the bride-price agreement between the families, and not of the conjugal pact between individuals.

It would be desirable to have a moralist thoroughly examine the philosophico-theological validity of the continuation of this marriage after the death of one of the parties. Personally I think that for the widow, and on condition that nothing else opposes it, it is valid. For consent is expressed by the man through the payment of the bokoli and by the woman through the act of accompanying the man as his wife.

2) From the economic standpoint, death does not change
768 the situation that existed during life. The various bride-price valuables remain in the hands of the respective parties. The difference between the consequences of death and those of divorce are therefore very clearly delineated, as was indicated in the Conclusion of Chapter VIII, Article III.

3) These legal and financial rules confirm the conclusion drawn in Chapter VI, Article II and those that follow, that a wife belongs to her husband legally as well as in fact, even though she does not leave her clan. [illegible]

4) They also support the conclusion of Chapter II, Article IX, 5, that for the marriage agreement the walo is the essential element among the various bride-price payments.

5) Finally, they demonstrate the legal priority of the conjugal union above the clan and family society in spite of facts that can often be observed which would appear to contradict this statement.

Chapter X

Children

[illegible] A study of marriage would be incomplete without a chapter on the subject of children. Their procreation and education constitute the finis operis, the natural result of the married state, a state which for man, as a reasonable being, is the only legitimate form of carrying out the propagation of his species, the specific objective of sexual life.

This subject could be expanded more extensively than is possible here. We will pass in silence over a number of interesting facts related to it which fall outside the limits set for this work. For example, we will exclude the question of adoption, since it does not deal with children in connection with marriage, but only within the general rubric of family and society.

Even within these limits this chapter alone would comprise an entire volume were it treated with the fullness it merits. We must therefore confine ourselves to generalities and discuss only those particular situations which are most frequent and common.

As to the order of discussion to be followed in this chapter, and after a few preliminary notes (Article I), we will examine in succession:

Article II. Conception and pregnancy
Article III. Childbirth

567 439 562 Everywhere there were also abducted women and female slaves; these were simply sold. Furthermore women were bought and sold with women [as payment]. Also women who were inherited and no longer in the hands of their family were sold by their second, third, or other subsequent husband. In all of these cases, the family no longer came into consideration for the bride price. One would have to stretch the point in order to consider the sums paid in these cases as a bride price, and consequently as a native custom which one must respect.

562 439 Or one should have to assume that such a native woman remains a "bride" for her whole lifetime. It will be said that the woman consented to her sale by one man to the other.

[563] Often this was indeed the case, but not always by any means, for children and slaves were also sold. Even the consent of the woman did not prevent it from being a sale; her consent was rather an extra transaction that simplified the sale of a human article of trade. It still remains woman trade.

764 567 The Inheritance. Upon the death of a polygynist, the burial ceremony was conducted according to the class and rank of the deceased. One or two or several [538] slaves were killed and buried with the polygynist in the same grave. Sometimes the arms and legs of these male and female slaves were broken, and then they were buried alive in the same grave with the body.

[768] When these slaves still had family, it might happen that the family members, having learned of the unfortunate lot of their relative, would hasten from faraway districts to buy him or her free if it was not yet too late. Several Negroes have told us of those heart-breaking scenes at which they were present as children. The mourning and the lamenting over the dead lasted from a week to a month.

•768 428 587 The eldest son immediately succeeded his father in position and immediately took one of the wives of his father.

The other sons divided among them the houses and wives of their father.

If the deceased had left no son, or if he was still too young, the eldest brother succeeded the deceased. All of the wives had to remain in their own home, except the wife who was immediately taken by the eldest son. They were obliged to await the day of the distribution. This day was put off for from one to four months.

581 593 587 Meanwhile, these wives were subjected to a certain discipline. They were called bitoko, which we translate here as "widow." During this time they were allowed to speak with the relatives of the deceased, but they had to remain at home; it was not permitted for anyone to take these wives.

When the time came for the distribution, the one in charge, namely, the son or the brother of the deceased, called together the heirs and parties concerned. On the day of the distribution, in the morning before dawn, the bitoko left their dwelling place and went to the man with whom they had already come to an agreement, so that by daybreak all the huts of the bitoko stood empty. Each of the wives of the polygynist usually has her own hut. At the appointed hour, the meeting was announced by the usual beating of the tomtom. The wives, the heirs, and all parties concerned then came together.

If there were many wives to distribute, the order of distribution was as follows: in the first place the brothers of the deceased received their share; in the second [340] place came the sons; and in the third place, the grandsons, that is, the sons of the daughters who received their share from the Nkita of their mother. If at this time the wife did not want to go with the man for whom she was designated, she was sold to another. Sometimes the family of the wife was not satisfied with that, and if they could, they gave the bride price back in order thereby to free their daughter or sister. Such a wife then came back to her family, where, however, she was again married in return for another bride price. The family acted thus to prevent its daughter or sister from simply being sold. When the grandsons were still too young, their share of the Nkita of their mother went to their uncle, the son of the deceased. The latter had then to provide a wife for them later, which he usually never did without making a great deal of trouble. If the daughters had no sons who could inherit their Nkita, they received some of the father's personal property as inheritance: goats, dogs, lances, knives, pots, etc. If the deceased had left a daughter but no sons or brothers, the daughter had to supervise the distribution of the inheritance.

Our civilized idea that the wife, the mother of the family, is the first heir, is thus not taken into consideration there. Indeed, the wife, the mother herself, is inherited if she is not too old.

764 corpse would then be buried by men in order to leave it as a hollow chamber, and
763 the hole leading down to it filled in with earth.

For a month or two after the burial the festivities and orgies continued. Women
764 would be hanged to create some diversion, but those hanged were not many. Decapi-
762 tations would continue. According to the informants only slaves brought in from
a distance would have to be tied to prevent their escape. The slave members of the
567 household of the dead *nkumu* would await their turn stoically, content to die that
[152] they might accompany their master in his journey to the land of spirits. This may
be true but scarcely seems probable. Still another diversion in the funeral orgies was killing in the manner known as [illegible]. If some man who had a slave did not wish him to be hanged or beheaded, he might give him for this other method. As the weeks slipped by, such a one, his life having apparently been spared, would suppose that all was safe and that there was little chance of his being taken, and, thus emboldened, would, instead of keeping at a safe distance, join the crowd to watch a beheading. His death would be prearranged. At the moment of beheading a victim, someone would drive a spear into the unsuspecting man, the whole crowd then using spears and knives to stab and slash until he fell. Some might be tortured to death by being buried up to the neck and left thus exposed to the hot sun without food or water until death intervened, but this was not a common practice at such funerals.

763 The termination of the dead *nkumu's* affairs took place when the division of the inheritance was made, a long and complicated process.

178
626 Such were the old days before European penetration. The advent of the white man half a century ago was the beginning of the end. The ceremonies had to be given up, though reluctantly. Occasionally now goats are beheaded in place of human victims, and many of the younger generation feel that, even so, the sight is more than they can endure, and they seek refuge elsewhere. *Nkumu* are not anxious for the honours. They find little or no respect paid to them by the government officials and this is a distinct obstacle to their obtaining honours from their own people. When the *nkumu* resident in the village adjacent to the mission station died, one of the Natives was asked who would be next. The reply was that probably no one would appear as a successor. Asked why, he answered, 'There are too many trousers.' He meant that too many were adopting the ways of the white man to
[643] make the inauguration of another *nkumu* a success. In his one useful function, that of judge, the paramount chief now takes his place, cases tried must be recorded by a clerk of the court, and fines paid into the treasury of the chieftaincy. With such a state of affairs the old ways drop into desuetude, and the younger generation grow up knowing less of the ways of their fathers as the years pass.

614 He represents the A-group in the council of elders of the village and of the other large units. Since no members of the group [672] are considered capable of conducting affairs, all the legal transactions which they undertake are treated as though they had been sanctioned by the patriarch. To a large extent the members of the group may represent one another. In the absence of the elder, a younger member may act as the representative of the [623] group at council meetings. When the senior member dies, his function will be taken over by the next oldest member of the group.

614 621 An A-group will split up only through internal conflicts which cannot be bridged or through a large population increase. The newly-formed A-groups continue to maintain a close relationship which, at first, is much closer than among the B-groups whose A-groups have split much earlier. In the higher ranks cohesion after the split diminishes only gradually; thus many gradations develop in the feeling of cohesion. These gradations could not be even approximately reproduced in a diagram with any degree of exactitude. There is no formula by which the split takes place, as there is, for example, among the Tallensi (13) where it is determined by a certain number of generations. 614 Theoretically the A-groups are "eternal." The A-groups are 596 subdivided into small families. Within the polygynous families 595 nuclear families (*Familienkerne*) (14) have a [illegible] independent position economically. Each wife has her own house. A husband's wives and the wives of his sons have their houses within the same homestead. As the master of the homestead, the father has an open shelter where the men spend their time and [361] hold their meetings. Upon the death of the master of the

---

13. Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship,*
p. 36 f.

14. Thurnwald, *Menschliche Gesellschaft,*
Vol. 4, p. 12.

614 596 591 [764] homestead, it is deserted by the inhabitants. On the new dwelling site the sons each build their own shelter. In contrast to the groups of the type A-E, the group living within a homestead is finite; its existence ends with the father's death. Only a man whose father (in the European meaning of the term) has died may have a shelter. Thus the homestead community is interposed between the A-group and the small family.

614 To sum up the characteristic features of the A-groups: Membership determined by male descent; unity of legal power, especially insofar as landed property and inheritance law is concerned the senior has full power; succession by simple seniority; theoretically unlimited existence of the group. The A-groups consist of small families who live together in homesteads under one father in each case.

Groups of Rank B

614 797 There is usually a friendly, neighborly relationship between the A-groups which form part of a B-group. People assist each other to a large extent, and there is joint consultation on most matters. Group B has only one [illegible] ilóki, "master of the hidden power," the priest of the kinship group, who is consulted by all the members of the group. He functions during the magical preparations for the hunt; he is consulted before any important undertaking. During the leave-taking ceremony after a burial, he converses with the deceased, and people turn to him when the ancestors have appeared to them in their dreams to transmit their desires, orders, or other information to the living. He protects the people of his group from the ill will, [illegible], of the dead and the living. The priest of the kinship group is used as the criterion [134] to determine which group of homogeneous A-groups represents a B-group. The priest of the kinship group is descended from a certain one of the related A-groups.

616 554 There is a difference in rank among the A-groups of a B-group -- one group will be regarded as older -- but this is

844 are not too rare. (?)

2. Ease in delivery is called *bosfojá*; difficulty is called *bonsombo*.

A husband asks his mother-in-law to come and help her daughter. Other kinswomen of the husband or the wife do not refuse [482] their services either. Among them there is always one who is more expert in these matters and who acts as a midwife (*mbótsa*).

The delivery takes place in the banana grove behind the hut; there is light and air there. In the house it would be more difficult.

The husband cannot be present at this event. His presence would make it difficult and painful. The further away he is, the better. The prohibition is not rigid, however; if there is no one to help his wife (as in the case of an unexpected delivery in the forest, etc.), he will have no hesitation whatsoever in helping her with all the power and skill at his command.

To facilitate the arrival of the child, the midwife gives (278) the wife a potion to drink "in order to make slippery" (*botá wĩ bonéli*), and administers a douche containing *bofmo* bark.

If the pains continue for several days and all medication is 845 without results, it is assumed that some evil spell (*liloka*) is at work. To neutralize it the woman in labor is "blessed" (*-saka*). For that purpose her family and that of her husband each bring a stalk of the *bokaaló* plant (*bosífoga*). Two kinswomen, each with the stalk of her respective clan, squeeze out the sap with which they smear the woman's abdomen. After that the delivery takes place in a normal fashion.

845 The *nkanga* (doctor-magician) only intervenes when a woman 756 has already had several miscarriages or when all her children die. 847 If he is consulted he invariably attributes such misfortunes to the action of spirits of the deceased, who may be appeased by offerings and the promise that a manifestation of their will be heeded with respect to the naming of the child. Usually he adds that a few elementary prohibitions must be observed until the child is weaned.

Article V. Name Giving

Naming does not occur on any predetermined date. It is
553 not delayed without a special reason. No feast or ceremony accompanies the event. The father simply puts colored powder on the child's forehead as a sign of joy.

It is the father's right to choose a name for his child. Sometimes he asks for the family's opinion. Preferably he gives names of his relatives, deceased or living, or sometimes his own. But it is proper to respect the mother's feelings also. Failure to take them into account could provoke the woman to cause an abortion in order to punish him for being so willful as to neglect her family.

[845] A painful childbirth, like the repeated death of preceding
[769] children, is often attributed to the rancor of a dead person who is discontented. In such a situation the Nkundó await the verdict
[787] of a dream, or they have recourse to the judgment of a nkanga (doctor-magician) in order to be able to satisfy the irascible dead.

If the situation recurs too often, the calamity is attributed
553 to a rivalry between dead persons who are fighting over which of
551 their respective names should be given to the newborn; the envious loser kills the child. In order to avoid such mean vengeance and make everyone content while satisfying none, the father gives the child a neutral name or a Botswa name, such as Botswá, Sáka, Ěfâlína (nameless), Botsilá (lack of success, bad luck), Litáli (dead without known cause), etc. If the child has already received a name, but for one reason or another the inauspicious fury of a ghost is feared, it is always possible to change from that name to another.

Children are usually given the names of relatives of the same sex. Exceptions are sometimes made, however, if one of the sexes is not sufficiently represented among the progeny, in which case the bearer of the name can always change it later, and he almost always does. Nevertheless, there are [500] no specifically male or female names, except for those that consist of the relative form of a verb, such as Ósâsuka, "the coquette," Óyêmengo, "she who comes with plenty," Ófénji, "she who excels." Finally, certain names are sometimes used for either sex.

● 771 In matters of religion the Nkundó recognize the existence of a Supreme Being: Njakomba or Mbombiandá, creator and ruler of all that exists. They do not worship him in any way, however; all their religious practices are addressed to guardian and ancestral spirits. (2)

2. On the subject of the religious conceptions of the Nkundó, see a detailed study by Father Boelaert, M.S.C., in *Hooger Leven*, 1934, pp. 1612 and 1636, and 1935, pp. 12 and 60.

197 The language of the Nkundó is beautiful, harmonious, flexible, and rich. It has all the qualities needed to become a literary language and is admirably suited to the requirements of teaching. Furthermore, its various dialects are spoken over a considerably large territory, in fact over one of the largest language areas [13] of the Congo. 777 234 In addition to the religious and devotional books of the Catholic missions, a fairly large collection of various academic textbooks is available in this language, thanks primarily to the zeal of the Protestant missionaries. The latter have also published a complete translation of the Bible. Several vocabularies and small grammars have been compiled, and in recent years a large dictionary and an expanded grammar have been added to these, both compiled by A. and L. Ruskin of the Bongandanga Mission. For several years the Protestant mission at Bolenge has been publishing a native magazine, and the Catholic mission is pushing ahead with preparations to publish one also.

164 Father Shebesta's book, Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge, includes a chapter on the Nkundó in which the author gives a good general description of this people. Nevertheless, some of the details given must be accepted with reservations.

121 The general information given above is enough to give the reader a superficial knowledge of the Nkundó.

The purpose of this work is to give a more extensive account of their institutions pertaining to marriage.

As we have previously stated, we are considering only a portion of this people. All our statements cover only the fraction we have delimited. The family institutions of other Nkundó groups are not accounted for, as they are less known to us and we do not want

847 [484] already more "civilized," such as the neighborhood of Coquilhatville and the Losanganya region.

847 846 Attention should be drawn to the danger of an increase in abortions for a new reason, namely the shame of giving birth outside of wedlock. As we have seen in Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 3, premarital pregnancies have existed since time immemorial without resulting either in remorse or in palavers. Through the teaching of Christian morality, the feeling of shame must sooner or later be extended to this phenomenon. In explaining the evil of fornication, care should therefore be taken to insist on the fact that transgressing the Fifth Commandment by abortion is a far greater evil.

847 845 Voluntary abortion is not considered a moral error by the Nkundó. (1) In their eyes an imperfectly formed fetus, not viable,

1. An attitude which also exists in Europe at the present time, according to [illegible] in Kultuurleven, Vol. 6, no. 1, p. 23 (1935), and the brochure by Prof. D. Schockaert quoted there.

is not yet a man. It is only a human being in the process of formation, in potentia. Hence the custom of burying the aborted child in the [440] hut or quite near it. Thus the spirit responsible for the pregnancy will see that it is respected and repeat its benevolent action. (1)

847 [illegible] [778]

1. Others explain this custom by saying that the fetus already has a soul which remains near the tiny body and will take the first opportunity to re-enter the mother's body.

But if it is voluntary an abortion is always a wrong against family and society, for it deprives the family of a member on whom

Take F/33

M
784
781

young man! [Ed., the text is not translated from mid-page 17 to the second paragraph, page 19.]

[19] Since the chief goal of our expedition was to study the practices and customs connected with the material and everyday life of the native, as well as to gather objects for our collection, our stay among the various tribes was too

M
[12]

Fig. 14. Natural Deformations among the Natives.
(1) Bankutu women; (2) Barakata woman; (3) Bankutu child.

M
[732]

short to permit a thorough study of their religious life and its attendant customs.

We ascertained that the native, as a rule, acknowledges the existence of a higher spirit. During my stay in the village of Kapanda, Banfumongo tribe, I had the opportunity to question a chief on the subject.

M
I
776

"Who causes the sun and the moon to rise? Who gave you the fish of the river and the animals of the plain, Matali?"

The chief looked at me for an instant, dumbfounded, and then replied, "Nzambi ve Mundele?" "Was it not Nzambi, White man?"

"Why, then, do you not call upon Nzambi to protect your crops, favor your fishing, and grant you success in hunting, Matali?" [20]

Tabn F129

A
1
776

"Would he want to help us, Mundele?"

"Why not?"

"Is he not exclusively good?" Metali continued.

"If he is so good, should he not listen to you, Metali?"

"Are not misfortunes caused by the ndoki (spirits), Mundele?"

"But is not Nzambi sufficiently powerful to ward off those ndoki, Metali?"

"Are not the ndoki sent against those who have done evil to others? Would Nzambi still be good if he were to ward off the ndoki, who punish the evil-doers? Ye Mundele, ye! Nzambi is good, he does only good, why call upon him?"

This bit of conversation sums up the native's conception of the supreme being. One calls upon him to explain what one cannot understand, but there is no cult devoted to him. Everything that is good for the society and whose source or origin is not known comes from him.

M
776
778

Aside from this spirit, the various tribes believe that there is a multitude of other spirits, some stronger than others, who are all very much concerned with the natives. They are all good in the sense that what is obtained from them is always beneficial to someone, although sometimes it is quite harmful to someone else. For this reason the native has created nkisi [Ed., fetish] and ndoki.

M
776
791

The fetisher is supposed to be able to communicate with these spirits. He keeps from them, according to native belief, the secrets of which plants help in healing and who has killed someone. He can obtain from them the punishment of a thief, because such punishment is beneficial to the one robbed. Through their intervention he can assure good fishing, guarantee rich hunting, facilitate childbirth, heal the sick, etc., or, on the other hand, make any enterprise fail.

M
776
791
778

The native believes that success of any kind is granted by these spirits. He attempts, therefore, to secure their good graces as much as possible. Before hunting, fishing, childbirth, etc., he goes to the fetisher. For a fairly high fee, the latter calls upon the spirits and hands over the appropriate nkisi. If the results do not conform to his expectations, the native blames [21] neither the fetisher nor the nkisi, but a ndoki more powerful than the nkisi involved. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

M
776
791
778

The intervention of the okisi or ndoki is only a temporary one. Once an undertaking has been successfully carried out, the native has no further use for the object given to him by the fetisher to insure success. On the next occasion he will go back to the fetisher and ask for a new okisi, which he would always like to be more powerful than the ndoki. Unfortunately the fetisher cannot find such an all-powerful okisi. A spirit that he has invoked with success for years, whose power seems inexhaustible, will one day fail him. Five, ten, fifteen times success has followed the invocation, and then, there it is, an enterprise under the same auspices fails miserably. A new okisi, more powerful, has become ndoki, and the native returns to the fetisher and demands that he do better, always better! With the exception of certain figurines carved in wood and used as hunting fetishes, the physical representation of okisi consists of an assortment of the

S
[778]

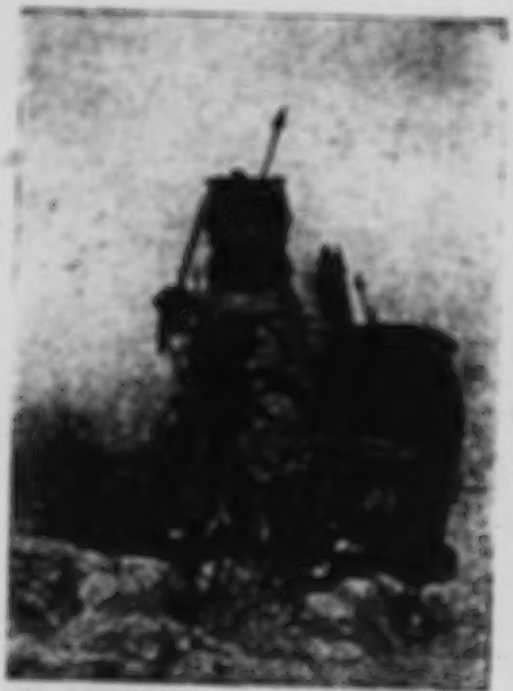


Fig. 18. Implements of Diapolo,
Basakata Fetisher of the Bokoro Region.

M
778

Nels,

843
833
841
finally, that sexual relations are strictly forbidden to them during menstruation (-bona or êna nsongé, literally "to be ill from" or "to see the moon," and other similar expressions). The reason given is that a woman in that difficult condition should be spared all additional annoyance.

1. Elimá

842
776
● The Nkundó attribute the procreation of children sometimes to God (Njakomba) and sometimes to spirits (elimá, pl. bilimá). God forms (-hoga) the children in the mother's womb, but at the same time the bilimá provide the men among the progeny. (1)

[161]

1. Contrary to what is reported by Father Lemaeghe (Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 363) concerning the Ekonda, the tribes that I have known never address prayers for children to God, although they attribute the gift of children to Him. This matter does not concern God (Njakomba or Mbombiânda) directly, but rather a particular elimá.

Sterility, which is a common phenomenon here, is not imputed to sorcery but is considered an innate flaw. Natives usually claim that God refuses them children.

There is no point in trying to make the natives resolve this apparent contradiction; they would not succeed. They simply state the two points. I say "apparent contradiction," for as the Nkundó admit that the bilimá are subject to Njakomba, the contradiction is not real, and the two propositions can be [470] reconciled by explaining the intervention of the spirits as an operation which is dependent on divine action: they are secondary, intermediary causes, although our natives do not make this philosophical analysis.

To explain all the beliefs pertaining to spirits would be to go outside the framework of this study. Nevertheless, we cannot leave out those details which closely touch on our subject.

776 825 There is a large number of diverse spirits, and almost every village has several in its territory. Each one has its own habitat in some singular place or object which stimulates the imagination: enormous trees, oval hollows which form ponds of a sort (efímbo, pl. befímbo), steep slopes, extraordinary pieces of limonite, whirlpools in streams and rivers, etc.

776 842 The Nkundó pray to the bilímá in order to obtain children. For that purpose they make offerings of food and money. To test someone's feelings toward it, an elímá may come to him in the evening or at night in the guise of a known person and ask for some small present. Unhappy is he who shows himself to be stingy; he will be deprived of the object of his desire, or his child will be premature or born sickly or deformed.

783 842 776 In addition to taking a generally friendly attitude toward the spirit, another means of ensuring his intervention is open to a woman. She can procure some kaolin (pembe) at the spirit's habitat (a efímbo, preferably). In the evening she mixes it with some plants. She smears her abdomen with this mixture, known as isaá. [843] She continues the treatment throughout her pregnancy; it has the property of removing everything in her which is of such a nature that it might oppose the spirit (ikáfola lokako jwá bilíma bíle ndá likundó).

776 842 Certain water spirits are known for their generosity, for instance Itómbáolombé or Ekótalombé of Mpaká, [471] who is considered to be a female being. She goes on distant voyages to seek a supply of children. On her return she appears to someone and communicates the news to him so that he may spread it. But she orders all women who desire her favors to observe some form of abstinence. Sometimes she sings to amuse or calm the children. On that day mothers must not use songs to pacify their little ones or to put them to sleep and can use only soft words for that purpose. Otherwise the child would die, for to do so would be to disregard the old elímá's kindness.

[787] Sometimes the spirits give signs of their blessing. A woman who is bathing on the shore just at the time a cargo arrives there will soon see her most intimate wish fulfilled. From forest spirits

776
842
[781] women receive other signs: an unexpected obstacle in the form of a stone, a stump, a root, the capture of a tree frog which comes and jumps onto the shoulder, etc

A spirit loves and protects only a child he himself has given. He abhors and hates to the death the living gifts of his fellow spirits. If there are several bilímá in the vicinity of a single village, however, the Nkundó explain the absence of the usual rivalries by considering them as related; one is the husband, another the wife, others the children; that is why they do not oppose each other.

776
847 Thus an elímá is hostile to any fetus not of his creation. Nevertheless, his spiteful action only begins at the end of several weeks, and even then the pregnancy must have gone far enough to be visible (ifumi jíbela infimbé) Does it take time for him to obtain evidence that the fruit in question is undoubtedly his own gift?

In any case the consequence of this belief is that a woman who has been pregnant for several months cannot long [472] reside in foreign parts, and one who, after conception, has accompanied a husband who has gone to work elsewhere, returns to her village to complete the last period of pregnancy and to deliver.

However, there is an antidote (osengé) against this murder-
[751] ous action of the spirits. It may be obtained from a person who knows the recipe (this person is not the nkanga or "doctor"). The protective compound is wrapped in a bit of cloth and, by means of a thread of fibers from the lokúlá creeper, is tied in the middle of a rope braided with the fibers of the ilolonyafondé bush, which the threatened woman ties around her hips. (1)

[114]
[115]

1. These data on the subject of the elímá is diametrically opposed to the ideas of Father Schebesta (Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge, p. 241, and W. Schmidt, Der Ursprung der Gottesidee, Vol. 4, p. 322), based on the word of his interpreter, Bern. Bongonga of Bofiama (Bombwanja) (now deceased), who was

847
776
119
165

obliged in my presence to retract his statements under the pressure of crushing objections on the part of a considerable number of other natives. See also Father Boelaert, Nsongo Lianja, 1935, p. 60, and Congo, 1936, Vol. 1, p. 42, as well as Hulstaert, Congo, 1936, Vol. 2, p. 676.

843
777

2. The beginnings of pregnancy

The first months following the cessation of menstruation are called bofigwa. The oral expression is -figwa ɓimi (ɓimi meaning "fetus")

A woman who has just conceived no longer has any success in looking for caterpillars or in fishing (by scooping, whether with bolɔ́ngɔ hooks or drugs, called lisole). She is unable to catch anything while the efforts of her companions are fruitful. That is because the bofigwa is wɛ́kɛ, that is, a cause for a lack of success (bɛ́mɔnɔ ɓa wɛ́kɛ ɓiléko). Note that this word may be derived from the verb éka, "to place an obstacle."

The husband of a woman in this condition is no better off. His wife's wɛ́kɛ is communicated to him as well as to all those of his relatives who [472] live in the same village or, as the natives say, ɓáá mpeká ɔmɔ́kɔ́tá, "one who eats from the same pot," and ɓáá ndáko ɔmɔ́kɔ́tá, "one who lives in the same house." Friends are not harmed, even if they live in the same settlement as the pregnant woman, nor are relatives living elsewhere.

The wɛ́kɛ brings misfortune to anyone tainted with it. Thus if he goes hunting, he will return empty handed; if he participates in a war he will be wounded. Furthermore, if there is a leopard in the vicinity he will choose to kill that man. An elephant will detect his presence and try to kill him. A snake will bite him more readily than another. At market he will be charged more for everything.

This burdensome situation continues during the entire period of pregnancy, hence until the birth of the child.

847
776
109
115

obliged in my presence to correct his statements under the pressure of crushing objections on the part of a considerable number of other natives. See also Father Boelaert, Nsongo Lonkundo, 1938, p. 60, and Congo, 1938, Vol. 1, p. 62, as well as Hulstaert, Congo, 1938, Vol. 2, p. 670.

843
777

2. The beginnings of pregnancy

The first months following the cessation of menstruation are called [illegible]. The oral expression is [illegible] ([illegible] meaning "fever")

A woman who has just conceived no longer has any success in looking for caterpillars or in fishing (by scooping, whether with [illegible] baskets or drags, called [illegible]). She is unable to catch anything while the efforts of her companions are fruitful. That is because the [illegible] is welo, that is, a cause for a lack of success ([illegible]). Note that this word may be derived from the verb [illegible], "to place an obstacle."

The husband of a woman in this condition is no better off. His wife's welo is communicated to him as well as to all those of his relatives who [473] live in the same village or, as the natives say, [illegible], "one who eats from the same pot," and [illegible], "one who lives in the same house." Friends are not harmed, even if they live in the same settlement as the pregnant woman, nor are relatives living elsewhere.

The welo brings misfortune to anyone tainted with it. Thus if he goes hunting, he will return empty handed; if he participates in a war he will be wounded. Furthermore, if there is a leopard in the vicinity he will choose to kill that man. An elephant will detect his presence and try to kill him. A snake will bite him more readily than another. At market he will be charged more for everything.

This burdensome situation continues during the entire period of pregnancy, hence until the birth of the child.

[illegible] The Nkundó know an antidote ([illegible] or [illegible]), however, a means of getting rid of such annoying obstacles. Of the three known processes the last is especially common at present.

[illegible] 1) The husband (or any person to whom the wèkò is attached and who wants to be rid of it) picks up a [illegible] chilopod, naturally by means of a leaf, encloses it in a large leaf which he binds with a thin creeper, and makes a small package of it, as one makes a package of meat, fish, etc. He gives this package to his wife, who thinks it contains food and opens it without any suspicion. But when she sees the detested arthropod, she throws it far from her with cries of disgust, while her husband says to her, "You are the one who remains with the wèkò." As a result he himself is freed from it.

2) A second means is to take the pregnant woman by the arm when an opportunity presents itself and to say to her: "May the wèkò remain attached to you."

[illegible] 3) The woman prepares some [illegible] (cassava leaves [474] salted and dipped in palm oil). The two spouses eat it together contrary to the usual practice. But the husband arranges matters in such a way that his wife gets the last mouthful and keeps the leaf which serves as a plate and represents the wèkò. Then the husband says to her, "Keep the wèkò for yourself."

The wèkò cannot be detached from the woman, for she is the [illegible] wèkò, "the owner of the wèkò," the one who is the basis for it. For her it continues until the child is on the point of being born ([illegible], literally "he has come to the end of his growth," or [illegible], "has turned to one side"), and thus, in practice, until the birth of the child.

[illegible] If a first wife dies at the beginning of her first pregnancy, a caesarian operation must be performed on her. The fetus is removed (it is still no more than an embryo -- [illegible] or [illegible], literally "an egg," or [illegible], literally "blood") so that it can be buried behind the hut. An omission of this practice would result in the death through pregnancy of the deceased's husband's other wives or of the women he will subsequently marry.

Tuhn F | 23

M
776 "Would he want to help us, Mundele?"

"Why not?"

"Is he not exclusively good?" Manali continued.

"If he is so good, should he not listen to you, Manali?"

"Are not misfortunes caused by the ndoki (spirits), Mundele?"

"But is not Nzambi sufficiently powerful to ward off these ndoki, Manali?"

"Are not the ndoki sent against those who have done evil to others? Would Nzambi still be good if he were to ward off the ndoki, who punish the evil-doers? Ye Mundele, ye! Nzambi is good, he does only good, why call upon him?"

This bit of conversation sums up the native's conception of the supreme being. One calls upon him to explain what one cannot understand, but there is no cult devoted to him. Everything that is good for the society and whose source or origin is not known comes from him.

M
776
778 Aside from this spirit, the various tribes believe that there is a multitude of other spirits, some stronger than others, who are all very much concerned with the natives. They are all good in the sense that what is obtained from them is always beneficial to someone, although sometimes it is quite harmful to someone else. For this reason the native has created nkisi [Ed., fetish] and ndoki.

M
776
791 The fetisher is supposed to be able to communicate with these spirits. He keeps from them, according to native belief, the secrets of which plants help in healing and who has killed someone. He can obtain from them the punishment of a thief, because such punishment is beneficial to the one robbed. Through their intervention he can assure good fishing, guarantee rich hunting, facilitate childbirth, heal the sick, etc., or, on the other hand, make any enterprise fail.

M
776
791
778 The native believes that success of any kind is granted by these spirits. He attempts, therefore, to secure their good graces as much as possible. Before hunting, fishing, childbirth, etc., he goes to the fetisher. For a fairly high fee, the latter calls upon the spirits and hands over the appropriate nkisi. If the results do not conform to his expectations, the native blames [21] neither the fetisher nor the nkisi, but a ndoki more powerful than the nkisi invoked. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

M
776
791
778

The intervention of the nkisi or ndoki is only a temporary one. Once an undertaking has been successfully carried out, the native has no further use for the object given to him by the fetisher to insure success. On the next occasion he will go back to the fetisher and ask for a new nkisi, which he would always like to be more powerful than the ndoki. Unfortunately the fetisher cannot find such an all-powerful nkisi. A spirit that he has invoked with success for years, whose power seems inexhaustible, will one day fail him. Five, ten, fifteen times success has followed the invocation, and then, there it is, an enterprise under the same auspices fails miserably. A new nkisi, more powerful, has become ndoki, and the native returns to the fetisher and demands that he do better, always better! With the exception of certain figurines carved in wood and used as hunting fetishes, the physical representation of nkisi consists of an assortment of the

S
[778]

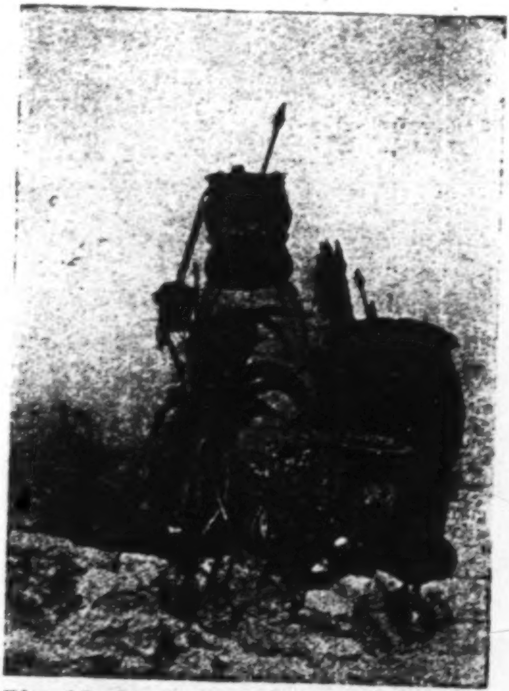


Fig. 15. Implements of Diapolo, Basakata Fetisher of the Bokoro Region.

M
778

Teke FI33

Ntomba

● M 778 of the most disparate and incongruous objects, [22] white, black,
or red clay, ngula /Ed., redwood powder/, chicken feet, heads,
beaks, claws, and feathers, shells, palm nuts, etc., all mixed together in a large pot or in an old worn basket. It is from this
magic treasure that the fetisher takes a pinch or two which he
wraps carefully in a little bag and hands over to those who resort
[T 778] to him. As for the human figurines so often found in the huts of the
Bateke and Banfumu, we do not believe that they are fetishes. In
our opinion, they are guardian figurines for children, carved before
their birth and preserved until they reach marriageable age.

M 791 824 Some fetishers manage to gain quite a reputation, and their services are purchased for a very high fee. They are familiar with the properties of certain plants, and they keep this knowledge secret and exploit it as much as possible. It would be wrong to believe that the fetisher's practices are all based on mystification.

M 278 695 Ebandia, the high chief of the Mosengere, knew the secret of certain poisons. He knew effective remedies for certain kinds of festering wounds; he proportioned the quantity of poison at ordeals so as to make its action violent or slow, and he was familiar with an antidote which cancelled out the effects of the poison.

M 278 695 684 A few hours before our arrival at Penge, Ebandia had subjected [23] one of his wives to trial by poison, on the mere suspicion that she might have gone too far with a native during a slightly prolonged stay in the forest. Ebandia accused her of adultery, prepared the beverage, and compelled the poor woman to prove her innocence by taking the poison. The unfortunate creature rebelled. A quarrel arose, and the village natives, when informed of the matter, protested against it, to no avail, however. The old tyrant carried out the ordeal. He had been notified of our impending arrival, and after allowing the unfortunate woman to suffer horribly for nearly two hours, he gave her the antidote. Five hours later, all the effects of the poison were gone. [Ed., the text is not translated from the last paragraph, page 23, to the second paragraph, page 26.]

T 764 [26] In general the natives have a kind of cult of the dead. In the Bateke-Banfumu region, the corpse is wrapped in fabrics. The more important the deceased person is, the larger the bundle. His whole wealth in fabrics goes with him to the grave. Prior

Sakata FO43
Yaelima

S 224 778 of false bamboo, two or three arrowheads, and a small bow had been stuck in this paste. At the foot of the stake the natives had piled a whole series of antelope and buffalo skulls. These remains alone were vaguely reminiscent of the hunting fetish of the Kasai region.

M S 224 778 It is possible that this very simple form of the nkisi of the hunt is also the earliest and that it is closest to ancestral custom, since the primitive shelters of the neighboring peoples and the huts characteristic of the Bateke-Banfumu tribes are actually a mere elaboration of the custom followed by the parental branch of these peoples, a custom which called for the skull of the largest animal killed during the hunt to be dedicated to the guardian spirits of the hunt and to be placed at the foot of the physical representation of these spirits.

M 224 778 In the region of Oshwe and Bumbuli we found no trace of this custom. Each village, however, possessed its hunting fetish. The one in the Yaelima village of Yanga is among the most interesting. A tall shrub stands near a group of four huts located slightly apart from the principal area of the settlement. Two forked stakes, 1.20 meters apart, stand close by, and a straight stick lies on the ground, which may be placed on the forks. A small piece of a calabash hangs by two lianas, one of which is tied to the tree, the other to one of the forked stakes. The calabash contains substances with magic power: a mixture of mpembe and black earth, forming a muddy paste. Before leaving on a communal hunt, each hunter who owns a net must walk by this fetish. The head of one of his arrows or of his spear is dipped in the small calabash, and part of the mud that sticks to it [81] is spread on the nets. Upon returning from the hunt, a piece of flesh from one of the animals killed is hung on the crossbar lying on the two forked stakes. The custom of depositing skulls does not seem to be known in the region.

The hunting fetish of the Bokala in the village of Yoshomo Monene stands in the center of the native settlement. It consists of two forked stakes which may be joined by a crossbar, exactly like the framework of the Yaelima hunting fetish. The tall shrub is replaced by an herbaceous plant with thick leaves. The calabash containing the magic substances lies on the ground between the

Yaelima

224 778 plant and one of the stakes. The customs and ceremonies observed before leaving for the communal hunt are identical to those we have just described.

224 As to the relations between the fetisher, the hunting fetish, and the individual hunter, we will ignore them, having been unable to obtain any information on this subject in these regions.

Throughout the region we visited, large-scale hunting is done communally. As a rule, all the men participate, including young men from the age of 15. [Ed., the text is not translated from the last paragraph, page 81, to the second paragraph, page 83.]

[83] The catch of the communal hunt is shared among all the families in the village, with the chief and the dignitaries having special rights.

224 622 Individual hunting does not entail any distribution, except when a buffalo, leopard, or elephant is involved. [293] The tail of the buffalo goes to the native chief, who uses it as a fly-chaser and a badge of rank. [281] The skin of the leopard is reserved for the chief, who makes it into a skirt which he displays ostentatiously at important festivities and public dances. The trunk and tusks of the elephant go to the chief while the bristles go in [778] [301] part to the hunters and [84] in part to the local dignitaries, who use them to make necklaces.

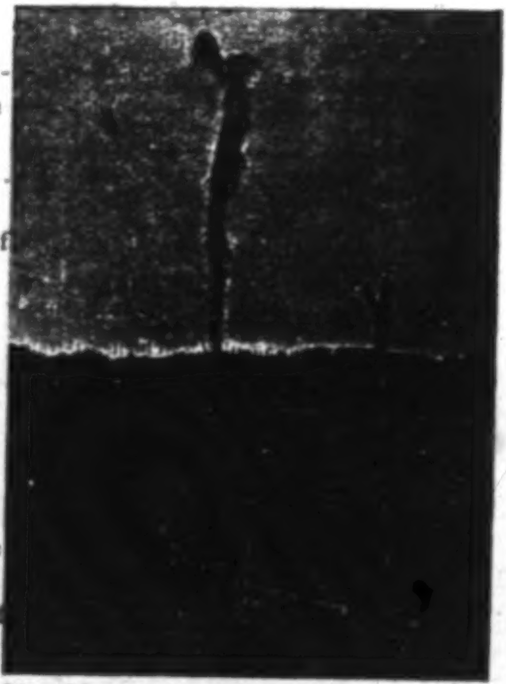


Fig. 51. Yaelima Fetish, Nkisi of the Hunt.

276
778

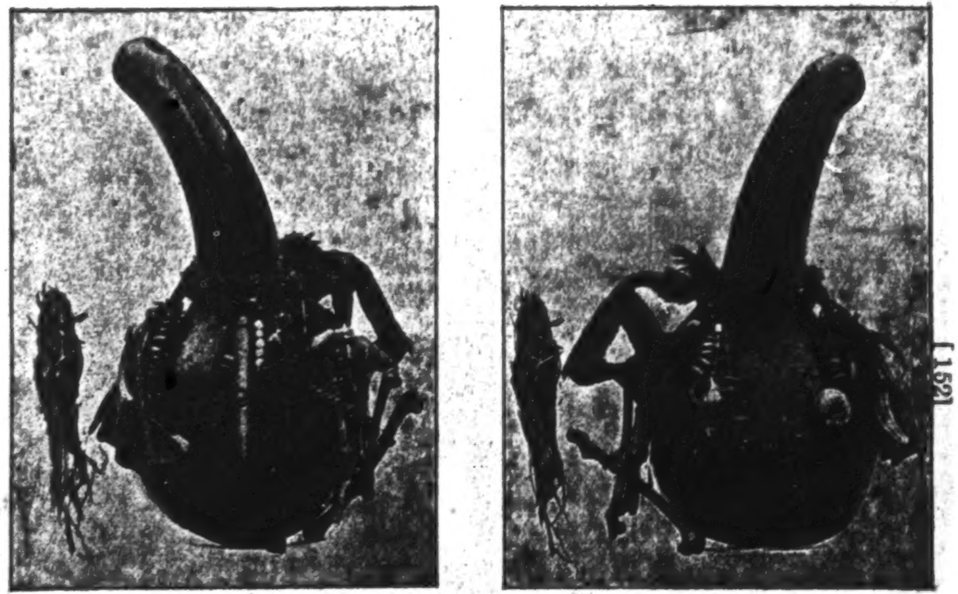


Fig. 87. Pipe for Smoking Hemp, Adorned with Nkisi.
Left: rear view. Right: front view.

M 301 on all the fingers of the hand. Those who can afford it even put them on their toes. Around the neck they wear fiber necklaces, M [779] from which they hang nkisi bags and horns. These amulet necklaces are associated with a religious idea, with magic power, rather than with ornamentation.

M 301 857 Children are usually overloaded with gaudy ornaments: white feathers stuck in the hair, necklaces and belts of glass beads, and small bells attached to the belt. In our opinion, however, these objects are not primarily intended to adorn the child, but to protect it. There is no doubt that the mother sticks the feathers in her child's hair and attaches small bells to his belt in order to find him more easily if he gets lost in the fields or in the bush. As soon as the child is old enough to find his own way and return to the village alone, bells and feathers are given up permanently. [185]

T [292 301 302]

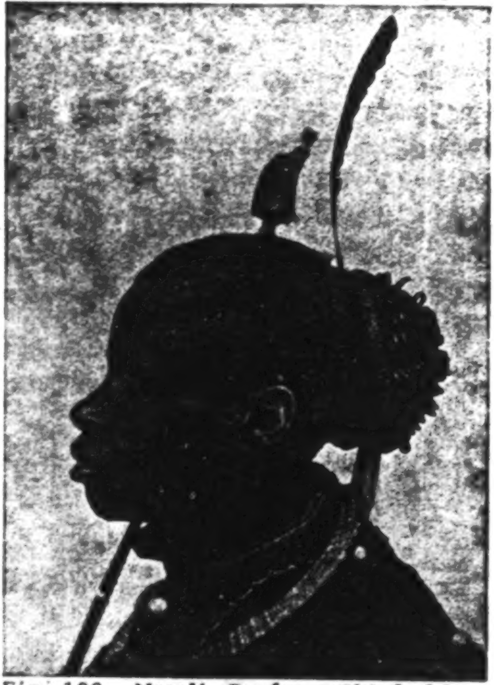


Fig. 106. Natali, Banfumu Chief of Kapanda.

M 301 171 According to their ornaments, the peoples of the Stanley Pool-Kole region are divided into five groups.

845 [202] The event is announced by the usual signal, but the signal is doubled or, if the children are of different sexes, the signal for each sex is given once. It is followed by the dance beat: two [535] or three long and two short.

The next day the father's relatives go outside the village, 845 preferably to a crossroads. On each side they plant a stalk of 778 lokőkólőkő. All around the stalk they spread a little heap of small branches and various leaves called jǔké. It is a sign and a place of benediction and good fortune. Each passer-by stops, picks two leaves, places one on each pile, spits on it, and says swá.(2) Then they clap hands and twice sing out, yelí yeye. Such behavior brings the benediction of the twins upon a person's journey, his undertakings, his marriage. The umbilical cord as well as the placenta and membrane are buried under the heap.

845 302 [386] Every morning the mother and father draw two stripes with kaolin on the middle of their foreheads and on their arms, above and below the elbow. They do the same to the twins. (3) They continue doing so until the child is weaned. If after that time one of the children falls ill, they begin again treating him in this manner until he is cured, taking care not to omit his brother, lest he too fall ill. For while these designs are signs of joy, they are [751] above all a prophylactic measure against children's fever (ikűtswáki), [502] called wǎsanyi when it occurs in twins or in a child following them, and manifests itself chiefly by tumors of the head and face.

845 551 Twins are invariably called Mbőyő and Bokétu, names given to the first born and the second respectively, whatever their sex. The Bombwanja (like the Ekonda) use the names Mbőő and Mpia, respectively. The mother takes the name of Ǎmbǎ.

---

2. Onomatopoeia for "spit."

3. Sometimes a double stripe is added at the temples The kaolin may be used pure or mixed with the red paint called ngőla.

845 parents to the dance, they must go. When the mother passes a
● [178] crossroads or the dwelling place of a spirit or an efeno (a place
where the Nkundó gather for magical practices, oracles, etc.), she
also sings and dances in honor of the spirit, so that he will favor her
845 children. Various songs are popular, such as: Elím'é'Åmbá
533 tongólela yelí yeye, "Spirit of Åmbá, do not weep; (1) Bokétu la

1. Tongólela is an archaic form still in use among the Ekonda, etc

Mbőy'é'Ambá tofúkáké tonyongáké, toléké bilingoi yelí yeye, "Ambá's Bokétu and Mbőyó, do not bruise yourself, do not stir, do not eat bilingoi mushrooms"; Bokétu 'a Mbóyó njóátela ngőy' emengo yelí yeye, "Bokétu and Mbőyó, I surround my mother with abundance"; Bokétu'a Mbőyó lá'okono lá'okendo yelí yeye, "I shall fall ill, and yet I will walk (be well)"; Bokétu'a Mbőyó, lióta bokekesano yelí yeye, "difficult childbirth," etc.

Foods forbidden to twins are the mushrooms called bilingoi
845 (or bilingondo or bankǎnkíndá), the mpambí antelope, and the ɔ̌lí
262 yam, which is also forbidden to parents whose child is not yet weaned.
(2)

2. This prohibition extends to all food cooked in pots in which such forbidden foods have been prepared. The extension is characteristic of all alimentary prohibitions.

845 When traveling, the parents of twins gird themselves with the
484 creeping plant called boyayenga, or wear it like a strap over the
shoulder The mother also attaches a bell to it. Their hair is often
[301] adorned with two feathers from the tail of a gray parrot (nkoso) and
two feathers from a white hen. [504]

845 The greeting to parents of twins and their reply must always
576 be double: w'ɔ̌né w'ɔ̌né, the reply em'ɔ́né em'ɔ́né; oɔ̂yá, oɔ̂yá, the
reply bíka bíka. Note that the last greeting is not replied to differently

583 607 used by her father, Nkamba ɛ́y'ontole of Bofɛ́tola (Bonjoku), to pay a supplement for his wife Bekombe. On this account the latter became her daughter's nkita. The double bride price served to obtain the wife Lintamba for Ifolí y'onguma, Bekombe's brother and Mbɛ́lá's uncle, and Lintamba thus belonged to both mother and daughter, but the two did not fight about the matter.

One person can have two or more nkita, especially if her bride price is so large that it can be used to obtain several wives. Such is the case of Mputú (Sofia) of the Basɛ́ká Mbangɔ́ of Bonganda (Bonkoso). Her first husband, Mpɛ́nda of Lofelí, paid 40 rings and a slave. With this sum Mputú's uncle, [172] Mbangɔ́ ɛ́y'akoso (who had settled with the Elángá l'Imomo, his mother's clan), paid the bride price for Bonjɔ́lɔ́ of Nkɛ́lengo. (1) In the meantime, Mpɛ́nda was killed in a fight with his brother, Iloko. Mputú married Elɔ́ngola, Mpɛ́nda's nephew, but then he died after two or three years of marriage. She was then married to Lokonga of Lɔ̌ngá (Nkɔ́le), whose life was not much longer, and finally to Bakutu (Boniface) of Bombɛ́nga w'ɔ̌kenda (Besombɔ́, Bombwanja), who paid a considerable bride price. A part of this bride price was a compensation to the family of the last husband, and another portion was used by Mbangɔ́ to acquire as wife, Bongelí of Ekúkola. By means of the bride price paid by Lokonga, Mbangɔ́ (Joseph), a first cousin of Mputú, obtained the wife Bolɛ́já (who came from the Ionda). Lastly, Bakutu gave Bonjɛ́kyá (Christophe) of Losɛ́linga, a distant cousin of Mputú, the necessary bride price to marry Embongámbembe of Lɔ̌ngá, who on this account also became the nkita of Mputú, though not in the strict sense of the term. Mputú thus has four nkita, although not all of them are living.

● [782] [727] 1. During a war against the Nkɛ́lengo, this woman had been captured by the Elángá, who wanted to sacrifice her to the ikwɛí at a feast which terminated the mourning. But Mbangɔ́ begged the notables to let her live because he loved her very much and wanted to marry her.

593 Iongo of Bokákyá (Boselo, Bombwanja), married to Bokaa is 'Ifonda
574 of Bowélé; for Mbalaka, daughter of Bolekela wa Imangaiso of the
342 Basékà Lokuli (Bongíli), married to Mbuli is'ea Wela of Bombóngo
556 w'Etefa (Bongale) (1) [286]

[531] 1. She bore the name of Mbálaka (meaning indemnity), because her father had solemnly proclaimed (-békya) and publicly promised that he intended, one day, to place himself in the position of having to pay an indemnity because of his daughter, as proof of his love. Indeed
● [782] when Mbálaka was married, he killed one of his wives, cut her into pieces, and sent the "meat" to his son-in-law as "the first hen" that his wife would pre-
[682] pare for him. But he did not have to pay
[614] the indemnity because the victim's clan was too weak to attempt a war; they did not dare to make a claim and, in order to avoid even greater misfortunes, they resigned themselves to this revolting ignominy.

Article V

Relations Between the Husband and His Wife's Family

606 As has already been said, kinship by marriage is called likiló,
607 and relatives by marriage are called bokiló, bakiló. Mbótsoló is a term of respect for very close relatives by marriage (father-in-law, mother-in-law, sometimes brother-in-law or sister-in-law). When there is a considerable age difference between two affinal relatives, the elder one sometimes calls the younger bokilówalé. This happens most frequently when the son-in-law is so young that he can still be considered a child. This term can even be used by an elder brother

Note,

842 833 [843] finally, that sexual relations are strictly forbidden to them during menstruation (-kona or éna nsóngé, literally "to be ill from" or "to see the moon," and other similar expressions). The reason given is that a woman in that difficult condition should be spared all additional annoyance.

1. Elímá

842 776 The Nkundó attribute the procreation of children sometimes to God (Njakomba) and sometimes to spirits (elímá, pl. bilímá). God forms (-ánga) the children in the mother's womb, but at the same time the bilímá provide the men among the progeny. (1)

● [182] 1. Contrary to what is reported by Father Lestaeghe (Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 363) concerning the Ekonda, the tribes that I have known never address prayers for children to God, although they attribute the gift of children to Him. This matter does not concern God (Njakomba or Mbombiándá) directly, but rather a particular elímá.

Sterility, which is a common phenomenon here, is not imputed to sorcery but is considered an innate flaw. Natives usually claim that God refuses them children.

There is no point in trying to make the natives resolve this apparent contradiction; they would not succeed. They simply state the two points. I say "apparent contradiction," for as the Nkundó admit that the bilímá are subject to Njakomba, the contradiction is not real, and the two propositions can be [470] reconciled by explaining the intervention of the spirits as an operation which is dependent on divine action: they are secondary, intermediary causes, although our natives do not make this philosophical analysis.

To explain all the beliefs pertaining to spirits would be to go outside the framework of this study. Nevertheless, we cannot leave out those details which closely touch on our subject.

This funeral drumming is kept up for a long time, off and on for days, and is very 624
stirring in its rhythm. While it is going on, the elders congregate in an *ebanga*. They 766
fast and have nothing to do with their wives during this time. The *ekopo* is mourning,
and the *molembe* may be likewise mourning, but for the others it is a time of rejoicing, [533]
and also of the relaxing of moral restraints. It is an occasion for dancing by both
Batwa and 'freemen', the former regarding this as a time for special rejoicing, [535]
for the *nkumu* was their master and now he is dead they are no longer under restraint.
They are free to take any of their master's goods and even to snatch blankets off the [563]
corpse. Men and women do not dance together; the women, taking some of their
husbands' weapons, go off in one direction, and the men, arrayed in finery, dance
at the other end of the village.

While the *nkumu* is still unburied and the drumming is going on, the *molembe* look for a successor among the *ekopo*. Often this man will, as we have seen, have already been designated. The *molembe*, Batwa, and others in the village make up a party, and attired in war finery go off with their weapons as though after a man they wished to kill. As they go they sing: [539]

Nkombe w'oopiita elimbo
We elale we nko?
Hawk, thou hast destroyed the nest,
Where art thou going to sleep?

Before catching the real successor they catch one or another in fun, singing this song. The man of course refuses to be *nkumu*, and the point of the song is that because of his refusal the *ekope* no longer fulfils its function of supplying the *molembe* with *nkumu* and therefore ceases to be of any use to them. If this man by refusing thus destroys the family nest, where will they sleep?

Finally, after this fun, the real successor is caught, his face daubed with black, and [303]
the group sing: [539]

Bela lusu-oo, lusola nkulu.
The cunning animal is hiding, reveal the tortoise.

Thus the new *nkumu*, like a cunning animal, is hiding, but when discovered, like the tortoise, he will not try to run away. The whole group conducts the new *nkumu* to the *ipana* and sits all night guarding him. Earlier on the day of the actual interment of the dead *nkumu*, the new one is installed with ceremonies as already described.

On the day the *nkumu* dies his people scatter to other villages to look for slaves 766
for the executions on the day of the burial. Slave-owners or husbands of unwanted
wives ask quietly how much money there is for the man or woman, accept the agreed 567
amount, and tell the buyers to go quietly and catch the slave or wife before anything 762
is suspected and an escape is made. In this connexion we may note two classes of 562
wives, *bopika* and *iboto*. A third class, *boamba*, acquired by the payment of a very
small bride price, was not nearly as common formerly as at present and may be passed
by. A *bopika* was a slave wife acquired by capture in war or stolen. If loved by her
husband she will take her place practically on an equality with the members of the
village, but she may be killed, for she is her husband's possession, 'his money' is
the native expression. An *iboto* is a wife for whom a very high bride price has been
paid, obliging her family to give wives to the other family in perpetuity, supplying

766 a successor to replace a deceased woman, and thus maintaining the balance between
567 the two families. Such wives were seldom killed, for they had relatives who cared
for them and would object, and who had the power to do so by refusing to
● 792 fulfil their obligations and by retaining the bride price already received. The group
562 of men and women gathered together for execution thus comprised males and
bopika women from the 'free' group (*baoto*, as applied to all men and women not Batwa), and Batwa men and women whose owners had consented to their death. It sometimes happened that a man, seeing a woman among this group who took his fancy, might obtain her by paying for her in money or substituting one of his own slaves.

766 In some cases the executioner, *bomembe*, was chosen from among the family of the
dead *nkumu*, in others he was selected from among the whole group of people over
792 which the *nkumu* held sway. The man having been chosen, the knife is brought out
of the house where it has been kept by some elder. This, a blade some sixteen
[412] inches in length, two-edged, decorated by alternating longitudinal lines of polished
and blackened steel and inserted in a wooden handle, is sharpened on one edge,
carefully wrapped in a plantain leaf, and laid away for use on the following day.

At dawn the prisoners are taken to the water and washed to clean them, inland towns accomplishing this purpose by dragging them up and down the village in the dew-drenched grass tied by a liana. The prisoners then are arranged in a V shape, the apex nearest the spot where the *nkumu*'s body is sitting in state. Low seats are made by resting a stick in the forks of two perpendicular ones, and this cross bar is straddled by the victim. His hands are tied behind his back and his head tied to a sapling securely fixed at one end in the ground, the other bent down sufficiently to allow for tying the head with considerable tension on the rope. When all is thus arranged an expert drummer begins to pound out a rhythmic beat, and the ceremony of handing over the knife takes place.

The executioner of the day is dressed in finery but no camwood powder is evident,
for it is a time of mourning and not of rejoicing. He wears a hat with many feathers,
a vine encircles his waist, and bracelets of the same his arms. Then the man who last
occupied the position of executioner comes forward. An elder has already brought
the knife wrapped in its leaf and also a heap of ash on a leaf, both of which are placed
on the ground. The old executioner picks up the knife while the new one faces him.
The former demonstrates with gestures how he used to go about his work, the
motions, the attitudes, the fine arts of the task. Even though the executioner of the
day may have had previous experience, this part of the ceremony must be gone
[516] through. Then, holding the knife aloft, the instructor raises his right leg at right
angles to his body, bends it at the knee so that the shin hangs perpendicularly, and
the new executioner passes underneath it, returning the same way. He now faces
the old executioner, who lays the knife in his own hands, arms outstretched and
palms open, the handle resting in his right palm, the blade in his left. The new man,
facing his instructor, places his outstretched and open palms on the shoulders of
the other, draws his hands down his arms, finally coming to the knife, which, because
of its position is thus received, handle in the left hand, blade in the right. Releasing
his right-hand grasp of the blade, he stoops, sprinkles the blade with some of the
ash, then rubs his right hand in the dirt to remove all slippery sweat. Then still

grasping the knife with his left hand, with his free right hand he drains a gourd of 782 palm wine to gain courage, hits the nearest victim on the head with the empty gourd, 766 then transfers the knife to his right hand. He is now ready for his work which he proceeds to do methodically, sustained by the heady wine and the rhythm of the drum. When he had finished one of the lines, a pause would be made to bring out the body for burial. Just before this is done an armed band rushes down the path, returns, goes up in the other direction, then returns; this is said by some to ward off any spirits which might be about. The *nkumu* is now brought out by the Batwa slaves.[1] His grave, a circular hole with a crypt in one side of it, its entrance facing west, had been previously prepared. Few people in the Bonginda villages knew or had seen the actual burying place of an *nkumu*. While the corpse was carried to the grave followed by a crowd, the executioner finished his work. Those who stayed behind took the bodies of the decapitated men and women and divided [266] them among all the participants of the funeral who would subsequently devour everything.

Accompanying the funeral procession to the grave were the *ndeli*, one or more men or women who were destined to accompany the *nkumu* to his grave and to the other world beyond. At the burial of an *nkumu* witnessed in 1930 at which the semblances of some of the old rites were carried out, a party of armed men contested the right of the procession to approach the grave, there was a mock battle for a few minutes between two bands of the funeral party, and then the procession gained right of way. At the grave-side the legs and sometimes the arms of one *ndeli* were broken by heavy clubs to prevent him from escaping. Then seated on the ground the body of the *nkumu* would be placed on the knees of this one, whose arms would be placed round the *nkumu* and securely fastened by driving a peg right through both wrists. Sometimes two *ndeli* were thus used. If the number of victims was sufficient, [516] others would be buried alive too, being placed in the grave in the recumbent *monsepa* position, with the corpse on top of them, its weight being sufficient, with the earth filling in the grave, to prevent escape. The *nkumu* was now ready for burial and was placed in the crypt, facing west.[2] The relatives of the *nkumu* approach, they pluck [824] the leaves and stem of a juicy bush known as *mokako* and chewing it, expectorate ceremonially on the body while they address it in language somewhat as follows: 'You are going to leave us now, we are mourning, for you were a good and wise man, your discernment in matters of justice was without parallel, &c. . . . we wish that you may be happy where you go, have many wives, beget many children, lack not for meat. But don't take with you our power to beget children, leave us also some of this wisdom of yours, for what you were, we would be.' This prayer over, the *montolo* would be slipped off the head of the corpse and replaced by the informal hat, all done so dexterously that the bare head was not seen. The entrance to the [184]

---

[1] The body was supposed to have remained in state for seven to nine days, but actually it was buried privately soon after death, a dummy being set up with the *montolo* on its head, and the succeeding ceremonies being conducted with only the dummy in the place of the actual body. The inland villages however did allow the body to remain unburied for the long period, the wives being forced to keep watch in the same house. The Bonginda buried their *nkumu* generally in their houses at the spot where they had been accustomed to rest, burying the dummy at some other spot farther off.

[2] All burials have particular regard to this east-west position, those buried in the recumbent position having the feet to the west. The native explanation is that this allows the spirit of the departed to follow the path of the sinking sun. [823]

766 crypt would then be barred by mats in order to leave it as a hollow chamber, and
782 the hole leading down to it filled in with earth.

For a month or two after the burial the festivities and orgies continued. Women
766 would be hanged to create some diversion, but those hanged were not eaten. Decapi-
782 tations would continue. According to the informants only slaves brought in from
a distance would have to be tied to prevent their escape. The slave members of the
567 household of the dead *nkumu* would await their turn stoically, content to die that
[152] they might accompany their master in his journey to the land of spirits. This may
be true but scarcely seems possible. Still another diversion in the funeral orgies was killing in the manner known as *esumbu*. If some man who had a slave did not wish him to be hanged or beheaded, he might give him for this other method. As the weeks slipped by, such a one, his life having apparently been spared, would suppose that all was safe and that there was little chance of his being taken, and, thus emboldened, would, instead of keeping at a safe distance, join the crowd to watch a beheading. His death would be prearranged. At the moment of beheading a victim, someone would drive a spear into the unsuspecting man, the whole crowd then using spears and knives to stab and slash until he fell. Some might be tortured to death by being buried up to the neck and left thus exposed to the hot sun without food or water until death intervened, but this was not a common practice at such funerals.

768 The termination of the dead *nkumu*'s affairs took place when the division of the inheritance was made, a long and complicated process.

178 Such were the old days before European penetration. The advent of the white
624 man half a century ago was the beginning of the end. The ceremonies had to be
given up, though reluctantly. Occasionally now goats are beheaded in place of human victims, and many of the younger generation find that, even so, the sight is more than they can endure, and they seek refuge elsewhere. *Nkumu* are not anxious for the honours. They find little or no respect paid to them by the government officials and this is a distinct obstacle to their obtaining honour from their own people. When the *nkumu* resident in the village adjacent to the mission station died, one of the Natives was asked who would be next. The reply was that probably no one would appear as a successor. Asked why, he answered, 'There are too many trousers.' He meant that too many were adopting the ways of the white man to
[693] make the inauguration of another *nkumu* a success. In his one useful function, that
of judge, the paramount chief now takes his place, cases tried must be recorded by a clerk of the court, and fines paid into the treasury of the chieftaincy. With such a state of affairs the old ways drop into desuetude, and the younger generation grow up knowing less of the ways of their fathers as the years pass.

614 621 202 624 It is the task of the messengers to transmit all important messages to the other groups in accordance with a precise plan; this is particularly true regarding the invitations to the meetings of the village council with the nkúmú. At the same time they inform the other groups as to the program of the meeting. The first messenger calls on the messenger of the other community; the old men are gathered at the latter's house in order to receive and to discuss the message. The messenger of this community, in turn, departs for the next in line. As a result of this practice the messenger and his home became one of the centers of social life.

621 614 361 623 The same uniformity is found in community II. Here we can also see the engangala, the meeting place of the village Isangi and of its branch villages. The meeting place is an open space in which stands a short tree with a broad crown. The representatives of the several villages gather in the shade of this tree since one of the open men's houses could not accommodate all of them. The senior of the nuclear kinship groups Mpia (No. 14), Nsambi (No. 15), and Liengo (No. 16) has his house on this spot which is situated on the border of the territory belonging to these three groups. The elder of Mpia, however, is the messenger for the hamlet of Boyeke; he may of course be identical with the "elder on the engangala."

614 621 Cohesion within the third settlement community was also so strong that it employs only one messenger. The kinship subgroup Nsambɔ́sɛ́lɛ́ which is concentrated in this hamlet is said to consist of the descendants of an illegitimate child of the daughter of the village founder (see Diagram 1). As is the case in many other villages, it is therefore entrusted with the office of the ●[782] [624] botɛ́ni, who carries out the sacrifice of human beings and animals on the proper occasions.

614 621 624 202 The three communities just described are relatively homogeneous groups; the three following ones are quite heterogeneous. The two groups of hamlet IV belong to the kinship subgroups Iyolo and Mbo. In contrast to the kinship subgroups Lovendo and Besilo, they regard themselves as sufficiently different from

776 There is a large number of diverse spirits, and almost
823 every village has several in its territory Each one has its own habitat in some singular place or object which stimulates the imagination: enormous trees, oval hollows which form ponds of a sort (jémbo, pl. baémbo), steep slopes, extraordinary pieces of limonite, whirlpools in streams and rivers, etc

776 The Nkundó pray to the bilímá in order to obtain children.
842 For that purpose they make offerings of food and money. To test someone's feelings toward it, an elímá may come to him in the evening or at night in the guise of a known person and ask for some small present. Unhappy is he who shows himself to be stingy; he will be deprived of the object of his desire, or his child will be premature or born sickly or deformed.

783 In addition to taking a generally friendly attitude toward
842 the spirit, another means of ensuring his intervention is open to a
776 woman. She can procure some kaolin (gongo) at the spirit's habitat (a jémbo, preferably). In the evening she mixes it with some plants. She smears her abdomen with this mixture, known
[843] as isaá. She continues the treatment throughout her pregnancy; it has the property of removing everything in her which is of such a nature that it might oppose the spirit (ákékola lokeko jwǎ bilíma lǒle ndá likundú).

Certain water spirits are known for their generosity, for
776 instance Itúmbálombé or Ekótalombé of Mpakú, [471] who is
842 considered to be a female being. She goes on distant voyages to seek a supply of children. On her return she appears to someone and communicates the news to him so that he may spread it. But she orders all women who desire her favors to observe some form of abstinence. Sometimes she sings to amuse or calm the children On that day mothers must not use songs to pacify their little ones or to put them to sleep and can use only soft words for that purpose. Otherwise the child would die, for to do so would be to disregard the old elímá's kindness.

Sometimes the spirits give signs of their blessing. A woman
[787] who is bathing on the shore just at the time a cargo arrives there will soon see her most intimate wish fulfilled From forest spirits

843 a woman's mother proceeded with the ceremony in the absence of the husband and his family. The latter were furious. They revealed the matter so that if anything should happen later to the mother or the child the law would be on their side. In that way the husband could evade responsibility and place the blame on his wife and her family so that they would have to pay an indemnity.

The pregnant woman does not remove the paint for three or [302] four weeks after the ceremony. Nowadays the use of paint having [178] disappeared except for certain occasions and among older persons, it is left on for only one night. In addition the surface smeared has been reduced to a line in the middle of the head or even one single spot.

●[783] During this ceremony the Bombwanja have a public confession [837] (etato) of the lovers. But since the Bokótś wait until after delivery, we will deal with it later on.

On the night following the ceremony described, the couple [833] [476] "fasten the fetus" through their carnal union. Were they to omit this act, the child would die before birth.

For subsequent pregnancies the fastening of the fetus is no longer preceded by the same formalities.

The couple continue to have relations during the entire [833] period of pregnancy "in order to open an easy passage for the child." 843 On the other hand, they must strictly observe marital fidelity. 837 Nevertheless, a polygamist may have relations with his other wives.

In addition to this essential art, the interdict also includes a secondary part; the couple may not even commit acts even very remotely related to procreation. Thus they may not:

1) Touch in any way whatsoever -- even to shaking their hands -- persons with whom they have had adulterous relations; such persons must therefore be avoided.

2) Sit next to such persons.

3) Look at them.

4) Enter a house or apartment where they are.

5) Eat "from the same pot."

6) Lie in another couple's bed.

7) Other persons may no longer sleep in the bed of the couple bound by the bokeka.

853 quantity of leaves, which he puts in his little basket called ilámbá.
757 If a leaf falls in the course of this operation, he must stop and throw away all that he has picked up to that point. The massage cannot take place on that day for it would cause the child to die falling and withering like a leaf. The father must start all over again the next day.

There are always two masseuses: one of the husband's kinswoman and one of the wife's. (1) They crush the leaves in

1. The Injóló sometimes permit a man to perform the massage.

[743] the same single mortar (eoka). The mother meanwhile must make her public confession, of which we will speak again in a moment. When the substances intended for rubbing have been prepared, the two masseuses begin their operation, which must be quite painful. The husband's relative takes care of the right breast, the wife's concentrates on [494] the left. (1)

1. This is a natural arrangement for our people; the term used to indicate "husband" (bóme) is undoubtedly etymologically related to the one denoting "the right" (elóme), and there is some likelihood that the same is true for wǎlɛ́ (wife) and iɛ́li (left).

They energetically massage the breasts from the top to the bottom with the mixture. After a few minutes they test the milk by letting a few drops run out onto a burning fragment of pottery. If the reaction is normal the mother begins to nurse. If on the other hand, the milk curdles and solidifies (baɛ̌le báonda) like rubber, it is a sign that it is of bad quality because of the presence of an internal boil in the breast, called ǐtsɛ́. In that case the knowledge and skill of a woman expert is called upon. The latter rubs the leaves of a creeper between her hands in order to extract

853 the sap, which she then mixes with water. The resulting liquid is
757 oily and foams like soap. She places a few drops on a piece of banana leaf and makes a sachet of it. She holds this against the breast for a certain time until the boil, similar to a blood clot or a piece of liver, leaves the breast and enters the sachet. She then shows it to those present. From then on the mother can nurse her child without fear; her milk has become healthy and normal.

2) The mother's public confession must include the names
837 of all the men with whom she has had carnal relations since the
853 child's conception. Other groups, such as the Injóló, extend this
684 obligation even to instances preceding that moment but which
783 have not been declared at a previous occasion. The confession is public. The masseuse related to the husband begins to crush the leaves to be used in rubbing the breast; as she moves the pestle and says to the mother, "Name a man." The mother replies by giving a name. The masseuse says nyongo, "indemnity." Then all those present say yengô, yengô, yengô, "absolved" Then it is the other masseuse's turn, and she interrogates the mother in the same way. The process continues till all the names have been cited. If [495] the mother cites the name of a man who is a close relative of her husband and who therefore does not need to pay an indemnity, the masseuse does not reply nyongo. Instead a member of the husband's clan makes the gesture signifying
[201] exemption: he holds the kernel of a palm nut (lolikó) in his left hand and throws it by means of a small board which he holds in his right. Among the Injóló the man takes two kernels and strikes them against each other and then throws them away. Were the woman to suppress a name the child would die. If she has no admission to make, she replies, "No one besides my husband."

The indemnity that must be paid by those who are obligated to do so consists of a hen and a bunch of bananas (or their cash value) which are to be given to the masseuses, who will then divide them. Were the accused to refuse, the husband would demand a regular indemnity from him after the end of the seclusion.

The Bombwanja have this confession at the time of the
[184] fastening of the fetus. A few old women married into the clan carry out the interrogation. The kernel of the fruit of the palm is thrown by means of a knife.

837 Note, finally, that the confession is restricted to married
783 women. It is never expected of a young unmarried mother. Therefore
853 it would seem to be a practice connected with marriage (a
social institution) and not with childbirth (a physiological phenomenon).

This confession is called etato or lotato, from the verb
[192] -tata, "to confess," (for which the generic term, sanga, "to say,"
is sometimes substituted).

I was unable to find any reason for this practice other than that of avoiding the death of the child. It is evident, however, that this explanation does not exhaust the question, although it is entirely possible that the original and deeper meaning has been lost without leaving any trace in the minds of the present generation. [496]

3) During the entire duration of nursing, the mother must
853 not be separated from her child. For the usual circumstances of
933 daily life, this rule is broadly interpreted; but during sexual relations it is strict, and no exceptions or excuses are permitted. Negligence under these circumstances would inevitably bring about the death of the child by ndota as soon as the mother took it back. This rule holds for legitimate relations as much as for illicit ones. Therefore the mother must always keep her child at her breast.

4) If at some point during nursing, the milk no longer flows
953 in sufficient quantity, the mother is given a potion consisting of
[757] the extract of the bark of the bolóngé tree (which has a fruit con-
[278] taining a very sweet milky sap). Then she eats vegetables called
lotélé. (1)

1. The leaves of this plant are also ordinarily eaten as vegetables, but they are consumed especially by those who possess the modern magical practice known as boyaóli.

5) An accident to which the Nkundó attach great importance
[262] is the rejection or vomiting of milk into the mouth of an adult, even if the person affected is the infant's mother. Such a person

291 581 speaking. (1) Is this custom in some way related to modesty? The

1. See Chapter VI, Article VI.

[606] same question may be raised with respect to another strict rule of decorum which forbids a man to look his mother-in-law in the face. (2)

2. For details concerning this custom, see Chapter VI, Article V, 1.

It can readily be answered in the affirmative. (3)

3. Nevertheless, see Chapter X, Article II, 3.

784 516 The rule of decorum which forbids a man to sit down on a seat where a woman is seated who is not his wife seems to me also to be dictated by sexual modesty. On the other hand, stepping over the seat under such circumstances has nothing whatever to do with this feeling. The purpose of this practice is to enable the person seated (regardless of sex) to avoid the evil repercussions of a charm or magic spell in his or her possession. (4)

4. Contrary to the explanation given by Jadot in Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge (Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 90.

291 834 Is the native ashamed to show his nakedness? Let us beware of answering this question in general terms. In order to have an idea of the situation which is sufficiently clear and precise, various cases and circumstances must be taken into account.

1) First of all it can be stated that in the normal course of daily living the Nkundó, men as well as women, do all they can to hide their genital organs. That is to say that basically they are

535 far the most inventive tribe. All the dances have two distinguishable parts: the dance strictly speaking and the finale or ikóeyo. The latter consists of acrobatic exhibitions or a theatrical performance. It varies with each performance and sometimes goes beyond the limits of decency, especially in certain scenes of the women's dances. Here everything depends on the attitude of the actors and spectators.

535 786 [533] The words sung are usually proper. Passages that may be less so occur only exceptionally. The exclamations of some of the male or female dancers, but mostly those of the audience when the intensity of the performance reaches a climax, are somewhat less innocent. Thus this climax [62] is the weak spot morally speaking. This is true especially of the dances performed by the women who, led on by their passion and encouraged by the cheering and applause of the spectators, make provocative movements (bitékó, bembónjo). A European will see nothing wrong, but the native knows the gestures and their meaning. The spectators then applaud with even greater enthusiasm, either because of sexual feelings or out of aesthetic enjoyment, for to them these movements are beautiful. All the artistic dances for women which are the fashion at the present time contain a similar phase of exaggerated excitement. It is therefore understandable that in the past the elders strictly forbade children and adolescents to attend these dances.

[586] After what has just been said, no one will be astonished to hear that these great dances are often the cause of adultery and divorce. And to a limited extent the same can be said for the men's dances, for masculine beauty is exhibited in an enticing manner.

533 535 The rhythmic motions which sometimes accompany singing during drinking parties cannot really be called dances; nothing shocking is implied by them and the words of the songs are seldom improper. Salacious songs are rarely sung in the course of daily living, but they are never omitted from funeral ceremonies.

535 [177 831] Up to now we have spoken of artistic dances, which are always very popular. They were -- and are -- reserved for certain special occasions. For ordinary circumstances the Nkundó have a few little entertaining dances which have nothing at all in common with the dance as such. They are more like games. The lyrics of the songs

164 bikofo -- the heavy branches upon which lay the bed in which the woman died.

lǒngo -- a hoe (real or replaced by a ring) to dig the grave.

ifaká -- a knife (ditto) to dig the grave.

yǎndá -- an axe (ditto) to cut the roots that would be found at the site of the grave. (1)

● [787] 1. One day I saw the iron bar given as yǎndá refused by the wife's family because it was the same one they themselves had given to help the husband pay the nkanga (doctor-sorcerer) for his divination (bolíngó) during the wife's illness.

bombémbé wǎ nyang'éy'ǒna -- a belt for the mother of the deceased, so that she can wear it during mourning.

botsá w'ǐláká -- the head of the corpse, in honor of those who wail over the deceased while sitting near her head, that is, [438] to say, the very close relatives. This is the last and largest payment, consisting of 3 to 5 rings.

All these payments together comprise the nkunjí and, with the exception of the nsango, the likongá l'etóo, and the byěko by'ǒkáko, they are a kind of beéngo. (1) Not all the beéngo are

1. See Chapter II, Article V.

equally large. Therefore, all of them are not always claimed. The smallest ones -- bakemo, bantsingá, baóndo, nkóngi, bokengo, nsili, bompúlo, mpuka -- are often omitted.

Even some of the others may be left out. The matter depends not only on the friendliness of feeling between the two groups, but chiefly on the number of children to which the woman in question has given birth. If the woman was sterile, her family is less demanding. But if the deceased had several children, they do not yield, arguing that their daughter was a source of great profit to her husband's clan.

Article VI. The Economic Position of a Widow

736 768 As long as her seclusion lasts, a widow continues to live with the family of her deceased husband. She supplies herself with food from the crops she has grown. The tools her husband has given her remain in her hands, and she makes use of them as soon as she can. As to the various utensils which must be destroyed, they are replaced by others lent her by the family of the deceased, for she may no longer use those which served her in her husband's lifetime.

In order to better express the magnitude of their mourning, the Nkundó often refrain [441] from using the products of the farms established by the deceased. Therefore, instead of continuing to cultivate the existing crops of manioc and vegetables, the widow prefers to seek provisions in the fields of the close relatives of the deceased. Or a man who has already chosen her may place his fields at her disposal. If neither of these sources is available and she wishes to observe the rule rigorously, she must purchase what she needs in this realm.

736 768 421 As we have seen in Chapter VI, Article II, a widow has no claim to the fruits of her labors. Neither the money she has earned and which is intended for the common needs of the household, nor the crops she has set up, nor the fish she has caught, nor the caterpillars she has gathered in the forest belong to her. Everything goes to the heirs. Her property is limited to objects she may have received as her personal share in her daughter's bride price, or as some other payment belonging exclusively to the mother.

If the widow remains in the family of the deceased, however, her fields, tools, etc., are left to her, for under those conditions there is no reason to take them away from her. But if she ● [787] remarries elsewhere, the heirs are pitiless. A Nkundó does not want the family wealth to be scattered or squandered in any way. The law says lokutu lǒkísó lőfótsw'înyamó, "our patrimony cañ not be alienated."

736 768 In point of fact the widow is treated more favorably, at least in the best instances. If her relations with the family have been good, they will not refuse her some small object that she

776 823 There is a large number of diverse spirits, and almost every village has several in its territory Each one has its own habitat in some singular place or object which stimulates the imagination: enormous trees, oval hollows which form ponds of a sort (jěmbo, pl. baémbo), steep slopes, extraordinary pieces of limonite, whirlpools in streams and rivers, etc

776 842 The Nkundó pray to the bilímá in order to obtain children. For that purpose they make offerings of food and money. To test someone's feelings toward it, an elímá may come to him in the evening or at night in the guise of a known person and ask for some small present. Unhappy is he who shows himself to be stingy; he will be deprived of the object of his desire, or his child will be premature or born sickly or deformed.

783 842 776 In addition to taking a generally friendly attitude toward the spirit, another means of ensuring his intervention is open to a woman. She can procure some kaolin (eongo) at the spirit's habitat (a jěmbo, preferably). In the evening she mixes it with some plants. She smears her abdomen with this mixture, known as isaá. [843] She continues the treatment throughout her pregnancy; it has the property of removing everything in her which is of such a nature that it might oppose the spirit (ákékola lokeko jwǎ bilíma lǒle ndá likundú).

776 842 Certain water spirits are known for their generosity, for instance Itúmbálombé or Ekótalombé of Mpakú, [471] who is considered to be a female being. She goes on distant voyages to seek a supply of children. On her return she appears to someone and communicates the news to him so that he may spread it. But she orders all women who desire her favors to observe some form of abstinence. Sometimes she sings to amuse or calm the children On that day mothers must not use songs to pacify their little ones or to put them to sleep and can use only soft words for that purpose. Otherwise the child would die, for to do so would be to disregard the old elímá's kindness.

[787] Sometimes the spirits give signs of their blessing. A woman who is bathing on the shore just at the time a cargo arrives there will soon see her most intimate wish fulfilled From forest spirits

776
842
● [797] women receive other signs: an unexpected obstacle in the form of a stone, a stump, a root, the capture of a tree frog which comes and jumps onto the shoulder, etc

A spirit loves and protects only a child he himself has given. He abhors and hates to the death the living gifts of his fellow spirits. If there are several bilímá in the vicinity of a single village, however, the Nkundó explain the absence of the usual rivalries by considering them as related; one is the husband, another the wife, others the children; that is why they do not oppose each other.

776
843
Thus an elímá is hostile to any fetus not of his creation. Nevertheless, his spiteful action only begins at the end of several weeks, and even then the pregnancy must have gone far enough to be visible (jěmi jôkela isómbá) Does it take time for him to obtain evidence that the fruit in question is undoubtedly his own gift?

In any case the consequence of this belief is that a woman who has been pregnant for several months cannot long [472] reside in foreign parts, and one who, after conception, has accompanied a husband who has gone to work elsewhere, returns to her village to complete the last period of pregnancy and to deliver,

[751] However, there is an antidote (nsengó) against this murderous action of the spirits. It may be obtained from a person who knows the recipe (this person is not the nkanga or "doctor"). The protective compound is wrapped in a bit of cloth and, by means of a thread of fibers from the lokósá creeper, is tied in the middle of a rope braided with the fibers of the ikuluyaéndé bush, which the threatened woman ties around her hips. (1)

[114]
[115]
1. These data on the subject of the elímá is diametrically opposed to the ideas of Father Schebesta (Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge, p. 241, and W. Schmidt, Der Ursprung der Gottesidee, Vol. 4, p. 322), based on the word of his interpreter, . Bern. . Bongonga of Boúlama (Bombwanja) (now deceased), who was

Article V. Name Giving

553 Naming does not occur on any predetermined date. It is not delayed without a special reason. No feast or ceremony accompanies the event. The father simply puts colored powder on the child's forehead as a sign of joy.

It is the father's right to choose a name for his child. Sometimes he asks for the family's opinion. Preferably he gives names of his relatives, deceased or living, or sometimes his own. But it is proper to respect the mother's feelings also. Failure to take them into account could provoke the woman to cause an abortion in order to punish him for being so willful as to neglect her family.

[845] [769] [787] A painful childbirth, like the repeated death of preceding children, is often attributed to the rancor of a dead person who is discontented. In such a situation the Nkundó await the verdict of a dream, or they have recourse to the judgment of a nkanga (doctor-magician) in order to be able to satisfy the irascible dead.

553 551 If the situation recurs too often, the calamity is attributed to a rivalry between dead persons who are fighting over which of their respective names should be given to the newborn; the envious loser kills the child. In order to avoid such mean vengeance and make everyone content while satisfying none, the father gives the child a neutral name or a Botswa name, such as Bo̱tswá, Sáka, Ěfâlǐna (nameless), Botsilá (lack of success, bad luck), Litúli (dead without known cause), etc. If the child has already received a name, but for one reason or another the inauspicious fury of a ghost is feared, it is always possible to change from that name to another.

Children are usually given the names of relatives of the same sex. Exceptions are sometimes made, however, if one of the sexes is not sufficiently represented among the progeny, in which case the bearer of the name can always change it later, and he almost always does. Nevertheless, there are [500] no specifically male or female names, except for those that consist of the relative form of a verb, such as Ósâsuka, "the coquette," "Óyê̱me̱ngo̱, "she who comes with plenty," Ófénji, "she who excels." Finally, certain names are sometimes used for either sex.

596 invading groups of kinsfolk there was always one who was considered as the family head, and this man could claim the title of *momene mokonda*, the owner of the land. Round this man the rest of the members of the family group clustered, and he had the general direction of their affairs. He could scarcely be termed a chief, having a paternal oversight rather than exercising any wide authority demanding organizing ability and political astuteness. The succession of *momene mokonda* runs collaterally through younger brothers in the first place; hence if a first-born male happens to hold that position, the succession among his younger brothers is in the order of their birth. When these have all died the succession passes to the next generation. If all the males of a group die, it is possible for a daughter's son to leave his father's side in order to assume the position of *momene mokonda* on his mother's side.

A *momene mokonda* can delegate his duties as head to another member of the family, who is then termed *molomi o ehe*, the husband of the settlement. For such a privilege payment is generally made to the *momene mokonda*. Round these *momene mokonda* and their immediate kinsmen others gathered, forming, it may be, another section of the same settlement, known then as an *etuka*, or, if numerous, another settlement.[1]

624 [693] The *momene mokonda* (or *molomi o ehe*) hears and judges cases that come to him, aided always by a group of elders, and directs the activities of the settlement. However, this does not entirely satisfy the Tumba; they want an *nkumu* also. The *nkumu* is chosen, not by the whole settlement, but by a single village, or it may be even one *etuka* of a village. If the villages of a settlement were without an *nkumu* it would generally, but not necessarily, be the *etuka* of the *momene mokonda* which would lead off by seeking one out. The group desiring an *nkumu* are known as the *molembe*, and they look about for a man of the same tribe but not of the same settlement or village, an outsider. He must be a man of some wealth, for actually he will buy his right of authority and pay heavily for it. If the man who is approached accepts, he is known from then on until his accession as *Nkema Akuke*, the term *nkumu* not being used until he is finally invested with the insignia of office, the *montolo*, or hat of special design. *Nkema Akuke*'s family is known as the *ekopo*, or *nnango*. This man, [556] once having accepted the invitation to become *nkumu*, sets about amassing wealth in the form of wives and brass rods. He may be years about it, but he does not thereby forfeit his right to the office, nor apparently weary those who extended the invitation. Should *Nkema Akuke* die before he is installed as *nkumu*, or should he wish to withdraw from the honour bestowed upon him, the succession passes to another member of his *ekopo*. The succession would normally pass to the eldest male of the *ekopo*, ● [787] but many circumstances may interfere to give it to another member of the family. A dream dreamed by a male of the *ekopo* to the effect that he should be the *nkumu* is sufficient to give him the right of succession over the eldest male. When asked [689] whether it was common to lie about such a dream having occurred, in order to gain the right of succession, those questioned received the suggestion with emphatic negatives, for this is no time to lie; any man so doing would be sure to die, and the fear of death would deter him from such baseness.

---

[1] Where practical, the invested chiefs set up by the Belgian Colonial Government are men chosen because of their right to be known as *momene mokonda* or *molomi o ehe*. Often, however, the settlements are so small and lacking in cohesion that it has been necessary to set up chiefs arbitrarily over chieftaincies very much larger than were their own hereditary spheres of influence.

fear of death would deter him from such baseness. Another sign of the chosen 624
successor is some untoward experience, such, for example, as finding cowrie shells
(worn by *nkumu*) in a trap in the forest or a net that had been put out to catch
fish.

Nkema Akuke, whether the first of his line or a man succeeding in the office, bears [293]
the emblems of his rank. He wears an *ilelembe* (a branch of a special bush) stuck into
his belt on the right side and hanging downwards. The special hat, *montolo*, worn [292]
by *nkumu* is not yet his to wear, but he wears an ordinary skin hat known as *lopope*,
which is the mark of any elder. This hat may be ornamented with feathers if so
desired.

When *Nkema Akuke* decides that he has acquired sufficient wealth to enable him [302]
properly to claim the right of being made an *nkumu*, he begins his preparatory arrangements.
Mbili, a mixture of charcoal with some sticky substance, is smeared over his
body with plantain leaves. All ornamented clothing is discarded and a single cloth [292]
woven from raffia, and known as *molele*, is worn. He refuses to sit on the benches usually
used and instead sits on the bare earth. All this is explained as an attempt on the [516]
part of the man about to be raised to the office of *nkumu* to be different from others,
a man apart, separate, peculiar, not partaking in the ordinary interests and affairs of
his fellow men.

Nkema Akuke now leaves his own village accompanied by all his wives and [533]
children, and also by a singer, *nyemba*, who is paid to sing his praises, and by several
male Batwa (pygmies), up to half a dozen in number, known as *ntotii* because of their 563
duty of blowing gourds and producing sounds which indicate praise of the great 534]
man. This party makes the round of villages wherever relatives are found, and the
announcement is made that *Nkema Akuke* is about to become an *nkumu*. This 624
pilgrimage accomplished, a 'doctor' (*nkanga*) is visited by the aspirant to office, 791
who seeks by magic to discover whether it is the propitious time for the ceremony of
installation. The whole company retires to the private enclosure at the rear of the 787
house belonging to the *nkanga* chosen, this being the place where he performs his
wonders. The *nkanga* resorts to *mingo*, that particular branch of magic which has to
do with reasons for strange and unaccountable phenomena.[1] *Nkema Akuke* now
seeks some sign as confirmation of his determination to claim his office at this time.
Some native pepper may be wrapped in a leaf or merely covered by it, and left within
sight of all, and upon being opened it may be found to have turned into salt, or perhaps
it may be some earth that is thus turned to salt. Or a cock may be placed upon
Nkema Akuke's head and covered with a basket and thus left for some time. Upon
removing the basket it may be discovered that an egg has been laid. All such tests, 624
if successful, will be regarded as indications that it really is time for *Nkema Akuke*
to assume the office of *nkumu*, but if the test fails he will usually go ahead with his
plans anyhow, fearing the shame that would come to him should he go back to his
home after having made the triumphant round of his relatives' homes. However,
should he act thus, and he most certainly will, he knows that his days are numbered,

---

[1] If a man's fields do not produce and he cannot understand why, he will resort to *mingo*. If it is suspected, for example, that the trouble is caused by someone making 'medicine', an arrow shaft is put into a small hole in the ground, and at each name mentioned, the arrow can be pulled out if the person is innocent, but remains stuck fast in the hole at the mention of the guilty name.

624 and that he may have no more than a month or perhaps a year in which to live and will surely die speedily.

The special objects attaching to the office of *nkumu*, among these the hat, *montolo*, and stool, *mbata*, are at the same time subject to similar magical arts to determine whether they may be produced for the new *nkumu*'s use. They are not present, being in the possession of the *molembe* which will appoint him, but are mentioned by name. Apart from the *montolo*, no further ceremony is required to identify these objects with their future owner.

[302] The *mingo* ended, the *Nkema Akuke* smears black *mbili* all over his body again, 624 before the rites begin to determine which of his wives is to be known as *Nsono*, 787 the one who will be closest to her husband throughout his days. For this, magic formulae (*bienzako*, sing. *eenzako*) are used. All the wives sit round in a circle and the *nkanga* places some irritant such as ground pepper in the eyes of all the women. The wife whose eyes stream most and whose discomfort is also accompanied by a violent [827] shaking of the body is known to be *Nsono*. Here again, lying is believed to be out of the question, for the shaking of the body is something that is supposed to be impossible of simulation, the real being easily distinguished by all from the false. *Nsono* is now stripped of all clothing and her body smeared by the *nkanga* with yellow clay on one side, and with white on the other. A belt of leaves is put round her waist 624 and a small bit of cloth between the legs with each end attached to the belt. Near by 789 a gourd with 'medicine' in it has been standing ready for the next step in the ceremonies, and this is now smeared with white clay, a parrot's feather stuck in the neck, and handed to *Nsono*, who receives it in one hand. Into the other hand is put a section of plantain stalk, into one end of which has been stuck a parrot's feather. A third feather is placed in her mouth so that she cannot speak, greet anyone, or eat. She is now tied with a cord which is held by one of the young men attending *Nkema Akuke*. At this point of the procedure the *nkanga* states his price [791 for his work, which will be in the neighbourhood of one hundred brass rods, worth 435] to-day about fifty francs, but formerly double that amount. The future *nkumu*, accompanied as before, leaves for the village of the *molembe*. *Nsono* starts off at a tremendous pace, for she is now imbued with a sort of frenzied strength, and for this reason has been tied up and put in charge of a strong young man, otherwise she would be off so fast that no one could catch her, and would go into the forest, where she would live for days unseen.

624 In the village of the *molembe* the party all sit in an *ebanga* belonging to one of the elders. This is the place where the Tumba men really live—their houses are just [343 sleeping and cooking establishments, but the *ebanga*, having a roof for shade and no walls, is the place where the men congregate and spend their leisure time. It is also 342] the site of the village smithy, which takes up one end. Here, then, *Nkema Akuke* and his party sit for a day and a night, and neither he nor *Nsono* may eat food or drink [262] wine during this period. Games are played by the *molembe*—mock battles, dances, and songs chiefly of battle, and before the first streaks of dawn appear the group in the [517] *ebanga* begins to march up and down the village singing.

At dawn the whole party, accompanied by a large crowd, make their way to a place in the bush where there is an elevation of some sort. Here *Nkema Akuke* climbs up and takes his stand, accompanied by *Nsono*. Now the *molembe* choose the *Bilepo*

Dengese FO16

M 303 sides of this square and held in place by a binding of twisted 285 raffia fibers. The sides are then plaited by the simplest method, that is, with the horizontal band weaving in and out of the vertical thongs. As all of these molds always have approximately the same height and diameter, the ngula cones are both similar in M 303 shape and quite constant in weight. The natives use them a great deal as trade goods. In some regions the ngula cone has become [436] a veritable currency, with a standard value from one tribe to another. [170] A market is organized regularly when steamers M [439] call at Mushie, and there the people of the interior exchange the products of their industries for the imported objects brought by the Blacks who work for the Whites. Ngula cones are among the principal items of trade and bring a very high price. In the Oshwe region, the old chief Kua Kua was a great ngula trader. He came by regularly with four or five of his wives, bringing various products from the region between the Kasai and the Lukenie to exchange for the ngula made in the Lokoro region.

D 303 Throughout the central Congo regions, the ngula used for trade has the shape of an elongated truncated cone. Among the Basongo-Meno and farther east, on the other hand, ngula most often is shaped in a ball. The native of these regions often uses it to decorate his pottery and wooden objects and to dye the fibers of cloth used for decoration. He keeps it in cosmetic boxes carved from takula wood and usually decorated with very artistic designs. He also uses it to color his hair. [Ed., a passage from the middle of page 170 to the last paragraph, page 171, is omitted.]

M 302 ●789 [171] Aside from ngula, the native sometimes smears his body with a type of white clay quite frequently found in the river beds. [172] The native calls it mpembe. Its use is far from being as widespread as that of ngula, and we believe that the native associates it with magic power rather than ornamentation. Mpembe is used chiefly by the peoples of the Congo-Kasai, Lake Leopold II, and Lukenie regions, up to the region of the Batitu.

M [765] We never saw a native smear his whole body with it. The few women in mourning that we saw were covered with a grayish-yellow mud and not with mpembe. We believe, moreover, that the use of mpembe is reserved to the chief, his wives, and perhaps

M 302 0789 dignitaries and their families, but it was impossible for us to prove the accuracy of our hypothesis. When questioned about this, the natives always confined themselves to uncertain and evasive replies. The native chief rarely appears at a large gathering without having his face and sometimes his arms and chest covered with lines drawn with mpembe. At all official receptions, the chief, a few dignitaries, and sometimes some of the chiefs' wives had a more or less symmetrical rectangle drawn with mpembe around the eyes.

M 304 302 We observed the following artificial deformations in the course of our journey:

1) depilation;
2) filing of the teeth;
3) tattooing by incision;
4) circumcision.

M 302 Depilation is practiced by all the peoples of the regions visited. The native plucks out every last hair on his body. Where the hair cannot be plucked, it is shaved with great care. For the parts of the body that are hard to reach, men and women help one another. Eyebrows and eyelashes are both plucked, while beards and mustaches, on the other hand, are cared for with great pride. It is very unusual to see a full beard. We ran across only one such case. The happy possessor of this beautiful [173] beard was as proud of it as he could be, and Natali, chief of the Banfumu of Kwamouth, was heartbroken to have only a few hairs on his chin while one of his dignitaries was endowed with such a fine beard.

T 302 Among the Bateke-Banfumu peoples, up to the Ipanga, the natives frequently shave the base of their scalp all around the head. Their headdress looks like a very symmetrical calotte.

M 302 Among the Yaelima we encountered men whose heads were completely shaved except for one strip just above the nape of the neck. A similar custom must have prevailed among the Bateke and Banfumu, but the unshaved part was broader.

Among the Yaelima and up to the region of the Bankutshu north of Bena Dibele, the natives shave their hair in such a way

595x The bomɛ́tsa takes her task to heart, for her husband's glory is her own as well. The bomɛ́tsa is conscious of her role in spite of the presence of a favorite, for it is less that of a wife in the sexual sense of the word than of a wife who is mother of the family. It is of a higher order than the roles of the other wives; it is more serious, more unselfish, and based on a deeper love and a more deliberate will. According to the native point of view, it is rightly the source of a legitimate pride; it is an honor, while the position of the favorite is closer to an object of vanity. Therefore the bomɛ́tsa likes to show her importance.

It may seem strange to us that the bomɛ́tsa puts her heart into working to increase the number of women in the harem. But this is altogether natural for the Nkundɔ́. The growth of the harem is a source of glory, and she has been brought up to this attitude since her youth. After the first ardor, her affection becomes more serious. She becomes a perfect matron in the Roman manner. Although she continues her relations with her husband and takes care of her children, she is chiefly occupied with her duties as mistress of the whole family. Her husband loves her with a deeper and more reasoned emotion than he shows toward his other wives. Without cease he shows his consideration and attachment for her. If she is sterile it is very likely that he will give her a child belonging to his family or born of a wife who has left him, so that she can bring it up as if it were her own.
[343]

595x
592 The bomɛ́tsa's house is located at the right end of the row of wive's huts. She deserves this location because of her function as bomɔ́ngɔ́ loɛ́njɛ́, "owner, mistress of the polygamist's compound. The Nkundɔ́ say: ɛ́bɛ́la loɛ́njɛ́, "she stretches, or extends, her husband's group of dwellings in order to enlarge it."

595x A polygamous husband undertakes nothing of importance without first consulting the bomɛ́tsa (be it the creation of a bolɛ́mbɔ́ or a nkɔ́ndɛ́, or the acquisition of new wives, etc.). He respects her and treats her with deference, as if she were his mother, our people say.

● [789] The bomɛ́tsa is the only one of all the polygamist's wives who plays a part in the acceptance of the Nkundɔ́ offensive and defensive

595x 789 magic known as yoli. She alone participates in the ceremonies that accompany it; with her husband she eats half of the hen that has been killed for that purpose, and on that night she alone may share his bed. Finally, only with her, to the exclusion of the co-wives, may the husband eat the fish called wengɛ́, and only she may and must burn the leavings. Otherwise the magical practice would turn against its owner.

595x [724] When a piece of game is divided, the bomɛ́tsa is entitled to the lintɛ́la (the lower portion of the breast), which would go to the man's mother (or his father's or his elder brother's wife) were he a bachelor.

In the bomɛ́tsa's absence, her place is taken by her ebísa (see below, Article IV) or by the wife who follows her in seniority. At her death, the same rules govern her succession.

The name bomɛ́tsa is probably derived from the root mɛ́tsa, "to begin." She is the one who founds the family. Sometimes she is also called ikɔ́kɔ́yɔ́njemba, literally "bachelor's love." The Bombwanja say itɔ́kɔ́yɔ́njemba (the Ekondà, nkɛ́mukolo).

In addition to the bomɛ́tsa, reference is sometimes made to [344] bomɛ́tsa w'ìɛ́li, or "bomɛ́tsa of the left." The bomɛ́tsa in the strict sense of the term is contrasted to the latter as bomɛ́tsa w'ìlɔ́me ("of the right"). The bomɛ́tsa of the left is a polygamist's second wife. She is given this name because her house is at the left end of [592] the loɛ́njɛ́. She has no special rights or duties, however, unless the actual bomɛ́tsa delegates to her the task of looking after her end of the compound. If the harem is large, the husband may set aside [224] for her a special portion of the game, called itɔ́mbantɛ́ta, or nape of the neck. In her absence it goes to the eldest daughter.

Article II. The Favorite

595λ 556 All polygamists of any importance have a favorite wife, or nkɔ́ndɛ́. But only the rich and the notables have a true nkɔ́ndɛ́. The minor polygamists, of course, imitate the others (nkɔ́ndɛ́ ɛ́ɛ̂ weɔ́lɛ́ or ɛ́ɛ̂ itsiɔ́, "without great importance"), but they do so without

Article VI

Magic Practices Pertaining to Divorce

586x ●789 It seems to me not without interest to devote a few lines to the magic practices prevalent among our peoples and used on the occasion of divorce. We are not speaking of love philters; strictly speaking they would not be appropriate here. (1) We will therefore limit ourselves to giving a general idea of the practices used to prevent a wife from leaving her husband, to avenge a divorce, or to make a fugitive return.

As we shall see, these objectives often become intertwined.

1) The trinity iké̱táki-itó̱ko̱-ntómbá is considered by the natives as three related practices. We see it more as three forms of a single practice.

[177] All three originated with the Ntómbá of Lake Tumba and were introduced to the Nkundó -- directly or indirectly -- by certain Ekonda tribes living between the two peoples. This introduction took place in modern times. The practices were unknown here before colonization. Even at the present time they have not spread everywhere; they have not yet crossed the Momboyo. The chronological order of their introduction is first iké̱táki, second itókó, third ntómbá.

The animating spirit of these practices is the leopard. Their primary purpose is to call back an unfaithful wife and, if she obstinately refuses, to kill her or her seducer. Secondarily, they also serve to cause the death of any enemy whatever, especially in reprisal.

The three practices differ with respect to their manufacture and method of use. We cannot go into all the relevant details, for they are outside the framework of this study. [416] It is sufficient to say that the owner of the charm to whose powers he resorts first calls the woman by blowing into an antelope horn,

---

1. See Chapter I, Part 2, Article VIII.

586x especially very early in the morning at the crowing of the cock. (1)

789

> 1. The natives also use this means to call their children who long ago left for the "lowlands" and whose return they ardently desire.

If the one who is called does not return, the charm will take revenge either on her or on her lover, depending on the desire of the person operating it. Another intervention on his part is then required, however, and it varies according to the form used. Note that according to the native view it is impossible for the wife not to hear the call, no matter how far away she may be. If she does not return, it is because she is being obstinate and deserves to be punished.

The spirit of vengeance alone is involved in:

586x 2) The *ngondé̜*. This charm comes from the Coquilhatville
754 region or even further away. The word *ngondé̜* is the Lolíngá form
[237] of the Lonkundó word *nkondé*, which means "gavial." The teeth of this reptile actually play a part in its composition. It is used to punish any thief by death. Therefore it has been declared effective against anyone who tries to seduce the wife of another. It will cause the culprit's feet to swell and to open with pus. Like the above practices, this one has not yet crossed Momboyo.

Such usages like many others have therefore been recently
832 introduced. Before the arrival of Europeans in these parts, only
177 love philters were known. However, it is easily understandable that the Nkundó gladly and confidently received these new practices which are so useful -- in their opinion -- and operate in a domain of capital importance for which colonization has deprived them of their ancient sanctions and means of prevention. [417]

846 of a dried banana leaf. Three knots are tied in it. The helper
holds it in one hand and with the other cuts off the first knot, which
she carries away with her. The mother keeps her end in her hand
and presents the other to her husband. She receives the knife
from the hands of the helper and cuts between the two knots so that
each spouse carries away his end. Each time the parties involved
say, "We have cut the bofófó; we are separating; go away."
Having thus bid each other farewell, each fastens his end to the
roof of the seclusion hut.

This ceremony ends the period of seclusion and puts an end
846 to the ekelɛ́ prohibitions. From then on the couple may have sexual
837 relations together, the helper can resume her usual life, and
adultery on the part of the father can no longer harm the child or
the mother. Note, however, that the child's immunity to the
father's misconduct implies one condition: the father must not take
it on his knees the day he commits adultery. By the following day
the effects of his act have been nullified. A woman can discover
her husband's infidelity through his refusal to take the child. Often
she makes use of this means to obtain a confirmation of her suspicions.
Some men abstain from all misconduct solely to guard
against any such possibility. Adultery may have a harmful influence
on the child even after it is weaned if it has a weak constitution.
[491] All this seems to indicate that the reaction is considered
to be physical and direct rather than a sanction based on religion
or superstition.

846 Nkundó therapeutics include an antidote, however; it is
789 called bondandota (from ndota "an illness caused by the infraction
of prohibitions of a sexual nature"). It consists of a potion made
[278] from the sap of an aroid bearing the same name, which is mixed
with the sap of the libúlúkakó plant. If for some reason or other
the couple have been away from each other for a fairly long time,
they sit or stand face to face and take the child on their knees,
which touch each other, and each one makes the child drink the
potion twice, once from each hand, making sure to turn its face
toward him [or her]. Usually the couple also drink some of the
brew, though it is intended primarily for the child. Without
these precautions the relations between the pair and the father's

846 taking the child would cause the child's death. The same precau- 789 tion is also in order if the husband goes on a trip before the child's birth and does not return till after the delivery

We have just seen that the harmful effects of the father's 846 misconduct on his child's life is effectuated through the father's 837 act of taking the child on his knees. Thus the Nkundó speak of baóngó b'âbé, "a father's bad knees," to indicate his reprehensible [826] conduct, and they say that the bondandota potion is administered to the child so that it will not die because of the father's bad knees. (1)

> 1. The expression baóngó b'âbé is also used when an undertaking which requires continence is unsuccessful. (See Article II, 3).

When a child has painful and persistent diarrhea, it is often 753 interpreted as the effect of the father's infidelity. As soon as they 454 become aware of it, the couple separate for some time, and the father no longer touches the child. [492]

Contrary to what one reads on this subject about other peo- 837 ples of the Congo, Nkundó couples do not have to remain continent 834 beyond the period of seclusion. The separation ceremony gives the 789 husband back the freedom of action he had before his wife's pregnancy. For the wife the bokeka remains strict with respect to illicit relations until the child is weaned However she, too, may regain her freedom by having recourse to an antidote, the ingredients of which she purchases from a person who holds the secret. The ingredients are placed in a small antelope horn which is then stopped [824] up by means of bolaká (resin from the Symphonia gabonensis). The interested party wears it about her loins on a string or a bead belt or, preferably, on a special creeper. This amulet protects the child's life from the harmful influence of the mother's acts of adultery, but it does so only on condition that she does not separate herself from the child, as we will explain further on. This procedure

837 is not morally condoned, and a woman who resorts to it does not
834 escape criticism. She is compared to a goat, who does not have
● 789 a regular and steady husband: álómya bóna lontaa, "she nurses her child as a goat does." (1)

1. The opposite of lómya lontaa, -- if it is used to show the contrast -- is lómya lontómbá.

When the separation ceremony is ended, the mother is
846 adorned with all her ornaments and goes out to walk in a procession through the village. The child is carried by an older sister, a niece, etc. He is taken around the village, bánangya bǒna l'olóló Small presents are offered him everywhere -- an arrow, a small knife, a hairpin, etc There is no feast, however; if that honor were accorded him he would die of it (for when someone dies, there is always a feast of farewell in his honor). [493]

Article IV. Nursing

853 During the first few days after birth an infant does not suck the milk of its mother, since it is "too hot." He is fed by a third person, preferably a relative.

On the third day the following occurs:

853 1) The mother's breasts are massaged (-kulola baéle). For
757 this purpose the Nkundó use leaves of the bǔte creeper and the lilongyá plant (Adenostemma viscosum Forst.), a green leaf from a banana tree called nselenge, several pieces of peeled sugar cane, the tips of the dried leaves of any banana tree, and sometimes other plants are added as well. All the ingredients are crushed, then boiled, and white sand and a bit of red paint are mixed in with them. The mixture is called ndengó. It is prepared by the women who are in charge of massaging the breasts. The bǔte leaves, however, must be picked by the father. He goes to the forest early in the morning and first shakes the creeper so that all leaves that are not firmly attached will fall off. Then he climbs it and picks the desired

576
845 from the others. They thus rank with the great notables of the past. [sic]

When the children grow up and become self-sufficient, all 845 the special regulations lose their force and they become like 554 everybody else. Nothing distinguishes them from the rest in marriage, death, etc. No preference is shown for or against them. But their descendants will again produce twins.

Thus the Nkundó consider twins as extraordinary children, 845 but they do not carry this view to extremes. They are pleased to receive two children at a time, although they believe that under such circumstances the pregnancy and delivery are more dangerous for the mother. That is why she is called boyéngwá since, despite the seriousness of the situation, she did not die. This epithet is also applied to the father and to the twins, probably for the same reason as well as because of their immunity with respect to prohibitions. If the twins are of different sexes, however, the mother is not as likely to be called boyéngwá, since she is likoka, "harmful." (1)

---

1. See above, Article II, 3.

845 It is apparent from the above description that twins are 789 considered to be somewhat tainted with magic. The existence of 754 this belief is confirmed by the prohibition against throwing anything (stone, palm kernel, etc.) onto their hut, the same prohibition applying to anyone who possesses a charm or practices sorcery or protective magic. In addition they possess a certain innate ability to cast a spell over the activities (hunting, fishing) of others. That is why persons who are afraid of being harmed by them smear themselves with kaolin in the same way as do such children and their parents. [505]

The Nkundó have had cases of triplets, but they are ex- 845 tremely rare. The youngest of the three is called Yěndembe, or Yěndende, or Yělele. The only special practice with reference to the youngest one is that he can never be ordered to do any work, be sent to carry a message, run any errand, etc., áfótswé ntómo.

326 The objects of iron made by the Mongo smith are as follows.
411

Bibui: all that is of iron

1. Likula: arrow.
2. Bosuki: arrow for hunting pigs; also used to cut copal and spear fish.
3. Bongelo: lance.
4. Ifombolo: lance.
5. Mpokwankoi: lance.
6. Liswa: axe.

Jokula: knives

326
412

1. Mombi; 2. Boli; 3. Bolengwa; 4. Lingonda; 5. Limenga; 6. Likodzi; 7. Efamba; 8. Momba; 9. More little knives; 10. Lizangi.

Basongo: needles

1. Ingwala.
2. Lokili: tattooing needle. [413]
3. Jyolo: small needle to get flea beetles out of the feet.
4. Efoli: small pin.

Ngonga: bells

326
534
301
[789]

1. Ngonga ea tosisi: bells worn on the hips by women and children so that as they walk the ringing will keep away the evil spirits.
2. Bongonga: a bell attached to the point of a war-lance which makes it like the head of a walking-stick but upside down.
3. Lingwete: little round bell worn on the wrist by men.
4. Elondza ea itumba: the war-bell. An oblong pipe [97] in the form of a long cup attached to a stick. It is struck with a piece of soft wood, and the sound travels surprisingly far.

These bells are all made of wrought iron.

624 and that he may have no more than a month or perhaps a year in which to live and will surely die speedily.

The special objects attaching to the office of *nkumu*, among these the hat, *montolo*, and stool, *mbata*, are at the same time subject to similar magical arts to determine whether they may be produced for the new *nkumu*'s use. They are not present, being in the possession of the *molembe* which will appoint him, but are mentioned by name. Apart from the *montolo*, no further ceremony is required to identify these [302] objects with their future owner.

The *nningo* ended, the *Nkema Akuke* smears black *mbili* all over his body again, 624 before the rites begin to determine which of his wives is to be known as *Nsono*, 787 the one who will be closest to her husband throughout his days. For this, magic formulae (*bienzako*, sing. *eenzako*) are used. All the wives sit round in a circle and the *nkanga* places some irritant such as ground pepper in the eyes of all the women. The wife whose eyes stream most and whose discomfort is also accompanied by a violent [827] shaking of the body is known to be *Nsono*. Here again, lying is believed to be out of the question, for the shaking of the body is something that is supposed to be impossible of simulation, the real being easily distinguished by all from the false. *Nsono* is now stripped of all clothing and her body smeared by the *nkanga* with yellow clay on one side, and with white on the other. A belt of leaves is put round her waist 624 and a small bit of cloth between the legs with each end attached to the belt. Near by 789 a gourd with 'medicine' in it has been standing ready for the next step in the ceremonies, and this is now smeared with white clay, a parrot's feather stuck in the neck, and handed to *Nsono*, who receives it in one hand. Into the other hand is put a section of plantain stalk, into one end of which has been stuck a parrot's feather. A third feather is placed in her mouth so that she cannot speak, greet anyone, or eat. She is now tied with a cord which is held by one of the young men attending *Nkema Akuke*. At this point of the procedure the *nkanga* states his price [791] for his work, which will be in the neighbourhood of one hundred brass rods, worth 435] to-day about fifty francs, but formerly double that amount. The future *nkumu*, accompanied as before, leaves for the village of the *molembe*. *Nsono* starts off at a tremendous pace, for she is now imbued with a sort of frenzied strength, and for this reason has been tied up and put in charge of a strong young man, otherwise she would be off so fast that no one could catch her, and would go into the forest, where she would live for days unseen.

624 In the village of the *molembe* the party all sit in an *ebanga* belonging to one of the elders. This is the place where the Tumba men really live—their houses are just [343 sleeping and cooking establishments, but the *ebanga*, having a roof for shade and no walls, is the place where the men congregate and spend their leisure time. It is also 342] the site of the village smithy, which takes up one end. Here, then, *Nkema Akuke* and his party sit for a day and a night, and neither he nor *Nsono* may eat food or drink [262] wine during this period. Games are played by the *molembe*—mock battles, dances, and [517] songs chiefly of battle, and before the first streaks of dawn appear the group in the *ebanga* begins to march up and down the village singing.

At dawn the whole party, accompanied by a large crowd, make their way to a place in the bush where there is an elevation of some sort. Here *Nkema Akuke* climbs up and takes his stand, accompanied by *Nsono*. Now the *molembe* choose the *Bilepo*

Take F133

M
I
176 "Would he want to help us, Mundele?"

"Why not?"

"Is he not exclusively good?" Matali continued.

"If he is so good, should he not listen to you, Matali?"

"Are not misfortunes caused by the ndoki (spirits), Mundele?"

"But is not Nzambi sufficiently powerful to ward off these ndoki, Matali?"

"Are not the ndoki sent against those who have done evil to others? Would Nzambi still be good if he were to ward off the ndoki, who punish the evil-doers? Ve Mundele, ve! Nzambi is good, he does only good, why call upon him?"

This bit of conversation sums up the native's conception of the supreme being. One calls upon him to explain what one cannot understand, but there is no cult devoted to him. Everything that is good for the society and whose source or origin is not known comes from him.

M
176
178 Aside from this spirit, the various tribes believe that there is a multitude of other spirits, some stronger than others, who are all very much concerned with the natives. They are all good in the sense that what is obtained from them is always beneficial to someone, although sometimes it is quite harmful to someone else. For this reason the native has created nkisi [Ed., fetish] and ndoki.

M
176
791 The fetisher is supposed to be able to communicate with these spirits. He keeps from them, according to native belief, the secrets of which plants help in healing and who has killed someone. He can obtain from them the punishment of a thief, because such punishment is beneficial to the one robbed. Through their intervention he can assure good fishing, guarantee rich hunting, facilitate childbirth, heal the sick, etc., or, on the other hand, make any enterprise fail.

M
776
791
778 The native believes that success of any kind is granted by these spirits. He attempts, therefore, to secure their good graces as much as possible. Before hunting, fishing, childbirth, etc., he goes to the fetisher. For a fairly high fee, the latter calls upon the spirits and hands over the appropriate nkisi. If the results do not conform to his expectations, the native blames [21] neither the fetisher nor the nkisi, but a ndoki more powerful than the nkisi invoked. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

M
776
●791
778

The intervention of the nkisi or ndoki is only a temporary one. Once an undertaking has been successfully carried out, the native has no further use for the object given to him by the fetisher to insure success. On the next occasion he will go back to the fetisher and ask for a new nkisi, which he would always like to be more powerful than the ndoki. Unfortunately the fetisher cannot find such an all-powerful nkisi. A spirit that he has invoked with success for years, whose power seems inexhaustible, will one day fail him. Five, ten, fifteen times success has followed the invocation, and then, there it is, an enterprise under the same auspices fails miserably. A new nkisi, more powerful, has become ndoki, and the native returns to the fetisher and demands that he do better, always better! With the exception of certain figurines carved in wood and used as hunting fetishes, the physical representation of nkisi consists of an assortment of the

S
[778]

Fig. 15. Implements of Diapolo, Basakata Fetisher of the Bokoro Region.

M
778

Teke FI33

Ntomba

M 778 of the most disparate and incongruous objects, [22] white, black, or red clay, ngula /Ed., redwood powder/, chicken feet, heads, beaks, claws, and feathers, shells, palm nuts, etc., all mixed together in a large pot or in an old worn basket. It is from this magic treasure that the fetisher takes a pinch or two which he wraps carefully in a little bag and hands over to those who resort T [778] to him. As for the human figurines so often found in the huts of the Bateke and Banfumu, we do not believe that they are fetishes. In our opinion, they are guardian figurines for children, carved before their birth and preserved until they reach marriageable age.

M 791 824 Some fetishers manage to gain quite a reputation, and their services are purchased for a very high fee. They are familiar with the properties of certain plants, and they keep this knowledge secret and exploit it as much as possible. It would be wrong to believe that the fetisher's practices are all based on mystification.

M 278 695 Ebandia, the high chief of the Mosengere, knew the secret of certain poisons. He knew effective remedies for certain kinds of festering wounds; he proportioned the quantity of poison at ordeals so as to make its action violent or slow, and he was familiar with an antidote which cancelled out the effects of the poison.

M 278 695 684 A few hours before our arrival at Penge, Ebandia had subjected [23] one of his wives to trial by poison, on the mere suspicion that she might have gone too far with a native during a slightly prolonged stay in the forest. Ebandia accused her of adultery, prepared the beverage, and compelled the poor woman to prove her innocence by taking the poison. The unfortunate creature rebelled. A quarrel arose, and the village natives, when informed of the matter, protested against it, to no avail, however. The old tyrant carried out the ordeal. He had been notified of our impending arrival, and after allowing the unfortunate woman to suffer horribly for nearly two hours, he gave her the antidote. Five hours later, all the effects of the poison were gone. [Ed., the text is not translated from the last paragraph, page 23, to the second paragraph, page 26.]

T 764 [26] In general the natives have a kind of cult of the dead. In the Bateke-Banfumu region, the corpse is wrapped in fabrics. The more important the deceased person is, the larger the bundle. His whole wealth in fabrics goes with him to the grave. Prior

000 the same rights as the other children of the polygynist.

595 The polygynist always sought to increase the number of his
556 wives, for his prestige rose and his fortune increased in that manner.
593 If anyone in civilized lands seeks to enlarge his fortune, this is
done, people say, in order to insure the future of his children. The
native thinks little about that; his primary idea is to enjoy himself
and to surpass others in prestige and esteem. As far as the future
of his children is concerned, there are polygynists who possess twenty
or thirty wives or even more, and sometimes they have only one or
two children. Also it is little in keeping with their notions to care
for the future; he who is still alive tomorrow must take care of
595 tomorrow then, so they reason. On the contrary, instead of caring
for his children, the polygynist often took great trouble to obtain a
593 wife for his son. The son, however, was not yet the owner of his
584 wife; it was, so to speak, only a loan. Not until after the death of
606 his father did he become owner. In some districts, when the father
had obtained a wife for his son, he first kept this wife for some time
for himself. Only after a few months did he give her to his son. In
595 other districts, when the wife was pregnant by the son, he was obliged
593 to send her for a few days to his father. He was not allowed to bear
606 the honor of fatherhood alone; his father must share that with him.
842 The father reserved for himself the honor of naming all of the chil-
551 dren of his children. In some areas of the Congo, morals were so
835 low and common that the father even kept his own daughters in his
harem. This did not occur in Equatorial Africa, but there was a
custom that was not much better. The magician was sometimes
583 consulted about the bride price which the father tried to get for his
●791 daughter, or the brother for his sister.

The magician then gave them the advice that they themselves should first have relations with their own daughter or sister. This custom existed almost everywhere in Equatorial Africa.

[535] Bride Price. In general, the daughter was given in
583 marriage upon payment of a bride price. The father had little
choice of the future husband of his daughter. The one who guaranteed
the most goods in payment was certain to get her. Since, in most
cases, the little daughter had not yet arrived at the years of maturity,
there was naturally no question of her consent. The bride price was
not paid all at once, but gradually during the years while the
daughter grew up. Since the daughter was given without her consent

fear of death would deter him from such baseness. Another sign of the chosen 624
successor is some untoward experience, such, for example, as finding cowrie shells (worn by *nkumu*) in a trap in the forest or a net that had been put out to catch fish.

Nkema Akuke, whether the first of his line or a man succeeding in the office, bears [293]
the emblems of his rank. He wears an *ilelembe* (a branch of a special bush) stuck into his belt on the right side and hanging downwards. The special hat, *montolo*, worn [292]
by *nkumu* is not yet his to wear, but he wears an ordinary skin hat known as *lopope*, which is the mark of any elder. This hat may be ornamented with feathers if so desired.

When *Nkema Akuke* decides that he has acquired sufficient wealth to enable him [302]
properly to claim the right of being made an *nkumu*, he begins his preparatory arrangements. *Mbili*, a mixture of charcoal with some sticky substance, is smeared over his body with plantain leaves. All ornamented clothing is discarded and a single cloth [292]
woven from raffia, and known as *molele*, is worn. He refuses to sit on the benches usually used and instead sits on the bare earth. All this is explained as an attempt on the [516]
part of the man about to be raised to the office of *nkumu* to be different from others, a man apart, separate, peculiar, not partaking in the ordinary interests and affairs of his fellow men.

Nkema Akuke now leaves his own village accompanied by all his wives and [533]
children, and also by a singer, *nyemba*, who is paid to sing his praises, and by several male Batwa (pygmies), up to half a dozen in number, known as *ntotii* because of their [563]
duty of blowing gourds and producing sounds which indicate praise of the great [534]
man. This party makes the round of villages wherever relatives are found, and the announcement is made that *Nkema Akuke* is about to become an *nkumu*. This 624
pilgrimage accomplished, a 'doctor' (*nkanga*) is visited by the aspirant to office, 791
who seeks by magic to discover whether it is the propitious time for the ceremony of installation. The whole company retires to the private enclosure at the rear of the 787
house belonging to the *nkanga* chosen, this being the place where he performs his wonders. The *nkanga* resorts to *nningo*, that particular branch of magic which has to do with reasons for strange and unaccountable phenomena.[1] *Nkema Akuke* now seeks some sign as confirmation of his determination to claim his office at this time. Some native pepper may be wrapped in a leaf or merely covered by it, and left within sight of all, and upon being opened it may be found to have turned into salt, or perhaps it may be some earth that is thus turned to salt. Or a cock may be placed upon *Nkema Akuke*'s head and covered with a basket and thus left for some time. Upon removing the basket it may be discovered that an egg has been laid. All such tests, 624
if successful, will be regarded as indications that it really is time for *Nkema Akuke* to assume the office of *nkumu*, but if the test fails he will usually go ahead with his plans anyhow, fearing the shame that would come to him should he go back to his home after having made the triumphant round of his relatives' homes. However, should he act thus, and he most certainly will, he knows that his days are numbered,

---

[1] If a man's fields do not produce and he cannot understand why, he will resort to *nningo*. If it is suspected, for example, that the trouble is caused by someone making 'medicine', an arrow shaft is put into a small hole in the ground, and at each name mentioned, the arrow can be pulled out if the person is innocent, but remains stuck fast in the hole at the mention of the guilty name.

624 and that he may have no more than a month or perhaps a year in which to live and will surely die speedily.

The special objects attaching to the office of *nkumu*, among these the hat, *montolo*, and stool, *mbata*, are at the same time subject to similar magical arts to determine whether they may be produced for the new *nkumu*'s use. They are not present, being in the possession of the *molembe* which will appoint him, but are mentioned by name. Apart from the *montolo*, no further ceremony is required to identify these [302] objects with their future owner.

The *mingo* ended, the *Nkema Akuke* smears black *mbili* all over his body again, 624 before the rites begin to determine which of his wives is to be known as *Nsono*, 787 the one who will be closest to her husband throughout his days. For this, magic formulae (*bienzako*, sing. *eenzako*) are used. All the wives sit round in a circle and the *nkanga* places some irritant such as ground pepper in the eyes of all the women. The wife whose eyes stream most and whose discomfort is also accompanied by a violent [827] shaking of the body is known to be *Nsono*. Here again, lying is believed to be out of the question, for the shaking of the body is something that is supposed to be impossible of simulation, the real being easily distinguished by all from the false. *Nsono* is now stripped of all clothing and her body smeared by the *nkanga* with yellow clay on one side, and with white on the other. A belt of leaves is put round her waist 624 and a small bit of cloth between the legs with each end attached to the belt. Near by 789 a gourd with 'medicine' in it has been standing ready for the next step in the ceremonies, and this is now smeared with white clay, a parrot's feather stuck in the neck, and handed to *Nsono*, who receives it in one hand. Into the other hand is put a section of plantain stalk, into one end of which has been stuck a parrot's feather. A third feather is placed in her mouth so that she cannot speak, greet anyone, or eat. She is now tied with a cord which is held by one of the young men attending *Nkema Akuke*. At this point of the procedure the *nkanga* states his price ● [791 for his work, which will be in the neighbourhood of one hundred brass rods, worth 435] to-day about fifty francs, but formerly double that amount. The future *nkumu*, accompanied as before, leaves for the village of the *molembe*. *Nsono* starts off at a tremendous pace, for she is now imbued with a sort of frenzied strength, and for this reason has been tied up and put in charge of a strong young man, otherwise she would be off so fast that no one could catch her, and would go into the forest, where she would live for days unseen.

624 In the village of the *molembe* the party all sit in an *ehanga* belonging to one of the elders. This is the place where the Tumba men really live—their houses are just [343 sleeping and cooking establishments, but the *ehanga*, having a roof for shade and no walls, is the place where the men congregate and spend their leisure time. It is also 342] the site of the village smithy, which takes up one end. Here, then, *Nkema Akuke* and [262] his party sit for a day and a night, and neither he nor *Nsono* may eat food or drink wine during this period. Games are played by the *molembe*—mock battles, dances, and [517 songs chiefly of battle, and before the first streaks of dawn appear the group in the *ehanga* begins to march up and down the village singing.

At dawn the whole party, accompanied by a large crowd, make their way to a place in the bush where there is an elevation of some sort. Here *Nkema Akuke* climbs up and takes his stand, accompanied by *Nsono*. Now the *molembe* choose the *Bilepo*

614 596 592 [768] homestead, it is deserted by the inhabitants. On the new dwelling site the sons each build their own shelter. In contrast to the groups of the type A-E, the group living within a homestead is finite: its existence ends with the father's death. Only a man whose father (in the European meaning of the term) has died may have a shelter. Thus the homestead community is interposed between the A-group and the small family.

To sum up the characteristic features of the A-groups:

614 Membership determined by male descent; unity of legal power, especially insofar as landed property and inheritance law is concerned the senior has full power; succession by simple seniority; theoretically unlimited existence of the group. The A-groups consist of small families who live together in homesteads under one father in each case.

Groups of Rank B

614 293 There is usually a friendly, neighborly relationship between the A-groups which form part of a B-group. People assist each other to a large extent, and there is joint consultation on most matters. Group B has only one Nkúmú ilọki, "master of the hidden power," the priest of the kinship group, who is consulted by all the members of the group. He functions during the magical preparations for the hunt; he is consulted before any important undertaking. During the leave-taking ceremony after a burial, he converses with the deceased, and people turn to him when the ancestors have appeared to them in their dreams to transmit their desires, orders, or other information to the living. He protects the people of his group from the ill will, ndọki, of the dead and the living. The priest of the kinship group is used as the criterion [194] to determine which group of homogeneous A-groups represents a B-group. The priest of the kinship group is descended from a certain one of the related A-groups.

614 554 There is a difference in rank among the A-groups of a B-group -- one group will be regarded as older -- but this is

583x unjust in itself, it certainly becomes so if it is considered a penalty
584 inflicted for the rupture. For the indemnity is restricted to the man,
174 whether or not he is in the wrong. Furthermore, to accept an indemnity
177 even when the engagement is broken because of the woman tends to
favor frauds and real swindles on the part of the woman and her parents,
in short a kind of traffic in women.

It is also evident that the rich (polygamists) suffer much less
[585] from the innovation than do monogamous men, especially those who
●[794] adopt monogamy as a principle and more especially the Christians,
who do not condone divorce. Thus I am of the opinion that the desire to defend polygamy against the doctrine of the missionaries is not entirely unrelated to the transformation of this custom.

000 All these considerations show that the question is highly complex and that it would be better if the ancient custom were restored.

If the breaking of the engagement is due to wrongs, the new custom could perhaps be tolerated, though it is not without serious dangers, but the indemnity should be imposed exclusively on the party at fault. Furthermore, the wrongs would have to be serious, and on the other hand, the indemnity would have to be, not in the nature of a forfeit, but of a payment of damages commensurate with the extent of the damage suffered and the seriousness of the wrong. And here those cases should especially be considered where the breaking of the engagement is accompanied by proceedings of a vexatious and insulting nature. And though it is a very delicate task to evaluate all these elements, we must not forget to take them into account.

It seems to me that the ancient law must still be maintained when the engagement is broken simply because of a change of feelings for which neither party is to blame, if such a case occurs. For it is better not to innovate than to innovate too fast. [129]

Article IV. Walo -- Bombuluku

589x The walo or bombuluku is the bulk of the bride price paid for a marriage. Between the payment of the ndanga and that of the walo, 146 614 umbilical cord was not buried; how dare you boast? You are but a stranger." Therefore this custom constitutes a sort of matriculation into the family. If anyone wants to be entirely certain of a Nkundó's clan, he has only to look for the place where his umbilical cord was buried.

5) The end of seclusion is marked by a few ceremonies.

846 302 A. A meal. Early in the morning of the day set, the husband goes and cuts a bunch of fruit of the palm tree, and the helper goes and picks manioc leaves (nowadays leaves and fruit collected the day before are sometimes used). The helper crushes all of this to make a dish of food. While she cooks it over the fire, she shaves a little hair off the mother, plucks out one eyebrow, and cuts one of her nails. Then she does the same to the child. The helper moves away, and the father comes in. His wife subjects him to the same treatment, and he reciprocates, doing the same to the child. The rubbish is simply thrown away without any ceremony. This practice has no special name; the Nkundó say: bɔ́yaténa bekengo, bɔ́yakenga, "They shave each other's heads."

846 When the vegetables are ready, all the women of the village are gathered together. A little pit is dug in front of the hut. A large leaf is placed in it to serve as a dish, and the vegetables are poured into it. The mother, the helper, and all those assembled eat. Except for a few small boys no representatives of the stronger sex are present. When the meal is completed, [490] the leaf that served as a plate and those that served as spoons are buried in the pit. Today the more advanced of the population use a European plate and spoons. The meal and the vegetables eaten are called losanganya, "reunion," because the entire village is united in partaking of them, or lofanjola, "dispersion," because it is the prelude to the end of the bokeka.

B. Then follows the ceremony of separation (-téna bofofó, or, among the Injɔ́lɔ́, bokɛ́kɛ́lɛ́kɛ́. (1) The bofofó is the mid-rib

● [792]

---

1. The expression and the ceremony designated by it are used whenever an important matter, such as a trial, etc., is to be terminated.

771 In matters of religion the Nkundó recognize the existence of a Supreme Being: Njakomba or Mbombiɛndɛ, creator and ruler of all that exists. They do not worship him in any way, however; all their religious practices are addressed to guardian and ancestral spirits. (2)

> 2. On the subject of the religious conceptions of the Nkundó, see a detailed study by Father Boelaert, M.S.C., in Hooger Leven, 1934, pp. 1612 and 1636, and 1935, pp. 12 and 60.

197 The language of the Nkundó is beautiful, harmonious, flexible, and rich. It has all the qualities needed to become a literary language and is admirably suited to the requirements of teaching. Furthermore, its various dialects are spoken over a considerably large territory, in fact over one of the largest language areas [13] of the Congo. 797 214 In addition to the religious and devotional books of the Catholic missions, a fairly large collection of various academic textbooks is available in this language, thanks primarily to the zeal of the Protestant missionaries. The latter have also published a complete translation of the Bible. Several vocabularies and small grammars have been compiled, and in recent years a large dictionary and an expanded grammar have been added to these, both compiled by A. and L. Ruskin of the Bongandanga Mission. For several years the Protestant mission at Bolenge has been publishing a native magazine, and the Catholic mission is pushing ahead with preparations to publish one also.

114 Father Shebesta's book, Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge, includes a chapter on the Nkundó in which the author gives a good general description of this people. Nevertheless, some of the details given must be accepted with reservations.

121 The general information given above is enough to give the reader a superficial knowledge of the Nkundó.

The purpose of this work is to give a more extensive account of their institutions pertaining to marriage.

As we have previously stated, we are considering only a portion of this people. All our statements cover only the fraction we have delimited. The family institutions of other Nkundó groups are not accounted for, as they are less known to us and we do not want

593x 586x everything. But they only succeed if they have no sons old enough to defend their mother. Differences in behavior are due to the character of the persons involved. (1)

1. See Chapter VIII, Article I.

797 595 159 Only religion can bring about a radical change in this domain. We are still far from our goal, but a few serious Christians have already begun to adapt to the requirements of a higher morality and to deal with their wives in conformity with the sanctity of marriage though he or she may be ill. Yet it is more difficult for them to do this than for the others, since this same morality forbids [39] polygamy and all other means of satisfying passion.

An admirable case is that of Bekau Marie, daughter of Esalɛ D'Iɛmbo (Bonkoso). Her husband, Bokombeembe Pierre of Mbalɛ, suffered from leprosy for many years. He could no more perform the sexual act than do any real work. His wife therefore had to support herself with the help of her son. In spite of her freedom, her separation from her native village, and the ill feelings borne her by her husband's family, she did not want to leave him but decided that she would continue to devote herself to him. (1)

1. Her action is due only in part to Christian influence. That is why this case belongs here to the exclusion of some others I could describe, which are due solely to the influence of Christian morality upon the souls of the individuals.

593x 578 If there is a dispute between her family and her husband, it is hard to know in advance which side the wife will take. Similarly, if difficulties arise between the husband's family and his wife, he can take either his wife's side or that of his relatives. It is all a matter of individual temperament. Some people spontaneously lend support to their families; others on the contrary take sides with their wives. A woman or a man who without good reason habitually takes

595x only consider the marriages of adult individuals through the nkumbó,
586x that is to say, unions that are truly and perfectly voluntary on both sides. Finally, we should exclude those wives of polygamists who prefer monogamy and have taken advantage of an opportunity to break their unions in order to enter into a marriage contract with a bachelor. It seems to me that when these reasonable considerations and restrictions are taken into account, the figures established will not argue against the stability of Nkundó marriages to the extent that one might have thought at first. Or at least that is my impression, derived from the many cases that have come to my attention and that it has been my duty to investigate thoroughly in the course of my ministry as a priest.

The 112 marriages recorded in our last two books at Flandria can be broken down as follows (1): 18 widows, (2) 6 inherited wives, [47] 1 replacement, 3 cases of women who had broken marriages entered into before puberty, 29 wives of polygamists, 18 divorced wives of monogamous men, and 37 first marriages. If we exclude the replacement, the marriages of children and of former wives of polygamists, but include widows and women who are inherited, we arrive at 37 + 18 + 6 = 61 persons for whom their present marriage is still their first, as against 18 clear-cut cases of divorce.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that these figures are based on
[717] only a tiny minority of the population and on that part which, from our point of view, may be considered the best, because these people are willing to submit to the yoke of Christian morality. In addition these people are in their prime, and it is impossible to say whether later on they will persevere in these good inclinations. But in any case these instances show that faithfulness to a promise can, and in fact does, exist among the Nkundó.

595x Without a doubt one of the most beautiful aspects of love in
837 general, and marital love in particular, is conjugal faithfulness. As will be shown in detail in Chapter VI, Article VII, 2, the Nkundó do

1. I am excluding the 14 Batswa cases.

2. As against widows who are inherited.

585x The husband has a second reason for making the walo large: by this means he can bind his wife and his in-laws more closely to him. For the larger the walo, the more difficult it would be to reimburse the husband and therefore to break the marriage. Thus a man will pay a larger amount for a woman he cares for particularly. For their part, his parents-in-law will say: "We must remain on good terms with our son-in-law, for he is generous and wealthy." And if there is a palaver in the household and their daughter wants to leave -- or actually leaves -- her husband, they will be all the more inclined to do everything in their power to smooth out the differences and make her return to her husband's house. They will say, "We have collected so many valuables from him, how would we find the means of reimbursing him?"

583x
587 If a daughter remarries, her parents can demand not only the amount required to reimburse her first husband, but also a supplement for themselves. It is not considered proper to ask too much, however; 10 or 15 rings are usually enough. It follows that a woman's bride price rises with the number of husbands she has had.

583x The chief reason for the amount of the walo being reduced has always been, and still is, the payment of the bosóngo (see Article IX) at the same time with, or immediately after, the walo. It explains the low walo payments in cases 21, 25, 27 and 38b in the list which follows. Nowadays there may be new reasons. Among Christians; for example, a brother may want to help his widowed sister so that she will not have too long to wait before remarrying; or orphans born somewhere in a distant center may have been more or less abandoned by their families (as in case 17). To give some idea of the walo amounts,
583x
●797 I have copies a few cases out of our bride-price records of Flandria Mission. Next to the women's names I have indicated their tribe of origin, then the amount paid for them (in bakonga), and finally the year of marriage. [139] The numbers at the left denote their order in our books. (1)

1. These records are kept because we require that at least the walo be paid before the marriage is celebrated. I should point out that, in an isolated instance, the ikulɛ-ndanga may

589*
[797]

have been included in the amount given for the walo.

No.	Name	Tribe	Amount of Walo (in bakonga)	Year
2.	Bolumbu Monica	Bonkoso	100	1929
4.	Ilumbe Sofia	Bombwanja	80	1929
12.	Lokole Maria	Elinga	100	1930
13.	Baata Joanna	Bakaala	60	1930 (2)

2. The same for her sister, Ijanga Paulina (no. 14).

No.	Name	Tribe	Amount of Walo (in bakonga)	Year
16.	Bonkiki Clara	Elinga (Bosaa)	100	1930
17.	Bolumbu Paulina	Bombwanja	56	1930
18.	Ilonga Teresa	Bongili	95	1930
19.	Lomboto Maria	Bombwanja	100	1930
20.	Bawala Catharina	Bombwanja	85	1930
21.	Ilumbe Josephina	Bombwanja	60	1930
22.	Botsinanya Teresa	Bongili	73	1930
23.	Bolanga Joanna	Bombwanja	60	1930
24.	Eume Amanda	Bongili	168	1930
25.	Ifoonge Gerdina	Bombwanja	50	1930
27.	Boongi Martha	Bombwanja	56	1930
28.	Nyon yi Loisa	Bombwanja	50	1930
28a.	Loota Joanna	Bombwanja	90	1930
32.	Bolumbu Emilia	Bombwanja	90	1930
33.	Iloko Bonifacia	Bakaala	70	1930
34.	Bolumbu Maria	Wangata	80	1930
36.	Isaka Gerdina	Bombwanja	65	1931
[140]				
38.	Mbanga Clara	Bonkoso	80	1931
38a.	Wetsi Teresa	Bongili	70	1931
38b.	Wambela Loisa	Bonkoso	54	1931
40.	Efoloko Martha	Bombwanja	67	1931

428 587 581 Because of all these obvious differences, the Nkundɔ́ tend to consider this second type of union nonmarital. It resembles actual marriage only externally; in the final analysis, the difference is fundamental, since it has none of the specific properties of a marriage. Therefore such a union is not a marriage, but a continuous concubinage.

A man who cohabits in this manner with a woman for whom others have paid the bride price is often the object of humiliating allusions. He is treated as nkolasangɔ́, "inheritance taker" (that is, of inherited women). If a woman involved in the type of union described quarrels with one who has been "bought" in the regular manner, the latter will sometimes clap her hands (-foma losáka) to indicate her superiority. That is why such a woman is sometimes called wálɛ ɔâ fomalosáka in contrast to the other. [195]

Present-day circumstances make all this even more clearly apparent. ●[797] Nowadays, even pagan natives almost everywhere are aware of the intransigence of the Catholic Church on the question of the indissolubility of a marriage which has been effected through the religious ceremony. For this reason the "masters" of a woman who is legally theirs but who is actually living with another man in the manner described, will not permit her to enter into a religious marriage with this man unless he pays the bride price.

Therefore we may consider the type of union described above a concubinage which does not satisfy the moral conditions for a true marital union. As to the first type of marriage by inheritance, namely a union with a close relative of the deceased, the question is more complicated; but it is my opinion that such a marriage is valid from the moral standpoint. I hope, however, that in order to attain greater certainty on this point, others will re-examine the case in the light of the various aspects of the solution that have been presented.

The following historic case pertaining to individuals whose genealogy appears below will illustrate the preceding discussion:

586x
587 is only one royal power and dignity which continues to exist through the various individuals invested with it) or as in law when, in spite of a change in the identity of the debtor, there is no novation. (1) [207]

1. We will return to this question in Article IX.

Because of the way the Nkundɔ view this substitution, the bankitsɛ occupies the same rank in the harem as the woman she is replacing, and she is handed over to the husband by the same ndonga who participated in arranging the initial agreement.

What evaluation should be placed on this union by substitution from the standpoint of natural law? Does it bear the taint of a real vice or does it not? The right of civil powers to break a marriage legitimately contracted is debated. (1) Let us assume that this right exists

1. At the present time the affirmative opinion has almost been abandoned by Catholic philosophers, jurists, and moralists.

and, furthermore, that the woman being substituted really consents. Her view, as well as the view of everyone around her, is that this is a matter of submitting to a family duty imposed by the laws which govern her people. One may wonder whether this requirement can be defended before basic principles of the law in general and in the light of morality. In any case the unanimous opinion of the natives that this substitution constitutes the continuation of a marriage through another person is certainly false. It is undoubtedly the result of an insufficient analysis, which leads them to lose sight of the crux of the problem by focusing primarily on the involvement of the clan in the marital union (see Article IX).

Whatever the case may be, it is possible to say without fear that in the great majority of cases a native woman submits to this law because she considers her submission an obligation which, for the good of her family, she is not permitted to escape.

● [197] Moreover, the younger generation is beginning to oppose this practice. For example, here with the Sisters there is a young daughter

586x of Boɔ́mbo, named Ngongo, who was given to Bokungɔ́ of Bongíli as a
587 replacement for her sister Ilumbɛ́ when she was a very small child.
797 Since she was not yet nubile she continued to live with her parents. When they became Christians, Ngongo was also baptized. On the other hand, [208] Longɔ́la, a son of Bokungɔ́, had become a catechumen and, after coming to the school, was baptized. His father yielded Ngongo to him as his future wife. Ngongo (who was now about seventeen) wanted nothing to do with this marriage. It was not that she refused to have Longɔ́la as her husband; she did not want to be married simply as a bankitsɔ́. She insisted on a marriage by bride price, in spite of the difficulties involved in the procedure, which was doubly useless and, for the Nkundɔ́, stupid.

587 There is a second form of substitution: replacement after death.
583x When a man has lost his wife and both he and the parents of the deceased want to maintain their alliance, he brings them 20 to 25 rings through the medium of the ndonga for the purpose of obtaining a new wife. This payment is called ibɔ́leɔ́ko, a term derived from -bɔ́l, "to beat" (for instance the clay in the ground) and eɔ́ko, "the site of a house." The Injɔ́lɔ́ designate it by a different name which however has the same meaning. It is sangɔ́lɛ́kojí, "the inheritance of a dwelling site."

The procedure is as follows: When the widower has fulfilled all his funerary obligations and, at the end of his second visit to his parents-in-law, he is about to take leave of them, they ask him:

"Well, you're leaving. What are you planning to do now?"

He answers, "I loved your daughter very much. She is dead, and I have buried her. I have fulfilled all my duties. I have always lived on good terms with you, and I would like to continue our relationship. But first I must consult my family. Then we will see." That is how he expresses his wish to continue being their son-in-law. After asking his relatives' opinion, he returns to his father-in-law with the ibɔ́leɔ́ko. "Here, I bring you the ibɔ́leɔ́ko; I come to beat the house site; give me a wife." The father-in-law will have already chosen the daughter, sister, or other relative who is to replace the deceased and has already privately mentioned her to his son-in-law.

593* 758 Efala of Longa married to Ifolí of Bokényola (Bonjoku); Basásé of Mbelé married to Nkengo of Litóli.

If the woman went to her family in good health and contracted an infirmity there, her parents are responsible for it. They are obliged to nurse her and to assume all the expenses due to her treatment. After she is cured they send her back with a quantity of nkomé for her husband. Usually the matter ends there. If relations between the two families are not very good, however, the husband will claim an indemnity, which varies with the situation and to which he is entitled even if he does not claim it.

This stipulation of the law holds even if the woman has gone to see her mother, father, etc., at the time of an illness or for any other reason.

It does not hold, on the other hand, if the wife has been ordered to go to her parents by her husband, or if she has fled the home shared with her husband because of ill treatment or of serious failings on his part; this point will be explained below in number 3. In such cases the husband is legally responsible for the illness.

Certain situations may arise which are intermediate to the ones discussed. Thus, for example, a wife may make a visit on her own initiative [269] but for her husband's good. Theoretically, he should win the case. Note, finally, that a stay of only twenty-four hours is not considered sufficient to make responsibility for an illness fall on the wife's family.

Colonization has produced an entirely new situation. 178 595* 758 672 797 Colonial law has given the extra wives of polygamists the freedom to go to a mission in order to be instructed in the Christian religion and to contract a monogamous marriage (provided the customary rules governing the dissolution of marriages are observed). Such a woman may fall ill at the mission. If her illness has no troublesome consequences, it does not result in a dispute. But if the illness becomes chronic and in some way detrimental to the abandoned spouse, it may do so.

The polygamists declare that they are free of any responsibility, which they place on the woman's family. But the family has

178 nothing to do with it; it is unjust to bring them into the matter.
595x Since this legislation is intended to combat polygamy, it is natural
758 that the polygamous husband be the one who suffers from it.

672 The following is a recent example of this situation: Mbóyó
●797 Julienne, sister of Botúna Jean of Balondó, married to a polygamist by the name of Insilo of Bokenyola (Bonjoku), went to Bokuma Mission, where she contracted an incurable illness. (1) Because of her illness she found it impossible to remarry. She therefore left the mission but was no longer accepted by the husband she had lived with so that she had to live in her brother's home. Insílo insisted that her brother reimburse him for the bride price, maintaining that in going to the mission, the woman had divorced him; his real reason, however, [270] was that she had become unfit to fulfill the duties of a wife. Since Mbóyó did not fall ill in his home, he held her family responsible.

593x 3. Abandonment of the home shared by the couple

586x In the case of serious failings on the part of a husband, a woman's usual weapon is to leave their common home and return to her father's house. If the reason for her flight is serious, it is up to the husband to go and bring her back. She will not return on her own initiative. If he refuses to make the first step, he will be accused as much by public opinion as by his parents-in-law of not loving his wife, and a rupture will become inevitable. It is therefore his duty to go to his wife's parents. They will ask him to explain the situation. The wife, too, will say what she thinks. The parents will settle their difference. Whether or not the ndonga is present will depend on the

1. It was a sort of illness with nervous symptoms. From a scientific viewpoint, it is more than likely that she had this illness before her arrival at the mission, although it was only manifested there. But the natives do not make this distinction, so it is not relevant to our topic.

595x arrangements for a regular marriage with a lover, or they leave the polygamist under the protection of the Whites to go to a center or a mission.

1. A preference for monogamy

595x 797 We will not deal with daughters of Christian parents under this heading, in order not to falsify the problem, which we are discussing from the psychological, not the religious point of view.

1) Women who oppose being handed over in marriage to a man who is already married are rare. It is possible that such a refusal is due to one of the following causes: the desire to be bolɔ́mbɔ́ (or éfɔ́tswâála), (1) a natural desire for complete freedom, an antipathy for the suitor, or an abnormal constitution. Such cases must be [363] eliminated, since they prove nothing for or against the question raised.

But there are other instances where marriage is clearly postponed for the sake of entering into a monogamous union. Yet, under present circumstances, the desire to embrace the Christian religion is almost never absent. I have known several cases of adult single women who came to the mission to be married there while preparing for baptism. Most of them did not have the courage to persevere, however.

A greater number remain with their parents even if they want to be admitted to the Church. The life of single women at the mission is not exactly the easiest, either from the material viewpoint or as regards freedom. For even a sincere desire to participate in a monogamous union does not exclude human weakness or constitute a certificate of saintliness. These girls remain subject to the impulsiveness of their passions. It is quite true that even at the mission they can find the means to satisfy it, for it is impossible to watch over them to such a point that they would be unable to escape. But precisely because of this surveillance, which is close in spite of everything, they cannot freely let themselves go. While at home no one pays any

---

1. See Chapter I, Part 1, Article II, and Part 2, Article III.

595x 797 attention to their deviations, at the mission the discovery of any misconduct results at least in a reprimand, which is always disagreeable, and often in a fairly long postponement of the baptism they ardently desire. Therefore these women usually prefer to circumvent the difficulty by waiting until a young man who is Christian or a catechumen asks for them in marriage.

595x 2) Most girls do not oppose polygamy. Education and traditional custom do not lose their power in a few years. Besides, the girls are often not really aware of the exact situation at the time they are asked for in marriage. Later, [364] when polygamous life no longer satisfies them, they try to arrange a marriage with a bachelor.

[797] In a number of cases the decisive reason is the desire to become Catholic. In others, religion does not enter into consideration. Only those can be examined here, for the value of the first group is greatly reduced by the presence of the religious motive.

If a woman leaves her husband because of personal antipathy to him or certain of her co-wives, and not because of any opposition to the system of polygamy, she takes the easiest and most direct way out by going to another polygamist, who has the means for repaying her bride price. This occurrence is more frequent than the preceding ones. Therefore we can make a division between the two possible situations and conclude that a preference for monogamy is present when a woman leaves a polygamist to marry a bachelor.

3) Other women take advantage of the freedom that colonization has produced by going to live with a bachelor in one of the centers. There may be a variety of motives behind such an action: a desire for luxury, a desire to be united to a man whom they love but who does not have the necessary wealth to marry them in the usual fashion, or a real desire for a monogamous union. (1) Today the last reason is rather rare.

1. At the present time the flight toward the centers has already become difficult,

595x but it is still possible. Everything depends on the degree of surveillance of the authorities. In large settlements their task is not always easy.

595x 797 4) A woman who abandons her polygamous husband and asks to be admitted to a mission may be motivated either by an aversion to polygamy or by a religious reason. First of all, we must make a distinction here between Catholic and Protestant missions. For if the woman goes to a Protestant mission, it is possible that only the first motive is involved. [365] For the Protestant mission accepts wives of polygamists for baptism without requiring them to break with the custom. Only the husband is excluded. (1) Therefore, they do not leave him when they become Christian but continue participating in the life of the harem as before. Thus, if any of them go to the Protestant mission all the same, we can conclude that they do so solely out of a preference for monogamy. But I do not know whether such cases actually occur, or in what proportion. It is to be hoped that a Protestant missionary will examine this exceedingly interesting question.

With reference to the Catholic missions, one or the other of the two motives may be involved. Usually both are present in the same person, for the Catholic religion does not permit polygamy either on the part of man or woman. According to the colonial law of the Congo, a woman has the right to break a polygamous union for the sake of a monogamous one. The polygamist's wife who asks to live at the mission wants to become Catholic and at the same time to contract a monogamous marriage. She has both objectives in mind. Persons of this sort must therefore be excluded from our discussion. As a matter of

1. I am speaking only of the specific region with which we are dealing in this study. Therefore, generalizations should not be made from these statements.

595^x fact, women who do not wish to become Catholic take the paths
[717] described in 2) and 3).

5) There are even women who prevent their husbands from becoming polygamous. If he loves them a great deal, he will yield in the end, even if personally he would very much like to build a harem for himself. This was done by Mputɔ̃ (recently deceased, February 3, 1933), wife of Bofɛ̃nda, chief of Ekɔ̃kola. Bofɛ̃nda was rich and tried more than once to acquire other wives. He even took them home and paid the bride prices -- for example, for Ilo̲a of Bongíli. But Mputɔ̃ made life unbearable for them and thus forced them to leave. She absolutely wanted to keep her husband, [366] to whom she had given two boys and three girls, for herself alone.

We can therefore conclude that among a minority of Nkundɔ̃ women there exists a real preference for monogamy, even if we leave out of consideration all those who may be impelled by religious reasons. But most of them are in no way opposed to polygamy.

2. A preference for polygamy

Most Nkundɔ̃ women like polygamy and prefer it to monogamy. They make fun of a impɔ̃mbonjemba and are proud of the large number of wives in their husbands' harems.

Their indifference or aversion to monogamy can be explained on the basis of habit or atavism. But what is the basis for their marked preference for polygamy despite all its disadvantages? I asked this question of a number of polygamists' wives. Naturally, they first invoked the custom, (1) except for those who had known me for a long time. But the serious reason they gave was the greater comfort of life in a harem.

[609] 1. This is the standard explanation a native hands out to a foreigner or to someone he does not know or by whom he thinks he is unknown.

736 may wish to keep. In exemplary unions she is allowed to keep
768 the mats she has woven with her own hands, and the goods she received from her husband -- fabrics, beads, hens, even goats and dogs, and even sometimes what she has acquired through joint efforts with her husband (crops, livestock) -- are divided equally. The division is usually carried out with a generous attitude toward the widow, and if there is only one object of a kind the tendency is to let her have it. [442] Such conduct springs from pure generosity, for -- as has already been said -- the woman has absolutely no claim. In the past it followed only upon extraordinarily happy unions, and particularly in consideration of the relationship between the two families and the affection of one of the immediate heirs for the widow.

At the present time the influence of the missions is increasing
736 the number of instances of generosity toward the widow and starting
768 an inclination to make it a general rule. Thus good Christian
797 families -- if they are not thwarted by their pagan relatives -- leave the widow those objects she personally used, such as clothing, utensils, a trunk, and even a sewing machine.

Article VII. Economic Effects of Death

1. Bride price and dowry

768 The death of one of the spouses dissolves a marriage only
583x from a certain point of view and only as a union between two specific individuals. A marriage is absolutely broken only by the death of both spouses (or by divorce).

Unlike divorce death does not bring about any repayment either of the bride price or of the dowry (nkọmí). When the wife dies, all these payments remain in the hands of the respective parties. When a husband dies, the widow continues to belong to the heirs; she is part of the inheritance. The children belong to the father and his family; no new payment for them is necessary.

768 fastened her to a fork (etɔ́ka) until he was reimbursed. Sometimes
672 the ndonga intervened to free her, but by doing so he took upon
593* himself the responsibility of making restitution of the bride price. In this last [465] instance, if the wife died in the home of her family, the husband was entitled to reimbursement just as he would be in case of a divorce. Thus we come back to the situation described under 2) and 3), the forms varying according to whether or not the widower wanted to continue the affinal relationship.

[178] Nowadays the situation has changed entirely. The colonial administration no longer permits the use of the etɔ́ka. Consequently, a man who wants to get rid of his incorrigible wife acts in such a way that she will leave him of her own free will. And the situation is again that described in 2).

If the husband has sent his wife away himself by placing her in the hands of the ndonga, his parents-in-law will refuse him an indemnity or any restitution of the bride price and often will not even accept the nkunjɛ́. They answer his demands by telling him that he should not have repudiated the wife whom he freely chose for himself. Thus most men resort to the procedure described in the next paragraph. There are circumstances, however, under which this mode of action is more difficult; this is so especially in the case of monogamists, since its execution requires several weeks, sometimes several months. In the interim the wife does as she pleases and neglects her husband, so that the latter practically finds himself a bachelor.

791 Evangelization has added a second difficulty. Catholic
768 marriage is indissoluble. Catechumens and Christians who wish to
672 marry must therefore be careful. Before admitting them to religious marriage, we require that at least the walo be paid. But
593* the young men know the temperament and value of their fiancées only through experience. In almost every case therefore they have this experience at home before the walo, in accordance with their ancestral custom. Then, if one of the two parties is pagan (which happens very often), the disciplinary rules of the Catholic missions in the Congo require that they spend a minimum of six months

797 preparing at a mission station or catechumenate [456]. During
768 the experimental period, the engaged pair sometimes find faults
672 in each other which lead them to foresee a married life filled with
595 difficulties and resulting in a breakup. Therefore it is preferable that they carry out the required measures before marriage. The woman is usually the source of the difficulties. The female sex has hardly been touched by evangelization, chiefly because pagan parents, who do not oppose the Christianization and education of their boys, take their revenge on the girls. What they fear particularly is the girls' opposition to premature marriages or their flight to the centers. For those people, therefore, it is almost impossible to get round the difficulty in such a way. As the situation is not provided for in traditional law and, furthermore, most of the natives who hold power are clearly indifferent, if not hostile, to evangelization and the stability of Christian marriage, these special circumstances are not taken into account in any way, to the great detriment of the young people who are thus caught between their consciences and their temporal interests (which in this instance have strong repercussions on their moral life). The attitude of almost all the chiefs and judges in this matter is not contrary to ancestral law -- since the situation was unknown -- but it is certainly opposed to the spirit of that law.

7) The couple go to the home of the wife's family together.
672 Illness and death that come unexpectedly during such a visit are
768 imputed solely to the husband, who retains all the risks except,
595 of course, if the husband returns home but his wife does not follow him, remaining with her parents. Indeed in such a case we fall back on the solution described in 2).

8) Here we come back to the possibility indicated at the end of Article IX, 1, namely that of the wife who dies in her [457] family's home before the walo is paid. If the husband is in the wrong (see under 1), 5), and 7), the solution given in the article in question retains all its validity; the husband's "responsibility" remains intact. In the other instances it is reduced but not taken away. Actually, two laws are in conflict. On the one hand, there is the "responsibility" of the husband who has not fully acquitted

768 Colonization has given rise to a new legal situation which is
672 not provided for in Nkundó traditional law. If a woman takes ad-
178 vantage of the freedom permitted her by colonial legislation and goes to a mission to obtain instruction and make a monogamous marriage, and then contracts an illness from which she dies (at the mission, in the hospital, or even in the home of her family -- a question of place which has no legal importance), we find ourselves confronted by an entirely new situation. The husband no longer considers the woman his wife since she has left him, even though theoretically she continues to retain that status. On the other hand, she has not gone back to her family or gone to live with another man.

Polygamous husbands want to throw the "responsibility" back upon the woman's parents. But actually they have no part in the events, and it is unfair to involve them in the situation.

They do not bring the mission into the matter. As a matter
[197] of fact, the mission performs a service to the woman and to society as a whole in trying to elevate it morally and culturally.

What should one think of this situation? In the preceding article we have seen that the husband assumes all risks in relation to the wife. Certain exceptions to this rule [460], which we have explained, have been formulated in Nkundó law; but outside of them, the law retains its dominion, since the exceptions are narrowly defined. Thus it applies to the situation with which we are dealing, and consequently the damages must remain on the husband's account.

Moreover, this interpretation is to be encouraged for the following reason:

The purpose of the legislation involved is to protect freedom in this matter of capital importance and to favor monogamy and the gradual abandonment of polygamy. Polygamists -- as a group -- must perforce suffer from it in one way or another. It is inconceivable that a struggle against an abuse would not affect the persons guilty of it.

Such cases are still very rare, but their frequency may in-
768 crease with the progress of evangelization.

672 In terminating this discussion we must make one point that
682 is related to both of the last two articles. The cause of death has no

202 198 *Bansele nsele ba nkanga*. "The one always screaming who is followed into the high grass, the strong branch, the districts go along with the priest (Father).

1. The missionary is seen here as a witch doctor (*bansele nsele ba nkanga* is a general *lokole* name for the Negro witch doctor), who, like the Negro doctor, is looked upon as a doctor and a priest.

2. *Bofala boki ndaki lisako nda lokombe* [sic]. The priest, because he is always seeking converts everywhere, is here compared with an antelope which, when it is followed, runs around and around in the high grass.

3. *Etafe bolo*. The missionary is here compared with a strong branch. He is strong because he is influential and highly regarded by the Negroes.

4. *Benanga bekendaka la mpere*. The districts all go along with the Father (priest). They all follow his instructions.

The *nkombo* of the Protestant Anglican missionary is as follows: *Bofanga sembola bonanga boso nkenda l'Inglese*.

"The fishing net is spread out; the country goes along with the Englishman."

In the same way as the fishing net cordons off a part of the river and everything is caught in it, so all the people go along with the Englishman. The Protestant Anglican missionary was in this district ●[N] before the arrival of the Catholic missionary, so this *nkombo* refers, of course, to this period. Since the arrival of the Catholic missionary, the situation has changed completely in this district.

These few examples give an indication of the difficulty in understanding the *lokole* language.

352 322 In addition, the Negro makes a few chairs, the most important of which is the *lyeko la mpaka*, the chair for the elder, a three-legged affair with two props under it, topped with a piece out of the umbrella tree; into this the elder can throw himself as lazily as he wishes.

Then there is the so-called *ebonga*, a little stool chopped out of a block of wood with the native axe. This is finished off attractively with an *esumwa*, a small paring chisel, and the seat is decorated around the edge with studs which have been bought in some factory or other.

THE *NKUMU* OF THE TUMBA

RITUAL CHIEFTAINSHIP ON THE MIDDLE CONGO

H. D. BROWN

101 THE tribes living round Lake Tumba, a lake some thirty-five miles long by
twelve wide lying north of Lake Leopold II (approximately 0° 30′ south latitude,
[133] and 18° east longitude) and draining into the Congo River at the confluence of
the Ubangi, lack cohesion and show a considerable variety of custom and language.
But they are known collectively as Tumba, the Government adaptation of the Native
term *Ntomba*. Most of them are found to the east of the lake, the whole group
numbering perhaps little more than forty to fifty thousand at the present time, though
[797] there is evidence that the last twenty years have seen a great decrease in population.
European occupation of this area goes back barely fifty years, Protestant missions
having been established for about the same length of time. The first mission post
[177] was established at Ikoko on the north-east shore of the lake, one of the villages of a
group known as Bonginda. In pursuing this investigation particular attention has
been given to the practices of this group, but mention is occasionally made where
considerable differences have been found elsewhere.

105 The Tumba are agricultural, hunting, and fishing people. Their country is flat
13 and swampy with dense forests, and there are many watercourses flowing into Lake
Tumba. There are occasional small, less swampy plains, and one such area, more
open, with quite wide stretches of prairie, is a haunt of buffalo. The forests are fairly
wel supplied with game, and the swamps, streams, and lakes with fish. A heavy
rainfall and no distinct dry season make agriculture reasonably easy and famine
unknown. Every family has its plantation of manioc, the staple diet, which is supplemented by plantains and bananas. The people make their own tools, formerly
smelting their own iron for this purpose, are fairly skilful at making dug-out canoes,
engage in weaving raffia and making mats out of split cane, and are efficient at pottery
production.

624 The role of the *nkumu* in the socio-religious activities of the community is one of
the most interesting features of Tumba life. As a result of European contact the
101 ceremonies connected with the *nkumu* are rapidly disappearing, but it has been
178 possible to collect considerable information from the older men and women among
whom the details are still vividly remembered.[1] The following report refers to the
period previous to European occupation and control, a time within the memory of
a large number of people, but already sufficiently remote to become a matter of
hearsay before the lapse of many more years.

596 An understanding of the place of the *nkumu* among the Tumba requires a glance
[173] at the tribal organization. According to the people themselves, they migrated westward, and coming into these parts chose land for themselves. Among the several

---

[1] In *My Children of the Forest*, New York, 1924, pp. 48–51, Andrew F. Hensey has briefly outlined some of the items of interest observed among the *nkumu* of the district adjacent to that of the present study. These more detailed notes are, however, timely if a record is to be preserved that approximates to accuracy.

178 We can add to that also a large number of black women who became
583 the famous "housekeepers" of the Europeans. Although payment for these women was usually given to their owners, they were still withdrawn from the family life and the native customs. Finally, the Christian women, who now live in Christian marriage, must also be mentioned.

In addition, the price of wives and the bride price have [544] undergone great changes, primarily in those districts where the natives came into more immediate contact with Europeans. Before the arrival of the Europeans, their main medium of payment was the woman herself; a woman was paid for with a woman. Now it is forbidden to use women as currency. Therefore the natives have raised the price in the payment of *bakonga* and *mitako.*

178 In some districts close to the European centers, the natives
583 have brought the price for wives and the bride price to a height
435 never before known. For one wife they ask several *nkesi*.

A *nkesi* is 10,000 *mitako*. Such a sum is much too high in relation to their means. In a village there are, for instance, 50 women; for one woman, 40,000 to 50,000 *mitako* are asked, while at present in the whole village together the sum of 50,000 *mitako* is no more to be found. Therefore to oblige someone to pay two or three *nkesi* is usually to make it impossible for him to pay, or rather to make it necessary for him to pay with women, which is nothing else than encouraging woman trade, which then occurs.

802 A remark should also be made here about the nomenclature
177 of the numerals. *Nkesi* is not a word of the Equatorial peoples; it was brought in from elsewhere with the Europeans. Their amounts were as follows:

10 was *jum* or *bonkama*;

100 was *nkoto*; and with the arrival of the Whites and foreign population came

1,000 nkesi.

The present numerical value is: 10, *jum*; 100, *bonkama*; 1,000, *nkoto*; and 10,000, *nkesi*. Some very old Negroes, however, still say *bonkama* for 10.

This is the probable origin of the great rise in price of wives,
[583] especially in the area of Coquilhatville.

178 439 583 When the first Europeans arrived at Leopoldville and Brazzaville, it was not long before European materials and other articles also came to Coquilhatville to the hands of the great village chiefs who carried on trade on the rivers, primarily in slaves and ivory. The village chiefs, Yoma from the village of Boyeka, Ibuka of Boyere, Yamba of [545] Eala, Nkake of Bokele, etc., carried these European articles up the Tshuapa and Ikelemba rivers, and they bought slaves and wives with them.

Returning home again, they bought wives from their own district and paid for them with the slaves and women whom they themselves had bought cheaply with the European articles. For one woman of their district they paid three or four women. The arrival 802 of the Whites and foreign Blacks acquainted them with the number *nkesi* which, however, in their definition was only 1,000 and which they formerly called 10 *nkoto* or 10 times 100.

178 583 It was not long before the Europeans had to concern themselves with hearing disputes over the wives. In the Black land such a thing is unavoidable. Whenever the Blacks came to the Whites with their disputes, they dared not or would not say, "I paid for this woman with three women, but they said, "I paid for this woman with three *nkesi*," that is, 3 times 1,000 *mitako*. Meanwhile, the *nkoto* and *nkesi* acquired their value of 1,000 and 10,000. The statement, however, that a woman was paid for with *nkesi* was retained, through the error of the Whites or through the greed of the polygynists or both. Indeed, later some women were paid for with *nkesi*, namely, when the prevalent currency in the Congo was the *mitako*. It was also no wonder, for the polygynists had a monopoly on the wives, and it was to their advantage to raise the price.

Therefore, if the native of Coquilhatville says now that his father or his uncle paid for that woman with three or four *nkesi*, this generally means that the wife was paid for with three or four women. The price of the women in Wangata, near Coquilhatville, was formerly no higher than in the other areas. Many women were paid for with only five *bakonga*, for instance, in Bokala, near Bamania, a village which belonged to the village chief Yoma of Boyeka.

178 583 435 It should also be noted that the *nkesi* which have been paid in recent years in Wangata have been paid not in *mitako* or in

776
825 There is a large number of diverse spirits, and almost every village has several in its territory Each one has its own habitat in some singular place or object which stimulates the imagination: enormous trees, oval hollows which form ponds of a sort (jémbo, pl. baémbo), steep slopes, extraordinary pieces of limonite, whirlpools in streams and rivers, etc

776
842 The Nkundó pray to the bilímá in order to obtain children. For that purpose they make offerings of food and money. To test someone's feelings toward it, an elímá may come to him in the evening or at night in the guise of a known person and ask for some small present. Unhappy is he who shows himself to be stingy; he will be deprived of the object of his desire, or his child will be premature or born sickly or deformed.

783
842
776 In addition to taking a generally friendly attitude toward the spirit, another means of ensuring his intervention is open to a woman. She can procure some kaolin (congo) at the spirit's habitat (a jémbo, preferably). In the evening she mixes it with some plants. She smears her abdomen with this mixture, known as isá. [843] She continues the treatment throughout her pregnancy; it has the property of removing everything in her which is of such a nature that it might oppose the spirit (ákékola lokeko jwá bilíma ílie ndá likundú).

776
842 Certain water spirits are known for their generosity, for instance Itúmbálombé or Ekótalombé of Mpakú, [471] who is considered to be a female being. She goes on distant voyages to seek a supply of children. On her return she appears to someone and communicates the news to him so that he may spread it. But she orders all women who desire her favors to observe some form of abstinence. Sometimes she sings to amuse or calm the children. On that day mothers must not use songs to pacify their little ones or to put them to sleep and can use only soft words for that purpose. Otherwise the child would die, for to do so would be to disregard the old elímá's kindness.

[787] Sometimes the spirits give signs of their blessing. A woman who is bathing on the shore just at the time a cargo arrives there will soon see her most intimate wish fulfilled From forest spirits

grasping the knife with his left hand, with his free right hand he drains a gourd of 782
palm wine to gain courage, hits the nearest victim on the head with the empty gourd, 766
then transfers the knife to his right hand. He is now ready for his work which he proceeds to do methodically, sustained by the heady wine and the rhythm of the drum. When he had finished one of the lines, a pause would be made to bring out the body for burial. Just before this is done an armed band rushes down the path, returns, goes up in the other direction, then returns; this is said by some to ward off any spirits which might be about. The *nkumu* is now brought out by the Batwa slaves.[1] His grave, a circular hole with a crypt in one side of it, its entrance facing west, had been previously prepared. Few people in the Bonginda villages knew or had seen the actual burying place of an *nkumu*. While the corpse was carried to the grave followed by a crowd, the executioner finished his work. Those who stayed behind took the bodies of the decapitated men and women and divided [24] them among all the participants of the funeral who would subsequently devour everything.

Accompanying the funeral procession to the grave were the *ndeli*, one or more men or women who were destined to accompany the *nkumu* to his grave and to the other world beyond. At the burial of an *nkumu* witnessed in 1930 at which the semblances of some of the old rites were carried out, a party of armed men contested the right of the procession to approach the grave, there was a mock battle for a few minutes between two bands of the funeral party, and then the procession gained right of way. At the grave-side the legs and sometimes the arms of one *ndeli* were broken by heavy clubs to prevent him from escaping. Then seated on the ground the body of the *nkumu* would be placed on the knees of this one, whose arms would be placed round the *nkumu* and securely fastened by driving a peg right through both wrists. Sometimes two *ndeli* were thus used. If the number of victims was sufficient, [514] others would be buried alive too, being placed in the grave in the recumbent *supine* position, with the corpse on top of them, its weight being sufficient, with the earth filling in the grave, to prevent escape. The *nkumu* was now ready for burial and was placed in the crypt, facing west.[2] The relatives of the *nkumu* approach, they pluck [824] the leaves and stem of a juicy bush known as *nkeke* and chewing it, expectorate ceremonially on the body while they address it in language somewhat as follows: 'You are going to leave us now, we are mourning, for you were a good and wise man, your discernment in matters of justice was without parallel, &c. . . . we wish that you may be happy where you go, have many wives, beget many children, lack not for meat. But don't take with you our power to beget children, leave us also some of this wisdom of yours, for what you were, we would be.' This prayer over, the [illegible] would be slipped off the head of the corpse and replaced by the informal hat, all done so dexterously that the bare head was not seen. The entrance to the [184]

---

[1] The body was supposed to have remained in state for seven to nine days, but actually it was buried privately soon after death, a dummy being set up with the [illegible] on its head, and the succeeding ceremonies being conducted with only the dummy in the place of the actual body. The inland villages however did allow the body to remain unburied for the long period, the wives being forced to keep watch in the same house. The Bonginda buried their *nkumu* generally in their houses at the spot where they had been accustomed to sit, burying the dummy at some other spot farther off.

[2] All burials have particular regard to this east-west position, those buried in the recumbent position having the feet to the west. The native explanation is that this allows the spirit of the departed to follow the path of the sinking sun. [823]

Teke FI33
Ntomba

M 778 of the most disparate and incongruous objects, [22] white, black, or red clay, ngula /Ed., redwood powder/, chicken feet, heads, beaks, claws, and feathers, shells, palm nuts, etc., all mixed together in a large pot or in an old worn basket. It is from this magic treasure that the fetisher takes a pinch or two which he wraps carefully in a little bag and hands over to those who resort to him. T [778] As for the human figurines so often found in the huts of the Bateke and Banfumu, we do not believe that they are fetishes. In our opinion, they are guardian figurines for children, carved before their birth and preserved until they reach marriageable age.

M 791 ● 824 Some fetishers manage to gain quite a reputation, and their services are purchased for a very high fee. They are familiar with the properties of certain plants, and they keep this knowledge secret and exploit it as much as possible. It would be wrong to believe that the fetisher's practices are all based on mystification.

M 278 695 Ebandia, the high chief of the Mosengere, knew the secret of certain poisons. He knew effective remedies for certain kinds of festering wounds; he proportioned the quantity of poison at ordeals so as to make its action violent or slow, and he was familiar with an antidote which cancelled out the effects of the poison.

M 278 695 684 A few hours before our arrival at Penge, Ebandia had subjected [23] one of his wives to trial by poison, on the mere suspicion that she might have gone too far with a native during a slightly prolonged stay in the forest. Ebandia accused her of adultery, prepared the beverage, and compelled the poor woman to prove her innocence by taking the poison. The unfortunate creature rebelled. A quarrel arose, and the village natives, when informed of the matter, protested against it, to no avail, however. The old tyrant carried out the ordeal. He had been notified of our impending arrival, and after allowing the unfortunate woman to suffer horribly for nearly two hours, he gave her the antidote. Five hours later, all the effects of the poison were gone. [Ed., the text is not translated from the last paragraph, page 23, to the second paragraph, page 26.]

T 764 [26] In general the natives have a kind of cult of the dead. In the Bateke-Banfumu region, the corpse is wrapped in fabrics. The more important the deceased person is, the larger the bundle. His whole wealth in fabrics goes with him to the grave. Prior

291/184 The nkɛ́sɛ́ is unknown beyond the Jwalɛ́ and the Luilaka. In that region the women tie a string (or a belt of beads) around themselves and attach a second piece of cloth to it.

291 Thus the male garment is a rudimentary sort of shorts, open on the sides, while female dress is much more open. In general the efufa is an appropriate protection of one's modesty, but it is inadequate in certain positions. (2)

[611] [196] 2. It may be interesting to note that etɔ́o nsamɛ́nyɛ́, or just plain etɔ́o, which is the term for a man's garment, also indicates the male line of descent, while the female line is often designated by the term nkɛ́sɛ́ (sometimes by the word jwɔ̌moto derived from bɔ̌moto, "woman"). Let us add that lonkundɔ́ jwǎ nkɛ́sɛ́ means "pure, flawless Lonkundo, not corrupted by foreign influences." This expression should be compared with the following phrases: langue maternel, moedertaal, "mother tongue," etc.

291 177 At present the nkɛ́sɛ́ is no longer worn except by a few elderly inhabitants of villages far from the main communication lines. Everywhere else the ancient mode of dress has been replaced by materials imported from Europe. The women wear at least a sangatɛ́mbo, a kind of short skirt which falls from their loins at least to the middle of their thighs if not further. Middle-aged men in the interior have simply changed the material of their garment but not its form. The younger ones, on the contrary, have frankly adopted the European mode of dress.

291 581 ● [124] [837] A married woman is not allowed to enter the village of her relatives by marriage (bakilɔ́) or appear before them [54] without supplementing her usual attire with one or more beleleke (banana leaves cut into fringes). The term bakilɔ́ must be understood as it is meant by the Nkundɔ́; it excludes those with whom the wife may sometimes perform the sexual act and who are called "husbands" broadly speaking.

834 178 It goes without saying that the feeling of sexual modesty and its various manifestations among these people are being transformed by two different currents. On the one hand, their moral laxity is increased by their contact with all sorts of other peoples, by a greater freedom, by the partial emancipation of women, and by the attraction of the large centers and their luxury. On the other hand, there is the preaching of Christian morality, although its effects are still very slight and certainly do not counterbalance the influences mentioned above.

Article II. Preparation for Sexual Life

1. The Woman's preparation

833

When a girl wishes to indulge in pleasures of the flesh, she prepares her sexual organs in advance. The preparation itself consists of "opening the way" (lifola mbɔ́ka). This operation, which is repeated several times, is performed in hiding, preferably in the forest. The girl may or may not have companions with her who share her intentions. Each girl operates on herself. In order to gradually enlarge the organ, a girl uses progressively thicker shoots of the ● [824] bosɛ́ɛ́nga or bokaakɔ́ plant (Costus afer), making sure first to remove the tip. Later these shoots are replaced by the lombɔ́lɛ́ fruit of the bosɔ̌ombɔ́ plant (Aframomum) or, more infrequently, by a young manioc tuber.

This is the general practice; exceptions are few or nonexistent. It is followed because the girls want the event to which they aspire to occur without difficulty (bálota báfɔ́v'ɔ̌keela).

833 515 In addition to this basic preparation, girls [65] also wash the private parts of their bodies. This is a cleanliness measure which they continue to practice save in exceptional cases for the rest of their lives. According to my informants, the native woman -- as a very general rule -- stresses this cleanliness as much for herself as for the sake of not repelling her husband or lover. When a girl begins to practice this personal hygiene, it is a sign that she wants to begin her sexual life.

832 in which they are manufactured, and consequently in the way they [824] are used. The most common ingredients are certain leaves mixed with red rouge (ngóla) and a sort of lichen which forms red slabs on the bark of certain species found in the forest; the whole thing is [825] carefully wrapped in a small fur (especially the skin of the small feline iyei).

The charm is hidden under a slat of the bed where the desired one takes her nightly rest. Because this is done an ardent love for the owner of the charm will grow in her heart. Or it may be placed somewhere in a hut; then the desired woman is called in, the owner of the charm takes her arm, and the efóndé immediately "turns her heart." Or, still without the woman's knowledge, the charm is thrown into the fire where she cooks. If she begins to sneeze when she returns home, this is a sign that the smoke charged with mysterious emanations from the philter has pepetrated through her nostrils all the way to her heart and filled it with ardent love for the Adonis in question.

The efóndé is considered an ikóko, that is, a subjugation. Efóndé ákóka bǎmato, "the efóndé masters women, has power over [824] them." The substance which prevents the efóndé from being efficacious is the bokai, a kind of sour vegetable. [102] The owner of the philter must abstain from eating it. For the bekai cause vomiting and if he ate any the woman would in the same manner eject her love and thus make the boté ineffective.

2. Bontálá

Contrary to the efóndé, the bontálá is a love philter which is not available to everyone; it is a charm only for dancers of the iyaya. This does not mean that all the artists who perform this dance have it, but they alone are acquainted with it. The material basis of the bontálá, as of most Nkundó beté, are the leaves of certain plants.

The efficacy of the bontálá is infallible. It acts not only on the beloved one, but also on any woman who involuntarily or on purpose fulfills the condition necessary to its operation. That is, as soon as a woman's head touches the arm of the possessor of the bontálá, her heart is moved in his favor; should she be married, her love for her

583ˣ 431 to leave her husband and he, in revenge, were to lay hands on her mother or on one of the other wives of the clan. (1) [148]

1. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 4, (1), and Chapter VIII, Article II, 1.

● [824] 7) *Lombẹ̌*: a wide shoulder strap made of fur or braided *bẹkombẹ* reeds (*Calamus sp.*), though valuables of equal worth (one knife or a *konga*) may be given. Nowadays this *boéngo* consists of 2 or 3 rings; it goes to the mother in compensation for the wearying burden of carrying and nursing her daughter. (1)

1. Note that when a mother-in-law brings a child into the world, her son-in-law sends her a shoulder strap of *liengé* otterskin or a *konga* of equivalent value. He does not repeat this gift at each birth, however.

[854] 8) *Betótswá byǎ nkwá*: leaves of the *bonkongé* bush used to remove, wipe off, and carry away (*tóta*) a child's excrement. This *boéngo* consists of a ring and goes to the mother as compensation for her performance of these tasks. In the absence of the mother, it is claimed by another of the father's wives or by a female relative of the mother.

[224] 9) The *bojánga*, "hunting net," is demanded in many villages for no special reason. Certain clans, however, scoffed at by others because they have few members, officially ask a man belonging to one of the latter and wishing to marry one of their daughters to bring a net, saying: "You make fun of us because we have no people; bring us a hunting net to surround and enclose us, since we are not many." Thus the village of Boyela of the Bakáala, never gives one of its members in marriage without this *boéngo*.

[184] 10) *Wěngé w'ǎẹ́kẹ́*: a *boéngo* which is not known everywhere but which is customary in certain groups, for example among the Bakáala. One of the woman's relatives takes a piece of a young thorny trunk of the *wěngé* tree. Having scraped one end of it, he holds this

595* 554 On the day set aside for establishing the position of the *bolɔ́mbɔ́*, there is a great feast. All the clans and neighboring villages that have been invited gather at the home of the polygamist in question. He presents the woman to them and addresses the gathering: "Here is the woman whom I want to make my *bolɔ́mbɔ́*, as I have already announced to you. Today I am making public the decision I already made a long time ago. Be it known to all that no man may touch her, or he will be severely punished." Then two women (in rare instances, two men) hold the woman, and the husband unfastens her belt and rips off all her clothing. Then the assistants tie a rope or a belt of *mpangá* (striped antelope) skin around her, and to it they attach various furs. From that day [292] until her death she may no longer wear the clothing (*bitɔ́o*) of other women; she must always [350] be dressed in furs. Hence her name, *bolɔ́mbɔ́ wa bíkɔ́tɔ́*, "*bolɔ́mbɔ́* with furs." Then her husband gives her pots of palm oil with which she will have to cover herself. Two men approach her; they are chosen among the handsomest in the village (1) (married or single) and are

[609] 1. They are then (sic) relatives of the husband. Nkundó law dictates that no stranger shall perform a function of the slightest importance -- not even that of silencing a gathering. According to their saying, *bofaya áfɔtɛlɛ lokáanga*, "a stranger does not cut up a guinea hen."

[301] richly adorned with furs, belts of *mpangá*, beads, raffia fabrics with jagged edges, copper rings on their ankles, etc. Stepping [351] in rhythm, they lead her to the house intended for her which is ● [524] surrounded by a fence of *bɔfɛko* posts (*Ricinodendron africanum*) held together with palms. This hut with its fence is called *ilɛkɛ*.

There the *bolɔ́mbɔ́* will reside for months and years (up to three or more, they say). She is secluded there, so to speak, [514] and may not go out. If she needs to go to the banana groves for her personal needs, she covers and surrounds herself with a mat so that no one will see her.

846 to be able to nurse the child together." This does not mean that
833 from then on they may have regular sexual relations, for these are not permitted until after the end of seclusion. But if they were to omit the act at this time, they would have to abstain from it until the child is weaned. The Nkundó say that the act is performed "only a little." For many it becomes masturbation; others withdraw before obtaining the effect of the act. In no case may the act reach its natural climax. The reason for this practice is unknown to me. Perhaps it is done in order not to molest the woman while she is in a painful condition.

The next day the ashes in the hearth of the seclusion hut
846 are swept out, and the fire becomes "ordinary"; anyone may use it and eat food prepared on it.

4) The umbilical cord is dried on the bolíkó (a tray or shelf) and then buried at the foot of a young banana tree planted for that purpose, preferably under a bo̲nko̲ní tree if possible. The ashes and sweepings from the seclusion hut are thrown there. The banana tree is called nkíndá. (1) Its fruit may be eaten only by the child's
[153] grandfather and grandmother. If another person eats it, he will be punished with a headache of a nervous type.

The umbilical cord is always buried in the father's native
846 soil. People who are far from home (laborers for the Whites, etc.)
614 preserve the umbilical cords of their children with great care in order to take them back [489] when they return to their village, or send them back when a favorable opportunity arises. The Nkundó hold to this usage tenaciously, because a person whose umbilical cord is not buried in the lands of his paternal clan has no authority in the group. The person involved would meet with the following objection: ntákokúndela lokolé, ntákokundela lo̲ko̲kí, óyakúmya ngámo? olě nk'eyâya, "The lokolé was not beaten for you, your

---

[824] 1. This is a generic term used for any banana tree planted for a special purpose (a magical practice, a game, etc.).

846 taking the child would cause the child's death. The same precaution
789 is also in order if the husband goes on a trip before the child's
birth and does not return till after the delivery

We have just seen that the harmful effects of the father's
846 misconduct on his child's life is effectuated through the father's
837 act of taking the child on his knees. Thus the Nkundó speak of
baóngó b'âbé, "a father's bad knees," to indicate his reprehensible
[826] conduct, and they say that the *bondandota* potion is administered
to the child so that it will not die because of the father's bad
knees. (1)

1. The expression *baóngó b'âbé* is also used when an undertaking which requires continence is unsuccessful. (See Article II, 3).

When a child has painful and persistent diarrhea, it is often
753 interpreted as the effect of the father's infidelity. As soon as they
854 become aware of it, the couple separate for some time, and the
father no longer touches the child. [492]

Contrary to what one reads on this subject about other peoples
837 of the Congo, Nkundó couples do not have to remain continent
834 beyond the period of seclusion. The separation ceremony gives the
789 husband back the freedom of action he had before his wife's pregnancy.
For the wife the *bokeka* remains strict with respect to illicit
relations until the child is weaned However she, too, may regain
her freedom by having recourse to an antidote, the ingredients of
which she purchases from a person who holds the secret. The ingredients
are placed in a small antelope horn which is then stopped
[824] up by means of *bolakɛ́* (resin from the *S[illegible]mphonia gabonensis*). The
interested party wears it about her loins [illegible] a string or a bead belt
or, preferably, on a special creeper. This amulet protects the
child's life from the harmful influence of the mother's acts of
adultery, but it does so only on condition that she does not separate
herself from the child, as we will explain further on. This procedure

862 does not really stop nursing till it is about two years old, and sometimes two and a half if it has a weak constitution.

Weaning is not accompanied by any ceremony or feast. In order to break the child's habit, the mother smears her nipples with the sap of the liféte fruit (a kind of small sweet pimento or [824] eggplant) or with a pimento-pepper extract (imbénga). Sometimes she leaves the child with some relative (daughter, sister, etc.) for a time [498] while she lives elsewhere.

As we have seen above, after weaning, the ekelé-bokeka period comes to an end for the mother, and her infidelities no longer have repercussions on the life of her child.

[853] 8) If the mother dies while the infant is still being nursed, [563] the task of nursing is turned over to some woman who is disposed to undertake it even a Bo̱tswa, and there always is one. After the child is weaned the woman is suitably recompensed. The use of [235] goat's milk is unknown.

854 751 9) Young children frequently suffer convulsions. This illness is thought to be caused by hawks, and for that reason it is called [153] mpulú (bird). The Nkundó try to prevent it by hanging an amulet around children's necks; it is usually the clavicular triangle of a hen's carcass. In addition they know a remedy whose purpose is to strengthen the nerves: the child is laid on a mat stretched out anywhere on the roof of the hut. An eyewash (bo̱ló̱í) is prepared from the sap of leaves from the litóyansombo bush and extract of mbó̱lé (fruit of the bosoombó̱). Using a leaf shaped into a horn, a few drops are put into the child's eyes. Then the father or some other relative pulls out the mat from under the child and lifts it several times, shouting: tá tá tá.

856 10) No special importance is attached to teething. But a child whose upper teeth come in before the lower ones (a defect called ingondo) is considered abnormal. Therefore he is forbidden to eat the first fruits of hunting or fishing in an enclosure (mpao), lest the latter lose their productivity.

845 In other respects he is not differentiated from the other two. Greetings are not tripled in the case of triplets.

A child born directly after twins is called Wuteji (from utela, "to repeat"). He is in no way different from other children.

Article VII. Circumcision

304 Circumcision is generally practiced. It does not have to be performed at any particular age. It is usually done during childhood before the tenth year. The more timorous put it off until puberty or even later. Special customs of individual clans sometimes set a time. Thus, a man of the village of Besombó is not allowed to be circumcised until he has killed an animal at the hunt. On the other hand, the season during which circimcisions are performed is specified: they must take place during the period when the water level is low.

The operation may be performed by any man who is expert at it. It is carried out behind the huts. No one but the boys being operated on and their fathers are present. The boys stand in a group somewhat apart from the proceedings but place themselves so that with their eyes they can follow the treatment to which their companion is being subjected. The patient squats. One of the elderly assistants places his hands over the boy's eyes so that he cannot see what is happening. The person performing the operation has already dug a small pit to catch the blood. He pulls the foreskin, ties it with a string, and then uses ashes to trace the line which must be followed by the empúto knife that is used on such occasions. When the blood has stopped flowing, he chews some bondóngó
● [824] pepper (Aframomum . . .) or, preferably, [506] a caudal fin of
[825] the ngolo fish and then spits it onto the wound. The resulting sensation is very painful. But the patient shows that he is brave; for if he cries he is mocked by his companions.

As long as the wound is not healed, the boy must not use
[262] manioc leaves (bangánju) or manioc bread in the preparation of bosombó or loóto. Nor may he eat the skin, head, or tail of fish.

While the wound is healing, the boy who has been circumcised is cared for, washed, etc., by his mother or, if he has reached

202 so-and-so has died. Hours before his actual death, people everywhere know that a certain person is on his deathbed and that his death is imminent.

[100] If the witch doctor is up to his tricks of duping the silly Negro, people everywhere around know just what nonsense he is performing at what moment.

The White announces his morning and midday orders by means of the lokole and tells his workers when they may cease work for the day by the same means.

In the mornings and evenings and in the case of wet weather, the lokole carries especially far, but in the full sun it is not so effective.

202
534 The lokole is a large block of wood which is split down the middle for almost the whole of its length, and the inside part is carefully hollowed out. The lokole has the shape of an extra long, open mussel shell although, in general, the outside edges are flattened out.

322 The making of lokole is the trade of a certain person, and some Negroes are well-known for the lokole they have made.

Only four kinds of wood are suitable for the making of a lokole. [324] These are (1) Bokungu; (2) Likoso; (3) Bolondo; and (4) Isi. The last is the most excellent kind of wood and the one used by the Mongo [386] Negro to manufacture his "ngula" (red dye) with which he smears his body for even the least important event that occurs in his village. The Isi is probably a species of redwood. The Mongo Negro makes 322 five different lokole: (1) Ingonga, small in shape; (2) lokole ja losali, 534 medium size; (3) bongungu, large lokole. These three are all like the one described above. They are struck with sticks (bosolu) from the "momambo" tree (umbrella tree). (4) Bonkuka is the large, high lokole that is struck with two sticks to the ends of which are attached several balls of caoutchouc. The sound of these lokole carries for the greatest distance. (5) Ngomo is the large, oblong, upright dance lokole. This lokole is simply a large, oblong piece of wood, completely hollowed out, decorated a little, about 1.25 meters high, and covered at the top with a piece of dried antelope or leopard skin. It is struck with the fingers and the palm of the hand. This lokole is the well-known tom-tom, still used by the Negroes on the steamboats to announce their arrival in the villages along the river.

202 And now something about lokole language.

198 The beat of the lokole varies, and it is by this means that the Negroes [101] understand the different words. The tempo varies also.

no compulsion. If one of the contracting parties fails to fulfil its pledges in this matter 224
of giving part of the kill, or in anything else, the aggrieved party may call the council 624
together. This consists not only of members of the *[illegible]* and *[illegible]*, but of all 596
elders of the village or villages connected with this particular one. The party judged
in the wrong, whether *[illegible]* or *[illegible]*, will be fined, the injured party receiving its 621
share, and both parties will be charged to live together harmoniously and observe
their contracts.

The power of the *nkumu* was apparently limited, and did not supersede that of 624
the *[illegible]*. When trials came up, the aggrieved party might go either to the 695
[illegible] or to the *nkumu*. If it was necessary to call the village elders together
about it, both these authorities were present at the hearing. First the young men of
the group were allowed to give their verdict, then the old men, after that *[illegible]*
(or the *[illegible]*), and finally the *nkumu* was given the privilege of the
last word. He would comment on the opinions of each of the judges, criticizing one
young man, commending another, and then giving his own verdict, at which the
group would assent by saying, 'Even so, grandfather'. The whole group of judges
would then fix the fines, a double portion of which went to the *nkumu*.

The actual manual labour which an *nkumu* may do excludes anything endangering 624
life or limb, or requiring agility and speed. He may clear the bush for his gardens:
this is a man's work. He may take part in the building of his houses, but may do
no high work, and, among the inland groups, it is the work of the Batwa to put the [563]
roof on for him. The *nkumu* may also prepare pitfalls for catching game, but cannot
engage in any other type of hunting or do any fishing. Digging a grave is prohibited,
for, as we shall see, everything pertaining to death must be ignored by the *nkumu*.

Other rules affecting the daily life of the *nkumu* may be roughly divided into three:
those affecting his person, those having to do with his food, and social regulations.

One of the great points of observance in the first class of regulations is the impor- 624
tance of the *[illegible]*. The *nkumu* must on no account be seen during daylight hours 242
with an uncovered head. If he wishes relief from the cumbersome *[illegible]* he may
take it off in the darkness of his house and put on an ordinary hat made of skins,
and when night falls he may walk where he will bareheaded if he so desires. The
skin hat, known as *[illegible]*, may be made from two animals only, in the case of an [524]
nkumu, one being the *[illegible]*, a species of antelope with light-coloured hair, and the
other the *[illegible]*, an animal resembling a beaver. The skin of the *[illegible]* may be used
by anyone, but the *[illegible]* is reserved for the *nkumu* only with one exception. The skin [859]
of the *[illegible]* may also be used for the carrying strap for infants known as *[illegible]*,
which is worn over one shoulder in bandolier fashion. For the *nkumu* the skin of
the *[illegible]* is limited to the informal hat, *[illegible]*, and for making into the *[illegible]*, a pouch
used for carrying small objects and worn like a sporran. As a corollary to the impor-
tance of the *[illegible]* may be noted the importance attached to the head of the *nkumu*,
which must never be seen uncovered in daylight.

The Bonginda *nkumu* never wash in the daytime, but may wash at night with hot 624
water. The inland *nkumu* never wash. Even the Bonginda *nkumu* never wash their 515
heads, and no *nkumu* ever cuts his hair. If the *nkumu* becomes too greatly incon-
venienced, one of his wives may delouse his head, but only within the privacy of the [141]
house, by the light that enters the rear opening.

624 An *nkumu* can never walk alone, but must always be accompanied by others, and on no occasion whatsoever may he run. Even though he never washes, if he is out [771] in the rain and sees everybody else hurrying for shelter, he will not quicken his pace. [513] His movements must be slow and deliberate. The *nkumu* never sleeps alone; waking and sleeping he is attended by someone. But apart from this he is free to go where he wishes. The *nkumu* is not indiscriminate, as others may be, in his private habits, but [514] must use his own latrine at all times, and if travelling must have his own latrine in each place where he stays. The inland *nkumu* frequently take advantage of this custom [516] by hiding their accumulated brass rods at the bottom of a freshly dug latrine. Such hidden wealth will be acquired by an inheritor at the decease of the *nkumu*.

In speaking of himself the *nkumu* never refers to himself by his title but always by his own name.

624 The couch upon which the *nkumu* sits or reclines during the daytime may not be shared indiscriminately with others, but those permitted to sit upon it at the same 362 time as the *nkumu* are *mami*, women, and Batwa. The reservation of this couch for [562 the use of the *nkumu* is not surprising, but the exceptions are. One explanation given was that women and Batwa are not *bato ba ase*, persons in particular; they do not 565] count for anything in the social life of the community; they are not really 'people'. Another explanation was that they do not pay fines, this being tantamount to saying [572] that they are exempt from laws and therefore cannot break laws even by doing what would be for others an illegal act. The stool of the *nkumu*, however, has closer restrictions in the manner of its use. Besides the *nkumu* only two others may sit upon it, *Nsese* and *Mpoge*. It is always carried by one of his wives, though not necessarily by any special one.

624 The restrictions concerning the food of the *nkumu* are many. He may eat food only in his own house, or, if on a journey, in one given over for his use. He may not 262 enter another house to partake of food even if invited to do so. Likewise the *nkumu* may not eat in the forest, or eat or drink anywhere along the road when on a journey, but must wait until he arrives at a village and has a house at his disposal in order to partake of food and drink. He never 'sleeps with hunger'; even if a wife or child should die causing him great sorrow he must partake of food before going to sleep. [765] The Bonginda *nkumu* must never go into mourning, and death must be ignored by them, but the inland *nkumu* are permitted to mourn. All food carried to an *nkumu* must be covered, this rule even applying to water. Food must not be placed in a basket with high sides (*ekele*), but in a shallow one (*mpale*), and no food that has been kept overnight in a pot may be eaten by him: swelling of the abdomen will result. Various foods are taboo, among these all fast-moving snakes, though slow- [824] moving ones may be eaten; light-coloured palm-nuts may not be eaten, and a variety of yam known as *nsekiki* is shunned, for it is with the tough stems of the *nsekiki* that the dying body of the *nkumu* will be bound to ensure the sitting posture necessary for burial.

624 Among regulations roughly classed as social, we have already covered several in references above, and have referred to the *nkumu* in council. It may be added here that [623] he is expected to agree with the majority of the councillors and not fall out with them. The rules affecting the *nkumu* ... are accompanied by severe penalties. There [681] must not be any fighting; if anger is aroused to the point of blows the antagonists

grasping the knife with his left hand, with his free right hand he drains a gourd of palm wine to gain courage, hits the nearest victim on the head with the empty gourd, then transfers the knife to his right hand. He is now ready for his work which he proceeds to do methodically, sustained by the heady wine and the rhythm of the drum. When he had finished one of the lines, a pause would be made to bring out the body for burial. Just before this is done an armed band rushes down the path, returns, goes up in the other direction, then returns; this is said by some to ward off any spirits which might be about. The *nkumu* is now brought out by the Batwa slaves.[1] His grave, a circular hole with a crypt in one side of it, its entrance facing west, had been previously prepared. Few people in the Bongiinda villages knew or had seen the actual burying place of an *nkumu*. While the corpse was carried to the grave followed by a crowd, the executioner finished his work. Those who stayed behind took the bodies of the decapitated men and women and divided them among all the participants of the funeral who would subsequently devour everything. 782 766 [201]

Accompanying the funeral procession to the grave were the *ndeli*, one or more men or women who were destined to accompany the *nkumu* to his grave and to the other world beyond. At the burial of an *nkumu* witnessed in 1930 at which the semblances of some of the old rites were carried out, a party of armed men contested the right of the procession to approach the grave, there was a mock battle for a few minutes between two bands of the funeral party, and then the procession gained right of way. At the grave-side the legs and sometimes the arms of one *ndeli* were broken by heavy clubs to prevent him from escaping. Then seated on the ground the body of the *nkumu* would be placed on the knees of this one, whose arms would be placed round the *nkumu* and securely fastened by driving a peg right through both wrists. Sometimes two *ndeli* were thus used. If the number of victims was sufficient, others would be buried alive too, being placed in the grave in the recumbent *mosojo* position, with the corpse on top of them, its weight being sufficient, with the earth filling in the grave, to prevent escape. The *nkumu* was now ready for burial and was placed in the crypt, facing west.[2] The relatives of the *nkumu* approach, they pluck the leaves and stem of a juicy bush known as *mokako* and chewing it, expectorate ceremonially on the body while they address it in language somewhat as follows: 'You are going to leave us now, we are mourning, for you were a good and wise man, your discernment in matters of justice was without parallel, &c. . . . we wish that you may be happy where you go, have many wives, beget many children, lack not for meat. But don't take with you our power to beget children, leave us also some of this wisdom of yours, for what you were, we would be.' This prayer over, the *nsumb* would be slipped off the head of the corpse and replaced by the informal hat, all done so dexterously that the bare head was not seen. The entrance to the [514] [824] [184]

---

[1] The body was supposed to have remained in state for seven to nine days, but actually it was buried privately soon after death, a dummy being set up with the *nsumb* on its head, and the succeeding ceremonies being conducted with only the dummy in the place of the actual body. The inland villages however did allow the body to remain unburied for the long period, the wives being forced to keep watch in the same house. The Bongiinda buried their *nkumu* generally in their houses at the spot where they had been accustomed to rest, burying the dummy at some other spot farther off.

[2] All burials have particular regard to this east-west position, those buried in the recumbent position having the feet to the west. The native explanation is that this allows the spirit of the departed to follow the path of the sinking sun. [823]

101
619 9. The Bongale. Three large villages belonging to this group are to be found in the territory under discussion. In order of their size they are: Bongale wă Botóló (among the Lifumba, between the Bosómbé, Loilíma and Safsi rivers), Bongale wă Ilinga (among the Bakɛ́afa, near Ikɛ́ngɛ́), and Bongale wă Bonongɛ (among the Bonkoso, near Bempumba). [569] The difference between their rules of exogamy and those of the other tribes confirms the view that the Bongale are not true Nkundó. (2)

2. See Chapter V, Article III. There are several other small Bongale groups, but I do not know whether they are related to those mentioned above. Among them are those living near Bonyeka (Busira) among the Boɛ́ngi (Bokɛ́la, Boɛ́njola). They may be descended from different ancestors who all bore the name Ngale. The same name may indicate an identical origin, but it may also be derived from different individuals whose names were the same. This statement is generally applicable.

The tribes living between the Jwalɛ́ and the Boloko, with whom the Boléngé and the Ntɔ́mbá between the Congo and the Boloko are sometimes classified, are grouped under the general name of Iléngé by the Boɛ́ngɛ́, Injɔ́lɔ́, and Eléngé. (3)

[114] 3. The Bokele tribe listed on the above-mentioned map does not exist. Could this error be due to the incorrect extension of the name of a Boloki village near Bokɛ́ma which is called Bokɛ́lɛ?

The Nkundó-Mɔ́ngɔ came from the north or the northeast. (4)

[825] 4. The following note may be of interest: The stories and songs of the Nkundó indicate a

101
619
[825] recollection of an animal of the leopard family which they call bokonga. Their description of it corresponds to the lion. Some soldiers and other expatriates, who were also young people, shown representations of a lion immediately identified it with their bokonga.

The groups under discussion here lived for a time on the banks of the Luwo (Maringa) and the [11] upper Ikelemba, (1) then under pressure from other Mongo tribes, they crossed the Tshuapa-Ruki. They evicted the Ekonda and settled in their present location. This exodus must have taken place a fairly long time ago; it is impossible to determine the date and difficult to make any estimates. In any case it must have occurred 150 to 200 years ago.

241 These peoples are primarily farmers; they grow chiefly bananas, manioc, yams, colocasia [taro], sweet potatoes, sugar cane, and various vegetables and condiments. The food crops they grow, together with what they gather and the Elaeis palm trees provide them with a continuous and abundant food supply, as long as elephants do
[131] not interfere. Their domestic animals include chickens, goats, and
224 dogs. (2) Hunting is a pleasant change of activity rather than an

[173] 1. It appears that between the Ikelemba and its tributary the Losflifa, there is still a bonkom tree called w'amenga (of bald heads) under which, according to tradition, the ancestors held their councils. Nearby there is a bosffi whose fruits never ripen.

[171] 2. Ducks have been introduced fairly recently, but they were known long before colonial times. They came from the south. Sheep have been introduced only in the last few decades, and they are found only in a few villages on the river banks in the lowlands.

92 in which they are manufactured, and consequently in the way they
[824] are used. The most common ingredients are certain leaves mixed with red rouge (ngôla) and a sort of lichen which forms red slabs on the bark of certain species found in the forest; the whole thing is
[825] carefully wrapped in a small fur (especially the skin of the small feline iyali).

The charm is hidden under a slat of the bed where the desired one takes her nightly rest. Because this is done an ardent love for the owner of the charm will grow in her heart. Or it may be placed somewhere in a hut; then the desired woman is called in, the owner of the charm takes her arm, and the efɔndɔ immediately "turns her heart." Or, still without the woman's knowledge, the charm is thrown into the fire where she cooks. If she begins to sneeze when she returns home, this is a sign that the smoke charged with mysterious emanations from the philter has pepetrated through her nostrils all the way to her heart and filled it with ardent love for the Adonis in question.

The efɔndɔ is considered an ikɔ́kɔ, that is, a subjugation. Efɔndɔ ɛkɔka bâmato, "the efɔndɔ masters women, has power over
[824] them." The substance which prevents the efɔndɔ from being efficacious is the bekai, a kind of sour vegetable. [102] The owner of the philter must abstain from eating it. For the bekai cause vomiting and if he ate any the woman would in the same manner eject her love and thus make the bɔtɛ ineffective.

2. Bonɛfɛ

Contrary to the efɔndɔ, the bonɛfɛ, is a love philter which is not available to everyone; it is a charm only for dancers of the iyaya. This does not mean that all the artists who perform this dance have it, but they alone are acquainted with it. The material basis of the bonɛfɛ, as of most Nkundɔ bɔtɛ, are the leaves of certain plants.

The efficacy of the bonɛfɛ is infallible. It acts not only on the beloved one, but also on any woman who involuntarily or on purpose fulfills the condition necessary to its operation. That is, as soon as a woman's head touches the arm of the possessor of the bonɛfɛ, her heart is moved in his favor; should she be married, her love for her

614 621 The Bongangɛ are divided as follows:

1) Bongangɛ, in the narrow sense of the term (Basɛ́kɛ Inanɔ́, B. Bolakɛ, B. Bongɛ́ngɛ́, B. Bandɔ́wɛ, B. Lokɔ́kɔ́myɛ)

2) Bongangɛ of Bakoyɔ́, or Bolíma

3) Bongangɛ of Mbɔ́mbɛ́ or Basɛ́kɛ Botɛ́na

Thus Lotɔ́lɛ, Bakoyɔ́, and Mbɔ́mbɛ́ each have an Etɔ́o group and a Bongangɛ group. The Bongangɛ, in the narrow sense of the term, have in addition a "slave" group named Batsína, a part of which is located with the Bosɛnjo. A foreign clan is settled with the Etɔ́o of Lotɔ́lɛ; they are the Bofalambɔ́ka, descendant of a man named Ekonda (Imbolo) and his sister who was married to Mbete, a slave from Bompɛ́ngɛ (Wɛ́ngatɛ) who was freed by his master.

Many villages have foreign groups living with them such as descendants of slaves (ekwɛ́la), or others (Ekonda, Bombwanja, groups related by marriage called likilo, mpɛ́mɛ or bowɛ́lɛ́, and mbɛ́solɛ, (1) etc.). [249]

[609] 1. Mpɛ́mɛ or bowɛ́lɛ́ are any foreigners who were formerly invited by the group patriarch to remain with him in order to carry out certain tasks, especially metal-working. Mbɛ́solɛ is the term applied to a child born to a woman out of wedlock [596] (Chapter I, Part 2, Article IV, 3). Such [829] children are also called nkio y'ɔ̃ɔ́me, "the husband's flying dogs," because they are not his own children but are attached to their mother's husband in the fashion of these animals, who attach themselves to trees when they sleep.

614 592 If we add the descendants of relatives who have married into other more or less remote groupings, the prohibition against marriage on account of kinship applies to a good many people. In accordance with the law of exogamy, such a kin group may be widely dispersed geographically, and it is understandable that it is not always easy to

593 to which she devotes her time, sitting on a couch or a log, so oc-
578 cupies her attention that she is no longer aware that her narrow
834 garment is no longer in its proper modest position, and the gossip is
therefore exposed to shame and ridicule.

593 In addition to giving his wife a good whipping, the husband
also brings out his vocabulary of invective and sarcasm. The woman
578 does not run the risk of complaining, for she knows in advance that
she will be placed in the wrong. Nevertheless, the discreet husband
will not go too far. The elders suggest that the young people
moderate the violence of their expressions. For, they say, "a woman
is more sensitive to it than a man; she might go and hang herself
[825] in the forest," lĭkinya ǎyakõma lěí la nsõnyi, "lĭkinya (the ant) will
hang herself one day out of an excess of shame" (this is a reference to
the way this insect bites into a blade of grass or some other object
and dies rather than let go). "And above all," they say, "do not extend your insults to your wives' parents, for they could urge their daughters to leave you."

With respect to adultery, the punishments prescribed in Nkundó law will be examined below in Article VIII.

It is apparent from the preceding description that the Nkundó attach relatively little importance to the outpourings of loquacious eloquence characteristic of the weaker sex as long as they do not go beyond limits or degenerate into outrageous and ignominious insults. The elders teach youth to be calm in the face of these demonstrations of the declamatory art at which most Negresses are as adept as our fishwives at home.

[562] They say that a woman is like an elephant: bŏmoto ale
é njoku. There is nothing to be done about her. It is futile [280] to
try and speak gently to her; she does not even listen. To impose
silence on her is impossible. To try and calm her, make her listen
to reason, is a waste of effort. It is the same with an elephant: He
[825] can perhaps be chased away with cries and noise, but he will destroy
the crops nonetheless.

The fact that a woman readily opens her mouth is not considered a sign that she does not love her husband. The Nkundó even

664 [192] payment rightly owed, and in the absence of an adequate translation, "indemnity" is still the least inaccurate. (1)

One point remains to be noted. The two forms of punishment, violence and indemnity, may not be combined, and this principle is applied in all situations (2). Should this prohibition be construed as an implicit condemnation of violent measures? Or have we here the use of a system of settlement? It is difficult to settle this question, and actually the two explanations overlap at least in part.

694 512 It is not without interest to note that, in order to justify sanctions against the accomplice, the Nkundó invoke his frequently dominant role in adultery. Actually they reason that a woman is weak by nature; her emotions predominate, she is easily led and resists enticement only with difficulty. A man on the other hand is more reasonable, better able to control himself. Sanctions enacted and applied against the wife alone would not only leave out the punishment of one of the two culprits, but they would also be inadequate for the preservation of social order, since the woman remains exposed to succumbing out of weakness in spite of the penalties. The severity of Nkundó law with regard to the corporal punishment of the wife, which exists in spite of these considerations, are explained in terms of the woman's sensitive nature and of the power her husband has over her which he lacks in relation to her accomplice.

●[625] 1. The words used for "reward" are *bokɔ́ndo*, which is a reward for an unusual service, like the capture of a leopard or another "royal" animal (*nyam'ě'ekofo*, such as a python, an eagle, etc.) or a beautiful dance, and *mbuseji*, which is a reward for small services.

2. For example, see also Chapter VIII, Article III, 1.

764 [584] to return to join the procession, or may be able to do so only with difficulty.

The act of carrying a corpse to its native clan is not designated by any specific term. The expression is simply tsɛ́ka ilâka, "to go and return the corpse."

764 431 In one or more places near the entrance to the village, a barrier (bokâko, lokombɛ́, or loɛ́laka) made of posts and palms is set up. There the relatives of the deceased, armed, wait for the procession of the husband's relatives, who are also armed, and forbid them to continue their march. Before passing, the latter must make a payment. The valuables given are called byɛ̂ko by'ôkâko or simply bokâko (or loɛ́laka). The family of the deceased calls to the procession, "Halt! You will not pass here." The latter reply, "We come to bring [426] you the corpse of your child; we want to break down the barrier. Let us pass; here are [584] the gifts." The ndonga hands over a knife, a brass or copper ring, or some equivalent object (for instance, money, nowadays). Thereupon the members of the deceased's clan move away. The bɛ́nambótswá (persons related to both clans) break down the barrier, and the procession passes, headed by the ndonga and the bɛ́nambótswá. The husband follows the coffin.

764 579 In the past it was almost always necessary to force a passage through the barrier. The wife's family did not want to open and the husband's family did not want to pay, and so they came to blows. The group bearing the corpse tried to break down the barrier, while their adversaries tried to prevent them from doing so. The arms used in that struggle were chiefly pointed sticks which the members of the two camps threw at each other; more rarely, arrows were used. The specific name for this sort of brawl is gbɛhɛ́lá. Certain clans specialize in this sport. Thus between Bofmbo and Lileko, there is a regular battle every time. In such serious cases the barrier is heavily fortified; the posts are thick and hard, and intertwined with thorny creepers (bokau, longolɛ́, wanganjɛ́la, etc.) and thorny shrubs (wɛ̂ngɛ́, etc.). A quantity ●[125] of venomous biting ants (bafumba, mbómbá, byɛ̂mbo, etc.) are added. If the brawl becomes serious, the ndonga and the other bɛ́nambótswa intervene and impose peace by requiring the husband's clan to pay.

843 177 The Nkundó know an antidote (nsengó or losenjó), however, a means of getting rid of such annoying obstacles. Of the three known processes the last is especially common at present.

● [125] 1) The husband (or any person to whom the wekɛ́ is attached and who wants to be rid of it) picks up a nkɔ̂ngolí chilopod, naturally by means of a leaf, encloses it in a large leaf which he binds with a thin creeper, and makes a small package of it, as one makes a package of meat, fish, etc. He gives this package to his wife, who thinks it contains food and opens it without any suspicion. But when she sees the detested arthropod, she throws it far from her with cries of disgust, while her husband says to her, "You are the one who remains with the wɛ̌kɛ́." As a result he himself is freed from it.

2) A second means is to take the pregnant woman by the nose when an opportunity presents itself and to say to her: "May the wɛ̌kɛ́ remain attached to you."

[152] [264] 3) The woman prepares some imbɔ́ndɔ́ (manioc leaves [474] salted and dipped in palm oil). The two spouses eat it together contrary to the usual practice. But the husband arranges matters in such a way that his wife gets the last mouthful and keeps the leaf which serves as a plate and represents the wɛ̌kɛ́. Then the husband says to her, "Keep the wɛ̌kɛ́ for yourself."

The wɛ̌kɛ́ cannot be detached from the woman, for she is the bomɔ́ngo wɛ̌kɛ́, "the owner of the wɛ̌kɛ́," the one who is the basis for it. For her it continues until the child *is on the point of* being born (elaká ó jɔ̌mi jɔ̌ónda, literally "he has come to the end of his growth," or jɔ̌ɔ́kama, "has turned to one side"), and thus, in practice, until the birth of the child.

[152] If a first wife dies at the beginning of her first pregnancy, a cesarian operation must be performed on her. The fetus is removed (it is still no more than an embryo -- ilɔ́ngɛ́lá or bokelé, literally "an egg," or ilɔ́ngɔ́, literally "blood") so that it can be buried behind the hut. An omission of this practice would result in the death through pregnancy of the deceased's husband's other wives or of the women he will subsequently marry.

3. The period of prohibitions

843 When a pregnancy is far advanced -- about two or three months before delivery (a period which has now been reduced to one or two weeks) -- the Nkundó proceed with the "preservation of the fetus" (báomba jémi, "they preserve the fetus," or báaka jémi, "they fasten the fetus"). The period called bokeka or bokeko begins at that moment and does not end until after childbirth. The oral expression is lémba bokeka, "to bind the period of sexual prohibitions." (1) This term also extends to all special prohibitions (bikilá) resulting from this condition. [475]

[566] [502] For the first pregnancy the period begins with the following ceremony: The woman's mother smears her daughter's head and all of her body with a red paint called ngóla. This paint, usually used as make-up, is used here as a mark of affection and given to honor and congratulate the future mother on this happy occasion. When the ngóla is somewhat hardened, the mother smears her daughter's hair with it and rolls the hair into little balls, using an iron bosóngó, which is the instrument usually used for hairdressing. Then she gives her daughter a hen and some bananas to eat. From then on the pregnant woman may no longer eat hens, for the consumption of this bird (which the Nkundó place in the same category as ducks) and its eggs would stop the normal development of the fetus. The ceremony is called fla bongata (eleku among the Bombwanja), "to smear with red paint in little balls." ● [825]

The woman's father and the husband's kin feel strongly about being present at this ceremony, for it is considered very important. I know of an intense palaver which occurred because

---

[834] 1. The expression lémba lǔmbá is also used. A similar period of sexual prohibitions called by the same name still exists for, among other things, circumcision, the construction of a hunting enclosure, and the setting of elephant traps.

843 3) They must not climb up on the roof (they are not forbidden to climb a palm tree in order to cut off nuts).

4) They must not eat animals killed by a carnivore (leopard,
843 84 crocodile, etc.), or the child would die a sudden and unnatural
262 death like the victims of such wild beasts. [480]

● 825 5) They must abstain from animals such as porcupines, anteaters, certain birds, crocodiles, and gavials, (1) who are in the habit of living in the hollows of trees or in dens. The delivery would be very painful if they ate them, for the child would roll up and crouch in the mother's womb. Fish that find shelter in passageways do not produce such consequences and are therefore eaten.

6) They must not eat turtles (2). A very difficult birth is feared, for the turtle withdraws into its shell and encloses its anal extremities as in a vise, and the child would do the same. ✓

7) They must not eat the head of a monkey. The child would be born with deep-set eyes resembling the monkey's.

8) They must not eat the large antelope known as mbuli, because it has a long neck and flabby flesh, and the child would acquire the same defects.

[753] 9) They must not eat the lioδló fish, which would cause migraines, since it swims fiercely without direction.

The results of bokeka and the obligations resulting from it
843 are connected with natural paternity. Thus, if a woman becomes
837 pregnant as a result of relations with a regular, recognized lover, the latter must assume all responsibility. He is required to "fasten the fetus" and to observe all the regulations pertaining to the

---

1. In this region women never eat snakes or bats (loléma, bọnkọ́mí, ffukyá).

2. In some tribes (Bongili, Bonkoso) women always abstain from eating such reptiles.

845 In other respects he is not differentiated from the other two. Greetings are not tripled in the case of triplets.

A child born directly after twins is called Wuteji (from utela, "to repeat"). He is in no way different from other children.

Article VII. Circumcision

Circumcision is generally practiced. It does not have to
304 be performed at any particular age. It is usually done during childhood before the tenth year. The more timorous put it off until puberty or even later. Special customs of individual clans sometimes set a time. Thus, a man of the village of Besombó is not allowed to be circumcised until he has killed an animal at the hunt. On the other hand, the season during which circimcisions are performed is specified: they must take place during the period when the water level is low.

The operation may be performed by any man who is expert at it. It is carried out behind the huts. No one but the boys being operated on and their fathers are present. The boys stand in a group somewhat apart from the proceedings but place themselves so that with their eyes they can follow the treatment to which their companion is being subjected. The patient squats. One of the elderly assistants places his hands over the boy's eyes so that he cannot see what is happening. The person performing the operation has already dug a small pit to catch the blood. He pulls the foreskin, ties it with a string, and then uses ashes to trace the line which must be followed by the empúte knife that is used on such occasions. When the blood has stopped flowing, he chews some bondóngó
[824] pepper (Aframomum . . . .) or, preferably, [506] a caudal fin of
[825] the ngolo fish and then spits it onto the wound. The resulting sensation is very painful. But the patient shows that he is brave; for if he cries he is mocked by his companions.

As long as the wound is not healed, the boy must not use
[261] manioc leaves (bangánju) or manioc bread in the preparation of bosombó or lokóto. Nor may he eat the skin, head, or tail of fish.

While the wound is healing, the boy who has been circumcised is cared for, washed, etc., by his mother or, if he has reached

763 literally that the deceased has hanged the heart, the former is used of a tree which leans over and falls from a great cut at its base.

624 On the announcement of the death, an expert drummer drums out the news. There will be at least four drums of the type known as *lokulu*, and a *nange*.[1] The four
766 drums are called by the names, *Epunda*, having the 'biggest voice', that is a deep
594 bass note, *Mongoye*, having a higher note, *Mongonda*, a high pitched note, and *Monkoto*,
202 having a very high penetrating note. To these four drums others are added; if the *nkumu* himself did not possess sufficient, they would be borrowed from the surrounding villages, and their notes matched with those of the first three drums, being beaten with them in their turn. *Monkoto* is beaten simultaneously with *Epunda*, giving a rhythmic tattoo. When the news of the death has been sent out on *Epunda*, the funeral drumming commences, as follows:

539 *Mongonda*. Botianganu w'Amba lokolo,
Mongoye. Ntsala ikita, otongonoko,
Epunda. Tokund' ibenge molom' o nyama,
Ombolekeke mmenge,
Lobanga lolenda ntondo,
Bikeku bilenda lobola.
Nange. Tobilake nkoi nkonge,
Tobilake nkoi nkonge, &c.

The English and the interpretation are as follows:

Mongonda. A scattering of Amba, the snail. (The mother of twins, always called Amba, here gives her name to the snail because of her prolific progeny, which, upon being introduced to the world, scatter, while the mother dies. So the death of the *nkumu* will cause a scattering of his many wives and children.)

Mongoye. Feathers fall; pick them up. (That is to say, for your arrow shafts, for if you don't, and come back later, the wind will have scattered them and you won't find them. So while the *nkumu* was alive it was the time for his children to learn his teachings so that when palavers came after his death they would be well acquainted with his wisdom and know how to settle them.)

Epunda. We are burying the *ibenge*, husband of animals, You have just eaten *mmenge*, The chin looks up at the ridge pole, The jaw bones look up at the sky.
[825] *(The ibenge is an animal much prized for its fat meat; the nkumu always gets his share* when it is killed, and the skin is made into carrying straps for infants, and into belts.
[568] Batwa are prohibited the use of it for any purpose. It is therefore fitting to liken the *nkumu* to the *ibenge*. *Mmenge* (sing. *lobenge*) is the equivalent of a snack. When a woman brings her cassava from the swamp where it has been soaking for several
[264] days, her husband may be too hungry to wait the long hours required to cook *it*, so to appease his hunger his wife takes a piece or two of the unprepared root, splits
[252] it in two, places salt between, wraps it in a *lokombe* leaf and roasts it in the hot ashes, where it is quickly cooked. So the *nkumu* just had time to eat a few *mmenge*; he didn't wait for the big cooking; his life was suddenly cut off.)

Nange. Don't pull out the leopard's eyelashes. (That is, while he is alive; now he is dead one can disregard his power.)

---

[1] A *lokulu* is a slit gong made from a hollowed log. Its two notes are produced by striking the two lips of the slit. A *nange* is a hollowed log, open at one end, across which is stretched a vellum hide.

833 753 684 which has a strong resemblance to sleeping sickness. (1) One of its

1. It is not sleeping sickness itself, however, for that disease seems formerly to have been unknown in this area.

symptoms is a weakness of the lower limbs. Instances are cited of individuals who were unable to resist their passions and were punished in this manner. Apparently only the woman dies. As soon as her family discovers that she is stricken, the guilty woman denounces her accomplice. The latter is held responsible and is required to pay a heavy indemnity, which may amount to several dozen copper rings.

835 751 Here as in many other situations the Nkundó have found a way to avoid the danger. There is an antidote (mengó), and it is water (bàsi bale mengó éà bombilé). Thus those who are unable to control their aroused passions during the day, satisfy it in a shallow stream.

837 753 The fear of bombilé has been greatly shaken [93] by colonization. If we are to believe the natives, foreign soldiers are responsible for this change also. But the behavior of the latter could not completely destroy the ancient feeling, probably due to a natural shame which makes them seek darkness and privacy for acts of this sort.

833 [575] [842] After intercourse a native woman usually gives herself a douche. She does so for the sake of cleanliness. It often happens, however, that she does not wait long enough before doing so, and thus she neutralizes the effect of the intercourse. This is chiefly a matter of carelessness. Nevertheless, under certain circumstances she may use this means to prevent conception. (1)

1. See Chapter X, Article I, 2.

833 126 According to my informants, some women have constitutional abnormalities which repel men. As everything readily becomes public, such flaws are quickly known after marriage, though not quite as readily beforehand. Actually love can -- and often does -- cause them to be overlooked. But after the first ardor has cooled, such a situation may become a threat to the stability of a marriage. When quarrels

833 826 become somewhat violent, the women recall these flaws, to the great shame of the person who suffers from them. The same is true of the weakness of some of the men which, like an excess of sexual activity, can cause difficulties in a household.

2. Rape

839 Rape in the true sense of the word -- that is, the abuse of a woman by the use of violence -- is most unusual among the Nkundó. If a woman does not consent, the angry seducer leaves her, often insulting her to the best of his ability. I know of only one case of rape, which occurred some time ago and caused much consternation in the region. Banɛngɛ, the daughter of Iloko [94] Is Ɛ́fekele of Lofelɛ (Bongɛli), was at that time living with her mother's clan the Bonyeka (Bonkoso). She had not yet fully attained physical maturity (her breasts were still very small). One day she went into the forest and did not return in the evening. The family was alarmed, and her father and her uncle Mpɛ́nda ɛ́a Nkotonkale went to look for her. Finding traces of fresh blood, they followed them till they found Banɛngɛ's corpse buried in the nsusulu. She had died of hemorrhage; her sex organs, torn, showed the unmistakable signs of rape. People had their suspicions, but it has never been possible to prove the identity of the criminal. If there had been proof, he would not have escaped the mortal vengeance of the unfortunate victim's parents.

All the data I have been able to collect indicates that other instances must undoubtedly have occurred.

3. Incomplete acts

832 Here we are speaking of what moralists call actus impudicitiae, that is, acts whose nature physically leads to sexual pleasure.

Obscene bodily contacts between persons of opposite sex are preparatory acts which excite; even touching the breasts, the abdomen, and taking a person by the arms are included in this category.

593x 606 578 We should add that in some households, difficulties arise rather easily during the visits of parents or parents-in-law, because of the sensibilities, incompatibility of character, or discontent of one party who may consider the other guilty of discourtesy, lack of delicacy, disrespect, or stinginess toward the visiting parents. The same is true for the rearing of children. [273]

4. Punishments

593x 578 Nkundó law permits a husband to inflict corporeal punishment (bikɛ́njwɛ̂, sing. ekɛ́njwɛ̂) on his wife, its nature varying with the seriousness of the case. Obviously these sanctions, expressly permitted by law, cannot give rise to claims on the woman's part [576] or result in the obligation to pay a bofɔndɔ. [Editor's note: Unless, of course, the husband -- acting in excess of his rights -- is more violent than the occasion warrants for under such conditions, the wife, supported by her family, attacks the husband, who is then [684] forced to acknowledge the harm he has done and make reparation by means of a bofɔndɔ.] If she is hurt she may claim a supplementary payment called liombo (from the verb bomba) or "bandage" (for the wound); it consists of 5 rings or more, depending on the situation. ● [826] The loss or breaking of a tooth is considered a serious injury. For this is a real injury to the woman and, in the case of front teeth, to her beauty. (1) Of course, as explained above, the wife will first have run home, and it is there that the dispute is examined.

593x 578 684 For the sake of a clearer understanding, let us go into a few details concerning the penal stipulations of Nkundó law in relation to the life of a married couple.

Usually, in a simple domestic quarrel, the couple does no more than tell each other some home truths, seasoning their speeches

---

[304] 1. Because they are filed, the incisors are much less resistant than normal teeth. Teeth filing is practiced for reasons of beauty.

846 taking the child would cause the child's death. The same precau-
787 tion is also in order if the husband goes on a trip before the child's
birth and does not return till after the delivery

We have just seen that the harmful effects of the father's
846 misconduct on his child's life is effectuated through the father's
837 act of taking the child on his knees. Thus the Nkundó speak of
bańgó b'âbé, "a father's bad knees," to indicate his reprehensible
● [846] conduct, and they say that the bondandota potion is administered
to the child so that it will not die because of the father's bad
knees. (1)

1. The expression bańgó b'âbé is also used when an undertaking which requires continence is unsuccessful. (See Article II, 3).

When a child has painful and persistent diarrhea, it is often
753 interpreted as the effect of the father's infidelity. As soon as they
854 become aware of it, the couple separate for some time, and the
father no longer touches the child. [492]

Contrary to what one reads on this subject about other peo-
837 ples of the Congo, Nkundó couples do not have to remain continent
834 beyond the period of seclusion. The separation ceremony gives the
787 husband back the freedom of action he had before his wife's preg-
nancy. For the wife the boleka remains strict with respect to illicit
relations until the child is weaned. However she, too, may regain
her freedom by having recourse to an antidote, the ingredients of
which she purchases from a person who holds the secret. The in-
gredients are placed in a small antelope horn which is then stopped
[824] up by means of bolakó (resin from the Symphonia gabonensis). The
interested party wears it about her loins on a string or a bead belt
or, preferably, on a special creeper. This amulet protects the
child's life from the harmful influence of the mother's acts of
adultery, but it does so only on condition that she does not separate
herself from the child, as we will explain further on. This procedure

624 and that he may have no more than a month or perhaps a year in which to live and will surely die speedily.

The special objects attaching to the office of *nkumu*, among these the hat, *mantoh*, and stool, *ekiata*, are at the same time subject to similar magical arts to determine whether they may be produced for the new *nkumu*'s use. They are not present, being in the possession of the *molendo* which will appoint him, but are mentioned by name. Apart from the *mantoh*, no further ceremony is required to identify these objects with their future owner.

[302] The *etingo* ended, the *Nkomo Akolo* smears black *ntsili* all over his body again, 624 before the rites begin to determine which of his wives is to be known as *Nsona*, 787 the one who will be closest to her husband throughout his days. For this, magic formulae (*bisanko*, sing. *esanko*) are used. All the wives sit round in a circle and the *nkanga* places some irritant such as ground pepper in the eyes of all the women. The wife whose eyes stream most and whose discomfort is also accompanied by a violent shaking of the body is known to be *Nsona*. Here again, lying is believed to be out [827] of the question, for the shaking of the body is something that is supposed to be impossible of simulation, the real being easily distinguished by all from the false. *Nsona* is now stripped of all clothing and her body smeared by the *nkanga* with yellow clay on one side, and with white on the other. A belt of leaves is put round her waist 624 and a small bit of cloth between the legs with each end attached to the belt. Near by 784 a gourd with 'medicine' in it has been standing ready for the next step in the ceremonies, and this is now smeared with white clay, a parrot's feather stuck in the neck, and handed to *Nsona*, who receives it in one hand. Into the other hand is put a section of plantain stalk, into one end of which has been stuck a parrot's feather. A third feather is placed in her mouth so that she cannot speak, greet anyone, or eat. She is now tied with a cord which is held by one of the young men attending *Nkomo Akolo*. At this point of the procedure the *nkanga* states his price [79] for his work, which will be in the neighbourhood of one hundred brass rods, worth 430 to-day about fifty francs, but formerly double that amount. The future *nkumu*, accompanied as before, leaves for the village of the *molendo*. *Nsona* starts off at a tremendous pace, for she is now imbued with a sort of frenzied strength, and for this reason has been tied up and put in charge of a strong young man, otherwise she would be off so fast that no one could catch her, and would go into the forest, where she would live for days unseen.

624 In the village of the *molendo* the party all sit in an *etanda* belonging to one of the elders. This is the place where the Tumba men really live—their houses are just [362] sleeping and cooking establishments, but the *etanda*, having a roof for shade and no walls, is the place where the men congregate and spend their leisure time. It is also 362 the site of the village smithy, which takes up one end. Here, then, *Nkomo Akolo* and his party sit for a day and a night, and neither he nor *Nsona* may eat food or drink wine during this period. Games are played by the *molendo*—mock battles, dances, and [577] songs chiefly of battle, and before the first streaks of dawn appear the group in the *etanda* begins to march up and down the village singing.

At dawn the whole party, accompanied by a large crowd, make their way to a place in the bush where there is an elevation of some sort. Here *Nkomo Akolo* climbs up and takes his stand, accompanied by *Nsona*. Now the *molendo* choose the *Bilopo*

593* 834 arises but rarely. Furthermore, if a daughter is required to perform similar duties for her father, she will undertake this obligation only [593] with the lament: njôy'ôôna ɛkɛ 'm wimɔkɛ, "I have come to see where I had my origin." Any woman who has been in that position will later know no oath more sacred than this one: la bɔtakɛ wà faíɛ bɔkɛ 'm wɔ̀ɔkɛ la mpaka, "by my father's nakedness which I saw when he was old."

834 291 Thus we can draw the conclusion that the Nkundɔ are offended by nakedness and as a rule do not tolerate it. The exceptions do not invalidate this generalization; on the contrary, they tend to support it. -

2. Speech. Obscenities and propriety.

521 831 In general the Nkundɔ see nothing wrong with using obscene expressions. They only describe them as "bad" if they become indecent.

195 If a conversation touches on matters of sex, they may wonder whether a particular topic is necessary, interesting, or entertaining; they will not ask themselves whether it is moral. For it will be apparent throughout this study they have no concept of morality strictly speaking.

The Nkundɔ possesses a varied and extensive list of obscene words -- nor is he alone in this respect. [58] We are not compiling a dictionary, and therefore we will not list them. What interests us are the circumstances that make these words indecent and under which a proper use of them impossible. The circumstances provide us with a criterion of the degree of obscenity of a word or expression. Let us say at once that we include in this category not only terms applied to organs and phenomena which are of a sexual nature strictly speaking, but also words pertaining to certain anatomical parts or physiological functions such as, for example, excretion, hair and tattooing found on private parts, and the female garment called efufa. We [194] should also point out that some tribes will consider expressions obscene which do not shock others at all.

521 which do not shock others at all. (1)
831
195

1. These comments are applicable also to peoples in other parts of the world.

[559] The general rule of decorum among the Nkundó permits the use of such terms only among equals. Their use when speaking to inferiors is tolerated but not approved of. The use of obscenities when speaking to any strangers meets with definite disapproval. Among persons of different sexes the prohibition is particularly strict.

Nevertheless, the use of these expressions is judged less severely if they are uttered in a moment of anger or as a reprimand, even in the presence of a member of the opposite sex.

Exclamations of anger, vexation, and sorrow are often nothing but obscenities (2). No one is shocked by them in such situations.

2. See "Les Coutumes Funéraires" [Funeral Customs], No. 1, to be published in *Anthropos*.

Some elderly or more modest persons do not make use of them, however; if the habit of using a particular expression is thoroughly ingrained, they may make a slight change in its pronunciation (as is common for some of our "swear words").

195 To circumvent the difficulties caused by the need to use certain words frequently, [58] euphemisms are coined to take their
831
519
521
516
place. Thus the Nkundó say: ntswá lokako w'âkuna, "I am going behind the house," to indicate that they are going to urinate, and ntswá ikondó, "I am going for small pieces of firewood," or ntswá ôténa lokásá, "I am going to pick a leaf," meaning that they are going to the toilet. On the way they say: ñkúa lolá, "I am leaving the path" or "I am going to the forest." A husband is permitted to use accurate terminology when speaking to his wife, but it is considered very improper for her to do so in speaking to him.

574 When someone is satisfying a natural need, others keep a distance away from him; they will not even speak to him. Moreover, the person would not reply even if he were called. A woman will not
576

574 576 even answer her husband, but he may indicate his presence by coughing lightly.

574 576 578 831 Any infraction of these rules is considered a grave insult. A person offended in this manner may seek revenge by violent means, either personally or through the medium of his son, brother, etc. According to native justice he will always be in the right, even if the quarrel becomes bloody. The simple act of uttering obscenities while passing in front of a house in which there is someone who is entitled to the speaker's respect may result in reprisals by the latter. (1)

1. See Jadot, Blancs et Noirs au Congo belge [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 90.

578 834 Crude language is especially reprehensible and wounding if it contains allusions to incest or other reflections on a relative whom the speaker wants to insult. And it must be admitted that such expressions may go beyond the limits (for example: coi cum patre, matre, fratre, sorore, etc.). In connection with this topic it should be noted that reference is always made to a relative of the opposite sex to that of the person who is directly or indirectly being addressed. Furthermore, licentious talk and the use of indecorous language are more severely condemned when they take place in the presence of [554] women and old people [66] or are said by a slave in front of his master, by a Botswa in front of a Boto (1).

1. See Introduction, footnote 2, p. 4.

578 684 834 If a man catches anyone uttering obscenities in front of his wife, especially if they are addressed to her personally, he can start action in adultery proceedings. If the woman refuses to listen to the seducer, she will not answer him, or sometimes, annoyed at the insult, she may retort by insulting his mother. She can complain, but generally she does not do so. Is she ashamed, or is she afraid that the tempter might make public some excess in her conduct which he has discovered? In any case a woman is more sensitive than a man to the

535 for the most inventive tribe. All the dances have two distinguishable parts: the dance strictly speaking and the finale or *ilefeyo*. The latter consists of acrobatic exhibitions or a theatrical performance. It varies with each performance and sometimes goes beyond the limits of decency, especially in certain scenes of the women's dances. Here everything depends on the attitude of the actors and spectators.

535 786 [853] The words sung are usually proper. Passages that may be less so occur only exceptionally. The exclamations of some of the male or female dancers, but mostly those of the audience when the intensity of the performance reaches a climax, are somewhat less innocent. Thus this climax [illegible] is the weak spot morally speaking. This is true especially of the dances performed by the women who, led on by their passion and encouraged by the cheering and applause of the spectators, make provocative movements (*[illegible]*, *[illegible]*). A European will see nothing wrong, but the native knows the gestures and their meaning. The spectators then applaud with even greater enthusiasm, either because of sexual feelings or out of aesthetic enjoyment, for to them these movements are beautiful. All the artistic dances for women which are the fashion at the present time contain a similar phase of exaggerated excitement. It is therefore understandable that in the past the elders strictly forbade children and adolescents to attend these dances.

[586] After what has just been said, no one will be astonished to hear that these great dances are often the cause of adultery and divorce. And to a limited extent the same can be said for the men's dances, for masculine beauty is exhibited in an enticing manner.

535 535 The rhythmic motions which sometimes accompany singing during drinking parties cannot really be called dances; nothing shocking is implied by them and the words of the songs are seldom improper. Salacious songs are rarely sung in the course of daily living, but they are never omitted from funeral ceremonies.

535 [illegible] Up to now we have spoken of artistic dances, which are always very popular. They were -- and are -- reserved for certain special occasions. For ordinary circumstances the Nkundó have a few little entertaining dances which have nothing at all in common with the dance as such. They are more like games. The lyrics of the songs

535
177
837 may be ribald, but this occurs rather rarely. However, at the present time, they are often actually obscene -- especially since "European-style" dancing has been introduced, and more particularly in the centers, small and large, and among those who have come under [63] its influence. This kind of dancing for amusement is chiefly practiced by young people.

To the credit of morality it should be noted that mixed dancing is unknown to strictly native ways. It occurs in the centers (in the form of the mixed bofenya or the balinga, grotesque imitations of European dances) but is spreading -- and rapidly -- to the villages of the interior. The second variety especially raises havoc, for it has a deleterious influence on morality. It has been the cause of a number of cases of adultery, divorce, palavers, and quarrels, and has been forbidden by certain chiefs and headmen, who would like to be able to severely punish anyone who dances it.

Conclusion

834
837 The data presented in the foregoing section forces us to conclude that sexual modesty does exist among the Nkundó. The wearing of clothing, the various prohibitions, the attitude of the older and wiser members of the community show that they experience this feeling. It is the same here as elsewhere. In certain areas it is even carried to an extreme. The exceptions should be attributed to individual deviations; and because of the reactions they provoke, they even provide conclusive evidence. The general laxity which may be observed on some special occasions does not provide material for a serious objection against the existence of modesty. Yet it is difficult to determine the reason for such an attitude which seems to contradict the rest of our data. Should it be interpreted as a yielding to human weakness, or seen as a weakening of public morality? Or is it not rather because these special circumstances make an unfavorable interpretation of such actions impossible? An allusion made in public, in a group, [64] does not have the same significance as that same allusion may have between two people, where it implies a suspicious intimacy.

304/ and "modern" fashions, as well as some ancient ones, take this into
832 account. In the next paragraph, moreover, we will note ananalogous phenomenon.

Both of the explanations given can be defended, since each has its value. But it seems to me preferable not to oppose them but rather to bring them together, as they probably are in the thinking of the native.

It should also be noted that a man never performs the operation of making a sexual tattoo on a woman, although a woman may indeed operate on a man. And finally it should be mentioned that the
● [851] specific terms designating these tattoos are considered as obscenities.

The practice of tattooing is decreasing at the present time.
[178] Many boys are already without tattoos. But very few girls lack them; among them the fad has not disappeared. Some even have themselves tattooed without the knowledge of their parents and in spite of their opposition. Among the Blacks, as everywhere in the world, fashion is deeply rooted because it is natural. But the designs of the tattoos are now becoming smaller. It seems to me that this change is due, not to a reaction against tattooing as such, but rather to a modification of the style. For tattooing is a real fashion, and like all fashions it is subject to change and development. Nowadays there is a tendency to imitate the designs of other peoples of the Congo. Elsewhere, as among the Injɔ́lɔ́, for example, an internal evolution may be observed, although it is occurring under foreign influence. The evolution is taking place chiefly in the face motifs, while those of the body are beginning to be omitted. But the sexual tattoos do not seem to be disappearing. [69]

4. Bead Belts

291/ From an early age the Nkundó child is adorned with a belt of
301/ trading beads. Before the coming of the Europeans this decoration
832 made its appearance only towards puberty and was restricted to girls. Nowadays, many men also adorn themselves in this manner. And since it is now easier to obtain the beads, women are no longer with a single string but wear several in assorted colors. They add smaller ones below the knee.

291/ 301/ 832 According to what I have been told, this type of ornament may also have a sexual significance. Normally -- and this statement is applicable only to the present time -- the beads are entirely covered by clothing and are visible only on a few occasions. If a large number of strings (as many as six, eight, or ten) or very many beads are worn, attention may be attracted to them because there will be a bulge in the clothing worn over them. Their sound will reveal their presence during a race or a dance. And according to my informants, that is enough to awaken passion. Making an allusion to the beads and especially touching them deliberately is considered as an invitation. For her part, a woman sometimes rubs them together in her fingers so that they will make their characteristic noise and thus attract a man's attention and arouse his interest.

The preceding does not mean that simply the wearing of the beads is necessarily intended for a bad purpose. Not only must such an intention be excluded in the case of serious persons, especially if they are elderly and content themselves with wearing a single string, seldom a second one to support the first. But there is also the possibility that a young Black beauty may adorn herself with ten or more [832] strands out of sheer vanity, so that the whole world may see that she has so many. [70]

Furthermore, it has been shown that attention to appearance is not necessarily directed to another person. Though that may be generally true, many people like to dress for the pleasure of being well dressed, and girls who never dream of an adventure may still enjoy wearing pretty undergarments. This desire for adornment for its own sake can, no doubt, explain the belts, as well as other embellishments on more than one Nkundó woman.

We should add that those who adhere to the theory that the tattoos have an immediate sexual influence could apply such a theory here as well.

302 831 5. Depilation

All Nkundó of both sexes practice depilation of the genital organs and even the armpits. The natives believe that the hair growing

302 under the arms is related to sexuality and give it the same name as
831 they use for their pubic hair.

A person removes his or her own hair, or it is removed by a friend of the same sex. Formerly, the hairs were simply pulled out. Nowadays, many people shave with a [illegible]. Moreover the practice tends to be confined to the hair connected with sexuality, but in the past everything was removed: eyebrows, eyelashes, mustaches, beards.

For the Nkundó hair removal is a form of beauty care. Their
302 explanation must be accepted, though the term "beauty care" must be broadly defined so that it will include also the depilation of parts of the body that are always hidden. This last form however, might have some relation to the tattoos; it makes tattooing easier and its effect more obvious. [71]

Article III. Prostitution

The dictionary defines prostitution as follows: "a trade which
548 consists in providing one's body for the pleasures of the public in exchange for money." In addition to this limited sense, the most important aspect of which is "in exchange for money," the word also has several broader meanings.

Prostitution is found in the world in various forms: 1) the kept woman, 2) the brothel, 3) the professional streetwalker, 4) the occasional streetwalker, 5) the married woman who has a steady relationship with a lover who pays her, 6) the woman who is the concubine of a number of men in succession and who is paid by each of them. We will examine the forms under which this misconduct has occurred and occurs among the Nkundó.

The first question we should ask is whether a Nkundó woman gave herself to a man for profit before the European occupation. It is true that a woman often accepted remuneration but, as we have already said, it is very difficult to determine whether she did so for gain or simply to be reassured of her lover's affection. Knowing the mentality of the Nkundó woman of today, we must admit that her greed sometimes brings her to acts of venal love. One or another of them has no doubt given her body in order to possess various

592 husband will change to revulsion, and she will leave him to be with her charmer.

Part 3

The Search for a Wife

594 When a young man old enough to marry believes he has the means to do so, he goes out to seek a wife. Naturally, he knows a number of girls, and as a rule he has no trouble finding one who suits him. The courtship is quite simple. As everywhere there are meet- [93/] ings, visits, chats, and jokes; but there is no romanticism or sentimentality, for they are absolutely unknown to these peoples. Since they are in a hurry [103] to reach the objective of their relationship, namely conjugal life, -- and their progress toward this goal is facilitated by usages and customs -- there remains little time for poetry.

There is no specific term for courtship itself. The Nkundó simply speak of "talking with a woman," sanja bómoto, "looking for a woman," asa bómoto. The girl who is its object is referred to as bombéyó (or boamóló among the Injólé).

First, the young man addresses his proposals to the girl: "Ilánga ikokolé (ikokumbéle) la wǎlí", "I want to take you for wife." She shows her agreement by saying, "Ilolanga wě ng'ökó", "I love you also," or more frequently, "elaká ö wě", "as you wish," jía ö liké, "it's up to you," or something of this sort. (1)

[95/96]

1. Note that for the Nkundó these expressions have quite a different significance than would appear from the words. They express a real agreement and an explicit and personal consent. In fact it is considered improper for a woman to use a more direct expression.

595 97/ The lovers exchange gifts. The girl gives food which her mother has provided, or which she has been able to procure herself.

595 [illegible] 5) The desire to increase the number of children is one of the reasons most frequently given; it is the chief, and sometimes the only, one cited by ethnographers. There is no question that it has a great deal of validity, for the Nkundó like to have many children. It is one of the things on which they pride themselves as well as a powerful means for reinforcing a social position (and we are thus led back to the first reason cited).

The question of knowing whether polygamy actually does favor the birth rate is irrelevant here, even if the results of a comparison were clearly against this system and were it proved that "the more wives a polygamist has, the fewer children he has." For the Nkundó never make this statistical computation. He sees only the principle: several women give more children than one. And for them, that is the gist of the matter. Furthermore, the interest of the people as a whole does not appear on the [57] horizon of the Nkundó's thoughts and feelings: they think only of themselves, and in their egoism, they consider only their own interests.

595 591 6) To all these reasons given by the Nkundó to justify the practice of polygamy, we must add a sixth, which they never mention, sexuality. Without colonization it would have been difficult for us to make this statement. [374] But the new state of affairs shows several flaws in our people's arguments. We have already pointed out some of them. Furthermore, all the reasons mentioned up to now do not suffice to account for the existence of polygamy. They do not explain why in the past the old men wanted to keep all the women to themselves, or why a given individual becomes a polygamist. It is a fact that for more than one man some of these alleged reasons have been involved. It is also known that several natives have acquired fortunes by European work (as clerks, salesmen, traders, etc.) in order to be able to establish a harem, though there could have been no motive of vanity or gain in social influence. On the basis of my knowledge of circumstances, persons, and places, I am convinced that even for some natives living in their villages, the primary purpose was clearly sexual. I am acquainted with more than one such case.

595* 53) And it is not difficult to understand this fact. For indeed polygamy constitutes a legitimate and easy means by which a man may enjoy several women without being bothered by palavers, difficulties, etc. The mentality of many men who care little about moral laws as well as the tendency of a disordered instinct to multiply its objects only confirm this observation. Often one sees men who were monogamists at first begin by taking a second wife out of passion. Then gradually their passion becomes greater rather than appeased, and so a harem is built up progressively.

595* 178 The changes introduced by colonization in the economic life of this people have not resulted in a decrease of polygamy. In the absence of exact figures we must be satisfied with simple visual observations, but in certain regions one has the impression that the harems have become smaller but, on the other hand, that the number of polygamists has increased, and therefore [375] the desire for polygamy, that is, its affective cause, has [651] not diminished. Nor does the extra tax frighten or stop the polygamists. The great means for changing the Nkundó attitude in this realm will always be the action of the missions and the penetration of Christian ethics, seconded by a government attitude favoring monogamy. (1)

[648] 1. The favorable attitude of the colonial government toward monogamy is expressed chiefly in the permission given to a polygamist's extra wives to abandon their husband in order to contract a monogamous union, preferably in a mission, under the supervision of missionaries.

[177] Another means, undoubtedly secondary but still important, is the example of European couples. The Blacks are imitative, and native women envy the lot of the white woman, so that European households are propaganda for monogamy when they behave well.

Take F133
Saketa FO43

M
304

From Leopoldville to Kole the peoples know and practice tattooing. This varies, however, from one region to another in motif and design, the symmetry of application, its extensiveness, and the manner of execution.

T
304

Among the Bateke and Banfumungu, we noted two distinct tattooings: that of the men and that of the women. [188]

For the men, the face is covered with striated, parallel lines, irregular, slightly concave, shallow, and covering the cheeks from the temples to near the chin. For the women, there is no facial tattooing, but the abdominal region is symmetrically covered with small lines or elongated dots in relief, placed side by side and covering the whole region extending from the pit of the stomach to the lower abdomen.

S
[304]

Fig. 110. Tribal Tattooing Executed by a Man, Wadia Tribe.

Fig. 111. Ornamental Tattooing Executed by a Woman, Wadia Tribe.

The males are tattooed by simple incisions, usually made at the age of seven or eight as manhood draws near. Women are tattooed at all ages.

M
304
832

Prior to our [Ed., European] penetration of the region, a young girl was tattooed before puberty, according to the information we obtained. There was a twofold reason for this: to satisfy

[text continues on p. 147]

304 132 [177 291] personal vanity, and to excite the male. At the present time only the latter reason accounts for the practice in the region where our influence has been effective. The introduction of European fabrics, the expansion of the economy and the progress of civilization have led the women to clothe themselves and to hide and screen a large part of the body from indiscreet glances. [189] The small primitive loincloth has given way to a toga of variable length, which hides from the public eye that part [Fig. 112 appears here] of the body which is covered with tattoos. In

[291 301 304 142]

Fig. 115. Elegant Lady of the Bokala-Tselima Region. Tattoos, Bracelets, and Necklaces.

304 133 such cases, the woman can no longer display her tattoos for the sake of vanity. [Figs. 113 and 114 appear here] If, despite this, some of them continue to have themselves tattooed just like the old matrons, it is because they hope to attract a man, to please him, and to be able to participate sooner in the pleasures of intimate life. When questioned on this subject, the natives are very definite. The men maintain that the raised tattoos [190] on

304 831 certain parts of the female body is very exciting to them, essentially as a result of the very pronounced movements of the woman during sexual contact. This explanation, which according to the natives seems to be the only reason for tattooing the women of certain tribes (this applies, in our opinion, to the Bateke, Basfomongo, Baboma, and, up to a certain point, to all the riparian peoples of Lake Leopold II), also enables us to explain the special character of the tattooing of Yaelima women. It extends all around the *mons Veneris*, follows the fold of the groin, and continues in concentric circles on the inside of the upper thighs. The tattoo scars on these parts of the woman's body are usually more symmetrical and in more pronounced relief, and these characteristics increase in direct proportion to the nearness of the pubic region. Coquetry cannot be the reason for making these raised scars. Their presence is largely hidden, even by the flimsiest and most primitive loincloth. Among certain tribes, the loincloth completely covers this part of the body, and since native women exercise a great deal of care and modesty in hiding these tattoos from the public eye, it was only with great difficulty that we were able to verify their existence. Let us note in passing [14] that despite earnest endeavors, we never were able to persuade a native woman of the interior to be photographed without her loincloth. The civilized women, whether local demimondaines or housewives, were, it is true, less [131] timid. The natives themselves make a distinction between these tattoos and those which appear on other parts of the body, notably on the arms, back, and face.

304 831 Tattoos on the back, arms, and throat are always essentially decorative. We found them especially on the women, who are coquettish by nature even among the most primitive peoples. These tattoos generally lack the characteristic uniformity which is such a clear mark of the racial tattoos. The latter are found in their most characteristic form on the men, particularly on the forehead, temples, cheeks, and sometimes the chest. Among certain tribes, the women have also taken over this artificial deformation peculiar to the men. Elsewhere,the women have special tattoos which are clearly distinct from those of the men, and, finally, among some peoples the women have no racial tattoos.

291 834 embarrassed by the glances of others. This feeling extends even to other parts of the body which, irrespective of the degree of culture they have reached, most peoples try to cover. [55]

2) Between persons of the same sex and age a certain freedom
834 514 is permitted. This may be observed especially among young boys when they have to urinate. In our countries of Europe the situation is no different. I must say, however, that I have only noticed this freedom in the schools and never in the villages of the interior. Is there a gap in my observations, or should this laxity in the schools be attributed to the influence of the law of least effort (the suitable places in the schools are at some distance) and to the lack of leisure available to the pupils given the shortness of recreation periods on the one hand and their love of play on the other? It is also possible that among these boys modesty has barely made its appearance, since this feeling is strongly linked to the sexual instinct and awakens only with the latter. It would also seem that living in a group tends to reduce the power of modesty.

3) It is obvious that sexual excitement runs counter to modesty
834 832 and that sometimes -- especially among young people -- immodest acts may be used to arouse another person, especially in situations, such as bathing, which lend themselves easily to such actions.

4) Bathers, whether washing or swimming, are very careless,
515 836 especially when they are in a group of their own sex and age. In former times no doubt they did not indulge in the luxury of even a rudimentary bathing costume. But at the present time it is not at all difficult for them to obtain the small piece of cloth needed for that purpose. Nevertheless, nude bathing in rivers and streams is a common practice. It is far more frequent among women than among men. The natives with whom I have discussed the subject attribute this fact to levity and a lack of concern; but they see nothing very wrong in it. Whether or not [56] the bathers are in a group also seems to make a difference. If you surprise one or two people under such circumstances, they will hide in haste. If, on the other hand, you find a dozen, they will not move; on the contrary, they will interrupt their toilette to watch you pass. Perhaps they are simply unconcerned about their nakedness. But it is also possible that they

304
512 wishing to commit myself on the reason for this custom, it is a fact that a Nkundó woman will refuse to marry a man who has not been circumcised. Consequently, all the natives want to undergo this operation. That is the reply given by the natives when we asked about the reason for circumcision. When we pushed the inquiry further, they added that the women abhor the deposits that form under the foreskin. I mention this explanation for what it's worth. Nevertheless, this may really be the reason that impels them.

In any case circumcision would seem to have no religious or initiatory significance.

3. Tattooing

304
192

Two kinds of tattoos exist among the Nkundó: purely ornamental tattoos and sexual tattoos. (2) The latter are to be found only on women. The [67] designs are located on portions of the body surrounding the sex organs and even on the outside of the latter.

---

[619] 2. I will not discuss tribal tattoos because these do not seem to exist among the Nkundó. The reasons for tattooing vary from people to people and from group to group. It is for this reason that they are a distinctive mark. But that does not mean that such is their purpose. The distinctions apparent among the tattoos of various tribes are not an objective but a consequence, as are, for example, the variations among national costumes in Europe. Moreover, the contacts of our people in peace or war have extended by and large only to neighboring clans or tribes, who use the same type of ornamentation as they did. And in these encounters dialect differences serve as a much better means of identification.

504
132

What brings the Nkundó to practice this second form of tattooing? First of all the following considerations must be taken into account: since a woman is by nature more eager than the man to appear beautiful, it seems altogether appropriate that her tattoos should be more abundant, more elaborate than the man's. And since coquetry is a form of the desire to appeal to the opposite sex and since members of the latter are susceptible to it, the tattoos attract them. Therefore, too, the women's tattoos have been most elaborated on those parts of her body which are nearest the sex organ.

The reason for the existence of these tattoos may be that they add additional pleasure to intercourse. (1) This explanation does not seem entirely implausible. I have never been able to obtain a clear-cut or direct confirmation of this point, but it is a fact that a man sometimes makes malicious remarks to his wife if she is not sufficiently tattooed to his taste ("You, your body is as smooth as a man's"). This fact lends considerable validity to the explanation given. The persistence of these tattoos in spite of modern dress also makes it convincing, although the evidence is not entirely conclusive, considering that its significance is not diminished by the psychological explanation that follows.

The figures are placed in such a way that they converge toward the sex organ. Moreover, the men see the tattooing at some time or other, either in its entirety or in part. Clothing may cover them more or less, but at some time for one reason or another the woman uncovers them, if only partially. [48] The imagination works on what is seen and quite naturally arouses sexual desire. The accuracy of this psychological explanation can be verified even in Europe: one is tempted particularly by what one has only glimpsed.

1. This is the explanation given, for example, by Dr. J. Maes in *Notes sur les Populations des Bassins du Kasai, de la Lukenie et du lac Léopold II* (Notes Concerning the Peoples of the Kasai and Lukenie Basins and of Lake Leopold II), p. 189 ff.

309/ and "modern" fashions, as well as some ancient ones, take this into
● 132 account. In the next paragraph, moreover, we will note analogous
phenomena.

Both of the explanations given can be defended, since each has its value. But it seems to me preferable not to oppose them but rather to bring them together, as they probably are in the thinking of the native.

It should also be noted that a man never performs the operation of making a sexual tattoo on a woman, although a woman may indeed operate on a man. And finally it should be mentioned that the
[791] specific terms designating these tattoos are considered as obscenities.

The practice of tattooing is decreasing at the present time.
[178] Many boys are already without tattoos. But very few girls lack them; among them the fad has not disappeared. Some even have themselves tattooed without the knowledge of their parents and in spite of their opposition. Among the Blacks, as everywhere in the world, fashion is deeply rooted because it is natural. But the designs of the tattoos are now becoming smaller. It seems to me that this change is due, not to a reaction against tattooing as such, but rather to a modification of the style. For tattooing is a real fashion, and like all fashions it is subject to change and development. Nowadays there is a tendency to imitate the designs of other peoples of the Congo. Elsewhere, as among the *Injolo*, for example, an internal evolution may be observed, although it is occurring under foreign influence. The evolution is taking place chiefly in the face motifs, while those of the body are beginning to be omitted. But the sexual tattoos do not seem to be disappearing. [68]

4. Bead Belts

29/ From an early age the Nkundo child is adorned with a belt of
30/ trading beads. Before the coming of the Europeans this decoration
132 made its appearance only towards puberty and was restricted to girls. Nowadays, many men also adorn themselves in this manner. And since it is now easier to obtain the beads, women are no longer with a single string but wear several in assorted colors. They add smaller ones below the knee.

191/ 30/ 192 According to what I have been told, this type of ornament may also have a sexual significance. Normally -- and this statement is applicable only to the present time -- the beads are entirely covered by clothing and are visible only on a few occasions. If a large number of strings (as many as six, eight, or ten) or very many beads are worn, attention may be attracted to them because there will be a bulge in the clothing worn over them. Their sound will reveal their presence during a race or a dance. And according to my informants, that is enough to awaken passion. Making an allusion to the beads and especially touching them deliberately is considered as an invitation. For her part, a woman sometimes rubs them together in her fingers so that they will make their characteristic noise and thus attract a man's attention and arouse his interest.

The preceding does not mean that simply the wearing of the beads is necessarily intended for a bad purpose. Not only must such an intention be excluded in the case of serious persons, especially if they are elderly and content themselves with wearing a single string, seldom a second one to support the first. But there is also the possibility [192] that a young Black beauty may adorn herself with ten or more strands out of sheer vanity, so that the whole world may see that she has so many. [70]

Furthermore, it has been shown that attention to appearance is not necessarily directed to another person. Though that may be generally true, many people like to dress for the pleasure of being well dressed, and girls who never dream of an adventure may still enjoy wearing pretty undergarments. This desire for adornment for its own sake can, no doubt, explain the belts, as well as other embellishments on more than one Nkundó woman.

We should add that those who adhere to the theory that the tattoos have an immediate sexual influence could apply such a theory here as well.

302 5. Depilation

193 All Nkundó of both sexes practice depilation of the genital organs and even the armpits. The natives believe that the hair growing

833 826 become somewhat violent, the women recall these flaws, to the great shame of the person who suffers from them. The same is true of the weakness of some of the men which, like an excess of sexual activity, can cause difficulties in a household.

2. Rape

839 Rape in the true sense of the word -- that is, the abuse of a woman by the use of violence -- is most unusual among the Nkundó. If a woman does not consent, the angry seducer leaves her, often insulting her to the best of his ability. I know of only one case of rape, which occurred some time ago and caused much consternation in the region. Banɛ́ngɛ, the daughter of Iloko [94] Is Ɛ́fekele of Lofelɛ (Bongili), was at that time living with her mother's clan the Bonyeka (Bonkoso). She had not yet fully attained physical maturity (her breasts were still very small). One day she went into the forest and did not return in the evening. The family was alarmed, and her father and her uncle Mpɛ́nda ɛ́a Nkotonkale went to look for her. Finding traces of fresh blood, they followed them till they found Banɛ́ngɛ's corpse buried in the nsusulu. She had died of hemorrhage; her sex organs, torn, showed the unmistakable signs of rape. People had their suspicions, but it has never been possible to prove the identity of the criminal. If there had been proof, he would not have escaped the mortal vengeance of the unfortunate victim's parents.

All the data I have been able to collect indicates that other instances must undoubtedly have occurred.

3. Incomplete acts

832 Here we are speaking of what moralists call actus impudicitiae, that is, acts whose nature physically leads to sexual pleasure.

Obscene bodily contacts between persons of opposite sex are preparatory acts which excite; even touching the breasts, the abdomen, and taking a person by the arms are included in this category.

852 Kissing between persons of opposite sex is unknown. Embraces occur on the other hand but not in public; they must be considered as preparation to approaching intercourse. (1) An extraordinarily strong passion sometimes leads lovers to engage in more intimate kissing, usually as a prelude to normal intercourse. Although some natives are not shocked by such practices, more responsible people consider them improper. [96]

Article VI. Vices "Contra Naturam"

858 1. Male homosexuality

Homosexuality has been known among the Nkundó since time immemorial, among men as well as women.

Among the former it took the form of sodomy in the past, with one particular characteristic -- for which I do not know the explanation, that is, only the younger of the two men could take the active role. Nowadays among the youth, homosexuality has begun to take on a different form; the boys who practice it lie down in the positions of husband and wife. It is reported that sometimes one of the two says from time to time to his accomplice, "This is what I do with your sister." Is this an indication that here we have homosexuality only in action but not in feeling (in effectu not in affectu, as the moralists say)?

Homosexuality among the Nkundo does not seem to be the result of a special inclination for this vice; rather it has always been a last resort open to those who could not find a natural outlet for their passions. Although we cannot approve of this depravation of instinct either on rational grounds or in adherence to the faith, we must admit that it was more excusable among these peoples whose social organization was disadvantageous to many young people. At the present time there is already much less sodomy because it has become easier to get married. As for the new form of homosexuality, it may be observed especially in places where men are kept rigidly apart from relations

---

1. See above, Part 1, Article III.

835 encounter it only in connection with magical practices and sorcery
759 (boté, plural beté), for which it is the nkimbo, that is, the condition without which the beté would lack efficacy. If the nkimbo is not observed, the boté turns against its owner and, by a reversal of its effect (bonsongano), brings death to the latter. Therefore the interested parties submit to these degrading requirements despite their natural repugnance. Depending on the case, incest with the mother, the daughter, or the sister is required. The first of these eventualities is the most repugnant to our natives. Though it goes altogether against the grain to do so, the mother submits to this ignominy to save the life of her foolhardy and greedy son.

[87] The nkimbo of incest does not exist in all beté. It even seems to have been absent from the beté which are ancient and purely Nkundó. It is found primarily in the big modern beté, which have been imported from other peoples or invented on the spot since colonization. (1)

1, See Kaptein, in Congo, 1922,
Vol. 1, p. 534.

Article VIII. Love Philters

852 The Nkundó are familiar with two love philters, the efóndé and the bonsílá. Other modern beté may produce the same effect in part or secondarily. Here [101] we will only deal with the first two, which are "pure" and ancient love philters.

The love philters (boté w'ëlangyá) serve to gain the heart of a young girl as much as to entice a married woman away from her husband.

1, Efóndé

Efónde (1) is a common charm. Anyone can procure it from the maker in consideration of the appropriate payment, of course. Various kinds of efóndé exist, differing as to the ingredients used, the manner

---

1, Efónde is often used as a synonym
of elangyá in its sexual meaning.

132 in which they are manufactured, and consequently in the way they
[124] are used. The most common ingredients are certain leaves mixed with red rouge (*ngóla*) and a sort of lichen which forms red slabs on the back of certain species found in the forest; the whole thing is
[125] carefully wrapped in a small fur (especially the skin of the small feline *iyeli*).

The charm is hidden under a slat of the bed where the desired one takes her nightly rest. Because this is done an ardent love for the owner of the charm will grow in her heart. Or it may be placed somewhere in a hut; then the desired woman is called in, the owner of the charm takes her arm, and the *elôndé* immediately "turns her heart." Or, still without the woman's knowledge, the charm is thrown into the fire where she cooks. If she begins to sneeze when she returns home, this is a sign that the smoke charged with mysterious emanations from the philter has penetrated through her nostrils all the way to her heart and filled it with ardent love for the Adonis in question.

The *elôndé* is considered an *ilófo*, that is, a subjugation. *Elôndé ékôka bâmato*, "the *elôndé* masters women, has power over
[126] them." The substance which prevents the *elôndé* from being efficacious is the *bokai*, a kind of sour vegetable. [102] The owner of the philter must abstain from eating it. For the *bokai* cause vomiting and if he ate any the woman would in the same manner eject her love and thus make the *bote* ineffective.

2. *bontélé*

Contrary to the *elôndé*, the *bontélé*, is a love philter which is not available to everyone; it is a charm only for dancers of the *iyaya*. This does not mean that all the artists who perform this dance have it, but they alone are acquainted with it. The material basis of the *bontélé*, as of most Nkundô *bote*, are the leaves of certain plants.

The efficacy of the *bontélé* is infallible. It acts not only on the beloved one, but also on any woman who involuntarily or on purpose fulfills the condition necessary to its operation. That is, as soon as a woman's head touches the arm of the possessor of the *bontélé*, her heart is moved in his favor; should she be married, her love for her

582 husband will change to revulsion, and she will leave him to be with her charmer.

Part 3

The Search for a Wife

584 When a young man old enough to marry believes he has the means to do so, he goes out to seek a wife. Naturally, he knows a number of girls, and as a rule he has no trouble finding one who suits him. The courtship is quite simple. As everywhere there are meet- [95] ings, visits, chats, and jokes; but there is no romanticism or sentimentality, for they are absolutely unknown to these peoples. Since they are in a hurry [102] to reach the objective of their relationship, namely conjugal life, -- and their progress toward this goal is facilitated by usages and customs -- there remains little time for poetry.

There is no specific term for courtship itself. The Nkundó simply speak of "talking with a woman," sanja bómoto, "looking for a woman," asa bómoto. The girl who is its object is referred to as bombéyó (or bosombé among the Injólé).

First, the young man addresses his proposals to the girl: "Ńlanga ńkokolá (ńkokumbéla) la wǎli", "I want to take you for wife." She shows her agreement by saying, "Ńkolanga wě ng'ókó", "I love you also," or more frequently, "elakó ó wě", "as you wish," jú ó límé, "it's up to you," or something of this sort. (1)

[95] [576]

1. Note that for the Nkundó these expressions have quite a different significance than would appear from the words. They express a real agreement and an explicit and personal consent. In fact it is considered improper for a woman to use a more direct expression.

584 93/ The lovers exchange gifts. The girl gives food which her mother has provided, or which she has been able to procure herself.

¶6 especially very early in the morning at the crowing of the cock.(1)
[illegible]

1. The natives also use this means to call their children who long ago left for the "lowlands" and whose return they ardently desire.

If the one who is called does not return, the charm will take revenge either on her or on her lover, depending on the desire of the person operating it. Another intervention on his part is then required, however, and it varies according to the form used. Note that according to the native view it is impossible for the wife not to hear the call, no matter how far away she may be. If she does not return, it is because she is being obstinate and deserves to be punished.

The spirit of vengeance alone is involved in:

¶7 2) The ngondé. This charm comes from the Coquilhatville region or even further away. The word ngondé is the Loįfogá form of the Lonkundó word nkondé, which means "gavial." The teeth of this reptile actually play a part in its composition. It is used to punish any thief by death. Therefore it has been declared effective against anyone who tries to seduce the wife of another. It will cause the culprit's feet to swell and to open with pus. Like the above practices, this one has not yet crossed Momboyo.

¶12 177 Such usages like many others have therefore been recently introduced. Before the arrival of Europeans in these parts, only love philters were known. However, it is easily understandable that the Nkundó gladly and confidently received these new practices which are so useful -- in their opinion -- and operate in a domain of capital importance for which colonization has deprived them of their ancient sanctions and means of prevention. [417]

304
132
[177
291] personal vanity, and to excite the male. At the present time only the latter reason accounts for the practice in the region where our influence has been effective. The introduction of European fabrics, the expansion of the economy and the progress of civilization have led the women to clothe themselves and to hide and screen a large part of the body from indiscreet glances. [189] The small primitive loincloth has given way to a toga of variable length, which hides from the public eye that part [Fig. 112 appears here] of the body which is covered with tattoos. In

[291
301
304
142]

Fig. 115. Elegant Lady of the Bokala-Yaelima Region. Tattoos, Bracelets, and Necklaces.

such cases, the woman can no longer display her tattoos for the sake of vanity. [Figs. 113 and 114 appear here] If, despite this, some of them continue to have themselves tattooed just like the old matrons, it is because they hope to attract a man, to please him, and to be able to participate sooner in the pleasures of intimate life. When questioned on this subject, the natives are very definite. The men maintain that the raised tattoos [190] on

304
133

304
301
833
certain parts of the female body is very exciting to them, essentially as a result of the very pronounced movements of the woman during sexual contact. This explanation, which according to the natives seems to be the only reason for tattooing the women of certain tribes (this applies, in our opinion, to the Bateke, Bankutungo, Baboma, and, up to a certain point, to all the riparian peoples of Lake Leopold II), also enables us to explain the special character of the tattooing of Yaelima women. It extends all around the mons Veneris, follows the fold of the groin, and continues in concentric circles on the inside of the upper thighs. The tattoo scars on these parts of the woman's body are usually more symmetrical and in more pronounced relief, and these characteristics increase in direct proportion to the nearness of the pubic region. Coquetry cannot be the reason for making these raised scars. Their presence is largely hidden, even by the flimsiest and most primitive loincloth. Among certain tribes, the loincloth completely covers this part of the body, and since native women exercise a great deal of care and modesty in hiding these tattoos from the public eye, it was only with great difficulty that we were able to verify their existence. Let us note in passing
[834]
that despite earnest endeavors, we never were able to persuade a native woman of the interior to be photographed without her loincloth. The civilized women, whether local demimondaines or housewives, were, it is true, less [191] timid. The natives themselves make a distinction between these tattoos and those which appear on other parts of the body, notably on the arms, back, and face.

304
301
832
Tattoos on the back, arms, and throat are always essentially decorative. We found them especially on the women, who are coquettish by nature even among the most primitive peoples. These tattoos generally lack the characteristic uniformity which is such a clear mark of the racial tattoos. The latter are found in their most characteristic form on the men, particularly on the forehead, temples, cheeks, and sometimes the chest. Among certain tribes, the women have also taken over this artificial deformation peculiar to the men. Elsewhere, the women have special tattoos which are clearly distinct from those of the men, and, finally, among some peoples the women have no racial tattoos.

Yaelima

This consists of a set of small curves drawn above the root of the nose, similar to those we previously noted among the Ipanga-Bakutu, but usually sharper and more pronounced. This identical and characteristic motif seems to establish an affinity between these two groups, but it must be noted that the motif on the temples varies considerably from one region to another. Here we find again the rosette of the peoples of Lake Leopold II, although much larger. The concentric circles cover the temples, and very often they extend over a wider area as arcs, always concentric, are added above the cheeks. 304

Both men and women have adopted this tattoo.

2) Sexual tattoos, reserved for women. 304 833

These consist of scars in relief which are found on all parts of the body from just above and between the breasts to the middle of the thighs.

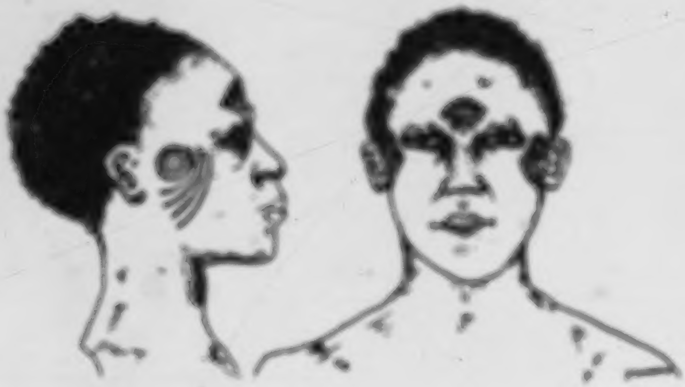


Fig. 120. Bokala-Yaelima Tattoos.

3) Ornamental or coquettish tattoos. [156] 304

These extend irregularly over all the other parts of the body, including the arms and back.

The tattoos in the second category form a series of concentric, rounded triangles whose tip is actually the mons Veneris. 304 833

The designs between the breasts and the navel vary considerably from one person to another. The rosettes and palm-leaf motif clearly predominate. The man does not use this type of tattoo, but the woman, on the other hand, takes a great deal of

Dengese FO 16

M
[illegible]

palms with it, from which we may conclude that her chief aim is a heightening of sensation in sexual relations.

M
309

The motifs or designs in the third category are extremely varied [197] and most irregular, as we noted earlier. Aside from the concentric rosette, we saw the most varied designs: small dots, stippled lines, crescents, diamond shapes, palm-leaf motifs, and other figures cross, cut into each other, are superimposed on each other, and are mixed in such a way that the scars seem to have been scattered at random all over the body.

Men and women both have adopted these designs, but the woman seems to be especially fond of them. In this respect the Bokala and Yaelima differ sharply from their neighbors to the west, but seem to resemble closely the tribes to the east, especially the peoples of the Dekese region. Photographs sent by Mr. Van den Broeck and designated as Dengese show us the undeniable

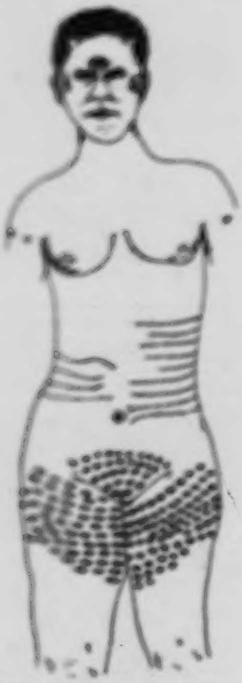


Fig. 121. Ipanga-Batitu Tattoos.

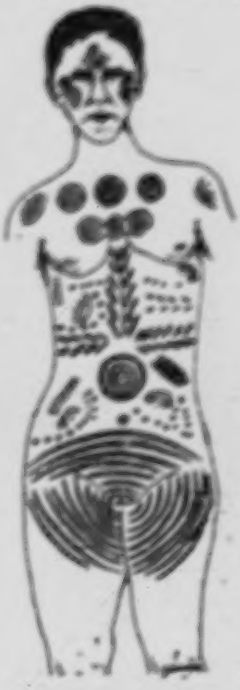


Fig. 122. Bokala-Yaelima Tattoos.

M
D
304

Yaelima

304 171 we made of the many figures we saw in this region showed us that the variations are so numerous, so diverse, and so closely intertwined that it is totally impossible to use this as a basis for determining ethnic sectors with clearly-defined characteristics.

304 171 ● 833 Finally, if we consider only those tattoo figures to which

[302 142]

Fig. 124. Yaelima Headdress and Tattooing. Typical Longomo or Dignitary.

we attributed, if not a familial origin, at least a familial nature [200] (incitement to sexual relations), we see that throughout the region this type of tattoo is peculiar to women.

From Leopoldville to the confines of Batitu territory and even among some Bokala women, this tattoo consists (where it still exists) of a number of small, aligned dots, just like the ornamental tattoos.

Among the Ipanga-Batitu, these figures sometimes embellish the arms and part of the back, while among the other tribes they are less elaborate.

304 171 833 In the region of the Yaelima, Dengese, and some of the Bokala, this tattoo consists of a series of broken, concentric lines with the pubic region as the main center.

We do not know if this tattoo is also worn by the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu women, but this seems probable to us. We can, however, assert that among those peoples this tattoo does not extend to the upper thighs, except for one or two lines of small incised dots running parallel to the fold of the groin.

[192] [302]

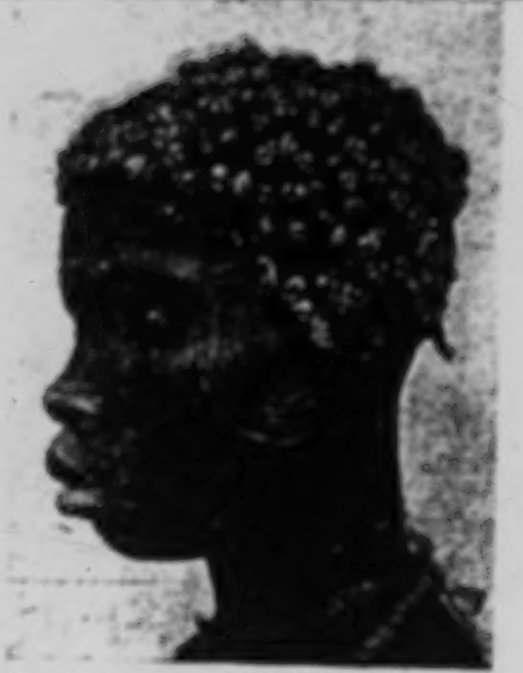


Fig. 125. Yaelima Tattoing and Headdress Adorned with Peanuts Smeared with Ngula.

The incisions for ornamental and sexual tattoos are usually made by women, although a man sometimes takes over this task.

304 The operation is carried out at very irregular intervals and at practically any [201] time of life. Moreover, it requires several sittings, usually spaced from 10 to 15 days apart.

The tattooing knife, which is also used for depilation, consists of a small, broad iron blade with a curved, very sharp cutting edge.

515 834 are reassured by the fact that they are in a group, so that no one feels singled out by the gaze of the passer-by. Washing away from major streams is always surrounded by more propriety. For this purpose a [341] small enclosure (ilomba) is built behind the hut or among the banana trees, or a small thicket is allowed to grow there. By this means the native is sheltered from indiscreet glances if he wants to take a [517] bath or give himself an enema. As a matter of fact these things are done preferably after dark.

571 152 5) Violent anger or sorrow drown out modesty, just as they momentarily destroy the use of reason and suppress all feelings which are contradictory or simply different. In this situation, too, the man shows himself superior to the woman. He is less impulsive, calmer, less prone to lose control of his actions, to be carried away by his anger. Thus he almost never strips himself bare. The woman, on the other hand, readily strips off all her clothing. This behavior is extremely common; a woman undresses completely whenever she experiences great sorrow or intense anger. Luckily for propriety's sake some friend or relative always hastens to cover at least the essential parts. For a woman who throws off her clothing exposes herself to the mockery and jeers of spectators. (1)

[594] [578] 1. An angry woman may also undress to shame her husband; it is a way of insulting and mocking him.

● 833 6) The Nkundó practice sexual intercourse only at night. I believe that this custom is due to their sense of propriety, [57] supplemented by a superstitious explanation which will be described in detail in Article V.

573 834 7) The sense of modesty has its fullest expression in relation to parents, brothers, sisters, etc. Thus it is unheard of that a son should see his mother naked: bóna ěnfndiká ǒnanyí nyangó. If an adult daughter is ill and requires personal care (such as an enema, for example), the father has to take care of her himself if no other female relative is near by. But their sense of modesty is such that they both shed tears over the event. As a matter of fact this situation

834/ 116 It goes without saying that the feeling of sexual modesty and its various manifestations among these people are being transformed by two different currents. On the one hand, their moral laxity is increased by their contact with all sorts of other peoples, by a greater freedom, by the partial emancipation of women, and by the attraction of the large centers and their luxury. On the other hand, there is the preaching of Christian morality, although its effects are still very slight and certainly do not counterbalance the influences mentioned above.

Article II. Preparation for Sexual Life

1. The Woman's preparation

● 833

When a girl wishes to indulge in pleasures of the flesh, she prepares her sexual organs in advance. The preparation itself consists of "opening the way" (*lifola mbóka*). This operation, which is repeated several times, is performed in hiding, preferably in the forest. The girl may or may not have companions with her who share her intentions. Each girl operates on herself. In order to gradually enlarge the organ, a girl uses progressively thicker shoots of the [929] *bonkónga* or *bokaoló* plant (*Costus afer*), making sure first to remove the tip. Later these shoots are replaced by the *bombólé* fruit of the *bosáombó* plant (*Aframomum*) or, more infrequently, by a young manioc tuber.

This is the general practice; exceptions are few or nonexistent. It is followed because the girls want the event to which they aspire to occur without difficulty (*bilota bálifo'ikoala*).

837/ 515 In addition to this basic preparation, girls [65] also wash the private parts of their bodies. This is a cleanliness measure which they continue to practice save in exceptional cases for the rest of their lives. According to my informants, the native woman -- as a very general rule -- stresses this cleanliness as much for herself as for the sake of not repelling her husband or lover. When a girl begins to practice this personal hygiene, it is a sign that she wants to begin her sexual life.

156
864

> prohibition under any circumstances. I have heard these same terms used also by the natives in the vicinity of Coquilhatville.

The body becomes flabby and without strength, and this weakness ends in a fatal paralysis ([illegible] [illegible] or [illegible]). In addition, the girls feared that their sexual organs, not yet fully formed, would be torn. They were also imbued with a very intense fear: [illegible] [illegible], "the fear of males," [illegible] [illegible], "the fear of females." They also feared death -- [illegible] [illegible]. The parents added that sexual acts were free from danger only between persons of the requisite age.

156 864 171 This does not mean that children did not commit indecent acts. The game of [illegible], in which little girls try to cook (and which is always one of their favorite games (3) as it probably is throughout the world), often gave rise to it. Small boys joined in the game in order to taste the meal. And quite naturally they began to play at "husband and wife," more or less. Often this game involved only innocent imitations, but other times touching and exhibitions occurred between children of the same sex or of opposite sexes. This game is far more dangerous nowadays, [81] because of a change in the attitude of young people toward sexual matters.

> 3. Some boys imitate this game in order to acquire the habit of preparing their own meals. Later they benefit from it on more than one occasion.

The game of [illegible], in which boys, imitating monkeys, chase each other through the trees and creepers can -- and does -- result in reprehensible scenes.

[illegible] 171 In former times most girls were married before puberty. But their husbands did not touch them until they had completed their normal development.

156 [illegible] 864 Among some individuals the fear of sexual relations was so deeply rooted that it persisted even beyond the age limit and was

[592 conquered only by repeated assaults of passion. Thus it is generally
593] known among the natives that young women used to seek refuge in
864 their mother's house when the husband wanted to begin making use of his rights as a husband. The mother would try to persuade her daughter to submit to the law of life. But sometimes, if her child seemed too resistant, the mother made excuses for her and asked the husband to consider her daughter's youth. The man usually wanted to remain on good terms with his mother-in-law so he did not insist and resigned himself to waiting till nature influenced the spirit and heart of his wife.

Since young people were brought up in deep fear of dangerous relations, it should not surprise us that this feeling became a real habit and did not disappear spontaneously the moment a certain degree of liberty was permitted. As a matter of fact, could we not make similar observations in Europe?

This is the natural explanation for the praiseworthy degree of morality among adolescents in the past.

[171] Nowadays all that has changed. The young people follow where their passions lead them. Not the slightest check is placed on
[836 their impulses. Parents pay only slight attention to the conduct of
864 their children. [82] It is better not to inquire into the morality of modern youth. Husbands no longer respect the bodies of their adolescent brides, who are themselves quite used to a sexual life and eagerly look forward to it, and no longer know the feeling of "the fear of men." Should we then be astonished at the frightening de-
[164] crease in the birth rate (1) and the ever increasing spread of venereal diseases, which seem to have been unknown in the past?

The reasons for this change will be investigated further on, under the letter C.

836 B. Between adults. Here the Nkundó are very lenient. There is a difference, however, between the socio-legal and moral viewpoints, although as we shall see the latter is influenced by the former.

[582] A woman is entirely free, legally speaking, as long as the first payment on her bride price has not been made. No man has

---

1. The natives say that in the past young wives quickly became pregnant. And now ...

591 684 soon as her family becomes aware of her condition. The accomplice is made officially responsible and is required to accept this responsible and is required to accept this responsibility by publicly pledging his willingness to take all consequences upon himself. This pledge like all pledges is called ndonga. It consists of a knife, a ring of copper or brass, a spear, or similar objects. (2)

2. The same custom is practiced in the case of pregnancy resulting from adultery.

Article V. Sexual Intercourse

• 833 Although this subject is extremely delicate and therefore difficult to investigate and describe, it does not seem pointless to note here a few details with which I have become acquainted. We will discuss in succession a few circumstances relative to the act, then rape, and finally what are called incomplete acts. [92]

1. Circumstances relative to the act

[N] The Nkundó have intercourse lying on their sides. Nowadays, natives who have had frequent contacts with Whites are beginning to abandon the old manner for that of the Europeans. The spirit of imitation probably plays some part in the transformation which is beginning, but the gradual spread of the knowledge that the European system makes conception more likely is also a factor.

Even for illicit relations our natives seldom choose the forest or near-by palm or banana groves. Usually they prefer an isolated hut, or they take advantage of the absence of witnesses who might intrude on them. At night they are generally afraid of anything that stirs in the forest.

833 953 684 The Nkundó have sexual relations only during the night. To do so in the daytime would be to risk being striken by a mortal illness called bombilé (derived from mbilé "noon," by extension, "day"),

833 753 684 which has a strong resemblance to sleeping sickness. (1) One of its symptoms is a weakness of the lower limbs. Instances are cited of individuals who were unable to resist their passions and were punished in this manner. Apparently only the woman dies. As soon as her family discovers that she is stricken,the guilty woman denounces her accomplice. The latter is held responsible and is required to pay a heavy indemnity, which may amount to several dozen copper rings.

833 751 Here as in many other situations the Nkundɔ́ have found a way to avoid the danger. There is an antidote (nsengɔ́), and it is water (bǎsi bale nsengɔ́ ɛâ bombilɛ́). Thus those who are unable to control their aroused passions during the day, satisfy it in a shallow stream.

833 753 The fear of bombilɛ́ has been greatly shaken [93] by colonization. If we are to believe the natives, foreign soldiers are responsible for this change also. But the behavior of the latter could not completely destroy the ancient feeling, probably due to a natural shame which makes them seek darkness and privacy for acts of this sort.

833 [515] [842] After intercourse a native woman usually gives herself a douche. She does so for the sake of cleanliness. It often happens, however, that she does not wait long enough before doing so, and thus she neutralizes the effect of the intercourse. This is chiefly a matter of carelessness. Nevertheless, under certain circumstances she may use this means to prevent conception. (1)

---

1. It is not sleeping sickness itself, however, for that disease seems formerly to have been unknown in this area.

1. See Chapter X, Article I, 2.

833 826 According to my informants, some women have constitutional abnormalities which repel men. As everything readily becomes public, such flaws are quickly known after marriage, though not quite as readily beforehand. Actually love can -- and often does -- cause them to be overlooked. But after the first ardor has cooled, such a situation may become a threat to the stability of a marriage. When quarrels

833 826 become somewhat violent, the women recall these flaws, to the great shame of the person who suffers from them. The same is true of the weakness of some of the men which, like an excess of sexual activity, can cause difficulties in a household.

2. Rape

839 Rape in the true sense of the word -- that is, the abuse of a woman by the use of violence -- is most unusual among the Nkundɔ́. If a woman does not consent, the angry seducer leaves her, often insulting her to the best of his ability. I know of only one case of rape, which occurred some time ago and caused much consternation in the region. Banɛ́ngɛ́, the daughter of Iloko [94] Is Ɛ́fekele of Lofelɛ́ (Bongɛ́li), was at that time living with her mother's clan the Bonyeka (Bonkoso). She had not yet fully attained physical maturity (her breasts were still very small). One day she went into the forest and did not return in the evening. The family was alarmed, and her father and her uncle Mpɛ́nda ɛ́a Nkotonkale went to look for her. Finding traces of fresh blood, they followed them till they found Banɛ́ngɛ́'s corpse buried in the *nsusulu*. She had died of hemorrhage; her sex organs, torn, showed the unmistakable signs of rape. People had their suspicions, but it has never been possible to prove the identity of the criminal. If there had been proof, he would not have escaped the mortal vengeance of the unfortunate victim's parents.

All the data I have been able to collect indicates that other instances must undoubtedly have occurred.

3. Incomplete acts

832 Here we are speaking of what moralists call *actus impudicitiae*, that is, acts whose nature physically leads to sexual pleasure.

Obscene bodily contacts between persons of opposite sex are preparatory acts which excite; even touching the breasts, the abdomen, and taking a person by the arms are included in this category.

4. Onanism [*coitus interruptus*]

893 Onanism also seems to be unknown. No doubt many women have learned this vice through their concubinage with Europeans, but they have not spread it. The same may be said of involuntary onanism. For the native does not look for sensual refinements; rather he follows his natural impulse. (1)

> 1. The practice described in Chapter X, Article III, 3, may be slightly tainted with onanism; it could certainly lead to such a practice, but it is not caused by perversion.

Article VII. Incest

895
614 We here must distinguish between 1) sexual relations between distantly related kin and 2) between close kin.

1. Among distant relatives

Incest among distant relatives (in the Nkundó sense of the word) has existed since time immemorial. It is called *lonkâna* (*bombakɛ́* among the Bombwanja). *Lonkâna* is derived from *nkâna*, "brother, sister." The expression *liɛ́la j'ōlóló*, "sexual union in the village," is also used. The term *lonkâna* is applied to relations between members of families which are only very distantly related (not at all related, according to our notions) but between whom marriage is not permitted. Thus one hears that such and such kin groups do not marry each other (báfóyakumbólɛ́) but they commit *lonkâna*. Two kin groups of this sort may be considered closely related clans. The groups between whom *lonkâna* is practiced each has its own cemetery, while those between whom it is absolutely forbidden share a common cemetery. Thus, to cite an example, the "village" [98] of Elɛ́ngɛ l'Imomo l'Ontole (Bongíli) is composed of three kin groups, as the name indicates. The Imomo settlement is partially located in the

Article I. Girls

584 According to Nkundɔ custom it is acceptable for an expected child, not yet born or still very young, to be promised in marriage to X or Y. This practice was formerly very common and is still quite prevalent today. It is called banda bɔ̌na or bǒmoto, literally, "to count a child" or "to count a woman." The ikulɛ is paid at the time of the promise. Later the matter is carried out in the usual fashion; the other parts of the bride price are paid either while the fiancée is young or, preferably, at the time when she goes to her husband.

584
855 Until that time, if one of the girl's relatives is already a wife of a polygamist husband-to-be or of one of his relatives, the child is brought up in her husband's family from a fairly early age, depending on the circumstances. She lives with her relative. She may be barely seven or eight years old, for example. If no one in her husband's clan can take care of her, [232] she spends only one or two weeks there to become acquainted, little by little, with people and places; she repeats the visit from time to time. Her mother accompanies her, for being so young she could not get used to being there alone, without support, without her parents. Therefore it is necessary to wait till she is old enough to be somewhat independent and able to manage by herself. That time usually comes around the [145] beginning of puberty, thus sometime between the ages of twelve and fifteen.

584
833 Like an adult woman, she is already called bompɛka or wǎlɛ, depending on the portion of the bride price that has been paid. She has all the duties and privileges of a wife: sexual relations, food preparation, care of the household, etc. There is no set date or age for the beginning of cohabitation. This matter is settled between the husband and his parents-in-law. The latter do not have the right to [606] delay the time, even if their daughter is still too young, but they can make use of their great influence over their son-in-law. The modern [178] generation is not shocked by sexual relations between an adulterer [sic] [571] and a girl who has not reached puberty. Besides, all is in order from the legal standpoint; since the man has paid the bride price, he is the

584 legitimate husband and is entitled to his wife. Everything depends
833 on his personal attitude, his passion, or his respect for the body of his young wife. If he is reasonable he will be very careful during his relations with her or will abstain altogether, so as not to "damage" her body. But from the legal standpoint he may do as he chooses. Thus there are adults who have regular relations -- one way or another -- with a wife whose breasts are not in the least developed. In such cases marital relations take place before nubility. (1) The consequences with respect to the birth rate may easily be guessed. [233] It may also happen that the husband himself has not reached puberty. This fact presents no obstacle to cohabitation. As soon as he feels that he is a man, he builds his hut and the couple live there together. In all these cases the girl often goes to her parents' home, and sometimes her visits extend for weeks during which she does not see her husband.

Formerly things did not work out in this fashion. The young wife often refused to participate in the sexual act, especially if the husband was considerably older than she. Her reaction was due to her natural modesty and timidity, together with her education. A polygamous husband usually respected her feelings, till she gradually came around. When her normal physiological development was completed and her love reached a sufficient intensity, she would begin to follow her instincts. In the light of what was said in Chapter I, Part 2,, Article IV, 2, A, we may readily accept our informants' statements on this score; the situation seems altogether natural.

---

[882] 1. Note that the immature girl is not called *filingo* in Nkundó, as Engels ("Les Wangata," *Revue congolaise*, 1910, p. 36) maintains. This word is but the Nkundó transformation of the word *virgo*. There is no specific term for "prepubescent." A girl who is not yet a woman but is no longer a child is called *itembeleke*.

Article III. Relations between Spouses; Their Various Rights and Duties

593x
833 Spouses are obliged to fulfill the duties and perform the tasks incumbent upon them .

It is difficult to say just how far the sense of duty to fulfill the debitum conjugale extends among the Nkundó. Normally, they very frequently fulfill this obligation toward each other. But after a good quarrel they abstain, either through mutual consent or because one of them refuses. [586] If one of the parties fails seriously and repeatedly in this respect, the question is resolved by a divorce. The response to temporary lapses is limited to reprimands, disputes, blows, and other common reactions. [834] It should be added that continence is required during the ekelé period after the birth of a child and after setting up a new hunting enclosure (lokombo) or a new fishing weir (bosaka), before the third piece of a game or fish is caught.

1. Meals

593x
264 A couple never take their meals together. The husband eats the food prepared for him and served to him by his wife alone, with his grown sons, or with friends or relatives. The wife herself eats with her small children, her daughters, or her female relatives. The two sexes never mingle at meals.

593x
521 The same rule applies to talks, but it is much less strictly maintained; it is not rare to find that, for one reason or another, women participate in the conversation of men.

It will not be long before, through the influence of Christianity, [266] women will generally be admitted in the conversations of the opposite sex. Developments with respect to mixed meals will come with much more difficulty; in practice the question has not even been broached.

593x
348 Thus one finds a kitchen next to the bedroom or separated from the hut; in addition to being the place where food is prepared, it is [354] where the woman spends her day. The kitchen is sometimes a structure separated from the dwelling itself, sometimes a part of the house separated from the bedroom by a partition containing a door.

595x Thus a favorite is in every way the object of her husband's
[431] preference. He divides with her all presents he receives, while the other wives are not included in this expression of generosity.
●[853] But in the matter of sexual relations, apart from his trips, he has obligations to all of them. The most he can do is to add one night to the usual number (see below).

The co-wives adapt fairly well to this preferential system. Nevertheless, there is a good deal of backbiting on account of it. It may also happen that one or another of the wives is jealous to
[586] the point of being unable to bear it. [347] The signs of her rancor multiply, and a divorce results in the end.

[765] The nkɔ́ndɛ́ does not have to go into mourning for anyone other than her husband. Even then she does not remove her clothing. But she does not have to abide by mourning regulations either for her parents or her own children.

[587] Like the other wives, the favorite is passed on through inheritance. But she cannot be taken as a bosɔ́lɔ́ by anyone except an elder brother of the deceased.

595x
192 Nkɔ́ndɛ́ is the specific term by which a favorite is designated. Its etymology is unknown to me. The word is used everywhere, although the Injɔ́lɔ́ often say lokílo (whose etymology is equally obscure). Another less common (older?) term known to the Bonkoso, Bongili, Wǎngatá, and Bakáala is bongilɛ́ or bongijí (1). In addition to the term ikundaka, already cited, there is also the word ebɛ́lɛ́kɛ́, a generic term meaning "preference, predilection" or, when applied to a child or a slave, "an object one does not want to dispose of." The favorite is also called áfɔ́kńámɛ́, "untouchable," because other men may not have relations with her.

1. The Ekonda call the favorite bokɔ́lo. The Elanga of Losanganya say bofiɛ́, a name borne by certain women among the Nkundɔ́ between Jwalɛ́ and Boloko. Might this also be an old name?

595x cultivate. Whatever food he has been able to obtain (from hunting and fishing, the fruit of palm trees, etc.) must be impartially distributed by the bomátsa. He is required to eat food prepared by each one, either on the same day or, more frequently, each in turn.

595x 833 The same holds true for their intimate relations. He must divide his nights equally among them all and in turn (-kafa mpóngó). Usually he spends three or four nights with the same one. He is not allowed to favor one wife over another. He may add an extra night to the usual number only in favor of the bomátsa or the favorite. If he wants to have continuous relations with the favorite, he goes on a trip with her for a real or invented reason.

Partiality is sharply criticized and gives rise to violent domestic quarrels. It may result in the breaking up and dispersion of the harem. It is very badly tolerated, especially in sexual matters. The husband must therefore watch himself carefully and respect the rights of each and every one. Exceptions are made only with regard to women who occupy a special rank in the harem, and then only with respect to the privileges or duties that go with the position.

On their set nights, the women go to cohabit with their husband in his house. He seldom goes to their houses unless he has no hut of his own. Each wife knows her turn, and none of them are ashamed to let the others know when it comes. On the contrary, it is sometimes in their interest to do so.

595x There is no sharing of property among co-wives except in the case of a bibísa. Each one takes care of her own household, does her own cooking, cares for her own children, cultivates her [360] own crops. Each one has her own tools and utensils. They may help each other if they wish to, however. Especially for fishing they often go together, particularly for scooping ponds.

847 they could count. Nevertheless, if it happens to a young unmarried mother, little or no fuss is made over it because no one can feel wronged; at most the culprit is scolded. For a married woman, on the other hand, it is one of the most serious infractions. Her husband has an immediate right to the fetus that would have become his child. He cannot beat or mistreat the offender in punishment, for her condition will not permit violence, but he can abandon her to her fate by refusing her all assistance, in particular by refusing to bring her firewood, the heat of which she greatly needs under such circumstances. For she has done him an enormous wrong and has acted with real malice (*aônjokel'inkúnyá*, he says), since he married her chiefly so that she would give him descendants. If she dies it is her own fault. Even her family will not support her, for [682] they would be accused of being involved in the crime; inevitably they would lose the case and be condemned to indemnify the husband.

An abortion which is ascertained to be involuntary [i.e., 843 a miscarriage] is treated like an accident or an illness and the appropriate legal stipulations are applied to it. Thus if it happens while the woman is at her parents' home, the responsibility for it falls on them. Usually the palaver is settled in a friendly manner; the family makes a few *nkọmí* payments, and the question is closed. If relations between the husband and his son-in-law are somewhat strained, the dispute may be drawn out and may result in the breaking up of the marriage. If the woman dies from the accident, the rules given in Article X of the preceding chapter come into play. [469]

Article II. Conception and Pregnancy

842
● 833 The Nkundó have only a partial notion of the phenomena of conception. They are well aware of which acts cause the procreation of children. They have a perfect knowledge of anatomy and a rich vocabulary pertaining to sexual life. But they know only as much about physiological processes as experience can teach them. Furthermore, they believe that the act of procreation must be repeated several times in order to produce its natural result. Note,

Note,

842 finally, that sexual relations are strictly forbidden to them during
● 833 menstruation (-kona or éna nsóngé, literally "to be ill from" or "to
[843] see the moon," and other similar expressions). The reason given
is that a woman in that difficult condition should be spared all
additional annoyance.

1. Elímá

The Nkundó attribute the procreation of children sometimes
842 to God (Njakomba) and sometimes to spirits (elímá, pl. bilímá).
776 God forms (-ánga) the children in the mother's womb, but at the
same time the bilímá provide the men among the progeny. (1)

There is no point in trying to make the natives resolve this apparent contradiction; they would not succeed. They simply state the two points. I say "apparent contradiction," for as the Nkundó admit that the bilímá are subject to Njakomba, the contradiction is not real, and the two propositions can be [470] reconciled by explaining the intervention of the spirits as an operation which is dependent on divine action: they are secondary, intermediary causes, although our natives do not make this philosophical analysis.

To explain all the beliefs pertaining to spirits would be to go outside the framework of this study. Nevertheless, we cannot leave out those details which closely touch on our subject.

---

[182] 1. Contrary to what is reported by Father Lestaeghe (Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 363) concerning the Ekonda, the tribes that I have known never address prayers for children to God, although they attribute the gift of children to Him. This matter does not concern God (Njakomba or Mbombiándá) directly, but rather a particular elímá.

Sterility, which is a common phenomenon here, is not imputed to sorcery but is considered an innate flaw. Natives usually claim that God refuses them children.

843 a woman's mother proceeded with the ceremony in the absence of the husband and his family. The latter were furious. They revealed the matter so that if anything should happen later to the mother or the child the law would be on their side. In that way the husband could evade responsibility and place the blame on his wife and her family so that they would have to pay an indemnity.

The pregnant woman does not remove the paint for three or
[302] four weeks after the ceremony. Nowadays the use of paint having
[178] disappeared except for certain occasions and among older persons,
it is left on for only one night. In addition the surface smeared has been reduced to a line in the middle of the head or even one single spot.

[783] During this ceremony the Bombwanja have a public confession
[837] (etato) of the lovers. But since the Bokótɛ́ wait until after delivery,
we will deal with it later on.

On the night following the ceremony described, the couple
[633] [476] "fasten the fetus" through their carnal union. Were they to
omit this act, the child would die before birth.

For subsequent pregnancies the fastening of the fetus is no longer preceded by the same formalities.

The couple continue to have relations during the entire
[833] period of pregnancy "in order to open an easy passage for the child."
843 On the other hand, they must strictly observe marital fidelity.
837 Nevertheless, a polygamist may have relations with his other wives.

In addition to this essential art, the interdict also includes a secondary part; the couple may not even commit acts even very remotely related to procreation. Thus they may not:

1) Touch in any way whatsoever -- even to shaking their hands -- persons with whom they have had adulterous relations; such persons must therefore be avoided.

2) Sit next to such persons.

3) Look at them.

4) Enter a house or apartment where they are.

5) Eat "from the same pot."

6) Lie in another couple's bed.

7) Other persons may no longer sleep in the bed of the couple bound by the bokeka.

M
846 for and fed so that she may regain her strength rapidly. [486]

3. Seclusion

After childbirth the mother remains secluded (-ulama) in her hut for several weeks -- two, three, or more, depending on circumstances and especially on her husband's social position. Her seclusion is called julé. The hut bears the same name, or else it is called janga, "palm leaf." Sometimes the term ekelé is also applied to it, denoting the period of seclusion with all the special regulations it involves. These are as follows:

M [184] 1) Meals. In some tribes the woman may already eat on the day of the delivery. But among others she is only permitted to drink. The reason for this fast is given in the form of a legend. One day P [846] long ago a Botswa asked his master for a little manioc, but the master refused to give it to him. The master's wife had just given birth. Annoyed by the refusal, the Botswa cursed his master, saying: "From now on your women will have to fast the day they give birth." (1) Another explanation is that at sometime in the past someone refused food to a slave who was about to be sacrificed at a feast of the lifting of mourning. Tribes and villages that do not give any reason of this sort permit a woman to eat in the evening, if the delivery takes place in the morning.

M [833] A mother's first meal is prepared by a woman who has performed the carnal act the preceding night. She goes to draw water, and on her return she fastens or attaches over the door of the seclusion hut a piece of palm (jånga) or, among the Bombwanja, a piece of dried banana leaf; in this way she informs everyone that it M [262] is a house of ekelé. Then she prepares the food, which consists of bananas with fish or a hen in palm-oil sauce. It is eaten by the mother and her husband as well as the cook. Their very young children may also delight in it, but [487] the older ones, approaching puberty, may not. The newborn child is given a tiny bit of the sauce to taste.

---

1. Batswa women never fast under such circumstances.

For a young unmarried mother, the meal is prepared by a
846 [589] girl who has not reached puberty or a woman who is quite old, that
is, by someone who does not engage in sexual intercourse.

2) Various regulations. From the time of the preparation of the first meal until the end of the bokeka, that is, until the day the umbilical cord becomes detached, the hearth of the seclusion hut is sacred, so to speak. Apart from the couple and the assistants, no one may enjoy it or profit from it, either to light anything from it or eat anything that has been prepared there. However, some men have a means of lifting the prohibition pertaining to the fire. Upon the hearth and all the hearths of the village or a group of houses, depending on the situation, they let fall a few drops of a special concoction.

It is also forbidden to sweep or pick up the ashes from the fire. Everything must stay put until the umbilical cord of the newborn child becomes detached.

During the entire period of seclusion, the mother is assisted by a kinswoman (or one of her husband's kinswomen; among the Bombwanja there are always two), who is the wujisa, "the one who makes the seclusion" (from the verb uja). The seclusion should not be thought of as that of a hermit; the mother may go out as soon as her condition permits, and the helper goes about her occupations, but she does not do so more than necessary. Rather the hut is a house of prohibitions.

During this period the mother and her helper do not do farm
[834] work. In addition they must abstain from carnal relations and from
all contacts with the opposite sex, in conformity with the customs
explained in Article II, 3, above. The ekelé extends to the husband and to any other person who enters the hut. Any infraction results in the death of the mother or the child in the same manner as in the case of the bokeka (see loc. cit) . [488]

3) The end of the bokeka. When, at the end of four or
five days, the umbilical cord becomes detached, the news is announced to the whole village, so that everyone may go back to their
[833] work that has been suspended. The following night the father
and mother perform the conjugal act to "destroy the bokeka and

846 to be able to nurse the child together." This does not mean that
● 833 from then on they may have regular sexual relations, for these are
not permitted until after the end of seclusion. But if they were
to omit the act at this time, they would have to abstain from it
until the child is weaned. The Nkundó say that the act is performed "only a little." For many it becomes masturbation; others withdraw before obtaining the effect of the act. In no case may the act reach its natural climax. The reason for this practice is unknown to me. Perhaps it is done in order not to molest the woman while she is in a painful condition.

The next day the ashes in the hearth of the seclusion hut
846 are swept out, and the fire becomes "ordinary"; anyone may use
it and eat food prepared on it.

4) The umbilical cord is dried on the bolíkó (a tray or shelf) and then buried at the foot of a young banana tree planted for that purpose, preferably under a bọnkọḿ tree if possible. The ashes and sweepings from the seclusion hut are thrown there. The banana tree is called nkíndá. (1) Its fruit may be eaten only by the child's
[153] grandfather and grandmother. If another person eats it, he will be
punished with a headache of a nervous type.

The umbilical cord is always buried in the father's native
846 soil. People who are far from home (laborers for the Whites, etc.)
614 preserve the umbilical cords of their children with great care in
order to take them back [489] when they return to their village, or send them back when a favorable opportunity arises. The Nkundó hold to this usage tenaciously, because a person whose umbilical cord is not buried in the lands of his paternal clan has no authority in the group. The person involved would meet with the following objection: ntákokúndela lokolé, ntákokundela lọkọkí, óyakúmya ngámo? olě nk'eyâya, "The lokolé was not beaten for you, your

---

[824] 1. This is a generic term used for any banana tree planted for a special purpose (a magical practice, a game, etc.).

837 783 853 Note, finally, that the confession is restricted to married women. It is never expected of a young unmarried mother. Therefore it would seem to be a practice connected with marriage (a social institution) and not with childbirth (a physiological phenomenon).

[192] This confession is called etato or lotato, from the verb -tata, "to confess," (for which the generic term, sanga, "to say," is sometimes substituted).

I was unable to find any reason for this practice other than that of avoiding the death of the child. It is evident, however, that this explanation does not exhaust the question, although it is entirely possible that the original and deeper meaning has been lost without leaving any trace in the minds of the present generation. [496]

853 833 3) During the entire duration of nursing, the mother must not be separated from her child. For the usual circumstances of daily life, this rule is broadly interpreted; but during sexual relations it is strict, and no exceptions or excuses are permitted. Negligence under these circumstances would inevitably bring about the death of the child by ndota as soon as the mother took it back. This rule holds for legitimate relations as much as for illicit ones. Therefore the mother must always keep her child at her breast.

853 [757] [278] 4) If at some point during nursing, the milk no longer flows in sufficient quantity, the mother is given a potion consisting of the extract of the bark of the bolóngé tree (which has a fruit containing a very sweet milky sap). Then she eats vegetables called lotélé. (1)

(1) The leaves of this plant are also ordinarily eaten as vegetables, but they are consumed especially by those who possess the modern magical practice known as boyaóli.

[262] 5) An accident to which the Nkundó attach great importance is the rejection or vomiting of milk into the mouth of an adult, even if the person affected is the infant's mother. Such a person

Sakata FO43

M S 258 462 the flooded banks of all the rivers in the Mosengere-Basakata region. When the nature of the ground and the level of the river permit, the grass is spread out on the spot to dry in the sun, while in flooded areas the woman loads the harvest in the canoe and takes it to the temporary village set up [108] on the bank. The dry grass is packed in stacks which are like the haystacks on our European farms.

M S 258 When a family deems that its harvest of grass is sufficient, the chief of the group prepares the incinerating grounds or furnace. Pulverized earth from small termites' nests is mixed with mud from the river. The mixture is well worked and kneaded so as to make a firm and pliant paste and is then spread over the surface of a small hole from 15 to 20 centimeters deep and one or two meters square.

M S 258 462 When this coating is entirely dry, the women begin their work. One of them loads the furnace and lights it, while the others bring in grass from the stacks.

As the first pile burns down, the woman in charge of the furnace throws in new sheaves, and the work, accompanied by a low, monotonous chant, continues without pause until the full harvest of salt grass is burned.

Fig. 63. Stacks of Salt Grass, among the Bobaie.

M S [533]

● M S 258 ● 834 462 The burning usually lasts a whole day. During this time and during the period when the furnace is being prepared, all

M S 258 834 462 sexual relations are strictly forbidden between the head of the family and the woman in charge of the burning.

M S 258 285 462 When the last sprig is burned, the fire extinguished, and the ashes cold, the women heap them in large baskets.

Meanwhile the head of the family has made a sort of large funnel out of broad and tough rattan splints, bound with fine thongs of raffia stems and lianas. These funnels vary between two and three meters in height. The diameter of the large opening is one and a half to two meters. The bottom is formed by the cluster of rattan splints, roughly tied with a broad rattan thong. This funnel is placed upright between three or four sticks planted in the ground. An earthenware jar is placed under the funnel. The women line the inside of the funnel with banana leaves, placed on top of each other in such a way as to make the sides completely [109] waterproof. They next pour the ashes from the incineration into the funnel, pressing and squeezing them as much as possible.

When the funnel is three-fourths full, the woman draws about ten pots of water, or about 50 liters, and pours them over the ashes. This water takes two or sometimes three days to spread through the ashes. When the ashes are saturated, the woman pours two or three more pots of water into the funnel. From then on there is a slow drain of water, strongly salted from the dissolution of the soluble alkaline matter contained in the ashes. The water is caught in the earthenware jar under the funnel. The woman thus obtains four or five pots of a strong salt solution and two pots of water less saturated with salt. After putting aside her six or seven pots of salt water, the woman lights a fire and puts one or several earthenware bowls over it. Into these, little by little, she pours the strong salt solution, which she allows to boil.

When the water evaporates, the first salt deposit forms on the bottom and sides of the bowl.

M S 415 The heat from these evaporation hearths is so intense that it is impossible to come near them. The woman therefore carefully provides herself with two long ladles to refill the bowls at a distance as the evaporation progresses. The whole lot is left on the fire until all the salt water is evaporated. Even after the evaporation is completed, the woman leaves the jar over the fire, which she stokes, so as to completely dry and solidify the salt deposit. This

304 833 certain parts of the female body is very exciting to them, essentially as a result of the very pronounced movements of the woman during sexual contact. This explanation, which according to the natives seems to be the only reason for tattooing the women of certain tribes (this applies, in our opinion, to the Bateke, Banfumungu, Baboma, and, up to a certain point, to all the riparian peoples of Lake Leopold II), also enables us to explain the special character of the tattooing of Yaelima women. It extends all around the mons Veneris, follows the fold of the groin, and continues in concentric circles on the inside of the upper thighs. The tattoo scars on these parts of the woman's body are usually more symmetrical and in more pronounced relief, and these characteristics increase in direct proportion to the nearness of the pubic region. Coquetry cannot be the reason for making these raised scars. Their presence is largely hidden, even by the flimsiest and most primitive loincloth. Among certain tribes, the loincloth completely covers this part of the body, and since native women exercise a great deal of care and modesty in hiding these tattoos from the public eye, it was only with great difficulty that we were able to verify their existence. Let us note in passing
● [834] that despite earnest endeavors, we never were able to persuade a native woman of the interior to be photographed without her loincloth. The civilized women, whether local demimondaines or housewives, were, it is true, less [191] timid. The natives themselves make a distinction between these tattoos and those which appear on other parts of the body, notably on the arms, back, and face.

304 832 Tattoos on the back, arms, and throat are always essentially decorative. We found them especially on the women, who are coquettish by nature even among the most primitive peoples. These tattoos generally lack the characteristic uniformity which is such a clear mark of the racial tattoos. The latter are found in their most characteristic form on the men, particularly on the forehead, temples, cheeks, and sometimes the chest. Among certain tribes, the women have also taken over this artificial deformation peculiar to the men. Elsewhere, the women have special tattoos which are clearly distinct from those of the men, and, finally, among some peoples the women have no racial tattoos.

000 delicacy of a person's sexual modesty, the better that person is armed -- all other things [51] being equal -- against the excesses of passion. The habits of lust, on the other hand, dull and weaken the sense of modesty.

On the basis of these psychological and moral considerations as well as the facts of experience, it is impossible to say that a people is lacking in modesty simply because of the fact that they clearly have sensual tendencies and show a good deal of lasciviousness.

834 Among the Nkundó one should not expect the delicate sentiments found among some other peoples, especially those strongly influenced by Christian morality. But modesty is not unknown to them.

In the lines to follow we will say nothing more about the instinct of sexual modesty, which I think has been to a great extent blunted among the Nkundó, but of modesty in manner, which is an indication of inner modesty. The comparatively strict rules by which the Nkundó community tries to protect modesty shows that these people are fully aware of the value of that instinct as a safeguard against human weakness.

In general they hide the manifestations of sexual passion. In addition, certain practices which they favor show their attitude toward this matter; we will examine them in greater detail. It should be noted that, as we will see below, modesty among the Nkundó extends to situations where we would not consider it applicable, and vice versa, because of differences in the attitude toward certain questions.

Ethnologists in general consider the following among the chief effects (or indications) of modesty: the wearing of clothing (1) and the existence of regulations concerning the decency and [52] discretion which in word or deed should be observed between persons of the same sex and, more especially, toward persons of the opposite sex.

1. Although the wearing of clothing is a precaution arising from modesty, it has been asserted that the lack of garments is no proof of the lack of this sentiment.

291 581 speaking. (1) Is this custom in some way related to modesty? The

1. See Chapter VI, Article VI.

[606] same question may be raised with respect to another strict rule of decorum which forbids a man to look his mother-in-law in the face. (2)

2. For details concerning this custom, see Chapter VI, Article V, 1.

It can readily be answered in the affirmative. (3)

3. Nevertheless, see Chapter X, Article II, 3.

784 516 The rule of decorum which forbids a man to sit down on a seat where a woman is seated who is not his wife seems to me also to be dictated by sexual modesty. On the other hand, stepping over the seat under such circumstances has nothing whatever to do with this feeling. The purpose of this practice is to enable the person seated (regardless of sex) to avoid the evil repercussions of a charm or magic spell in his or her possession. (4)

4. Contrary to the explanation given by Jadot in Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge (Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 90.

291 834 Is the native ashamed to show his nakedness? Let us beware of answering this question in general terms. In order to have an idea of the situation which is sufficiently clear and precise, various cases and circumstances must be taken into account.

1) First of all it can be stated that in the normal course of daily living the Nkundó, men as well as women, do all they can to hide their genital organs. That is to say that basically they are

291 834 embarrassed by the glances of others. This feeling extends even to other parts of the body which, irrespective of the degree of culture they have reached, most peoples try to cover. [55]

834 514 2) Between persons of the same sex and age a certain freedom is permitted. This may be observed especially among young boys when they have to urinate. In our countries of Europe the situation is no different. I must say, however, that I have only noticed this freedom in the schools and never in the villages of the interior. Is there a gap in my observations, or should this laxity in the schools be attributed to the influence of the law of least effort (the suitable places in the schools are at some distance) and to the lack of leisure available to the pupils given the shortness of recreation periods on the one hand and their love of play on the other? It is also possible that among these boys modesty has barely made its appearance, since this feeling is strongly linked to the sexual instinct and awakens only with the latter. It would also seem that living in a group tends to reduce the power of modesty.

834 832 3) It is obvious that sexual excitement runs counter to modesty and that sometimes -- especially among young people -- immodest acts may be used to arouse another person, especially in situations, such as bathing, which lend themselves easily to such actions.

515 834 4) Bathers, whether washing or swimming, are very careless, especially when they are in a group of their own sex and age. In former times no doubt they did not indulge in the luxury of even a rudimentary bathing costume. But at the present time it is not at all difficult for them to obtain the small piece of cloth needed for that purpose. Nevertheless, nude bathing in rivers and streams is a common practice. It is far more frequent among women than among men. The natives with whom I have discussed the subject attribute this fact to levity and a lack of concern; but they see nothing very wrong in it. Whether or not [56] the bathers are in a group also seems to make a difference. If you surprise one or two people under such circumstances, they will hide in haste. If, on the other hand, you find a dozen, they will not move; on the contrary, they will interrupt their toilette to watch you pass. Perhaps they are simply unconcerned about their nakedness. But it is also possible that they

515 are reassured by the fact that they are in a group, so that no one feels
● 834 singled out by the gaze of the passer-by. Washing away from major
streams is always surrounded by more propriety. For this purpose a
[343] small enclosure (ikomba) is built behind the hut or among the banana
trees, or a small thicket is allowed to grow there. By this means
the native is sheltered from indiscreet glances if he wants to take a
[157] bath or give himself an enema. As a matter of fact these things are
done preferably after dark.

834 5) Violent anger or sorrow drown out modesty, just as they
152 momentarily destroy the use of reason and suppress all feelings which
are contradictory or simply different. In this situation, too, the man
shows himself superior to the woman. He is less impulsive, calmer,
less prone to lose control of his actions, to be carried away by his
anger. Thus he almost never strips himself bare. The woman, on
the other hand, readily strips off all her clothing. This behavior is
extremely common; a woman undresses completely whenever she
experiences great sorrow or intense anger. Luckily for propriety's
sake some friend or relative always hastens to cover at least the
essential parts. For a woman who throws off her clothing exposes
herself to the mockery and jeers of spectators. (1)

[593]x
[578] 1. An angry woman may also undress to
shame her husband; it is a way of insulting and mocking him.

833 6) The Nkundó practice sexual intercourse only at night. I
believe that this custom is due to their sense of propriety, [57] supplemented by a superstitious explanation which will be described in
detail in Article V.

593x 7) The sense of modesty has its fullest expression in relation
834 to parents, brothers, sisters, etc. Thus it is unheard of that a son
should see his mother naked: bǒna átěnáká ěsunví nvangó. If an
adult daughter is ill and requires personal care (such as an enema,
for example), the father has to take care of her himself if no other
female relative is near by. But their sense of modesty is such that
they both shed tears over the event. As a matter of fact this situation

2: Hulstaert--52 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

593ˣ
●834 arises but rarely. Furthermore, if a daughter is required to perform similar duties for her father, she will undertake this obligation only
[539] with the lament: *njôy'ɔ́ẹna ɛ̌kɛ́'m wímɔ́kɔ́*, "I have come to see where I had my origin." Any woman who has been in that position will later know no oath more sacred than this one: *la botakɔ́ wɔ̌ fafɔ́ bɔ̌kɛ́ 'm wɛ̌nɔ́kɔ́ la mpaka*, "by my father's nakedness which I saw when he was old."

834
291 Thus we can draw the conclusion that the Nkundó are offended by nakedness and as a rule do not tolerate it. The exceptions do not invalidate this generalization; on the contrary, they tend to support it.

2. Speech. Obscenities and propriety.

521
831 In general the Nkundó see nothing wrong with using obscene expressions. They only describe them as "bad" if they become indecent.

195 If a conversation touches on matters of sex, they may wonder whether a particular topic is necessary, interesting, or entertaining; they will not ask themselves whether it is moral. For it will be apparent throughout this study they have no concept of morality strictly speaking.

The Nkundó possesses a varied and extensive list of obscene words -- nor is he alone in this respect. [58] We are not compiling a dictionary, and therefore we will not list them. What interests us are the circumstances that make these words indecent and under which a proper use of them impossible. The circumstances provide us with a criterion of the degree of obscenity of a word or expression. Let us say at once that we include in this category not only terms applied to organs and phenomena which are of a sexual nature strictly speaking, but also words pertaining to certain anatomical parts or physiological functions such as, for example, excretion, hair and tattooing found on private parts, and the female garment called *efufa*. We
[184] should also point out that some tribes will consider expressions obscene which do not shock others at all.

514
576 even answer her husband, but he may indicate his presence by coughing lightly.

Any infraction of these rules is considered a grave insult. A
514 person offended in this manner may seek revenge by violent means,
576 either personally or through the medium of his son, brother, etc.
578 According to native justice he will always be in the right, even if
831 the quarrel becomes bloody. The simple act of uttering obscenities while passing in front of a house in which there is someone who is entitled to the speaker's respect may result in reprisals by the latter. (1)

---

1. See Jadot, *Blancs et Noirs au Congo belge* [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 90.

578 Crude language is especially reprehensible and wounding if it
834 contains allusions to incest or other reflections on a relative whom the speaker wants to insult. And it must be admitted that such expressions may go beyond the limits (for example: *coi cum patre, matre, fratre, sorore*, etc.). In connection with this topic it should be noted that reference is always made to a relative of the opposite sex to that of the person who is directly or indirectly being addressed. Furthermore, licentious talk and the use of indecorous language are more severely condemned when they take place in the presence of
[554] women and old people [60] or are said by a slave in front of his master, by a Botswa in front of a Bootó (1).

---

1. See Introduction, footnote 2, p. 4.

578 If a man catches anyone uttering obscenities in front of his
604 wife, especially if they are addressed to her personally, he can start
834 action in adultery proceedings. If the woman refuses to listen to the seducer, she will not answer him, or sometimes, annoyed at the insult, she may retort by insulting his mother. She can complain, but generally she does not do so. Is she ashamed, or is she afraid that the tempter might make public some excess in her conduct which he has discovered? In any case a woman is more sensitive than a man to the

578 shame of obscenities. They say: ɔ̌lekɛ́ nsɔ́nvi ɛ́â bitɔ́li ń'kɔ̌moto.
684 Bɔ̌moto ndɛ́ ndota (itúfâ) "A woman is a ndota snake. Just as that
●834 reptile twists through the grass and rolls up as soon as it sees a man approaching, so a woman finds it difficult to endure any obscenity."

The ideal way to be sure whether an expression is actually considered indecent is to check whether it may be used in the presence of a close relative, for a Nkundɔ́ never utters an obscenity in front of such a person.

195
578
834 Among the Nkundɔ́, as in Europe, certain indelicate exclamations are so deeply rooted that they seem to have lost their original meaning, that is, most of the population no longer thinks of it at all. That a few more serious and modest individuals are still aware of it is apparent from the way they change the pronounciation of the terms in question.

Licentious expressions are never considered indecent and shock no one when they are uttered in a group or during group activities.
[571] Such activities include communal fishing and hunting expeditions, [61] drinking parties, dances, funerals, and -- at the present time -- communal work on a road, a resthouse, etc.

Thus we see that in these matters there is a remarkable discretion side by side with a certain degree of tolerance, which may be carried quite far. Licentious remarks are not condemned in themselves, but only because of fortuitous circumstances, so we see that the Nkundɔ́ do not consider them from a moral point of view, as we do, but from a social one. But the fact that those are precisely the words which can become indecent and socially bad shows that the native sees in their content something shocking, shameful, some quality likely to give offense. The freedom exercised in certain cases does not alter this general conclusion but simply gives evidence of he inclinations of a passionate nature.

3. Dances

535

Nkundɔ́ dances change periodically, as is the fashion in Europe. Old dances are given up after a time and are replaced by others which are newly invented or recently introduced. The dances fashionable at the present time came from the Besongɔ́, who are by

535 177 831 may be ribald, but this occurs rather rarely. However, at the present time, they are often actually obscene -- especially since "European-style" dancing has been introduced, and more particularly in the centers, small and large, and among those who have come under [63] its influence. This kind of dancing for amusement is chiefly practiced by young people.

To the credit of morality it should be noted that mixed dancing is unknown to strictly native ways. It occurs in the centers (in the form of the mixed bofenya or the balinga, grotesque imitations of European dances) but is spreading -- and rapidly -- to the villages of the interior. The second variety especially raises havoc, for it has a deleterious influence on morality. It has been the cause of a number of cases of adultery, divorce, palavers, and quarrels, and has been forbidden by certain chiefs and headmen, who would like to be able to severely punish anyone who dances it.

Conclusion

● 834 The data presented in the foregoing section forces us to conclude that sexual modesty does exist among the Nkundó. The wearing of clothing, the various prohibitions, the attitude of the older and wiser members of the community show that they experience this feeling. It is the same here as elsewhere. In certain areas it is even carried to an extreme. The exceptions should be attributed to individual deviations; and because of the reactions they provoke, they even provide conclusive evidence. The general laxity which may be observed on some special occasions does not provide material for a serious objection against the existence of modesty. Yet it is difficult to determine the reason for such an attitude which seems to contradict the rest of our data. Should it be interpreted as a yielding to human weakness, or seen as a weakening of public morality? Or is it not rather because these special circumstances make an unfavorable interpretation of such actions impossible? An allusion made in public, in a group, [64] does not have the same significance as that same allusion may have between two people, where it implies a suspicious intimacy.

834 178 It goes without saying that the feeling of sexual modesty and its various manifestations among these people are being transformed by two different currents. On the one hand, their moral laxity is increased by their contact with all sorts of other peoples, by a greater freedom, by the partial emancipation of women, and by the attraction of the large centers and their luxury. On the other hand, there is the preaching of Christian morality, although its effects are still very slight and certainly do not counterbalance the influences mentioned above.

Article II. Preparation for Sexual Life

1. The Woman's preparation

833

When a girl wishes to indulge in pleasures of the flesh, she prepares her sexual organs in advance. The preparation itself consists of "opening the way" (lifola mbóka). This operation, which is repeated several times, is performed in hiding, preferably in the forest. The girl may or may not have companions with her who share her intentions. Each girl operates on herself. In order to gradually [824] enlarge the organ, a girl uses progressively thicker shoots of the bosáánga or bokaakó plant (Costus afer), making sure first to remove the tip. Later these shoots are replaced by the lombólé fruit of the bosǒombó plant (Aframomum) or, more infrequently, by a young manioc tuber.

This is the general practice; exceptions are few or nonexistent. It is followed because the girls want the event to which they aspire to occur without difficulty (bálota báfóv'ǒkeela).

833 515 In addition to this basic preparation, girls [65] also wash the private parts of their bodies. This is a cleanliness measure which they continue to practice save in exceptional cases for the rest of their lives. According to my informants, the native woman -- as a very general rule -- stresses this cleanliness as much for herself as for the sake of not repelling her husband or lover. When a girl begins to practice this personal hygiene, it is a sign that she wants to begin her sexual life.

Article III. Relations between Spouses; Their Various Rights and Duties

593x
833 Spouses are obliged to fulfill the duties and perform the tasks incumbent upon them .

It is difficult to say just how far the sense of duty to fulfill the debitum conjugale extends among the Nkundó. Normally, they very frequently fulfill this obligation toward each other. But after a good quarrel they abstain, either through mutual consent or because [586] one of them refuses. If one of the parties fails seriously and repeatedly in this respect, the question is resolved by a divorce. The response to temporary lapses is limited to reprimands, disputes, blows, and other [834] common reactions. It should be added that continence is required during the ekelé period after the birth of a child and after setting up a new hunting enclosure (lokombo) or a new fishing weir (bosaka), before the third piece of a game or fish is caught.

1. Meals

593x
264 A couple never take their meals together. The husband eats the food prepared for him and served to him by his wife alone, with his grown sons, or with friends or relatives. The wife herself eats with her small children, her daughters, or her female relatives. The two sexes never mingle at meals.

593x
521 The same rule applies to talks, but it is much less strictly maintained; it is not rare to find that, for one reason or another, women participate in the conversation of men.

It will not be long before, through the influence of Christianity, [266] women will generally be admitted in the conversations of the opposite sex. Developments with respect to mixed meals will come with much more difficulty; in practice the question has not even been broached.

593x
343
[354] Thus one finds a kitchen next to the bedroom or separated from the hut; in addition to being the place where food is prepared, it is where the woman spends her day. The kitchen is sometimes a structure separated from the dwelling itself, sometimes a part of the house separated from the bedroom by a partition containing a door.

593x themselves of the usual and ordinary obligations incumbent upon
577 them on the death of a son-in-law. Should this be taken as a kind
762 of implied condemnation of suicide? [278]

593x The wisdom of the elders recommends to youth that they
not let anger lead them to brutal acts even where, legally, it is
578 permissible to use force. They do not act in such a way through a
967 policy of adaptation to the present regime. Even before the arrival
626 of the white men, they gave lessons in calm and self-mastery. For serious blows, wounds, and especially homicide could have deplorable consequences legally and even politically (war). They preferred recourse to punishments, such as abstention from food and the refusal of debitum conjugale, which although less violent, are not without efficacity. In that way they were also spared the vexation of in-laws, whose pity would be aroused by the wounds and bodily suffering of their child or sister.

578 One thing that deserves blows or a good whipping because it
593x is considered a serious failure in the fulfillment of the duties of married life is indifference and negligence in housework. A husband may safely deal forcefully with the situation, although he must first inform the qualified authorities. The following are some examples of such faults: the wife does not give the necessary attention to the kitchen, her children, the cleaning of the hut and court; she neglects her crops, does not go fishing, makes no attempt to obtain salt, etc.; in short, she does not give the required time and care to the tasks incumbent upon her. She herself, her children, and her house remain disgustingly filthy, her fields and banana groves are invaded by weeds and her pantry is devoid of utensils and food, while she wastes her time doing nothing or rather spends it running about the village, going to one woman's house, chatting with another, spending the better part of her day gossiping. The Nkundó does not put up with this sort of behavior, and no one can reproach him. Even other men and the woman's companions condemn [279] such conduct. Often the woman is ridiculed, and on occasion she may
● [834] hear unflattering comments such as bǒmot'ǒw'asoló, efufa eténgamaka, "a gossip, her cloth is to the side," that is, the interminable chatting

593ˣ to which she devotes her time, sitting on a couch or a log, so oc-
578 cupies her attention that she is no longer aware that her narrow
● 834 garment is no longer in its proper modest position, and the gossip is
therefore exposed to shame and ridicule.

593ˣ In addition to giving his wife a good whipping, the husband
578 also brings out his vocabulary of invective and sarcasm. The woman does not run the risk of complaining, for she knows in advance that she will be placed in the wrong. Nevertheless, the discreet husband will not go too far. The elders suggest that the young people moderate the violence of their expressions. For, they say, "a woman is more sensitive to it than a man; she might go and hang herself
[825] in the forest," lǐkinya áyakóma lóí la nsónyi, "lǐkinya (the ant) will hang herself one day out of an excess of shame" (this is a reference to the way this insect bites into a blade of grass or some other object and dies rather than let go). "And above all," they say, "do not extend your insults to your wives' parents, for they could urge their daughters to leave you."

With respect to adultery, the punishments prescribed in Nkundó law will be examined below in Article VIII.

It is apparent from the preceding description that the Nkundó attach relatively little importance to the outpourings of loquacious eloquence characteristic of the weaker sex as long as they do not go beyond limits or degenerate into outrageous and ignominious insults. The elders teach youth to be calm in the face of these demonstrations of the declamatory art at which most Negresses are as adept as our fishwives at home.

[562] They say that a woman is like an elephant: bǒmoto ale é njoku. There is nothing to be done about her. It is futile [280] to try and speak gently to her; she does not even listen. To impose silence on her is impossible. To try and calm her, make her listen to reason, is a waste of effort. It is the same with an elephant: He
[825] can perhaps be chased away with cries and noise, but he will destroy the crops nonetheless.

The fact that a woman readily opens her mouth is not considered a sign that she does not love her husband. The Nkundó even

684 movement and therefore serves as the Nkundó prison. But in addition, if it is applied for a long time, it becomes a real torture; the skin becomes painful and comes off, inflammations readily appear, and bugs sometimes lodge there.

As soon as the woman's family hears (through the ndonga) that she is being so tortured, they often come and beg her husband to [576] free her. To pacify and propitiate him, they offer him an ad hoc payment, that is, a boóndo of a few copper rings. Generally, he yields to their entreaties. A good relationship and his respect toward them require that he not remain indifferent to their supplications, especially as he needs them for the stability of the marriage and the good functioning of the household.

2) Byéngẹtanyi, or handcuffs, which consist of sticks attached either to the wrists or to the ankles (to prevent walking), or to both arms and feet. Two sticks were used, one above and one below, with the limb placed in between, and they were tied with ropes that were attached and fastened in notches made at [317] each end of the sticks. In rare instances the wrists were bound. To increase the pain and immobility, the ropes were shrunk and hardened by pouring water on them. These handcuffs were generally added to the etóka and were never applied alone.

3) Exposure to the bites of nkongôtó ants. In the region under [184] discussion, I have never heard the people speak of exposure to bafumba (Dorylus), or even to the venomous benkǒnkóme. This fact contrasts with the practice of other Móngo tribes and with the content of certain legends (evolution?).

4) The pouring of water containing pepper into the vagina. Sometimes the genital organs were rubbed with crushed pepper.

5) Exposure of the sex organs to fire. A burning log was held near them.

The last two types of torture were the most dreadful.

We can add one last form of punishment which is derived from the same legal rules, although it is not a torture:

[634] 6) Nudity. The husband tears off the guilty woman's garments and thus exposes her to public shame. Even if she resorts to using leaves, no one mistakes the situation, and her shame is only partly reduced.

C. Against a husband and his accomplice. There is no specific sanction in Nkundɔ́ law against a husband's adultery, [323] but an outraged wife may take revenge on him, as on her rival. Her weapons against her husband include invective, the refusal of food, drink, baths, and finally of debitum conjugale. These are appreciable punishments about which the husband can in no way complain, for he would be found entirely in the wrong. The woman's actions stem from a legitimate jealousy. Sometimes her feeling becomes so intense that she tears off her clothing and stands before her husband completely naked; this shames him greatly and constitutes a stinging reproach. Invectives flow out of the wife's mouth in torrents: ilolɛ́ inɛ̌, itutula inɛ̌, inyanyama inɛ́, owá lɔ́í ô ndá nyongo, ndá ntɛ́mbɔ̌, "that imbecile, that good for nothing, that beast, one day you'll die of penalties, of being caught in flagrante delicto . . . ." Then there is a whole string of the usual insults. Our Nkundɔ́ say that the more abundant the insults, the greater is the woman's love. She may carry on like this for days, even for weeks. Her responses to her husband's adultery are thus of the same sort as those she makes use of under other circumstances.

684

●[834]

[578]

[152]

If a jealous wife sets fire to the hut in which her husband yielded to his passion, no one can reproach her. The damage was caused on her husband's account.

Against the woman accomplice, the wife may use more violent means. She may fight her, strike her, even injure her. The rival's husband will demand a liombo, or payment "for blows and wounds," which has to be paid not by the wife's family, but by the guilty husband. Thus in the final analysis it is again he who is punished. If the offending woman is killed, it is again the unfaithful husband who is obliged to pay an indemnity to the widower. (See Article II.)

One form of punishment to which a wife likes to have recourse to take revenge on her adulterous husband and his accomplice if she catches them in the act is to pour a pot of hot or boiling water on their bodies. [324]

3. The period of prohibitions

843 When a pregnancy is far advanced -- about two or three months before delivery (a period which has now been reduced to one or two weeks) -- the Nkundó proceed with the "preservation of the fetus" (báomba jě́mi, "they preserve the fetus," or báaka jěmi, "they fasten the fetus"). The period called bokeka or bokeko begins at that moment and does not end until after childbirth. The oral expression is lémba bokeka, "to bind the period of sexual prohibitions." (1) This term also extends to all special prohibitions (bikilá) resulting from this condition. [475]

For the first pregnancy the period begins with the following [386] ceremony: The woman's mother smears her daughter's head and [302] all of her body with a red paint called ngóla. This paint, usually used as make-up, is used here as a mark of affection and given to honor and congratulate the future mother on this happy occasion. When the ngóla is somewhat hardened, the mother smears her daughter's hair with it and rolls the hair into little balls, using an iron bosóngó, which is the instrument usually used for hairdressing. Then she gives her daughter a hen and some bananas to eat. From then on the pregnant woman may no longer eat hens, for the con- [825] sumption of this bird (which the Nkundó place in the same category as ducks) and its eggs would stop the normal development of the fetus. The ceremony is called îla bongata (eleku among the Bombwanja), "to smear with red paint in little balls."

The woman's father and the husband's kin feel strongly about being present at this ceremony, for it is considered very important. I know of an intense palaver which occurred because

● [834] 1. The expression lémba lǔmbá is also used. A similar period of sexual prohibitions called by the same name still exists for, among other things, circumcision, the construction of a hunting enclosure, and the setting of elephant traps.

For a young unmarried mother, the meal is prepared by a
846 [589] girl who has not reached puberty or a woman who is quite old, that
is, by someone who does not engage in sexual intercourse.

2) *Various regulations.* From the time of the preparation of the first meal until the end of the *bokeka*, that is, until the day the umbilical cord becomes detached, the hearth of the seclusion hut is sacred, so to speak. Apart from the couple and the assistants, no one may enjoy it or profit from it, either to light anything from it or eat anything that has been prepared there. However, some men have a means of lifting the prohibition pertaining to the fire. Upon the hearth and all the hearths of the village or a group of houses, depending on the situation, they let fall a few drops of a special concoction.

It is also forbidden to sweep or pick up the ashes from the fire. Everything must stay put until the umbilical cord of the newborn child becomes detached.

During the entire period of seclusion, the mother is assisted by a kinswoman (or one of her husband's kinswomen; among the Bombwanja there are always two), who is the *wujisa*, "the one who makes the seclusion" (from the verb *uja*). The seclusion should not be thought of as that of a hermit; the mother may go out as soon as her condition permits, and the helper goes about her occupations, but she does not do so more than necessary. Rather the hut is a house of prohibitions.

During this period the mother and her helper do not do farm
[834] work. In addition they must abstain from carnal relations and from all contacts with the opposite sex, in conformity with the customs explained in Article II, 3, above. The *ekelɛ́* extends to the husband and to any other person who enters the hut. Any infraction results in the death of the mother or the child in the same manner as in the case of the *bokeka* (see *loc. cit*) . [488]

3) *The end of the bokeka.* When, at the end of four or five days, the umbilical cord becomes detached, the news is announced to the whole village, so that everyone may go back to their
[833] work that has been suspended. The following night the father and mother perform the conjugal act to "destroy the *bokeka* and

846 taking the child would cause the child's death. The same precau-
789 tion is also in order if the husband goes on a trip before the child's
birth and does not return till after the delivery

We have just seen that the harmful effects of the father's
846 misconduct on his child's life is effectuated through the father's
837 act of taking the child on his knees. Thus the Nkundó speak of
baóngó b'âbé, "a father's bad knees," to indicate his reprehensible
[826] conduct, and they say that the bondandota potion is administered
to the child so that it will not die because of the father's bad
knees. (1)

1. The expression baóngó b'âbé is also used when an undertaking which requires continence is unsuccessful. (See Article II, 3).

When a child has painful and persistent diarrhea, it is often
753 interpreted as the effect of the father's infidelity. As soon as they
854 become aware of it, the couple separate for some time, and the
father no longer touches the child. [492]

Contrary to what one reads on this subject about other peo-
837 ples of the Congo, Nkundó couples do not have to remain continent
834 beyond the period of seclusion. The separation ceremony gives the
789 husband back the freedom of action he had before his wife's preg-
nancy. For the wife the bokeka remains strict with respect to illicit
relations until the child is weaned However she, too, may regain
her freedom by having recourse to an antidote, the ingredients of
which she purchases from a person who holds the secret. The in-
gredients are placed in a small antelope horn which is then stopped
[824] up by means of bolaká (resin from the Symphonia gabonensis). The
interested party wears it about her loins on a string or a bead belt
or, preferably, on a special creeper. This amulet protects the
child's life from the harmful influence of the mother's acts of
adultery, but it does so only on condition that she does not separate
herself from the child, as we will explain further on. This procedure

837 is not morally condoned, and a woman who resorts to it does not
● 834 escape criticism. She is compared to a goat, who does not have
789 a regular and steady husband: álómya bǒna lontaa, "she nurses her child as a goat does." (1)

1. The opposite of lómya lontaa, -- if it is used to show the contrast -- is lómya lontómbá.

When the separation ceremony is ended, the mother is
846 adorned with all her ornaments and goes out to walk in a procession through the village. The child is carried by an older sister, a niece, etc. He is taken around the village, bánangya bǒna l'olóló Small presents are offered him everywhere -- an arrow, a small knife, a hairpin, etc There is no feast, however; if that honor were accorded him he would die of it (for when someone dies, there is always a feast of farewell in his honor). [493]

Article IV. Nursing

853 During the first few days after birth an infant does not suck the milk of its mother, since it is "too hot." He is fed by a third person, preferably a relative.

On the third day the following occurs:

853 1) The mother's breasts are massaged (-kulola baéle). For
757 this purpose the Nkundó use leaves of the bǔte creeper and the lilongyá plant (Adenostemma viscosum Forst.), a green leaf from a banana tree called nselenge, several pieces of peeled sugar cane, the tips of the dried leaves of any banana tree, and sometimes other plants are added as well. All the ingredients are crushed, then boiled, and white sand and a bit of red paint are mixed in with them. The mixture is called ndengó. It is prepared by the women who are in charge of massaging the breasts. The bǔte leaves, however, must be picked by the father. He goes to the forest early in the morning and first shakes the creeper so that all leaves that are not firmly attached will fall off. Then he climbs it and picks the desired

4. Onanism [*coitus interruptus*]

893 Onanism also seems to be unknown. No doubt many women have learned this vice through their concubinage with Europeans, but they have not spread it. The same may be said of involuntary onanism. For the native does not look for sensual refinements; rather he follows his natural impulse. (1)

1. The practice described in Chapter X, Article III, 3, may be slightly tainted with onanism; it could certainly lead to such a practice, but it is not caused by perversion.

Article VII. Incest

895
614 We here must distinguish between 1) sexual relations between distantly related kin and 2) between close kin.

1. Among distant relatives

Incest among distant relatives (in the Nkundó sense of the word) has existed since time immemorial. It is called *lonkâna* (*bombaká* among the Bombwanja). *Lonkâna* is derived from *nkâna*, "brother, sister." The expression *liála j'ölóló*, "sexual union in the village," is also used. The term *lonkâna* is applied to relations between members of families which are only very distantly related (not at all related, according to our notions) but between whom marriage is not permitted. Thus one hears that such and such kin groups do not marry each other (báfóyakumbólé) but they commit *lonkâna*. Two kin groups of this sort may be considered closely related clans. The groups between whom *lonkâna* is practiced each has its own cemetery, while those between whom it is absolutely forbidden share a common cemetery. Thus, to cite an example, the "village" [98] of Elánga l'Imomo l'Ontole (Bongíli) is composed of three kin groups, as the name indicates. The Imomo settlement is partially located in the

835 allied district of the Bombomba). The same is true of the Bontole. 614 Elángá and Imomo, together with Eleke (Lokongo), comprise the posterity of the son of Ambá, who was the sister of Iloko, Eángá, and Bokungó, the latter being the ancestor of the Bontole. The three groups do not intermarry. Between the Elángá and the Imomo, lonkâna relations are also not permitted, but they are practiced with the Bontole. Note that the term lonkâna is never applied to relations between truly separate clans, that is, between exogamous entities.

To define the precise limits of this practice we would have to examine each kin group separately, and this would lead us too far afield.

It should also be noted that lonkâna may be limited to an isolated act, or it can become an intermittent concubinage. The name of the practice does not change when it involves a married woman who is visiting her family. Sanctions against adultery are applicable to such a case, however, as to all others. (1) Although the relatives of the woman are more lenient than if the adulterous relations had occurred with a different lover, the husband whose rights have been infringed on makes no such distinction.

835 614 174 The custom of lonkâna seems rather strange. After all, if sexual relations between these clans are not reprehensible, why is marriage between them forbidden? This is an apparent contradiction which merits attention. Should not this practice be viewed as a relaxation of the law of exogamy? In past times all sexual relations between members of the clans under discussion would have been forbidden, a very natural phenomenon when the families originated. [99] Later the young people would have succumbed to the temptation, and little by little infractions would even have multiplied. For as the clans became increasingly extended, the temptations became more and more numerous and the rule, now detached from its natural significance because very distant kinship was involved, came to seem more or less arbitrary to the interested parties. It was supported by no sanction or

---

1. See Chapter VI, Article VIII.

835
614
174
fear. (1) Thus the very number of violations would have gradually

1. Actually, no sanction is provided against marriages within an exogamous entity; everything lies in the opposition of parents and elders and in a habit which is almost innate.

made the practice customary. Powerless to stop it, the persons in authority, guardians of traditional morality, would have contented themselves with channeling the development and restricting it to a minimum by being lenient on the subject of extramarital relations in order to save the principle of exogamy. This explanatory hypothesis can find a little confirmation in the fact that at the very beginning of colonization when European influence was not felt as yet, there were isolated and very rare cases of marriage in opposition to the law of exogamy between members of groups which were only very distantly related but already practiced lonkâna. The exception then became the rule, and from then on the two groupings in question intermarried regularly and without hindrance, while other families remained under the ancient law. Thus there is the known case of Boyela village (Bakɛala), which includes the Bokambɛ, Bembakɔ, Besɔlɔ, and Bekɔlama (extinct), all descendants of Ngonde and one wife; his union with another spouse gave rise to the Lilekɛ and the Likongo, to whom Bongilɛ, a group related through marriage (likilo), is attached. These two groups of families could not intermarry, but they did engage in lonkâna. Around the time of the first arrival of the Whites, a member of the Bembakɔ [100] family a certain Bonjɔmbɔ was impelled by an excessive love to violate the law of exogamy by taking Bolondɔ of Lilekɛ for his wife. As his love did not cool and the marriage proved stable, it was recognized and accepted as legitimate. Since then the two groups in question have each become exogamous.

835
754
2. Between close relatives

Incest between close relatives has no special name of its own. As a matter of fact, it never occurs as an outgrowth [illegible]. We

835 encounter it only in connection with magical practices and sorcery
154 (*botɛ*, plural *betɛ*), for which it is the *nsimbo*, that is, the condition without which the *betɛ* would lack efficacy. If the *nsimbo* is not observed, the *botɛ* turns against its owner and, by a reversal of its effect (*bosesengano*), brings death to the latter. Therefore the interested parties submit to these degrading requirements despite their natural repugnance. Depending on the case, incest with the mother, the daughter, or the sister is required. The first of these eventualities is the most repugnant to our natives. Though it goes altogether against the grain to do so, the mother submits to this ignominy to save the life of her foolhardy and greedy son.

[184] The *nsimbo* of incest does not exist in all *botɛ*. It even seems to have been absent from the *betɛ* which are ancient and purely Nkundó. It is found primarily in the big modern *betɛ*, which have been imported from other peoples or invented on the spot since colonization. (1)

1. See Kaptein, in *Congo*, 1922,
Vol. 1, p. 534.

Article VIII. Love Philters

832 The Nkundó are familiar with two love philters, the *efóndɛ* and the *bontɛlɛ*. Other modern *betɛ* may produce the same effect in part or secondarily. Here [101] we will only deal with the first two, which are "pure" and ancient love philters.

The love philters (*botɛ w'ɛ̌langyɛ*) serve to gain the heart of a young girl as much as to entice a married woman away from her husband.

1. *Efóndɛ*

Efónde (1) is a common charm. Anyone can procure it from the maker in consideration of the appropriate payment, of course. Various kinds of efóndɛ exist, differing as to the ingredients used, the manner

1. *Efónde* is often used as a synonym
of *elangyɛ* in its sexual meaning.

582
567 matters are more important than the father's ancestry. (1)

[554] 1. Among the Nkundɔ́ no shame is attached to not knowing the family of one's father. But not to be able to name the mother's clan is a great dishonor for it proves that she was a slave.

There is less opposition to the first generation born of a couple who were both slaves than for their parents, and it progressively decreases with each succeeding generation. There is practically no opposition now to the grandsons. The reason seems to be [597] that although receiving a wife from one's master in a regular marriage does not constitute emancipation (nsikɔ́, nsikola) for the slave, it is a kind of adoption (wɛ̌mya, -ɛ́mya). [246]

Article III. Kinship

582
835 Marriage between members of the same kin group (isangano, bosangema, from the verb -sangema, "to be related") is forbidden. But how far does such a kin group extend? It is impossible to give a general rule. On the one hand, it is certain that if two groups are not descended from a common ancestor there is no bond of kinship between them, even if they live side by side. But on the other hand, it is not possible to say that all those who are descended from the same ancestor are relatives and that marriage is forbidden between the various branches of the grouping they comprise. The question therefore amounts to knowing by which ancestor the exogamous grouping is defined. A decision on this point may only be made through the examination of each case individually.

614 It is impossible to deduce anything from the meaning of the term clan, for it is usually defined as "a grouping of families united to one another by kinship." This leaves us back where we started. The characteristics usually given for a clan are: generic name,

M
614 untangle all the threads. Thus it happens that young people form
582 relationships with the intention of marrying without knowing that
they are related; they are warned only by the opposition and ensuing
explanations of the elders.

We may conclude that marriage among descendants of a common ancestor is generally prohibited if they live in the same village. It is frequently permitted on the other hand, if they belong to different villages, provided that they are not, at the same time, related to one of the ancestresses.

M
Clearly, it is difficult to say what precise degree of kinship
582 formed the basis for the prohibition of or permission for a marriage
835 between descendants of a common ancestor, or what are the boundaries of an exogamous grouping.

It is also apparent from the preceding observations -- as
M
from the examination of affinity as an obstacle to marriage -- that
[611] the descent from a common mother is a more important factor than
descent from the father. This does not give proof of a form of
matriarchy, though it could be the remains or the beginning of one,
M
or could provide a partial explanation for one. It stems quite simply
[842] from the Nkundó notions concerning procreation, in which they
M
attribute the major role to the mother. There is also the fact that
[602] greater shame is attached to being united with a person descended
M
from the same woman, and finally the fact that they feel a stronger
[593] affection for the mother than for the father (a sentiment [250] which
is accentuated by polygamy). The three causes are closely related.

M
Finally, it should be noted that there is a group among the
184 Nkundó we are discussing which is less strict than the others in this
582 matter. The relatives among whom marriage is prohibited is
definitely more limited; that is, their exogamous groupings are more
limited. The people in question are the Bongale (see Introduction),
and the same phenomenon may be observed among the Elingá. (1)

P
[582]

1. The Batswá are still more liberal, and in this respect their practices differ very little from ancient European laws and customs.

602 brings forth reprimands on the part of the husband and his parents which obviously can easily degenerate into quarrels. If the omissions are so frequent and of such a nature that they can no longer be explained as simply forgetting, a whim, or a fit of peevishness, but [299] are taken to indicate spitefulness or vulgarity, the matter is [621] brought before the ndonga (who is often assisted by the family tribunal) or brought before the authority constituted by the woman's kin. If in spite of everything the expected improvement does not take place, the break-up is inevitable.

606 The husband's father and mother extend the same affection to their son's wife as they feel toward him. They consider her their own child, and it is not unusual to find that their love for the wife equals their feeling for their own son. She is only a relative by marriage, but out of affection for her they call her their child. She, for [601] her part, does not use toward them the term bakanga (or bakiló) but out of filial respect calls them "father" and "mother." Exceptions to this practice may be found, however.

606 224 If the father (and those who fall in the same category such as uncles, elder brothers, etc.) kills a large game animal, he is expected to give his son's (or brother's, etc.) wife a piece of meat, whose size depends on the number of daughters-in-law he has and which consists of one or several chops (bokálako) (1) and the piece at the nape of the neck (botómbyá).

606 ●835 Illicit relations between the husband's father and his daughter-in-law would be an unheard of crime. The same would be true with respect to any of the "superior" relatives. (2) The laws regulating

---

1. Called liéto among the Bolengé and the tribes of the Losanganya.

[178] [184] 2. Only the Boangi -- like the Elángá of the Losanganya - allow relations between a brother and the wife of his junior; and they are already beginning to find imitators among their neighbors to the southeast, the Injóló.

606 135 the relations between a wife and her husband's parents are closely connected with the rules pertaining to the prohibition related to affinity and seems to spring from the same source. Therefore it will be useful to have in mind what we have said in the preceding chapter, Article IV.

607 The husband's elder brothers treat his wife as their sister. The wife calls her husband's sisters [300] *bakiló*, but out of respect she often gives them the title of "mother." (1)

[601] 1. Among the Elángá the wife also calls her husband's sisters *bongíli* (pl. *bangíli*); they call her *bǒnongíli* (pl. *bǎnangíli*). A wife often calls her husband's mother *nyangôngíli*. *Bǎnangíli l'ǎnangíli* means "the brother's wives and their sisters-in-law."

587 After the husband's death, as has been said *suo loco*, his father or his brother may marry his widow. But this practice is not well regarded and is permitted only rarely, chiefly when the scattering of the family patrimony is feared or if the two interested parties have an unusual love for each other.

837 602 With respect to children or younger brothers and all those who fall into that category, the situation is altogether different. Illicit relations with wives of their father, grandfather, uncle, elder brother, or elder cousin, are judged much less severely. Generally, misconduct does not give rise to claims for payment, or the payment is demanded "for form's sake" and consists of a hen and a bunch of bananas. By means of this payment the guilty one recognizes his error and renders homage to the right of his elder.

[626] In general public opinion condemns these relations and often with great severity. The question of degree of kinship as well as other considerations result in a great diversity among the cases, so we will examine each situation separately and distinguish each time between the husband's reaction and that of public opinion.

000 the same rights as the other children of the polygynist.

595 The polygynist always sought to increase the number of his
556 wives, for his prestige rose and his fortune increased in that manner.
593 If anyone in civilized lands seeks to enlarge his fortune, this is
done, people say, in order to insure the future of his children. The
native thinks little about that; his primary idea is to enjoy himself
and to surpass others in prestige and esteem. As far as the future
of his children is concerned, there are polygynists who possess twenty
or thirty wives or even more, and sometimes they have only one or
two children. Also it is little in keeping with their notions to care
for the future; he who is still alive tomorrow must take care of
595 tomorrow then, so they reason. On the contrary, instead of caring
for his children, the polygynist often took great trouble to obtain a
593 wife for his son. The son, however, was not yet the owner of his
584 wife; it was, so to speak, only a loan. Not until after the death of
606 his father did he become owner. In some districts, when the father
had obtained a wife for his son, he first kept this wife for some time
for himself. Only after a few months did he give her to his son. In
595 other districts, when the wife was pregnant by the son, he was obliged
593 to send her for a few days to his father. He was not allowed to bear
606 the honor of fatherhood alone; his father must share that with him.
842 The father reserved for himself the honor of naming all of the children of his children. In some areas of the Congo, morals were so
551
835 low and common that the father even kept his own daughters in his
harem. This did not occur in Equatorial Africa, but there was a
custom that was not much better. The magician was sometimes
583 consulted about the bride price which the father tried to get for his
791 daughter, or the brother for his sister.

The magician then gave them the advice that they themselves should first have relations with their own daughter or sister. This custom existed almost everywhere in Equatorial Africa.

583 [535] Bride Price. In general, the daughter was given in marriage upon payment of a bride price. The father had little choice of the future husband of his daughter. The one who guaranteed the most goods in payment was certain to get her. Since, in most cases, the little daughter had not yet arrived at the years of maturity, there was naturally no question of her consent. The bride price was not paid all at once, but gradually during the years while the daughter grew up. Since the daughter was given without her consent

614 554 only of lesser importance (see below, under local groups). The headman of the B-group is the oldest of the seniors of the related A-groups, that is, the senior of the B-group. He is not, however, fully in charge of affairs like the elder of the A-group; he should rather be seen as princeps inter pares. This, of course, does not affect his position as senior of his own A-group.

614 423 Within a B-group landed property is often still regarded as belonging together, even though fixed boundaries between the territories of the constituent groups may already exist. In general, however, it may be assumed that the other elders will not object if a hunting expedition is extended to their territory, if, under certain circumstances, the soil of their district is used for planting, or if certain wild plants are taken from there for building a house or as raw material for a craftsman. Membership in a B-group is determined by membership in an A-group.

614 835 At this point we shall not enter into a discussion of the genealogical peculiarities which result from the significance of the bride price. We learned of one case of incest which occurred between members of two A-groups which formed a B-group, but we have not heard of anything like that occurring within an A-group. In this connection, however, we do not refer to those acts of incest which are required to make a particularly powerful charm become effective.

Summing up all that is characteristic of B-groups:

614 There is only one priest of the kinship group; cohesion within a B-group is very close, people cooperate extensively, all important matters are decided by the group, even those which, strictly speaking, concern only the constituent A-groups; in this connection, the oldest of the seniors has a somewhat privileged position.

Groups of Rank C

The cohesion within a group of this category is considerably looser, although on this level particularly one can find great differences among the individual groups. For example, the groups Lovendo and Besilo consider themselves much closer

614 to each other than either of these groups with Nsambásálá (see Diagram 2). It was for this reason that in my dissertation I divided this rank into two different ranks (kinship subgroups I° and II°). (15) Since there are no obvious criteria for the two

15. Müller, Fürstentum, p. 125.

ranks and since such a division is not possible in the other villages, I no longer make such distinctions.

[582] [835] The groups of rank C are the exogamous units of the future. Although marriage is not permitted between the members of different C-groups, sexual relations between them are permitted. This permission corresponds to the lonkana of the Bokóté (16).

16. Hulstaert, "Mariage," p. 97. f.

Groups of Rank D

614 582 The groups of this category constitute the truly exogamous units. It is true that marriages between "advanced persons" ["evolués"] take place even within rank D, but this practice is still frowned upon by the old people. In Isangi we also find the special stipulation that members of two D-groups, Ngelé and Nkoto, may intermarry, [195] but they may not enter into marriage with members of the D-group, Bolíma. Since in present-day Isangi, Bolíma is extinct, this stipulation only works to the disadvantage of the emigrants in Bolíma w'ási and of the children of sisters in other villages. The Bolíma group is regarded as the father group of Isangi (see Diagram 1); Ngelé is the group of the older brother, Nkoto that of the younger brother. This serves as an explanation for the special position of Bolíma in the exogamous system. It is said that it would not be right for a "father" to marry one of his "children" even if these children are the offspring of such distant generations that they intermarry.

595 837 not appreciate marital fidelity the same way we do. A wife's unfaithfulness is severely punished by the laws. But adultery may be discovered and known to all without causing shame or remorse. This is a marked difference between our way of thinking and that of the Nkundő. They maintain that a passing infidelity which is not followed through does not denote an absence of love for one's spouse, even if it is repeated. In spite of the implausibility of this statement, I had to accept it, for those who argued with me were so many, their positions so various, and they were really serious. Among them were a number of Christians with whom we are very satisfied and who conduct themselves admirably, as do their wives. They consider these errors to be momentary failings [48] due to passion, which permit love to remain. Indeed, often these men and women are models in the performance of their other duties. This misbehaviour is without doubt considered very serious -- their anger shows clearly that they do not consider it trivial -- but it does not exclude love and thus, as far as everything else is concerned, the spouses continue giving proof of it to each other.

Let us not forget that many elements may lead to a fall and that consciences may go far astray. On the other hand, the fact that a husband is tolerant, even to the point of exploiting his wife, does not exclude a certain love for her; a husband may be extremely indulgent and at the same time jealous to the point of crime. All that may be found among the Whites, after all. Love without the feeling of duty will not suffice to sustain a union.

Moreover, there is no dogma, no moral teaching based on religion, to restrain the instincts. And we should add that among these [562] primitive people, the woman's natural tendency to please, to submit to a man's desires, is highly developed. In Europe these feelings are channeled by the Christian religion and its influence on society. Here they encounter no direct obstacle except for sanctions. Before marriage [836] sexual passion and all sensations connected with it and adjunct to it can be pursued without physical, moral, or social obstacles, at least at the present time. The surroundings in which a girl grows up and the example and conversations of her companions will tend even to push her in that direction.

856
864 During a girl's early childhood beginning when she is still nursing, a mother with foresight will work to make her organs as perfect as possible. By applying pressure repeatedly and for long periods, she molds, so to speak, the outside in order to make it narrow, as this quality is greatly valued by our people.

It is the mother, too, who trains the girl in her preparations for married life. She teaches her how to behave toward her future husband, and at the same time instructs her in the duties of a good housewife (see Chapter X, Article VIII).

836
864 Certain forms of behavior, although their relationship to our subject is only superficial and external, must nevertheless be mentioned. An adult man will often take in his arms a little girl who has not yet been weaned, or perhaps only slightly more developed. He considers this child to be his wife. He has paid no bride price for her. But since she is a sister, cousin, or other relative of one of his wives, she is a "wife" from his point of view; that is, not only will it be possible for him to marry her later on, but even without becoming her husband he will enjoy a certain liberty in relation to her. (1) Thus, when such a man takes his young "wife" in his arms,

1. See Chapter VI, Article V, 2.

he is enjoying an anticipation of the future and speaks to her [66] in that sense, often accompanying his words with intimate caresses.

The same practice, mutatis mutandis, may be observed on the part of a woman toward a small boy whom she can consider as her "husband."

304
582

2. Circumcision

Circumcision is generally practiced. It is usually performed at an early age. Without going into the details at this point (1) or

1. They will be found in Chapter X, Article VII.

549 available to me, the government recognizes the presence of 702 free women out of a population of 8,386 persons who are not permanent residents.

Article IV. Premarital Sexuality

836 Under this heading we will examine:

1. What the Nkundó think about virginity.
2. Relations between single people.
3. The Nkundó's attitude toward births outside of wedlock.

1. Virginity

The word "virginity" has a double meaning. It may signify the presence of the hymen, the wholeness of the body, or it may have the meaning given in the dictionary: "virgin, a girl who has never had intercourse with a man."

Because of the practice described in Article II, 1, Nkundó girls who remain physically virgin until adulthood are extremely rare. Even if a girl does not begin sexual life until after her body has reached maturity -- a situation which occurs rarely today but which was formerly common, (2) [78] she will not give herself up to carnal pleasures until after she has broken her hymen.

585
836 What is the Nkundó attitude toward virginity? This question must be divided into two parts:

1) Does the future husband attach any importance to the physical virginity of his fiancée? Evidently not from what we have seen.

2) Does he attach any importance to her moral virginity? That is, is it a matter of indifference to him whether or not he is the first to have intercourse with her?

---

2. See no. 2 of the present article.

585 836 To say that it makes absolutely no difference to him might be too extreme a statement. But it is certainly not very important to him, since the primary purpose of his marriage is to obtain progeny and to follow his natural instinct in an honest fashion. This does not mean that he likes to marry a woman of loose morals; quite the contrary.

171 585 836 What is the linguistic data on the subject of virginity? In an interesting paper entitled "The Principles of Bantu Marriage" (_Africa_ Vol. 2, No. 3 (1929), p. 255), E. Torday says, "Some of the most competent philologists assure us that in most Bantu languages there is no word for 'virgin'; .... The Wachagga, who may be an exception, use the word 'unimpaired,' and it is perhaps in the use of similar expressions, not exclusively applied to physical virginity, that we shall find the explanation of the absence of a specific term."

585 836 192 Thus the Lonkundó have a noun: _ekâtɛ́_. It is derived from the root _kât_ (the verb is _-kâtema_), which means "to be firmly attached, to be tenacious" (e.g., _lokâtɔ́_, "tenacity"). _Ekâtɛ́_ designates something which is difficult to open, to separate, to break up, especially fruit with a tough, hard, thick rind. It is applied to the _litófɛ́_, _lisɛ́njá_, and the _lindongó_ when it is impossible to break the shell which contains the edible portion even though the fruit is ripe. [79] This term is used in a figurative sense for a woman who resists seduction, who "does not allow herself to be opened." It is not at all specific and in no way the equivalent of our word "virginity," rather it seems to signify "chastity."

Other Nkundó tribes seem to have a specific word, _bokotó_. I learned this term from natives living between the Ikelemba and the Tshuapa, both east and west of the Julɛ́, as well as from some Basɛ́kâ Bongwalanga from the old Lulonga District. The missionaries of the Apostolic Prefecture of Basankusu use it in their publications to mean "virginity, virgin." I was not able to get an exact idea of its precise meaning, but as far as I was able to make out it is much closer to "virgin chastity" than _ekâtɛ́_. In any case it includes no reference to physical virginity. (1)

000

1. We should not be astonished that "primitive" tribes have no word in their language

000

> which specifically expresses our idea of virginity, nor deduce from its absence that the thing itself is unknown to them. The Greeks and Romans were well acquainted with it, yet they had no precise word for it. Parthenos and Virgo mean simply "unmarried girl." The Germanic words such as Maagd and Jungfrau, which now signify "virgin," originally had the same meaning as the Greek and Latin terms.

585
● 836
The foregoing does not imply that every Nkundő girl is free to have sexual relations and that public opinion approves of libertinism among single people. We will examine this question in the following paragraphs.

896
164
2. Sexual relations between single people

In dealing with this question we must distinguish between relations between adults and the contacts between nonadults. We will therefore examine the two situations separately so that at the end we can attempt to explain the changes in native attitudes in this realm that have occurred. [80]

A. Before physical maturity. We will first relate what the natives tell about customary practices in the past, and then describe the practices of the present day.

In the past, sexual contacts between young people not yet marriageable were severely punished by their parents. The children were taught that those who were guilty would be struck down by a very serious illness which was inevitably fatal. This illness was called by the generic term ndota (1), and the more specific one, esέmbέji.

> 1. Ndota is the name of the illness which is the punishment for an infraction of a sexual

836
864 prohibition under any circumstances. I have heard these same terms used also by the natives in the vicinity of Coquilhatville.

The body becomes flabby and without strength, and this weakness ends in a fatal paralysis (byongé nnyǎnyuka or nkatááná). In addition, the girls feared that their sexual organs, not yet fully formed, would be torn. They were also imbued with a very intense fear: bofolu w'aende, "the fear of males," bofolu w'ǎmato, "the fear of females." They also feared death -- bálotákí iwá. The parents added that sexual acts were free from danger only between persons of the requisite age.

836 This does not mean that children did not commit indecent acts.
864 The game of ioto, in which little girls try to cook (and which is al-
838 ways one of their favorite games (2) as it probably is throughout the world), often gave rise to it. Small boys joined in the game in order to taste the meal. And quite naturally they began to play at "husband and wife," more or less. Often this game involved only innocent imitations, but other times touching and exhibitions occurred between children of the same sex or of opposite sexes. This game is far more dangerous nowadays, [81] because of a change in the attitude of young people toward sexual matters.

The game of yembankongo, in which boys, imitating monkeys, chase each other through the trees and creepers can -- and does - result in reprehensible scenes.

582 In former times most girls were married before puberty. But
178 their husbands did not touch them until they had completed their normal development.

582 Among some individuals the fear of sexual relations was so
838 deeply rooted that it persisted even beyond the age limit and was
864

2. Some boys imitate this game in order to acquire the habit of preparing their own meals. Later they benefit from it on more than one occasion.

582 conquered only by repeated assaults of passion. Thus it is generally
833 known among the natives that young women used to seek refuge in
864 their mother's house when the husband wanted to begin making use of
his rights as a husband. The mother would try to persuade her daughter to submit to the law of life. But sometimes, if her child seemed too resistant, the mother made excuses for her and asked the husband to consider her daughter's youth. The man usually wanted to remain on good terms with his mother-in-law so he did not insist and resigned himself to waiting till nature influenced the spirit and heart of his wife.

Since young people were brought up in deep fear of dangerous relations, it should not surprise us that this feeling became a real habit and did not disappear spontaneously the moment a certain degree of liberty was permitted. As a matter of fact, could we not make similar observations in Europe?

This is the natural explanation for the praiseworthy degree of morality among adolescents in the past.

Nowadays all that has changed. The young people follow
178 where their passions lead them. Not the slightest check is placed on
● 836 their impulses. Parents pay only slight attention to the conduct of
864 their children. [82] It is better not to inquire into the morality of
modern youth. Husbands no longer respect the bodies of their adolescent brides, who are themselves quite used to a sexual life and eagerly look forward to it; and no longer know the feeling of "the fear of men." Should we then be astonished at the frightening de-
[164] crease in the birth rate (1) and the ever increasing spread of venereal diseases, which seem to have been unknown in the past?

The reasons for this change will be investigated further on, under the letter C.

836 B. Between adults. Here the Nkundó are very lenient. There
is a difference, however, between the socio-legal and moral viewpoints, although as we shall see the latter is influenced by the former.

[562] A woman is entirely free, legally speaking, as long as the
first payment on her bride price has not been made. No man has

---

1. The natives say that in the past young wives quickly became pregnant. And now ...

562 exclusive rights over her. Hence the proverb: Mbɛmbo ǐle nd'âns'ôimbo 836 ɛfa la nkɔ́lɔ́, "boimbo fruit found under the tree have no owner; they [539] belong to the first person who gathers them." Thus a girl for whom nothing has been paid belongs to no one. A woman free in this manner does not infringe on the rights of any man in her sexual relations. There are therefore no sanctions against her licentiousness.

836 864 Furthermore, the discovery of her activities gives rise to no shame. At most more serious parents will rebuke children who go too far -- the girls because they abuse the body and reduce their value for a prospective marriage (2), the boys because they [83] run the risk of financial difficulties (the dangers of adultery, indemnity for childbirth with death as a result, etc.).

[585] 2. Not that a smaller bride price would be given for them. But a serious man would rather not take a woman for wife who has "run around" a great deal and therefore is more likely to commit adultery, to be unfaithful, and less likely to become the mother of a numerous progeny.

626 836 Public opinion is even more lenient than the parents. This attitude is easy to understand: strangers need fear no unpleasant consequences. Errors of this sort are generally considered natural weaknesses, provided that they do not occur too frequently. For public opinion is hard on people who run from one to another; they are stigmatized with the name ebɛ́bɔ́ɛ́, "unfaithful, flighty, without intelligence or reasoning powers," or ebɔ́ngɛ́, a stronger term with the same meaning.

836 From all the foregoing should we deduce that every woman is free to indulge fully in fornication? On the basis of the above considerations we could frankly conclude the affirmative. The behavior that can be observed from day to day fully confirms this answer. Some people stray more or less accidentally, but for others the practice quickly becomes a habit. And it can be said of all of them that

● 836 they succumb to any favorable opportunity. The validity of this generalization is not affected by extremely rare exceptions which may be encountered and which are due either to a constitutional abnormality or to an extraordinarily firm Christian conviction. How should 836 178 these observations be reconciled with the statement so often heard from natives that the situation was entirely different before the coming of the white men? It was not unusual to see young women not only abstaining from sexual relations but having such a "fear of men" that they drove away seducers and defended their chastity by hitting them with a stick.

When the woman did not accept the young man's proposition, she considered it a grave insult. The initiator was entitled to no indemnity "for blows and wounds." The woman replied only in violent terms, in word or act. [84] Often she went and insulted the mother of the guilty party. When the latter was told the reason for this behavior, she could only turn on her misbehaving son and usually gave him a good talking to; if he was young enough she gave him a good beating. Thus the girl had every right to defend herself.

If the provocation gave rise to no complications in family or society, the parents paid a lot less attention. But they tried to teach [864] their children discretion in these dangerous matters, though their instruction primarily took the form of a lesson after an error was committed, or sometimes apropos of an incident that had befallen someone else. Some parents were very severe. These attitudes were based on a vague sense of morality which was not deduced from philosophical reasoning or religious or superstitious ideas but which was innate and instinctive so to speak. In addition, the fear of excesses and eventual social consequences no doubt also played a considerable [577] role. Excesses were feared above all, and an isolated occurrence was regarded more or less as a momentary weakness.

To form an accurate picture of the situation that existed in the past, we must not lose sight of the fact that, because of very early marriages, the number of young single women was necessarily limited.

The attitude toward single men was more lenient than toward 562 836 girls, unless their behavior had any consequences and apart from the danger of their actions becoming habitual, leading inevitably to palavers.

174 836 C. An attempt to explain the modern changes. The facts themselves as much as a knowledge of human nature, together with the lenient attitude of parents and the lack of sanctions (the last two points are relevant only to relations between adults), are in direct contradiction to the statements of the natives. Should these not therefore be explained as exaggerations, stemming from a desire for national glory and a resentment of the situation created by colonization? The [124] natives whose strange assertions I have cited are elderly and serious; they demonstrate all the qualities of truthful witnesses. But are they not -- perhaps unconsciously -- laudatores temporis acti? I thought so for a long time and never allowed their statements to carry any weight. I have discussed this question over and over again, not with one or two natives, but with dozens of the most serious and sincere people, under various circumstances and in regions far removed from one another. Yet all supported the same argument, and I could never make my point of view prevail. I always received the same reply: "You Whites are not willing to believe us when we tell you what we know better than you, what is the pure truth. You are so involved in your own point of view!" Finally, before so much formal testimony -- uniform, unchanging, repeated ad nauseum in such varied circumstances as to individuals, times, and places -- my attachment to my own idea began, with some regret, to falter.

But how is it possible to resolve the contradiction between a rather broad liberty and the practice of chastity? And above all how can less than fifty years have sufficed to transform any attachment to virginity into licentiousness? The difficulty presents itself for relations between adults, but it is especially great with respect to reprehensible contacts between nonadults, because of the terrible sanction that we have described above.

The first objection may be partially met if we take into account the habit of "the fear of men," which is acquired and maintained through the severe prohibition against sexual relations before physical maturity and the terrible punishment with which the transgressor is threatened. [86]

The second objection on the other hand is much more serious. It is the one which above all has always kept me from accepting the

174 thesis of the natives. This is how it is refuted by those who contradict
896 me: "When the first black soldiers and their assistants, archers, and
[175] spear carriers were sent by the Whites to conquer us, they committed
all sorts of atrocities and permitted themselves all the licentious acts
that occurred to them. Among other things they took advantage of
young girls, even those who were not nubile. They required immature
girls to engage in sexual intercourse. They even went so far as to
force people to commit incest, uniting mother and son, father and
daughter, pointing a gun at their breasts. (1)

> 1. The fact that the soldiers required that immature girls be delivered over to them, because they were afraid of venereal diseases, is still notorious.

These accusations are so shocking and repugnant that one refuses to admit their veracity. Yet it is possible that they correspond to reality. For one thing, the informants are entirely reliable. For another, the account is internally consistent. As a matter of fact, scenes of the sort described seemed to have occurred at the beginning of almost all colonizations. Their authors were usually the natives of other regions rather than Whites (in our area Europeans were almost entirely absent from the first contacts between the inhabitants and the new power). By the nature of things anything can be expected at such a time. For occupations are carried out under martial law. And everyone is aware that war unleashes the human beast which -- as even contemporary history abundantly shows -- is capable of worse and more repugnant excesses.

It is possible to object to all this for, if the assertions of the natives are true, the events they describe did not give rise to a practice of incest and, consequently, need not have given rise to the far-reaching changes which we have observed. [87] But the two situations are entirely different. For licentious behavior between single people is more or less consistent with the passionate tendencies of human nature, which were mostly checked by the fear of a sanction -- a terrible sanction, it is true, but it was shown in fact to be nonexistent. Incest,

174
836 on the other hand, is extremely repugnant by nature, especially for the Nkundɔ́. It is a vice which comes about only as a result of special beliefs or through a fundamental degeneration of sexuality.

The breaking up of the framework of traditional organization may furnish a partial explanation in this realm as in many others. In the case of sexual relations between single adults, it might even be deemed sufficient. As much may be said about greed, vanity, the desire for ostentation and display. These are very natural sentiments in a woman, and they were greatly stimulated by the dazzling riches imported from Europe. But these facts are not sufficient in themselves to account for everything. They are especially and entirely inadequate in explaining the considerable changes in the relations between immature children, and we are thus forced to accept the explanation given by serious natives.

3. Children born out of wedlock

848 Among the Nkundɔ́, giving birth to a child outside of wedlock has never from time immemorial been considered a grave misdemeanor. It is not considered criminal, as ethnographers say it is among many other African peoples.

Furthermore, this attitude logically follows from the liberty permitted to adolescents, as described above. Neither the woman nor her lover are harassed or punished as a result. On the contrary, the grandparents joyfully receive the child, who adds to the size, power, and wealth of the clan. [88] For an illegitimate child (entombɔ́) (1)
593
614 does not belong to its natural father. It is incorporated into the mother's family. It is said that he is born without a father. His

---

1. Such a child is also known as bọna ɓa wanẹ́, "child of the sunlight," or bọna ɓa bombamboka, "child of the highway" or "of a girl of the streets." Among the Bombomba the term bọkẹlankɔ́lo is also heard.

584 For his part, the young man gives her some small game animals 431 (especially the big rat called botómba, lemurs of the genus esɛ́ndɛ́, etc.) or fish. These gifts have no specific name. The man's gifts are simply called mpató "gift sent"; the woman's are called botímo, a term used for all presents given by a woman to her lover (see also Chapter VI, Article VII, 2). The verb used with this noun is tumba, "to make burn." Etymologically the two words are in no way related.

Sometimes the sweethearts give each other a secret mutual pledge of their desire to be married. This pledge is called bondengɛ́ or bonengɛ́ and consists particularly of a necklace of beads called bafomakongo (or, more rarely, bisengɛ́ or bisenggɛ́la). [103]

581 In choosing their wives, the men allow themselves to be motivated by the various factors which may influence them in this realm, such as physical or moral attractions. Wealth or social rank almost never play a part in determining the choice. Youth is easily carried away by physical attraction and passionate love. Men who are already more settled as well as the more sensible young men pay more attention to moral qualities, such as general conduct, submissiveness, goodness, gentleness, and especially diligence, careful attention to work, etc. In short, we find here the full range of individual variations that are encountered elsewhere, with the exception of marriages motivated by financial or political interests or by the degree of moral elevation that can be aroused by the Christian religion, such as pure devotion.

584 After a few days of courtship the girl lets her suitor know that if he really loves her he had better settle the matter and that consequently he must obtain her parents' consent. [836] Meanwhile they have already had intimate relations several times; therefore the moment of official negotiations should not be delayed.

586 587 584 Seeking a wife who is already married is in no way different from the procedure we have just described, but a great deal of circumspection must be used so that the husband's suspicions will not be aroused. The exchange of the secret pledge we have mentioned occurs especially in this situation.

Once the divorce is completed, the woman falls in the same category as a single girl since she is free.

Seeking a future wife in an as yet unborn child or one that is very young will be discussed in a special section (Chapter IV, Article I). [105]

584 The young man informs his own parents of his intentions, and they make certain that this marriage merits [106] consideration and that there are no obstacles or too great difficulties that might cause trouble later on.

For the official negotiations the suitor and his father (or a substitute for the latter) go to the home of the girl's parents, who inquire as to the purpose of their visit, and when they discover that so-and-so would like to marry their daughter, they ask: "How do you want her?" (1) "I want her for my wife," he replies. Whereupon they tell him to make the necessary arrangements to make the first payment on the bride price. When the two parties have come to an agreement the parents of the intended conclude the conversation by saying: "We are not opposed; it is up to you."

[586] The formalities of the negotiations in the case of a woman who already has a husband do not differ from those for a girl who is free. Only, in the first instance the proceedings must go on with great circumspection so as not to anger the abandoned husband. In addition the woman's parents inform the suitor and his family of the amount of the bride price they must bring in order to reimburse the first husband. (2)

In cases of engagement before birth or at a very early age, the same procedures are observed, but they are adapted to the special circumstances of the situation, which will be explained in detail in Chapter IV.

After the negotiations have thus begun, the suitor's father prepares the first payment of the bride price which, accompanied by his son and the ndonga, he delivers to the future wife's family. But let us first explain the ndonga.

● [886] 1. That is, do you want her as your legitimate wife, or are you only planning to live with her for a time? In this fashion the parents of the intended assure themselves that the suitor has serious intentions of contracting a real marriage

2. See Chapter VIII, Articles II and III.

595x
586x only consider the marriages of adult individuals through the nkúmbó, that is to say, unions that are truly and perfectly voluntary on both sides. Finally, we should exclude those wives of polygamists who prefer monogamy and have taken advantage of an opportunity to break their unions in order to enter into a marriage contract with a bachelor. It seems to me that when these reasonable considerations and restrictions are taken into account, the figures established will not argue against the stability of Nkundó marriages to the extent that one might have thought at first. Or at least that is my impression, derived from the many cases that have come to my attention and that it has been my duty to investigate thoroughly in the course of my ministry as a priest.

The 112 marriages recorded in our last two books at Flandria can be broken down as follows (1): 18 widows, (2) 6 inherited wives, [47] 1 replacement, 3 cases of women who had broken marriages entered into before puberty, 29 wives of polygamists, 18 divorced wives of monogamous men, and 37 first marriages. If we exclude the replacement, the marriages of children and of former wives of polygamists, but include widows and women who are inherited, we arrive at 37 + 18 + 6 = 61 persons for whom their present marriage is still their first, as against 18 clear-cut cases of divorce.

[797] Nevertheless, it should be noted that these figures are based on only a tiny minority of the population and on that part which, from our point of view, may be considered the best, because these people are willing to submit to the yoke of Christian morality. In addition these people are in their prime, and it is impossible to say whether later on they will persevere in these good inclinations. But in any case these instances show that faithfulness to a promise can, and in fact does, exist among the Nkundó.

595x
837 Without a doubt one of the most beautiful aspects of love in general, and marital love in particular, is conjugal faithfulness. As will be shown in detail in Chapter VI, Article VII, 2, the Nkundó do

---

1. I am excluding the 14 Batswa cases.

2. As against widows who are inherited.

595 837 not appreciate marital fidelity the same way we do. A wife's unfaithfulness is severely punished by the laws. But adultery may be discovered and known to all without causing shame or remorse. This is a marked difference between our way of thinking and that of the Nkundɔ. They maintain that a passing infidelity which is not followed through does not denote an absence of love for one's spouse, even if it is repeated. In spite of the implausibility of this statement, I had to accept it, for those who argued with me were so many, their positions so various, and they were really serious. Among them were a number of Christians with whom we are very satisfied and who conduct themselves admirably, as do their wives. They consider these errors to be momentary failings [48] due to passion, which permit love to remain. Indeed, often these men and women are models in the performance of their other duties. This misbehaviour is without doubt considered very serious -- their anger shows clearly that they do not consider it trivial -- but it does not exclude love and thus, as far as everything else is concerned, the spouses continue giving proof of it to each other.

Let us not forget that many elements may lead to a fall and that consciences may go far astray. On the other hand, the fact that a husband is tolerant, even to the point of exploiting his wife, does not exclude a certain love for her; a husband may be extremely indulgent and at the same time jealous to the point of crime. All that may be found among the Whites, after all. Love without the feeling of duty will not suffice to sustain a union.

Moreover, there is no dogma, no moral teaching based on religion, to restrain the instincts. And we should add that among these
[562] primitive people, the woman's natural tendency to please, to submit
to a man's desires, is highly developed. In Europe these feelings are
channeled by the Christian religion and its influence on society. Here
[836] they encounter no direct obstacle except for sanctions. Before marriage
sexual passion and all sensations connected with it and adjunct to it can
be pursued without physical, moral, or social obstacles, at least at
the present time. The surroundings in which a girl grows up and the
example and conversations of her companions will tend even to push her
in that direction.

595x 837 548 Finally, let us not forget the spirit of gain and greed. Except in a few instances, a woman expects remuneration from a man to whom she has surrendered her body. Many infidelities may be explained by this practice, at least at the present time. But on the other hand, it should be noted that the woman's demand for a "wage" from her lover may be explained by an amorous concern; by giving the woman a gift or an amount of money the man shows [49] his regard for her; it is a demonstration of his affection for her, and the woman wants to be paid in order to be sure of her lover's love. That is not to say that such instances are common or frequent, but such a feeling is natural and actually exists in more than one case. (1)

1. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 2.

It is not surprising that the woman who lives in circumstances which are always unfavorable to chastity and marital fidelity is easily led to adultery and often falls. That is the basis of the proverb: [589] *bǒmoto ndé lofolókó, nkó ngonda ěfá'nd'ósengámé*, "the woman is a chrysalis; there is no forest where she does not hang" -- a clear condemnation of the frivolity of the daughters of Eve in the land of the Nkundó. Nevertheless, these moral criticisms in the form of proverbs can be accepted only in a general way and must be understood *cum grano salis*; they leave the door wide open for exceptions.

595x 152 In his *Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge* [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], (p. 38), Jadot has written: "The Bantu is capable of love . . . and that is all, and his wife -- no matter what has been said -- of a certain amount of marital fidelity. In general, neither the one nor the other go too far. Platonism, Petrarchism, and Romanticism are foreign to the love of the natives . . . I know . . . of cases of fierce jealousy and of beautiful faithfulness." (2)

2. See also *ibid.*, p. 208 ff.

152 We conclude that love exists among the Nkundó. This feeling is subjected to harsh attacks and is affected by many unfavorable circumstances, which may account for its imperfection and for certain

291 184 The nkásá is unknown beyond the Jwalé and the Luilaka. In that region the women tie a string (or a belt of beads) around themselves and attach a second piece of cloth to it.

291 Thus the male garment is a rudimentary sort of shorts, open on the sides, while female dress is much more open. In general the efufa is an appropriate protection of one's modesty, but it is inadequate in certain positions. (2)

[611] [196] 2. It may be interesting to note that etóo nsamányá, or just plain etóo, which is the term for a man's garment, also indicates the male line of descent, while the female line is often designated by the term nkásá (sometimes by the word jwǒmoto derived from bǒmoto, "woman"). Let us add that lonkundó jwǎ nkásá means "pure, flawless Lonkundo, not corrupted by foreign influences." This expression should be compared with the following phrases: langue maternel, moedertaal, "mother tongue," etc.

291 177 At present the nkásá is no longer worn except by a few elderly inhabitants of villages far from the main communication lines. Everywhere else the ancient mode of dress has been replaced by materials imported from Europe. The women wear at least a sangatúmbo, a kind of short skirt which falls from their loins at least to the middle of their thighs if not further. Middle-aged men in the interior have simply changed the material of their garment but not its form. The younger ones, on the contrary, have frankly adopted the European mode of dress.

291 581 [824] [837] A married woman is not allowed to enter the village of her relatives by marriage (bakiló) or appear before them [54] without supplementing her usual attire with one or more beleleke (banana leaves cut into fringes). The term bakiló must be understood as it is meant by the Nkundó; it excludes those with whom the wife may sometimes perform the sexual act and who are called "husbands" broadly speaking.

548
178 The fact of colonization has greatly changed the situation. The freedom of communication across great distances, the introduction of new and varied goods and especially of money, have had a great influence on the development of prostitution. The economic system of the people remains the same; but when the women are away from their families or their husbands, they spend their means at their own discretion. And, since the objects of adornment available to them have greatly increased, they have a personal incentive to engage in immoral conduct.

The vice has not therefore taken on European forms; modern changes have simply increased -- but in enormous proportions -- the number of occasional streetwalkers. The development of this state of affairs is encouraged by the procuring activities of certain polygamous and even monogamous men living near European centers, which give rise to the attitude of their wives. For though the husband may reap the primary financial benefit, the wife is not deprived of her little gain, and her native cupidity easily pushes her to engage without scruple in commercializing her body.

837
548 The women under discussion are usually married. Often they have a recognized lover among the laborers in the camps, and he usually pays for their faithfulness. Thus we arrive at the married woman with a regular paying lover. [76]

This form of prostitution has developed even outside laborers' camps. It is to be found among the people on the river banks, who are more in contact with the Whites and their people and in the neighboring villages. It is especially prevalent among the Beloko, fairly near Coquilhatville, where it is spreading even among wives of monogamists. This perversion takes root all the more rapidly because it has a certain resemblance to the ancestral custom of a recognized concubinage (see Chapter VI, Article VIII, 2) and like the latter, it often does not take the form of prostitution. That is to say, the illicit relationship is not engaged in for the sake of gain. Furthermore, an arrangement is often made with the husband.

[369] As to the other forms of prostitution listed, they are still unknown in the native villages and in the small centers located in the territory studied. Some of them, however, may develop in the fairly near future.

428
587 Lastly, these facts demonstrate collective ownership within the clan or the extended family. When a close relative, such as Bosɔlɔ for instance, marries a widow, he considers her legally as his legitimate spouse, just as she was the legitimate spouse of the deceased. [200] No new bride-price agreement is necessary, since the preceding one continues to be valid. The only new element introduced is that another person in the family of the deceased enters into a marriage bond with the widow. Whether the person marrying the woman is the legitimate heir or a close relative makes no difference because of the community of interests that exists (the children belong to Bosɔlɔ as much as to the heir, for example). (1)

1. We will come back to this question further on (see Article IX).

837 Because of the superficial resemblance between different situations, it should be mentioned here that the enjoyment of a woman in a common-law relationship is not asked for exclusively in the case of a widow. Such a request may also be made in connection with the wife of a polygamist while the husband is still living, but this is done only by a close relative and even then is not well regarded. Usually the situation is as follows: a man falls in love with one of the wive's in his relative's harem, and she shares his sentiments. He takes her home with him. There is a palaver. The husband is furious, breaks of all relations with the seducer, and wants no more of his invitations or his gifts, which means the quarrel is serious. Therefore, other relatives intervene to try and reconcile the two adversaries; seeing that there is no way to prevent the cohabitation of the pair or judging that such action would not be expedient, they try to pacify the legitimate husband. Through the agency of his elder brother, the lover sends him a gift in entreaty. The husband, finding no one on his side, bows down before the fait accompli, accepts the gift (bompángá), and yields the enjoyment of the woman. Instead of going about the matter in this cavalier fashion, the lover may also make his request in the normal manner. If for one reason or another the lovers want to stop living together, they separate without further

837 ceremony. If the husband is kindly disposed toward them, he gives back to his relative the valuables the latter has paid, and the incident is closed. [201]

That is what happened some time ago to Insɛ́lo, of Bokenyola (Bonjoku). (1) In the harem of his maternal uncle, Efonja Is'Ôfuwa, who was originally from Bonjoku but had been integrated into the Bongale, he had noticed a certain Mbilɛ́eyenga, originally from Bosáá, and "his heart was rent asunder," as the Nkundɔ́ say. Through the agency of his older first cousins Mpetsɛ́ ɛ́â Lingomo, ye sent Efonja a bompángá of 6 rings, asking him to be kind enough to allow him to cohabit with this woman. His request was well received. But after a certain number of years their passion cooled, and Insɛ́lo wished to contract a proper marriage to give himself posterity. He therefore parted from Mbilɛ́, who went back to her husband. The latter returned the 6 rings to Insɛ́lo, because he did not want to enrich himself at the expense of a relative.

Article III. The Bosɔ́lɔ́

428 The marriage of a bosɔ́lɔ́ is a special form of the inheritance
587 of women.
768 The term bosɔ́lɔ́ is used everywhere. The Injɔ́lɔ́ also use a synonym, njɛ́mɔ́, an incorrect term derived from the verb ɛ́mola, "to make [someone] get up." Thus they say ɛ́moja bǒna njɛ́mɔ́, "to give the child (son, daughter) a bosɔ́lɔ́. (2) Among the Beloko and their Elɛ́ngá the term bombɛ́jɛ́ is used as well as bosɔ́lɔ́.

On the day when the widows are "lifted from the ground" and

---

1. Now chief of the Bonkoso.

2. The Elanga tribes in the Losanganya region also use this expression.

583x 184 a new element from the legal standpoint. This is clearly apparent in the repugnance with which these same Bombwanja who practice the form of exchange just described regard an exchange pure and simple, which will be described below.

The exchange of widows is also practiced by the Elíngɔ. Like the Bombwanja, they also have the two forms of quasi-exchange described at the beginning of this article.

4) On the other hand, a true exchange of wives exists among the riverain peoples known as the Boɔ́yɔ and the Longa (1); in their dialect it is called iengyɔ. Two men exchange wives. If the bride price of one is greater than that of the other, the difference is refunded. Such an exchange is carried out with the consent of the women involved.

583x 184 152 [837] Let us see how such an exchange usually comes about. Imagine two men, Bokulɔ and Mpolɛ, with their respective wives, Mbindo and Baɔnɔ. Suppose that Bokulɔ falls in love with Baɔnɔ, the wife of Mpolɛ, and the pair become involved in an adulterous relationship. There is a cooling of Baɔnɔ's love for her husband Mpolɛ; she performs fewer and fewer services for him, etc. The same thing happens to Bokulɔ's relationship with his wife Mbindo. The latter is jealous; her patience is soon at an end. She discusses the matter with Mpolɛ, her rival's husband. "See how your wife deceives you; she no longer loves you. My husband is forsaking me [217] for her; he no longer loves me. This is a challenge to you as well as to me. If you are a man (1), pick up the challenge."

---

1. They live near the mouth of the Salonga (in the villages of Bonsela, Pomputɔ, Nkɔse, Bombomba, Isakɔ, etc.)

1. "Man" in the sense of vir (jwende); the meaning is: "If you have any courage, show that you are not a coward."

573* dare to maintain that a woman's speaking out about her husband is a
578 sign of affection. On the other hand, a woman who instead bewails her lot softly and quietly saying, ngɔ́ya ñkeke lɔ́í l'ɔ̌m'o̱né̱ na?, ("mother, what shall I do with this husband?"), will not be with him long. Her complaint is chiefly egoistic, while the other seeks the good of her spouse and her household.

As we have already mentioned, the perfect punishment, and one frequently employed in ordinary cases, is a husband's refusal to eat food prepared by his wife or to wash with water she has drawn or boiled. It is a type of reprimand to which she is sensitive. The husband's aversion must not last too long, however, for it could lead to
●[837] a breaking up of the marriage, more especially since in the end the woman would begin to suspect infidelities -- which do occur.

The fact that Nkundɔ́ law does not allow the husband complete freedom and clearly limits his rights does not in any way exclude the occurrence of infractions. The mass of human beings is always inferior to the moral ideal imposed by legislation. But these provisions of Nkundɔ́ law do protect a woman against her husband's excesses. We have already cited the expedients available to her: abandonment of the home shared with her husband; legal apologies (bo̱ɔ́ndo̱), indemnity for injuries (lio̱mbo̱). In addition, a wife who has been wronged will abstain from foods (such as meat or palm nuts) given her by her husband and, even more important, will refuse to have sexual relations with him. And for our people this is a great affront. In order to re-establish a normal and peaceful situation, a husband often has to pacify [281] his spouse by means of a bo̱ɔ́ndo̱. In addition to the measures mentioned, a wife may of course use insults, of which every native has a rich and varied collection.

No one can condemn or reprimand a woman for abusing a lazy husband. If he does not go to the hunt and bring back game, if he neglects the building or repair of the house, if he is too much of a laggard, if he does not fell the forest to set up food crops, it is clearly he who is in the wrong, and he will find no one who will approve of his conduct and condemn his wife. If he turns out to be incorrigible, it will not be long before the marriage is broken, according
[539] to the axiom elɔ́ng'ey'ɔ̌moto ñk'okɔ́fo, "the woman's victory is divorce."

606 the act of procreation on the part of one of them. Perhaps this idea is latent in the native mind, or at least is at the basis of this rule. The fact that this hypothesis applies only to the wife's mother-in-law [mother?] does not weaken it; for in native eyes [291] the other instances are entirely without importance. (1)

1. See, for example, Chapter II, Article X, and Chapter V, Articles II and III.

606 292 Another regulation pertaining to the mother-in-law requires that she -- and all the women who are given the same title in current usage -- may appear in her son-in-law's village only when dressed in a bọlẹlẹkẹ. A bọlẹlẹkẹ is a banana leaf, either green or dried, which has been torn in several places perpendicularly to the large [765] central rib, and constitutes the first and principal sign of mourning. Moreover, Batswa women must also dress in this manner before entering a Baotó settlement. The following reason is given for the rule in the second instance: a Bọtswá woman's dress consists of a lolímba, a belt of small braided ropes about 10 centimeters long. Although in ordinary positions the lolímba provides fairly good protection, it is not considered adequate to really stop all indiscreet looks. And it is popularly believed that if a Bootó sees a Bọtswá woman's genital organs, she will die. Might we conclude from this last explanation that there is a fundamental connection between the reasons that necessitate the wearing of a bọlẹlẹkẹ in these three instances? Or is the mother-in-law to imitate a Bọtswá woman and thus show a certain subordination to her son-in-law?

2. Female relatives

607 831 As long as they are free, that is, as long as no bride-price payment has been made for them, a woman's sisters or cousins are considered by her husband as his wives, and he calls them so (baálí). This term is applied only to relatives of a generation below that of the true wife or to members of the same generation who are younger than she and with whom marriage [292] is permitted. It is therefore never

607 extended to relatives with whom marriage prohibited, such as nieces
837 who are banankáná, who are his wife's "mothers." (1)

1. See Chapter V, Article IV and the examples cited there (for instance, examples 25, 26, 17).

When such relatives of the wife marry, the situation changes. They belong to another man, and a continuation of the same practice as when they are single produces very serious cases of adultery. There are differences depending on the degree of affinity, however. In addition to the usual sanctions against adultery, other measures may be taken, especially the dissolution of the marriage. An especially serious case, but one which is more or less hypothetical, would be adultery between a man and his father-in-law's wife; a special feeling of shame is connected with it, and our Nkundó say that the two persons are like a Botswá and his master. Misconduct with the wife of a brother-in-law (or cousin-in-law) is also a very serious matter. The latter may take his sister (or cousin) away from the guilty husband and thus break the marriage. The same applies to adultery with a nyangôkiló (1)

1. See Chapter V, Article IV and the examples given there (for instance, examples 25, 26, 17).

3. Legal matters

606
685 Here we must examine the manner in which breaches of the law are settled between parents-in-law and son-in-law. It is known that among these peoples justice, in the strict sense of the word, is one of the most prominent aspects of social legislation. Theft is one of the principal causes for shame and was formerly severely punished. The thief, especially if he continued to repeat his offence, could be sold as a slave.

606 835 the relations between a wife and her husband's parents are closely connected with the rules pertaining to the prohibition related to affinity and seems to spring from the same source. Therefore it will be useful to have in mind what we have said in the preceding chapter, Article IV.

607 The husband's elder brothers treat his wife as their sister. The wife calls her husband's sisters [300] bakiló, but out of respect she often gives them the title of "mother." (1)

[601] 1. Among the Elángá the wife also calls her husband's sisters bongíli (pl. bangíli); they call her bǒnongíli (pl. bǎnangíli). A wife often calls her husband's mother nyangôngíli. Bǎnangíli l'ǎnangíli means "the brother's wives and their sisters-in-law."

587 After the husband's death, as has been said suo loco, his father or his brother may marry his widow. But this practice is not well regarded and is permitted only rarely, chiefly when the scattering of the family patrimony is feared or if the two interested parties have an unusual love for each other.

● 837 602 With respect to children or younger brothers and all those who fall into that category, the situation is altogether different. Illicit relations with wives of their father, grandfather, uncle, elder brother, or elder cousin, are judged much less severely. Generally, misconduct does not give rise to claims for payment, or the payment is demanded "for form's sake" and consists of a hen and a bunch of bananas. By means of this payment the guilty one recognizes his error and renders homage to the right of his elder.

[626] In general public opinion condemns these relations and often with great severity. The question of degree of kinship as well as other considerations result in a great diversity among the cases, so we will examine each situation separately and distinguish each time between the husband's reaction and that of public opinion.

837 A. A woman's misconduct with her husband's son does not re-
626 sult in the payment of an indemnity. Nevertheless, the husband who
595x has been wronged takes action; he defends his rights and is enraged,
593x whether the situation is very serious or not, and especially if he is
monogamous. If he has several wives, he is more apt to pass over the matter, unless it involves his favorite. Sometimes he takes revenge by striking the guilty son's mother, taking her hens away from her, etc. But such action may lead to complications: [301] the brother of the woman so treated might intervene, and if the reaction *of the husband* who has been wronged is too violent or recurs too often, a divorce may result. In any case the father never hurts his heedless son's wife, since he loves her like his own daughter.

The father may apply a direct sanction against the offender by delaying the acquisition of a wife for him and refusing his blessings for his son's travels and undertakings -- still a serious thing in purely native society.

Such relations are always greatly criticized by public opinion, even if relatives intervene on the culprit's behalf. The latter is disgraced as a result; he is mocked with the epithet etóonjóló, to which
[578] often is added the explicative phrase l'óála banyangó b'áningá. Etóonjóló is derived from etóo, "masculine clothing" and, figuratively, "virility in the physical sense," and from bóló, "strength." Thus the epithet implies that the culprit is so virile that he goes so far as to unite even with his brothers' mothers.

587 Marriage with the father's widow after his death is legitimate.
626 Nevertheless, if the widow has left children, public opinion does not entirely refrain from judgment and though the severity of the criticism cited above will be attenuated, it may still be heard. Such was the case of Yoká of Bokenyola (Bonjoku), which is well known in this region. He married Lokokú, widow of his father Insílo y'Òkátola and mother of Insílo Antoine, present chief of the Bonkoso. (1).

1. With reference to the above-mentioned attitude, an exception must be made with regard to the inheritance of a widow by right

587
626 of seniority (she is then called bosólɔ́ -- see Chapter III, Article III). The giving of a widow who is in the position described is preferably avoided.

● 837
626 Illicit relations between a son and his father's wife are judged with especially great severity if the young man's own mother is still alive. He is reproached for his behavior in terms which are clear and crude: Oɔ̂y'ɔ̌sanganya mbindo ĭkɛ̌ la mbindo y'îs'â nyangɔ́, "you unite your stains (impurities) with those of your father and [302] mother"; Outɛ́ ńk'eki wɛ̌ wǐmánáká, "you are returning from whence you came." To these expressions is often added ɔ́wa lɔ́í ɛ! olekí liloka, "you will die because of your too great wickedness." To the [761] Nkundɔ́ this last statement is a kind of curse, and if it is repeated by several persons it will not fail to have its effect. Or, to speak as our people do, if everyone greatly wails over and against this man, he will really die. (1)

1. This attitude of the Nkundɔ́ may be one of the reasons why widows are assigned not to the son of the deceased, but to his brother.

If the son in question is not married, especially if he has already reached a relatively advanced age, and if he approaches the wives of his polygamous father, the matter is considered less serious. The latter cannot be too angry, especially when only isolated instances are involved; for other relatives will allow their affection for this young man to speak, since they are aware of his passion and therefore understand his temptations and follies. They would intervene to pacify the father and urge him to prevent the repetition of such occurrences by obtaining a wife for his son. In exceptional cases the family council may even judge the father to be in the wrong because of his harshness toward his son and may allow the latter to take his father's wife away from him (never, however, the first wife, the favorite, or the bolómbu); such was the case we described in

837 626 Chapter II, Article XI, 2. But such a situation is far from ideal in Nkundô eyes and is permitted only if, on the one hand, the son ardently loves the woman and, on the other, if the father is too slow in obtaining a wife for him.

837 602 Here then we observe a conflict between two feelings: a husband's jealousy and the affection of a father and various relatives. That is why it is difficult -- as in many situations -- to draw the line between what is permitted and what is forbidden. From what has preceded and from the general explanations given by natives, we can conclude, however, that: [303] 1) relations between a woman and her husband's son are forbidden and severely judged, but with much more leniency than in the case of "superior" relatives; 2) the [593] father may not go to extremes in repressing misconduct nor ask his own son to pay an indemnity, since to do so would be to enrich himself through his child's misbehaviour, and the latter would have no means of paying him except through him or his mother's clan -- and it would be very unjust and inappropriate to force him to have recourse to the latter.

593 837 607 B. A younger brother calls his elder brother's wife wǎlí, or wife, and she calls him bǒme, or husband, because they may marry one another. Therefore adulterous relations may also be found among them. But in practice some distinctions must be made.

If the younger brother is not married and the elder one has a harem, -- a state of affairs which was very common in the past but today is very rare -- the situation is analogous to the one described above in relation to a father's wife except that there is greater indulgence toward the culprit.

If the elder brother is monogamous and the younger brother a bachelor, relations of the latter with the former's wife when the husband is present are forbidden. If the younger brother nevertheless yields to the temptation, he is condemnable. The husband may not claim an indemnity. But in revenge he may procure for himself a "make-believe indemnity" (nyongo ěa bolîlambo) by felling one of the culprit's banana trees, taking away his chickens, moving his hut, taking some other similar action. The purpose of these acts, according

593ˣ 607 837 to our people, is to inspire the young man with a little more respect for his elder. The latter may not go to extremes, however, (as for example by fighting his younger brother), for fear of being censured for a lack of brotherly love. (1) Besides, the valuables with which he obtained his wife [304] belong in one sense to both brothers. If the two brothers have different mothers, the elder has many more trumps in his hand. And if in addition his mother's clan has provided the entire bride price or a major part of it, he would win his case entirely as regards the indemnity, although the duty of brotherly love, and therefore of leniency, would still remain. In the case of isolated misdeeds there must always be this leniency. But if the misconduct is frequently repeated, the culprit's excuses no longer carry much weight.

If the younger brother, too, is married, the matter takes on a totally different aspect. Since he has a wife of his own, he no longer has any excuse for satisfying his passions by adulterous means. It is true that the injured husband is still obliged to modulate his anger and its manifestations, but he can obtain more financial satisfaction. The indemnity he claims, however, must be added to the guilty wife's bride price; for it is inconceivable that he enrich himself at his brother's expense. If he himself obtained his brother's wife for him, he may take her away and give her to another brother, cousin, etc., or even take her for himself, in spite of the impediment of affinity. However this is an exceptional case and only applied if the misconduct has been serious and repeated and the culprit has taken an insolent attitude.

If the husband is not present, because he is on a trip or the younger brother has met his sister-in-law while she is staying with her family or traveling elsewhere, the younger brother is entirely free

---

1. A slight brotherly punishment is not taken seriously, particularly if the younger brother is considerably his junior; it is permitted, especially where the younger brother has erred repeatedly.

595ˣ to have relations with her. If the woman refuses to have relations
607 with her brother-in-law, the latter often reports her ill will to her
837 husband, who will reprimand her or even strike her because she does not love his own brother, and will accuse her of having lovers: ótóna bɔ́n'ɔ̂â ngɔ́ya, ólangakâ ók'aend'ɔ́nkinɔ́. Since there is more affection between brothers born of the same mother, the husband's anger would then be even greater. A lack of affection on the part of his wife arouses her husband's suspicions on the question of her fidelity because Nkundó women are extremely ready to yield to temptation. [305] Therefore if she refuses her own brother-in-law-husband, she must be obtaining satisfaction elsewhere. This reasoning may be false, but it is based on a frequency of cases. The husband's attitude does not show a lack of jealousy; on the contrary, it proves its existence.

If the younger brother meets his sister-in-law in the home of her family, they will intervene on his behalf. They will tell her to receive "her husband" well, to prepare food for him, to clean the hut set aside for him. They will even force her to cohabit with him for the entire duration of his stay in their village. By this means they seek to avoid palavers with their son-in-law. If the woman's antipathy toward her brother-in-law is so great that she cannot be made to submit to him, they sometimes give their visitor another of their daughters (or cousins, etc.), younger than his brother's wife, to perform wifely duties for him.

All those designated as bakínɔ́ in Nkundó terminology fall into the same category as a younger brother (thus younger male cousins are also included). The seriousness of the conflict that may arise on this question and of its consequences vary in proportion to the degree of kinship between the individuals involved.

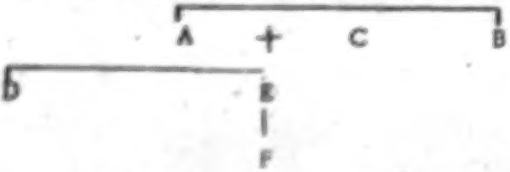
C. The position of a nephew (bɔ́ɔnankáná) in relation to his
604 maternal uncle's wives is to a great extent comparable to that of a
837 son in relation to his father's wives. The fact that marriage is effected
578 through the payment of a bride price gives the nephew greater
595ˣ freedom; for the uncle was enriched through the marriage of his

604 nephew's mother. There is no question of indemnity, except that of
837 "respects," to show the nephew's submission, and it consists of a hen and
578 a bunch of bananas. If the nephew refuses to make this gesture of
593 deference and submission, he is considered in the wrong and the entire family gangs up on him in order to save the authority and hierarchy of the family. "You are offending your uncle," they say, "no doubt you want him to die so that you can take his place and profit from the inheritance." And the offended uncle, after being patient for a few days, may demand a real indemnity. [306] But then other considerations become involved, and a new situation is created.

Actually, the young man's mother often -- though not always -- takes his side and turns on her brother. Two situations may arise:

1) The nephew's mother may not be born of the same mother as the uncle. In that case she seldom refrains from intervening on her son's behalf. She reproaches her brother for his hardness and his lack of affection for her, especially if the adulterous wife is her nkita, that is, if she were acquired by means of the bride price paid for her. She will say, "To whom do you owe this wife? And yet you demand riches from my son. Give me back my bride price, so that I may get him a wife." The uncle also gets angry, and sometimes accedes to his indignant sister's request and returns her bride price. If he does so all relationship between brother and sister is broken. But this is an unusual outcome; matters are almost always settled before this extremity is reached.

2) If brother and sister have the same mother, peace is always re-established before this aggravation, and the interchange is limited to a few reproaches and a little momentary anger. For the proverb says, bɔ́sangɔ́ nyangó bɔ́fomb'ilɔ́ngɔ́, "hatred between children of the same mother is but feigned, illusory; it is not true or real."



604 An uncle (see D above) is not entirely free to cure his nephew's
837 (F) passion unless he is the nkóló of his sister (E), that is, unless the
578 mother (C) of his sister (E) is the nkita of his aunt (B), [307] who is the
579 sister of his father (A). Indeed in that case his sister may not complain, for she owes him respect and submission; her subordination to her brother and master is greater than the gratitude he owes her for any riches he may have obtained through her or on her account.

603 D. In the case of the relationship of a grandson (bonkána) to
837 his grandfather's wives, his freedom is, in practice, complete. Actually, among the Nkundó the affection of a grandfather (nkóko) for his own grandson often exceeds his love for his own son and completely degenerates into weakness. (1) The grandfather puts up with all his grandson's carryings-on, his whims, all his teasing, his insults, etc.

After illicit relations the grandson sometimes carries his insolence so far as to spontaneously send his grandfather a "mock" indemnity in the form of a basket filled with stones in the place of copper rings.

606 Although the grandfather treats his grandson with good humor,
603 public opinion does not favor the latter's conduct, though it is more
837 lenient than in the cases described above. The public reaction, as well as the sending of the "mock" fine, shows that in principle these relations are censurable and condemned. Because of present circum-
[78] stances, particularly marriage at an earlier age than in the past, the age difference between a grandson and his grandfather's wives has increased considerably in the constantly growing number of cases, and their relations have proportionately decreased. (2) [308]

---

1. As happens very often also in Europe.
See Chapter I, Part 1, Article I, 3.

[114] 2. We have seen above that other Nkundó tribes are even less strict in these matters. On the other hand, the Ekonda, a Nkundó group living on Lake Leopold II, have a

603
837
626
194

> higher morality -- in our terms. Among them the question of relations between a woman and her husband's son, younger brother, etc., does not even arise. Have they been influenced by some neighboring tribe? Or must we attribute the inferior morality of some of the tribes in this respect to decadence."

837
602

The following conclusions emerge from this long description:

1) Relations between a man and the wife of his son, younger brother, etc., in short of anyone inferior to him in the family hierarchy, are always strictly prohibited and never occur.

2) They do occur on the other hand between an inferior and the wife of his senior and superior. The degree of kinship between the husband and the culprit plays a considerable role in determining the seriousness or triviality of an infraction, the sanctions applied, and the various consequences. Some relations are accepted, others are censured with varying degrees of leniency, still others are pitilessly criticized.

3) In these matters a distinction may be made between two aspects:

a) the husband's reaction and the repression of the illicit relations;

b) the judgment of public opinion;

or:

a) the financial aspect;

b) the moral aspect -- to use that term for want of a better one.

Sometimes a third element comes into play, namely the intervention of the family on the side of the culprit against the injured husband who, *for one reason or another*, is in the wrong himself.

602
837
684

a) The usual sanction *for* adultery is, for the man, an indemnity to pay. But such a payment cannot be made since no financial transaction -- strictly speaking at least -- may be made

602 within a group of close kin, seeing that, from a certain standpoint,
837 property belongs to all the members, each sooner or later receiving
684 or inheriting from the other. But in cases where other sanctions can
be imposed, they are considered legitimate. [309]

b) Except in the case of relations between brother and sister-
626 in-law -- within the limits described above -- public opinion is
837 severe in its judgment, even more severe than for ordinary cases of
602 adultery, although because of the more tangible nature of the sanctions imposed against the latter, these seem on the surface to be considered more serious; many natives even have that impression. Or at least that is the first impression that spontaneously comes from their explanations; currently, they stress the indemnity, and in their accounts of ancient proceedings and violent sanctions, they forget the other aspect. Others do not distinguish between the two sides of the problem, or distinguish between them only very poorly. Only in going to the bottom of things do they -- like ourselves -- become aware of the two aspects and the importance of not confusing them.

The leniency we observe in certain cases on the part of the interested parties who have been wronged, and sometimes on the part of public opinion, does not seem to us to have been explained as a leniency based on principle nor as a legitimation of these relations (except in the case of brothers within the limits indicated). They seem rather to spring from the affection they have for the culprit, their sympathy for his condition as a bachelor, a certain community of interests, and finally from an evaluation of certain other elements that may be involved (such as a fundamental jealousy in the case of brothers).

602 The great distinction made by the Nkundő in this realm as
181 in others between inferior and superior relatives is based on their conception of authority, which is patriarchal, therefore paternal. What is involved is not so much a fear of power as a reverent awe -- although the first should not be excluded. In their eyes an inferior does not exist for the benefit and advantage of the superior, but the reverse; authority exists for the good of the inferior, who to preserve hierarchy and order must submit to the [310] superior. The superior's duty to help his inferior (in his difficulties, his palavers, his poverty),

602 181 to be liberal and generous toward him and therefore to make goods available to him, to be lenient in matters concerning justice and property and obliging in conjugal matters -- as long as the principle of authority remains secure is based on the same idea. The exploitation of an inferior by his superior is entirely contrary to the basic nature of Nkundó authority, while the reverse is entirely in conformity with it. (1)

> 1. This attitude may account -- at least to some extent -- for the liberties that the natives readily take with the European, their superior or master, such as domestic thefts, inappropriate requests, the kind of begging and lack of respect for authority that we are accustomed to seeing, etc.

Article VII. Adultery

837 For the Nkundó, adultery is an illicit union between a man and a married woman. From the moment the ikulá is paid for a woman, any relations with her by a man other than the husband-to-be are considered adulterous.

1. Terminology

There is no exclusive or specific term in Lonkundo by which our word "adultery" may be translated. There are a number of words in the language which are only partially equivalent to it.

1) First of all, the Nkundó speak of bongombe, a term denoting steady and continuous relations with a woman who is a complete stranger, that is, who is not related in any way. The word designates the relationship as well as the persons involved. This type of adultery is also called a wǐsamaka or linsámba jó njísámá (from the verb ísama) -- that is, a secret, as against a true linsámbá (which will be

837 discussed in the next article). The Bombwanja, the Ionda, and the Injɔ́lɔ́ call it *lɔ̌ngɔla*, "(any) act performed in hiding" (from the verb *ɔ́ngɔla*). The Ionda also use [311] the term *ekundɛ́* (from the verb *kunda*, "to bury), which refers to "something that is buried or hidden under a heap."

Nowadays there is a tendency to apply the term *linsɛ́mbɛ́*, without any qualification, to adultery of this sort, at least if it is not limited to a single act. The woman and her lover are both called *bonsɛ́mbɛ́* (pl. *bansɛ́mbɛ́*).

2) If only an isolated act takes place, it is called *yĕtsí* (from the verb *ɛ́ta*, "to call"). But this term may also be applied to unmarried persons. Strictly speaking, it denotes a single union and not continuous relations. Certain tribes (the Injɔ́lɔ́, the Elɛ́ngɛ́) also have the word *efongo* (for instance in the expression *nyong'ɛ̌'efongo*, "indemnity for a single instance").

3) The term *lonkâna* (*bombakɛ́* among the Bombwanja) designates adultery between persons belonging to a single exogamous entity and, by extension, between persons belonging to different families but comprising a single settlement.

As the word itself indicates, the relations involved take place between "cousins" in the broadest sense of the term.

837
192 The natives gave me an account of the etymology of the terms *bɔngɔmbɛ* and *lonkâna*, which it may be useful to repeat here. They are believed to have been invented by fickle wives and their lovers in order to hide their illicit love affairs. Even of old there were relations between the Nkundó and the Ngɔmbɛ. A Ngɔmbɛ who appeared in a Nkundó village was the object of the curiosity of all the young people. A man going to his paramour (or vice versa) or coming back at a very late hour could reply, if suspicions were aroused, that he had been to see the Ngɔmbɛ. The same trick could be used in a case of *lonkâna*. I am passing on this explanation for whatever it's worth -- (for *lonkâna*, for instance, the etymology I cited at the beginning seems a good deal more natural), [312] it may be of interest at some time to have it noted and preserved in writing.

837 [196] 4) To indicate a tendency toward adultery (especially on the part of women) the Nkundó use the verb fâfoka which literally denotes clothing that is too big and that flies in the wind. The noun loyǒ or boyǒ is also used.

The verb used for discovering a case of adultery is té̠mbo̠la, the noun is nté̠mbó̠.

[574] Occasional or permanent adultery has always been very common. This fact is undoubtedly due to the relative ease with which it is possible to escape discovery and consequent sanctions. A woman going to visit her family cannot possibly be followed or watched by her husband; the distances make such surveillance difficult and, furthermore, it would have disastrous consequences for the stability of the marriage, since neither the woman nor her family would put up with it. Other partial causes are lasciviousness, polygamy, etc., as we will see later in the text.

2. Gifts

837 431 [602] An adulterous man and woman send each other presents; his consist of meat, arrows, etc., hers of food and various small objects. A woman's gifts to her lover are called botúmo (the noun used with the verb tumba, "to make burn" (1). Very young relatives generally serve as intermediaries. Note that a woman rarely sends her son, for she has reason to fear that the gift would not reach its destination; the boy would give himself a treat with it. She can have more confidence in a daughter.

A man's gift is called by the generic term mpató, "a gift that is sent, a dispatch." [313]

In isolated cases (yětsi) a man sends an arrow, some small object, beads, meat, etc. Nowadays money or cloth have been

1. Note that the noun and the verb are not etymologically related. Perhaps botúmo might be related to túma, "to show, to designate." The Ekonda call this gift elika. See Chapter II, Article I.

● 837 431 substituted for all these items. As a rule the woman demands some remuneration although there are exceptions, which may be frequent or rare, depending on the region and on the nature of the persons involved. They are due to extraordinary passion or to the woman's love for her lover. (1)

1. See Chapter I, Part 1, Article IV.

3. Evidence of adultery

837 684 The strength of the evidence may vary.

1) The strongest evidence is finding the couple in flagrante delicto. No objection will hold up against it, and it constitutes for the application of the severest sanctions. The act must be observed by the husband. The testimony of a third party is never introduced. If another person discovers the adultery and favors the husband, that person will inform the latter so that he can take precautions in order to catch the culprits personally. If it is discovered by the woman's father or other close relative who favors the husband, [606] he informs the latter and, if possible, calls him to witness the infraction himself. If he does so, the husband must give the indemnity to his father-in-law. This is not a legal obligation but one imposed by good relations and decorum, since the father-in-law has shown good will and affection toward his son-in-law.

2) A wife's admission is almost as important and always decisive. Such a confession mitigates her husband's anger toward her and directs it chiefly toward her accomplice. Therefore most women do not hesitate to denounce their paramours if they feel somewhat cornered. (On the other hand, women never denounce each other.) [314]

3) A third form of evidence can be obtained by surprising the lovers while they are planning a meeting. The husband can accuse them on the spot and try to extract a complete confession from his wife on the subject of the past or the future. If possible he assures himself of the co-operation of witnesses. If he foresees a denial on his wife's part, he lets the occasion pass and looks for a good opportunity to surprise the culprits in the act. Regardless of the

937 684 wife's inclinations, a husband often will not intervene at once; he will give no sign of what he has observed but will skillfully seek an opportunity to observe the pair in flagrante delicto, so that he can take more violent action. This approach is absolutely necessary if he has nothing but suspicions, even if they are well founded. To act otherwise would not have great results and would show a lack of judgment -- often true of young, inexperienced husbands or ones with too irascible a temperament. An intercepted message bearing an invitation or an acceptance has the same practical value.

This form of evidence is weaker than the two preceding ones -- unless these are added -- and justifies only certain sanctions.

4) The sight of lovers giving gifts, either from hand to hand or through an intermediary (" with so-and-so's compliments") also has its value as evidence. But here again the best approach is to use this evidence as a means of obtaining the wife's confession. That is the only practical value of discovering gifts in the wife's possession. If a wife finds no explanations that will pacify the husband, she is forced to admit the act and denounce her accomplice.

4. Sanctions

684 Nkundó law includes several sanctions against adultery some of which are applicable to the spouse, some to the accomplice, and some to an intermediary (ekímá). There are differences [315] in the application of these sanctions depending on the gravity of the case (for instance, repetition of an offence or a habitual offence), the inclinations or temperaments of the persons involved, and the value of the evidence. Although the sanctions are legitimated by law, most of them are applied at the spouse's initiative; but in some instances the authority of the family as well as that of the ndonga have to be involved. Therefore the following varied situations should be pointed out:

A. A husband's sanctions against an adulterous wife.

a) In the case of a delicto flagrante, the husband may beat his wife, wound her, and even kill her. Neither she nor her family have the right to complain. If he kills her he is no longer entitled

684 that she becomes accustomed to her husband's relations with various
581 other women. Consequently, the reaction of the women in general
562 [325] against adultery is much weaker than that of the men. Moreover, because of this same system, a woman is much more exposed to weakness, and stronger sanctions are therefore necessary to insure her fidelity.

Finally, there is one last reason for considering a woman's misconduct as more serious. It is the danger of conception through adultery, with all the attendant consequences: risks for the pregnant woman, forced continence for the husband, etc. (1)

1. See no. 6 below as well as Chapter I, Part 2, Article IV, 3, and Chapter X, Article II, 3.

From the description of sanctions it is apparent that in spite
562 684 of the woman's inferior position, Nkundó law does not leave husbands the full and complete freedom which, according to certain writers, they are accorded among other peoples. Even if the means of repression available to the wife do not incontestably prove that the husband has an obligation of conjugal fidelity -- and the wife's legal status explains a great deal -- the fact remains that the ndonga as well as public opinion approve of even her violent reaction, proving that she is right and the husband wrong.

5. Public opinion

626 Public opinion is fairly lenient in relation to isolated in-
837 stances (yětsi, efongo). It clearly recognizes the error involved in infringing on the conjugal rights of another, but the error is attributed to human weakness. In the case of habit the situation is different; it is criticized frequently and severely. Habitual sinners
[192] are called efáfóká (from the verb fafoka, literally "to flutter" and figuratively "to flirt"), ebóngá or ebábóngá (from the verb bâbonga) or ebábóá (from bâboa) "to flutter, to be flighty and fickle." These epithets are applied primarily to women, who are more subject to this failing than men.

626 The shame attached to the discovery of this sort of miscon-
837 duct in the better circles in Europe is unknown among the Nkundó.
This is natural since isolated instances are readily excused. As to
[152] the habitual offenders, they are sensitive [326] to the above-men-
tioned epithets but will not correct their ways on this account any
more than people in other parts of the world.

An adulterous husband is criticized as much as an adulterous
837 wife in spite of the difference in the means of repression which
626 684 Nkundó law provides for their respective misconduct.

Public opinion therefore corroborates the conclusion toward which our examination of sanctions has pointed, namely that adultery is condemned by the Nkundó. Opinion is not based on the existence of the sanction but seems to spring from their innate mentality, which makes them perceive adultery as a disorder.

6. Aggravating circumstances

837 If a case of adultery is followed by conception, it becomes
842 especially serious, and for the husband as much as for the natural
672 father. Indeed the latter must assume all the consequences. When circumstances permit the husband makes his wife denounce her accomplice, and she does not refuse to do so. The husband then calls a meeting and demands a pledge (ndanga) from the culprit, who in that way acknowledges that he is at fault and shows his willingness to assume all responsibility. If there is a miscarriage or the child dies during delivery, the natural father must pay the legal father an indemnity of "a slave" or more (sometimes 50 rings); a smaller indemnity is required for a child who is only deformed or sickly. If the mother dies the indemnity consists of a slave and 50 rings, and it may go as high as 100 rings.

In the interim the husband no longer goes near his wife. He leaves her to her lover, who must "preserve the foetus" and observe all the rites and practices associated with pregnancy and childbirth, since, physically, he is the father. (1) [327]

---

1. For fuller details see Chapter X, Article II, 3. For analogous practices

672 837 [842] in the case of an unmarried mother, see Chapter I, Part 1, Article III, 3.

[843] Adultery also becomes especially serious during the period preceding childbirth when there is a special prohibition against it, as endangering the lives of both mother and child, as we will explain in Chapter X, Article III.

7. Remarks and general conclusions

837 [721] 1) In former times the offense of adultery, even in its mildest form, that is, an isolated act, was one of the chief causes of "wars" between villages. Sometimes both sides called on their relatives by marriage to assist them, and the result was a general upheaval.

837 595* 2) As a rule a husband wants his wife to be faithful. Doubtless there are exceptions. Most if not all of them were formerly found among the old polygamists. At their age they were disgusted with continual palavers, and their experience as men had taught them that they often became angry and uselessly complicated their little lives. They preferred to close their eyes, like good old Bo̲no̲ɔ́ w'ìko̲lo̲ngɔ́ of Ite̲ko̲ (the Bombwanja clan of the Boɔ́yá). He came to see me in the Christian village of Bombomba through which I was passing at the beginning of March, 1933. I asked him why he was adorned with so many bells, and he answered naively, "I always wear them. That way my wives know of my coming already from a distance. It gives them time to stop slandering me and to send their lovers away." When I expressed my surprise that he did not want to catch them in the act in order to punish them and end their infidelities, he answered me with a smile, "No, Father, jealousy . . . is for the young. As for me, I have seen so much of it that I no longer have any desire to get angry and make palavers for these trivialities."

548 837 595* Since the coming of the Europeans some unscrupulous men -- especially polygamists -- have been engaging in [328] a kind of procuring. They send their wives to commit adultery in order to be able to catch them in the act and thus enrich themselves. Or else they lend their wives for one night or more to laborers or soldiers who are

548 bachelors in law or in fact.

837 595 x Knowing their wives' weak and sensual natures, some men save the rings that come to them as indemnities -- today as in the past. When this capital has grown sufficiently, they use it to acquire a new wife. The latter is in a sense the other wife's nkita, and she is called, rather crudely, nkita é' efufa, efufa being the piece of cloth (apron) worn by the women. Such action does not mean that the husband wishes to speculate in immorality. He simply profits from what is a fact. But this attitude could easily degenerate, and at the present time the danger that it might is no longer imaginary, although for the moment things have not gone that far. Watchfulness on the part of administrative authorities can avoid all exploitation of marital infidelity by preventing the development of this evil or checking it where it already exists.

837 593 x The attitude toward a spouse's adultery varies greatly with different situations. These variations spring not only from the temperament of the injured party -- this goes without saying -- but also from the way the one guilty of adultery fulfills other marital obligations. This is particularly true with respect to a woman's "weaknesses." If she otherwise shows herself to be a devoted wife who is attentive, respectful, hard working, and one who takes the interests of her husband and children to heart, in a word, a good housewife, her husband will regret her infidelities, but he will pay less attention to these failings, since she compensates for them by many good qualities which show that she seriously loves him and lets herself go solely out of weakness. On the other hand, if a wife becomes neglectful, [329], disagreeable, and disrespectful, the change will indicate that something other than just weakness is involved, that her love for her husband has cooled and has chosen another object.

This is the sound philosophy of conjugal life among the Nkundó, as it is proclaimed and taught by all their old men and sages.

837 3) In spite of the terrible sanctions against adultery, it would appear that this offence has always been common. Certain events, such as deaths, feasts, and dances which last long into the night, are especially conducive to laxity. But even under ordinary

837 circumstances, the dark of evening provides strong provocation. A noisy crowd of young people is often deliberately aroused for the purpose of hiding such frolics. Women especially are the ones to start the scene (called *iole*). They begin with "games," pinching, etc. Sometimes those who are bolder cry out, *iole o*! by way of a signal. These irregularities are sometimes agreed upon in advance; other times they are provoked without any advance agreement. The husbands intervene, but it is very difficult for them to catch the culprits.

577 837 4) It would seem that according to Nkundó notions, adultery is not a moral fault, even in the broadest sense of the term, and not punishable by a nonearthly power of religion or superstition, which would intervene to re-establish the order that has been disrupted. Rather one has the impression that their law pertaining to it is purely social. Not that I want to say that this law and its sanctions do not, in the last analysis, spring from a moral idea; but if this moral idea exists, it is very vague and confused and is not expressed by our people. In practice all attention is focused on the sanctions because of the injury to property rights. There never seems to be the slightest reference to a moral religious idea. [330]

And this is probably the chief reason for the frequency of adultery in spite of the sanctions, for while these undoubtedly reduce the evil they are powerless to stop it. But this statement does not apply exclusively to our people. Every law is an ideal. Sanctions attempt to ensure that it is observed. But the masses never attain the intended goal. When some individuals are superior to the ideal imposed by law, it is because society falls short in performing its task, as is the case in Europe today. Among the Nkundó, law and society are superior to the morality of individuals. Besides, sanctions though necessary have never sufficed to assure perfect obedience of laws: *nihil leges sine moribus*. Good morals must come from considerations that are superior to particular laws and the basis for them.

Although, as we have seen, the Nkundó do not connect the subject at hand in any way with their religious understanding, how can we explain the praiseworthy conduct of many individuals? In my opinion although the Nkundó are not aware of the relationship between the law and its ultimate legislator, they are not without a certain vague, innate feeling that adultery is immoral, and this is corroborated by

● 837 their sense of the personal injustice involved. But they do not reason
577 out these feelings; they follow them spontaneously, blindly.

There is a greater awareness of the social evil in adultery. But it is based not on the philosophical considerations of this harm in itself, but on the consequences of individual cases for the proper functioning of society -- palavers, financial difficulties, enmities, quarrels, wars.

This it seems to me is the present state of their ideas. It does not preclude the possibility that the law and sanctions against adultery may rest on an ultimate basis of moral ideas. And more particularly it is quite possible that the moral idea [331] operates only in the form of a feeling of the great principles of fundamental natural law which is innate to all human reason.

837 5) No one will be astonished if we say that colonization, far
177 from reducing the frequency of adultery, actually contributed to its considerable increase. The abolition of native penalties and punishments together with a great freedom of movement could not help but lead, naturally, to this state of affairs. Every informed colonial who is in close contact with the natives is aware of the situation. "The prohibition of corporal punishments which, according to custom, were the sanctions imposed against a woman's adultery have brought about a license whose extent can be measured by the degree to which a group is subject to our occupation. The forgetfulness if not the contempt for the promises of marriage is nowhere carried so far as in places where the customary disciplines have been completely re-
[113] moved." (Maj. Engels, Bulletin Soc. Belge. Et. Col., cited in Congo, 3rd year, Vol. 1, p. 77, April, 1922). That is why various persons have repeatedly called for sanctions against adultery to replace the ancestral means of repression that have been abolished.

But the decrees hoped for have never passed beyond the stage
692 of mere projects. Fortunately, another step, and a fundamental one,
177 has been taken in the meantime through the establishment of native
837 jurisdiction (1926). Under the guidance and control of European authorities, native courts will turn the helm halfway back to the ancient sanctions, adapting these all the while to the new conditions created by colonization and by the introduction of more humanitarian

177 ideas. Nevertheless, great care must be exercised not to go to extremes in introducing these ideas to the point where a society only just beginning to emerge from a pagan barbarism because of the presence of a civilization based on Christianity, is treated as an equal of European communities. Native society must evolve gradually and harmoniously. Rushing is often synonymous with breaking, and it is always a [332] great mistake. And in the matters under discussion, the abolition of sanctions which, in spite of their imperfection and their inadequacy for fulfilling the whole task, have been shown to have a real efficacy, has removed all the coercive power of Nkundó law. A sentimental and excessive humanitarianism must yield before the native society's right to respect for its vital institutions -- unless these are entirely to be condemned -- and therefore before the necessity for severe punishments which it cannot do without for the moment. For our natives are not yet ready for a complete abolition of their customary sanctions, since they still lack a new foundation that would replace their fear of the ancient penalties. Let us therefore take care not to take all means of punishment away from husbands and wives, even if they seem somewhat violent from our viewpoint. Finally, there is no sense in overstressing a respect for members of the weaker sex, who by their very nature sometimes need punishment for the greater good of the whole community. Moreover, as for this respect, our Nkundó do not understand it at all; the way we conceive of it is entirely opposed to their mentality and their laws. Therefore, everything will work out more easily if the native courts are given sufficient latitude to act in the spirit of their ancestral law and if their activity is guided by a constant, informed, and sympathetic control whose sole aim is the healthy evolution of native society.

692

837

000 If it is applied within these limits and under these conditions, Nkundó law can redress many wrongs and help to save native society from the abyss into which it is in danger of falling. In spite of its faults and imperfections, it is preferable not only to the system of freedom (or license) which has reigned for many years, but also to

000 new legislation emanating from the European power, a very slow and complex system (the law against adultery which has been requested for decades is still in the realm of studies and projects), lacking in flexibility and the ability to adapt to the very varied circumstances of the peoples of the Congo. A law is needed only for the persons who do not fall within the jurisdiction of the native courts, in order to preserve harmony and impartiality in the exercise of justice, since native society must of necessity feel its effects.

Article VIII. Relations Permitted to the Wife

●837 In this article we will examine the relations a wife may have -- under certain conditions -- with various persons. According to our law, such relations would be adulterous, but Nkundó law does not consider them as such. From this arises the difference between this article and the preceding one. Such relations may be 1) transitory or 2) permanent (concubinage).

1. Transitory relations

837
561
[574] A wife is permitted to have sexual relations with her husband's age mates (baníngá, sing. boníngá). (1) When one comes to the home of another in the course of travel, the host lends his wives to the visitor, saying: "Here is your house; here are your wives." If he is monogamous he leaves his house and his spouse at the visitor's disposal and goes to bed elsewhere alone. If a woman who is traveling arrives [illegible] village of one of her husband's age mates, the latter -- as soon as he learns of her presence -- invites her to stay in his home for the length of her stay. When they say good-by he gives her a present for her husband" with the boningá's compliments." When one visits another, wives are often exchanged.

---

1. See Chapter I, Part 1, Article III.

● 837 561 Such is the practice among age mates who maintain good and true relationships. They have free access to each other's wives, and [334] their actions cannot give rise to claims or fines. Nor if one is more "stingy" in the native view than another, can the latter start palavers with him on that account. But such an attitude will result in a cooling of the cordiality of their relationship, and refusals will be reciprocated.

Age mates do not demand indemnities from each other because it is not fitting for one to enrich himself at the other's expense. This rule applies even to "private" relations, to a simple "call," occurring without the lending described above. But if one of them goes too far, that is if he avails himself of another's wife two or three times without the latter doing likewise, a palaver may arise. The husband will believe that he has been wronged and will demand an indemnity. If his companion refuses on the grounds of the relationship which unites them, he may receive a reply such as the following: iníngá átswɛ̌ngela ndé baálí é? "is the age-mate relationship a means for acquiring wives?" A regular battle may follow, and the husband is the one who will win the case before the court.

There are no relations permitted between men and women age mates. Such relations would be considered typical adultery.

The relations between a man and his age-mate's wife are therefore permitted not in themselves, but because of the husband's willingness to have them occur. Furthermore, the husband is not strictly required to yield his wife to him. That he does so is a [572] matter of good friendship, harmony, payment for services, and mutual respect and affection. From the purely matrimonial point of view, the terrain is free and neutral since, they say, the relations involved are purely private between them, and each one does what he thinks best.

837 572 In addition to the boníngá, the Nkundó have a relationship called boseka, "friendship," "friend." (It is called bokandeko among the Bombwanja). (1) In contrast to the practices that prevail between

---

1. See Chapter I, Part1, Article III.

837 572 age mates, the friendship pact has no connection with the wives of the men involved. If [335] there is a very firm friendship between them, one may lend his wife to the other in some situation or other, but this is a fairly rare occurrence. The Nkundó say that the boseka relationship is for mutual assistance only.

If a case of adultery occurs, the husband has every right to demand an indemnity, but if the occurrence is not repeated, he never goes to extremes, and, because of the friendship, he may ask as little as 2 or 3 rings. If the occurrences are repeated without reciprocity, however, the husband often makes a great to-do; he demands a large indemnity and breaks the friendship pact.

Instead of demanding an indemnity some men give their [431] friend a gift (mpólí) asking him to stop the illicit relations. Often this action is but a subterfuge to relax the other's vigilance so that, feeling freer, he will be more easily apprehended.

837 551 Between persons bearing the same name (ndoí, pl. bandoí), (1) there is no free access to wives, nor are persons of opposite sexes ever considered ndoí. Such relations would be considered concubinage or pure and simple adultery.

837 To summarize, a certain freedom of access to each other's wives exists among age mates, but it is subject to the expressed or tacit consent of the respective husbands. These relations are not considered adulterous. Such freedom does not exist with respect to other categories of persons. But these, nevertheless, had to be mentioned here because the similarity among the kinds of relationship discussed might produce errors in the reader's mind, and because in certain parts of the Congo such persons fall into the same category as Nkundó age mates.

2. Concubinage

595x 837 Concubinage (called limsámbá among the Bokote, isoke among the Bombwanja as well as the Ekonda) is a union [335] between

---

1. See Chapter I, Part 1, Article III.

595 a man and another's wife which is legitimate, regulated, officially
587 acknowledged, and accepted. It is not a marriage; there is no bride price nor are there witnesses other than the woman herself; the wife does not belong to the secondary husband, and in case of a rupture of relations, there is no restitution of valuables however numerous they may be. A man who in this manner purchases the right to cohabit with the wife of another does so because of poverty; he does not have the means to pay a bride price for this woman or
[626] any other. Therefore he is disdained and scorned by his fellows. To a certain extent the husband and the lover share a common life: they give each other presents and food, help each other, eat together, and call each other bakalɛ, the same name by which wives of a polygamist address each other.

Such a concubinage can last fairly long. It is usually difficult to break, for the legitimate husband takes such a breaking up badly and considers it an injustice. If the husband is rich and influential, it is dangerous for the partner to dissolve the relationship for he will have to count on the husband's wrath. Thus in the past such a union could continue for many years (in that case it was called ɛkɔkɔ) until the lover (bomɛmbɛ, pl. bamɛmbɛ) was rich enough to free himself. Often it continued for an entire lifetime, and the partner settled in the loɛnjɛ (a place occupied by a man and his wives) of the husband (limɛmbɛ jɛ́ njelɛ́ngwɛ, enjwɛ́ki); he thus became like the husband's child. Nowadays this custom has become much less common because of the freedom resulting from colonization as well as the greater possibility of acquiring wealth. This diminution shows that the practice is not ideal, even in native eyes, and is only a last resort resulting from the state of the distribution of wealth.

A man who desires to live in concubinage with another man's wife has some relations with her in secret and then makes the matter public. For that purpose he gives the woman a knife or a few bakonga to take to her [337] husband. Or he may even call a meeting of the patriarchs and pay the husband in front of them. To make a concubinage public in this way is called ɔja limɛmbɛ, "to make

595 the concubinage come out," (the intransitive of the verb is óla), or
837 ieja (iela) limɔ́mbɔ́, "to bring out into daylight, to make public."

The payment for the right of concubinage is called lonyɔ́ɔ́ngo, although it may also be designated simply by the term limɔ́mbɔ́ (iloko). To show his agreement the woman's husband sends the partner a dog or a few hens (2, 3, 5, or more, depending on his wealth or his satisfaction). The intermediary is not the woman involved but one of her co-wives. Nor is one of the husband's children ever charged with this office. Thereafter, the two partners
[431] regularly give each other gifts. The husband's presents are all called botɔ́mo (the generic term given to all presents from a woman to her lover), while those of the other man are called by the term mpatɔ́, "package, gift sent" -- also a generic term.

Often the woman herself urges her lover to make their concubinage public because she wishes to regularize the situation as she fears its possible consequences. Sometimes she threatens to break off all relations, but usually she nevertheless succumbs to temptation.

As soon as the concubinage is made public in the manner described, that publication itself renders it legitimate. The expression used for the act of contracting such a union is kota limɔ́mbɔ́.

If a woman's official lover catches her in the act of adultery, he does not denounce her to her husband but personally demands an indemnity as if he himself were the legitimate husband. If the culprit refuses to pay him, the lover breaks off relations with the woman and denounces her to her husband. Thus the adulterer is punished in any case, and from his point of view it is preferable to pay the bonɔ́mbɔ́, who will be satisfied with a smaller indemnity. [338]

Since the woman does not belong to her lover, he has no rights whatsoever to the fruits of her labor or to her children, who are considered her husband's. But the partner has a right to expect that the woman will prepare food for him. The husband, for his part, has the right to his partner's assistance. The social situation is therefore entirely in the husband's favor. The lover's only gain is to have access to a woman whom he could not otherwise have obtained. But the respect due to the legitimate husband prohibits him from freely availing himself of the woman while he is in the village.

595* Some men are strict on this point, while others are more tolerant.
●837 Clearly, the technique of such men is most subtle. The more a
wife's lover is permitted his freedom, the greater is the likelihood
that other women, who prefer a young man passionately enamoured
of them to their husband, will ask the polygamist to marry them. A
[59] man who is sufficiently wealthy and influential can in this manner build
up a harem from which he does not benefit physically but which assures him of a dominant social position.

This practice exists almost exclusively in conjunction with polygamy, but cases do occur among monogamists. And among more "civilized" tribes, such as the riverain people of the Lower Congo, a tendency in that direction is developing.

A request for concubinate made by a relative of the husband cannot be considered in the same category with the situation we have just examined. Such a request is more closely related to the request for an inherited wife (see Chapter III, Article II). The difference is obvious. The only thing the two situations have in common is the fact of legitimate cohabitation with another man's wife. One perceives this immediately upon comparing the two.

Article IX. The Family's Role in Marriage

We have found that there are situations in which a woman is
596 to some extent considered and treated as the wife not only of her
581 husband, but also of certain of his relatives (Article VI). Moreover, we have seen in Chapter II the big role that the families play in the arrangement and continuation of their children's marriage. In discussing the question of the inheritance of wives, we have seen that the close relatives of the deceased have rights over the widow; one of them may marry her without any obligations toward the chief heir, and the new union is not a new marriage but a continuation of the previous marriage, which is not broken in spite of the first husband's death. A similar observation was made in relation to the practice of wife replacement (Chapter III, Article IV).

All this leads us to raise a question: To what extent does the family have collective rights over the wife? The following answer is

595x that no one will see her. She lives in this house in the company
554 of her ebísa, her daughters, some female relatives, or even another of her husband's wives, who must wait on her, prepare food for her, etc., and who go out and enter freely. Her husband also enters at will and spends the usual number of nights with her. No other man is permitted to enter the enclosure.

During her period of seclusion, the bolɛ́mbɛ́ may not do the slightest work. She does not wash with water, but only with palm oil. She walks only on mats. She is also exempt from mourning for her parents. (Compare with Chapter I, Part 1, Article II.)

When the period of seclusion comes to an end, the husband announces the coming-out feast. There is merrymaking, dancing, and drinking. Mats are spread from the door of [351] the hut of seclusion all the way to the middle of the street. The two men who brought the woman to the hut come again and, taking her by the arms at the entrance to the enclosure, lead her over the mats. The ceremony thus ends without further ado.

The bolɛ́mbɛ́ is henceforth free and acts like any other woman except for the wearing of furs. She may work, draw water, cook, travel, visit her parents, etc. But her husband's
[563] honor and his reputation as a rich man require that he give his
[567] bolɛ́mbɛ́ one or several slaves, or Batswa, or -- as is more frequently done -- one or two bibísa, who are supposed to take
[377] care of her housework and thus free the princess.

595x Adultery with her -- after her seclusion -- is more
554 severely punished than misconduct with an ordinary woman as
● 837 regards the indemnity to be paid. But as a flagrant insult, it is
614 considered very serious indeed, not so much as an infringement or marital rights as an attack on the honor of the whole clan or group of clans involved. Thus, while adultery with a nkɛ́ndɛ́, for instance, is a private matter, arousing the husband's jealousy and anger, misconduct with a bolɛ́mbɛ́ is a public offense. The whole clan is enraged -- for they believe that their honor has been attacked, and all the members together press for vengeance for

595A
579 this outrage (nkele eleki ɛy'olɛmbɛ). It is a kind of national dis-
591 honor. This observation also clearly pinpoints the great differ-
619 ence between the favorite and the bolɛmbɛ.

The following custom should be mentioned in this con-
595A nection: if any man, even a stranger or one who comes from a
721 great distance, comes and -- over the fence -- strikes the roof
579 of a bolɛmbɛ's ilɛlɛ of seclusion with his elɔfɔ (1) as a call to

[579] 1. A wooden bell (see Congo, 1935, Vol. 2, p. 366, figs. 4 and 5).

war, the whole village is obliged to take up arms to defend him. All the men [352] accompany him and unite with his family against the enemy clan, whatever the distance may be. The Nkundo say that the act of touching the bolɛmbɛ's hut infuriates the entire clan and makes them take up arms without hesitation. (1)

1. Compare the result of a serious offense, whose effect is entirely in the offender's favor, to analogous cases described previously, for example in Chapter III, Article VII; Chapter VI, Article V, 4, Appendix; and below in Chapter VIII, Article II, 3, (2).

595A One last indication of the social nature of this institution
579 is the fact that the bolɛmbɛ has the right to sit beside her husband at public gatherings and feasts, a prerogative which she alone of all women possesses. With her is a boy or girl who serves as her "boy" and carries the seat (bofnga) on which she sits.

When a bolɛmbɛ dies her husband may put another in her place. To do so he repeats the ceremony described above. It is called sangoja bolɛmbɛ, "to make succeed to the title of bolɛmbɛ."

As we saw in Chapter I, Part 1, Article II, a man may even make his daughter a bolɛmbɛ.

595* Since there are many wives, they have much less work in preparing the husband's food, regardless of whether the co-wives divide the days among themselves or cook for him every day. Therefore, the fields they have to prepare and care for are less extensive, there is less firewood to fetch, less manioc to soak, fewer vegetables to grow, etc. On the other hand, if a monogamous husband has visitors, his wife's work never ends.

In addition to this reason there is another, which is not admitted but is given categorically by impartial natives; it is freedom or license. The wife of a monogamist is always bound to her husband and can absent herself [367] only with difficulty. Her husband wants to have her near him, both for food and for conjugal relations. A polygamist's wife is a good deal freer. Even her prolonged absence does not disturb her husband unless he suspects infidelity or is excessively jealous. Furthermore, [837] since the various wives have their specific nights, she has more freedom to give herself to her lovers. For many wives this is the chief reason for their preference for polygamy -- we are speaking, of course, of the situation today.

Article IX. Children of a Polygamist

The various children of a polygamist live with their respective mothers, who must provide their sustenance and bring them up. Usually the other wives are strangers to them, and their contacts with them are not much more frequent than with the other women in the village. If a special affection binds their mother to her co-wives, children also become involved, just as they are involved in the antipathies, dissensions, and rivalries of the harem. Usually they respect their father's wives, especially the elderly ones. But later a boy may allow himself to be carried away by passion and have illicit relations with one of the younger wives.

586x
178

> of this rule, however, could trouble the religious feelings of native Christians and thus produce an effect that is the reverse of the one desired. A religious marriage is in fact indissoluble, and in such cases the obligation to make restitution would be equivalent to a recognition that a religious union could be dissolved. And not only would the native consider this an opposition between the public authorities and Christian morality, but in addition the stability of marriages in general would greatly suffer.

here it must be noted that certain parents use hypocritical circumventions rather than openly showing their refusal. This is how they go about it: if the woman has really abandoned her husband and he, for good reasons such as those given above, no longer cares for his wife with whom he can no longer live (especially if he is monogamous), the question of reimbursement arises. The woman, in connivance with her parents, who do not want to make restitution of the bride price, publicly and officially declares that she is not leaving her husband and wishes to return to the conjugal household, whereas her only intention is to help her parents avoid paying the bride-price valuables. In time she will manage to get out of it one way or another.

3. Special cases

586x There are some rather special cases in the dissolution of marriage. The first has occurred more frequently since colonization, while the last has practically disappeared.

586x 1) Njangó. This word is the noun form of the verb angola, "to seduce or lead astray" (another's wife, his laborer, his slave,
● 837 etc.). Therefore, it is a generic term, but it is primarily applied
587 to the seduction of a married woman in order to make her leave her husband. It therefore denotes a man's act. Of the woman it is

586 simply said that she has left her husband (aɔ̃kɔ́fa) and has been taken
837 in marriage by X (aɔ̃kúmbwa ɛ́ka Sóngɔ́ló). Having fallen in love
587 with another man's wife [390] and desiring to marry her, a man tries to win her favor. If she consents he collects the valuables necessary for the bride price. He then asks the woman to come to him and pays the bride price as for any marriage.

Instead of going directly to her seducer, the woman may also first go to her parents, especially if they are in favor of her plan. If they are not she would not succeed, because they would prevent her from carrying it out.

Cases of njangó were formerly rare because they were risky.
[721] As a matter of fact, they constituted a casus belli. Anyone who undertook such a venture had to be in a position to take the consequences of his act, especially with respect to the payment of an in-
[178] demnity. Nowadays, on the other hand, these occurrences are much more frequent, even when the new husband does not have the means to pay the bride price at once. Nevertheless, the reversal in government policy is beginning to produce good results. The woman, or her mother, is often imprisoned; rarely the seducer. This penalty is often sufficient to restore order. But to keep from being exposed to further difficulties caused by the woman who no longer loves him, the abandoned husband sometimes refuses to take back his unfaithful wife.

The rarity of cases in former times as well as the fact that
[671] they constituted a legitimate reason for war shows that the njangó did not have the approval of Nkundo law but that it was more or less considered an infraction.

2) Taking refuge. Because of the change in circumstances,
586 the practice of taking refuge is no longer common today. It used
577 to be done as follows: A woman who absolutely wanted to leave her husband and had no means of doing so, since no man had asked for her in marriage and her parents were powerless to help her, went secretly to a rich and influential man whom she would have liked as a husband. She arrived unexpectedly, stood before him, or even threw herself at him, crying, [391] Bejwó békí! ónjéngé.

843 a woman's mother proceeded with the ceremony in the absence of
the husband and his family. The latter were furious. They revealed the matter so that if anything should happen later to the mother or the child the law would be on their side. In that way the husband could evade responsibility and place the blame on his wife and her family so that they would have to pay an indemnity.

The pregnant woman does not remove the paint for three or
[302] four weeks after the ceremony. Nowadays the use of paint having
[178] disappeared except for certain occasions and among older persons,
it is left on for only one night. In addition the surface smeared has been reduced to a line in the middle of the head or even one single spot.

[783] During this ceremony the Bombwanja have a public confession
● [837] (etato) of the lovers. But since the Bokótɛ́ wait until after delivery,
we will deal with it later on.

On the night following the ceremony described, the couple
[833] [476] "fasten the fetus" through their carnal union. Were they to
omit this act, the child would die before birth.

For subsequent pregnancies the fastening of the fetus is no longer preceded by the same formalities.

The couple continue to have relations during the entire
[833] period of pregnancy "in order to open an easy passage for the child."
843 On the other hand, they must strictly observe marital fidelity.
837 Nevertheless, a polygamist may have relations with his other wives.

In addition to this essential art, the interdict also includes a secondary part; the couple may not even commit acts even very remotely related to procreation. Thus they may not:

1) Touch in any way whatsoever -- even to shaking their hands -- persons with whom they have had adulterous relations; such persons must therefore be avoided.

2) Sit next to such persons.

3) Look at them.

4) Enter a house or apartment where they are.

5) Eat "from the same pot."

6) Lie in another couple's bed.

7) Other persons may no longer sleep in the bed of the couple bound by the bokeka.

843 This law requiring a most strict fidelity lasts until the end
837 of the bokeka for the husband, but until the weaning of the child
for the wife. It is especially strict for the period of seclusion (see
below, Article III, 3).

The violation of the essential stipulation of this interdict (-fénda bokeka) results either in the death of the woman during pregnancy and especially during seclusion or in the death of the child later on. [477]

A. If the woman dies during this period, the suspicion is placed a priori on her husband. The Nkundó say abfénda wǎlɪ, "he has transgressed against his wife." Unless he can prove his innocence through public actions, the judgment of a magician, or autopsy[sic].

If the woman has been the victim of a seducer, he is held responsible and must pay a large indemnity equivalent to the bride price that was paid for the deceased. If no other man is involved, the affair has no consequences.

843 In the past the combined autopsy and Caesarian section was
163 always performed. It had a dual purpose: to remove the child and
754 to examine the mother. If the operation revealed the existence of
845 a "stomach" (likundú), the deceased was of a noxious (lilọka)
853 nature or constitution and therefore caused the death of her child.
If the child remained alive, it proved that he was of a magically superior nature and was able to resist the natural evil spells of his mother, which thus turned against their unwitting author. (1)

1. The Nkundó believe that only animals have a "stomach" (likundú). If a human being has one, that is, if his viscera are large, curved, in compartments, in a word, abnormal, that person is an evildoer. He commits evil acts voluntarily or, most frequently, unknowingly. Some men with a likundú can be recognized by the fact that they eat their nails, hair, etc. The Nkundó must certainly have observed relationships between this habit and a deformity of the stomach.

853 The child is given to a wet nurse (a kinswoman, a stranger, a Botswa woman, depending on who is available).

847
845
843 If the mother's body shows no signs of evil-doing or of "the hatred of others," it is thought that her death was caused by evil spells on the part of the child. Thereupon some kill the child to prevent it from doing harm during its whole life; others, on the contrary, spare it despite everything.

843
● 837 If the husband (for it is he above all who is involved, since he is most exposed to possible lapses) has unfortunately been guilty of misconduct, his wife has only a slim chance [478] of salvation. Nevertheless, it is still possible for her to be saved, on condition that from then on her husband abstain from any sexual act and from all the accidental gestures and actions described above. The least he can do under these circumstances is to inform his wife of his indiscretion so that she can take precautions. If he wants to
[672] ward off any possibility of causing his wife's certain death, he sends her home and gives his father-in-law a pledge (ndanga) through which he recognizes his guilt and shows his intention to assume the entire responsibility for his misdeed. An upright man prefers to act in this fashion, for he never knows whether one day he will not inadvertently violate one of the prohibitions.

853
837 B. The child's death is the result of the putrefaction of the mother's milk, the mother being thus incapable of nursing. As in the preceding case, the offense is a priori imputed to the husband -- isɛ́ aβoma bɔ́na la ndota. (1) Since he has wronged no one but himself, no palaver ensues; the "natural" punishment is sufficient. This does not mean that he is not the object of evil tongues; people point at him and at times remind him of his misdeed. To remove the blame from himself, he can resort to

[153] 1. Ndota is an illness caused by the violation of prescriptions of a sexual nature (See Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 2, A).

853 an ordeal or ask a magician's judgment or a magical practice to
837 reveal the culprit. The culprit who is discovered is not subject to
any social sanction; he is punished by the ordeal itself or the spell
cast against him.

If the mother's adultery is proven through her having been
[684] caught in the act, her seducer is considered guilty. He must pay
the death indemnity (20 to 30 copper rings). The woman is not
at all involved as far as society is concerned; it is a matter between
her and her husband.

In order to prevent any harmful effect on the child, the
751 Nkundó resort to a potion called bondandota, which will be explained
854 in [479] the next article, 3. "Medication" by scarfication
might also be mentioned. This therapy is applied to the
parents as well as to the child. If the father is wealthy, he invites
the wife's family to come and perform the operation themselves.
As in all comparable situations, the invitation is accompanied by
the handing over of a pledge, and farewell presents (belingako)
are given at the end of the visit. In addition the wife very often
goes to live with her parents for some time after her seclusion in
order to increase the efficacy of the treatment.

The sanction incurred for a violation of the secondary
843 stipulations is less serious. For instance, the pregnant woman suffers
[684] from violent migraines, which often cause fainting and sometimes
make delivery very difficult; thus they can even cause death. The
husband is seldom bothered by these headaches. But he takes great
pains to faithfully observe the law in order to spare his wife such
painful consequences and to avoid the death of the child being born.

Apart from sexual abstention and the rules connected with it, the couple are also subject to various prohibitions which are clearly based on superstitious ideas. Thus:

1) They must neither go down into a well nor dig in the earth. The woman would die, for it is as if they were digging her grave.

2) They must not carry anything together with another person, for that is how corpses are carried, and such carrying would be the cause of death, through imitation of the woman's funeral procession.

843 3) They must not climb up on the roof (they are not forbidden to climb a palm tree in order to cut off nuts)

4) They must not eat animals killed by a carnivore (leopard,
843 841 crocodile, etc.), or the child would die a sudden and unnatural
262 death like the victims of such wild beasts. [480]

825 5) They must abstain from animals such as porcupines, anteaters, certain birds, crocodiles, and gavials, (1) who are in the habit of living in the hollows of trees or in dens. The delivery would be very painful if they ate them, for the child would roll up and crouch in the mother's womb. Fish that find shelter in passageways do not produce such consequences and are therefore eaten.

1. In this region women never eat snakes or bats (loléma, bonkómí, ífukyá).

6) They must not eat turtles (2). A very difficult birth is feared, for the turtle withdraws into its shell and encloses its anal extremities as in a vise, and the child would do the same.

2. In some tribes (Bongili, Bonkoso) women always abstain from eating such reptiles.

7) They must not eat the head of a monkey. The child would be born with deep-set eyes resembling the monkey's.

8) They must not eat the large antelope known as mbuli, because it has a long neck and flabby flesh, and the child would acquire the same defects.

9) They must not eat the lioóló fish, which would cause
[153] migraines, since it swims fiercely without direction.

The results of bokeka and the obligations resulting from it
843 are connected with natural paternity. Thus, if a woman becomes
● 837 pregnant as a result of relations with a regular, recognized lover, the latter must assume all responsibility. He is required to "fasten the fetus" and to observe all the regulations pertaining to the

843 bokeka. The same is true if the pregnancy is the result of adultery; 837 the natural father must bear all the consequences of his act. The husband is absolved from them and has no relations with his wife until the end of this particular pregnancy. The culprit must give him a pledge by which he publically recognizes his responsibility, and he is expected to fulfill all the duties of a husband. Therefore he may have relations with the woman during her entire pregnancy without paying additional indemnities. If any accident befalls the mother or the child, he is made to pay a large indemnity.

Note finally that, as we have pointed out in Chapter II, [583] Article XI, no bride-price payment can be made from the time the pregnancy becomes visible until after the end of the period of seclusion.

843 844 757 To facilitate childbirth the previously mentioned concoction of various leaves mixed with kaolin (isaá) is continuously applied to the abdomen. Medical scarifications on the abdomen are also performed.

Finally, as the time of delivery approaches, special douches [278] made from a concoction of the bark of the boímbo tree (1) are administered. All these treatments are called betɛ́ byá bosánjá, that is, medicines (for the purpose) of an easy delivery.

Article III. Birth

844 1. Delivery

A woman remains with her husband for childbirth; she does not go home to her family. Only exceptionally does she give birth elsewhere -- for instance, if she has been sent home for one reason or another, or during a trip, while working in the fields, near a stream, or a spring, etc. Such sudden unexpected deliveries

---

1. Certain douches, especially the one made of boímbo, are also used as abortive agents.

846 of a dried banana leaf. Three knots are tied in it. The helper holds it in one hand and with the other cuts off the first knot, which she carries away with her. The mother keeps her end in her hand and presents the other to her husband. She receives the knife from the hands of the helper and cuts between the two knots so that each spouse carries away his end. Each time the parties involved say, "We have cut the bofofó; we are separating; go away." Having thus bid each other farewell, each fastens his end to the roof of the seclusion hut.

This ceremony ends the period of seclusion and puts an end
846 to the ekelɛ prohibitions. From then on the couple may have sexual
837 relations together, the helper can resume her usual life, and
adultery on the part of the father can no longer harm the child or the mother. Note, however, that the child's immunity to the father's misconduct implies one condition: the father must not take it on his knees the day he commits adultery. By the following day the effects of his act have been nullified. A woman can discover her husband's infidelity through his refusal to take the child. Often she makes use of this means to obtain a confirmation of her suspicions. Some men abstain from all misconduct solely to guard against any such possibility. Adultery may have a harmful influence on the child even after it is weaned if it has a weak constitution. [491] All this seems to indicate that the reaction is considered to be physical and direct rather than a sanction based on religion or superstition.

846 Nkundó therapeutics include an antidote, however; it is
789 called bondandota (from ndota "an illness caused by the infraction
of prohibitions of a sexual nature"). It consists of a potion made
[278] from the sap of an aroid bearing the same name, which is mixed
with the sap of the libúlúkakó plant. If for some reason or other the couple have been away from each other for a fairly long time, they sit or stand face to face and take the child on their knees, which touch each other, and each one makes the child drink the potion twice, once from each hand, making sure to turn its face toward him [or her]. Usually the couple also drink some of the brew, though it is intended primarily for the child. Without these precautions the relations between the pair and the father's

846 taking the child would cause the child's death. The same precau-
789 tion is also in order if the husband goes on a trip before the child's
birth and does not return till after the delivery

We have just seen that the harmful effects of the father's
846 misconduct on his child's life is effectuated through the father's
837 act of taking the child on his knees. Thus the Nkundó speak of
baóngó b'âbé, "a father's bad knees," to indicate his reprehensible
[826] conduct, and they say that the bondandota potion is administered
to the child so that it will not die because of the father's bad
knees. (1)

> 1. The expression baóngó b'âbé is also used when an undertaking which requires continence is unsuccessful. (See Article II, 3).

When a child has painful and persistent diarrhea, it is often
753 interpreted as the effect of the father's infidelity. As soon as they
454 become aware of it, the couple separate for some time, and the
father no longer touches the child. [492]

Contrary to what one reads on this subject about other peo-
837 ples of the Congo, Nkundó couples do not have to remain continent
834 beyond the period of seclusion. The separation ceremony gives the
789 husband back the freedom of action he had before his wife's preg-
nancy. *For the wife the bokeka remains strict with respect to illicit*
relations until the child is weaned However she, too, may regain
her freedom by having recourse to an antidote, the ingredients of
which she purchases from a person who holds the secret. The in-
gredients are placed in a small antelope horn which is then stopped
[824] up by means of bolakɔ́ (resin from the Symphonia gabonensis). The
interested party wears it about her loins on a string or a bead belt
or, preferably, on a special creeper. This amulet protects the
child's life from the harmful influence of the mother's acts of
adultery, but it does so only on condition that she does not separate
herself from the child, as we will explain further on. This procedure

837 is not morally condoned, and a woman who resorts to it does not
834 escape criticism. She is compared to a goat, who does not have
789 a regular and steady husband: álɔ́mya bɔ̌na lontaa, "she nurses
her child as a goat does." (1)

1. The opposite of lɔ́mya lontaa, -- if it is used to show the contrast -- is lɔ́mya lontómbá.

When the separation ceremony is ended, the mother is
846 adorned with all her ornaments and goes out to walk in a procession through the village. The child is carried by an older sister, a niece, etc. He is taken around the village, bɔ́nangya bɔ̌na l'olóló Small presents are offered him everywhere -- an arrow, a small knife, a hairpin, etc There is no feast, however; if that honor were accorded him he would die of it (for when someone dies, there is always a feast of farewell in his honor). [493]

Article IV. Nursing

During the first few days after birth an infant does not suck
853 the milk of its mother, since it is "too hot." He is fed by a third person, preferably a relative.

On the third day the following occurs:

1) The mother's breasts are massaged (-kulola baɛ́le). For
853 this purpose the Nkundó use leaves of the bǔtɛ creeper and the
757 lilongyá plant (Adenostemma viscosum Forst.), a green leaf from a banana tree called mɛlɛngɛ, several pieces of peeled sugar cane, the tips of the dried leaves of any banana tree, and sometimes other plants are added as well. All the ingredients are crushed, then boiled, and white sand and a bit of red paint are mixed in with them. The mixture is called ndengó. It is prepared by the women who are in charge of massaging the breasts. The bǔtɛ leaves, however, must be picked by the father. He goes to the forest early in the morning and first shakes the creeper so that all leaves that are not firmly attached will fall off. Then he climbs it and picks the desired

853 757 the sap, which she then mixes with water. The resulting liquid is oily and foams like soap. She places a few drops on a piece of banana leaf and makes a sachet of it. She holds this against the breast for a certain time until the boil, similar to a blood clot or a piece of liver, leaves the breast and enters the sachet. She then shows it to those present. From then on the mother can nurse her child without fear; her milk has become healthy and normal.

837 853 684 783 2) The mother's public confession must include the names of all the men with whom she has had carnal relations since the child's conception. Other groups, such as the Injóló, extend this obligation even to instances preceding that moment but which have not been declared at a previous occasion. The confession is public. The masseuse related to the husband begins to crush the leaves to be used in rubbing the breast; as she moves the pestle and says to the mother, "Name a man." The mother replies by giving a name. The masseuse says nyongo, "indemnity." Then all those present say yengô, yengô, yengô, "absolved". Then it is the other masseuse's turn, and she interrogates the mother in the same way. The process continues till all the names have been cited. If [495] the mother cites the name of a man who is a close relative of her husband and who therefore does not need to pay an indemnity, the masseuse does not reply nyongo. Instead a member of the husband's clan makes the gesture signifying [201] exemption: he holds the kernel of a palm nut (lolikó) in his left hand and *throws it by means of a small board which he holds in his* right. Among the Injóló the man takes two kernels and strikes them against each other and then throws them away. Were the woman to suppress a name the child would die. If she has no admission to make, she replies, "No one besides my husband."

The indemnity that must be paid by those who are obligated to do so consists of a hen and a bunch of bananas (or their cash value) which are to be given to the masseuses, who will then divide them. Were the accused to refuse, the husband would demand a regular indemnity from him after the end of the seclusion.

The Bombwanja have this confession at the time of the [194] fastening of the fetus. A few old women married into the clan carry out the interrogation. The kernel of the fruit of the palm is thrown by means of a knife.

837 Note, finally, that the confession is restricted to married
783 women. It is never expected of a young unmarried mother. Therefore it would seem to be a practice connected with marriage (a
853 social institution) and not with childbirth (a physiological phenomenon).

This confession is called etato or lotato, from the verb [192] -tata, "to confess," (for which the generic term, sanga, "to say," is sometimes substituted).

I was unable to find any reason for this practice other than that of avoiding the death of the child. It is evident, however, that this explanation does not exhaust the question, although it is entirely possible that the original and deeper meaning has been lost without leaving any trace in the minds of the present generation. [496]

3) During the entire duration of nursing, the mother must
853 not be separated from her child. For the usual circumstances of
933 daily life, this rule is broadly interpreted; but during sexual relations it is strict, and no exceptions or excuses are permitted. Negligence under these circumstances would inevitably bring about the death of the child by ndota as soon as the mother took it back. This rule holds for legitimate relations as much as for illicit ones. Therefore the mother must always keep her child at her breast.

4) If at some point during nursing, the milk no longer flows
853 in sufficient quantity, the mother is given a potion consisting of
[757] the extract of the bark of the bolóngé tree (which has a fruit con-
[278] taining a very sweet milky sap). Then she eats vegetables called lotélé. (1)

1. The leaves of this plant are also ordinarily eaten as vegetables, but they are consumed especially by those who possess the modem magical practice known as boyaóli.

5) An accident to which the Nkundó attach great importance
[262] is the rejection or vomiting of milk into the mouth of an adult, even if the person affected is the infant's mother. Such a person

595 wife was called Lonkata. This was, however, more a category, for
there were sometimes four Lonkata in a harem. The rest were ordinary wives. Among the Ekonda, the first wife was called Nkumokolo, just like the Bomatsa. The second wife was called Ekila or Nkonde. The remaining wives were the ordinary wives of the harem.

The first wife, Bomatsa, always remained at home and never
595 left the harem. The second, Ekila or Nkonde, accompanied the
484 polygynist everywhere; she was at his side on all his trips. The
Bolumbu usually went completely alone to do errands in other villages.

595 These old customs of priority among the wives are now
gradually beginning to disappear.

684 It was forbidden under severe penalty to have relations with
the first, second, or third wife of the polygynist. The penalties were death, slavery, or a large fine.

This was their law concerning adultery, enforced with severe punishment.

The ordinary wives of the harem were less strictly guarded.
595 This often depended on the jealousy or indifference of the polygynist.
837 Anyone who had relations with these wives had to pay a fine, or
rather, a price of prostitution. Since the wives were almost all in the possession of the polygynists, there were naturally many men without a wife. These, then, often had relations with the ordinary wives of the polygynists. Also, the sons of the polygynist had relations with them; the polygynist himself sometimes even had relations with the ordinary wives of his neighbor. This was the bad consequence and the immorality of polygyny.

It is easy to understand that the ordinary wives of the polygynist,
595 having relations with others, often left their husband, or rather,
586 their master in order to go to another. The ordinary wives constituted the largest number. It is because of this that one now finds many women who have had three or four, sometimes even seven, different husbands in succession. Among some tribes, [534] the Ekonda among them, they were stricter; a wife who had already left her husband or master two or more times was considered to have little worth.

567 The female slaves who were taken in war were given by the
595 polygynist to his male slaves as wives. They could also be installed
in the harem among the ordinary wives. Their children could have
the same rights as the other children of the polygynist

837 When a wife of a polygynist had illicit relations with another
586 man of the same village, this was called Bonsamba. When she had such relations with a man of another village, this was called Isoke. As we have observed, the ordinary wives of the harem often had such relations. When the woman eloped with her bonsamba or isoke, or with whomever it was, she was pursued by her husband or owner, who tried to get her back. If the wife refused, negotiations over the bride price began.

If an agreement was reached or if a pledge was given as guarantee for the payment, the first bond was considered broken, and the woman was considered bound to this second man, even though he had been her bonsamba or isoke.

It might also happen that the first husband was so jealous that he did not want to make any agreement; then he attempted to kill either the guilty wife or her second husband. If the woman became
593 ill at the home of her husband, he went to tell her family and had to
758 give a security to the family.

583 Often the family came to get the wife, in order to be able to care for her better. If, in such a case, the wife [538] died at the home of her family, there were no further difficulties about the bride price, according to their customs. If, however, the bride price had still not been completely paid, the family asked their son-in-law to pay the remainder.

583 In recent times, now that the heathen customs have been
178 undermined by the European occupation, we see that the husbands whose wives have gone to their family when sick and have died there, demand the return of the bride price from the family, but this is completely contrary to their old customs. In one case the husband could demand the return of the bride price, namely, if the wife had left while healthy to go to her family and had died there.

562 Buying or Trading of Women. The woman was also in many
439 cases an acknowledged object of trade. The great village chiefs, among others Ibuka and Yoma, of whom we shall speak further, carried on a sort of woman trade. With European articles and also native currency, they went to other districts of the Equator [Province] to buy women with them, just like someone who goes to market, even though no public markets where women were sold actually existed.

836
864

prohibition under any circumstances. I have heard these same terms used also by the natives in the vicinity of Coquilhatville.

The body becomes flabby and without strength, and this weakness ends in a fatal paralysis (byongé nsyÍnyuka or nkatééné). In addition, the girls feared that their sexual organs, not yet fully formed, would be torn. They were also imbued with a very intense fear: bofolo w'aende, "the fear of males," bofolo w'ámato, "the fear of females." They also feared death -- bélotéké iwé. The parents added that sexual acts were free from danger only between persons of the requisite age.

836
864
857

This does not mean that children did not commit indecent acts. The game of loto, in which little girls try to cook (and which is always one of their favorite games (2) as it probably is throughout the world), often gave rise to it. Small boys joined in the game in order to taste the meal. And quite naturally they began to play at "husband and wife," more or less. Often this game involved only innocent imitations, but other times touching and exhibitions occurred between children of the same sex or of opposite sexes. This game is far more dangerous nowadays, [81], because of a change in the attitude of young people toward sexual matters.

2. Some boys imitate this game in order to acquire the habit of preparing their own meals. Later they benefit from it on more than one occasion.

The game of yembenkongo, in which boys, imitating monkeys, chase each other through the trees and creepers can -- and does -- result in reprehensible scenes.

583
881

In former times most girls were married before puberty. But their husbands did not touch them until they had completed their normal development.

836
831
864

Among some individuals the fear of sexual relations was so deeply rooted that it persisted even beyond the age limit and was

832 Kissing between persons of opposite sex is unknown. Embraces occur on the other hand but not in public; they must be considered as preparation to approaching intercourse. (1) An extraordinarily strong passion sometimes leads lovers to engage in more intimate kissing, usually as a prelude to normal intercourse. Although some natives are not shocked by such practices, more responsible people consider them improper. [95]

Article VI. Vices "*Contra Naturam*"

838

1. Male homosexuality

Homosexuality has been known among the Nkundó since time immemorial, among men as well as women.

Among the former it took the form of sodomy in the past, with one particular characteristic -- for which I do not know the explanation, that is, only the younger of the two men could take the active role. Nowadays among the youth, homosexuality has begun to take on a different form; the boys who practice it lie down in the positions of husband and wife. It is reported that sometimes one of the two says from time to time to his accomplice, "This is what I do with your sister." Is this an indication that here we have homosexuality only in action but not in feeling (*in effectu* not *in affectu*, as the *moralists* say)?

Homosexuality among the Nkundo does not seem to be the result of a special inclination for this vice; rather it has always been a last resort open to those who could not find a natural outlet for their passions. Although we cannot approve of this depravation of instinct either on rational grounds or in adherence to the faith, we must admit that it was more excusable among these peoples whose social organization was disadvantageous to many young people. At the present time there is already much less sodomy because it has become easier to get married. As for the new form of homosexuality, it may be observed especially in places where men are kept rigidly apart from relations

---

1. See above, Part 1, Article III.

998 with the opposite sex for a long time, such as internment camps, prisons, etc.

2 Female homosexuality

Nkundó girls play at "husband and wife," and even adult married women engage in this vice. According [96] to my informants, the causes are the following: first, an intense and very intimate love between two women, and second, and above all, the fact that wives of polygamists find it difficult to satisfy their passions in a natural way. Often they engage in this practice with co-wives of the same man. The greater liberty introduced through colonization could reduce its frequency, but up till now no great improvement has been observed. What is more, in establishments where girls are too severely kept away from the opposite sex, there has been an increase.

The verb used to designate these depraved acts is *yamɛ́ma*, "to each other, one against the other." The noun *bomɛ́mo* is derived from it. But these words are also used to designate a simple embrace. A more specific term is *yafkya bonsángo*; the verb *yafkya* (simple form: *fkya*) means "to press against each other."

Is there any need to say that a people like the Nkundó, whose beliefs are founded on nature, see nothing the least bit wrong with this vice? Consequently it would be desirable for educators and missionaries to draw their pupils' attention to the harm present in such practices.

3. Masturbation

999 This vice seems never to have been practiced by the Nkundó, but at the present time it is known in the large centers and in the camps; from there it gradually penetrates into the interior. Yet it seems to spread with difficulty in native society. It is understandable that a man who has acquired the habit in one of the centers does not rid himself of it without great effort; but as the natives do not have the will to corrupt others, he does not become an agent of its propagation. (1) [97]

(1) In spite of frequent touching due to itching.

837 become somewhat violent, the women recall these flaws, to the
826 great shame of the person who suffers from them. The same is true of the weakness of some of the men which, like an excess of sexual activity, can cause difficulties in a household.

2. Rape

● 839 Rape in the true sense of the word -- that is, the abuse of a woman by the use of violence -- is most unusual among the Nkundɔ. If a woman does not consent, the angry seducer leaves her, often insulting her to the best of his ability. I know of only one case of rape, which occurred some time ago and caused much consternation in the region. Banángɛ, the daughter of Iloko [94] is Liefele of Lofeli (Bongili), was at that time living with her mother's clan the Bonyeke (Bonkoso). She had not yet fully attained physical maturity (her breasts were still very small). One day she went into the forest and did not return in the evening. The family was alarmed, and her father and her uncle Mpɛ́nda ɛa Nkotonkale went to look for her. Finding traces of fresh blood, they followed them till they found Banángɛ's corpse buried in the [illegible]. She had died of hemorrhage; her sex organs, torn, showed the unmistakable signs of rape. People had their suspicions, but it has never been possible to prove the identity of the criminal. If there had been proof, he would not have escaped the mortal vengeance of the unfortunate victim's parents.

All the data I have been able to collect indicates that other instances must undoubtedly have occurred.

3. Incomplete acts

832 Here we are speaking of what moralists call actus impudicitiae, that is, acts whose nature physically leads to sexual pleasure.

Obscene bodily contacts between persons of opposite sex are preparatory acts which excite; even touching the breasts, the abdomen, and taking a person by the arms are included in this category.

§58 with the opposite sex for a long time, such as internment camps, prisons, etc.

2 Female homosexuality

Nkundó girls play at "husband and wife," and even adult married women engage in this vice. According [96] to my informants the causes are the following: first, an intense and very intimate love between two women, and second, and above all, the fact that wives of polygamists find it difficult to satisfy their passions in a natural way. Often they engage in this practice with co-wives of the same man. The greater liberty introduced through colonization could reduce its frequency, but up till now no great improvement has been observed. What is more, in establishments where girls are too severely kept away from the opposite sex, there has been an increase.

The verb used to designate these depraved acts is yamóma, "to each other, one against the other." The noun bomómo is derived from it. But these words are also used to designate a simple embrace. A more specific term is yafiya bosángo; the verb yafiya (simple form: fiyà) means "to press against each other."

Is there any need to say that a people like the Nkundó, whose beliefs are founded on nature, see nothing the least bit wrong with this vice? Consequently it would be desirable for educators and missionaries to draw their pupils' attention to the harm present in such practices.

3. Masturbation

§59 This vice seems never to have been practiced by the Nkundó, but at the present time it is known in the large centers and in the camps; from there it gradually penetrates into the interior. Yet it seems to spread with difficulty in native society. It is understandable that a man who has acquired the habit in one of the centers does not rid himself of it without great effort; but as the natives do not have the will to corrupt others, he does not become an agent of its propagation. (1) [97]

1. In spite of frequent touching due to itching.

276 ●842 According to native belief, the kola nut ensures the fertility of a woman if sexual relations take place the night after the man has used this stimulant.

276 The regular use of kola induces very intense nervous excitement. We noticed that the adolescents and men in their prime scarcely use it. Only the old people use it regularly. Kakua, the old native chief, chewed it from morning to night. One day I pointed this out to him, asking if he were not afraid of the dangerous effects of this overindulgence. He proudly pointed out to me the huts of his seven wives, saying, "Ask them if they don't have children!"

276 263 278 Among the stimulants we may also mention the peanut, widely used by all the tribes, a type of small ground pea, and certain tree roots known to the natives but the exact nature of which we unfortunately could not determine. It is well to note, moreover, that most of the natives use the stimulants as medicaments as well as condiments. They are used for intestinal pains, colic, and as purgatives.

462 252 In all the tribes the preparation of food and meals is exclusively the task of women. They always do it with great care. [142]

252 The kitchen, if it can be called one, is always very simple. If the weather is good, cooking is done in the open in the middle of the village, in front of the hut or behind it, and very often in the shade of the banana trees. If the weather is rainy or cold, the women prepares the meals inside the hut. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

Fig. 81. Carrying Firewood.

[45] [31]

833 753 654 which has a strong resemblance to sleeping sickness. (1) One of its symptoms is a weakness of the lower limbs. Instances are cited of individuals who were unable to resist their passions and were punished in this manner. Apparently only the woman dies. As soon as her family discovers that she is stricken,the guilty woman denounces her accomplice. The latter is held responsible and is required to pay a heavy indemnity, which may amount to several dozen copper rings.

833 751 Here as in many other situations the Nkundó have found a way to avoid the danger. There is an antidote (mengɔ́), and it is water (bàsi bale mengɔ́ éà bombilɛ́). Thus those who are unable to control their aroused passions during the day, satisfy it in a shallow stream.

833 753 The fear of bombilɛ́ has been greatly shaken [93] by colonization. If we are to believe the natives, foreign soldiers are responsible for this change also. But the behavior of the latter could not completely destroy the ancient feeling, probably due to a natural shame which makes them seek darkness and privacy for acts of this sort.

833 [579] [842] After intercourse a native woman usually gives herself a douche. She does so for the sake of cleanliness. It often happens, however, that she does not wait long enough before doing so, and thus she neutralizes the effect of the intercourse. This is chiefly a matter of carelessness. Nevertheless, under certain circumstances she may use this means to prevent conception. (1)

833 826 According to my informants, some women have constitutional abnormalities which repel men. As everything readily becomes public, such flaws are quickly known after marriage, though not quite as readily beforehand. Actually love can -- and often does -- cause them to be overlooked. But after the first ardor has cooled, such a situation may become a threat to the stability of a marriage. When quarrels

---

1. It is not sleeping sickness itself, however, for that disease seems formerly to have been unknown in this area.

1. See Chapter X, Article I, 2.

582
583 We have spoken of the unproductivity of the bride price. This is a Nkundó notion, and it is accurate only because the old men want to satisfy themselves before their sons. Actually, they could very easily reconcile their desire that the bride price should be productive with the aspirations of the youths, at least in many instances. All they would need to do would be to use the valuables they have received for their sons' benefit by acquiring girls of the same age for them. The productivity of the valuables would not diminish [228] in the least, of course, since the goods would remain in the family. On the contrary, it would be increased because a greater number of progeny would probably be born. But our natives
● [842]
[161] knowledge of physiology does not seem to be sufficiently developed for them to come to this conclusion. And even more probably their egoism has greatly clouded their intelligence and silenced the voice of good sense and fatherly love to make it possible for them to multiply the number of their wives and thus increase the easy satisfaction of their sensuality, augment their wealth, and reinforce their social position. It will be their sons' turn after their death.

561
428
595 This situation is aggravated by the fact that, except for the bosilo, the brothers, not the sons, of the deceased inherited the widows, who thus remained in the hands of the old men.

582 Because of their attitudes the old men monopolized most of the women. They established large harems for themselves, so that it was very difficult for the young men to find a woman to marry; they had to consider themselves lucky if their father provided them with a child.

582
578 Thus it was unheard of that a young man between twenty and thirty years old should marry, except for a few instances where a man acquired a child who was to become his wife after a number of years. Men were usually forty years old or older before they married.

Nowadays the situation has changed entirely; the attitude of the old men favors the young much more and has become almost normal. The great majority of fathers, if they have the means, procure a wife for their sons as soon as the latter are old enough to express a desire for one. This improvement is due to the fact that it has become

M [illegible] untangle all the threads. Thus it happens that young people form relationships with the intention of marrying without knowing that they are related; they are warned only by the opposition and ensuing explanations of the elders.

We may conclude that marriage among descendants of a common ancestor is generally prohibited if they live in the same village. It is frequently permitted on the other hand, if they belong to different villages, provided that they are not, at the same time, related to one of the ancestresses.

M [illegible] Clearly, it is difficult to say what precise degree of kinship formed the basis for the prohibition of or permission for a marriage between descendants of a common ancestor, or what are the boundaries of an exogamous grouping.

It is also apparent from the preceding observations -- as M [illegible] from the examination of affinity as an obstacle to marriage -- that the descent from a common mother is a more important factor than descent from the father. This does not give proof of a form of matriarchy, though it could be the remains or the beginning of one, or could provide a partial explanation for one. It stems quite simply M [illegible] from the Nkundó notions concerning procreation, in which they attribute the major role to the mother. There is also the fact that M [illegible] greater shame is attached to being united with a person descended from the same woman, and finally the fact that they feel a stronger M [illegible] affection for the mother than for the father (a sentiment [230] which is accentuated by polygamy). The three causes are closely related.

M [illegible] Finally, it should be noted that there is a group among the Nkundó we are discussing which is less strict than the others in this matter. The relatives among whom marriage is prohibited is definitely more limited; that is, their exogamous groupings are more limited. The people in question are the Bongale (see Introduction), and the same phenomenon may be observed among the Elingá. (1)

P [illegible] 1. The Batswá are still more liberal, and in this respect their practices differ very little from ancient European laws and customs.

626 (837) The shame attached to the discovery of this sort of misconduct in the better circles in Europe is unknown among the Nkundó. This is natural since isolated instances are readily excused. As to [152] the habitual offenders, they are sensitive [326] to the above-mentioned epithets but will not correct their ways on this account any more than people in other parts of the world.

837 626 684 An adulterous husband is criticized as much as an adulterous wife in spite of the difference in the means of repression which Nkundó law provides for their respective misconduct.

Public opinion therefore corroborates the conclusion toward which our examination of sanctions has pointed, namely that adultery is condemned by the Nkundó. Opinion is not based on the existence of the sanction but seems to spring from their innate mentality, which makes them perceive adultery as a disorder.

6. Aggravating circumstances

837 592 672 If a case of adultery is followed by conception, it becomes especially serious, and for the husband as much as for the natural father. Indeed the latter must assume all the consequences. When circumstances permit the husband makes his wife denounce her accomplice, and she does not refuse to do so. The husband then calls a meeting and demands a pledge (*nlenga*) from the culprit, who in that way acknowledges that he is at fault and shows his willingness to assume all responsibility. If there is a miscarriage or the child dies during delivery, the natural father must pay the legal father an indemnity of "a slave" or more (sometimes 50 rings); a smaller indemnity is required for a child who is only deformed or sickly. If the mother dies the indemnity consists of a slave and 50 rings, and it may go as high as 100 rings.

In the interim the husband no longer goes near his wife. He leaves her to her lover, who must "preserve the foetus" and observe all the rites and practices associated with pregnancy and childbirth, since, physically, he is the father. (1) [327]

1. For fuller details see Chapter X, Article II, 3. For analogous practices

672
837
[842]

in the case of an unmarried mother, see
Chapter I, Part 1, Article III, 3.

[843] Adultery also becomes especially serious during the period preceding childbirth when there is a special prohibition against it, as endangering the lives of both mother and child, as we will explain in Chapter X, Article III.

7. Remarks and general conclusions

831 [721] 1) In former times the offense of adultery, even in its mildest form, that is, an isolated act, was one of the chief causes of "wars" between villages. Sometimes both sides called on their relatives by marriage to assist them, and the result was a general upheaval.

837 595 2) As a rule a husband wants his wife to be faithful. Doubtless there are exceptions. Most if not all of them were formerly found among the old polygamists. At their age they were disgusted with continual palavers, and their experience as men had taught them that they often became angry and uselessly complicated their little lives. They preferred to close their eyes, like good old Bonof w'Ilolongo of Iteko (the Bombwanja clan of the Boôyé). He came to see me in the Christian village of Bombomba through which I was passing at the beginning of March, 1933. I asked him why he was adorned with so many bells, and he answered naively, "I always wear them. That way my wives know of my coming already from a distance. It gives them time to stop slandering me and to send their lovers away." When I expressed my surprise that he did not want to catch them in the act in order to punish them and end their infidelities, he answered me with a smile, "No, Father, jealousy . . . is for the young. As for me, I have seen so much of it that I no longer have any desire to get angry and make palavers for these trivialities."

558 837 595 Since the coming of the Europeans some unscrupulous men -- especially polygamists -- have been engaging in [328] a kind of procuring. They send their wives to commit adultery in order to be able to catch them in the act and thus enrich themselves. Or else they lend their wives for one night or more to laborers or soldiers who are

595a
842 5) The desire to increase the number of children is one of the reasons most frequently given; it is the chief, and sometimes the only, one cited by ethnographers. There is no question that it has a great deal of validity, for the Nkundó like to have many children. It is one of the things on which they pride themselves as well as a powerful means for reinforcing a social position (and we are thus led back to the first reason cited).

The question of knowing whether polygamy actually does favor the birth rate is irrelevant here, even if the results of a comparison were clearly against this system and were it proved that "the more wives a polygamist has, the fewer children he has." For the Nkundó never make this statistical computation. He sees only the principle: several women give more children than one. And for them, that is the gist of the matter. Furthermore, the interest of the people as a whole does not appear on the [157] horizon of the Nkundó's thoughts and feelings: they think only of themselves, and in their egoism, they consider only their own interests.

595a
831 6) To all these reasons given by the Nkundó to justify the practice of polygamy, we must add a sixth, which they never mention, sensuality. Without colonization it would have been difficult for us to make this statement. [374] But the new state of affairs shows several flaws in our people's arguments. We have already pointed out some of them. Furthermore, all the reasons mentioned up to now do not suffice to account for the existence of polygamy. They do not explain why in the past the old men wanted to keep all the women to themselves, or why a given individual becomes a polygamist. It is a fact that for more than one man none of these alleged reasons have been involved. It is also known that several natives have acquired fortunes by European work (as clerks, salesmen, traders, etc.) in order to be able to establish a harem, though there could have been no motive of vanity or gain in social influence. On the basis of my knowledge of circumstances, persons, and places, I am convinced that even for some natives living in their villages, the primary purpose was clearly sexual. I am acquainted with more than one such case.

586ˣ 672 If the wife is ill she may have become ill at her husband's home or elsewhere and these two possible situations must be considered separately. In the first instance there is no cause for divorce, since responsibility for her illness rests entirely with the husband. On the other hand, if the wife contracted her illness while staying with her family, the family must shoulder the responsibility, and if her illness is incurable, the husband can have recourse to divorce. But this is not so if the wife has gone to her parents' home in response to her husband's express order, or if she ran away from the husband's for reasons which are just and reasonable. Some situations may give rise to violent disputes. Such is the case, for example, of an illness during a visit undertaken at the wife's own initiative but for the good of the husband. Theoretically, he should win the case. Also, a stay of twenty-four hours is not considered sufficient to place the responsibility for the illness on the wife's family. (1)

1. For details see Chapter VI, Article III, 3 and 4. See also Chapter IX, Article X.

586ˣ The difference between the consequences of the husband's illness and his wife's is of a practical nature. A husband who suffers from an incurable illness or one that takes too long to cure is usually (though not always) abandoned by his wife. If no other man pays a bride price for her, the marriage continues. If the woman finds a lover, he pays the bride price, which is turned over to the first husband, completing the divorce. But it is not possible to say that the man's illness *per se* is a cause of divorce, for the wife is under an obligation to take care of a sick husband. [378] But in practice neither of the two families involved demand the application of this law. All yield to the wishes of the woman, who will refuse to continue a union that has so little attraction for her.

Thus illness is not a legally valid reason for divorce. But in practice it is recognized as a situation that can result in the dissolution of a marriage.

● [672] Although the Nkundó ardently desire children, sterility

586 842 is not invoked as a reason for divorce. Yet there are many sterile women. To obtain the fulfillment of his desires, a man will have recourse to polygamy. He will try to obtain the valuables he needs in order to acquire another wife. If he does not have the financial means, he could make life difficult for his wife through petty annoyances and meanness of the kind that are not likely to place him in the wrong. In that way he could drive her into leaving him, and thus recover the cost of the bride price. But such behavior is only hypothetical; it could happen here and there, but I know of no instance. In any case a husband never invokes sterility in order to break up a marriage. Therefore, contrary to what happens elsewhere, the question is not raised in Nkundó law.

586 Included among the factors that make the continuation of marriage impossible is a husband's violations of sexual prohibitions during pregnancy or after childbirth, exposing the wife to mortal danger. For through his misconduct the husband becomes guilty of an implicit repudiation, and the wife's father will make use of his right to protect his child's life. (1)

1. See Chapter X, Article II, 3.

The remaining reasons are those given at the beginning, which can be reduced to the impossibility of continuing the marriage due to an incompatibility of temperaments, the cooling of love, serious offenses, especially if repeated, [378] serious and continual failures in the performance of duties, and faults that dishonor the culprit. (1) The habit of stealing, in particular, must be mentioned

1. For example, adultery with a relative by marriage -- see Chapter VI, Article V, 2, and Chapter V, Article IV, no. 2., ex. 17.

in this last category. Women who steal, even small things like manioc, fish, or meat, end in provoking most husbands' antipathy

000

Article IV. Nursing
Article V. Naming
Article VI. The question of twins
Article VII. Circumcision
Article VIII. Education
Article IX. Rights over the children [464]

Article I. Preliminaries

1. Generalities

●842 The Nkundó like to have children. Not only do they like to have daughters, as some too superficial colonials sometimes maintain, but they like to have boys just as much. It is true that a daughter carries the hope of a bride price and all it represents for polygamists eager for pagan glory and carnal pleasures; yet a real preference for children of the weaker sex is seldom observed. What one does encounter, just as in Europe for that matter, is a desire to have a child of a particular sex when, for example, the other is already abundantly represented in the household. Thus a native who already has several boys but no girl or only one, will make offerings to obtain a sister for the boys. That he should do so is hardly astonishing since among these people a sister is the proper and sometimes the only means by which a man can acquire a wife. On the other hand, a father whose progeny are exclusively, or almost exclusively, members of the female sex ardently desires the birth of a son, an heir to the fruits of his labor and someone who would be able to aid and assist him in his old age by building him a hut, clearing the forest for him, and bringing him game or the products of fishing.

842
855 Actually one seldom hears these preferences expressed. The impression one gets is rather that the Nkundó love their children as such and also because, whatever their sex, they greatly contribute to the reinforcement of his social position; the two motives are inseparable in practice.

It is sometimes maintained that the natives do not refuse to have children because their coming does not inconvenience them in any way, nor do they impose crushing financial obligations

842 855 upon them; their upbringing costs them nothing, whereas among Whites the maintenance, dress, food, instruction, and occupational placement involve considerable expenses. It cannot be [465] denied that while the modern European is exacting from all these viewpoints, enchained and blocked by an ever growing multitude of needs, the material life of the native is simple and his necessities are reduced to an indispensable minimum. Nevertheless, it can hardly be said that it is as easy for him to raise a large family with many children as it is to have the responsibility of a smaller number. Without speaking of clothing -- especially at the present time -- there is the food for growing children, which forces him to clear a greater expanse of forest and to work harder at the various ways of fishing and hunting; and when the time comes for the sons to find wives, he is the one who must arrange to procure the valuables needed for a bride price.

For their part, Nkundó women like to transmit life as much as the men, if not more so. Pregnancy may make them disagreeable and grumpy and sometimes cause them pain, but they put up with it and, as a very general rule, do not think of depriving themselves on that account of the happiness of giving birth to a cute little creature, of nursing it, of carrying it in their arms or on their shoulders. The difficulties and pains of maternity do not repel them. Although later, during the payment of her daughter's bride price, a Nkundó woman's greed will lead her to loudly claim the payment due her and even sometimes destroy her child's love because of delaying this financial operation, the delay does not come to their minds until the time comes.

In short, the Nkundó woman feels a perfectly natural, maternal love for her child.

842 855 152 There are of course exceptions to this general rule. And the contrary would be astonishing for a pagan population who give free rein to all their passions or, at least, restrain them only very [466] slightly, and whose love is far from the perfection one may find among a people ennobled by fifteen centuries of Christianity. Moreover -- as all the preceding pages testify -- our Nkundó are not fashioned from a uniform mold notwithstanding the impression given by certain colonial and ethnological works. All the individual

842 855 152 differences can be found here, although they are less apparent to a European observer since we usually approach the natives as a group and our contact with them is often too impersonal.

2. Abortion

847 A great enemy of maternal love is the practice of abortion, which has always been known to the Nkundó. Here we cannot describe all the prescriptions used for that purpose. It will be sufficient to enumerate the reasons for which they have recourse to this practice. They are as follows:

1) A woman's lasciviousness; the procreation and subsequent care of a child to some extent prevent the indulging in carnal pleasures. Formerly this cause of abortion was nonexistent or very [178] rare. Needless to say, it has become more common, especially in the centers where it is constantly on the increase and where, in addition, occasional or regular "housekeepers" learn new means of sterilization and abortion.

2) A woman's antipathy or persistent anger toward her husband may encourage her to prevent conception or destroy its effect.

3) An excessive weakening of the mother's organism caused by a large number of conceptions and childbirths at too short intervals.

4) The encumberance and the difficulty of watching, carrying, and taking care of many small children -- bɛ́lota [illegible] [467] [179] [illegible]. This reason is especially important for well-known dancers.

It goes without saying that several of these motives may be combined in the same person. For instance, I knew of a woman who aborted at the time of her eighth child. Her recurrent pregnancies, together with continuous work, had greatly reduced her strength. A palaver with her husband was the last straw; she decided to get rid of the fruit she carried in her body.

Outside of these exceptions the natives of this country ardently desire their own continuation through a large number of progeny. (1)

[180]

1. The same is not true elsewhere. Examples to that effect are cited from regions that are

847] they could count. Nevertheless, if it happens to a young unmarried mother, little or no fuss is made over it because no one can feel wronged; at most the culprit is scolded. For a married woman, on the other hand, it is one of the most serious infractions. Her husband has an immediate right to the fetus that would have become his child. He cannot beat or mistreat the offender in punishment, for her condition will not permit violence, but he can abandon her to her fate by refusing her all assistance, in particular by refusing to bring her firewood, the heat of which she greatly needs under such circumstances. For she has done him an enormous wrong and has acted with real malice (efonjokel 'inkinyá, he says), since he married her chiefly so that she would give him descendants. If she dies it is her own fault. Even her family will not support her, for
[682] they would be accused of being involved in the crime; inevitably they would lose the case and be condemned to indemnify the husband.

An abortion which is ascertained to be involuntary [i.e., 847 a miscarriage] is treated like an accident or an illness and the appropriate legal stipulations are applied to it. Thus if it happens while the woman is at her parents' home, the responsibility for it falls on them. Usually the palaver is settled in a friendly manner; the family makes a few nkomi payments, and the question is closed. If relations between the husband and his son-in-law are somewhat strained, the dispute may be drawn out and may result in the breaking up of the marriage. If the woman dies from the accident, the rules given in Article X of the preceding chapter come into play. [468]

Article II. Conception and Pregnancy

842 (3) The Nkundó have only a partial notion of the phenomena of conception. They are well aware of which acts cause the procreation of children. They have a perfect knowledge of anatomy and a rich vocabulary pertaining to sexual life. But they know only as much about physiological processes as experience can teach them. Furthermore, they believe that the act of procreation must be repeated several times in order to produce its natural result. Now,

Ntfr,

842
833
[841]
finally, that sexual relations are strictly forbidden to them during menstruation (*-bɛna* or *ɓɛna nsɔngɔ*, literally "to be ill from" or "to see the moon," and other similar expressions). The reason given is that a woman in that difficult condition should be spared all additional annoyance.

1. Elimɔ

842
776
The Nkundɔ attribute the procreation of children sometimes to God (Njakomba) and sometimes to spirits (*elimɔ*, pl. *bilimɔ*). God forms (*-ɛnga*) the children in the mother's womb, but at the same time the *bilimɔ* provide the men among the progeny. (1)

[192]

1. Contrary to what is reported by Father Lemaeghe (*Congo*, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 363) concerning the Ekonda, the tribes that I have known never address prayers for children to God, although they attribute the gift of children to Him. This matter does not concern God (Njakomba or Mbombiandɔ) directly, but rather a particular *elimɔ*.

Sterility, which is a common phenomenon here, is not imputed to sorcery but is considered an innate flaw. Natives usually claim that God refuses them children.

There is no point in trying to make the natives resolve this apparent contradiction; they would not succeed. They simply state the two points. I say "apparent contradiction," for as the Nkundɔ admit that the *bilimɔ* are subject to Njakomba, the contradiction is not real, and the two propositions can be [470] reconciled by explaining the intervention of the spirits as an operation which is dependent on divine action: they are secondary, intermediary causes, although our natives do not make this philosophical analysis.

To explain all the beliefs pertaining to spirits would be to go outside the framework of this study. Nevertheless, we cannot leave out those details which closely touch on our subject.

776 825 There is a large number of diverse spirits, and almost every village has several in its territory. Each one has its own habitat in some singular place or object which stimulates the imagination: enormous trees, oval hollows which form ponds of a sort (ilímbo, pl. bailímbo), steep slopes, extraordinary pieces of limonite, whirlpools in streams and rivers, etc.

776 842 The Nkundó pray to the bilímá in order to obtain children. For that purpose they make offerings of food and money. To test someone's feelings toward it, an elímá may come to him in the evening or at night in the guise of a known person and ask for some small present. Unhappy is he who shows himself to be stingy; he will be deprived of the object of his desire, or his child will be premature or born sickly or deformed.

783 842 776 In addition to taking a generally friendly attitude toward the spirit, another means of ensuring his intervention is open to a woman. She can procure some kaolin ([illegible]) at the spirit's habitat (a ilímbo, preferably). In the evening she mixes it with some plants. She smears her abdomen with this mixture, known as inaá. [842] She continues the treatment throughout her pregnancy; it has the property of removing everything in her which is of such a nature that it might oppose the spirit (Ekifekola lokeko jwá bilíma ilio ndá likundú).

776 842 Certain water spirits are known for their generosity, for instance Bómbáliombé or Ekitaloŋgié of Mpakó, [471] who is considered to be a female being. She goes on distant voyages to seek a supply of children. On her return she appears to someone and communicates the news to him so that he may spread it. But she orders all women who desire her favors to observe some form of abstinence. Sometimes she sings to amuse or calm the children. On that day mothers must not use songs to pacify their little ones or to put them to sleep and can use only soft words for that purpose. Otherwise the child would die, for to do so would be to disregard the old elímá's kindness.

[787] Sometimes the spirits give signs of their blessing. A woman who is bathing on the shore just at the time a cargo arrives there will soon see her most intimate wish fulfilled. From forest spirits

776 842 [771] women receive other signs: an unexpected obstacle in the form of a stone, a stump, a root, the capture of a tree frog which comes and jumps onto the shoulder, etc

A spirit loves and protects only a child he himself has given. He abhors and hates to the death the living gifts of his fellow spirits. If there are several bilímá in the vicinity of a single village, however, the Nkundó explain the absence of the usual rivalries by considering them as related; one is the husband, another the wife, others the children; that is why they do not oppose each other.

Thus an elímá is hostile to any fetus not of his creation. 776 843 Nevertheless, his spiteful action only begins at the end of several weeks, and even then the pregnancy must have gone far enough to be visible (émi jôela isómbá) Does it take time for him to obtain evidence that the fruit in question is undoubtedly his own gift?

In any case the consequence of this belief is that a woman who has been pregnant for several months cannot long [472] reside in foreign parts, and one who, after conception, has accompanied a husband who has gone to work elsewhere, returns to her village to complete the last period of pregnancy and to deliver,

However, there is an antidote (mengó) against this murderous [751] action of the spirits. It may be obtained from a person who knows the recipe (this person is not the nkanga or "doctor"). The protective compound is wrapped in a bit of cloth and, by means of a thread of fibers from the lokóéá creeper, is tied in the middle of a rope braided with the fibers of the ikuluyaéndé bush, which the threatened woman ties around her hips. (1)

---

[114] [115] 1. These data on the subject of the elímá is diametrically opposed to the ideas of Father Schebesta (Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge, p. 241, and W. Schmidt, Der Ursprung der Gottesidee, Vol. 4, p. 322), based on the word of his interpreter, Bern.. Bongonga of Bodlama (Bombwanja) (now deceased), who was

000 the same rights as the other children of the polygynist.

595 The polygynist always sought to increase the number of his
556 wives, for his prestige rose and his fortune increased in that manner.
593 If anyone in civilized lands seeks to enlarge his fortune, this is
done, people say, in order to insure the future of his children. The
native thinks little about that; his primary idea is to enjoy himself
and to surpass others in prestige and esteem. As far as the future
of his children is concerned, there are polygynists who possess twenty
or thirty wives or even more, and sometimes they have only one or
two children. Also it is little in keeping with their notions to care
for the future; he who is still alive tomorrow must take care of
595 tomorrow then, so they reason. On the contrary, instead of caring
for his children, the polygynist often took great trouble to obtain a
593 wife for his son. The son, however, was not yet the owner of his
594 wife; it was, so to speak, only a loan. Not until after the death of
606 his father did he become owner. In some districts, when the father
had obtained a wife for his son, he first kept this wife for some time
for himself. Only after a few months did he give her to his son. In
595 other districts, when the wife was pregnant by the son, he was obliged
593 to send her for a few days to his father. He was not allowed to bear
606 the honor of fatherhood alone; his father must share that with him.
●842 The father reserved for himself the honor of naming all of the chil-
551 dren of his children. In some areas of the Congo, morals were so
835 low and common that the father even kept his own daughters in his
harem. This did not occur in Equatorial Africa, but there was a
custom that was not much better. The magician was sometimes
583 consulted about the bride price which the father tried to get for his
791 daughter, or the brother for his sister.

The magician then gave them the advice that they themselves should first have relations with their own daughter or sister. This custom existed almost everywhere in Equatorial Africa.

583 [535] Bride Price. In general, the daughter was given in
marriage upon payment of a bride price. The father had little
choice of the future husband of his daughter. The one who guaranteed
the most goods in payment was certain to get her. Since, in most
cases, the little daughter had not yet arrived at the years of maturity,
there was naturally no question of her consent. The bride price was
not paid all at once, but gradually during the years while the
daughter grew up. Since the daughter was given without her consent

584 On the other hand, as we have seen, two women may have one nkita in common, especially if their combined bride prices have been used to obtain a single wife. In such a case the two bankílɔ́ and their descendants share their duties and prerogatives. In practice this situation arises only if the two bankílɔ́ are uterine sisters, but seldom in the case of other relatives. It does occur occasionally, however, as for instance in the case of Bolɔ́fɔ w'Imeka and Bolɔ́mbɛ́ w'Ikofo. Both were daughters of Bakutu b'is'ɛy'olɔ́njɔ́ of Bokonda (Bosombo), but they had different mothers (Mbɛ́lɛ and wĨngi, respectively). Their joint bride prices were used for the marriage of Bolɔ́fɔ wâ Ekɔ́fɔ́mɛ Bonkɔ́fɔ w'Ĩlɔ́mɛ (son of Bakutu and Wĩngi) to Bokungɛ of Engɔ́njɔ́ (Bonkoso). [172]

Article XI

General Remarks on the Payment of the Bride Price

585 §43 A few general comments should be added to all the foregoing ideas and rules concerning bride price.

1) During a woman's pregnancy no payment of any kind may be made. This principle is stated by the Nkundɔ́, and they strictly adhere to it. Pregnancy, however, must be understood as a pregnancy which is clearly visible to everyone, that is, the period of bokeka, and not that of the beginning, bɔfɔswa, (1) during which payments may still be made.

If one inquires into the reason for this prohibition, one receives the reply that if payments were made during the bokeka the woman would have great difficulties in delivery and would stand very little chance of escaping death. (Pregnancy is considered a dangerous condition. Of a pregnant woman, the Nkundɔ́ say: akɛ́kí la lɔ́fa, "she is blocked by the sun," or "the sun stands across her path," that is, she is between life and death.) That is the only explanation given for the prohibition. Is it perhaps connected in some way with the belief in the elímɛ? (See Chapter X, Article II, 1).

---

1. See Chapter X, Article II, 3 and 4.

673 937 [843] in the case of an unmarried mother, see Chapter I, Part 1, Article III, 3.

● [841] Adultery also becomes especially serious during the period preceding childbirth when there is a special prohibition against it, as endangering the lives of both mother and child, as we will explain in Chapter X, Article III.

7. Remarks and general conclusions

937 [731] 1) In former times the offense of adultery, even in its mildest form, that is, an isolated act, was one of the chief causes of "wars" between villages. Sometimes both sides called on their relations by marriage to assist them, and the result was a general upheaval.

937 945 2) As a rule a husband wants his wife to be faithful. Doubtless there are exceptions. Most if not all of them were formerly found among the old polygamists. At their age they were disgusted with continual palavers, and their experience as men had taught them that they often became angry and uselessly complicated their little lives. They preferred to close their eyes, like good old Bonsof w'Ilonga of Imbo (the Bombwanja clan of the Bofiyi). He came to see me in the Christian village of Bombomba through which I was passing at the beginning of March, 1933. I asked him why he was adorned with so many bells, and he answered naively, "I always wear them. That way my wives know of my coming already from a distance. It gives them time to stop slandering me and to send their lovers away." When I expressed my surprise that he did not want to catch them in the act in order to punish them and end their infidelities, he answered me with a smile, "No, Father, jealousy . . . is for the young. As for me, I have seen so much of it that I no longer have any desire to get angry and make palavers for these trivialities."

938 937 945 Since the coming of the Europeans some unscrupulous men -- especially polygamists -- have been engaging in [328] a kind of procuring. They send their wives to commit adultery in order to be able to catch them in the act and thus enrich themselves. Or else they lend their wives for one night or more to laborers or soldiers who are

847
[661] already more "civilized," such as the neighborhood of Coquilhatville and the Losangenya region.

847
848 Attention should be drawn to the danger of an increase in abortions for a new reason, namely the shame of giving birth outside of wedlock. As we have seen in Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 3, premarital pregnancies have existed since time immemorial without resulting either in remorse or in palavers. Through the teaching of Christian morality, the feeling of shame must sooner or later be extended to this phenomenon. In explaining the evil of fornication, care should therefore be taken to insist on the fact that transgressing the Fifth Commandment by abortion is a far greater evil.

847
● 845 Voluntary abortion is not considered a moral error by the Nkundó. (2) In their eyes an imperfectly formed fetus, not viable,

2. An attitude which also exists in Europe at the present time, according to Haesaert in Kultuurleven, Vol. 6, no. 1, p. 21 (1935), and the brochure by Prof. D. Schockaert quoted there.

is not yet a man. It is only a human being in the process of formation, in potentia. Hence the custom of burying the aborted child in the [466] hut or quite near it. Thus the spirit responsible for the pregnancy will see that it is respected and repeat its benevolent action. (1)

847
[764]
[776]

1. Others explain this custom by saying that the fetus already has a soul which remains near the tiny body and will take the first opportunity to re-enter the mother's body.

But if it is voluntary an abortion is always a wrong against family and society, for it deprives the family of a member on whom

847] they could count. Nevertheless, if it happens to a young unmarried mother, little or no fuss is made over it because no one can feel wronged; at most the culprit is scolded. For a married woman, on the other hand, it is one of the most serious infractions. Her husband has an immediate right to the fetus that would have become his child. He cannot beat or mistreat the offender in punishment, for her condition will not permit violence, but he can abandon her to her fate by refusing her all assistance, in particular by refusing to bring her firewood, the heat of which she greatly needs under such circumstances. For she has done him an enormous wrong and has acted with real malice (*abnjokel 'isidinyá*, he says), since he married her chiefly so that she would give him descendants. If she dies it is her own fault. Even her family will not support her, for
[847] they would be accused of being involved in the crime; inevitably they would lose the case and be condemned to indemnify the husband.

● 843 An abortion which is ascertained to be involuntary [i.e., a miscarriage] is treated like an accident or an illness and the appropriate legal stipulations are applied to it. Thus if it happens while the woman is at her parents' home, the responsibility for it falls on them. Usually the palaver is settled in a friendly manner; the family makes a few *nkgmí* payments, and the question is closed. If relations between the husband and his son-in-law are somewhat strained, the dispute may be drawn out and may result in the breaking up of the marriage. If the woman dies from the accident, the rules given in Article X of the preceding chapter come into play. [469]

Article II. Conception and Pregnancy

842
153
The Nkundó have only a partial notion of the phenomena of conception. They are well aware of which acts cause the procreation of children. They have a perfect knowledge of anatomy and a rich vocabulary pertaining to sexual life. But they know only as much about physiological processes as experience can teach them. Furthermore, they believe that the act of procreation must be repeated several times in order to produce its natural result. Note,

Nele,

842 finally, that sexual relations are strictly forbidden to them during
833 menstruation (-bɔna or ɛna nsɔ́ngɔ́, literally "to be ill from" or "to
[843] see the moon," and other similar expressions). The reason given is that a woman in that difficult condition should be spared all additional annoyance.

1. Elímɔ

842
776
The Nkundó attribute the procreation of children sometimes to God (Njakomba) and sometimes to spirits (elímɔ, pl. bilímɔ). God forms (-ânga) the children in the mother's womb, but at the same time the bilímɔ provide the men among the progeny. (1)

There is no point in trying to make the natives resolve this apparent contradiction; they would not succeed. They simply state the two points. I say "apparent contradiction," for as the Nkundó admit that the bilímɔ are subject to Njakomba, the contradiction is not real, and the two propositions can be [470] reconciled by explaining the intervention of the spirits as an operation which is dependent on divine action: they are secondary, intermediary causes, although our natives do not make this philosophical analysis.

To explain all the beliefs pertaining to spirits would be to go outside the framework of this study. Nevertheless, we cannot leave out those details which closely touch on our subject.

---

[842] 1. Contrary to what is reported by Father Lemaeghe (Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 262) concerning the Ekonda, the tribes that I have known never address prayers for children to God, although they attribute the gift of children to Him. This matter does not concern God (Njakomba or Mbombiánda) directly, but rather a particular elímɔ.

Sterility, which is a common phenomenon here, is not imputed to sorcery but is considered an innate flaw. Natives usually claim that God refuses them children.

776 825 There is a large number of diverse spirits, and almost every village has several in its territory. Each one has its own habitat in some singular place or object which stimulates the imagination: enormous trees, oval hollows which form ponds of a sort (elímbo, pl. belímbo), steep slopes, extraordinary pieces of limonite, whirlpools in streams and rivers, etc.

776 842 The Nkundó pray to the bilímá in order to obtain children. For that purpose they make offerings of food and money. To test someone's feelings toward it, an elímá may come to him in the evening or at night in the guise of a known person and ask for some small present. Unhappy is he who shows himself to be stingy; he will be deprived of the object of his desire, or his child will be premature or born sickly or deformed.

783 842 776 In addition to taking a generally friendly attitude toward the spirit, another means of ensuring his intervention is open to a woman. She can procure some kaolin (ponga) at the spirit's habitat (a elímbo, preferably). In the evening she mixes it with some plants. She smears her abdomen with this mixture, known as isaá. ● [843] She continues the treatment throughout her pregnancy; it has the property of removing everything in her which is of such a nature that it might oppose the spirit (ẽkẽhola lokeko jwá bilíma ẽkie ndá likundó).

776 842 Certain water spirits are known for their generosity, for instance Iténdélombé or Ehótalombé of Mpaká, [471] who is considered to be a female being. She goes on distant voyages to seek a supply of children. On her return she appears to someone and communicates the news to him so that he may spread it. But she orders all women who desire her favors to observe some form of abstinence. Sometimes she sings to amuse or calm the children. On that day mothers must not use songs to pacify their little ones or to put them to sleep and can use only soft words for that purpose. Otherwise the child would die, for to do so would be to disregard the old elímá's kindness.

[787] Sometimes the spirits give signs of their blessing. A woman who is bathing on the shore just at the time a cargo arrives there will soon see her most intimate wish fulfilled. From forest spirits

776 842 [791] women receive other signs: an unexpected obstacle in the form of a stone, a stump, a root, the capture of a tree frog which comes and jumps onto the shoulder, etc.

A spirit loves and protects only a child he himself has given. He abhors and hates to the death the living gifts of his fellow spirits. If there are several bilímá in the vicinity of a single village, however, the Nkundó explain the absence of the usual rivalries by considering them as related: one is the husband, another the wife, others the children; that is why they do not oppose each other.

776 843 Thus an elímá is hostile to any fetus not of his creation. Nevertheless, his spiteful action only begins at the end of several weeks, and even then the pregnancy must have gone far enough to be visible (émi jóbela ioómbá) Does it take time for him to obtain evidence that the fruit in question is undoubtedly his own gift?

In any case the consequence of this belief is that a woman who has been pregnant for several months cannot long [472] reside in foreign parts, and one who, after conception, has accompanied a husband who has gone to work elsewhere, returns to her village to complete the last period of pregnancy and to deliver.

However, there is an antidote (nsengé) against this murder- [751] ous action of the spirits. It may be obtained from a person who knows the recipe (this person is not the nkanga or "doctor"). The protective compound is wrapped in a bit of cloth and, by means of a thread of fibers from the lokólá creeper, is tied in the middle of a rope braided with the fibers of the ikulayafódé bush, which the threatened woman ties around her hips. (1)

---

[114] [115] 1. These data on the subject of the elímá is diametrically opposed to the ideas of Father Schebesta (Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge, p. 241, and W. Schmidt, Der Ursprung der Gottesidee, Vol. 4, p. 322), based on the word of his interpreter, Bern. Bongonga of Bodilama (Bombwanja) (now deceased), who was

843
776
179
115
obliged in my presence to retract his statements under the pressure of crushing objections on the part of a considerable number of other natives. See also Father Boelaert, Nsongo Lovesa, 1938, p. 60, and Congo, 1936, Vol. 1, p. 43, as well as Hulstaert, Congo, 1936, Vol. 2, p. 670.

2. The beginnings of pregnancy

843
777
The first months following the cessation of menstruation are called bofgwa. The oral expression is -fgwe ɔ́mi (ɔ́mi meaning "fetus")

A woman who has just conceived no longer has any success in looking for caterpillars or in fishing (by scooping, whether with bofingd baskets or drugs, called lisola). She is unable to catch anything while the efforts of her companions are fruitful. That is because the bofgwa is wɛ̂kɔ́, that is, a cause for a lack of success (bɔ́mɔnɔ ba wɛ̂kɔ́ ilɔ̂kɔ). Note that this word may be derived from the verb ɛ̂kɔ, "to place an obstacle."

The husband of a woman in this condition is no better off. His wife's wɛ̂kɔ́ is communicated to him as well as to all those of his relatives who [473] live in the same village or, as the natives say, ɔ̂ɔ́ nyɔlɔ́ ɔmɔ̂kɔ́, "one who eats from the same pot," and okɔlɔ́ ilɔmbɛ ɔmɔ̂kɔ́, "one who lives in the same house." Friends are not harmed, even if they live in the same settlement as the pregnant woman, nor are relatives living elsewhere.

The wɛ̂kɔ́ brings misfortune to anyone tainted with it. Thus if he goes hunting, he will return empty handed; if he participates in a war he will be wounded. Furthermore, if there is a leopard in the vicinity he will choose to kill that man. An elephant will detect his presence and try to kill him. A snake will bite him more readily than another. At market he will be charged more for everything.

This burdensome situation continues during the entire period of pregnancy, hence until the birth of the child.

● 615 777 The Nkundó know an antidote (*nsengó* or *lonenjó*), however, a means of getting rid of such annoying obstacles. Of the three known processes the last is especially common at present.

[825] 1) The husband (or any person to whom the *wɛ̌kɛ́* is attached and who wants to be rid of it) picks up a *nkɔ̂ngolɔ́* chilopod, naturally by means of a leaf, encloses it in a large leaf which he binds with a thin creeper, and makes a small package of it, as one makes a package of meat, fish, etc. He gives this package to his wife, who thinks it contains food and opens it without any suspicion. But when she sees the detested arthropod, she throws it far from her with cries of disgust, while her husband says to her, "You are the one who remains with the *wɛ̌kɛ́*." As a result he himself is freed from it.

2) A second means is to take the pregnant woman by the nose when an opportunity presents itself and to say to her: "May the *wɛ̌kɛ́* remain attached to you."

[252] [264] 3) The woman prepares some *tsibóndó* (manioc leaves [474] salted and dipped in palm oil). The two spouses eat it together contrary to the usual practice. But the husband arranges matters in such a way that his wife gets the last mouthful and keeps the leaf which serves as a plate and represents the *wɛ̌kɛ́*. Then the husband says to her, "Keep the *wɛ̌kɛ́* for yourself."

The *wɛ̌kɛ́* cannot be detached from the woman, for she is the *bomɔ́ngo wɛ̌kɛ́*, "the owner of the *wɛ̌kɛ́*," the one who is the basis for it. For her it continues until the child is on the point of being born (*elaká ô jómi jókinda*, literally "he has come to the end of his growth," or *jóhékama*, "has turned to one side"), and thus, in practice, until the birth of the child.

[152] If a first wife dies at the beginning of her first pregnancy, a cesarian operation must be performed on her. The fetus is removed (it is still no more than an embryo -- *ilóngɛ́lá* or *bokelé*, literally "an egg," or *ilóngó*, literally "blood") so that it can be buried behind the hut. An omission of this practice would result in the death through pregnancy of the deceased's husband's other wives or of the women he will subsequently marry.

3. The period of prohibitions

● [843] When a pregnancy is far advanced -- about two or three months before delivery (a period which has now been reduced to one or two weeks) -- the Nkundó proceed with the "preservation of the fetus" (bákomba jómi, "they preserve the fetus," or bíáka jómi, "they fasten the fetus"). The period called bokeka or bokeko begins at that moment and does not end until after childbirth. The oral expression is lóoba bokeka, "to bind the period of sexual prohibitions." (1) This term also extends to all special prohibitions (bekilá) resulting from this condition. [473]

[834] 1. The expression lóoba lóobé is also used. A similar period of sexual prohibitions called by the same name still exists for, among other things, circumcision, the construction of a hunting enclosure, and the setting of elephant traps.

For the first pregnancy the period begins with the following [796] ceremony: The woman's mother smears her daughter's head and [302] all of her body with a red paint called ngóla. This paint, usually used as make-up, is used here as a mark of affection and given to honor and congratulate the future mother on this happy occasion. When the ngóla is somewhat hardened, the mother smears her daughter's hair with it and rolls the hair into little balls, using an iron bosángó, which is the instrument usually used for hairdressing. Then she gives her daughter a hen and some bananas to eat. From then on the pregnant woman may no longer eat hens, for the consumption of this bird (which the Nkundó place in the same category [825] as ducks) and its eggs would stop the normal development of the fetus. The ceremony is called fia bongata (elelu among the Bombwanja), "to smear with red paint in little balls."

The woman's father and the husband's kin feel strongly about being present at this ceremony, for it is considered very important. I know of an intense palaver which occurred because

● [illegible] a woman's mother proceeded with the ceremony in the absence of the husband and his family. The latter were furious. They revealed the matter so that if anything should happen later to the mother or the child the law would be on their side. In that way the husband could evade responsibility and place the blame on his wife and her family so that they would have to pay an indemnity.

The pregnant woman does not remove the paint for three or [illegible] four weeks after the ceremony. Nowadays the use of paint having [illegible] disappeared except for certain occasions and among older persons, it is left on for only one night. In addition the surface smeared has been reduced to a line in the middle of the head or even one single spot.

[illegible] During this ceremony the Bombwanja have a public confession [illegible] (otato) of the lovers. But since the Boloki wait until after delivery, we will deal with it later on.

On the night following the ceremony described, the couple [illegible] [476] "fasten the fetus" through their carnal union. Were they to omit this act, the child would die before birth.

For subsequent pregnancies the fastening of the fetus is no longer preceded by the same formalities.

The couple continue to have relations during the entire [illegible] period of pregnancy "in order to open an easy passage for the child." [illegible] On the other hand, they must strictly observe marital fidelity. [illegible] Nevertheless, a polygamist may have relations with his other wives.

In addition to this essential art, the interdict also includes a secondary part; the couple may not even commit acts even very remotely related to procreation. Thus they may not:

1) Touch in any way whatsoever -- even to shaking their hands -- persons with whom they have had adulterous relations; such persons must therefore be avoided.

2) Sit next to such persons.

3) Look at them.

4) Enter a house or apartment where they are.

5) Eat "from the same pot."

6) Lie in another couple's bed.

7) Other persons may no longer sleep in the bed of the couple bound by the bokeka.

843
837 This law requiring a most strict fidelity lasts until the end of the bekeke for the husband, but until the weaning of the child for the wife. It is especially strict for the period of seclusion (see below, Article III, 3).

The violation of the essential stipulation of this interdict (-fifinda bekeke) results either in the death of the woman during pregnancy and especially during seclusion or in the death of the child later on. [477]

A. If the woman dies during this period, the suspicion is placed a priori on her husband. The Nkundó say afifinda wălí, "he has transgressed against his wife." Unless he can prove his innocence through public actions, the judgment of a magician, or autopsy[sic].

If the woman has been the victim of a seducer, he is held responsible and must pay a large indemnity equivalent to the bride price that was paid for the deceased. If no other man is involved, the affair has no consequences.

843
763
754
845
853 In the past the combined autopsy and Caesarian section was always performed. It had a dual purpose: to remove the child and to examine the mother. If the operation revealed the existence of a "stomach" (likundú), the deceased was of a noxious (lilgho) nature or constitution and therefore caused the death of her child. If the child remained alive, it proved that he was of a magically superior nature and was able to resist the natural evil spells of his mother, which thus turned against their unwitting author. (1)

(1). The Nkundó believe that only animals have a "stomach" (likundú). If a human being has one, that is, if his viscera are large, curved, in compartments, in a word, abnormal, that person is an evildoer. He commits evil acts voluntarily or, most frequently, unknowingly. Some men with a likundú can be recognized by the fact that they eat their nails, hair, etc. The Nkundó must certainly have observed relationships between this habit and a deformity of the stomach.

853 The child is given to a wet nurse (a kinswoman, a stranger, a Batswa woman, depending on who is available).

847 845 760 If the mother's body shows no signs of evil-doing or of "the hatred of others," it is thought that her death was caused by evil spells on the part of the child. Thereupon some kill the child to prevent it from doing harm during its whole life; others, on the contrary, spare it despite everything.

683 837 If the husband (for it is he above all who is involved, since he is most exposed to possible lapses) has unfortunately been guilty of misconduct, his wife has only a slim chance [478] of salvation. Nevertheless, it is still possible for her to be saved, on condition that from then on her husband abstain from any sexual act and from all the accidental gestures and actions described above. The least he can do under these circumstances is to inform his wife of his indiscretion so that she can take precautions. If he wants to [672] ward off any possibility of causing his wife's certain death, he sends her home and gives his father-in-law a pledge (*nkanga*) through which he recognizes his guilt and shows his intention to assume the entire responsibility for his misdeed. An upright man prefers to act in this fashion, for he never knows whether one day he will not inadvertently violate one of the prohibitions.

853 837 B. The child's death is the result of the putrefaction of the mother's milk, the mother being thus incapable of nursing. As in the preceding case, the offense is a priori imputed to the husband -- *lal afoma bǫna la nkota*. (1) Since he has wronged no one but himself, no palaver ensues; the "natural" punishment is sufficient. This does not mean that he is not the object of evil tongues; people point at him and at times remind him of his misdeed. To remove the blame from himself, he can resort to

[753] 1. *Nkota* is an illness caused by the violation of prescriptions of a sexual nature (See Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 2, A).

an ordeal or ask a magician's judgment or a magical practice to reveal the culprit. The culprit who is discovered is not subject to any social sanction; he is punished by the ordeal itself or the spell cast against him.

If the mother's adultery is proven through her having been caught in the act, her seducer is considered guilty. He must pay the death indemnity (20 to 30 copper rings). The woman is not at all involved as far as society is concerned; it is a matter between her and her husband.

In order to prevent any harmful effect on the child, the Nkundo resort to a potion called bondandota, which will be explained in [478] the next article, 3. "Medication" by scarification might also be mentioned. This therapy is applied to the parents as well as to the child. If the father is wealthy, he invites the wife's family to come and perform the operation themselves. As in all comparable situations, the invitation is accompanied by the handing over of a pledge, and farewell presents (belingaka) are given at the end of the visit. In addition the wife very often goes to live with her parents for some time after her seclusion in order to increase the efficiency of the treatment.

The sanction incurred for a violation of the secondary stipulations is less serious. For instance, the pregnant woman suffers from violent migraines, which often cause fainting and sometimes make delivery very difficult; thus they can even cause death. The husband is seldom bothered by these headaches. But he takes great pains to faithfully observe the law in order to spare his wife such painful consequences and to avoid the death of the child being born.

Apart from sexual abstention and the rules connected with it, the couple are also subject to various prohibitions which are clearly based on superstitious ideas. Thus:

1) They must neither go down into a well nor dig in the earth. The woman would die, for it is as if they were digging her grave.

2) They must not carry anything together with another person, for that is how corpses are carried, and such carrying would be the cause of death, through imitation of the woman's funeral procession.

847 3) They must not climb up on the roof (they are not forbidden to climb a palm tree in order to cut off nuts)

847 4) They must not eat animals killed by a carnivore (leopard, crocodile, etc.), or the child would die a sudden and unnatural
262 death like the victims of such wild beasts. [400]

825 5) They must abstain from animals such as porcupines, anteaters, certain birds, crocodiles, and gavials, (1) who are in the habit of living in the hollows of trees or in dens. The delivery would be very painful if they ate them, for the child would roll up and crouch in the mother's womb. Fish that find shelter in passageways do not produce such consequences and are therefore eaten.

6) They must not eat turtles (2). A very difficult birth is feared, for the turtle withdraws into its shell and encloses its anal extremities as in a vise, and the child would do the same.

7) They must not eat the head of a monkey. The child would be born with deep-set eyes resembling the monkey's.

8) They must not eat the large antelope known as mbuli, because it has a long neck and flabby flesh, and the child would acquire the same defects.

[163] 9) They must not eat the lioóló fish, which would cause migraines, since it swims fiercely without direction.

The results of bokeka and the obligations resulting from it
843 are connected with natural paternity. Thus, if a woman becomes
837 pregnant as a result of relations with a regular, recognized lover, the latter must assume all responsibility. He is required to "fasten the fetus" and to observe all the regulations pertaining to the

1. In this region women never eat snakes or bats ([illegible], [illegible], [illegible]).

2. In some tribes (Bongili, Bombomo) women always abstain from eating such reptiles.

843 bokeke. The same is true if the pregnancy is the result of adultery;
839 the natural father must bear all the consequences of his act. The husband is absolved from them and has no relations with his wife until the end of this particular pregnancy. The culprit must give him a pledge by which he publically recognizes his responsibility, and he is expected to fulfill all the duties of a husband. Therefore he may have relations with the woman during her entire pregnancy without paying additional indemnities. If any accident befalls the mother or the child, he is made to pay a large indemnity.

Note finally that, as we have pointed out in Chapter II,
[585] Article XI, no bride-price payment can be made from the time the pregnancy becomes visible until after the end of the period of seclusion.

843 To facilitate childbirth the previously mentioned concoc-
tion of various leaves mixed with kaolin ([illegible]) is continuously ap-
844 plied to the abdomen. Medical scarifications on the abdomen are
751 also performed.

Finally, as the time of delivery approaches, special douches
[278] made from a concoction of the bark of the bofimbo tree (1) are administered. All these treatments are called betɛ́ byâ bobɔ́tɔ́, that is, medicines (for the purpose) of an easy delivery.

Article III. Birth

844 1. Delivery

A woman remains with her husband for childbirth; she does not go home to her family. Only exceptionally does she give birth elsewhere -- for instance, if she has been sent home for one reason or another, or during a trip, while working in the fields, near a stream, or a spring, etc. Such sudden unexpected deliveries

---

1. Certain douches, especially the one made of bofimbo, are also used as abortive agents.

843 bokeka. The same is true if the pregnancy is the result of adultery;
837 the natural father must bear all the consequences of his act. The husband is absolved from them and has no relations with his wife until the end of this particular pregnancy. The culprit must give him a pledge by which he publically recognizes his responsibility, and he is expected to fulfill all the duties of a husband. Therefore he may have relations with the woman during her entire pregnancy without paying additional indemnities. If any accident befalls the mother or the child, he is made to pay a large indemnity.

Note finally that, as we have pointed out in Chapter II,
[583] Article XI, no bride-price payment can be made from the time the pregnancy becomes visible until after the end of the period of seclusion.

843 To facilitate childbirth the previously mentioned concoc-
844 tion of various leaves mixed with kaolin (isaá) is continuously ap-
757 plied to the abdomen. Medical scarifications on the abdomen are also performed.

Finally, as the time of delivery approaches, special douches
[278] made from a concoction of the bark of the boímbo tree (1) are administered. All these treatments are called beté byá bosánjá, that is, medicines (for the purpose) of an easy delivery.

1. Certain douches, especially the one made of boímbo, are also used as abortive agents.

Article III. Birth

844 1. Delivery

A woman remains with her husband for childbirth; she does not go home to her family. Only exceptionally does she give birth elsewhere -- for instance, if she has been sent home for one reason or another, or during a trip, while working in the fields, near a stream, or a spring, etc. Such sudden unexpected deliveries

844 are not too rare. (2)

2. Ease in delivery is called bosánjá;
difficulty is called bonsombo.

A husband asks his mother-in-law to come and help her daughter. Other kinswomen of the husband or the wife do not refuse [482] their services either. Among them there is always one who is more expert in these matters and who acts as a midwife (mbótsi).

The delivery takes place in the banana grove behind the hut; there is light and air there. In the house it would be more difficult.

The husband cannot be present at this event. His presence would make it difficult and painful. The further away he is, the better. The prohibition is not rigid, however; if there is no one to help his wife (as in the case of an unexpected delivery in the forest, etc.), he will have no hesitation whatsoever in helping her with all the power and skill at his command.

To facilitate the arrival of the child, the midwife gives
[278] the wife a potion to drink "in order to make slippery" (boté wǎ bosɛ́li), and administers a douche containing boímo bark.

If the pains continue for several days and all medication is
845 without results, it is assumed that some evil spell (liloka) is at work. To neutralize it the woman in labor is "blessed" (-saka). For that purpose her family and that of her husband each bring a stalk of the bokaakó plant (bosáánga). Two kinswomen, each with the stalk of her respective clan, squeeze out the sap with which they smear the woman's abdomen. After that the delivery takes place in a normal fashion.

845 The nkanga (doctor-magician) only intervenes when a woman
756 has already had several miscarriages or when all her children die.
769 If he is consulted he invariably attributes such misfortunes to the action of spirits of the deceased, who may be appeased by offerings and the promise that a manifestation of their will be heeded with respect to the naming of the child. Usually he adds that a few alimentary prohibitions must be observed until the child is weaned.

851 birth of a child involves a few prohibitions which affect the whole village and apply to the Batswá as well as the Baotó. They do not affect inhabitants of a portion of the village which is separated by a swamp from the group where the happy event has occurred. Those bound by the prohibitions may no longer go to "work" -- that is, to work in the fields, fetch food or firewood, build a hunting enclosure or a fishing weir, or work at the building or repair of a house. An infraction of this rule would result in the destruction of the fruit of all their labor: the fields would no longer produce, and no beast or fish would be caught. This deadly influence would [484] extend to all crops, etc. no matter whom they belong to. Nevertheless, there is nothing wrong in fetching firewood from the forest, harvesting manioc from a ripe field, or cutting the fruit of the palm.

Strictly speaking, these prohibitions touch only persons who have seen the newborn child. But since no one fails to go and admire it, all are subject to them. The prohibitions remain in effect until the umbilical cord is detached. [184] Some tribes, however, have the more convenient custom of limiting its duration to the day of the child's birth.

2. The hygiene of mother and child

[844] The umbilical cord (lǫkǫ́ki) is cut near the middle. An incision is made near the infant's navel. 846 Each day a concoction of herbs is poured on the part of the cord that is still attached and white sand is put on it to make it dry more rapidly. When the end falls off, a powder made of scorched banana is applied to the wound.

In order to prevent the weakening of a woman's abdomen, it is bound with a belt made of bands of the dried bark of the banana tree (ekutú).

The assistants wash the mother and child. On the mother they place dried leaves or bark of the banana tree which have been carefully crumpled. They are put on like panties to catch the blood and are replaced by new ones whenever necessary. Nowadays pieces of cloth are often used; they are put on like a man's garment.

843 This law requiring a most strict fidelity lasts until the end
837 of the bokeka for the husband, but until the weaning of the child
for the wife. It is especially strict for the period of seclusion (see below, Article III, 3).

The violation of the essential stipulation of this interdict (-fénda bokeka) results either in the death of the woman during pregnancy and especially during seclusion or in the death of the child later on. [477]

A. If the woman dies during this period, the suspicion is placed a priori on her husband. The Nkundó say aôfénda wǎlí, "he has transgressed against his wife." Unless he can prove his innocence through public actions, the judgment of a magician, or autopsy[sic].

If the woman has been the victim of a seducer, he is held responsible and must pay a large indemnity equivalent to the bride price that was paid for the deceased. If no other man is involved, the affair has no consequences.

843 In the past the combined autopsy and Caesarian section was
763 always performed. It had a dual purpose: to remove the child and
754 to examine the mother. If the operation revealed the existence of
845 a "stomach" (likundú), the deceased was of a noxious (liloka)
853 nature or constitution and therefore caused the death of her child.
If the child remained alive, it proved that he was of a magically superior nature and was able to resist the natural evil spells of his mother, which thus turned against their unwitting author. (1)

(1) The Nkundó believe that only animals have a "stomach" (likundú). If a human being has one, that is, if his viscera are large, curved, in compartments, in a word, abnormal, that person is an evildoer. He commits evil acts voluntarily or, most frequently, unknowingly. Some men with a likundú can be recognized by the fact that they eat their nails, hair, etc. The Nkundó must certainly have observed relationships between this habit and a deformity of the stomach.

853 The child is given to a wet nurse (a kinswoman, a stranger, a Bo̲tswa woman, depending on who is available).

847 845 843 If the mother's body shows no signs of evil-doing or of "the hatred of others," it is thought that her death was caused by evil spells on the part of the child. Thereupon some kill the child to prevent it from doing harm during its whole life; others, on the contrary, spare it despite everything.

843 837 If the husband (for it is he above all who is involved, since he is most exposed to possible lapses) has unfortunately been guilty of misconduct, his wife has only a slim chance [478] of salvation. Nevertheless, it is still possible for her to be saved, on condition that from then on her husband abstain from any sexual act and from all the accidental gestures and actions described above. The least he can do under these circumstances is to inform his wife of his indiscretion so that she can take precautions. If he wants to [672] ward off any possibility of causing his wife's certain death, he sends her home and gives his father-in-law a pledge (ndanga) through which he recognizes his guilt and shows his intention to assume the entire responsibility for his misdeed. An upright man prefers to act in this fashion, for he never knows whether one day he will not inadvertently violate one of the prohibitions.

853 837 B. The child's death is the result of the putrefaction of the mother's milk, the mother being thus incapable of nursing. As in the preceding case, the offense is a priori imputed to the husband -- isɛ́ aôoma bǒ̲na la ndota. (1) Since he has wronged no one but himself, no palaver ensues; the "natural" punishment is sufficient. This does not mean that he is not the object of evil tongues; people point at him and at times remind him of his misdeed. To remove the blame from himself, he can resort to

---

[153] 1. Ndota is an illness caused by the violation of prescriptions of a sexual nature (See Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 2, A).

844 are not too rare. (2)

2. Ease in delivery is called bosánjá;
difficulty is called bonsombo.

A husband asks his mother-in-law to come and help her daughter. Other kinswomen of the husband or the wife do not refuse [482] their services either. Among them there is always one who is more expert in these matters and who acts as a midwife (mbótsi).

The delivery takes place in the banana grove behind the hut; there is light and air there. In the house it would be more difficult.

The husband cannot be present at this event. His presence would make it difficult and painful. The further away he is, the better. The prohibition is not rigid, however; if there is no one to help his wife (as in the case of an unexpected delivery in the forest, etc.), he will have no hesitation whatsoever in helping her with all the power and skill at his command.

To facilitate the arrival of the child, the midwife gives [278] the wife a potion to drink "in order to make slippery" (boté wǎ boséli), and administers a douche containing boímo bark.

If the pains continue for several days and all medication is 845 without results, it is assumed that some evil spell (liloka) is at work. To neutralize it the woman in labor is "blessed" (-saka). For that purpose her family and that of her husband each bring a stalk of the bokaakő plant (bosáánga). Two kinswomen, each with the stalk of her respective clan, squeeze out the sap with which they smear the woman's abdomen. After that the delivery takes place in a normal fashion.

845 756 769 The nkanga (doctor-magician) only intervenes when a woman has already had several miscarriages or when all her children die. If he is consulted he invariably attributes such misfortunes to the action of spirits of the deceased, who may be appeased by offerings and the promise that a manifestation of their will be heeded with respect to the naming of the child. Usually he adds that a few alimentary prohibitions must be observed until the child is weaned.

Article V. Name Giving

Naming does not occur on any predetermined date. It is 553 not delayed without a special reason. No feast or ceremony accompanies the event. The father simply puts colored powder on the child's forehead as a sign of joy.

It is the father's right to choose a name for his child. Sometimes he asks for the family's opinion. Preferably he gives names of his relatives, deceased or living, or sometimes his own. But it is proper to respect the mother's feelings also. Failure to take them into account could provoke the woman to cause an abortion in order to punish him for being so willful as to neglect her family.

[845] A painful childbirth, like the repeated death of preceding [769] children, is often attributed to the rancor of a dead person who is discontented. In such a situation the Nkundő await the verdict [787] of a dream, or they have recourse to the judgment of a nkanga (doctor-magician) in order to be able to satisfy the irascible dead.

If the situation recurs too often, the calamity is attributed 553 to a rivalry between dead persons who are fighting over which of 551 their respective names should be given to the newborn; the envious loser kills the child. In order to avoid such mean vengeance and make everyone content while satisfying none, the father gives the child a neutral name or a Bo̲tswa name, such as Bo̲tswá, Sáka, Ěfâlǐna (nameless), Botsilá (lack of success, bad luck), Litúli (dead without known cause), etc. If the child has already received a name, but for one reason or another the inauspicious fury of a ghost is feared, it is always possible to change from that name to another.

Children are usually given the names of relatives of the same sex. Exceptions are sometimes made, however, if one of the sexes is not sufficiently represented among the progeny, in which case the bearer of the name can always change it later, and he almost always does. Nevertheless, there are [500] no specifically male or female names, except for those that consist of the relative form of a verb, such as Ósâsuka, "the coquette," "Óyê̲me̲ngo̲, "she who comes with plenty," Ófénji, "she who excels." Finally, certain names are sometimes used for either sex.

551 The etymology of most names is impossible to trace, and they have no meaning. Some are borrowed from the nomenclature of the realms of nature or of things, but no attention is paid to their original meaning, and allusions to it -- sometimes attempted by certain Europeans -- are either not understood or badly received. Other names are dictated by the child's constitution, for example Ókunjoló, "who will be buried even today," or Báwáôlóí, "one dies only later." (1) Names sometimes also commemorate a special event, such as a great mourning (Báwá, "they die"; Bálela, "people weep"), a rivalry (Báunela, "they fight for," meaning that two men are rivals for the possession of the mother of the child to whom the name is given). Finally, some names carry the meaning of a saying, such as Báwake, "all men must die," etc.

[572] In closing let us repeat that persons who bear the same name are often bound by a special friendship, give each other presents, and help each other. However, such a relationship does not entitle persons of different sexes to have intimate relations with each other, and if they do so such relations are treated as concubinage or simply adultery.

Article VI. Twins

845 Although for the Nkundó the birth of twins (baása, sing. jäsa), does not have the importance that other peoples attach to it [501], it does have some special features, the chief of which is the absence of the prohibitions and regulations that go with ordinary births. Twins are free from all common prohibitions; they are fulúngú. (1) Let is examine the details.

---

1. Both names are intended to prevent allusions to the child's debility and to express the equivalent of the saying: it is but a life of languor.

1. This is true even with respect to abstentions during mourning.

2: Hulstaert--469 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

● 845 [202] The event is announced by the usual signal, but the signal is doubled or, if the children are of different sexes, the signal for each sex is given once. It is followed by the dance beat: two [535] or three long and two short.

845 778 The next day the father's relatives go outside the village, preferably to a crossroads. On each side they plant a stalk of *lokőkólókő*. All around the stalk they spread a little heap of small branches and various leaves called *jǔké*. It is a sign and a place of benediction and good fortune. Each passer-by stops, picks two leaves, places one on each pile, spits on it, and says *swá*.(2) Then they clap hands and twice sing out, *yelí yeye*. Such behavior brings the benediction of the twins upon a person's journey, his undertakings, his marriage. The umbilical cord as well as the placenta and membrane are buried under the heap.

845 362 [386] Every morning the mother and father draw two stripes with kaolin on the middle of their foreheads and on their arms, above and below the elbow. They do the same to the twins. (3) They continue doing so until the child is weaned. If after that time one of the children falls ill, they begin again treating him in this manner until he is cured, taking care not to omit his brother, lest he too fall ill. For while these designs are signs of joy, they are [751] above all a prophylactic measure against children's fever (*ikűtswáki*), [502] called *wǎ́sanyi* when it occurs in twins or in a child following them, and manifests itself chiefly by tumors of the head and face.

845 551 Twins are invariably called Mbőyő and Bo̱ké̱tu, names given to the first born and the second respectively, whatever their sex. The Bombwanja (like the Ekonda) use the names Mbőő and Mpia, respectively. The mother takes the name of Ǎmbá.

---

2. Onomatopoeia for "spit."

3. Sometimes a double stripe is added at the temples The kaolin may be used pure or mixed with the red paint called *ngőla*.

845 However, these names are not used exclusively by such persons;
551 they may be given to others as well. The father, on the other hand,
does not receive a new name; but he bears the title Is'éy'ǎfé,
which literally means "father of two." (1) Twins are also said to
be Ǎmbámba (pl. Byǎmbámba) from the verb -ámba, "to accept,
to receive," because they are permitted to accept and to take
everything, since none of the usual prohibitions apply to them.

The mother of twins is not required to go into seclusion
845 (nyang'éy'aása áfőáte waékelé). The shed belonging to the head
343 of the clan, that is, the one in whose home important animals
(leopards, etc.) are dismembered, is set up for her. (2) The shed
is closed by means of palms. Neither the parents, nor the helper,
nor the persons who enter this place are required to observe continence or the other prohibitions involved in ekelé.

All the members of the kin group come to greet the twins
845 and give each one a present (hens, knives, arrows, food), which
is received by the father or the mother. Whenever anything is
given to one of the twins, even if it is the smallest object, the
same must be given to the other; otherwise the latter would die.
If the mother takes one in her arms, the other one must also be
picked up, either by her or by the father. If she strikes one, she
must also strike his brother. This [503] duality therefore applies
to everything, and with even greater reason to nursing.

If a twin child cries or is ill, the parents must sing and
[534] dance to the accompaniment of a lokolé and a ngòmo drum, a
ceremony called -bénga baása. If someone invites a twin or his

1. Among the Ekonda he is called Buka.

2. Therefore, at the bonsenge place or the place of dismembering important animals (nyama yǎ bikofo, literally "superb animals").

845 parents to the dance, they must go. When the mother passes a
[178] crossroads or the dwelling place of a spirit or an efeno (a place
where the Nkundó gather for magical practices, oracles, etc.), she
also sings and dances in honor of the spirit, so that he will favor her
845 children. Various songs are popular, such as: Elím'é'Ǎmbá
533 tongólela yelí yeye, "Spirit of Ǎmbá, do not weep; (1) Bokétu la

1. Tongólela is an archaic form still in use among the Ekonda, etc

Mbóy'é'Ambá tofúkáké tonyongáké, toléké bilingoi yelí yeye, "Ǎmbá's Bokétu and Mbóyó, do not bruise yourself, do not stir, do not eat bilingoi mushrooms"; Bokétu 'a Mbóyó njóátela ngóy' emengo yelí yeye, "Bokétu and Mbóyó, I surround my mother with abundance"; Bokétu'a Mbóyó lá'okono lá'okendo yelí yeye, "I shall fall ill, and yet I will walk (be well)"; Bokétu'a Mbóyó, lióta bokekesano yelí yeye, "difficult childbirth," etc.

Foods forbidden to twins are the mushrooms called bilingoi
845 (or bilingondo or bankǎnkíndá), the mpambí antelope, and the ǒlí
262 yam, which is also forbidden to parents whose child is not yet weaned.
(2)

2. This prohibition extends to all food cooked in pots in which such forbidden foods have been prepared. The extension is characteristic of all alimentary prohibitions.

845 When traveling, the parents of twins gird themselves with the
484 creeping plant called boyayenga, or wear it like a strap over the
shoulder. The mother also attaches a bell to it. Their hair is often
[301] adorned with two feathers from the tail of a gray parrot (nkoso) and
two feathers from a white hen. [504]

845 The greeting to parents of twins and their reply must always
576 be double: w'ǒné w'ǒné, the reply em'óné em'óné; oôyá, oôyá, the
reply bíka bíka. Note that the last greeting is not replied to differently

576
845 from the others. They thus rank with the great notables of the past. [sic]

845
554 When the children grow up and become self-sufficient, all the special regulations lose their force and they become like everybody else. Nothing distinguishes them from the rest in marriage, death, etc No preference is shown for or against them. But their descendants will again produce twins.

845 Thus the Nkundó consider twins as extraordinary children, but they do not carry this view to extremes. They are pleased to receive two children at a time, although they believe that under such circumstances the pregnancy and delivery are more dangerous for the mother. That is why she is called boyéngwá since, despite the seriousness of the situation, she did not die This epithet is also applied to the father and to the twins, probably for the same reason as well as because of their immunity with respect to prohibitions. If the twins are of different sexes, however, the mother is not as likely to be called boyéngwá, since she is likoka, "harmful." (1)

1. See above, Article II, 3.

845
789
754 It is apparent from the above description that twins are considered to be somewhat tainted with magic. The existence of this belief is confirmed by the prohibition against throwing anything (stone, palm kernel, etc.) onto their hut, the same prohibition applying to anyone who possesses a charm or practices sorcery or protective magic. In addition they possess a certain innate ability to cast a spell over the activities (hunting, fishing) of others. That is why persons who are afraid of being harmed by them smear themselves with kaolin in the same way as do such children and their parents. [505]

845 The Nkundó have had cases of triplets, but they are extremely rare. The youngest of the three is called Yěndembe, or Yěn[illegible]ende, or Yělele. The only special practice with reference to the youngest one is that he can never be ordered to do any work, be sent to carry a message, run any errand, etc., áfótswé ntómo.

845 In other respects he is not differentiated from the other two. Greetings are not tripled in the case of triplets.

A child born directly after twins is called Wuteji (from utela, "to repeat"). He is in no way different from other children.

Article VII. Circumcision

Circumcision is generally practiced. It does not have to 304 be performed at any particular age. It is usually done during childhood before the tenth year. The more timorous put it off until puberty or even later. Special customs of individual clans sometimes set a time. Thus, a man of the village of Besombó is not allowed to be circumcised until he has killed an animal at the hunt. On the other hand, the season during which circimcisions are performed is specified: they must take place during the period when the water level is low.

The operation may be performed by any man who is expert at it. It is carried out behind the huts. No one but the boys being operated on and their fathers are present. The boys stand in a group somewhat apart from the proceedings but place themselves so that with their eyes they can follow the treatment to which their companion is being subjected. The patient squats. One of the elderly assistants places his hands over the boy's eyes so that he cannot see what is happening. The person performing the operation has already dug a small pit to catch the blood. He pulls the foreskin, ties it with a string, and then uses ashes to trace the line which must be followed by the empúte knife that is used on such occasions. When the blood has stopped flowing, he chews some bondóngó [824] pepper (Aframomum . . .) or, preferably, [506] a caudal fin of [825] the ngolo fish and then spits it onto the wound. The resulting sensation is very painful. But the patient shows that he is brave; for if he cries he is mocked by his companions.

As long as the wound is not healed, the boy must not use [262] manioc leaves (bangánju) or manioc bread in the preparation of bosombó or lóóto. Nor may he eat the skin, head, or tail of fish.

While the wound is healing, the boy who has been circumcised is cared for, washed, etc., by his mother or, if he has reached

845 puberty, by his father. The performance of this role entails continence (bokeka) for the person who undertakes it, even with respect to the spouse. A violation of this rule prevents healing of the wound or at least makes the process very long and difficult. (1)

[755] 1. A similar bokeka applies to anyone nursing a large gangrenous ulcer (wǎlɛ́).

The foreskin that has been cut off is dried on the bolíkó (tray or shelf). Then no one bothers with it any longer, and it usually remains there, dusty and dirty, for an indefinite period of time if the rats leave it alone.

[177] In the centers the young people are beginning to neglect the native skilled in circumcising and resort instead to European surgeons.

[556] Circumcision is not an occasion for feasts or ceremonies. Sometimes a man who is rich and vain will give a feast, but this is not at all a common practice.

The term "to circumcise" is translated in Lonkundo as tɛ́na bonsoé, "to cut off the foreskin." The less vulgar term and one used much more frequently is tɛ́na nsóngé, "to cut off the tip." A much too decent circumlocution is tɛ́na batɔ́i, "to cut off the ears."

The reason for this custom has already been given in Chapter I, Part II, Article II, 2.

Article VIII. Education

868
857 From an early age a Nkundɔ́ child must perform various small services for his parents, especially in the household; he is asked to draw water, fetch firewood, take care of a little brother or sister, etc. The demands for such services are addressed chiefly to girls, but boys are not at all exempt. By the very nature of things, however, the latter are less frequently asked to help.

Quite early a boy may accompany his father on trips, at meetings, legal debates, etc The father makes a bow and arrows for him and teaches him the art of using them. The great pastime

624 thus, *Nsono* is a very prominent figure. Still arrayed as previously described, she sits outside the *nongo* near the road on the special stool of the *nkumu*. Nobody may pass her with food, a humane law, considering that she must spend the day fasting. If anyone attempts to do so she catches the unlucky individual, helps herself to as much of his food as she wants, the victim meanwhile begging her to be merciful and leave him a small portion, and the booty is taken into the *ipana*. During this sentinel duty *Nsono* must still keep the parrot's feather in her mouth and maintain silence, so, in case she catches an unsuspecting bearer of food, the remonstrance and argument are all one-sided.[1] After the first day *Nsono* no longer sits outside the *nongo* but goes from place to place in the village, choosing spots where people may least expect her, hoping thus to reap a bigger harvest for her pains. This is kept up for eight days, which comprise two Tumba ' weeks ' of three days' work and one of rest. The rest-day is appropriately named *boina bo nsono* after the duty of *Nsono* of sitting doing nothing day by day. The eight days of this ceremony over, *Nsono* lays aside her gourd and plantain stalk, which are placed at the foot of the first central supporting post [302] of the *ebanga* on entering. She is given a fresh coating of chalk and three coloured stripes are drawn the length of her back and down her arms. She still remains close to the *nkumu*.

[567] Various personalities are connected with the *nongo* of an *nkumu*. The *Basele* is a male slave, clothed in a skin breech cloth, whose duty it is to receive callers at the *ipana* before admitting them to the presence of the *nkumu*.

624 595 *Mpenge* is the name taken by the wife first married by the *nkumu*. From henceforth she no longer accompanies her husband, and their cohabitation ceases unless the *nkumu* is willing to pay her each time the sum of one hundred rods. But the *nkumu* is obliged to eat all food she cooks for him even though they have a quarrel. *Mpenge* does not honour her husband with the special greeting accorded to *nkumu*, but greets her husband and all other *nkumu* as she would ordinary people.[2] The second wife of an *nkumu* must assume the name of *Iyombo Anganda*, but no importance attaches to her position.

624 516 Among the Tumba generally, apart from the Bonginda, a woman is chosen from the *molembe* to bear the title *Bolumbu Itina i Ekopo* (*Bolumbu*, the ' raison d'être ' of the *ekopo*). She is, it would seem, a symbolical figure, a reminder that the *ekopo* owes its existence to the *molembe* of which this woman becomes the titular head. While the *nkumu* is still in seclusion the chosen woman is taken to the open space between the *ipana* and the row of sons' houses, known as the *nanda*. Here, in the presence of the assembled crowd she is praised by being addressed, '*Bolumbu Itina, bototo!*' and the crowd exclaims, '*Bwoo!*'[3] Strips of leopard skin, about eighteen

---

[845] [1] It is interesting to note that there are some exceptions to those who may be caught and robbed by *Nsono* during her eight days of watching. No member of the *molembe* may be thus treated, twins and their parents are exempt, and also all children born to the *nkumu* before he attains office, these being termed *maomi*.

[554 595] [2] Besides *Mpenge*, a mother of twins is also exempt from according *nkumu* special salutations, and among some groups the father of twins is also exempt.

[3] This ceremony gives husbands of any village, whether they are members of the *molembe* or not, the opportunity to single out a favourite wife for special honour, for at this time any woman may be given the name of *Bolumbu*, though not with the significant complement of *Itina i Ekopo*. The ceremony is similar, is performed at the *nanda*, but besides receiving the strips of leopard skin, she must be divested of all her clothing, a new *lomboo* and *mpango* are then placed round her, and the strips of skin then attached to the new belt.

must go to the *monkeke* for their fight, this being the location of the houses belong- 624
ing to the sons of the *nkumu*. The penalty for breaking this law is a fine, and if no 689
fine were forthcoming hanging used to be the alternative. If a quarrel arises else-
where and one party wishes to avoid fighting, he may retire to the *nongo* and thus be
safe. No trees in the *nongo* may be climbed. There are, however, privileged classes
exempt from all such rules, and these embrace a good many people. Thus, the mother [845]
of twins, twins, Batwa, *maomi*, and all members of the *molembe* and *ekopo* are exempt
from the laws of the *nongo*. If any of these commit acts which are illegal for those [672]
coming under the law, they are not held guilty, but their actions will not be condoned;
they will be considered breaches of good conduct, and will be dealt with informally; [626]
the parties will be quietly reprimanded, and adjured to observe the proprieties of
conduct. For outsiders breaking the laws of the *nongo*, what corresponds to a warrant
is necessary. It is necessary to catch the culprit in the act and hale him before the [696]
nkumu. The *nkumu* himself cannot do this, nor can any of the *ekopo*; it must be done
by one of the *molembe*, and so if the *nkumu* sees someone infringing the law he will
try to get one of the *molembe* on the spot in a hurry in order to catch the offender.

In war,[1] it is the *molomi o ehe* who is most active in preparations, but the *nkumu* 624
will accompany his party to battle, keeping well in the rear, and surrounded by good
fighters. He does not wear his *montolo* but puts on the informal hat. If an *nkumu* were 726
captured, he would never be tortured or killed as were other prisoners, unless he
specifically sought such a fate. He could be ransomed, and his captors would [727]
beseech him to let his people ransom him, but in many cases an *nkumu* would invite
death rather than endure the shame of being yielded up as a prisoner of war.

An *nkumu* is always addressed by a double clap of the hands, and will not reply to 624
anyone rude enough to speak to him first. In answer to the clap he replies with a
word of wisdom expressed in an aphorism or proverb. Such a reply, however, is 576
common to all elders, who have their favourite aphorisms ready for any who pay
them special honour. Anything the *nkumu* says must be answered not by the
customary *nko boiko* (even so) which ordinary people use, but with the special word,
bionga, which is reserved exclusively for replying to an *nkumu*, and means the same
thing.

When the hour of death approaches, an *nkumu* is attended by his Batwa. It is a 624
rule that he must not die a natural death, and near the end, while he is still conscious 763
and can still speak, all 'free men' clear out and leave the Batwa pygmies to their
task of tying the *nkumu* very tightly with the fibrous yam vines known as *menkiki*. [563]
Often this secure lashing in the sitting posture, known as *ilima*, is sufficient to finish
the *nkumu* off, but sometimes the work is expedited by twisting his neck.[2] Then it
is announced that he is dead, *aohilwa*, this being in contradistinction to the customary
phrase *aokoma moloko* used of the death of ordinary people. While the latter means

---

[1] Owing to the lack of tribal cohesion, warfare was not on any considerable scale. The method of warfare consisted in sending groups of young men to fight first, the elders only joining in when one side began to get the worst of the fray. Victors and vanquished in such fights were designated 'husband' and 'wife' respectively, and members of the one group were free to come and go in the villages of the other, and even to help themselves to food. In future wars 'husband' and 'wife' were supposed to combine against their common foes.

[2] Besides *nkumu*, elderly and rich men, fathers and mothers of twins, and twins are buried in the *ilima* or sitting posture, in contradistinction to the *monsepe* position which is the recumbent one used for ordinary people and slaves. [764]

851 birth of a child involves a few prohibitions which affect the whole village and apply to the Batswá as well as the Baotó. They do not affect inhabitants of a portion of the village which is separated by a swamp from the group where the happy event has occurred. Those bound by the prohibitions may no longer go to "work" -- that is, to work in the fields, fetch food or firewood, build a hunting enclosure or a fishing weir, or work at the building or repair of a house. An infraction of this rule would result in the destruction of the fruit of all their labor: the fields would no longer produce, and no beast or fish would be caught. This deadly influence would [484] extend to all crops, etc. no matter whom they belong to. Nevertheless, there is nothing wrong in fetching firewood from the forest, harvesting manioc from a ripe field, or cutting the fruit of the palm.

Strictly speaking, these prohibitions touch only persons who have seen the newborn child. But since no one fails to go and admire it, all are subject to them. The prohibitions remain in ef-
[184] fect until the umbilical cord is detached. Some tribes, however, have the more convenient custom of limiting its duration to the day of the child's birth.

2. The hygiene of mother and child

[844] The umbilical cord (lọkọ́ki) is cut near the middle. An in-
● 846 cision is made near the infant's navel. Each day a concoction of herbs is poured on the part of the cord that is still attached and white sand is put on it to make it dry more rapidly. When the end falls off, a powder made of scorched banana is applied to the wound.

In order to prevent the weakening of a woman's abdomen, it is bound with a belt made of bands of the dried bark of the banana tree (ekutú).

The assistants wash the mother and child. On the mother they place dried leaves or bark of the banana tree which have been carefully crumpled. They are put on like panties to catch the blood and are replaced by new ones whenever necessary. Nowadays pieces of cloth are often used; they are put on like a man's garment.

846 In order to facilitate the flowing out of all the blood, the
mother is given hot baths. However, they are not begun before
515 noon, for the Nkundó say that in the morning and evening it is too
cool and the blood is not sufficiently fluid. Those who have been
[177] in greater contact with the Whites give the mother beer or wine to
drink. The hot baths are administered behind the hut in an en-
[843] closure set up for the occasion. They are of two kinds: baths by
sprinkling (bompúlo wǎ mbǎomba) and steam baths (bompúlo
w'ělángé). For the first method [485] very hot water is used, and
by using a bunch of palms, the woman's abdomen, loins, and ribs
are sprinkled. In the second method a pit is dug and large leaves
(or a basin) containing boiling water are placed in it. Three or
four strong, wide sticks are placed on top, and the woman is
seated on them. She is wrapped in several mats to which, today,
one or two blankets are added. She is left thus exposed to the action of the steam for several minutes. According to the natives,
it is the ideal system because it makes all the blood come out, or
almost all. Some people first give a sprinkle bath, and then follow
it with a steam bath; others are satisfied with one or the other,
depending on the circumstances. In any case more than one bath
is never given in one day. This care may be given for one or two
weeks, or it may stop after two or three days. The effect of
"civilizing" is more inclined to the latter. But no Nkundó would
want to omit the baths, for the woman's life is at stake.

After the bath the woman is carefully rubbed and dried,
[302] and then anointed with oil mixed with red paint.

From time to time, usually every second day, she is given a douche.

846 As long as the mother remains weak, a large fire is maintained in her hut to keep her warm, and the doors are closed by means of palms. The husband and his relatives fetch the firewood. But the first log must be cut and brought by the husband who, to use the Nkundó expression, must "remove the violence" (ímola lofasó. In the beginning the woman lies down on a boánga right near the fire. She turns the front of her body toward it. The fire plays a great role in her quick recovery. She is very well cared

M
846 for and fed so that she may regain her strength rapidly. [486]

3. Seclusion

After childbirth the mother remains secluded (-ulama) in her hut for several weeks -- two, three, or more, depending on circumstances and especially on her husband's social position. Her seclusion is called julé. The hut bears the same name, or else it is called janga, "palm leaf." Sometimes the term ekelé is also applied to it, denoting the period of seclusion with all the special regulations it involves. These are as follows:

M
[844] 1) Meals. In some tribes the woman may already eat on the day of the delivery. But among others she is only permitted to drink. The reason for this fast is given in the form of a legend. One day long ago a Botswa asked his master for a little manioc, but the master refused to give it to him. The master's wife had just given birth. Annoyed by the refusal, the Botswa cursed his master, saying: "From now on your women will have to fast the day they give birth." (1) Another explanation is that at sometime in the past someone refused food to a slave who was about to be sacrificed at a feast of the lifting of mourning. Tribes and villages that do not give any reason of this sort permit a woman to eat in the evening, if the delivery takes place in the morning.

P
[844]

M
[833] A mother's first meal is prepared by a woman who has performed the carnal act the preceding night. She goes to draw water, and on her return she fastens or attaches over the door of the seclusion hut a piece of palm (jänga) or, among the Bombwanja, a piece of dried banana leaf; in this way she informs everyone that it is a house of ekelé. Then she prepares the food, which consists of

M
[262] bananas with fish or a hen in palm-oil sauce. It is eaten by the mother and her husband as well as the cook. Their very young children may also delight in it, but [487] the older ones, approaching puberty, may not. The newborn child is given a tiny bit of the sauce to taste.

---

1. Batswa women never fast under such circumstances.

846 [589] For a young unmarried mother, the meal is prepared by a girl who has not reached puberty or a woman who is quite old, that is, by someone who does not engage in sexual intercourse.

2) *Various regulations.* From the time of the preparation of the first meal until the end of the *bokeka*, that is, until the day the umbilical cord becomes detached, the hearth of the seclusion hut is sacred, so to speak. Apart from the couple and the assistants, no one may enjoy it or profit from it, either to light anything from it or eat anything that has been prepared there. However, some men have a means of lifting the prohibition pertaining to the fire. Upon the hearth and all the hearths of the village or a group of houses, depending on the situation, they let fall a few drops of a special concoction.

It is also forbidden to sweep or pick up the ashes from the fire. Everything must stay put until the umbilical cord of the newborn child becomes detached.

During the entire period of seclusion, the mother is assisted by a kinswoman (or one of her husband's kinswomen; among the Bombwanja there are always two), who is the *wujisa*, "the one who makes the seclusion" (from the verb *uja*). The seclusion should not be thought of as that of a hermit; the mother may go out as soon as her condition permits, and the helper goes about her occupations, but she does not do so more than necessary. Rather the hut is a house of prohibitions.

During this period the mother and her helper do not do farm [834] work. In addition they must abstain from carnal relations and from all contacts with the opposite sex, in conformity with the customs explained in Article II, 3, above. The *ekelɛ́* extends to the husband and to any other person who enters the hut. Any infraction results in the death of the mother or the child in the same manner as in the case of the *bokeka* (see *loc. cit.*) . [488]

3) *The end of the bokeka.* When, at the end of four or five days, the umbilical cord becomes detached, the news is announced to the whole village, so that everyone may go back to their work that has been suspended. The following night the father [833] and mother perform the conjugal act to "destroy the *bokeka* and

●846 to be able to nurse the child together." This does not mean that 833 from then on they may have regular sexual relations, for these are not permitted until after the end of seclusion. But if they were to omit the act at this time, they would have to abstain from it until the child is weaned. The Nkundó say that the act is performed "only a little." For many it becomes masturbation; others withdraw before obtaining the effect of the act. In no case may the act reach its natural climax. The reason for this practice is unknown to me. Perhaps it is done in order not to molest the woman while she is in a painful condition.

The next day the ashes in the hearth of the seclusion hut 846 are swept out, and the fire becomes "ordinary"; anyone may use it and eat food prepared on it.

4) The umbilical cord is dried on the bolíkó (a tray or shelf) and then buried at the foot of a young banana tree planted for that purpose, preferably under a bọnkọmí tree if possible. The ashes and sweepings from the seclusion hut are thrown there. The banana tree is called nkíndá. (1) Its fruit may be eaten only by the child's [853] grandfather and grandmother. If another person eats it, he will be punished with a headache of a nervous type.

The umbilical cord is always buried in the father's native 846 soil. People who are far from home (laborers for the Whites, etc.) 644 preserve the umbilical cords of their children with great care in order to take them back [489] when they return to their village, or send them back when a favorable opportunity arises. The Nkundó hold to this usage tenaciously, because a person whose umbilical cord is not buried in the lands of his paternal clan has no authority in the group. The person involved would meet with the following objection: ntákokúndela lokolé, ntákokundela lọkọkí, óyakúmya ngámo? olé nk'eyâya, "The lokolé was not beaten for you, your

---

[824] 1. This is a generic term used for any banana tree planted for a special purpose (a magical practice, a game, etc.).

846 umbilical cord was not buried; how dare you boast? You are but a
614 stranger." Therefore this custom constitutes a sort of matriculation into the family. If anyone wants to be entirely certain of a Nkundó's clan, he has only to look for the place where his umbilical cord was buried.

5) The end of seclusion is marked by a few ceremonies.

846 A. A meal. Early in the morning of the day set, the hus-
302 band goes and cuts a bunch of fruit of the palm tree, and the helper goes and picks manioc leaves (nowadays leaves and fruit collected the day before are sometimes used). The helper crushes all of this to make a dish of food. While she cooks it over the fire, she shaves a little hair off the mother, plucks out one eyebrow, and cuts one of her nails. Then she does the same to the child. The helper moves away, and the father comes in. His wife subjects him to the same treatment, and he reciprocates, doing the same to the child. The rubbish is simply thrown away without any ceremony. This practice has no special name; the Nkundó say: báyaténa bekengo, báyakenga, "They shave each other's heads."

When the vegetables are ready, all the women of the vil-
846 lage are gathered together. A little pit is dug in front of the hut. A large leaf is placed in it to serve as a dish, and the vegetables are poured into it. The mother, the helper, and all those assembled eat. Except for a few small boys no representatives of the stronger sex are present. When the meal is completed, [490] the leaf that served as a plate and those that served as spoons are buried in the pit. Today the more advanced of the population use a European plate and spoons. The meal and the vegetables eaten are called losanganya, "reunion," because the entire village is united in partaking of them, or lofanjola, "dispersion," because it is the prelude to the end of the bokeka.

B. Then follows the ceremony of separation (-téna bofofó, or, among the Injóló, bokékéléké. (1) The bofofó is the mid-rib

[796]

---

1. The expression and the ceremony designated by it are used whenever an important matter, such as a trial, etc., is to be terminated.

● 846 of a dried banana leaf. Three knots are tied in it. The helper holds it in one hand and with the other cuts off the first knot, which she carries away with her. The mother keeps her end in her hand and presents the other to her husband. She receives the knife from the hands of the helper and cuts between the two knots so that each spouse carries away his end. Each time the parties involved say, "We have cut the *bofofó*; we are separating; go away." Having thus bid each other farewell, each fastens his end to the roof of the seclusion hut.

This ceremony ends the period of seclusion and puts an end
846 to the *ekelɛ́* prohibitions. From then on the couple may have sexual
837 relations together, the helper can resume her usual life, and adultery on the part of the father can no longer harm the child or the mother. Note, however, that the child's immunity to the father's misconduct implies one condition: the father must not take it on his knees the day he commits adultery. By the following day the effects of his act have been nullified. A woman can discover her husband's infidelity through his refusal to take the child. Often she makes use of this means to obtain a confirmation of her suspicions. Some men abstain from all misconduct solely to guard against any such possibility. Adultery may have a harmful influence on the child even after it is weaned if it has a weak constitution. [491] All this seems to indicate that the reaction is considered to be physical and direct rather than a sanction based on religion or superstition.

846 Nkundó therapeutics include an antidote, however; it is
789 called *bondandota* (from *ndota* "an illness caused by the infraction
of prohibitions of a sexual nature"). It consists of a potion made
[278] from the sap of an aroid bearing the same name, which is mixed with the sap of the *libúlúkakó* plant. If for some reason or other the couple have been away from each other for a fairly long time, they sit or stand face to face and take the child on their knees, which touch each other, and each one makes the child drink the potion twice, once from each hand, making sure to turn its face toward him [or her]. Usually the couple also drink some of the brew, though it is intended primarily for the child. Without these precautions the relations between the pair and the father's

846 taking the child would cause the child's death. The same precau-
789 tion is also in order if the husband goes on a trip before the child's
birth and does not return till after the delivery

We have just seen that the harmful effects of the father's
846 misconduct on his child's life is effectuated through the father's
837 act of taking the child on his knees. Thus the Nkundó speak of
baóngó b'âbé, "a father's bad knees," to indicate his reprehensible
[826] conduct, and they say that the bondandota potion is administered
to the child so that it will not die because of the father's bad
knees. (1)

1. The expression baóngó b'ǎbé is also used when an undertaking which requires continence is unsuccessful. (See Article II, 3).

When a child has painful and persistent diarrhea, it is often
753 interpreted as the effect of the father's infidelity. As soon as they
454 become aware of it, the couple separate for some time, and the
father no longer touches the child. [492]

Contrary to what one reads on this subject about other peo-
837 ples of the Congo, Nkundó couples do not have to remain continent
834 beyond the period of seclusion. The separation ceremony gives the
789 husband back the freedom of action he had before his wife's preg-
nancy. For the wife the bokeka remains strict with respect to illicit
relations until the child is weaned However she, too, may regain
her freedom by having recourse to an antidote, the ingredients of
which she purchases from a person who holds the secret. The in-
gredients are placed in a small antelope horn which is then stopped
[824] up by means of bolaká (resin from the Symphonia gabonensis). The
interested party wears it about her loins on a string or a bead belt
or, preferably, on a special creeper. This amulet protects the
child's life from the harmful influence of the mother's acts of
adultery, but it does so only on condition that she does not separate
herself from the child, as we will explain further on. This procedure

837 is not morally condoned, and a woman who resorts to it does not
834 escape criticism. She is compared to a goat, who does not have
789 a regular and steady husband: álómya bǒna lontaa, "she nurses
her child as a goat does." (1)

1. The opposite of lómya lontaa, -- if it is used to show the contrast -- is lómya lontómbá.

When the separation ceremony is ended, the mother is
● 846 adorned with all her ornaments and goes out to walk in a procession through the village. The child is carried by an older sister, a niece, etc. He is taken around the village, bánangya bǒna l'olóló Small presents are offered him everywhere -- an arrow, a small knife, a hairpin, etc There is no feast, however; if that honor were accorded him he would die of it (for when someone dies, there is always a feast of farewell in his honor). [493]

Article IV. Nursing

853 During the first few days after birth an infant does not suck the milk of its mother, since it is "too hot." He is fed by a third person, preferably a relative.

On the third day the following occurs:

853 1) The mother's breasts are massaged (-kulola baéle). For
757 this purpose the Nkundó use leaves of the bǔte creeper and the lilongyá plant (Adenostemma viscosum Forst.), a green leaf from a banana tree called nselenge, several pieces of peeled sugar cane, the tips of the dried leaves of any banana tree, and sometimes other plants are added as well. All the ingredients are crushed, then boiled, and white sand and a bit of red paint are mixed in with them. The mixture is called ndengó. It is prepared by the women who are in charge of massaging the breasts. The bǔte leaves, however, must be picked by the father. He goes to the forest early in the morning and first shakes the creeper so that all leaves that are not firmly attached will fall off. Then he climbs it and picks the desired

842 differences can be found here, although they are less apparent to
855 a European observer since we usually approach the natives as a
152 group and our contact with them is often too impersonal.

2. Abortion

●947 A great enemy of maternal love is the practice of abortion, which has always been known to the Nkundó. Here we cannot describe all the prescriptions used for that purpose. It will be sufficient to enumerate the reasons for which they have recourse to this practice. They are as follows:

[178] 1) A woman's lasciviousness: the procreation and subsequent care of a child to some extent prevent the indulging in carnal pleasures. Formerly this cause of abortion was nonexistent or very rare. Needless to say, it has become more common, especially in the centers where it is constantly on the increase and where, in addition, occasional or regular "housekeepers" learn new means of sterilization and abortion.

2) A woman's antipathy or persistent anger toward her husband may encourage her to prevent conception or destroy its effect.

3) An excessive weakening of the mother's organism caused by a large number of conceptions and childbirths at too short intervals.

4) The encumberance and the difficulty of watching, carrying, and taking care of many small children -- bálota bọkẹkẹsano [467]
[535] wǎ bǎna nsátélá nsátélá. This reason is especially important for well-known dancers.

It goes without saying that several of these motives may be combined in the same person. For instance, I knew of a woman who aborted at the time of her eighth child. Her recurrent pregnancies, together with continuous work, had greatly reduced her strength. A palaver with her husband was the last straw; she decided to get rid of the fruit she carried in her body.

Outside of these exceptions the natives of this country ardently desire their own continuation through a large number of progeny. (1)

[184]

1. The same is not true elsewhere. Examples to that effect are cited from regions that are

847 [184] already more "civilized," such as the neighborhood of Coquilhatville and the Losanganya region.

847 848 Attention should be drawn to the danger of an increase in abortions for a new reason, namely the shame of giving birth outside of wedlock. As we have seen in Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 3, premarital pregnancies have existed since time immemorial without resulting either in remorse or in palavers. Through the teaching of Christian morality, the feeling of shame must sooner or later be extended to this phenomenon. In explaining the evil of fornication, care should therefore be taken to insist on the fact that transgressing the Fifth Commandment by abortion is a far greater evil.

847 843 Voluntary abortion is not considered a moral error by the Nkundó. (2) In their eyes an imperfectly formed fetus, not viable,

2. An attitude which also exists in Europe at the present time, according to Haenecour in Kultuurleven, Vol. 6, no. 1, p. 21 (1935), and the brochure by Prof. D. Schockaert quoted there.

is not yet a man. It is only a human being in the process of formation, in potentia. Hence the custom of burying the aborted child in the [468] hut or quite near it. Thus the spirit responsible for the pregnancy will see that it is respected and repeat its benevolent action. (1) 847 [766] [774]

1. Others explain this custom by saying that the fetus already has a soul which remains near the tiny body and will take the first opportunity to re-enter the mother's body.

But if it is voluntary an abortion is always a wrong against family and society, for it deprives the family of a member on whom

● 841 they could count. Nevertheless, if it happens to a young unmarried mother, little or no fuss is made over it because no one can feel wronged; at most the culprit is scolded. For a married woman, on the other hand, it is one of the most serious infractions. Her husband has an immediate right to the fetus that would have become his child. He cannot beat or mistreat the offender in punishment, for her condition will not permit violence, but he can abandon her to her fate by refusing her all assistance, in particular by refusing to bring her firewood, the heat of which she greatly needs under such circumstances. For she has done him an enormous wrong and has acted with real malice (aônjokel'inkúnyá, he says), since he married her chiefly so that she would give him descendants. If she dies it is her own fault. Even her family will not support her, for [682] they would be accused of being involved in the crime; inevitably they would lose the case and be condemned to indemnify the husband.

An abortion which is ascertained to be involuntary [i.e., 843 a miscarriage] is treated like an accident or an illness and the appropriate legal stipulations are applied to it. Thus if it happens while the woman is at her parents' home, the responsibility for it falls on them. Usually the palaver is settled in a friendly manner; the family makes a few nko̱mí payments, and the question is closed. If relations between the husband and his son-in-law are somewhat strained, the dispute may be drawn out and may result in the breaking up of the marriage. If the woman dies from the accident, the rules given in Article X of the preceding chapter come into play. [469]

Article II. Conception and Pregnancy

842
133
The Nkundó have only a partial notion of the phenomena of conception. They are well aware of which acts cause the procreation of children. They have a perfect knowledge of anatomy and a rich vocabulary pertaining to sexual life. But they know only as much about physiological processes as experience can teach them. Furthermore, they believe that the act of procreation must be repeated several times in order to produce its natural result. Note,

853 The child is given to a wet nurse (a kinswoman, a stranger, a Botswa woman, depending on who is available).

847 If the mother's body shows no signs of evil-doing or of
845 "the hatred of others," it is thought that her death was caused
843 by evil spells on the part of the child. Thereupon some kill the child to prevent it from doing harm during its whole life; others, on the contrary, spare it despite everything.

If the husband (for it is he above all who is involved, since
843 he is most exposed to possible lapses) has unfortunately been guilty
837 of misconduct, his wife has only a slim chance [478] of salvation. Nevertheless, it is still possible for her to be saved, on condition that from then on her husband abstain from any sexual act and from all the accidental gestures and actions described above. The least he can do under these circumstances is to inform his wife of his indiscretion so that she can take precautions. If he wants to
[672] ward off any possibility of causing his wife's certain death, he sends her home and gives his father-in-law a pledge (ndanga) through which he recognizes his guilt and shows his intention to assume the entire responsibility for his misdeed. An upright man prefers to act in this fashion, for he never knows whether one day he will not inadvertently violate one of the prohibitions.

B. The child's death is the result of the putrefaction of
853 the mother's milk, the mother being thus incapable of nursing.
837 As in the preceding case, the offense is a priori imputed to the husband -- isé aôoma bǒna la ndota. (1) Since he has wronged no one but himself, no palaver ensues; the "natural" punishment is sufficient. This does not mean that he is not the object of evil tongues; people point at him and at times remind him of his misdeed. To remove the blame from himself, he can resort to

---

[153] 1. Ndota is an illness caused by the violation of prescriptions of a sexual nature (See Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 2, A).

174 836 on the other hand, is extremely repugnant by nature, especially for the Nkundɔ́. It is a vice which comes about only as a result of special beliefs or through a fundamental degeneration of sexuality.

The breaking up of the framework of traditional organization may furnish a partial explanation in this realm as in many others. In the case of sexual relations between single adults, it might even be deemed sufficient. As much may be said about greed, vanity, the desire for ostentation and display. These are very natural sentiments in a woman, and they were greatly stimulated by the dazzling riches imported from Europe. But these facts are not sufficient in themselves to account for everything. They are especially and entirely inadequate in explaining the considerable changes in the relations between immature children, and we are thus forced to accept the explanation given by serious natives.

3. Children born out of wedlock

● 848 Among the Nkundɔ́, giving birth to a child outside of wedlock has never from time immemorial been considered a grave misdemeanor. It is not considered criminal, as ethnographers say it is among many other African peoples.

Furthermore, this attitude logically follows from the liberty permitted to adolescents, as described above. Neither the woman nor her lover are harassed or punished as a result. On the contrary, the grandparents joyfully receive the child, who adds to the size, power, and wealth of the clan. [88] For an illegitimate child (entombɔ́) (1)
848 614 does not belong to its natural father. It is incorporated into the mother's family. It is said that he is born without a father. His

1. Such a child is also known as bọna ɔ́a wanɛ́, "child of the sunlight," or bọna ɔ́a bombamboka, "child of the highway" or "of a girl of the streets." Among the Bombomba the term bọkẹlankɔ́lo is also heard.

848 posterity constitute a separate family in the clan of his maternal
614 ancestors; it is called jwǒmoto or etóo éy'ǒnankáná (that is, the patrilineal posterity of the sister's son). Families and clans that have originated in this manner are not particularly rare in this region. One may even find an entire village born in this manner. Thus, Mbelé of the Bombwanja-Boéndé is the etóo éy'ǒnankáná of Lileko. A more striking example is that of the Injóló tribe, descended from the sister of Nsimba and Eanga, who are respectively the ancestors of the Ntómbá and the Boléngé. Since the male ancestor is unknown, it is assumed that their origin is due to an extramarital conception by the mother, and that her son, Nkólóbisé, had no father. The same is true of the Wesé subtribe, bǒnankáná of the eldest subtribe Engónjó, as well as of the Ngombe subtribe, which is bǒnankáná of the Wesé.

It would be incorrect, however, to attribute the origin of all the "jwǒmoto" clans to illegitimate children, for they may have come into existence for other reasons. Thus it is known that the ancestors of certain clans were born of a legitimate union, but the bride price payment had not yet been completed. Then, as some sort of obstacle intervened, the relationship by marriage was broken, and the child was incorporated into the mother's clan. The obstacle which interrupts the bride price payment may be a disharmony between the engaged couple or their families, as in the case of the Baséká Etáféngela of the Bakáala; but it is more likely to be war or the migrations of the tribes at certain periods of their history. The latter reason may have separated more than one husband from a wife for whom he had only made an initial payment at the time her child was born.

848 The fact then that many "female" clans exist in a [89] region does not prove that illicit relationships between single people were common in the past -- especially if one also takes into account that pregnancies were formerly much more frequent than they are nowadays. It merely shows that such relationships did occur.

An illegitimate child is considered and treated by the maternal grandfather as if it were his own. No distinction is made between him and the legitimate children. He is in no way despised. He has a voice in family councils and deliberations. And since according to Nkundó notions his relationship to his first cousins is that of father to son, he

●848 has precedence over them and can become head of the family after his grandfather and uncles. In his natural father's clan, on the other hand, he has nothing to say.

848 596 If a man pays the bride price for a girl who has had a child by him, he asks his father-in-law to let him have his illegitimate child. This wish is almost always granted. The father-in-law well understands his son-in-law's fatherly sentiment of love and considers it quite legitimate and proper that a father should himself possess the ×[583] fruit of his own flesh. The only condition laid down is that because of the child the son-in-law must increase the amount of the bride price valuables by an extra slave or his equivalent. (1)

1. This transaction may even take place after the mother's death.

The father is not in a position to invoke any rights strictly speaking. The child is not considered as his because of his physical paternity, but only because of his father-in-law's kindness. If the latter were to refuse the father's request, he would not be acting in violation of justice. But his behavior would be considered as inhumane toward his daughter's husband and his grandson, and it would be criticized.

When a child is adopted by his natural father in this fashion, no one despises him for his illegitimate birth [90]. This procedure may therefore be considered to establish his legitimacy.

848 178 Nowadays, among the Beloko and their Elíngá, the practice of "buying" the child has sprung up. That is, if a man does not marry a woman who has had a child by him, he pays her parents a certain amount in order to obtain the child. There does not seem to be much opposition to the introduction of this custom, which springs from an honorable feeling for paternity and its duties. Its only disadvantage is that in such a case the child may never claim any rights in his mother's clan. (1)

1. See Chapter VIII, Article IV.

848 614 583× If a stranger marries an unwed mother, he is never given the child, which remains in the mother's family. This situation is clearly distinguished from those mentioned above.

848 614 583 What happens is that when such a woman goes to live with her husband and her child is too young to remain with his grandparents, she takes him along. Later when the boy reaches adulthood, he sometimes settles with the clan of his mother's husband and produces a posterity. But he is more or less discredited by the adopting clan (and by the others). He has no political rights there, no *mpifo.* His posterity is called *mbúsolá* (from *mbúsa*, "behind" and *bolá*, "clan of origin"). (2) Its members may marry members of the adopting clan, excepting of course the descendants of their common mother. They also have their own cemetery. They thus form a separate clan within the village.

The practice of "bringing a child in the sling" seems to be disappearing at the present time, because everyone wants to remain in his own clan. Government policy deprives natives who do not live with their own families of almost all their rights. Moreover, [91] today it is much easier than in the past to procure the means for establishing a home. This last problem was certainly an important reason why a man would settle with the clan of his mother's husband.

848 684 The preceding clearly shows that a lover by whom an unmarried girl has a child incurs no blame, penalty, or fine. He has no obligation to care either for the mother or the child. Neither justice nor propriety requires him to marry the unwed mother. No indemnity is exacted.

There is only one exception: that is, if the mother dies as a result of the pregnancy or the delivery, or if the child is stillborn or born sickly, deformed, or crippled. In such cases the lover has to pay a heavy indemnity (*mbálaka*) (1) That is why an unmarried woman who is pregnant is pressed into giving the name of her accomplice as

---

2. They also say "he was brought in the sling," *bôyélákí ndá lọmbẹ̌.*

1. For the child, the indemnity goes up to 50 rings; for the mother, 50 rings and a slave (or his equivalent in currency), or 75 to 100 rings.

848 soon as her family becomes aware of her condition. The accomplice
684 is made officially responsible and is required to accept this responsible and is required to accept this responsibility by publicly pledging his willingness to take all consequences upon himself. This pledge like all pledges is called ndanga. It consists of a knife, a ring of copper or brass, a spear, or similar objects. (2)

2. The same custom is practiced in the case of pregnancy resulting from adultery.

Article V. Sexual Intercourse

833 Although this subject is extremely delicate and therefore difficult to investigate and describe, it does not seem pointless to note here a few details with which I have become acquainted. We will discuss in succession a few circumstances relative to the act, then rape, and finally what are called incomplete acts. [92]

1. Circumstances relative to the act

The Nkundó have intercourse lying on their sides. Nowadays,
[77] natives who have had frequent contacts with Whites are beginning to abandon the old manner for that of the Europeans. The spirit of imitation probably plays some part in the transformation which is beginning, but the gradual spread of the knowledge that the European system makes conception more likely is also a factor.

Even for illicit relations our natives seldom choose the forest or near-by palm or banana groves. Usually they prefer an isolated hut, or they take advantage of the absence of witnesses who might intrude on them. At night they are generally afraid of anything that stirs in the forest.

833 The Nkundó have sexual relations only during the night. To
753 do so in the daytime would be to risk being striken by a mortal illness
684 called bombilɛ́ (derived from mbilɛ́ "noon," by extension, "day").

614
621
The Bongangá are divided as follows:

1) Bongangá, in the narrow sense of the term (Basékả Inanó, B. Bolaká, B. Bongénge, B. Bandúwá, B. Lokókómyá)

2) Bongangá of Bakoyó, or Bolíma

3) Bongangá of Mbómbé or Basékả Botúna

Thus Lotólá, Bakoyó, and Mbómbé each have an Etóo group and a Bongangá group. The Bongangá, in the narrow sense of the term, have in addition a "slave" group named Batsína, a part of which is located with the Bosánjo. A foreign clan is settled with the Etóo of Lotólá; they are the Bofalambóka, descendant of a man named Ekonda (Imbolo) and his sister who was married to Mbete, a slave from Bompángá (Wǎngatá) who was freed by his master.

Many villages have foreign groups living with them such as descendants of slaves (ekwála), or others (Ekonda, Bombwanja, groups related by marriage called likilo, mpámá or bowélé, and mbúsolá, (1) etc.). [249]

[609] 1. Mpámá or bowélé are any foreigners who were formerly invited by the group patriarch to remain with him in order to carry out certain tasks, especially metal-working. Mbúsolá is the term applied to a ●[848] child born to a woman out of wedlock [825] (Chapter I, Part 2, Article IV, 3). Such children are also called nkio y'áóme, "the husband's flying dogs," because they are not his own children but are attached to their mother's husband in the fashion of these animals, who attach themselves to trees when they sleep.

614
582
If we add the descendants of relatives who have married into other more or less remote groupings, the prohibition against marriage on account of kinship applies to a good many people. In accordance with the law of exogamy, such a kin group may be widely dispersed geographically, and it is understandable that it is not always easy to

586x 948 178 Finally, note that in the "lowlands" of the region [413] under discussion, payment for a natural child is beginning to be made regardless of whether the beginning of the bride price has been paid, or whether no payment at all has been made. In the past there was no question of such a practice, for the child would have been considered a slave in his father's clan and in the neighboring villages. And actually in the villages of the interior and in practically all of the region under consideration, that attitude has not changed. It is in the European centers, under the influence of Christian ideas, that these new ideas develop. In practice, cases do not occur except when the individuals in question are natives of very distant villages and are established permanently (to the extent that this term can be used) in their extra-customary residence.

Article V

The Position of Former Spouses and Their Children

586x Once the palaver concerning the reimbursement of valuables is settled, the former spouses become strangers to each other.

Their families sometimes continue relations with each other, however. In fact we have seen that a divorced woman may be replaced by a relative in her conjugal role. In such a case relations by marriage result from the continuation of the marriage agreement. (1)

Except in cases where a substitution occurs, all ties between the former spouses and their clans are thus broken.

The divorced wife can no longer claim the slightest right to the fields she has established on the land cleared by her husband. In general, all the fruits of her various activities remain the property of the husband; she herself [414] has no further right to them. In our time, however, it is not unusual for a man and wife who are

---

1. See Chapter III, Article IX.

847 [184] already more "civilized," such as the neighborhood of Coquilhatville and the Losanganya region.

847 Attention should be drawn to the danger of an increase in
848 abortions for a new reason, namely the shame of giving birth outside of wedlock. As we have seen in Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 3, premarital pregnancies have existed since time immemorial without resulting either in remorse or in palavers. Through the teaching of Christian morality, the feeling of shame must sooner or later be extended to this phenomenon. In explaining the evil of fornication, care should therefore be taken to insist on the fact that transgressing the Fifth Commandment by abortion is a far greater evil.

847 843 Voluntary abortion is not considered a moral error by the Nkundó. (2) In their eyes an imperfectly formed fetus, not viable,

2. An attitude which also exists in Europe at the present time, according to Haenecour in Kultuurleven, Vol. 6, no. 1, p. 21 (1935), and the brochure by Prof. D. Schockaert quoted there.

is not yet a man. It is only a human being in the process of formation, *in potentia*. Hence the custom of burying the aborted child
847 in the [468] hut or quite near it. Thus the spirit responsible for the
[766] pregnancy will see that it is respected and repeat its benevolent
[774] action. (1)

1. Others explain this custom by saying that the fetus already has a soul which remains near the tiny body and will take the first opportunity to re-enter the mother's body.

But if it is voluntary an abortion is always a wrong against family and society, for it deprives the family of a member on whom

000 this people with a sense of duty, that individual conscience of which they are so imperatively in need. [515]

Article IX. Rights Over the Children

593x 851 Without repeating everything on this subject that is to be found at various points in this work, it is nevertheless appropriate to summarize here the various considerations and conclusions concerning the rights over children.

The great principle dominating the entire question is the Roman adage: *Pater is est quem nuptiae demonstrant*. The legitimate husband is the legal father of his wife's child. Without marriage the natural father has no rights.

● 848 851 593x Consequently, children conceived in adultery belong exclusively to the husband (Chapter VI, Article VIII). Since relations with a widow who is not yet legitimately remarried is adultery, a child born as a result of such relations is legally the heir's child, (Chapter III, Article II). The same rule, *mutatis mutandis*, applies to a divorcée before a regular remarriage (Chapter VIII, Article III, 1).

The child of an independent woman has no legal father. Consequently, it belongs to the mother's family and remains illegitimate (*entombɔ́*: *entombó ɛ̌kámí* is the name by which his grandfather calls him). (Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 3.) But if the natural father marries the mother, he can obtain the child by paying an extra "slave" for it. In any case he must pay the complete bride price. If he does not marry the mother, he has no rights whatsoever over the child; however, this rule is in the process of changing in the northwest corner of the region under discussion (Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 3).

This legitimation is not required if the pregnancy began after bride-price payments were begun. It can take place even after the mother's death by means of the above-mentioned payment. Such cases of posthumous legitimization sometimes occur in relation to children born of extra-customary [*extracoutumiere*] unions contracted during the early period of colonization. [516]

613 they always refer to their descent from the ancestor-founder: "We are *baseka Ngoi* (descendants of Ngoi; we belong to the clan of Ngoi)."

Naturally the Nkundo-Mongo know very well that all the Mongo clans are descended from a common ancestor. They even believe in the common descent of all people. However, in clan unity they only go back to that ancestor who made their group legally autonomous, who made himself independent.

To that group belong, thus, all the children of that founder, all of the children of his sons, all of the children of his grandsons and great-grandsons; thus, all those who keep the same family name in our society.

The Nkundo-Mongo call the clan from the father's side their *wise*, from *ise* (father). The children of the lawfully married daughters belong to another *wise*, since they go back on their father's side to another ancestor. However, children of an unmarried daughter of the 948 clan continue to bear their mother's name, and thus belong to the *wise* of the mother, just as, in our society, they take on the family name of the mother.

Married women, however, continue ethnically to belong to their own paternal clan and do not form part of the *wise* of their husband.

2. Kinship Terms in the Paternal Clan

601 613 All of the living members of the paternal clan constitute one extended family. In the bosom of that one family, all members of the same /151/ generation also bear the same title. All of the members of the grandfather's generation are grandfathers. All the members of the father's generation are fathers, also including the female members. Thus, the sisters and female cousins of the father who belong to the *wise* are all called "female fathers": *isomoto* or *faomoto* (from *ise* or *fafa*, father, and *bomoto*, woman). All of the older brothers and male cousins of the *wise* are *batomolo*; all younger brothers or male cousins of the *wise* are *bakune*; all sisters or female cousins of the *wise* are nkana. All of the children of brothers and male cousins, and also all of the children of sisters and female cousins who remain in the *wise*, are *bana* (children).

601 561 613 Such terms are to us, of course, a never ending source of mistakes, complications, and ridicule. The native cannot possible understand this and underneath takes it very much amiss. Socially, legally, and

61
602 another group. According to their relationship to others, groups may be designated as:

- brother, younger or older;
- brother or half brother (descended from various wives of the polygynous ancestor);
- ●[848] Illegitimate child of the sister which, legally, as the child of the oldest brother or of the father of his mother, belongs to the group of the mother's relatives;
- child of a boy who together with his sister has moved to the unit of his brothers-in-law and has settled there permanently;
- son of a sister, who for some reason has separated from his paternal relatives and has moved in with the group of his mother or of one of his grandmothers.

601 Present-day social relationships are influenced by this variety of kinship relations. The kinship terms which refer to the relationships of the genuine or assumed ancestors to each other are occasionally transferred to the groups.

614
602
621 In this paper we shall describe the Isangi group (12) as an

[101] example of hierarchical kinship structure. Isangi is a local group of the type described above (p. 1). Following the custom of the region, I shall refer to it as a "village." Until we have decided which terms are applicable to the various groups, I shall use the letters A to E for the individual ranks of the hierarchical structure. Within this system A shall stand for the smallest and E for the largest units (see Diagram 2).[1]

In addition to the three ranks of Group D in Isangi, there are others in the daughter villages (see Diagram 1). These may also include foreign groups, as, for example, the "Nkundó" group, Liimbu, in Wengā.

---

12. Müller, Fürstentum [Kingdom], pp. 68 ff., 125, 128 ff.

[1] [See page 6, category 116.—Analyst]

P
M
563
578 The second case is somewhat more recent. It occurred at the beginning of the European penetration of the area. During the general upheaval at that time, the natives of Bosɔ́ka village (Bilángi of Lingonju) took advantage of the absence of many adult men whom the soldiers had taken on an expedition against the Mbole. They were able to capture a woman named Nsombola and take her home with them. She loved one of the men of Bosɔ́ka, and after many years, he "purchased" her for the price of two slaves. She lived there happily until quite recently, when she was overcome with a desire to return to her own race. (She leaves no descendants.)

In this second instance, then, the Nkundɔ́ bowed to the woman's wishes and, in accepting a bride price for Nsombola, gave in to the inevitable. This example shows that they can be flexible in their customary requirements if the situation warrants it.

Nevertheless, there have been no admirers or imitators of these exceptional cases, and the opposition against unions between the two races remains firm. Mixtures are not desired. The position
P
M
[851] which the hybrid family of Bakao occupies in the village of Lotángonda is highly significant. For it is an exception to the rule applicable to such cases, namely, that a child who has no legitimate father is incorporated into his mother's clan. The descendants of Bakao and Njalɛ́ are dependents of Lotángonda and are a part of it politically, but [243] they are not included in the kin group. For they have inherited a Bilángi nature from their father, and therefore, contrary to the logic usually applied, they have not become relatives of their ancestress. Here, too, the "racial principle" has prevailed against common law.

P
M
563
588
595 Nor does one hear of temporary relationships or concubinage between them. I know only of one instance; its outcome was not happy, and it did not invite imitators. It happened around 1913. A certain polygamist, Lokɔ́ta of Bokeke (Bombwanja) fell in love with the wife of Bonkingɔ́, who at the present time is headman of Bosáola (Batswá of Ntɔ́mbá, Bombwanja). He became the laughing stock of the entire region, but because of his love, it did not deter him. In his own household, however, the situation was more serious. One of his wives (Ámbánsele) soon left him. The others refused him their bodies

000alimentary prohibitions must be observed until the child is weaned.

851 As soon as the child is born, the women present announce the happy event with shouts, and someone runs to inform [483] the father. The latter (or a kinsman) communicates the news by means of a lokolé. For a boy the message is: Bato̱kó̱ falafala, bokáta bőkátáká liko̱ngá la nguwa, ayíme lo̱ke̱ndo̱ ndá likundú, etc., (1)

1. Elsewhere the term is ásokúsola. Or: be̱so̱fó̱ la mpíko bésőkitela bele foléfolé, "bowels and livers have come down, are outside."

"The mats are spread; he who holds spear and shield has come from the journey in the womb." For a girl, bokáta ... nguwa is omitted and the words isekaseka y'ólíato, "sweet friendship of woman" are substituted. (2)

2. Other terms exist in certain tribes (See Anthropos, Vol. 30, 1935, p. 655 ff.)

The news is greeted with cries of joy in the whole village, and everyone runs to admire the child and congratulate the mother. They do not enter the house. No feast heightens the general rejoicing.

Then, if the child is a boy, the father or a man in his family places himself in front of the child, who is presented to him at the entrance to the hut or on the porch if there is one. He holds a spear and threatens as if he were about to attack the child, shouting: "Ha! ha! ha!," and gesticulating like a warrior. Then he takes the little hand and makes the child hold the spear, saying to him: "Be a strong man, make war bravely." (3) The

3. If later in life a boy lets himself be frightened, he is asked, "Was that ceremony not performed when you were barely born?"

●851 birth of a child involves a few prohibitions which affect the whole village and apply to the Batswá as well as the Baotó. They do not affect inhabitants of a portion of the village which is separated by a swamp from the group where the happy event has occurred. Those bound by the prohibitions may no longer go to "work" -- that is, to work in the fields, fetch food or firewood, build a hunting enclosure or a fishing weir, or work at the building or repair of a house. An infraction of this rule would result in the destruction of the fruit of all their labor: the fields would no longer produce, and no beast or fish would be caught. This deadly influence would [484] extend to all crops, etc. no matter whom they belong to. Nevertheless, there is nothing wrong in fetching firewood from the forest, harvesting manioc from a ripe field, or cutting the fruit of the palm.

Strictly speaking, these prohibitions touch only persons who have seen the newborn child. But since no one fails to go and admire it, all are subject to them. The prohibitions remain in ef- [184] fect until the umbilical cord is detached. Some tribes, however, have the more convenient custom of limiting its duration to the day of the child's birth.

2. The hygiene of mother and child

[844] 846 The umbilical cord (lo̱kó̱ki) is cut near the middle. An incision is made near the infant's navel. Each day a concoction of herbs is poured on the part of the cord that is still attached and white sand is put on it to make it dry more rapidly. When the end falls off, a powder made of scorched banana is applied to the wound.

In order to prevent the weakening of a woman's abdomen, it is bound with a belt made of bands of the dried bark of the banana tree (ekutú).

The assistants wash the mother and child. On the mother they place dried leaves or bark of the banana tree which have been carefully crumpled. They are put on like panties to catch the blood and are replaced by new ones whenever necessary. Nowadays pieces of cloth are often used; they are put on like a man's garment.

000 this people with a sense of duty, that individual conscience of which they are so imperatively in need. [515]

Article IX. Rights Over the Children

593x 851 Without repeating everything on this subject that is to be found at various points in this work, it is nevertheless appropriate to summarize here the various considerations and conclusions concerning the rights over children.

The great principle dominating the entire question is the Roman adage: *Pater is est quem nuptiae demonstrant*. The legitimate husband is the legal father of his wife's child. Without marriage the natural father has no rights.

848 851 593x Consequently, children conceived in adultery belong exclusively to the husband (Chapter VI, Article VIII). Since relations with a widow who is not yet legitimately remarried is adultery, a child born as a result of such relations is legally the heir's child. (Chapter III, Article II). The same rule, *mutatis mutandis*, applies to a divorcée before a regular remarriage (Chapter VIII, Article III, 1).

The child of an independent woman has no legal father. Consequently, it belongs to the mother's family and remains illegitimate (*entombɔ́*: *entombó ěkámí* is the name by which his grandfather calls him). (Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 3.) But if the natural father marries the mother, he can obtain the child by paying an extra "slave" for it. In any case he must pay the complete bride price. If he does not marry the mother, he has no rights whatsoever over the child; however, this rule is in the process of changing in the northwest corner of the region under discussion (Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 3).

This legitimation is not required if the pregnancy began after bride-price payments were begun. It can take place even after the mother's death by means of the above-mentioned payment. Such cases of posthumous legitimization sometimes occur in relation to children born of extra-customary [*extracoutumiere*] unions contracted during the early period of colonization. [516]

● 851 593x A father's rights over his child are not unassailable. He can lose them, especially if he neglects to fulfill certain duties because such conduct is equivalent to disowning. Among the duties whose neglect results in the loss of rights over the children are the following:

1) The completion of the bride price.

2) The fulfillment of funerary duties (burial, payments).

3) The relinquishment of a portion of the bride price to be restituted in case of divorce.

4) The performance of duties toward the child. Only instances of grave negligence, constituting real abandonment, enter into consideration here -- especially an illegitimate refusal to obtain the means for a son to get married. The case cited in Chapter II, Article XI, 3 and similar instances also fall into this category.

Conclusions

58 At the end of this work we shall sum up the conclusions it suggests to us:

1) Among the Nkundó marriage consists of a union between a man and a woman, constituted through the payment of certain valuables. This payment is made by the husband, through the intermediation of one or more official witnesses, to the wife's parents; it is counterbalanced by a payment of valuables on the part of the woman's family to the husband and his family.

2) There are various sorts of conjugal unions which differ somewhat from this standard form: the inheritance of a widow by a distant relative of the husband; the substitution -- during life or after death -- of a kinswoman who continues the union begun by a woman now deceased or divorced; [517] the offer of a wife in exchange for the performance of an important service; a certain kind of exchange and, in some tribes, purchase; and union with a slave.

3) Apart from the question of the Batswa, obstacles to marriage are due to kinship and affinity.

624

inches long and two inches in width, numbering up to seven are brought and attached [596]
to the back of her *lomboo* by folding them over it.[1]

The first male child which was born to the *nkumu* before he acceded to the office is 852 ●
known as *Iyomi Nkoi*. If he has none, then the right to this name passes to the first
male child to be born to his younger brothers. Any child born on the day that the 624
nkumu is given his *montolo* is also called *Iyomi*; if a male he will be *Mola Iyomi*, if a [551]
female, *Mpembe Iyomi*.[2] These children must not see the *nkumu* until they are old enough to know his name and greet him properly, and so they are taken to some village other than the one in which he has his residence. When such children are considered old enough to take up residence in the village of the *nkumu* it is an occasion for revelry, a big dance, *nteko*, is held, and there is a feast. The child, *Iyomi*, is brought to the village of the *nkumu* with rejoicing, and this is a signal for everybody desiring to do so to help himself to anything belonging to the *nkumu*. Goats and fowls may be killed and eaten, sugar-cane rooted up, bananas, plantains, and other crops growing near by seized for food. Because of this custom the *nkumu* will take precautions and send his livestock, at least, off to some other village in order not to lose more than he can help.[3]

The *nyemba*, the singer or singers, and the *ntotii*, the praisers already mentioned, 624
remain with the *nkumu* during his period of seclusion. Added to these is *ntomba* 533
lokombi, the bearer of the *lokombi*, a stringed instrument played with the fingers, 534
similar to a bass viol in its general appearance.

Inside the *ipana* during the seclusion of the *nkumu*, few people have the right of 624
entrance, but as one enters the *ebanga* where the daylight hours are spent, one finds 342
the couch of the *nkumu* on the left and towards the rear. On the same side and towards 352
the front are seated the *ntombe lokombi* and the *nyemba*. *Nsono*'s couch is to the right of, and parallel to, that of the *nkumu*, but still to the left of the centre posts. To the right of her couch is the fire in the centre, and beyond the fire on the right side is a couch for the *maomi*, likewise somewhat to the rear, with a space in front for the *ntotii*.

The month's seclusion being completed, the *nkumu* prepares to buy the homage of 624
the village. *Nsono* gets rid of her decorative colours, and assumes ordinary attire,
becoming like any other of the wives, and is ready to take up all the usual duties of 576
a wife, whether in the garden or at the house. The people are called to come and render to the *nkumu* their homage and praise. The men come to the *ipana*, are admitted to the presence of their *nkumu* and seat themselves on the bare earth with their legs wide apart and facing him. They then, without uttering a word, greet him in the

---

[1] The *lomboo* is a belt which used to be worn by Tumba women encircling the buttocks, and this was used to attach their only garment, the *ekete* among the Bonginda, this being a short loin cloth, or an *mpongo* among other groups, this being a woven cloth strip worn between the legs.

[2] When a new *nkumu* assumes office, one already in office will take this opportunity of getting more of his sons named *Iyomi*. He takes them to the *molembe* of the new *nkumu*, and having placed a bracelet of cowrie shells on the right wrist, and sometimes one on the right ankle, asks the member of the *molembe* whose right it is to give away the *montolo* to name these sons *Maomi* (pl. of '*Iyomi*'). This man will then take such a son, and presenting him to the people introduce him by giving him a name, and following with praise as, '*Ose Iyomi Lonzie, bototo!*' and the crowd replies with the customary '*Bwoo!*' [291]

[3] It is well to remember that not every individual bearing names associated with the institution of the *nkumu* is directly concerned with it. With the practice of 'resurrecting' dead relatives by naming new-born children after them, such names as these become widespread. [551]

M
342

in three large stakes to support the main crosspieces. Then he builds the vertical framework of his hut by planting strong, straight stalks all around the perimeter, 70 centimeters apart. To these vertical stalks, the native attaches horizontal crosspieces made of strong raffia stems and spaced from five to seven centimeters apart. The same method is followed for the interior partition, although weaker and thinner raffia stems are used. The space reserved for the door is left open. At this stage, the dwelling resembles a large cage, [32] fully open to the sky, with its bars arranged horizontally. It remains in that state all through the period of time required to prepare the materials that will line the interior walls. To this end, the native cuts leaves of the nse-nse, a very common type of palm throughout this swampy region. The leaves are assembled in groups of four, the fronds having first been folded in along the rib and roughly braided. The free ends are tied with a fine thong, and the ribs are bound together at intervals of five centimeters. Once the leaves have been prepared, the native goes inside the hut under construction and begins to cover the walls. Proceeding systematically, he works from bottom to top, attaching the nse-nse leaves to the horizontal slats and placing them so that they overlap. When the wall has been covered, it is strengthened with a few slats placed vertically and tied to the outer framework

M
S
[342]

M
[353
576]

Fig. 27. Hut of the Wadia and Mosengere.

843 This law requiring a most strict fidelity lasts until the end
837 of the bokeka for the husband, but until the weaning of the child
for the wife. It is especially strict for the period of seclusion (see below, Article III, 3).

The violation of the essential stipulation of this interdict (-fénda bokeka) results either in the death of the woman during pregnancy and especially during seclusion or in the death of the child later on. [477]

A. If the woman dies during this period, the suspicion is placed a priori on her husband. The Nkundó say aòfénda wǎlí, "he has transgressed against his wife." Unless he can prove his innocence through public actions, the judgment of a magician, or autopsy[sic].

If the woman has been the victim of a seducer, he is held responsible and must pay a large indemnity equivalent to the bride price that was paid for the deceased . If no other man is involved, the affair has no consequences.

843 In the past the combined autopsy and Caesarian section was
163 always performed. It had a dual purpose: to remove the child and
754 to examine the mother. If the operation revealed the existence of
845 a "stomach" (likundú), the deceased was of a noxious (liloka)
853 nature or constitution and therefore caused the death of her child.
If the child remained alive, it proved that he was of a magically superior nature and was able to resist the natural evil spells of his mother, which thus turned against their unwitting author. (1)

1. The Nkundó believe that only animals have a "stomach" (likundú). If a human being has one, that is, if his viscera are large, curved, in compartments, in a word, abnormal, that person is an evildoer. He commits evil acts voluntarily or, most frequently, unknowingly. Some men with a likundú can be recognized by the fact that they eat their nails, hair, etc. The Nkundó must certainly have observed relationships between this habit and a deformity of the stomach.

● 853 The child is given to a wet nurse (a kinswoman, a stranger, a Bo̱tswa woman, depending on who is available).

847 845 843 If the mother's body shows no signs of evil-doing or of "the hatred of others," it is thought that her death was caused by evil spells on the part of the child. Thereupon some kill the child to prevent it from doing harm during its whole life; others, on the contrary, spare it despite everything.

843 837 If the husband (for it is he above all who is involved, since he is most exposed to possible lapses) has unfortunately been guilty of misconduct, his wife has only a slim chance [478] of salvation. Nevertheless, it is still possible for her to be saved, on condition that from then on her husband abstain from any sexual act and from all the accidental gestures and actions described above. The least he can do under these circumstances is to inform his wife of his indiscretion so that she can take precautions. If he wants to [672] ward off any possibility of causing his wife's certain death, he sends her home and gives his father-in-law a pledge (*ndanga*) through which he recognizes his guilt and shows his intention to assume the entire responsibility for his misdeed. An upright man prefers to act in this fashion, for he never knows whether one day he will not inadvertently violate one of the prohibitions.

853 837 B. The child's death is the result of the putrefaction of the mother's milk, the mother being thus incapable of nursing. As in the preceding case, the offense is a priori imputed to the husband -- *isé aôoma bǒ̱na la ndota*. (1) Since he has wronged no one but himself, no palaver ensues; the "natural" punishment is sufficient. This does not mean that he is not the object of evil tongues; people point at him and at times remind him of his misdeed. To remove the blame from himself, he can resort to

---

[153] 1. *Ndota* is an illness caused by the violation of prescriptions of a sexual nature (See Chapter I, Part II, Article IV, 2, A).

853
837 an ordeal or ask a magician's judgment or a magical practice to reveal the culprit. The culprit who is discovered is not subject to any social sanction; he is punished by the ordeal itself or the spell cast against him.

[684] If the mother's adultery is proven through her having been caught in the act, her seducer is considered guilty. He must pay the death indemnity (20 to 30 copper rings). The woman is not at all involved as far as society is concerned; it is a matter between her and her husband.

751
854 In order to prevent any harmful effect on the child, the Nkundó resort to a potion called bondandota, which will be explained in [479] the next article, 3. "Medication" by scarfication might also be mentioned. This therapy is applied to the parents as well as to the child. If the father is wealthy, he invites the wife's family to come and perform the operation themselves. As in all comparable situations, the invitation is accompanied by the handing over of a pledge, and farewell presents (belingako) are given at the end of the visit. In addition the wife very often goes to live with her parents for some time after her seclusion in order to increase the efficacy of the treatment.

843
[684] The sanction incurred for a violation of the secondary stipulations is less serious. For instance, the pregnant woman suffers from violent migraines, which often cause fainting and sometimes make delivery very difficult; thus they can even cause death. The husband is seldom bothered by these headaches. But he takes great pains to faithfully observe the law in order to spare his wife such painful consequences and to avoid the death of the child being born.

Apart from sexual abstention and the rules connected with it, the couple are also subject to various prohibitions which are clearly based on superstitious ideas. Thus:

1) They must neither go down into a well nor dig in the earth. The woman would die, for it is as if they were digging her grave.

2) They must not carry anything together with another person, for that is how corpses are carried, and such carrying would be the cause of death, through imitation of the woman's funeral procession.

837 is not morally condoned, and a woman who resorts to it does not
834 escape criticism. She is compared to a goat, who does not have
789 a regular and steady husband: álómya bǒna lontaa, "she nurses her child as a goat does." (1)

1. The opposite of lómya lontaa, -- if it is used to show the contrast -- is lómya lontómbá.

When the separation ceremony is ended, the mother is
846 adorned with all her ornaments and goes out to walk in a procession through the village. The child is carried by an older sister, a niece, etc. He is taken around the village, bánangya bǒna l'ólóló Small presents are offered him everywhere -- an arrow, a small knife, a hairpin, etc There is no feast, however; if that honor were accorded him he would die of it (for when someone dies, there is always a feast of farewell in his honor). [493]

Article IV. Nursing

● 853 During the first few days after birth an infant does not suck the milk of its mother, since it is "too hot." He is fed by a third person, preferably a relative.

On the third day the following occurs:

853 1) The mother's breasts are massaged (-kulola baɛ́le). For
757 this purpose the Nkundó use leaves of the bǔte creeper and the lilongyá plant (Adenostemma viscosum Forst.), a green leaf from a banana tree called nselenge, several pieces of peeled sugar cane, the tips of the dried leaves of any banana tree, and sometimes other plants are added as well. All the ingredients are crushed, then boiled, and white sand and a bit of red paint are mixed in with them. The mixture is called ndengó. It is prepared by the women who are in charge of massaging the breasts. The bǔte leaves, however, must be picked by the father. He goes to the forest early in the morning and first shakes the creeper so that all leaves that are not firmly attached will fall off. Then he climbs it and picks the desired

853 quantity of leaves, which he puts in his little basket called ilámbá.
757 If a leaf falls in the course of this operation, he must stop and throw away all that he has picked up to that point. The massage cannot take place on that day for it would cause the child to die falling and withering like a leaf. The father must start all over again the next day.

There are always two masseuses: one of the husband's kinswoman and one of the wife's. (1) They crush the leaves in [783] the same single mortar (eoka). The mother meanwhile must make her public confession, of which we will speak again in a moment. When the substances intended for rubbing have been prepared, the two masseuses begin their operation, which must be quite painful. The husband's relative takes care of the right breast, the wife's concentrates on [494] the left. (1)

1. The Injóló sometimes permit a man to perform the massage.

1. This is a natural arrangement for our people; the term used to indicate "husband" (bóme) is undoubtedly etymologically related to the one denoting "the right" (elóme), and there is some likelihood that the same is true for wǎlí (wife) and íáli (left).

They energetically massage the breasts from the top to the bottom with the mixture. After a few minutes they test the milk by letting a few drops run out onto a burning fragment of pottery. If the reaction is normal the mother begins to nurse. If on the other hand, the milk curdles and solidifies (baéle báonda) like rubber, it is a sign that it is of bad quality because of the presence of an internal boil in the breast, called ĭtaí. In that case the knowledge and skill of a woman expert is called upon. The latter rubs the leaves of a creeper between her hands in order to extract

● 853 the sap, which she then mixes with water. The resulting liquid is
757 oily and foams like soap. She places a few drops on a piece of banana leaf and makes a sachet of it. She holds this against the breast for a certain time until the boil, similar to a blood clot or a piece of liver, leaves the breast and enters the sachet. She then shows it to those present. From then on the mother can nurse her child without fear; her milk has become healthy and normal.

2) The mother's public confession must include the names
837 of all the men with whom she has had carnal relations since the
853 child's conception. Other groups, such as the Injóló, extend this
684 obligation even to instances preceding that moment but which
783 have not been declared at a previous occasion. The confession is public. The masseuse related to the husband begins to crush the leaves to be used in rubbing the breast; as she moves the pestle and says to the mother, "Name a man." The mother replies by giving a name. The masseuse says nyongo, "indemnity." Then all those present say yengô, yengô, yengô, "absolved". Then it is the other masseuse's turn, and she interrogates the mother in the same way. The process continues till all the names have been cited. If [495] the mother cites the name of a man who is a close relative of her husband and who therefore does not need to pay an indemnity, the masseuse does not reply nyongo. Instead a member of the husband's clan makes the gesture signifying
[201] exemption: he holds the kernel of a palm nut (lolikó) in his left hand and throws it by means of a small board which he holds in his right. Among the Injóló the man takes two kernels and strikes them against each other and then throws them away. Were the woman to suppress a name the child would die. If she has no admission to make, she replies, "No one besides my husband."

The indemnity that must be paid by those who are obligated to do so consists of a hen and a bunch of bananas (or their cash value) which are to be given to the masseuses, who will then divide them. Were the accused to refuse, the husband would demand a regular indemnity from him after the end of the seclusion.

The Bombwanja have this confession at the time of the
[184] fastening of the fetus. A few old women married into the clan carry out the interrogation. The kernel of the fruit of the palm is thrown by means of a knife.

837 Note, finally, that the confession is restricted to married
783 women. It is never expected of a young unmarried mother. There-
853 fore it would seem to be a practice connected with marriage (a social institution) and not with childbirth (a physiological phenomenon).

This confession is called etato or lotato, from the verb
[192] -tata, "to confess," (for which the generic term, sanga, "to say," is sometimes substituted).

I was unable to find any reason for this practice other than that of avoiding the death of the child. It is evident, however, that this explanation does not exhaust the question, although it is entirely possible that the original and deeper meaning has been lost without leaving any trace in the minds of the present generation. [496]

3) During the entire duration of nursing, the mother must
853 not be separated from her child. For the usual circumstances of
833 daily life, this rule is broadly interpreted; but during sexual relations it is strict, and no exceptions or excuses are permitted. Negligence under these circumstances would inevitably bring about the death of the child by ndota as soon as the mother took it back. This rule holds for legitimate relations as much as for illicit ones. Therefore the mother must always keep her child at her breast.

4) If at some point during nursing, the milk no longer flows
953 in sufficient quantity, the mother is given a potion consisting of
[157] the extract of the bark of the bolóngó tree (which has a fruit con-
[278] taining a very sweet milky sap). Then she eats vegetables called lotélé. (1)

1. The leaves of this plant are also ordinarily eaten as vegetables, but they are consumed especially by those who possess the modern magical practice known as boyaóli.

5) An accident to which the Nkundó attach great importance
[262] is the rejection or vomiting of milk into the mouth of an adult, even if the person affected is the infant's mother. Such a person

853 may not eat meat if the child is male, or fish if it is female, un-
262 til the child in question is grown and kills either an animal (or
bird) or a fish, according to the case, and has given it to the vic-
tim of the accident. If the child dies young, the person is accused
of having violated the prohibition and is obliged to pay a large
indemnity. This extremity is not usually reached, however, for
the one to whom the accident has befallen scrupulously keeps away
from everything that might cause this sort of murder. Then, if
death occurs and he has nothing with which to reproach himself,
he can resort to an ordeal or to the verdict of a test based on super-
stition. In addition in villages that have Batswa, a woman of that
[863] race must nurse the child for an instant after the accident before
its mother gives it her breast again. [497]

6) The child is carried on the shoulder, and as soon as it is
854 capable of holding on, on the hip. It does not take many weeks
for it to become accustomed to that position. When the mother
has to hold it for a long period of time (during a march, on a trip,
etc.), she puts it in a scarf-shoulder strap (lombě), made from
creepers that are scraped and woven as for a mat, or from a cloth
of raffia fibers, or even from a pelt (nowadays it is often made from
a piece of European cloth). The scarf must be sturdy, for were it
to tear and the infant fall, far-reaching consequences would result;
all of that woman's subsequent children would be condemned to die
in the mother's womb or during the period of nursing.

As the child grows it is sometimes carried astride the mother's back, either because she does not like to be separated from it, or because the tyranny of the little one forces her to keep it with her even during her work, errands, and even dances. She remedies this awkward situation if possible by resorting to the assistance of an older girl, a young niece or cousin, or a little boy from among the immediate kin.

When the child rests during the day, it is laid on an ordinary bed or on a movable bed (boánga), without any special arrangements. It has no difficulty sleeping soundly on such hard couches.

7) Weaning. Although a child is gradually accustomed
862 to solid food, it does not stop nursing. As it grows older, the
nursing times are spaced farther and farther apart. But the child

862 does not really stop nursing till it is about two years old, and sometimes two and a half if it has a weak constitution.

Weaning is not accompanied by any ceremony or feast. In order to break the child's habit, the mother smears her nipples
[824] with the sap of the lifété fruit (a kind of small sweet pimento or eggplant) or with a pimento-pepper extract (imbénga). Sometimes she leaves the child with some relative (daughter, sister, etc.) for a time [498] while she lives elsewhere.

As we have seen above, after weaning, the ekelé-bokeka period comes to an end for the mother, and her infidelities no longer have repercussions on the life of her child.

● [853] 8) If the mother dies while the infant is still being nursed,
[589] the task of nursing is turned over to some woman who is disposed to undertake it even a Botswa, and there always is one. After the child is weaned the woman is suitably recompensed. The use of
[235] goat's milk is unknown.

854 9) Young children frequently suffer convulsions. This illness
751 is thought to be caused by hawks, and for that reason it is called
[653] mpulú (bird). The Nkundó try to prevent it by hanging an amulet around children's necks; it is usually the clavicular triangle of a hen's carcass. In addition they know a remedy whose purpose is to strengthen the nerves: the child is laid on a mat stretched out anywhere on the roof of the hut. An eyewash (bolóí) is prepared from the sap of leaves from the litóyansombo bush and extract of mbóló (fruit of the bosoombó). Using a leaf shaped into a horn, a few drops are put into the child's eyes. Then the father or some other relative pulls out the mat from under the child and lifts it several times, shouting: tá tá tá.

856 10) No special importance is attached to teething. But a child whose upper teeth come in before the lower ones (a defect called ingondo) is considered abnormal. Therefore he is forbidden to eat the first fruits of hunting or fishing in an enclosure (mpao), lest the latter lose their productivity.

M
T
243
252

Maize gathered before maturity is eaten raw or roasted over a low fire. The ears which are allowed to ripen on the stalk are carefully shelled, the kernels ground in a wooden mortar with a cylindrical pestle, and the flour is winnowed or passed through a sieve.

M
T
252
412

The mortar used to make maize flour is made from a section of a tree trunk, with a rectangular opening hollowed in the outer surface and perpendicular to the axis of the trunk. These mortars are very crude, poorly worked, and quite rudimentary. Besides these, one sometimes find others which are better made, small cubes provided with a lug or a liana. Let us note, however, that among the Banfumu southeast of Tua we found a mortar of similar shape which the natives used to prepare vegetables.

M
[252
415
291
● 854]

Fig. 74. Batitu Women Shelling Maize and Preparing Vegetables.

The sieves used for maize flour in this region are also a special type. The sides are made in an open weave. The general form resembles that of a large bottle with a square bottom, cylindrical body, constricted neck, and slightly flared rim.

M
T
252

The housewife mixes the maize flour with palm oil to form a somewhat thick dough. She wraps it carefully in leaves and boils it for 10 to 15 minutes. This dish, the mokwoï of the Basakata-Mosengere, is served very hot, usually seasoned a little

Teke F133

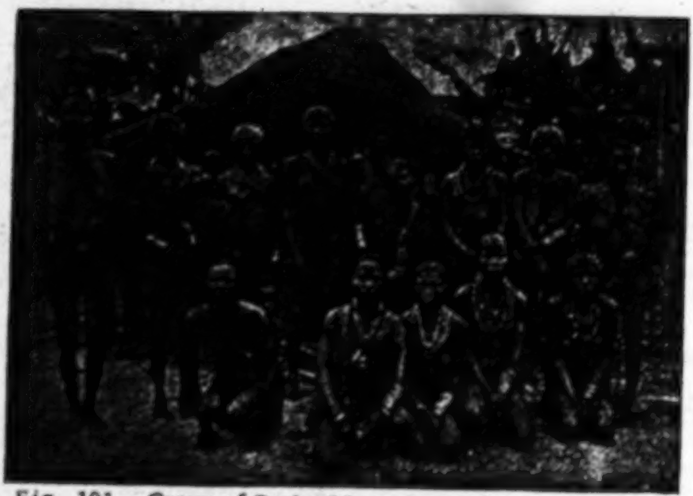
Yaelima

M 301

are worn in the hair, around the neck, on the wrists and ankles, and at the waist.

From Stanley Pool to Mushie, the women slip a crown of cowries into the hair, sometimes wear bracelets of brass or glass beads on the wrist and forearm, and hang brass necklaces or imported beads strung on fibers around the neck. Very often the necklace goes from the shoulders under the arm. Throughout this region, imported ornaments predominate. Only the chiefs have retained a few special ornaments from the old days, notably the necklace and bracelet of worked brass and the necklace adorned with the teeth of leopards or lions. These latter objects are associated with a privilege, a prerogative, a right of use.

M T 301 554



M [301 516 854] ●

Fig. 101. Group of Batitu Women. Hairdos and Ornaments.

They are, in a way, badges of rank. In the full regalia worn by [180] Natali, a typical native petty chief, each detail seemed to have a special meaning. He had donned his finest costume in our honor and to impress us: an old tunic from the Belgian Regiment of the Guides, and a government medal around his neck on a chain, the badge of a native chief recognized by the government. He had attached a small whistle to the same chain, along with the five or six medals for his wives' taxes. Over this chain he wore the necklace of the native chiefs, made of brass and

T 301 554 302

T 301 554 302 decorated with worked designs. His black skin glistened with grease and oil. His face had a wide red line of oil and ngula powder from the tip of his nose to the top of his forehead. A large circle, white above and yellow below, was painted around his right eye. His eyelashes were very long and powdered white, while his eyebrows had been carefully plucked. His head was covered with thick hair, short and woolly. It was gathered at the back into a large chignon roll, to which was fitted a secondary coiffure in small braids, dyed with ngula and shining with grease. A long blue bead dangled below this original headdress, and a long cock feather topped off the whole thing. The T [304] temples and cheeks were marked with a set of light parallel lines, a tattoo which seems to be drawn with an iron comb and which is [181] characteristic of all the Banfumungu. T [481 293] In his left hand Natali held the big walking staff, adorned at the top with a small iron bell, and he M [301 ●854] carried a fly-chaser made from the tail of a buffalo under his right arm, the badge of a chief. This was Natali: a native chief whose T [651] ornaments indicated his authority, recognized by the state whose medal he possessed, a polygamist who had paid the tax on his wives as attested by the little receipt plates which hung from his neck, a sorcerer and fetisher who knew the art of making nkisi and the magic powders that striped his face.

Fig. 102. A Batitu Mother and her Children, Adorned with Cowry Beads and Brass Rings.

M 301 on all the fingers of the hand. Those who can afford it even put them on their toes. M [778] Around the neck they wear fiber necklaces, from which they hang nkisi bags and horns. These amulet necklaces are associated with a religious idea, with magic power, rather than with ornamentation.

M 301 857 Children are usually overloaded with gaudy ornaments: white feathers stuck in the hair, necklaces and belts of glass beads, and small bells attached to the belt. In our opinion, however, these objects are not primarily intended to adorn the child, but to protect it. There is no doubt that the mother sticks the feathers in her child's hair and attaches small bells to his belt in order to find him more easily if he gets lost in the fields or in the bush. As soon as the child is old enough to find his own way and return to the village alone, bells and feathers are given up permanently. [185]

T [292 301 302]

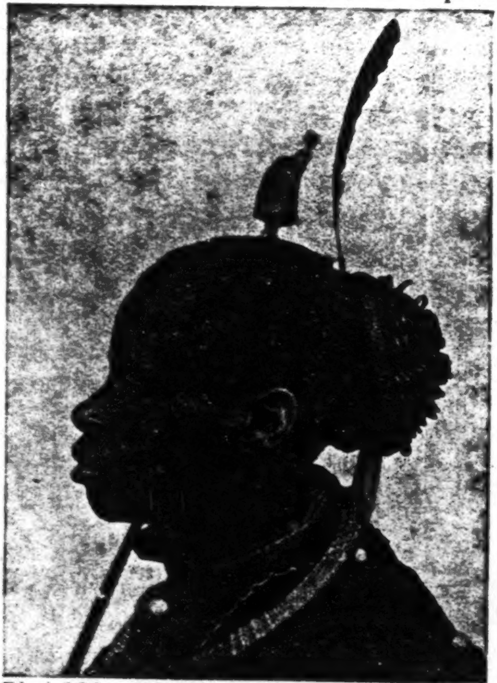


Fig. 106. Natali, Banfumu Chief of Kapanda.

M 301 171 According to their ornaments, the peoples of the Stanley Pool-Kole region are divided into five groups.

583ˣ to leave her husband and he, in revenge, were to lay hands on her
431 mother or on one of the other wives of the clan. (1) [148]

1. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 4, (1), and Chapter VIII, Article II, 1.

7) Lombě: a wide shoulder strap made of fur or braided [824] bekombe reeds (Calamus sp.); though valuables of equal worth (one knife or a konga) may be given. Nowadays this boéngo consists of 2 or 3 rings; it goes to the mother in compensation for the wearying burden of carrying and nursing her daughter. (1)

1. Note that when a mother-in-law brings a child into the world, her son-in-law sends her a shoulder strap of liengé otterskin or a konga of equivalent value. He does not repeat this gift at each birth, however.

[854] 8) Betótswá byá nkwá: leaves of the bonkongé bush used to remove, wipe off, and carry away (tóta) a child's excrement. This boéngo consists of a ring and goes to the mother as compensation for her performance of these tasks. In the absence of the mother, it is claimed by another of the father's wives or by a female relative of the mother.

[224] 9) The bojángá, "hunting net," is demanded in many villages for no special reason. Certain clans, however, scoffed at by others because they have few members, officially ask a man belonging to one of the latter and wishing to marry one of their daughters to bring a net, saying: "You make fun of us because we have no people; bring us a hunting net to surround and enclose us, since we are not many." Thus the village of Boyela of the Bakáala, never gives one of its members in marriage without this boéngo.

[184] 10) Wěngé w'ǎeke: a boéngo which is not known everywhere but which is customary in certain groups, for example among the Bakáala. One of the woman's relatives takes a piece of a young thorny trunk of the wěngé tree. Having scraped one end of it, he holds this

853 an ordeal or ask a magician's judgment or a magical practice to
837 reveal the culprit. The culprit who is discovered is not subject to
any social sanction; he is punished by the ordeal itself or the spell
cast against him.

If the mother's adultery is proven through her having been
[684] caught in the act, her seducer is considered guilty. He must pay
the death indemnity (20 to 30 copper rings). The woman is not
at all involved as far as society is concerned; it is a matter between her and her husband.

In order to prevent any harmful effect on the child, the
751 Nkundó resort to a potion called bondandota, which will be ex-
854 plained in [479] the next article, 3. "Medication" by scarification might also be mentioned. This therapy is applied to the parents as well as to the child. If the father is wealthy, he invites the wife's family to come and perform the operation themselves. As in all comparable situations, the invitation is accompanied by the handing over of a pledge, and farewell presents (belingako) are given at the end of the visit. In addition the wife very often goes to live with her parents for some time after her seclusion in order to increase the efficacy of the treatment.

The sanction incurred for a violation of the secondary
843 stipulations is less serious. For instance, the pregnant woman suffers
[684] from violent migraines, which often cause fainting and sometimes
make delivery very difficult; thus they can even cause death. The husband is seldom bothered by these headaches. But he takes great pains to faithfully observe the law in order to spare his wife such painful consequences and to avoid the death of the child being born.

Apart from sexual abstention and the rules connected with it, the couple are also subject to various prohibitions which are clearly based on superstitious ideas. Thus:

1) They must neither go down into a well nor dig in the earth. The woman would die, for it is as if they were digging her grave.

2) They must not carry anything together with another person, for that is how corpses are carried, and such carrying would be the cause of death, through imitation of the woman's funeral procession.

846 taking the child would cause the child's death. The same precau-
789 tion is also in order if the husband goes on a trip before the child's
birth and does not return till after the delivery

We have just seen that the harmful effects of the father's
846 misconduct on his child's life is effectuated through the father's
837 act of taking the child on his knees. Thus the Nkundó speak of
baóngó b'âbé, "a father's bad knees," to indicate his reprehensible
[826] conduct, and they say that the bondandota potion is administered
to the child so that it will not die because of the father's bad
knees. (1)

> 1. The expression baóngó b'âbé is also used when an undertaking which requires continence is unsuccessful. (See Article II, 3).

When a child has painful and persistent diarrhea, it is often
753 interpreted as the effect of the father's infidelity. As soon as they
454 become aware of it, the couple separate for some time, and the
father no longer touches the child. [492]

Contrary to what one reads on this subject about other peo-
837 ples of the Congo, Nkundó couples do not have to remain continent
834 beyond the period of seclusion. The separation ceremony gives the
789 husband back the freedom of action he had before his wife's preg-
nancy. For the wife the bokeka remains strict with respect to illicit relations until the child is weaned. However she, too, may regain her freedom by having recourse to an antidote, the ingredients of which she purchases from a person who holds the secret. The in-
gredients are placed in a small antelope horn which is then stopped
[824] up by means of bolaká (resin from the Symphonia gabonensis). The
interested party wears it about her loins on a string or a bead belt or, preferably, on a special creeper. This amulet protects the child's life from the harmful influence of the mother's acts of adultery, but it does so only on condition that she does not separate herself from the child, as we will explain further on. This procedure

853 262 may not eat meat if the child is male, or fish if it is female, until the child in question is grown and kills either an animal (or bird) or a fish, according to the case, and has given it to the victim of the accident. If the child dies young, the person is accused of having violated the prohibition and is obliged to pay a large indemnity. This extremity is not usually reached, however, for the one to whom the accident has befallen scrupulously keeps away from everything that might cause this sort of murder. Then, if death occurs and he has nothing with which to reproach himself, he can resort to an ordeal or to the verdict of a test based on superstition. In addition in villages that have Batswa, a woman of that [863] race must nurse the child for an instant after the accident before its mother gives it her breast again. [497]

6) The child is carried on the shoulder, and as soon as it is 854 capable of holding on, on the hip. It does not take many weeks for it to become accustomed to that position. When the mother has to hold it for a long period of time (during a march, on a trip, etc.), she puts it in a scarf-shoulder strap (lombě), made from creepers that are scraped and woven as for a mat, or from a cloth of raffia fibers, or even from a pelt (nowadays it is often made from a piece of European cloth). The scarf must be sturdy, for were it to tear and the infant fall, far-reaching consequences would result; all of that woman's subsequent children would be condemned to die in the mother's womb or during the period of nursing.

As the child grows it is sometimes carried astride the mother's back, either because she does not like to be separated from it, or because the tyranny of the little one forces her to keep it with her even during her work, errands, and even dances. She remedies this awkward situation if possible by resorting to the assistance of an older girl, a young niece or cousin, or a little boy from among the immediate kin.

When the child rests during the day, it is laid on an ordinary bed or on a movable bed (boánga), without any special arrangements. It has no difficulty sleeping soundly on such hard couches.

7) Weaning. Although a child is gradually accustomed 862 to solid food, it does not stop nursing. As it grows older, the nursing times are spaced farther and farther apart. But the child

862 does not really stop nursing till it is about two years old, and sometimes two and a half if it has a weak constitution.

Weaning is not accompanied by any ceremony or feast. In
order to break the child's habit, the mother smears her nipples
[824] with the sap of the lifété fruit (a kind of small sweet pimento or
eggplant) or with a pimento-pepper extract (imbénga). Sometimes
she leaves the child with some relative (daughter, sister, etc.) for
a time [498] while she lives elsewhere.

As we have seen above, after weaning, the ekelé-bokeka period comes to an end for the mother, and her infidelities no longer have repercussions on the life of her child.

[853] 8) If the mother dies while the infant is still being nursed,
[563] the task of nursing is turned over to some woman who is disposed to
undertake it even a Botswa, and there always is one. After the
child is weaned the woman is suitably recompensed. The use of
[235] goat's milk is unknown.

●854 9) Young children frequently suffer convulsions. This illness
751 is thought to be caused by hawks, and for that reason it is called
[853] mpulú (bird). The Nkundó try to prevent it by hanging an amulet
around children's necks; it is usually the clavicular triangle of a
hen's carcass. In addition they know a remedy whose purpose is to
strengthen the nerves: the child is laid on a mat stretched out anywhere on the roof of the hut. An eyewash (bolóí) is prepared from the sap of leaves from the litóyansombo bush and extract of mbólé (fruit of the bosoombó). Using a leaf shaped into a horn, a few drops are put into the child's eyes. Then the father or some other relative pulls out the mat from under the child and lifts it several times, shouting: tá tá tá.

856 10) No special importance is attached to teething. But a child whose upper teeth come in before the lower ones (a defect called ingondo) is considered abnormal. Therefore he is forbidden to eat the first fruits of hunting or fishing in an enclosure (mpao), lest the latter lose their productivity.

no compulsion. If one of the contracting parties fails to fulfil its pledges in this matter 224
of giving part of the kill, or in anything else, the aggrieved party may call the council
together. This consists not only of members of the *molembe* and *ekopo*, but of all 624
elders of the village or villages connected with this particular one. The party judged 596
in the wrong, whether *ekopo* or *molembe*, will be fined, the injured party receiving its 621
share, and both parties will be charged to live together harmoniously and observe
their contracts.

The power of the *nkumu* was apparently limited, and did not supersede that of 624
the *momene mokonda*. When trials came up, the aggrieved party might go either to the
momene mokonda or to the *nkumu*. If it was necessary to call the village elders together 695
about it, both these authorities were present at the hearing. First the young men of the group were allowed to give their verdict, then the old men, after that *momene mokonda* (or the *molomi o eke*), and finally the *nkumu* was given the privilege of the last word. He would comment on the opinions of each of the judges, criticizing one young man, commending another, and then giving his own verdict, at which the group would assent by saying, 'Even so, grandfather'. The whole group of judges would then fix the fines, a double portion of which went to the *nkumu*.

The actual manual labour which an *nkumu* may do excludes anything endangering 624
life or limb, or requiring agility and speed. He may clear the bush for his gardens:
this is a man's work. He may take part in the building of his houses, but may do
no high work, and, among the inland groups, it is the work of the Batwa to put the [563]
roof on for him. The *nkumu* may also prepare pitfalls for catching game, but cannot engage in any other type of hunting or do any fishing. Digging a grave is prohibited, for, as we shall see, everything pertaining to death must be ignored by the *nkumu*.

Other rules affecting the daily life of the *nkumu* may be roughly divided into three: those affecting his person, those having to do with his food, and social regulations.

One of the great points of observance in the first class of regulations is the impor- 624
tance of the *montolo*. The *nkumu* must on no account be seen during daylight hours 292
with an uncovered head. If he wishes relief from the cumbersome *montolo* he may
take it off in the darkness of his house and put on an ordinary hat made of skins,
and when night falls he may walk where he will bareheaded if he so desires. The
skin hat, known as *louku*, may be made from two animals only, in the case of an [824]
nkumu, one being the *nkulupa*, a species of antelope with light-coloured hair, and the
other the *iyoko*, an animal resembling a beaver. The skin of the *nkulupa* may be used
by anyone, but the *iyoko* is reserved for the *nkumu* only with one exception. The skin
of the *iyoko* may also be used for the carrying strap for infants known as *nyamba*, [854]
which is worn over one shoulder in bandoleer fashion. For the *nkumu* the skin of the *iyoko* is limited to the informal hat, *louku*, and for making into the *lokoto*, a pouch used for carrying small objects and worn like a sporran. As a corollary to the importance of the *montolo* may be noted the importance attached to the head of the *nkumu*, which must never be seen uncovered in daylight.

The Bonginda *nkumu* never wash in the daytime, but may wash at night with hot 624
water. The inland *nkumu* never wash. Even the Bonginda *nkumu* never wash their
heads, and no *nkumu* ever cuts his hair. If the *nkumu* becomes too greatly incon- 515
venienced, one of his wives may delouse his head, but only within the privacy of the [184]
house, by the light that enters the rear opening.

The first one includes the Bateke-Banfumu-Baboma, among whom ornaments are relatively rare for the women as well as for the men. 301 171

The second one encompasses all the peoples in the region of Lake Leopold II and the lower Lukenie and is characterized by the solid brass necklace worn by the women and the ornaments trimmed with cowries and the brass plaques worn by the dignitaries and chiefs.

The third one includes the Ipanga and the Batitu, with the belt ornamented with brass beads, rings on the fingers and toes, and solid brass rings worn above the ankles, all of which are peculiar to the women.

Fig. 107. A Group of Batitu Children.

142
516
855

The fourth group is characterized by the sheath of brass rings covering the arm from wrist to elbow and worn as much by the men as by the women of the Bokala-Yaelima.

The fifth group includes the Bena Dibele-Kole region, where imported ornaments have replaced the primitive ones. [186]

In addition to all these adornments used regularly in common, everyday life, the native also has ornaments reserved for show and ceremony. 301

593x [882] If the whole family [26] suffers through the misbehaviour of adolescents, the latter will not be spared by the father. But the mother will often take their sides for, not belonging to her husband's family, she allows only her heart to speak. The familial-political organization of this people requires that fondness have its limits; otherwise it could lead to disorder and anarchy.

593x 855 It cannot be said of Nkundó parents, as one often reads about other peoples of the Congo, that they do not care for their children, who are self-sufficient and obliged to provide for their own needs from the age of six or seven. Our people are always feeding and even coddling their children; even when the latter are married they are always well received in their parents' home and lavishly treated. It is quite true that the young people spend much time in the forest looking for various kinds of food, but that is part of their games and amusements, a phase of their education, and at the same time their contribution to the maintenance of the household (a contribution which cannot be omitted from any serious education, and it is regrettable that it should be omitted by so many European families. (1)

1. Education will be dealt with more extensively in Chapter X, Article VIII.

593x 581 In the matter of marriage parents generally respect the feelings of their children. A father who is motivated by avarice and, above all, by the need for a certain sum of money or its equivalent, may sometimes let the voice of self-interest predominate over that of the heart.

It goes without saying that one may encounter aberrations of fatherly feeling, but such cases are exceedingly rare. (2)

2. For an example see Chapter II, Article XI, 3, B.

593x Though parents love their children without distinction and without consideration of their faults, vices, etc., they are not exempt from a certain amount of partiality; a particular child [27] will

1. Clothing. Nudity.

291
855 Until he has reached the age of discretion and even a little later, the Nkundó child wears nothing more around his loins than a belt of beads or a plain string usually adorned with some amulet. Nobody is shocked by this rudimentary attire. Parents take great interest in the adornment of their children; from a very early age [301] they are seen wearing belts of trading beads, bracelets, rings around the ankles made of iron, copper, or brass, and in addition, at the present time, glass beads above the knees.

291 As the child grows older the clothing increases. From the outset there are differences on the basis of sex.

The boy acquires a thin strip of cloth which is attached to his string or belt simply by folding back the two ends. The cloth falls between his legs without being tight, allowing for great freedom of movement and the circulation of air; this is an excellent precaution against perspiration due to extreme heat, but it is not very effective protection against indiscreet looks, at least in certain positions. The fabric made of raffia may be decorated to a greater or a lesser extent. In former times there existed different kinds, which we need not describe here. The length of the hanging borders is dictated by vanity. The string was often replaced by a raffia belt or -- among prominent men -- by a leather thong.

The woman's garment consists of a broad raffia belt whose two ends are gradually narrowed, ending in cords which are tied on the [53] stomach. In the center of this belt (nkásá (1) a ball of raffia fibers is attached (bonkoko). A piece of cloth (efufa or lofufa) whose width may vary from 3 centimeters to 20 centimeters or more, depending on the age and the wearer's intensity of the feeling of modesty, is attached to the cords and falls more or less low on the body. For a [292] feast or display the efufa is replaced with a more valuable and longer [104] piece of cloth (intóló or, among the Elángá of Losanganya, ifika).

1. Or bokangá, bokangá wá nkásá. Among the Bombwanja it is called likóngâ.

Article I. Girls

According to Nkundó custom it is acceptable for an expected
584 child, not yet born or still very young, to be promised in marriage
to X or Y. This practice was formerly very common and is still quite
prevalent today. It is called *banda bǒna* or *bǒmoto*, literally, "to
count a child" or "to count a woman." The *ikulɛ* is paid at the time
of the promise. Later the matter is carried out in the usual fashion;
the other parts of the bride price are paid either while the fiancée
is young or, preferably, at the time when she goes to her husband.

Until that time, if one of the girl's relatives is already a
584 855 wife of a polygamist husband-to-be or of one of his relatives, the
child is brought up in her husband's family from a fairly early age,
depending on the circumstances. She lives with her relative. She
may be barely seven or eight years old, for example. If no one in
her husband's clan can take care of her, [232] she spends only one or
two weeks there to become acquainted, little by little, with people
and places; she repeats the visit from time to time. Her mother
accompanies her, for being so young she could not get used to being
there alone, without support, without her parents. Therefore it is
necessary to wait till she is old enough to be somewhat independent
and able to manage by herself. That time usually comes around the
[145] beginning of puberty, thus sometime between the ages of twelve and
fifteen.

Like an adult woman, she is already called *bompáka* or *wǎlɛ*,
584 833 depending on the portion of the bride price that has been paid. She
has all the duties and privileges of a wife: sexual relations, food
preparation, care of the household, etc. There is no set date or age
for the beginning of cohabitation. This matter is settled between the
husband and his parents-in-law. The latter do not have the right to
[606] delay the time, even if their daughter is still too young, but they can
make use of their great influence over their son-in-law. The modern
[178] generation is not shocked by sexual relations between an adulterer [sic]
[571] and a girl who has not reached puberty. Besides, all is in order from
the legal standpoint; since the man has paid the bride price, he is the

584
572 When an engagement is arranged for an expected child, the events may betray the hopes of the parents; and the child for whom the *ikulɛ* has been paid may turn out to be a boy. This mischance is dealt with in the following manner: either the suitor waits for the birth of a girl, or an alliance of friendship and mutual assistance (*boseka*, see Chapter I, Part 1, Article III) is established between him and the newborn child. Such an alliance is called *liɛla jǎ jwende*, "the marriage of men," (*matrimonium viri*). In no case is restitution made for the *ikulɛ* that has been paid. If the friendship between the two men remains unbroken later, it results in the marriage of the daughter of the man for whom the *ikulɛ* was paid before his birth, to the man who paid it or to his son or grandson. No new *ikulɛ* is paid for such a marriage; the payment of the bride price simply has to be completed in the usual fashion.

584 A man may acquire a young child for himself, or for a son, a younger brother, etc. In the past the former was more frequently the case, for the old men kept the women for themselves and wanted [234] to benefit from having them before leaving them to the youths as inheritance. But the latter situation also arose.

The purpose [of obtaining a young child as wife for a relative] was to prevent inexperienced youths who were not able to defend themselves from being deprived of the means of obtaining a wife should the father die prematurely and the heirs monopolize the harem and bride-price valuables to their own profit, which theoretically they have a right to do. This practice is thus a means of favoring a son or other relative by furnishing him with a wife earlier than is customary. Nowadays this is even a stronger reason [178] than in the past, because boys marry earlier than formerly.

Other reasons for obtaining a child as a wife are involved in the two above-mentioned instances. There is a greater certainty of getting one's money's worth; valuables can disappear for various reasons during long unproductive years.

584
155 But the most fundamental reason, in my opinion, is the one very often invoked by the Nkundó, namely the opportunity of personally attending to the future wife's education. There is no

584 855 question but that it is in the husband's interest to take care of it himself. He can accustom her from childhood on to special circumstances, to the laws of the clan, to the particular habits (virtues, faults, way of living, etc.) of his family, his wives, and, last but not least, himself. He can mold her according to his tastes and desires. Enormous advantages result from his success in doing so. This does not mean that he takes care of her personally, for he knows he is not a born educator. He therefore usually prefers to hand this [593] task over to his mother (or aunt or sister), who enjoys this obligation and likes to help her son and to participate directly and intimately in his household.

584 572 A childhood engagement between their respective offspring often results from an alliance between "friends." If the children later on do not want the marriage, that is all there is to it. Restitution of payments is made, or a substitution is arranged. Such a situation arose while this book was being written. [235] At least twenty years ago, Lokóta of Bolíngo and Inkílo of Bonjoku made a bond of friendship (boseka). The former begot a boy (Ituwó), the latter a girl (Lokoku). The parents arranged the engagement of their children by means of the ikulá payment. When Ituwó grew old enough to marry, he had no desire to marry Lokoku, for his heart was taken by another. But he had a younger brother, Itoko, who had affectionate feelings for Lokoku. Ituwó explained the situation to his mother (since his father had died in the interim), and she resumed the relationship with Inkílo. They all came to an agreement without difficulty. Itokó therefore married Lokokó in place of his elder brother, after paying the bride price for her.

584 If a little girl is not satisfied with the union that has been arranged she is free, according to the rules of law, to break it -- and not simply by failing to give her consent. Note that in such a case the husband is not entitled to any compensation for having raised this child.

In spite of the advantages involved in childhood unions, they should be rigorously held in check, since the affections often stray from bonds formed at such an early age. More should be done to

586 act is equivalent to giving up his rights.

The wife's family makes no effort to keep the children born of a broken marriage. On the contrary, they insist that the husband pay the necessary valuables in order to retain his rights over his legitimate progeny. Nevertheless, they cannot force him to do so; the father is entirely free either to take his children or [412] to choose a given portion of the bride price in preference to them. But he is obliged to choose between the two alternatives.

855 586 All the natives care about their children. Therefore an indifference to them and preference for getting back the entire bride price is altogether unusual. Instances such as the following do occur, however.

Bumba, daughter of Lokâ of Bokenyola (Losenge, Bomwanja) was married to Elimîlele of Losáli. After some years of marriage, the latter repudiated his pregnant wife for reasons unknown to me. Although attempts were made to show him the stupidity of his act, nothing would move him. Bumba returned to her brother Ilfaó and there gave birth to a daughter. Ilfaó asked the father to come and see his child and at the same time be reconciled with his wife. Elimîlele refused. After a time, Bumba was married to another man, but that marriage did not last. A *bankitaá* was substituted for her, and she was married to Bokángo of Bokengé. The latter paid a bride price of 80 rings for her. Elimîlele was asked to come and get what was due him. This time he came. He took everything, without leaving the slightest thing as payment for his daughter. He was asked to leave 25 rings in order not to be deprived of his rights over his child. He wanted to hear nothing of this suggestion; he preferred to take back his bride price in its entirety. The daughter, Bombála, is about to marry Bolongólokolo of Bompela (Bokótola). The bride price to be paid will be received by her mother's clan, and her father will receive nothing at all. He can never claim the slightest payment from his son-in-law. Besides, the latter is not legally his son-in-law; for from the legal standpoint Elimîlele is not his father-in-law. Bombála, for her part, is no longer required to recognise her father, since he has disowned her. She belongs solely to her mother's clan, and her father's family can never again make any claim upon her or her descendants.

400
Article IV. Nursing
Article V. Naming
Article VI. The question of twins
Article VII. Circumcision
Article VIII. Education
Article IX. Rights over the children [464]

Article I. Preliminaries

1. *Generalities*

842 The Nkundó like to have children. Not only do they like to have daughters, as some too superficial colonials sometimes maintain, but they like to have boys just as much. It is true that a daughter carries the hope of a bride price and all it represents for polygamists eager for pagan glory and carnal pleasures; yet a real preference for children of the weaker sex is seldom observed. What one does encounter, just as in Europe for that matter, is a desire to have a child of a particular sex when, for example, the other is already abundantly represented in the household. Thus a native who already has several boys but no girl or only one, will make offerings to obtain a sister for the boys. That he should do so is hardly astonishing since among these people a sister is the proper and sometimes the only means by which a man can acquire a wife. On the other hand, a father whose progeny are exclusively, or almost exclusively, members of the female sex ardently desires the birth of a son, an heir to the fruits of his labor and someone who would be able to aid and assist him in his old age by building him a hut, clearing the forest for him, and bringing him game or the products of fishing.

842
● 855 Actually one seldom hears these preferences expressed. The impression one gets is rather that the Nkundó love their children as such and also because, whatever their sex, they greatly contribute to the reinforcement of his social position; the two motives are inseparable in practice.

It is sometimes maintained that the natives do not refuse to have children because their coming does not inconvenience them in any way, nor do they impose crushing financial obligations

892 upon them; their upbringing costs them nothing, whereas among
855 Whites the maintenance, dress, food, instruction, and occupational
placement involve considerable expenses. It cannot be [465] denied that while the modern European is exacting from all these viewpoints, enchained and blocked by an ever growing multitude of needs, the material life of the native is simple and his necessities are reduced to an indispensable minimum. Nevertheless, it can hardly be said that it is as easy for him to raise a large family with many children as it is to have the responsibility of a smaller number. Without speaking of clothing -- especially at the present time -- there is the food for growing children, which forces him to clear a greater expanse of forest and to work harder at the various ways of fishing and hunting; and when the time comes for the sons to find wives, he is the one who must arrange to procure the valuables needed for a bride price.

For their part, Nkundó women like to transmit life as much as the men, if not more so. Pregnancy may make them disagreeable and grumpy and sometimes cause them pain, but they put up with it and, as a very general rule, do not think of depriving themselves on that account of the happiness of giving birth to a cute little creature, of nursing it, of carrying it in their arms or on their shoulders. The difficulties and pains of maternity do not repel them. Although later, during the payment of her daughter's bride price, a Nkundó woman's greed will lead her to loudly claim the payment due her and even sometimes destroy her child's love because of delaying this financial operation, the delay does not come to their minds until the time comes.

In short, the Nkundó woman feels a perfectly natural, maternal love for her child.

There are of course exceptions to this general rule. And
842 the contrary would be astonishing for a pagan population who give
855 free rein to all their passions or, at least, restrain them only very
152 [466] slightly, and whose love is far from the perfection one may find among a people ennobled by fifteen centuries of Christianity. Moreover -- as all the preceding pages testify -- our Nkundó are not fashioned from a uniform mold notwithstanding the impression given by certain colonial and ethnological works. All the individual

842 differences can be found here, although they are less apparent to
855 a European observer since we usually approach the natives as a
152 group and our contact with them is often too impersonal.

2. Abortion

847 A great enemy of maternal love is the practice of abortion, which has always been known to the Nkundó. Here we cannot describe all the prescriptions used for that purpose. It will be sufficient to enumerate the reasons for which they have recourse to this practice. They are as follows:

1) A woman's lasciviousness: the procreation and subsequent care of a child to some extent prevent the indulging in carnal pleasures. Formerly this cause of abortion was nonexistent or very [178] rare. Needless to say, it has become more common, especially in the centers where it is constantly on the increase and where, in addition, occasional or regular "housekeepers" learn new means of sterilization and abortion.

2) A woman's antipathy or persistent anger toward her husband may encourage her to prevent conception or destroy its effect.

3) An excessive weakening of the mother's organism caused by a large number of conceptions and childbirths at too short intervals.

4) The encumberance and the difficulty of watching, carrying, and taking care of many small children -- bɛ́lota bɔkɔkɔsano [467] [535] wă bána mɛ́tɛ́lɛ́ mɛ́tɛ́lɛ́. This reason is especially important for well-known dancers.

It goes without saying that several of these motives may be combined in the same person. For instance, I knew of a woman who aborted at the time of her eighth child. Her recurrent pregnancies, together with continuous work, had greatly reduced her strength. A palaver with her husband was the last straw; she decided to get rid of the fruit she carried in her body.

Outside of these exceptions the natives of this country ardently desire their own continuation through a large number of progeny. (1)

---

[189] 1. The same is not true elsewhere. Examples to that effect are cited from regions that are

● 856 864 During a girl's early childhood beginning when she is still nursing, a mother with foresight will work to make her organs as perfect as possible. By applying pressure repeatedly and for long periods, she molds, so to speak, the outside in order to make it narrow, as this quality is greatly valued by our people.

It is the mother, too, who trains the girl in her preparations for married life. She teaches her how to behave toward her future husband, and at the same time instructs her in the duties of a good housewife (see Chapter X, Article VIII).

836 864 Certain forms of behavior, although their relationship to our subject is only superficial and external, must nevertheless be mentioned. An adult man will often take in his arms a little girl who has not yet been weaned, or perhaps only slightly more developed. He considers this child to be his wife. He has paid no bride price for her. But since she is a sister, cousin, or other relative of one of his wives, she is a "wife" from his point of view; that is, not only will it be possible for him to marry her later on, but even without becoming her husband he will enjoy a certain liberty in relation to her. (1) Thus, when such a man takes his young "wife" in his arms, he is enjoying an anticipation of the future and speaks to her [66] in that sense, often accompanying his words with intimate caresses.

1. See Chapter VI, Article V, 2.

The same practice, mutatis mutandis, may be observed on the part of a woman toward a small boy whom she can consider as her "husband."

304 512 2. Circumcision

Circumcision is generally practiced. It is usually performed at an early age. Without going into the details at this point (1) or

---

1. They will be found in Chapter X, Article VII.

862 does not really stop nursing till it is about two years old, and sometimes two and a half if it has a weak constitution.

Weaning is not accompanied by any ceremony or feast. In order to break the child's habit, the mother smears her nipples [824] with the sap of the lifété fruit (a kind of small sweet pimento or eggplant) or with a pimento-pepper extract (imbénga). Sometimes she leaves the child with some relative (daughter, sister, etc.) for a time [498] while she lives elsewhere.

As we have seen above, after weaning, the ekelé-bokeka period comes to an end for the mother, and her infidelities no longer have repercussions on the life of her child.

[653] 8) If the mother dies while the infant is still being nursed, [523] the task of nursing is turned over to some woman who is disposed to undertake it even a Botswa, and there always is one. After the child is weaned the woman is suitably recompensed. The use of [235] goat's milk is unknown.

854 751 9) Young children frequently suffer convulsions. This illness is thought to be caused by hawks, and for that reason it is called [553] mpulú (bird). The Nkundó try to prevent it by hanging an amulet around children's necks; it is usually the clavicular triangle of a hen's carcass. In addition they know a remedy whose purpose is to strengthen the nerves: the child is laid on a mat stretched out anywhere on the roof of the hut. An eyewash (bolóí) is prepared from the sap of leaves from the litóyansombo bush and extract of mbólé (fruit of the bosoombó). Using a leaf shaped into a horn, a few drops are put into the child's eyes. Then the father or some other relative pulls out the mat from under the child and lifts it several times, shouting: tɛ́ tɛ́ tɛ́.

856 10) No special importance is attached to teething. But a child whose upper teeth come in before the lower ones (a defect called ingondo) is considered abnormal. Therefore he is forbidden to eat the first fruits of hunting or fishing in an enclosure (mpao), lest the latter lose their productivity.

Teke FI33

M 243 The cultivation of rice serves less to nourish the native than for trade. He usually sells his harvest immediately after the husking.

T M 244 Peanuts thrive in the region of the Banfumu and among the Bankutshu. They grow best in light soil and are not suitable for land cleared from the great forest. The crop demands a great T M [462] deal of care and regular upkeep. Fields invaded by weeds yield nothing. The harvest takes place when the crop is mature and is the task of the women with the help of the children. The peanuts are placed in baskets carried on the back and taken to the village. The native spreads them out in the sun to dry. He turns them again and again, two or three times a day, and brings them into the hut at night.

M 249 Sugar-cane plantations are set up in marshy lowlands.

[462] All the work on this crop falls to the men. These plantations are found only in regions where the natives make masanga, sugar- [273] cane beer. Sugar-cane fields are especially numerous in the villages on the lower Lukenie and the Fimi.

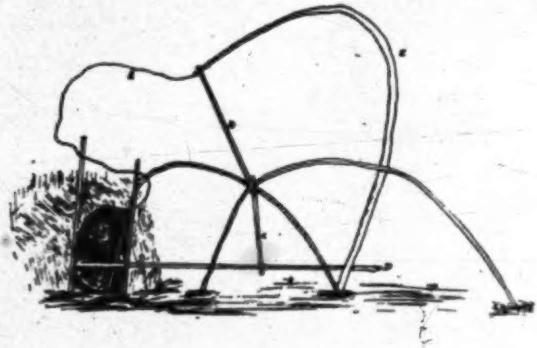
M 244 As a rule the natives also cultivate a few legumes, sweet potatoes, and yams, but on a small scale and without giving them any particular care. [61]

Hunting

M 224 462 Hunting is practiced only by men. They engage in it, not for sport, diversion, or relaxation, but for the sole purpose of procuring meat and fat.

M 224 ● 857 From their earliest childhood, the boys get together to beat the grass and catch mice, rats, and other rodents which swarm in the bush. Nothing is more interesting than to see them at work. Ten, fifteen, or sometimes twenty of them form a large circle. Armed with sticks, they beat the grass and make an unbelievable din. Little by little the circle narrows, moving in on a small well-cleared space. The oldest, most daring and most agile of the boys keep watch over this space, their eyes alert and riveted on the edge of the grass, ready to pounce. The beaters redouble their zeal, strike, shout, gesture, and gradually drive all the rodents

224 ●857 toward the small clearing. Badgered and frightened, the rats, mice, etc., run madly. Not daring to break through the line of beaters, they are pushed toward the clearing, hesitate an instant before entering it, then bound in. Without moving from their places, the little hunters wait for them and catch them in passing.



A sharp, quick blow and their ribs are smashed in, their skulls broken. Not one escapes; neither their size (some rodents are as big as hares) nor bites nor scratches frighten these tots of three, four, or five years of age.

224 223 857 The children also occupy themselves by capturing birds and small rodents with nets and snares. The latter are made with a flexible stalk for a spring and a cord with a noose. A system of small sticks which automatically trigger the release compels the bird to stick its head into the noose to reach the bait. At this moment, the mechanism is released, and the victim is pulled up by the cord attached to the stalk spring.

224 The natives also set snares of the same sort in front of holes of rodents and other animals or at a place where they habitually pass.

At the village of Madjuku, I had occasion to see the mechanism of a rat snare in action. In front of a hole, two arched sticks [62] intersect. A strong rattan stalk (E) has been stuck into the ground, and two piassava cords (A and B) are tied to its tip. One of the cords ends in a noose, which is placed in front of the entrance to the hole. A small stick (C) is attached to the end of the second cord. One of the ends of this stick passes behind the intersection

264 [415] spherical calotte, and also wooden plates. Sometimes also simple leaves are used as plates, unless the food is served in the cooking pots.

The whole meal is spread on the ground. [144]

The man squats on his mat and dips leisurely in the dishes with his hand, moving from one to another according to his taste.

[522] The meal is always eaten in silence. Even when several friends eat together, they never talk during the meal.

After the meal the natives carefully wash their hands and teeth and rinse out their mouths several times.

Beverages

271 415 Water is the only beverage they drink at mealtime, and they use it quite rarely. If they do not have a wooden or earthenware cup, they use part of a calabash or simply a leaf rolled into a little cone.

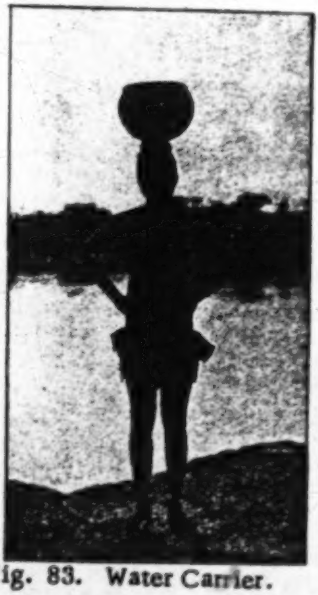


Fig. 83. Water Carrier.

312 462 ●857 482 Water usually comes from a spring near the village. The natives use river water only when it is quite clear. The women and children have the task of fetching water, a chore which is often quite hard. I visited many villages located along or near the river, whose source of drinking water was 20 to 30 minutes away.

At certain hours of the day and more especially in the morning as the sun first comes up, the women and children set out, a calabash or water jug balanced on their heads, to fetch the supply for the day.

271 415 Water is kept in large calabashes or earthenware jugs, sheltered from the sun in a corner of the hut.

684 D. Against the go-between (1) Nkundó law permits all sorts

● [857]

1. The Nkundó generally use go-betweens to tender invitations to women; these are frequently children between the ages of six and fourteen. The disastrous effect of such a practice on the bringing up of young people is easily understood. In some groups it has inflicted a real moral evil.

of invective, blows, and a good whipping. Formerly the most serious situation arose if a woman was called directly. In the past, if favored by circumstances (especially the social position of the families involved), certain of the more jealous and bold men caught the go-between and sold him as a slave. This punishment was entirely legitimate, even though the person for whom the go-between acted was the one primarily guilty and therefore the prisoner's family could attack him on that account. People cite the rather recent historic case of Bonkɛ́kɛ́ is Îloko of Ikengo (Ntómbá, Wǎngatá), who sold a Botswa named Bompáte into slavery because the latter had brought a lover's gift to Wǔfya, his favorite.

684
562
581
E. Conclusion. In examining the various sanctions that Nkundó law provides against adulterers and their accomplices, we are struck by a noticeable difference among the cases. Although a wife has certain means to check her husband's misconduct, she is unquestionably less well armed than he. This is a logical consequence of the nature of Nkundó marriage. A husband defends his "property," whereas a wife is not an "owner." Furthermore, in this realm the requirements are stricter for a woman than for a man. Even in Europe the misconduct of a man is judged very differently than a woman's weakness, the latter being considered much more serious and shameful, even though -- in an absolute sense -- the two are equal. Finally, the system of polygamy plays a role, for it tends to weaken a wife's love and consequently her jealousy, so

845 puberty, by his father. The performance of this role entails continence (*bokeka*) for the person who undertakes it, even with respect to the spouse. A violation of this rule prevents healing of the wound or at least makes the process very long and difficult. (1)

[755] 1. A similar *bokeka* applies to anyone nursing a large gangrenous ulcer (*wǎlé*).

The foreskin that has been cut off is dried on the *bolíkó* (tray or shelf). Then no one bothers with it any longer, and it usually remains there, dusty and dirty, for an indefinite period of time if the rats leave it alone.

In the centers the young people are beginning to neglect [177] the native skilled in circumcising and resort instead to European surgeons.

Circumcision is not an occasion for feasts or ceremonies. [556] Sometimes a man who is rich and vain will give a feast, but this is not at all a common practice.

The term "to circumcise" is translated in Lonkundo as *téna bọnsọé*, "to cut off the foreskin." The less vulgar term and one used much more frequently is *téna nsọ́ngẹ́*, "to cut off the tip." A much too decent circumlocution is *téna batói*, "to cut off the ears."

The reason for this custom has already been given in Chapter I, Part II, Article II, 2.

Article VIII. Education

From an early age a Nkundó child must perform various 868 small services for his parents, especially in the household; he is 857 asked to draw water, fetch firewood, take care of a little brother or sister, etc. The demands for such services are addressed chiefly to girls, but boys are not at all exempt. By the very nature of things, however, the latter are less frequently asked to help.

Quite early a boy may accompany his father on trips, at meetings, legal debates, etc The father makes a bow and arrows for him and teaches him the art of using them. The great pastime

857 for young boys is hunting and fishing by all sorts of methods suitable
868 for their age. Little by little an adolescent learns the usual tasks
and everything that he needs to know in order to survive and obtain
food and shelter. His instruction is completed by his companions
and above all by the exigencies of life.

A girl learns housework and farming. Very early her mother braids a small basket for her in order to accustom her to carrying loads. She also participates in the women's fishing.

In general one has the impression that the girls are far more active than the boys. But I think that this difference is due to the fact that the boys are almost always in the forest, while the girls remain in the village and are therefore noticed more. As a matter of fact in our missions it cannot be said that the boys work less well than the girls, quite the contrary.

The girls practice the culinary art, not only with their mothers but also -- as in Belgium -- in a game (ioto).

The children do not study the history, laws, and traditions
867 of their clan or tribe. They learn them in the [508] course of
869 events, either by hearing them described or by asking questions.
Often their parents explain such matters on their own initiative, not according to a definite program but rather when opportunities arise. A young man can learn many things especially by accompanying his father on visits, on trips, at meetings and deliberations, or by listening attentively to the performances of troubadours who play the longombé (mandolin). The astonishing knowledge of usages and customs, ancestral laws, history, the wisdom of the ancients, proverbs, fables, etc., possessed by some youngsters, to the point of excelling their elders, can be explained by their faithfulness in following papa instead of continuously enjoying the freedom of the forest. I have encountered more than one instance of this sort which was explained primarily on the basis of the boy's attachment to his father.

The Nkundó child begins to hum popular tunes and imitate
868 the rhythmic movements of the dancers when he is barely able to
walk. Little girls, especially, practice special dances of their own. Then, little by little, the children mix with the group of adult dancers and are able to join the chorus, though they must remain in the rear.

567 Everywhere there were also abducted women and female 439 slaves; these were simply sold. Furthermore women were bought 562 and sold with women [as payment]. Also women who were inherited and no longer in the hands of their family were sold by their second, third, or other subsequent husband. In all of these cases, the family no longer came into consideration for the bride price. One would have to stretch the point in order to consider the sums paid in these cases as a bride price, and consequently as a native custom which one must respect.

562 Or one should have to assume that such a native woman re-439 mains a "bride" for her whole lifetime. It will be said that the woman consented to her sale by one man to the other.

Often this was indeed the case, but not always by any means, 858 for children and slaves were also sold. Even the consent of the woman did not prevent it from being a sale; her consent was rather an extra transaction that simplified the sale of a human article of trade. It still remains woman trade.

764 The Inheritance. Upon the death of a polygynist, the burial 567 ceremony was conducted according to the class and rank of the deceased. One or two or several [539] slaves were killed and buried with the polygynist in the same grave. Sometimes the arms and legs of those male and female slaves were broken, and then they were buried alive in the same grave with the body.

When these slaves still had family, it might happen that the family members, having learned of the unfortunate lot of their relative, would hasten from faraway districts to buy him or her free if it was not yet too late. Several Negroes have told us of those heart-breaking scenes at which they were present as children. The mourn-765 ing and the lamenting over the dead lasted from a week to a month.

768 The eldest son immediately succeeded his father in position 428 and immediately took one of the wives of his father.

The other sons divided among them the lances and knives of 587 their father.

If the deceased had left no son, or if he was still too young, the oldest brother succeeded the deceased. All of the wives had to remain in their own home, except the wife who was immediately taken by the eldest son. They were obliged to await the day of the distribution. This day was put off for from one to four months.

2: Hulstaert--476 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

868 Parents teach their children the trades that they themselves know: forging, wood sculpture, the weaving of mats and baskets, pottery making, etc.

867 With respect to ethics, the children learn a great deal from experience, but parents do not fail to teach them rules of politeness, decorum, good breeding, and the great principles of social relations. As in Europe, however, there are degrees of concern or indifference in this realm. The moral code taught is the one the parents themselves practice. It is centered above all on family and society: respect toward members of the family, mutual assistance, respect for the welfare of others, fear of the opposite sex, etc. But all of it has a naturalistic basis: the reason given for adherence to such precepts is limited to the unpleasant consequences [509] that would otherwise result. Reprimands and even corporal punishments for infractions are not unknown. But they are chiefly due to exasperation and therefore mixed with anger and without any continuity or consistent idea. Once the anger has passed the threats remain sterile. For punishment the parents
● [61] resort chiefly to blows, but other penalties are also common. For instance, one of our catechists when he was young (between 1880 and 1895) had removed a little bird trapped in a snare belonging to one of his cousins. As soon as his father heard what he had done, he gave the youngster a good scolding and made him go to bed without supper.

As a girl approaches puberty, her mother teaches her the rights and duties of a married woman. She teaches her how to behave and conduct herself in order to be a good wife and mother. She does this so that her daughter may find a good husband, and so that the union may be stable and not produce too many palavers or trouble.

Formerly children were not allowed to see the dances of adults. They were chased away and had to amuse each other. This was an excellent means for preserving morality among the youth and retaining their respect for their elders. Therefore it is most regrettable that it has been abandoned.

882 When the children reach puberty, they no longer like to sleep in their parent's home. The parents do not send them away, but on the other hand, they do not oppose this desire on the part of young people which, they say, springs from a feeling of modesty. The boys go one way, the girls another; for example, they may appropriate an unoccupied hut belonging to their father or go to close relatives, or they may try and find a place in quarters occupied by a group of boys or girls. If no house is available, the boys band together to build a hut which they share. Nowadays they begin very early [510] to build individual huts or one for two, in order to thus enjoy a greater freedom.

868 On the trees in the forest one finds a kind of hard mushroom called losikitela. When a child begins to speak, the mushroom is placed between his teeth, so that he will bite into it and thus learn not to express himself thoughtlessly but to hold back his words (-sikitela) and think before speaking.

One can often observe parents and other persons actively helping children to express themselves correctly, especially in correcting mistakes, pronunciation, and errors with regard to proper nouns, by giving them the proper words and even explaining grammatical forms and subtle distinctions between certain terms. "This is how it must be said; that means something else. This plant is called thus and so, etc."

● 861 Therefore, although a Nkundó child is very free to spend his days as he pleases and, perforce, learns many things through personal experience, it would be wrong to say that his parents are not interested in his education and do not contribute to it. They participate actively by their advice, their explanations, and their demonstrations. Needless to say, their role is neither as important nor as continuous as in many civilized societies. Besides it is very difficult, and often unfair, to compare our people's situation with that of Europeans; the difference in circumstances is too great. But we must point out in all fairness that the Nkundó do make efforts in this realm, although the results are hardly apparent with respect to moral education (1), because there are many flaws, gaps,

1. We will say no more about material and economic education, which can not be criticized.

86 efforts, and obstacles, the most important of which should be considered. [511]

1) First of all education begins too late. To be crowned with success such efforts should be begun as early as possible. And among the Nkundó, a child is not considered old enough to be given lessons or punished until he is fairly well developed (usually at about six years of age).

2) In their pedagogy the Nkundó do not take into account the relationship between cause and effect with respect to the acquisition of bad habits. They react against censurable actions, but they do not attack their roots by opposing the beginning of vices. Thus, they do not understand that if the desires and whims of a small child, for example with respect to nursing, demands for food, the desire to be fondled and carried, etc., are continually satisfied, he will necessarily become an unruly little tyrant who wants to be satisfied in every way.

3) The Nkundó have no systematic idea or consistency in correcting faults and punishing misbehavior; as we have seen, punishment by Nkundó parents most frequently takes the form of sudden explosions of anger and indignation. The purpose of the punishment is not apparent to the child, and the only result obtained is a fear of being chastised. There may be fortunate exceptions, but these are surely extremely rare. Generally, parents follow the impulse of the moment, and the youngsters take advantage of these impulses. The gravity of such a situation stands out clearly in the following case history: Isia (now a man between thirty and forty) was amusing himself by shooting arrows. One of his father's wives, named Bokeli, appeared, accompanied by Bakutu, a young sister of Isia. The youngster reproved Bokeli: "What are you doing here with my sister? If she is hit by an arrow, the palaver will be yours." The woman insulted him. The boy threatened to shoot at her. Thereupon his father, Bolfidlu, intervened, saying, "If you dare touch my wife, I [512] will kill one of your mothers." (1) Isia's retort was to shoot at Bokeli saying,

1. That is, either his mother (Botafoanya) or her sister and ohfsa, Basfini.

861 "Well, then, let them both die." (2) His father wanted to catch

> 2. That is, if my mother is to die, you, Bokeli, will die also (a common retort in such cases).

him, but the agile youngster fled to the forest. As he did not return home that evening, everyone became frightened. Finally, he answered the call of his aunt Bongôla and came back. The moral of the story: everyone was happy to see him again, and there was no more question of punishment. (3)

> 3. According to the Nkundó jurisprudence, the wrong was actually on Bokeli's side because she started the insults. But the reaction was excessive, nevertheless.

An even stronger example is that of Esaló (now between forty and fifty), who was insulted by his mother Bosola for some misdeed. He shot at her and wounded her on the forehead. To flee his father's anger he withdrew to the forest. He was called and came back. That ended the palaver. (4)

> 4. As a matter of fact, a Nkundó fable teaches that a person should not be left under the sway of rage, especially if he has withdrawn to the forest, because he may become a misanthrope as a result, producing even more deplorable consequences (vagrancy, murders, etc.).

593 861 4) There is a lack of cooperation between the spouses. Each one acts on his own initiative and out of his own indignation. More than that they contradict each other; one will punish the child, and the other tries to protect it, either directly or indirectly, by reprimanding the spouse.

593 561 Women in particular are very intolerant of having anyone touch their children, even the child's own father. This fact can be attributed in part to a lack of any unity of feeling between the spouses and partly to maternal love, which is purely natural, psycho-physiological, so to speak.

Measures taken against a child who has misbehaved often 578 561 result in serious domestic quarrels, sometimes followed by the wife's flight to her family. Such was the case of Bakutu b'Ŏfóngé (born around 1880). His father, Bolónjó, had forbidden him to peel a piece of sugar cane [513] in a clumsy and wasteful manner. The boy did not want to listen to reason. Next thing you know he had cut a deep wound in his finger. "What did I tell you?" shouted the father. "Now you are punished for your disobedience." Thereupon the mother, Mbélé, flew into a rage. "Oh! You are killing my child!" and so on. She rolled up her mats, took her baskets on her back, and took the path leading to her village.

Nkundó casuistry includes the case -- which seems hypothetical or at least belonging to the past, for I have never known or heard of a real instance -- of a man taking revenge on his wife for having insulted his child. His revenge took the form of ordering the child to go and kill a goat belonging to her mother's clan, thus obliging the child to pay an indemnity to the owner, so that the mother finds herself thus being punished by her family. The father's right to do this is recognized in Nkundó jurisprudence. But from the standpoint of education the solution is far from ideal.

5) The influence of the kin group also plays a great role. 602 561 The Nkundó are very much attached to their families. Their children are at home everywhere in the group. A wife has very close ties to her own family. The father's brothers and sisters are a child's "fathers"; his maternal aunts and uncles are his "mothers." A child's real father does not do much to defend his son against scolding or punishment from his own close kin but does not readily accept the intervention of his wife's family, and vice versa. And again the child can take advantage of such dissension. The situation occurs quite frequently although there are many exceptions.

6) The parent's opposition to reprimands by strangers is
861 even greater as a general rule. They try to cover up and justify
609 the faults of their progeny, whom they will fiercely defend. The
children naturally know all this and take advantage of it.

7) The polygamous household, with all its rivalries among
595 co-wives, cannot but accentuate all such [514] adverse effects
593 on the children's education. The conflicts, spiteful comments,
861 palavers, etc., are easily extended to the children. And each
wife defends her own.

8) Everything is public; there are no secrets; everything
593 is known, seen, and heard. People do not restrain themselves
861 and the presence of children does not stop the flow of insults and
obscenities which anger provokes. The young people see many
things it would be better for them not to know. They are present
at domestic quarrels and are witnesses to dissensions. All this is
increased by life outdoors, in the street, and by the thinness of
partitions.

9) Another factor is added nowadays: the facility of com-
177 munications and the presence of European stations. Boys can al-
593 ways run away and find shelter with the Whites or their native em-
861 ployees. The girls seek out kinswomen who live at such stations,
even though they must help a little with the housework, in the
hope of later enjoying a greater freedom and living in luxury.
Parental influence and authority are naturally weakened as a result.

10) Finally, Nkundó education lacks any solid basis, any
861 religion or religious morality. Everything is based on natural,
physical fear: the fear of punishments (physical or based on super-
stition), harmful consequences of bad actions (palavers, difficulties,
fines, indemnities, sometimes the shame of being caught -- as in
theft). It is especially this lack of religious motivation that makes
their moral education bear so little fruit. As the Nkundó are
accustomed to this imperfect state, they do not feel the need for
000 such a foundation. That is why it is so difficult to instill any moral
conscience into them. The patient and perservering action of the
great Christian truths with their institutions for moral formation
(uninterrupted preaching, confession, prayer) are needed to endow

853 may not eat meat if the child is male, or fish if it is female, un-
262 til the child in question is grown and kills either an animal (or
bird) or a fish, according to the case, and has given it to the vic-
tim of the accident. If the child dies young, the person is accused
of having violated the prohibition and is obliged to pay a large
indemnity. This extremity is not usually reached, however, for
the one to whom the accident has befallen scrupulously keeps away
from everything that might cause this sort of murder. Then, if
death occurs and he has nothing with which to reproach himself,
he can resort to an ordeal or to the verdict of a test based on super-
stition. In addition in villages that have Batswa, a woman of that
[563] race must nurse the child for an instant after the accident before
its mother gives it her breast again. [497]

6) The child is carried on the shoulder, and as soon as it is
854 capable of holding on, on the hip. It does not take many weeks
for it to become accustomed to that position. When the mother
has to hold it for a long period of time (during a march, on a trip,
etc.), she puts it in a scarf-shoulder strap (lombě), made from
creepers that are scraped and woven as for a mat, or from a cloth
of raffia fibers, or even from a pelt (nowadays it is often made from
a piece of European cloth). The scarf must be sturdy, for were it
to tear and the infant fall, far-reaching consequences would result;
all of that woman's subsequent children would be condemned to die
in the mother's womb or during the period of nursing.

As the child grows it is sometimes carried astride the mother's back, either because she does not like to be separated from it, or because the tyranny of the little one forces her to keep it with her even during her work, errands, and even dances. She remedies this awkward situation if possible by resorting to the assistance of an older girl, a young niece or cousin, or a little boy from among the immediate kin.

When the child rests during the day, it is laid on an ordinary bed or on a movable bed (bośnga), without any special arrangements. It has no difficulty sleeping soundly on such hard couches.

7) Weaning. Although a child is gradually accustomed
862 to solid food, it does not stop nursing. As it grows older, the
nursing times are spaced farther and farther apart. But the child

● 862 does not really stop nursing till it is about two years old, and sometimes two and a half if it has a weak constitution.

Weaning is not accompanied by any ceremony or feast. In order to break the child's habit, the mother smears her nipples with the sap of the lilété fruit (a kind of small sweet pimento or eggplant) or with a pimento-pepper extract (imbóngo). Sometimes she leaves the child with some relative (daughter, sister, etc.) for a time [498] while she lives elsewhere. [824]

As we have seen above, after weaning, the ekelé-bokeka period comes to an end for the mother, and her infidelities no longer have repercussions on the life of her child.

[451] 8) If the mother dies while the infant is still being nursed, the task of nursing is turned over to some woman who is disposed to undertake it even a Botswa, and there always is one. After the child is weaned the woman is suitably recompensed. The use of goat's milk is unknown. [589] [235]

854/ 751/ 9) Young children frequently suffer convulsions. This illness is thought to be caused by hawks, and for that reason it is called mpulú (bird). The Nkundó try to prevent it by hanging an amulet around children's necks; it is usually the clavicular triangle of a hen's carcass. In addition they know a remedy whose purpose is to strengthen the nerves: the child is laid on a mat stretched out anywhere on the roof of the hut. An eyewash (bolólé) is prepared from the sap of leaves from the litóyanzombo bush and extract of mbóló (fruit of the bosombó). Using a leaf shaped into a horn, a few drops are put into the child's eyes. Then the father or some other relative pulls out the mat from under the child and lifts it several times, shouting: té té té. [151]

864 10) No special importance is attached to teething. But a child whose upper teeth come in before the lower ones (a defect called ingondo) is considered abnormal. Therefore he is forbidden to eat the first fruits of hunting or fishing in an enclosure (mpao), lest the latter lose their productivity.

856
864 During a girl's early childhood beginning when she is still nursing, a mother with foresight will work to make her organs as perfect as possible. By applying pressure repeatedly and for long periods, she molds, so to speak, the outside in order to make it narrow, as this quality is greatly valued by our people.

It is the mother, too, who trains the girl in her preparations for married life. She teaches her how to behave toward her future husband, and at the same time instructs her in the duties of a good housewife (see Chapter X, Article VIII).

856
864 Certain forms of behavior, although their relationship to our subject is only superficial and external, must nevertheless be mentioned. An adult man will often take in his arms a little girl who has not yet been weaned, or perhaps only slightly more developed. He considers this child to be his wife. He has paid no bride price for her. But since she is a sister, cousin, or other relative of one of his wives, she is a "wife" from his point of view; that is, not only will it be possible for him to marry her later on, but even without becoming her husband he will enjoy a certain liberty in relation to her. (1) Thus, when such a man takes his young "wife" in his arms, he is enjoying an anticipation of the future and speaks to her [66] in that sense, often accompanying his words with intimate caresses.

The same practice, mutatis mutandis, may be observed on the part of a woman toward a small boy whom she can consider as her "husband."

304
582

2. Circumcision

Circumcision is generally practiced. It is usually performed at an early age. Without going into the details at this point (1) or

---

1. See Chapter VI, Article V, 2.

1. They will be found in Chapter X, Article VII.

000 which specifically expresses our idea of virginity, nor deduce from its absence that the thing itself is unknown to them. The Greeks and Romans were well acquainted with it, yet they had no precise word for it. *Parthenos* and *Virgo* mean simply "unmarried girl." The Germanic words such as *Maagd* and *Jungfrau*, which now signify "virgin," originally had the same meaning as the Greek and Latin terms.

585
836 The foregoing does not imply that every Nkundó girl is free to have sexual relations and that public opinion approves of libertinism among single people. We will examine this question in the following paragraphs.

896 2. Sexual relations between single people

164 In dealing with this question we must distinguish between relations between adults and the contacts between nonadults. We will therefore examine the two situations separately so that at the end we can attempt to explain the changes in native attitudes in this realm that have occurred. [80]

A. Before physical maturity. We will first relate what the natives tell about customary practices in the past, and then describe the practices of the present day.

In the past, sexual contacts between young people not yet marriageable were severely punished by their parents. The children were taught that those who were guilty would be struck down by a very serious illness which was inevitably fatal. This illness was called by the generic term *ndota* (1), and the more specific one, *gsémbéji*.

1. *Ndota* is the name of the illness which is the punishment for an infraction of a sexual

836
864

prohibition under any circumstances. I have heard these same terms used also by the natives in the vicinity of Coquilhatville.

The body becomes flabby and without strength, and this weakness ends in a fatal paralysis (byongɛ́ nnyǎnyuka or nkatɛ́ɛ́nɛ́). In addition, the girls feared that their sexual organs, not yet fully formed, would be torn. They were also imbued with a very intense fear: bofolu w'aende, "the fear of males," bofolu w'ǎmato, "the fear of females." They also feared death -- bɛ́lotɛ́kɛ́ iwɛ́. The parents added that sexual acts were free from danger only between persons of the requisite age.

836
864
838 This does not mean that children did not commit indecent acts. The game of ioto, in which little girls try to cook (and which is always one of their favorite games (2) as it probably is throughout the world), often gave rise to it. Small boys joined in the game in order to taste the meal. And quite naturally they began to play at "husband and wife," more or less. Often this game involved only innocent imitations, but other times touching and exhibitions occurred between children of the same sex or of opposite sexes. This game is far more dangerous nowadays, [81] because of a change in the attitude of young people toward sexual matters.

The game of yembankongo, in which boys, imitating monkeys, chase each other through the trees and creepers can -- and does - result in reprehensible scenes.

583
178 In former times most girls were married before puberty. But their husbands did not touch them until they had completed their normal development.

582
835
864 Among some individuals the fear of sexual relations was so deeply rooted that it persisted even beyond the age limit and was

2. Some boys imitate this game in order to acquire the habit of preparing their own meals. Later they benefit from it on more than one occasion.

582 conquered only by repeated assaults of passion. Thus it is generally
833 known among the natives that young women used to seek refuge in
864 their mother's house when the husband wanted to begin making use of
his rights as a husband. The mother would try to persuade her daughter to submit to the law of life. But sometimes, if her child seemed too resistant, the mother made excuses for her and asked the husband to consider her daughter's youth. The man usually wanted to remain on good terms with his mother-in-law so he did not insist and resigned himself to waiting till nature influenced the spirit and heart of his wife.

Since young people were brought up in deep fear of dangerous relations, it should not surprise us that this feeling became a real habit and did not disappear spontaneously the moment a certain degree of liberty was permitted. As a matter of fact, could we not make similar observations in Europe?

This is the natural explanation for the praiseworthy degree of morality among adolescents in the past.

Nowadays all that has changed. The young people follow
178 where their passions lead them. Not the slightest check is placed on
836 their impulses. Parents pay only slight attention to the conduct of
864 their children. [82] It is better not to inquire into the morality of modern youth. Husbands no longer respect the bodies of their adolescent brides, who are themselves quite used to a sexual life and eagerly look forward to it; and no longer know the feeling of "the fear of men." Should we then be astonished at the frightening de-
[164] crease in the birth rate (1) and the ever increasing spread of venereal diseases, which seem to have been unknown in the past?

The reasons for this change will be investigated further on, under the letter C.

836 B. Between adults. Here the Nkundó are very lenient. There is a difference, however, between the socio-legal and moral viewpoints, although as we shall see the latter is influenced by the former.

[562] A woman is entirely free, legally speaking, as long as the first payment on her bride price has not been made. No man has

---

1. The natives say that in the past young wives quickly became pregnant. And now ...

562 exclusive rights over her. Hence the proverb: Mbɔ́mbo ǐle nd'ânsɔ bimbo
836 ńa la nkɔ́lɔ́, "boimbo fruit found under the tree have no owner; they
[539] belong to the first person who gathers them." Thus a girl for whom nothing has been paid belongs to no one. A woman free in this manner does not infringe on the rights of any man in her sexual relations. There are therefore no sanctions against her licentiousness.

836
864 Furthermore, the discovery of her activities gives rise to no shame. At most more serious parents will rebuke children who go too far -- the girls because they abuse the body and reduce their value for a prospective marriage (2), the boys because they [83] run the risk of financial difficulties (the dangers of adultery, indemnity for childbirth with death as a result, etc.).

626
836 Public opinion is even more lenient than the parents. This attitude is easy to understand: strangers need fear no unpleasant consequences. Errors of this sort are generally considered natural weaknesses, *provided that they do not occur too frequently. For public* opinion is hard on people who run from one to another; they are stigmatized with the name ebɔ́bɔ́ɔ́, "unfaithful, flighty, without intelligence or reasoning powers," or ebɔ́ngɔ́, a stronger term with the same meaning.

836 From all the foregoing should we deduce that every woman is free to indulge fully in fornication? On the basis of the above considerations we could frankly conclude the affirmative. The behavior that can be observed from day to day fully confirms this answer. Some people stray more or less accidentally, but for others the practice quickly becomes a habit. And it can be said of all of them that

---

[585] 2. Not that a smaller bride price would be given for them. But a serious man would rather not take a woman for wife who has "run around" a great deal and therefore is more likely to commit adultery, to be unfaithful, and less likely to become the mother of a numerous progeny.

836 they succumb to any favorable opportunity. The validity of this generalization is not affected by extremely rare exceptions which may be encountered and which are due either to a constitutional abnormality or to an extraordinarily firm Christian conviction. How should 834 178 these observations be reconciled with the statement so often heard from natives that the situation was entirely different before the coming of the white men? It was not unusual to see young women not only abstaining from sexual relations but having such a "fear of men" that they drove away seducers and defended their chastity by hitting them with a stick.

When the woman did not accept the young man's proposition, she considered it a grave insult. The initiator was entitled to no indemnity "for blows and wounds." The woman replied only in violent terms, in word or act. [84] Often she went and insulted the mother of the guilty party. When the latter was told the reason for this behavior, she could only turn on her misbehaving son and usually gave him a good talking to; if he was young enough she gave him a good beating. Thus the girl had every right to defend herself.

If the provocation gave rise to no complications in family or society, the parents paid a lot less attention. But they tried to teach [864] their children discretion in these dangerous matters, though their instruction primarily took the form of a lesson after an error was committed, or sometimes apropos of an incident that had befallen someone else. Some parents were very severe. These attitudes were based on a vague sense of morality which was not deduced from philosophical reasoning or religious or superstitious ideas but which was innate and instinctive so to speak. In addition, the fear of excesses and eventual social consequences no doubt also played a considerable [577] role. Excesses were feared above all, and an isolated occurrence was regarded more or less as a momentary weakness.

To form an accurate picture of the situation that existed in the past, we must not lose sight of the fact that, because of very early marriages, the number of young single women was necessarily limited.

562 836 The attitude toward single men was more lenient than toward girls, unless their behavior had any consequences and apart from the danger of their actions becoming habitual, leading inevitably to palavers.

593x themselves of the usual and ordinary obligations incumbent upon
577 them on the death of a son-in-law. Should this be taken as a kind
762 of implied condemnation of suicide? [278]

The wisdom of the elders recommends to youth that they
593x not let anger lead them to brutal acts even where, legally, it is
578 permissible to use force. They do not act in such a way through a
● 867 policy of adaptation to the present regime. Even before the arrival
626 of the white men, they gave lessons in calm and self-mastery. For
serious blows, wounds, and especially homicide could have deplorable consequences legally and even politically (war). They preferred recourse to punishments, such as abstention from food and the refusal of debitum conjugale, which although less violent, are not without efficacity. In that way they were also spared the vexation of in-laws, whose pity would be aroused by the wounds and bodily suffering of their child or sister.

578 One thing that deserves blows or a good whipping because it
593x is considered a serious failure in the fulfillment of the duties of married life is indifference and negligence in housework. A husband may safely deal forcefully with the situation, although he must first inform the qualified authorities. The following are some examples of such faults: the wife does not give the necessary attention to the kitchen, her children, the cleaning of the hut and court; she neglects her crops, does not go fishing, makes no attempt to obtain salt, etc.; in short, she does not give the required time and care to the tasks incumbent upon her. She herself, her children, and her house remain disgustingly filthy, her fields and banana groves are invaded by weeds and her pantry is devoid of utensils and food, while she wastes her time doing nothing or rather spends it running about the village, going to one woman's house, chatting with another, spending the better part of her day gossiping. The Nkundó does not put up with this sort of behavior, and no one can reproach him. Even other men and the woman's companions condemn [279] such conduct. Often the woman is ridiculed, and on occasion she may
[B4] hear unflattering comments such as bɔ̃mot'ɔ̃w'asolɔ́, efufa etɛ́ngamaka,
"a gossip, her cloth is to the side," that is, the interminable chatting

857 for young boys is hunting and fishing by all sorts of methods suitable
868 for their age. Little by little an adolescent learns the usual tasks and everything that he needs to know in order to survive and obtain food and shelter. His instruction is completed by his companions and above all by the exigencies of life.

A girl learns housework and farming. Very early her mother braids a small basket for her in order to accustom her to carrying loads. She also participates in the women's fishing.

In general one has the impression that the girls are far more active than the boys. But I think that this difference is due to the fact that the boys are almost always in the forest, while the girls remain in the village and are therefore noticed more. As a matter of fact in our missions it cannot be said that the boys work less well than the girls, quite the contrary.

The girls practice the culinary art, not only with their mothers but also -- as in Belgium -- in a game (ioto).

● The children do not study the history, laws, and traditions
867 of their clan or tribe. They learn them in the [508] course of
869 events, either by hearing them described or by asking questions. Often their parents explain such matters on their own initiative, not according to a definite program but rather when opportunities arise. A young man can learn many things especially by accompanying his father on visits, on trips, at meetings and deliberations, or by listening attentively to the performances of troubadours who play the longombé (mandolin). The astonishing knowledge of usages and customs, ancestral laws, history, the wisdom of the ancients, proverbs, fables, etc., possessed by some youngsters, to the point of excelling their elders, can be explained by their faithfulness in following papa instead of continuously enjoying the freedom of the forest. I have encountered more than one instance of this sort which was explained primarily on the basis of the boy's attachment to his father.

The Nkundó child begins to hum popular tunes and imitate
[illegible] the rhythmic movements of the dancers when he is barely able to walk. Little girls, especially, practice special dances of their own. Then, little by little, the children mix with the group of adult dancers and are able to join the chorus, though they must remain in the rear.

868 Parents teach their children the trades that they themselves know: forging, wood sculpture, the weaving of mats and baskets, pottery making, etc.

● 867 With respect to ethics, the children learn a great deal from experience, but parents do not fail to teach them rules of politeness, decorum, good breeding, and the great principles of social relations. As in Europe, however, there are degrees of concern or indifference in this realm. The moral code taught is the one the parents themselves practice. It is centered above all on family and society; respect toward members of the family, mutual assistance, respect for the welfare of others, fear of the opposite sex, etc. But all of it has a naturalistic basis: the reason given for adherence to such precepts is limited to the unpleasant consequences [509] that would otherwise result. Reprimands and even corporal punishments for infractions are not unknown. But they are chiefly due to exasperation and therefore mixed with anger and without any continuity or consistent idea. Once the anger has passed the threats remain sterile. For punishment the parents [861] resort chiefly to blows, but other penalties are also common. For instance, one of our catechists when he was young (between 1880 and 1895) had removed a little bird trapped in a snare belonging to one of his cousins. As soon as his father heard what he had done, he gave the youngster a good scolding and made him go to bed without supper.

As a girl approaches puberty, her mother teaches her the rights and duties of a married woman. She teaches her how to behave and conduct herself in order to be a good wife and mother. She does this so that her daughter may find a good husband, and so that the union may be stable and not produce too many palavers or trouble.

Formerly, children were not allowed to see the dances of adults. They were chased away and had to amuse each other. This was an excellent means for preserving morality among the youth and retaining their respect for their elders. Therefore it is most regrettable that it has been abandoned.

845 puberty, by his father. The performance of this role entails continence (bokeka) for the person who undertakes it, even with respect to the spouse. A violation of this rule prevents healing of the wound or at least makes the process very long and difficult. (1)

[755] 1. A similar bokeka applies to anyone nursing a large gangrenous ulcer (wălɛ́).

The foreskin that has been cut off is dried on the bolíkó (tray or shelf). Then no one bothers with it any longer, and it usually remains there, dusty and dirty, for an indefinite period of time if the rats leave it alone.

In the centers the young people are beginning to neglect [177] the native skilled in circumcising and resort instead to European surgeons.

Circumcision is not an occasion for feasts or ceremonies. [594] Sometimes a man who is rich and vain will give a feast, but this is not at all a common practice.

The term "to circumcise" is translated in Lonkundo as téna bɔnsɛ́, "to cut off the foreskin." The less vulgar term and one used much more frequently is téna nsɔ́ngɛ́, "to cut off the tip." A much too decent circumlocution is téna batɔ́i, "to cut off the ears."

The reason for this custom has already been given in Chapter I, Part II, Article II, 2.

Article VIII. Education

● 566 567 From an early age a Nkundó child must perform various small services for his parents, especially in the household; he is asked to draw water, fetch firewood, take care of a little brother or sister, etc. The demands for such services are addressed chiefly to girls, but boys are not at all exempt. By the very nature of things, however, the latter are less frequently asked to help.

Quite early a boy may accompany his father on trips, at meetings, legal debates, etc. The father makes a bow and arrows for him and teaches him the art of using them. The great pastime

857 for young boys is hunting and fishing by all sorts of methods suitable
868 for their age. Little by little an adolescent learns the usual tasks and everything that he needs to know in order to survive and obtain food and shelter. His instruction is completed by his companions and above all by the exigencies of life.

A girl learns housework and farming. Very early her mother braids a small basket for her in order to accustom her to carrying loads. She also participates in the women's fishing.

In general one has the impression that the girls are far more active than the boys. But I think that this difference is due to the fact that the boys are almost always in the forest, while the girls remain in the village and are therefore noticed more. As a matter of fact in our missions it cannot be said that the boys work less well than the girls, quite the contrary.

The girls practice the culinary art, not only with their mothers but also -- as in Belgium -- in a game (loto).

The children do not study the history, laws, and traditions
867 of their clan or tribe. They learn them in the [508] course of
869 events, either by hearing them described or by asking questions. Often their parents explain such matters on their own initiative, not according to a definite program but rather when opportunities arise. A young man can learn many things especially by accompanying his father on visits, on trips, at meetings and deliberations, or by listening attentively to the performances of troubadours who play the longombé (mandolin). The astonishing knowledge of usages and customs, ancestral laws, history, the wisdom of the ancients, proverbs, fables, etc., possessed by some youngsters, to the point of excelling their elders, can be explained by their faithfulness in following papa instead of continuously enjoying the freedom of the forest. I have encountered more than one instance of this sort which was explained primarily on the basis of the boy's attachment to his father.

The Nkundó child begins to hum popular tunes and imitate
[illegible] the rhythmic movements of the dancers when he is barely able to walk. Little girls, especially, practice special dances of their own. Then, little by little, the children mix with the group of adult dancers and are able to join the chorus, though they must remain in the rear.

2: Hulstaert--476 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundo

868 Parents teach their children the trades that they themselves know: forging, wood sculpture, the weaving of mats and baskets, pottery making, etc.

867 With respect to ethics, the children learn a great deal from experience, but parents do not fail to teach them rules of politeness, decorum, good breeding, and the great principles of social relations. As in Europe, however, there are degrees of concern or indifference in this realm. The moral code taught is the one the parents themselves practice. It is centered above all on family and society; respect toward members of the family, mutual assistance, respect for the welfare of others, fear of the opposite sex, etc. But all of it has a naturalistic basis: the reason given for adherence to such precepts is limited to the unpleasant consequences [509] that would otherwise result. Reprimands and even corporal punishments for infractions are not unknown. But they are chiefly due to exasperation and therefore mixed with anger and without any continuity or consistent idea. Once the anger has passed the threats remain sterile. For punishment the parents [861] resort chiefly to blows, but other penalties are also common. For instance, one of our catechists when he was young (between 1880 and 1890) had removed a little bird trapped in a snare belonging to one of his cousins. As soon as his father heard what he had done, he gave the youngster a good scolding and made him go to bed without supper.

As a girl approaches puberty, her mother teaches her the rights and duties of a married woman. She teaches her how to behave and conduct herself in order to be a good wife and mother. She does this so that her daughter may find a good husband, and so that the union may be stable and not produce too many palavers or trouble.

Formerly, children were not allowed to see the dances of adults. They were chased away and had to amuse each other. This was an excellent means for preserving morality among the youth and retaining their respect for their elders. Therefore it is most regrettable that it has been abandoned.

882 When the children reach puberty, they no longer like to sleep in their parent's home. The parents do not send them away, but on the other hand, they do not oppose this desire on the part of young people which, they say, springs from a feeling of modesty. The boys go one way, the girls another; for example, they may appropriate an unoccupied hut belonging to their father or go to close relatives, or they may try and find a place in quarters occupied by a group of boys or girls. If no house is available, the boys band together to build a hut which they share. Nowadays they begin very early [510] to build individual huts or one for two, in order to thus enjoy a greater freedom.

● 861 On the trees in the forest one finds a kind of hard mushroom called losikitela. When a child begins to speak, the mushroom is placed between his teeth, so that he will bite into it and thus learn not to express himself thoughtlessly but to hold back his words (-sikitela) and think before speaking.

One can often observe parents and other persons actively helping children to express themselves correctly, especially in correcting mistakes, pronunciation, and errors with regard to proper nouns, by giving them the proper words and even explaining grammatical forms and subtle distinctions between certain terms. "This is how it must be said; that means something else. This plant is called thus and so, etc."

861 Therefore, although a Nkundó child is very free to spend his days as he pleases and, perforce, learns many things through personal experience, it would be wrong to say that his parents are not interested in his education and do not contribute to it. They participate actively by their advice, their explanations, and their demonstrations. Needless to say, their role is neither as important nor as continuous as in many civilized societies. Besides it is very difficult, and often unfair, to compare our people's situation with that of Europeans; the difference in circumstances is too great. But we must point out in all fairness that the Nkundó do make efforts in this realm, although the results are hardly apparent with respect to moral education (1), because there are many flaws, gaps,

---

1. We will say no more about material and economic education, which can not be criticized.

857 for young boys is hunting and fishing by all sorts of methods suitable
868 for their age. Little by little an adolescent learns the usual tasks and everything that he needs to know in order to survive and obtain food and shelter. His instruction is completed by his companions and above all by the exigencies of life.

A girl learns housework and farming. Very early her mother braids a small basket for her in order to accustom her to carrying loads. She also participates in the women's fishing.

In general one has the impression that the girls are far more active than the boys. But I think that this difference is due to the fact that the boys are almost always in the forest, while the girls remain in the village and are therefore noticed more. As a matter of fact in our missions it cannot be said that the boys work less well than the girls, quite the contrary.

The girls practice the culinary art, not only with their mothers but also -- as in Belgium -- in a game (*ioto*).

The children do not study the history, laws, and traditions
867 of their clan or tribe. They learn them in the [508] course of
869 events, either by hearing them described or by asking questions. Often their parents explain such matters on their own initiative, not according to a definite program but rather when opportunities arise. A young man can learn many things especially by accompanying his father on visits, on trips, at meetings and deliberations, or by listening attentively to the performances of troubadours who play the *longombé* (mandolin). The astonishing knowledge of usages and customs, ancestral laws, history, the wisdom of the ancients, proverbs, fables, etc., possessed by some youngsters, to the point of excelling their elders, can be explained by their faithfulness in following papa instead of continuously enjoying the freedom of the forest. I have encountered more than one instance of this sort which was explained primarily on the basis of the boy's attachment to his father.

[illegible] The Nkundó child begins to hum popular tunes and imitate the rhythmic movements of the dancers when he is barely able to walk. Little girls, especially, practice special dances of their own. Then, little by little, the children mix with the group of adult dancers and are able to join the chorus, though they must remain in the rear.

593 ● [882] If the whole family [26] suffers through the misbehaviour of adolescents, the latter will not be spared by the father. But the mother will often take their sides for, not belonging to her husband's family, she allows only her heart to speak. The familial-political organization of this people requires that fondness have its limits; otherwise it could lead to disorder and anarchy.

593 855 It cannot be said of Nkundo parents, as one often reads about other peoples of the Congo, that they do not care for their children, who are self-sufficient and obliged to provide for their own needs from the age of six or seven. Our people are always feeding and even coddling their children; even when the latter are married they are always well received in their parents' home and lavishly treated. It is quite true that the young people spend much time in the forest looking for various kinds of food, but that is part of their games and amusements, a phase of their education, and at the same time their contribution to the maintenance of the household (a contribution which cannot be omitted from any serious education, and it is regrettable that it should be omitted by so many European families. (1)

1. Education will be dealt with more extensively in Chapter X, Article VIII.

593 581 In the matter of marriage parents generally respect the feelings of their children. A father who is motivated by avarice and, above all, by the need for a certain sum of money or its equivalent, may sometimes let the voice of self-interest predominate over that of the heart.

It goes without saying that one may encounter aberrations of fatherly feeling, but such cases are exceedingly rare. (2)

2. For an example see Chapter II, Article XI, 3, B.

593 Though parents love their children without distinction and without consideration of their faults, vices, etc., they are not exempt from a certain amount of partiality; a particular child [27] will

548 ornaments or objects for her toilette (hairpins, for example), and it is probable therefore that individual cases of this sort occurred. But it is altogether unlikely that the practice was widespread, as it does not fit in with the economic organization of this people, among whom wealth is more or less collectively owned and, moreover, (as will be shown in Chapter VI, Article II) a woman has no property rights. [72] Therefore we can assume that there were only a few occasional prostitutes.

On the other hand, there have never been any professional prostitutes; that is, Nkundó women have never made a job out of prostitution, and the same thing may be said of the other forms listed above.

The number of prostitutes was necessarily limited, however, by the fact that the great majority of women were always married young (Chapter IV, Article I), and that adultery was severely punished (Chapter VI, Article VII).

Nevertheless, there is something which superficially resembles prostitution; that is, there is a category of girls and women whom at first glance one would be tempted to call prostitutes. Therefore it would be useful to examine the situation somewhat more closely, for though in itself it is entirely different from prostitution, it could easily lend itself to it.

548
572
602
It sometimes happens that a girl, besides the bolumbu (a socio-political institution in no way related to the degeneration of female sexuality), is kept in the home of her parents beyond the customary age before she is given in marriage. Such a girl is called elûmwâla, "the one who does not marry." She is not bolumbu. Externally or -- to use philosophical terminology -- materially, the two customs resemble each other; but formally they are entirely different. Creating a bolumbu involves authority and influence and is thus a public matter. Whether a girl becomes an elûmwâla, on the other hand, is a private matter between father and daughter. While the creation of a bolumbu is accompanied by public feasts and a decree officially proclaimed (bofho) by the father and accepted by the council of family heads [73], the establishment of a elûmwâla involves no official act or ceremony.

548 572. 582. The name efotswâfla does not mean that the girl will stay single all her life. Her marriage is not permanently excluded; it is only postponed.

As for her behaviour, the efotswâfla conducts herself like any Nkundó girl. Nothing distinguishes her from her companions. If a good match is proposed to her, she marries like everyone else.

This custom -- if one can use the term -- therefore has no real connection with prostitution. All that can be said is that the girl who stays single longer and until adulthood, is exposed to more libertinism and a life of debauchery.

586 It also happens that parents who are angry because their daughter has dissolved a marriage to a man they consider a good son-in-law prevent her from remarrying in an effort to make her return to her legitimate husband. If the parents and their child each hold to their viewpoint without yielding, such a situation can go on for many months until the wife is -- practically speaking -- no longer under the authority of her husband. And since the opposition of her parents prevents her from being married by another man, she easily comes to give herself to all. It should be added that at present this case is chiefly hypothetical. Parents no longer have the authority [75] to thwart the desires of an adult daughter in this way; if she is stubborn they have to yield out of fear that she will run far away. And that would be to go from the frying pan into the fire. But in the past the kind of situation I have described was not unusual.

558 569 The most fertile places for the breeding and development of prostitution are to be sought in the centers. The following principal causes can be given:

1) Female vanity is overexcited by the sight [76] of all the dazzling riches which have been imported by white men and which are such a temptation to Negro women. It requires a considerable income to satisfy this desire to enhance one's native beauty. Ordinary laborers and artisans do not earn enough money to satisfy their wives or daughters in this respect. Mistresses of Europeans or of foreign black men, the wives of "clerks" and other representatives of Negro high society display a degree of luxury startling and striking to the rest.

legitimate husband and is entitled to his wife. Everything depends on his personal attitude, his passion, or his respect for the body of his young wife. If he is reasonable he will be very careful during his relations with her or will abstain altogether, so as not to "damage" her body. But from the legal standpoint he may do as he chooses. Thus there are adults who have regular relations -- one way or another -- with a wife whose breasts are not in the least developed. In such cases marital relations take place before nubility. (1) The consequences with respect to the birth rate may easily be guessed. [231] It may also happen that the husband himself has not reached puberty. This fact presents no obstacle to cohabitation. As soon as he feels that he is a man, he builds his hut and the couple live there together. In all these cases the girl often goes to her parents' home, and sometimes her visits extend for weeks during which she does not see her husband.

Formerly things did not work out in this fashion. The young wife often refused to participate in the sexual act, especially if the husband was considerably older than she. Her reaction was due to her natural modesty and timidity, together with her education. A polygamous husband usually respected her feelings, till she gradually came around. When her normal physiological development was completed and her love reached a sufficient intensity, she would begin to follow her instincts. In the light of what was said in Chapter I, Part 2, Article IV, 2, A, we may readily accept our informants' statements on this score; the situation seems altogether natural.

---

1. Note that the immature girl is not called *filingo* in Nkundó, as Engels ("Les Wangata," *Revue congolaise*, 1910, p. 36) maintains. This word is but the Nkundó transformation of the word *virgo*. There is no specific term for "prepubescent." A girl who is not yet a woman but is no longer a child is called *jembelake*.

882 When the children reach puberty, they no longer like to sleep in their parent's home. The parents do not send them away, but on the other hand, they do not oppose this desire on the part of young people which, they say, springs from a feeling of modesty. The boys go one way, the girls another; for example, they may appropriate an unoccupied hut belonging to their father or go to close relatives, or they may try and find a place in quarters occupied by a group of boys or girls. If no house is available, the boys band together to build a hut which they share. Nowadays they begin very early [510] to build individual huts or one for two, in order to thus enjoy a greater freedom.

866 On the trees in the forest one finds a kind of hard mushroom called losik'tela. When a child begins to speak, the mushroom is placed between his teeth, so that he will bite into it and thus learn not to express himself thoughtlessly but to hold back his words (-sikitela) and think before speaking.

One can often observe parents and other persons actively helping children to express themselves correctly, especially in correcting mistakes, pronunciation, and errors with regard to proper nouns, by giving them the proper words and even explaining grammatical forms and subtle distinctions between certain terms. "This is how it must be said; that means something else. This plant is called thus and so, etc."

861 Therefore, although a Nkundó child is very free to spend his days as he pleases and, perforce, learns many things through personal experience, it would be wrong to say that his parents are not interested in his education and do not contribute to it. They participate actively by their advice, their explanations, and their demonstrations. Needless to say, their role is neither as important nor as continuous as in many civilized societies. Besides it is very difficult, and often unfair, to compare our people's situation with that of Europeans; the difference in circumstances is too great. But we must point out in all fairness that the Nkundó do make efforts in this realm, although the results are hardly apparent with respect to moral education (1), because there are many flaws, gaps,

1. We will say no more about material and economic education, which can not be criticized.